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ANTHOLOGY OF
American Negro Literature

Edited by SYLVESTRE C. WATKINS

With an Introduction by JOHN T. FREDERICK

THE MODERN LIBRARY · NEW YORK

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To my mother,

ADA B WATKINS,

WHO REPRESENTS THE BEGINNING,

AND TO MY CHILDREN,

ADRIENNE AND SYLVESTRE II,

WHO REPRESENT THE FUTURE

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PREFACE

NEGRO history and Negro literature have maintained a very close relationship through the years In his struggle for a better way of life, the Negro has, through necessity, made his literature a purposeful thing—born of his great desire to become a full-fledged citizen of the United States His late start did not allow him the pleasure of creating a new phrase, or a more beautiful expression The struggle against ignorance, indifference and racial bigotry had first claim upon his time and energy

When Calverton edited *An Anthology of American Negro Literature* in 1929, he successfully reflected the attitude of the period and included authors who were just beginning to make their appearance upon the literary scene. As writers began to develop, they were confronted with the demands of two audiences the black, wanting their "ideals" portrayed, and the white, interested only in the "traditional" Negro In their desire to become successful writers, many attempted to satisfy both groups, but found themselves writing contrary to their beliefs and ideas

During the period of the "New Negro Renaissance," the desires of the white audience received more attention by reason of their seeming interest in things Negroid Many Negro writers found it profitable to portray only what their paying audiences wanted As a result some of these authors were found wanting when the "fad" era had passed

The dark days of the "depression" helped to awaken a new social consciousness in the Negro and resulted in the birth of stronger and more stirring pieces of writing Most of the authors represented in this volume have developed since 1929 Others who appeared in the Calverton *Anthology* have been omitted because their writing belonged to the pre-depression period, or they have ceased to produce writing that is representative of the "newer" Negro literature

This collection represents the vigorous thinking and writing that characterizes today's Negro author Here will be found—not the "traditional" Negro, nor the Negro "ideal"—but the true American

of Negro parentage speaking his mind about his problems, and offering suggestions for their solution The Negro author now intends to express his ideas and thoughts—if they please the Negro and/or the white reader he is satisfied, but if they do not please the Negro and/or the white reader, he will have had, and will continue to have, his say

A large collection of books, pamphlets, etc , have been published on the Negro—with a considerable percentage of these written by non-Negro authors *An Anthology of American Negro Literature* has been compiled as an introduction to the vast store of information and general writings that have been written by Negroes Outstanding representative works from many different fields have been brought together in four main classifications In the short story section various moods of expression are reflected, with contrasting pictures of Negro life The essay section is the largest of the four main classifications This was found necessary in order to include as many complete pieces as possible in such fields as economics, literature, history and sociology Autobiography and biography contain selections from the published lives of outstanding Negroes who have made, and are making, great contributions to the advancement of the Negro group The biographical and bibliographical section has been prepared to supply you with each author's background and a list of his books and the sources of his articles for further reading

Poetry has not been included, since five outstanding anthologies have been published in this field *Golden Slippers, An Anthology of Negro Poetry for Young Readers,* by Arna Bontemps, *Book of American Negro Poetry,* by James Weldon Johnson, *Caroling Dusk, An Anthology of Verse by Negro Poets,* by Countee Cullen, *Negro Voices, An Anthology of Contemporary Verse,* by Beatrice M. Murphy, *Negro Poets and Their Poems,* by R J Kerlin Margaret Walker and Melvin Tolson are two of our more recent poets Brief selections of their work will be found in this volume in Alain Locke's article "The Negro in American Culture " Locke discusses Negro poetry as a cultural contribution, and Sterling Brown in his article "Contemporary Negro Poetry," approaches the subject through an appraisal of individual poets and their work.

For many years, editors of anthologies have followed a set form in classifying their selections. Fragments from novels were always

included, with the thought that the reader's appetite would be made more keen by reading parts from a given writer's novel. But today, many anthology editors have begun to omit these novel fragments, because they have not accomplished the original purpose—nor is it fair to include only a few pages from the author's complete story. This explains why *An Anthology of American Negro Literature* does not include selections from the novels of Negro writers However, I do recommend that the following novels be read *Their Eyes Were Watching God,* by Zora N Hurston, *Home to Harlem,* by Claude McKay; *The Blacker the Berry,* by Wallace Thurman, *My Lives and How I Lost Them,* by Countee Cullen; *These Low Grounds,* by W E Turpin, *Blood on the Forge,* by William Attaway, *Black Thunder,* by Arna Bontemps, *Native Son,* by Richard Wright, and *The White Face,* by Carl R Offord.

As must be the case in making such a compilation, I have probably omitted a favorite author and maybe a favorite story or article. While this is to be regretted, the reader may find it advantageous, for the special format of this volume permits easier handling and makes it suitable for short-time as well as leisure-time reading. This anthology was not meant to be complete

I am grateful for the permission of the various authors and publishers to use their material, and I am especially indebted to Arna Bontemps for his counsel and for suggestions that have been of much value to me in making this compilation All selections have been made by me and I must accept full responsibility for errors. Yvonne Crawford, Mattie Fleming and Dorothea Hardeman were each very kind to handle the stenographic details of my work; and I shall be forever grateful to my wife, Mabel Watkins, whose patience and constant help have seen the *Anthology* through to its completion

S. C. Watkins

Chicago, Illinois
January, 1944

INTRODUCTION

by John T Frederick

A COLLECTION representative of the recent contributions of Negro writers to American prose has been needed for some time Its appearance now, in wartime, is particularly significant

In recent years our literature has been enriched by the work of writers of various large ethnic groups not characteristically expressed in previous decades It is increasingly clear that our American literature of the future will be most strikingly characterized by the vitality and the substantial value of these new contributions Of all these diverse elements, out of which our national literature is being built, none is more important than the work of our Negro writers

The Negro writers of the nineteenth century are far from negligible, of course, the history of Negro literature goes back even to the eighteenth century, and that history is surveyed in some of the essays of the present volume But in the twentieth century the Negro writer has attained his seniority, and his work its maturity, as a factor in our literature The attitude of American readers toward the work of Negro writers has undergone a profound change in the present generation No longer is a book the object of a special curiosity because a Negro wrote it, and no longer is the Negro author greeted either with condescension or false adulation because of his race The Negro writer stands on his own feet in the American literary world of today, on an equal footing with other American writers

Many factors have contributed to this change in attitude One of the most important of these has been the universal acceptance of Negro music—the general recognition of the blues and jazz as the most characteristic musical expression of America, and of the spirituals as by far the finest and richest portion of our musical inheritance as a nation; the influence of individual Negro musicians has been profound Another major factor has been the actual increase of our knowledge of Negro history, especially of the culture of Negro Africa, and the general growth of substantial scholarship and

scholarly attainments among American Negroes A third factor has been the increasing economic importance of the Negro in American life as a whole, the recognition of which has led to an increased disposition to take seriously what the Negro says or does—or writes But the best reason for our giving Negro writers an equal footing with white writers is that they have earned it—the quality of their work demands it It is on this ground that Mr Watkins' collection finds its first reason for being.

Negro literature is literature created by Negroes That is to say that it is to be viewed as literature first, in relation to the standards of all literature, and only secondarily is it to be especially examined as the work of Negro writers Mr Watkins' collection meets this test. Here are short stories of high artistry and of complete sincerity —qualities not too often paired in the current anthologies of the American short story as a whole Here are essays and articles that are meaty, lucid, penetrating and memorable Here are biographical and autobiographical sketches that are poignant, piquant, gay, somber, prophetic As the candid record and far-seeing interpretation of a vast segment of the American scene, as the honest and powerful expression of one great part of American life, this book takes its place on the shelf of recent American literature as the worthy companion of the best of contemporary anthologies of other kinds

But for the American reader of today, this book is literature in something more than the usual sense of historical and aesthetic judgments Distinctly, this is something more than an exhibit of *belles-lettres,* much more than a pocket companion for a vacant hour Because of the time at which it is given to us to read, because of the place of the Negro in our American life in this third year of our war against fascism, this is literature in a dynamic sense, literature in action, literature in what I take to be its highest function, when it may discoverably affect the thinking and the conduct of men and the destiny of mankind

Very carefully, very thoughtfully and conscientiously, Mr. Watkins has assembled for the reader of this book a group of selections which present—as fully and as fairly, I believe, as a single small volume could—the place of the Negro in American life today, and what the Negro thinks and feels about that place. It isn't an unrelated picture. the historical backgrounds are given, the way

the place has been prepared and the way the Negro has come to occupy it It isn't a partial or distorted picture all sides of Negro life are presented here, and all attitudes and intentions characteristic of American Negroes today Stories, essays and articles, biographical and autobiographical sketches, all dovetail together to give the reader—with detail, color, incident and action, with interpretation and analysis, comment and reflection, and, finally, with power and completeness—the sense of truth

I do not know the specific ways in which the Negro's place in American life is to be made better I do know that it will be made better in one way or another And I know that it can be made better by all of us, working together The problem of the Negro's place in American life is not a local problem alone or primarily, or a state problem, or a regional problem It is a national problem, because on the Negro's place in the American nation depends our future relation to other nations, the rising nations of that great majority of the peoples of the earth whose skins are colored It is a national problem because on its solution depend our national consistency, integrity and self-respect

That the Negro's place in American life is a national problem means that it is the individual problem of every citizen of the nation. It is a problem that cannot be ignored, evaded or postponed It must be faced and dealt with now, while millions of American Negroes are fighting side by side with other millions of Americans against fascism and for the Four Freedoms

In our individual responsibility, most of us greatly need knowl edge and understanding knowledge of what the Negro's place in American life today really is, understanding of what the Negro thinks and how he feels about it. To give us such knowledge and such understanding, Mr Watkins' anthology is of the highest and most timely value

Chicago, December, 1943.

SHORT STORIES

Richard Wright

DAVE struck out across the fields, looking homeward through paling light. Whut's the usa talkin wid em niggers in the field? Anyhow, his mother was putting supper on the table Them niggers can't understan nothing One of these days he was going to get a gun and practise shooting, then they can't talk to him as though he were a little boy He slowed, looking at the ground Shucks, Ah ain scareda them even ef they are biggern me! Aw, Ah know whut Ahma do. . . Ahm going by ol Joe's sto n git that Sears Roebuck catlog n look at them guns Mabbe Ma will lemme buy one when she gits mah pay from ol man Hawkins Ahma beg her t gimme some money. Ahm ol ernough to hava gun Ahm seventeen Almos a man He strode, feeling his long, loose-jointed limbs Shucks, a man oughta hava little gun aftah he done worked hard all day. . .

He came in sight of Joe's store A yellow lantern glowed on the front porch He mounted steps and went through the screen door, hearing it bang behind him. There was a strong smell of coal oil and mackerel fish He felt very confident until he saw fat Joe walk in through the rear door, then his courage began to ooze

"Howdy, Dave! Whutcha want?"

"How yuh, Mistah Joe? Aw, Ah don wanna buy nothing Ah jus wanted t see ef yuhd lemme look at tha ol catlog erwhile."

"Sure! You wanna see it here?"

"Nawsuh Ah wans t take it home wid me Ahll bring it back termorrow when Ah come in from the fiels "

"You plannin on buyin something?"

"Yessuh "

"Your ma letting you have your own money now?"

"Shucks Mistah Joe, Ahm gittin t be a man like anybody else!"

Joe laughed and wiped his greasy white face with a red bandanna

"Whut you plannin on buyin?"

Dave looked at the floor, scratched his head, scratched his thigh and smiled. Then he looked up shyly.

"Ahll tell yuh, Mistah Joe, ef yuh promise yuh won't tell."

"I promise."

"Waal, Ahma buy a gun"

"A gun? Whut you want with a gun?"

"Ah wanna keep it"

"You ain't nothing but a boy You don't need a gun"

"Aw, lemme have the catlog, Mistah Joe Ahll bring it back"

Joe walked through the rear door Dave was elated He looked around at barrels of sugar and flour He heard Joe coming back He craned his neck to see if he were bringing the book Yeah, he's got it! Gawddog, he's got it!

"Here, but be sure you bring it back It's the only one I got"

"Sho, Mistah Joe"

"Say, if you wanna buy a gun, why don't you buy one from me? I gotta gun to sell"

"Will it shoot?"

"Sure it'll shoot"

"Whut kind is it?"

"Oh, it's kinda old A lefthand Wheeler. A pistol A big one"

"Is it got bullets in it?"

"It's loaded"

"Kin Ah see it?"

"Where's your money?"

"Whut yuh wan fer it?"

"I'll let you have it for two dollars."

"Just two dollahs? Shucks, Ah could buy tha when Ah git mah pay"

"I'll have it here when you want it"

"Awright, suh Ah be in fer it"

He went through the door, hearing it slam again behind him. Alma git some money from Ma n buy me a gun! Only two dollahs! He tucked the thick catalogue under his arm and hurried

"Where yuh been, boy?" His mother held a steaming dish of black-eyed peas

"Aw, Ma, Ah jus stopped down the road t talk wid th boys."

"Yuh know bettah than t keep suppah waitin"

He sat down, resting the catalogue on the edge of the table.

"Yuh git up from there and git to the well n wash yosef! Ah ain feedin no hogs in mah house!"

She grabbed his shoulder and pushed him. He stumbled out of the room, then came back to get the catalogue.

"Whut this?"

"Aw, Ma, it's jusa catlog."

"Who yuh git it from?"

"From Joe, down at the sto."

"Waal, thas good We kin use it around the house."

"Naw, Ma " He grabbed for it. "Gimme mah catlog, Ma."

She held onto it and glared at him

"Quit hollerin at me! Whut's wrong wid yuh? Yuh crazy?"

"But Ma, please It ain mine! It's Joe's! He tol me t bring it back t im termorrow "

She gave up the book. He stumbled down the back steps, hugging the thick book under his arm. When he had splashed water on his face and hands, he groped back to the kitchen and fumbled in a corner for the towel He bumped into a chair, it clattered to the floor. The catalogue sprawled at his feet When he had dried his eyes he snatched up the book and held it again under his arm His mother stood watching him

"Now, ef yuh gonna acka fool over that ol book, Ahll take it n burn it up."

"Naw, Ma, please "

"Waal, set down n be still!"

He sat down and drew the oil lamp close He thumbed page after page, unaware of the food his mother set on the table His father came in Then his small brother

"Whutcha got there, Dave?" his father asked.

"Jusa catlog," he answered, not looking up

"Ywah, here they is!" His eyes glowed at blue and black revolvers. He glanced up, feeling sudden guilt His father was watching him He eased the book under the table and rested it on his knees After the blessing was asked, he ate He scooped up peas and swallowed fat meat without chewing Buttermilk helped to wash it down He did not want to mention money before his father He would do much better by cornering his mother when she was alone He looked at his father uneasily out of the edge of his eye

"Boy, how come yuh don quit foolin wid tha book n eat yo suppah?"

"Yessuh."

"How yuh n ol man Hawkins gittin erlong?"

"Suh?"

"Can't yuh hear? Why don yuh lissen? Ah ast yuh how wuz yuh n ol man Hawkins gittin erlong?"

"Oh, swell, Pa Ah plows mo lan than anybody over there"

"Waal, yuh oughta keep yo min on whut yuh doin."

"Yessuh."

He poured his plate full of molasses and sopped at it slowly with a chunk of cornbread When all but his mother had left the kitchen, he still sat and looked again at the guns in the catalogue Lawd, ef Ah only had tha pretty one! He could almost feel the slickness of the weapon with his fingers If he had a gun like that he would polish it and keep it shining so it would never rust. N Ahd keep it loaded, by Gawd!

"Ma?"

"Hunh?"

"Ol man Hawkins give yuh mah money yit?"

"Yeah, but ain no usa yuh thinkin bout thowin nona it erway. Ahm keepin tha money sos yuh kin have cloes t go to school this winter"

He rose and went to her side with the open catalogue in his palms She was washing dishes, her head bent low over a pan Shyly he raised the open book When he spoke his voice was husky, faint

"Ma, Gawd knows Ah wans one of these"

"One of whut?" she asked, not raising her eyes

"One of these," he said again, not daring even to point She glanced up at the page, then at him with wide eyes.

"Nigger, is yuh gone plum crazy?"

"Aw, Ma—"

"Git outta here! Don yuh talk t me bout no gun! Yuh a fool!"

"Ma, Ah kin buy one fer two dollahs."

"Not ef Ah knows it yuh ain!"

"But yuh promised me one—"

"Ah don care whut Ah promised! Yuh ain nothing but a boy yit!"

'Ma, ef yuh lemme buy one Ahll never ast yuh fer nothing no mo"

"Ah tol yuh t git outta here! Yuh ain gonna toucha penny of tha

money fer no gun! Thas how come Ah has Mistah Hawkins t pay yo wages t me, cause Ah knows yuh ain got no sense"

"But Ma, we needa gun. Pa ain got no gun. We needa gun in the house. Yuh kin never tell whut might happen"

"Now don yuh try to maka fool outta me, boy! Ef we did hava gun yuh wouldn't have it!"

He laid the catalogue down and slipped his arm around her waist.

"Aw, Ma, Ah done worked hard alla summer n ain ast yuh fer nothin, is Ah, now?"

"Thas whut yuh spose t do!"

"But Ma, Ah wans a gun Yuh kin lemme have two dollahs outta mah money Please, Ma I kin give it to Pa . . Please, Ma! Ah loves yuh, Ma"

When she spoke her voice came soft and low

"Whut yuh wan wida gun, Dave? Yuh don need no gun Yuhll git in trouble N ef yo Pa jus thought Ah let yuh have money t buy a gun he'd hava fit"

"Ahll hide it, Ma It ain but two dollahs"

"Lawd, chil, whuts wrong wid yuh?"

"Ain nothing wrong, Ma. Ahm almos a man now. Ah wans a gun."

"Who gonna sell yuh a gun?"

"Ol Joe at the sto."

"N it don cos but two dollahs?"

"Thas all, Ma Just two dollahs Please, Ma."

She was stacking the plates away; her hands moved slowly, reflectively Dave kept an anxious silence Finally, she turned to him

"Ahll let yuh git tha gun ef yuh promise me one thing"

"Whuts tha, Ma?"

"Yuh bring it straight back t me, yuh hear? It'll be fer Pa"

"Yessum! Lemme go now, Ma."

She stooped, turned slightly to one side, raised the hem of her dress, rolled down the top of her stocking, and came up with a slender wad of bills.

"Here," she said "Lawd knows yuh don need no gun. But yer Pa does. Yuh bring it right back t me, yuh hear? Ahma put it up. Now ef yuh don, Ahma have yuh Pa lick yuh so hard yuh won ferget it."

"Yessum."

He took the money, ran down the steps, and across the yard.

"Dave! Yuuuuuh Daaaaave!"

He heard, but he was not going to stop now "Naw, Lawd!"

The first movement he made the following morning was to reach under his pillow for the gun In the gray light of dawn he held it loosely, feeling a sense of power Could killa man wida gun like this Kill anybody, black or white And if he were holding his gun in his hand nobody could run over him, they would have to respect him It was a big gun, with a long barrel and a heavy handle He raised and lowered it in his hand, marveling at its weight

He had not come straight home with it as his mother had asked, instead he had stayed out in the fields, holding the weapon in his hand, aiming it now and then at some imaginary foe But he had not fired it, he had been afraid that his father might hear Also he was not sure he knew how to fire it

To avoid surrendering the pistol he had not come into the house until he knew that all were asleep When his mother had tiptoed to his bedside late that night and demanded the gun, he had first played 'possum, then he had told her that the gun was hidden outdoors, that he would bring it to her in the morning Now he lay turning it slowly in his hands He broke it, took out the cartridges, felt them, and then put them back

He slid out of bed, got a long strip of old flannel from a trunk, wrapped the gun in it, and tied it to his naked thigh while it was still loaded He did not go in to breakfast Even though it was not yet daylight, he started for Jim Hawkins' plantation Just as the sun was rising he reached the barns where the mules and plows were kept.

"Hey! That you, Dave?"

He turned Jim Hawkins stood eying him suspiciously

"What're yuh doing here so early?"

"Ah didn't know Ah wuz gittin up so early, Mistah Hawkins Ah wuz fixin t hitch up ol Jenny n take her t the fiels"

"Good Since you're here so early, how about plowing that stretch down by the woods?"

"Suits me, Mistah Hawkins"

"O K Go to it!"

He hitched Jenny to a plow and started across the fields Hot dog! This was just what he wanted If he could get down by the woods, he could shoot his gun and nobody would hear He walked behind the plow, hearing the traces creaking, feeling the gun tied tight to his thigh

When he reached the woods, he plowed two whole rows before he decided to take out the gun Finally, he stopped, looked in all directions, then untied the gun and held it in his hand He turned to the mule and smiled

"Know whut this is, Jenny? Naw, yuh wouldn't know! Yuhs jusa ol mule! Anyhow, this is a gun, n it kin shoot, by Gawd!"

He held the gun at arm's length Whut t hell, Ahma shoot this thing! He looked at Jenny again

"Lissen here, Jenny! When Ah pull this ol trigger Ah don wan yuh t run n acka fool now "

Jenny stood with head down, her short ears pricked straight Dave walked off about twenty feet, held the gun far out from him, at arm's length, and turned his head Hell, he told himself, Ah ain afraid The gun left loose in his fingers, he waved it wildly for a moment Then he shut his eyes and tightened his forefinger Bloom! A report half-deafened him and he thought his right hand was torn from his arm He heard Jenny whinnying and galloping over the field, and he found himself on his knees, squeezing his fingers hard between his legs His hand was numb, he jammed it into his mouth, trying to warm it, trying to stop the pain The gun lay at his feet He did not quite know what had happened He stood up and stared at the gun as though it were a live thing He gritted his teeth and kicked the gun Yuh almos broke mah arm! He turned to look for Jenny, she was far over the fields, tossing her head and kicking wildly

"Hol on there, ol mule!"

When he caught up with her she stood trembling, walling her big white eyes at him The plow was far away, the traces had broken. Then Dave stopped short, looking, not believing. Jenny was bleeding Her left side was red and wet with blood He went closer Lawd have mercy! Wondah did Ah shoot this mule? He grabbed for Jenny's mane She flinched, snorted, whirled, tossing her head

"Hol on now! Hol on "

The t [illegible] 's side, right between the ribs. It was

round, wet, red. A crimson stream streaked down the front leg, flowing fast. Good Gawd! Ah wuznt shootin at tha mule. . He felt panic. He knew he had to stop that blood, or Jenny would bleed to death He had never seen so much blood in all his life. He ran the mule for half a mile, trying to catch her Finally she stopped, breathing hard, stumpy tail half arched He caught her mane and led her back to where the plow and gun lay Then he stopped and grabbed handfuls of damp black earth and tried to plug the bullet hole Jenny shuddered, whinnied, and broke from him.

"Hol on! Hol on now!"

He tried to plug it again, but blood came anyhow. His fingers were hot and sticky. He rubbed dirt hard into his palms, trying to dry them Then again he attempted to plug the bullet hole, but Jenny shied away, kicking her heels high He stood helpless He had to do something He ran at Jenny, she dodged him He watched a red stream of blood flow down Jenny's leg and form a bright pool at her feet

"Jenny . . . Jenny . . ." he called weakly

His lips trembled She's bleeding t death! He looked in the direction of home, wanting to go back, wanting to get help But he saw the pistol lying in the damp black clay He had a queer feeling that if he only did something, this would not be, Jenny would not be there bleeding to death

When he went to her this time, she did not move She stood with sleepy, dreamy eyes, and when he touched her she gave a low-pitched whinny and knelt to the ground, her front knees slopping in blood

"Jenny . . Jenny . . ." he whispered

For a long time she held her neck erect, then her head sank, slowly. Her ribs swelled with a mighty heave and she went over

Dave's stomach felt empty, very empty He picked up the gun and held it gingerly between his thumb and forefinger He buried it at the foot of a tree He took a stick and tried to cover the pool of blood with dirt—but what was the use? There was Jenny lying with her mouth open and her eyes walled and glassy. He could not tell Jim Hawkins he had shot his mule But he had to tell something Yeah, Ahll tell em Jenny started gittin wil n fell on the joint of the plow . . But that would hardly happen to a mule. He walked across the field slowly, head down.

It was sunset. Two of Jim Hawkins' men were over near the edge of the woods digging a hole in which to bury Jenny Dave was surrounded by a knot of people, all of them were looking down at the dead mule

"I don't see how in the world it happened," said Jim Hawkins for the tenth time

The crowd parted and Dave's mother, father, and small brother pushed into the center

"Where Dave?" his mother called

"There he is," said Jim Hawkins

His mother grabbed him

"Whut happened, Dave? Whut yuh done?"

"Nothing"

"C'mon, boy, talk," his father said

Dave took a deep breath and told the story he knew nobody believed

"Waal," he drawled "Ah brung ol Jenny down here sos Ah could do mah plowin Ah plowed bout two rows, just like yuh see" He stopped and pointed at the long rows of upturned earth "Then something musta been wrong wid ol Jenny She wouldn't ack right a-tall She started snortin n kickin her heels Ah tried to hol her, but she pulled erway, rearin n goin on Then when the point of the plow was stickin up in the air, she swung erroun n twisted herself back on it . . . She stuck hersef n started t bleed N fo Ah could do anything, she wuz dead"

"Did you ever hear of anything like that in all your life?" asked Jim Hawkins.

There were white and black standing in the crowd. They murmured. Dave's mother came close to him and looked hard into his face.

"Tell the truth, Dave," she said.

"Looks like a bullet hole ter me," said one man.

"Dave, whut yuh do wid tha gun?" his mother asked

The crowd surged in, looking at him. He jammed his hands into his pockets, shook his head slowly from left to right, and backed away His eyes were wide and painful.

"Did he hava gun?" asked Jim Hawkins.

"By Gawd, Ah tol yuh tha wuz a gun wound," said a man, slapping his thigh

His father caught his shoulders and shook him till his teeth rattled.

"Tell whut happened, yuh rascal! Tell whut ."

Dave looked at Jenny's stiff legs and began to cry

"Whut yuh do wid tha gun?" his mother asked

"Whut wuz he doin wida gun?" his father asked

"Come on and tell the truth," said Hawkins "Ain't nobody going to hurt you . ."

His mother crowded close to him

"Did yuh shoot tha mule, Dave?"

Dave cried, seeing blurred white and black faces

"Ahh ddinnt gggo tt sshoooot hher Ah sswear off Gawd Ahh ddint . . Ah wuz a-tryin t sssee if the ol gggun would sshoot—"

"Where yuh git the gun from?" his father asked

"Ah got it from Joe, at the sto "

"Where yuh git the money?"

"Ma give it t me "

"He kept worryin me, Bob . Ah had t . Ah tol im t bring the gun right back t me It was fer yuh, the gun "

"But how yuh happen to shoot that mule?" asked Jim Hawkins

"Ah wuznt shootin at the mule, Mistah Hawkins The gun jumped when Ah pulled the trigger . . . N fo Ah knowed anything Jenny wuz there a-bleedin "

Somebody in the crowd laughed Jim Hawkins walked close to Dave and looked into his face

"Well, looks like you have bought you a mule, Dave "

"Ah swear fo Gawd, Ah didn't go t kill the mule, Mistah Hawkins!"

"But you killed her!"

All the crowd was laughing now They stood on tiptoe and poked heads over one another's shoulders

"Well, boy, looks like yuh done bought a dead mule! Hahaha!"

"Ain tha ershame "

"Hohohohoho."

Dave stood, head down, twisting his feet in the dirt

"Well, you needn't worry about it, Bob," said Jim Hawkins to

Dave's father. "Just let the boy keep on working and pay me two dollars a month."

"Whut yuh wan fer yo mule, Mistah Hawkins?"

Jim Hawkins screwed up his eyes

"Fifty dollars"

"Whut yuh do wid tha gun?" Dave's father demanded

Dave said nothing

"Yuh wan me t take a tree lim n beat yuh till yuh talk!"

"Nawsuh!"

"Whut yuh do wid it?"

"Ah thowed it erway"

"Where?"

"Ah Ah thowed it in the creek"

"Waal, c mon home N firs thing in the mawnin git to tha creek n fin tha gun."

"Yessuh"

"Whut yuh pay fer it?"

"Two dollahs"

"Take tha gun n git yo money back n carry it t Mistah Hawkins, yuh hear? N don fergit Ahma lam yo black bottom good fer this! Now march yosef on home, suh!"

Dave turned and walked slowly He heard people laughing Dave glared, his eyes welling with tears Hot anger bubbled in him Then he swallowed and stumbled on

That night Dave did not sleep He was glad that he had gotten out of killing the mule so easily, but he was hurt Something hot seemed to turn over inside him each time he remembered how they had laughed He tossed on his bed, feeling his hard pillow N Pa says he's gonna beat me He remembered other beatings, and his back quivered Naw, naw, Ah sho don wan im t beat me tha way no mo Dam em all! Nobody ever gave him anything All he did was work They treat me like a mule . N then they beat me He gritted his teeth N Ma had t tell on me

Well, if he had to, he would take old man Hawkins that two dollars But that meant selling the gun And he wanted to keep that gun Fifty dollahs fer a dead mule

He turned over, thinking how he had fired the gun He had an

itch to fire it again. Ef other men kin shoota gun, by Gawd, Ah kin! He was still listening Mebbe they all sleepin now . . The house was still. He heard the soft breathing of his brother. Yes, now! He would go down and get that gun and see if he could fire it! He eased out of bed and slipped into overalls

The moon was bright He ran almost all the way to the edge of the woods He stumbled over the ground, looking for the spot where he had buried the gun Yeah, here it is Like a hungry dog scratching for a bone he pawed it up He puffed his black cheeks and blew dirt from the trigger and barrel He broke it and found four cartridges unshot He looked around, the fields were filled with silence and moonlight He clutched the gun stiff and hard in his fingers But as soon as he wanted to pull the trigger, he shut his eyes and turned his head Naw, Ah can't shoot wid mah eyes closed n mah head turned. With effort he held his eyes open, then he squeezed Blooooom! He was stiff, not breathing The gun was still in his hands Dammit, he'd done it! He fired again Blooooom! He smiled Blooooom! Blooooom! Click, click There! It was empty If anybody could shoot a gun, he could He put the gun into his hip pocket and started across the fields

When he reached the top of a ridge he stood straight and proud in the moonlight, looking at Jim Hawkins' big white house, feeling the gun sagging in his pocket Lawd, ef Ah had jus one mo bullet Ahd taka shot at tha house Ahd like t scare ol man Hawkins jussa little. . . . Jussa enough t let im know Dave Sanders is a man

To his left the road curved, running to the tracks of the Illinois Central He jerked his head, listening From far off came a faint hoooof-hoooof; hoooof-hoooof, hoooof-hoooof . . . That's number eight He took a swift look at Jim Hawkins' white house; he thought of pa, of ma, of his little brother, and the boys He thought of the dead mule and heard hoooof-hoooof, hoooof-hoooof; hoooof-hoooof . . . He stood rigid Two dollahs a mont. Les see now . . . Tha means itll take bout two years Shucks! Ahll be dam!

He started down the road, toward the tracks Yeah, here she comes! He stood beside the track and held himself stiffly. Here she comes, erroun the ben . . C mon, yuh slow poke! C mon! He had his hand on his gun, something quivered in his stomach. Then the train thundered past, the gray and brown box cars rumbling and clinking. He gripped the gun tightly; then he jerked his hand out of

his pocket. Ah betcha Bill wouldn't do it! Ah betcha. . . . The cars slid past, steel grinding upon steel Ahm riding yuh ternight so hep me Gawd! He was hot all over He hesitated just a moment, then he grabbed, pulled atop of a car, and lay flat He felt his pocket, the gun was still there. Ahead the long rails were glinting in moonlight, stretching away, away to somewhere, somewhere where he could be a man. . . .

TRUANT

Claude McKay

THE warbling of a mother's melody had just ended and the audience was in a sentimental state and ready for the scene that the curtain, slowly drawn, disclosed A mother in calico print jigged on her knee a little baby, crooning the while some Gaelic folk-words A colleen sat on a red-covered box, mending a chemise, sitting at her feet, a younger sister with a picture-book Three boys in shirt sleeves and patched pantaloons playing with a red-and-green train on a lacquer-black railroad A happy family An antique sitting-room, torn wall-paper, two comic chairs and the Holy Virgin on the mantelpiece A happy family Father, fat and round like a chianti-bottle, skips into the picture and up leaps boys and girls and mother with baby The Merry Mulligans!

The orchestra starts at the pointing baton Squeaky-burlesque family singing Dancing Stunting A performing wonder that little baby Charming family of seven American-famous The Merry Mulligans beloved of all lovers of clean vaudeville

With them the show finished Barclay Oram and his wife Rhoda descended from Nigger Heaven, walked up to 50th Street, and caught the local subway train for Harlem He took the slower train, hoping there would be seats and the passengers not jammed together as always

Perhaps others had hoped for the same thing The cars were packed Rhoda broke up a piece of chewing-gum and chewed She had a large mouth and she chewed the gum as if she were eating food, opening her mouth so wide that people could see the roof When they were first married, Barclay had detested her way of chewing gum and told her so But she replied that it was absurd to let a little thing like chewing gum irritate him

"Oh, you brown baby!" she had cried, taking his face in her hands and kissing him with the perfumed flavor of her favorite chewing gum on her breath . . .

"The show was pretty nice, eh?" said Rhoda.

"I am fed up with them; a cabaret in Harlem is better," replied Barclay

"I don't think so Anything downtown for a change is preferable to the cheap old colored shows I'm dead sick of them"

She chewed the gum vigorously, dropping a few pointless phrases that were half-swallowed up in the roar of the train through the enormous gut of the city, and the strange staccato talk of voices half-lifted above and half-caught in the roar Barclay gazed moodily at the many straphangers who were jammed together None seemed standing on his feet All seemed like fat bags and lean boxes piled up indiscriminately in a warehouse Penned up like cattle, the standing closely pressing the seated passengers, kneading them with their knees and blotting out their sight, so that those who had been fortunate to find seats were as uncomfortable as those who had not

"I thought we'd have a little air in this local box," he said

"It'll be better at 72nd Street," she said "Some of them will get out"

"And others will push in New York City is swarming with people like a beehive"

"Getting thicker and thicker every day," she agreed

At 135th Street they left the train Rhoda, as usual, put her hand through her husband's arm as they walked home The saloons, restaurants, candy stores of the Avenue were crowded The Chop Suey Palace was doing a good after-theater business

"Might have some chop suey," suggested Barclay

"Not tonight," she said "Betsy's with the Howlands, and they might want to go to bed"

"Ah yes!" He had forgotten about Betsy, their four-year-old child. Always he forgot about her Never could he quite realize that he was the father of a family A railroad waiter, although he was thirty-six he always felt himself just a boy—a servant boy His betters whom he served treated him always as a boy—often as a nice dog. And when he grew irritated and snapped, they turned on him as upon a bad dog It was better for him, then, that, although he was a husband and father, he should feel like an irresponsible boy Even when sometimes he grew sad, sullen and disquieted, these were the moods of a boy Rhoda bossed him a little and never took his moods seriously. . . .

They went straight home. Barclay lighted up the three-room apartment Rhoda went across the hall to the Howlands' for Betsy. She brought the child in, sleeping on her breast, and bent down that Barclay might kiss her. Then she put her to bed in her little cot beside the dresser.

They had a little supper, cold chicken and beer. . . . They went to bed in the front room that they had made their bedroom Another room was let to a railroad porter, and the dining-room served for eating- and sitting-room

Rhoda undressed, rubbed her face and her limbs with cold cream, slipped on a long white gown with pink ribbon around the neck, and lay down against the wall Barclay laid himself down beside her in his underclothes During the first six months of their union he had slept regularly in pyjamas Then he ignored them and began sleeping in his underclothes, returning to the habit of his village boyhood Rhoda protested at first Afterwards she accepted it quietly . .

Sleep, sweet sleep .

The next morning Rhoda shook Barclay at five o'clock "O God!" He stretched himself, turned over, and rested his head on her breast

"Time to get up," she said

"Yes," he sighed "God! I feel tired" He stretched his arms, touched, fondled her face, and fell into a slight doze

Ten minutes more Rhoda gave him a dig in the back with her knee and cried, "You just must get up, Barclay"

"All right" He turned out of bed Six o'clock in the Pennsylvania Station for duty, that was life itself A dutiful black boy among proud and sure white men, so that he could himself be a man in Harlem with purchasing power for wife, child, flat, movie, food, liquor. . . .

He went to the bathroom and washed Dressed, he entered the dining-room, opened a cabinet, and poured out a glass of whisky That peppered him up and opened his eyes wide It was not necessary for Rhoda to make coffee He would breakfast with the other waiters in the dining-car Mechanically he kissed her good-bye She heard him close the door, and she moved over into the middle of the bed, comfortably alone, for an early-morning nap

It was a disastrous trip for Barclay. On the dining-car he was the

first waiter and in charge of the pantry. As pantryman he received five dollars a month more than the other waiters It was his job to get the stores (with the steward and chef) from the commissary He was responsible for the stuff kept in the pantry There were some waiters and cooks addicted to petty stealing Butter, cream, cheese, sugar, fruit They stole for their women in New York. They stole for their women-on-the-side in the stop-over cities Always Barclay had to mount guard quietly Between him and the raw-voiced, black-bull chef there was an understanding to watch out for the nimble-fingered among the crew For if they were short in the checking up of the stores the steward held them responsible. And the commissary held the steward responsible.

This trip Barclay had one of his moody-boy spells He would not watch the pantry. Let the boys swipe the stuff He had no pleasure waiting on the passengers It was often a pleasure, something of an anticipated adventure, each day to meet new passengers, remark the temperature of their looks and sometimes make casual conversation with a transient acquaintance But today it was all wrong from the moment he observed them, impatient, crowding the corridor and the rushing of the dining-room as soon as the doors were opened They filled him with loathing, made him sick of service SERVICE. A beautiful word fallen upon bad days. No place for true human service in these automatic-serving days.

Mechanically Barclay picked up the dimes and quarters that were left for service. For Rhoda and Betsy It pleasured him when Rhoda wore pretty clothes. And Betsy loved him more each time he remembered to bring home colored bonbons. What was he going to do with the child? He wondered if he would be able to give her a good education like her mother's. And what would she do? Perhaps marry a railroad waiter like her mother and raise up children to carry on the great tradition of black servitude.

Philadelphia, Harrisburg, Altoona, Pittsburgh No dice, no coon-can, this trip. His workmates coaxed. Nothing could lift him out of himself. He was a moody boy this trip The afternoon of the fourth day from New York brought the dining-car to Washington Washington reminded Barclay of a grave. He had sharp hammering memories of his university days there. For there he had fallen in love. . . .

He went up to 7th Street, loitering through the Negro district, stopping curiously before a house, leaning against a stoop, sniffing here and there like a stray hound He went into a barrel-house and drank a glass of whisky. The place was sour-smelling, full of black men, dim and smoky, close, but friendly warm

The hour of his train's departure approached Barclay continued drinking He felt pleased with himself in doing something irregular Oh, he had been regular for such a long time! A good waiter, an honest pantryman Never once had he sneaked a packet of sugar nor a pound of butter for his flat Rhoda would have flung it in the street. He had never given to the colored girls who worked in the yards and visited the dining-cars with their teasing smiles Oh, it was hard to be responsible, hard to be regular

What would the steward say about his being left in Washington? Maybe he would be drunk himself, for he was a regular souser Barclay recalled the day when he got helplessly stewed on the Washington run and the waiters managed the dining-car, handed out checks, made change among themselves, and gave the best service they ever did as a crew. At Philadelphia an inspector hopped on the train and took charge of the service The dining-car was crowded The steward half-roused himself out of his stupor, and came lurching through the jam of passengers in the corridor into the diner, to dispute the stewardship with the inspector.

"I'm in charge of this diner," he said in a nerve-biting, imey-wimey voice "Give a man a chance, treat me like a gen'leman "

Tears trickled down his cheeks He staggered and swayed in the corridor, blocking the entrance and exit of the guests Like a challenged mastiff, the inspector eyed him, at the same time glancing quickly from the waiters to the amazed guests Then he gripped the steward by the scruff of the collar and, with the help of the Pullman conductor, locked him up in a drawing-room until the train reached New York

The crew did not like the steward and hoped they would be rid of him at last. But he was back with them the next trip The inspector was known as a hard guy, quick to report a waiter if a flask of gin were discovered in his locker But it was different with the steward. Both men were peers, the inspector being a promoted steward.

"Well, I'm off duty, anyhow," murmured Barclay He smiled and ordered another drink The train must have passed Baltimore by then, on its way to New York What waiter was waiting on the first two tables? "I should worry." He had the warm, luxurious feelings of a truant He drank himself drunk.

"Something for a change I've been regular too long Too awfully regular," he mused

He rocked heavily out of the barrel-house to a little fried-chicken restaurant He ate His stomach appeased, his thoughts turned to a speakeasy May as well finish the thing in style—be grandly irregular, he thought He found a speakeasy Bold-eyed chocolate girls, brown girls, yellow girls Blues Pianola blues, gramophone blues Easy-queasy, daddy-mammy, honey-baby, brown-gal, black-boy, hot-dog blues . . .

The next day he reported himself at the restaurant-car department in Washington, and was sent home to New York There at the commissary the superintendent looked him over and said· "Well, you're a case You wanted a little time off, eh? Well, take ten days"

That was his punishment—ten idle days He left the commissary walking on air For three years he had worked on the railroad without taking a holiday. Why? He did not himself know. He had often yearned for a few entirely free days But he had never had the courage to take them, not for fear of forfeiting the nominal wages, but the tips—his real wages Nor had he wanted to lose his former dining-car He had liked his work-pals there. A good crew teaming splendidly along together, respectful to and respected by the steward, who was a decent-minded man Moreover, there was the flat with Rhoda and Betsy. Every day was precious, every tip necessary. . . . Ten days gratuitously thrust upon him with malicious intent No wages-and-food, no tips Let him cool his heels and tighten his belt. Yet he was happy, happy like a truant suspended from school.

Freedom! Ten days What would he do with them? There would be parties. Rhoda loved parties She had friends in New York who knew her when she was a school-teacher. Whist Dancing Movies.

He nosed around the tenderloin district. When he first came to New York he had lived in 40th Street.

He met a pal he had once worked with as elevator boy in a department store They drank two glasses of beer each, and walked up to San Juan Hill.

When Barclay got home, Rhoda, in an orange evening dress, was just leaving for a party They embraced.

"I phoned up the commissary yesterday and they said you were left in Washington Bad boy!" She laughed "Guess I'll fix you something to eat"

"Don't bother I'm not hungry," said Barclay.

"All right I'm going on to Mame Dixon's for whist and a little dancing afterwards You might dress up and come on down and have a little fun"

"Not tonight, honey We'll have plenty of time to go around together They gave me ten days"

"Ten days!" she cried "The rent is due on Friday and the insurance on—on—Ten days! But why did you get left, Barclay?"

"I don't know Felt rotten the whole trip—tired, blue Been too punctual all along Just had to break the habit Feel a little irresponsible."

"But you might get in bad with the company How could you, when there's Betsy and me to think of and our social position?"

She broke up a stick of chewing-gum and vigorously chewed. "Well, anyway, come on along to Mame's if you feel like it." She rolled the gum with her tongue "But if you don't, you can bring Betsy over from the Howlands'."

Chewing, chewing, she went out.

"Kill-joy," murmured Barclay Riding on the subway from San Juan Hill to Harlem, he had been guessing chucklingly at what she would say Perhaps "All right, honey-stick, why slave every day? Let's play around together for ten days"

Chewing, chewing Always chewing Yet that mouth was the enchanting thing about her. . . . Her mouth It made me marry her. Her skin was brown and beautiful Like cat's fur soft to the fingers But it was not her fruit-ripe skin It was her mouth that made me.

Ordinary her face would have been, if it were not for the full large mouth that was mounted on the ample plane of her features like an exquisite piece of bas-relief.

He went across the hall to the Howlands' and brought back Betsy.

"Candy, daddy, candy!" The happy brown thing clapped her hands and pulled at his pantaloons. He set her on his knee and gave her a little paper packet He danced her up and down: "Betsy, wupsy, mupsy, pretsy, eatsy plentsy candy."

She wriggled off his knee with the packet, and dropped the candies one by one into a small glass jar, gurgling over the colors and popping one into her mouth at intervals. . . . She returned again to Barclay's knee, squeezing a brown rubber doll. For a little while she made a rocking-horse of him. Then she scratched her head and yawned. Barclay undressed her and put her in the crib.

"Betsy and me and our social position " That social position! Alone he brooded, moody, unreasonable. Resentment gripped his heart He hated his love of Rhoda's mouth He hated the flat and his pitiable "social position." He hated fatherhood. He resented the sleeping child.

"Betsy and me and—" Should he go on forever like that? Round the circle of the Eastern field? New York, Boston, Buffalo, Pittsburgh, Harrisburg, Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia, again New York.

Forever? Getting off nowhere?

Forever fated to the lifelong tasks of the unimaginative? Why was he, a West Indian peasant boy, held prisoner within the huge granite-gray walls of New York? Dreaming of tawny tasseled fields of sugar-cane, and silver-gray John-tuhits among clusters of green and glossy-blue berries of pimento The husbands and fathers of his village were not mechanically driven servant boys They were hardy, independent tillers of the soil or struggling artisans

What enchantment had lured him away from the green intimate life that clustered round his village—the simple African-transplanted life of the West Indian hills? Why had he hankered for the hard-slabbed streets, the vertical towers, the gray complex life of this steel-tempered city? Stone and steel! Steel and stone! mounting in heaven-pursuing magnificence Feet piled upon feet, miles circling miles, of steel and stone A tree seemed absurd and a garden queer in this iron-gray majesty of man's imagination He was a slave to it. A part of him was in love with this piling grandeur. And that was why he was slave to it.

From the bedroom came a slight stirring and a sleepy murmur of child-language Barclay was lost in the past. Step by step he retraced his life. . . . His fever-like hunger for book knowledge, for strange lands and great cities His grand adolescent dream.

The evening of his departure from the village came back star-blue and clear. He had trudged many miles to the railroad with his bright-patterned carpet bag on his shoulder For three years in the capital of his island he had worked in a rum warehouse. Happy On the road to his beautiful dream Later he had crossed over to Santiago in Cuba And at twenty-five he had reached New York, found his strange land—a great city of great books.

Two years of elevator-running and switchboard-operating had glanced by like a magic arrow against the gaunt gray walls of the city. Time was a radiant servant working for his dream.

His dream, of course, was the Negro university Now he remembered how he turned green cold like a cucumber, when he was told that he could not enter the university course Two years preparatory work was needed Undaunted, he had returned to New York and crammed for a year And the next fall he swept through the entrance examinations

For Barclay then the highroad to wisdom led necessarily by way of a university It had never occurred to him that he might have also attained his goal in his own free, informal way

He had been enchanted by the words University, Seat of Learning He had seen young men of the insular island villages returned from the native colleges They all brought back with them a new style of clothes, a different accent, a new gait, the exciting, intoxicating smell of the city—so much more intriguing than the ever-fresh accustomed smell of the bright-green hill-valley village Style and accent and exotic smell—all those attractive fruits of college training, fundamental forms of the cultural life Home study could not give him the stamp . . His disillusion had not embittered him . .

My college days were happy, he reflected A symmetrical group of buildings, gray walls supporting in winter stout, dark-brown leafless creepers An all-Negro body of students—men and women—of many complexions, all intensely active The booklore was there, housed in a kind of Gothic building with a projecting facade resting on Grecian

pillars. The names of Aristotle, Solon, Virgil, Shakespeare, Dante, and Longfellow were cut in the façade. The building was one of the many symbols scattered over America and the world, summing up the dream of a great romantic king of steel.

Barclay found no romance in textbooks, of course But he found plenty of it in the company of the jolly girls and chummy chaps of his widened acquaintance And the barbaric steps of the turkey-trot and the bunny-hug (exciting dances of that period) he had found more enchanting than the library He was amorously touched by the warm, intimate little dances he attended—the spontaneous outburst of group-singing when the dancers were particularly drunk on a rich tintinnabulating melody

Then one day he was abruptly pulled up in his fantastic steps No more money in the box He had to wheel round about and begin the heavy steps of working his way through college.

The next fall he met Rhoda. It was at one of those molasses-thick Aframerican affairs that had rendered university life so attractive to him, at the home of a very generous, fawn-brown widow who enjoyed giving a few students a nice time at her flat The widow entertained her guests in a free kind of way. She did not belong to the various divisions that go to the making of nice Negro society, for she was merely the widow of a Pullman porter, who had saved up his tips and paid up on a good insurance policy She had been too fine for the non-discriminating parlor-social sets, and too secular for the prayer-meeting black ladies So she had cleverly gone in for the non-snobbish young intellectuals—poor students who could not afford to put on airs

Barclay recalled the warm roomful of young Negro men and girls Copper and chocolate and fine anthracite, with here and there a dash of cream, all warmly dancing One night he was attracted to Rhoda He danced with her all the time and she was warm to him, loving to him She was the first American girl with whom he began a steady intimacy All the ardors of him were stirred to her and simply, impetuously he had rushed into deep love, like a bee that darts too far into the heart of a flower and, unable to withdraw, dies at the bottom of the juice

Rhoda, who had been earning her own living as a teacher, helped

him, and the problem of money was lifted from his mind. Oh, he was very happy then! Books and parties and Rhoda. . . .

In the middle of his junior year she told him she was with child. They discussed whether she should have the child or operate it away. If she had it without being married, she would lose her job He remembered a school-teaching girl of his village who had tried to conceal her pregnancy and died under an operation in the city The other girls, the free peasant girls, always bore their children when they were gotten with child Perhaps it was better that way

Rhoda was pleased that Barclay wanted the thing to develop in the natural way She desired a child She was at that vague age when some women feel that marriage is more than the grim pursuit of a career So they went to New York together and got married

But Barclay did not fully realize the responsibility, perhaps could not, of marriage Never fully understood its significance

Barclay remembered now that he was as keen as Rhoda for the marriage Carried away by the curiosity to take up a new role, there had been something almost of eagerness in his desire to quit the university. And it had seemed a beautiful gesture Rhoda had helped him when he was in great need, and he felt splendid now to come to her support when she was incapacitated for work He would have hated to see her drop down to menial tasks As a Jack-of-all-trades he had met many refined colored girls having a rough time jammed at the bottom of the common scramble to survive

He had been happy that Rhoda was not pushed to leave Betsy in one of those dime dumps where poor colored children were guarded while their mothers worked, happy that from his job on the railroad he was earning enough for the family to live simply and comfortably

About that job he had never taken serious thought Where was it leading him? What was it making of his character? He had taken it as if he were acting in a play rather than working at a job. It met the necessary bill of being in love For he was really in love with Rhoda. The autumn-leaf mellowness of her body. Her ripe-ripe accent and richness of laughter And her mouth the full form of it, its strength and beauty, its almost unbearable sweetness, magnetic drawing, sensuous, exquisite, a dark pagan piece of pleasure. . . .

How fascinated and enslaved he had been to what was now stale with chewing-gum and banal remarks on "social position."

Barclay's attitude to the railroad was about the same toward the modern world in general. He had entered light-heartedly into the whirl and crash and crush, the grand babel of building, the suction and spouting, groaning and whining and breaking of steel—all the riotous contagious movement around him.

He had entered into the rough camaraderie of the railroad with all the hot energy of youth. It was a rugged, new experience that kindled his vagabonding mind and body There was rude poetry in the roar and rush and rattle of trains, the sharp whistle of engines and racing landscapes, the charm of a desolate mining town and glimpses of faces lost as soon as seen He had even tried to capture some of those fleeting piled-up images. Some he had read to his workmates which they appreciated, but teased him for writing·

We are out in the field, the vast wide-open field,
Thundering through from city to city
Where factories grow like jungle trees
Yielding new harvests for the world.
Through Johnstown glowing like a world aflame,
And Pittsburgh, Negro-black, brooding in iron smoke,
Philly's Fifteenth street of wenches, speakeasies, and cops.
Out in the field, new fields of life
Where machines spin flowers like tropic trees
And coal and steel are blazing suns—
And darkly we wonder, night-wrapped in the light.

The steel-framed poetry of cities did not crowd out but rather intensified in him the singing memories of his village life. He loved both, the one complementing the other. Against the intricate stone-and-steel flights of humanity's mass spirit, misty in space and time, hovered the green charm of his village. Yellow-eyed and white-lidded Spanish needles coloring the grassy hillsides, barefooted black girls, straight like young sweet-woods, tramping to market with baskets of mangoes or star-apples poised unsupported on their heads. The native cockish liquor juice of the sugar-cane, fermented in bamboo joints for all-night carousal at wakes and tea meetings. Heavy drays loaded with new-made sugar, yams and plantains, rumbling along

the chalky country road away down and over the hills under the starshine and the hot-free love songs of the draymen.

He remembered all, regretting nothing, since his life was a continual fluxion from one state to another His deepest regret was always momentary, arising from remaining in a rut after he had exhausted the experience.

Rhoda now seemed only another impasse into which he had drifted Just a hole to pull out of again and away from the road, that arena of steel rushing him round and round in the same familiar circle He had to evade it and be irresponsible again.

But there was the child and the Moral Law The cold white law. Rhoda seemed more than he to be subject to it with her constant preoccupation about social position.

Spiritually he was subject to another law. Other gods of strange barbaric glory claimed his allegiance and not the grim frock-coated gentleman of the Moral Law of the land The Invisible Law that upheld those magnificent machines and steel-spired temples and new cathedrals erected to the steel-flung traffic plan of man. Oh, he could understand and love the poetry of them but not their law that held humanity gripped in fear.

His thought fell to a whisper within him He could never feel himself more than a stranger within these walls His body went through the mechanical process, but untamed, for his spirit was wandering far

Rhoda at the party and the child asleep He could hear her breathing and wondered if it were breath of his breath For he had often felt to himself a breath of his own related to none Suppose he should start now on the trail again with that strange burning thought. Related to none.

There were the Liberty Bonds in his trunk. Rhoda would need them. He remembered how he had signed for them All the waiters herded together in one of the commissary-rooms and lectured by one of the special war men.

"Buy a bond, boys. All you boys will buy a bond because you all believe in the Allied cause We are in the war to make the world safe for Democracy You boys on the railroad are enjoying the blessings of Democracy like all real Americans. Your service is inestimable.

Keep on doing your part and do your best by buying a bond because you believe in the Allied cause and you want America to win the war and the banner of Democracy float over the world. Come on, take your bond"

For the Moral Law. Buy a bond

Well it was all right, he had subscribed One way of saving money, although the bonds were worth so much less now There was the bankbook with a couple hundred dollars Leave that, too Insurance policies. Forget them

He thought he heard the child stir He dared not look He clicked the door and stepped out Where? Destination did not matter. Maybe his true life lay in eternal inquietude.

ONE FRIDAY MORNING

Langston Hughes

THE news did not come directly to Nancy Lee, but it came in little indirections that finally added themselves up to one tremendous fact: she had won the prize! But being a calm and quiet young lady, she did not say anything although the whole high school buzzed with rumors, guesses, reportedly authentic announcements on the part of students who had no right to be making announcements at all—since no student really knew yet who had won this year's art scholarship.

But Nancy Lee's drawing was so good, her lines so sure, her colors so bright and harmonious that certainly no other student in the senior art class at George Washington High was thought to have very much of a chance Yet you never could tell Last year nobody had expected Joe Williams to win the Artist Club scholarship with that funny modernistic water color he had done of the high-level bridge In fact, it was hard to make out there was a bridge until you had looked at the picture a long time Still, Joe Williams got the prize, was feted by the community's leading painters, club women, and society folks at a big banquet at the Park-Rose hotel, and was now an award student at the Art School—the city's only art school.

Nancy Lee Johnson was a colored girl, a few years out of the South. But seldom did her high-school classmates think of her as colored. She was smart, pretty and brown, and fitted in well with the life of the school She stood high in scholarship, played a swell game of basketball, had taken part in the senior musical in a soft velvety voice, and had never seemed to intrude or stand out except in pleasant ways, so it was seldom even mentioned—her color.

Nancy Lee sometimes forgot she was colored herself She liked her classmates and her school Particularly she liked her art teacher, Miss Dietrich, the tall red-haired woman who taught her to keep her brush strokes firm and her colors clean, who taught her law and order in doing things; and the beauty of working step by step until a job is done; a picture finished; a design created; or a block print carved out of nothing but an idea and a smooth square of linoleum, inked, proofs made, and finally put down on paper—clean, sharp, beautiful, indi-

vidual, unlike any other in the world, thus making the paper have a meaning nobody else could give it except Nancy Lee. That was the wonderful thing about true creation. You made something nobody else on earth could make—but you.

Miss Dietrich was the kind of teacher who brought out the best in her students—but their own best, not anybody else's copied best For anybody else's best, great though it might be, even Michelangelo's, wasn't enough to please Miss Dietrich dealing with the creative impulses of young men and women living in an American city in the Middle West, and being American.

Nancy Lee was proud of being American, a Negro American with blood out of Africa a long time ago, too many generations back to count But her parents had taught her the beauties of Africa, its strength, its song, its mighty rivers, its early smelting of iron, its building of the pyramids, and its ancient and important civilizations. And Miss Dietrich had discovered for her the sharp and humorous lines of African sculpture, Benin, Congo, Makonde Nancy Lee's father was a mail carrier, her mother a social worker in a city settlement house Both parents had been to Negro colleges in the South. And her mother had gotten a further degree in social work from a Northern university. Her parents were, like most Americans, simple ordinary people who had worked hard and steadily for their education Now they were trying to make it easier for Nancy Lee to achieve learning than it had been for them They would be very happy when they learned of the award to their daughter—yet Nancy did not tell them. To surprise them would be better. Besides there had been a promise.

Casually, one day, Miss Dietrich asked Nancy Lee what color frame she thought would be best on her picture. That had been the first inkling

"Blue," Nancy Lee said Although the picture had been entered in the Artist Club contest a month ago, Nancy Lee did not hesitate in her choice of a color for the possible frame since she could still see her picture clearly in her mind's eye—for that picture waiting for the blue frame had come out of her soul, her own life, and had bloomed into miraculous being with Miss Dietrich's help It was, she knew the best water color she had painted in her four years as a high-school art student, and she was glad she had made something Miss

Dietrich liked well enough to permit her to enter in the contest before she graduated

It was not a modernistic picture in the sense that you had to look at it a long time to understand what it meant It was just a simple scene in the city park on a spring day with the trees still leaflessly lacy against the sky, the new grass fresh and green, a flag on a tall pole in the center, children playing, and an old Negro woman sitting on a bench with her head turned A lot for one picture, to be sure, but it was not there in heavy and final detail like a calendar. Its charm was that everything was light and airy, happy like spring, with a lot of blue sky, paper-white clouds, and air showing through. You could tell that the old Negro woman was looking at the flag; and that the flag was proud in the spring breeze, and that the breeze helped to make the children's dresses billow as they played

Miss Dietrich had taught Nancy Lee how to paint spring, people and a breeze on what was only a plain white piece of paper from the supply closet But Miss Dietrich had not said make it like any other spring-people-breeze ever seen before She let it remain Nancy Lee's own. That is how the old Negro woman happened to be there looking at the flag—for in her mind the flag, the spring and the woman formed a kind of triangle holding a dream Nancy Lee wanted to express. White stars on a blue field, spring, children, ever-growing life, and an old woman Would the judges at the Artist Club like it?

One wet rainy April afternoon Miss O'Shay, the girl's vice-principal sent for Nancy Lee to stop by her office as school closed. Pupils without umbrellas or raincoats were clustered in doorways hoping to make it home between showers Outside the skies were gray. Nancy Lee's thoughts were suddenly gray, too

She did not think she had done anything wrong, yet that tight little knot came in her throat just the same as she approached Miss O'Shay's door. Perhaps she had banged her locker too often and too hard Perhaps the note in French she had written to Sallie half way across the study hall just for fun had never gotten to Sallie but into Miss O'Shay's hands instead Or maybe she was failing in some subject and wouldn't be allowed to graduate. Chemistry! A pang went through the pit of her stomach

She knocked on Miss O'Shay's door. That familiarly solid and competent voice said, "Come in."

Miss O'Shay had a way of making you feel welcome even if you came to be expelled

"Sit down, Nancy Lee Johnson," said Miss O'Shay "I have something to tell you" Nancy Lee sat down "But I must ask you to promise not to tell anyone yet"

"I won't, Miss O'Shay," Nancy Lee said, wondering what on earth the principal had to say to her

"You are about to graduate," Miss O'Shay said "And we shall miss you You have been an excellent student, Nancy, and you will not be without honors on the senior list, as I am sure you know"

At that point there was a light knock on the door Miss O'Shay called out, "Come in," and Miss Dietrich entered "May I be a part of this, too?" she asked, tall and smiling

"Of course," Miss O'Shay said "I was just telling Nancy Lee what we thought of her But I hadn't gotten around to giving her the news Perhaps, Miss Dietrich, you'd like to tell her yourself"

Miss Dietrich was always direct "Nancy Lee," she said, "your picture has won the Artist Club scholarship"

The slender brown girl's eyes widened, her heart jumped, then her throat tightened again She tried to smile, but instead tears came to her eyes

"Dear Nancy Lee," Miss O'Shay said, "we are so happy for you" The elderly white woman took her hand and shook it warmly while Miss Dietrich beamed with pride

Nancy Lee must have danced all the way home She never remembered quite how she got there through the rain She hoped she had been dignified But certainly she hadn't stopped to tell anybody her secret on the way Raindrops, smiles and tears mingled on her brown cheeks She hoped her mother hadn't yet gotten home and that the house was empty She wanted to have time to calm down and look natural before she had to see anyone She didn't want to be bursting with excitement—having a secret to contain

Miss O'Shay's calling her to the office had been in the nature of a preparation and a warning The kind, elderly vice-principal said she did not believe in catching young ladies unawares, even with honors, so she wished her to know about the coming award In making acceptance speeches she wanted her to be calm, prepared, not nervous, overcome and frightened, so Nancy Lee was asked to think what she

would say when the Scholarship was conferred upon her a few days hence, both at the Friday morning high-school assembly hour when the announcement would be made, and at the evening banquet of the Artist Club Nancy Lee promised the vice-principal to think calmly about what she would say

Miss Dietrich had then asked for some facts about her parents, her background and her life, since it would probably all be desired for the papers Nancy Lee had told her how, six years before, they had come up from the Deep South, her father having been successful in achieving a transfer from one post office to another, a thing he had long sought in order to give Nancy Lee a chance to go to school in the North. Now, they lived in a modest Negro neighborhood, went to see the best plays when they came to town, and had been saving to send Nancy Lee to art school, in case she were permitted to enter. But the scholarship would help a great deal, for they were not rich people.

"Now Mother can have a new coat next winter," Nancy Lee thought, "because my tuition will all be covered for the first year. And once in art school, there are other scholarships I can win"

Dreams began to dance through her head, plans and ambitions, beauties she would create for herself, her parents and the Negro people—for Nancy Lee possessed a deep and reverent race pride. She could see the old woman in her picture (really her grandmother in the South) lifting her head to the bright stars on the flag in the distance. A Negro in America! Often hurt, discriminated against, sometimes lynched—but always there were the stars—the blue body of the flag. Was there any other flag in the world that had so many stars? Nancy Lee thought deeply but she could remember none in all the encyclopedias or geographies she had ever looked into.

"Hitch your wagon to a star," Nancy Lee thought, dancing home in the rain. "Who were our flag makers?"

Friday morning came, the morning when the world would know—her high-school world, the newspaper world, her mother and dad. Dad could not be there at the assembly to hear the announcement, nor see her prize picture displayed on the stage, nor listen to Nancy Lee's little speech of acceptance, but Mother would be able to come, although Mother was much puzzled as to why Nancy Lee was so insistent she be at school on that particular Friday morning.

When something is happening, something new and fine, something that will change your very life, it is hard to go to sleep at night for thinking about it, and hard to keep your heart from pounding, or a strange little knot of joy from gathering in your throat. Nancy Lee had taken her bath, brushed her hair until it glowed, and had gone to bed thinking about the next day, the big day when, before three thousand students, she would be the one student honored, her painting the one painting to be acclaimed as the best of the year from all the art classes of the city Her short speech of gratitude was ready She went over it in her mind, not word for word (because she didn't want it to sound as if she had learned it by heart) but she let the thoughts flow simply and sincerely through her consciousness many times

When the president of the Artist Club presented her with the medal and scroll of the scholarship award, she would say

"Judges, and members of the Artist Club I want to thank you for this award that means so much to me personally and through me to my people, the colored people of this city who, sometimes, are discouraged and bewildered, thinking that color and poverty are against them I accept this award with gratitude and pride, not for myself alone but for my race that believes in American opportunity and American fairness—and the bright stars in our flag I thank Miss Dietrich and the teachers of this school who made it possible for me to have the knowledge and training that lie behind this honor you have conferred upon my painting When I came here from the South a few years ago, I was not sure how you would receive me You received me well You have given me a chance, and helped me along the road I wanted to follow I suppose the judges know that every week here at assembly the students of this school pledge allegiance to the flag I shall try to be worthy of that pledge, and of the help and friendship and understanding of my fellow citizens of whatever race or creed, and of our American dream of 'Liberty and justice for all!' "

That would be her response before the students in the morning How proud and happy the Negro pupils would be, perhaps as proud as they were of the one colored star on the football team Her mother would probably cry with happiness. Thus Nancy Lee went to sleep dreaming of a wonderful tomorrow.

The bright sunlight of an April morning woke her There was breakfast with her parents—their half-amused and puzzled faces across the table, wondering what could be this secret that made her eyes so bright The swift walk to school, the clock in the tower almost nine, hundreds of pupils streaming into the long rambling old building that was the city's largest high school, the sudden quiet of the home room after the bell rang, then the teacher opening her record book to call the roll But just before she began, she looked across the room until her eyes located Nancy Lee

"Nancy," she said, "Miss O'Shay would like to see you in her office, please"

Nancy Lee rose and went out while the names were being called and the word present added its period to each name Perhaps, Nancy Lee thought, the reporters from the papers had already come Maybe they wanted to take her picture before assembly, which wasn't until ten o'clock (Last year they had had the photograph of the winner of the award in the morning papers as soon as the announcement had been made)

Nancy Lee knocked at Miss O'Shay's door.

"Come in"

The vice-principal stood at her desk There was no one else in the room It was very quiet

"Sit down, Nancy Lee," she said Miss O'Shay did not smile There was a long pause The seconds went by slowly "I do not know how to tell you what I have to say," the elderly woman began, her eyes on the papers on her desk "I am indignant and ashamed for myself and for this city" Then she lifted her eyes and looked at Nancy Lee in the neat blue dress sitting there before her "You are not to receive the scholarship this morning"

Outside in the hall the electric bells announcing the first period rang, loud and interminably long Miss O'Shay remained silent To the brown girl there in the chair, the room grew suddenly smaller, smaller, smaller, and there was no air She could not speak

Miss O'Shay said, "When the committee learned that you were colored they changed their plans"

Still Nancy Lee said nothing, for there was no air to give breath to her lungs.

"Here is the letter from the committee, Nancy Lee." Miss O'Shay picked it up and read the final paragraph to her.

"It seems to us wiser to arbitrarily rotate the award among the various high schools of the city from now on And especially in this case since the student chosen happens to be colored, a circumstance which unfortunately, had we known, might have prevented this embarrassment. But there have never been any Negro students in the local art school and the presence of one there might create difficulties for all concerned We have high regard for the quality of Nancy Lee Johnson's talent, but we do not feel it would be fair to honor it with the Artist Club award " Miss O'Shay paused She put the letter down

"Nancy Lee, I am very sorry to have to give you this message."

"But my speech," Nancy Lee said, "was about . . ." The words stuck in her throat " about America . "

Miss O'Shay had risen, she turned her back and stood looking out the window at the spring tulips in the school yard.

"I thought, since the award would be made at assembly right after our oath of allegiance," the words tumbled almost hysterically from Nancy Lee's throat now, "I would put part of the flag salute in my speech You know, Miss O'Shay, that part about 'liberty and justice for all' "

"I know," said Miss O'Shay slowly facing the room again "But America is only what we who believe in it, make it I am Irish You may not know, Nancy Lee, but years ago, we were called the dirty Irish, and mobs rioted against us in the big cities, and we were invited to go back where we came from But we didn't go And we didn't give up, because we believed in the American dream, and in our power to make that dream come true Difficulties, yes Mountains to climb, yes Discouragements to face, yes Democracy to make, yes. That is it, Nancy Lee! We still have in this world of ours, democracy *to make* You and I, Nancy Lee But the premise and the base is here, the lines of the Declaration of Independence and the words of Lincoln are here, and the stars in our flag Those who deny you this scholarship do not know the meaning of those stars, but it's up to us to make them know As a teacher in the public schools of this city, I myself will go before the school board and ask them to remove from our system the offer of any prizes or awards denied to any

student because of race or color." Suddenly Miss O'Shay stopped speaking Her clear, clear blue eyes looked into those of the girl before her. The woman's eyes were full of strength and courage. "Lift up your head, Nancy Lee, and smile at me"

Miss O'Shay stood against the open window with the green lawn and the tulips beyond, the sunlight tangled in her gray hair, her voice an electric flow of strength to the hurt spirit of Nancy Lee. The Abolitionists who believed in freedom when there was slavery must have been like that The first white teachers who went into the Deep South to teach the freed slaves must have been like that All those who stand against ignorance, narrowness, hate and mud on stars must be like that.

Nancy Lee lifted her head and smiled The tears were only drops of April rain.

The bell for assembly rang. Nancy Lee went through the long hall filled with students toward the auditorium

"There will be other awards," Nancy Lee thought. "There're schools in other cities. This won't keep me down But when I'm a woman, I'll fight to see that these things don't happen to other girls as this has happened to me. And men and women like Miss O'Shay will help me"

She took her seat among the seniors The doors of the auditorium closed As the principal came onto the platform the students rose and turned their eyes to the flag on the stage with its red and white stripes and the stars on its field of blue.

One hand went to the heart, the other outstretched toward the flag Three thousand voices spoke Among them was the voice of a dark girl whose cheeks were suddenly wet with tears

"I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands" The words grew stronger, the dark girl's voice stronger, too "One nation indivisible, with liberty and justice for all"

"That is the land we must make," she thought.

THE GOOPHERED GRAPEVINE

Charles Waddell Chesnutt

We alighted from the buggy, walked about the yard for a while, and then wandered off into the adjoining vineyard Upon Annie's complaining of weariness I led the way back to the yard, where a pine log, lying under the spreading elm, afforded a shady though somewhat hard seat One end of the log was already occupied by a venerable-looking colored man He held on his knees a hat full of grapes, over which he was smacking his lips with great gusto, and a pile of grapeskins near him indicated that the performance was no new thing. We approached him at an angle from the rear, and were close to him before he perceived us He respectfully rose as we drew near, and was moving away, when I begged him to keep his seat

"Don't let us disturb you," I said "There is plenty of room for us all."

He resumed his seat with some embarrassment. While he had been standing, I had observed that he was a tall man, and, though slightly bowed by the weight of years, apparently quite vigorous He was not entirely black, and this fact, together with the quality of his hair, which was about six inches long and very bushy, except on the top of his head, where he was quite bald, suggested a slight strain of other than Negro blood There was a shrewdness in his eyes, too, which was not altogether African, and which, as we afterwards learned from experience, was indicative of a corresponding shrewdness in his character He went on eating his grapes, but did not seem to enjoy himself quite so well as he had apparently done before he became aware of our presence.

"Do you live around here?" I asked, anxious to put him at his ease.

"Yas, suh I lives des ober yander, behine de nex' san'hill, on de Lumberton plank-road."

"Do you know anything about the time when this vineyard was cultivated?"

"Lawd bless you, suh, I knows all about it Dey ain' na'er a man in dis settlement w'at won' tell you ole Julius McAdoo 'uz bawn en

raise' on dis yer same plantation Is you de Norv'n gemman w'at's gwine ter buy de ole vimya'd?"

"I am looking at it," I replied, "but I don't know that I shall care to buy unless I can be reasonably sure of making something out of it"

"Well, suh, you is a stranger ter me, en I is a stranger to you, en we is bofe strangers ter one anudder, but 'f I 'uz in yo' place, I wouldn't buy dis vimya'd"

"Why not?" I asked

"Well, I dunno whe'r you b'lieves in conj'in' er not,—some er de w'ite folks don't, er says dey don't,—but de truf er de matter is dat dis yer ole vimya'd is goophered"

"Is what?" I asked, not grasping the meaning of this unfamiliar word

"Is goophered—cunju'd, bewitch'"

He imparted this information with such solemn earnestness, and with such an air of confidential mystery, that I felt somewhat interested, while Annie was evidently much impressed, and drew closer to me

"How do you know it is bewitched?" I asked

"I wouldn' spec' fer you ter b'lieve me 'less you know all 'bout de fac's But ef you en young miss dere doan' min' lis'nin' ter a ole nigger run on a minute er two w'ile you er restin', I kin 'spain to you how it all happen'"

We assured him that we would be glad to hear how it all happened, and he began to tell us At first the current of his memory—or imagination—seemed somewhat sluggish, but as his embarrassment wore off, his language flowed more freely, and the story acquired perspective and coherence As he became more and more absorbed in the narrative, his eyes assumed a dreamy expression, and he seemed to lose sight of his auditors, and to be living over again in monologue his life on the old plantation

"Ole Mars Dugal' McAdoo," he began, "bought dis place long many years befo' de wah, en I 'member well w'en he sot out all dis yer part er de plantation in scuppernon's De vimes growed monst'us fas', en Mars Dugal' made a thousan' gallon er scuppernon' wine eve'y year

"Now, ef dey's an'thing a nigger lub, nex' ter 'possum, en chick'n,

en watermillyums, it's scuppernon's Dey ain' nuffin dat kin stan' up side'n de scuppernon' fer sweetness, sugar ain't a suckumstance ter scuppernon' W'en de season is nigh 'bout ober, en de grapes begin ter swivel up des a little wid de wrinkles er ole age,—w'en de skin git sof' en brown,—den de scuppernon' make you smack yo' lip en roll yo' eye en wush fer mo', so I reckon it ain' very 'stonishin' dat niggers lub scuppernon'.

"Dey wuz a sight er niggers in de naberhood er de vimya'd Dere wuz ole Mars Henry Brayboy's niggers, en ole Mars Jeems McLean's niggers, en Mars Dugal's own niggers, den dey wuz a settlement er free niggers en po' buckrahs down by de Wim'l'ton Road, en Mars Dugal' had de only vimya'd in de naberhood I reckon it ain' so much so nowadays, but befo' de wah, in slab'ry times, a nigger didn' mine goin' fi' er ten mile in a night, w'en dey wuz sump'n good ter eat at de yuther een'

"So atter a w'ile Mars Dugal' begin ter miss his scuppernon's Co'se he 'cuse' de niggers er it, but dey all 'nied it ter de las' Mars Dugal' sot spring guns en steel traps, en he en de oberseah sot up nights once't or twice't, tel one night Mars Dugal'—he 'uz a monst'us keerless man—got his leg shot full er cow-peas But somehow er nudder dey couldn' nebber ketch none er de niggers I dunner how it happen, but it happen des like I tell you, en de grapes kep' on a-goin' des de same

"But bimeby ole Mars Dugal' fix' up a plan ter stop it Dey wuz a cunjuh 'oman livin' down 'mongs' de free niggers on de Wim'l'ton Road, en all de darkies fum Rockfish ter Beaver Crick wuz feared er her She could wuk de mos' powerfulles' kin' er goopher,—could make people hab fits, er rheumatiz', er make 'em des dwinel away en die, en dey say she went out ridin' de niggers at night, fer she wuz a witch 'sides bein' a cunjuh 'oman Mars Dugal' hearn 'bout Aun' Peggy's doin's, en begun ter 'flect whe'r er no he couldn' git her ter he'p him keep de niggers off'n de grapevines One day in de spring er de year, ole miss pack' up a basket er chick'n en poun'cake, en a bottle er scuppernon' wine, en Mars Dugal' tuk it in his buggy en driv over ter Aun' Peggy's cabin He tuk de basket in, en had a long talk wid Aun' Peggy

"De nex' day Aun' Peggy come up ter de vimya'd De niggers seed her slippin' 'round, en dey soon foun' out what she 'uz doin' dere.

Mars Dugal' had hi'ed her ter goopher de grapevimes. She sa'ntered 'roun' 'mongs' de vimes, en tuk a leaf fum dis one, en a grape-hull fum dat one, en den a little twig fum here, en a little pinch er dirt fum dere,—en put it all in a big black bottle, wid a snake's toof en a speckle hen's gall en some ha'rs fum a black cat's tail, en den fill' de bottle wid scuppernon' wine W'en she got de goopher all ready en fix', she tuk 'n went out in de woods en buried it under de root uv a red oak tree, en den come back en tole one er de niggers she done goopher de grapevimes, en a'er a nigger w'at eat dem grapes 'ud be sho ter die inside'n twel' mont's.

"Atter dat de niggers let de scuppernon's 'lone, en Mars Dugal' didn' hab no 'casion ter fine no mo' fault, en de season wuz mos' gone, w'en a strange gemman stop at de plantation one night ter see Mars Dugal' on some business, en his coachman, seein' de scuppernon's growin' so nice en sweet, slip 'roun' behine de smoke-house, en et all de scuppernon's he could hole Nobody didn' notice it at de time, but dat night, on de way home, de gemman's hoss runned away en kill' de coachman W'en we hearn de noos, Aun' Lucy, de cook, she up'n say she seed de strange nigger eat'n' er de scuppernon's behine de smoke-house, en den we knowed de goopher had be'en er wukkin' Den one er de nigger chilluns runned away fum de quarters one day, en got in de scuppernon's, en died de nex' week. White folks say he die' er de fevuh, but de niggers knowed it wuz de goopher So you k'n be sho de darkies didn' hab much ter do wid dem scuppernon' vimes.

"W'en de scuppernon' season 'uz ober fer dat year, Mars Dugal' foun' he had made fifteen hund'ed gallon er wine, en one er de niggers hearn him laffin' wid de oberseah fit ter kill, en sayin' dem fifteen hund'ed gallon er wine wuz monst'us good intrus' on de ten dollars he laid out on de vimya'd So I 'low ez he paid Aun' Peggy ten dollars fer to goopher de grapevimes

"De goopher didn' wuk no mo' tel de nex' summer, w'en 'long to'ds de middle er de season one er de fiel' han's died, en ez dat lef' Mars Dugal' sho't er han's, he went off ter town fer ter buy anudder. He fotch de noo nigger home wid 'im He wuz er ole nigger, er de color er a gingy-cake, en ball ez a hossaple on de top er his head. He wuz a peart ole nigger, do', en could do a big day's wuk.

"Now it happen dat one er de niggers on de nex' plantation, one

er ole Mars Henry Brayboy's niggers, had runned away de day befo', en tuk ter de swamp, en ole Mars Dugal' en some er de yuther nabor w'ite folks had gone out wid dere guns en dere dogs fer ter he'p 'em hunt fer de nigger, en de han's on our own plantation wuz all so flusterated dat we fuhgot ter tell de noo han' 'bout de goopher on de scuppernon' vimes Co'se he smell de grapes en see de vimes, an atter dahk de fus' thing he done wuz ter slip off ter de grapevimes 'dout sayin' nuffin ter nobody Nex' mawnin' he tole some er de niggers 'bout de fine bait er scuppernon' he et de night befo'

"W'en dey tole 'im 'bout de goopher on de grapevimes, he 'uz dat tarrified dat he turn pale, en look des like he gwine ter die right in his tracks De oberseah come up en axed w'at 'uz de matter, en w'en dey tole 'im Henry been eatin' er de scuppernon's, en got de goopher on 'im, he gin Henry a big drink er w'iskey, en 'low dat de nex' rainy day he take 'im ober ter Aun' Peggy's, en see ef she wouldn' take de goopher off'n him, seein' ez he didn' know nuffin' erbout it tel he done et de grapes

"Sho nuff, it rain de nex' day, en de oberseah went ober ter Aun' Peggy's wid Henry En Aun' Peggy say dat bein' ez Henry didn' know 'bout de goopher, en et de grapes in ign'ance er de conseq'ences, she reckon she mought be able fer take de goopher off'n him So she fotch out er bottle wid some cunjuh medicine in it, en po'd some out in a go'd fer Henry ter drink He manage ter git it down, he say it tas'e like w'iskey wid sump'n bitter in it She 'lowed dat 'ud keep de goopher off'n him tel de spring, but w'en de sap begin ter rise in de grapevimes he ha' ter come en see her ag'in, en she tell him w'at he's ter do

"Nex' spring, w'en de sap commence' ter rise in de scuppernon' vime, Henry tuk a ham one night. Whar'd he git de ham? *I* doan know; dey wa'n't no hams on de plantation 'cep'n' w'at 'uz in de smoke-house, but *I* never see Henry 'bout de smoke-house But ez I wuz a-sayin', he tuk de ham ober ter Aun' Peggy's, en Aun' Peggy tole 'im dat w'en Mars Dugal' begin ter prune de grapevimes, he must go en take 'n scrape off de sap what it ooze out'n de cut een's er de vimes, en 'n'int his ball head wid it, en ef he do dat once't a year de goopher wouldn' wuk agin 'im long ez he done it En bein' ez he fotch her de ham, she fix' it so he kin eat all de scuppernon' he want.

"So Henry 'n'int his head wid de sap out'n de big grapevime des

ha'f way 'twix de quarters en de big house, en de goopher nebber wuk agin him dat summer But he beatenes' thing you eber see happen ter Henry Up ter dat time he wuz ez ball ez a sweeten' 'tater, but des ez soon ez de young leaves begun ter come out on de grapevimes, de ha'r begun ter grow out on Henry's head, en by de middle er de summer he had de bigges' head er ha'r on de plantation. Befo' dat, Henry had tol'able good ha'r 'roun' de aidges, but soon ez de young grapes begun ter come, Henry's ha'r begun to quirl all up in little balls, des like dis yer reg'lar grapy ha'r, en by de time de grapes got ripe his head look des like a bunch er grapes Combin' it didn' do no good, he wuk at it ha'f de night wid er Jim Crow, en think he git it straighten' out, but in de mawnin' de grapes 'ud be dere des de same So he gin it up, en tried ter keep de grapes down by havin' his ha'r cut sho't

"But dat wa'n't de quares' thing 'bout de goopher When Henry come ter de plantation, he wuz gittin' a little ole and stiff in de j'ints But dat summer he got des ez spry en libely ez any young nigger on de plantation, fac', he got so biggity dat Mars Jackson, de obeiseah, ha' ter th'eaten ter whip 'im, ef he didn' stop cuttin' up his didos en behave hisse'f But de mos' cur'ouses' thing happen' in de fall, when de sap begin ter go down in de grapevimes Fus, when de grapes 'uz gethered, de knots begun ter straighten out'n Henry's ha'r, en w'en de leaves begin ter fall, Henry's ha'r commence' ter drap out, en when de vimes 'uz bar', Henry's head wuz baller'n it wuz in de spring, en he begin ter git ole en stiff in de j ints ag in, en paid no mo' 'tention ter de gals dyoin' er de whole winter En nex' spring, w'en he rub de sap on ag'in, he got young ag in, en so soopl en libely dat none er de young niggers on de plantation couldn' jump, ner dance, ner hoe ez much cotton ez Henry But in de fall er de year his grapes 'mence' ter straighten out, en his j'ints ter git stiff, en his ha'r drap off, en de rheumatiz begin ter wrastle wid 'im

"Now, ef you'd 'a' knowed ole Mars Dugal' McAdoo, you'd 'a' knowed dat it ha' ter be a mighty rainy day when he couldn' fine sump'n fer his niggers ter do, en it ha' ter be a mighty little hole he couldn' crawl thoo, en ha'ter be a monst'us cloudy night when a dollar git by him in de dahkness, en w'en he see how Henry git young in de spring en ole in de fall, he 'lowed ter hisse'f ez how he could make mo' money out'n Henry dan by wukkin' him in de

cotton-fiel' 'Long de nex' spring, atter de sap 'mence' ter rise, en Henry 'n'int 'is head en sta'ted fer ter git young en soopl, Mars Dugal' up'n tuk Henry ter town, en sole 'im fer fifteen hunder' dollars Co'se de man w'at bought Henry didn' know nuffin 'bout de goopher, en Mars Dugal' didn't see no 'casion fer ter tell 'im. Long to'ds de fall, w'en de sap went down, Henry begin ter git ole ag'in same ez yuzhal, en his noo marster begin ter git skeered les'n he gwine ter lose his fifteen-hunder'-dollar nigger He sent fer a mighty fine doctor, but de med'cine didn' 'pear ter do no good, de goopher had a good holt Henry tole de doctor 'bout de goopher, but de doctor des laff at 'im

"One day in de winter Mars Dugal' went ter town, en wuz santerin' 'long de Main Street, w'en who should he meet but Henry's noo master Dey said 'Hoddy,' en Mars Dugal' ax 'im ter hab a seegyar, en atter dey run on awhile 'bout de craps en de weather, Mars Dugal' ax 'im, sorter keerless, like ez ef he des thought of it,—

" 'How you like de nigger I sole you las' spring?'

"Henry's marster shuck his head en knock de ashes off'n his seegyar

" 'Spec' I made a bad bahgin when I bought dat nigger Henry done good wuk all de summer, but sence de fall set in he 'pears ter be sorter pinin' away Dey ain' nuffin pertickler de matter wid 'im—leastways de doctor say so—'cep'n' a tech er de rheumatiz, but his ha'r is all fell out, en ef he don't pick up his strenk mighty soon, I spec' I'm gwine ter lose 'im '

"Dey smoked on awhile, en bimeby ole mars say, 'Well, a bahgin 's a bahgin, but you en me is good fren's, en I doan wan' ter see you lose all de money you paid fer dat nigger, en ef w'at you say is so, en I ain't 'sputin' it, he ain't wuf much now I spec's you wukked him too ha'd dis summer, er e'se de swamps down here don't agree wid de san'-hill nigger So you des lemme know, en ef he gits any wusser I'll be willin' ter gib yer five hund'ed dollars for 'im, en take my chances on his livin' '

"Sho' nuff, when Henry begun ter draw up wid de rheumatiz en it look like he gwine ter die fer sho, his noo marster sen' fer Mars Dugal', en Mars Dugal' gin him what he promus, en brung Henry home ag'in He tuk good keer uv 'im dyoin' er de winter,—give 'im

w'ıskey ter rub hıs rheumatız, en terbacker ter smoke, en all he want ter eat,—'caze a nıgger w'at he could make a thousan' dollars a year off'n dıdn' grow on eve'y huckleberry bush.

"Nex' spring, w'en de sap rise en Henry's ha'r commence' ter sprout, Mars Dugal' sole 'ım ag'ın, down ın Robeson County dıs time; en he kep' dat sellın' busıness up fer five year er mo' Henry nebber say nuffin 'bout de goopher ter hıs noo marsters, 'caze he know he gwıne ter be tuk good keer uv de nex' wınter, w'en Mars Dugal' buy hım back. En Mars Dugal' made 'nuff money off'n Henry ter buy anudder plantatıon ober on Beaver Crıck.

"But 'long 'bout de een 'er dat five year dey come a stranger ter stop at de plantatıon. De fus' day he 'uz dere he went out wıd Mars Dugal' en spent all de mawnın' lookın' ober de vımya'd, en atter dınner dey spent all de evenın' playın' kya'ds. De nıggers soon 'skıv-ver' dat he wuz a Yankee, en dat he come down ter Norf C'lına fer ter l'arn de w'ıte folks how to raise grapes en make wine. He promus Mars Dugal' he c'd make de grapevımes b'ar twice't ez many grapes, en dat de noo wınepress he wuz a-sellın' would make mo' d'n twice't ez many gallons er wine En ole Mars Dugal' des drunk ıt all ın, des 'peared ter be bewıtch' wıd dat Yankee W'en de darkıes see dat Yankee runnın' 'roun' de vımya'd en dıggın' under de grapevımes, dey shuk dere heads, en 'lowed dat dey feared Mars Dugal' losın' hıs mın' Mars Dugal' had all de dırt dug away fum under de roots er all de scuppernon' vımes, an' let 'em stan' dat away fer a week er mo'. Den dat Yankee made de nıggers fix up a mıxtry er lıme en ashes en manyo, en po' ıt 'roun' de roots er de grapevımes Den he 'vise Mars Dugal' fer ter trım de vımes close't, en Mars Dugal' tuck 'n done eve'ythıng de Yankee tole hım ter do Dyoın' all er dıs time, mine yer, dıs yer Yankee wuz lıbbın' off'n de fat er de lan', at de bıg house, en playın' kya'ds wıd Mars Dugal' eve'y nıght; en dey say Mars Dugal' los' mo'n a thousan' dollars dyoın' er de week dat Yankee wuz a-ruınin' de grapevımes

"W'en de sap rıs nex' spring, ole Henry 'n'ınted hıs head ez yuzhal, en hıs ha'r 'mence' ter grow des de same ez ıt done eve'y year. De scuppernon' vımes growed monst's fas', en de leaves wuz greener en thıcker dan dey eber be'n dyoın' my rememb'ance, en Henry's ha'r growed out thıcker dan eber, en he 'peared ter gıt younger 'n younger, en soopler; en seein' ez he wuz sho't er han's dat spring, havın' tuk

in consid'able noo groun', Mars Dugal' git de crap in en de cotton chop' So he kep' Henry on de plantation

"But 'long 'bout time fer de grapes ter come on de scuppernon' vimes, dey 'peared ter come a change ober 'em, de leaves withered en swivel' up, en de young grapes turn' yaller, en bimeby eve'ybody on de plantation could see dat de whole vimya'd wuz dyin'. Mars Dugal' tuk'n water de vimes en done all he could, but 't wa'n no use dat Yankee had done bus' de watermillyum One time de vimes picked up a bit, en Mars Dugal' 'lowed dey wuz gwine ter come out ag'in, but dat Yankee done dug too close under de roots, en prune de branches too close ter de vime, en all dat lime en ashes done burn de life out'm de vimes, en dey des kep' a-with'in' en a-swivelin'

"All dis time de goopher wuz a-wukkin' When de vimes sta'ted ter wither, Henry 'mence' ter complain er his rheumatiz; en when de leaves begin ter dry up, his ha'r 'mence' ter drap out When de vimes fresh' up a bit, Henry 'd git peart ag'in, en when de vimes wither' ag'in, Henry 'd git ole ag'in, en des kep' gittin' mo' fitten fer nuffin, he des pined away, en pined away, en fin ly tuk ter his cabin, en when de big vime whar he got de sap ter 'n int his head withered en turned yaller en died, Henry died too,—des went out sorter like a cannel Dey didn't 'pear ter be nuffin de matter wid 'im, 'cep'n de rheumatiz, but his strenk des dwinel' away tel he didn' hab ernuff lef' ter draw his bref De goopher had got de under holt, en th'owed Henry dat time fer good en all

"Mars Dugal' tuk on mightily 'bout losin' his vimes en his nigger in de same year, en he swo' dat ef he could git holt er dat Yankee he'd wear 'im ter a frazzle, en den chaw up de frazzle, en he d done it, too, for Mars Dugal' 'uz a monst'us brash man w'en he once git started He sot de vimya'd out ober ag in, but it wuz th ee er fo' year befo' de vimes got ter b'arin' any scuppern on's

"W'en de wah broke out, Mars Dugal' raise' a comp ny, en went off ter fight de Yankees He say he wuz mighty glad wah come, en he des want ter kill a Yankee fer eve'y dollar he los' 'long er dat grape raisin' Yankee En I 'spec' he would a done it too, ef de Yankees hadn' s'picioned sump'en, en killed him fus' Atter de s render ole Miss move' ter town, de niggers all scattered 'way fum de plantation, en de vimya'd ain' be'n cultervated sence "

"Is that story true?" asked Annie doubtfully, but seriously, as the old man concluded his narrative.

"It's des ez true ez I'm a-settin' here, miss Dey's a easy way ter prove it I kin lead de way right ter Henry's grave ober yonder in de plantation buryin'-groun'. En I tell yer w'at, marster, I wouldn' 'vise you to buy dis yer ole vimya'd, 'caze de goopher's on it yit, en dey ain' no tellin' w'en it's gwine ter crap out."

"But I thought you said all the old vines died."

"Dey did 'pear ter die, but a few un 'em come out ag'in, en is mixed in 'mongs' de yuthers I ain' skeered ter eat de grapes 'caze I knows de old vimes fum de noo ones, but wid strangers dey ain' no tellin' w'at mought happen I wouldn' 'vise yer ter buy dis vimya'd "

I bought the vineyard, nevertheless, and it has been for a long time in a thriving condition, and is often referred to by the local press as a striking illustration of the opportunities open to Northern capital in the development of Southern industries The luscious scuppernong holds first rank among our grapes, though we cultivate a great many other varieties, and our income from grapes packed and shipped to the Northern markets is quite considerable I have not noticed any developments of the goopher in the vineyard, although I have a mild suspicion that our colored assistants do not suffer from want of grapes during the season

I found, when I bought the vineyard, that Uncle Julius had occupied a cabin on the place for many years, and derived a respectable revenue from the product of the neglected grapevines This, doubtless, accounted for his advice to me not to buy the vineyard, though whether it inspired the goopher story I am unable to state I believe, however, that the wages I paid him for his services as coachman, for I gave him employment in that capacity, were more than an equivalent for anything he lost by the sale of the vineyard.

THE CITY OF REFUGE

Rudolph Fisher

I

CONFRONTED suddenly by daylight, King Solomon Gillis stood dazed and blinking The railroad station, the long, white-walled corridor, the impassable slot-machine, the terrifying subway train—he felt as if he had been caught up in the jaws of a steam-shovel, jammed together with other helpless lumps of dirt, swept blindly along for a time, and at last abruptly dumped.

There had been strange and terrible sounds "New York! Penn Terminal—all change!" "Pohter, hyer, pohter, suh?" Shuffle of a thousand soles, clatter of a thousand heels, innumerable echoes. Cracking rifle-shots—no, snapping turnstiles "Put a nickel in!" "Harlem? Sure This side—next train" Distant thunder, nearing. The screeching onslaught of the fiery hosts of hell, headlong, breath-taking Car doors rattling, sliding, banging open "Say, wha' d'ye think this is, a baggage car?" Heat, oppression, suffocation—eternity —"Hundred 'n turdy-fif' next!" More turnstiles Jonah emerging from the whale.

Clean air, blue sky, bright sunlight.

Gillis set down his tan cardboard extension case and wiped his black, shining brow Then slowly, spreadingly, he grinned at what he saw Negroes at every turn, up and down Lenox Avenue, up and down 135th Street, big, lanky Negroes, short, squat Negroes, black ones, brown ones, yellow ones, men standing idle on the curb, women, bundle-laden, trudging reluctantly homeward, children rattle-trapping about the sidewalks, here and there a white face drifting along, but Negroes predominantly, overwhelmingly everywhere There was assuredly no doubt of his whereabouts. This was Negro Harlem

Back in North Carolina Gillis had shot a white man and, with the aid of prayer and an automobile, probably escaped a lynching. Carefully avoiding the railroads, he had reached Washington in safety For his car a Southwest bootlegger had given him a hundred dollars and directions to Harlem; and so he had come to Harlem.

Ever since a traveling preacher had first told him of the place, King Solomon Gillis had longed to come to Harlem The Uggams were always talking about it, one of their boys had gone to France in the draft and, returning, had never got any nearer home than Harlem And there were occasional "colored" newspapers from New York newspapers that mentioned Negroes without comment, but always spoke of a white person as "So-and-so, white " That was the point In Harlem, black was white You had rights that could not be denied you, you had privileges, protected by law And you had money Everybody in Harlem had money It was a land of plenty Why, had not Mouse Uggam sent back as much as fifty dollars at a time to his people in Waxhaw?

The shooting, therefore, simply catalyzed whatever sluggish mental reaction had been already directing King Solomon's fortunes toward Harlem The land of plenty was more than that now, it was also the city of refuge

Casting about for direction, the tall newcomer's glance caught inevitably on the most conspicuous thing in sight, a magnificent figure in blue that stood in the middle of the crossing and blew a whistle and waved great white-gloved hands The Southern Negro's eyes opened wide, his mouth opened wider If the inside of New York had mystified him, the outside was amazing him For there stood a handsome, brass-buttoned giant directing the heaviest traffic Gillis had ever seen, halting unnumbered tons of automobiles and trucks and wagons and pushcarts and street-cars, holding them at bay with one hand while he swept similar tons peremptorily on with the other, ruling the wide crossing with supreme self-assurance And he, too, was a Negro!

Yet most of the vehicles that leaped or crouched at his bidding carried white passengers One of these overdrove bounds a few feet and Gillis heard the officer's shrill whistle and gruff reproof, saw the driver's face turn red and his car draw back like a threatened pup. It was beyond belief—impossible Black might be white, but it couldn't be that white!

"Done died an' woke up in Heaven," thought King Solomon, watching, fascinated, and after a while, as if the wonder of it were too great to believe simply by seeing, "Cullud policemans!" he said,

half aloud, then repeated over and over, with greater and greater conviction, "Even got cullud policemans—even got cullud—"

"Where y' want to go, big boy?"

Gillis turned A little, sharp-faced yellow man was addressing him.

"Saw you was a stranger Thought maybe I could help y' out"

King Solomon located and gratefully extended a slip of paper "Wha' dis hyeh at, please, suh?"

The other studied it a moment, pushing back his hat and scratching his head The hat was a tall-crowned, unindented brown felt, the head was brown patent-leather, its glistening brush-back flawless save for a suspicious crimpiness near the clean-grazed edges

"See that second corner? Turn to the left when you get there. Number forty-five's about half-way the block"

"Thank y', suh"

"You from—Massachusetts?"

"No, suh, Nawth Ca'lina"

"Is 'at so? You look like a Northerner Be with us long?"

"Till I die," grinned the flattered King Solomon

"Stoppin' there?"

"Reckon I is Man in Washin'ton 'lowed I'd find lodgin' at dis ad-dress"

"Good enough If y' don't, maybe I can fix y' up Harlem's pretty crowded This is me" He proffered a card

"Thank y', suh," said Gillis, and put the card in his pocket

The little yellow man watched him plod flat-footedly on down the street, long awkward legs never quite straightened, shouldered extension-case bending him sidewise, wonder upon wonder halting or turning him about Presently, as he proceeded, a pair of bright green stockings caught and held his attention Tony, the storekeeper, was crossing the sidewalk with a bushel basket of apples. There was a collision, the apples rolled, Tony exploded, King Solomon apologized The little yellow man laughed shortly, took out a notebook, and put down the address he had seen on King Solomon's slip of paper.

"Guess you're the shine I been waitin' for," he surmised

As Gillis, approaching his destination, stopped to rest, a haunting notion grew into an insistent idea "Dat li'l yaller nigger was a sho' 'nuff gen'man to show me de road. Seem lak I knowed him befo'—"

He pondered That receding brow, that sharp-ridged, spreading nose, that tight upper lip over the two big front teeth, that chinless jaw— He fumbled hurriedly for the card he had not looked at and eagerly made out the name

"Mouse Uggam, sho' 'nuff! Well, dog-gone!"

II

Uggam sought out Tom Edwards, once a Pullman porter, now prosperous proprietor of a cabaret, and told him —

"Chief, I got him a baby jess in from the land o' cotton and so dumb he thinks ante bellum 's an old woman "

"Where 'd you find him?"

"Where you find all the jay birds when they first hit Harlem— at the subway entrance This one come up the stairs, batted his eyes once or twice, an' froze to the spot—with his mouth open Sure sign he's from 'way down behind the sun and ripe f' the pluckin' "

Edwards grinned a gold-studded, fat-jowled grin "Gave him the usual line, I suppose?"

"Didn't miss An' he fell like a ton o' bricks 'Course I've got him spotted, but damn 'f I know jess how to switch 'em on to him "

"Get him a job around a store somewhere Make out you're befriendin' him Get his confidence "

"Sounds good Ought to be easy He's from my State Maybe I know him or some of his people "

"Make out you do, anyhow Then tell him some fairy tale that'll switch your trade to him The cops'll follow the trade We could even let Froggy flop into some dumb white cop's hands and 'confess' where he got it See?"

"Chief, you got a head, no lie "

"Don't lose no time And remember, hereafter, it's better to sacrifice a little than to get squealed on Never refuse a customer. Give him a little credit Humor him along till you can get rid of him safe. You don't know what that guy that died may have said, you don't know who's on to you now And if they get you—I don't know you "

"They won't get me," said Uggam

King Solomon Gillis sat meditating in a room half the size of his hencoop back home, with a single window opening into an airshaft.

An airshaft: cabbage and chitterlings cooking; liver and onions sizzling, sputtering, three player-pianos out-plunking each other, a man and a woman calling each other vile things, a sick, neglected baby wailing, a phonograph broadcasting blues, dishes clacking; a girl crying heartbrokenly, waste noises, waste odors of a score of families, seeking issue through a common channel; pollution from bottom to top—a sewer of sounds and smells

Contemplating this, King Solomon grinned and breathed, "Dog-gone!" A little later, still gazing into the sewer, he grinned again. "Green stockin's," he said, "loud green!" The sewer gradually grew darker A window lighted up opposite, revealing a woman in camisole and petticoat, arranging her hair King Solomon, staring vacantly, shook his head and grinned yet again. "Even got cullud policemans!" he mumbled softly

III

Uggam leaned out of the room's one window and spat maliciously into the dinginess of the airshaft "Damn glad you got him," he commented, as Gillis finished his story "They's a thousand shines in Harlem would change places with you in a minute jess f' the honor of killin' a cracker."

"But I didn't go to do it 'T was a accident"

"That's the only part to keep secret"

"Know whut dey done? Dey killed five o' Mose Joplin's hawses 'fo he lef' Put groun' glass in de feed-trough Sam Cheevers come up on three of 'em one night pizenin' his well Bleesom beat Crin shaw out o' sixty acres o' lan' an' a year's crops Dass jess how 't is Soon's a nigger make a li'l sump'n he better git to leavin' An' fo' long ev'ybody's goin' be lef'!"

"Hope to hell they don't all come here"

The doorbell of the apartment rang A crescendo of footfalls in the hallway culminated in a sharp rap on Gillis's door Gillis jumped. Nobody but a policeman would rap like that Maybe the landlady had been listening and had called in the law It came again, loud, quick, angry King Solomon prayed that the policeman would be a Negro

Uggam stepped over and opened the door King Solomon's apprehensive eyes saw framed therein, instead of a gigantic officer, calling for him, a little blot of a creature, quite black against even the dark-

ness of the hallway, except for a dirty, wide-striped silk shirt, collarless, with the sleeves rolled up

"Ah hahve bill fo' Mr Gillis" A high, strongly accented Jamaican voice, with its characteristic singsong intonation, interrupted King Solomon's sigh of relief

"Bill? Bill fo' me? What kin' o' bill?"

"Wan bushel appels T'ree seventy fite"

'Apples? I ain' bought no apples" He took the paper and read aloud, laboriously, "Anton o Gabrielli to K S Gillis, Doctor—"

"Mr Gabrielli say, you not pays him, he send policemon"

"What I had to do wid 'is apples?"

'You bumps into him yesterday, no? Scatter appels everywhere—on the sidewalk, in de gutter Kids pick up an' run away Others all spoil So you pays"

Gillis appealed to Uggam "How 'bout it, Mouse?"

"He's a damn liar Tony picked up most of 'em, I seen him Lemme look at that bill—Tony never wrote this thing This baby's jess playin' you for a sucker"

"Ain' had no apples, ain' payin' fo' none," announced King Solomon, thus prompted "Didn't have to come to Harlem to git cheated Plenty o' dat right wha' I come fum"

But the West Indian warmly insisted "You cahn't do daht, mon Whaht you t'ink, 'ey? Dis mon loose 'is appels an' 'is money too?"

'What diff'ence it make to you, nigger?"

'Who you call nigger, mon? Ah hahve you understahn'—"

"Oh, well, white folks, den What all you got t' do wid dis hyeh, anyhow?"

"Mr Gabrielli send me to collect bill!"

'How I know dat?"

"Do Ah not bring bill? You t'ink Ah steal t'ree dollar, 'ey?"

"Three dollars an' sebenty-fi' cent," corrected Gillis "Nuther thing wha' you ever see me befo'? How you know dis is me?"

'Ah see you, sure Ah help Mr Gabrielli in de store When you knocks down de baskette appels, Ah see Ah follow you Ah know you comes in dis house"

"Oh, you does? An' how come you know my name an' flat an' room so good? How come dat?"

"Ah fin' out Sometime Ah brings up here vegetables from de store."

"Humph! Mus' be workin' on shares"

"You pays, 'ey? You pays me or de policemon?"

"Wait a minute," broke in Uggam, who had been thoughtfully contemplating the bill. "Now listen, big shorty You haul hips on back to Tony We got your menu all right"—he waved the bill—"but we don't eat your kind o' cookin', see?"

The West Indian flared "Whaht it is to you, 'ey? You can not mind your own business? Ah hahve not spik to you!"

"No, brother But this is my friend, an' I'll be john-browned if there's a monkey-chaser in Harlem can gyp him if I know it, see? Bes' thing f' you to do is to catch air, toot sweet"

Sensing frustration, the little islander demanded the bill back Uggam figured he could use the bill himself, maybe The West Indian hotly persisted, he even menaced Uggam pocketed the paper and invited him to take it Wisely enough, the caller preferred to catch air

When he had gone, King Solomon sought words of thanks

"Bottle it," said Uggam "The point is this I figger you got a job"

"Job? No I ain't! Wha' at?"

"When you show Tony this bill, he'll hit the roof and fire that monk"

"What ef he do?"

"Then you up 'n ask f' the job He'll be too grateful to refuse I know Tony some, an' I'll be there to put in a good word See?"

King Solomon considered this "Sho' needs a job, but ain' after stealin' none"

"Stealin'? 'T wouldn t be stealin' Stealin' 's what that damn monkey-chaser tried to do from you This would be doin' Tony a favor an' gettin' y'self out o' the barrel What's the hold-back?"

"What make you keep callin' him monkey-chaser?"

"West Indian That's another thing Any time y' can knife a monk, do it They's too damn many of 'em here They're an achin' pain"

"Jes de way white folks feels 'bout niggers"

"Damn that How 'bout it? Y' want the job?"

"Hm—well—I'd ruther be a policeman"

"Policeman?" Uggam gasped

"M—hm Dass all I wants to be, a policeman, so I kin police all the white folks right plumb in jail!"

Uggam said seriously, "Well, y' might work up to that But it takes time. An' y've got to eat while y're waitin'" He paused to let this penetrate "Now how 'bout this job at Tony's in the meantime? I should think y'd jump at it"

King Solomon was persuaded.

"Hm—well—reckon I does," he said slowly

"Now y're tootin'!" Uggam's two big front teeth poped out in a grin of genuine pleasure. "Come on. Let's go."

IV

Spitting blood and crying with rage, the West Indian scrambled to his feet For a moment he stood in front of the store gesticulating furiously and jabbering shrill threats and unintelligible curses Then abruptly he stopped and took himself off

King Solomon Gillis, mildly puzzled, watched him from Tony's doorway. "I jess give him a li'l shove," he said to himself, "an' he roll' clean 'cross de sidewalk" And a little later, disgustedly, "Monkey-chaser!" he grunted, and went back to his sweeping.

"Well, big boy, how y' comin' on?"

Gillis dropped his broom. "Hay-o, Mouse. Wha' you been las' two-three days?"

"Oh, around Gettin' on all right here? Had any trouble?"

"Deed I ain't—ceptin' jes now I had to throw 'at li'l jigger out."

"Who? The monk?"

"M—hm He sho' Lawd doan like me in his job Look like he think I stole it from him, stiddy him tryin' to steal from me Had to push him down sho' 'nuff 'fo I could git rid of 'im Den he run off talkin' Wes' Indi'man an' shakin' his fis' at me"

"Ferget it" Uggam glanced about. "Where's Tony?"

"Boss man? He be back direckly"

"Listen—like to make two or three bucks a day extra?"

"Huh?"

"Two or three dollars a day more'n what you're gettin' already?"

"Ain' I near 'nuff in jail now?"

"Listen." King Solomon listened Uggam hadn't been in France for nothing Fact was, in France he'd learned about some valuable French medicine He'd brought some back with him—little white pills—and while in Harlem had found a certain druggist who knew what they were and could supply all he could use Now there were any number of people who would buy and pay well for as much of this French medicine as Uggam could get It was good for what ailed them, and they didn't know how to get it except through him. But he had no store in which to set up an agency and hence no single place where his customers could go to get what they wanted. If he had, he could sell three or four times as much as he did

King Solomon was in a position to help him now, same as he had helped King Solomon He would leave a dozen packages of the medicine—just small envelopes that could all be carried in a coat pocket—with King Solomon every day Then he could simply send his customers to King Solomon at Tony's store They'd make some trifling purchase, slip him a certain coupon which Uggam had given them, and King Solomon would wrap the little envelope of medicine with their purchase Mustn't let Tony catch on, because he might object, and then the whole scheme would go gaflooey Of course it wouldn't really be hurting Tony any Wouldn't it increase the num ber of his customers?

Finally, at the end of each day, Uggam would meet King Solomon some place and give him a quarter for each coupon he held There'd be at least ten or twelve a day—two and a half or three dollars plumb extra! Eighteen or twenty dollars a week "Dog-gone!" breathed Gillis

"Does Tony ever leave you here alone?"

"M—hm Jess started dis mawnin' Doan nobody much come round 'tween ten an' twelve, so he done took to doin' his buyin' right 'long 'bout dat time Nobody hyeh but me fo' 'n hour or so."

"Good I'll try to get my folks to come 'round here mostly while Tony's out, see?"

"I doan miss"

"Sure y' get the idea, now?" Uggam carefully explained it all again By the time he had finished, King Solomon was wallowing in gratitude.

"Mouse, you sho' is been a friend to me Why, 'f 't hadn't been fo' you—"

"Bottle it," said Uggam. "I'll be round to your room tonight with enough stuff for tomorrer, see? Be sure'n be there"

"Won't be nowha' else."

"An' remember, this is all jes between you 'n me"

"Nobody else but," vowed King Solomon

Uggam grinned to himself as he went on his way "Dumb Oscar! Wonder how much can we make before the cops nab him? French medicine—Humph!"

V

Tony Gabriellı, an oblate Neapolitan of enormous equator, wabbled heavily out of his store and settled himself over a soap box

Usually Tony enjoyed sitting out front thus in the evening, when his helper had gone home and his trade was slackest He liked to watch the little Gabriellis playing over the sidewalk with the little Levys and Johnsons, the trios and quartettes of brightly dressed, dark-skinned girls merrily out for a stroll, the slovenly gaited, darker men, who eyed them up and down and commented to each other with an unsuppressed "Hot damn!" or "Oh no, now!"

But tonight Tony was troubled Something was wrong in the store, something was different since the arrival of King Solomon Gillis The new man had seemed to prove himself honest and trustworthy, it was true Tony had tested him, as he always tested a new man, by apparently leaving him alone in charge for two or three mornings As a matter of fact, the new man was never under more vigilant observation than during these two or three mornings Tony's store was a modification of the front rooms of his flat and was in direct communication with it by way of a glass-windowed door in the rear Tony always managed to get back into his flat via the side-street entrance and watch the new man through this unobtrusive glass-windowed door If anything excited his suspicion, like unwarranted interest in the cash register, he walked unexpectedly out of this door to surprise the offender in the act Thereafter he would have no more such trouble But he had not succeeded in seeing King Solomon steal even an apple

What he had observed, however, was that the number of cus-

tomers that came into the store during the morning's slack hour had pronouncedly increased in the last few days Before, there had been three or four Now there were twelve or fifteen The mysterious thing about it was that their purchases totaled little more than those of the original three or four

Yesterday and today Tony had elected to be in the store at the time when, on the other days, he had been out But Gillis had not been overcharging or short-changing, for when Tony waited on the customers himself—strange faces all—he found that they bought something like a yeast cake or a five-cent loaf of bread It was puzzling Why should strangers leave their own neighborhoods and repeatedly come to him for a yeast cake or a loaf of bread? They were not new neighbors New neighbors would have bought more variously and extensively and at different times of day Living near by, they would have come in, the men often in shirtsleeves and slippers, the women in kimonos, with boudoir caps covering their lumpy heads They would have sent in strange children for things like yeast cakes and loaves of bread And why did not some of them come in at night when the new helper was off duty?

As for accosting Gillis on suspicion, Tony was too wise for that. Patronage had a queer way of shifting itself in Harlem You lost your temper and let slip a single "negre!" A week later you sold your business

Spread over his soap box, with his pudgy hands clasped on his preposterous paunch, Tony sat and wondered Two men came up, conspicuous for no other reason than that they were white They displayed extreme nervousness, looking about as if afraid of being seen, and when one of them spoke to Tony it was in a husky, toneless, blowing voice, like the sound of a dirty phonograph record

"Are you Antonio Gabrielli?"

"Yes, sure" Strange behavior for such lusty-looking fellows He who had spoken unsmilingly winked first one eye then the other, and indicated by a gesture of his head that they should enter the store His companion looked cautiously up and down the avenue, while Tony, wondering what ailed them, rolled to his feet and puffingly led the way

Inside, the spokesman snuffled, gave his shoulders a queer little

hunch, and asked, "Can you fix us up, buddy?" The other glanced restlessly about the place as if he were constantly hearing unaccountable noises

Tony thought he understood clearly now "Booze, 'ey?" he smiled. "Sorry—I no got."

"Booze, hell, no!" The voice dwindled to a throaty whisper "Dope. Coke, milk, dice—anything Name your price Got to have it"

"Dope?" Tony was entirely at a loss "What's a dis, dope?"

"Aw, lay off, brother. We're in on this Here." He handed Tony a piece of paper "Froggy gave us a coupon. Come on You can't go wrong"

"I no got," insisted the perplexed Tony; nor could he be budged on that point

Quite suddenly the manner of both men changed "All right," said the first angrily, in a voice as robust as his body "All right, you're clever You no got. Well, you will get You'll get twenty years!"

"Twenty year Whadda you talk?"

"Wait a minute, Mac," said the second caller "Maybe the wop's on the level Look here, Tony, we're officers, see, policemen" He produced a badge "A couple of weeks ago a guy was brought in dying for the want of a shot, see? Dope—he needed some dope—like this—in his arm. See? Well, we tried to make him tell us where he'd been getting it, but he was too weak. He croaked next day. Evidently he hadn't had money enough to buy any more

"Well, this morning a little nigger that goes by the name of Froggy was brought into the precinct pretty well doped up When he finally came to, he swore he got the stuff here at your store Of course, we've just been trying to trick you into giving yourself away, but you don't bite. Now what's your game? Know anything about this?"

Tony understood "I dunno," he said slowly; and then his own problem whose contemplation his callers had interrupted, occurred to him. "Sure!" he exclaimed. "Wait. Maybeso I know somet'ing."

"All right Spill it"

"I got a new man, work-a for me" And he told them what he had noted since King Solomon Gillis came.

"Sounds interesting Where is this guy?"

"Here in da store—all day."

"Be here tomorrow?"

"Sure All day."

"All right We'll drop in tomorrow and give him the eye. Maybe he's our man"

"Sure Come ten o'clock. I show you," promised Tony.

VI

Even the oldest and rattiest cabarets in Harlem have sense of shame enough to hide themselves under the ground—for instance, Edwards's To get into Edwards's you casually enter a dimly lighted corner saloon, apparently—only apparently—a subdued memory of brighter days What was once the family entrance is now a side entrance for ladies Supporting yourself against close walls, you crouchingly descend a narrow, twisted staircase until, with a final turn, you find yourself in a glaring, long, low basement. In a moment your eyes become accustomed to the haze of tobacco smoke. You see men and women seated at wire-legged, white-topped tables, which are covered with half-empty bottles and glasses, you trace the slow jazz acompaniment you heard as you came down the stairs to a pianist, a cornetist, and a drummer on a little platform at the far end of the room. There is a cleared space from the foot of the stairs, where you are standing, to the platform where this orchestra is mounted, and in it a tall brown girl is swaying from side to side and rhythmically proclaiming that she has the world in a jug and the stopper in her hand Behind a counter at your left sits a fat, bald, tea-colored Negro, and you wonder if this is Edwards—Edwards, who stands in with the police, with the political bosses, with the importers of wines and worse A white-vested waiter hustles you to a seat and takes your order The song's tempo becomes quicker, the drum and the cornet rip out a fanfare, almost drowning the piano; the girl catches up her dress and begins to dance . .

Gillis's wondering eyes had been roaming about They stopped.

"Look, Mouse!" he whispered. "Look a yonder!"

"Look at what?"

"Dog-gone if it ain' de self-same gal!"

"Wha' d' ye mean, self-same girl?"

"Over yonder, wi' de green stockin's. Dass de gal made me knock

over dem apples fust day I come to town 'Member? Been wishin' I could see her ev'y sence"

"What for?" Uggam wondered

King Solomon grew confidential "Ain' but two things in dis world, Mouse, I really wants One is to be a policeman Been wantin' dat ev'y sence I seen dat cullud traffic-cop dat day Other is to get myse'f a gal lak dat one over yonder!"

"You'll do it," laughed Uggam, "if you live long enough."

"Who dat wid her?"

"How 'n hell do I know?"

"He cullud?"

"Don't look like it Why? What of it?"

"Hm—nuthin'—"

"How many coupons y' got tonight?"

"Ten" King Solomon handed them over

"Y' ought to've slipt 'em to me under the table, but it's all right now, long as we got this table to ourselves. Here's y' medicine for tomorrer."

"Wha'?"

"Reach under the table"

Gillis secured and pocketed the medicine

"An here's two-fifty for a good day's work" Uggam passed the money over Perhaps he grew careless, certainly the passing this time was above the table, in plain sight

"Thanks, Mouse"

Two white men had been watching Gillis and Uggam from a table near by. In the tumult of merriment that rewarded the entertainer's most recent and daring effort, one of these men, with a word to the other, came over and took the vacant chair beside Gillis

"Is your name Gillis?"

"'Tain' nuthin' else"

Uggam's eyes narrowed

The white man showed King Solomon a police officer's badge

"You're wanted for dope-peddling Will you come along without trouble?"

"Fo' what?"

"Violation of the narcotic law—dope-selling."

"Who—me?"

"Come on, now, lay off that stuff I saw what happened just now myself" He addressed Uggam "Do you know this fellow?"

"Nope Never saw him before tonight"

"Didn't I just see him sell you something?"

"Guess you did We happened to be sittin' here at the same table and got to talkin' After a while I says I can't seem to sleep nights, so he offers me sump'n he says'll make me sleep, all right I don't know what it is, but he says he uses it himself an' I offers to pay him what it cost him That's how I come to take it Guess he's got more in his pocket there now"

The detective reached deftly into the coat packet of the dumfounded King Solomon and withdrew a packet of envelopes He tore off a corner of one, emptied a half-dozen tiny white tablets into his palm, and sneered triumphantly "You'll make a good witness," he told Uggam

The entertainer was issuing an ultimatum to all sweet mammas who dared to monkey around her loving man Her audience was absorbed and delighted, with the exception of one couple—the girl with the green stockings and her escort They sat directly in the line of vision of King Solomon's wide eyes, which, in the calamity that had descended upon him, for the moment saw nothing

"Are you coming without trouble?"

Mouse Uggam, his friend Harlem Land of plenty City of refuge —city of refuge If you live long enough—

Consciousness of what was happening between the pair across the room suddenly broke through Gillis's daze like flame through smoke. The man was trying to kiss the girl and she was resisting Gillis jumped up The detective, taking the act for an attempt at escape, jumped with him and was quick enough to intercept him The second officer came at once to his partner's aid, blowing his whistle several times as he came

People overturned chairs getting out of the way, but nobody ran for the door It was an old crowd A fight was a treat; and the tall Negro could fight

"Judas Priest!"

"Did you see that?"

"Damn!"

White—both white Five of Mose Joplin's horses. Poisoning a well A year's crops Green stockings—white—white—

"That's the time, papa!"

"Do it, big boy!"

"Good night!"

Uggam watched tensely, with one eye on the door. The second cop had blown for help—

Downing one of the detectives a third time and turning to grapple again with the other, Gillis found himself face to face with a uniformed black policeman

He stopped as if stunned For a moment he simply stared Into his mind swept his own words like a forgotten song, suddenly recalled.

"Cullud policemans!"

The officer stood ready, awaiting his rush

"Even—got—cullud—policemans—"

Very slowly King Solomon's arms relaxed, very slowly he stood erect, and the grin that came over his features had something exultant about it.

THE GILDED SIX-BITS

Zora Neale Hurston

It was a Negro yard around a Negro house in a Negro settlement that looked to the payroll of the G and G. Fertilizer Works for its support.

But there was something happy about the place. The front yard was parted in the middle by a sidewalk from gate to door-step, a sidewalk edged on either side by quart bottles driven neck down into the ground on a slant. A mess of homey flowers planted without a plan but blooming cheerily from their helter-skelter places The fence and house were whitewashed The porch and steps scrubbed white

The front door stood open to the sunshine so that the floor of the front room could finish drying after its weekly scouring. It was Saturday. Everything clean from the front gate to the privy house Yard raked so that the strokes of the rake would make a pattern Fresh newspaper cut in fancy edge on the kitchen shelves.

Missie May was bathing herself in the galvanized washtub in the bedroom. Her dark-brown skin glistened under the soapsuds that skittered down from her washrag Her stiff young breasts thrust forward aggressively like broad-based cones with the tips lacquered in black.

She heard men's voices in the distance and glanced at the dollar clock on the dresser.

"Humph! Ah'm way behind time t'day! Joe gointer be heah 'fore Ah git mah clothes on if Ah don't make haste "

She grabbed the clean meal sack at hand and dried herself hurriedly and began to dress But before she could tie her slippers, there came the ring of singing metal on wood Nine times.

Missie May grinned with delight She had not seen the big tall man come stealing in the gate and creep up the walk grinning happily at the joyful mischief he was about to commit. But she knew that it was her husband throwing silver dollars in the door for her to pick up and pile beside her plate at dinner. It was this way every Saturday afternoon. The nine dollars hurled into the open door, he

scurried to a hiding place behind the cape jasmine bush and waited.

Missie May promptly appeared at the door in mock alarm

"Who dat chunkin' money in mah do'way?" she demanded No answer from the yard She leaped off the porch and began to search the shrubbery She peeped under the porch and hung over the gate to look up and down the road While she did this, the man behind the jasmine darted to the china berry tree. She spied him and gave chase

"Nobody ain't gointer be chunkin' money at me and Ah not do 'em nothin'," she shouted in mock anger He ran around the house with Missie May at his heels She overtook him at the kitchen door He ran inside but could not close it after him before she crowded in and locked with him in a rough and tumble For several minutes the two were a furious mass of male and female energy Shouting, laughing, twisting, turning, tussling, tickling each other in the ribs, Missie May clutching onto Joe and Joe trying, but not too hard, to get away

"Missie May, take yo' hand out mah pocket!" Joe shouted out between laughs

"Ah ain't, Joe, not lessen you gwine gimme whateve' it is good you got in yo' pocket Turn it go, Joe, do Ah'll tear yo' clothes"

"Go on tear 'em You de one dat pushes de needles round heah. Move yo' hand, Missie May"

"Lemme git dat paper sack out yo' pocket Ah bet its candy kisses"

"Tain't Move yo' hand Woman ain't got no business in a man's clothes nohow Go way"

Missie May gouged way down and gave an upward jerk and triumphed

"Unhhunh! Ah got it It 'tis so candy kisses Ah knowed you had somethin' for me in yo' clothes Now Ah got to see whut's in every pocket you got"

Joe smiled indulgently and let his wife go through all of his pockets and take out the things that he had hidden there for her to find She bore off the chewing gum, the cake of sweet soap, the pocket handkerchief as if she had wrested them from him, as if they had not been bought for the sake of this friendly battle

"Whew! dat play-fight done got me all warmed up" Joe exclaimed "Got me some water in de kittle?"

"Yo' water is on de fire and yo' clean things is cross de bed Hurry up and wash yo'self and git changed so we kin eat Ah'm hongry" As Missie said this, she bore the steaming kettle into the bedroom

"You ain't hongry, sugar," Joe contradicted her "Youse jes' a little empty Ah'm de one whut's hongry Ah could eat up camp meetin', back off 'ssociation, and drink Jurdan dry. Have it on de table when Ah git out de tub"

"Don't you mess wid mah business, man You git in yo' clothes Ah'm a real wife, not no dress and breath Ah might not look lak one, but if you burn me, you won't git a thing but wife ashes"

Joe splashed in the bedroom and Missie May fanned around in the kitchen A fresh red and white checked cloth on the table Big pitcher of buttermilk beaded with pale drops of butter from the churn Hot fried mullet, crackling bread, ham hock atop a mound of string beans and new potatoes, and perched on the window-sill a pone of spicy potato pudding

Very little talk during the meal but that little consisted of banter that pretended to deny affection but in reality flaunted it Like when Missie May reached for a second helping of the tater pone Joe snatched it out of her reach

After Missie May had made two or three unsuccessful grabs at the pan, she begged, "Aw, Joe, gimme some mo' dat tater pone"

"Nope, sweetenin' is for us men-folks Y'all pritty lil frail eels don't need nothin' lak dis You too sweet already"

"Please, Joe"

"Naw, naw Ah don't want you to git no sweeter than whut you is already We goin' down de road a lil piece t'night so you go put on yo' Sunday-go-to-meetin' things"

Missie May looked at her husband to see if he was playing some prank "Sho nuff, Joe?"

"Yeah We goin' to de ice-cream parlor"

"Where de ice-cream parlor at, Joe?"

"A new man done come heah from Chicago and he done got a place and took and opened it up for a ice-cream parlor, and bein' as it's real swell, Ah wants you to be one de first ladies to walk in dere and have some set down"

"Do Jesus, Ah ain't knowed nothin' 'bout it. Who de man done it?"

"Mister Otis D. Slemmons, of spots and places—Memphis, Chicago, Jacksonville, Philadelphia and so on."

"Dat heavy-set man wid his mouth full of gold teethes?"

"Yeah. Where did you see 'im at?"

"Ah went down to de sto' tuh git a box of lye and Ah seen 'im standin' on de corner talkin' to some of de mens, and Ah come on back and went to scrubbin' de floor, and he passed and tipped his hat whilst Ah was scourin' de steps. Ah thought Ah never seen *him* befo'."

Joe smiled pleasantly. "Yeah, he's up to date He got de finest clothes Ah ever seen on a colored man's back "

"Aw, he don't look no better in his clothes than you do in yourn. He got a puzzlegut on 'im and he so chuckle-headed, he got a pone behind his neck "

Joe looked down at his own abdomen and said wistfully "Wisht Ah had a build on me lak he got He ain't puzzlegutted, honey. He jes' got a corperation Dat make 'm look lak a rich white man All rich mens is got some belly on 'em "

"Ah seen de pitchers of Henry Ford and he's a spare-built man and Rockefeller look lak he ain't got but one gut But Ford and Rockefeller and dis Slemmons and all de rest kin be as many-gutted as dey please, Ah's satisfied wid you jes' lak you is, baby God took pattern after a pine tree and built you noble Youse a pritty man, and if Ah knowed any way to make you mo' pritty still Ah'd take and do it "

Joe reached over gently and toyed with Missie May's ear "You jes' say dat cause you love me, but Ah know Ah can't hold no light to Otis D Slemmons. Ah ain't never been nowhere and Ah ain't got nothin' but you "

Missie May got on his lap and kissed him and he kissed back in kind Then he went on "All de womens is crazy 'bout 'im everywhere he go."

"How you know dat, Joe?"

"He tole us so hisself."

"Dat don't make it so. His mouf is cut cross-ways, ain't it? Well, he kin lie jes' lak anybody else "

"Good Lawd, Missie! You womens sho is hard to sense into things. He's got a five-dollar gold piece for a stick-pin and he got a ten-dollar

gold piece on his watch chain and his mouf is jes' crammed full of gold teethes. Sho wisht it wuz mine And whut make it so cool, he got money 'cumulated. And womens give it all to 'im."

"Ah don't see whut de womens see on 'im. Ah wouldn't give 'im a wink if de sheriff wuz after 'im"

"Well, he tole us how de white womens in Chicago give 'im all dat gold money So he don't 'low nobody to touch it at all Not even put dey finger on it. Dey tole 'im not to You kin make 'miration at it, but don't tetch it"

"Whyn't he stay up dere where dey so crazy 'bout 'im?"

"Ah reckon dey done made 'im vast-rich and he wants to travel some He says dey wouldn't leave 'im hit a lick of work He got mo' lady people crazy 'bout him than he kin shake a stick at."

"Joe, Ah hates to see you so dumb Dat stray nigger jes' tell y'all anything and y'all b'lieve it."

"Go 'head on now, honey and put on yo' clothes. He talkin' 'bout his pritty womens—Ah want 'im to see *mine*"

Missie May went off to dress and Joe spent the time trying to make his stomach punch out like Slemmons' middle. He tried the rolling swagger of the stranger, but found that his tall bone-and-muscle stride fitted ill with it He just had time to drop back into his seat before Missie May came in dressed to go.

On the way home that night Joe was exultant. "Didn't Ah say ole Otis was swell? Cain't he talk Chicago talk? Wuzn't dat funny whut he said when great big fat ole Ida Armstrong come in? He asted me, 'Who is dat broad wid de forte shake?' Dat's a new word Us always thought forty was a set of figgers but he showed us where it means a whole heap of things Sometimes he don't say forty, he jes' say thirty-eight and two and dat mean de same thing Know whut he tole me when Ah wuz payin' for our ice cream? He say, 'Ah have to hand it to you, Joe Dat wife of yours is jes' thirty-eight and two. Yessuh, she's forte!' Ain't he killin'?"

"He'll do in case of a rush. But he sho is got uh heap uh gold on 'im. Dat's de first time Ah ever seed gold money It lookted good on him sho nuff, but it'd look a whole heap better on you."

"Who, me? Missie May, youse crazy! Where would a po' man lak me git gold money from?"

Missie May was silent for a minute, then she said, "Us might find some goin' long de road some time. Us could"

"Who would be losin' gold money round heah? We ain't even seen none dese white folks wearin' no gold money on dey watch chain You must be figgerin' Mister Packard or Mister Cadillac goin' pass through heah"

"You don't know whut been lost 'round heah Maybe somebody way back in memorial times lost they gold money and went on off and it ain't never been found And then if we wuz to find it, you could wear some 'thout havin' no gang of womens lak dat Slemmons say he got."

Joe laughed and hugged her "Don't be so wishful 'bout me. Ah'm satisfied de way Ah is So long as Ah be yo' husband, Ah don't keer 'bout nothin' else Ah'd ruther all de other womens in de world to be dead than for you to have de toothache Less we go to bed and git our night rest"

It was Saturday night once more before Joe could parade his wife in Slemmons' ice-cream parlor again He worked the night shift and Saturday was his only night off Every other evening around six o'clock he left home, and dying dawn saw him hustling home around the lake where the challenging sun flung a flaming sword from east to west across the trembling water

That was the best part of life—going home to Missie May Their whitewashed house, the mock battle on Saturday, the dinner and ice-cream parlor afterwards, church on Sunday nights when Missie out-dressed any woman in town—all, everything, was right

One night around eleven the acid ran out at the G and G The foreman knocked off the crew and let the steam die down As Joe rounded the lake on his way home, a lean moon rode the lake in a silver boat If anybody had asked Joe about the moon on the lake, he would have said he hadn't paid it any attention But he saw it with his feelings It made him yearn painfully for Missie Creation obsessed him He thought about children They had been married more than a year now They had money put away They ought to be making little feet for shoes A little boy child would be about right.

He saw a dim light in the bedroom and decided to come in through the kitchen door He could wash the fertilizer dust off himself before presenting himself to Missie May It would be nice for her not

to know that he was there until he slipped into his place in bed and hugged her back She always liked that

He eased the kitchen door open slowly and silently, but when he went to set his dinner bucket on the table he bumped into a pile of dishes, and something crashed to the floor. He heard his wife gasp in fright and hurried to reassure her

"Iss me, honey. Don't git skeered"

There was a quick, large movement in the bedroom A rustle, a thud, and a stealthy silence The light went out

What? Robbers? Murderers? Some varmint attacking his helpless wife, perhaps He struck a match, threw himself on guard and stepped over the door-sill into the bedroom

The great belt on the wheel of Time slipped and eternity stood still. By the match light he could see the man's legs fighting with his breeches in his frantic desire to get them on He had both chance and time to kill the intruder in his helpless condition—half in and half out of his pants—but he was too weak to take action The shapeless enemies of humanity that live in the hours of Time had waylaid Joe He was assaulted in his weakness Like Samson awakening after his haircut So he just opened his mouth and laughed

The match went out and he struck another and lit the lamp A howling wind raced across his heart, but underneath its fury he heard his wife sobbing and Slemmons pleading for his life Offering to buy it with all that he had "Please, suh, don't kill me Sixty-two dollars at de sto' Gold money"

Joe just stood Slemmons looked at the window, but it was screened Joe stood out like a rough-backed mountain between him and the door Barring him from escape, from sunrise, from life

He considered a surprise attack upon the big clown that stood there laughing like a chessy cat But before his fist could travel an inch, Joe's own rushed out to crush him like a battering ram Then Joe stood over him

"Git into yo' damn rags, Slemmons, and dat quick"

Slemmons scrambled to his feet and into his vest and coat As he grabbed his hat, Joe's fury overrode his intentions and he grabbed at Slemmons with his left hand and struck at him with his right The right landed The left grazed the front of his vest Slemmons was knocked a somersault into the kitchen and fled through the

open door. Joe found himself alone with Missie May, with the golden watch charm clutched in his left fist. A short bit of broken chain dangled between his fingers.

Missie May was sobbing. Wails of weeping without words. Joe stood, and after awhile he found out that he had something in his hand And then he stood and felt without thinking and without seeing with his natural eyes Missie May kept on crying and Joe kept on feeling so much and not knowing what to do with all his feelings, he put Slemmons' watch charm in his pants pocket and took a good laugh and went to bed

"Missie May, whut you cryin' for?"

"Cause Ah love you so hard and Ah know you don't love *me* no mo'."

Joe sank his face into the pillow for a spell, then he said huskily, "You don't know de feelings of dat yet, Missie May "

"Oh Joe, honey, he said he wuz gointer give me dat gold money and he jes' kept on after me—"

Joe was very still and silent for a long time Then he said, "Well, don't cry no mo', Missie May Ah got yo' gold piece for you "

The hours went past on their rusty ankles Joe still and quiet on one bed-rail and Missie May wrung dry of sobs on the other Finally the sun's tide crept upon the shore of night and drowned all its hours Missie May with her face stiff and streaked towards the window saw the dawn come into her yard It was day Nothing more Joe wouldn't be coming home as usual No need to fling open the front door and sweep off the porch, making it nice for Joe Never no more breakfasts to cook; no more washing and starching of Joe's jumper-jackets and pants No more nothing So why get up?

With this strange man in her bed, she felt embarrassed to get up and dress She decided to wait till he had dressed and gone Then she would get up, dress quickly and be gone forever beyond reach of Joe's looks and laughs But he never moved Red light turned to yellow, then white.

From beyond the no-man's land between them came a voice. A strange voice that yesterday had been Joe's

"Missie May, ain't you gonna fix me no breakfus'?"

She sprang out of bed. "Yeah, Joe. Ah didn't reckon you wuz hongry."

No need to die today. Joe needed her for a few more minutes anyhow.

Soon there was a roaring fire in the cook stove Water bucket full and two chickens killed. Joe loved fried chicken and rice. She didn't deserve a thing and good Joe was letting her cook him some breakfast. She rushed hot biscuits to the table as Joe took his seat.

He ate with his eyes in his plate No laughter, no banter.

"Missie May, you ain't eatin' yo breakfus'."

"Ah don't choose none Ah thank yuh "

His coffee cup was empty. She sprang to refill it When she turned from the stove and bent to set the cup beside Joe's plate, she saw the yellow coin on the table between them.

She slumped into her seat and wept into her arms

Presently Joe said calmly, "Missie May, you cry too much Don't look back lak Lot's wife aud turn to salt "

The sun, the hero of every day, the impersonal old man that beams as brightly on death as on birth, came up every morning and raced across the blue dome and dipped into the sea of fire every evening Water ran down hill and birds nested.

Missie knew why she didn't leave Joe She couldn't She loved him too much, but she could not understand why Joe didn't leave her He was polite, even kind at times, but aloof

There were no more Saturday romps No ringing silver dollars to stack beside her plate No pockets to rifle In fact the yellow coin in his trousers was like a monster hiding in the cave of his pockets to destroy her.

She often wondered if he still had it, but nothing could have induced her to ask nor yet to explore his pockets to see for herself. Its shadow was in the house whether or no

One night Joe came home around midnight and complained of pains in the back He asked Missie to rub him down with liniment. It had been three months since Missie had touched his body and it all seemed strange But she rubbed him Grateful for the chance Before morning, youth triumphed and Missie exulted But the next day, as she joyfully made up their bed, beneath her pillow she found the piece of money with the bit of chain attached

Alone to herself, she looked at the thing with loathing, but look she must. She took it into her hands with trembling and saw first

thing that it was no gold piece It was a gilded half dollar Then she knew why Slemmons had forbidden anyone to touch his gold He trusted village eyes at a distance not to recognize his stick-pin as a gilded quarter, and his watch charm as a four-bit piece

She was glad at first that Joe had left it there Perhaps he was through with her punishment They were man and wife again Then another thought came clawing at her He had come home to buy from her as if she were any woman in the long house Fifty cents for her love As if to say that he could pay as well as Slemmons She slid the coin into his Sunday pants pocket and dressed herself and left his house

Half way between her house and the quarters she met her husband's mother, and after a short talk she turned and went back home Never would she admit defeat to that woman who prayed for it nightly If she had not the substance of marriage she had the outside show Joe must leave *her* She let him see she didn't want his old gold four-bits too

She saw no more of the coin for some time though she knew that Joe could not help finding it in his pocket But his health kept poor, and he came home at least every ten days to be rubbed

The sun swept around the horizon, trailing its robes of weeks and days One morning as Joe came in from work, he found Missie May chopping wood Without a word he took the ax and chopped a huge pile before he stopped

"You ain't got no business choppin' wood, and you know it "

"How come? Ah been choppin' it for de last longest "

"Ah ain't blind You makin' feet for shoes "

"Won't you be glad to have a li'l baby chile, Joe?"

"You know dat 'thout astin' me "

"Iss gointer be a boy chile and de very spit of you."

"You reckon, Missie May?"

"Who else could it look lak?"

Joe said nothing, but he thrust his hand deep into his pocket and fingered something there

It was almost six months later Missie May took to bed and Joe went and got his mother to come wait on the house

Missie May was delivered of a fine boy Her travail was over when

Joe came in from work one morning His mother and the old women were drinking great bowls of coffee around the fire in the kitchen

The minute Joe came into the room his mother called him aside

"How did Missie May make out?" he asked quickly

"Who, dat gal? She strong as a ox She gointer have plenty mo'. We done fixed her wid de sugar and lard to sweeten her for de nex' one"

Joe stood silent awhile

You ain't ast 'bout de baby, Joe You oughter be mighty proud cause he sho is de spittin' image of yuh, son Dat's yourn all right, if you never git another one, dat un is yourn And you know Ah'm mighty proud too, son, cause Ah never thought well of you marryin' Missie May cause her ma used tuh fan her foot round right smart and Ah been mighty skeered dat Missie May wuz gointer git misput on her road"

Joe said nothing He fooled around the house till late in the day, then, just before he went to work, he went and stood at the foot of the bed and asked his wife how she felt He did this every day during the week

On Saturday he went to Orlando to make his market It had been a long time since he had done that.

Meat and lard, meal and flour, soap and starch Cans of corn and tomatoes All the staples He fooled around town for awhile and bought bananas and apples Way after while he went around to the candy store

"Hello, Joe," the clerk greeted him "Ain't seen you in a long time"

"Nope, Ah ain't been heah Been round in spots and places"

"Want some of them molasses kisses you always buy?"

"Yessuh" He threw the gilded half dollar on the counter "Will dat spend?"

"Whut is it, Joe? Well, I'll be doggone! A gold-plated four-bit piece Where'd you git it, Joe?"

"Often a stray nigger dat come through Eatonville He had it on his watch chain for a charm—goin' round making out iss gold money Ha ha! He had a quarter on his tie pin and it wuz all golded up too Tryin' to fool people Makin' out he so rich and everything. Ha! Ha! Tryin' to tole off folkses wives from home."

"How did you git it, Joe? Did he fool you, too?"

"Who, me? Naw suh! He ain't fooled me none. Know whut Ah done? He come round me wid his smart talk Ah hauled off and knocked 'im down and took his old four-bits way from 'im Gointer buy my wife some good ole lasses kisses wid it Gimme fifty cents worth of dem candy kisses"

"Fifty cents buys a mighty lot of candy kisses, Joe Why don't you split it up and take some chocolate bars, too They eat good, too"

"Yessuh, dey do, but Ah wants all dat in kisses. Ah got a li'l boy chile home now. Tain't a week old yet, but he kin suck a sugar tit and maybe eat one them kisses hisself"

Joe got his candy and left the store The clerk turned to the next ·ustomer "Wisht I could be like these darkies Laughin' all the time Nothin' worries 'em"

Back in Eatonville, Joe reached his own front door There was the ring of singing metal on wood Fifteen times Missie May couldn't run to the door, but she crept there as quickly as she could

"Joe Banks, Ah hear you chunkin' money in mah do'way You wait till Ah got mah strength back and Ah'm gointer fix you for dat."

A SUMMER TRAGEDY

Arna Bontemps

Old Jeff Patton, the black share farmer, fumbled with his bow tie His fingers trembled and the high, stiff collar pinched his throat A fellow loses his hand for such vanities after thirty or forty years of simple life Once a year, or maybe twice if there's a wedding among his kinfolks, he may spruce up, but generally fancy clothes do nothing but adorn the wall of the big room and feed the moths That had been Jeff Patton's experience He had not worn his stiff-bosomed shirt more than a dozen times in all his married life. His swallow-tailed coat lay on the bed beside him, freshly brushed and pressed, but it was as full of holes as the overalls in which he worked on week-days The moths had used it badly. Jeff twisted his mouth into a hideous toothless grimace as he contended with the obstinate bow. He stamped his good foot and decided to give up the struggle.

"Jennie," he called.

"What's that, Jeff?" His wife's shrunken voice came out of the adjoining room like an echo It was hardly bigger than a whisper.

"I reckon you'll have to he'p me wid this heah bow tie, baby," he said meekly "Dog if I can hitch it up"

Her answer was not strong enough to reach him, but presently the old woman came to the door, feeling her way with a stick. She had a wasted, dead-leaf appearance Her body, as scrawny and gnarled as a string bean, seemed less than nothing in the ocean of frayed and faded petticoats that surrounded her These hung an inch or two above the tops of her heavy unlaced shoes and showed little grotesque piles where the stockings had fallen down from her negligible legs

"You oughta could do a heap mo' wid a thing like that'n me—beingst as you got yo' good sight"

"Looks like I oughta could," he admitted "But ma fingers is gone democrat on me I get all mixed up in the looking glass an' can't tell wicha way to twist the devilish thing"

Jennie sat on the side of the bed and old Jeff Patton got down on one knee while she tied the bow knot. It was a slow and painful

ordeal for each of them in this position Jeff's bones cracked, his knee ached, and it was only after a half dozen attempts that Jennie worked a semblance of a bow into the tie

"I got to dress maself now," the old woman whispered "These is ma old shoes an' stockings, and I ain't so much as unwrapped ma dress"

"Well, don't worry 'bout me no mo', baby," Jeff said "That 'bout finishes me All I gotta do now is slip on that old coat 'n ves' an' I'll be fixed to leave"

Jennie disappeared again through the dim passage into the shed room Being blind was no handicap to her in that black hole Jeff heard the cane placed against the wall beside the door and knew that his wife was on easy ground He put on his coat, took a battered top hat from the bed post and hobbled to the front door He was ready to travel As soon as Jennie could get on her Sunday shoes and her old black silk dress, they would start

Outside the tiny log house, the day was warm and mellow with sunshine A host of wasps were humming with busy excitement in the trunk of a dead sycamore Gray squirrels were searching through the grass for hickory nuts and blue jays were in the trees, hopping from branch to branch Pine woods stretched away to the left like a black sea Among them were scattered scores of log houses like Jeff's, houses of black share farmers Cows and pigs wandered freely among the trees There was no danger of loss Each farmer knew his own stock and knew his neighbor's as well as he knew his neighbor's children

Down the slope to the right were the cultivated acres on which the colored folks worked They extended to the river, more than two miles away, and they were today green with the unmade cotton crop A tiny thread of a road, which passed directly in front of Jeff's place, ran through these green fields like a pencil mark

Jeff, standing outside the door with his absurd hat in his left hand, surveyed the wide scene tenderly He had been forty-five years on these acres He loved them with the unexplained affection that others have for the country to which they belong

The sun was hot on his head, his collar still pinched his throat, and the Sunday clothes were intolerably hot Jeff transferred the hat

to his right hand and began fanning with it Suddenly the whisper that was Jennie's voice came out of the shed room

"You can bring the car round front whilst you's waitin'," it said feebly. There was a tired pause, then it added, "I'll soon be fixed to go"

"A'right, baby," Jeff answered "I'll get it in a minute"

But he didn't move A thought struck him that made his mouth fall open The mention of the car brought to his mind, with new intensity, the trip he and Jennie were about to take Fear came into his eyes, excitement took his breath Lord, Jesus!

"Jeff . O Jeff," the old woman's whisper called

He awakened with a jolt "Hunh, baby?"

"What you doin'?"

"Nuthin. Jes studyin' I jes been turnin' things round 'n round in ma mind"

"You could be gettin' the car," she said

"Oh yes, right away, baby"

He started round to the shed, limping heavily on his bad leg There were three frizzly chickens in the yard All his other chickens had been killed or stolen recently But the frizzly chickens had been saved somehow That was fortunate indeed, for these curious creatures had a way of devouring "poison" from the yard and in that way protecting against conjure and black luck and spells But even the frizzly chickens seemed now to be in a stupor Jeff thought they had some ailment, he expected all three of them to die shortly

The shed in which the old T-model Ford stood was only a grass roof held up by four corner poles It had been built by tremulous hands at a time when the little rattletrap car had been regarded as a peculiar treasure And, miraculously, despite wind and downpour, it still stood

Jeff adjusted the crank and put his weight upon it The engine came to life with a sputter and bang that rattled the old car from radiator to tail light Jeff hopped into the seat and put his foot on the accelerator The sputtering and banging increased The rattling became more violent That was good It was good banging, good sputtering and rattling, and it meant that the aged car was still in running condition She could be depended on for this trip.

Again Jeff's thought halted as it paralyzed The suggestion of the

trip fell into the machinery of his mind like a wrench He felt dazed and weak He swung the car out into the yard, made a half turn and drove around to the front door When he took his hands off the wheel, he noticed that he was trembling violently He cut off the motor and climbed to the ground to wait for Jennie

A few minutes later she was at the window, her voice rattling against the pane like a broken shutter.

"I'm ready, Jeff"

He did not answer, but limped into the house and took her by the arm He led her slowly through the big room, down the step and across the yard

"You reckon I'd oughta lock the do'?" he asked softly

They stopped and Jennie weighed the question Finally she shook her head

"Ne' mind the do'," she said "I don't see no cause to lock up things"

"You right," Jeff agreed "No cause to lock up"

Jeff opened the door and helped his wife into the car. A quick shudder passed over him Jesus! Again he trembled

"How come you shaking so?" Jennie whispered.

"I don't know," he said

"You mus' be scairt, Jeff"

"No, baby, I ain't scairt"

He slammed the door after her and went around to crank up again The motor started easily Jeff wished that it had not been so responsive He would have liked a few more minutes in which to turn things around in his head As it was, with Jennie chiding him about being afraid, he had to keep going He swung the car into the little pencil-mark road and started off toward the river, driving very slowly, very cautiously

Chugging across the green countryside, the small battered Ford seemed tiny indeed Jeff felt a familiar excitement, a thrill, as they came down the first slope to the immense levels on which the cotton was growing He could not help reflecting that the crops were good He knew what that meant, too, he had made forty-five of them with his own hands It was true that he had worn out nearly a dozen mules, but that was the fault of old man Stevenson, the owner of the land. Major Stevenson had the odd notion that one mule was all a

share farmer needed to work a thirty-acre plot. It was an expensive notion, the way it killed mules from overwork, but the old man held to it Jeff thought it killed a good many share farmers as well as mules, but he had no sympathy for them He had always been strong, and he had been taught to have no patience with weakness in men. Women or children might be tolerated if they were puny, but a weak man was a curse. Of course, his own children—

Jeff's thought halted there He and Jennie never mentioned their dead children any more And naturally, he did not wish to dwell upon them in his mind Before he knew it, some remark would slip out of his mouth and that would make Jennie feel blue Perhaps she would cry A woman like Jennie could not easily throw off the grief that comes from losing five grown children within two years Even Jeff was still staggered by the blow His memory had not been much good recently He frequently talked to himself And, although he had kept it a secret, he knew that his courage had left him He was terrified by the least unfamiliar sound at night He was reluctant to venture far from home in the daytime And that habit of trembling when he felt fearful was now far beyond his control Sometimes he became afraid and trembled without knowing what had frightened him The feeling would just come over him like a chill

The car rattled slowly over the dusty road Jennie sat erect and silent with a little absurd hat pinned to her hair Her useless eyes seemed very large, very white in their deep sockets Suddenly Jeff heard her voice, and he inclined his head to catch the words.

"Is we passed Delia Moore's house yet?" she asked.

"Not yet," he said

"You must be drivin' mighty slow, Jeff."

"We just as well take our time, baby "

There was a pause A little puff of steam was coming out of the radiator of the car Heat wavered above the hood Delia Moore's house was nearly half a mile away. After a moment Jennie spoke again

"You ain't really scairt, is you, Jeff?"

"Nah, baby, I ain't scairt."

"You know how we agreed—we gotta keep on goin'."

Jewels of perspiration appeared on Jeff's forehead. His eyes rounded, blinked, became fixed on the road.

"I don't know," he said with a shiver, "I reckon it's the only thing to do"

"Hm"

A flock of guinea fowls, pecking in the road, were scattered by the passing car Some of them took to their wings, others hid under bushes A blue jay, swaying on a leafy twig, was annoying a roadside squirrel Jeff held an even speed till he came near Delia's place. Then he slowed down noticeably

Delia's house was really no house at all, but an abandoned store building converted into a dwelling It sat near a crossroads, beneath a single black cedar tree There Delia, a cattish old creature of Jennie's age, lived alone She had been there more years than anybody could remember, and long ago had won the disfavor of such women as Jennie For in her young days Delia had been gayer, yellower and saucier than seemed proper in those parts Her ways with menfolks had been dark and suspicious And the fact that she had had as many husbands as children did not help her reputation

"Yonder's old Delia," Jeff said as they passed.

"What she doin'?"

"Jes sittin' in the do'," he said

"She see us?"

"Hm," Jeff said "Musta did"

That relieved Jennie It strengthened her to know that her old enemy had seen her pass in her best clothes That would give the old she-devil something to chew her gums and fret about, Jennie thought Wouldn't she have a fit if she didn't find out? Old evil Delia! This would be just the thing for her It would pay her back for being so evil It would also pay her, Jennie thought, for the way she used to grin at Jeff—long ago when her teeth were good

The road became smooth and red, and Jeff could tell by the smell of the air that they were nearing the river He could see the rise where the road turned and ran along parallel to the stream The car chugged on monotonously After a long silent spell, Jennie leaned against Jeff and spoke

"How many bale o' cotton you think we got standin'?" she said.

Jeff wrinkled his forehead as he calculated.

"'Bout twenty-five, I reckon"

"How many you make las' year?"

"Twenty-eight," he said. "How come you ask that?"

"I's jes thinkin'," Jennie said quietly.

"It don't make a speck o' difference though," Jeff reflected "If we get much or if we get little, we still gonna be in debt to old man Stevenson when he gets through counting up agin us. It's took us a long time to learn that."

Jennie was not listening to these words. She had fallen into a trance-like meditation Her lips twitched She chewed her gums and rubbed her gnarled hands nervously Suddenly, she leaned forward, buried her face in the nervous hands and burst into tears She cried aloud in a dry cracked voice that suggested the rattle of fodder on dead stalks She cried aloud like a child, for she had never learned to suppress a genuine sob Her slight old frame shook heavily and seemed hardly able to sustain such violent grief

"What's the matter, baby?" Jeff asked awkwardly. "Why you cryin' like all that?"

"I's jes thinkin'," she said.

"So you the one what's scairt now, hunh?"

"I ain't scairt, Jeff I's jes thinkin' 'bout leavin' eve'thing like this—eve'thing we been used to It's right sad-like "

Jeff did not answer, and presently Jennie buried her face again and cried

The sun was almost overhead It beat down furiously on the dusty wagon-path road, on the parched roadside grass and the tiny battered car Jeff's hands, gripping the wheel, became wet with perspiration, his forehead sparkled Jeff's lips parted His mouth shaped a hideous grimace His face suggested the face of a man being burned. But the torture passed and his expression softened again.

"You mustn't cry, baby," he said to his wife. "We gotta be strong. We can't break down."

Jennie waited a few seconds, then said, "You reckon we oughta do it, Jeff? You reckon we oughta go 'head an' do it, really?"

Jeff's voice choked; his eyes blurred He was terrified to hear Jennie say the thing that had been in his mind all morning She had egged him on when he had wanted more than anything in the world to wait, to reconsider, to think things over a little longer. Now she was getting cold feet Actually, there was no need of thinking the question through again. It would only end in making the same painful de-

cision once more. Jeff knew that. There was no need of fooling around longer

"We jes as well to do like we planned," he said "They ain't nothin' else for us now—it's the bes' thing"

Jeff thought of the handicaps, the near impossibility, of making another crop with his leg bothering him more and more each week. Then there was always the chance that he would have another stroke, like the one that had made him lame Another one might kill him. The least it could do would be to leave him helpless Jeff gasped—Lord, Jesus! He could not bear to think of being helpless, like a baby, on Jennie's hands Frail, blind Jennie

The little pounding motor of the car worked harder and harder. The puff of steam from the cracked radiator became larger Jeff realized that they were climbing a little rise A moment later the road turned abruptly and he looked down upon the face of the river.

"Jeff"

"Hunh?"

"Is that the water I hear?"

"Hm Tha's it"

"Well, which way you goin' now?"

"Down this-a way," he said "The road runs 'long 'side o' the water a lil piece"

She waited a while calmly Then she said, "Drive faster"

"A'right, baby," Jeff said

The water roared in the bed of the river It was fifty or sixty feet below the level of the road Between the road and the water there was a long smooth slope, sharply inclined The slope was dry, the clay hardened by prolonged summer heat. The water below, roaring in a narrow channel, was noisy and wild.

"Jeff"

"Hunh?"

"How far you goin'?"

"Jes a lil piece down the road"

"You ain't scairt is you, Jeff?"

"Nah, baby," he said trembling "I ain't scairt."

"Remember how we planned it, Jeff. We gotta do it like we said. Brave-like."

"Hm."

Jeff's brain darkened Things suddenly seemed unreal, like figures in a dream. Thoughts swam in his mind foolishly, hysterically, like little blind fish in a pool within a dense cave They rushed, crossed one another, jostled, collided, retreated and rushed again Jeff soon became dizzy. He shuddered violently and turned to his wife

"Jennie, I can't do it I can't " His voice broke pitifully

She did not appear to be listening All the grief had gone from her face She sat erect, her unseeing eyes wide open, strained and frightful Her glossy black skin had become dull She seemed as thin, as sharp and bony, as a starved bird Now, having suffered and endured the sadness of tearing herself away from beloved things, she showed no anguish She was absorbed with her own thoughts, and she didn't even hear Jeff's voice shouting in her ear

Jeff said nothing more For an instant there was light in his cavernous brain. The great chamber was, for less than a second, peopled by characters he knew and loved They were simple, healthy creatures, and they behaved in a manner that he could understand They had quality But since he had already taken leave of them long ago, the remembrance did not break his heart again Young Jeff Patton was among them, the Jeff Patton of fifty years ago who went down to New Orleans with a crowd of country boys to the Mardi Gras doings The gay young crowd, boys with candy-striped shirts and rouged-brown girls in noisy silks, was like a picture in his head. Yet it did not make him sad On that very trip Slim Burns had killed Joe Beasley—the crowd had been broken up Since then Jeff Patton's world had been the Greenbriar Plantation If there had been other Mardi Gras carnivals, he had not heard of them Since then there had been no time, the years had fallen on him like waves Now he was old, worn out Another paralytic stroke (like the one he had already suffered) would put him on his back for keeps In that condition, with a frail blind woman to look after him, he would be worse off than if he were dead

Suddenly Jeff's hands became steady He actually felt brave He slowed down the motor of the car and carefully pulled off the road. Below, the water of the stream boomed, a soft thunder in the deep channel Jeff ran the car onto the clay slope, pointed it directly toward the stream and put his foot heavily on the accelerator The little car leaped furiously down the steep incline toward the water The

movement was nearly as swift and direct as a fall The two old black folks, sitting quietly side by side, showed no excitement In another instant the car hit the water and dropped immediately out of sight

A little later it lodged in the mud of a shallow place One wheel of the crushed and upturned little Ford became visible above the rushing water.

ESSAYS

THE NEGRO PRESS TODAY

Roi Ottley

I

From many quarters, attention is focusing today upon the Negro press. Articulating as it does, freely and vigorously, the Negro's insistence that a valid war for the Four Freedoms must include the 13,000,000 Negroes in America, it is in many ways what Pearl Buck would call "a testing point for democracy" The outcries against it as an organ of protest are many, but the understanding of the need it serves is sadly inadequate To the Negro and his press alike, the efforts of a large section of white America to check his protest rather than examine and act upon its causes seem utterly at variance with the avowed democratic objectives of the present world struggle.

Stimulated by the high-minded slogans of democracy heard currently, the Negro is talking with understandable and considerable vigor about his condition and what is to be done about it He has gone to war against the American dictator Jim Crow, as well as against the Axis dictators, and, naturally enough, he can impute no good to either enemy. His loudest and most articulate voice in this battle is the Negro press, which makes no bones about being stridently biased in the Negro's cause

Its truculent headlines, regarded in certain quarters as inflammatory, have caused concern to the Government Archibald MacLeish, while director of the Office of Facts and Figures, predecessor to the Office of War Information, called an informal conference of Negro editors at which he attempted to counsel them on treatment of news They told him frankly that unless the Negro was accorded his constitutional rights as a citizen they could not cease militant crusading. This placed him in an embarrassing—and indeed untenable—position of having to ask Negroes to forego their claims for equal treatment in the midst of a war theoretically being fought for democracy. This request, in the view of the Negro journalists, meant abdication of the Negro's rights, and they rejected it. Two months later the Negro Newspaper Publishers' Association held its annual conference in Chicago and adopted a war resolution which pledged their papers to campaign for "victory at home and abroad."

Subsequently the Department of Justice looked into this matter of the Negro press Three or four papers reported visits by FBI agents The *Pittsburgh Courier,* manifestly incensed by the implications, labeled the visits as "an obvious effort to cow the Negro press," and with characteristic vigor declared that "instead of trying to frighten Negro editors into silence, the FBI should investigate those forces fostering fascism" within America.

Since that time, in one form or another, more pressure has been brought on the Negro press to end its aggressiveness on racial questions Lately, a number of people outside government circles—individuals from Westbrook Pegler to Mrs Roosevelt—have expressed concern about the editorial policy of the Negro press in wartime But few of the white critics—with the exception of the President's wife—begin their attack with the fundamental assumption that equality of the races is the goal to be achieved The Four Freedoms? Oh, yes, but at a comfortable distance Here is the point where the Negro press parts company with even well-meaning white friends For, in essence, the press is crusading for a change in American concepts of race, for an end to distinctions based on skin color, here and now

Such a policy, viewed with considerable alarm by certain sections of the white population, has brought the Negro press into a head-on clash with the traditional American pattern for the Negro Yet this policy—a line from which it never varies—makes the press one of the most important agencies within the Negro community, if not in America Its position dovetails also with that of the Negro's "Big Three"—the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the National Urban League, and the March on Washington Movement—those organizations which will not be satisfied by appeasement, which insist on measurable progress toward equality for the Negro now.

Today the press rivals the church in its influence on the masses of Negroes—unencumbered as it is by religious dogma, or, for that matter, by rigid party lines It also influences those considerable thousands whom the church never reaches. It is, in actuality, the only established agency in Negro life which is without any direct "white" influence whatsoever in the formulation of its policies This fundamental fact may explain why it speaks out definitively on racial questions.

What should be of acute concern to the white community is that, whatever its virtues or shortcomings, the Negro press is today a faithful reflection of the Negro mass mind, and as such it cannot be dismissed lightly Attempts to muzzle it or suppress it altogether, for the sake of a mythical "unity," are doomed to fail Such attempts add only one more cause to the deep unrest and groping for self-realization the press now mirrors, they breed only more resentment and militancy.

II

To understand this vastly important Negro agency, we must trace briefly its growth, development and reason for being, which may throw its present-day character into perspective To begin with, the Negro press has been a force—though largely unseen until today—for more than a hundred years, and was born as an organ of protest The first Negro newspaper published in the United States, *Freedom's Journal,* made its appearance in New York City in 1827, four years before Garrison's *Liberator*, and at a moment when the Abolitionists were beginning to gather forces for a mighty assault on slavery The *Journal's* editors frankly declared that in fighting to destroy the institution of slavery the paper was of necessity an organ of propaganda

At the close of the Civil War the Negro press numbered about thirty publications Then the assassination of Lincoln brought new anxieties to the black population The death of the Emancipator was followed by the emergence of the Ku Klux Klan, the erecting of legal barriers in the South to reduce the black man's status as a citizen, violence to Negro workingmen, and the beginning of lynching as an instrument of terror Meantime, liberal white men were consumed with the mighty rush of dollars They forgot all about the progressive character of the war and left Negroes to shift for themselves in a hostile community The moral conscience of the nation, once situated in New England, had gone abroad, remaining there as an expatriate Negroes stood alone As they sized up the situation, a Negro press was an urgent need to combat the rapidly mounting anti-Negro sentiment and to unify the black population for counter-action By the '90s, the Negro press had grown to such an extent that a

Negro editor, I. Garland Penn, wrote its history in a 300-page volume called *The Afro-American Press,* in which he recounted its service to the Negro community.

With America's entrance into the First World War, "to make the world safe for democracy," a number of publications saw the democratic implications of this phrase in connection with improving the position of the Negro at home and almost immediately became more aggressive. Even the older conservative papers spoke up more daringly Attorney General A Mitchell Palmer, after investigating the reported "radicalism" among Negro newspapers, solemnly told the nation that the utterances of Negro editors were not "the ignorant vaporings of untrained minds," but the sober declarations of intelligent men who were "defiantly assertive of the Negro's equality."

While Negro newspapers were still not at one in their social philosophy, they all were now in advance of any previous position the Negro press had taken The war had set them in motion along the road to democracy, and they remained in the groove Today the press is a powerful force in the Negro's struggle for equality, reaching into every corner and crevice of the Negro community There are some 230 Negro newspapers in the United States, and the Associated Negro Press, a news-gathering agency which services them. They have a combined circulation well above two million, covering the Negro reading public like a blanket The leading papers are members of the Audit Bureau of Circulation. The *Pittsburgh Courier,* the most important Negro paper in America, leads the field with 225,000 circulation (in 1942).

Besides the *Courier,* the largest and most influential papers are the *Baltimore Afro-American, Norfolk Journal and Guide, Chicago Defender, New York Amsterdam-Star News, New York Age, People's Voice, Kansas City Call, Oklahoma Black Dispatch, Michigan Chronicle, Cleveland Call and Post, Philadelphia Tribune, Houston Informer, Atlanta Daily World* and *California Eagle.* Together they employ about two thousand workers and own equipment worth more than a million dollars. There are, as well, several hundred religious, fraternal, literary and labor journals, school and college publications, a few theatrical, picture and fashion magazines, and such non-profit periodicals as *The Crisis,* official mouthpiece of the NAACP, and *Opportunity,* organ of the National Urban League.

III

Many of them have a tough time of it financially, for there is still little profitable advertising in the Negro newspapers. The chief revenue comes from the sale of the papers themselves, which usually retail for ten cents a copy—they are weeklies Much of what advertising there is is reminiscent of that in the general papers of the '80s and '90s, before advertising developed into a competitive art, and includes many sucker items such as lodestones, zodiacal incense, and books on unusual love practices, products that purport to turn black skin white, or straighten kinky hair. The hair dekinking process has, indeed, developed into a sizable industry, which, besides catering to Negro women, has found vogue with crinkly-haired white women and gets advertised also in the large white New York dailies. Some of the largest advertising copy that appears in Negro newspapers comes from such sources.

About this phase of its operations, the Negro press is extremely sensitive It has indeed made determined efforts to eliminate such copy from its columns. Negro readers themselves have been particularly critical of the press in this regard, but Negro businesses alone—none too large—cannot bring in the sums necessary for operating large newspaper plants, the publishers argue; white firms discriminate against Negro newspapers when earmarking funds for advertising, and they must snatch whatever they can get Once, when Philip Morris cigarettes experimented with a direct appeal to the Negro market by purchasing space in three Negro newspapers situated in cities with large Negro populations, a neighbor paper unblushingly appealed to the "race loyalty" of its readers, saying it was up to "every Negro who smokes cigarettes to consider this (Philip Morris) appeal " It is only fair to say that this venturesome advertiser cashed in handsomely on a meager investment—for such appeals do get tangible results A by-product of the drive of Negro newspapers to get advertising of nationally sold goods has incidentally been the employment of Negroes as salesmen by many of the large companies which make bids for the patronage of Negro consumers.

It is of course a truism that no newspaper can operate without income, and often, in the Negro press as among white papers, what constitutes "good business" in the eyes of the publisher rules the

roost There was, for instance, the publisher who, during the depression, forbade any stories on Negro unemployment and suffering. With an eye on the cash register, he held that white advertisers would refuse to buy space in a paper catering to a poor community. This is, however, an exceptional case In one sense, Negro publishers are perhaps more advanced in their concepts of what is good business than white publishers The *Amsterdam-Star News* has for a number of years employed white writers, editors and advertising solicitors. Today, the *Pittsburgh Courier* maintains a Fifth Avenue advertising office with an almost exclusively white personnel The current attitude of the Negro press seems documented in the fact that Harlem's brand-new PM-ish *People's Voice,* in bidding for circulation, announced it would accept no advertising that preys on superstition

Yet this very lack of general advertising often permits the Negro papers to speak out boldly and freely on racial and social questions As small enterprises, they crusade for government control of big business, particularly those organizations that refuse to employ Negroes As organs that cater to working people, they strongly support the right of workers to be represented by trade unions They have launched spirited attacks on those AFL craft unions which refuse to admit Negro skilled workers to their memberships But, with fine inconsistency, they are, like their white neighbors, generally opposed to the unionization of their own employees Back in 1935, when the editorial workers of the *Amsterdam-Star News,* as members of the American Newspaper Guild, sought recognition of the union, the publishers promptly locked them out and charged them with being "misled by Communists," and Heywood Broun, then Guild president, was castigated by the publishers for interfering in a strictly Negro issue.

IV

Politically this press-from-across-the-tracks may have sharply differing editorial slants, yet together the papers form a solid phalanx fighting for the equality of the Negro. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in Harlem, in many ways a cross section of Negro life Three Negro newspapers form the press in this area The *New York Age,* oldest and most conservative, acknowledges that change in

the Negro's status is necessary but holds that it should come through orderly democratic processes and by the grace of the Republican Party In more than fifty years of existence, the *Age* has shown a keen sense of social responsibility, a policy underscored by its owner's adherence to the philosophy of Booker T Washington Calmly edited, the paper has had distinguished editors like James Weldon Johnson and Lester A Walton, who was appointed Minister to Liberia by President Roosevelt Yet today it demands unconditional equality for the Negro through accelerated gradualism

The *Amsterdam-Star News,* most widely circulated, on the whole encourages the Negro to pursue an opportunistic course It has leaned heavily on the New Deal, but it supported Thomas E Dewey, a Republican, for Governor of New York State. When preparing the way for this somersault, it nailed its thinking in place with the remark "Only by preserving a voice in the councils of each political party can Negroes hope to share in the benefits of a victorious campaign Whoever wins then must give the Negro vote consideration" Somehow it has managed to support all parties and movements for the betterment of the Negro, and has unceasingly campaigned for his rights and the improvement of Harlem Beyond this, its chief aim would seem to be the development of a wealthy Negro business class, which its publishers envision as the solution of the Negro's problems Today, it regards the war as a vehicle for rolling racial equality into American life, and says so in no uncertain terms

Harlem's *People's Voice,* edited by the Reverend Adam Clayton Powell, Jr , demands fundamental social change through the agency of a united white and black labor From the take-off, *PV,* now about a year old, pledged itself to be a non-partisan, working-class paper, and the spearhead of all movements that worked toward "the full emancipation of the people" It makes frank appeals to Negro nationalism and regards the present world conflict as a "People's War" In the last State elections, it stood aloof from all candidates running for Governor, but endorsed Ben Davis, Jr , Negro Communist candidate for Congressman-at-large from New York *PV* holds that "These things are undeniably true—there is a New Negro, he is creating a New White Man And these two, together, are founding a New World."

V

Beyond its editorial harangues, the Negro press is of solid importance to the Negro. While he reads the white press for daily spot news, he goes to the weekly colored papers for an interpretation of these world events as they affect him. The press provides a vast platform for Negro leaders, it serves as the co-ordinator of any mass action the race is impelled to take; and, edited by ordinary men and women who articulate the aspirations (and complaints) of the black rank and file, it is an important instrument of general education. It keeps the Negro public exceedingly well informed of day-to-day happenings of particular interest to the race, and its columnists discuss a wide sweep of events in terms of their meanings to the Negro. In short, the press is a house organ for the Negro community.

It also keeps its finger closely on the pulse of the community. The *Pittsburgh Courier,* for instance, each week conducts a poll of responsible Negro opinion on matters which affect race relations in the country. When it asked recently, after the attacks on the press in the *Reader's Digest* and the *Atlantic* "Do you approve of the crusade which the Negro press is conducting for full integration of the race into the life of America?" it polled a 91 2 per cent Yes In the breakdown of the figures regionally, the South was only a fraction behind the North—92 4 per cent of the North answering Yes, 90 5 per cent of the South—which would seem to indicate pretty conclusively that the new race militancy is not merely a matter of Northern Negro agitation as has sometimes been charged The vote reflects the new spirit abroad among Negroes, the profound new internal forces at work in the matter of race relations, of which Thomas Sancton wrote in the Winter issue of *Common Ground* In the evaluation of the press requested by this particular poll, "race publications were praised by the citizens," the *Courier* for January 23rd reported, "for the great contribution which they are making to the war effort The exposé of vicious Axis rumors, the condemnation of Negroes who spread pro-Hitler propaganda, the great amount of coverage given the Negro soldier—all these, said the people, were efforts which proved that the Negro press is fully behind our national effort to win this war "

Negro newspapers are not always serious, not by any means mere

crape-hanging sheets. Society news is a breezy and prominent feature. Considerable space is devoted to lively articles on fashion, art, shopping hints, music, theater, sports, book reviews and spot-news photography, always with an abundance of names being quoted. The large number of columnists—who conduct what are frequently sound and thoughtful forums—testify to the emphasis placed on personal journalism Few papers are without two or three gossip columnists as well But the meager operating capital precludes staffs or coverage or salaries that approximate those of the white dailies. Until the war, the larger publications had underpaid correspondents in the principal news centers of the world Today they have war correspondents abroad covering the exploits of America's black warriors

Much of what appears in the Negro press would probably be taboo in the white papers. For example, it seeks to widen the horizon of its readers' thinking on the color problem The *Courier,* with this end in view, recently added two columnists to the Negro (or white) journalism—a Chinese and an East Indian Actually, the Negro press has vastly different standards from the white press for handling material involving interracial participants Crimes against whites by Negroes —to illustrate—are generally viewed against the whole social background Perhaps the reason for this is the fact that the Negro press has the terrific task of beating down insinuations of the Negro's inferiority, and in doing so sometimes inclines toward racial patriotism which verges on black chauvinism. Contrary to general belief, however, many Negro papers do play up the good side of racial relations, when they occur, in the Army, among students, between private individuals.

As a whole, the press is more flamboyant than cautious and restrained—in the style of the Hearst press and the *Daily News* and *Mirror.* But it must be remembered that the papers are directed at the Negro masses, and no black *New York Times* would carry them. The white *Times* does not carry the white masses; it is the *Daily News* that reaches the millions. The Negro press, like the white press, has learned that to reach and serve the great mass of Negroes, it has to reflect and appeal to the average mind, the common man. So, like the white press, it often oversensationalizes stories of crime and sex; and the reader of the *Springfield Republican* or the *New York*

Times or *Herald Tribune* will shrink from some of it just as he does from the *Journal-American* and the *News*.

VI

That the press is alert to its responsibilities of leadership is indicated by a meeting held in New York City a few weeks ago by Negro editors and publishers from as far west as Oklahoma to plan a campaign for the continuation of the President's Committee on Fair Employment Practices as an independent government agency Chairman McNutt's indefinite postponement of the public hearings the FEPC had scheduled on discrimination against Negro workers on railroads was a terrific setback to the slow progress the Negro has been making under the New Deal This press conference, held at the office of the NAACP, issued a statement which ran in part "We request the President to direct the Committee to reschedule the public hearings which Chairman McNutt cancelled Wiping out the color line in war industries is not only necessary for the full use of the nation's manpower but is also equally important as a pledge to our non-white allies of the good faith of the American Government in its proclamation of freedom and democracy as the objectives of the war.

"The attempts of reactionary forces in Congress and certain high-placed government officers to preserve the color line in war industries furnish fuel for Nazi and Japanese propaganda in Africa and Asia that the Four Freedoms do not apply to the colored races The Negro people and the Negro press are one hundred per cent behind the war effort but are determined that democracy shall function at home as well as be a policy laid down for foreign consumption"

Without a doubt, the Negro press is the most race-conscious agency in Negro life The war—complicated by racial factors—has given sweeping force and appeal to black nationalism How far the press should go in developing race militancy is a matter to which its editors are giving serious thought The *Pittsburgh Courier*, largest and most influential of the papers, has from the beginning opposed the March on Washington, questioning the wisdom of this potentially violent technique. It has now strongly come out against the civil disobedience campaign proposed by A Philip Randolph, leader of the March on Washington Movement, as a protest against the scut-

tling of the FEPC The *Courier,* however, is as staunch as Mr Randolph on the objectives for which they both fight—the complete elimination of all arbitrary barriers imposed on Negro Americans because of their color

P L. Prattis, executive editor of the *Courier,* in a letter to Virginius Dabney, editor of the *Richmond Times Dispatch* and author of the recent *Atlantic* article "Nearer and Nearer the Precipice," demonstrates the sense of responsibility that animates much of the press. Mr Prattis writes "We recognize the rightness in fact with which you and some other white Southerners, our friends, have described the problem of the races in this country, particularly in the South. But you know and we know that these facts covering certain adamant attitudes derive from prejudices and not just principles All the right as to principle, you must admit, is on our side The battle is one of principle and justice against prejudice All of us want to resolve this issue without bloodshed if possible Our differences arise out of our opinions as to how far and with what immediacy we can press the issue without incurring violence

"The *Courier* truly does not know It is convinced that we cannot stop at the point where you would have us stop It is sure that there are steps beyond those advocated by you, Mr Graves and others of our Southern friends We want to win the war as you do But we know, as you know, that there is grave danger of losing the war and the peace if many of the problems at home, including the race problem, are not resolved You know that the old world, politically, socially, and economically, is dead Is it not the responsibility of us Americans who know this to devote what talent we have to get at the roots of the new facts of life even if such action might be termed 'radical'?"

The problem of the Negro in the United States, as Mr Prattis points out, is no longer a purely domestic question in which one section of the white citizenry accuses the other of a lack of righteousness, both allowing the matter to rest there As a matter of cold fact, the issue of race today—meaning the rights, dignity and pursuit of happiness of colored peoples in a democratic world—is integrated with the larger strategy of defeating the Axis

The condition of the black man in this country has, in fact, become the barometer of democracy to the colored leaders of the world

and even suggests to them the kind of "democracy" which would dominate the postwar period should certain fascist-minded elements in this country have their way. And though press, radio and motion pictures may hide the facts of life from the rank and file of white people as though they were undeveloped children, the Negro press is possessed of no such hush-hush policy.

The urgent need of extending democracy to the American Negro, and the profoundly positive effect it would have upon the colored peoples elsewhere in the world, is in brief the editorial line of the Negro press today Balanced so precariously on the brace of double standards, it realizes it would be among the first to tumble into oblivion should tomorrow bring any fundamental change to the Negro's condition But, for the present, the logic of its very existence compels it to maintain a policy of vigorous "race-angling" of the news which affects Negroes directly.

In its broadest sense, the press is conducting a crusade for democracy, serving, in effect, the fundamental interests of all peoples—white and black—by its insistence upon the extension of democracy and the translation into reality of the announced objectives of the war.

THE NEGRO DIGS UP HIS PAST

Arthur A. Schomburg

THE American Negro must remake his past in order to make his future. Though it is orthodox to think of America as the one country where it is unnecessary to have a past, what is a luxury for the nation as a whole becomes a prime social necessity for the Negro For him, a group tradition must supply compensation for persecution, and pride of race the antidote for prejudice History must restore what slavery took away, for it is the social damage of slavery that the present generations must repair and offset So among the rising democratic millions we find the Negro thinking more collectively, more retrospectively than the rest, and apt, out of the very pressure of the present, to become the most enthusiastic antiquarian of them all.

Vindicating evidences of individual achievement have as a matter of fact been gathered and treasured for over a century. Abbé Grégoire's liberal-minded book on Negro notables in 1808 was the pioneer effort, it has been followed at intervals by less-known and often less-discriminating compendiums of exceptional men and women of African stock But this sort of thing was on the whole pathetically over-corrective, ridiculously over-laudatory, it was apologetics turned into biography A true historical sense develops slowly and with difficulty under such circumstances But today, even if for the ultimate purpose of group justification, history has become less a matter of argument and more a matter of record There is the definite desire and determination to have a history, well-documented, widely known at least within race circles, and administered as a stimulating and inspiring tradition for the coming generations.

Gradually, as the study of the Negro's past has come out of the vagaries of rhetoric and propaganda and become systematic and scientific, three outstanding conclusions have been established

First, that the Negro has been, throughout the centuries of controversy, an active collaborator, and often a pioneer, in the struggle for his own freedom and advancement This is true to a degree which makes it the more surprising that it has not been recognized earlier.

Second, that by virtue of their being regarded as something "exceptional," even by friends and well-wishers, Negroes of attainment and genius have been unfairly disassociated from the group, and group credit lost accordingly

Third, that the remote racial origins of the Negro, far from being what the race and the world have been given to understand, offer a record of credible group achievement, when scientifically viewed, and more important still, that they are of vital general interest because of their bearing upon the beginnings and early development of culture

With such crucial truths to document and establish, an ounce of fact is worth a pound of controversy So the Negro historian today digs under the spot where his predecessor stood and argued Not long ago, the Public Library of Harlem housed a special exhibition of books, pamphlets, prints and old engravings, that simply said, to skeptic and believer alike, to scholar and school-child, to proud black and astonished white, "Here is the evidence" Assembled from the rapidly growing collections of the leading Negro book-collectors and research societies, there were in these cases materials not only for the first true writing of Negro history, but for the rewriting of many important paragraphs of our common American history Slow though it be, historical truth is no exception to the proverb

Here among the rarities of early Negro Americana was Jupiter Hammon's "Address to the Negroes of the State of New York," edition of 1787, with the first American Negro poet's famous: "If we should ever get to Heaven, we shall find nobody to reproach us for being black, or for being slaves" Here was Phyllis Wheatley's MS poem of 1767, addressed to the students of Harvard, her spirited encomiums upon George Washington and the Revolutionary Cause, and John Marrant's St John's Day eulogy to the "Brothers of African Lodge, No 459," delivered at Boston in 1784 Here, too, were Lemuel Haynes' Vermont commentaries on the American Revolution and his learned sermons to his white congregation in Rutland, Vermont, and the sermons of the year 1808 by the Rev Absalom Jones of St Thomas Church, Philadelphia, and Peter Williams of St Philip's, New York, pioneer Episcopal rectors who spoke out in daring and influential ways on the Abolition of the Slave Trade

Such things and many others are more than mere items of curiosity: they educate any receptive mind

Reinforcing these were still rarer items of Africana and foreign Negro interest, the volumes of Juan Latino, the best Latinist of Spain in the reign of Philip V, incumbent of the chair of Poetry at the University of Granada, and author of Poems printed in Granada, 1573, and a book on the Escurial, published 1576, the Latin and Dutch treatises of Jacobus Eliza Capitein, a native of West Coast Africa and graduate of the University of Leyden, Gustavus Vassa's celebrated autobiography that supplied so much of the evidence in 1796 for Granville Sharpe's attack on slavery in the British colonies, Julien Raymond's Paris exposé of the disabilities of the free people of color in the then (1791) French colony of Haiti, and Baron de Vastey's *Cry of the Fatherland,* the famous polemic by the secretary of Christophe that precipitated the Haitian struggle for independence The cumulative effect of such evidences of scholarship and moral prowess is too weighty to be dismissed as exceptional

But weighter surely than any evidence of individual talent and scholarship could ever be, is the evidence of important collaboration and significant pioneer initiative in social service and reform, in the efforts toward race emancipation, colonization and race betterment From neglected and rust-spotted pages comes testimony to the black men and women who stood shoulder to shoulder in courage and zeal, and often on a parity of intelligence and talent, with their notable white benefactors There was the already cited work of Vassa that aided so materially the efforts of Granville Sharpe, the record of Paul Cuffee, the Negro colonization pioneer, associated so importantly with the establishment of Sierra Leone as a British colony for the occupancy of free people of color in West Africa, the dramatic and history-making exposé of John Baptist Phillips, African graduate of Edinburgh, who compelled, through Lord Bathhurst, in 1824, the enforcement of the articles of capitulation guaranteeing freedom to the blacks of Trinidad There is the record of the pioneer colonization project of Rev Daniel Coker in conducting a voyage of ninety expatriates to West Africa in 1820, of the missionary efforts of Samuel Crowther in Sierra Leone, first Anglican bishop of his diocese, and that of the work of John Russwurm, a leader in the work and foundation of the American Colonization Society.

When we consider the facts, certain chapters of American history will have to be reopened Just as black men were influential factors in the campaign against the slave trade, so they were among the earliest instigators of the abolition movement. Indeed, there was a dangerous calm between the agitation for the suppression of the slave trade and the beginning of the campaign for emancipation. During that interval colored men were very influential in arousing the attention of public men who in turn aroused the conscience of the country Continuously between 1808 and 1845, men like Prince Saunders, Peter Williams, Absalom Jones, Nathaniel Paul, and Bishops Varick and Richard Allen, the founders of the two wings of African Methodism, spoke out with force and initiative and men like Denmark Vesey (1822), David Walker (1828), and Nat Turner (1831) advocated and organized schemes for direct action. This culminated in the generally ignored but important conventions of Free People of Color in New York, Philadelphia and other centers, whose platforms and efforts are to the Negro of as great significance as the nationally cherished memories of Faneuil and Independence Halls Then with Abolition comes the better-documented and more recognized collaboration of Samuel R Ward, William Wells Brown, Henry Highland Garnett, Martin Delaney, Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth and Frederick Douglass, with their great colleagues, Tappan, Phillips, Sumner, Mott, Stowe and Garrison.

But even this latter group who came within the limelight of national and international notice, and thus into open comparison with the best minds of their generation, the public too often regards as a group of inspired illiterates, eloquent echoes of their abolitionist sponsors For a true estimate of their ability and scholarship, however, one must go with the antiquarian to the files of the *Anglo-African Magazine,* where page-by-page comparisons may be made. Their writings show Douglass, McCune Smith, Wells Brown, Delaney, Wilmot Blyden and Alexander Crummell to have been as scholarly and versatile as any of the noted publicists with whom they were associated. All of them labored internationally in the cause of their fellows; to Scotland, England, France, Germany and Africa, they carried their brilliant offensive of debate and propaganda, and with this came instance upon instance of signal foreign recognition,

from academic, scientific, public and official sources. Delaney's *Principia of Ethnology* won public reception from learned societies, Pennington's discourses an honorary doctorate from Heidelberg, Wells Brown's three-year mission the entrée to the salons of London and Paris, and Douglass' tours receptions second only to Henry Ward Beecher's.

After this great era of public interest and discussion, it was Alexander Crummell, who, with the reaction already setting in, first organized Negro brains defensively through the founding of the American Negro Academy in 1874 at Washington A New York boy whose zeal for education had suffered a rude shock when refused admission to the Episcopal Seminary by Bishop Onderdonk, he had been befriended by John Jay and sent to Cambridge University, England, for his education and ordination On his return, he was beset with the idea of promoting race scholarship, and the Academy was the final result It has continued ever since to be one of the bulwarks of our intellectual life, though unfortunately its members have had to spend too much of their energy and effort answering detractors and disproving popular fallacies Only gradually have the men of this group been able to work toward pure scholarship Taking a slightly different start, the Negro Society for Historical Research was later organized in New York, and has succeeded in stimulating the collection from all parts of the world of books and documents dealing with the Negro It has also brought together for the first time co-operatively in a single society African, West Indian and Afro-American scholars Direct offshoots of this same effort are the extensive private collections of Henry P Slaughter of Washington, the Rev Charles D Martin of Harlem, of Arthur Schomburg of Brooklyn, and of the late John E Bruce, who was the enthusiastic and far-seeing pioneer of this movement Finally, and more recently, the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History has extended these efforts into a scientific research project of great achievement and promise Under the direction of Dr. Carter G Woodson, it has continuously maintained, for twenty-seven years, the publication of the learned quarterly, *The Journal of Negro History,* and with the assistance and recognition of two large educational foundations has maintained research and published valuable monographs in Negro history Almost keeping pace with the work of scholarship has been

the effort to popularize the results, and to place before Negro youth in the schools the true story of race vicissitude, struggle and accomplishment So that quite largely now the ambition of Negro youth can be nourished on its own milk

Such work is a far cry from the puerile controversy and petty braggadocio with which the effort for race history first started But a general, as well as a racial, lesson has been learned We seem lately to have come at last to realize what the truly scientific attitude requires, and to see that the race issue has been a plague on both our historical houses, and that history cannot be properly written with either bias or counterbias The blatant Caucasian racialist with his theories and assumptions of race superiority and dominance has in turn bred his Ethiopian counterpart—the rash and rabid amateur who has glibly tried to prove half of the world's geniuses to have been Negroes and to trace the pedigree of nineteenth-century Americans from the Queen of Sheba But fortunately today there is on both sides of a really common cause less of the sand of controversy and more of the dust of digging.

Of course, a racial motive remains—legitimately compatible with scientific method and aim The work our race students now regard as important, they undertake very naturally to overcome in part certain handicaps of disparagement and omission too well known to particularize But they do so not merely that we may not wrongfully be deprived of the spiritual nourishment of our cultural past, but also that the full story of human collaboration and interdependence may be told and realized Especially is this likely to be the effect of the latest and most fascinating of all of the attempts to open up the closed Negro past, namely, the important study of African cultural origins and sources The bigotry of civilization, which is the taproot of intellectual prejudice, begins far back and must be corrected at its source Fundamentally, it has come about from that depreciation of Africa which has sprung up from ignorance of her true rôle and position in human history and the early development of culture The Negro has been a man without a history because he has been considered a man without a worthy culture. But a new notion of the cultural attainment and potentialities of the African stocks has recently come about, partly through the corrective influence of the more scientific study of African institutions and early

cultural history, partly through growing appreciation of the skill and beauty, and in many cases, the historical priority of the African native crafts, and finally, through the signal recognition which first in France and Germany but now very generally, the astonishing art of the African sculptures has received Into these fascinating new vistas, with limited horizons lifting in all directions, the mind of the Negro has leapt forward faster than the slow clearings of scholarship will yet safely permit But there is no doubt that here is a field full of the most intriguing and inspiring possibilities Already the Negro sees himself against a reclaimed background, in a perspective that will give pride and self-respect ample scope, and make history yield for him the same values that the treasured past of any people affords.

THE NEGRO IN AMERICAN FICTION[1]

Benjamin Brawley

EVER since Sydney Smith sneered at American books a hundred years ago, honest critics have asked themselves if the literature of the United States was not really open to the charge of provincialism. Within the last year or so the argument has been very much revived, and an English critic, Mr Edward Garnett, writing in *The Atlantic Monthly,* has pointed out that with our predigested ideas and made-to-order fiction we not only discourage individual genius, but make it possible for the multitude to think only such thoughts as have passed through a sieve Our most popular novelists and sometimes our most respectable writers see only the sensation that is uppermost for the moment in the mind of the crowd—divorce, graft, tainted meat or money—and they proceed to cut the cloth of their fiction accordingly Mr Owen Wister, a "regular practitioner" of the novelist's art, in substance admitting the weight of these charges, lays the blame on our class democracy which utterly refuses to do its own thinking and which is satisfied only with the tinsel and gewgaws and hobby-horses of literature And no theme has suffered so much from the coarseness of the mob spirit in literature as that of the Negro

As a matter of fact, the Negro in his problems and strivings offers to American writers the greatest opportunity that could possibly be given to them today It is commonly agreed that only one other large question, that of the relations of capital and labor, is of as much interest to the American public, and even this great issue fails to possess quite the appeal offered by the Negro from the social standpoint One can only imagine what a Victor Hugo, detached and philosophical, would have done with such a theme in a novel. When we see what actually has been done—how often in the guise of fiction a writer has preached a sermon or shouted a political creed, or vented his spleen—we are not exactly proud of the art of novel-writing as it has been developed in the United States of America. Here was opportunity for tragedy, for comedy, for the subtle portrayal

[1] This essay is of historical significance, and does not include publications issued after 1915.—Ed.

of all the relations of man with his fellow man, for faith and hope and love and sorrow And yet, with the Civil War fifty years in the distance, not one novel or one short story of the first rank has found its inspiration in this great theme Instead of such work we have consistently had traditional tales, political tracts and lurid melodramas.

Let us see who have approached the theme, and just what they have done with it, for the present leaving out of account all efforts put forth by Negro writers themselves

The names of four exponents of Southern life come at once to mind—George W Cable, Joel Chandler Harris, Thomas Nelson Page and Thomas Dixon, and at once, in their outlook and method of work, the first two become separate from the last two Cable and Harris have looked toward the past, and have embalmed vanished or vanishing types Mr Page and Mr Dixon, with their thought on the present (though for the most part they portray the recent past), have used the novel as a vehicle for political propaganda.

It was in 1879 that *Old Creole Days* evidenced the advent of a new force in American literature, and on the basis of this work, and of *The Grandissimes* which followed, Mr Cable at once took his place as the foremost portrayer of life in old New Orleans By birth, by temperament, and by training he was thoroughly fitted for the task to which he set himself His mother was from New England, his father of the stock of colonial Virginia, and the stern Puritanism of the North was mellowed by the gentler influences of the South. Moreover, from his long apprenticeship in newspaper work in New Orleans he had received abundantly the knowledge and training necessary for his work Setting himself to a study of the Negro of the old régime, he made a specialty of the famous—and infamous—quadroon society of Louisiana of the third and fourth decades of the last century And excellent as was his work, turning his face to the past in manner as well as in matter, from the very first he raised the question propounded by this paper In his earliest volume there was a story entitled *'Tite Poulette,* the heroine of which was a girl amazingly fair, the supposed daughter of one Madame John A young Dutchman fell in love with 'Tite Poulette, championed her cause at all times, suffered a beating and stabbing for her, and was by her nursed back to life and love. In the midst of his perplexity about joining himself to a member of another race, came the word from

Madame John that the girl was not her daughter, but the child of yellow fever patients whom she had nursed until they died, leaving their infant in her care Immediately upon the publication of this story, the author received a letter from a young woman who had actually lived in very much the same situation as that portrayed in *'Tite Poulette,* telling him that his story was not true to life and that he knew it was not, for Madame John really *was* the mother of the heroine Accepting the criticism, Mr Cable set about the composition of *Madame Delphine,* in which the situation is somewhat similar, but in which at the end the mother tamely makes a confession to a priest What is the trouble? The artist is so bound by circumstances and hemmed in by tradition that he simply has not the courage to launch out into the deep and work out his human problems for himself. Take a representative portrait from *The Grandissimes*

> Clemence had come through ages of African savagery through fires that do not refine but that blunt and blast and blacken and char, starvation, gluttony, drunkenness, thirst, drowning, nakedness, dirt, fetichism, debauchery, slaughter, pestilence, and the rest—she was their heiress, they left her the cinders of human feelings She had had children of assorted colors,—had one with her now, the black boy that brought the basil to Joseph, the others were here and there, some in the Grandissime households or field-gangs, some elsewhere within occasional sight, some dead, some not accounted for Husbands—like the Samaritan woman's We know she was a constant singer and laugher

Very brilliant, of course, and yet Clemence is a relic, not a prophecy

Still more of a relic is Uncle Remus For decades now, this charming old Negro has been held up to the children of the South as the perfect expression of the beauty of life in the glorious times "befo' de wah," when every Southern gentleman was suckled at the bosom of a "black mammy" Why should we not occasionally attempt to paint the Negro of the new day—intelligent, ambitious, thrifty, manly? Perhaps he is not so poetic, but certainly the human element is greater

To the school of Cable and Harris belong also, of course, Miss Grace King and Mrs Ruth McEnery Stuart, a thoroughly representative piece of work being Mrs Stuart's *Uncle 'Riah's Christmas Eve* Other more popular writers of the day, Miss Mary Johnston and Miss Ellen Glasgow for instance, attempt no special analysis of the Negro They simply take him for granted as an institution that always has

existed and always will exist, as a hewer of wood and drawer of water, from the first flush of creation to the sounding of the trumpet of doom.

But more serious is the tone when we come to Thomas Nelson Page and Thomas Dixon We might tarry for a few minutes with Mr Page to listen to more such tales as those of Uncle Remus, but we must turn to living issues Times have changed. The grandson of Uncle Remus does not feel that he must stand with his hat in his hand when he is in our presence, and he even presumes to help us in the running of our government This will never do, so in *Red Rock* and *The Leopard's Spots* it must be shown that he should never have been allowed to vote anyway, and those honorable gentlemen in the Congress of the United States in the year 1865 did not know at all what they were about Though we are given the characters and setting of a novel, the real business is to show that the Negro has been the "sentimental pet" of the nation all too long By all means let us have an innocent white girl, a burly Negro, and a burning at the stake, or the story would be incomplete

We have the same thing in *The Clansman,* a "drama of fierce revenge " But here we are concerned very largely with the blackening of a man's character. Stoneman (Thaddeus Stevens very thinly disguised) is himself the whole Congress of the United States He is a gambler, and "spends a part of almost every night at Hall & Pemberton's Faro Place on Pennsylvania Avenue " He is hysterical, "drunk with the joy of a triumphant vengeance " "The South is conquered soil," he says to the President (a mere figure-head, by the way), "I mean to blot it from the map " Further "It is but the justice and wisdom of heaven that the Negro shall rule the land of his bondage It is the only solution of the race problem Wait until I put a ballot in the hand of every Negro, and a bayonet at the breast of every white man from the James to the Rio Grande " Stoneman, moreover, has a mistress, a mulatto woman, a "yellow vampire" who dominates him completely "Senators, representatives, politicians of low and high degree, artists, correspondents, foreign ministers, and cabinet officers hurried to acknowledge their fealty to the uncrowned king, and hail the strange brown woman who held the keys of his house as the first lady of the land " This, let us remember, was for some months the best-selling book in the United States. A slightly

altered version of it has very recently commanded such prices as were never before paid for seats at a moving picture entertainment, and with *The Traitor* and *The Southerner,* it represents our most popular treatment of the gravest social question in American life! *The Clansman* is to American literature exactly what a Louisiana mob is to American democracy Only too frequently, of course, the mob represents us all too well

Turning from the longer works of fiction to the short story, I have been interested to see how the matter has been dealt with here. For purposes of comparison I have selected ten from a representative periodical index, we may assume that they are thoroughly typical The ten are *Shadow,* by Harry Stillwell Edwards, in the *Century* (December, 1906); *Callum's Co'tin' A Plantation Idyl,* by Frank H Sweet, in the *Craftsman* (March, 1907), *His Excellency the Governor,* by L M Cooke, in *Putnam's* (February, 1908), *The Black Drop,* by Margaret Deland, in *Collier's Weekly* (May 2 and 9, 1908), *Jungle Blood,* by Elmore Elliott Peake, in *McClure's* (September, 1908), *The Race-Rioter,* by Harris Merton Lyon, in the *American* (February, 1910), *Shadow,* by Grace MacGowan Cooke and Alice MacGowan, in *Everybody's* (March, 1910), *Abram's Freedom,* by Edna Turpin, in the *Atlantic* (September, 1912), *A Hypothetical Case,* by Norman Duncan, in *Harper's* (June, 1915), and *The Chalk Game,* by L B Yates, in the *Saturday Evening Post* (June 5, 1915) For high standards of fiction I think we may safely say that, all in all, the periodicals here mentioned are representative of the best that America has to offer In some cases the story cited is the only one on the Negro question that a magazine has published within the decade

Shadow, in the *Century,* is the story of a Negro convict who for a robbery committed at the age of fourteen was sentenced to twenty years of hard labor in the mines of Alabama An accident disabled him, however, and prevented his doing the regular work for the full period of his imprisonment At twenty he was a hostler, looking forward in despair to the fourteen years of confinement still waiting for him But the three little girls of the prison commissioner visit the prison Shadow performs many little acts of kindness for them, and their hearts go out to him They storm the governor and the judge for his pardon, and present the Negro with his freedom as a Christmas gift The story is not long, but it strikes a note of genuine pathos

Callum's Co'tin' is concerned with a hardworking Negro, a blacksmith, nearly forty, who goes courting the girl who called at his shop to get a trinket mended for her mistress At first he makes himself ridiculous by his finery, later he makes the mistake of coming to a crowd of merry-makers in his working clothes More and more, however, he storms the heart of the girl, who eventually capitulates. From the standpoint simply of craftsmanship, the story is an excellent piece of work

His Excellency the Governor deals with the custom on Southern plantations of having, in imitation of the white people, a Negro "governor" whose duty it was to settle minor disputes At the death of old Uncle Caleb, who for years had held this position of responsibility, his son Jubal should have been the next in order He was likely to be superseded, however, by loud-mouthed Sambo, though urged to assert himself by Maria, his wife, an old house-servant who had no desire whatever to be defeated for the place of honor among the women by Sue, a former field hand At the meeting where all was to be decided, however, Jubal with the aid of his fiddle completely confounded his rival and won There are some excellent touches in the story, but, on the whole, the composition is hardly more than fair in literary quality

The Black Drop, throughout which we see the hand of an experienced writer, analyzes the heart of a white boy who is in love with a girl who is almost white, and who when the test confronts him suffers the tradition that binds him to get the better of his heart "But you will still believe that I love you?" he asks, ill at ease as they separate. "No, of course, I can not believe that," replies the girl

Jungle Blood is the story of a simple-minded, simple-hearted Negro of gigantic size, who in a moment of fury kills his pretty wife and the white man who has seduced her The tone of the whole may be gleaned from the description of Moss Harper's father "An old darky sat drowsing on the stoop There was something ape-like about his long arms, his flat, wide-nostriled nose, and the mat of gray wool which crept down his forehead to within two inches of his eyebrows"

The Race-Rioter sets forth the stand of a brave young sheriff to protect his prisoner, a Negro boy, accused of the assault and murder of a little white girl Hank Egge tries by every possible subterfuge to defeat the plans of a lynching party, and finally dies riddled with

bullets as he is defending his prisoner The story is especially remarkable for strong and sympathetic characterization of such contrasting figures as young Egge and old Dikeson, the father of the dead girl

Shadow, in *Everybody's,* is a story that depends for its force very largely upon incident It studies the friendship of a white boy, Ranny, opposed by both the Northern white mother and the ambitious and independent Negro mother In a fight, Shad breaks a collar-bone for Ranny, later he saves him from drowning In the face of Ranny's white friends, all the harsher side of the problem is seen, and yet the human element is strong beneath it all The story, not without considerable merit as it is, would have been infinitely stronger if the friendship of the two boys had been pitched on a higher plane As it is, Shad is very much like a dog following his master

Abram's Freedom is at the same time one of the most clever and one of the most provoking stories with which we have to deal It is a perfect example of how one may walk directly up to the light and then deliberately turn his back upon it The story is set just before the Civil War It deals with the love of the slave Abram for a free young woman, Emmeline "All his life he had heard and used the phrase 'free nigger' as a term of contempt What, then, was this vague feeling, not definite enough yet to be a wish or even a longing?" So far, so good Emmeline inspires within her lover the highest ideals of manhood, and he becomes a hostler in a livery-stable, paying to his master so much a year for his freedom Then comes the astounding and forced conclusion At the very moment when, after years of effort, Emmeline has helped her husband to gain his freedom (and when all the slaves are free as a matter of fact by virtue of the Emancipation Proclamation), Emmeline, whose husband has special reason to be grateful to his former master, says to the lady of the house "Me an' Abram ain't got nothin' to do in dis worl' but to wait on you an' master"

In *A Hypothetical Case* we again see the hand of a master craftsman Is a white boy justified in shooting a Negro who has offended him? The white father is not quite at ease, quibbles a good deal, but finally says, "Yes" The story, however, makes it clear that the Negro did not strike the boy He was a hermit living on the Florida coast and perfectly abased when he met Mercer and his two companions.

When the three boys pursued him and finally overtook him, the Negro simply held the hands of Mercer until the boy had recovered his temper Mercer in his rage really struck himself

The Chalk Game is the story of a little Negro jockey who wins a race in Louisville only to be drugged and robbed by some "flashlight" Negroes who send him to Chicago There he recovers his fortunes by giving to a group of gamblers the correct "tip" on another race, and he makes his way back to Louisville much richer by his visit Throughout the story emphasis is placed upon the superstitious element in the Negro race, an element readily considered by men who believe in luck.

Of these ten stories, only five strike out with even the slightest degree of independence *Shadow,* in the *Century,* is not a powerful piece of work, but it is written in tender and beautiful spirit *The Black Drop* is a bold handling of a strong situation *The Race-Rioter* also rings true, and in spite of the tragedy there is optimism in this story of a man who is not afraid to do his duty *Shadow,* in *Everybody's,* awakens all sorts of discussion, but at least attempts to deal honestly with a situation that might arise in any neighborhood at any time. *A Hypothetical Case* is the most tense and independent story in the list

On the other hand, *Callum's Co'tin'* and *His Excellency the Governor,* bright comedy though they are, belong, after all, to the school of Uncle Remus *Jungle Blood* and *The Chalk Game* belong to the class that always regards the Negro as an animal, a minor, a plaything—but never as a man *Abram's Freedom,* exceedingly well written for two-thirds of the way, falls down hopelessly at the end Many old Negroes after the Civil War preferred to remain with their former masters; but certainly no young woman of the type of Emmeline would sell her birthright for a mess of pottage

Just there is the point That the Negro is ever to be taken seriously is incomprehensible to some people The more Gwynplaine protests, the more outlandish he becomes to the House of Lords

We are simply asking that those writers of fiction who deal with the Negro shall be thoroughly honest with themselves, and not remain forever content to embalm old types and work over outworn ideas Rather should they sift the present and forecast the future. But of course the editors must be considered. The editors must give

their readers what the readers want, and when we consider the populace, of course we have to reckon with the mob And the mob does not find anything very attractive about a Negro who is intelligent, cultured, manly and who does not smile It will be observed that in no one of the ten stories above mentioned, not even in one of the five remarked most favorably, is there a Negro of this type Yet he is obliged to come America has yet to reckon with him The day of Uncle Remus as well as of Uncle Tom is over

Even now, however, there are signs of better things. Such an artist as Mr Howells, for instance, has once or twice dealt with the problem in excellent spirit Then there is the work of the Negro writers themselves The numerous attempts in fiction made by them have most frequently been open to the charge of crassness already considered, but Paul Laurence Dunbar, Charles W Chesnutt, and W E Burghardt Du Bois have risen above the crowd Mr Dunbar, of course, was better in poetry than in prose Such a short story as *Jimsella,* however, exhibited considerable technique *The Uncalled* used a living topic treated with only partial success But for the most part, Mr Dunbar's work looked toward the past Somewhat stronger in prose is Mr Chesnutt *The Marrow of Tradition* is not much more than a political tract, and *The Colonel's Dream* contains a good deal of preaching, but *The House Behind the Cedars* is a real novel Among his short stories, *The Bouquet* may be remarked for technical excellence, and *The Wife of His Youth* for a situation of unusual power Dr Du Bois's *The Quest of the Silver Fleece* contains at least one strong dramatic situation, that in which Bles probes the heart of Zora, but the author is a sociologist and essayist rather than a novelist.

Some day we shall work out the problems of our great country Some day we shall not have a state government set at defiance, and the massacre of Ludlow Some day our little children will not slave in mines and mills, but will have some chance at the glory of God's creation, and some day the Negro will cease to be a problem and become a human being Then, in truth, we shall have the Promised Land But until that day comes let those who mold our ideals and set the standards of our art in fiction at least be honest with themselves and independent Ignorance we may for a time forgive, but a man has only himself to blame if he insists on not seeing the sunrise in the new day.

James Weldon Johnson

O BLACK AND UNKNOWN BARDS

O black and unknown bards of long ago,
How came your lips to touch the sacred fire?
How, in your darkness, did you come to know
The power and beauty of the minstrel's lyre?
Who first from midst his bonds lifted his eyes?
Who first from out the still watch, lone and long,
Feeling the ancient faith of prophets rise
Within his dark-kept soul, burst into song?

Heart of what slave poured out such melody
As "Steal away to Jesus"? On its strains
His spirit must have nightly floated free,
Though still about his hands he felt his chains
Who heard great "Jordan roll"? Whose starward eye
Saw chariot "swing low"? And who was he
That breathed that comforting, melodic sigh,
"Nobody knows de trouble I see"?

What merely living clod, what captive thing,
Could up toward God through all its darkness grope,
And find within its deadened heart to sing
These songs of sorrow, love and faith, and hope?
How did it catch that subtle undertone,
That note in music heard not with the ears?
How sound the elusive reed so seldom blown,
Which stirs the soul or melts the heart to tears?

Not that great German master in his dream
Of harmonies that thundered amongst the stars
At the creation, ever heard a theme
Nobler than "Go down, Moses." Mark its bars,

How like a mighty trumpet call they stir
The blood Such are the notes that men have sung
Going to valorous deeds, such tones there were
That helped make history when time was young.

There is a wide, wide wonder in it all,
That from degraded rest and servile toil
The fiery spirit of the seer should call
These simple children of the sun and soil
O black slave singers, gone forgot, unfamed,
You—you alone, of all the long, long line
Of those who've sung untaught, unknown, unnamed,
Have stretched out upward, seeking the divine

You sang not deeds of heroes or of kings,
No chant of bloody war, no exulting paean
Of arms-won triumphs, but your humble strings
You touched in chord with music empyrean
You sang for better than you knew, the songs
That for your listeners' hungry hearts sufficed
Still live,—but more than this to you belongs
You sang a race from wood and stone to Christ

It was in the above lines, which appeared in the *Century Magazine* nearly twenty years ago, that I tried to voice my estimate and appreciation of the Negro Spirituals and to celebrate the unknown black bards who created them As the years go by and I understand more about this music and its origin the miracle of its production strikes me with increasing wonder It would have been a notable achievement if the white people who settled this country, having a common language and heritage, seeking liberty in a new land, faced with the task of conquering untamed nature, and stirred with the hope of building an empire, had created a body of folk music comparable to the Negro Spirituals But from whom did these songs spring—these songs unsurpassed among the folk songs of the world and, in the poignancy of their beauty, unequaled?

In 1619 a Dutch vessel landed twenty African natives at Jamestown, Virginia. They were quickly bought up by the colonial

settlers This was the beginning of the African slave trade in the American Colonies To supply this trade Africa was raped of millions of men, women and children As many as survived the passage were immediately thrown into slavery These people came from various localities in Africa They did not all speak the same language. Here they were, suddenly cut off from the moorings of their native culture, scattered without regard to their old tribal relations, having to adjust themselves to a completely alien civilization, having to learn a strange language, and, moreover, held under an increasingly harsh system of slavery; yet it was from these people this mass of noble music sprang, this music which is America's only folk music and, up to this time, the finest distinctive artistic contribution she has to offer the world It is strange!

I have termed this music noble, and I do so without any qualifications. Take, for example, "Go Down, Moses", there is not a nobler theme in the whole musical literature of the world If the Negro had voiced himself in only that one song, it would have been evidence of his nobility of soul Add to this "Deep River," "Stand Still, Jordan," "Walk Together, Children," "Roll, Jordan, Roll, "Ride on, King Jesus," and you catch a spirit that is a little more than mere nobility, it is something akin to majestic grandeur The music of these songs is always noble and their sentiment is always exalted Never does their philosophy fall below the highest and purest motives of the heart And this might seem stranger still

Perhaps there will be no better point than this at which to say that all the true Spirituals possess dignity It is, of course, pardonable to smile at the naiveté often exhibited in the words, but it should be remembered that in scarcely no instance was anything humorous intended When it came to the use of words, the maker of the song was struggling as best he could under his limitations in language and, perhaps, also under a misconstruction or misapprehension of the facts in his source of material, generally the Bible And often, like his more literary poetic brothers, he had to do a good many things to get his rhyme in But almost always he was in dead earnest There are doubtless many persons who have heard these songs sung only on the vaudeville or theatrical stage and have laughed uproariously at them because they were presented in humorous vein Such people have no conception of the Spirituals They probably thought

of them as a new sort of ragtime or minstrel song. These Spirituals cannot be properly appreciated or understood unless they are clothed in their primitive dignity.

No space will here be given to a rehearsal of the familiar or easily accessible facts regarding the origin and development of folk music in general Nor will any attempt be made at a discussion of the purely technical questions of music involved A thorough exposition of this latter phase of the subject will be found in H E. Krehbiel's *Afro-American Folksongs* There Mr Krehbiel makes an analysis of the modes, scales and intervals of these songs and a comparative study between them and the same features of other folksongs Here it is planned, rather, to relate regarding these songs as many facts as possible that will be of interest to the general lover of music and serve to present adequately this collection Instead of dissecting this music we hope to re-create around it as completely as we can its true atmosphere and place it in a proper setting for those who already love the Spirituals and those who may come to know them

Although the Spirituals have been overwhelmingly accredited to the Negro as his own original creation, nevertheless, there have been one or two critics who have denied that they were original either with the Negro or in themselves, and a considerable number of people have eagerly accepted this view The opinion of these critics is not sound It is not based upon scientific or historical inquiry Indeed, it can be traced ultimately to a prejudiced attitude of mind, to an unwillingness to concede the creation of so much pure beauty to a people they wish to feel is absolutely inferior Once that power is conceded, the idea of absolute inferiority cannot hold These critics point to certain similarities in structure between the Spirituals and the folk music of other peoples, ignoring the fact that there are such similarities between all folksongs The Negro Spirituals are as distinct from the folksongs of other peoples as those songs are from each other, and, perhaps, more so One needs to be only ordinarily familiar with the folk music of the world to see that this is so

The statement that the Spirituals are imitations made by the Negro of other music that he heard is an absurdity What music did

American Negroes hear to imitate? They certainly had no opportunity to go to Scotland or Russia or Scandinavia and bring back echoes of songs from those lands Some of them may have heard a few Scotch songs in this country, but it is inconceivable that this great mass of five or six hundred Negro songs could have sprung from souch a source What music then was left for them to imitate? Some have gone so far as to say that they caught snatches of airs from the French Opera at New Orleans, but the songs of the Negroes who fell most directly under that influence are of a type distinct from the Spirituals. It was in localities far removed from New Orleans that the great body of Spirituals were created and sung There remains then the music which the American Negroes heard their masters sing; chiefly religious music Now if ignorant Negroes evolved such music as "Deep River," "Steal Away to Jesus," "Somebody's Knockin' at Yo' Do'," "I Couldn't Hear Nobody Pray" and "Father Abraham" by listening to their masters sing gospel hymns, it does not detract from the achievement but magnifies it

Regarding the origin of this music, I myself have referred to the "miracle" of its production And it is easier to believe the miracle than some of the explanations of it that are offered Most difficult of all is it to believe that the Negro slaves were indebted to their white masters for the sources of these songs The white people among whom the slaves lived did not originate anything comparable even to the mere titles of the Spirituals In truth, the power to frame the poetic phrases that make the titles of so many of the Spirituals betokens the power to create the songs Consider the sheer magic of "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot," "I've Got to Walk My Lonesome Valley," "Steal Away to Jesus," "Singing with a Sword in My Hand," "Rule Death in His Arms," "Ride on, King Jesus," "We Shall Walk Through the Valley in Peace," "The Blood Came Twinklin' Down," "Deep River," "Death's Goin' to Lay His Cold, Icy Hand on Me," and confess that none but an artistically endowed people could have evoked it.

No one has even expressed a doubt that the poetry of the titles and text of the Spirituals is Negro in character and origin, no one else has dared to lay claim to it, why, then, doubt the music? There is a slight analogy here to the Shakespeare-Bacon controversy The Baconians in their amazement before the transcendent greatness of

the plays declare that Shakespeare could not possibly have written them, he was not scholar enough, he did not know enough Greek, no mere play actor could be gentleman enough to be so familiar with the ways of the court and royalty, no mere play actor could be philosopher enough to know all the hidden springs of human motives and conduct. Then they pick a man who fills these requirements and accounts for the phenomenon of the crowning glory of the English tongue Lord Francis Bacon, they say, wrote the plays but did not claim them because it was not creditable for a gentleman to be a playwright However, though it was creditable for a gentleman of the age to be a poet, they do not explain why Lord Bacon did not claim the poems And it is easy to see that the hand that wrote the poems could write the plays

Nobody thought of questioning the Negro's title as a creator of this music until its beauty and value were demonstrated The same thing, in a greater degree, has transpired with regard to the Negro as the originator of America's popular medium of musical expression, in fact, to such a degree that it is now completely divorced from all ideas associated with the Negro Still, for several very good reasons, it will not be easy to do that with the Spirituals

When the Fisk Jubilee Singers toured Europe they sang in England, Scotland and Germany, spending eight months in the latter country Their concerts were attended by the most cultured and sophisticated people as well as the general public In England they sang before Queen Victoria, and in Germany the Emperor was among those who listened to them Music critics paid special attention to the singers and their songs The appearance of the Jubilee Singers in Europe constituted both an artistic sensation and a financial success, neither of which results could have been attained had their songs been mere imitations of European folk music or adaptations of European airs.

The Spirituals are purely and solely the creation of the American Negro; that is, as much so as any music can be the pure and sole creation of any particular group And their production, although seemingly miraculous, can be accounted for naturally The Negro brought with him from Africa his native musical instinct and talent, and that was no small endowment to begin with

Many things are now being learned about Africa It is being

learned and recognized that the great majority of Africans are in no sense "savages", that they possess a civilization and a culture, primitive, it is true, but in many respects quite adequate, that they possess a folk literature that is varied and rich, that they possess an art that is quick and sound. Among those who know about art it is generally recognized that the modern school of painting and sculpture in Europe and America is almost entirely the result of the direct influence of African art, following the discovery that it was art. Not much is yet known about African music, and, perhaps, for the reason that the conception of music by the Africans is not of the same sort as the conception of music by the people of Western Europe and the United States Generally speaking, the European concept of music is melody and the African concept is rhythm Melody has, relatively, small place in African music, and harmony still less, but in rhythms African music is beyond comparison with any other music in the world Krehbiel, after visiting the Dahomey Village at the World's Fair in Chicago, and witnessing the natives dance to the accompaniment of choral singing and the beating of their drums, wrote of them·

"The players showed the most remarkable rhythmical sense and skill that ever came under my notice Berlioz, in his supremest effort with his army of drummers, produced nothing to compare in artistic interest with the harmonious drumming of these savages. The fundamental effect was a combination of double and triple time, the former kept by the singers, the latter by the drummers, but it is impossible to convey the idea of the wealth of detail achieved by the drummers by means of exchange of the rhythms, syncopation of both simultaneously, and dynamic devices Only by making a score of the music could this be done I attempted to make such a score by enlisting the help of the late John C. Fillmore, experienced in Indian music, but we were thwarted by the players, who, evidently divining our purpose when we took out our notebooks, mischievously changed their manner of playing as soon as we touched pencil to paper. I was forced to the conclusion that in their command of the element, which in the musical art of the ancient Greeks stood higher than either melody or harmony, the best composers of today were the veriest tyros compared with these black savages."

The musical genius of the African has not become so generally recognized as his genius in sculpture and design, and yet it has had a wide influence on the music of the world. Friedenthal points out that African Negroes have a share in the creation of one of the best known and most extended musical forms, the Habanera This form, which is popularly known as the chief characteristic of Spanish music, is a combination of Spanish melody and African rhythm Friedenthal, regarding this combination, says

"Here stand these two races facing each other, both highly musical but reared in different worlds of music Little wonder that the Spaniards quickly took advantage of these remarkable rhythms and incorporated them into their own music . . The melody of the Habanera came out of Middle or Southern Spain, and the rhythm which accompanies it had its origin in Africa We therefore have, in a way, the union of Spanish spirit and African technique."

The rhythm of the Habanera is the rhythm characteristic of Spanish and Latin-American music A considerable portion of Bizet's opera, *Carmen,* is based on this originally African rhythm

Further, regarding the musical genius of the Africans, Friedenthal says "Now, the African Negroes possess great musical talent It must be admitted, though, that in the invention of melodies, they do not come up to the European standard, but the greater is their capacity as inventors of rhythms The talent exhibited by the Bantus in contriving the most complex rhythms is nothing short of marvelous."

Now, the Negro in America had his native musical endowment to begin with, and the Spirituals possess the fundamental characteristics of African music They have a striking rhythmic quality, and show a marked similarity to African songs in form and intervallic structure But the Spirituals, upon the base of the primitive rhythms, go a step in advance of African music through a higher melodic and an added harmonic development For the Spirituals are not merely melodies The melodies of many of them so sweet or strong or even weird, are wonderful, but hardly more wonderful than the harmonies One has never experienced the full effect of these songs until he has heard their harmonies in the part singing of a large number of Negro voices. I shall say more about this question of harmony

later But what led to this advance by the American Negro beyond his primitive music? Why did he not revive and continue the beating out of complex rhythms on tom-toms and drums while he uttered barbaric and martial cries to their accompaniment? It was because at the precise and psychic moment there was blown through or fused into the vestiges of his African music the spirit of Christianity as he knew Christianity.

At the psychic moment there was at hand the precise religion for the condition in which he found himself thrust Far from his native land and customs, despised by those among whom he lived, experiencing the pang of the separation of loved ones on the auction block, knowing the hard taskmaster, feeling the lash, the Negro seized Christianity, the religion of compensations in the life to come for the ills suffered in the present existence, the religion which implied the hope that in the next world there would be a reversal of conditions, of rich man and poor man, of proud and meek, of master and slave The result was a body of songs voicing all the cardinal virtues of Christianity—patience, forbearance, love, faith and hope—through a necessarily modified form of primitive African music. The Negro took complete refuge in Christianity, and the Spirituals were literally forged of sorrow in the heat of religious fervor. They exhibited, moreover, a reversion to the simple principles of primitive, communal Christianity

The thought that the Negro might have refused or failed to adopt Christianity—and there were several good reasons for such an outcome, one being the vast gulf between the Christianity that was preached to him and the Christianity practiced by those who preached it—leads to some curious speculations. One thing is certain, there would have been no Negro Spirituals. His musical instinct would doubtless have manifested itself, but is it conceivable that he could have created a body of songs in any other form so unique in the musical literature of the world and with such a powerful and universal appeal as the Spirituals? Indeed, the question arises, would he have been able to survive slavery in the way in which he did? It is not possible to estimate the sustaining influence that the story of the trials and tribulations of the Jews as related in the Old Testament exerted upon the Negro. This story at once caught and fired the imaginations of the Negro bards, and they sang, sang

their hungry listeners into a firm faith that as God saved Daniel in the lion's den, so would He save them, as God preserved the Hebrew children in the fiery furnace, so would He preserve them; as God delivered Israel out of bondage in Egypt, so would He deliver them How much this firm faith had to do with the Negro's physical and spiritual survival of two and a half centuries of slavery cannot be known

Thus it was by sheer spiritual forces that African chants were metamorphosed into the Spirituals, that upon the fundamental throb of African rhythms were reared those reaches of melody that rise above earth and soar into the pure, ethereal blue And this is the miracle of the creation of the Spirituals

As is true of all folksongs, there are two theories as to the manner in which the Spirituals were "composed" whether they were the spontaneous outburst and expression of the group or chiefly the work of individual talented makers I doubt that either theory is exclusively correct The Spirituals are true folksongs and originally intended only for group singing Some of them may be the spontaneous creation of the group, but my opinion is that the far greater part of them is the work of talented individuals influenced by the pressure and reaction of the group The responses, however, may be more largely the work of the group in action, it is likely that they simply burst forth It is also true that many of these songs have been modified and varied as they have been sung by different groups in different localities This process is still going on Sometimes we find two or more distinct variations of the melody of a song There are also the interchange and substitution of lines Yet, it is remarkable that these variations and changes are as few as they are, considering the fact that these songs have been for generations handed down from ear to ear and by word of mouth Variations in melody are less common than interchange of lines The committing to memory of all the leading lines constituted quite a feat, for they run high into the hundreds, so sometimes the leader's memory failed him and he would have to improvise or substitute This substituting accounts for a good deal of the duplication of leading lines

In the old days there was a definitely recognized order of bards, and to some degree it still persists. These bards gained their recognition by achievement They were makers of songs and leaders of

singing They had to possess certain qualifications· a gift of melody, a talent for poetry, a strong voice, and a good memory Here we have a demand for a great many gifts in one individual; yet, they were all necessary The recognized bard required the ability to make up the appealing tune, to fashion the graphic phrase, to pitch the tune true and lead it clearly, and to remember all the lines There was at least one leader of singing in every congregation, but makers of songs were less common My memory of childhood goes back to a great leader of singing, "Ma" White, and a maker of songs, "Singing" Johnson. "Ma" White was an excellent laundress and a busy woman, but each church meeting found her in her place ready to lead the singing, whenever the formal choir and organ did not usurp her ancient rights. I can still recall her shrill, plaintive voice quavering above the others Memory distinctly brings back her singing of "We Are Climbing Jacob's Ladder," "Keep Me from Sinking Down," and "We Shall Walk Through the Valley in Peace " Even as a child my joy in hearing her sing these songs was deep and full She was the recognized leader of spiritual singing in the congregation to which she belonged and she took her duties seriously One of her duties was to "sing-down" a long-winded or uninteresting speaker at love feasts or experience meetings, and even to cut short a prayer of undue length by raising a song (And what a gentle method of gaining relief from a tiresome speaker Why shouldn't it be generally adopted today?) "Ma" White had a great reputation as a leader of singing, a reputation of which she was proud and jealous She knew scores of Spirituals, but I do not think she ever "composed" any songs

On the other hand, singing was "Singing" Johnson's only business He was not a fixture in any one congregation or community, but went from one church to another, singing his way I can recall that his periodical visits caused a flutter of excitement akin to that caused by the visit of a famed preacher These visits always meant the hearing and learning of something new I recollect how the congregation would hang on his voice for a new song—new, at least to them They listened through, some of them joining in wáveringly The quicker ears soon caught the melody and words The whole congregation easily learned the response, which is generally unvarying They sang at first hesitantly, but seizing the song quickly,

made up for hesitation by added gusto in the response. Always the strong voice of the leader corrected errors until the song was perfectly learned. "Singing" Johnson must have derived his support in somewhat the same way as the preachers—part of a collection, food and lodging He doubtless spent his leisure time in originating new words and melodies and new lines for old songs "Singing" Johnson is one of the indelible pictures on my mind. A small but stocky, dark-brown man was he, with one eye, and possessing a clear, strong, high-pitched voice Not as striking a figure as some of the great Negro preachers I used to see and hear, but at camp meetings, revivals, and on special occasions only slightly less important than any of them. A maker of songs and a wonderful leader of singing A man who could improvise lines on the moment A great judge of the appropriate song to sing, and with a delicate sense of when to come to the preacher's support after a climax in the sermon had been reached by breaking in with a line or two of a song that expressed a certain sentiment, often just a single line "Singing" Johnson always sang with his eyes, or eye, closed, and indicated the tempo by swinging his head and body When he warmed to his work it was easy to see that he was transported and utterly oblivious to his surroundings.

"Singing" Johnson was of the line of the mightier bards of an earlier day, and he exemplified how they worked and how the Spirituals were "composed " These bards, I believe, made the original inventions of story and song, which in turn were influenced or modified by the group in action.

In form the Spirituals often run strictly parallel with African songs, incremental leading lines and choral iteration Krehbiel quotes from Denham and Clapperton's *Narrative of Travels in Northern and Central Africa,* the following song by Negro bards of Bornou in praise of their Sultan·

Give flesh to the hyenas at daybreak—
Oh, the broad spears!
The spear of the Sultan is the broadest—
Oh, the broad spears!
I behold thee now, I desire to see none other—
Oh, the broad spears!

My horse is as tall as a high wall—
Oh, the broad spears!
He will fight ten—he fears nothing!
Oh, the broad spears!
He has slain ten, the guns are yet behind—
Oh, the broad spears!
The elephant of the forest brings me what I want—
Oh, the broad spears!
Like unto thee, so is the Sultan—
Oh, the broad spears!
Be brave! Be brave, my friends and kinsmen—
Oh, the broad spears!
God is great! I wax fierce as a beast of prey—
Oh, the broad spears!
God is great! Today those I wished for are come—
Oh, the broad spears!

Or take this beautiful song found in one of the Bantu folktales. It is the song of an old woman standing at the edge of the river with a babe in her arms, singing to coax back the child's mother, who has been enchanted and taken by the river The tale is *The Story of Tangalimlibo,* and the song runs as follows

It is crying, it is crying,
Sihamba Ngenyanga
The child of the walker by moonlight,
Sihamba Ngenyanga
It was done intentionally by people whose names cannot be mentioned
Sihamba Ngenyanga
They sent her for water during the day,
Sihamba Ngenyanga
She tried to dip it with the milk basket, and then it sank,
Sihamba Ngenyanga
Tried to dip it with the ladle, and then it sank,
Sihamba Ngenyanga
Tried to dip it with the mantle, and then it sank,
Sihamba Ngenyanga

Compare these African songs with the American Spiritual, "Oh, Wasn't Dat a Wide Ribber":

Oh, de Ribber of Jordan is deep and wide,
One mo' ribber to cross.
I don't know how to get on de other side,
One mo' ribber to cross
Oh, you got Jesus, hold him fast,
One mo' ribber to cross.
Oh, better love was nebber told,
One mo' ribber to cross.
'Tis stronger dan an iron band,
One mo' ribber to cross.
'Tis sweeter dan de honeycomb,
One mo' ribber to cross
Oh, de good ole chariot passin' by,
One mo' ribber to cross.
She jarred de earth an' shook de sky,
One mo' ribber to cross
I pray, good Lord, I shall be one,
One mo' ribber to cross.
To get in de chariot an' trabble on,
One mo' ribber to cross
We're told dat de fore wheel run by love,
One mo' ribber to cross
We're told dat de hind wheel run by faith,
One mo' ribber to cross
I hope I'll get dere bye an' bye,
One mo' ribber to cross.
To jine de number in de sky,
One mo' ribber to cross
Oh, Jordan's Ribber am chilly an' cold,
One mo' ribber to cross
It chills de body, but not de soul,
One mo' ribber to cross.

A study of the Spirituals leads to the belief that the earlier ones were built upon the form so common to African songs, leading lines and response It would be safe, I think, to say that the bulk of

the Spirituals is cast in this simple form. Among those following this simple structure, however, are some of the most beautiful of the slave songs One of these, whose beauty is unsurpassed, is "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot," which is constructed to be sung in the following manner

Leader	*Swing low, sweet chariot,*
Congregation	*Comin' for to carry me home*
Leader	*Swing low, sweet chariot,*
Congregation	*Comin' for to carry me home.*
Leader	*I look over Jordan, what do I see?*
Congregation	*Comin' for to carry me home*
Leader	*A band of angels comin' after me,*
Congregation	*Comin' for to carry me home*
Leader	*Swing low, sweet chariot,*
	etc , etc , etc

The solitary voice of the leader is answered by a sound like a rolling sea The effect produced is strangely moving

But as the American Negro went a step beyond his original African music in the development of melody and harmony, he also went a step beyond in the development of form The lead and response are still retained, but the response is developed into a true chorus In a number of the songs there are leads, a response and a chorus In this class of songs the chorus becomes the most important part, dominating the whole song and coming first Such a song is the well-known "Steal Away to Jesus ' In this song the congregation begins with the chorus, singing it in part harmony.

Steal away, steal away,
Steal away to Jesus
Steal away, steal away home,
I ain't got long to stay here

Then the leader alone or the congregation in unison:

My Lord He calls me,
He calls me by the thunder,
The trumpet sounds within-a my soul.

Then the response in part harmony

I ain't got long to stay here
Steal away, steal away,
etc , etc , etc

This developed form is carried a degree farther in "Go Down, Moses" Here the congregation opens with the powerful theme of the chorus, singing it in unison down to the last line, which is harmonized

Go down, Moses,
'Way down in Egypt land,
Tell ole Pharaoh,
Let my people go

Then the leader

Thus saith the Lord, bold Moses said,

And the response

Let my people go

Leader

If not I'll smite your first-born dead.

Response

Let my people go

Chorus

Go down, Moses,
Go down, Moses,
'Way down in Egypt land,
Tell ole Pharaoh,
Let my people go,
etc , etc , etc

In a few of the songs this development is carried to a point where the form becomes almost choral Examples of these more complex structures are "Deep River" and "Walk Together, Children."

I have said that the European concept of music, generally speaking, is melody and the African concept is rhythm It is upon this point that most white people have difficulty with Negro music, the dif-

ficulty of getting the "swing" of it. White America has pretty well mastered this difficulty; and naturally, because the Negro has been beating these rhythms in its ears for three hundred years But in Europe, in spite of the vogue of American popular music, based on these rhythms, the best bands are not able to play it satisfactorily. Of course, they play the notes correctly, but any American can at once detect that there is something lacking The trouble is, they play the notes too correctly, and do not play what is not written down. There are few things more ludicrous—to an American—than the efforts of a European music-hall artist to sing a jazz song It is interesting, if not curious, that among white Americans those who have mastered these rhythms most completely are Jewish-Americans. Indeed, Jewish musicians and composers are they who have carried them to their highest development in written form

In all authentic American Negro music the rhythms may be divided roughly into two classes—rhythms based on the swinging of head and body and rhythms based on the patting of hands and feet Again, speaking roughly, the rhythms of the Spirituals fall in the first class and the rhythms of secular music in the second class The "swing" of the Spirituals is an altogether subtle and elusive thing. It is subtle and elusive because it is in perfect union with the religious ecstasy that manifests itself in the swaying bodies of a whole congregation, swaying as if responding to the baton of some extremely sensitive conductor So it is very difficult, if not impossible, to sing these songs sitting or standing coldly still, and at the same time capture the spontaneous 'swing" which is of their very essence

Carl Van Vechten writing in *Vanity Fair* about these songs declared it as his opinion that white singers cannot sing them, and that women, with few exceptions, should not attempt to sing them at all Mr Van Vechten made this statement in recognition of the element in the Spirituals without which their beauty of melody and harmony is lifeless His statement also, I take it, has specific reference to the singing of these songs as solos on the concert stage I agree that white singers are, naturally, prone to go to either of two extremes to attempt to render a Spiritual as though it were a Brahms song, or to assume a "Negro unctuousness" that is obviously false, and painfully so I think white singers, concert singers, can sing Spirituals—if they feel them But to feel them it is necessary to know the truth

about their origin and history, to get in touch with the association of ideas that surround them, and to realize something of what they have meant in the experiences of the people who created them. In a word, the capacity to feel these songs while singing them is more important than any amount of mere artistic technique Singers who take the Spirituals as mere "art" songs and singers who make of them an exhibition of what is merely amusing or exotic are equally doomed to failure, so far as true interpretation is concerned Mr. Van Vechten's opinion brings up the question of the rendition of these songs as concert solos not only by white but by colored singers. I have seen more than one colored singer floundering either in the "art" or the "exhibition" pit The truth is, these songs, primarily created and constructed, as they were, for group singing, will always remain a high test for the individual artist They are not concert material for the mediocre soloist Through the genius and supreme artistry of Roland Hayes these songs undergo, we may say, a transfiguration He takes them high above the earth and sheds over them shimmering silver of moonlight and flashes of the sun's gold, and we are transported as he sings By a seemingly opposite method, through sheer simplicity, without any conscious attempt at artistic effort and by devoted adherence to the primitive traditions, Paul Robeson achieves substantially the same effect These two singers, apparently so different, have the chief essential in common; they both feel the Spirituals deeply Mr Hayes, notwithstanding all his artistry, sings these songs with tears on his cheeks Both these singers pull at the heartstrings and moisten the eyes of their listeners

We were discussing the "swing" of the Spirituals, and were saying how subtle and elusive a thing it was It is the more subtle and elusive because there is a still further intricacy in the rhythms The swaying of the body marks the regular beat or, better, surge, for it is something stronger than a beat, and is more or less, not precisely, strict in time, but the Negro loves nothing better in his music than to play with the fundamental time beat He will, as it were, take the fundamental beat and pound it out with his left hand, almost monotonously; while with his right hand he juggles it It should be noted that even in the swaying of head and body the head marks the surge off in shorter waves than does the body In listening to Negroes sing their own music it is often tantalizing and even exciting to

watch a minute fraction of a beat balancing for a slight instant on the bar between two measures, and, when it seems almost too late, drop back into its own proper compartment There is a close similarity between this singing and the beating of the big drum and the little drums by the African natives In addition, there are the curious turns and twists and quavers and the intentional striking of certain notes just a shade off the key, with which the Negro loves to embellish his songs These tendencies constitute a handicap that has baffled many of the recorders of this music I doubt that it is possible with our present system of notation to make a fixed transcription of these peculiarities that would be absolutely true, for in their very nature they are not susceptible to fixation Many of the transcriptions that have been made are far from the true manner and spirit of singing the Spirituals I have gone thus far into the difficulties connected with singing the Spirituals in order that those who are interested in these songs may have a fuller understanding of just what they are It is not necessary to say that the lack of complete mastery of all these difficulties is not at all fatal to deriving pleasure from singing Spirituals A group does not have to be able to sing with the fervor and abandon of a Negro congregation to enjoy them Nor does one have to be a Hayes or a Robeson to give others an idea of their beauty and power

Going back again, the rhythms of Negro secular music, roughly speaking, fall in the class based on the patting of hands and feet. It can easily be seen that this distinction between the Spirituals and Negro secular music is, in a large way, that of different physical responses to differing sets of emotions Religious ecstasy fittingly manifests itself in swaying heads and bodies, the emotions that call for hand and foot patting are pleasure, humor, hilarity, love, just the joy of being alive In this class of his music, as in the Spirituals, the Negro is true to the characteristic of playing with the fundamental beat, if anything, more so What is largely psychological manifestation in the Spirituals becomes physical response in the secular music In this music the fundamental beat is chiefly maintained by the patting of one foot, while the hands clap out intricate and varying rhythmic patterns It should be understood that the foot is not marking straight time, but what Negroes call "stop time," or what the books have no better definition for than "syncopation." The

strong accent or down beat is never lost, but is playfully bandied from hand to foot and from foot to hand

I wish to point out here that the rhapsodical hand clapping connected with singing the Spirituals—except in the "ring shout" songs, of which I shall speak later—is not to be confused with the hand clapping to dance-time music. Recently another Negro dance has swept the country It was introduced to New York by Messrs Miller and Lyles in their musical comedy, *Runnin' Wild* And at present white people everywhere, in the cabarets, on the ball floor and at home count it an accomplishment to be able to "do the Charleston" When Miller and Lyles introduced the dance in their play they did not depend wholly on the orchestra—an extraordinary jazz band—for the accompaniment, but had the major part of the chorus supplement it with hand and foot patting The effect was electrical and contagious It was the best demonstration of beating out complex rhythms I have ever witnessed, and I do not believe New York ever before witnessed anything of just its sort

It would be interesting to know how many peoples there are other than the Negro in America and Africa, if there are any, who innately beat out these complex and extremely intricate rhythms with their hands and feet The Spanish people do something of the kind in their castanet dances, but, as has already been shown, this is probably the result of African influence At any rate, this innate characteristic of the Negro in America is the genesis and foundation of our national popular medium for musical expression

The temptations for these digressions are almost irresistible. At this point the writer could go far along the line of discussing the origin of Negro secular music and its development until it was finally taken over and made "American popular music" It would be easy also to stray along a parallel line, and note how Negro dances have kept step with Negro secular music, and how from their inglorious beginnings they have advanced until they have been recognized and accepted by the stage and by "society" And this merely to pave the way for another slight digression And, yet, we can hardly discuss the question of Negro rhythms and "swing" without paying some attention to still another class of songs—the work songs

With regard to rhythm and "swing" the work songs do not fall into the classification with either the Spirituals or the dance-time

songs. The "swing" of these songs is governed by the rhythmic motions made by a gang of men at labor It may be the motions made in swinging a pick on the road or a hammer on the rock pile, or in loading cotton on the levee Some of the finest examples of these songs are those originated by the convicts at work in the chain gang One of these is the poignantly beautiful "Water Boy," frequently sung by Roland Hayes All the men sing and move together as they swing their picks or rock-breaking hammers They move like a ballet, not a ballet of cavorting legs and pirouetting feet, but a ballet of bending backs and quivering muscles It is all in rhythm, but a rhythm impossible to set down There is always a leader and he sets the pace A phrase is sung while the shining hammers are being lifted It is cut off suddenly as the hammers begin to descend and gives place to a prolonged grunt which becomes explosive at the impact of the blow Each phrase of the song is independent, apparently obeying no law of time. After each impact the hammers lie still and there is silence As they begin to rise again the next phrase of the song is sung, and so on Just how long the hammers will be allowed to rest cannot be determined, nor, since the movements are not governed by strict time, can any exact explanation be given as to why they all begin to rise simultaneously There are variations that violate the obvious laws of rhythm, but over it all can be discerned a superior rhythmic law A fine illustration of what I have been trying to explain was given by Paul Robeson in his rendition of the convict song in *The Emperor Jones*

Brief mention must be made of another class of Negro songs This is a remnant of songs allied to the Spirituals but which cannot be strictly classified with them They are the "shout songs" These songs are not true Spirituals nor even truly religious; in fact, they are not actually songs They might be termed quasi-religious or semi-barbaric music They once were used, and still are in a far less degree, in religious gatherings, but neither musically nor in the manner of their use do they fall in the category of the Spirituals This term "shout songs" has no reference to the loud, jubilant Spirituals, which are often so termed by writers on Negro music; it has reference to the songs or, better, the chants used to accompany the "ring shout" The "ring shout," in truth, is nothing more or less than the survival of a primitive African dance, which in quite an understandable way

attached itself in the early days to the Negro's Christian worship. I can remember seeing this dance many times when I was a boy A space is cleared by moving the benches, and the men and women arrange themselves, generally alternately, in a ring, their bodies quite close The music starts and the ring begins to move Around it goes, at first slowly, then with quickening pace Around and around it moves on shuffling feet that do not leave the floor, one foot beating with the heel a decided accent in strict two-four time The music is supplemented by the clapping of hands As the ring goes around it begins to take on signs of frenzy. The music, starting, perhaps, with a Spiritual, becomes a wild, monotonous chant The same musical phrase is repeated over and over one, two, three, four, five hours. The words become a repetition of an incoherent cry. The very monotony of sound and motion produces an ecstatic state. Women, screaming, fall to the ground prone and quivering Men, exhausted, drop out of the shout But the ring closes up and moves around and around.

I remember, too, that even then the "ring shout" was looked upon as a very questionable form of worship It was distinctly frowned upon by a great many colored people. Indeed, I do not recall ever seeing a "ring shout" except after the regular services Almost whispered invitations would go around, "Stay after church, there's going to be a 'ring shout.' " The more educated ministers and members, as fast as they were able to brave the primitive element in the churches, placed a ban on the "ring shout " The "shout," however, was never universal The best information that I have been able to gather indicates that it was most general in the Atlantic and Gulf coastal regions of the Southeastern States Today it is rarely seen It has not quite, but has almost disappeared In parts of Louisiana, and in some parts of the West Indies and South America, or, in other words, where the Negro came under the influence and jurisdiction of the Catholic Church and the Church of England this dance long persisted outside of the church and Christian religion There it retained its primitive social and ceremonial significance and was practiced with more or less frankness Two reasons may be advanced to cover these two facts· under the Catholic Church and the Church of England the Negro, practically, never had any place of worship of his own, and, of course, he would never have been allowed to introduce such a

practice as the "ring shout," even under a religious guise, into those churches, it is also in a large measure true that the Negro in those localities has never accepted the Christian religion in the sense and degree in which it was accepted by the Negro of the South; there his acceptance was more a matter of outward conformity, and he clung more tenaciously to his African cultural and religious ideas. This survival of an African ceremony has been outlawed in the United States and cannot be seen except in some backward churches of a backward community But in parts of the West Indies and South America it is still quite frankly practiced as a social function. The Negroes that live along the eastern fringe of Venezuela dance every Saturday I have often heard their chants and the drums throbbing until afar into the night I was in Haiti several years ago and I learned that the "Saturday-night dance," which had been the custom there, too, had been interdicted in the larger cities by the American Occupation authorities However, the people were still allowed to dance in the rural districts and on holidays On one national holiday in a small village I saw them dance under a thatched pavilion in the little public square It was the same thing I had seen in my childhood in a small church in Florida The formation of the dancers was the same, the shuffling motion was the same, the monotonous, incoherent chant sounded the same, although these folk spoke an unfamiliar language The only differences I noted were it was not in a church, there was great gaiety instead of religious frenzy, and the beating drums—real African drums

I refer again to Mr Van Vechten's interesting article. In it he said: "Negro folksongs differ from the folksongs of most other races through the fact that they are sung in harmony " I am glad to have this confirmation of my own opinion I have long thought that the harmonization of the Spirituals by the folk group in singing them was distinctive of them among the folksongs of the world My speculation was with regard to how many other groups of folksongs there were that were harmonized spontaneously in the singing. The fact that the Spirituals were sung in harmony has always seemed natural to me, because Negroes harmonize instinctively What about the traditional reputation of Negroes as singers, upon what is it really founded? The common idea is that it is founded upon the quality of their voices It is not. The voices of Negroes, when untrained, are

often overloud, perhaps rather blatant, sometimes even a bit strident; but they are never discordant In harmony they take on an orchestra-like timbre. The popular credit given to Negroes as singers is given, *maybe unconsciously,* because of their ability to harmonize, and not because of the quality of their voices When the folks at the "big house" sat on the verandah and heard the singing floating up through the summer night from the "quarters" they were enchanted, and it is likely they did not realize that the enchantment was wrought chiefly through the effect produced by harmonizing and not by the voices as voices.

Pick up four colored boys or young men anywhere and the chances are ninety out of a hundred that you have a quartet Let one of them sing the melody and the others will naturally find the parts Indeed, it may be said that all male Negro youth of the United States is divided into quartets When I was a very small boy one of my greatest pleasures was going to concerts and hearing the crack quartets made up of waiters in the Jacksonville hotels sing Each of the big Florida resort hotels boasted at least two quartets, a first and a second When I was fifteen and my brother was thirteen we were singing in a quartet which competed with other quartets In the days when such a thing as a white barber was unknown in the South, every barber shop had its quartet, and the men spent their leisure time playing on the guitar—not banjo, mind you—and "harmonizing" I have witnessed some of these explorations in the field of harmony and the scenes of hilarity and back-slapping when a new and peculiarly rich chord was discovered There would be demands for repetitions, and cries of "Hold it! Hold it!" until it was firmly mastered And well it was, for some of these chords were so new and strange for voices that, like Sullivan's *Lost Chord,* they would never have been found again except for the celerity with which they were recaptured In this way was born the famous but much-abused "barber-shop chord"

It may sound like an extravagant claim, but it is, nevertheless, a fact that the "barber-shop chord" is the foundation of the close harmony method adopted by American musicians in making arrangements for male voices I do not think English musicians have yet used this method of arranging to any great extent "Barber-shop harmonies" gave a tremendous vogue to male quartet singing, first

on the minstrel stage, then in vaudeville; and soon white young men, wherever four or more were gathered together, tried themselves at "harmonizing." The vogue somewhat declined because the old "barber-shop chord" was so overdone that it became almost taboo But the male quartet is still one of the main features of colored musical shows These modern quartets avoid the stereotyped chords of twenty, thirty and forty years ago, but the chief charm of their singing still lies in the closeness of the harmony No one who heard *Shuffle Along,* can forget the singing of the Four Harmony Kings

Among the early collectors of the Spirituals there was some doubt as to whether they were sung in harmony This confusion may have been due in part to the fact that in the Spirituals the Negro makes such frequent use of unison harmony The leading lines are always sung by a single voice or in unison harmony, and many of the refrains or choruses are sung in unison harmony down to the last phrase, and then in part harmony The chorus of "Go Down, Moses" is an example In *Slave Songs of the United States,* published in 1867, Mr Allen, one of the editors, in accounting for the fact that only melodies of the songs in the collection were printed, said in his preface

"There is no singing in parts, as we understand it, and yet no two seem to be singing the same thing, the leading singer starts the words of each verse, often improvising, and others, who 'base' him, as it is called, strike in with the refrain or even join in the solo when the words are familiar When the 'base' begins the leader often stops, leaving the rest of the words to be guessed at, or it may be they are taken up by one of the other singers And the 'basers' themselves seem to follow their own whims, beginning where they please, striking an octave above or below (in case they have pitched the tune too high), or hitting some other note that chords, so as to produce the effect of a marvelous complication and variety and yet with the most perfect time and rarely with any discord And what makes it all the harder to unravel a thread of melody out of this strange network is that, like birds, they seem not infrequently to strike sounds that cannot be precisely represented by the gamut and abound in 'slides from one note to another and turns and cadences not in articulated notes"

Mr. Allen's opinion that the songs were not harmonized is explained when he says, "There is no singing in parts, as we understand it." And no one can blame him for not attempting to do more than transcribe the melodies If Mr Allen were writing today, when America is so familiar with the bizarre Negro harmonies, he would recognize that the Spirituals were harmonized and he would try to transcribe the harmonies What he heard was the primitive and spontaneous group singing of the Spirituals, and his description of it is, perhaps, as good as can be given It might also be noted that it is an excellent description of the most modern American form of instrumentation—a form that most people think of as a brand-new invention.

What can be said about the poetry of the texts of the Spirituals? Naturally, not as much as can be said about the music. In the use of the English language both the bards and the group worked under limitations that might appear to be hopeless Many of the lines are less than trite, and irrelevant repetition often becomes tiresome They are often saved alone by their naiveté And yet there is poetry, and a surprising deal of it in the Spirituals There is more than ought to be reasonably expected from a forcedly ignorant people working in an absolutely alien language. Hebraic paraphrases are frequent These are accounted for by the fact that the Bible was the chief source of material for the lines of these songs

Upon de mountain Jehovah spoke,
Out-a his mouth came fi-ar and smoke

But in these paraphrases we have something that is not exactly paraphrase, there is a change of, I dare to say it, style, something Hebrew—austerity—is lessened, and something Negro—charm—is injected Examples could be multiplied

I wrastled wid Satan, I wrastled wid sin
Stepped over hell, an' come back agin.
Isaiah mounted on de wheel of time
Spoke to God A-mighty 'way down de line.

O hear dat lumberin' thunder
A-roll f'om door to door,
A-callin' de people home to God,
Dey'll git home bime-by

O see dat forked lightenin'
A-jump f'om cloud to cloud,
A-pickin' up God's chillun
Dey'll git home bime-by

Here are lines suggestive of what may be found in the Psalms, and yet how distinctively different:

Sinner, sinner, you better pray,
Looks like my Lord a-comin' in de sky.
Or yo' soul be los' on de jedgment day,
Looks like my Lord a-comin' in de sky.

O little did I think he was so nigh,
Looks like my Lord a-comin' in de sky
He spoke an' he made me laugh and cry,
Looks like my Lord a-comin' in de sky.

When I was a monah jes' like you,
Looks like my Lord a-comin' in de sky.
My head got wet wid de midnight dew,
Looks like my Lord a-comin' in de sky.

My head got wet wid de midnight dew,
Looks like my Lord a-comin' in de sky.
De mornin' star was a witness too,
Looks like my Lord a-comin' in de sky.

Many of the stories and scenes in the Bible gave the Negro bards great play for their powers of graphic description The stories are always dramatic and the pictures vivid and gorgeously colored The style, in contradiction of the general idea of Negro diffuseness, is concise and condensed It might be said of them that every line is a

picture The following illustrative lines are taken from a Spiritual derived from John's vision on Patmos:

Yes, the book of Revelations will be brought forth dat day,
An' ev'ry leaf unfolded, the book of the seven seals.

An' I went down to Egypt, I camped upon de groun'
At de soundin' of de trumpet de Holy Ghost came down

An' when de seals were opened, the voice said, "Come an' see."
I went an' stood a-lookin' to see de mystery

The red horse came a-gallopin', an' de black horse he came too,
An' de pale horse he came down de road, an' stole my father away

An' den I see ole Satan, an' dey bound him wid a chain,
An' dey put him in de fi-ar, an' see de smoke arise

Dey bound him in de fi-ar, where he wanted to take my soul
Ole Satan gnashed his teeth and howled, he missed po' sinner man's soul.

Den I see de dead arisin', an' stan' before de Lamb
An' de wicked call on de mountains to hide dem f'om His face

An' den I see de Christians standin' on God's right hand,
A shoutin' "Hallelujah!" singing praises to de Lamb

Sometimes these biblical incidents are resolved into lyrical gems I quote a stanza from the song about Jacob wrestling with the angel, found in Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson's book

O wrestlin' Jacob Jacob day's a-breakin',
I will not let thee go!
O wrestlin' Jacob, Jacob day's a-breakin',
He will not let me go!
O, I hold my brudder wid a tremblin' hand,
I would not let him go!
I hold my sister wid a tremblin' hand,
I would not let her go!

But see what these Negro bards have done with the story of the crucifixion They have not merely rehearsed it as it is given in the gospels, they have fused into it their very own pathos·

Dey crucified my Lord,
An' He never said a mumblin' word
Dey crucified my Lord,
An' He never said a mumblin' word.
Not a word—not a word—not a word

Dey nailed Him to de tree,
An' He never said a mumblin' word.
Dey nailed Him to de tree,
An' He never said a mumblin' word.
Not a word—not a word—not a word

Dey pierced Him in de side,
An' He never said a mumblin' word.
Dey pierced Him in de side,
An' He never said a mumblin' word.
Not a word —not a word—not a word

De blood came twinklin' down,
An' He never said a mumblin' word.
De blood came twinklin' down,
An' He never said a mumblin' word.
Not a word—not a word—not a word

He bowed His head an' died,
An' He never said a mumblin' word.
He bowed His head an' died,
An' He never said a mumblin' word
Not a word—not a word—not a word

The word "twinklin' " in the fourth stanza is a Negro pronunciation of the word "trinkling " But in this way what a magical poetic phrase was stumbled upon, "The blood came twinkling down."

In rare instances a touch of the irrepressible Negro humor creeps in:

Ev'ybody talkin' 'bout heaben ain' gwine der.

Sister, you better mind how you walk on de cross,
Yo' foot might slip an' yo' soul git los'.

De devil is a liar an' a conjurer too,
Ef you don't look out he'll conjure you.

Much, too, of the poetry of the Spirituals is the Negro's innate expression of his own emotions and experiences, and out of these he drew some piercing lyrical cries

Sometimes I feel like a motherless child,
Sometimes I feel like a motherless child,
Sometimes I feel like a motherless child,
A long ways from home.

Or in the opposite mood

Sometimes I feel like an eagle in de air
Some-a dese mornin's bright an' fair
I'm goin' to lay down my heavy load,
Goin' to spread my wings an' cleave de air.

You may bury me in de east,
You may bury me in de west,
But I'll hear de trumpet sound
In-a dat mornin'.

Occasionally we are startled by a flash of poetry of pure beauty; of poetry not circumscribed by individual conditions, but coming out of the experiences of humanity I quote, in concluding these examples, again from Colonel Higginson's book:

I know moon-rise, I know star-rise,
I lay dis body down.

I walk in de moonlight, I walk in de starlight,
To lay dis body down.
I walk in de graveyard, I walk throo de graveyard,
To lay dis body down.
I lie in de grave an' stretch out my arms,
I lay dis body down.
I go to de jedgment in de evenin' of de day
When I lay dis body down,
An' my soul an' your soul will meet in de day
When I lay dis body down.

Regarding the line, "I lie in de grave an' stretch out my arms," Colonel Higginson wrote "Never, it seems to me, since man first lived and suffered, was his infinite longing for peace uttered more plaintively than in that line"

Something should be said to give a general idea about the "language" in which these songs were written Negro dialect in America is the result of the effort of the slave to establish a medium of communication between himself and his master. This he did by dropping his original language, and formulating a phonologically and grammatically simplified English, that is, an English in which the harsh and difficult sounds were elided, and the secondary moods and tenses were eliminated This dialect served not only as a means of communication between slave and master but also between slave and slave, so the original African languages became absolutely lost The dialect spoken in the sea islands off the coast of Georgia and South Carolina remains closer to African form than the dialect of any other section, and still contains some African words It is, at any rate, farther from English than the speech of American Negroes anywhere else But it is remarkable how few words of known African origin there are in the Negro dialect generally spoken throughout the United States

Negro dialect, in substantially its present form, has been used in the United States for the past two centuries. In the South all white people, men, women and children, understand the dialect without any shadow of difficulty. Indeed, the English spoken by the whites does not differ, in some respects, from the dialect, so great has been the influence of this soft, indolent speech of the Negro. Nevertheless,

Negro dialect presents some difficulties to white people who have never lived in the South, when they attempt to reproduce it in speech or in song Of course, it is not necessary to be an expert in Negro dialect to sing the Spirituals, but most of them lose in charm when they are sung in straight English For example, it would be next to sacrilege to render

"What kinda shoes you gwine to weah?"

by

"What kind of shoes are you going to wear?"

An error that confuses many persons is the idea that Negro dialect is uniform and fixed The idioms and pronunciation of the dialect vary in different sections of the South A Negro of the uplands of Georgia does not speak the identical dialect of his brother of the islands off the coast of the State, and would have a hard time understanding him Nor is the generally spoken Negro dialect the fixed thing it is made to be on the printed page It is variable and fluid Not even in the dialect of any particular section is a given word always pronounced the same It may vary slightly in the next breath in the mouth of the same speaker How a word is pronounced is governed by the preceding and following sounds Sometimes the combination permits or a liaison so close that to the uninitiated the sound of the word is almost lost.

To illustrate If one dialect-speaking Negro asks another, "Is dat all you got to say?" the answer in the affirmative would be, "Das all." The invariable practice on the printed page is to represent "that" by "dat" and, logically, "that's" by "dat's." But the harsh "ts" sound is displeasing to the Negro ear, as well as troublesome to the Negro tongue, so it is softened into "das "

Negro dialect is for many people made unintelligible on the printed page by the absurd practice of devising a clumsy, outlandish, so-called phonetic spelling for words in a dialect story or poem when the regular English spelling represents the very same sound Paul Laurence Dunbar did a great deal to reform the writing down of dialect, but since it is more a matter of ear than of rules those who are not intimately familiar with the sounds continue to make the same blunders.

Since the understanding of the Spirituals and the pleasure of singing them are increased by a knowledge of the dialect in which the texts were composed, a suggestion or two about it will not be out of place. The first thing to remember is that the dialect is fundamentally English An American from any part of the United States or an Englishman can, with not more than slight difficulty, understand it when it is spoken The trouble comes in trying to get it from the printed page. There are some idioms that may be strange, but they are few The next thing to remember is that the pronunciation of the dialect is the result of the elision by the Negro, as far as possible, of all troublesome consonants and sound combinations

Thus· "th" as in "that" or "than" becomes "d"
"th" as in "thick" or "thin" becomes "t"

This rule holds good at the end as well as at the beginning of words and syllables So we have "dat" and "der" or "dar," and "tick" and "tin," and "wid" and "det" (for death) Indeed, the Negro tries to elide the "h" whenever it is in combination with another consonant. There is always the tendency to suppress the "r," except when it is the initial letter of the syllable The "g" in "ing" endings is generally dropped or smothered, and the sound resembles the final French "m" and "n " "A," "e" and "u," between two consonants in an unaccented syllable, are uniformly rendered by the sound of "u" in "but " The sound is sometimes broadened almost to the "a" in "father." This is not an inflexible rule, but it especially holds true with regard to final syllables (It may be remembered that this same tendency, in a less degree, is true of correct English) Examples The word "never" may be heard either as "nevuh" or as "nevah " This word is often playfully emphasized by a strong accent on the last syllable, "nevah " In the word "better" the first "e" has the usual short "e" sound, and the second "e" follows the above rule Thus we have "bettuh" or "bettah " The word "to" is always pronounced "tuh " The "or" and "our" combinations are generally sounded "oh," as "do' " or "doh" for "door," and "monuh" or "monah" for "mourner " This dialect word, by the way, does not signify one undergoing grief, but one undergoing repentance for sins

Perhaps the most common mistake made in imitating Negro dialect is in giving to "de," the dialect for "the," the unvarying pronunciation of "dee." It is pronounced "dee" when it precedes words

beginning with a vowel sound, and "duh" before those beginning with a consonant sound. In this it follows the rule for the article "the"

The statement that the Negro dialect generally spoken in the United States is fundamentally English brings up a curious fact regarding the effort of a smaller group of Negro slaves to create a medium of communication between themselves and their masters This fact is the more apropos because this smaller group also created a rich body of folksongs In what was the Territory of Louisiana the language was French The Negro slaves of the Territory, in establishing a medium of communication, instead of forming a dialect of the French language, created a distinct language This language is known as Creole Creole is an Africanized French, but it is neither African nor French It is a language in itself The French-speaking person cannot, with the exception of some words, understand it unless he learns it Creole is a distinct language, scientifically constructed and logical in its grammatical arrangement It is a graphic and expressive language, and is, in some respects, superior to French

For a reason I cannot give, wherever there was a Negro population the French language in the French-American colonial settlements divided itself into two branches—French and Creole This is true of Louisiana, of Martinique, of Guadaloupe and of Haiti No such thing happened with the Spanish language. Negroes in the Spanish-American countries speak Spanish.

In setting down the words of the songs for *The Books of American Negro Spirituals,* I endeavored to keep them as true to the original dialect as is compatible with a more or less ready recognition of what the words really are When a dialect spelling would puzzle and confuse the reader and actually throw him off, the regular English spelling was followed. This, for example, was the practice followed in writing the word "sword" in the song "Singing with a Sword in My Hand." The spelling "sode" or "soad" would have been positively misleading. I am sure this method is preferable to an attempt to indicate by phonetic spelling all the exact sounds of Negro dialect. I have seen "unuthuh" printed for "another." The ordinary pronunciation of the regular English spelling is so close to the dialect that the difference does not warrant such a task in deciphering being placed upon the reader. It will be noticed that in some of the songs

the exaggerated form of dialect would not be fitting; in such songs I kept the dialect forms down to the minimum. With a general idea of the principles of the dialect the reader or singer may give even Negro songs written in straight English the proper color.

This book was dedicated to those through whose efforts these songs have been collected, preserved and given to the world It is a fitting, if inadequate, tribute; for it was wholly within the possibilities for these songs to be virtually lost The people who created them were not capable of recording them, and the conditions out of which this music sprang and by which it was nourished have almost passed away Without the direct effort on the part of those to whom I offer this slight tribute, the Spirituals would probably have fallen into disuse and finally disappeared. This probability is increased by the fact that they passed through a period following Emancipation when the front ranks of the colored people themselves would have been willing and even glad to let them die.

The first efforts toward the preservation of this music were made by the pioneer collectors who worked within the decade following the Civil War. These collectors, either through curiosity or as a matter of research, or because they were impressed by the unique beauty of the Spirituals, set down on paper the words and melodies. All of them were more or less successful in getting the melodies down correctly, but none of these pioneers even attempted to set down the anarchic harmonies which they heard In fact, they had no classification for these sounds or even comprehension of them as harmonies These pioneers were none of them exceptionally trained, but on this point they were not one whit behind the most advanced thought in American music of their day Some of these early collectors contented themselves with jotting down simply the melodies and words, and publishing their collections in that form. Others harmonized the melodies These harmonized arrangements, however, had little or no relation to the original harmonies or the manner of singing them by the group They were, generally, straight four-part arrangements set down in strict accordance with the standard rules of thorough-bass Nevertheless, except for the work of these pioneer collectors, done mostly as a labor of love, the number of the Spirituals recorded and preserved would have been only a small fraction of what it is

The credit for the first introduction of the Spirituals to the American public and the world belongs to Fisk University It was the famous Fisk Jubilee Singers who first made this country and Europe conscious of the beauty of these songs. The story of the struggles and successes of the Jubilee Singers, as told in the *Fisk Collection of the Spirituals,* reads like a romance The first impetus upward was given them in New York under the powerful patronage of Henry Ward Beecher With far-reaching wisdom Fisk University devoted itself to the careful collection and recording of the Spirituals, and so the work of the earlier collectors was broadened and improved upon The work of Fisk University was quickly followed up by Hampton; Calhoun School, in Alabama, Atlanta University; Tuskegee Institute, and other schools in the South These schools have for two generations been nurseries and homes for these songs.

Within the past ten or twelve years thorough musicians have undertaken a study of this music, a scientific study of it as folk music and an evaluation of its sociological as well as its musical importance. Chief among these is H E Krehbiel, more than thirty years music critic on the *New York Tribune* For many years Mr Krehbiel made a study of Negro music, and gathered a vast amount of data In 1914 he published his *Afro-American Folksongs,* which has already been referred to here Shortly afterwards an excellent and sound book on the subject, *Folk Songs of the American Negro,* was published by Professor John W Work of Fisk University Natalie Curtis Burlin issued *The Hampton Series—Negro Folk-Songs,* in four parts containing the results of her investigations and studies at Hampton aided by phonograph records Maud Cuney Hare of Boston contributed to the sum of historical and scientific knowledge regarding Negro music A number of foreign musicians and observers, mostly Germans, have written on the same theme

Today the Spirituals have a vogue They are beyond the place where the public might hear them only through the quartets of Fisk or Hampton or Atlanta or Tuskegee Today the public buys the Spirituals, takes them home and plays and sings them This has been brought about because the songs have been put into a form that makes them available for singers and music lovers The principal factor in reaching this stage has been H T Burleigh, the eminent colored musician and composer. Mr. Burleigh was the pioneer in

making arrangements for the Spirituals that widened their appeal and extended their use to singers and the general musical public. Along with Mr. Burleigh and following him was a group of talented colored composers working to the same end Nathaniel Dett, Carl Diton, J. Rosamond Johnson and N. Clark Smith. The vogue of the Spirituals was added to by the publishing of twenty-four piano arrangements of Spirituals by Coleridge-Taylor Clarence Cameron White of Boston published a number of arrangements for violin and piano. There were others who aided greatly by organizing choruses and teaching them to sing these songs, foremost among whom were Mrs. Azalia Hackley, Mrs Daisy Tapley and William C Elkins. The latest impulse given to the spread of the Spirituals has come within the last year or two through their presentation to the public by colored singers on the concert stage The superlatively fine rendition of these songs by Roland Hayes, Paul Robeson, Miss Marian Anderson and Julius Bledsoe has brought them to their highest point of celebrity and placed the classic stamp upon them Today it is appropriate for any artist, however great, to program one or a group of these Spirituals

A number of white persons aided in securing the general recognition which the Spirituals now enjoy. Several white musicians have made excellent arrangements for some of these songs David Mannes, long interested in Negro music, was instrumental together with Mrs Natalie Curtis Burlin, Mr. Elbridge Adams and others in founding a colored music school settlement in the Harlem section of New York City. Clement Wood, the poet, has for several years given lectures on the Spirituals, illustrated by voice and at the piano. Carl Van Vechten, whom I have quoted, has made a study of Negro music and has written a number of articles on the subject. But the present regard in which this Negro music is held is due overwhelmingly to the work of Negro composers, musicians and singers It was through the work of these Negro artists that the colored people themselves were stirred to a realization of the true value of the Spirituals, and that result is more responsible for the new life which pulses through this music than any other single cause I have said that these songs passed through a period when the front ranks of the Negro race would have been willing to let them die Immediately following Emancipation those ranks revolted against everything

connected with slavery, and among those things were the Spirituals It became a sign of not being progressive or educated to sing them This was a natural reaction, but, nevertheless, a sadly foolish one. It was left for the older generation to keep them alive by singing them at prayer meetings, class meetings, experience meetings and revivals, while the new choir with the organ and books of idiotic anthems held sway on Sundays At this period gospel hymn-book agents reaped a harvest among colored churches in the South. Today that is all changed There is hardly a choir among the largest and richest colored churches that does not make a specialty of singing the Spirituals This reawakening of the Negro to the value and beauty of the Spirituals was the beginning of an entirely new phase of race consciousness It marked a change in the attitude of the Negro himself toward his own art material, the turning of his gaze inward upon his own cultural resources Neglect and ashamedness gave place to study and pride All the other artistic activities of the Negro have been influenced

There is also a change of attitude going on with regard to the Negro. The country may not yet be conscious of it, for it is only in the beginning It is, nevertheless, momentous America is beginning to see the Negro in a new light, or, rather, to see something new in the Negro It is beginning to see in him the divine spark which may glow merely for the fanning And so a colored man is soloist for the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the Philharmonic, a colored woman is soloist for the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra and the Philharmonic, colored singers draw concertgoers of the highest class, Negro poets and writers find entrée to all the most important magazines, Negro authors have their books accepted and put out by the leading publishers And this change of attitude with regard to the Negro which is taking place is directly related to the Negro's change of attitude with regard to himself. It is new, and it is tremendously significant.

THE NEGRO IN AMERICAN CULTURE

Alain Locke

THE position of the Negro in American culture is indeed a paradox. It almost passes understanding how and why a group of people can be socially despised, yet at the same time artistically esteemed and culturally influential, can be both an oppressed minority and a dominant cultural force Yet this is their position, at least at present. Some of the most characteristic American things are Negro or Negroid, derivatives of the folk life of this darker tenth of the population, and America at home basks in their influence, thrives upon their consumption and vulgarization, and abroad at least must accept their national representativeness This because these things are among the most distinctive products of the American soil, and because too they have a contagious and almost irresistible hold upon human psychology—since, being soundly primitive, they are basically and universally human Even now, much of what is characteristically Negro is representatively American, and as the contemporary cultural and artistic expression of the Negro spirit develops, this will be so more and more.

Unfortunately, but temporarily, what is best known are the vulgarizations, and of these "jazz" and its by-products are in the ascendancy We must not, cannot, disclaim the origin and characteristic quality of "jazz", it is an important racial derivative But it does not follow that it is spiritually representative. It is in the first place not a pure Negro folk thing, but a hybrid product of the reaction of the elements of Negro folk song and dance upon popular and general elements of contemporary American life. "Jazz" is one-third Negro folk idiom, one-third ordinary middle-class American idea and sentiment, and one-third spirit of the "machine-age" which, more and more, becomes not American but Occidental Because the basic color of the mixture is Negro, we attribute jazz, more largely than we should, to Negro life Rather we should think of it this way—jazz represents Negro life in its technical elements, American life in general in its intellectual content. This may seem an unwarrantable

statement, and will remain so for those who only know American life superficially The truth becomes evident, however, only to those who contrast the pure and serious forms of Negro art, which are less known, with the popular vulgarized forms which, with the modern vogue of jazz, are world-known The serious folk art of the older Negro generation is best represented by the so-called Spirituals, a body of real and genuine folk-song of great musical and spiritual importance, while the serious art which can best represent to the world the Negro of the present generation is contemporary Negro poetry In this article, we shall use Negro poetry as a means of indicating the present cultural position of the Negro in American life.

Properly to do so, we should first see a little of the historical background Slavery, for generations the lot of nine-tenths of the Negro population, put upon the Negro the burdens and stigma of a peasant class· conditions which as economic and civic handicaps and as race prejudice still hamper, in spite of considerable improvement, the position of the Negro masses, emancipated only since 1863 In spite of rapid assimilation of American standards and ways of life, and phenomenal educational advance (only 11 per cent of the Negro population is now illiterate), and in spite of much philanthropic interest and help from a minority of the white population, the general attitude of public opinion in America has set the Negro off to himself as a class apart It has been an inconsistent ostracism from the beginning, even under the slave regime For then, while the Negro was most despised, he was, as domestic menial, ensconced in the very heart of the family life of the land-owning aristocracy, a situation which accounts in part for his rapid assimilation of American mores. Since emancipation, American race prejudice has been just as capricious, it has segregated the Negro socially but not culturally in the broad sense of the word culture, and, while making him a submerged class economically and politically, has not isolated or differentiated his institutional life

The consequence has been that the Negro today is a typical American with only a psychological sense of social difference; a minority that, having no political vent for its collective ambitions—since political participation and equal civic rights are the goal of its

practical aspirations—has an enormous amount of accumulated energy to focus upon artistic expression and cultural self-determination Social prejudice, which was meant to hamper the Negro—and which has hampered him in economic, political and social ways—has turned out to be a great spiritual discipline and a cultural blessing in disguise For it has developed in the Negro a peculiar folk-solidarity, preserved its peculiar folk-values and intensified their modes of expression, so that now they stand out in the rather colorless amalgam of the general population as the most colorful and distinctive spiritual things in American life This is the root of the paradox we referred to at the beginning, the stone that was socially rejected in the practical aspects of the American democracy has become a cornerstone spiritually in the making of a distinctive American culture For when America began to tire of being culturally merely a province of Europe, and turned to the artistic development of native things, among the most distinctive to hand were the folk-things of the Negro which prejudice had isolated from the materializing and standardizing process of general American conditions

This was the position that confronted the cultural nationalists in America a decade ago—the aboriginal Indian things had been ruthlessly pushed aside and all but exterminated, the native white elements were for the most part different only in size, number and tempo from their European derivatives, and there, characteristically different and colorful, were the Negro folk-products—an alluring, undeveloped source of native materials and local color We had a wholesale adoption of these elements in popular dance and music; then as European appreciation pointed the way (we must not forget the role of Dvořák, Delius and Darius Milhaud in this), a second wave of this influence spread to serious music In another field, after a popular craze for "dialect poetry" led in the nineties by a Negro poet, Paul Laurence Dunbar, serious American poetry began with Vachel Lindsay to turn to jazz rhythms and background for inspiration The climax of this movement, naturally, has been with the contemporary Negro poets whom we shall soon discuss. Then in the development of native American drama, Ridgely Torrence started a vogue for Negro folk-plays, and Edward Sheldon and Eugene O'Neill discovered the unique possibilities of the Negro

problem-play, as *The Emperor Jones* Paul Green, another Pulitzer-prize winner, discovered the importance of the Southern Negro folk-types in the series of plays which have made him a figure in the development of native American drama Lately, too, a whole school of American fiction has been turning to the exploitation of the Negro milieu and its folk-values; one school with an exotic approach —Ronald Firbank, Haldane McFall, Carl Van Vechten, and another still more important school of Southern realism, Ellen Glasgow, Julia Peterkin, Du Bose Heyward, with his famous story of Charleston life, *Porgy,* William March, Hamilton Basso, William Faulkner and Erskine Caldwell These have been supplemented by a school of Negro writers of fiction, among them Claude McKay, Jessie Fauset, Rudolph Fisher, Countee Cullen, Langston Hughes, Walter Turpin and Richard Wright

We can thus trace the reasons why, in recent American art, the Negro has had proportionately more than his tenth share of space and influence, and how as an unexpected but very appreciable gift to the national spiritual life—a veritable treasure of the humble—the Negro elements have given new values and fresh momentum to the contemporary cultural self-expression of America

But the greatest and most representative development of Negro folk-experience and its values must come from Negro artists themselves This situation, after generations of artistic impotence except in folk-lore and folk-song, is now being capitalized by the young Negro intellectuals And contemporary Negro poetry is its best articulate expression In it we can see more clearly than anywhere else the ideals and objectives of the "New Negro," and the movement for cultural self-expression that has been aptly termed the "Negro Renaissance " A Negro editor of the new school, Charles S. Johnson, says "The new racial poetry of the Negro is the expression of something more than experimentation in a new technique. It marks the birth of a new racial consciousness and self-conception It is first of all a frank acceptance of race, but the recognition of this difference without the usual implications of disparity It lacks apology, the wearying appeals to pity, and the conscious philosophy of defense In being itself it reveals its greatest charm, and in accepting its distinctive life, invests it with a new meaning " Mr. Johnson is further

right in saying that "the poetry of Langston Hughes is without doubt the finest expression of this new Negro poetry It is also a significant part of the poetry of new America, recording its beauty in its own idiom." Langston Hughes has written this manifesto of the movement: "We younger Negro artists who create now intend to express our individual dark-skinned selves without fear or shame If white people are pleased we are glad If they are not, it does not matter We know we are beautiful. And ugly too The tom-tom cries and the tom-tom laughs. If colored people are pleased we are glad If they are not, their displeasure doesn't matter either. We build our temples for tomorrow, strong as we know how, and we stand on top of the mountain, free within ourselves" This is the young Negro's spiritual declaration of independence and marks the attainment, nearly two generations after physical freedom, of spiritual emancipation.

But what, we may now ask, is Negro Poetry? Certainly not merely poetry by Negro writers. There is a considerable amount of abstract lyricism on universal themes, written by Negro poets. This vein of expression serves as a demonstration of the Negro's participation in the national culture common to all, of his share in modern thought, in fact Neither is Negro poetry the older dialect poetry of a peasant patois and a Ghetto world of restricted and genre types and sentiment Negro poetry today represents many strains, having only one common factor—the fact of reflecting some expression of the emotional sense of race or some angle of the peculiar group tradition and experience In the case of the American Negro the sense of race is stronger than that of nationality, and in some form or other is a primary factor in the consciousness of the Negro poet.

Race has many diverse ways of reflecting itself in the equation of life, each temperament reflects it just a bit differently and reacts to it just a bit differently We too frequently neglect this important point, that the racial factors may reside in the overtones of artistic expression and that there is often more of race in its sublimations than in its crude reportorial expression Of course, to begin with, we have the direct portrayal of Negro folk-life and folk-types, with their characteristic idioms of thought, feeling and speech, but contemporary Negro poetry has opened up many other veins of subtler racial

expression. There is, for example, the poetry of derived emotional coloring that merely reflects in a secondary way the tempo and moods of Negro life, the school that reflects not a race substance but a race temperament. There is too the vein that emphasizes the growing historical sense of a separate cultural tradition, a racialist trend that is the equivalent of a nationalist background and spirit in Europe. Again, we have the poetry of personal expression in which the racial situations induce a personal reaction and a particular philosophy of life. Finally we have the vein that directly expresses the sense of group and its common experiences, and partly as poetry of social protest, partly as poetry of social exhortation and propaganda. directly capitalizes the situations and dilemmas of racial experience. For the analysis of Negro poetry these strains of race consciousness and their modes of expression are more important, if anything, than the formal and technical distinctions of a poetic school. It is upon this basis, at least, that we shall proceed in this present analysis.

A basic point for the interpretation of contemporary Negro poetry is the realization that the traditional dialect school is now pretty generally regarded as the least representative in any intimate racial sense. To the Negro poet of today, it represents a "minstrel tradition," imposed from without and reflecting, even in its apparent unsophistication, conscious posing and self-conscious sentimentality. If Negro poetry of this type had addressed primarily its own audience, it would have been good poetry in the sense that the "Spirituals" are. But for the most part it has been a "play-up" to set stereotypes and an extraverted appeal to the amusement complex of the overlords Rarely, as in the case of a true folk-ballad or work-song, lullaby or love-song, do we have in Negro dialect poetry the genuine brew of naive folk-products. Rather have these things presented the Negro spirit in distorted, histrionic modifications tainted with the attitude of "professional entertainment." Of course, one may argue, the poetry of the Troubadours was that of professional entertainers—and so it was, but with this difference—that the tradition was completely shared by the audiences and that there was no dissociation of attitude between those who sang and those who listened

So in the revision of the dialect tradition which the younger

Negro poets are trying to bring about, there is first of all James Weldon Johnson's well-known criticism of dialect as a limited medium of expression, "with but two stops—pathos and humor" There is also the attempt to reinstate the authentic background, and the naive point of view, as is successfully achieved at times in Mr Johnson's "sermons in verse" of the *God's Trombones* volume. Here we have the folk-spirit attempting at least the "epic role," and speaking in the grand manner, as in the Judgment Day sermon of the old ante-bellum Negro preacher

Too late, sinner! Too late!
Good-bye, sinner! Good-bye!
In hell, sinner! In hell!
Beyond the reach of the love of God.

And I hear a voice, crying, crying;
Time shall be no more!
Time shall be no more!
Time shall be no more!
And the sun will go out like a candle in the wind,
The moon will turn to dripping blood,
The stars will fall like cinders,
And the sea will burn like tar,
And the earth shall melt away and be dissolved,
And the sky will roll up like a scroll
With a wave of His hand God will blot out time,
And start the wheel of eternity
Sinner, oh, sinner,
Where will you stand
In the great day when God's a-going to rain down fire?

The contemporary dialect school insists on true and objective folk-values though not always on the serious, bardic note which is sounded here But even in comic portrayal the younger school tries equally to purge our expression of any false sentimentality and clownishness. The folk-lyrics of Langston Hughes are spontaneous and carry irresistible conviction They, and the folk-ballads of

Sterling Brown, are our really most successful efforts to date, to recapture the folk-soul. It ranges from the deep spirituality of.

At de feet o' Jesus,
Sorrow like a sea.
Lordy, let yo' mercy
Come driftin' down on me.
At de feet o' Jesus,
At yo' feet I stand
O, ma little Jesus,
Please reach out yo' hand—

To the quizzical humor of

I'm gonna walk to de graveyard
'Hind ma friend, Miss Cora Lee.
Gonna walk to de graveyard
'Hind ma dear friend, Cora Lee,
'Cause when I'm dead some
Body'll have to walk behind me.

And again to the homely, secular folkiness of

De railroad bridge's
A sad song in de air.
De railroad bridge's
A sad song in de air.
Ever' time de trains pass
I wants to go somewhere.

The work of Hughes in the folk-forms has started up an entire school of younger Negro poetry principally in the blues form and in the folk-ballad vein It is the latter that seems to me most promising, in spite of the undeniable interest of the former in bringing into poetry some of the song and dance rhythms of the Negro But this is, after all, a technical element· it is the rich substance of Negro life that promises to rise in recreated outlines from the folk-ballads of the younger writers. And much as the popular interest in the

preservation of this peasant material owes to Paul Laurence Dunbar, to "When Malindy Sings" and "When de Co'n Pone's Hot," nevertheless there is no comparison in authenticity or naive beauty in the more objective lyrics of today For example, Lucy Williams' "No'th-boun' ":

O' de wurl' ain't flat,
An' de wurl' ain't round
Hit's one long strip
Hangin' up an' down—
Jes' Souf an' Norf,
Jes' Norf an' Souf
Since Norf is up,
An' Souf is down,
An' Hebben is up,
I'm upward boun'.

Or Joseph Cotter's "Tragedy of Pete" or Sterling Brown's "Odyssey of Big Boy" or "Maumee Ruth " As a matter of fact, this latter poet is, with Hughes, a genius of folk-values, the most authentic evocation of the homely folk-soul His importance warrants quotation at length "Tornado Blue," contemporary though it is, is graphically authentic

Black wind came aspeedin' down de river from de Kansas plains,
Black wind came aspeedin' down de river from de Kansas plains,
Black wind came aroarin' like a flock of giant aeroplanes

Destruction was adrivin' it, and close beside was Fear.
Destruction drivin', pa'dner at his side was Fear,
Grinnin' Death and skinny Sorrow was abringin' up de rear. . . .

Newcomers dodged de mansions, an' knocked on de po' folks' do'.
Dodged most of de mansions, an' knocked down de po' folks' do'.
Never knew us po' folks so popular befo'

Foun' de moggidge unpaid, foun' de insurance long past due,
Moggidge unpaid, de insurance very long pas' due,
De home we wukked so hard fo' goes back to de Fay an' Jew.

"Memphis Blues" is inimitably fine:

Nineveh Tyre.
Babylon,
Not much lef'
Of either one.
All dese cities
Ashes and rust
De wind sings sperrichals
Through deir dus'
Was another Memphis
'Mongst de olden days,
Done been destroyed
In many ways
Dis here Memphis
It may go
Floods may drown it,
Tornado blow,
Mississippi wash it
Down to sea—
Like de other Memphis in
History

The modern dialect school—if it may so be styled—has thus developed a simplicity and power unknown to the earlier dialect writers, and has revealed a psychology so much more profound and canny than the peasant types with which we were so familiar and by which we were so amused and cajoled that we are beginning to doubt today the authenticity of what for years has passed as the typical Negro.

Another remove from the plain literal transcription of folk-life is the work of the "jazz school," which as a matter of fact is not native in origin. Vachel Lindsay it was who brought it into prominence at a time when it was only a submerged and half-inarticulate motive in Negro doggerel Today it too often degenerates back into this mere trickery of syncopation. Yet there is powerful and fresh poetic technique in its careful transposition to poetic idiom But it will never come into its own with an eye-reading public or until its close

competitor, the school of free verse, begins to lose some of its vogue. For essentially it is not a school of irregular rhythm like the free-verse technique, but a more varied and quantitative scansion based on musical stresses and intervals inseparable from the ear control of chant and oral delivery Only elaborate analysis will do it justice, but an obvious and masterful example will have to suffice us in a quotation from Jean Toomer.

Pour, O pour that parting soul in song,
O pour it in the sawdust glow of night,
Into the velvet pine-smoke air tonight,
And let the valley carry it along
And let the valley carry it along

O land and soil, red soil and sweet gum-tree,
So scant of grass, so profligate of pines,
Now just before an epoch's sun declines,
Thy son, in time, I have returned to thee,
Thy son, I have in time returned to thee.

There is more Negro rhythm here, and in a line like "Caroling softly souls of slavery," than in all the more exaggerated jazz of the sensationalists, black and white, who beat the bass-drum and tapping cymbals of American jazz rather than the throbbing tom-tom and swaying lilt of the primitive voice and body surcharged with escaping emotion Negro rhythms, even in their gay moods, are rhapsodic; they quiver more than they clash, they glide more than they march. So except in occasional patches, the rhythmic expression of Negro idioms in poetry awaits a less sensation-loving audience than we now have, and subtler musicianship than even our contemporary poets have yet attained

We come now to the more sophisticated expressions of race in American Negro poetry For a long while the racial sense of the Negro poet was hectic and forced, it was self-consciously racial rather than normally so These were the days of rhetoric and apostrophe The emotional identification was at best dramatic, and often melodramatic As with the greater group-pride and assurance of the

present-day Negro, race became more of an accepted fact, his racial feelings are less constrained Countee Cullen's calmly stoical sonnet "From the Dark Tower," Arna Bontemps' "A Black Man Talks of Reaping," Langston Hughes' "Dream Variation" or "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" are characteristic now Yesterday it was the rhetorical flush of partisanship, challenged and on the defensive. This was the patriotic stage through which we had to pass Nothing is more of a spiritual gain in the life of the Negro than the quieter assumption of his group identity and heritage, and contemporary Negro poetry registers this incalculable artistic and social gain. Occasionally dramatic still, and to advantage, as in Cullen's "Simon the Cyrenian Speaks" or Lewis Alexander's sonnets "Africa" and "The Dark Brother," the current acceptance of race is quiet with deeper spiritual identification and supported by an undercurrent of faith rather than a surface of challenging pride

Thus, as in Gwendolyn Bennett's

I love you for your brownness
And the rounded darkness of your breast.
I love you for the breaking sadness in your voice
And shadows where your wayward eyelids rest . . .

Oh, little brown girl, born for sorrow's mate,
Keep all you have of queenliness,
Forgetting that you once were slave,
And let your full lips laugh at Fate!

Or again, Countee Cullen's

My love is dark as yours is fair,
Yet lovelier I hold her
Than listless maids with pallid hair,
And blood that's thin and colder.

You-proud-and-to-be-pitied one,
Gaze on her and despair,
Then seal your lips until the sun
Discovers one as fair.

A subtler strain of race consciousness flows in a more mystical sense of race that is coming to be a favorite mood of Negro poetry. This school was born in the lines of Claude McKay to "The Harlem Dancer".

But looking at her falsely smiling face,
I knew herself was not in that strange place.

This mood springs from the realization that the Negro experience has bred something mystical and strangely different in the Negro soul It is a sublimation of the fact of race, conjured up nowhere more vividly than in these lines of Langston Hughes:

I've known rivers
Ancient, dusky rivers
My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

However, this mystical transposition of race into pure feeling is often so sublimated as not to be explicit at all Many a reader would not detect it in the following two poems, except as it was pointed out to him as a veiled statement of racial emotion or racial experience Lewis Alexander's "Transformation" refers to racial largesse and Negro social forgiveness

I return the bitterness,
Which you gave to me;
When I wanted loveliness
Tantalant and free

I return the bitterness.
It is washed by tears,
Now it is a loveliness
Garnished through the years.

I return it loveliness,
Having made it so,
For I wore the bitterness
From it long ago.

This is all the more effective because it might just as well be a romantic lyric of unrequited love or a poem of Christian forgiveness, though very obviously it is the old miracle of the deepest particularity finding the universal. The same is true, I think, of another fine lyric, "I Think I See Him There," by Waring Cuney that almost needs the conscious recall of the Negro spiritual,

Were you there
When they nailed Him to the cross?

to sense the background of its particular Negro intensity of feeling and compassion·

I think I see Him there
With a stern dream on His face
I see Him there—
Wishing they would hurry
The last nail in place
And I wonder, had I been there,
Would I have doubted too?
Or would the dream have told me,
What this man speaks is true?

One would, of course, not foolishly claim for the race a monopoly of this sort of spiritual discipline and intensification of mood, but at the same time there is no more potent and potential source of it in all modern experience.

We next come to that strain of Negro poetry that reflects social criticism With the elder generation, this strain was prominent, more so even than today, but it began and ended in humanitarian and moral appeal It pled for human rights and recognition, was full of pathos and self-pity, and threatened the wrath of God, but in no very commanding way Finally in bitter disillusionment it turned to social protest and revolt The challenge vibrated within our own generation to the iron notes and acid lines of Claude McKay Weldon Johnson's title poem, "Fifty Years and After," represents a transition point between the anti-slavery appeal and the radical threat To the extent that the radical challenge is capable of pure poetry, Claude

McKay realized it. But contemporary Negro poetry has found an even more effective weapon and defense than McKay's

If we must die—let it not be like hogs
Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot.

Or the mood of his terrific indictment, "The Lynching":

All night a bright and solitary star
Hung pitifully o'er the swinging car
Day dawned, and soon the mixed crowds came to view
The ghastly body swaying in the sun
The women thronged to look, but never a one
Showed sorrow in her eyes of steely blue,
And little lads, lynchers that were to be
Danced round the dreadful thing in fiendish glee.

For Negro protest has found a true catharsis in a few inspired notes, and has discovered the strength of poetic rather than intellectual irony As a point of view this promises perhaps a more persuasive influence than any literary and artistic force yet brought to bear upon the race question in all the long debate of generations Certainly we have that note in Langston Hughes' ironic "Song for a Dark Girl".

Way down south in Dixie
(Break the heart of me)
They hung my black young lover
To a cross-roads tree.

Way down South in Dixie
(Bruised body high in air)
I asked the white Lord Jesus
What was the use of prayer?

Way down South in Dixie
(Break the heart of me)
Love is a naked shadow
On a gnarled and naked tree.

We next come to the most sophisticated of all race motives—the conscious and deliberate threading back of the historic sense of group tradition to the cultural backgrounds of Africa Undoubtedly this motive arose in a purely defensive and imitative reaction But it has grown stronger and more positive year by year Africa is naturally romantic It is poetic capital of the first order, even apart from the current mode of idealizing the primitive and turning toward it in the reaction from the boredom of ultra-sophistication. There is some of this Caucasian strain in the Negro poet's attitude toward Africa at the present time But it is fortunately not dominant with the Negro poet It is interesting to notice the different approaches from which the younger Negro poets arrive at a spiritual espousal of Africa Of course, with the minor poetical talents, it is rhetorical and melodramatically romantic, as it has always been But our better poets are above this Mr Cullen, who has a dormant but volcanically potential "paganism of blood"—(he himself puts it, "My chief problem has been that of reconciling a Christian upbringing with a pagan inclination")—is torn between the dilemma of the primitive and the sophisticated in more poems than the famous "Heritage" which dramatizes the conflict so brilliantly For him the African mood comes atavistically, and with something of a sense of pursuing Furies, he often eulogizes the ancestral spirits in order to placate them

So I lie, who find no peace
Night or day, no slight release
From the unremittent beat
Made by cruel padded feet
Walking through my body's street
Up and down they go, and back,
Beating out a jungle track

But if Cullen has given us the exotic, emotional look on the race's past, Hughes has given us what is racially more significant—a franker, more spiritual loyalty, without sense of painful choice or contradiction, a retrospective recall that is intimate and natural. For him,

We should have a land of trees
Bowed down with chattering parrots
Brilliant as the day,
And not this land where birds are gray.

The moods of Africa, the old substances of primitive life, are for this growing school of thought a precious heritage, acceptable as a new artistic foundation, the justification of the much-discussed racial difference, a source of new inspiration in the old Antaean strength But if there is to be any lasting restatement of the African tradition, it cannot be merely retrospective That is why even this point of view must merge into a transposition of the old elemental values to modern modes of insight This is just on the horizon edge in Negro poetry and art, and is one of the goals of racialism in the new aesthetic of Negro life No better advance statement has been made than Mae Cowdery's lines

I will take from the hearts
Of black men—
Prayers their lips
Are 'fraid to utter
And turn their coarseness
Into a beauty of the jungle
Whence they came

If and when this is achieved the last significance of race in our art and poetry will have manifested itself beyond question or challenge.

The final spiritual expression of the Negro will inevitably be a blend of Africa and America, but the dominant note will, of course, be American Indeed it may come as a unique interpretation of American life with more than racial significance Foretastes of this are in our latest poetry, as in the maturer poems of Sterling Brown, or in such challenging things as Melvin Tolson's *Rendezvous with America,* or Margaret Walker's volume *For My People,* which won the 1942 prize in the Yale Series of Younger Poets' competition. For, as might be expected, the Negro experience has given an insight into the deeper significances of democracy and America itself

of peculiar poignancy and of unusual penetration. Such is quite obvious in two stanzas from Margaret Walker's *Southern Song*.

I want no mobs to wrench me from my southern rest, no
forms to take me in the night and burn my shack and
make for me a nightmare full of oil and flame

I want my careless song to strike no minor key, no fiend to
stand between my body's southern song—the fusion
of the South, my body's song and me

And even more of general significance does this same mood become in these stanzas of Tolson's 'Rendezvous"

A blind man said,
"Look at the kikes."
And I saw
Rosenwald sowing the seeds of culture in the Black Belt,
Michelson measuring the odysseys of invisible worlds,
Brandeis opening the eyes of the blind to the Constitution,
Boas translating the oneness of mankind

A blind man said,
"Look at the dagos"
And I saw
La Guardia shaping the cosmos of pyramided Manhattan
Brumidi verving the Capitol frescoes of "Washington at Yorktown,"
Caruso scaling the Alpine ranges of drama with the staff of song
Toscanini enchanting earthward the music of the spheres

A blind man said,
"Look at the chinks."
And I saw
Lin Yutang crying the World Charter in the white man's wilderness,
Dr Chen charting the voyages of bacteria in the Lilly Laboratories,
Lu Cong weaving plant-tapestries in the Department of Agriculture,
Madame Chiang Kai-shek interpreting the Orient and the Occident.

A blind man said,
"Look at the bohunks."
And I saw
Sikorsky blue-printing the cabala of the airways,
Stokowski imprisoning the magic of symphonies with a baton,
Zvak erecting St Patrick's Cathedral in a forest of skyscrapers,
Dvořák enwombing the multiple soul of the New World.

A blind man said,
"Look at the niggers"
And I saw
Black Sampson mowing down Hessians with a scythe at Brandywine,
Marian Anderson bewitching continents with the talisman of art,
Douglass hurling philippics of freedom from tombstones,
Private Brooks dying at the feet of MacArthur at Bataan

To trace Negro poetry in the way we have done, does some necessary violence to the unity of individual writers who combine several strands in their poetic temperaments It also overlooks some of the purely universal and general poetry which others have contributed But it will give some definite impression of the recent racial and cultural revival which Negro poets are expressing and of the interesting and unique developments that the interaction of the white and black races in America is producing And incontestably the artistic product of this generation gauges the rising tide of Negro culture and the deep artistic potentialities of Negro art The position of the Negro in American culture today is strategic and promising, it is his spiritual recompense for generations of long-suffering and will for some generations yet furnish the basis of his contribution to the spiritual treasury of the nation.

THE FREEDMEN'S BUREAU

W. E B. Du Bois

THE problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color-line—the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea It was a phase of this problem that caused the Civil War, and however much they who marched South and North in 1861 may have fixed on the technical points of union and local autonomy as a shibboleth, all nevertheless knew, as we know, that the question of Negro slavery was the real cause of the conflict Curious it was, too, how the deeper question ever forced itself to the surface despite effort and disclaimer No sooner had Northern armies touched Southern soil than this old question, newly guised, sprang from the earth What shall be done with Negroes? Peremptory military commands, this way and that, could not answer the query; the Emancipation Proclamation seemed but to broaden and intensify the difficulties, and the War Amendments made the Negro problems of today

It is the aim of this essay to study the period of history from 1861 to 1872 so far as it relates to the American Negro In effect, this tale of the dawn of Freedom is an account of that government of men called the Freedmen's Bureau—one of the most singular and interesting of the attempts made by a great nation to grapple with vast problems of race and social condition

The war has naught to do with slaves, cried Congress, the President and the Nation, and yet no sooner had the armies, East and West, penetrated Virginia and Tennessee than fugitive slaves appeared within their lines They came at night, when the flickering camp-fires shone like vast unsteady stars along the black horizon old men and thin, with gray and tufted hair, women, with frightened eyes, dragging whimpering hungry children, men and girls, stalwart and gaunt—a horde of starving vagabonds, homeless, helpless and pitiable, in their dark distress Two methods of treating these newcomers seemed equally logical to opposite sorts of minds Ben Butler, in Virginia, quickly declared slave property contraband of war, and put the fugitives to work, while Frémont, in Missouri,

declared the slaves free under martial law Butler's action was approved, but Frémont's was hastily countermanded, and his successor, Halleck, saw things differently "Hereafter," he commanded, "no slaves should be allowed to come into your lines at all, if any come without your knowledge, when owners call for them, deliver them " Such a policy was difficult to enforce, some of the black refugees declared themselves freemen, others showed that their masters had deserted them, and still others were captured with forts and plantations Evidently, too slaves were a source of strength to the Confederacy, and were being used as laborers and producers "They constitute a military resource," wrote Secretary Cameron, late in 1861, "and being such, that they should not be turned over to the enemy is too plain to discuss " So gradually the tone of the army chiefs changed, Congress forbade the rendition of fugitives, and Butler's "contrabands" were welcomed as military laborers This complicated rather than solved the problem, for now the scattering fugitives became a steady stream, which flowed faster as the armies marched

Then the long-headed man with care-chiseled face who sat in the White House saw the inevitable, and emancipated the slaves of rebels on New Year's, 1863 A month later Congress called earnestly for the Negro soldiers whom the Act of July, 1862, had half grudgingly allowed to enlist Thus the barriers were leveled and the deed was done The stream of fugitives swelled to a flood, and anxious army officers kept inquiring "What must be done with slaves, arriving almost daily? Are we to find food and shelter for women and children?"

It was a Pierce of Boston who pointed out the way, and thus became in a sense the founder of the Freedmen's Bureau He was a firm friend of Secretary Chase, and when, in 1861, the care of slaves and abandoned lands devolved upon the Treasury officials, Pierce was especially detailed from the ranks to study the conditions First, he cared for the refugees at Fortress Monroe, and then after Sherman had captured Hilton Head, Pierce was sent there to found his Port Royal experiment of making free workingmen out of slaves Before his experiment was barely started, however, the problem of the fugitives had assumed such proportions that it was taken from the hands of the over-burdened Treasury Department and given to

the army officials Already centers of massed freedmen were forming at Fortress Monroe, Washington, New Orleans, Vicksburg, and Corinth, Columbus, Ky , and Cairo, Ill , as well as at Port Royal Army chaplains found here new and fruitful fields, "superintendents of contrabands" multiplied, and some attempt at systematic work was made by enlisting the able-bodied men and giving work to the others

Then came the Freedmen's Aid societies, born of the touching appeals from Pierce and from these other centers of distress There was the American Missionary Association, sprung from the Amistad, and now full-grown for work; the various church organizations, the National Freedmen's Relief Association, the American Freedmen's Union, the Western Freedmen's Aid Commission—in all fifty or more active organizations, which sent clothes, money, school-books, and teachers southward All they did was needed, for the destitution of the freedmen was often reported as "too appalling for belief," and the situation was daily growing worse rather than better

And daily, too, it seemed more plain that this was no ordinary matter of temporary relief, but a national crisis, for here loomed a labor problem of vast dimensions Masses of Negroes stood idle, or, if they worked spasmodically, were never sure of pay, and if perchance they received pay, squandered the new thing thoughtlessly In these and other ways were camp life and the new liberty demoralizing the freedmen The broader economic organization thus clearly demanded sprang up here and there as accident and local conditions determined Here it was that Pierce's Port Royal plan of leased plantations and guided workingmen pointed out the rough way In Washington the military governor, at the urgent appeal of the superintendent, opened confiscated estates to the cultivation of the fugitives and there in the shadow of the dome gathered black free villages General Dix gave over estates to the freedmen of Fort Monroe, and so on, South and West The government and benevolent societies furnished the means of cultivation, and the Negro turned again slowly to work The systems of control, thus started, rapidly grew, here and there, into strange little governments, like that of General Banks in Louisiana, with the ninety thousand black subjects, its fifty thousand guided laborers, and its annual budget of one hundred thousand dollars and more It made out four thousand pay-rolls a year, registered all freedmen, inquired into grievances and

redressed them, laid and collected taxes, and established a system of public schools So, too, Colonel Eaton, the superintendent of Tennessee and Arkansas, ruled over one hundred thousand freedmen, leased and cultivated seven thousand acres of cotton land, and fed ten thousand paupers a year In South Carolina was General Saxton, with his deep interest in black folk He succeeded Pierce and the Treasury officials, and sold forfeited estates, leased abandoned plantations, encouraged schools, and received from Sherman, after that terribly picturesque march to the sea, thousands of the wretched camp followers

Three characteristic things one might have seen in Sherman's raid through Georgia, which threw the new situation in shadowy relief the Conqueror, the Conquered, and the Negro Some see all significance in the grim front of the destroyer, and some in the bitter sufferers of the Lost Cause But to me neither soldier nor fugitive speaks with so deep a meaning as that dark human cloud that clung like remorse on the rear of those swift columns, swelling at times to half their size, almost engulfing and choking them In vain were they ordered back, in vain were bridges hewn from beneath their feet, on they trudged and writhed and surged, until they rolled into Savannah a starved and naked horde of tens of thousands There too came the characteristic military remedy "The islands from Charleston south, the abandoned rice-fields along the rivers for thirty miles back from the sea, and the country bordering the St John's River, Florida, are reserved and set apart for the settlement of Negroes now made free by act of war " So read the celebrated "Field-order Number Fifteen "

All these experiments, orders, and systems were bound to attract and perplex the government and the nation Directly after the Emancipation Proclamation, Representative Eliot had introduced a bill creating a Bureau of Emancipation, but it was never reported The following June a committee of inquiry, appointed by the Secretary of War, reported in favor of a temporary bureau for the "improvement, protection, and employment of refugee freedman," on much the same lines as were afterwards followed Petitions came in to President Lincoln from distinguished citizens and organizations, strongly urging a comprehensive and unified plan of dealing with the freedmen, under a bureau which should be "charged with the

study of plans and execution of measures for easily guiding, and in every way judiciously and humanely aiding, the passage of our emancipated and yet to be emancipated blacks from the old condition of forced labor to their new state of voluntary industry"

Some half-hearted steps were taken to accomplish this, in part, by putting the whole matter again in charge of the special Treasury agents Laws of 1863 and 1864 directed them to take charge of and lease abandoned lands for periods not exceeding twelve months, and to "provide in such leases, or otherwise, for the employment and general welfare" of the freedmen Most of the army officers greeted this as a welcome relief from perplexing "Negro affairs," and Secretary Fessenden, July 29, 1864, issued an excellent system of regulations, which were afterward closely followed by General Howard Under Treasury agents, large quantities of land were leased in the Mississippi Valley, and many Negroes were employed, but in August, 1864, the new regulations were suspended for reasons of "public policy," and the army was again in control

Meanwhile Congress had turned its attention to the subject, and in March the House passed a bill by a majority of two establishing a Bureau for Freedmen in the War Department Charles Sumner, who had charge of the bill in the Senate, argued that freedmen and abandoned lands ought to be under the same department, and reported a substitute for the House bill attaching the Bureau to the Treasury Department This bill passed, but too late, for action by the House The debates wandered over the whole policy of the administration and the general question of slavery, without touching very closely the specific merits of the measure in hand Then the national election took place, and the administration, with a vote of renewed confidence from the country, addressed itself to the matter more seriously A conference between the two branches of Congress agreed upon a carefully drawn measure which contained the chief provisions of Sumner's bill but made the proposed organization a department independent of both the War and the Treasury officials The bill was conservative, giving the new department "general superintendence of all freedmen" Its purpose was to "establish regulations" for them, protect them, lease them lands, adjust their wages, and appear in civil and military courts as their "next friend" There were many limitations attached to the powers thus granted, and the

organization was made permanent Nevertheless, the Senate defeated the bill, and a new conference committee was appointed This committee reported a new bill, February 28, which was whirled through just as the session closed, and became the Act of 1865 establishing in the War Department a "Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands"

This last compromise was a hasty bit of legislation, vague and uncertain in outline A Bureau was created, "to continue during the present War of Rebellion, and for one year thereafter," to which was given "the supervision and management of all abandoned lands and the control of all subjects relating to refugees and freedmen," under "such rules and regulations as may be presented by the head of the Bureau and approved by the President" A Commissioner, appointed by the President and Senate, was to control the Bureau, with an office force not exceeding ten clerks The President might also appoint assistant commissioners in the seceded States, and to all these offices military officials might be detailed at regular pay The Secretary of War could issue rations, clothing, and fuel to the destitute, and all abandoned property was placed in the hands of the Bureau for eventual lease and sale to ex-slaves in forty-acre parcels

Thus did the United States government definitely assume charge of the emancipated Negro as the ward of the nation It was a tremendous undertaking Here at a stroke of the pen was erected a government of millions of men—and not ordinary men either, but black men emasculated by a peculiarly complete system of slavery, centuries old, and now, suddenly, violently, they come into a new birthright, at a time of war and passion, in the midst of the stricken and embittered population of their former masters Any man might well have hesitated to assume charge of such a work, with vast responsibilities, indefinite powers, and limited resources. Probably no one but a soldier would have answered such a call promptly, and, indeed, no one but a soldier could be called, for Congress had appropriated no money for salaries and expenses

Less than a month after the weary Emancipator passed to his rest, his successor assigned Major-General Oliver O Howard to duty as Commissioner of the new Bureau He was a Maine man, then only thirty-five years of age He had marched with Sherman to the sea, had fought well at Gettysburg, and but the year before had been

assigned to the command of the Department of Tennessee. An honest man, with too much faith in human nature, little aptitude for business and intricate detail, he had had large opportunity of becoming acquainted at first hand with much of the work before him. And of that work it has been truly said that "no approximately correct history of civilization can ever be written which does not throw out in bold relief, as one of the great landmarks of political and social progress, the organization and administration of the Freedmen's Bureau"

On May 12, 1865, Howard was appointed, and he assumed the duties of his office promptly on the 15th, and began examining the field of work A curious mess he looked upon, little despotisms, communistic experiments, slavery peonage, business speculations, organized charity, unorganized almsgiving—all reeling on under the guise of helping the freedmen, and all enshrined in the smoke and blood of war and the cursing and silence of angry men On May 19 the new government—for a government it really was—issued its constitution, commissioners were to be appointed in each of the seceded States, who were to take charge of "all subjects relating to refugees and freedmen," and all relief and rations were to be given by their consent alone. The Bureau invited continued co-operation with benevolent societies, and declared "It will be the object of all commissioners to introduce practicable systems of compensated labor," and to establish schools. Forthwith nine assistant commissioners were appointed They were to hasten to their fields of work; seek gradually to close relief establishments, and make the destitute self-supporting, act as courts of law where there were no courts, or where Negroes were not recognized in them as free; establish the institution of marriage among ex-slaves, and keep records; see that freedmen were free to choose their employers, and help in making fair contracts for them; and finally, the circular said "Simple good faith for which we hope on all hands for those concerned in the passing away of slavery will especially relieve the assistant commissioners in the discharge of their duties toward the freedmen, as well as promote the general welfare."

No sooner was the work started, and the general system and local organization in some measure begun, than two grave difficulties appeared which changed largely the theory and outcome of Bureau

Work. First, there were the abandoned lands of the South. It had long been the more or less definitely expressed theory of the North that all the chief problems of Emancipation might be settled by establishing the slaves on the forfeited lands of their masters—a sort of poetic justice, said some But this poetry done into solemn prose meant either wholesale confiscation of private property in the South, or vast appropriations Now Congress had not appropriated a cent, and no sooner did the proclamations of general amnesty appear than the eight hundred thousand acres of abandoned lands in the hands of the Freedmen's Bureau melted quickly away The second difficulty lay in perfecting the local organizations of the Bureau throughout the wide field of work Making a new machine and sending out officials of duly ascertained fitness for a great work of social reform is no child's task, but this task was even harder, for a new central organization had to be fitted on a heterogeneous and confused but already existing system of relief and control of ex-slaves, and the agents available for this work must be sought for in an army still busy with war operations—men in the very nature of the case ill fitted for delicate social work—or among the questionable camp followers of an invading host Thus, after a year's work, vigorously as it was pushed, the problem looked even more difficult to grasp and solve than at the beginning Nevertheless, three things that year's work did, well worth the doing, it relieved a vast amount of physical suffering, it transported seven thousand fugitives from congested centers back to the farms, and, best of all, it inaugurated the crusade of the New England schoolma'am

The annals of this North Crusade are yet to be written—the tale of a mission that seemed to our age far more quixotic than the quest of St Louis seemed to his Behind the mists of ruin and rapine waved the calico dresses of women who dared, and after the hoarse mouthings of the field guns rang the rhythm of the alphabet Rich and poor they were, serious and curious Bereaved now of a father, now of a brother, now of more than these, they came seeking a life work in planting New England schoolhouses among the white and black of the South They did their work well In that first year they taught one hundred thousand souls, and more.

Evidently, Congress must soon legislate again on the hastily organized Bureau, which had so quickly grown into wide significance

and vast possibilities. An institution such as that was well-nigh as difficult to end as to begin Early in 1866 Congress took up the matter, when Senator Trumbull, of Illinois, introduced a bill to extend the Bureau and enlarge its powers This measure received, at the hands of Congress, far more thorough discussion and attention than its predecessor The war cloud had thinned enough to allow a clearer conception of the work of Emancipation The champions of the bill argued that the strengthening of the Freedman's Bureau was still a military necessity; that it was needed for the proper carrying out of the Thirteenth Amendment, and was a work of sheer justice to the ex-slave, at a trifling cost to the government The opponents of the measure declared that the war was over, and the necessity for war measures past, that the Bureau, by reason of its extraordinary powers, was clearly unconstitutional in time of peace, and was destined to irritate the South and pauperize the freedmen, at a final cost of possibly hundreds of millions These two arguments were unanswered, and indeed unanswerable the one that extraordinary powers of the Bureau threatened the civil rights of all citizens, and the other that the government must have power to do what manifestly must be done, and that present abandonment of the freedmen meant their practical re-enslavement The bill which finally passed enlarged and made permanent the Freedmen's Bureau It was promptly vetoed by President Johnson as "unconstitutional," "unnecessary," and "extrajudicial," and failed of passage over the veto Meantime, however, the breach between Congress and the President began to broaden, and a modified form of the lost bill was finally passed over the President's second veto, July 16

The Act of 1866 gave the Freedmen's Bureau its final form—the form by which it will be known to posterity and judged of men It extended the existence of the Bureau to July, 1868, it authorized additional assistant commissioners, the retention of army officers mustered out of regular service, the sale of certain forfeited lands to freedmen on nominal terms, the sale of Confederate public property for Negro schools, and a wider field of judicial interpretation and cognizance The government of the unreconstructed South was thus put very largely in the hands of the Freedmen's Bureau, especially as in many cases the departmental military commander was now made also assistant commissioner. It was thus that the Freed-

men's Bureau became a full-fledged government of men. It made laws, executed them and interpreted them, it laid and collected taxes, defined and punished crime, maintained and used military force, and dictated such measures as it thought necessary and proper for the accomplishment of its varied ends Naturally, all these powers were not exercised continuously nor to their fullest extent, and yet, as General Howard has said, "scarcely any subject that has to be legislated upon in civil society failed, at one time or another, to demand the action of this singular Bureau "

To understand and criticize intelligently so vast a work, one must not forget an instant the drift of things in the later sixties Lee had surrendered, Lincoln was dead, and Johnson and Congress were at loggerheads; the Thirteenth Amendment was adopted, the Fourteenth pending, and the Fifteenth declared in force in 1870. Guerrilla raiding, the ever-present flickering after-flame of war, was spending its force against the Negroes, and all the Southern land was awakening as from some wild dream to poverty and social revolution In a time of perfect calm, amid willing neighbors and streaming wealth, the social uplifting of four million slaves to an assured and self-sustaining place in the body politic and economic would have been a herculean task, but when to the inherent difficulties of so delicate and nice a social operation were added the spite and hate of conflict, the hell of war, when suspicion and cruelty were rife, and gaunt Hunger wept beside Bereavement,—in such a case, the work of any instrument of social regeneration was in large part foredoomed to failure The very name of the Bureau stood for a thing in the South which, for two centuries and better, men had refused even to argue,—that life amid free Negroes was simply unthinkable, the maddest of experiments

The agents that the Bureau could command varied all the way from unselfish philanthropists to narrow-minded busybodies and thieves, and even though it be true that the average was far better than the worst, it was the occasional fly that helped spoil the ointment

Then amid all crouched the freed slave, bewildered between friend and foe He had emerged from slavery,—not the worst slavery in the world, not a slavery that made all life unbearable, rather a slavery that had here and there something of kindliness, fidelity, and happiness,—but withal slavery, which so far as human aspiration

and desert were concerned, classed the black man and the ox together. And the Negro knew full well that, whatever their deeper convictions may have been, Southern men had fought with desperate energy to perpetuate this slavery under which the black masses, with half-articulated thought, had writhed and shivered. They welcomed freedom with a cry They shrank from the master who still strove for their chains, they fled to the friends that had freed them, even though those friends stood ready to use them as a club for driving the recalcitrant South back into loyalty So the cleft between the white and black South grew Idle to say it never should have been, it was inevitable as its results were pitiable Curiously incongruous elements were left arrayed against each other,—the North, the government, the carpet-bagger, and the slave, here; and there, all the South that was white, whether gentleman or vagabond, honest man or rascal, lawless, murderer or martyr to duty

Thus it is doubly difficult to write of this period calmly, so intense was the feeling, so mighty the human passions that swayed and blinded men Amid it all, two figures ever stand to typify that day to coming ages,—the one, a gray-haired gentleman, whose fathers had quit themselves like men, whose sons lay in nameless graves, who bowed to the evil of slavery because its abolition threatened untold ill to all, who stood at last, in the evening of life, a blighted, ruined form, with hate in his eyes,—and the other, a form hovering dark and mother-like, her awful face black with the mists of centuries, had aforetime quailed at that white master's command, had bent in love over the cradles of his sons and daughters, and closed in death the sunken eyes of his wife,—aye, too, at his behest had laid herself low to his lust, and borne a tawny man-child to the world, only to see her dark boy's limbs scattered to the winds by midnight marauders riding after "damned Niggers" These were the saddest sights of that woeful day; and no man clasped the hands of these two passing figures of the present-past; but, hating, they went to their long home, and, hating, their children's children live today.

Here, then, was the field of work for the Freedmen's Bureau, and since, with some hesitation, it was continued by the act of 1868 until 1869, let us look upon four years of its work as a whole There were, in 1868, nine hundred Bureau officials scattered from Washington to Texas, ruling, directly and indirectly, many millions of men.

The deeds of these rulers fall mainly under seven heads: the relief of physical suffering, the overseeing of the beginnings of free labor, the buying and selling of land, the establishment of schools, the paying of bounties, the administration of justice, and the financing of all these activities.

Up to June, 1869, over half a million patients had been treated by Bureau physicians and surgeons, and sixty hospitals and asylums had been in operation. In fifty months twenty-one million free rations were distributed at a cost of over four million dollars. Next came the difficult question of labor First, thirty thousand black men were transported from the refuges and relief stations back to the farms, back to the critical trial of a new way of working. Plain instructions went out from Washington: the laborers must be free to choose their employers, no fixed rate of wages was prescribed, and there was to be no peonage or forced labor So far, so good; but where local agents differed *toto coelo* in capacity and character, where the *personnel* was continually changing, the outcome was necessarily varied The largest element of success lay in the fact that the majority of the freedmen were willing, even eager, to work So labor contracts were written,—fifty thousand in a single State,—laborers advised, wages guaranteed, and employers supplied In truth, the organization became a vast labor bureau,—not perfect, indeed, notably defective here and there, but on the whole successful beyond the dreams of thoughtful men The two great obstacles which confronted the officials were the tyrant and the idler,—the slaveholder who was determined to perpetuate slavery under another name, and the freedman who regarded freedom as perpetual rest,—the Devil and the Deep Sea.

In the work of establishing the Negroes as peasant proprietors, the Bureau was from the first handicapped and at last absolutely checked Something was done, and larger things were planned; abandoned lands were leased so long as they remained in the hands of the Bureau, and a total revenue of nearly half a million dollars derived from black tenants Some other lands to which the nation had gained title were sold on easy terms, and public lands were opened for settlement to the very few freedmen who had tools and capital. But the vision of "forty acres and a mule"—the righteous and reasonable ambition to become a landholder, which the nation had

all but categorically promised the freedmen—was destined, in most cases, to bitter disappointment. And those men of marvelous hindsight who are today seeking to preach the Negro back to the present peonage of soil know well, or ought to know, that the opportunity of binding the Negro peasant willingly to the soil was lost on that day when the Commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau had to go to South Carolina and tell the weeping freedmen, after their years of toil, that their land was not theirs, but there was a mistake—somewhere If, by 1874, the Georgia Negro alone owned three hundred and fifty thousand acres of land, it was by grace of his thrift rather than by bounty of the government

The greatest success of the Freedmen's Bureau lay in the planting of the free school among Negroes, and the idea of free elementary education among all classes in the South It not only called the school mistresses through the benevolent agencies and built them schoolhouses, but it helped discover and support such apostles of human culture as Edmund Ware, Samuel Armstrong and Erastus Cravath The opposition to Negro education in the South was at first bitter, and showed itself in ashes, insult, and blood; for the South believed an educated Negro to be a dangerous Negro And the South was not wholly wrong, for education among all kinds of men always has had, and always will have, an element of danger and revolution, of dissatisfaction and discontent Nevertheless, men strive to know Perhaps some inkling of this paradox, even in the unquiet days of the Bureau, helped the bayonets allay an opposition to human training which still today lies smoldering in the South, but not flaming. Fisk, Atlanta, Howard, and Hampton were founded in these days, and six million dollars were expended for educational work, seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars of which the freedmen themselves gave of their poverty.

Such contributions, together with the buying of land and various other enterprises, showed that the ex-slave was handling some free capital already The chief initial source of this was labor in the army, and his pay and bounty as a soldier Payments to Negro soldiers were at first complicated by the ignorance of the recipients, and the fact that the quotas of colored regiments from Northern States were largely filled by recruits from the South, unknown to their fellow soldiers Consequently, payments were accompanied by such frauds

that Congress, by joint resolution in 1867, put the whole matter in the hands of the Freedmen's Bureau In two years six million dollars was thus distributed to five thousand claimants, and in the end the sum exceeded eight million dollars Even in this system fraud was frequent, but still the work put needed capital in the hands of practical paupers, and some, at least, was well spent

The most perplexing and least successful part of the Bureau's work lay in the exercise of its judicial functions The regular Bureau court consisted of one representative of the employer, one of the Negro, and one of the Bureau If the Bureau could have maintained a perfectly judicial attitude, this arrangement would have been ideal, and must, in time, have gained confidence, but the nature of its other activities and the character of its *personnel* prejudiced the Bureau in favor of the black litigants, and led without doubt to much injustice and annoyance On the other hand, to leave the Negro in the hands of the Southern courts was impossible In a distracted land where slavery had hardly fallen, to keep the strong from wanton abuse of the weak, and the weak from gloating insolently over the half-shorn strength of the strong, was a thankless, hopeless task. The former masters of the land were peremptorily ordered about, seized, and imprisoned, and punished over and over again, with scant courtesy from army officers The former slaves were intimidated, beaten, raped, and butchered by angry and revengeful men. Bureau courts tended to become centers simply for punishing whites, while the regular civil courts tended to become solely institutions for perpetuating the slavery of blacks Almost every law and method ingenuity could devise was employed by the legislatures to reduce the Negroes to serfdom—to make them the slaves of the State, if not of individual owners, while the Bureau officials too often were found striving to put the "bottom rail on top," and give the freedmen a power and independence which they could not yet use It is all well enough for us of another generation to wax wise with advice to those who bore the burden in the heat of the day It is full easy now to see that the man who lost home, fortune, and family at a stroke and saw his land ruled by "mules and niggers," was really benefited by the passing of slavery It is not difficult now to say to the young freedman, cheated and cuffed about, who has seen his father's head beaten to a jelly and his own mother shamelessly assaulted, that the

meek shall inherit the earth. Above all, nothing is more convenient than to heap on the Freedmen's Bureau all the evils of that evil day, and damn it utterly for every mistake and blunder that was made.

All this is easy, but it is neither sensible nor just Some one had blundered, but that was long before Oliver Howard was born, there was criminal aggression and heedless neglect, but without some system of control there would have been far more than there was. Had that control been from within, the Negro would have been reenslaved, to all intents and purposes Coming as the control did from without, perfect men and methods would have bettered all things; and, even with imperfect agents and questionable methods, the work accomplished was not undeserving of commendation.

Such was the dawn of Freedom, such was the work of the Freedmen's Bureau, which, summed up in brief, may be epitomized thus: For some fifteen million dollars, beside the sums spent before 1865, and the dole of benevolent societies, this Bureau set going a system of free labor, established a beginning of peasant proprietorship, secured the recognition of black freedmen before courts of law, and founded the free common school in the South On the other hand, it failed to begin the establishment of good-will between ex-masters and freedmen, to guard its work wholly from paternalistic methods which discouraged self-reliance, and to carry out to any considerable extent its implied promises to furnish the freedmen with land Its successes were the result of hard work, supplemented by the aid of philanthropists and the eager striving of black men. Its failures were the result of bad local agents, the inherent difficulties of the work, and national neglect

Such an institution, from its wide powers, great responsibilities, large control of moneys, and generally conspicuous position, was naturally open to repeated and bitter attack It sustained a searching Congressional investigation at the instance of Fernando Wood in 1870 Its archives and few remaining functions were with blunt discourtesy transferred from Howard's control, in his absence, to the supervision of Secretary of War Belknap in 1872, on the Secretary's recommendation Finally, in consequence of grave intimations of wrong-doing made by the Secretary and his subordinates, General Howard was court-martialed in 1874 In both of these trials the Commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau was officially exonerated

from any wilful misdoing, and his work commended. Nevertheless, many unpleasant things were brought to light,—the methods of transacting the business of the Bureau were faulty; several cases of defalcation were proved, and other frauds strongly suspected; there were some business transactions which savored of dangerous speculation, if not dishonesty, and around it all lay the smirch of the Freedmen's Bank.

Morally and practically, the Freedmen's Bank was part of the Freedmen's Bureau, although it had no legal connection with it. With the prestige of the government back of it, and a directing board of unusual respectability and national reputation, this banking institution had made a remarkable start in the development of that thrift among black folk which slavery had kept them from knowing. Then in one sad day came the crash,—all the hard-earned dollars of the freedmen disappeared, but that was the least of the loss,—all the faith in saving went too, and much of the faith in men; and that was a loss that a Nation, which today sneers at Negro shiftlessness, has never yet made good. Not even ten additional years of slavery could have done so much to throttle the thrift of the freedmen as the mismanagement and bankruptcy of the series of savings banks chartered by the Nation for their especial aid Where all the blame should rest, it is hard to say, whether the Bureau and the Bank died chiefly by reason of the blows of its selfish friends or the dark machinations of its foes, perhaps even time will never reveal, for here lies unwritten history

Of the foes without the Bureau, the bitterest were those who attacked not so much its conduct or policy under the law as the necessity for any such institution at all Such attacks came primarily from the Border States and the South, and they were summed up by Senator Davis, of Kentucky, when he moved to entitle the act of 1866 a bill "to promote strife and conflict between the white and black races . . . by a grant of unconstitutional power" The argument gathered tremendous strength South and North, but its very strength was its weakness For, argued the plain common sense of the nation, if it is unconstitutional, unpractical, and futile for the nation to stand guardian over its helpless wards, then there is left but one alternative, —to make those wards their own guardians by arming them with the ballot. Moreover, the path of the practical politician pointed the

same way; for, argued this opportunist, if we cannot peacefully reconstruct the South with white votes, we certainly can with black votes. So injustice and force joined hands.

The alternative thus offered the nation was not between full and restricted Negro suffrage, else every sensible man, black and white, would easily have chosen the latter. It was rather a choice between suffrage and slavery, after endless blood and gold had flowed to sweep human bondage away. Not a single Southern legislature stood ready to admit a Negro, under any conditions, to the polls, not a single Southern legislature believed free Negro labor was possible without a system of restrictions that took all its freedom away; there was scarcely a white man in the South who did not honestly regard Emancipation as a crime, and its practical nullification as a duty. In such a situation, the granting of the ballot to the black man was a necessity, the very least a guilty nation could grant a wronged race, and the only method of compelling the South to accept the results of the war. Thus Negro suffrage ended a civil war by beginning a race feud. And some felt gratitude toward the race thus sacrificed in its swaddling clothes on the altar of national integrity, and some felt and feel only indifference and contempt.

Had political exigencies been less pressing, the opposition to government guardianship of Negroes less bitter, and the attachment to the slave system less strong, the social seer can well imagine a far better policy, a permanent Freedmen's Bureau, with a national system of Negro schools, a carefully supervised employment and labor office, a system of impartial protection before the regular courts, and such institutions for social betterment as savings banks, land and building associations, and social settlements. All this vast expenditure of money and brains might have formed a great school of prospective citizenship, and solved, in a way we have not yet solved, the most perplexing and persistent of the Negro problems.

That such an institution was unthinkable in 1870 was due in part to certain acts of the Freedmen's Bureau itself. It came to regard its work as merely temporary, and Negro suffrage as a final answer to all present perplexities. The political ambition of many of its agents and *protégés* led it far afield into questionable activities, until the South, nursing its own deep prejudices, came easily to ignore all the good deeds of the Bureau and hate its very name with perfect hatred.

So the Freedmen's Bureau died, and its child was the Fifteenth Amendment

The passing of a great human institution before its work is done, like the untimely passing of a single soul, but leaves a legacy of striving for other men. The legacy of the Freedmen's Bureau is the heavy heritage of this generation Today, when new and vaster problems are destined to strain every fibre of the national mind and soul, would it not be well to count this legacy honestly and carefully? For this much all men know: despite compromise, war, and struggle, the Negro is not free In the backwoods of the Gulf States, for miles and miles, he may not leave the plantation of his birth, in well-nigh the whole rural South the black farmers are peons, bound by law and custom to an economic slavery, from which the only escape is death or the penitentiary In the most cultured sections and cities of the South the Negroes are a segregated, servile caste, with restricted rights and privileges. Before the courts, both in law and custom they stand on a different and peculiar basis Taxation without representation is the rule of their political life And the result of all this is, and in nature must have been, lawlessness and crime That is the large legacy of the Freedmen's Bureau, the work it did not do because it could not

I have seen a land right merry with the sun, where children sing, and rolling hills lie like passioned women wanton with harvest And there in the King's Highway sat and sits a figure veiled and bowed, by which the traveler's footsteps hasten as they go On the tainted air broods fear Three centuries' thought has been the raising and unveiling of that bowed human heart, and now behold a century new for the duty and the deed The problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color-line.

STRIKING THE ECONOMIC BALANCE

Charles S Johnson

ONE of the most powerful elements in the development of the South was black labor On the sweating backs of Negroes rested, for over two hundred and fifty years, first tobacco cultivation and later a vast cotton kingdom with an elaborate structure of politics, capital and social ritual. The agricultural pattern of the region kept the cities small and without industries, resisted the influence of technology that has changed the contours of world civilization and fostered fixed social classes.

Inherent in the Southern agricultural system, however, were dangers that could scarcely be averted The dominant crop was precarious, although an alluring source of wealth, it encouraged exploitation of the soil and created a vicious circle of credit and debt which kept the region as dependent as a colony upon the capital of the North and East The system failed to accumulate the capital necessary for the social and cultural development of the South Out of it came a small, powerful and possessive upper class, a larger propertyless lower class of whites, and a post-slavery color caste which set itself steadfastly against the theory of a democratic society

The results of the economic policy have been serious not only for the Negroes at the bottom of the structure, but for the region itself. It has been only recently that these problems have been disentangled sufficiently from the emotions and the nostalgic allure of the past to be considered in their own stark economic right Ten years of a widespread economic depression brought the first mood for questioning institutions and traditions In the face of threatened collapse of the economic base itself, the region came to recognize the extraneous economic burden of many of its most cherished social traditions

Recent studies have repeatedly pointed out that the cotton tenancy problem, for example, assumed for decades to be purely a Negro problem, is basically a *Southern* problem involving even more white than Negro tenants and sharecroppers They reveal also that the vast wastage of the soil is not primarily due to Negro ignorance and neglect, but is the responsibility of those who own, control and direct

the labor on the land, of those who control the facilities for education. They show that poverty wages simply mean little or no purchasing power for the common people, white and Negro alike, on which industries must thrive, and that the undernourishment so prevalent in the area means non-productive illness and costly death Recognition of this situation, perhaps, has prompted a new approach to the problem of the area and laid the ground for a new order of race relations.

Race problems in the economic system may now be viewed not so much as separate and lamentable race phenomena, but as elements in the total economic structure and situation.

NEGROES IN THE CHANGING SOUTH

In 1910, 88 percent of the Negroes of the South were employed as agricultural laborers and domestic servants, the two lowest-paid occupational fields Their agricultural labor was bound up with the archaic traditions of the plantation system with its meager financial returns, frequent exploitation and peonage, stagnant culture and restricted social communication The introduction of schools and some measure of literacy and the vicissitudes of agriculture itself began to break up these patterns

The great majority of American Negroes have always lived in the Southern States where the denseness of the agricultural population, the deterioration and declining productivity of the soil, together with fading markets, have made poverty chronic for both whites and Negroes In the past ten years, the Negroes have been virtually forced out of agriculture as the alternative to slow starvation They have gone where there are prospects of employment or, at least, relief

Farm workers have been increasingly unnecessary in the Southern agricultural system In the early days of the country, according to the Department of Agriculture analysis, it took nine families out of ten to raise enough raw materials for food and clothing for all ten. Today only three families out of ten are needed on farms, the other seven must find employment in industry and related services If full use is made of improved farm machinery, two families or less, out of ten, can do all the necessary farm work The traditional movement of manpower, says Carter Goodrich of the International Labor Office, has been from agriculture to manufacture. The limits of possible

demand for manufactured goods and other services are more flexible than the demand for agricultural products.

The present problem of Negro workers is twofold In industry they have only marginal status as recent comers, with barriers of tradition and prejudice to overcome And in agriculture, too, they have only marginal status, as a result of the decreasing necessity for workers in this field Since 1920, there has been an addition of nearly two million Southern Negroes to the population of the North, and they are today more urban than rural in their distribution

Of the four major occupational fields in the South—cotton cultivation, cotton fabrication, tobacco growing and manufacturing, and iron and steel—cotton cultivation holds the largest number of Negroes There are over 700,000 Negro tenant families, representing about 3,500,000 persons It never has been possible for these families to earn an adequate living Studies show the average *annual* earnings before the present war to fall below $200 In 1929, the average income was less than a fourth of the income of farmers in other sections—$186 as compared with $528 For tenants the average annual income was $73, and for sharecroppers $38 The Eastern cotton belt, where most of the Negroes live, together with the Appalachian Ozarks, constitute the major economic problem of the South and of the nation.

THE NEGRO ENTERS INDUSTRY

Prior to the present war, the heaviest concentrations of Negro workers were still in unskilled branches of industry, and in agriculture and domestic and personal service, but there had been a fairly significant penetration into industry and into positions above the unskilled level In 1930, there were sixty-four general industrial or service groups in a total of 126 in which Negro workers were engaged, and in which 50 percent or more were unskilled and 50 percent or more of the white workers were above the unskilled level As a matter of fact, the total number of Negro workers in the sixty-four fields was 3,051,408 or 55 4 percent of the total Negro working population About two-thirds of these workers were in agriculture and domestic and personal service

There were, however, thirty-eight industrial fields in which 50 percent or more of the Negroes were employed in capacities above

unskilled labor In these industries were 665,834 Negro workers or about 12 percent of the total working force In seven occupational fields more than 50 percent of the Negro employees were skilled or white-collar workers These fields were suit, coat and overall factories, automobile repair shops, postal service, insurance, real estate; professional service, recreation and amusement

The basic industrial situation of the Negro worker in the North can be illustrated in the changing industrial pattern of Chicago In that city in 1890, of the total gainfully employed Negroes, 53 7 percent were in domestic and personal service and on railroad trains Only 7 4 percent were in skilled, clerical, managerial and professional positions Foreign-born whites, as in most urban and industrial cities of the North, controlled the unskilled positions By 1910, Negro male workers were in 166 out of 178 occupations, and Negro female workers in thirty-seven of forty-two occupational groups In the intensive competition, foreign-born whites were pushed up and native whites concentrated more and more in the upper brackets Labor unions as well as employers restricted the number of Negroes in skilled trades By 1920, after the mass migration of the last war period, the proportion of Chicago Negroes in manufacturing increased from 3 to 11 percent There were three and one half times as many Negro semi-skilled workers in 1920 as in 1910, although they remained below the foreign-born group in mass occupational levels, and the foreign born group remained below the native whites By 1930 the Negroes while still holding the highest relative proportions in unskilled work, had proportionately as many semi-skilled workers as the foreign born, and about half as many white-collar workers. They, in turn, were followed by the newest group, the Mexicans, who took their places at the bottom

In the Southern urban areas, the average annual wage (white and Negro) is $865 as compared with $1 219 for workers in other sections However, the Negro earnings represent a differential in the average wages of the South amounting approximately to 30 percent.

In the typical Northern industrial city, the average weekly wage for Negro male white-collar workers in 1936 was $23, and for female workers, $15 82 The skilled Negro male averaged $18 77 and the skilled female, $13 37 All these figures are considerably below the level necessary for a health-and-decency standard of living.

This economic inadequacy is back of many of the problems of education, health, housing, family life and general cultural development It is reflected in high Negro mortality rates from tuberculosis, typhoid, pellagra, influenza and childbirth, and also in infant mortality These rates are from two to four times those of whites, and are largely controllable.

IMPACTS OF WORLD WAR II

It requires a profound crisis to disturb the deepest occupational patterns which regulate our national working habits The racial stratification of jobs has been one of the national traits The present war, with its acute demand for industrial manpower, reveals the real strength of the resistance to any change of the pattern of racial stratification in occupations.

The major minority problem of the war to date has been one of exchanging critically needed manpower for a traditional policy of exclusion The issue of group competition unquestionably will arise with the cessation of the expanded war program and the return to civilian occupations of the millions of able-bodied men now in military service

While it is unlikely that all the minority gains in industry can be sustained when the pressures are removed, the exposure of the Negro workers to new areas and levels of industries and skills will leave a deposit of mutual experience for white and Negro workers, and new skills and economic expectations which undoubtedly will add to the ferment of Negro labor. The areas of resistance to the Negro worker which, in the present war crisis, continue to be maintained are those involving racial segregation of workers, the appointment of Negroes to supervisory positions over whites and over other Negro workers, and the use of recreational facilities

All of this has an important bearing upon the future of Negro labor. First, Negro workers are being geographically distributed where the bulk of the war industries are located In the first monumental plans for war production in 1941 the value of defense contracts and project orders was $13,287,163,000, and of this total the fourteen Southern States received about 7 percent, although they had about a fourth of the population This means that the vast bulk of these contracts went to States outside the South, and these have

drawn labor to them The war contracts were awarded to the older industrial areas where there were basic facilities, transportation, and a potential labor force reasonably well adapted to industry For the period June, 1940, to June, 1942, 6 3 percent of the $80,000,000,000 in war contracts awarded went to eleven Southern States Eight Northern and Western States received over half the awards This undoubtedly will have permanent effects upon the distribution of the Negro population, despite the incidence of new industries in the South

Further, Negro workers are being exposed, under pressure, to some measure of training for skills These skills will remain as one of the valuable educational deposits of the war and will prove useful in further efforts of Negro workers to secure and maintain a footing in industry.

THE OUTLOOK IN SOUTHERN AGRICULTURE

The future economic status of the Negro worker in the rural South is bound up with the economic changes of the area Although the South is potentially rich in resources, the majority of the Negro population shares a lowly economic status with fully a fourth of the white population Any change in Negro status anticipates·

A decrease in the population pressure against the present resources of the poorer areas

A movement and settlement of Negro and white agricultural workers, under conditions guaranteeing security of tenure and income, in better agricultural areas

A further migration of the Negro rural population to urban industrial areas, preferable in a wider distribution over the United States

A reconstruction of agricultural practice in the partially depleted areas of the Old South

The National Resources Planning Board estimates that in the ten principal cotton states there are 84,600,000 acres of land seriously damaged by erosion This large volume of depleted land in the Old South, together with the lack in the past of substantial crop diversification and the high population density, is sharply reflected in the meager farm incomes of all of the agricultural workers. Southern agriculture could actually prosper with from a fourth to a third

fewer cotton farms, which are really no longer needed because of technological improvements and loss of foreign markets Many of these markets may not return in their old volume of demand after the war.

Sound agricultural strategy dictates an increased emphasis upon dairying and livestock production and upon the development of new uses for non-food agricultural products This can aid income, but will require fewer agricultural workers In fact, the section could probably spare as many as two million workers from agricultural production. Already the Negro rural population has been responding to the pressure of internal changes by moving away In such a movement there are social as well as economic values in prospect A substantial decrease in the ratio of Negroes to whites in the Southern region would undoubtedly relax traditional racial tensions that under normal conditions would not change appreciably over many decades Further, the wider geographical distribution of Negro workers will increase their political power, especially in the States in which there is a wider use of the franchise

The war has revealed a further fact of importance to agriculture in the burden of illiteracy and ill health, from which the Negroes in particular have suffered The greatest handicap to adaptability and maximum service to both the military and the economic phases of the war program has been the low level of education of the population and the prevalence of enervating poverty diseases This lesson will be a powerful argument for better schools and for government aid and control, without discrimination, in providing vocational training and medical care, and in planning for new uses of the region's resources

The Federal Government already has set a pattern for essential changes in the regional economy of the South The report of the Southeastern Regional Planning Commission points out that "there is hardly a current problem vexing the farm population for which there is not a corresponding program of governmental action in operation" The more serious problem is that of making possible the utilization of these programs by increased education, and by the extension of security of tenure and pride of ownership to all farm families, the majority of whom are without these benefits This

means for Negro agricultural workers full and free access to long-term credit with low interest rates, improved landlord-tenant relations with the security of written leases, incorporation into programs for co-operative production and marketing, and incorporation into the decentralized industries on part-time industrial employment

The present machinery for agricultural planning consists of county and state agricultural planning committees through which the Department of Agriculture operates, at least theoretically, in a democratic manner These agencies, together with the National Resources Planning Board and the regional post-war planning committees, have great strategic value to the future of Negro agricultural workers A first step of importance is to include on these basic planning boards Negro agricultural workers who, in the past, have known little or nothing about program making It will be only a repetition of the shortsightedness of the past to regard the Negro workers simply as detached and limited auxiliaries of Southern agricultural planning Sound regional development demands their full functional inclusion as the only real basis for raising the economic level of Southern agriculture

THE OUTLOOK IN POST-WAR INDUSTRY

The prospects for Negro workers in the industrial sphere, as in agriculture, are bound up with the development of post-war industry. There is every indication that the nation will not return to the industrial structure of 1940 The billions invested in war plants alone will be wasted unless this capital investment is turned, at least in large part, to the manufacture of peacetime requirements It is significant that many of these plants are in new locations, foreshadowing a shift of industry from old and crowded centers For the first time there seems a real prospect of industrial redistribution that may conceivably contribute immeasurably to population stability.

Officials of the War Manpower Commission have observed that many Negroes who have moved from the South probably will not return because of their experience with higher employment and relief standards, better schools and less direct discrimination The return to civilian life will inevitably bring problems both for the marginal Negroes and for women workers drawn into the emergency program But undoubtedly there will be, as in the last war, a residuum

of Negro workers in the new industries and on upgraded levels of the old-line jobs.

Much of the resistance to use of Negro workers in the past has been based upon lack of acquaintance with their abilities on the part of employers, and a sense of group competition on the part of entrenched white labor. Already both of these have been considerably modified by the exigencies of the war In the first instance, the acute demand for labor itself has brought its lesson, even though slowly and grudgingly, to the new employers of Negroes In the second instance, labor has been finding Negro workers increasingly important assets in the maintenance of their position in our economic structure It is obviously a sounder economy to include and protect Negro workers in an equitable distribution of jobs than to lose the benefits to labor generally of an effective bargaining power From the point of view of employers it also can be a sounder economy to include Negro workers in a normal industrial program than to have to divert increasing amounts of their profits to taxation to provide unemployment relief As for Negro workers themselves, the wisest strategy would be to insist upon more and more opportunities for improving their skills, and to develop their relations with labor

If we are enlightened as a nation, many of the dangers of the last post-war readjustment can be avoided It probably will require the strong, regulatory hand of government to engineer the transition, but economists are pointing out that a sound, balanced industrial economy is possible with the resources at hand The post-war need for civilian goods and services, the expansion of such new industries as airplane construction, the public works reserve, the vast shortage of housing and general construction will create demands that can keep industry vitally engaged

It is estimated by one authority that by 1945 one-fourth of all the dwellings in the United States will be more than fifty years old Mass production probably will be applied to housing, and the Southern cities, if they are wise, will share in this vast industry

The future of the Negro in industry will be influenced by significant changes in the structure of the Negro population and in the changing structure and philosophy of labor itself Once the Negro population was very largely an undifferentiated labor group with what appeared to be a fixed and limited relationship to the American

economy Better schooling, and the movement from farm to city, from field and kitchen to industry and business have speeded social and economic class differentiation within the group, with the result that class relationships cutting across racial lines are increasingly important

Since war needs have given labor itself a new dignity, there is less apology for this class identification and a larger sense of responsibility for the ends of production In thus escaping some of the former exploitation, labor also has escaped a paternalism which usually was beneficent at least in intention The result has been a larger burden of responsibility on labor for its own destiny as a group, and for individual workers.

The ends of labor, as an equal partner in the production of goods and wealth, cannot be served without the co-operation of all workers. This is in sharp contrast to the old craft-union philosophy based, like the old industrial monopoly, upon the economy of scarcity The new philosophy, as a part of its own inherent logic, takes in Negro workers, and this logic has been fortified in some of the powerful new labor organizations by penalties for failure to enforce the policy of non-discrimination, and by a growing political solidarity

Negro workers are now recognizing in the new unions the most strategic weapon for their own advance Even in the South the disposition of labor has been increasingly to give greater value to class than to race, as evidenced in the Birmingham area where there are more than one hundred racially mixed locals, and in the Southern Tenant Farmers Union with its mixed membership

Along with these internal changes there is, finally, another factor that will affect Negro labor and white labor alike This is the post-war structure of world economics The competition of labor in areas of the world with lower living standards than ours, the freedom of exchange of goods, the creation of new markets, the disappearance of old ones—all these will have their repercussions here There can be no final success, however, for the nation's war effort if it leaves any class of labor enslaved or exploited or rejected In this lies the hope of the Negro for a status consistent with the principles of American democracy.

THE NEGRO FAMILY IN THE UNITED STATES

E. Franklin Frazier

Our account of the development of the Negro family in the United States traverses scarcely more than a century and a half of history Yet, during that comparatively brief period, from the standpoint of human history, the Negro, stripped of the relatively simple preliterate culture in which he was nurtured, has created a folk culture and has gradually taken over the more sophisticated American culture. Although only three-quarters of a century has elapsed since the arrival of the last representative of preliterate African races, the type of culture from which he came was as unlike the culture of the civilized American Negro today as the culture of the Germans of Tacitus' day was unlike the culture of German-Americans.

Thus our first task has been to discover the process whereby his raw sexual impulses were brought under control not only through the discipline of the master race but also by association with his fellows Next, we have undertaken to study the character of the restraints upon sex and family behavior which have evolved as a part of the Negro's folk culture Our final task has been to analyze the process by which a favored few have escaped from the isolation of the black folk and gradually taken over the attitudes and sentiments as well as the external aspects of the culture of the dominant race

When the Negro slave was introduced into American economic life, he was to all intents and purposes, to use the words of Aristotle, merely an "animate tool" But, as in all cases where slavery exists, the fact that the slave was not only animate but human affected his relations with his masters To the slave-trader, who had only an economic interest in the slave, the Negro was a mere utility But, where master and slave had to live together and carry on some form of co-operation, the human nature of the slave had to be taken into account Consequently, slavery developed into a social as well as an economic institution The lives of the white master class became intertwined with the lives of the black slaves Social control was not simply a matter of force and coercion but depended upon a system of

etiquette based upon sentiments of superordination, on the one hand, and sentiments of submission and loyalty, on the other. Thus the humanization of the slave as well as his assimilation of the ideals, meanings, and social definitions of the master race depended upon the nature of his contacts with the master race. Where the slave was introduced into the household of the master, the process of assimilation was facilitated; but, where his contacts with whites were limited to the poor white overseer, his behavior was likely to remain impulsive and subject only to external control.

Yet, social interaction within the more or less isolated world of the slave did much to mold his personality. Although in some cases the slaves retained the conception of themselves which they had acquired in their own culture, their children were only slightly influenced by these fading memories. Consequently, their personalities reflected, on the whole, the role which they acquired in the plantation economy. Individual differences asserted themselves and influenced the responses of their fellow slaves as well as their own behavior. The large and strong of body and those of nimble minds outstripped the weak and slow-witted. Some recognition was shown these varying talents and aptitudes by the slaves as well as by the masters. Within the world of the slave, social distinctions appeared and were appreciated.

When the sexual taboos and restraints imposed by their original culture were lost, the behavior of the slaves in this regard was subject at first only to the control of the masters and the wishes of those selected for mates. Hence, on the large plantations, where the slaves were treated almost entirely as instruments of production and brute force was relied upon as the chief means of control, sexual relations were likely to be dissociated on the whole from human sentiments and feelings. Then, too, the constant buying and selling of slaves prevented the development of strong emotional ties between the mates. But, where slavery became a settled way of life, the slaves were likely to show preferences in sexual unions, and opportunity was afforded for the development of strong attachments. The permanence of these attachments was conditioned by the exigencies of the plantation system and the various types of social control within the world of the plantation.

Within this world the slave mother held a strategic position and played a dominant role in the family groupings. The tie between

the mother and her younger children had to be respected not only because of the dependence of the child upon her for survival but often because of her fierce attachment to her brood Some of the mothers undoubtedly were cold and indifferent to their offspring, but this appears to have been due to the attitude which the mother developed toward the unborn child during pregnancy as well as the burden of child care On the whole, the slave family developed as a natural organization, based upon the spontaneous feelings of affection and natural sympathies which resulted from the association of the family members in the same household Although the emotional interdependence between the mother and her children generally caused her to have a more permanent interest in the family than the father, there were fathers who developed an attachment for their wives and children

But the Negro slave mother, as she is known through tradition at least, is represented as the protectress of the children of the master race Thus tradition has symbolized in the relation of the black foster-parent and the white child the fundamental paradox in the slave system—maximum intimacy existing in conjunction with the most rigid caste system Cohabitation of the men of the master race with the women of the slave occurred on every level and became so extensive that it nullified to some extent the monogamous mores. The class of mixed-bloods who were thus created formed the most important channel by which the ideals, customs, and mores of the whites were mediated to the servile race Whether these mixed-bloods were taken into the master's house as servants, or given separate establishments, or educated by their white forebears, they were so situated as to assimilate the culture of the whites Although a large number of this class were poor and degraded, fairly well-off communities of mixed-bloods who had assimilated the attitudes and culture of the whites to a high degree developed in various parts of the country It was among this class that family traditions became firmly established before the Civil War

Emancipation destroyed the modus vivendi which had become established between the two races during slavery Although the freedmen were able to move about and thereby multiply the external contacts with the white man's world, many of the intimate and sympathetic ties between the two races were severed. As a result, Negroes

began to build their own institutions and to acquire the civilization of the whites through the formal process of imitation and education. Then, too, despite their high hopes that their freedom would rest upon a secure foundation of landownership, the masses of illiterate and propertyless Negroes were forced to become croppers and tenants under a modified plantation system In their relative isolation they developed a folk culture with its peculiar social organization and social evaluations Within the world of the black folk, social relations have developed out of intimate and sympathetic contacts Consequently, the maternal-family organization, a heritage from slavery, has continued on a fairly large scale But the maternal-family organization has also been tied up with the widespread illegitimacy which one still finds in these rural communities Illegitimacy among these folk is generally a harmless affair, since it does not disrupt the family organization and involves no violation of the mores Although formal education has done something in the way of dispelling ignorance and superstition, it has effected little change in the mores and customs of these folk communities.

The stability and the character of the social organization of the rural communities has depended upon the fortunes of Southern agriculture Up until the opening of the present century, the more ambitious and energetic of the former slaves and their descendants have managed to get some education and buy homes This has usually given the father or husband an interest in his family and has established his authority Usually such families sprang from the more stable, intelligent, and reliable elements in the slave population The emergence of this class of families from the mass of the Negro population has created small nuclei of stable families with conventional standards of sexual morality all over the South Although culturally these families may be distinguished from those of free ancestry, they have intermarried from time to time with the latter families. These families represented the highest development of Negro family life up to the opening of the present century

However, the urbanization of the Negro population since 1900 has brought the most momentous change in the family life of the Negro since emancipation This movement, which has carried a million Negroes to Southern cities alone, has torn the Negro loose from his cultural moorings. Thousands of these migrants have been solitary

men and women who have led a more or less lawless sex life during their wanderings. But many more illiterate or semi-illiterate and impoverished Negro families, broken or held together only by the fragile bonds of sympathy and habit have sought a dwelling place in the slums of Southern cities. Because of the dissolution of the rural folkways and mores, the children in these families have helped to swell the ranks of juvenile delinquents Likewise, the bonds of sympathy and community of interests that held their parents together in the rural environment have been unable to withstand the disintegrating forces in the city Illegitimacy, which was a more or less harmless affair in the country, has become a serious economic and social problem At times students of social problems have seen in these various aspects of family disorganization a portent of the Negro's destruction

During and following the World War, the urbanization of the Negro population was accelerated and acquired even greater significance than earlier migrations to cities The Negro was carried beyond the small Southern cities and plunged into the midst of modern industrial centers in the North Except for the war period, when there was a great demand for his labor, the migration of the Negro to Northern cities has forced him into a much more rigorous type of competition with whites than he has ever faced Because of his rural background and ignorance, he has entered modern industry as a part of the great army of unskilled workers Like the immigrant groups that have preceded him, he has been forced to live in the slum areas of Northern cities In vain social workers and others have constantly held conferences on the housing conditions of Negroes, but they have been forced finally to face the fundamental fact of the Negro's poverty Likewise, social and welfare agencies have been unable to stem the tide of family disorganization that has followed as a natural consequence of the impact of modern civilization upon the folkways and mores of a simple peasant folk Even Negro families with traditions of stable family life have not been unaffected by the social and economic forces in urban communities Family traditions and social distinctions that had meaning and significance in the relatively simple and stable Southern communities have lost their meaning in the new world of the modern city

One of the most important consequences of the urbanization of the

Negro has been the rapid occupational differentiation of the population. A Negro middle class has come into existence as the result of new opportunities and greater freedom as well as the new demands of the awakened Negro communities for all kinds of services This change in the structure of Negro life has been rapid and has not had time to solidify The old established families, generally of mulatto origin, have looked with contempt upon the new middle class which has come into prominence as the result of successful competition in the environment With some truth on their side, they have complained that these newcomers lack the culture, stability in family life and purity of morals which characterized their own class when it graced the social pyramid In fact, there has not been sufficient time for these new strata to form definite patterns of family life Consequently, there is much confusion and conflict in ideals and aims and patterns of behavior which have been taken over as the result of the various types of suggestion and imitation in the urban environment

The most significant element in the new social structure of Negro life is the black industrial proletariat that has been emerging since the Negro was introduced into Western civilization Its position in industry in the North was insecure and of small consequence until, with the cessation of foreign immigration during the World War, it became a permanent part of the industrial proletariat This development has affected tremendously the whole outlook on life and the values of the masses of Negroes Heretofore, the Negro was chiefly a worker in domestic and personal services, and his ideals of family and other aspects of life were a crude imitation of the middle-class standards which he saw Very often in the hotel or club he saw the white man during his leisure and recreation and therefore acquired leisure-class ideals which have probably been responsible for the "sporting complex" and the thriftlessness which are widespread among Negroes But thousands of Negroes are becoming accustomed to the discipline of modern industry and are developing habits of consumption consonant with their new role As the Negro has become an industrial worker and received adequate compensation, the father has become the chief breadwinner and assumed a responsible place in his family

When one views in retrospect the waste of human life, the immorality, delinquency, desertions, and broken homes which have

been involved in the development of Negro family life in the United States, they appear to have been the inevitable consquences of the attempt of a preliterate people, stripped of their cultural heritage, to adjust themselves to civilization The very fact that the Negro has succeeded in adopting habits of living that have enabled him to survive in a civilization based upon *laissez faire* and competition, itself bespeaks a degree of success in taking on the folkways and mores of the master race That the Negro has found within the patterns of the white man's culture a purpose in life and a significance for his strivings which have involved sacrifices for his children and the curbing of individual desires and impulses indicates that he has become assimilated to a new mode of life

However, when one undertakes to envisage the probable course of development of the Negro family in the future, it appears that the travail of civilization is not yet ended First it appears that the family which evolved within the isolated world of the Negro folk will become increasingly disorganized Modern means of communication will break down the isolation of the world of black folk, and, as long as the bankrupt system of Southern agriculture exists, Negro families will continue to seek a living in the towns and cities of the country. They will crowd the slum areas of Southern cities or make their way to Northern cities where their family life will become disrupted and their poverty will force them to depend upon charity Those families that possess some heritage of family traditions and education will resist the destructive forces of urban life more successfully than the illiterate Negro folk In either case their family life will adapt itself to the secular and rational organization of urban life Undoubtedly, there will be a limitation of offspring; and men and women who associate in marriage will use it as a means for individual development

The process of assimilation and acculturation in a highly mobile and urbanized society will proceed on a different basis from that in the past There are evidences at present that in the urban environment, where caste prescriptions lose their force, Negroes and whites in the same occupational classes are being drawn into closer association than in the past Such associations, to be sure, are facilitating the assimilation of only the more formal aspects of white civilization; but there are signs that intermarriage in the future will bring about

a fundamental type of assimilation. But, in the final analysis, the process of assimilation and acculturation will be limited by the extent to which the Negro becomes integrated into the economic organization and participates in the life of the community. The gains in civilization which result from participation in the white world will in the future as in the past be transmitted to future generations through the family.

I INVESTIGATE LYNCHINGS

Walter White

I

NOTHING contributes so much to the continued life of an investigator of lynchings and his tranquil possession of all his limbs as the obtuseness of the lynchers themselves Like most boastful people who practice direct action when it involve no personal risk, they just can't help talk about their deeds to any person who manifests even the slightest interest in them

Most lynchings take place in small towns and rural regions where the natives know practically nothing of what is going on outside their own immediate neighborhoods Newspapers, books, magazines, theatres, visitors and other vehicles for the transmission of information and ideas are usually as strange among them as dry-point etchings But those who live in so sterile an atmosphere usually esteem their own perspicacity in about the same degree as they are isolated from the world of ideas They gabble on *ad infinitum,* apparently unable to keep from talking

In any American village, North or South, East or West, there is no problem which cannot be solved in half an hour by the morons who lounge about the village store World peace, or the lack of it, the tariff, sex, religion, the settlement of the war debts, short skirts, Prohibition, the carryings-on of the younger generation, the superior moral rectitude of country people over city dwellers (with a wistful eye on urban sins)—all these controversial subjects are disposed of quickly and finally by the bucolic wise men When to their isolation is added an emotional fixation, such as the rural South has on the Negro, one can sense the atmosphere from which spring the Heflins, the Ku Kluxers, the two-gun Bible-beaters, the lynchers and the anti-evolutionists And one can see why no great amount of cleverness or courage is needed to acquire information in such a forlorn place about the latest lynching

Professor Earle Fiske Young of the University of Southern California recently analyzed the lynching returns from fourteen Southern

states for thirty years He found that in counties of less than 10,000 people there was a lynching rate of 3 2 per 100,000 of population; that in those of from 10,000 to 20,000 the rate dropped to 2 4, that in those of from 20,000 to 30,000, it was 2 1 per cent, that in those of from 30,000 to 40,000, it was 1 7, and that thereafter it kept on going down until in counties with from 300,000 to 800,000 population it was only 0 05

Of the forty-one lynchings and eight race riots I have investigated for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People during the past ten years. all of the lynchings and seven of the riots occurred in rural or semi-rural communities The towns ranged in population from around one hundred to ten thousand or so The lynchings were not difficult to inquire into because of the fact already noted that those who perpetrated them were in nearly every instance simple-minded and easily fooled individuals On but three occasions were suspicions aroused by my too definite questions or by informers who had seen me in other places These three times I found it rather desirable to disappear slightly in advance of reception committees imbued with the desire to make an addition to the lynching record. One other time the possession of a light skin and blue eyes (though I consider myself a colored man) almost cost me my life when (it was during the Chicago race riots in 1919) a Negro shot at me, thinking me to be a white man

II

In 1918 a Negro woman, about to give birth to a child, was lynched with almost unmentionable brutality along with ten men in Georgia. I reached the scene shortly after the butchery and while excitement yet ran high It was a prosperous community Forests of pine trees gave rich returns in turpentine, tar and pitch The small towns where the farmers and turpentine hands traded were fat and rich The main streets of the largest of these towns were well paved and lighted. The stores were well stocked The white inhabitants belonged to the class of Georgia crackers—lanky, slow of movement and of speech, long-necked, with small eyes set close together, and skin tanned by the hot sun to a reddish-yellow hue

As I was born in Georgia and spent twenty years of my life there, my accent is sufficiently Southern to enable me to talk with Southern-

ers and not arouse their suspicion that I am an outsider (In the rural South hatred of Yankees is not much less than hatred of Negroes.) On the morning of my arrival in the town I casually dropped into the store of one of the general merchants who, I had been informed, had been one of the leaders of the mob After making a small purchase I engaged the merchant in conversation There was, at the time, no other customer in the store. We spoke of the weather, the possibility of good crops in the fall, the political situation, the latest news from the war in Europe. As his manner became more and more friendly I ventured to mention guardedly the recent lynchings.

Instantly he became cautious—until I hinted that I had great admiration for the manly spirit the men of the town had exhibited I mentioned the newspaper accounts I had read and confessed that I had never been so fortunate as to see a lynching My words or tone seemed to disarm his suspicions He offered me a box on which to sit, drew up another one for himself, and gave me a bottle of Coca-Cola.

"You'll pardon me, Mister," he began, "for seeming suspicious but we have to be careful In ordinary times we wouldn't have anything to worry about, but with the war there's been some talk of the Federal government looking into lynchings. It seems there's some sort of law during wartime making it treason to lower the man power of the country "

"In that case I don't blame you for being careful," I assured him. "But couldn't the Federal government do something if it wanted to when a lynching takes place, even if no war is going on at the moment?"

"Naw," he said, confidently, proud of the opportunity of displaying his store of information to one who he assumed knew nothing whatever about the subject. "There's no such law, in spite of all the agitation by a lot of fools who don't know the niggers as we do. States' rights won't permit Congress to meddle in lynching in peace time."

"But what about your State government—your Governor, your sheriff, your police officers?"

"Humph! Them? We elected them to office, didn't we? And the niggers, we've got them disfranchised, ain't we? Sheriffs and police and Governors and prosecuting attorneys have got too much sense to mix in lynching-bees. If they do they know they might as well give

up all idea of running for office any more—if something worse don't happen to them—" This last with a tightening of the lips and a hard look in the eyes.

I sought to lead the conversation into less dangerous channels. "Who was the white man who was killed—whose killing caused the lynchings?" I asked

"Oh, he was a hard one, all right Never paid his debts to white men or niggers and wasn't liked much around here He was a mean 'un all right, all right."

"Why, then, did you lynch the niggers for killing such a man?"

"It's a matter of safety—we gotta show niggers that they mustn't touch a white man, no matter how low-down and ornery he is "

Little by little he revealed the whole story When he told of the manner in which the pregnant woman had been killed he chuckled and slapped his thigh and declared it to be "the best show, Mister, I ever did see You ought to have heard the wench howl when we strung her up "

Covering the nausea the story caused me as best I could, I slowly gained the whole story, with the names of the other participants. Among them were prosperous farmers, business men, bankers, newspaper reporters and editors, and several law-enforcement officers.

My several days of discreet inquiry began to arouse suspicions in the town On the third day of my stay I went once more into the store of the man with whom I had first talked. He asked me to wait until he had finished serving the sole customer When she had gone he came from behind the counter and with secretive manner and lowered voice he asked, "You're a government man, ain't you?" (An agent of the Federal Department of Justice was what he meant)

"Who said so?" I countered.

"Never mind who told me; I know one when I see him," he replied, with a shrewd harshness in his face and voice.

Ignorant of what might have taken place since last I had talked with him, I thought it wise to learn all I could and say nothing which might commit me. "Don't you tell anyone I am a government man; if I *am* one, you're the only one in town who knows it," I told him cryptically. I knew that within an hour everybody in town would share his "information."

An hour or so later I went at nightfall to the little but not uncomfortable hotel where I was staying As I was about to enter a Negro approached me and, with an air of great mystery, told me that he had just heard a group of white men discussing me and declaring that if I remained in the town overnight "something would happen" to me

The thought raced through my mind before I replied that it was hardly likely that, following so terrible a series of lynchings, a Negro would voluntarily approach a supposedly white man whom he did not know and deliver such a message He had been sent, and no doubt the persons who sent him were white and for some reason did not dare tackle me themselves Had they dared there would have been no warning in advance—simply an attack Though I had no weapon with me, it occurred to me that there was no reason why two should not play at the game of bluffing I looked straight into my informant's eyes and said· "You go back to the ones who sent you and tell them this that I have a damned good automatic and I know how to use it If anybody attempts to molest me tonight or any other time, somebody is going to get hurt"

That night I did not take off my clothes nor did I sleep Ordinarily in such small Southern towns everyone is snoring by nine o'clock That night, however, there was much passing and re-passing of the hotel I learned afterward that the merchant had, as I expected, told generally that I was an agent of the Department of Justice, and my empty threat had served to reinforce his assertion The Negro had been sent to me in the hope that I might be frightened enough to leave before I had secured evidence against the members of the mob I remained in the town two more days My every movement was watched, but I was not molested But when, later, it became known that not only was I not an agent of the Department of Justice but a Negro, the fury of the inhabitants of the region was unlimited—particularly when it was found that evidence I gathered had been placed in the hands of the Governor of Georgia It happened that he was a man genuinely eager to stop lynching—but restrictive laws against which he had appealed in vain effectively prevented him from acting upon the evidence And the Federal government declared itself unable to proceed against the lynchers

III

In 1926 I went to a Southern State for a New York newspaper to inquire into the lynching of two colored boys and a colored woman. Shortly after reaching the town I learned that a certain lawyer knew something about the lynchers He proved to be the only specimen I have ever encountered in much traveling in the South of the Southern gentleman so beloved by fiction writers of the older school He had heard of the lynching before it occurred and, fruitlessly, had warned the judge and the prosecutor He talked frankly about the affair and gave me the names of certain men who knew more about it than he did Several of them lived in a small town nearby where the only industry was a large cotton mill When I asked him if he would go with me to call on these people he peered out of the window at the descending sun and said, somewhat anxiously, I thought, "I will go with you if you will promise to get back to town before sundown."

I asked why there was need of such haste "No one would harm a respectable and well-known person like yourself, would they?" I asked him

"Those mill hands out there would harm anybody," he answered.

I promised him we would be back before sundown—a promise that was not hard to make, for if they would harm this man I could imagine what they would do to a stranger!

When we reached the little mill town we passed through it and ascending a steep hill, our car stopped in front of a house perched perilously on the side of the hill In a yard stood a man with iron-gray hair and eyes which seemed strong enough to bore through concrete. The old lawyer introduced me and we were invited into the house As it was a cold afternoon in late autumn the gray-haired man called a boy to build a fire

I told him frankly I was seeking information about the lynching. He said nothing but left the room Perhaps two minutes later, hearing a sound at the door through which he had gone, I looked up and there stood a figure clad in the full regalia of the Ku Klux Klan I looked at the figure and the figure looked at me The hood was then removed and, as I suspected, it was the owner of the house

"I show you this," he told me, "so you will know that what I tell you is true."

This man, I learned, had been the organizer and kleagle of the local Klan He had been quite honest in his activities as a Kluxer, for corrupt officials and widespread criminal activities had caused him and other local men to believe that the only cure rested in a secret extra-legal organization But he had not long been engaged in promoting the plan before he had the experience of other believers in Klan methods. The very people whose misdeeds the organization was designed to correct gained control of it This man then resigned and ever since had been living in fear of his life He took me into an adjoining room after removing his Klan robe and there showed me a considerable collection of revolvers, shotguns, rifles and ammunition.

We then sat down and I listened to as hair-raising a tale of Nordic moral endeavor as it has ever been my lot to hear Among the choice bits were stories such as this The sheriff of an adjoining county the year before had been a candidate for reelection A certain man of considerable wealth had contributed largely to his campaign fund, providing the margin by which he was reelected Shortly afterwards a married woman with whom the sheriff's supporter had been intimate quarreled one night with her husband When the cuckold charged his wife with infidelity, the gentle creature waited until he was asleep, got a large butcher knife, and then artistically carved him up Bleeding more profusely than a pig in the stockyards, the man dragged himself to the home of a neighbor several hundred yards distant and there died on the doorstep The facts were notorious, but the sheriff effectively blocked even interrogation of the widow!

I spent some days in the region and found that the three Negroes who had been lynched were about as guilty of the murder of which they were charged as I was Convicted in a court thronged with armed Klansmen and sentenced to death, their case had been appealed to the State Supreme Court, which promptly reversed the conviction, remanded the appellants for new trials, and severely criticized the judge before whom they had been tried. At the new trial the evidence against one of the defendants so clearly showed his innocence that the judge granted a motion to dismiss, and the other two defendants were obviously as little guilty as he. But as

soon as the motion to dismiss was granted the defendant was re-arrested on a trivial charge and once again lodged in jail. That night the mob took the prisoners to the outskirts of the town, told them to run, and as they set out pumped bullets into their backs The two boys died instantly The woman was shot in several places, but was not immediately killed One of the lynchers afterwards laughingly told me that "we had to waste fifty bullets on the wench before one of them stopped her howling"

Evidence in affidavit form indicated rather clearly that various law-enforcement officials, including the sheriff, his deputies, various jailers and policemen, three relatives of the then Governor of the State, a member of the State Legislature and sundry individuals prominent in business, political and social life of the vicinity were members of the mob

The revelation of these findings after I had returned to New York did not add to my popularity in the lynching region. Public sentiment in the State itself, stirred up by several courageous newspapers, began to make it uncomfortable for the lynchers When the sheriff found things getting a bit too unpleasant, he announced that he was going to ask the grand jury to indict me for "bribery and passing for white" It developed that the person I was supposed to have paid money to for execution of an affidavit was a man I had never seen in the flesh, the affidavit having been secured by the reporter of a New York newspaper.

An amusing tale is connected with the charge of passing Many years ago a bill was introduced in the Legislature of that State defining legally as a Negro any person who had one drop or more of Negro blood Acrimonious debate in the lower house did not prevent passage of the measure, and the same result seemed likely in the State Senate One of the Senators, a man destined eventually to go to the United States Senate on a campaign of vilification of the Negro, rose at a strategic point to speak on the bill. As the story goes, his climax was: "If you go on with this bill you will bathe every county in blood before nightfall And, what's more, there won't be enough white people left in the State to pass it"

When the sheriff threatened me with an indictment for passing as white, a white man in the State with whom I had talked wrote me a long letter asking me if it were true that I had Negro blood. "You

did not tell me nor anyone else in my presence," he wrote, "that you were white except as to your name I had on amber-colored glasses and did not take the trouble to scrutinize your color, but I really did take you for a white man and, according to the laws of ——, you may be " My informant urged me to sit down and figure out mathematically the exact percentage of Negro blood that I possessed and, if it proved to be less than one-eighth, to sue for libel those who had charged me with passing

This man wrote of the frantic efforts of the whites of his State to keep themselves thought of as white He quoted an old law to the effect that "it was not slander to call one a Negro because everybody could see that he was not; but it was slanderous to call him a mulatto "

IV

On another occasion a serious race riot occurred in Tulsa, Oklahoma, a bustling town of 100,000 inhabitants In the early days Tulsa had been a lifeless and unimportant village of not more than five thousand people, and its Negro residents had been forced to live in what was considered the least desirable section of the village, down near the railroad Then oil was discovered nearby and almost overnight the village grew into a prosperous town The Negroes prospered along with the whites and began to erect comfortable homes, business establishments, a hotel, two cinemas and other enterprises, all of these springing up in the section to which they had been relegated This was, as I have said, down near the railroad tracks. The swift growth of the town made this hitherto disregarded land of great value for business purposes Efforts to purchase the land from the Negro owners at prices far below its value were unavailing Having built up the neighborhood and knowing its value, the owners refused to be victimized

One afternoon in 1921 a Negro messenger boy went to deliver a package in an office building on the main street of Tulsa His errand done, he rang the bell for the elevator in order that he might descend The operator, a young white girl, on finding that she had been summoned by a Negro, opened the door of the car ungraciously Two versions there are of what happened then. The boy declared that she started the car on its downward plunge when he was only

halfway in, and that to save himself from being killed he had to throw himself into the car, stepping on the girl's foot in doing so. The girl, on the other hand, asserted that the boy attempted to rape her in the elevator The latter story, at best, seemed highly dubious—that an attempted criminal assault would be made by any person in an open elevator of a crowded office building on the main street of a town of 100,000 inhabitants—and in open daylight!

Whatever the truth, the local press, with scant investigation, published lurid accounts of the alleged assault That night a mob started to the jail to lynch the Negro boy A group of Negroes offered their services to the jailer and sheriff in protecting the prisoner The offer was declined and, when the Negroes started to leave the sheriff's office, a clash occurred between them and the mob Instantly the mob swung into action

The Negroes, outnumbered, were forced back to their own neighborhood Rapidly the news spread of the clash and the numbers of mobbers grew hourly By daybreak of the following day the mob numbered around five thousand, and was armed with machine-guns, dynamite, rifles, revolvers and shotguns, cans of gasoline and kerosene, and—such are the blessings of invention!—airplanes Surrounding the Negro section, it attacked, led by men who had been officers in the American army in France Outnumbered and outequipped, the plight of the Negroes was a hopeless one from the beginning Driven further and further back, many of them were killed or wounded, among them an aged man and his wife, who were slain as they knelt at prayer for deliverance Forty-four blocks of property were burned after homes and stores had been pillaged

I arrived in Tulsa while the excitement was at its peak Within a few hours I met a commercial photographer who had worked for five years on a New York newspaper and he welcomed me with open arms when he found that I represented a New York paper From him I learned that special deputy sheriffs were being sworn in to guard the town from a rumored counterattack by the Negroes It occurred to me that I could get myself sworn in as one of these deputies

It was even easier to do this than I had expected That evening in the City Hall I had to answer only three questions—name, age and address I might have been a thug, a murderer, an escaped convict, a member of the mob itself which had laid waste a large area of the

city—none of these mattered, my skin was apparently white, and that was enough. After we—some fifty or sixty of us—had been sworn in, solemnly declaring we would do our utmost to uphold the laws and constitutions of the United States and the State of Oklahoma, a villainous-looking man next to me turned and remarked casually, even with a note of happiness in his voice: "Now you can go out and shoot any nigger you see and the law'll be behind you."

As we stood in the wide marble corridor of the not unimposing City Hall waiting to be assigned to automobiles which were to patrol the city during the night, I noticed a man, clad in the uniform of a captain of the United States Army, watching me closely. I imagined I saw in his very swarthy face (he was much darker than I, but was classed as a white man while I am deemed a Negro) mingled inquiry and hostility. I kept my eye on him without appearing to do so. Tulsa would not have been a very healthy place for me that night had my race or my previous investigations of other race riots been known there. At last the man seemed certain he knew me and started toward me.

He drew me aside into a deserted corner on the excuse that he had something he wished to ask me, and I noticed that four other men, with whom he had been talking, detached themselves from the crowd and followed us.

Without further introduction or apology my dark-skinned, newly made acquaintance, putting his face close to mine and looking into my eyes with a steely, unfriendly glance, demanded challengingly:

"You say that your name is White?"

I answered affirmatively.

"You say you're a newspaper man?"

"Yes, I represent the New York ——. Would you care to see my credentials?"

"No, but I want to tell you something. There's an organization in the South that doesn't love niggers. It has branches everywhere. You needn't ask me the name—I can't tell you. But it has come back into existence to fight this damned nigger Advancement Association. We watch every movement of the officers of this nigger society and we're out to get them for putting notions of equality into the heads of our niggers down South here."

There could be no question that he referred to the Ku Klux Klan

on the one hand and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People on the other. As coolly as I could, the circumstances being what they were, I took a cigarette from my case and lighted it, trying to keep my hand from betraying my nervousness When he finished speaking I asked him·

"All this is very interesting, but what, if anything, has it to do with the story of the race riot here which I've come to get?"

For a full minute we looked straight into each other's eyes, his four companions meanwhile crowding close about us. At length his eyes fell With a shrug of his shoulders and a half-apologetic smile, he replied as he turned away, "Oh, nothing, except I wanted you to know what's back of the trouble here "

It is hardly necessary to add that all that night, assigned to the same car with this man and his four companions, I maintained a considerable vigilance When the news stories I wrote about the riot (the boy accused of attempted assault was acquitted in the magistrate's court after nearly one million dollars of property and a number of lives had been destroyed) revealed my identity—that I was a Negro and an officer of the Advancement Society—more than a hundred anonymous letters threatening my life came to me I was also threatened with a suit for criminal libel by a local paper, but nothing came of it after my willingness to defend it was indicated

V

A narrow escape came during an investigation of an alleged plot by Negroes in Arkansas to "massacre" all the white people of the State. It later developed that the Negroes had simply organized a cooperative society to combat their economic exploitation by landlords, merchants, and bankers, many of whom openly practiced peonage I went as a representative of a Chicago newspaper to get the facts Going first to the capital of the State, Little Rock, I interviewed the Governor and other officials and then proceeded to the scene of the trouble, Phillips county, in the heart of the cotton-raising area, close to the Mississippi

As I stepped from the train at Elaine, the county seat, I was closely watched by a crowd of men Within half an hour of my arrival I had been asked by two shopkeepers, a restaurant waiter, and a ticket agent why I had come to Elaine, what my business was and what I

thought of the recent riot The tension relaxed somewhat when I implied I was in sympathy with the mob Little by little suspicion was lessened and then, the people being eager to have a metropolitan newspaper give their side of the story, I was shown "evidence" that the story of the massacre plot was well-founded, and not very clever attempts were made to guide me away from the truth.

Suspicion was given new birth when I pressed my inquiries too insistently concerning the share-cropping and tenant-farming system, which works somewhat as follows Negro farmers enter into agreements to till specified plots of land, they to receive usually half of the crop for their labor Should they be too poor to buy food, seed, clothing and other supplies, they are supplied these commodities by their landlords at designated stores When the crop is gathered the landowner takes it and sells it By declaring that he has sold it at a figure far below the market price and by refusing to give itemized accounts of the supplies purchased during the year by the tenant, a landlord can (and in that region almost always does) so arrange it that the bill for supplies always exceeds the tenant's share of the crop Individual Negroes who had protested against such thievery had been lynched. The new organization was simply a union to secure relief through the courts, which relief those who profited from the system meant to prevent Thus the story of a "massacre" plot

Suspicion of me took definite form when word was sent to Phillips county from Little Rock that it had been discovered that I was a Negro, though I knew nothing about the message at the time I walked down West Cherry Street, the main thoroughfare of Elaine, one day on my way to the jail, where I had an appointment with the sheriff, who was going to permit me to interview some of the Negro prisoners who were charged with being implicated in the alleged plot A tall, heavy-set Negro passed me and, *sotto voce,* told me as he passed that he had something important to tell me, and that I should turn to the right at the next corner and follow him Some inner sense bade me obey. When we had got out of sight of other persons the Negro told me not to go to the jail, that there was great hostility in the town against me and they planned harming me In the man's manner there was something which made me certain he was telling the truth Making my way to the railroad station, since my interview with the prisoners (the sheriff and jailer being present)

was unlikely to add anything to my story, I was able to board one of the two trains a day out of Elaine When I explained to the conductor —he looked at me so inquiringly—that I had no ticket because delays in Elaine had given me no time to purchase one, he exclaimed, "Why, Mister, you're leaving just when the fun is going to start! There's a damned yaller nigger down here passing for white and the boys are going to have some fun with him "

I asked him the nature of the fun

"Wal, when they get through with him," he explained grimly, "he won't pass for white no more."

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EXTRACTS FROM

FIFTY YEARS OF NEGRO CITIZENSHIP

Carter G. Woodson

THE citizenship of the Negro in this country is a fiction The Constitution of the United States guarantees to him every right vouchsafed to any individual by the most liberal democracy on the face of the earth but, despite the unusual powers of the Federal Government, this agent of the body politic has studiously evaded the duty of safeguarding the rights of the Negro The Constitution confers upon Congress the power to declare war and make peace, to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts and excises, to coin money, to regulate commerce and the like; and further empowers Congress "to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers and all other powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any department or officer thereof" After the unsuccessful effort of Virginia and Kentucky, through their famous resolutions of 1798 drawn up by Jefferson and Madison to interpose State authority in preventing Congress from exercising its powers, the United States Government with Chief Justice John Marshall as the expounder of that document, soon brought the country around to the position of thinking that, although the Federal Government is one of the enumerated powers, that government and not that of States is the judge of the extent of its powers and, "though limited in its powers, is supreme within its sphere of action" [1] Marshall showed, too, that "there is no phrase in the instrument which, like the Articles of Confederation, excludes incidental or implied powers, and which requires that everything granted shall be expressly and minutely described" [2] Marshall insisted, moreover, "that the powers given to the government imply the ordinary means of execution," and "to imply the means necessary to an end is generally understood as implying any means, calculated to produce the end and not as being confined to those single

[1] McCulloch *v* Maryland, 4 Wheaton, 416

[2] McCulloch *v* Maryland, 4 Wheaton, 416

means without which the end would be entirely unattainable." [3] He said "Let the end be legitimate, let it be within the scope of the Constitution, and all means which are appropriate, which are plainly adapted to that end, which are not prohibited, but consist with the letter and the spirit of the Constitution, are constitutional."

Fortified thus, the Constitution became the rock upon which nationalism was built and by 1833 there were few persons who questioned the supremacy of the Federal Government, as did South Carolina with its threats of nullification Because of the beginning of the intense slavery agitation not long thereafter, however, and the division of the Democratic party into a national and proslavery group, the latter advocating State's rights to secure the perpetuation of slavery, there followed a reaction after the death of John Marshall in 1835, when the court abandoned to some extent the advanced position of nationalism of this great jurist and drifted toward the localism long since advocated by Judge Roane of Virginia

In making the national government the patron of slavery, a new sort of nationalism as a defense of that institution developed thereafter, however, and culminated in the Dred Scott decision [4] To justify the high-handed methods to protect the master's property right in the bondman, these jurists not only referred to the doctrines of Marshall already set forth above but relied also upon the decisions of Justice Storey, the nationalist surviving Chief Justice Marshall They believed with Storey that a constitution of government founded by the people for themselves and their posterity and for objects of the most momentous nature—for perpetual union, for the establishment of justice, for the general welfare and for a perpetuation of the blessings of liberty—necessarily requires that every interpretation of its powers have a constant reference to those objects No interpretation of the words in which those powers are granted can be a sound one which narrows down every ordinary import so as to defeat those objects

In the decision of Prigg *v.* Pennsylvania, when the effort was to carry out the fugitive slave law,[5] the court, speaking through Justice Storey in 1842, believed that the clause of the Constitution conferring

[3] *Ibid*, 416

[4] Dred Scott *v* Sanford, 19 Howard, 399.

[5] 16 Peters, 539, 612.

a right should not be so construed as to make it shadowy or unsubstantial or leave the citizen without the power adequate for its protection when another construction equally accordant with the words and the sense in which they were used would enforce and protect the right granted The court believed that Congress is not restricted to legislation for the execution of its expressly granted powers, but for the protection of rights guaranteed by the Constitution, may employ such means not prohibited, as are necessary and proper, or such as are appropriate to attain the ends proposed The court held, moreover, in Prigg *v* Pennsylvania, that "the fundamental principle applicable to all cases of this sort, would seem to be, that when the end is required the means are given, and when the duty is enjoined, the ability to perform it is contemplated to exist on the part of the functionaries to whom it is entrusted" It required very little argument to expose the fallacy in supposing that the national government had ever meant to rely, for the due fulfillment of its duties and the rights which it established, upon State legislation rather than upon that of the United States, and with greater reason, when one bears in mind that the execution of power which was to be the same throughout the nation could not be confided to any State which could not rightfully act beyond its own territorial limits All of this power exercised in executing the Fugitive Slave Law of 1793 was implied rather than such direct power as that later conferred upon Congress by the Thirteenth Amendment, which provided that Congress should have power to pass appropriate legislation to enforce it

As the Supreme Court decided in the case of Prigg *v* Pennsylvania that the officers of the State were not legally obligated to assist in the enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1793, Congress passed another and a more drastic measure in 1850 which, although unusually rigid in its terms, was enthusiastically supported by the Supreme Court in upholding the slavery régime The Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 deprived the Negro suspect of the right of a trial by jury to determine the question of his freedom in a competent court of the State The affidavit of the person claiming the Negro was sufficient evidence of ownership This law made it the duty of marshals and of the United States courts to obey and execute all warrants and precepts issued under the provisions of this Act It imposed a penalty of a fine and imprisonment upon any person knowingly hindering

the arrest of a fugitive or attempting to rescue one from custody or harboring one or aiding one to escape The writ of habeas corpus was denied to the reclaimed Negro and the Act was *ex posto facto.* In short, the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 committed the whole country to the task of the protection of slave property and made slavery a national matter with which every citizen in the country had to be concerned In the interest of the property right of the master, moreover, the Supreme Court by the Dred Scott Decision [6] upheld this measure, feeling that there was in Congress adequate power expressly given and implied to enforce this regulation in spite of any local opposition that there might develop against the government acting upon individuals to carry out this police regulation The Negro was not a citizen and in his non-political status could not sue in a Federal Court, which for the same reason must disclaim jurisdiction in a case in which the Negro was a party

In the decision of Ableman *v* Booth,[7] the court in construing the provision for the return of slaves according to the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 further recognized the master's right of property in his bondman, the right of assisting and recovering him regardless of any State law or regulation or local custom to the contrary whatsoever This tribunal then believed that the right of the master to have his fugitive slave delivered up on the claim, being guaranteed by the Constitution, the implication was that the national government was clothed with proper authority and functions to enforce it These were reversed during the Civil War by the nation rising in arms against the institution of slavery which it had economically outgrown, and the court, in the support of the Federal Government, exercising its unusual powers in effecting the political and social upheaval resulting in the emancipation of the slaves, again became decidedly national in its decisions

Out of Rebellion the Negro emerged a free man endowed by the State and Federal Government with all the privileges and immunities of a citizen in accordance with the will of the majority of the American people, as expressed in the Civil Rights Bill and in the ratification of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments A decidedly militant minority, however, willing to grant the Negro free-

[6] Dred Scott *v* Sanford, 19 Howard 399

[7] 21 Howard, 506.

dom of body but unwilling to grant him political or civil rights, bore it grievously that the race had been so suddenly elevated and soon thereafter organized a party of reaction to reduce the freedmen to the position of the free people of color, who before the Civil War had no rights but that of exemption from involuntary servitude. During the Reconstruction period, when the Negroes figured conspicuously in the rebuilding of the Southern States, they temporarily enjoyed the rights guaranteed them by the Constitution As there set in a reaction against the support of the reconstructed governments as administered by corrupt Southerners and interlopers, the support which the United States Government had given this first effort in America toward actual democracy was withdrawn and the undoing of the Negro as a citizen was easily effected throughout the South by general intimidation and organized mobs known as the Ku Klux Klan.

One of the first rights denied the Negro by these successful reactionaries was the unrestricted use of common carriers. Standing upon its former record, however, the court had sufficient precedents to continue as the impartial interpreter of the laws guaranteeing all persons civil and political equality In New Jersey Steam Navigation Company *v* Merchants Bank,[8] the court speaking through Justice Nelson took high ground in the defense of the free and unrestricted use of common carriers, a right frequently denied the Negroes after the Civil War The court said that a common carrier is "in the exercise of a sort of public office and has public duties to perform from which he should not be permitted to exonerate himself without assent of the parties concerned" This doctrine was upheld in Munn *v* Illinois,[9] and in Olcott *v* Supervisors,[10] when it was decided that railroads are public highways established under the authority of the State for the public use, and that they are none the less public highways, because controlled and owned by private corporations, that it is a part of the function of government to make and maintain highways for the convenience of the public; that no matter who is agent or what is the agency, the function performed is *that of the State,* that although the owners may be private

[8] 6 Howard, 344.
[9] 94 U S, 113.
[10] 16 Wall, 678.

companies, they may be compelled to permit the public to use these works in the manner in which they can be used, "Upon these grounds alone," continues the opinion, "have courts sustained the investiture of railroad corporations with the States right of eminent domain, or the right of municipal corporations, under legislative authority, to assess, levy, and collect taxes to aid in the construction of railroads." [11] Jurists in this country and in England had also held that inasmuch as the innkeeper is engaged in a quasi-public employment the law gives him special privileges and he is charged with certain duties and responsibilities to the public The public nature of his employment would then forbid him from discriminating against any person asking admission, on account of the race or color of that person [12]

In the Slaughter House Cases [13] and Strauder *v* West Virginia,[14] the United States Supreme Court held that since slavery was the moving or principal cause of the adoption of the Thirteenth Amendment, and since that institution rested wholly upon the inferiority, as a race, of those held in bondage, their freedom necessarily involved immunity from, and protection against, all discrimination against them, because of their race Congress, therefore, under its present express power to enforce that amendment by appropriate legislation, might enact laws to protect that people against deprivation, *because of their race,* of any civil rights granted to other freemen in the same States, and such legislation may be of a direct and primary character, operating upon States, their officers and agents, and also upon, at least, such individuals and corporations as exercise public functions and wield power and authority under the State

The State was conceded the power to regulate rates, fares of passengers and freight and, upon these grounds, it might regulate the entire management of railroads in matters affecting the convenience and safety of the public, such as regulating speed, compell-

[11] This was held in Township of Queensburg *v* Culver (19 Wall, 83), in Township of Pine Grove *v* Talcott (19 Wall, 666), and in Massachusetts in Worcester *v* Western R R Corporation (4 Met, 564)

[12] Storey on Bailments, Sec 475-6, and Rex *v* Ivens, 7 Carrington & Payne, 213, 32, E C L, 495.

[13] 16 Wall, 36

[14] 100 U. S., 303.

ing stops of prescribed length at stations and prohibiting discriminations and favoritisms The position taken here is that these corporations are actual agents of the State and what the State permits them to do is an act of the State. The Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments made the Negro race a part of the public and entitled to share in the control and use of public utilities Any restriction in the use of these utilities would deprive the race of its liberty; for "personal liberty consists," says Blackstone, "in the power of locomotion, of changing situation, of removing one's person to whatever places one's own inclination may direct, without restraint, unless by due course of law "

In several decisions the court had held that the purpose of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments was to raise the Negro race from that condition of inferiority and servitude, in which most of them had previously stood, into perfect equality of civil rights with all other persons within the jurisdiction of the United States In Strauder *v* West Virginia,[15] and Neal *v* Delaware,[16] the court had taken the position that exemption from race discrimination is a right of a citizen of the United States Negroes charged that members of their race had been excluded from a jury because of their color The court was then of the opinion that such action contravened the Constitution and, as was held in the case of Prigg *v* Pennsylvania, declared it essential to the national supremacy that the agent of the body politic should have the power to enforce and protect any right granted by the Constitution

In *Ex Parte Virginia* the position was the same In this case one Cole, a county judge, was charged by the laws of Virginia with the duty of selecting grand and petit jurors The laws of that State did not permit him in the performance of that duty to make any distinction as to race He was indicted in a Federal court under the Act of 1875 for making such discriminations The attorney-general of Virginia contended that the State had done its duty, and had not authorized or directed that county judge to do what he was charged with having done, that the State had not denied to the Negro race the equal protection of the laws, and that consequently the act of Cole must be deemed his individual act, in contravention of the will

[15] 100 U S , 306
[16] 103 U S , 386

of the State Plausible as this argument was, it failed to convince the court and, after emphasizing the fact that the Fourteenth Amendment had reference to the acts of the political body denominated a State, "by whatever instruments or in whatever modes that action may be taken," and that a State acts by its legislative, executive and judicial authorities, and can act in no other way, it said

"The constitutional provision, therefore, must mean that no agency of the State, or of the officers or agents by whom its powers are exerted shall deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws Whoever, by virtue of public position under a State government, deprives another of property, life, or liberty without due process of law, or denies or takes away the equal protection of the laws, violates the constitutional inhibitions, and, as he acts under the name and for the State, and is clothed with the State power, his act is that of the State This must be so, or the constitutional prohibition has no meaning Then the State has clothed one of its agents with power to annul or evade it But the constitutional amendment was ordained for a purpose It was to secure equal rights to all persons, and to insure to all persons the enjoyment of such rights, power was given to Congress to enforce its provisions by appropriate legislation Such legislation must act upon persons, not upon the abstract thing denominated as State, but upon the persons who are the agents of the State, in the denial of the rights which were intended to be secured " [17]

The Supreme Court of the United States soon fell under reactionary influence and gave its judicial sanction to all repression necessary to establish permanently the reactionaries in the South and to deprive the Negroes of their political and civil rights It will be interesting, therefore, to show exactly how far the United States Supreme Court, supposed to be an impartial tribunal and generally held in such high esteem and treated with such reverential fear, has been guilty of inconsistency and sophistry in its effort to support the autocracy in defiance of the well-established principles of interpretation for construing the constitutions and laws of States and in utter disregard of the supremacy of Congress in the exercise of the powers granted the government by the Constitution of the United States.

[17] *Ex Parte Virginia,* 100 U S , 346-7.

The Right of Locomotion

In 1875 Congress passed a measure commonly known as the Civil Rights Bill, which was supplementary of other measures of the same sort, the first being enacted April 9, 1866,[18] and reenacted with some modifications in sections 16, 17, and 18 of the Enforcement Act passed August 31, 1870.[19] The intention of the statesmen advocating these measures was to secure to the freedmen the enjoyment of every right guaranteed all other citizens. The important sections of the Civil Rights Bill of 1875 follow:

Section 1. That all persons within the jurisdiction of the United States shall be entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of the accommodations, advantages, facilities, and privileges of inns, public conveyances on land or water, theatres, and other places of public amusement, subject only to the conditions and limitations established by law, and applicable alike to citizens of every race and color, regardless of any previous condition of servitude.

Section 2. That any person who shall violate the foregoing section by denying to any citizen, except for reasons by law applicable to citizens of every race and color, and regardless of any previous condition of servitude, the full enjoyment of any of the accommodations, advantages, facilities or privileges in said section enumerated, or by aiding or inciting such denial, shall for every such offense forfeit and pay the sum of five hundred dollars to the person aggrieved thereby, to be recovered in an action of debt, with full costs, and shall, also, for every such offense be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and, upon conviction therefor, shall be fined not less than five hundred nor more than one thousand dollars, or shall be imprisoned not less than thirty days nor more than one year. *Provided,* That all persons may elect to sue for the penalties aforesaid, or to proceed under their rights at common law and by State statutes, and having so elected to proceed in the one mode or the other, their right to proceed in the other jurisdiction shall be barred. But this provision shall not apply to criminal proceedings, either under this act or the criminal law of any State, and provided further, That a judgment for the penalty

[18] 14 Statutes, 27, Chapter 31.
[19] 16 Statutes, 140, Chapter 114.

in favor of the party aggrieved, or a judgment upon an indictment, shall be a bar to either prosecution, respectively

Although the Negroes by this measure were guaranteed the rights which were granted by the Constitution to every citizen of the United States, the members of the Supreme Court of the United States instead of upholding the laws of the nation in accordance with their oaths undertook to hedge around and to explain away the articles of the Constitution in such a way as to legislate rather than interpret the laws according to the intent of the framers of the polls In the courts, in inns, in hotels, on street cars and on railroads, Negroes had sued for redress of their grievances and the persons thus called upon to respond in the courts attacked the constitutionality of the Civil Rights Bill and the War Amendments, contending that they encroached upon the police power of the States

The first of these Civil Rights Cases were· United States *v* Stanley, United States *v* Ryan, United States *v* Nichols, United States *v*. Singleton, and Robinson and Wife *v* Memphis and Charleston R R Co Two of these cases, those against Stanley and Nichols, were indictments for denying to persons of color the accommodations of inn or hotel, two of them, those against Ryan and Singleton, were, one on information, the other on indictments, for denying to individuals the privileges and accommodations of a theatre The information against Ryan was for refusing a colored person a seat in the dress circle of McGuire's Theater in San Francisco; and the indictment against Singleton was for denying to another person, whose color was not stated, the full enjoyment of the accommodation of the theatre known as the Grand Opera House in New York

The argument to show the culpability of the State was that in becoming a business man or a corporation established by sanction of and protected by the State, such a person or persons discriminating against a citizen of color no longer acted in a private but in a public capacity and in so doing affected an interest in violation of the State by controlling, as in the case of slavery, an individual's power of locomotion The Civil Rights Bill was appropriate legislation as defined by the Constitution to forbid any action by private persons which "in the light of our history may reasonably be apprehended to tend, on account of its being incidental to quasi-public occupations, to

create an institution" The Act of 1875 in prohibiting persons from violating the rights of other persons to the full and equal enjoyment of the accommodations of inns and public conveyances, for any reason turning merely upon the race or color of the latter, partook of the specific character of certain contemporaneous, solemn and effective action by the United States to which it was a sequel and is constitutional

Giving the opinion of the court in Civil Rights Cases,[20] Mr Justice Bradley said that the Fourteenth Amendment on which this Act of 1875 rested for its authority, if it had any authority at all, does not invest Congress with the power to legislate within the domain of State legislation or in State action of the kind referred to in the Civil Rights Act He believed that the Fourteenth Amendment does not authorize Congress to create a code of municipal law for the regulation of private rights He conceded that positive rights and privileges are secured by the Fourteenth Amendment but only by prohibition against State laws and State proceedings affecting those rights[21] "Until some State law has passed," he said, "or some State action through its officers or agents has been taken adverse to the rights of citizens sought to be protected by the Fourteenth Amendment, no legislation of the United States under said amendment, nor any proceeding under such legislation, can be called into activity, for the prohibitions of the amendment are against State laws and acts under State authority" Otherwise Congress would take the place of State legislatures and supersede them and regulate all private rights between man and man Civil rights such as are guaranteed by the Constitution against State aggression, thought Justice Bradley, cannot be impaired by the wrongful acts of individuals unsupported by State authority in the shape of laws, customs, or executive proceedings, for those are private wrongs

Justice Bradley believed, moreover, that the Civil Rights Act could not be supported by the Thirteenth Amendment in that, unlike the Fourteenth Amendment, the Thirteenth Amendment is primary and direct in abolishing slavery "When a man has emerged from slavery," said he, "and by the aid of beneficent legislation has shaken

[20] 109 U S 1

[21] United States *v* Cruikshank 92 U S, 542, Virginia *v* Rives, 100 U S, 318, *Ex Parte Virginia*, 100 U S, 339

off the inseparable concomitants of that State, there must be some stage in the progress of his elevation when he takes the rank of a mere citizen, ceases to be the special favorite of the laws, and when his rights as a citizen or a man are to be protected in the ordinary modes by which other men's rights are protected" To eject a Negro from an inn or a hotel, to compel him to ride in a separate car, to deny him access and use of places maintained at public expense, according to Justice Bradley, do not constitute imposing upon the Negroes badges and incidents of slavery, for they are acts of individuals with which Congress, because of the limited powers of the Federal government, cannot have anything to do The particular clause in the Civil Rights Act, so far as it operated on individuals in the several States was, therefore, held null and void, but the court held that it might apply to the District of Columbia and territories of the United States for which Congress might legislate directly Since then the court has in the recent Wright Case declared null and void even that part which it formerly said might apply to territory governed directly by Congress, thus taking the position tantamount to reading into the laws of the United States and the laws of nations the segregation measures of a mediæval ex-slaveholding commonwealth assisted by the nation in enforcing obedience to its will beyond the three-mile limit on the high seas

Although conceding that the Thirteenth Amendment was direct and primary legislation. the court held that it had nothing to do with the guarantee against that race discrimination commonly referred to in the bills of complaint as the badges and incidents of slavery The court found the Fourteenth Amendment negative rather than direct and primary because of one of its clauses providing that "no State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges and immunities of citizens of the United States nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty and property without due process of law, nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws" The court was too evasive or too stupid to observe that the first clause of this amendment was an affirmation to the effect that all persons born and naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside In other words, the court held that if there is one negative clause in a paragraph, the whole para-

graph is a negation. Such sophistry deserves the condemnation of all fair-minded people, when one must conclude that any person even without formal education, if he has heard the English language spoken and is of sound mind, would know better than to interpret a law so unreasonably.

In declaring this act unconstitutional, the Supreme Court of the United States violated one of its own important principles of interpretation to the effect that this duty is such a delicate one that the court in declaring a statute of Congress invalid must do so with caution, reluctance and hesitation and never until the duty becomes manifestly imperative In the decision of Fletcher *v* Peck,[22] the court said that whether the legislative department of the government has transcended the limits of its constitutional power is at all times a question of much delicacy, which seldom, if ever, is to be decided in the affirmative in a doubtful case The position between the Constitution and the law should be such that the judge feels a clear and strong conviction of their incompatibility with each other. In the Sinking Fund Cases,[23] the court said "When required in the regular course of judicial proceedings to declare an act of Congress void if not within the legislative power of the United States, this declaration should never be made except in a clear case Every possible presumption is in favor of the validity of a statute, and this continues until the contrary is shown beyond a rational doubt One branch of the government cannot encroach on the domain of another without danger. The safety of our institutions depends in no small degree on a strict observance of this salutary rule." And this is exactly what happened The judiciary here assumed the function of the legislative department Not even a casual reader on examining these laws and the Constitution can feel that the court in this case felt such a clear and strong conviction as to the invalidity of this constitutional legislation when that tribunal, as its records show, had under different circumstances before the Civil War held a doctrine decidedly to the contrary.

Mr Justice Harlan, therefore, dissented He considered the opinion of the court narrow, as the substance and spirit were sacrificed by a subtle and ingenious verbal criticism. Justice Harlan believed, "that

[22] 6 Cranch, 128.

[23] 99 U. S., 418.

it is not the words of the law but the internal sense of it that makes the law; the letter of the law is the body, the sense and reason of the law the soul." "Constitutional provisions adopted in the interest of liberty," said Justice Harlan, "and for the purpose of securing, through national legislation, if need be, rights inhering in a state of freedom, and belonging to American citizenship, have been so construed as to defeat the end the people desire to accomplish, which they attempted to accomplish, and which they supposed they had accomplished, by changes in their fundamental law"

The court, according to Justice Harlan, although he did not mean to say that the determination in this case should have been materially controlled by considerations of mere expediency or policy, had departed from the familiar rule requiring that the purpose of the law or Constitution and the objects to be accomplished by any grant are often the most important in reaching real intent just as the debates in the convention of 1787 and the discussions in the *Federalist* and in the ratifying conventions of the States have often been referred to as throwing important light on clauses in the Constitution seeming to show ambiguity The debates on the war amendment, when they were proposed and ratified, were thoroughly expounded before the court in bringing before that tribunal the intention of the members of Congress, by which the court, according to a well established principle of interpretation, should have been influenced in construing the statute in question

The court held that legislation for the enforcement of the Thirteenth Amendment is direct and primary, "but to what specific ends may it be directed?" inquired Justice Harlan The court "had uniformly held that national government has the power, whether expressly given or not, to secure and protect rights conferred or guaranteed by the Constitution"[24] Justice Harlan believed then that the doctrines should not be abandoned when the inquiry was not as to an implied power to protect the master's rights, but what Congress might, under powers expressly granted, do for the protection of freedom and the rights necessarily inhering in a state of freedom

The Thirteenth Amendment, the court conceded, did more than prohibit slavery as an *institution,* resting upon distinctions of race

[24] United States *v* Reese, 92 U S, 214; Strauder *v* West Virginia, 100 U S, 303.

and uphold by positive law The court admitted that it "established and decreed universal civil freedom throughout the United States" "But did the freedom thus established," inquired Justice Harlan, "involve more than exemption from actual slavery? Was nothing more intended than to forbid one man from using another as property? Was it the purpose of the nation simply to destroy the institution and then remit the race, theretofore held in bondage, to the several States for such protection, in their civil rights, necessarily growing out of their freedom, as those States in their discretion might choose to provide? Were the States against whose protest the institution was destroyed to be left free, so far as national interference was concerned, to make or allow discriminations against that race, as such, in the enjoyment of those fundamental rights which by universal concession, inhere in a state of freedom?" Justice Harlan considered it indisputable that Congress in having power to abolish slavery could destroy the burdens and disabilities remaining as its badges and incidents which constitute its substance in visible form

The court in its defense had taken as an illustration that the negative clause of the Fourteenth Amendment was not direct and primary, that although the States are prohibited from passing laws to impair the obligations of contract, this did not mean that Congress could legislate for the general enforcement of contracts throughout the States Discomfiting his brethren on their own ground, Harlan said: "A prohibition upon a State is not a *power in Congress or in the national government* It is simply a *denial* of *power* to the State The much-talked-of illustration of impairing the obligation of contracts, therefore, is not an example of power expressly conferred in contra distinction to that of this case and is not convincing, for this would be a court matter, not a matter of Congress The Fourteenth Amendment is the first case of conferring upon Congress affirmative power by *legislation to enforce* an express prohibition on the States Judicial power could have acted without such a clause The Fourteenth Amendment is not merely a prohibition on State action It made Negroes citizens of the United States and of the States This is decidedly affirmative This citizenship may be protected not only by the judicial branch of the government but by Congressional legislation of a primary or direct character It is in the power of Congress to enforce the affirmative as well as the prohibitive provisions of this article.

The acceptance of any doctrine to the contrary," continued Justice Harlan, "would lead to this anomalous result that whereas prior to the amendments, Congress with the sanction of this court passed the most stringent laws—operating directly and primarily upon States and their officers and agents, as well as upon individuals—in vindication of slavery and the right of the master, it may not now, by legislation of a like primary and direct character, guard, protect, and secure the freedom established, and the most essential right of the citizenship granted, by the constitutional amendments."

It did not seem to Justice Harlan that the fact that, by the second clause of the first section of the Fourteenth Amendment, the States are expressly prohibited from making or enforcing laws abridging the rights and immunities of citizens of the United States, furnished any sufficient reason for upholding or maintaining that the amendment was intended to deny Congress the power, by general, primary and direct legislation, of protecting citizens of the several States, being also citizens of the United States, against all discrimination, in respect of their rights as citizens, which is founded on "race, color, or previous condition of servitude" "Such an interpretation," thought he, "is plainly repugnant to its fifth section, conferring upon Congress power, by appropriate legislation, to enforce not merely the provisions containing prohibitions upon the States, but all of the provisions of the amendment, including the provisions, express and implied, in the first clause of the first section of the article granting citizenship" The prohibition of the State laws could have been negatived by judicial interpretation without the Fourteenth Amendment on the ground that they would have conflicted with the Constitution.

The court said the Fourteenth Amendment was not intended to enact a municipal code for the States No one will gainsay this This amendment, moreover, is not altogether for the benefit of the Negro. It simply interferes with the local laws when they operate so as to discriminate against persons or permit agents of the States to discriminate against persons of any race on account of color or previous condition of servitude Of what benefit was it if it did not do this? The constitutions of the several States had already secured all persons against deprivation of life, liberty or property otherwise than by due process of law, and in some form recognized the right of all persons

to the equal protection of the laws If this be the correct interpretation even, it does not follow that privileges which have been granted by the nation may not be protected by primary legislation upon the part of Congress Justice Harlan pointed out that it is for Congress, not the judiciary, to say that legislation is appropriate, for that would be sheer usurpation of the functions of a coordinate department Why should these rules of interpretation be abandoned in the case of maintaining the rights of the Negro guaranteed by the Constitution?

The Civil Rights of 1875 could have been maintained on the ground that it regulated interstate passenger traffic, as one of the cases, Robinson and Wife *v* Memphis and Charleston Railroad Company showed that Robinson, a citizen of Mississippi, had purchased a ticket entitling him to be carried from Grand Junction, Tennessee, to Lynchburg, Virginia This case substantially presented the question of interstate commerce, but the court reserved the question whether Congress in the exercise of its power to regulate commerce among the several States, might or might not pass a law regulating rights in public conveyances passing from one State to another The court undertook to hide behind the fact that this specific act did not recite therein that it was enacted in pursuance of the power of Congress to regulate commerce. Justice Harlan, therefore, inquired "Has it ever been held that the judiciary should overturn a statute, because the legislative department did not accurately recite therein the particular provision of the Constitution authorizing its enactment?" On the whole, the contrary is the rule It is sufficient to know that there is authority in the Constitution

In this decision, too, there was the influence of the much-paraded bugbear of social equality forced upon the whites To use the inns, hotels, and parks established by authority of the government and the places of amusement authorized as the necessary stimulus to progress, to buy a railroad ticket at the same window, ride in the same comfortable car on a limited train rather than incur the loss of time and suffer the inconvenience of inferior accommodations on a slow local train, to sleep and eat in a Pullman car so as to be refreshed for business on arriving at the end of a long journey, all of this was and is today dubbed by the reactionary courts social equality Justice Harlan exposed this fallacy in saying. "The right, for in-

stance, of a colored citizen to use the accommodations of a public highway, upon the same terms as are permitted to white citizens, is no more a social right than his right, under the law, to use the public market, or a post office, or his right to sit in a public building with others, of whatever race, for the purpose of hearing the political questions of the day discussed "

What did the Negro become when he was freed? What was he when, according to section 2 of Article IV of the Constitution, he became by virtue of the Fourteenth Amendment entitled to all privileges and immunities of citizens in the several States? [25] From what did the race become free? If Justice Bradley had been inconveniently segregated by common carriers, driven out of inns and hotels with the sanction of local law, and deprived by a mob of the opportunity to make a living, would he have considered himself a free citizen of this or any other country? "A colored citizen of Ohio or Indiana while in the jurisdiction of Tennessee," contended Justice Harlan, "is entitled to enjoy any privilege or immunity, fundamental in citizenship, which is given to citizens of the white race in the latter State Citizenship in this country necessarily imports at least equality of civil rights among citizens of every race in the same State." In United States *v* Cruikshank,[26] it was held that rights of life and personal liberty are natural rights of man, and that "equality of the rights of citizens is a principle of republicanism "

On the whole, however, the United States Supreme Court has not yet had the moral courage to face the issue in cases involving the constitutional rights of the Negro Not a decision of that tribunal has yet set forth a straightforward opinion as to whether the States can enact one code of laws for the Negroes and another for the other elements of our population in spite of the fact that the Constitution of the United States prohibits such iniquitous legislation In cases in which this question has been frankly put the court has wiggled out of it by some such declaration as that the case was improperly brought, that there were defects in the averments, or that the court lacked jurisdiction.

In the matter of jurisdiction the United States Supreme Court has

[25] Ward *v* Maryland, 12 Wall, 418, Corfield *v* Coryell, 4 Washington, D C, 371, Paul *v* Virginia, 8 Wall, 168, Slaughter House cases, *Ibid*, 36

[26] 92 U S, 542

been decidedly inconsistent. This tribunal at first followed the opinion of Chief Justice John Marshall in the case of Osborn *v.* United States Bank [27] that "when a question to which the judicial power of the United States is extended by the Constitution forms an ingredient of the original cause it is in the power of Congress to give the Circuit Courts the jurisdiction of that cause, although other questions of fact or of law may be involved." Prior to the rise of the Negro to the status of so-called citizenship the court built upon this decision the prerogative of examining all judicial matters pertaining to the Federal Government until it made itself the sole arbiter in all important constitutional questions and became the bulwark of nationalism After some reaction the court resumed that position in all of its decisions except those pertaining to the Negro; for in the recent commercial expansion of the country involving the litigation of unusually large property values, the United States Supreme Court has easily found grounds for jurisdiction where economic rights are concerned, but just as easily disclaims jurisdiction where human rights are involved in cases in which Negroes happen to be complainants

The fair-minded man, the patriot of foresight, observes, therefore, with a feeling of disappointment this prostitution of an important department of the Federal Government to the use of the reactionary forces in the United States endeavoring to whittle away the essentials of the Constitution which guarantees to all persons in this country all the rights enjoyed under the most progressive democracy on earth Since the Civil War the United States Supreme Court, instead of performing the intended function of preserving the Constitution by democratic interpretation, has by its legislative decisions practically stricken therefrom so many of its liberal provisions and read into the Constitution so much caste and autocracy that discontent and radicalism have developed almost to the point of eruption.

[27] 9 Wheaton, 738.

CONTEMPORARY NEGRO POETRY, 1914-1936

Sterling Brown

THE extensive migrations from the South, quickened by the devastations of the boll weevil, the growing resentment at injustice, and the demand of Northern industries; the advance of the Negro in labor, wealth, and education, the World War with its new experiences in camp and battle, the Garvey movement with its exploitation of "race," all of these contributed to the growth of the "New Negro." In 1935, Alain Locke, editor of *The New Negro* wrote

The intelligent Negro of today is resolved not to make discrimination an extenuation for his shortcomings in performance, individual or collective, he is trying to hold himself at par, neither inflated by sentimental allowances nor depreciated by current social discounts. For this he must know himself and be known for precisely what he is, and for that reason he welcomes the new scientific rather than the old sentimental interest . . Now we rejoice and pray to be delivered both from self-pity and condescension.

The New Negro was marked by self-respect (which, admittedly at times, became self-preening) and by self-reliance He asked for less charity and more justice Negro poetry reflected all of this. Coincidentally in the post-war years the "new poetry" appeared in American literature, and new Negro poets naturally shared in this movement's reaction against sentimentality, didacticism, optimism and romantic escape. They learned to shun stilted "poetic diction," to use fresher more original language and to humanize poetry Race was no longer to be caricatured or neglected, they did not plead "for a race" but attempted to express it At their best they belonged with the renascent American poets who "in the tones of ordinary speech rediscovered the strength, the dignity, the vital core of the commonplace "

The resulting poetry had five major concerns: (1) a discovery of Africa as a source for race pride (2) a use of Negro heroes and

heroic episodes from American history (3) propaganda of protest (4) a treatment of the Negro masses [frequently of the folk, less often of the workers] with more understanding and less apology and (5) franker and deeper self-revelation Some of this subject matter called for a romantic approach, some for a realistic It must be added that much of the poetry written in the period of the "New Negro Renaissance," belongs, in subject matter and treatment, with the poetry already discussed.

Fenton Johnson's works show the two extremes of Negro poetry after 1914 Some of his poems are conventional in form and substance, others, patterned upon his fellow Chicagoan, Sandburg, are striking departures in Negro poetry With Sandburg's technique and Edgar Lee Masters' outlook, Johnson included in *African Nights* snapshots of bitter experience such as "Aunt Hannah Jackson," "The Banjo-Player," "The Minister," "The Scarlet Woman" and "Tired" Unfortunately, Johnson, like so many of his Negro contemporaries, fell silent shortly after these poems Perhaps there was little audience for their pessimism, either within a race whose optimism is proverbial, or without, where the Negro's brooding over his lot is generally unwelcome. "The Scarlet Woman," educated for more than a white man's kitchen, is driven by poverty to street-walking, and gin is her only way of forgetfulness "Tired" indicts civilization·

I am tired of building up somebody else's civilization. . . . Let the old shanty go to rot, the white people's clothes turn to dust, and the Calvary Baptist Church sink to the bottomless pit. . . .

Throw the children into the river, civilization has given us too many.

Negro "leaders" who direct the race into optimism condemned this view of life, but it is tonic after such frequent insistence on "a good time coming bye and bye" Like so many modern poets, Fenton Johnson held to the words of Thomas Hardy that

If way to the better there be, it exacts a full look at the worst

WOMEN POETS

Georgia Douglas Johnson continues in the main the tradition According to a sponsoring critic, Mrs. Johnson has "set herself the

task of documenting the feminine heart . . and in a simple declarative style engages with ingenuous directness the moods and emotions of her themes" The poems in *The Heart of a Woman* (1918), *Bronze* (1922), and *An Autumn Love Cycle* (1928) are written to appeal to the heart, and are generally autumnal in tone. *Bronze* contains "Hegira," "The Octoroon" and "Aliens" upon race themes, one section, "Motherhood," at times goes deeply into the tragic problems of Negro mothers aware of what faces their children Though conventional in phrase and meter, her poems are skillful and fluent Angelina Weld Grimke is the author of many musical lyrics, frequently in a carefully worded and cadenced free verse. Intellectual and sensitive to injustice, she has written poems of irony and quiet despair, a puppet player twitches "the strings with slow sardonic grin."

Let us forget the past unrest
We ask for peace

She is influenced by imagism, but her images are of the twilight, of winter

Alice Dunbar Nelson, wife of Paul Laurence Dunbar, in addition to her better-known sketches of Creole life, wrote many poems. These echo the romantic themes, some being concerned with descriptions of Nature "the perfect loveliness that God has made" in contrast with man-made imperfections "I Sit and Sew" laments a woman's enforced inactivity in time of war.

VOICES OF PROTEST

More forthright, but done with less artistic care, are the poems of Walter Everette Hawkins His book is called *Chords and Discords*, the "chords" are conventional lyrics about love or duty, but the "discords" foreshadow new Negro poetry "The Iconoclast" and "To Prometheus" are self-consciously radical, but the theme was new for Negro poets. "A Festival in Christendom" describes a lynching, but since literary diction is used for lurid details, it does not succeed as poetry·

Then from his side they tore his heart
And watched its quivering fibres start.

In "Thus Speaks Africa" Hawkins combines race pride and race history in a manner favored by many contemporary Negro poets.

I am Africa
Wild is the wail of my waters,
Deep is the cry of my Congo
I laid down my life at Fort Pillow. . . .
I died on the flag at Fort Wagner
My bones lie bleaching in Flanders
I was burned at the stake down in Georgia,
I was fuel for the mob in Texas. . .

After such a catalogue, he states less convincingly:

And then like the Phoenix of Egypt,
I rose from the ashes immortal . . .

Carrie W Clifford in *The Widening Light* likewise looks forward anxiously to the bursting "full-flowered into life" of black folk choked into a death stupor Many of her sonnets are race-conscious like "The Black Draftee from Dixie," which tells of one of the many soldiers who were lynched upon their return from overseas.

One of the many Negro poets who died young, Roscoe Jamison is best known for his poem "Negro Soldiers," beginning

These truly are the Brave,
These men who cast aside,
Old memories, to walk the blood-stained pave
Of Sacrifice, joining the solemn tide
That moves away, to suffer and to die
For Freedom when their own is yet denied!

Similarly cut off at the outset of his career, Joseph Seamon Cotter, gifted son of a gifted father, left behind him a sheaf of poems, *The Band of Gideon and Other Poems* Cotter had a definite lyrical facility, seen in the title poem, "Supplication," and "Rain Music."

Closer to the New Negro concern for social themes, done with quiet persuasiveness is

Brothers, come!
And let us go unto our God
And when we stand before him
I shall say—
Lord, I do not hate,
I am hated
I scourge no one,
I am scourged
I covet no lands,
My lands are coveted.
I mock no peoples,
My people are mocked
And brother, what shall you say?

CLAUDE MCKAY

Claude McKay's voice was the strongest in the immediate post-war years Born in the West Indies, McKay soon after his arrival in America discovered the shams of "democracy" With Floyd Dell and Max Eastman he became one of the editors of *The Liberator*, a magazine dedicated to social justice In the epidemic of race riots occurring shortly after the war, a much-quoted cry of defiance was McKay's

If we must die—let it not be like hogs,
Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot. . . .
Like men we'll face the murderous, cowardly pack
Pressed to the wall, dying, but fighting back!

"The Lynching," with its crowd where men were jostled by steely-eyed women and "little lads, lynchers that were to be," and "America" "which feeds me bread of bitterness" contain desperate truth. Africa is called, with point and power

The harlot, now thy time is done
Of all the mighty nations of the sun.

Streetwalkers of Harlem, cabaret dancers, and urban workers are treated with understanding McKay looks searchingly at reality and reveals its harshness But there is a McKay other than the hater, the rebel and the realist—there is the dreamer, nostalgic for the sights and sounds of his native West Indies "The Tropics in New York" is a poem of memory stirred by the sight of West Indian fruits in a store window "My Mother" is a simply, tenderly phrased reminiscence "Flame-Heart," a listing of the delights of youth in Jamaica, is one of the best lyrics in Negro poetry. "Two an' Six" is a charming pastoral of Jamaican life, closer to Burns than to Dunbar When McKay turned almost completely to prose fiction, Negro poetry suffered a real loss.

ANNE SPENCER

Anne Spencer is the most original of all Negro women poets Her devotion to Browning, attested by one of her best poems "Life-Long, Poor Browning," results in a closely woven style that is at times cryptic, but even more often richly rewarding She makes use of poetic tradition without being conventional, and of new styles with a regard for form, her vision and expression are those of a wise, ironic but gentle woman of her times She is sensitive to natural beauty, praising her home-state Virginia·

Her canopied reaches of dogwood and hazel
Beech tree and redbud fine-laced in vines
Fleet clapping rills by lush fern and basil
Drain blue hills to lowlands scented with pines

"Neighbors," "I Have a Friend" and "Innocence" convey a great deal, in the deceptively simple manner of Emily Dickinson "Before the Feast of Shushan" is a poem of vivid sensuous beauty, telling an old story in modern terms "At the Carnival" has a bitter wisdom, Mrs Spencer sets before us graphically the drab cheapness the blind crowd, the sausage and garlic booth, the dancing tent where "a quivering female-thing gestured assignations," the "Limousine

Lady" and the "bull-necked man" in contrast to the gleaming beauty of "Girl of the Tank." But

Little Diver, Destiny for you
Like as for me, is shod in silence;
Years may seep into your soul
The bacilli of the usual and the expedient;
I implore Neptune to claim his child today!

Original, sensitive and keenly observant, the poems of Anne Spencer should be collected for a wider audience.

JESSIE FAUSET

Though better known as a novelist, Jessie Fauset is likewise a poet. Her interest in French literature is apparent in many titles of her poems, and in her translations of poets of the French West Indies, who should be better known Most of Miss Fauset's personal poems are about love, written with a care for form, and an ironic disillusionment "La Vie C'est la Vie," the best of these, sets forth a triangle of lovers, loving and unbeloved·

But he will none of me Nor I
Of you Nor you of her. 'Tis said
The world is full of jests like these—
I wish that I were dead

"Oriflamme" celebrates Sojourner Truth, making her symbolic of the Negro mother, bereft of her children "still visioning the stars."

JEAN TOOMER

Jean Toomer is best as a poet in the beautiful prose of *Cane* (1923) His few poems in the same volume, however, are original and striking. Jean Toomer has written that Georgia opened him up; "Reapers" and "Cotton Song" show this awakening to folk

material. In "Georgia Dusk" there is a sense of the ominous mystery of the Southland.

The sawmill blows its whistle, buzz-saws stop
And silence breaks the bud of knoll and hill. . . .
Smoke from the pyramidical sawdust pile
Curls up, blue ghosts of trees. . . .
. . . the chorus of the cane
Is caroling a vesper to the stars. . . .

With a mastery of the best rhythmical devices of Negro folk music, "Song of the Son" expresses the return of the younger Negro to a consciousness of identity with his own, a return to folk sources, to the "caroling softly souls of slavery"—

O land and soil, red soil and sweet-gum tree,
So scant of grass, so profligate of pines,
Now just before an epoch's sun declines,
Thy son, in time, I have returned to thee,
Thy son, I have in time returned to thee.

In time, for though the sun is setting on
A song-lit race of slaves, it has not set. . . .

In spite of the small number of his poems, Toomer remains one of the finest and most influential of Negro poets His long silence has been broken with the publication of "Blue Meridian," a rather long poem calling for a "new America, to be spiritualized by each new American " In it there are only occasional references to Negro life:

The great African races sent a single wave
And singing riplets to sorrow in red fields
Sing a swan song, to break rocks
And immortalize a hiding water boy. . . .

JAMES WELDON JOHNSON

James Weldon Johnson has also felt the need of recording the lives and thoughts of those "leaving, soon gone " After collecting and editing two volumes of spirituals, he turned to the task, attempted

in an earlier poem—"The Creation"—of fixing something of the rapidly passing old-time Negro preacher *God's Trombones, Seven Negro Sermons in Verse* (1927) was widely acclaimed Material which is usually made ludicrous is here invested with dignity, power and beauty Convinced that dialect smacks too much of the minstrel stage, Johnson attempts to give truth to folk idiom rather than mere misspellings The rhythms of these chants have true poetic quality. The advance from his earlier dialect "Jungles and Croons" is a great one, *God's Trombones* is a truthful and sincere rendition of a belief and a way of life There is the occasional grotesqueness of the folk preacher.

Wash him with hyssop inside and out
Hang him up and drain him dry of sin

But there is the tenderness of the reference to Sister Caroline, down in Yamacraw, who had borne the burden of the heat of the day and to whom Death "looked like a welcome friend," and the intimacy of telling a novice in the mad, bad Babylon of scarlet women, dancing and drinking

Young man, young man,
Your arm's too short to box with God

If the hell-border city of Babylon recalls Memphis, New Orleans and Harlem, "The Crucifixion" and "Let My People Go" recall other Negro experiences

Listen!—Listen!
All you sons of Pharaoh
Who do you think can hold God's people
When the Lord God himself has said,
Let my people go?

The visionary qualities of the spirituals are seen throughout, especially in "The Judgment Day"

The sun will go out like a candle in the wind,
The moon will turn to dripping blood,
The stars will fall like cinders,
And the sea will burn like tar. . . .

The same visionary type of imagination is to be seen in *Saint Peter Relates an Incident of the Resurrection Day* (1930), a caustic satire of the treatment accorded Negro Gold Star Mothers The Unknown Soldier, arriving in heaven, is discovered to be a Negro, the G A R, the D A R, the Legion, the Klan, the trustees of the patriotism of the nation are astounded and want him buried again In these later poems, both the interpretation and the protest are less rhetorical and more dramatic than in *Fifty Years*, and consequently more persuasive

COUNTEE CULLEN

Most precocious of contemporary Negro poets is Countee Cullen, who was winner of many nation-wide poetry contests in high school and college, and who published his first volume when he was only twenty-two This volume, *Color* (1925), is by many critics considered Cullen's best Like Dunbar's standard English poems, and Braithwaite's, Cullen's work is marked by technical skill, it is the most polished lyricism of modern Negro poetry Cullen is a follower of tradition in English verse, of what he calls "the measured line and the skillful rhyme" His chief models are Keats and Edna St Vincent Millay But he has poured new wine into the old bottles His gifts are fluency and brilliant imagery, he can convey deep emotion and concise irony He writes of the gay abandon of lovely brown girls in Harlem "whose walk is like the replica of some barbaric dance" but he is impressed with the transiency of happiness, "the winter of sure defeat." He is capable of the tenderness of "A Brown Girl Dead":

Her mother pawned her wedding ring
To lay her out in white,
She'd be so proud she'd dance and sing
To see herself tonight . . .

and of the epigrammatic

She even thinks that up in heaven
Her class lies late and snores
While poor black cherubs rise at seven
To do celestial chores.

Cullen insists, as any poet should, that he wants "no racial consideration to bolster up" his reputation, and (a different thing, this) does not wish to be confined to "racial" themes

What shepherd heart would keep its fill
For only the darker lamb?

It is nevertheless true, as James Weldon Johnson points out, that his best poems are those motivated by race "The Shroud of Color" celebrates a mystical experience in which the poet turns from despair to identity with his people

Lord, I will live persuaded by mine own.
I cannot play the recreant to these,
My spirit has come home, that sailed the doubtful seas

"Heritage" is a statement of the atavism that was a cardinal creed of New Negro poetry, of "old remembered ways" from Africa persisting in civilization·

I can never rest at all
When the rain begins to fall
Like a man gone mad with pain
I must match its weird refrain. . . .

But the Africa is "literary" and romanticized, and the theme is too close to Lindsay's "Congo, creeping through the black." "Heritage," for all of its color and facility, does not quite convince. Cullen has also written sonnets of protest *The Black Christ* (1929) is a narrative poem about lynching but, like others of his late poems, relies more upon literature than life

LANGSTON HUGHES

Langston Hughes is like Cullen in productivity and wide popularity. These two poets are about the same age, Hughes' *The Weary Blues* (1926) appeared the year after *Color* Where Cullen is traditional in form, Hughes is experimental, substituting Sandburg for Keats, and going as far in metrical revolt as "The Cat and the Saxophone, 2 A.M." Cullen is subjective whereas Hughes is frequently

objective and dramatic, concerned with the Negro masses. Cullen has most recently translated the *Medea* of Euripides; Hughes' most recent work is communist propaganda. Both poets have strains of pessimism, at times met stoically, but Hughes has now turned to a cause that he believes will usher in social justice.

In *The Weary Blues* Hughes helped to celebrate jazz-mad Harlem, but a note of sadness intrudes as in "To Midnight Nan at Leroy's" and "Song for a Banjo Dance." He believes that

We should have a land of sun. . . .
And not this land where life is cold.

He, too, sings atavistically of Africa, of the boy in whose blood "all the tom-toms of the jungle beat." But, aware that the dark peoples are caged in "the circus of civilization," he turns realistically to description of his people. His folk portraits are good in "The Weary Blues," "Aunt Sue's Stories," and the tender, stoical "Mother to Son," one of the best Negro poems:

Well, son, I'll tell you:
Life for me ain't been no crystal stair. . . .

This interest is continued in *Fine Clothes to the Jew* (1927), in which he combines the melancholy and irony of the folk-blues An abandoned woman sings

Don't know's I'd mind his goin'
But he left me when de coal was low. . . .

He gives dramatic sketches of city workers—elevator boys and porters "climbing up a great big mountain of yes, sirs!" "Ruby Brown," like Fenton Johnson's acid sketches, and "A Ruined Gal" have shocked those who wish poetry to be confined to the pretty and sweet, but they ring true and sympathetic. Another side of Negro experience is made real in "Feet o' Jesus," "Prayer" and "Angel's Wings." "Cross" is a quizzical and "Mulatto" a direct commentary upon the bitter social fruit of race mixture.

Generalized interpretation of the race appears in "I, Too, Sing

America" and in "A Negro Speaks of Rivers," one of his finest poems He calls his people "loud-mouthed laughers in the hands of fate," but is convinced that "their soul has grown deep like the rivers." "Minstrel Man" takes an old concept and reveals a new truth

Because my mouth
Is wide with laughter
And my throat
Is deep with song,
You do not think
I suffer after
I have held my pain
So long

Hughes' awakened interest in communism has resulted in such poems as "Good-Bye, Christ," "Letter to the Academy," "Elderly Race Leaders" (which closes with twenty-four dollar signs), the "Ballad of Lenin," "Ballad of Ozzie Powell" and the better "To the Kids Who Die," "America" and "The Ballad of Roosevelt",

The pot was empty
The cupboard was bare
I said, Papa
What's the matter here?
I'm waitin' on Roosevelt, son,
Roosevelt, Roosevelt,
Waitin' on Roosevelt, son

OTHER NEW NEGRO POETS

Waring Cuney likewise absorbed something of the spirit of the blues and spirituals, and his poems, like those of Hughes, have a deceptive simplicity. "I Think I See Him There," "Troubled Jesus," "Crucifixion" and "Wake Cry" deal gently and truthfully with folk religion "Burial of the Young Love," "The Death Bed," "Threnody" and "Finis" attain a true melancholy with economy

of phrase "No Images" tells of the girl who thinks "her brown body has no glory"

If she could dance
Naked,
Under palm trees
And see her image in the river
She would know

But there are no palm trees
On the street,
And dish water gives back no images.

Helene Johnson also writes with pride of race Her "Sonnet to a Negro in Harlem" praises him for his magnificent disdain, his arrogant and bold laughter Like Hughes, she believes his setting should be palm trees and mangoes She writes in Harlemese a sketch of a jazz prince, with his shoulders "jerking the jig-wa" "Bottled" is a semi-humorous lament for a Negro "in trick clothes . . yaller shoes and yaller gloves and a swallow-tail coat," who would be beautiful back in pagan Africa Gwendolyn Bennett's poems are generally race conscious, like most of the New Negro school, she writes in "To a Dark Girl"

Something of old forgotten queens
Lurks in the lithe abandon of your walk . .

Gladys May Casely Hayford, a native African, writes with a conscious desire to imbue her own people "With the idea of their own beauty, superiority and individuality, with a love and admiration for our own country which has been systematically suppressed" Her "Rainy Season Love Song" is colorful and warm, but the verse form is traditional in cadence and phrasing

One of the best Negro novelists, Arna Bontemps, is likewise a poet of distinction His work is meditative, couched in fluent but subdued rhythms It is poetry of the twilight, of reverie, as so much of Negro poetry, but the artistry is of high order. "Nocturne," "Nocturne at Bethesda," "Gethsemane," "Golgotha Is a Mountain" and "Return" are his best works, and their titles are indicative.

Whether writing in the traditional forms or in free verse, Bontemps' concern seems to be music above all else The symbolism is at times successful; "Nocturne at Bethesda" has racial import:

> . . *and why*
> *Do our black faces search the empty sky?*
> *Is there something we have forgotten? Some precious thing*
> *We have lost, wandering in strange lands?*

One of the New Negro poets, Bontemps makes frequent reference to Africa, now grieving over the lost glory, now insisting upon his heritage and now writing

> *Those mountains should be ours.*

Something of the attitude of the Garvey movement is to be seen in Lewis Alexander's poems to Africa there is the allegiance to the "motherland," and a romantic faith in her resurgence

> *Rise from out thy charnel house to be*
> *Thine own immortal, brilliant self again*

This type of idealization of Africa was an attempted corrective to the typical undervaluation, but was more poetic dreaming than understanding "The Dark Brother" pleads rhetorically for brotherhood Lewis Alexander has also experimented with all types of poetry from the Japanese Tanka and Hokku to the Blues. Intellectual irony is in the free-verse poetry of Frank Horne "To a Persistent Phantom" and "More Letters Found Near a Suicide" are modern portraiture, vivid, racy and unhackneyed "Nigger, a Chant for Children" is a recital of Negro heroism with the race pride of the New Negro movement One of the finest poetic re-creations of slavery days and characters was "Dead and Gone" by Allison Davis This dramatic narrative (appearing in the only issue of the magazine *Harlem*) showed understanding and power

Clarissa Scott Delaney wrote poems that bore witness to a spirit sensitive and in love with life "The Mask" is a well-done portrait Sensitivity likewise marks the poems of Esther Popel Shaw "Salute to the Flag" departs from her usual nature description, it attacks the shams of democracy by placing the patriotic teachings of the

schools side by side with the newspaper report of a lynching George Leonard Allen, a poet-musician of North Carolina, was awarded a prize for the best sonnet in a state-wide contest conducted by the United Daughters of the Confederacy He wrote fluently of nature and music, before his untimely death he was attempting as well to deal with folk experiences Another Southern poet, Jonathan Brooks, writes with quiet surety His poems, generally religious in nature or in imagery, are thoughtful and moving Simple in phrasing and rhythm, they are unobtrusively symbolic A collection of them would reveal that Brooks has a talent of distinction *Negrito* (1933) by J Mason Brewer is commendable in its purpose of recording Negro experience in the Southwest, but the shadow of Dunbar lies heavy and there is little reference to anything but the happier side of life

STERLING BROWN

Southern Road by Sterling A Brown (1932) is chiefly an attempt at folk portraiture of Southern characters Brown sought to convey the tragedy of the Southern Negro, as in his title poem, "Children of the Mississippi," "King Cotton" and "Sam Smiley," and the comedy in the Slim Greer series and "Sporting Beasley" The wandering roustabout is recorded in "Long Gone" and "Odyssey of Big Boy" The irony to be found in Negro folk song appears in "Mr Samuel and Sam" "Strong Man," making use of a refrain found in Sandburg—"The strong men keep coming on"—is an expression of the dogged stoicism Brown has found in Negro experience He has made a fairly close study of folkways and folk songs, and has used this in interpreting folk experience and character which he considers one of the important tasks of Negro poetry He is not afraid of using folk speech, refusing to believe dialect to be "an instrument of only two stops—pathos and humor" He uses free verse and the traditional forms as well as folk forms and many of his poems are subjective His second volume, to be called *No Hiding Place*, re-explores the Southern scene with more emphasis on social themes

REALISM AND PROTEST

Trumpet in the New Moon by Welborn Victor Jenkins (1934) is a panoramic picture of the Negro in American life. It recalls Whit-

man in its patriotism (and its cataloging) and Sandburg, but has an original place in Negro poetry

Remember the service

Come Susie, rock the baby—Go Hannah, get the dinner—
Uncle Jim, go plow the new ground—
Here Sambo, grab my satchel and get to hell—

Remember the sweat, the cotton fields, the lumber logs, the brick yards, the sawmills and turpentine plantation—all black labor.

Realistic and novel in detail, the poem repeats a pattern dear to Negro poets from Whitfield through Dunbar and James Weldon Johnson the recording of Negro service will effect

the joys of Rebirth and Regeneration
At the solemn Love-Feast of Brotherhood and Democracy

Frank Marshall Davis is likewise panoramic in *Black Man's Verse* (1935) "What Do You Want, America," like "Trumpets in the New Moon," lists the services of Negroes, but comments more sardonically on the abuses of democracy Davis is at times a mystic escapist, but at his best he is bitterly realistic "Chicago's Congo," "Jazz Band," "Mojo Mike's Beer Garden," "Cabaret" and "Georgia's Atlanta" are forthright transcripts of reality "Lynched" is a powerful protest Davis is satiric about Negro "society" Robert Whitmore, ruler of the local Elks,

died of apoplexy
when a stranger from Georgia
mistook him
for a former Macon waiter.

Davis at times leans heavily upon Masters and Sandburg, but his gift of realistic portraiture, his irony and his knowledge of Negro life should stand him in very good stead Richard Wright, likewise of Chicago, is not content with either listing Negro achievement or registering the abuses of American life He believes in poetry as a weapon, and in his driving rhythms urges Negro workers to rise up

like men, side by side with white workers, to establish communism in America.

I am black and I have seen black hands
Raised in fists of revolt, side by side with the white fists of white workers,
And some day—and it is only this which sustains me—
Some day, there will be millions and millions of them
On some red day in a burst of fists on a new horizon!

ROMANTIC ESCAPES

Quite a few books of verse have been produced by Negro poets within recent years, which are romantic escapes for the sensitive authors from depressing actualities *Make Way for Happiness* (1932) by Alpheus Butler promises "I will bring you pretty things measure for measure" and the resulting "prettiness" is trite J Harvey L. Baxter bewails the fallen estate of noble poetry which will still be sung

As long as stars, or waves of sea

That Which Concerneth Me (1934) is unconcerned with race experience or the revelation of a personality, what concerns the poet, according to Baxter, is "the song of rose and bee" "Eve Lynn's" *No Alabaster Box* is praised by her sponsor because "not once does she refer to the peculiar problem of her own group" Marion Cuthbert's *April Grasses* is generally escapist, the interesting subject matter Miss Cuthbert is acquainted with she seems to consider unfit for poetic expression Mae Cowdery's *Lift Our Voices* contains too often vague yearning and the romantic worship of nature, but at times has poetic drive These poets, by denying racial or even personal experience, pretend to touch "universality" which, according to one Negro critic, means a concern with the universe

SUMMARY

Contemporary Negro poets are too diverse to be grouped into schools Certain chief tendencies, however, are apparent More than Alberry Whitman, Dunbar and Braithwaite, the contemporary

poets, even when writing subjective lyrics, are more frankly personal, less restrained and, as a general rule, less conventional They have been influenced by modern American poetry, of course, as their elders were by post-Victorian, but one of the cardinal lessons of modern poetry is that the poet should express his own view of life in his own way It has been pointed out, however, that "bookishness" still prevails, that the so-called new poetry revival has left many versifiers untouched Secondly, more than the older poets who hesitantly advanced defenses of the Negro, the contemporary Negro poet is more assured, more self-reliant He seems less taken in by American hypocrisy and expresses his protest now with irony, now with anger, seldom with humility The poets who have taken folk types and folk life for their province no longer accept the stereotyped view of the traditional dialect writers, nor, lapsing into gentility, do they flinch from an honest portrayal of folk life Their laughter has more irony in it than buffoonery They are ready to see the tragic as well as the pitiful They are much closer to the true folk product than to the minstrel song

It is not at all advanced that the contemporary poetry of the American Negro is to be ranked with the best of modern poetry Too many talented writers have stopped suddenly after their first, sometimes successful, gropings The Negro audience is naturally small, and that part devoted to poetry, much smaller Few Negro poets have the requisite time for maturing, for mastering technique, for observation of the world and themselves Negro poets have left uncultivated many fields opened by modern poetry Many still confine their models to the masters they learned about in school, to the Victorians, and the pre-Raphaelites Almost as frequently they have been unaware of the finer uses of tradition The reading world seems to be ready for a true interpretation of Negro life from within, and poets with a dramatic ability have before them an important task And the world has always been ready for the poet who in his own manner reveals his deepest thoughts and feelings. What it means to be a Negro in the modern world is a revelation much needed in poetry But the Negro poet must write so that whosoever touches his book touches a man Too often, like other minor poets, he has written so that whosoever touches his book touches the books of other and greater poets.

WHAT THE NEGRO WANTS

Langston Hughes

Often in speaking with white friends about the so-called Negro problem, I am amazed at their lack of information concerning the failure of democracy in our regard They in turn are often amazed to learn that the Negro is so badly and so generally ill-treated Since, being a Negro, I do not rail and sweat and frown in anger, they seem vaguely to feel that things are not really very bad for us after all. And sometimes men of the best good will look at me and say, "Just what do you want?"

It would seem wise then to set down clearly and plainly what I and thirteen million other American Negroes desire The things that I shall enumerate are basic and non-controversial; they are the things any self-respecting citizen of the United States desires for himself regardless of color.

First, we want a chance to earn a decent living Even the most casual glance about you as you walk down the main street of any American city will show you that there are no Negroes employed as clerks in any of the shops you pass, none as tellers in any of the banks, none as motormen on the street cars or as drivers of buses. None as traffic cops None in any of the working jobs that your eye can spot paying more than a minimum salary.

We are elevator boys, janitors, red caps, maids—a race in uniform, as far as your tour of the main street goes In factories it is often the same story; a few Negro cleanup men who sweep out the trash under machines, or a scattering of Negroes among the unskilled laborers Employers will often blame the unions which, it is true, frequently raise the color bar, refusing to accept Negroes either as skilled workers or apprentices in the trades. But even where there is no union bar and many foreign-born workers are used, no Negro will be hired And the employer, if pushed, will admit that he wishes to employ none, giving often, as a reason, that the white workers will not work with Negroes—a fact seldom true, especially in the case of the foreign-born who have not acquired the traditional American prejudice against color.

What we want then is, first, economic opportunity—the right to earn our money at any trade or profession open to other Americans. We want the chance to do, or learn to do, skilled labor in plants and factories alongside any workman of any other race, especially in the many plants now turning out billions of dollars' worth of defense orders with our Government money We want no discrimination in Government employment or Civil Service after we have passed all the tests—except the test of being white We want unionization not based on race, and we want laws making it illegal for labor unions to prevent any man from working or being unionized on account of race Example in point, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, the Motion Picture Operators, the Stage Hands and many others. We do not want a Jim Crow Army in which Negro units are officered largely by whites, or a United States Navy in which we may be only cooks and mess men

Second, we want equal educational opportunities all over America. All schools supported by public funds should be open to Negro students whose parents, too, contribute to these public funds In Mississippi twenty-five counties have no recognized high-school facilities for Negroes, and only one dollar is spent on Negro education to every $9 88 spent on white education—yet 51 per cent of the population of the State is Negro We want equal pay for Negro teachers in public schools In certain states they are allotted only half the salaries paid to white teachers We want all Christian schools open to us the same as to those of the white race, or else we want those schools to drop the word Christian from their catalogues We want the right to study and teach anywhere that anybody else studies and teaches

Third, we want decent housing In the big cities we are very tired of living in the ancient abandoned sections deserted by the whites, for which we pay double rents We are tired of residential segregation which prevents us from buying or renting where we choose, if we have the money to do so. We resent the ghetto system of the Black Belts and realtors' covenants which prohibit Negroes from purchasing lots at will We resent being forced to live in slums and, because of color restrictions, being, therefore, at the mercy of landlords who can charge us what they choose since they know we cannot move. We resent not being able to get loans on our property,

or loans for building or insurance after we build, simply because we are colored and live in colored neighborhoods Street repairing, garbage removal, lighting, drainage and other services in the Black Belts are the worst in the city, although we too pay taxes

That is why, fourth, we want full participation in government—municipal, state and national Only where we participate in government have we any sure and effective way of remedying these unfortunate conditions Therefore we protest gerrymandering and redistricting of neighborhoods to cut up and divide the Negro vote and thus prevent Negroes from electing their choice of representatives to city or state governing bodies And in the South, we resent not being permitted to vote at all For how can we fight bad housing, bad paving, bad sewage and bad schools if we have no vote? And if, as in Texas, we cannot even belong to the Democratic Party, the party that controls the State and all its citizens (of whom there are almost a million Negroes), how can we better our own conditions in a democratic way?

We want, fifth, a fair deal before the law That means we desire Negroes on all jury panels, and that we be fairly called for jury service We desire the right to elect judges (which means again that we must vote) We desire adequate legal representation In some States, it is difficult, if not impossible, for a Negro to practice before the bar We desire protection from police brutality, which is severe in Negro neighborhoods, and against which we often have no redress We desire Negro policemen In other words, we desire equality before the law, for otherwise the law imposes upon us—and seldom with majesty

Sixth, we desire public courtesy, the same courtesy that is normally accorded other citizens We desire polite service in the shops and at the gas stations and in restaurants and on the trains and buses (Mexicans and other dark-skinned residents within our borders would appreciate this, too) We wonder why, in the South, we are not accorded the courtesy of the customary "Mr ," "Mrs ," or "Miss" before our names Why should shopkeepers feel free to call us merely "Mary" or "Jim" or "Hey, you"? We, too, are Americans, and we try to use good manners toward others.

And, finally, we want social equality in so far as public services go. White people have it. And certainly, in their case, there is no

law forcing people to invite anyone else to dinner if they do not care for his company Nor is there any law forcing people to marry who normally do not wish to do so We Negroes do not wish to force ourselves into the private lives of other people. But we do want the right to use, and be protected in the use of, all the public conveniences that other Americans may use the municipal parks, play grounds, auditoriums, hospitals and schools We want the right to ride without Jim Crow in any conveyance carrying the traveling public We want the right when traveling to dine in any restaurant or seek lodgings in any hotel or auto camp open to the public which our purse affords (Any Nazi may do so)

We want nothing not compatible with democracy and the Constitution, nothing not compatible with Christianity, nothing not compatible with sensitive, civilized living We want simply economic opportunity, educational opportunity, decent housing, participation in government, fairness at law, normal courtesy and equality in public services

There is nothing wrong in wanting these things, is there? If so, wherein lies the wrong?

There are thirteen million Negroes in America. We are men of good will seeking good will from others.

DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE, AND THE NEGRO

George S. Schuyler

On a hot summer day, a group of white people were seated on a Texas verandah sipping cool drinks and talking. Inevitably the discussion got around to Negroes, and one of the planters immediately launched into a violent diatribe against them The most vocal Negrophobe in town, he had once smashed his radio with an axe because one of his sons had tuned in on Paul Robeson In the midst of his denunciation of the Negro race, one of the younger members of the family quietly asked, "What about Annie?"—referring to the housekeeper who had served the family fifty years, and who is very black

"Oh," he spluttered, waving his hands, "she's not a nigger!"

His illogical attitude, characteristic of millions of white Americans, illustrates the Jekyll-Hyde nature of race relations in the United States and explains to a large extent how our largest "minority" has been able to survive.

White Americans, like characters in a Greek drama, alternately change masks in the interracial play Publicly they don the scowling mask of harshness, injustice, insult and, often, cruelty Privately they assume the smiling mask of friendliness, humanity and affection. Were it not for the Dr Jekyll side, the Mr Hyde role would make life a nightmare for colored Americans.

The public attitude is expressed in our Nazilike laws and customs implying that Negroes are morally and intellectually inferior, carriers of loathsome diseases, incapable of contributing to good government, inept and stupid in business and industry and hopelessly alien to white ethics and culture It is presumed that the Negro is to remain forever an Untouchable caste in American democracy

These laws shunt Negroes into separate and inferior schools, railroad coaches, bus compartments, hotels. restaurants, theater balconies and into many other kinds of physical separation from the majority. In some thirty States, "racial-pollution" laws refuse to

solemnize, legalize or tolerate interracial marriages, thus long anticipating similar legislation in Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. Legally blessed restrictive covenants force Negroes into ghettos indistinguishable from those in which European Jews are imprisoned today

This public attitude is also expressed in the bylaws and constitutional requirements of nearly thirty of the most powerful and skilled labor unions, which bar Negroes from membership while their officers bewail the plowing under of freedom abroad These unions reinforce the traditional exclusionist policies of the vast majority of American employers The resultant "cold pogrom" largely explains the disproportionately higher morbidity and mortality rates, the poverty and "shiftlessness" of the Negro masses

Custom, moreover, reinforces law In some cities exclusive shops discourage Negro patronage In other places it is dangerous for a Negro to hail or telephone for a white-owned taxicab Very frequently it is impossible for a Negro business man to find a realtor who will rent him an office or store outside the black ghetto It is still socially ruinous in most American communities for a white family to have Negro visitors on a plane of equality In most American towns it would be merely a unique form of suicide for a colored lad to stroll down the main street with a white girl

The most cynical people in the United States about the freedom and glory of the press are, understandably, the Negroes Long and bitter experience has taught them what a vital factor it is in keeping this public attitude against them alive Not only have American newspapers kept Negrophobism alive but they have periodically fanned it to white heat by headlining the most fantastic tales about colored people

Worse than the press has been the police force They frequently raid any place where Negroes and whites are associating as equals, scrutinize every suspiciously light-colored woman with a dark escort, beat up and shoot "bad niggers" in "self-defense" and raid homes without warrant One Middle-Western chief of police recently threatened to cancel the license of any Negro taxicab driver observed transporting a white passenger, particularly a white woman

This Negrophobia has its zealots and fanatics who keep it alive in the face of mass indifference, and whip backsliders again into the

fold. Without them, the so-called race problem might soon cease to be more than a memory of a barbaric era, and our population might shortly become truly homogenous instead of the Frankenstein creation of ill-fused and often mutually antagonistic groups out of which we are now feverishly struggling to create national unity But, unfortunately, these disciples of racial hatred move in high and low places, and it is fear of their fanaticism that keeps Americans plodding the treadmill of caste

In view of our long conditioning by the color caste system, it is remarkable that colored and white citizens really get on so well together, that there is so much fraternization, that there is basically so much mutual sympathy, understanding and real affection It is a tribute to something fundamentally fine in people, a truly hopeful sign in the depressing swamp of racial discrimination and segregation.

It is because of kindly hearts behind the brutal facade that many of the harsh anti-Negro laws are honored in the breach I have seen a train conductor come into a Jim Crow coach, where Negroes were so crowded that some had had to stand for two or three hours, and usher all the standees into the front half of the white coach behind, and no one challenged this flouting of the law.

It is not at all uncommon for the two so-called races to mingle in crowded streetcars and buses in Southern cities Only occasionally does some local Julius Streicher bellow for obedience to the law The same individual, incidentally, will ride in the midst of Negroes in some northern city quite meekly and without complaint In many Southern cities where white-owned taxicabs refuse to haul Negro passengers, it is interesting to note that this holds true only during daylight At night, when the operation becomes more of a private affair, these same taxicab drivers will solicit Negro patronage, particularly if they are going away from the center of the city and not toward it When questioned about this, many taxi men have stated they have no personal objection to hauling Negroes and only refuse in the daytime for fear of losing their jobs or licenses

Although it is the policy of railroads in the South not to sell Pullman accommodations to Negroes, there are numerous Negroes who rarely set foot in a Negro day coach. Through white friends they

are able to secure berths or drawing rooms evasively set down as "Lower 13," even in intra-state traffic One prominent Negro, unable to secure Pullman accommodations to leave an Alabama city, went to one of the top railroad officials who happened to be a boyhood chum The white man sent a messenger after the ticket and telephoned instructions to the station When the Negro arrived an hour and a half before train time, as advised, a white man met him, escorted him to the darkened Pullman car and warned him to go to bed immediately with his curtains carefully buttoned. The Negro did as he was told and rode comfortably to his destination

Numerous colored women have traveled through the lower South in de-luxe Pullman cars without untoward incident merely by posing as maids with the traditional white cap and apron Only in this way was a prominent Negro educator able to get Pullman accommodations going through Texas, although she merely laid the apron across her lap Although those "maids" are often suspected, they are never molested as long as they genuflect to local mores

The only colored people in America who are permitted to ride first class with white people in the South without subterfuge are foreigners and American Indians One colored teacher I know possesses a decidedly Oriental caste of features She regularly poses as a Japanese when going to visit her mother in Dallas and rides in the streamlined first-class coaches and Pullmans If anyone engages her in conversation, she speaks in what is supposed to be pidgin English Once a real Japanese sought to talk to her in his language, but she hurriedly protested that she was a Japanese born in Los Angeles

It is obviously not the proximity of Negroes to which white people object, since colored folk supply a disproportionate number of the domestic servants in this country A maid preparing milady's bath is much closer than a colored teacher trying on a hat at the other end of a department store A black waiter comes into closer contact with a white diner than does a black physician eating at the other end of a dining car And it must not be forgotten that 80 per cent of our so-called Negroes possess white ancestry No, it is not proximity per se but proximity as equals to which there is objection This objection often vanishes with the setting sun

Many lynch-bent mobs are frustrated because of the efforts of Southern whites kindly disposed toward the accused Negro Other-

wise there would be far more lynchings recorded than there are One white man in a barbarous Georgia county drove a colored boy all over the region hidden in the rumble seat of his car while pretending to be aiding the surrounding mob to find him. On another occasion when an elderly Negro handyman in an Alabama city was accused of the "usual crime" and lodged in the local jail, a delegation of white housewives, for whom he had long done odd jobs, went to his rescue and he was acquitted

The closest social relationships exist between colored and white, even in the deepest South, on terms of equality, in private Yet the same people are distant and "correct" in public The casual observer might go away with a most erroneous impression of actual racial relations That is why many Northern white people first visiting or taking up residence in the South, and leaning over backward to conform to local mores, are often more harsh and uncompromising in their racial attitude than the Southern-born whites

It is an unwritten law in many parts of the South that a Negro must not be employed in a white-collar job by a white firm However, there are numerous Negroes doing this work This is accomplished by calling them porters or laborers, for the protection of all concerned They keep books and even wait on customers without involving anybody in difficulties Undoubtedly many whites are aware of this dodge, but complaints are seldom made If they are made, who can object to a Negro porter or laborer? True, a prosperous Negro worker may occasionally be ambushed by jealous and jobless whites (with no effort made to apprehend the murderers), but such crimes are surprisingly rare.

It is not at all uncommon in many Southern communities for Negroes to visit their "white folks" socially. True, they will enter the back door as a gesture to James Crow but, once inside, they will sit down in the parlor for a friendly chat and perhaps a cup of tea Only a year ago a Negro newspaper reporter journeyed far into the hinterland to interview a jovial Southern politician of the old school concerning his aspirations for higher office. The politician, noted for his addiction to the flowing bowl, opened a quart of bonded liquor, the two "killed" it together and were soon slapping each other on the shoulders. Yet this same politician voted against a Federal anti-lynching bill every time it was introduced.

Another Southern politician, whose name for decades was synonymous with Negrophobism before the voters retired him to private life, now devotes much of his time to giving legal assistance free to Negroes run afoul of the law He is credited with having secured pardons for more Negro convicts than any other two Governors the State has had

I personally know of white people in the South who have got out of bed in the middle of the night to go across town to nurse some colored person or bring him medicine In this connection there is much truth in the old Southern Negro adage to "Seek ye first some good white folks and the Kingdom of Heaven shall be given unto thee"

These intimate associations soften the harshness of the public attitude to which, nevertheless, all must bow They are less conspicuous but quite as influential They explain the amazing paradoxes that confront every observer who peers below the surface of racial relations in our Southern regions

Singularly enough, in most of the North, the Jekyll-Hyde roles are reversed that is, the public attitude toward the Negro is more liberal than the private one The same individuals who rise at public gatherings and prate about democracy, liberty and tolerance often refuse to hire a Negro clerk in their store or a black teller in their bank They countenance the most flagrant discrimination against Negro labor in their factories although they may be helping to support some Negro industrial school in the South They work themselves into a frenzy over the plight of the German Jews, the Greeks and the Chinese, yet charge Negro tenants 50 per cent more than whites for identical tenements Northern newspapers that boast of their liberalism and their zeal for "the democratic way of life" will not hire the most competent colored girl as stenographer The Northern college that boasts of its star Negro athlete who has brought honor and publicity to the school will let him become a "Red Cap" before hiring him as an instructor

I am reminded of a colored girl in a Northern city whose father was a Frenchman She had his features and hair but her mother's dark ivory complexion. She resembled millions of Spaniards, Southern French and Italians, who, thanks to the romantic Moors, show

much evidence of the tar brush Through a definitely Negroid aunt who cooked for the manager of a large soap and cosmetic factory, this girl secured a job in the perfumery department The manager and the foreman knew she was colored She never claimed to be white She merely said nothing After a year she became the foreman's assistant Then one day while she was downtown with her considerably darker mother, she met some of the girls from the factory The girls spread the news throughout the factory In a day or so a delegation went to the foreman and threatened to strike if the colored girl was not discharged She was

Of course, all workers are not like these About twenty years ago, when I was on a construction job, the union workers, mostly Italians, struck for more money I walked out with them In a couple of hours the boss agreed to the pay boost but refused to take me back The Italians refused to return to work unless I was taken back They won It was my first introduction to labor unionism, and I promptly joined

A final story illustrating the vagaries of race relations has to do with a young colored couple, newlyweds, who decided late one fall shortly after the Civil War to make their home in an upstate New York city where no other Negroes lived They rented a cozy white house, furnished it and settled down That night they were awakened by the crash of window glass, the thunder of boulders bouncing against the walls and on the porch, and the odor of filth thrown all over the place Terrorized, they fled from town However, two or three days later, taking courage, they returned to see what they could salvage They were astonished to find the place completely renovated and repaired, window panes replaced and smoke curling from the chimney They sat down on the steps, tearful and desolate The white people, they were sure, had not been satisfied to drive them from their home but had taken possession of it.

Just then the front opened and a buxom matron with a kind smile came out and exclaimed, "Oh, there you are at last I thought you weren't ever coming back I've been keeping your fire going" She later explained that after the mob had wreaked its fury, the outraged housewives of the community had stepped in, denounced the mobsters and raised a collection to pay for repairing the damage

The young couple moved back into their house. The husband got

a job and shortly afterward opened a barber shop which he ran continuously for over a half century, becoming one of the best-known and best-loved citizens of the community

In this instance, private opinion ultimately triumphed over public opinion, and the two became one and the same This has happened countless times with varying degrees of success throughout our history If it could happen more often, if there were only the courage and determination on the part of citizens of good will to fight to make it happen more often, that national unity and good will necessary to build a great civilization would be more speedily achieved

WHY SHOULD WE MARCH?

A. Philip Randolph

THOUGH I have found no Negroes who want to see the United Nations lose this war, I have found many who, before the war ends, want to see the stuffing knocked out of white supremacy and of empire over subject peoples American Negroes, involved as we are in the general issues of the conflict, are confronted not with a choice but with the challenge both to win democracy for ourselves at home and to help win the war for democracy the world over

There is no escape from the horns of this dilemma There ought not to be escape For if the war for democracy is not won abroad, the fight for democracy cannot be won at home If this war cannot be won for the white peoples, it will not be won for the darker races

Conversely, if freedom and equality are not vouchsafed the peoples of color, the war for democracy will not be won Unless this double-barreled thesis is accepted and applied, the darker races will never wholeheartedly fight for the victory of the United Nations That is why those familiar with the thinking of the American Negro have sensed his lack of enthusiasm, whether among the educated or uneducated, rich or poor, professional or nonprofessional, religious or secular, rural or urban, north, south, east or west

That is why questions are being raised by Negroes in church, labor union and fraternal society, in poolroom, barbershop, schoolroom, hospital, hair-dressing parlor, on college campus, railroad and bus One can hear such questions asked as these What have Negroes to fight for? What's the difference between Hitler and that "cracker" Talmadge of Georgia? Why has a man got to be Jim-Crowed to die for democracy? If you haven't got democracy yourself, how can you carry it to somebody else?

What are the reasons for this state of mind? The answer is discrimination, segregation, Jim Crow Witness the navy, the army, the air corps, and also government services at Washington In many parts of the South, Negroes in Uncle Sam's uniform are being put upon, mobbed, sometimes even shot down by civilian and military police and, on occasion, lynched Vested political interests in race

prejudice are so deeply entrenched that to them winning the war against Hitler is secondary to preventing Negroes from winning democracy for themselves. This is worth many divisions to Hitler and Hirohito. While labor, business and farm are subjected to ceilings and floors and not allowed to carry on as usual, these interests trade in the dangerous business of race hate as usual

When the defense program began and billions of the taxpayers' money were appropriated for guns, ships, tanks and bombs, Negroes presented themselves for work only to be given the cold shoulder. North as well as South, and despite their qualifications, Negroes were denied skilled employment Not until their wrath and indignation took the form of a proposed protest march on Washington, scheduled for July 1, 1941, did things begin to move in the form of defense jobs for Negroes The march was postponed by the timely issuance (June 25, 1941) of the famous Executive Order No. 8802 by President Roosevelt But this order and the President's Committee on Fair Employment Practice, established thereunder, have as yet only scratched the surface by way of eliminating discriminations on account of race or color in war industry Both management and labor unions in too many places and in too many ways are still drawing the color line.

It is to meet this situation squarely with direct action that the March on Washington Movement launched its present program of protest mass meetings Twenty thousand were in attendance at Madison Square Garden, June 16, sixteen thousand in the Coliseum in Chicago, June 26, nine thousand in the City Auditorium of St. Louis, August 14 Meetings of such magnitude were unprecedented among Negroes [1] The vast throngs were drawn from all walks and levels of Negro life—businessmen, teachers, laundry workers, Pullman porters, waiters and red caps, preachers, crapshooters and social workers, jitterbugs and Ph D's They came and sat in silence, thinking, applauding only when they considered the truth was told, when they felt strongly that something was going to be done about it.

[1] In view of charges made that they were subsidized by Nazi funds, it may not be amiss to point out that of the $8,000 expenses of the Madison Square meeting every dime was contributed by Negroes themselves, except for tickets bought by some liberal white organizations.

The March-on-Washington Movement is essentially a movement of the people It is all Negro and pro-Negro, but not for that reason anti-white or anti-Semitic, or anti-Catholic, or anti-foreign, or anti-labor. Its major weapon is the nonviolent demonstration of Negro mass power Negro leadership has united back of its drive for jobs and justice. "Whether Negroes should march on Washington, and if so, when?" will be the focus of a forthcoming national conference. For the plan of a protest march has not been abandoned. Its purpose would be to demonstrate that American Negroes are in deadly earnest, and all out for their full rights No power on earth can cause them today to abandon their fight to wipe out every vestige of second-class citizenship and the dual standards that plague them

A community is democratic only when the humblest and weakest person can enjoy the highest civil, economic and social rights that the biggest and most powerful possess To trample on these rights of both Negroes and poor whites is such a commonplace in the South that it takes readily to anti-social, anti-labor, anti-Semitic and anti-Catholic propaganda It was because of laxness in enforcing the Weimar constitution in republican Germany that Nazism made headway Oppression of the Negroes in the United States, like suppression of the Jews in Germany, may open the way for a fascist dictatorship

By fighting for their rights now, American Negroes are helping to make America a moral and spiritual arsenal of democracy Their fight against the poll tax, against lynch law, segregation and Jim Crow, their fight for economic, political and social equality, thus becomes part of the global war for freedom

PROGRAM OF THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON MOVEMENT

1. We demand, in the interest of national unity, the abrogation of every law which makes a distinction in treatment between citizens based on religion, creed, color, or national origin This means an end to Jim Crow in education, in housing, in transportation and in every other social, economic and political privilege, and especially, we demand, in the capital of the nation, an end to all segregation in public places and in public institutions.

2 We demand legislation to enforce the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments guaranteeing that no person shall be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law, so that the full weight of the national government may be used for the protection of life and thereby may end the disgrace of lynching

3 We demand the enforcement of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments and the enactment of the Pepper Poll-Tax bill so that all barriers in the exercise of the suffrage are eliminated

4 We demand the abolition of segregation and discrimination in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Corps and all other branches of national defense

5 We demand an end to discrimination in jobs and job training. Further, we demand that the FEPC be made a permanent administrative agency of the U S Government and that it be given power to enforce its decisions based on its findings

6 We demand that federal funds be withheld from any agency which practices discrimination in the use of such funds

7 We demand colored and minority group representation on all administrative agencies so that these groups may have recognition of their democratic right to participate in formulating policies

8 We demand representation for the colored and minority racial groups on all missions, political and technical, which will be sent to the peace conference so that the interests of all people everywhere may be fully recognized and justly provided for in the post-war settlement.

COLOR, CASTE AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS IN THE DEEP SOUTH

Allison Davis

In spite of the efforts of the upper and middle economic groups of white people in Old County to maintain the caste line between the white and colored relief groups by placing nearly all white clients on a higher dole, or wage, than any colored client,[1] it was clear, between 1933 and 1935, that the lower groups of white people were more concerned with economic than with caste loyalties The best illustration of this tendency was the fact that the leading political candidate in the State in 1934 made his campaign speeches against "rich landowners" rather than against the efforts of the lower caste to achieve greater economic and social mobility In Louisiana, at the same time, Huey Long was finding economic loyalties a surer basis than caste antagonism for appealing to the lower economic group of whites The tendency toward a new alignment, as a result of the "depression" and the great increase in unemployment, was recognized by colored people generally. One colored urban worker expressed these ideas quite clearly:

Yeah, things is changing A white boy who ain't got nuthin' now got a helluva chance of gittin' enything these days! Ef he's po', he gonnuh stay po' now! Ef he ain't got nuthin' tuh start wid, he can't git rich off de nigguh.

It use' tuh be

"Nought to nought, an' figguh to figguh
All fuh de white man, an' none fuh de nigguh!"

Now, hit's·

"Nought to nought, an' fo' tuh fo'
All fuh de rich, an' none fuh de po'.

[1] The median Federal relief payment to 105 colored families in 1934 was $5 14 per month, to 132 white families, $12 35 The modal payment was $5 40 for colored families and $18 00 for white families

Caste in spite of economic superordination.—Before considering in detail the evidence with regard to fundamental antagonisms between economic groups, both within and across the caste lines, however, it is necessary to emphasize the fact that the conflicts dealt with above constitute only a modification, and by no means an abrogation, of caste as it applies to economic relationships To use our diagrammatical imagery, the caste line still slants downward upon colored people, even if they are members of the upper economic group For example, they cannot eat in white restaurants or live in houses in white neighborhoods of the same economic level as their own [2] They cannot receive accommodations equal to those of even the poorer whites in theaters or trains Well-to-do colored persons of the professional group cannot even wait inside white restaurants in Old City for sandwiches to be eaten outside In some stores colored persons of the middle and lower groups are likely to be waited upon only after all white persons have been served, and colored women of even the upper group are called by their first names by most white saleswomen Examples of the application of caste sanctions of this kind to prosperous colored men were frequently cited by informants As usual, the most extreme cases were represented as happening only in other cities In a neighboring Louisiana city, for instance, a colored man who rented some of his real estate to white persons had to follow the usual custom of going to the back door when he collected rent from his white tenants "Now dat nigguh got to ack so humble an' meek! He goes 'roun' to de back do' of his own house, now, to ask de white people fuh his rent! Got his hat in his han', an' his back all bent! laughing He's bettuh do like that, too, don't, dey'll run him 'way frum dere " The same behavior would have been required of a colored man in a similar position in Old City, however A fairly prosperous colored man there remarked on the common practice among local colored people of concealing the amount of their savings from white people He himself had kept his money in four banks, for this reason

During the years when I was making money, I didn't put it all in one bank I put it in four banks I wasn't going to let them white

[2] An upper-class colored man who bought a home in the middle-class white neighborhood in Old City was forced to move from it

people know what I had! If I made big money, I'd send it away from here, to the North, and keep it there I never could see how these fools get run out of town with all their money in one bank

Therefore, it is clear that, were it not for considerations of space, facts such as these would be repeated as the dominant refrain throughout this discussion of the relationship between the economic and the caste systems The object of this essay, however, is to call attention to the elements and to point out that certain behavioral systems which usually have been attributed to caste are more properly attributable to the economic system [3]

CASTE AND ECONOMIC GROUPS

Antagonisms between economic groups within upper caste —Both the overt behavior of white landlords and proprietors and their verbally expressed attitudes with regard to the lower economic group of white people in Old and Rural counties testified to the existence of

[3] The elimination of certain types of colored proprietors and artisans in Old County during the last thirty years, for example, has been largely the result of changes in the economic system Between 1865 and 1900 there was a relatively large number of colored proprietors in Old City and a great variety of artisans Some of these had been skilled workers on the plantations during slavery, and others had been free colored people In 1900 this group included proprietors of a catering establishment, a restaurant and a barber-shop (all of which served only white patrons) and a saddle and harness store, a drug store, a large wheelwrighting and blacksmith shop, a livery stable, a drygoods store and two grocery stores, which were considerably larger than any now owned by colored proprietors There were also colored contractors and artisans of all types who had virtually a monopoly of skilled labor The disappearance of colored persons from most of these fields, however, has been the result of the tightening of competition in the more advanced stages of the economic system Since white proprietors of the upper and middle economic groups have had more capital and credit than colored proprietors who sought to compete with them, they have forced most of these colored men from business The elimination of many colored proprietors, contractors and artisans, therefore, has been the result not of caste sanctions but of the fact that, in respect to capital, they were on the lower fringes of the businesses of their type They have been forced out by the same basic factors in competition which have forced out many white "marginal" business men On the other hand, those few colored proprietors and contractors who had a larger amount of capital and credit have been able to maintain their place in the economic system, as has been pointed out at the beginning of this chapter

economic groups within the upper caste solidarity to the interests of the white upper economic group The evidence on this point is abundant Only a relatively small part of it can be summarized here.

Exclusion of white tenants by white landlords—In Old County and in many other plantation areas the solidarity of the upper caste is most seriously threatened by the general practice of white landlords in giving colored farm tenants employment at the expense of poor and unemployed white men In taking advantage of the caste system, which renders the colored workers more docile and less expensive, the economic system at the same time subordinates a large group of colored families [4]

The only landlords in Old County, and most of those in Rural County, frankly told interviewers that it was their policy to accept no white tenants, and expressed strong antagonisms to the poor-white group as a whole Their policy is summarized by the following statement of a large white planter in Old County

The white tenants can be pretty poor I wouldn't want this generally known, but I wouldn't have one on my place I am always having applicants, but I always tell them I am full up White tenants will ruin you, they won't work, and they always stir up trouble Those who are good farmers are liable to turn against you sooner or later, and cause trouble [5]

One of the chief objections of white landlords to white tenants is based upon the ability of white tenants to resort to legal defense against dishonest settlement, terrorization, illegal eviction, or illegal seizure of livestock and personal property [6] A colored plantation

[4] A second major conflict between the agricultural economy and the caste system has been dealt with in the chapter "The Division of Labor," Chap xiv, namely, the influence of the shortage of colored labor after 1918 in compelling white planters to restrict their use of terrorization and dishonest settlements

[5] With regard to the Mississippi Delta, where white tenants have been trying to gain a foothold, Vance states "Reports indicate that many planters are vexed by the demands and behavior of their new [white] tenants, and prefer to have their labor all Negro . . It is a common saying that a white cropper 'ought to black his face, if he wants to get a good place' " (Vance, *The Negro Agricultural Worker* [mimeographed, 1934] pp 44-45)

[6] This reason for excluding white tenants was also given by a colored plantation manager in the Delta regions across the river from Old County Colored

manager in Old County also advanced this reason for the exclusion of white tenants and added that the practice had been common in his father's time, when "these rich white people here wouldn't have poor-whites on their farms at all."

A second reason advanced by white landlords for their exclusion of white tenants, especially during the years of low income, was that white tenants demanded more credit than colored tenants The landlord who hired more white workers than anyone else in Old County emphasized both of the above objections:

The reason most planters don't like white tenants is because they want more advances and you can't hold them down the way you can a Negro. If you tell a Negro he can't have any more, he will go back to work, but a white will grumble and won't work, and will even move out on you I have seen the time when you even had to advance them enough to buy a car, if you wanted them to work Then they always think you have beat them out of something They go around telling everybody that you cheated them, and they hold a grudge against you, and tell everybody that you are crooked

A third complaint made by white landlords against white tenants was that they tried to "boss all the Negroes" and thus interfered with the landlord's control of both groups

Merchants and bankers had similar policies with regard to allowing credit to white tenants The president of one of the banks expressed extreme antagonism to poor-whites and stated that white tenants "never" had a bank account and seldom were granted loans One of the leading merchants in Rural County said he never allowed credit to a white tenant if he could avoid doing so; the other merchant claimed that poor-whites would not pay their bills and that therefore he would not allow them credit

In Rural County a prominent government official told an interviewer: "White tenants are no good, and nobody wants them The Negroes are better people than the poor-whites." He was especially hostile to a political organization of the poorer white people, which he derisively called "The Woodpeckers' Taxpayers League" An-

laborers were preferred to white because (1) they spent their wages more freely in the plantation store and (2) they were more easily controlled than white tenants, "who will try to get up with the other white man"

other county official objected to the immigration of white sawmill workers, who, he claimed, were "a detriment" to the county The leading white landlords in Rural County were unanimous in accusing white sawmill workers of being "lower than the Negroes" and in preferring colored workers to them [7]

A large white planter in Old County, who refused to accept white tenants, said that there was a concerted movement by white planters to force the poorer whites to leave the county "They are a bad lot, worse even than Negroes" A justice of the peace in Old City, who claimed to have shot six white men of a group which sought to terrorize his colored farm labor in 1872, angrily insisted to the interviewer that white tenants were "a worthless, shiftless, no-count lot"; that in Old City itself there existed "the most low-down poor-whites —that never do a thing but drink and carouse around", and that the white planing-mill workers were "just the most worthless sort" who worked "a little" during the day but drank and caroused all night and every weekend.

White storekeepers, cotton buyers and insurance agents expressed similar antagonisms to white persons of the lower economic group. A large cotton buyer and credit merchant preferred colored to white tenants, he said, because the former usually paid their debts, while the latter were "always scheming to beat" him The local head of a white insurance company likewise felt that the poorer whites were "pretty bad," and just as dishonest as colored patrons. The white fisherman who "squatted" along the river banks were regarded as the most "worthless" of the poorer whites by both landlords and merchants, and even by officials of the local fish-packing company.

The reasons advanced by white individuals of the upper economic group to justify their disapproval of poor-whites seem to be group dogmas It seems probable that the conflicting interests of these economic groups—together with the class sanctions which operate between individuals who are members of different social classes as well as of different economic groups—account both for the subordination of the poorer whites and for the "reasons" offered as an

[7] One type of criticism of sawmill whites was that they violated caste taboos, however. "They are the kind who drink and gamble with the Negroes, and sleep with their women, and then if anything happens they want to kill all the Negroes."

explanation of this subordination. Two especially clear examples of the conjunction of social and economic group antagonisms were offered by (1) the eviction of a group of white tenants by a white landlord and (2) the behavior of upper-class white people toward white visitors of the middle economic group during Historical Week. In the first instance, a large white landlord who had been prevailed upon to accept twelve white tenants evicted all of them after one week because their wives paid a formal social call upon his wife. "The very first Sunday they were there, the women got all dressed up in their church clothes, you know, an' all went up to see Mrs. [Curtis the landlord's wife]!" The landlord's wife met them outside of her house, gave them each a flower and sent them home Later in the week, her husband evicted all his white tenants, and thereafter rented only to colored families.

In the second instance, a white woman of the upper social class, who served dinner to visitors at her mansion during Historical Week, charged them $2.00 a plate. She explained her motive in charging what was relatively a very high price "This isn't to pay for the food—it's to keep all the damned poor-white trash out—and I know it will I don't want one of 'em to come here—walking over my house"

Antagonisms between economic groups within the lower caste— The existence of economic groups within the lower caste likewise was indicated by abundant evidence of the same kind To subordinate colored tenants, colored landlords used the same legal and customary techniques (except for caste sanctions) that white landlords employed, and their attitudes, as well as those of their children, were equally antagonistic to the tenant group Finer gradations within economic groups also existed, for the more prosperous cash-tenants looked down upon the half-tenants and attributed the economic disabilities of these half-tenants to their inveterate "shiftlessness" In Old City, unemployed colored men were strongly antagonistic to the colored professional men. One of them angrily told a group of thirteen others.

An' de Negro who got somethin' is jus' as bad! Those Negroes up on Water Street [colored business section], an' dose doctuhs don't keer uh goddam about eny of you! All dey keer about is yo' money!

When my mothuh or my sistuh gits sick, dey ask me ef I've got money to pay them befo' they'll come. An' if I ain't got the money, them —— will let her die, first. They jus' as bad as them pecks [*white people*]![8]

Similar economic group antagonisms were expressed by the lower group toward colored business men The leader of a colored secret society and insurance company, which had failed two years previously, made several speeches in Old City in 1934 in which he attempted to dissolve antagonism towards his new business by invoking "race pride" and "race business." His speeches were received coldly, and his new organization was boycotted by the lower economic group.

Other evidence seems to show that economic behavior conflicts with caste solidarity (race loyalty) among the colored group just as it does among the white group[9] The resultant antagonisms are perpetuated for long periods For example, the mass of colored people in Old County boycotted the stores of a group of colored businessmen because joint-stock enterprises organized by the parents of these men had failed a generation earlier When the children of these former promoters opened businesses in Old City, most of the colored people refused to patronize them This type of "silent" boycott had been repeated against three different stores According to an upper-class colored businessman who had not been a member of the boycott group, the boycotts had been an organized expression of antagonism toward these proprietors by the lower economic group of colored people "They froze them out! They let them die in their tracks They don't forget!" One of these former owners, a man who had never been accused of dishonesty, mentioned the boycott of

[8] This charge could justifiably be made against only one of the four colored physicians in Old City An audit of the books of the leading colored physician in 1934 showed that he had collected fees for less than one half his calls

[9] Like members of all other groups in the society, the members of the colored upper economic group were inconsistent in their attitudes and overt behavior For example, a colored timber contractor, who enthusiastically approved of "race loyalty" in conversation with a group of friends, a few minutes later boasted of the fact that he had bought both land and timber from an illiterate group of colored people "for what the timber alone is worth "

his shoe store in a speech at a colored church where an interviewer was present. Even when he had decided to close his store and had offered shoes for half the price which a white proprietor was asking for identical shoes, he said, colored people had refused to buy them "Why, I stood right in my door and heard two rural Negroes talking One of them said 'Dose is nice shoes dey got in dat winduh!' The other one said 'Dey sho' is ' But the first one said 'Yeah, damn if they don't rot, befo' I'd buy eny of dem!' " As the story was told, there was embarrassed laughter by the audience in the church, and nodding of heads.

Economic solidarity across caste lines—It is necessary to define the extent to which individuals of similar economic status may be said to constitute a "group " Evidence of concerted action and of the consolidation of attitudes by the passing of dogmas from parents to children, such as has been cited above, indicates that "economic groups" do exist in Old County. Although the interaction between members of these groups is by no means so frequent or intimate as that between members of social classes, as a rule, the evidence from Old and Rural counties indicates that sufficient interaction and solidarity do exist between individuals to enable them to function as a group in some economic and political situations.

The caste system organizes the relationships between these economic groups into configurations which differ according to the economic status of the groups involved In general it appears that in Old County the caste system operates so as to create a concert of interest between the upper white and colored economic groups and to place the lower white and colored groups in direct competition in many occupational fields At any rate, the evidence at hand leaves no doubt that a strong solidarity exists between the leading white and colored business and professional men with regard to the manipulation of the caste sanctions

There is less uniformity in the organization of relationships between the lower white and colored economic groups While some members of these groups both on the farms and in Old City expressed friendly attitudes toward one another, denied caste antagonisms of any kind, and even participated in a modified type of neighborly relationship, others exhibited strong caste antagonisms

both in their speech and in their actions.[10] The "reason" usually given by such informants for their antagonisms to members of the lower economic group of the opposite caste was that the occupational and economic systems gave preference to the latter White rural persons of this type, for example, said they were antagonistic to colored tenants because the latter were preferred by landlords, whereas the colored tenants objected to the white tenants because they were economic competitors. The same basis for caste antagonisms appeared in interviews with white and colored former workers in the planing-mills and with applicants for Federal relief work, namely, that members of the opposite caste were competing successfully with them for jobs.

A certain amount of co-operation exists, however, between parallel economic groups, across caste lines This intercaste solidarity is especially strong between the two upper economic groups Reference has already been made to the co-operation of colored and white planters in preventing geographic mobility of colored tenants between plantations,[11] and to the point-to-point similarity of the behavior and attitudes of white and colored landlords with regard to the tenant group Other examples of economic solidarities across caste lines are available for the urban society A rather typical instance was the case of a white man of the upper economic level who sold a lot to a colored man of the same level and then protected the colored man from the encroachment of a poor-white family living behind the property.

[10] For example, white tenants were known to have intimidated colored tenants and forced them to leave a plantation in Rural County Colored tenants, on the other hand, twice burned a white tenant's cabin in Old County and thus forced the landlord to adopt a policy of excluding white tenants On the levees unskilled white workers sought to displace colored workers by force and then by political manipulation Similar antagonisms were expressed by white people of middle economic groups toward colored people of higher economic status. The wife of a white mail carrier, seeing the well-dressed child of a colored professional man enter a store, said loudly to another white woman "It's a shame how these nigguhs can dress their children all up They fix them up better than we can afford to fix ours!"

[11] The white Chamber of Commerce, moreover, co-operated vigorously with the local Colored Business Men's Association to persuade colored farmers not to emigrate during the post-war years.

In spite of the lack of ties based upon miscegenation between the present upper economic group, the traditional solidarity between well-to-do colored people and the "rich white people" is maintained. This co-operative relationship between the two upper economic groups consists not only of economic co-operation during critical periods of the local economy [12] but also of co-operation in organizing the caste system The relationship appears to be a conscious use of techniques by both groups for subordinating the lower caste By its exhibitions of patronage and protection toward the colored upper economic group, the white upper economic group both (1) dramatizes the patriarchal dogma of caste and (2) restricts the intercaste relationships to the minimum of co-operation necessary between caste "leaders," i e , to face-to-face relationships of patronage with only that group in the lower caste which has economic interests similar to its own Such exhibitions are rather frequent, and the habitual and open granting of favor and protection to their "leaders" is certainly an important technique for controlling the antagonisms of the colored inhabitants.

In general, the protection extended to the colored upper economic group exempts it from the caste sanctions of the white courts and of the mob Patronage, on the other hand, is extended to the lower caste as a whole, although it is distributed through members of the colored upper economic group In this community, as in other stratified societies, charity appears to be essentially a form of organized subordination of the receiving group and operates to maintain the society by furnishing subsistence to the lower group, by dissolving its antagonisms to the upper group, by preserving its segregated institutions, or by combining all three of these functions. In the caste system of Old County's society, patronage is notably effective in minimizing antagonism, not because the gifts have any great monetary value, but because they are regarded by both castes as symbols of the paternalistic relationship of the upper caste to the lower A third type of relationship, based upon patronage extended by the white upper group but verging upon a quasi-class relation-

[12] Co-operative effort of these two groups to preserve the labor supply during the post-war years has been cited In 1936 and 1937, furthermore, members of the colored upper economic group subscribed heavily to bond issues to establish several factories in Old County

ship, occurs when the white upper group attends entertainments or concerts in the church of the colored upper group, or when the colored group seeks to reciprocate by attending church funerals of members of the white upper group, even though they are segregated in the gallery.

Evidence of the existence of these three types of relationships is too abundant to be cited in detail Perhaps the following examples will serve to illustrate the usual behavior, however The protective relationship of the white upper group toward the colored was typified in the minds of the latter group by the experiences of two leading colored professional men who became involved in caste crises A white woman of the lower economic group accused one of these colored men of striking her as a result of a disagreement over a property line, actually, the colored man had knocked from her hand a pistol which she was leveling at him In spite of the fact that she ran down the main business streets of Old City, screaming "That nigger struck me!" and later had the colored man arrested, her charge was thrown out of court by the upper-class white judge who heard the case An even clearer example of this relationship was afforded by the experience of another colored professional man, who drove his automobile into a drunken white man of the lower class and killed him Not only did local white bankers offer to lend this colored man money with which to defend himself, but a group of upper-class white women called upon him at his place of business to assure him that they considered him a "great influence for good in the community" and that they intended to see that no harm came to him. He was not arrested

A great many examples of the extension of charity to the lower caste by the white upper group, using the colored upper group as an intermediary, are available Such gifts are made not only for the benefit of the colored lower economic group, as in the case of gifts for the Colored Poor Children's Christmas Fund, but also to churches which are patronized chiefly by the upper colored group The obligation is extended to the point where white upper-class women secure from their white friends contributions for church "rallies" conducted by colored upper-class women[1]

Quasi-class relationships between white and colored members of the upper groups occur chiefly at entertainments and concerts held

in the church of the colored upper group, and especially during the programs of plantation songs by which this church celebrates Easter. At this annual entertainment and also at periodic concerts by colored singers, upper-class colored women receive the congratulations of white upper-class sponsors who are present, and in some cases are addressed as "Mrs." by these white persons.

SUMMARY

The foregoing analysis of the modifications of color caste in the field of economic behavior seems to possess the following major implications In certain fields, notably in storekeeping, contracting, farming and professional service to colored persons, the economic system is still sufficiently "free" in competition to prevent the rigid application of caste taboos Although a large proportion of colored proprietors and contractors have been unable to compete successfully, owing to their lack of adequate capital, the operation of the economic system has maintained a small group of colored persons of relatively high economic status It has thus prevented the full extension of caste, i e , a development in which all members of the lower caste are legally, or by virtue of unbreakable custom, below all members of the upper caste in wages, occupational status and in the value of property owned In so far as the system has prevented this full extension of the caste principle, it appears to have been operating upon two principles (1) the principle of the sacredness of private property, and (2) the principle of free competition [13]

This latter aspect of the national economic and legal structures gives rise to the presence in Old County of nonlocal factories and sawmills. These manufacturing firms hire labor as cheaply as they can get it, with the result that in industries where white workers have not been able to establish caste taboos, colored workers are employed to do much the same type of labor as whites. They may even be

[13] In the field of personal service to colored people, such as in colored schools, restaurants, barbershops and burial establishments, the caste system, rather than the larger economic system, has been chiefly responsible for the existence of a group of economically superordinated colored persons In the field of medical and dental service, white men still compete with colored men for colored business.

preferred to white workers, because they can be hired for a lower wage

Not only do these nonlocal industries tend to disrupt caste in labor, but they put into the hands of colored workers money which the local white storekeepers are extremely anxious to obtain. Since money has the highest value in the economic system, it causes white middle-class and lower-class storekeepers to wait upon colored patrons deferentially It thereby increases the difficulties of adjusting caste, which seems to be essentially a structure of pastoral and agricultural societies, to manufacturing and commercial economies. This money economy likewise leads the group of entrepreneurs and middlemen to whom it has given rise—the most powerful group in the production—to be unmindful whether they buy cotton from a colored or white farmer, whether they sell food, automobiles and clothes to one or the other, whether they allow nonlocal industries to subordinate the lower economic group of whites to the lower group of colored workers, they care principally about increasing their money Even the local white farm owners prefer colored tenants to white, because they can obtain higher profits from the former From the point of view of the white lower group, such behavior is a violation of caste It indicates a fundamental conflict between the economic system and the caste dogma.

In the second place the principle of the sacredness of private property has generally operated to prevent the expropriation of colored owners Even during the period of slavery, free colored persons were allowed to own property in Old City and in the State generally. This right was not taken from them during the twenty years immediately preceding the Civil War, when the Legislature severely restricted their behavior in other respects At the close of the Civil War the same reactionary Legislature which passed the so-called "Black Code" in this State, providing for the virtual restoration of slavery by the use of vagrancy and "apprentice" laws, granted to freedmen the right to own property in incorporated towns and cities Since that time, colored owners have not been expropriated, except in isolated cases of terrorization To expropriate colored property owners would be to violate the most fundamental principle of the economic system and to establish a precedent for the expropriation of other subordinated groups, such as the lower economic group of

white people, Jews, Italians and "foreign" ethnic groups of all kinds.[14]

It is necessary to point out, however, that the modification of the caste system in the interests of the profits of the upper and middle economic groups of white people by no means amounts to an abrogation of caste in economic relationships The economic interests of these groups would also demand that cheaper colored labor should be employed in the "white collar" jobs in business offices, governmental offices, stores and banks In this field, however, the interests of the employer group conflict not only with those of the lower economic group of whites but also with those of the more literate and aggressive middle group of whites A white store which employed colored clerks, for example, would be boycotted by both these groups. The taboo upon the employment of colored workers in such fields is the result of the political power and the purchasing power of the white middle and lower groups As a result of these taboos in the field of "white-collar" work, the educated colored person occupies a well-nigh hopeless position in Old County.

The political power of the middle and lower groups of white people—that is to say, the disfranchisement of the colored population—has enabled these groups to establish a caste barrier to the employment of colored clerical workers in municipal, state and federal governmental offices The inability of these groups to extend caste taboos so as to prevent colored persons from owning real estate and from competing with white skilled and unskilled labor may be attributed to the fact that the rights of private property and of a free labor market for the planter and the manufacturer are still sacred legal rights in Old County.

A more detailed knowledge of the caste system, as it exists in economic settings which differ from the old plantation economy of Old County, would enable one to define the degree of subordina-

[14] In South Africa, in most parts of which the right to own real property is denied, the natives owned land communally, the principle of private property was not challenged, therefore The wholesale expropriation of South A rican tribes, like that of American Indian tribes, is justified by imperialistic colonial policy upon the basis, usually, that the natives have no ideas of land tenure and that therefore the right of property ownership is not violated, especially if the chief is told that he owns the land and is "persuaded" to accept a payment for it.

tion of the lower caste, according to the type of economy. A tentative hypothesis might be advanced that the physical terrorization of colored people is most common in those areas where their general economic status is highest In the "newer" agricultural, oil-producing, and manufacturing sections of the South, where relatively large groups of colored people are superordinated economically to relatively large groups of white people, open racial conflict and terrorization seem to be at their height Such conflict results from the fact that in many economic symbols, such as clothes, automobiles and houses, a relatively large number of colored people are superior to many of the poorer whites The white society, as a whole, often resorts to terrorization to reassert the dogma of caste and to indicate that in physical and legal power over life and limb of colored people, at least, the caste sanctions are effective

In the Delta areas of the state, where white and colored tenants are competing at an increasing rate, or in a mill-town society, a sawmill society, or an oil-mining society, where similar competition exists, most of the white men work for a living (as contrasted with the white planters in Old County), and work in daily contact with colored men, even though they may be termed "supervisors" In such a society, where most white men, dressed in overalls or work clothes, are almost as poor as the colored workers and occupy approximately the same occupational level, it is most difficult to maintain the caste lines with the rigidity and authority which the dogma of caste demands In such a community, therefore, the white population must resort to terrorization continually in order to impress the colored group with the fact that economic equality or superordination on the part of the latter is not real equality or superordination—in other words, that caste exists all along the line, as the myth demands, and that actually any white man, no matter how poor or illiterate, is superordinate to any colored man and must be treated with the appropriate deference

In the old plantation areas on the other hand, where almost all of the colored people are families of poverty-stricken tenants and almost all of the white people are families of owners or large landlords, caste is almost "perfect" economically and socially, and there is relatively little terrorization of the lower caste. In fine, where

caste is most fully extended, there is little need for violence, because the colored people are thoroughly subordinated economically, occupationally and socially. When the caste is in economic competition, as laborers and tenants, however, violence and conflict seem to be at their height.

CHARLES W. CHESNUTT
PIONEER IN THE FICTION OF NEGRO LIFE

Hugh M Gloster

CHARLES W CHESNUTT holds an important historical position in American Negro literature. Paving the way for the so-called Renascence of the 1920's, he overcame the double standard by which Negro literary work is sometimes appraised, opposed the anti-Negro propaganda of writers like Thomas Nelson Page and Thomas Dixon and either used or foreshadowed many of the themes treated by colored novelists of the present century.

The publication of Chesnutt's folk stories in *The Atlantic Monthly*, representing the first time this periodical had accepted the contributions of a colored American, may be said to mark the coming-of-age of Negro literature in the United States Before Chesnutt the fiction of Negro authors had been usually received with the tacit understanding that it was inferior to that of white writers To Chesnutt, however, the stigma of Negro inferiority was not applied His emancipation from the hypothetical yoke of racial limitation is clearly indicated in William Dean Howells' criticism of his early short stories

It is not from their racial interest that we could first wish to speak of them, though that must have a great and very just claim upon the critic It is much more simple and directly, as works of art, that they make their appeal, and we must allow the force of this quite independently of the other interest [1]

Chesnutt's first book, *The Conjure Woman* (1899),[2] a collection of seven folk tales suggestive of the work of Joel Chandler Harris,

[1] Howells, W D , "Mr Charles W Chesnutt's Stories," *The Atlantic Monthly*, LXXXV (1900), p 700

[2] Four of the seven stories in *The Conjure Woman* had appeared in *The Atlantic Monthly*, and one of the remaining three, "The Conjurer's Revenge," in *The Overland Monthly* Two were first printed in the bound volume *The Conjure Woman* was reprinted in 1929 with a foreword by Colonel Joel Spingarn.

made its appearance twelve years after "The Goophered Grapevine," the initial story in the volume, was published in *The Atlantic Monthly*. To say that Chesnutt wrote somewhat after the fashion of Harris does not mean that he was a slavish imitator,[3] for *The Conjure Woman* occasionally probes beneath the rosy surface of the conventional plantation milieu The plan of *The Conjure Woman* is simple enough Uncle Julius, a Machiavellian old Negro who is distinctly different from the fawningly virtuous and humbly Christian uncles portrayed by the school of Thomas Nelson Page, tells seven folk tales to a prosperous white couple who have hired him after settling in North Carolina to engage in grape culture These tales, showing the weal and woe of the ante-bellum plantation and featuring the conjuration of old Aunt Peggy, have their *raison d'être* in Uncle Julius' desire to promote his own welfare and that of his friends Remembering his lucrative income from a neglected vineyard, Uncle Julius tries to forestall the purchase and culture of the plot by telling the story of "The Goophered Grapevine" In "Po' Sandy" he prevents the wrecking of the old schoolhouse which his fellow parishioners wished to use as a church He effects the reemployment of his shiftless grandson in "Mars Jeems's Nightmare" In "The Conjurer's Revenge" he persuades his employer to purchase a worthless horse and obtains a good commission from the seller in the deal "Sis' Becky's Pickaninny" convinces the wife of his employer that the left hind foot of a rabbit is a sure bringer of good luck In "The Gray Wolf's Ha'nt" he endeavors to prevent the clearing of a swampy tract where he obtains honey in large quantities Finally, in "Hot-Foot Hannibal" he brings about the reconciliation and marriage of two young white lovers Here are unfolded the tragedy and injustice of bondage—the cruelty of master and

[3] Chesnutt admits the similarity of *The Conjure Woman* to Harris' work but insists upon his own originality "The name of the story teller, 'Uncle' Julius, and the locale of the stories, as well as the cover design, were suggestive of Mr Harris' Uncle Remus, but the tales are entirely different They are sometimes referred to as folk tales, but while they employ much of the universal machinery of wonder stories, especially the metamorphosis, with one exception, that of the first story, 'The Goophered Grapevine,' of which the norm was the folk tale, the stories are the fruit of my own imagination, in which respect they differ from the Uncle Remus stories which are avowedly folk tales" Charles W. Chesnutt, "Post-Bellum—Pre-Harlem," *The Crisis*, XXXVIII (1931), p. 193.

overseer, the estrangement of husband and wife, the separation of mother and child and commercial traffic in human life. These themes, which mirror social misery as an integral part of slavery, were neglected by Page and his fellow glorifiers of the Old South but were revealed by Chesnutt with such objectivity and detachment that for a long time many readers were unaware that his work was that of a Negro [4] As a result of Chesnutt's more comprehensive vision, his stories are more realistic and lifelike

They are new and fresh and strong, as life always is, and fable never is, and the stories of The Conjure Woman *have a wild, indigenous poetry, the creation of sincere and original imagination, which is imparted with tender humorousness and a very artistic reticence* [5]

It is noteworthy that Chesnutt exposed the sordid side of the plantation tradition with the folk tale, the same literary form that was frequently selected to establish the Negro as a contented bondman and as an inferior being In *The Conjure Woman* Chesnutt probably wrote seriously for a purpose, although many of his ideas are expressed through situations and in dialect

In *The Wife of His Youth and Other Stories of the Color Line* (1899) Chesnutt turned to the problems of near-whites and mulattoes, feeling that the more complicated lives of Negroes of mixed blood furnished superior subject matter for fiction [6] The volume achieves artistic unity through the presentation in each story of a serious problem arising from the Negro's position as an oppressed group in the American social order The title story, "The Wife of His Youth," a masterful study of the Blue Vein Society of Groveland (Cleveland), presents a cultured mulatto who honorably but

[4] Of his race Chesnutt said "It never occurred to me to claim any merit because of it, and I have always resented the denial of anything on account of it" *Ibid*, p 194

[5] W D Howells, *op cit*, p 700

[6] Concerning the material of his novels Chesnutt wrote "As a matter of fact, substantially all of my writings, with the exception of *The Conjure Woman*, have dealt with the problems of people of mixed blood, which, while in the main the same as those of the Negro, are in some instances and in some respects much more complex and difficult of treatment, in fiction as in life." Charles W Chesnutt, *op cit*, p 194

not enthusiastically acknowledges an ignorant black woman whom he married before the Civil War and who helped him to escape to the North In "Her Virginia Mammy," a tale which suggests Cable's "Madame Delphine," a colored mother keeps silent concerning the Negro ancestry of her daughter so that the young woman may marry an aristocratic white Southerner "The Sheriff's Children" is a tragic story of a bitter mulatto who is fatally wounded by his white half-sister before he can end the life of his father, a North Carolina sheriff. "A Matter of Principle" presents Cicero Clayton, a proud mulatto who often preached the brotherhood of man but who nevertheless prevents the successful marriage of his daughter because of his deep-seated prejudice toward black people. In "Cicely's Dream" there is a pathetic account of the unfulfilled love of a beautiful brown girl for a white Federal soldier who was accepted as a Negro after receiving a head wound which resulted in his temporary loss of memory "The Passing of Grandison" features a crafty slave who, by pretending to abhor Abolitionists, succeeds in duping his gullible master and in getting himself and his family into Canada "Uncle Wellington's Wives" is the story of an elderly Negro who finds more discomfort with a white mate in Cleveland than with a colored spouse in a small North Carolina town "The Bouquet" reveals the devotion of a little colored girl for her deceased white teacher and shows how prejudice frustrates even childish affection not only in the home but also in the church and cemetery "The Web of Circumstance" sets forth the consequences of the miscarriage of justice in a small Southern town

Chesnutt shows interest in intraracial as well as interracial problems; he turns his attention to the caste system within the race as well as to the caste system outside the race When this volume was finished he had not only sketched a number of the racial problems of slavery and Reconstruction, but he had also used many of the themes which Negro novelists of the twentieth century were to employ Outstanding among these were the prevalence of color prejudice within the Negro group, the dangers of "passing," the bitterness of the mulatto offspring of biracial mating, the pitfalls of urban life and intermarriage in the North, and the maladministration of justice in the small towns of the South. In almost every case the implications are

tragic, and at the conclusion of the last story in the volume the author deserts his customary objective method to express a hope for better interracial relationships:

Some time, we are told, when the cycle of years has rolled around, there is to be another golden age, when all men will dwell together in love and harmony, and when peace and righteousness shall prevail for a thousand years God speed the day, and let not the shining thread of hope become so enmeshed in the web of circumstances that we lose sight of it, but give us here and there, and now and then some little foretaste of this golden age, that we may the more patiently and hopefully await its coming[7]

In 1899, the year in which *The Wife of His Youth and Other Stories of the Color Line* was issued, Chesnutt temporarily interrupted his work in fiction to produce a biography of Frederick Douglass With the turn of the century, however, he reverted to fiction and produced three race-conscious novels which reveal the hard lot of the Negro during the Reconstruction period. Veering from the Southern servant-master literary pattern of Negro-white relationships, he probed the consequences of segregation and miscegenation in a manner distinctly different from that of Thomas Nelson Page and Thomas Dixon In these works Chesnutt discarded the relaxed plantation scene for that of the tense Southern small town Characteristic of this milieu is a run-down economic condition and a bitter anti-Negro attitude provoked chiefly by the Civil War and the carpet-bag regime Dr Green, one of the minor characters of Chesnutt's first novel, *The House Behind the Cedars*, expresses the representative white sentiment toward colored citizens of the community

"They may exalt our slaves over us temporarily, but they have not broken our spirit, and cannot take our superiority of blood and breeding The Negro is an inferior creature, God marked him with the badge of servitude, and has adjusted his intellect to a servile condition. We will not long submit to his domination" [8]

[7] Chesnutt, *The Wife of His Youth and Other Stories of the Color Line*, pp. 322-333

[8] Chesnutt, *The House Behind the Cedars*, p 138

The House Behind the Cedars, emphasizing the difficult struggles and the luring temptations of a beautiful young colored woman light enough to join the white group, is essentially a study of "passing" in a small Southern town Rena Walden, the heroine, leaves her unaspiring mother to seek superior advantages in the home of her brother John, who had previously moved into the white race and started the practice of law in South Carolina In John, who anticipates the hero of James Weldon Johnson's *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*, and in Rena, who is the spiritual forbear of Helga Crane of Nella Larsen's *Quicksand*, Chesnutt shows two typical attitudes of those who "pass".

With [John], the problem that oppressed his sister had been in the main a matter of argument, of self-conviction Once persuaded that he had certain rights, or ought to have them, by virtue of the laws of nature, in defiance of the customs of mankind, he had promptly sought to enjoy them. This he had been able to do by simply concealing his antecedents and making the most of his opportunities, with no troublesome qualms of conscience whatever But . . Rena's emotions, while less easily stirred, touched a deeper note than his, and dwelt upon it with greater intensity [9]

In her new home Rena and George Tryon, a young white aristocratic friend of her brother, soon fall in love and become engaged. Eventually Tryon learns of Rena's family background and renounces her hand, but subsequently seeks her as a mistress To escape him, Rena obtains employment in a near-by Negro school, where she is molested by a bestial mulatto named Jeff Wain In an effort to avoid the advances both of Tryon and Wain, Rena tries to flee to her mother but faints on the way After being rescued by Frank Fowler, a devoted and self-sacrificing black admirer, Rena dies in his arms, saying, ". . . my good friend—my best friend—you loved me best of them all " [10]

The House Behind the Cedars represents Chesnutt's initial large-scale attempt to counteract the propaganda of Negrophobic writers and to establish the Negro novel on a sound esthetic foundation.

[9] *Ibid*, p 78
[10] *Ibid*, p 293

In this work the relationship between the colored heroine and her white lover are decent and respectable This furnishes sharp contrast to Dixon's novels, which consistently depict interracial sexual contacts on a sensual and physical plane.

In his second novel, *The Marrow of Tradition* (1901), Chesnutt concentrates his attention upon the plight of the educated professional Negro in a small Southern town, the tragic results of the interbreeding of an aristocratic white family, and the struggle of Negro citizens for political power One of the most interesting characters in the book is Dr William Miller, the probable prototype of Dr Kenneth Harper of Walter White's *Fire in the Flint*, an educated and cultured Negro who has studied medicine in the best universities of America and Europe Though he has the opportunity to practice in the North and thereby avoid oppression, Miller turns to Wellington, where he feels that he can render valuable service by founding a hospital and a medical college Neither radical nor militant in racial issues, he is willing to compromise

Miller was something of a philosopher He had long ago had the conclusion forced upon him that an educated man of his race, in order to live comfortably in the United States, must either be a philosopher or a fool, and since he wished to be happy, and was not exactly a fool, he had cultivated philosophy [11]

Furthermore, Miller is hopeful for interracial friendship, considering the strife of Reconstruction a natural social evil which will eventually pass away.

He liked to believe that the race antagonism which hampered his progress and that of his people was a mere temporary thing, the outcome of former conditions, and bound to disappear in time, and that when a colored man should demonstrate to the community in which he lived that he possessed character and power, that community would find a way in which to enlist his services for the public good.[12]

In spite of his willingness to compromise and desire to co-operate, Miller is finally disillusioned when he discovers bitter racial hatred

[11] Chesnutt, *The Marrow of Tradition*, pp 60-61
[12] *Ibid*, p 65

within the medical profession and finally loses his little son in an uncalled-for race riot.

The half-sister relationship between Dr. Miller's mulatto wife, Janet, and Mrs Olivia Merkell Carteret, two women having the same legal father, afforded Chesnutt an opportunity to explore the tragic results of racial intermixture in the South. The mere sight of Janet's boy, whose resemblance to the proud Merkells is striking, excites Olivia so much that she gives premature birth to her child, almost losing her own life in the process On the other hand, Janet, yearning to be friendly with her half-sister, had always wished in vain "for a kind word, a nod, a smile, the least thing that imagination might have twisted into a recognition of the tie between them " [13] During the aforementioned riot Olivia is brought to her knees when her son's life depends upon whether Janet will consent for her husband to take the case. In this crisis Janet rejects the name and riches which Olivia offers and which are rightfully hers, and, in spite of the recent death of her own son, contributes her share to the sick boy's recovery:

"I throw back your father's name, your father's wealth, your sisterly recognition. I want none of them—they are bought too dear! Ah, God, they are bought too dear! But that you may know that a woman may be foully wronged, and yet may have a heart to feel, even for one who has injured her, you may have your child's life, if my husband can save it! Will," she said, throwing open the door into the next room, "go with her!" [14]

The professional troubles of Dr Miller and the difficulties of his wife with the white members of her family are but a small part, however, of the general racial confusion in Wellington The white citizens are vexed because of the political influence of Negroes, who form two-thirds of the town's population, and Major Carteret, Olivia's husband, stated his dissatisfaction through the columns of *The Morning Chronicle*:

Taking for his theme the unfitness of the Negro to participate in government—an unfitness due to his limited education, his lack of

[13] *Ibid.*
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 329.

experience, his criminal tendencies and, more especially, to his helpless mental and physical inferiority to the white race—the major had demonstrated, it seemed to him clearly enough, that the ballot in the hands of the Negro was a menace to the commonwealth He had argued with entire conviction that the white and black races could never attain social and political harmony by commingling their blood, he had proved by several historical parallels that no two unassimilable races could ever live together except in the relation of superior and inferior [15]

Especially objectionable to the white citizens is the prominence of colored men in the Reconstruction government Therefore the murder of Mrs Polly Ochiltree, which is impulsively attributed to an innocent Negro named Sandy Campbell, is all that is needed to fan the fires of racial hate into an all-consuming flame *The Morning Chronicle* at once makes an issue of the killing, and George McBane voices popular white sentiment when he declares·

"We seem to have the right nigger, but whether we have or not, burn a nigger It is an assault upon the white race, in the person of old Mrs Ochiltree, committed by the black race, in the person of some nigger It would justify the white people in burning any nigger The example would serve notice on the niggers that we shall hold the whole race responsible for the misdeeds of each individual" [16]

With incendiary speeches like this coming from the white leaders of the town, mob spirit quickly develops and soon a riot is set in motion [17] The whites appear on the streets, spreading insults, terror, punishment and death When neither Lawyer Watson nor any other professional Negro will lead the blacks in the conflict Josh Green, a vengeful man from the masses, assumes command and fatally stabs McBane before meeting his own violent death

The Marrow of Tradition, in spite of the fact that none of its main characters is colored, embraces almost every aspect of interracial

[15] *Ibid*, p 31

[16] *Ibid*, p 182

[17] The riot was doubtlessly inspired by the racial clashes which occurred in Wilmington, North Carolina, in 1898

life in the South during Reconstruction Here are presented the intrafamily strife, sometimes occasioned by miscegenation, the affection of the white gentleman for the black servant, the clash between Northern and Southern opinion relative to social contacts with the Negro, the disadvantage of Jim-Crowism, the handicaps of the colored professional man in a prejudice-ridden environment, the destructive course of mob passion and the consequences of Negro efforts to acquire full civil rights It is interesting to note that in this novel, as in *The House Behind the Cedars*, Chesnutt offers no panacea for the ills which he exposes, and the implication is that he was not very hopeful for harmonious race relations in the Southern States

In his last novel, *The Colonel's Dream* (1905), Chesnutt again uses the small-town milieu and white leading characters Colonel Henry French, an aristocrat who fought with the Confederacy during the Civil War, achieves wealth and a broader social vision in the North and thereafter comes South with his little motherless son, Philip, to find Clarendon, his home town, under the control of Bill Fetters, a former poor white, and in the grip of economic disintegration, social stagnation and political corruption. Of the backwardness of Clarendon, Chesnutt writes

There were no mills or mines in the neighborhood, except for a few grist mills, and a sawmill The bulk of the business consisted in supplying the needs of an agricultural population, and trading in their products The cotton was baled and shipped to the North, and reimported for domestic use, in the shape of sheeting and other stuffs. The corn was shipped to the North, and came back in the shape of corn meal and salt pork, the staple articles of diet. Beefsteak and butter were brought from the North, at twenty-five and fifty cents a pound, respectively There were cotton merchants, and corn and feed merchants, there were dry-goods and grocery stores, drug stores and saloons—and the usual proportion of professional men Since Clarendon was the county seat, there were, of course, a courthouse and a jail There were churches enough, if all filled at once, to hold the entire population of the town, and preachers in proportion The merchants, of whom a number were Jewish, periodically went into bankruptcy, the majority of their customers did likewise, and thus

a fellow-feeling was promoted, and the loss thrown back as far as possible The lands of the large farmers were mostly mortgaged, either to Fetters, or to the bank, of which he was the chief stockholder, for all that could be borrowed on them, while the small farmers, many of whom were colored, were practically tied to the soil by ropes of debt and chains of contract [18]

Viewing these sordid conditions, French determines to devote his money and life to the rescue of the town from Fetters and from decay, and begins his reform by erecting a modern cotton mill and providing for the enlightenment of the people, white and colored. When Dr McKenzie, pastor of the Presbyterian Church, opposes the education of Negroes with the argument that to a divinely doomed race "ignorance is euthanasia, and knowledge is but pain and sorrow," [19] French replies that colored people may logically anticipate a prosperous future in the United States, that they have earned their liberty through labor and that they deserve equal treatment since they were brought here through no fault of their own French, furthermore, champions not social equality but simple justice

In principle the Colonel was an ardent democrat, he believed in the rights of man, and extended the doctrine to include all who bore the human form But in feeling he was an equally pronounced aristocrat A servant's right he would have defended to the last ditch, familiarity he would have resented with equal positiveness.[20]

French's plans for the development of Clarendon run smoothly for a while but hit a snag when labor troubles arise because of the promotion of a Negro, the best workman in the group, to the foremanship of the masons Further difficulties appear when French orders a joint funeral and burial for his son, Philip, and Peter, an elderly ex-slave who lost his life in an effort to save the boy's Jim Green, the discharged white foreman of the masons, expresses the sentiments of the majority of his white townsmen

"Colonel French is an enemy of his race," he declared to his sympathetic following "He hires niggers when white men are idle, and

[18] Chesnutt, *The Colonel's Dream*, pp 77-78
[19] *Ibid*, p 164
[20] *Ibid* p 81

pays them more than white men are earning And now he is burying them with white people" [21]

When the incensed whites disinter Peter's corpse and place it on French's porch, French, now hopeless and disillusioned, leaves for New York to bury his son and servant with his deceased wife Once in the North, he drops the cotton-mill project but remembers to provide for the welfare of his friends in Clarendon

The Colonel's Dream provides a vivid exposition of the social upheaval in a representative Southern small town during the Reconstruction period In this book Chesnutt depicts the trying struggle of white philanthropy in the post-bellum South, the proud efforts of the old aristocrats to retain some semblance of their former high station, the rise of the poor whites to political power and financial influence, the maladministration of Southern agriculture and industry, the general prevalence of bankruptcy and indebtedness, the inhuman treatment of women and children in factories, the evils of peonage and the convict lease system, the obsessive fear of the power of the Negro ballot, the deep resentment of Southern whites for any kind of social equality with colored people, the tragic consequences of racial intermixture, the unfair distribution of funds for popular education, the open discrimination against Negroes in skilled labor and the general insecurity of Negro life and property In the last paragraph of the book, following the exposure of these aforementioned social ills, Chesnutt leans to pessimism in contemplating the future of Clarendon and of the Negro

But Clarendon has had its chance, not seems yet to have another Other towns, some not far from it, lying nearer the main lines of travel, have been swept into the current of modern life, but not yet Clarendon White men go their way, and black theirs, and the ways grow wider apart, and no one knows the outcome But there are those who hope, and those who pray, that this condition will pass, that some day our land will be truly free, and the strong will cheerfully help to bear the burdens of the weak, and Justice, the seed, and Peace, the flower, of liberty, will prevail throughout all our borders [22]

[21] *Ibid*, p 271
[22] *Ibid*, p 294

After *The Colonel's Dream* Chesnutt did not publish another book. A news article in *The Pittsburgh Courier* for June 30, 1928, announced a novel by Chesnutt which was to be published during the following winter, but this book did not appear Chesnutt was quoted as having made the following statement concerning the volume: "The book is a novel dealing with Negro life of the present day, just as my former novels dealt with the same subject twenty-five years ago " Perhaps his silence was due, partly at least, to disappointment in the results of his campaign for the betterment of social conditions in the South

Whether Chesnutt was disappointed in his campaign or not, he must be considered as an important trail blazer in American Negro fiction In his early stories of plantation life he not only made the folk tale a more faithful transcript of conditions as they actually were but he was also the first colored author whose work was generally criticized without consideration of race In *The Wife of His Youth and Other Stories of the Color Line* he experimented with the racial subject matter with which he was subsequently preoccupied in *The House Behind the Cedars*, *The Marrow of Tradition*, and *The Colonel's Dream* By handling the inflammatory social situations of the Reconstruction period and by frequently adopting the melodramatic methods of the propagandist, Chesnutt sometimes damaged his earlier reputation for esthetic balance, but before he laid down his pen he had either used or suggested many of the themes of the fiction of Negro life as we know it today.

AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

W. E. B. Du Bois

GRADUALLY, however, even in the midst of my activities and distractions I began to pause and take stock, I began to look back critically at the twenty years of my life which had passed since I gave up my work at Atlanta University, joined the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and founded and edited *The Crisis* My basic theory had been that race prejudice was primarily a matter of ignorance on the part of the mass of men, giving the evil and anti-social a chance to work their way, that when the truth was properly presented, the monstrous wrong of race hate must melt quickly before it. All human action to me in those days was conscious and rational. There was no twilight zone

To some extent I saw in two decades of work a justification of this theory Much of the statement, assertion and habit of thought characteristic of the latter part of the nineteenth century regarding the Negro had passed away Wild Tillmans had stopped talking of the growing "degeneracy of American Negroes" Tom Watsons were ceasing to assert that the Negro race had always been and would always be barbarians Even the basic excuse for lynching, the rape of white women, had been successfully countered and denied with statistical proof And from a day when the legality of the Fifteenth Amendment had been openly denied and that denial in some cases supported by judicial decision, we had come to the recognition of full citizenship rights by the Supreme Court. All this was gratifying to the leaders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and to me In a sense it was an epoch-making achievement No longer was it possible or thinkable anywhere in the United States to study and discuss the Negro without letting him speak for himself and without having that speaking done by a well-equipped person, if such person was wanted

On the other hand, I began to be deeply and disturbingly aware that with all the success of our agitation and propaganda, with the wide circulation, reading and attention which *The Crisis* enjoyed, with the appearance of Negroes on the lecture platform everywhere,

and the emergence of a distinct and creditable Negro literature, nevertheless the barriers of race prejudice were certainly as strong in 1930 as in 1910 the world over and, in certain aspects, from certain points of view, even stronger

Or, in other words, beyond my conception of ignorance and deliberate ill-will as causes of race prejudice, there must be other and stronger and more threatening forces, forming the founding stones of race antagonisms, which we had only begun to attack or perhaps in reality had not attacked at all Moreover, the attack upon these hidden and partially concealed causes of race hate must be led by Negroes in a program which was not merely negative in the sense of calling on white folk to desist from certain practices and give up certain beliefs, but direct in the sense that Negroes must proceed constructively in new and comprehensive plans of their own

I think it was the Russian Revolution which first illuminated and made clear this change in my basic thought It was not that I at any time conceived of Bolshevik Russia as ushering in any present millennium I was painfully sensitive to all its failures, to all the difficulties which it faced, but the clear and basic thing which appeared to me in unquestioned brightness was that in the year 1917 and then, after a struggle with the world and famine ten years later, one of the largest nations of the world made up its mind frankly to face a set of problems which no nation including our own is willing fully to face even to this day

Those questions involved the problem of the poverty of the mass of men in an age when an abundance of goods and technical efficiency of work seemed able to provide a sufficiency for all men, so that the mass of men could be fed and clothed and sheltered, live in health and have their intellectual faculties trained Russia was trying to accomplish this by eventually putting into the hands of those people who do the world's work the power to guide and rule the state for the best welfare of the masses It made the assumption, long disputed, that out of the down-trodden mass of people, ability and character, sufficient to do this task effectively, could and would be found I believed this dictum passionately It was, in fact, the foundation stone of my fight for black folk, it explained me.

I had been brought up with the democratic idea that this general welfare was the object of democratic action in the state, of allowing

the governed a voice in government But through the crimson illumination of war, I realized and, afterward by travel around the world, saw even more clearly that so-called democracy today was allowing the mass of people to have only limited voice in government, that democratic control of what are at present the most important functions of men work and earning a living and distributing goods and services; that here we did not have democracy in legislation and choice of officials

My thoughts in this line were made more firm by a visit to Russia. Some time in 1927, I met three Russian visitors to the United States. They were probably clandestine agents of the communist dictatorship They sought me out, probably because they recognized that I had been for some time a leader of what was called the liberal if not the radical wing among Negroes, and Russia was conceiving the distinct idea that the revolution in the United States might be promoted certainly in some degree by stirring up discontent among the most oppressed tenth of the American nation, namely, the American Negroes

Two of these Russians, a man and wife, were persons of education and culture and sought to learn my ideas and reactions rather than to press upon me their theories The third was a blond German and an active revolutionist. He was unwilling to wait He wanted something done and done now After I had sought firmly to show him that no revolution in America could be started by Negroes and succeed and, even if that were possible, that after what I had seen of the effects of war, I could never regard violence as an effective, much less necessary, step to reform the American state, he gradually faded out of the picture and ceased to visit me I do not know what became of him I never saw him again

From the other two Russians I learned much We had pleasant social relations and I sat at their feet to hear what was taking place and what was planned in Russia I asserted my inability to judge the situation fairly because I did not know enough of the facts and stressed my continuing doubt as to whether the Russian pattern could be and should be applied in the United States They said I ought to visit Russia and I expressed my eagerness to do so Finally, they offered to finance a visit to Russia, which I accepted with a written proviso, which I insisted upon, that this visit entail no promise

on my part of action or agreement of any kind. I was to go on a journey of free inquiry to see the most momentous change in modern human history which had taken place since the French Revolution. I went to Russia in 1928, traveling by way of Germany, where passport difficulties held me for two or more weeks

The sight of the German Republic struggling on the ruins of the empire and tottering under a load of poverty, oppression and disorganization made upon me an unforgettable impression But never in my life have I been so stirred as by what I saw during two months in Russia I visited Leningrad and Moscow, Nijni Novgorod and Kiev and came home by way of Odessa and Constantinople I was allowed, so far as I could see, every opportunity to investigate I saw the waifs of the sewers, the fifty thousand children who marched in the Red Square on Youth Day, the new art galleries and the new factories, the beginnings of the new agriculture But this was physical Mentally I came to know Karl Marx and Lenin, their critics and defenders Since that trip my mental outlook and the aspect of the world will never be the same

My day in Russia was the day of communist beginnings, the red weal of war suffering and of famine still lay across the land Only yesterday England, France, America and the Czechs had invaded their land without shadow of right The people were ragged and hungry, the cities were half in ruins The masses of men who crowded the streets and fought for places on the packed streetcars were truculent and overassertive in manner Moscow did not have a half dozen automobiles Yet, there lay an unforgettable spirit upon the land, in spite of almost insurmountable obstacles, in the face of contempt and chicanery and the armed force of the civilized world, this nation was determined to go forward and establish a government of men, such as the world had never seen

Since that they have reeled on, their path has been strewn with blood and failure, but at the same time their accomplishment today is such that they have compelled the world to face the kind of problem which they determined to face, and no matter how much the Fascism of Mussolini and the National Socialism of Hitler, the New Deal of Roosevelt and the appeasement of Chamberlain and the new World War may assert and believe that they have found ways of abolishing poverty, increasing the efficiency of work, allowing the

worker to earn a living and curtailing the power of wealth by means short of revolution, confiscation and force; nevertheless, every honest observer must admit that human civilization today has by these very efforts moved toward socialism and accepted many of the tenets of Russian communism We may, with dogged persistency, declare that deliberate murder, organized destruction and brute force cannot in the end bring and preserve human culture, but we must admit that nothing that Russia has done in war and mass murder exceeds what has been done and is being done by the rest of the civilized world.

Gradually it dawned upon me with increasing clarity just what the essential change in the world had been since the First World War and depression; and how the tactics of those who live for the widest development of men must change accordingly. It is not simply a matter of change in ideals, but even more of a decisive change in the methods by which ideals are to be approximated As I now look back, I see, in the crusade waged by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People from 1910 to 1930, one of the finest efforts of liberalism to achieve human emancipation; and much was accomplished But the essential difficulty with the liberalism of the twentieth century was not to realize the fundamental change brought about by the world-wide organization of work and trade and commerce.

During the nineteenth century the overwhelming influence of the economic activities of men upon their thought and action was, as Marx insisted, clear, but is was not until the twentieth century that the industrial situation called not only for understanding but for action Modern business enterprise organized for private profit was throttling democratic government, choking art and literature and leading work and industry into a dangerous paradox by increasing even more rapidly the number of persons able to buy and the amount of money they could spend, thus throwing industry into periodic convulsions The number of persons who see this economic impasse is becoming larger and larger until it includes today the leading thinkers of the world.

But the difficulty was to know how, without revolution, violence and dislocation of human civilization, the wrong could be righted and human culture started again upon its upward path One thing,

at any rate, was clear to me in my particular problem, and that was that a continued agitation which had for its object simply free entrance into the present economy of the world, that looked at political rights as an end in itself rather than as a method of reorganizing the state, and that expected through civil rights and legal judgments to re-establish freedom on a broader and firmer basis, was not so much wrong as shortsighted, that the democracy which we had been asking for in political life must sooner or later replace the tyranny which now dominated industrial life.

In the organization whose leadership I shared at the time, I found few who envisaged the situation as I did The bulk of my colleagues saw no essential change in the world It was the same world with the problems to be attacked by the same methods as before the war All we needed to do was to continue to attack lynching, to bring more cases before the courts and to insist upon our full citizenship rights They recoiled from any consideration of the economic plight of the world or any change in the organization of industry.

My colored colleagues especially were deeply American, with the old theory of individualism, with a desire to be rich or at least well-to-do, with suspicion of organized labor and labor programs, with a horror of racial segregation My white colleagues were still liberals and philanthropists They realized poignantly the dislocation of industry, the present economic problems, but most of them still believed in the basic rightness of industry as at present organized and few—perhaps only one, Oswald Garrison Villard—moved from this undisturbed belief in the capitalist system toward the left, toward a conception of a new democratic control of industry.

My nearest white friend, who was executive head of the organization, Joel Spingarn, was skeptical of democracy either in industry, politics or art He was the natural anarchist of the spirit His interest was aroused in the Negro because of discrimination, and not in the interest of ideal methods of conducting the state. Given certain rights and opportunities, it was more than wrong, in his mind, to discriminate against certain individuals because of their race and color He wanted for me and my people freedom to live and act; but he did not believe that voting or revolution in industry was going to bring the millennium He was afraid that I was turning radical and dogmatic and even communistic, and he proceeded to

use his power and influence in order to curb my acts and forestall any change of program of the Association on my part.

Students of sociology have not yet studied widely one method of human government used in modern times and that is the carrying out of social reform of various sorts by means of the secretary-board-of-directors organization. A group of intelligent men of good will come together for the purpose of studying a certain problem and improving conditions They may elect the conventional officers, but eventually they put effective power in the hands of a secretary There ensues a peculiarly effective unity, the secretary, to all essential purposes, becomes the organization and his effective consultants are his office staff whom he appoints and pays. All this goes smoothly until changes in the policy, ideals and objects are indicated. Logically these changes should come by decision of the board of directors; but the board by this time has probably become a co-opting body, whose members are suggested by the secretary, so that they are, in fact, his creatures. Moreover, the secretary is naturally tempted to fill his board with "window dressing", with persons who are in general agreement with his policies, but who take no active part either in attendance or discussion, and whose names, on the other hand, lend high prestige to the organization. These persons are not apt to know that changes in object are necessary or to care much, so long as the organization remains respectable

In part the NAACP followed this development but not entirely. In any such united effort for social betterment as ours, there is bound to be some cultural gap between white and black workers. The wider the gap, the easier the collaboration which resolves itself into the standard pattern of white leaders and black followers If the cultural gap is narrow it calls for some degree of submission of white to Negro leadership This in the United States is so unusual a pattern that it must be handled carefully.

Our original constituents upon the board of directors were intensely and vividly interested in finding some practical solution to the Negro problems They were not for the most part rich men, and it was necessary to secure funds. The original idea was that rich philanthropists would gladly contribute, but this assumption was to no large extent realized. On the contrary, large numbers of colored people and many white people of small means contributed

through membership and donations The major support of the organization during its effective years came from the colored people themselves, as was natural and logical.

The secretary at first was little more than an office executive Then we hired a trained white man at a high salary, who knew methods of modern publicity and propaganda. He came at a critical time, 1917, and did a fine job, especially in increasing membership and funds. In 1920 he resigned, and was replaced by James Weldon Johnson, whose power as executive was shared with the chairman of the board. The chairman represented the board and gave considerable time as real executive The executive power was also shared in another and rather unusual way, and that was with the editor and publisher of *The Crisis*.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People never accepted financial responsibility for *The Crisis*. When they first allowed me to publish it in November, 1910, it was on condition that the Association would be willing to meet any deficit which did not exceed fifty dollars a month It was for a long time a source of great pride to me that it was never called upon to pay any deficit. On the other hand, the Association paid my salary and a part of the office expense up until January 1, 1916 From that time until 1933, *The Crisis* was self-supporting, and received and disbursed over a half million dollars and distributed seven and a half million copies *The Crisis* came thus to form a distinct department of the NAACP, with its own office and clerical force and its own funds kept separate from those of the organization

There soon came the delicate matter of policy, of how far I should express my own ideas and reactions in *The Crisis*, or the studied judgment of the organization From the first to last, I thought strongly on this point and, as I argued, no organization can express definite and clear-cut opinions, so far as this organization as such came to conclusions, it would state them in its annual resolutions, but *The Crisis* would state openly the opinion of its editor, so long, of course, as that opinion was in general agreement with that of the organization. This was a dangerous and delicate matter, bound eventually to break down, in case there arose any considerable divergence of opinion between the organization and editor. It was

perhaps rather unusual that for two decades the two lines of thinking ran so largely in agreement

If, on the other hand, *The Crisis* had not been in a sense a personal organ and the expression of myself, it could not possibly have attained its popularity and effectiveness It would have been the dry kind of organ that so many societies support for purposes of reference and not for reading The editor was thus allowed wide latitude for his expression of opinion, chiefly because that freedom cost the Association nothing, gave it free publicity which otherwise would have cost thousands of dollars and was backed by readers and subscribers who increased more rapidly than the direct membership of the Association, and became in time a body of perhaps a quarter of a million persons The first real although tacit decision as to my power over the policy of *The Crisis* led to a change in the chairmanship of the board, which Joel Spingarn then assumed

The next question arose over the matter of political advice in the first Wilson election No action was taken, but some members of the board doubted the wisdom of our support of the Democratic Party The question of a segregated camp for Negro officers again split the board, but as the chairman and the editor were in agreement, the power of the Association was used for the establishment of the camp and later the board agreed that this had been the proper procedure After I had gone to Europe and held the first Pan-African Congress and began to advocate Pan-Africanism, the board quite decidedly refused to accept this new activity as part of its program; but it did not for a moment object to my further advocacy of Pan-Africanism so long as I was responsible for any costs

Then came the depression The revenue of *The Crisis* began to fall off as early as 1924 and 1925 Our circulation dropped steadily until by 1933 it was scarcely more than ten thousand paid subscriptions If the magazine was to be carried on, evidently the Association would have to share its cost and, if it did so, it would have a right to a larger voice in its conduct and policy

If *The Crisis* had continued self-supporting during the depression, I would have felt myself free gradually to force upon the thinking Negro world and the NAACP a new economic program. But *The Crisis* was no longer self-supporting. The mass of Negroes, even the intelligent and educated, progressively being thrown out of

work, did not have money for food, much less for magazines I found myself, therefore, seeking support from an organization for a program in which they did not wholeheartedly believe, and particularly this disbelief and growing suspicion centered around the new conception which I had for mass action on the part of the Negro.

By 1930, I had become convinced that the basic policies and ideals of the Association must be modified and changed, that in a world where economic dislocation had become so great as in ours, a mere appeal based on the old liberalism, a mere appeal to justice and further effort at legal decision, was missing the essential need, that the essential need was to guard and better the chances of Negroes, educated and ignorant, to earn a living, safeguard their income and raise the level of their employment I did not believe that a further prolongation of looking for salvation from the whites was feasible So far as they were ignorant of the results of race prejudice, we had taught them, but so far as their race prejudice was built and increasingly built on the basis of the income which they enjoyed and their anti-Negro bias consciously or unconsciously formulated in order to protect their wealth and power, in so far our whole program must be changed, and we must seek to increase the power and particularly the economic organization among Negroes to meet this new situation It was this change of emphasis that I proposed to discuss and promote through the columns of *The Crisis*

In addition to this, the meaning and implications of the new psychology had begun slowly to penetrate my thought My own study of psychology under William James had predated the Freudian era, but it had prepared me for it I now began to realize that in the fight against race prejudice, we were not facing simply the rational, conscious determination of white folk to oppress us, we were facing age-long complexes sunk now largely to unconscious habit and irrational urge, which demanded on our part not only the patience to wait, but the power to entrench ourselves for a long siege against the strongholds of color caste It was this long-term program, which called first of all for economic stability on the part of the Negro, for such economic foundation as would enable the colored people of America to earn a living, provide for their own social uplift, so far as this was neglected by the state and nation, and at the same time carry out even more systematically and with

greater and better-planned determination, the fight that the NAACP had inaugurated in 1910.

Meantime, the Association itself was receiving less of its income from colored supporters and more from white charity. It was illogical to expect that white philanthropy would be willing to support the economic program which I had in mind Moreover, the colored group did not wholly agree with me I realized that in later years the Association had too much attracted the higher income group of colored people, who regarded it as a weapon to attack the sort of social discrimination which especially irked them rather than as an organization to improve the status and power of the whole Negro group. If now the Association was willing to allow me the same freedom of expression in the crippled *Crisis* that I had had when *The Crisis* was economically independent, I was willing to try to set forth my new point of view while giving anyone else who had an idea full opportunity to express it I wanted, not dogmatically but inquiringly, to find out the function of a minority group like ours in the impending social change I thought that this was the highest service that any real periodical of opinion would do for its constituents. If we had had at this time leisure for thought and argument, my program could have been carried out, but unfortunately it happened that here dogma entered and dogma from a source that made my new point of view easily misinterpreted and suspected and this was the dogma of the American Communist Party applied first and most unfortunately to the Scottsboro cases, in which our organization was deeply interested and involved. Had it not been for their senseless interference, these poor victims of Southern injustice would today be free To insure their freedom, we had followed a tried and successful pattern· we had secured the services of Clarence Darrow and with him a respectable firm of local white lawyers. With quiet and careful methods, the Scottsboro victims would have been freed in a couple of years without fanfare or much publicity

But in the case of the Communists the actual fate of these victims was a minor matter. The leaders of Russian communism thought that they saw here a chance to foment revolution in the United States. This crass instance of cruelty and injustice; where ignorant colored boys, stealing a ride on a freight train, were faced with the ridiculous charge of attacking two white prostitutes on the same

train, who were amply protected, if they needed protection, by white hoodlums, seemed to Russia an unusual opportunity to expose American race prejudice and to arouse the Negroes and the working classes of America and the world. All this was based on abysmal ignorance of the pattern of race prejudice in the United States. About the last thing calculated to arouse the white workers of America would be the defense of a Negro accused of attacking a white woman, even though the Negro was probably innocent and the woman a prostitute This fact the Communists either did not know or ignored They seized the occasion for agitation in order to forward "the Revolution" They scared respectable lawyers out of the case; they repudiated Clarence Darrow, they made the whole issue turn on property rights and race, and spread this propaganda all over the world. Right as they undoubtedly were on the merits of the case, they were tragically wrong in their methods if they were seeking to free these victims.

This, of course, exasperated our office, *The Crisis* as well as the executive office But while in the case of *The Crisis*, it left me still determined to work for economic reform as the immediate method of attacking the Negro problem, in the case of the executive office it had the opposite effect of making both Spingarn and others determined to avoid this discussion and any drastic change in the object of the Association

For this reason the Second Amenia Conference was called, seventeen years after the first The first Amenia Conference in 1916 met at a strategic time Our essential agreement on a program of advance was gratifying and epoch-making; but, as I now realize, we had not only been hammered into unity by culminating oppression, but prepared for it by spadework which had gone before, and which for ten years had been preparing the minds of Americans, black and white, for a new deal in race relations and renewed effort toward racial equality In 1933, the situation was different We met at the beginning rather than at the end of a period of preparatory discussion. We were still mentally whirling in a sea of inconclusive world discussion We could not really reach agreement as a group, because of the fact that so many of us as individuals had not made up our minds on the essentials of coming social change The attendance was sifted—perhaps too much so; outside of four of the Elder Statesmen,

the median age was thirty—persons just out of college; their life work begun but not settled They were teachers, social workers, professional men, and two artisans

The discussion and resolutions, while disappointing to both Spingarn and myself, as I now see them, threw a flood of light upon our situation Four threads of thought entered into our conference first, the fight against race segregation and color discrimination in any form This was age-old among Negroes and also the bitterly felt contribution of those younger folk who had experienced race prejudice during the war and the difficulties of getting a decent opportunity to work and live after the war The second thread was Marxian economic determinism Most of the younger trained college group were convinced that the economic pattern of any civilization determined its development along all cultural lines In the third place everybody present, old and young, was seized with a new concern for the welfare of the great mass of Negro laboring people. They felt that too much in the past we had been thinking of the exceptional folk, "the Talented Tenth," the well-to-do, that we must now turn our attention toward the welfare and social uplift of the masses Finally, the old liberalism, resurgent in the leadership of the NAACP officials, wished to reiterate and strengthen everything we had done in the past, as the only program for the future

Out of these trends of thought, one can imagine the turmoil and contradiction of our discussion Our argument was indeterminate and our resolutions contradictory It was agreed that the primary problem before us was economic, but it was equally certain that this economic problem could not be approached from the point of view of race The only approach to it must be through the white labor masses who were supposed to accept without great reluctance the new scientific argument that there was no such thing as "race", and in the midst of this, nearly all the older men and some of the younger men were still trying to insist that the uplift of the Negro in the past and in the future could only take place through the development of superimposed economic and cultural classes, and that we needed in the future to reinforce the liberal program which we had been carrying out in the past

I was disappointed I had hoped for such insistence upon the compelling importance of the economic factor that this would lead to a

project for a planned program for using the racial segregation, which was at present inevitable, in order that the laboring masses might be able to have built beneath them a strong foundation for self-supporting and social uplift, and while this fundamental economic process was going on, we could, from a haven of economic security, continue even more effectively than ever to agitate for the utter erasure of the color line

I stood, as it seemed to me, between paths diverging to extreme communism and violence, on the one hand, and extreme reaction toward plutocracy, on the other I saw disaster for American Negroes in following a set determination to ignore race hate and nearing instead a creed of eventual violence and revolution, simply because a single great nation, having perhaps no other alternative, had started this way, this path was for American Negroes, to my mind, nonsense. The nonsense did not end here, it was just as nonsensical for us to assume that the program which we had espoused in 1910 was going to work in 1950 We had to prepare ourselves for a reorganization of society especially and fundamentally in industry And for that reason we had to work as a group toward the socialization of our own wealth and the establishment of such social objects in the nation and in the world

Spingarn was disappointed and in some degree impatient I remember one amusing incident· there was a young man in attendance (we will call him Jones), well-educated and in some ways brilliant, but on the other hand, a communist and also irresponsible and unreliable The members of the conference had been invited up one day to the Spingarn home, a beautiful spacious country mansion with pools and gardens in the English style Jones stood in the parlor and grinned, and said aloud to the visitors "Comes the revolution, and Commissar Jones will live here!" Spingarn did not appreciate the joke.

The end of it all was inconclusive resolutions and no agreement; and greater conviction on the part of the executive office that discussion of economic change and organization among colored people to affect a stronger economic position was not in the line of the policy of the NAACP; and that neither *The Crisis* nor anyone else ought to discuss these matters nor agitate them I began to see that for a second time in my life my occupation was gone, unless I made

a very complete surrender of my convictions I was not and am not a communist I do not believe in the dogma of inevitable revolution in order to right economic wrong I think it is worse than hell, and that it seldom or never forwards the advance of the world.

On the other hand, I believed and still believe that Karl Marx was one of the greatest men of modern times and that he put his finger squarely upon our difficulties when he said that economic foundations, the way in which men earn their living, are the determining factors in the development of civilization, in literature, religion and the basic pattern of culture And this conviction I had to express or spiritually die

My leadership was a leadership solely of ideas I never was, nor ever will be, personally popular This was not simply because of my idiosyncrasies but because I despise the essential demagoguery of personal leadership, of that hypnotic ascendancy over men which carries out objectives regardless of their value or validity, simply by personal loyalty and admiration In my case I withdrew sometimes ostentatiously from the personal nexus, but I sought all the more determinedly to force home essential ideas

I think I may say without boasting that in the period from 1910 to 1930 I was a main factor in revolutionizing the attitude of the American Negro toward caste My stinging hammer blows made Negroes aware of themselves, confident of their possibilities and determined in self-assertion So much so that today common slogans among the Negro people are taken bodily from the words of my mouth

But of course, no idea is perfect and forever valid Always to be living and apposite and timely, it must be modified and adapted to changing facts What I began to realize was that the heights and fastnesses which we black folk were assailing could not in America be gained by sheer force of assault, because of our relatively small numbers They could only be gained as the majority of Americans were persuaded of the rightness of our cause and joined with us in demanding our recognition as full citizens This process must deal not only with conscious rational action, but with irrational and unconscious habit, long buried in folkways and custom. Intelligent propaganda, legal enactment and reasoned action must attack the conditioned reflexes of race hate and change them.

Slowly but surely I came to see that for many years, perhaps many generations, we could not count on any such majority, that the whole set of the white world in America, in Europe and in the world was too determinedly against racial equality to give power and persuasiveness to our agitation. Therefore, I began to emphasize and restate certain implicit aspects of my former ideas I tried to say to the American Negro during the time of this frontal attack which you are making upon American and European prejudice, and with your unwavering statement and restatement of what is right and just, not only for us, but in the long run, for all men, during this time, there are certain things you must do for your own survival and self-preservation You must put behind your demands, not simply American Negroes, but West Indians and Africans and all the colored races of the world These things I began to say with no lessening, or thought of lessening of my emphasis upon the essential rightness of what we had been asking for a generation in the political and civic social equality

It was clear to me that agitation against race prejudice and a planned economy for bettering the economic condition of the American Negro were not antagonistic ideals but part of one ideal, that it did not increase segregation, the segregation was there and would remain for many years But now I proposed that in economic lines, just as in lines of literature and religion, segregation should be planned and organized and carefully thought through This plan did not establish a new segregration, it did not advocate segregation as the final solution of the race problem, exactly the contrary, but it did face the facts and faced them with thoughtfully mapped effort

Of course I soon realized that in this matter of segregation I was touching an old and bleeding sore in Negro thought From the eighteenth century down the Negro intelligentsia has regarded segregation as the visible badge of their servitude and as the object of their unceasing attack. The upper-class Negro has almost never been nationalistic He has never planned or thought of a Negro state or a Negro church or a Negro school This solution has always been a thought upsurging from the mass, because of pressure which they could not withstand and which compelled a racial institution or chaos. Continually such institutions were founded and developed,

but this took place against the advice and best thought of the intelligentsia

American Negroes have always feared with perfect fear their eventual expulsion from America. They have been willing to submit to caste rather than face this. The reasons have varied but today they are clear, Negroes have no Zion. There is no place where they can go today and not be subject to worse caste and greater disabilities from the dominant white imperialistic world than they suffer here today On the other hand, there is no likelihood just now of their being forcibly expelled So far as that is concerned, there was no likelihood ten years ago of the Jews being expelled from Germany The cases are far from parallel There is a good deal more profit in cheap Negro labor than in Jewish fellow citizens, which brings together strange bedfellows for the protection of the Negro On the other hand, one must remember that this is a day of astonishing change, injustice and cruelty, and that many Americans of stature have favored the transportation of Negroes and they were not all of the mental caliber of the present junior senator from Mississippi As the Negro develops from an easily exploitable, profit-furnishing laborer to an intelligent independent self-supporting citizen, the possibility of his being pushed out of his American fatherland may easily be increased rather than diminished We may be expelled from the United States as the Jew is being expelled from Germany

At any rate it is the duty of American Negroes today to examine this situation not with hysteria and anger but with calm forethought Whether self-segregation for his protection, for inner development and growth in intelligence and social efficiency, will increase his acceptability to white Americans or not, that growth must go on And whatever the event may bring, it must be faced as men face crises and not with surprise and helpless amazement It was astonishing and disconcerting and yet, for the philosopher, perfectly natural that this change of my emphasis was crassly and stupidly misinterpreted by the Negroes Appropriating as their own (and indeed now it was their own) my long insistence on self-respect and self-assertion and the demand for every equality on the part of the Negro, they seemed determined to insist that my newer emphasis was a repudiation of the older, that now I wanted segregation; that now I did not want equality; that now I was asking for

black people to act as black people and forcibly overthrow the dominance of the white.

I can see an assembly in Philadelphia, when I went down to say to the colored people that the demand of Leslie Hill to make the Cheyney school a college supported by the State of Pennsylvania was wise and inevitable "It will be a Negro college!" shouted the audience, as though such a thing had never been heard of "It will be Segregation," said a woman, who had given much of her life to furthering the fight for Negro equality I can see her now, brown, tense, bitter, as she lashed me with the accusation of advocating the very segregation that I had been fighting It was in vain that I pointed out that Cheyney was already segregated, that without the help of the State, the school would die, that with the help of the State it could be a great school, regardless of the fact that its teachers and students were Negroes And, moreover, there was no reason in the world why some of the teachers and some of the students could not eventually be white

Another incident occurred during these years, which shows the increasing paradox of race segregation in the United States The Rosenwald Fund proposed in 1931 to start a crusade for better hospitalization for Negroes Negro health needed to be safeguarded and improved and one of the main reasons for the Negro sickness and death rate was the fact that Negroes were not furnished hospital facilities, and that their physicians were very often not admitted to medical schools for study nor to hospitals for practice They proposed, therefore, to help in the building and equipment of Negro hospitals and in the education of Negro physicians.

Just how far they proposed to go, they did not make clear because before they had thoroughly matured their plans they were bitterly attacked by Dr Louis Wright of New York and others Louis Wright was a special favorite of mine The stepfather who brought him up was my own family physician for years I had followed Wright's career as he fought his way through Harvard and made a fine record. He began practice in New York and then at the time of the World War went to France as a captain in a colored medical unit of the AEF and there had a distinguished career He came back and fought his way into prominence in the Harlem Hospital of New York, which up to his time had admitted no Negroes. In time Louis

Wright became an authority in many branches of surgery and medicine, he was with reluctance admitted to the American College of Surgeons and was appointed one of the seven members of the Board of Surgeons of the Police Department of New York He is an outstanding man, gifted and thoroughly unselfish, and the one thing that he fought with unceasing energy was discrimination against Negroes in hospitals, whether as medical practitioners or patients He violently attacked the Rosenwald board saying that the method of segregated hospitals and segregated training for Negro physicians was not the way to go at the matter; that what ought to be done was to insist in season and out that Negroes be admitted to medical schools and hospital practice without regard to color.

I saw and saw clearly the argument on both sides to this controversy I was heart and soul with Louis Wright in his fight against segregation and yet I knew that for a hundred years in this America of ours it was going to be at least partially in vain I was heart and soul with the Rosenwald Fund, what Negroes need is hospital treatment now, and what Negro physicians need is hospital practice, and to meet their present need, poor hospitals are better than none, segregated hospitals are better than those where the Negro patients are neglected or relegated to the cellar

Yet in this case I was unable to decide or take part I wrote a rather perfunctory editorial in general upholding Dr Wright, but I was sorry to see the larger plan of the Rosenwald Fund curtailed and cut down to a mere ghost of its first self Whatever the merits of this particular controversy were, I am certain that for many generations American Negroes in the United States have got to accept separate medical institutions They may dislike it, they may and ought to protest against it; nevertheless it will remain for a long time their only path to health, to education, to economic survival.

The NAACP from the beginning faced this bogey It was not, never had been and never could be an organization that took an absolute stand against race segregation of any sort under all circumstances This would be a stupid stand in the face of clear and incontrovertible facts When the NAACP was formed, the great mass of Negro children were being trained in Negro schools; the great mass of Negro churchgoers were members of churches, the great mass of Negro citizens lived in Negro neighborhoods; the great mass of

Negro voters voted with the same political party, and the mass of Negroes joined with Negroes and co-operated with Negroes in order to fight the extension of this segregation and to move toward better conditions What was true in 1910 was still true in 1940 and will be true in 1970. But with this vast difference that the segregated Negro institutions are better organized, more intelligently planned and more efficiently conducted, and today form in themselves the best and most compelling argument for the ultimate abolition of the color line.

To have started out in this organization with a slogan, "no segregation," would have been impossible What we did say was no increase in segregation, but even that stand we were unable to maintain Whenever we found that an increase of segregation was in the interest of the Negro race, naturally we had to advocate it We had to advocate better teachers for Negro schools and larger appropriation of funds We had to advocate a segregated camp for the training of Negro officers in the World War We had to advocate group action of Negro voters in elections We had to advocate all sorts of organized movement among Negroes to fight oppression and in the long run end segregation

On the other side, white friends and enemies were rather gleeful in having so apt a club fashioned to their hands "Chauvinism!" they said, when I urged Pan-African solidarity for the accomplishment of universal democracy "Race prejudice," they intimated, was just as reprehensible when shown by black toward white as when shown by white toward black Here again it was nearly useless to reiterate So long as we were fighting a color line, we must strive by color organization We have no choice If in time, the fight for Negro equality degenerates into organized murder for the suppression of whites, then our last case is no better than our first; but this need not be, if we are level-headed and clear-sighted and work for the emancipation of all men from caste through the organization and determination of the present victims of caste

All this is bound to right itself logically in the minds of American Negroes and Africans, and West Indians, once it has been thoroughly digested and thought through But the domination of ideas always has this disadvantage in the presence of active, living, personal dictatorship. It is slow, painfully slow. It works with the vast delibera-

tion of perhaps that lack of rational thought which is characteristic of the human mind, but its ultimate triumph is inevitable and complete, so long as the ideas are kept clear and before the minds of men I shall not live to see entirely the triumph of this, my newer emphasis, but it will triumph just as much and just as completely as did my advocacy of agitation and self-assertion It is indeed a part of that same original program, it is its natural and inevitable fulfillment

No sooner had I come to this conclusion than I soon saw that I was out of touch with my organization and that the question of leaving it was only a matter of time This was not an easy decision, to give up *The Crisis* was like giving up a child, to leave the National Association was leaving the friends of a quarter of a century But on the other hand, staying meant silence, a repudiation of what I was thinking and planning Under such circumstances, what could I do? I had seen the modern world as few of my fellow workers had West African villages, Jamaican homes, Russian communism, German disaster, Italian fascism, Portuguese and Spanish life, France and England repeatedly and every state in the United States I knew something of the seething world I could seek through my editorship of *The Crisis* slowly but certainly to change the ideology of the NAACP and of the Negro race into a racial program for economic salvation along the paths of peace and organization

There were two alternatives to change the board of directors of the NAACP so as to substitute a group which agreed with this program, or to leave the Association If the first could be done without a prolonged fight, I was willing to undertake it I was appointed a member of the next nominating committee, five new members were proposed who would have begun the reorganization When, however, the committee gave its report the majority had changed from the persons agreed upon and substituted two or three excellent persons who unfortunately were either absolutely reactionary in their social and economic outlook or basically ignorant

The Association seemed to me not only unwilling to move toward the left in its program but even stepped decidedly toward the right And what astonished me most was that this economic reaction was voiced even more by the colored members of the Board of Directors than the white One could realize why a rich white liberal should suspect fundamental economic change, but it was most difficult for

me to understand that the younger and more prosperous Negro professional men, merchants and investors were clinging to the older ideas of property, ownership and profits even more firmly than the whites The liberal white world saw the change that was coming despite their wish The upper-class colored world did not anticipate nor understand it.

When now I came advocating new, deliberate and purposeful segregation for economic defense in precisely the lines of business and industry whither the NAACP was not prepared to follow, it was not an absolute difference of principle, but it was a grave difference as to further procedure When I criticized the Secretary for his unsound explanation of the historic stand of the NAACP on segregation, the Board of Directors voted May 21, 1934, "that *The Crisis* is the organ of the Association and no salaried officer of the Association shall criticize the policy, work or officers of the Association in the pages of *The Crisis*" Thereupon I forthwith gave up my connection with the Association saying

"In thirty-five years of public service my contribution to the settlement of the Negro problems has been mainly candid criticism based on a careful effort to know the facts I have not always been right, but I have been sincere, and I am unwilling at this late day to be limited in the expression of my honest opinions in the way in which the Board proposes I am, therefore, resigning this resignation to take effect immediately" The board refused to accept this resignation and asked me to reconsider I did so, but finally wrote, June 26, "I appreciate the good will and genuine desire to bridge an awkward break which your action indicated and yet, it is clear to me, and I think to the majority of the Board, that under the circumstances my resignation must stand"

In finally accepting my resignation the Board was kind enough to say in part

"He founded *The Crisis* without a cent of capital, and for many years made it completely self-supporting, reaching a maximum monthly circulation at the end of the World War of 100,000 This is an unprecedented achievement in American journalism, and in itself worthy of a distinguished tribute. But the idea which he propounded in it and in his books and essays transformed the Negro world as well as a large portion of the liberal white world, so that the whole

problem of the relation of black and white races has ever since had a completely new orientation He created, what never existed before, a Negro intelligentsia, and many who have never read a word of his writings are his spiritual disciples and descendants. Without him the Association could never have been what it was and is

"The Board has not always seen eye to eye with him in regard to various matters, and cannot subscribe to some of his criticism of the Association and its officials. But such differences in the past have in no way interfered with his usefulness, but rather on the contrary For he had been selected because of his independence of judgment, his fearlessness in expressing his convictions and his acute and wide-reaching intelligence A mere yes-man could not even have stimulated the Board itself to further study of various important problems. We shall be the poorer for his loss, in intellectual stimulus, and in searching analysis of the vital problems of the American Negro, no one in the Association can fill his place with the same intellectual grasp We therefore offer him our sincere thanks for the services he has rendered, and we wish him all happiness in all that he may undertake."

I had already for some years begun to canvass the possibility of a change of work This, of course, is not easy when a person is over sixty years of age If he has not had the grace to die before this, he ought, in accordance with prevalent public opinion, at least to be willing to stop acting and thinking I did not agree with that I thought of many possibilities, but at last determined to accept an offer that had been made to me quietly in 1929, and periodically repeated from time to time when John Hope of Atlanta came to town We had been close friends since 1897 We taught together until 1910. Hope had joined the Niagara Movement and the NAACP We met in France in 1918 while he was a YMCA secretary, and I promoting Pan-Africa Always when he came to New York, we did a theater and a dinner, and discussed the reformation of the world When he became President of the newly organized Atlanta University, he invited me to join him.

Of course, this change of work had certain unpleasant necessities. It would not only involve giving up *The Crisis* and my connection with the Association It also involved the cold douche of a return to life in the South. I knew the South. In part I had been educated there. I had spent thirteen years teaching in Georgia and during my

connection with the NAACP nearly every year I traveled in the South to keep myself closely acquainted with its problems. The South of 1933 was not the South of 1897. In many respects it had improved and the relations between the races were better. Nevertheless the South is not a place where a man of Negro descent would voluntarily and without good reason choose to live Its civilization is decidedly lower than that of the North. Its state and local governments are poor and full of incompetency and graft, and its whole polity is menaced by mass hysteria and mob law Its police system is wretched and the low-grade white policeman full of crude race hate is the ruler who comes closest and in most immediate contact with black folk of all classes There is a caste system based on color, fortified in law and even more deeply entrenched in custom, which meets and coerces the dark man at nearly every step: in trains, in streetcars, in elevators, in offices, in education, in recreation, in religion and in graveyards. The economic organization is still in the nineteenth century with ruthless exploitation, low wages, child labor, debt peonage and profit in crime. The better classes, with gracious manners and liberal outlook, exist and slowly grow; but with these I would have little contact, and fear of the mob would restrain their meeting me or listening to me.

All this I faced, but I saw too the compensations After all, the place to study a social problem is where it centers and not elsewhere. The Negro problem in the United States centers in the southern South. There in the place of its greatest concentration, forces are institutions like Atlanta University. The university throws around its professors and students a certain protective coloration It is an inner community surrounded by beauty with unusual chances for intellectual and social contact. To a degree it furnishes recreation and avenues to culture Our library without doubt is the best in Atlanta; our music is unsurpassed and the chances here for quiet contemplation and the intellectual life are considerable.

Then, too, I could not forget that even in New York, with all its opportunity for human contact, with its unrivaled facilities for a center of world thought and culture, it was nevertheless no heaven for black folk Negroes were not welcome to its hotels and restaurants nor to most of its clubs and organizations Contact with human beings despite color is far wider than in Georgia; but yet, it is not

wide. Theaters and great music center in New York as nowhere else in America. But they are very costly; a theater once a month and opera once a year was as much as I could afford. By careful choice and delicate prevision I may in New York foot a path of broad cultural contact and wide physical freedom; it would be difficult to find a quiet, clean place to live; but if I can earn a living, I can be fairly content. I should certainly have there no such dread of the white mob and the police as Negroes must have in the southern South. Weighing and balancing all these considerations, I came back to Atlanta In a sense I returned to my ivory tower, not so much for new scientific research, as for interpretation and reflection; and for making a record of what I had seen and experienced.

The situation to which I returned was new Back as early as 1905, I had proposed to the seven colored colleges of Atlanta the beginning of efforts toward uniting these various institutions into one university We actually once had a meeting at Spelman, but the dean was definitely opposed. She said crisply that if her head was going to be taken off, she would prefer to bite it off herself. I turned then in 1909 to John Hope, the president of Morehouse, and we worked out an interchange of lectures between Morehouse and Atlanta University He wrote me in 1910 "I hope and believe this is the beginning of new and larger things in an educational way among our colored institutions . . . I feel downright enthusiasm over the beginning that our two schools made this year and hope that, now that we have made a start and have some slight idea of what can be accomplished, the two schools may next year do larger things." Hope was then president of Morehouse College but, in 1929, he realized our dream in the affiliation of three Negro colleges of Atlanta in the new Atlanta University, with himself as first president

Far back in 1910 before leaving Atlanta University I had read before the American Historical Association a paper on "Reconstruction and Its Benefits," which greatly exercised Ulrich Phillips, protagonist of the slave South, but brought praise from Dunning of Columbia, Hart of Harvard and others I was convinced then, and am more certain since, that the reason for certain adjectives applied to Reconstruction is purely racial. Reconstruction was "tragic," "terrible," a "great mistake" and a "humiliation," not because of what actually

happened. people suffered after the Civil War, but people suffer after all wars, and the suffering in the South was no greater than in dozens of other centers of murder and destruction No, the "tragedy" of Reconstruction was because here an attempt was initiated to make American democracy and the tenets of the Declaration of Independence apply not only to white men, but to black men While still in *The Crisis* office, through a grant from the Rosenwald Fund I had begun a history of the black man's part in Reconstruction This was my thesis Two years' work at Atlanta University finished my *Black Reconstruction* and it was published in 1935

Next I naturally turned my thought toward putting into permanent form that economic program of the Negro which I believed should succeed and implement the long fight for political and civil rights and social equality which it was my privilege for a quarter of a century to champion I tried to do this in a preliminary way, through a little study of the "Negro and the New Deal" which I was asked to undertake in 1936 by the colored "Associates in Negro Folk Education," working under the American Association for Adult Education The editor of this series, Alain Locke, pressed me for the manuscript and by working hard I finished it and was paid for it just before my trip abroad in 1936 I think I made a fair and pretty exhaustive study of the experience of the Negro from 1933 to 1936 and by way of summing up I appended a statement and credo which I had worked out through correspondence with a number of the younger Negro scholars It was this

1. We American Negroes are threatened today with lack of opportunity to work according to gifts and training and lack of income sufficient to support healthy families, according to standards demanded by modern culture.

2. In industry, we are a labor reservoir, fitfully employed and paid a wage below subsistence, in agriculture, we are largely disfranchised peons; in public education, we tend to be disinherited illiterates; in higher education, we are the parasites of reluctant and hesitant philanthropy.

3. In the current reorganization of industry, there is no adequate effort to secure us a place in industry, to open opportunity for Negro ability, or to give us security in age or unemployment.

4. Not by the development of upper classes anxious to exploit the workers, nor by the escape of individual genius into the white world, can we effect the salvation of our group in America And the salvation of this group carries with it the emancipation not only of the darker races of men who make the vast majority of mankind, but of all men of all races We, therefore, propose this

BASIC AMERICAN NEGRO CREED

A. As American Negroes, we believe in unity of racial effort, so far as this is necessary for self-expression, leading ultimately to the goal of a united humanity and the abolition of all racial distinctions

B We repudiate all artificial and hate-engendering deification of race separation as such, but just as sternly, we repudiate an enervating philosophy of Negro escape into an artificially privileged white race which has long sought to enslave, exploit and tyrannize over all mankind

C We believe that the "Talented Tenth" among American Negroes, fitted by education and character to think and do, should find primary employment in determining by study and measurement the present field and demand for racial action and the method by which the masses may be guided along this path

D We believe that the problems which now call for such racial planning are Employment, Education and Health, these three· but the greatest of these is Employment.

E We believe that the labor force and intelligence of twelve million people is more than sufficient to supply their own wants and make their advancement secure Therefore, we believe that, if carefully and intelligently planned, a co-operative Negro industrial system in American can be established in the midst of and in conjunction with the surrounding national industrial organization and in intelligent accord with that reconstruction of the economic basis of the nation which must sooner or later be accomplished

F. We believe that Negro workers should join the labor movement and affiliate with such trade unions as welcome them and treat them fairly We believe that Workers' Councils organized by Negroes for interracial understanding should strive to fight race prejudice in the working class

G. We believe in the ultimate triumph of some form of Socialism

the world over; that is, common ownership and control of the means of production and equality of income

H. We do not believe in lynching as a cure for crime, nor in war as a necessary defense of culture, nor in violence as the only path to economic revolution Whatever may have been true in other times and places, we believe that today in America we can abolish poverty by reason and the intelligent use of the ballot, and above all by that dynamic discipline of soul and sacrifice of comfort which, revolution or no revolution, must ever be the only real path to economic justice and world peace

I We conceive this matter of work and equality of adequate income as not the end of our effort, but the beginning of the rise of the Negro race in this land and the world over, in power, learning and accomplishment

J We believe in the use of our vote for equalizing wealth through taxation, for vesting the ultimate power of the state in the hands of the workers, and as an integral part of the working class, we demand our proportionate share in administration and public expenditure

K. This is and is designed to be a program of racial effort and this narrowed goal is forced upon us today by the unyielding determination of the mass of the white race to enslave, exploit and insult Negroes, but to this vision of work, organization and service, we welcome all men of all colors so long as their subscription to this creed is sincere and is proven by their deeds

This creed proved unacceptable both to the Adult Education Association and to its colored affiliates Consequently when I returned from abroad the manuscript, although ordered and already paid for, was returned to me as rejected for publication Just who pronounced the veto I do not know

I had next two other projects first, that large mass of material relating to the Negro in the World War, which the NAACP had never made an effort to use or publish I had been working at that off and on since 1919, and one year had a grant from the Social Science Council. But I had not yet got it in shape for publication. Another project in which I had long been interested was an Encyclopaedia of the Negro As early as 1901, I had planned an Encyclopaedia Africana and secured on my board of advisers Sir Flinders

Petrie, Sir Harry Johnston, Giuseppe Sergi, Dr J Deniker, William James, and Franz Boas, and on my proposed board of editors I had practically all the leading Negroes of the United States who were then inclined toward research My change to New York and the work of starting *The Crisis* and, finally, the World War, put this quite out of my mind.

In 1931, the Phelps-Stokes Fund called together a committee to consider a plan of arranging for the preparation and publication of an Encyclopaedia of the Negro To this first meeting I was not invited as my relations to some of the executives of the Fund during the past had not been cordial But those who met insisted upon myself and others being invited to the second meeting Overcoming a natural hesitation I went Eventually and to me quite unexpectedly I was designated as future chairman of the editorial board, in case the funds for the enterprise should ever be found

Since the incorporation of the Encyclopaedia in 1932, by the help of a small appropriation from the Phelps-Stokes Fund, I have been planning and working on preliminary arrangements for such an undertaking. We found the great Fund, from bitter experience, encyclopaedia-shy But, in addition to that, I fear that no money sufficient for the publication of such an encyclopaedia under the leadership of colored scholars and the collaboration of white men can be soon found I doubt if men would formulate their objection to such a procedure, but after all it would seem to them natural that any such work should be under the domination of white men At any rate, we have gotten together a definite and completely worked-out plan, even to the subjects and many of the proposed writers, which can in the future be used for an Encyclopaedia of the Negro, a publication sure to come in time.

In 1936, my application to the Oberlaender Trust for a chance to restudy Germany was granted I spent five months in Germany, and some time in England, France and Austria, interviewing scholars on the encyclopaedia project I then took a two months' trip around the world. I was not allowed to stop as long in Russia as I would have liked; but I traversed it in a swift week from Moscow to Otpur. Then I spent a week in Manchukuo, ten days in China and two weeks in Japan. I seemed confirmed in the wisdom of my life choice by the panorama of the world which swept before me in

London and Paris; Berlin and Vienna, Moscow and Mukden; Peiping and Shanghai; Kyoto and Tokyo; and heavenly Hawaii. Singularly enough in that journey I was most impressed with the poignant beauty of the world in the midst of its distress.

For several years I had been importuning my publishers to get out a new edition of the little book called *The Negro,* published first in 1915 in the Home University Series Finally, in 1938, they consented by suggesting an entirely new book This entailed a good deal of work of the highest interest and in which I took much satisfaction The resulting volume, *Black Folk Then and Now,* was published in 1939. Since then I have been interested in the book I am now writing, a further essay into fiction, and a university review of race and culture, *Phylon,* born this year.

In February, 1938, I reached the arresting age of seventy and despite some effort on my part to escape the immediate consequences of this indiscretion, two of my younger colleagues, Ira Reid and Rayford Logan, initiated and carried through a University celebration, with a convocation, a bust by Portnoff, a dinner and a talk. In that talk I was called upon to set forth something of my philosophy of life after traversing so many years. The essence of what I said can be summed up in these words

I have been favored among the majority of men in never being compelled to earn my bread and butter by doing work that was uninteresting or which I did not enjoy or of the sort in which I did not find my greatest life interest This rendered me so content in my vocation that I seldom thought about salary or haggled over it My first job paid me eight hundred dollars a year and to take it I refused one which offered ten hundred and fifty I served over a year at the University of Pennsylvania for the munificent sum of six hundred dollars and never railed at fate. I taught and worked at Atlanta University for twelve hundred a year during thirteen effective and happy years. I never once asked for an increase I went to New York for the salary offered and only asked for an increase there when an efficient new white secretary was hired at a wage above mine. I then asked equal salary. I did not want the shadow of racial discrimination to creep into our salary schedule. I realize now that this rather specious monetary independence may in the end cost me dearly, and land me in time upon some convenient street corner with a tin cup.

For I have saved nearly nothing and lost my life insurance in the depression. Nevertheless, I insist that, regardless of income, work worth-while which one wants to do as compared with highly paid drudgery is exactly the difference between heaven and hell.

I am especially glad of the divine gift of laughter, it has made the world human and livable, despite all its pain and wrong I am glad that the partial Puritanism of my upbringing has never made me afraid of life I have lived completely, testing every normal appetite, feasting on sunset, sea and hill, and enjoying wine, women, and song I have seen the face of beauty from the Grand Canyon to the great Wall of China, from the Alps to Lake Baikal, from the African bush to the Venus of Milo.

Perhaps above all I am proud of a straightforward clearness of reason, in part a gift of the gods, but also to no little degree due to scientific training and inner discipline By means of this I have met life face to face, I have loved a fight and I have realized that Love is God and Work is His prophet; that His ministers are Age and Death

This makes it the more incomprehensible for me to see persons quite panic-stricken at the approach of their thirtieth birthday and prepared for dissolution at forty Few of my friends have openly celebrated their fiftieth birthdays, and near none their sixtieth Of course, one sees some reason the disappointment at meager accomplishment which all of us to some extent share, the haunting shadow of possible decline, the fear of death I have been fortunate in having health and wise in keeping it I have never shared what seems to me the essentially childish desire to live forever. Life has its pain and evil—its bitter disappointments, but I like a good novel and in healthful length of days, there is infinite joy in seeing the World, the most interesting of continued stories, unfold, even though one misses The End.

NO DAY OF TRIUMPH

J. Saunders Redding

I SPENT the night at Negro Alcorn College, where in 1815 Negro slave artisans built the beautiful chapel and Belles Lettres Hall, which once were the principal buildings of Oakland College It was a school for rich planters' sons on both sides of the river then, and the river ran by Rodney But now the river has moved away and houses stand in what was once its bed The buildings of the college speak of those past days; every hall teems with memories, every brick is a muted tongue But the old carriage sheds now house machinery The playing field is a cotton patch There are girls now, too, black and sweet-limbed Black boys in white coats still serve the meals in the refectory, but now they serve other black boys in an atmosphere as decorous and as full of old-world manners as ever Oakland College was Among the moss-hung live oaks and the giant pecan trees the bell from the tower chimes as sweetly as ever it did over the heads of the planters' sons

Young, hopeful, buoyant, a strange man in sand-hill Mississippi, though it is his home, President Bell said to me·

"We are proud of this place here We feel that we are not the unworthy heirs of a proud tradition."

Indeed, they might well be proud But they were also privileged, and privilege bred a tradition in which even Alcornians can feel no pride. But President Bell did not speak of this. I learned it from other sources

I learned that there are 217,000 Negro children of primary age who are not in school in Mississippi I learned that there are 105,000 Negro children of high-school age who are not in school Negro schools run three to seven months Directly controlling these schools are Negro trustees, and of the 7,000 Negro trustees, 6,000 cannot read or write their names An official told me this He makes such facts his business.

"For twelve years the figures have not varied by a hundred either way," the official said.

"Whose fault?" I asked.

He shrugged his shoulders in neither evasion nor excuse, but only because he saw it as a fact and facts are sometimes stubborn.

"No one's," he said "That's just Mississippi"

It was not a casual statement uttered in dismissal of the subject. Beneath its old-world manners and its ancient, memory-flooded beauty, Alcorn College, more than any public school I saw, faced the world with courteous courage, with bulldog teeth sheathed in the rubber of discretion—but with bulldog teeth.

"We'll keep on fighting it, and one day we'll break it, and that will be that It won't make much noise."

I saw also the Midgett boys, Willie and Ike They were twinlike, brown as was their mother, slim of waist I told them I had been to their home. "How's all?" they wanted to know.

They were undetermined whether to wait to be called up in the draft or to volunteer They had been reading in the Negro papers of colored flying units "This war," Ike said, "is li'ble to open up things for the colored." But Willie, who was more like John Henry, said, "It's a got-dawg shame it takes a war to do it."

All of Claiborne County is alive with more than memories Here more than anywhere is one's mind susceptible to the impression of the total South as a land unified by its ancient passions, welded by its terrible contrasts The Natchez Trace, long the most murderous trail in America, runs through here On a back road stand the stately, melancholy ruins of Windsor, once the finest mansion in five counties, and the Presbyterian church where, legend says, General Grant broke into the stores of sacramental wine with which he rode drunk into Vicksburg Here Black Hiram Revels, whom the carpetbaggers sent to Congress, came eventually to live Here also, just beyond the town of Rodney, was pointed out to me a row of neat white cottages unknown outside the South In Louisiana, where a college president had to reach the ear of the Governor through the Governor's cook, I was told, "If the Negro wants to get somewhere, he's got to get the cooks and maids and butlers to thinking right They're more potent than all the nigger big shots" They say in Mississippi, "It is the concubines."

I stopped in Natchez only long enough to have a cup of chicory-

bitter coffee with some friends and to be told again that Natchez-under-the-Hills was no place to miss. "Did you know that only women, and those the most beautiful mulattoes, were sold on the bluff there? Why, it's full of our history" But history sometimes is an instrument neither of evaluation nor of diagnosis, and I did not see Natchez-under-the-Hills Instead I drove through the beautiful but spectral (made so by the Spanish moss weeping from huge oaks in innumerable country churchyards) country to Sibley, to Woodville, to Dolorosa, and into Louisiana

At Lofton Villa, just north of Bains, I was attracted by what might have been a ghost He stood leaning forward on a cane in front of the wrought-iron gates that guarded the driveway to what undoubtedly was an antebellum mansion hidden among the trees His white hair flowed in a kinky cloud beneath his high plug hat He wore a long, black broadcloth coat faced with satin With his cane he waved me down, but when I stopped and he saw that I was a Negro, he stood motionless, ignoring me, his eyes fixed on the ground On the gate behind him was a painted sign "Visitors from Ten to Three Uncle Eph Will Show You Around."

I simply called at first, but he did not answer.

"Didn't you wave me down?"

With elaborate deliberateness, lifting his eyes from the ground and looking up and down the empty road, he ignored me His face was the rusty brown of a late Kieffer pear. His arms, stiff as ramrods pressed downward on the cane, trembled with the strain of his concentration.

"Uncle Eph," I called

"Don' you call me dat!" he said And then I knew he was trembling with indignation He lifted his cane and beat it against the ground, while his old eyes blinked in exasperation. "Ah don' 'low no niggah-darky to call me dat Ah'm Mister Spate to you, if you got some business wif me." It seemed a remarkably strong voice for such a pipelike throat.

"Excuse me, Mr Spate," I said "I'm really very sorry"

My apology took the edge off his anger, but his dignity was not shaken. I had never seen a man more deliberate, a man whose simplest movement was wrought with care.

"Has you some business wif me?"

"I'd like to see Lofton Villa," I said.

"Niggah-darkies ain't 'lowed," he answered shortly. Then for a moment he could not decide whether to ignore me again or to speak further He took off his hat, drew a handkerchief from between the buttons of his coat and slowly wiped his hair straight back He wore a celluloid collar without a tie His stiff shirt front was soiled.

"Dis is still de big gate. In de ol' times, darkies didn' much as stop to de big gate"

"Were you living then, Mr Spate?" I asked, trying to put the proper respect in my voice

"'Co'se Ah was Ah'm some sebenty-seben years ol' Miss 'Legra's got de writin' Miss 'Legra say Ah'm de las' bo'ned darky on dis plantation Miss 'Legra say Ah'm de las kinda darky she used to. Miss 'Legra say when she gawn an' Ah'm gawn, de good Lawd gawn' a close up His book an' leav de worl' to de ol' boy hisse'f. Dat's what she say"

I tried to picture this Miss Allegra wandering disconsolately through the dead, still time in the decaying mansion I could not see What was she like? But I could not picture her, and I could never really know Even of Ephriam Spate I had only an imperfect understanding In time and history their place was fixed, but it was a measure of the weight of change that both in time and history they seemed as remote as the origin of the stars I gazed at Ephraim Spate against the visible background of his times, and all I could see was a park, like an old, old cemetery full of weary trees

"And do you believe this, too, Mr Spate? That the Lord will close His book?"

"Ah cert'ny do, suh!" All this time he had stood in the recess before the gate, a dozen feet away from me Now he took a step nearer "De Lawd's gawn snap His gol' book shet an' dis old worl' gawn reel an' rock wif thunder"

"Suppose you die first, Mr Spate?"

"Ah ain't gawn go firs'," he said, as if arrangements were already complete "What kind' a triflin' darky you think Ah is? De Lawd know Miss 'Legra's min' on de matter, an' He know Ah got to look atter her. He wouldn' play no sech trick as dat" I thought his mouth quivered a little, perhaps in doubt But he said, "Ah'm satisfied de Lawd know dat."

I had no chance to question him further, for just then another car drove up—a car from Maine—and stopped. There were white people in it, and Ephraim Spate waved me on impatiently.

On through Bains and St. Francisville, and at Dixie I sped over the long Mississippi River bridge and went west and north through the table-flat Louisiana countryside over the fine roads built by Huey Long Cane was being harvested Great fields of it, like giant marsh grass, dwarfed everything else in the landscape. Drawn by four mules, huge wagonloads of it trundled by me on its way to the great refineries near New Orleans The raw-beefsteak smell of the immense marshes was in the air

In the side yards of houses old-fashioned cane mills, drawn round and round by mules or black men, ground out cane juice Fires blazed under cooking vats Sorghum Sorghum, corn bread, and hog meat Corn in Georgia, hogs in Tennessee But in Louisiana it was the cane. Men with machetes cut it, and women in pants piled it Black and white men, black and white women And at night around the cooking vats, black men on one side, white on the other—the ring of men as evenly divided between black and white as if some biologic law was at work—listening to the wind moaning in the lonesome brakes, drinking last year's fermented cane juice from stone jugs, they told tales

"Yes, suh Every good crop year, my grandfather told me, just after planting time, this right young gal—maybe she was a Cajun gal—would meet this great big man about midnight in the middle of the field, and they'd lay down together They always knowed when they was there, 'cause the next mawning they'd see the print of where they'd laid at in the ground And if the sorghum was goin'a be good an' thick, then just before cutting time a nigger gal and a Indian would go to the same place and lay down together. Nobody ever seen these people, nor yet the other ones, but it was easy to tell when the nigger gal and the Indian had been there, too, 'caus they'd beat down about a six-foot square of cane and make a bed-like, and in the mawning it would be there"

And from the other side, a voice

"But, Cap'n, Ah ain't disputin' ya, y'un'erstan' Ah jes' wud like ter know how dey knowed it was a niggah gal an' a Injun man."

"You got me. boy You sure got me."

Across the red Atchafalaya River the towns had colorful, haunting names Sunset, Carenco, Opelousas, Breaux Bridge. Into Bayou Teche and the Evangeline country around St Martinsville Longfellow's Evangeline was here, the legend says, and here her people ended their long flight from Nova Scotia They built the first steep-roofed houses. The houses and the fields kept by their descendants were as neat as picture postcards The scale of things was smaller here There was plenty of cane, but it grew only to man-height and well back from the road Every house stood in a fence and every fence corner was neatly stacked with firewood. Even the sleek cattle were like pictures on a billboard.

The small dark people—sometimes so dark as to be indistinguishable from the Negroes who live among them—keep their ancient customs The country is as distinctive of them as green is of postcard grass They still build their houses high and gabled, still speak the ancient, liquid language, still bear such names as LeBeau, Broussard, Mouton, Fornet, Lefate, Rousseve And they have given their names, and sometimes their blood, to Negroes

They have given their name and blood to Menola Melancon, who waited on me in the restaurant where I took my meals in Gabriel. Menola's skin was the warm yellow color of a pumpkin Luxuriant black hair glinted with blue lights and hung to her broad, square shoulders. Her breasts stood up aggressively, and in her gait there was a certain casual frankness For two days she served me, smiling often at my ignorance of crayfish bisque, pompano and the fried, delicious, gourdlike things stuffed with all manner of sea food She seldom spoke to me beyond a good morning or a good evening, uttered in liquid, queer accent. But often she stood in the kitchen door and screamed in Creole patois at her mother, a little black woman, who screamed more loudly back again

After an unusually violent and protracted bout of screaming the third morning, I asked Menola what the trouble was I could hear her mother in the kitchen still talking excitedly to herself and throwing things about

"Oh, it nothing," Menola said, shrugging her magnificent shoulders and jamming her hands into the pockets of her apron Then in a

burst of confidence, she put her hands on the back of the chair facing mine, and said·

"She say I too free-hand to you I don't care for what she say, me. 'He eat it all,' I say, 'an' he pay for it He hungry.' She say, 'Too much to eat Too little bit money' Pooh Like dat She say, 'Play Seaburg too much Seaburg take 'lectric 'Lectric cos' money. Blues. Blues. Blues' I say you like music Then I say, 'Pooh' Like dat" She threw up her hands in a liquid gesture and jammed them again in her pockets

"But if you have been giving me more than my money's worth," I said, embarrassed They were probably not having an easy time In two days I had not seen another customer, except a white man who stopped in every evening to play all the trick slot machines, of which there were a dozen

"Really," I said And then I kept quiet, not knowing what to say.

"You like Creole food? You like music 'Do I worry?' You like 'So Long'?"

Neither of us saw the mother until she was upon us and screaming in Menola's ear Her words were unintelligible to me She held a lighted, homemade cigarette between the middle fingers of her hand, and with this she seemed to be threatening Menola's eyes. Menola stood still, looking at her mother, her hands jammed in her apron When the mother had screamed herself out, Menola began, shrugging her shoulders, gesturing violently with her head, her hands, her whole rich body Any moment I expected to see them claw each other, but they did not, and the screaming ended as abruptly as it began Menola marched away, only to stop in the kitchen door.

Smiling, showing remarkably even teeth, the mother leaned across the table close to my face

"She full of tricks," the mother said, throwing a glance full of meaning at Menola.

"Shame!" Menola said, this time herself advancing and jabbing her forefinger through the air "You full of tricks Shame! Shame!" She stopped halfway and waited to see what her mother would say next

"She full of tricks, her. She want big money, go to Louis Armstrong. She give 'way food, her," the mother said, smiling acidly

over her shoulder at Menola. "Give food, play music, smile nice, get big tip, go Louis Armstrong She full of conjure, her. She got plait-eye."

"Lie! Lie!" Menola screamed But her mother only looked at her. Still smiling acidly, and now mouthing her clumsy cigarette, she brushed by Menola and went into the kitchen.

"She thinks you're giving me too much food," I said My appetite was completely gone I had eaten only one of the corn cakes with a little syrup and a small bit of the black, highly seasoned sausage

"Pooh for her," Menola said But she seemed less confident now. She looked past me through the big window into the narrow, shell-paved street

Long wagons pulled by tractors or sleek mules and piled high with cane rumbled by at intervals Black boys rode those mobile cane piles as if they were driving chariots on a dangerous course. Opposite the tiny restaurant stood a tiny fish market, and between it and a dark-windowed store, where long, black sausages, black hams and black rubber boots hung from the eaves, rose a mound of oyster shells higher than either the fish market or the store

"Do you want to hear Louis Armstrong?" I asked, thinking that perhaps I had been tricked after all "Will you go with me?"

She looked at me, her eyes big with suspicion, disbelief

"I mean it"

Her acceptance was casual, I thought, even a little cursory But in the next moment she was at the table and breaking excitedly into the strange and beautiful and somehow emotion-compelling language of which I understood not a word

Later I called her mother from the kitchen and paid her ten cents a meal extra, forty cents in all Menola cried shame, but her mother, smiling and tucking the loose coins in the folds of her headcloth, only stroked her arms and called Menola a nice girl "Nice girl, she" And Menola took this reversal of opinion with an indifferent shrug.

They lived in two small rooms over the restaurant, and that evening I simply ate later and stayed in the restaurant until Menola was ready Every few minutes, while I wasted nickels in the slot machines, the mother came to the kitchen door and smiled at me No one at all came in When Menola came down, I could not see that she had needed time to get ready. She wore the same open-work

sandals on her bare feet. Her hair was dressed in the same way, and under her cheap cloth coat she wore the same dress of green knitted stuff that she had been wearing all day. From the kitchen her mother brought a shoe box tied with string

It was not far to the school on the edge of the town. There was a steady stream of people going. Their laughter and their gay voices rose all around us in the soft darkness Frequently the words we heard were Creole words. In this section of the town there were no street lights, and pretty soon no sidewalks Whenever the loaded cane wagons went by, the lights from their axles making weird patterns of shadows, everyone would scurry to the side of the road, and someone would yell something gay or obscene, and there would be a general laughter Once Menola called out something to a passing wagon that I could not understand All who heard her laughed.

"What did you say, Menola?" I asked

" 'I say, Crow egg'," she said "It just something to say He might be white man and I say crow egg I feel good " She laughed gaily

"Tell me about yourself, Menola," I said

"How you mean tell?" I could feel her looking at me in the darkness, and I looked at her Her eyes seemed to catch up all the faint points and lines of light there were and to fling them back at me.

"You know Just things in general."

She turned her face from me, and we walked on in silence for several paces We had turned off the big road and now were walking down the narrow road to the school We could see the dim lights in the many windows of the low schoolhouse and many people standing in the yard around the door The atmosphere, the whole scene seemed strangely foreign and exciting. Menola put her hand lightly on my arm and turned to me again.

"I am born in Bayou Congo. Some time, some time too soon, I die Now I live That is all "

And I knew that was indeed all she would answer to my direct questioning It was enough. She was born, she would die, but now she lived. That was the great point, that now she lived She seemed to assume that I knew what her living was; that because I, too, lived, her definition of life and mine were both the same.

We pressed into the crowd at the door where tickets were sold. A great many people were not buying tickets, but were just standing

in the way, calling out to friends, shouting comments, making a gay, noisy crowd. Most of them were men and young boys, but there were also women and young girls among them. The two men at the door, one white and the other colored, could do nothing with the crowd. At each entreaty to move back and let the "paying customers in," the crowd laughed at and jeered them

"Treat, trade ur travel," the colored man shouted to the crowd. "If you can't pea, git off the pot"

Laughter and comments answered this. Behind me, Menola fastened her arms around my waist and helped me press closer to the door. The shoe box in one hand and money for the tickets in the other, I let the crowd take me Various voices called to Menola. A great many of them had a rising inflection and a foreign-sounding pitch Menola answered them all with a gay, "Hi, you"

"Come on, y'all niggahs Git out the way!" the colored man shouted. "If you ain't got no money, you can't git in yere."

"Dat what he think," someone said

"Aw, go to hell, ol' niggah!" another said.

"Ain't dis a free country?"

"Yeah Free schools an' dumb niggahs"

By the time we reached the door and I was stretching out my hand for tickets, the music started The pressure behind grew stronger. The crowd was banked from the door to the road The white ticket seller yelled for help The Negro shouted obscenities at the crowd until his throat swelled and a great vein corded on his forehead. The crowd roared back at him and did a lot of playful shoving, a lot of purposeful pressing, and then I caught myself roaring, too, laughing, with the crowd The music, which seemed untimed and without harmony, dripped through the air. The crowd heaved. The ticket seller grabbed for my money, missed, and I dropped it, and then we were forced through the door

"Come on," Menola said, snatching my arm The men at the door had their hands full. The white man was shouting for help; the Negro was cursing and shouting They were trying to close the flimsy double doors against the crowd "Come on," Menola said, and I followed her broad shoulders across the dim lamp-lighted hall and through the door to the auditorium

It was not a large auditorium, and it was already well filled. There

was a single row of collapsible chairs along each long wall. At the far end of the room, on a makeshift platform, sat the orchestra. Packed around the orchestra behind a wire screen was a crowd of white people They had been let in a side door. Louis Armstrong's orchestra had played for whites the night before, but tickets had cost two dollars each These were taking advantage of the dollar rates for colored Now they were packed so tight behind the wire that they could not dance On the main portion of the floor were people of all shades, from those as white as any behind the screen to the soot-black common to the isolated, inbred racial islands dotting the back country of Louisiana and Mississippi They were dressed in a variety of styles Women in long party dresses danced by with men in denim. Girls in gingham and calico house dresses, barelegged as was Menola, jumped the boogie with young men dressed in the long, tight-waisted coats and the narrow-bottomed trousers that were the latest style Most of the older women wore the bright-colored headcloths which seemed to be standard among them. With godly impartiality, the music flowed over white and black alike.

Menola and I found seats near the screen. For a time she was content to watch, and refused several dances with youths who came up and simply held out their hands wordlessly. I had not the slightest idea that she was refusing dances on my account. My whole attention was centered in the dancers around me, in the absorbed faces and the strangely detached, recklessly flung bodies The sudden bursts of laughter and snatches of talk enthralled me. The warm odors, at once sweet and yeasty, evoked memories beyond recalling and also beyond belief A curious, throbbing, impersonal force flowed through me and around me in an unstemmable tide It was in the music, in the soft, soft niggerskins, in the pale whiteskins

"Come on. I want to dance, me," Menola said, rising suddenly and standing before me.

"But I don't very well," I said.

"Come on. Go with the music. Go how I go."

We moved onto the floor in the midst of the crowd. "See It be's easy." And after a while it was easy, not unlike being carried along on the bosom of a stream, feeling the tug of its tide, becoming partaker of its strength and freedom I could feel myself expanding until it seemed that, in a way almost as physical as my hand on Menola's

waist, I touched the people around me. A few white couples had forced the screen and were also dancing on the edge of the crowd. Far from disturbing me, this fact gave a linear perspective to the scene, added piquancy to my jumbled feelings Now, I thought, we have a microcosm of the American world And then I tried to shut off my mind as one shuts a faucet off, for I realized the possibilities of dangerous absurdity in this symbolism I gave myself up to the dance.

Louis Armstrong's trumpet dropped music with physical dimensions, notes as solid as golf balls A kind of careless but controlled enthusiasm and gratification possessed the dancers

"You like it?" Menola asked

"Yes," I answered

"To dance is easy."

She moved a pace from me and took a few independent steps, shaking her shoulders and her head as men and women were doing all over the hall Her big, vital body weaved a fluid pattern before me. She swayed in the unmistakable vestige of a symbolic dance remembered by her blood. Her blood! Which blood of these the Cajun, Indian, Negro, white in her? Her black hair clung to her neck. She moved easily in the crowd, parting from me with a twitch of her hips and joining me again, touching me lightly and, in that touch, giving me to the crowd and to herself Joining, parting to join again and yet remaining free. Her upper lip beaded with perspiration

When the music stopped, we got huge boiled crabs and eggplant stuffed with crayfish from the shoe box Thus provided, we walked through the crowd. Everyone was eating, fish sandwiches and hot dogs, boiled crabs and hamburgers. We bought dripping bottles of soda water from the vendor, and we went up to have a look at Louis Armstrong and his band Only a few white people were behind the screen now The others were out on the floor.

"You feel good, like me?" Menola asked.

"Yes, I do"

"Everybody feel good You like it, hunh?"

"I like it fine," I said

When the music started again I did not dance, but sat against the wall near the orchestra. Menola swooped off with a yellow, flat-faced buck who moved as lightly as a breeze. I got swift glimpses of her

moving through the crowd. I saw her everywhere, like an embodied essence. A part of the crowd, she melted into it, emerged again, and always she moved with absolute freedom.

Later that night, as I lay in bed and thought about that scene, it was this freedom that struck me, and I knew that every dancer in that crowd would have given me the same impression. It was not Menola alone, or something she alone possessed, it was in and of the crowd. It was that the crowd, living in the present, believed in it "Now I live," Menola had said, and she was unbeholden to all that was sterile in the past. It was that she and they, the crowd, breathed the air of freedom It was that they, emergent from the womb of slavery, sucked in the air of freedom, and they loved it

But it was not this alone that I felt. I felt that I had come a far way, not in space and time alone, but in something which even to myself I feared to call understanding I dared not boast anything so final and satisfying as comprehension Only an utter fool would pretend to enough discernment and insight and to a sympathy sufficiently broad to embrace the total meaning of all I had seen and heard and of all that there was to be felt Yet there are fools I have heard them say, "I know and understand and love the Negro " The statement is usually made by someone in any discussion of the "Negro problem " It is meant by the speaker to indicate that he has all the answers to the problem But it is an empty boast (it is also pure condescension), and it is based upon a fallacy That fallacy is that the Negro is a problem both in vacuo and in toto, whereas in reality the Negro is only an equation in a problem of many equations, an equally important one of which is the white man To know and understand and love the Negro is not enough One must know and understand and love the white man as well.

It was in this direction—in the direction of knowledge and understanding and love—that I felt I had come a little way I do not boast of this. Under the circumstances it was almost inevitable I had set out in nearly hopeless desperation to find both as Negro and as American certain values and validities that would hold for me as man It is not enough in America to be Negro. It is not enough to be Negro American, or brown American, or colored American There is an easily comprehensible mind-set, a psychosis, indeed, born of

more than two centuries of slavery and inbred for dozens of generations It was the point to Mike Chowan's bitter gibe, "There's a combine you can't beat—American, middle class, Negro." It was the burden of the bitter mouthings of innumerable men (and women) who had exhorted countless Negro audiences "Be a man!" It is a phrase that has always meant more to a Negro American than non-Negro Americans can imagine And so, in a bewilderment that years of planless seeking had increased, I had set out as Negro and American to find among my people those validities that proclaimed them and me men

And I think I found them Among all that was hollow and false and trifling (and there was much) I think I found those values and validities as quietly alive and solid, as deep-rooted as vigorous trees. They have simple names, and they have been called before Other peoples have been said to have them, but that makes them no less good Indeed, that they are the attributes of other peoples, men, makes them of the highest importance to me That Negroes hold these values in common with others is America's fortune and, in a very immediate sense, the Negro American's salvation For these things they hold valid and valuable are the highest common denominator of mankind They are the bane of those who would destroy freedom, and they need no other justification than this. They are the intangibles in the scale of human values They are, unmistakably, integrity of spirit, love of freedom, courage, patience, hope

But that night, too, I thought of the meaning of where I had come from, of what I hoped I had left behind I thought of the false and hollow things and people I had been one of them, I thought They lived imbedded in a cocoon of memory and experience not their own And this was cowardice The traditions by which they lived were dried like husks They clung to a tradition of freedom and of democracy, and not these themselves. And this was pride—pride in a past that had its roots in shame, mayhap, or in pure chance Freedom was for them a thing of lineage, of ancestry—a free father, grandfather, great-grandfather And the problem of living in a tradition was a problem in logic and pride "Freedom," they say, "democratic freedom is a logical thing, a two plus two thing" It is rational, simply They have no convictions about it But they have

the tradition And one thing about a tradition is that it is the form of a thing completed, a finished thing But freedom is not a finished thing. Democracy is not. That is why I saw so much pain, so much groping, so much growing That is why there was Ephraim Spate and Mike Chowan, Leroy Stepteau and the cop in Memphis, because democracy and freedom are not finished, perfected things. Freedom is a principle And one thing about a principle is that is is an emotional thing It may be logical, but it is also emotional It takes conviction to live by a principle—a conviction that the principle is good, or honorable, or life-saving, or soul-saving And conviction is emotional And some day, I thought, these others may learn this· that something more than a free ancestor, or a tradition, or the law of the land must keep freedom and the love of freedom green

That night as I lay in bed in the little town of Gabriel, a thousand miles from all that had meant refuge, I felt at home and at peace, even with all that lay ahead of unending struggle (for I was not blind to this) and remaking in the faintly glimmering future This was victory for me, not triumph No man alone can ever know such triumph as I had hope for in the years ahead

The next morning I went to the restaurant Menola served me thick, black, tough-skinned sausages, corn cakes, coffee gray with milk I had told her the night before that I would be leaving after breakfast

"Where you go now?" she asked.

"Texas Oklahoma"

"Me, I always remember last night.'

"So will I," I said.

The mother gave me a box crammed with pralines. Menola pressed a medallion of St. Christopher in my hand.

ST. LOUIS BLUES AND SOLVENT BANK

W. C. Handy

THE one-step, maxixe and other dances had been done to the tempo of Memphis Blues, which the Vernon Castles slowed up to introduce their original dance, the fox trot When "St Louis Blues" was written the tango was the vogue. I tricked the dancers by arranging a tango introduction, breaking abruptly then into a low-down blues My eyes swept the floor anxiously, then suddenly I saw the lightning strike The dancers seemed electrified Something within them came suddenly to life. An instinct that wanted so much to live, to fling its arms and to spread joy, took them by the heels. By this I was convinced that my new song was accepted.

When the evening was over, the band piled into cabs and followed me home to celebrate the birth of the new blues. But Maggie, arms akimbo and rolling pin poised, was waiting for Jiggs at the door. I had been away from home twenty-four hours, burning up worlds of energy to produce a song, but maybe I should have stated where I was going and what I intended to do. Failing to make that clear, I presume, the fault was mine But it's an awkward thing to announce in advance your intention of composing a song hit between midnight and dawn The talk more naturally follows the act, and that is what ultimately happened in my case.

The men of the band got a big kick out of my domestic drama. But after all, heads are made to be lumped in this funny-paper world—aren't they?

A criticism leveled at the "St. Louis Blues" by the trombonist of our band was that it needed a vamp, a vamp in the prevailing manner, to allow more time for the singer.

"Never! Never!" I exploded.

But the next day a pause mark was placed over the final note in the introduction in order to favor the singer with the required delay, and with that "St. Louis Blues" was completed, born in an age of vamps. September, 1914, without a vamp. Two years had elapsed since I first published "Memphis Blues," five years since I played

this first jazz composition using Osborne and the tenor sax that moaned like "a sinner on revival day." Well, they say that life begins at forty—I wouldn't know—but I was forty the year "St. Louis Blues" was composed, and ever since then my life has, in one sense at least, revolved around that composition.

Things began to happen immediately, big things and little things, pleasant and unpleasant. Through them all, as I see it now, Time and Chance were conspiring to snatch me away from Memphis, away from the wistful glamour of a swiftly changing Beale Street. The increasing success of my songs, the ups and downs of business and the dread shadows in the sun—each played a part.

The "St. Louis Blues" was followed by "Yellow Dog Rag" (Yellow Dog Blues), a song in which I undertook to answer the question raised by Shelton Brooks in his remarkable hit, "I Wonder Where My Easy Rider's Gone." The country had gone stark, raving mad over the sweet-loving jockey with the easy ways and the roving disposition. I proposed to pick up Susan Johnson and Jockey Lee, Brooks' characters, in a parody of the original lyric, locating the lost rider "down where the Southern cross' the Dog." Thus my song was made around the line (but not the music) I had heard the guitar player improvise that night at Tutwiler. Before "Yellow Dog" I had written "Joe Turner Blues," which was followed by "Hesitating Blues," "Shoeboot's Serenade" and finally "Beale Street" (Beale Street Blues), a hail and farewell to the old Beale, the street that was

At our home at 659 Janette Street manuscripts were thrown on the floor for the ink to dry Hour after hour I sat at the piano, elaborating new tunes, patting my foot and thumping the keys energetically. Meanwhile the wolves that had been yapping at Beale Street ever since I could remember finally caught up with their victim. Backed by excursion-boat operators who wanted to draw the liquor trade, and shady characters who hoped to enjoy bigger profits from illicit business, the reformers eventually prevailed, passing a local option law for Memphis.

That was a calamity Imagine Pee Wee's closing at twelve o'clock at night! Imagine Beale Street without liquor. The anticipation was almost too unpleasant to bear. I wrote:

Goin' to the river, maybe bye and bye—
Goin' to the river, and there's a reason why—
Because the river's wet, and Beale Street's done gone dry.

Actually, I hollered before I was hit. Pee Wee's closed at twelve on the appointed night, but five minutes later the door swung open again The lights came up It was another day By this time all the whisky and gin were out of sight, and the shelves were ornamented with coca-cola and ginger-ale bottles Since that one frightful scare the wolf of Beale Street has never returned, so far as I know Pee Wee's has never again been closed for even five minutes.

Still there's no denying that Beale Street changed. Even at that moment it was losing something essential to its former character. So my lamentation was not entirely without point Beale Street finally lost L Pacini, to whom my song was dedicated because of a long-standing friendship

My recollections of the Beale Street era are not solely concerned with the writing of blues There are other threads to the story One of them goes back to 1907, the year that I first became a tenant of the Solvent Savings Bank The cashier of this Negro enterprise was Harry H Pace, a handsome young man of striking personality and definite musical leanings Pace had written some first-rate song lyrics and was in demand as a vocal soloist at church programs and Sunday-night concerts In 1907 we wrote "In the Cotton Fields of Dixie" which was published by a Cincinnati firm It was natural, if not inevitable, that he and I should gravitate together We spoke the same language We collaborated on songs Finally we became partners in the Pace & Handy Music Company—Publishers

The first songs published by our firm included my "Jogo Blues" and Pace's "The Girl You Never Have Met " Just before these numbers appeared, Pace left Memphis to become secretary-treasurer of the Standard Life Insurance Company of Atlanta, but he left with the bank his check to cover shipment of the forthcoming songs So later, when "St Louis Blues" was ready, I took my turn and decided to pay out of my pocket for the printing of ten thousand copies

By this time Pace was too busy and much too involved in his new duties to give much thought to our fledgling enterprise. I went ahead on my own initiative, however, and before the copies arrived

from the Otto Zimmerman Company, the Cincinnati printers (still doing business today at the old stand), I had secured enough orders from the Kress and Woolworth Music Departments to pay the entire printing bill. Soon a profit of four hundred dollars accumulated. This was immediately put back into the business When Pace returned to Memphis on business for the insurance company, he heard the song for the first time It had not only been printed but was on piano rolls before he knew about it.

Our publishing efforts were to remain tentative and tenuous for long, however. My blues were fast gathering momentum George Evans of the old Honey Boy Minstrels featured the "Memphis Blues" with Ed. V Cupero's band on stage and street The Victor catalogue listed the name of Handy between Handel and Haydn. Irving C Miller, having fallen for Memphis Blues when he heard it sung by the Blanks sisters, came to Barasso's Palace Theatre with a new road show and presently became a "St Louis Blues" fan He bought a thousand copies to dispose of along the road Later he reordered many times Then when "Yellow Dog" was ready, he introduced the number through the jazzy singer Estelle Harris and became an outlet for the number in the East.

With all this going on the little firm of Pace & Handy put a carnation in its buttonhole and began to hold up its head What's more, the originator of the blues threatened to become respectable Negroes who once called our aggregation a barrel-house band began to prick up their ears They seldom heard us play those days because we were engaged by the "quality" on the Alaskan Roof and Country Club, but when there was no longer any doubt that our new brand of music was cutting a figure, they made every effort to secure our services, offering as much as twice the fee we received from the white folks But it was too late We were under contract Small-time white shopkeepers along Beale Street underwent a change too. Instead of trying to get my trade by calling me "Parson," they began to know me by my family name I didn't tumble. They were likewise too late Morris Lippman's loan office had known my name for years. He would often let me have the use of my musical instruments while they were still in pawn, to play engagements.

Once more it began to look like Easy Street for the blues. But this was just half the story. Aside from the publishing business and

the business of composing new hits, I continued to carry the staggering responsibility of keeping busy a dozen bands, employing over sixty people, playing for dances, touring on the road and through the sticks and giving concerts. The fortunes of our bands and particularly of the main unit rose with the success of the blues.

In the midst of this boom my partner arranged a concert for us in the auditorium for colored people in Atlanta, billing the thing like a circus White folks of that city persuaded Pace to cancel this booking, however, and to place us instead in the auditorium where the Metropolitan Opera gave its Atlanta performances Pace agreed promptly, and the auditoriums were switched But when the *Atlanta Constitution* learned that we were to appear at the auditorium for whites, it began to stomp and fume This did not discourage Pace. In fact, he took advantage of the newspaper's hostility and increased his publicity through *The Georgian and Journal*

Back in Memphis I sweated blood to whip the show into shape. We needed a powerful attraction to conquer Atlanta, and we felt that we had it in our band, but just to make assurance doubly sure, we added Clarence Williams and Armand J Piron to the program. This team did not belong in Memphis. They were New Orleans musicians and music publishers and had come to Memphis in the interest of their catalogue, plugging in particular "Brown Skin" and "I Can Beat You Doing What You're Doing Me." Williams cut capers with the piano stool and played and sang superbly Piron contributed his fancy fiddling I had been instrumental in helping them get a listing with the five-and-ten-cent stores, a difficult assignment at that time. They had also made trips with our band through the Delta, winning many friends by their clever work. To help their business along as well as ours they agreed to make the trip with us.

An awe fell upon us as we took our places on the stage where Caruso had sung with the Metropolitan Opera Company in Atlanta. We faced the curtain like a flock of dusky Daniels come to judgment before an audience of 7,000 Then the barrier went up Before us a sea of faces rose and a silence that was oppressive A moment later the band struck up "Hail to the Spirit of Freedom," a march which I wrote for the Lincoln Jubilee Exposition held at the Coliseum in Chicago No one objected to that, so we followed it up with "Semiramis," a classical overture which the boys played in conven-

tional style. The audience gave us a good hand. Then the storm broke when we played the "Memphis Blues" and had to repeat it nine times. After that it was good-bye to the printed program. We played only requests, and these called for blues, blues and more blues. Nothing but the blues. People seemed to be starving for blues. My daughter Katherine, then only twelve, sang the "St Louis Blues" and, for encores, "Joe Turner" and again "Memphis Blues." They wouldn't let us stop, so we rushed in Clarence Williams and Armand Piron Well, they stopped the show, and I began to think that our boat had been torpedoed We just couldn't let the final curtain down now. We'd be lost. Suddenly the words of George M Cohan's song, "Always Leave 'Em Laughing When You Say Good-bye," occurred to me, and I commenced to dig down in the old bag of tricks

We had a drummer named Jasper Taylor. Jasper had long slapsticks The finale was his spot, I decided. The band took up "Memphis Blues" again and while Jasper went through his side-splitting antics, hands clapped, saxophones crooned and voices sang the tune to George Norton's lyrics:

They had a fiddler there who always slickened his hair . . .

They were getting "jazz" though the word was little known at the time, and they liked it. The curtain came down amid a tumult of applause.

Next morning the paper that had opposed our appearance in the Auditorium gave us two front-page columns with a headline which said, "At last we see the democracy of ragtime" The *Georgian and Journal* carried a large front-page cartoon showing a white man in the Auditorium wearing a ball and chain on his leg to prevent him from dancing Pace and the men who had been associated with him in the undertaking were elated They guarded my every moment, watched over me like bodyguards and whisked me here and there in closed cars. It was not because I was a mortal too good for human eyes. I detected, or fancied I detected, a box-office twinkle in my partner's eye. We were kept over, and played Atlanta for a week

Was it Easy Street I had reached, or was I riding for a fall? For some unaccountable reason my mind went back to my McGuffey's Fifth Reader. "Mediocrity is the best state of fortune," one of the axioms said. Another declared that there was "No Excellence without

Great Labor." I had no mind to be dour while the cheers were still ringing Yet I returned to Memphis to find a foreclosure about to be made on one of two cottages I had purchased there.

As odd as this may sound when you recall that my songs were going well and that the bands were in constant demand, it was a fact Maybe I put my money in a sock with a hole in it. Anyhow, Pace arranged to pay off the indebtedness through the Standard Life Insurance Company, thinking that thereby he might relieve my mind Of course, handling a dozen bands and carrying on the publishing business and working on new songs didn't count with Memphians I wasn't supposed to be a businessman After a dance engagement the colored bankers used to ask me if I'd had a good time last night As if playing from 8 P M until 3 A M for other people's enjoyment was easier than counting and handling other people's money from 10 A M to 3 P M

They had a strange way of rating artistic work and worth If any one owned a dozen cans and piled them on a couple of shelves behind a printed sign, he was a grocer and a businessman, if you please, but one who contracted for musicians and played for parties over a dozen states was a good-timer and a rounder, if not worse But these men were no more intolerant than others I had known In earlier days I had gone into church choirs with my violin or cornet under my arm only to hear elderly sisters whisper, "Yonder goes de devil " In traveling around with the minstrel company we bumped into society folks too dicty to buy tickets for our show We were invited to their functions only when we brought our instruments along Parents who would mortgage farm or home to educate their sons for medicine, law and the ministry would frown upon a child who wanted to study music and kick him out as a loafer

One day I was elaborating some new tunes, thumping the piano energetically, when the doorbell rang At the door stood an elderly white man wearing a broad grin and a big celluloid collar He was an insurance collector for the National Life and Casualty Company, he explained Then he apologized for the interruption

He had been listening outside to my melodies He had formerly been a vocal teacher and was familiar with old forms of music and wanted to talk about my new style of work I had my own troubles and wanted to air them My lack of capital, New York's remote

opportunities—these were the things that burdened me I wanted to upbraid my own people for being, as I thought, so slow to bestow their racial okays He tried to flag me down, but I continued to cry woe.

"Listen You're on the high road," he said eventually.

I looked at him strangely.

"How can you say that?"

Then he told me his story

At one time he had been a well-to-do farmer With his wife he had been contented and happy until one night he read that real money could be made in poultry They had a little money between them, money enough to start raising chickens on a small scale, but he decided that that wasn't enough He persuaded his wife to sign a mortgage on their farm in order to provide capital required to earn the wheelbarrow loads of money awaiting their efforts He outfitted a modern poultry farm Then came the chickens and the eggs They came so fast the man and his wife had to stay up nights to count the profits But there was a little difference in their calculations

"My wife," he said, "figured the value of the eggs I valued each egg as a chicken"

Then the world turned Cholera came The enterprising young man wheeled loads of dead profits away to be burned Unable to pay the mortgage, he lost the poultry farm and their home as well Then followed long hard years in which he and his wife worked, having bought a dozen hens and one rooster Slowly they mastered the secrets of diseases common to poultry Fortune showed her face In time they bought back the old home and opened a bank account

"But why the insurance business?"

"That is just a sideline to keep me busy," he said "My chickens know how to lay eggs"

His story did me a lot of good I decided that conditions had nothing to do with my own problems, that race and color did not enter, as I had suspected, and that possibly my blues would learn to lay eggs too Why not let well enough alone?

That, however, was not possible in my case I had not reached an age when I was content to let well enough alone Moreover, Time and Chance were still conspiring At that very moment Pace was in

New York on business for his insurance company and making connections that eventually resulted in a contract for our band to make twelve records The fee seemed to me a fabulous sum to pay twelve men traveling to and from New York for three days' work But the offer was sound and the records were made The prosperity was short-lived, however Soon the sock was empty again And to make matters worse, Pace gathered from one of my letters that I wanted him out of the business I wanted him actively in As a result, he demanded that I buy out his interest at a time when this was impossible

I tried to interest Lawrence Rosenfield in making an investment with us He was a Jewish friend for whom I had arranged music since first the publishing bug bit him But his father refused to buy out the Pace interest unless I consented that Lawrence should become president and that I should work for seventy-five dollars a month the first year with no withdrawals We didn't get together Even going to New York and making records for Columbia, it now developed, didn't necessarily mean Easy Street

The outlook grew dismal Then one Saturday night when I was playing with the band at the Colonial Country Club, eagerly hoping that our time would be extended so that we could earn an extra dollar apiece, a telephone call came for me My brother Charles E was at the other end of the wire Supervising the publishing affairs, particularly when the orchestra took me away, he had formed the habit of dropping by the post office at night to see what the midnight mail from New York and Chicago had brought.

Tonight there had been news that took his breath He was so excited he could scarcely speak He made me understand, however, that the Victor people had sent a check for royalties on Earl Fuller's recording of "Beale Street."

"Guess how much!"

From his tone I judged that we had done better than the usual two hundred

"Three hundred," I suggested.

"Up"

"Four hundred."

"Higher"

"Five hundred."

Here I commenced to gulp.

"Aw, come on up Way up," he urged.

"A thousand"

"Up again"

"Fifteen hundred."

"Up Up"

"I give up"

"One thousand, eight hundred and fifty-seven," he told me.

And I had just been hoping the white folks would hire us for one more hour so that we might earn an extra dollar apiece Well, I had just replaced the receiver when the manager came and informed me that the Club wanted us not for an extra hour but an extra three hours Lordy! With all that money waiting, with my heart pounding for joy, I had to stay on the job and blow for another three hours These were the longest, hardest and most miserable three hours I have ever played.

I don't think I could have stood up under the pressure had it not been for the bubbling good humor and the kidding of my musicians.

"Ole Handy! Hot dog, he's out of the barrel!"

Then during the intermissions, of course, we had to celebrate this new-found wealth Hip flasks came out, and I was toasted royally. After the dance Beale Street seemed a thousand miles away, but eventually we reached Pee Wee's and found Charlie waiting with the check we were all dying to see

We spent all day Sunday writing checks to cover bills payable

"You won't be satisfied," Charlie said with a grin, "till our account is overdrawn again"

This reminded me that the previous Saturday the bank had refused to cash a Woolworth check for me for forty dollars and I had had to go across the street to Joe Rafonti's saloon to cash it I couldn't help trying to imagine how they would feel when they saw this big check

The band had to keep rolling, of course, and on Monday and Tuesday nights we were currently booked to play for a dance in a hick town in Arkansas The hall was a hillbilly barn, and our meals while there were served in a local fish place where soap boxes doubled for chairs But dollars were bucks, and every one counted.

So Monday morning found me standing on the platform of the Union Station as usual, perfunctorily counting my men as they reported for the train The conductor looked at his watch and raised his hand to call "all aboard" But the words caught in his throat and his mouth sprang open as he saw an automobile arriving in a cloud of dust.

My mouth sprang open too, wider than the conductor's, when I saw Charlie leap from the car waving a piece of paper and shouting

"Give the driver a dollar and look what came from Columbia Records in the morning's mail—three thousand, eight hundred and twenty-seven dollars!"

"Whew! Give him five," I said

The liveried chauffeur pocketed the fin and drove away, smiling from ear to ear Then my brother and I made a race for the train the conductor had been holding

Later Charlie told me how he managed to head us off He knew as soon as he looked at the clock that a streetcar was out of the question It couldn't get him to the station before train time There were no cabs in sight when he reached the curb Even if there had been one, however, he would still have been standing there The taxicabs in Memphis didn't haul any coal, as they used to say, referring to colored fares But Charlie was determined to bring me the news at any cost Reckless with excitement, he watched a chauffeur drive a limousine up to a curb, step out and open the door for a white lady who went directly into the Union and Planters Bank When she had stepped out Charlie stepped in and excitedly told the fellow: "Take me to the Union Station—drive and drive like hell" The man objected at first, but Charlie convinced him promptly that he was not dealing with a crazy Negro or a bank robber, so the chauffeur not only agreed but brought him to the station in record time.

And here I was again, trotting off to a six-dollar engagement in a particularly backward part of Arkansas after a week-end which had brought nearly six thousand dollars It wouldn't be easy to take all the little digs that one suffered in that sort of element It would be hard to be tactful when commanded to play two extra hours or to do this or that monkey business for the delight of our audience, but even engagements like this had been welcome when the sock

was empty, and perhaps it wasn't right to scorn them now I made up my mind to endure it cheerfully Every dime added to what you had made the going easier and lessened the headaches

We lived through this engagement, and Wednesday morning I returned home to find another surprise waiting The Emerson Company had sent a check for an additional thousand dollars What I did with this check, together with the larger ones, can best be described as wish fulfillment.

Every man who has had his downs knows only too well the petty indignities the struggler suffers daily The underdog catches it on all sides. So often he meets those who delight to add insult to injury. That is perhaps the reason why the secret dream of telling the one who has done you dirt to go somewheres is so universal And that, subconsciously, may have been part of the reason why I had been careful to tell Charlie to hold all remittances until my return

Less than two weeks had passed since both of Memphis' colored banks had refused to cash my forty-dollar check, and I could still remember with embarrassment a lecture that one of their cashiers had read me about a four-dollar-and-fifty-cent check that I had presented at his window Now I was loaded for them I went to the window of the first bank and showed the cashier the biggest check

"Can you cash this?" I asked.

The cashier was so elated he ran through the bank showing it to all the officers When he returned from this jaunt, he was grinning all over himself.

"How do you want it?" he asked, putting on his Sunday manners

"I don't want it cashed," I told him coldly "You couldn't cash my Saturday's check for forty dollars. Why are you so willing to handle this one? Huh?"

Then I flashed before his amazed eyes the rest of the deposit, explaining that I was on my way uptown to deposit all of it in a white bank. With this I left him and went to the other colored bank I gave them a taste of the same medicine. It did me a peck of good

Both of the banks remonstrated with me daily for the next two weeks Both wanted to know—in more elegant words—just how come I did them like I did Hadn't we always been friends and hadn't they befriended me in the past? This was all true to some extent, but it was also true that they suffered from the old concep-

tion of the musician They had no respect for him except while he was entertaining them, if then This experience was a lasting lesson to them From that time onward my relationship with all of the men in these organizations has been most satisfactory After I had driven the point home, I returned and opened accounts with each bank

That done, I sent for Pace in Atlanta, relieved him of all obligations bearing his endorsement, cleared off pressing obligations, put the business on a surer foundation and handed him a substantial sum This, I hoped, would make it clear to him that I wanted him in, not out But through all these operations, while the money came and went, while we struggled and regained our feet, things were working out to a change My days in Memphis were numbered

James Weldon Johnson

I got immense satisfaction out of the work which was the main purpose of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, at the same time, I struggled constantly not to permit that part of me which was artist to become entirely submerged I had little time and less energy for creative writing but, in 1921, I began work on an anthology of poetry by American Negroes My original idea was extremely modest, I planned to start with Paul Laurence Dunbar and sift the work of all the Negro poets from him down to Claude McKay and his contemporaries, with a view to publishing in a small volume thirty or forty of the poems that I judged to be up to a certain standard

Before I had gone very far with the work, I realized that such a book, being the first of its kind, would be entirely devoid of a background America as a whole knew something of Dunbar, but it was practically unaware that there were such things as Negro poets and Negro poetry So I decided to write an introduction, and the introduction developed into a forty-two page essay on "The Creative Genius of the Negro" In that essay I called attention to the American Negro as a folk artist, and pointed out his vital contributions, as such, to our national culture In it I also made a brief survey of Negro poetry I began with Phillis Wheatley, who, brought in 1761 on a slave ship from Africa to Boston when she was nine years old, became the second woman in America to publish a volume of poetry, and touched on the most significant work from among the thirty-odd Negro poets between her and Dunbar I also went a little afield and mentioned some of the Negro poets of the West Indies and South America, giving most space to Placido, the popular poet of Cuba. My selections for the anthology proper increased to three or four times the number I had originally planned for, but I felt that in the case of this particular book, there was more to be gained by being comprehensive than would be lost by not being exclusive The use of "Aframerican" in the introductory essay to designate Negroes of either North America, South America, or the West Indies gave some

currency in this country to the term as a substitute for "Negro" or "colored" or "Afro-American" The word was coined, so far as I know, by Sir Harry H Johnston. It is on all points a good word but, in its use in this country, it quickly acquired a slightly derisive sense, a sense due mainly, perhaps, to the stamp put upon it by H L Mencken Mr Mencken and George S Schuyler, the Negro satirist, are the only American writers who continue to make frequent use of it Many white people, when they wish to be especially considerate, are in doubt about the term most acceptable to Negroes There are indeed puzzlingly subtle distinctions, to which colored people are more or less sensitive The adjective "colored" and the generic designations "Negroes," "the Negro," and "the Negro race" are always in order, but, "a Negro man," "a Negro woman," etc , are somewhat distasteful "Negress" is considered unpardonable. *The Book of American Negro Poetry* [1] was published early in 1922.

Later in the same year, Claude McKay published his *Harlem Shadows* He did not follow up this book of poems, but turned to prose That, together with his long absence from the United States, has caused him to be partially forgotten as a writer of verse, but *Harlem Shadows* proclaims him one of the finest of modern American poets Jean Toomer followed with *Cane,* a series of realistic stories of Negro life, interspersed with original lyrics of great beauty. Strangely, he never worked further the rich vein he had struck; this single book, however, made a deep impression on the critics and is still referred to as one of the best pieces of latter-day American prose The extraordinary poems of Anne Spencer attracted attention, there were beginnings by others, and the Negro "literary revival" was under way.

Shortly after the publication of *Harlem Shadows,* Claude McKay decided to go to Russia He had for a time been associate editor with Max Eastman of the *Liberator,* and was familiar with and interested in the Soviet experiment Grace and I gave a farewell party for him at our apartment in Harlem. There were present seven or eight white persons prominent in the literary world and a dozen or so colored guests News about the party leaked out. Harlem was not

[1] Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York, 1922.

yet accustomed to social gatherings of the sort, and local Negro papers referred to it as the "black and white" party

In 1924, Jessie Fauset published *There Is Confusion*,[2] a novel of life among intelligent and fairly well-to-do Northern Negroes Almost simultaneously, came Walter White's *The Fire in the Flint*,[3] a novel that gave a sectional view of life in the South, and aroused wide comment and sharp controversy In this period literary prizes were awarded for several years through *The Crisis*, edited by W E B DuBois, and *Opportunity*, edited by Charles S Johnson The *Opportunity* awards were each time made at a dinner attended by two or three hundred people, many of them white writers and others interested in literature In 1924 and 1925 came volumes of poetry by Countee Cullen and Langston Hughes, followed by novels by Nella Imes and Rudolph Fisher and by books of prose and poetry by a dozen other writers The leading publishers opened their doors and the important magazines opened their pages to these writers—and the Negro "literary revival" was in full swing

In 1925, with my brother, who made the piano arrangements, I collected a group of sixty-one Negro spirituals For the collection I wrote forty pages of preface in which I gave the history of the spirituals, the probable theories as to their origin, and an estimate of them as music and poetry The collection was published under the title of *The Book of American Negro Spirituals* [4] It was an instantaneous success, and is still in demand It is, I believe, probably the best collection of Negro spirituals in print, and would have made headway under any conditions, but we were fortunate in having it come out just at the propitious moment We followed the next year with a second collection; and although it contained as many numbers as beautiful and interesting as those in the first collection, it has not approached the success of its forerunner.

The research which I did in collecting the spirituals and gathering the data for my introductory essay had an effect on me similar to what I received from hearing the Negro evangelist preach that Sunday night in Kansas City This work tempered me to just the right mood to go on with what I had started when I wrote *The*

[2] Boni and Liveright, New York
[3] Alfred A Knopf, New York
[4] The Viking Press, New York

Creation I was in touch with the deepest revelation of the Negro's soul that has yet been made, and I felt myself attuned to it I made an outline of the second poem that I wrote of this series. It was to be a "funeral sermon " I decided to call it "Go Down, Death "

On Thanksgiving Day, 1926, I was at home After breakfast I went to my desk and began work in earnest on the poem As I worked, my own spirit rose till it reached a degree almost of ecstasy. The poem shaped itself easily and before the hour for dinner I had written it as it stands published Grace had as dinner guests Lucile Miller and Crystal Bird I read the poem to this little group Between Thanksgiving and the Christmas holidays, I wrote the prayer, "Listen, Lord " My plan was to write seven "sermons," and I had finished only two I decided to go to Great Barrington, Massachusetts, and write the other five I found the thermometer there around 18 below zero, but I stayed two weeks and brought the finished poems back with me to New York The poem that gave me the hardest work was "The Crucifixion " I realized that its effectiveness depended upon a simplicity which I found more difficult to achieve than the orotundity of "The Creation" and "The Prodigal Son" or the imagery of "Go Down, Death" and "The Judgment Day "

When I had finished the poems, I decided that they needed a preface, and I wondered if I was condemned to do a preface for every book that I should write I did a preface, telling something about the old plantation preacher and setting forth at some length my reasons for not writing the poems in conventionalized Negro dialect Next to writing "The Crucifixion," my greatest difficulty was in finding a title for the book I toyed and experimented with at least twenty tentative titles I narrowed them down to Listen, Lord; Cloven Tongues, Tongues of Fire, and Trumpets of the Lord, or Trumpeters of the Lord I liked the last two titles, but saw that "Trumpets" or "Trumpeters" would be a poetic cliché. Suddenly, I lit upon "trombone " The trombone, according to the Standard Dictionary, is· "A powerful brass instrument of the trumpet family, the only wind instrument possessing a chromatic scale enharmonically true, like the human voice or the violin, and hence very valuable in the orchestra " I had found it, the instrument and the word, of just the tone and timbre to represent the old-time Negro preacher's voice. Besides, there were the traditional jazz connota-

tions So the title became *God's Trombones—Seven Negro Sermons in Verse.*[5]

In 1925 I was awarded the Spingarn Medal The Spingarn Medal, established by J. E Spingarn, has now for eighteen years been awarded annually for "the highest or noblest achievement by an American Negro during the preceding year or years," and is the most distinguished badge of merit that an American Negro may wear The Medal was awarded to me as "author, diplomat and public servant" *God's Trombones* won for me the Harmon Award, consisting of a gold medal and a check for four hundred dollars. I was elected a member of the Board of Trustees of Atlanta University, and became a member of the committee that brought about the merger of Atlanta with Morehouse College and Spelman College to form the greater Atlanta University Talledega College and Howard University conferred on me the degree of Litt D.

During this period, I went to a great many "literary" parties At such gatherings I met and came to know a large number of American literary and artistic celebrities—great and near-great—and some of the stars of the theater and of Hollywood I also made the acquaintance of a few European celebrities At the Van Vechtens' I met Theodore Dreiser I had formed a stern mental image of Mr. Dreiser, picturing him as a morose and dour individual. But at dinner he impressed me as being more jovial than somber, indeed, he contributed a full share to the jollity of the occasion In the home of Alma Wertheim, I became acquainted with several of the foremost composers, musicians and conductors of the modern school It was there that I met Louis Gruenberg, who had already, while living in Vienna, made a setting of "The Creation," scored for voice and orchestra It was partly through Mrs Wertheim's interest in modern music that the work was given a production at Town Hall under the direction of Serge Koussevitzky, with a portion of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and Jules Bledsoe as soloist At a dinner at the Lewis Gannetts', I met Count Karolyi, former President of Hungary, and his wife The Count, much to my surprise, was deeply interested in the American race question, and talked to me earnestly to learn what I could tell him about the Negro in the

[5] The Viking Press, New York, 1927

United States. He was particularly curious about race intermixture and amalgamation as a solution of the problem The guest of honor and his wife left earlier than the others of us. When our host, who had seen them out, came back into the room, he laughingly related that the Count, in saying good-bye, had expressed satisfaction at the apparent confirmation of his idea of race intermixture and social intermingling as a way out, for he had gained the impression that my wife was white and that another of the guests, a beautiful brunette, was colored. Between me and the people to whose homes I went and those I met in them, there grew some friendships, several of them deep and abiding I went to two or three parties in Greenwich Village At one of these, I remember, costume of some kind was *de rigueur* I was taken in hand by a Russian who had been connected with the theater in his own country My regular clothes were discarded, then the Russian took a single narrow length of an oriental-looking fabric, and with amazing deftness wound it round my head as a turban, passed it under my arm, around my waist, draped my loins, and, presto, I was some sort of denizen of the desert The transformation pleased me highly, despite some disturbing qualms about exhibitionism

In turn, Grace and I entertained occasionally at our home in Harlem And so did Walter White and his wife at their home. Some of the parties we gave were gay, more than once we closed the evening, or began the morning, by all going to one of the Harlem cabarets to dance But the most lasting impression I have of any of the gatherings at my home is of Clarence Darrow, sitting under a lighted lamp, the only one in the room left lighted, reading in measured tones from his book, *Farmington* I retain a memory of the Lincolnlike beauty of the man, the beauty of sheer simplicity of his prose, the rising and falling melody of his voice and the group seated about him drinking in the three elements combined—Ruby Darrow, no doubt, musing, "This wonderful man is my husband"—Carl Van Vechten, the most sophisticated of American novelists, sitting back in the shadow, but not so far back that his face does not show emotions straining for tears—Fania Marinoff, seated on the floor, her head thrust slightly forward, her lips parted, her dark eyes glistening, herself unconsciously revealing an unblemished line of beauty of head and face and throat—the whole group silent, as the

words falling, falling, slip through their minds and lodge in their hearts with strange stirrings. Then to change the mood, Mr. Darrow takes up Newman Levy's *Opera Guyed*,[6] and reads "Samson and Delilah," then "La Traviata," and then "Thais", his sober voice and manner against the wit and ribald humor of the poems make us chuckle and roar The author of the poems tries to maintain a becoming modesty, but we are ready to forgive him for chuckling as heartily as the rest of us Mr Darrow, for his own delight, repeats the concluding lines of "Thais" several times over. Now, in partial repayment, Paul Robeson gives a reading of "The Creation," and "Listen, Lord," and Clarence Darrow quotes to him the words of Agrippa to Saint Paul, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."

This was the era in which was achieved the Harlem of story and song, the era in which Harlem's fame for exotic flavor and colorful sensuousness was spread to all parts of the world, when Harlem was made known as the scene of laughter, singing, dancing and primitive passions, and as the center of the new Negro literature and art, the era in which it gained its place in the list of famous sections of great cities This universal reputation was the work of writers The picturesque Harlem was real, but it was the writers who discovered its artistic values and, in giving literary expression to them, actually created the Harlem that caught the world's imagination Very early, Langston Hughes discovered these values and gave them their first expression in poetry. The prose about this Harlem is voluminous The writers who came to parties and went sight-seeing in Harlem found stimulating material for their pens. Then other writers flocked there, many came from far and depicted it in many ways and in many languages They still come; the Harlem of story and song still fascinates them

But there is the other real and overshadowing Harlem The commonplace, work-a-day Harlem The Harlem of doubly handicapped black masses engaged in the grim, daily struggle for existence in the midst of this whirlpool of white civilization There are dramatic values in that Harlem, too, but they have hardly been touched Writers of fiction, white and black, have limited their stories to Harlem

[6] Alfred A Knopf, New York, 1923.

as a playground, and have ignored or not recognized the fundamental, relentless forces at work and the efforts to cope with them. This is, of course, understandable; picturesque and exotic phases of life offer the easier and more alluring task for the fictionist But the sterner aspects of life in Harlem offer a unique and teeming field for the writer capable of working it Under these aspects lie real comedy and real tragedy, real triumphs and real defeats The field is waiting, probably for some Negro writer

The two books about Harlem that were most widely read and discussed were Carl Van Vechten's *Nigger Heaven,*[7] and Claude McKay's *Home to Harlem* [8] Mr Van Vechten's novel ran through a score of editions, was published in most of the important foreign languages and aroused something of a national controversy. For directly opposite reasons, there were objections to the book by white and colored people White objectors declared that the story was a Van Vechten fantasy, that they could not be expected to believe that there were intelligent, well-to-do Negroes in Harlem who lived their lives on the cultural level he described, or a fast set that gave at least a very good imitation of life in sophisticated white circles Negro objectors declared that the book was a libel on the face, that the dissolute life and characters depicted by the author were nonexistent. Both classes of objectors were wrong, but their points of view can be understood Negro readers of the book who knew anything knew that dissolute modes of life and dissolute characters existed in Harlem, their objections were really based upon chagrin and resentment at the disclosures to a white public Yet, Mr McKay's book dealt with low levels of life, a lustier life, it is true, than the dissolute modes depicted by Mr Van Vechten, but entirely unrelieved by any brighter lights, furthermore, Mr McKay made no attempt to hold in check or disguised his abiding contempt for the Negro bourgeoisie and "upper class" Still, *Home to Harlem* met with no such criticism from Negroes as did *Nigger Heaven* The lusty primitive life in *Home to Harlem* was based on truth, as were the dissolute modes of life in *Nigger Heaven*; but Mr Van Vechten was the first well-known American novelist to include in a story a cultured Negro

[7] Alfred A Knopf, New York, 1926
[8] Harper & Brothers, New York, 1928

class without making it burlesque or without implying reservations and apologies.

Most of the Negroes who condemned *Nigger Heaven* did not read it; they were stopped by the title I don't think they would now be so sensitive about it, as the race progresses it will becomes less and less susceptible to hurts from such causes. Whatever the colored people thought about *Nigger Heaven,* speaking of the author as a man antagonistic to the race was entirely unwarranted Carl Van Vechten had a warm interest in colored people before he ever saw Harlem In the early days of the Negro literary and artistic movement, no one in the country did more to forward it than he accomplished in frequent magazine articles and by his many personal efforts in behalf of individual Negro writers and artists Indeed, his regard for Negroes as a race is so close to being an affectionate one that he is constantly joked about it by his most intimate friends. His most highly prized caricature of himself is one done by Covarrubias in blackface, and presented to him on his birthday Mr Van Vechten's birthday, that of young Alfred Knopf and mine, fall on the same day of the same month For four or five years we have been celebrating them jointly, together with a small group of friends Last summer we celebrated at the country place of the Knopfs In a conversation that Blanche Knopf, Lawrence Langner and I were carrying on, something about the responsibility for children came up Mr Van Vechten interrupted Mrs Knopf with an opinion of his own on the subject, to which she retorted, "Carl, you don't know anything about it, because you are not a parent" Mr Van Vechten responded with, "You're mistaken, I am the father of four sons" And Alfred Knopf flashed out, "If you are, they must be the four Mills Brothers" Mr Van Vechten joined in the outburst of laughter From the first, my belief has held that *Nigger Heaven* is a fine novel

My own literary efforts and what part I played in creating the new literary Harlem were, however, mere excursions, my main activity was all the while the work of the Association But doubled activities began to tell on me, and my doctor began to give warning I had been helped to keep the pace because Miss Ovington had generously given me and Grace the use of her place, Riverbank, in the Berkshire Hills, for several summers. In 1926 I bought a little

place in the township of Great Barrington, Massachusetts. I rode one day by an overgrown place where a little red barn was all that stood out amongst the weeds, the house on the place had burned down A bright little river ran under a bridge and circled round behind the barn On inquiry, I learned that there were five acres in the tract, and I said, "This is just the place for me" Grace and I studied the possibilities and decided that we could remodel the barn, keeping the interior, with the old hand-hewn beams, just as it was We did, and named the place Five Acres. There we have made our home ever since for a part of the year

To get outdoor exercise I took up golf For four or five years I was a votary of the game—though remaining a dub. One day in September, 1925, I was on the links of a club over in New Jersey, when a messenger ran up and told me that I was wanted for a long-distance telephone call I rushed to the clubhouse and found that the call was from Detroit I talked for a half hour with the officers of our branch there.

The Negro population of Detroit had in a little over a decade increased from some ten thousand to some seventy-five thousand or more This had brought about an actual physical pressure in their housing conditions Several Negroes, to escape this pressure, bought homes in new neighborhoods, but were evicted from them by organized violence, in several instances the houses being practically destroyed by bombs Dr Ossian Sweet, a Negro physician, had bought a house in a modest white neighborhood of mechanics, clerks and small tradesmen, but he hesitated for several months about moving in because of the assaults that had been made on the homes bought by other Negroes in white neighborhoods Finally, he asked for police protection and with his wife moved in With his household goods, he took in guns and a supply of ammunition. There also went in with Dr Sweet his two brothers and some of his men friends, making eleven in all in the house The police guarded the house that night and the next day Late in the afternoon a crowd began gathering, and the police guard was increased, but the police did not disperse the crowd As darkness came on, the street became jammed with people and others were constantly arriving Later, stones began to hit the house, there was no interference from the police; a rifle cracked, and Leon Breiner, a white man in the crowd,

fell dead All of the inmates of the house, with the exception of the doctor's wife, were taken to jail and held without bail The situation in Detroit was inflammable Our branch officer there was calling on the national office for counsel and assistance

I hurried back to the city and consulted with Arthur B Spingarn Walter White was dispatched immediately to Detroit and there he took the first steps to allay passions and arrange for legal defense The Association engaged a staff of six lawyers, headed by Clarence Darrow and Arthur Garfield Hays The eleven defendants were indicted for first-degree murder During the trial, Mr White spent most of his time in Detroit, and Mr Spingarn made several trips there. I undertook to raise money for the defense of the case The issue was segregation by mob violence and the simple question was Does the common axiom of Anglo-Saxon law, that a man's house is his castle, apply to a Negro American citizen? We set our organization machinery in motion, and I issued an appeal to the country in which we called for the raising of a Defense Fund, a fund for the Detroit cases and any other cases that would involve the Negro's constitutional rights The response was spontaneous, within four months a sum in excess of $75,00○ was raised (A third of this amount was contributed by the American Fund for Public Service) The trial of the eleven defendants resulted in a disagreement

The second trial began in the following spring In this trial the defendants demanded to be tried separately, and the State elected to proceed against Henry Sweet, the doctor's youngest brother, who admitted that he had fired the shot from the house I attended the second trial We had three lawyers, Clarence Darrow and two local lawyers The courtroom was filled each day; and on the last day, when Mr Darrow addressed the jury, not another person could have been squeezed in The doors were jammed and the corridors packed I had the opportunity of hearing Clarence Darrow for the defense, at his best, in a famous case He talked for nearly seven hours I sat where I could catch every word and every expression of his face. It was a wonderful performance. Clarence Darrow, the veteran criminal lawyer, the psychologist, the philosopher, the humanist, the apostle of liberty, was bringing into play every bit of skill, drawing on all the knowledge and using every power that he possessed upon the twelve men who sat in front of him. At times,

his voice was as low as though he was coaxing a child. At such times, the strain upon the listeners to catch his words made them appear rigid. At other times, his words came like flashes of lightning and crashes of thunder He closed his argument with a plea that left no eyes dry When he finished, I walked over to him to express my appreciation and thanks His eyes were wet He placed his hands on my shoulders I tried to stammer out a few words, but broke down and wept The jury brought in a verdict of "Not guilty," and the Association had won another victory in its fight to maintain the common rights of citizenship for the Negro

Before the Detroit case was over, the Association undertook another case involving the Negro's constitutional rights In a section of the Texas law regulating primary elections was the following clause "However, in no event shall a Negro be eligible to participate in a Democratic Party primary election held in the State of Texas, and should a Negro vote in a Democratic primary election, such ballot shall be void, and election officials are herein directed to throw out such ballot and not count the same" Similar provisions in most of the Southern States constitute the "white primary," which, due to the one-party political system, is the most effective methods of disfranchising the Negro In these States, there is no law that prohibits Negroes from voting in the general elections, but the functions of the general elections have been transferred to the primary election. The persons winning nominations in the primary election are already elected, and the general election becomes merely perfunctory. For example, in the Texas gubernatorial campaign of 1926, in the first Democratic primary, with six candidates in the field, 735,186 votes were cast, in the run-off, with the candidates narrowed down to Dan Moody and Governor "Ma" Ferguson, 793,766 votes were cast But in the general election in the same campaign, only 89,263 votes were cast

The Association undertook a test of the Texas law, taking up the case of Dr A L Nixon, a Negro physician of El Paso, who, though qualified as a Democrat, was denied the right to vote in the Democratic primary This case was fought for two years, through the courts of Texas to the Supreme Court At the end, the Supreme Court handed down a unanimous decision declaring white primary laws unconstitutional.

The scope of my activities had widened; I had become a member of the national committee of the American Civil Liberties Union and had taken an earnest part in the fight in behalf of minority groups in general and in the fight for the restoration and maintenance of free speech, which was still circumscribed by the wartime prohibitions that had been placed on it When Charles Garland refused to accept an inheritance of a million or more dollars, the American Fund for Public Service was organized and chartered, mainly through the efforts of Roger N Baldwin, who was a friend of Mr. Garland, for the express purpose of taking over and administering this money. I was made a member of the board of twelve directors charged with the duty of disbursing the fund, later, I was chosen president of the board. Once, when the Fund was being organized, Mr Garland lunched with us He was an uncommonly handsome young man and extremely reticent He turned his inheritance over merely with the request that it be given away *as quickly as possible, and to "unpopular" causes, without regard to race, creed, or color.* In doing this, he made no gesture of any kind He simply did not want the money, and refused to take it He wished only to be left free to follow the life he had planned to live It was a strange experience to look upon a man in the flesh and in his right mind who could act like that about a million dollars For a while the fund, which was for the most part in First National Bank stock, increased faster than we could get rid of it, and I was surprised at learning that giving away money, if it is done at all judiciously, is a difficult job.

Shortly after my return from Detroit I found myself at the center of a sensational fight for free speech Three organizations, the League of Neighbors, the Union of East and West, and the Fellowship of Faiths, had planned to celebrate Peace Week For the close of the week a mass meeting was scheduled to be held at the Morris High School; the speakers to be Judge Jacob Panken, Rev. Albert Thomas, Arthur Garfield Hays, and myself The permission for the use of the school was revoked because Mr. Hays and I were among the speakers The American Civil Liberties Union immediately took up the matter, and in a letter to the Board of Education charged that Mr. Hays and I had been barred from speaking because our names were on a blacklist kept by the board. This the school board denied. The Union decided to bring a test case to determine the

right of the Board of Education to maintain a blacklist against public speakers, and promptly filed an application for the use of the auditorium of the Stuyvesant High School for a discussion of "Old-Fashioned Free Speech," with John Haynes Holmes, John Nevin Sayre, Arthur Garfield Hays and myself as the speakers The application was denied. The case was taken before the Board of Education and into the courts, with Samuel Untermeyer and Morris Ernst representing the Union After continual efforts extending over more than two years the case was won, and the Board of Education approved the application for the meeting in the auditorium of the Stuyvesant High School By that time I had recovered from the shock of being classed as a dangerous and un-American character. I felt fully reinstated when I was invited to take part in the unveiling of the bust of Whittier at the Hall of Fame.

My work as secretary of the Association, together with the books I had published, caused an increasing demand for me on the lecture platform Calls for me came from forums, women's clubs and from colleges and universities I filled as many of these as time and energy permitted Some of the forums I addressed had always a goodly number of wild-tongued radicals in the audience These, I discovered, loved nothing better than having a speaker to bait During the period for questions they often "treated me rough" because I did not hold that all of the ills and disadvantages suffered by the Negro could be wholly accounted for by the theory of economic determinism At times, I encountered churlishness Once a man rose and said, "I want to ask you a frank question Isn't the chief objection to the Negro due to the fact that he has a bad odor?" In reply, I agreed that there were lots of bad-smelling Negroes, but, in turn, I asked my questioner if he thought the expensive magazine advertisements about "B O " were designed to attract an exclusive Negro patronage I remarked that I did not think so, since they were generally illustrated with pictures of rather nice-looking white girls

I learned that by keeping my temper I could deal with irrationality, even with cases of violent race prejudice, but I was completely nonplussed by the gentle old lady who would come up after a talk before a woman's club and dilate to me on the qualities of her colored butler or cook, as evidence of the high opinion she held of the Negro. I did not question that her colored help possessed all the

excellences she ascribed to them, but I was, nevertheless, at a loss for just the proper comment to make about it. My embarrassment was the greater because I knew that the gentlewoman was being actuated by a sincere desire to say something nice to me And yet, as I think of it, there perhaps is no good reason why I should not always express to the gentle old lady my appreciation of the fact that she is providing one or two Negroes with jobs. I enjoyed talking before women's clubs, because that gave me frequent opportunities to talk about literature and art, and to read my poems At a number of colleges and universities I talked about the aesthetic as well as about the sterner factors in the race question Through arrangements made by Helen R Bryan of Philadelphia, I spoke before the high and normal schools of that city on Negro art and literature I think that the students and teachers in general gained in information from these talks, I am sure that at least one result was a marked psychological effect on the few colored students in the overwhelming mass of white students—the emergence of a new pride and self-respect, which I could not help but note in their words and in their faces as they grouped around me after each talk In the spring of 1927, I was invited to the University of North Carolina to hold seminars for a week on the sociological and artistic phases of Negro life I believe this invitation was unprecedented This was one of the most interesting episodes in my whole career As I faced those groups of Southern white young men, I felt a greater desire to win them over than I had felt with any other group I ever talked to, and to win them over by the honest truth I was not sure that I could do it, but, I think, to a good extent, I did My course increased in popularity, so much so that my last talk was adjourned from the classroom to one of the assembly halls because of the additional number of student body and citizens of Chapel Hill in the University Chapel

On this visit to the University of North Carolina I formed some friendly relations I met Paul Green, the playwright, and Elizabeth Lay Green, his wife It was very interesting to talk with them about Negro literature and drama I talked too, with Howard W Odlum and Guy B Johnson, who were directing the work at the University in digging up and making records of Negro folk material, a work second only to that done by Fisk University in preserving and bringing to the attention of the world the Negro spirituals. After

my address in the University Chapel, a young lady introducted herself to me as Mrs Katherine Elmore Her husband, Lee Elmore, was connected with the Department of Dramatics at the University She asked me if I would come to her home and meet some friends. I was happy to go A dozen or so people came in, and the evening was a delightful one There was talk about a great many things, with the race problem left out I read from *God's Trombones*—the book was just coming off the press In a letter that Mrs Elmore wrote to her mother, Mrs Laura T Huyck, in Albany, she spoke about me I was in Albany to make an address the following winter and met Mr and Mrs Huyck Since then, among the pleasantest days that Grace and I have passed have been the week-ends that we have spent each summer at their beautiful place at Rensselaerville, New York On one of these visits I was talking with Mrs Huyck, who is a constant reader, and suggested an idea I had by asking her why, instead of always taking in, she did not cultivate an art-means of giving out, of giving expression to herself. She put the question back to me somewhat quizzically· "Why, what shall I do? I believe I am too old to start to take up the piano again" I ventured, "Well—why not try painting?" She laughed the suggestion away as preposterous, saying that she had never had a pencil or brush in her hand But her secretary gave her a set of pastel colors and boards as a present the following Christmas, and she did, without any instruction or direction, begin to work with them Grace and I were at home in Albany in the spring and both of us were surprised by the pictures she had made I could hardly credit my eyes Since then she has held two exhibitions at the Durand-Ruel Galleries in East Fifty-Seventh Street, New York City, and received the praise of the art critics One of her pictures was bought by the Brooklyn Museum of Art.

I regard it as curious, almost as a matter of destiny, when I think of the number of times my life has touched the life of some other individual in an apparently cursory and transient way, and then consider how that contact marked the beginning of an important phase in my own life I have no intention of depreciating my own intelligence and industry, but the farther back I am able to look, the more clearly I discern that such results as I have gained may be, in a

fair degree, traced to "lucky breaks." If I were giving an exhortation on the subject to young people, I should say, *"Do not trust to luck,* but be, in every way, as fully prepared as possible to measure up to the 'lucky breaks' when they come"

I attended another important conference on the race question It was held for three days at New Haven in one of the fraternity houses of Yale University Twenty-five men, white and colored, made up the conference Arthur B Spingarn and I represented the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People At this conference I met Edwin R Embree, then Vice-President of the Rockefeller Foundation, and Dr Thomas Elsa Jones, the new President of Fisk University In the remarks that I made introducing the round-table discussion which I led, I said, "It is a common error to think of the race situation as static, as a problem that will remain fixed until it is solved What we call the race problem is not what it was a hundred years ago, or fifty years ago, or twenty or even ten years ago The situation is constantly shifting and changing It has never remained the same in any two generations, And it has never shifted more rapidly than it is shifting at the present time. The situation is a shifting one, therefore the means and methods of meeting it must also change" Mr Embree made a summary of the conference, and commented with emphasis on that statement A while later, I saw Mr Embree again at dinner at the house of Julius Rosenwald, in Chicago, but I had no idea then what this association would lead to.

I spoke one Sunday morning for the Ethical Culture Society in New York As I sat on the platform, I noted D—— in the audience. He waited until the exercises were over to speak to me I was glad of this because I had seen only little of him during these busy years. He introduced me to a very beautiful girl who was with him, as the young lady he was going to marry I didn't fear that he was going to commit bigamy because I knew he had had matrimonial difficulties and that he and his wife were divorced As soon as the young lady opened her mouth, I noted her Southern drawl D——, always quick-eyed and mentally alert and, without a doubt, a mind reader with regard to me, promptly gave me the information that she was from Louisiana The information surprised me in no manner. D——, in the confessions he used to make, had more than

once confided to me the strange and strong attraction that Southern white women possessed for him There was certainly nothing unnatural in his experience A situation which combines the forbidden and the unknown close at hand could not do less than create a magnified lure White men, where the races are thrown together, have never, for themselves, taken great pains to disguise that fact There is no sound reason to think that this mysterious pull exerts itself in only one direction across the color line, or that it confines itself to only one of the sexes, the pull is double and intercrossed It is possible that Dame Nature never kicks up her heels in such ecstatic abandon as when she has succeeded in bringing a fair woman and a dark man together, and vice versa Nor are there any facts on which to base a belief that, under comparable conditions, it would be more difficult for a colored man to win the love of a white woman (I am not here considering marriage, which is governed by a number of things aside from love) than for a white man to win the love of a colored woman This is a thought well-nigh impossible for the average white man to think, at least, with any equanimity The primitive spirit of possessive and egotistic maleness is broad enough to embrace the women of other men, but its egotistic quality brooks no encroachment on the women of the clan This primitive maleness is not limited to the white man, it is a masculine trait that may be traced back through many ages and among many races The Negro, the Negro in the South possesses it, the difference being his lack of power to give it authority In this whole situation, further complicated by the primitive antagonisms of femaleness, the sensitive nerve of the race problem in the South is embedded

I saw D—— and his fiancée occasionally after they were married; they seemed perfectly happy I enjoyed hearing her talk In that delicious drawl she informed me "I never knew that colored people had any problem till D—— told me about it I used to see lots of them where I lived, sometimes I used to go to the quarter of the town where most of them lived, and they always seemed so happy to me" The three of us were at dinner one night at the Civic Club, when she proudly told me that she was going to have a baby, that she hoped it was going to be a boy, and that he would be the first colored president of the United States I gave her my best wishes, but added that, according to rumors that had been current, Warren

Gamaliel Harding had beaten her prospective heir to that distinction. The baby was a boy, and a girl followed, both of them lovely children. I did not see D—— frequently, but our old intimacy was in some measure re-established He had made considerable money He told me that it cost him twenty thousand dollars a year to live He had put nearly all he could get together in the then recent Florida real-estate boom and the burst of the bubble had hit him hard One day in the summer of 1930, Grace who was reading the *New York Times,* startled me with the cry that D—— was dead I snatched the paper, and read that he had risen early, gone into the bathroom and shot himself through the heart At the hospital, where he died a few hours afterwards, his last words were that he was just tired of life

Death has grieved me more deeply, but never has it more terribly shocked me

In the elections of 1928, an effort was made to draft me as a candidate for Congress from the district in which the majority of Negroes in Harlem lived I spent a disagreeable couple of hours at the rooms of the County Committee Samuel Koenig, Chairman, and members of the committee made a strong attempt to impress on me that it was my duty not only to the Republican Party but to my race to accept the nomination I had no more ambition to be a Congressman than I had to be a prize fighter, and—in other words—I told them so They would not take "No" for an answer then and there, and urged me to consider the matter for a few days I consented to do that, but my mind was quite made up I did not see that I owed the Republican Party any duty that called on me for such a disruption of my plans and violation of my tastes But I realized how important a thing it would be to have a Negro in Congress and, at the end of a few days, I wrote Mr Koenig a letter definitely declining the nomination and urging the naming of some other colored man A colored man was nominated but failed by a narrow margin to be elected

My fervor as a Republican partisan had for some time been cooling off until now it was quite cold Indeed, five years before, in speaking at the annual conference of the Association that was held in Kansas City I had said

As soon as the Negro is able he should go into the Democratic primaries and vote for what he believes to be the best men for the local offices For a long time, he should not bother himself about helping to elect Republican presidents—or Democratic ones either By eschewing national Republican politics he will undermine all arguments about his being a mere tool and monkeypaw of alien Yankee domination By such a course, he will be building from the ground up In common sense, the chief concern of a Negro in the South is to have a voice in electing the judges of the local courts, the county prosecuting attorney, the sheriff, the members of the school board Unless he holds a federal job, it is sheer nonsense for a Negro in Mississippi to boast that he voted for Harding If he can't get equitable school facilities for his children, or is in danger of being railroaded in the courts, or mobbed, or lynched, President Harding can't help him—in Mississippi Of course, if the same Negro were in China, the President could send the entire navy to his assistance.

This statement did not meet with enthusiastic applause To a gathering of Negroes, at that time, it sounded like heresy. Today, it is precisely what a great proportion of the race is attempting to do.

THE ETHICS OF LIVING JIM CROW

Richard Wright

I

My first lesson in how to live as a Negro came when I was quite small. We were living in Arkansas. Our house stood behind the railroad tracks Its skimpy yard was paved with black cinders. Nothing green ever grew in that yard The only touch of green we could see was far away, beyond the tracks, over where the white folks lived. But cinders were good enough for me, and I never missed the green growing things And, anyhow, cinders were fine weapons You could always have a nice hot war with huge black cinders All you had to do was crouch behind the brick pillars of a house with your hands full of gritty ammunition And the first woolly black head you saw pop out from behind another row of pillars was your target. You tried your very best to knock it off. It was great fun

I never fully realized the appalling disadvantages of a cinder environment till one day the gang to which I belonged found itself engaged in a war with the white boys who lived beyond the tracks. As usual we laid down our cinder barrage, thinking that this would wipe the white boys out But they replied with a steady bombardment of broken bottles We doubled our cinder barrage, but they hid behind trees, hedges and the sloping embankments of their lawns. Having no such fortifications, we retreated to the brick pillars of our homes During the retreat a broken milk bottle caught me behind the ear, opening a deep gash which bled profusely The sight of blood pouring over my face completely demoralized our ranks My fellow-combatants left me standing paralyzed in the center of the yard, and scurried for their homes A kind neighbor saw me and rushed me to a doctor, who took three stitches in my neck

I sat brooding on my front steps, nursing my wound and waiting for my mother to come from work I felt that a grave injustice had been done me. It was all right to throw cinders. The greatest harm

a cinder could do was leave a bruise. But broken bottles were dangerous; they left you cut, bleeding and helpless

When night fell, my mother came from the white folks' kitchen I raced down the street to meet her. I could just feel in my bones that she would understand I knew she would tell me exactly what to do next time. I grabbed her hand and babbled out the whole story She examined my wound, then slapped me

"How come yuh didn't hide?" she asked me "How come yuh always fightin'?"

I was outraged, and bawled Between sobs I told her that I didn't have any trees or hedges to hide behind There wasn't a thing I could have used as a trench And you couldn't throw very far when you were hiding behind the brick pillars of a house She grabbed a barrel stave, dragged me home, stripped me naked, and beat me till I had a fever of one hundred and two She would smack my rump with the stave, and, while the skin was still smarting, impart to me gems of Jim Crow wisdom I was never to throw cinders any more. I was never to fight any more wars I was never, never, under any conditions, to fight white folks again And they were absolutely right in clouting me with the broken milk bottle Didn't I know she was working hard every day in the hot kitchens of the white folks to make money to take care of me? When was I ever going to learn to be a good boy? She couldn't be bothered with my fights She finished by telling me that I ought to be thankful to God as long as I lived that they didn't kill me.

All that night I was delirious and could not sleep Each time I closed my eyes I saw monstrous white faces suspended from the ceiling, leering at me

From that time on, the charm of my cinder yard was gone The green trees, the trimmed hedges, the cropped lawns grew very meaningful, became a symbol Even today when I think of white folks, the hard, sharp outlines of white houses surrounded by trees, lawns and hedges are present somewhere in the background of my mind Through the years they grew into an overreaching symbol of fear.

It was a long time before I came in close contact with white folks again We moved from Arkansas to Mississippi Here we had the good fortune not to live behind the railroad tracks, or close to white

neighborhoods. We lived in the very heart of the local Black Belt. There were black churches and black preachers, there were black schools and black teachers, black groceries and black clerks In fact, everything was so solidly black that for a long time I did not even think of white folks, save in remote and vague terms But this could not last forever As one grows older one eats more One's clothing costs more When I finished grammar school I had to go to work My mother could no longer feed and clothe me on her cooking job

There is but one place where a black boy who knows no trade can get a job And that's where the houses and faces are white, where the trees, lawns and hedges are green My first job was with an optical company in Jackson, Mississippi The morning I applied I stood straight and neat before the boss, answering all his questions with sharp yessirs and nosirs I was very careful to pronounce my sirs distinctly, in order that he might know that I was polite, that I knew where I was, and that I knew he was a white man I wanted that job badly

He looked me over as though he were examining a prize poodle. He questioned me closely about my schooling, being particularly insistent about how much mathematics I had had He seemed very pleased when I told him I had had two years of algebra

"Boy, how would you like to try to learn something around here?" he asked me

"I'd like it fine, sir," I said, happy I had visions of "working my way up" Even Negroes have those visions.

"All right," he said "Come on"

I followed him to the small factory.

"Pease," he said to a white man of about thirty-five, "this is Richard He's going to work for us."

Pease looked at me and nodded.

I was then taken to a white boy of about seventeen

"Morrie, this is Richard, who's going to work for us"

"Whut yuh sayin' there, boy!" Morrie boomed at me.

"Fine!" I answered

The boss instructed these two to help me, teach me, give me jobs to do, and let me learn what I could in my spare time.

My wages were five dollars a week.

I worked hard, trying to please. For the first month I got along O. K Both Pease and Morrie seemed to like me But one thing was missing And I kept thinking about it I was not learning anything, and nobody was volunteering to help me. Thinking they had forgotten that I was to learn something about the mechanics of grinding lenses, I asked Morrie one day to tell me about the work He grew red

"Whut yuh tryin' t' do, nigger, git smart?" he asked

"Naw, I ain' tryin' t' git smart," I said

"Well, don't, if yuh know whut's good for yuh!"

I was puzzled Maybe he just doesn't want to help me, I thought I went to Pease

"Say, are you crazy, you black bastard?" Pease asked me, his gray eyes growing hard

I spoke out, reminding him that the boss had said I was to be given a chance to learn something

"Nigger, you think you're white, don't you?"

"Naw, sir!"

"Well, you're acting mighty like it!"

"But, Mr Pease, the boss said ."

Pease shook his fist in my face

"This is a white man's work around here, and you better watch yourself!"

From then on they changed toward me They said good-morning no more When I was just a bit slow in performing some duty, I was called a lazy black son-of-a-bitch

Once I thought of reporting all this to the boss But the mere idea of what would happen to me if Pease and Morrie should learn that I had "snitched" stopped me And after all, the boss was a white man, too What was the use?

The climax came at noon one summer day Pease called me to his work-bench To get to him I had to go between two narrow benches and stand with my back against a wall

"Yes, sir," I said.

"Richard, I want to ask you something," Pease began pleasantly, not looking up from his work.

"Yes, sir," I said again

Morrie came over, blocking the narrow passage between the benches. He folded his arms, staring at me solemnly

I looked from one to the other, sensing that something was coming

"Yes, sir," I said for the third time.

Pease looked up and spoke very slowly.

"Richard, Mr Morrie, here, tells me you called me Pease."

I stiffened A void seemed to open up in me I knew this was the show-down

He meant that I had failed to call him Mr Pease I looked at Morrie He was gripping a steel bar in his hands I opened my mouth to speak, to protest, to assure Pease that I had never called him simply Pease, and that I had never had any intentions of doing so, when Morrie grabbed me by the collar, ramming my head against the wall

"Now, be careful, nigger!" snarled Morrie, baring his teeth "I heard yuh call 'im Pease! 'N' if yuh say yuh didn't, yuh're callin' me a liar, see?" He waved the steel bar threateningly.

If I had said· No, sir, Mr Pease, I never called you Pease, I would have been automatically calling Morrie a liar And if I had said. Yes, sir, Mr Pease, I called you Pease, I would have been pleading guilty to having uttered the worst insult that a Negro can utter to a Southern white man. I stood hesitating, trying to frame a neutral reply

"Richard, I asked you a question!" said Pease Anger was creeping into his voice.

"I don't remember calling you Pease, Mr Pease," I said cautiously. "And if I did, I sure didn't mean . . ."

"You black son-of-a-bitch! You called me Pease, then!" he spat, slapping me till I bent sideways over a bench Morrie was on top of me, demanding

"Didn't yuh call 'im Pease? If yuh say yuh didn't, I'll rip yo' gut string loose with this f--kin' bar, yuh black granny dodger! Yuh can't tell a white man a lie 'n' git erway with it, you black son-of-a-bitch!"

I wilted I begged them not to bother me I knew what they wanted. They wanted me to leave.

"I'll leave," I promised "I'll leave right now"

They gave me a minute to get out of the factory. I was warned not to show up again, or tell the boss.

I went.

When I told the folks at home what had happened, they called me a fool They told me that I must never again attempt to exceed my boundaries When you are working for white folks, they said, you got to "stay in your place" if you want to keep working

II

My Jim Crow education continued on my next job, which was portering in a clothing store One morning, while polishing brass out front, the boss and his twenty-year-old son got out of their car and half dragged and half kicked a Negro woman into the store A policeman standing at the corner looked on, twirling his nightstick. I watched out of the corner of my eye, never slackening the strokes of my chamois upon the brass After a few minutes, I heard shrill screams coming from the rear of the store Later the woman stumbled out, bleeding, crying, and holding her stomach When she reached the end of the block, the policeman grabbed her and accused her of being drunk Silently I watched him throw her into a patrol wagon.

When I went to the rear of the store, the boss and his son were washing their hands at the sink They were chuckling The floor was bloody, and strewn with wisps of hair and clothing No doubt I must have appeared pretty shocked, for the boss slapped me reassuringly on the back

"Boy, that's what we do to niggers when they don't want to pay their bills," he said, laughing

His son looked at me and grinned

"Here, have a cigarette," he said

Not knowing what to do, I took it He lit his and held the match for me This was a gesture of kindness, indicating that even if they had beaten the poor old woman, they would not beat me if I knew enough to keep my mouth shut.

"Yes, sir," I said, and asked no questions

After they had gone, I sat on the edge of a packing box and stared at the bloody floor till the cigarette went out

That day at noon, while eating in a hamburger joint, I told my fellow Negro porters what had happened No one seemed surprised One fellow, after swallowing a huge bite, turned to me and asked:

"Huh Is tha' all they did t' her?"

"Yeah. Wasn't tha' enough?" I asked

"Shucks! Man, she's a lucky bitch!" he said, burying his lips deep into a juicy hamburger "Hell, it's a wonder they didn't lay her when they got through."

III

I was learning fast, but not quite fast enough. One day, while I was delivering packages in the suburbs, my bicycle tire was punctured I walked along the hot, dusty road, sweating and leading my bicycle by the handle bars

A car slowed at my side

"What's the matter, boy?" a white man called

I told him my bicycle was broken and I was walking back to town

"That's too bad," he said "Hop on the running board"

He stopped the car I clutched hard at my bicycle with one hand and clung to the side of the car with the other.

"All set?"

"Yes, sir," I answered The car started.

It was full of young white men They were drinking I watched the flask pass from mouth to mouth

"Wanna drink, boy?" one asked.

I laughed, the wind whipping my face. Instinctively obeying the freshly planted precepts of my mother, I said

"Oh, no!"

The words were hardly out of my mouth before I felt something hard and cold smash me between the eyes It was an empty whisky bottle I saw stars, and fell backwards from the speeding car into the dust of the road, my feet becoming entangled in the steel spokes of my bicycle The white men piled out, and stood over me

"Nigger, ain' yuh learned no better sense'n tha' yet?" asked the man who hit me "Ain' yuh learned t' say *sir* t' a white man yet?"

Dazed, I pulled to my feet My elbows and legs were bleeding Fists doubled, the white man advanced, kicking my bicycle out of the way.

"Aw, leave the bastard alone He's got enough," said one

They stood looking at me. I rubbed my shins, trying to stop the flow of blood No doubt they felt a sort of contemptuous pity, for one asked:

"Yuh wanna ride t' town now, nigger? Yuh reckon yuh know enough t' ride now?"

"I wanna walk," I said, simply.

Maybe it sounded funny They laughed.

"Well, walk, yuh black son-of-a-bitch!"

When they left they comforted me with

"Nigger, yuh sho better be damn glad it wuz us yuh talked t' tha' way. Yuh're a lucky bastard, 'cause if yuh'd said tha' t' somebody else, yuh might've been a dead nigger now "

IV

Negroes who have lived South know the dread of being caught alone upon the streets in white neighborhoods after the sun has set In such a simple situation as this the plight of the Negro in America is graphically symbolized While white strangers may be in these neighborhoods trying to get home, they can pass unmolested But the color of a Negro's skin makes him easily recognizable, makes him suspect, converts him into a defenseless target

Late one Saturday night I made some deliveries in a white neighborhood I was pedaling my bicycle back to the store as fast as I could, when a police car, swerving toward me, jammed me into the curbing

"Get down and put up your hands!" the policemen ordered

I did They climbed out of the car, guns drawn, faces set, and advanced slowly

"Keep still!" they ordered.

I reached my hands higher They searched my pockets and packages They seemed dissatisfied when they could find nothing incriminating Finally, one of them said

"Boy, tell your boss not to send you out in white neighborhoods this time of night "

As usual, I said.

"Yes, sir."

V

My next job was as hallboy in a hotel. Here my Jim Crow education broadened and deepened When the bellboys were busy, I was often called to assist them. As many of the rooms in the hotel were

occupied by prostitutes, I was constantly called to carry them liquor and cigarettes These women were nude most of the time They did not bother about clothing even for bellboys When you went into their rooms, you were supposed to take their nakedness for granted, as though it startled you no more than a blue vase or a red rug Your presence awoke in them no sense of shame, for you were not regarded as human If they were alone, you could steal sidelong glimpses at them But if they were receiving men, not a flicker of your eyelids must show I remember one incident vividly. A new woman, a huge, snowy-skinned blonde, took a room on my floor I was sent to wait upon her She was in bed with a thickset man, both were nude and uncovered She said she wanted some liquor, and slid out of bed and waddled across the floor to get her money from a dresser drawer I watched her

"Nigger, what in hell you looking at?" the white man asked me, raising himself upon his elbows

"Nothing," I answered, looking miles deep into the blank wall of the room

"Keep your eyes where they belong, if you want to be healthy!"

"Yes, sir," I said

VI

One of the bellboys I knew in this hotel was keeping steady company with one of the Negro maids Out of a clear sky the police descended upon his home and arrested him, accusing him of bastardy The poor boy swore he had had no intimate relations with the girl Nevertheless, they forced him to marry her When the child arrived, it was found to be much lighter in complexion than either of the two supposedly legal parents The white men around the hotel made a great joke of it. They spread the rumor that some white cow must have scared the poor girl while she was carrying the baby If you were in their presence when this explanation was offered, you were supposed to laugh.

VII

One of the bellboys was caught in bed with a white prostitute. He was castrated, and run out of town Immediately after this all the bellboys and hallboys were called together and warned. We were

given to understand that the boy who had been castrated was a "mighty, mighty lucky bastard" We were impressed with the fact that next time the management of the hotel would not be responsible for the lives of "trouble-makin' niggers."

VIII

One night, just as I was about to go home, I met one of the Negro maids She lived in my direction, and we fell in to walk part of the way home together As we passed the white night-watchman, he slapped the maid on her buttock. I turned around, amazed The watchman looked at me with a long, hard, fixed-under stare. Suddenly he pulled his gun, and asked

"Nigger, don't yuh like it?"

I hesitated

"I asked yuh don't yuh like it?" he said again, stepping forward.

"Yes, sir," I mumbled

"Talk like it, then!"

"Oh, yes, sir!" I said with as much heartiness as I could muster.

Outside, I walked ahead of the girl, ashamed to face her. She caught up with me and said

"Don't be a fool, yuh couldn't help it!"

This watchman boasted of having killed two Negroes in self-defense.

Yet, in spite of all this, the life of the hotel ran with an amazing smoothness It would have been impossible for a stranger to detect anything The maids, the hallboys, and the bellboys were all smiles. They had to be.

IX

I had learned my Jim Crow lessons so thoroughly that I kept the hotel job till I left Jackson for Memphis It so happened that while in Memphis I applied for a job at a branch of the optical company I was hired And for some reason, as long as I worked there, they never brought my past against me

Here my Jim Crow education assumed quite a different form It was no longer brutally cruel, but subtly cruel. Here I learned to lie, to steal, to dissemble I learned to play that dual role which every Negro must play if he wants to eat and live.

For example, it was almost impossible to get a book to read It was assumed that after a Negro had imbibed what scanty schooling the State furnished he had no further need for books I was always borrowing books from men on the job One day I mustered enough courage to ask one of the men to let me get books from the library in his name Surprisingly, he consented I cannot help but think that he consented because he was a Roman Catholic and felt a vague sympathy for Negroes, being himself an object of hatred Armed with a library card, I obtained books in the following manner I would write a note to the librarian, saying "Please let this nigger boy have the following books" I would then sign it with the white man's name

When I went to the library, I would stand at the desk, hat in hand, looking as unbookish as possible When I received the books desired I would take them home If the books listed in the note happened to be out, I would sneak into the lobby and forge a new one I never took any chances guessing with the white librarian about what the fictitious white man would want to read No doubt if any of the white patrons had suspected that some of the volumes they enjoyed had been in the home of a Negro, they would not have tolerated it for an instant

The factory force of the optical company in Memphis was much larger than that in Jackson, and more urbanized. At least they liked to talk, and would engage the Negro help in conversation whenever possible By this means I found that many subjects were taboo from the white man's point of view Among the topics they did not like to discuss with Negroes were the following American white women, the Ku Klux Klan, France, and how Negro soldiers fared while there, French women, Jack Johnson, the entire northern part of the United States, the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln, U S Grant, General Sherman, Catholics, the Pope, Jews, the Republican Party, slavery, social equality, Communism, Socialism, the 13th and 14th Amendments to the Constitution, or any topic calling for positive knowledge or manly self-assertion on the part of the Negro The most accepted topics were sex and religion

There were many times when I had to exercise a great deal of ingenuity to keep out of trouble It is a Southern custom that all men must take off their hats when they enter an elevator And especially

did this apply to us blacks with rigid force One day I stepped into an elevator with my arms full of packages I was forced to ride with my hat on Two white men stared at me coldly Then one of them very kindly lifted my hat and placed it upon my armful of packages Now the most accepted response for a Negro to make under such circumstances is to look at the white man out of the corner of his eye and grin To have said "Thank you!" would have made the white man *think* that you *thought* you were receiving from him a personal service For such an act I have seen Negroes take a blow in the mouth Finding the first alternative distasteful, and the second dangerous, I hit upon an acceptable course of action which fell safely between these two poles I immediately—no sooner than my hat was lifted—pretended that my packages were about to spill, and appeared deeply distressed with keeping them in my arms In this fashion I evaded having to acknowledge his service, and, in spite of adverse circumstances, salvaged a slender shred of personal pride

How do Negroes feel about the way they have to live? How do they discuss it when alone among themselves? I think this question can be answered in a single sentence A friend of mine who ran an elevator once told me

"Lawd, man! Ef it wuzn't fer them polices 'n' them ol' lynch mobs, there wouldn't be nothin' but uproar down here!"

THE HOUSE UNDER ARCTURUS

William Stanley Braithwaite

I AM unhappy today—and yet I am touched with elation!—because in retrospect I relive a time of challenge and discovery and conquest, widening across the borders of a career fulfilling my hopes and dreams It is the fourteenth of February that I begin this successive recital of the autobiographical chronicle, and the day marks the anniversary of the publication, thirty-six years ago, of my first article on the magazines and the poets in the *Boston Evening Transcript*, a review which, growing into an annual affair for more than a quarter of a century, raised the standard and advanced the crusade in behalf of the recognition and appreciation for American poets and poetry Five years had followed the eventful acquaintance I had made with William Dean Howells

The old, the stirring old nineteenth century had passed into history The new twentieth century had come to birth, and in the hearts of men were the hopes of an approaching millennium! What the nineteenth century had achieved in human progress made these hopes reasonable Not in the history of human affairs had one been so fortunate as those of my age, whose lives bridging the generations between boyhood and the present, became the witness of, and participant in events and their effects, which had so profoundly changed the foundations of civilization

In the distant past, along the highway of Western civilization, were long, dark stretches of human wayfaring, luminous at intervals with the guiding spirits of great dreamers and thinkers whose Truths, complete in their immediacy, had but partially solved the riddle and mystery of man's existence, and the universe in which that existence flourished Aristotle, Plato, Jesus the Nazarene, Saint Augustine, Dante, da Vinci, Newton, Bacon, Erasmus, Spinoza, Shakespeare, Kant, Hegel, Rousseau, Darwin and Pasteur, among others, these luminous spirits and personalities transcended their fellows, creating the techniques and agencies with which men were to investigate further into the discoverable realms of physical mysteries and spiritual truths. The nineteenth century was the conscious

heir of these techniques and agencies; it had all the eagerness and curiosity, the passionate and unappeasable desire for knowledge and experience that the ideal thirteenth century of Henry Adams possessed, it had the courage and indomitable will-power of the Italian Renaissance to test the spirit in the crucible of the imagination in the sciences as well as in the arts and philosophies

The nineteenth century had placed the techniques and agencies in the hands of the many, and knowledge was diffused to make each man in his own right a sovereign in the realm of his will and in the temper of his spirit In this sovereignty the collective will of mankind was to attain, in Tennyson's prophetic verse, the "federation of the world" That was to be the attainment of the twentieth century! The physical sciences had unfolded a magnitude of evidence in the universe that magnified rather than diminished man's faith in a Creator, and the social sciences had restored balance in the human family dislocated by the confusion of tongues at the rearing of Babel Mr Carnegie built his palace of Peace at The Hague, symbolic of the unity of nations for the commonweal of mankind and the brotherhood of men The riddle of the universe had been solved in the summation of Haeckel's philosophic re-alignment of man's destiny with nature's, and the riddle of man's personality was in the slow process of solution in the psychological laboratory established by Huxley, and furnished with the agencies of perception and analysis by James and Freud, Jung and Bergson

Democracy had flowered as a governmental institution, but as a social organization it supported Montesquieu's belief that all forms of government in practice ultimately degenerated into tyranny With the discovery by physicists that the structure of the entire material universe of unimaginably gigantic galaxies—of extra-galactic nebulae —with millions and millions of stars (suns many times the size of our solar sun!), were built from the same molecules invisibly filling any room in which one may be, and Henry Drummond popularizing in simpler exposition the evidence of natural laws in the spiritual world, the nineteenth century bestowed its benediction of peace and fruition upon the twentieth at birth!

The historical concept of human events and experiences—of empires and heroes, of conflicts and ambitions, of national and racial ideals—from Plutarch to Gibbon, and on to Thiers and John Fiske,

had suffered in authority, and the historical function, as conceived by James Harvey Robinson, turned to serve new ideals, to probe a more elemental region in human action than the mere delineation and characterizing of events and their relationship to national growth or declines, to triumphs and glories

The historian at the threshold of the twentieth century, accepting the Robinsonian postulates, and the Tolstoian hypothetical agencies of free-will, chance and inevitability, were to regard human events not in themselves as significant, but rather the forces that produced them, springing from the collective and focusing urgency the masses of mankind Biography, the history of the individual in contrast to the history of the community, the nation or the period, shifted from the event, or the experience as recorded in the event, to the psychological factors, frequently in the obscure recesses of human thoughts and emotions with their magnetic interactions of desire and will, thus containing an inscrutable dynamo of motivations upon which the structure of experience and event was built, as surely as the physical universe built upon countless molecules Gamaliel Bradford invented this new type of biographical revelation though Lytton Strachey popularized it And in both instances, of invention and practice, there were undoubtedly, sources of inspiration and scientific inquiry radiating from the crowning masterpiece of human investigation in anthropology, Sir George Frazer's monumental work *The Golden Bough*, achieved during the closing years of the nineteenth century, and illuminating for the twentieth century, that self-knowledge of man which was to give him mastery over his social aims

Standing in the rotunda of the State House on Beacon Hill at midnight, at the birth of the new century, with the contiguous streets and the malls of the open Common crowded with humanity, Dr Edward Everett Hale, his massive form silhouetted against the radiance behind him, threw his trumpeting voice, without the aid of amplifiers, in invocation across the solemn, hushed night air into the far reaches of Tremont Street, beseeching the Divine blessing upon man and the nations of the new era

This event distilled in the alembic of my thoughts and specula tions the forces I have sketched in the foregoing paragraphs I looked upon the incoming century, as I looked upon the future of my literary

strivings, for the fruition of a passionate and consecrated aspiration. I was living that winter on Northampton Street in Boston, but a few doors from a little girl with sparkling eyes in which the vision of a career was even then radiating, the child Crystal Bird who, as the eminent Crystal Bird Fauset of today, has achieved a distinction that places her among the notable women in the contemporary life of America.

Three months after my visit to Mr Howells I reached my twenty-first birthday We were then living on Fifty-seventh Street, New York, a few doors from Tenth Avenue I make note of the day because I made of the anniversary, the cyclic date in a man's life, when his probationary days are over, and he assumes in the eyes of the world his manhood and his obligations toward society, something more than a chronological milestone—it was a covenant! I turned the day into a sort of confessional, closing myself up in a darkened room, where I remained all day and evening undisturbed, taking stock of my past and planning the future with obscure, and perhaps muddled, anticipations

I had that winter in New York sought employment on the newspapers and the bookstores I haunted Park Row, where the *World*, the *Tribune* and the *Sun* were then located, seeking work as a reporter I think there was not a book store of importance in the city to which I had not applied for a position as a book clerk The interviews I had with the various executives of the book stores were always critically interesting, and left a debit entry in my memory which a few years later I made them balance on the credit side of the ledger of my literary advancement Invariably I was told at the conclusion of the examinations for the position as book salesman that my knowledge of books, of literature in general, current, or standard, or classical, was extensive and superior to that of any other applicant, but—and this was the usual procedure—the conclusion was interrogatory· "You don't mind if I ask your nationality, not that it makes any difference?" When I would answer, as invariably I did, with the truth, that I "am an American Negro," the invariable evasion would follow. "Of course," began the way of escape, "I'll have to give all the applicants a fair consideration, though I've been most favorably impressed with your ability, and if you'll give me your address, I am certain you will hear from me." Of course, I never

heard from them, but I did not forget, and paid them the compliment of hearing from me later, sometimes to discover what bad memories men have when they make mistakes

My birthday meditations in the darkened room on Fifty-seventh Street forged a resolution to which I adhered with determined zeal. I had not been conscious of color, for though I had recognized the limitations and restrictions of both the social and economic relationships of the white and colored worlds, the former had not yet impinged upon the active pathway of my ambitions. I had a taste that winter in New York of what the difficulties and injustices were for one of color who wanted to be accepted at his worth and on terms of equality in the vocation of his choosing. I was forced to face problems which, somehow, I had deluded myself would solve themselves upon the higher, the universal, the spiritual plane of art. It was my belief that Beauty and Art were the leveler of all distinctions, and that the source of this transfiguring power was in the common unity of all men, sharing and participating in the same interests and the same privileges.

When I heard the famous English Platonist, G. Lowes Dickinson, some years later, deliver the Ingersoll Lecture at Harvard, on the immortality of the soul, he began by telling his intellectually and socially exclusive Brahmin audience that there was no difference between men, "Nor race, nor wealth, nor social position, makes any difference," he said, "it is only in the *growth of the soul*."

And in my artistic ambitions I had dimly formulated this belief, certain that the truth of it would dissolve the obstacles that presented a diverted pathway in the practice of one's idealistic vocation. The racial conditions which closed the doors to the opportunities for employment of the kind I sought in New York that winter convinced me that whatever may be the quality and distinction of achievement in literature, if that literature was confined to racial materials and experiences, it would be appraised and judged by a different standard from the literature of American writers in general. For the good of the artistic sincerity, for the cultural values, which must be purified and sustained in a country so much below the standard of European achievements, this double standard of criticism must be destroyed. This purpose became the dominating influence upon my efforts in the career I dreamed for the future.

My inclination might have turned toward a field where it might have been easier for recognition, where sentiment and sympathy on the part of press and public might have been lavishly and profitably remunerative But I had no such inclination, and the lack of it only served to strengthen and enrich the opportunity to challenge and discredit the illogical and dishonorable attitude of American criticism

The resolution I formed in that darkened room was to express myself on the common ground of American authorship, to demonstrate, in however humble a degree, that a man of color was the equal of any other man in possession of the attributes that produced a literature of human thought and experience, and to force a recognition of this common capacity and merit from the appreciation of the reading public and the authority of critical opinion And I resolved, with equal determination, not to treat in any phase, in any form, for any purpose, racial materials or racial experiences, *until* this recognition had been won, recorded and universally confirmed

This is the first recorded explanation of a course which had invited some criticism from my own people who accused me of retreat from, and discrimination against, racial materials and interests It did not occur to these critics that I was taking a way unique, and single-handed to help solve their problems, which were essentially my own personal problems as well, and which were insidious and perplexing These critics did not know how, in those weaker and earlier days, I was advised by subtly tempered advocates of racial differences and economies, to devote my talents in behalf of racial experiences Ray Stannard Baker, then one of the editors of the old *McClure's Magazine* (later the official biographer of Woodrow Wilson), investigated the "problem," resulting in a book entitled *Following the Color Line* He interviewed me in Boston, and after his departure, wrote me a lengthy letter, pleading for a consecration of my talents in literature to purely racial interests I replied, acknowledging the need of a purely aesthetic voice, to express and interpret the manifold interests of the Negro's life and experiences, but however well, I said, it might be achieved, such an author would still be judged as something apart from both the human and cultural standards applied to *American* authorship in general He would still be outside the fold of that complete function of equality

because he would be regarded as representative, a special phenomenon, rather than competitive in the sense of the rendering and interpretation of human nature and experience

In this attitude of a special quality and significance, representative of superficial distinctions in human experiences, was the manifestation of a patronage which declared the traditional assumption of the inferior status of the Negro author and his people Was I not told by a journalist friend, which gave me a shock, that it was common in literary and publishing circles, to refer to that superb and tragic artist, Charles Waddell Chesnutt, as "Page's darky" because Walter Hines Page, as editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, had discovered and printed Chesnutt's earlier stories in the magazine, and persuaded Houghton Mifflin to publish his books?

To the resolves I had made concerning the shaping of my literary career was added the final intention never to permit myself, whatever the practical gain, to be patronized because of my color That this might have been so, and profitably so, was revealed to me just before the publication of my first book of poems, when the poet Frederic Lawrence Knowles, one of my earliest poetic friends, said to me, "Ah, Braithwaite, when your book is published, you can become the rage of the Back Bay!" I caught the implication immediately and set him right

"No," I replied, "I would scorn the condescension that would falsely exaggerate the value of my verses because of a sentimental interest in the race of the author Yes, I might profit materially for a while, but it would destroy the character and respect of my efforts for a sound and sincere growth and reputation" And when some years later, Edward H Clement, a fine gentleman of the old school, for a quarter of a century editor-in-chief of the *Transcript*, remarked one day apropos of nothing, "I admire you, Braithwaite, for you owe your success to no one—you have paddled your own canoe!" I felt happy and justified in the resolves I had made

What Mr Clement really meant was that I had not been the special recipient of any favors or support in the dark and uncertain days of one's beginnings, as is so often the case with artists in any medium The only reliance upon which I could depend was the inner urge and determination which could not by any conceivable means envisage failure. The practical question of living and holding on until

the foundation was laid for the building of a career, substantial and secure of its own self, this was indeed to "paddle one's own canoe." But without friends, their sympathy and encouragement, their constant urging of a belief in one's own powers, and the certainty of circumstances to shape opportunities, with the judgment and alertness to take advantage of them, progress and fulfillment were often likely to be dubious And such friends I had!

When I left New York in April of 1901, and returned to Newport, I looked forward to but one achievement, and that at the earliest —to publish a book I returned to the Business Men's Association, where I could work the year round, and where I had ample time from my duties to study and write Continually revising, omitting and adding pieces, I was shaping the manuscript that was to make the book Some years before I had printed my first poems in the old Boston *Courant*, then edited by George Forbes, who later became associated with Monroe Trotter in establishing the radical Boston *Guardian*, and a little later, Roy Martin, then editor of the Boston *Journal*, afterwards manager of the Associated Press, accepted some pieces for the *Journal* Following the New York winter, the *Transcript* began to print my verses regularly through the cordial appreciation of Charles E Hurd, its literary editor

I had met at Newport in 1902 the young lady, whom I married in 1903, and with this domestic responsibility—though in a sense, I had known nothing but domestic responsibility ever since I first went to work—I felt it imperative to get started in literature Had I not known the responsibility toward Mother to which I have referred, I daresay I would not have had the courage to do what I did some four or five months after our marriage For returning to Boston in the autumn of 1903, I decided to devote myself wholly to a literary life It was a momentous step to take, but I was ready for complete disaster if it came, so strong was my passion for a literary career

It was in October of 1903 that the family, including my aunts, was settled in a house on Harwich Street, a block down from the Back Bay station It was here that I began the adventure that made possible the personal record I am writing If I had not been blinded with the passion for a literary career, I would have seen the tortuous and rocky road ahead, and sought a less forbidding pathway to

travel in life. But fools, fanatics and dreamers move with an undaunted determination toward goals in ways which not even the most perceptive psychologists have been able to explain The more baffled and discouraged, the darker and less charted the distance ahead, the more intensified and forging their urgency and appeal, driving them on I suspect I was compounded of all three in my disposition during that fateful year.

A few weeks after taking up the residence in Harwich Street, I went with my manuscript to see Laurens Maynard, who with Herbert Small, had founded the publishing firm of Small, Maynard and Company; and after a few years of success and prosperity had failed, and were taken over by Norman White, with offices at his bindery, the Boston Book Binding Company, in Cambridge Laurens Maynard was a unique figure in the literary and publishing world, a man of wide acquaintances, of boundless enthusiasm, of a Bohemian disposition, and noted as a fascinating conversationalist. Though some years older than myself, we became close friends for many years, and I owe to him many kindly acts which helped me along the way

Small, Maynard could not publish my manuscript, Maynard told me, for the firm was not issuing many new books, but was biding its time in process of rehabilitation But he knew a young publisher who had not yet issued a book of poems, and he would be glad to interest him in my manuscript Soon after the visit to Maynard, I called upon the publishers, Herbert B Turner and Company, located near the foot of Summer Street, opposite the South Station, and discussed with Mr Turner, and his partner, Charles McCotter, a quiet, music-loving, and thrifty Scotsman, the possibility of publication

Herbert Turner, the eldest son of a rich merchant of old Puritan stock, after trying his hand at various enterprises, had gone into the publishing business because of his passion for two authors, Robert Louis Stevenson and Charles Warren Stoddard, whose famous *South Sea Idylls* had charmed him as a young man His father had financed him in the business, and McCotter, who at one time had supervised the senior Turner's interest in Mexico, and who had also guided Herbert's younger twin brothers on European trips, was given a partnership on the strength of his literary knowledge and

general business experience It was McCotter who decided upon the merit of my verses, and the feasibility of their publication.

Finally they consented to publish my manuscript, but at my own expense, which was a common arrangement then, as it is now, and at the mere cost of manufacturing, quoting me a price which, if it had been less by one hundred per cent, I would not have had the money to meet I was convinced that the book must be published and ways and means found I thought the matter over for a few days, conceived and worked out a proposal which I asked Mr Turner to consider. The proposal was for me to obtain the promise of two hundred persons to buy a copy of the book in advance of publication, thus guaranteeing its expense.

When Mr. Turner heard my proposition, and had called Mr. McCotter into consultation, he sympathetically accepted it with the comment "Even with the signature of the individuals to buy the book it would be impractical to enforce their purchase if they refused to do so, but I would like to see you get started, Mr Braithwaite, and we will proceed and take the risk"

The responsibility was now mine to make good It took me seven months to do so, weary months of tramping and interviewing people. For the most part I felt that only literary people would be interested in a book of poems by an unknown poet, and that not all of these whom I would solicit would care to buy In this my experience proved me right Fred Knowles, who had a genuine admiration for my verse, and who had grown to like me personally, and who was himself preparing to publish his second book of poems that year, *Love Triumphant*, was of signal service in my efforts

He was an active member of the Boston Authors Club, a member of the Whitman Fellowship, and never failed to attend the weekly *salon* of Louise Chandler Moulton at her home in musty old Rutland Square, where all the Boston literati of the time assembled He gave me notes of introduction to these authors, and spoke to them personally, commending my poetic promise.

I pasted clippings of my best contributions to the *Transcript* into a little booklet, and prepared another folder with blank pages for the signatures of the advance subscribers for the book which I entitled *Lyrics of Life and Love*

Knowles himself was the first to subscribe, putting his name down

for two copies I then went to see Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson, at his house on Buckingham Street, Cambridge, whom I had met when he spoke at some gathering in Boston Colonel Higginson, who at this time was advancing in his eighties, was an eminent figure in the golden era of New England romanticism, as abolitionist, soldier and man of letters He was intimate with all the great New England authors, and was himself poet, novelist and essayist, and he was among the first to give enthusiastic appreciation to the beauty and high imaginative quality of the Negro spirituals He had joined the mob—indeed, was one of those that rammed the pole against the jail-house door—in the attempt to rescue the fugitive slave, Anthony Burns, and prevent his return South to his master, he had reported for one of the Boston papers the famous reading of his poems by Edgar Allan Poe, and like his fellow-citizen of Massachusetts, and fellow-alumnus of Harvard College, had commanded and led a regiment of Negro troops, the 55th Massachusetts, in the Civil War

My hope in seeing Colonel Higginson was to obtain his subscription for the book, aware and considerate of his advance age, I did not expect his interest to extend beyond this kindness, but instinctively and spontaneously, he gave me more, his counsel, and recommended my project to many of his friends At his insistence I returned to his home frequently, to report on my progress, spending many hours listening to his recollections of a long life in the service of humanity and letters The vivid procession of the figures and personalities of his great contemporaries marched before my vision as we sat in his quiet drawing room, reminiscent of the Cambridge days that had vanished, his low-pitched voice, aged as he was, without tremor or hesitation, but full, as I imagined, of the faint and subtle echoes of the mighty spirits that had glorified the environs of Cambridge and Boston and Concord in the nineteenth century.

The winter months of 1903-04 were passing and my progress was very slow I was confident that the subscriptions could be obtained so as to assure the publication of the book in the spring Most of the people I was to see lived in the various suburbs around Boston, and to conserve the few pennies I possessed, I used to walk out to the distant places and back In the meantime, Amos R Wells, who was editing *The Christian Endeavor World*, bought some of my verses

for publication in his magazine I had obtained subscriptions from notable people Julia Ward Howe, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, Bliss Perry, Nixon Waterman, Cyrus Dallin, the sculptor, George Gordon, of the famous Old South Church, Eugenia Brooks Frothingham, who had recently published an unusually able and successful first novel, and her cousin, Paul Revere Frothingham, the elegant and brilliant Unitarian minister; Arlo Bates, author of those typically Bostonian novels, *The Pagans* and *The Puritans*, professor of English at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (and incidentally the author of one of the best texts on composition for college students, *Talks on the Writing of English*), Louise Chandler Moulton, the familiar of the English poets of the Victorian era, especially the minor pre-Raphaelites, Phillip Burke Marston and Arthur O'Shaughnessy, Mark A. Dewolfe Howe, a charming and compassionate gentleman, then one of the editors of *The Youth's Companion* and since the biographer of New England culture, and Hezekiah Butterworth, the editor of *The Youth's Companion*, an elemental Yankee, just fresh from a South American tour when I visited him in his disorderly book-laden bedroom in a lodging-house on Worcester Street, in the shabby-genteel South End, where he did most of his work for the magazine

There were some incidents connected with these solicitations that are woven into my memory with dramatic interest On a larger scale, and where my personal sensitivities were involved so deeply and so critically, I was matching the future, a whole pattern of anticipations, against the uncertain sympathies and impressions of a human nature refrigerated in its social and intellectual superiority and pride There was an innate assumption of something within me, of whose reflection of subtle communication I was unaware, for the manifest interest was more often, and initially, expressed in my personality than in my verses I was led into discussion of subjects wholly alien to the purpose of my visit, and I could often discern, like a visible movement, their minds wavering around, but never quite touching upon, the subject of which my appearance made them questioningly aware. There was a lack of frankness in this matter, which seemed to save them from an embarrassing commitment, especially if it proved mistaken. They were also sure to ask me where

I was educated, as if that in some way determined the merit, or the sanction, of my efforts in verse-making.

Among the episodes that beaded this experience, some two or three stand out against the background of my memory One gave a disturbing tone to the spirit of the progress which a people were striving for, and rifted their ideals at the whim of a well-meant but ostensible ostracism I was so sure of this man's approval of the artistic ideal, indeed of his hearty sympathy with any creative striving, that I could not conceive of a disillusionment on any score I had found it difficult to catch him either at his home or office, and after journeying to Roxbury several times to see him, his secretary finally obtained an appointment for me to meet him at his office So I called on Edward Everett Hale[1] He was then the chaplain of the United States Senate, but when at home in Boston, spent most of his time attending to the affairs of the charitable organization he had founded —The Lend-a-Hand Society.

Dr Hale followed the long line of New England divines who had tempered theology with literary interests, and was the author of some notable works in fiction and biography, his *The Man Without a Country,* with its polemical patriotism, becoming an American classic, and his discursive record of *James Russell Lowell and His Friends,* an entertaining chronicle of New England authorship and culture He was a patriarchal figure, with his huge frame and massive head—giving one the notion of a reincarnated Homer, for one could not shake the impression, hearing his full-bodied, tumultuous voice, of his Homeric qualities—as he strode along the Boston streets.

Ushered into his private office, I beheld him sprawling at his desk, his leonine head slung between broad, boulder-like shoulders, over his desk, as his sidewise body was supported, it seemed, by a veritable trunklike leg slanting straight and stiff backward, half the length of the office floor With a ponderous turn of his head he looked at me briefly, asked my business as if recollecting some expectant affair, and then turned back to the examination of some papers on his desk I explained the purpose of my visit, placing the booklet of signatures before him Without hesitancy, he signed his name subscribing for a copy of the book and handed it back to me, his head still slung over his desk, and as he did so, remarked, "Young man, it is no disgrace to hoe potatoes."

Dr. Hale had focused, in his remark, the Du Bois-Washington controversy about racial ideals and problems upon my unsuspecting head, and there was no doubt as to which had his sympathy and support.

My visit to Alice Brown, the poet and novelist, was the occasion of another memorable episode. With Mary E. Wilkins and Sarah Orne Jewett, Miss Brown was a faithful portrayer of New England village life in novels and tales When I explained my mission I was sensitive, from her attitude, of a skeptical interest She was unacquainted with any of my verses as published in the Boston papers, and asked that I leave my little folder of clippings from the *Transcript,* and if her examination of them proved satisfactory, she would be glad to have a copy of the proposed book reserved for her. About a week later she wrote, returning the folder, expressing her regret at not being able to support the publication of verses that seemed to her of such doubtful merit Her letter contained some critical advice which, if followed, she suggested, might improve the quality of my efforts and make them worthy of publication I acknowledged her letter, thanking her for the kindness and attention she had given my work.

I did not see Miss Brown again until three years later when I met her at the reception given by the Boston Authors Club to Mrs. Humphry Ward, the English novelist and niece of Matthew Arnold, at William Lindsay's castle-like residence on Bay State Road She was on the other side of the large reception room when we spied each other, and instinctively we both moved forward to meet. With extended hand she approached and began speech which I sensed was to be an apology for the refusal she had made to take a copy of my book; and to save what I believed would have been an embarrassing moment for both of us, I immediately interrupted her with a reference to Mrs Humphry Ward's novels which I had read and greatly admired Miss Brown realized my intention instantly, and, warmly appreciating my tactful consideration, exclaimed fervently, "O you dear boy!"

After the book was published in September, 1904, I undertook to deliver the copies and collect the payment I had a handbag into which I crowded as many copies as it would hold, and went on my calls. I went to Eugenia Brooks Frothingham's on Newbury Street,

to deliver her copy She was not at home, but her mother came down to the reception room, when the maid had announced me When she entered the room and saw a book in my hand and the bag resting quietly on the floor at my feet, she became wrathful and demanded me "to take that bag and get out!" It was all done so quickly I scarcely knew what had happened when I found myself walking down the pavement on Newbury Street in a daze and with a sickening feeling within Whether Mrs Frothingham remembered me, I do not know, and if she did, she acted with superb indifference, for later at an Authors Club banquet, when I was seated and looked at my next neighbor, I looked into the smiling face of Mrs Frothingham We chatted pleasantly about our common interest in the company and the feast, and with no sign of recognition beyond our meeting for the occasion.

So the book was published at last, and I felt like a conqueror before whom lay the world to ravage and rule! I know that all young authors have experienced the same exultation and convictions But how disillusioned they soon become when they realize that it is only the start of a race, and to keep going means constant and hard work Surely, I thought, with the book a reality, and thus introduced and recorded in the annals of acknowledged authorship, the portals of every editorial office were down, and editors would vie for one's manuscripts It was in this mood that I sent some verse to Henry M. Alden, editor of *Harper's Magazine* Though he could not make use of any of the verse I had sent, Mr Alden wrote me a cordial personal letter when returning them, commending their merits, and invited me to submit another batch of my wares By return mail more verses were on the way to him, and by return mail they were on their way back to me with a printed rejection slip.

THE REVOLT OF THE EVIL FAIRIES

Ted Poston

THE grand dramatic offering of the Booker T Washington Colored Grammar School was the biggest event of the year in our social life in Hopkinsville, Kentucky It was the one occasion on which they let us use the old Cooper Opera House, and even some of the white folks came out yearly to applaud our presentation. The first two rows of the orchestra were always reserved for our white friends and our leading colored citizens sat right behind them—with an empty row intervening, of course

Mr Ed Smith, our local undertaker, invariably occupied a box to the left of the house and wore his cutaway coat and striped breeches This distinctive garb was usually reserved for those rare occasions when he officiated at the funerals of our most prominent colored citizens Mr Thaddeus Long, our colored mailman, once rented a tuxedo and bought a box too But nobody paid him much mind We knew he was just showing off

The title of our play never varied It was always "Prince Charming and the Sleeping Beauty," but no two presentations were ever the same Miss H Belle LaPrade, our sixth-grade teacher, rewrote the script every season, and it was never like anything you read in the story books

Miss LaPrade called it "a modern morality play of conflict between the forces of good and evil " And the forces of evil, of course, always came off second best

The Booker T. Washington Colored Grammar School was in a state of ferment from Christmas until February, for this was the period when parts were assigned First there was the selection of the Good Fairies and the Evil Fairies This was very important, because the Good Fairies wore white costumes and the Evil Fairies black. And strangely enough most of the Good Fairies usually turned out to be extremely light in complexion, with straight hair and white folks' features On rare occasions a dark-skinned girl might be lucky enough to be a Good Fairy, but not one with a speaking part.

There never was any doubt about Prince Charming and the Sleep-

ing Beauty. They were *always* light-skinned. And though nobody ever discussed those things openly, it was an accepted fact that a lack of pigmentation was a decided advantage in the Prince Charming and Sleeping Beauty sweepstakes.

And therein lay my personal tragedy I made the best grades in my class, I was the leading debater, and the scion of a respected family in the community But I could never be Prince Charming, because I was black.

In fact, every year when they started casting our grand dramatic offering my family started pricing black cheesecloth at Franklin's Department Store For they knew that I would be leading the forces of darkness and skulking back in the shadows—waiting to be vanquished in the third act Mamma had experience with this sort of thing All my brothers had finished Booker T. before me.

Not that I was alone in my disappointment Many of my classmates felt it too I probably just took it more to heart Rat Joiner, for instance, could rationalize the situation. Rat was not only black, he lived on Billy Goat Hill But Rat summed it up like this.

"If you black, you black."

I should have been able to regard the matter calmly too. For our grand dramatic offering was only a reflection of our daily community life in Hopkinsville The yallers had the best of everything. They held most of the teaching jobs in Booker T Washington Colored Grammar School They were the Negro doctors, the lawyers, the insurance men They even had a "Blue Vein Society," and if your dark skin obscured your throbbing pulse you were hardly a member of the élite.

Yet I was inconsolable the first time they turned me down for Prince Charming. That was the year they picked Roger Jackson. Roger was not only dumb, he stuttered But he was light enough to pass for white, and that was apparently sufficient

In all fairness, however, it must be admitted that Roger had other qualifications His father owned the only colored saloon in town and was quite a power in local politics In fact, Mr Clinton Jackson had a lot to say about just who taught in the Booker T Washington Colored Grammar School So it was understandable that Roger should have been picked for Prince Charming

My real heartbreak, however, came the year they picked Sarah

Williams for Sleeping Beauty. I had been in love with Sarah since kindergarten. She had soft light hair, bluish gray eyes, and a dimple which stayed in her left cheek whether she was smiling or not.

Of course Sarah never encouraged me much She never answered any of my fervent love letters and Rat was very scornful of my one-sided love affair "As long as she don't call you a black baboon," he sneered, "you'll keep on hanging around "

After Sarah was chosen for Sleeping Beauty, I went out for the Prince Charming role with all my heart If I had declaimed boldly in previous contests, I was matchless now If I had bothered Mamma with rehearsals at home before, I pestered her to death this time. Yes, and I purloined my sister's can of Palmer's Skin Success

I knew the Prince's role from start to finish, having played the Head Evil Fairy opposite it for two seasons And Prince Charming was one character whose lines Miss LaPrade never varied much in her many versions But although I never admitted it, even to myself, I knew I was doomed from the start They gave the part to Leonardius Wright Leonardius, of course, was yaller

The teachers sensed my resentment They were almost apologetic. They pointed out that I had been such a splendid Head Evil Fairy for two seasons that it would be a crime to let anybody else try the role They reminded me that Mamma wouldn't have to buy any more cheesecloth because I could use my same old costume They insisted that the Head Evil Fairy was even more important than Prince Charming because he was the one who cast the spell on Sleeping Beauty So what could I do but accept?

I had never liked Leonardius Wright He was a goody-goody, and even Mamma was always throwing him up to me But above all, he too was in love with Sarah Williams. And now he got a chance to kiss Sarah every day in rehearsing the awakening scene.

Well, the show must go on, even for little black boys So I threw my soul into my part and made the Head Evil Fairy a character to be remembered When I drew back from the couch of Sleeping Beauty and slunk away into the shadows at the approach of Prince Charming, my facial expression was indeed something to behold When I was vanquished by the shining sword of Prince Charming in the last act, I was a little hammy perhaps—but terrific!

The attendance at our grand dramatic offering that year was the

best in its history Even the white folks overflowed the two rows reserved for them and a few were forced to sit in the intervening one. This created a delicate situation, but everybody tactfully ignored it

When the curtain went up on the last act, the audience was in fine fettle Everything had gone well for me too—except for one spot in the second act That was where Leonardius unexpectedly rapped me over the head with his sword as I slunk off into the shadows That was not in the script, but Miss LaPrade quieted me down by saying it made a nice touch anyway Rat said Leonardius did it on purpose.

The third act went on smoothly though until we came to the vanquishing scene That was where I slunk from the shadows for the last time and challenged Prince Charming to mortal combat The hero reached for his shining sword—a bit unsportsmanlike I always thought, since Miss LaPrade consistently left the Head Evil Fairy unarmed—and then it happened!

Later, I protested loudly—but in vain—that it was a case of self-defense I pointed out that Leonardius had a mean look in his eye I cited the impromptu rapping he had given my head in the second act But nobody would listen They just wouldn't believe that Leonardius really intended to brain me when he reached for his sword

Anyway he didn't succeed For the minute I saw that evil gleam in his eye—or was it my own?—I cut loose with a right to the chin, and Prince Charming dropped his shining sword and staggered back. His astonishment lasted only a minute though, for he lowered his head and came charging in, fists flailing There was nothing yellow about Leonardius but his skin

The audience thought the scrap was something new Miss LaPrade had written in They might have kept on thinking so if Miss LaPrade hadn't been screaming so hysterically from the sidelines And if Rat Joiner hadn't decided that this was as good a time as any to settle old scores So he turned around and took a sock at the male Good Fairy nearest him

When the curtain rang down, the forces of Good and Evil were locked in combat. And Sleeping Beauty was wide awake, and streaking for the wings.

They rang the curtain back up fifteen minutes later, and we finished the play. I lay down and expired according to specifications, but Prince Charming will probably remember my sneering corpse to his dying day They wouldn't let me appear in the grand dramatic offering at all the next year. But I didn't care. I couldn't have been Prince Charming anyway.

BIOGRAPHIES

ROCK, CHURCH, ROCK!

Arna Bontemps

BACK IN 1925, audiences at the old Monogram Theatre, 35th and State in Chicago, found themselves centering more and more attention on a lanky, foot-patting piano player called Georgia Tom There was a boy to watch!

Georgia Tom had blues in his mind as well as in his feet and his hands He had composed Ma Rainey's popular theme music

Rain on the ocean,
Rain on the deep blue sea,

not to mention scores of other blues The kid was a natural If the blues idiom meant anything to you, he was your boy The only trouble was that the more you watched Georgia Tom, the less you saw him It was downright quaint the way he bobbed in and out of things Presently the hard-working boogie-woogie player dropped out of sight completely, and the name of Georgia Tom was forgotten

Five or six years later, observers of such phenomena noticed that Negro churches, particularly the storefront congregations, the Sanctified groups and the shouting Baptists, were swaying and jumping as never before Mighty rhythms rocked the churches. A wave of fresh rapture came over the people Nobody knew just why True, the Depression had knocked most of the folks off their feet and sent them hurrying back to church, but did that explain this tremendous impulse to get out of their seats and praise God in the aisles? It was also true that many new songs were being introduced from time to time—songs which were different—but what did that have to do with this new ecstasy? A few of the more inquiring members discovered that the best and most lively of the new songs were credited to Thomas A Dorsey, composer, but there were few people anywhere who connected Dorsey with the Georgia Tom of the former years The transformation had been complete. Well—almost complete.

Dorsey—not to be confused with the white orchestra leader of the same name—was born near Atlanta, the son of a country preacher. Gawky and shy, sensitive about his looks, snubbed by the more high-toned colored boys and girls of the city, young Tom early set his mind on learning to play the piano This involved walking four miles a day, four days a week (since there was no piano in his home), but it was worth the effort and the results were completely satisfactory

Within two years the funny-looking country kid was able to turn a Saturday Night Stomp upside down with his playing. City youngsters started calling him Barrel-House Tom Such stomp pianists as Lark Lee, Soap Stick, Long Boy, Nome Burkes and Charlie Spann had to move over and make room for the sad-faced newcomer, Barrel-House Tom People who gave the stomps recognized a difference, too. They were glad to pay a player like Tom a dollar and a half a night for dance music The second-string boys counted themselves lucky to get fifty cents

Even in those marvelous days, however, young Dorsey had more in his mind than just punishing a piano For one thing, there was a girl—a girl with curly black hair hanging over her shoulders like the glory of a thousand queens When she looked at Tom, he felt like a boy dazzled by the sun Then, quite suddenly, her family picked up and moved to Birmingham, carrying the daughter with them If they had only known what they were doing to the poor boy's heart! In this mood, as so often happens, ambition was born. Tom determined to be somebody in his chosen field

First he tried, with such local help as he could get, to teach himself harmony, composition, instrumentation and arranging But being twenty and broken-hearted, he listened to talk about the steel mills of Gary, Indiana. There was good money in those mills—money that would make the wages of a Georgia stomp musician look sick Moreover, there were golden opportunities up North, opportunities for study, musical opportunities Perhaps, too, there were other proud dark queens with shiny black glory hanging down over their shoulders The lure was too great; Tom couldn't resist

What he failed to consider was the limitation of a thin, willowy body that weighed only 128 pounds The steel mill all but did him in, but he kept at it till he got his bearings. Which is to say, he kept

at it till he could put a little five-piece orchestra together. This orchestra marked the beginning of Georgia Tom, the Barrel House and Saturday Night Stomp phase having been left in Atlanta. It gave him piano practice, and it enabled him to earn money by playing for parties in the steel-mill communities of Gary and South Chicago It provided exercises in the making of band arrangements and piano scores, and it left enough time for study at the Chicago College of Composition and Arranging. More important still, it started him to reflecting

One of the first results of this tranquil thought was a little song entitled "Count the Days I'm Gone." The waste basket got that one, but the effort was not wasted. Song followed song, and when Dorsey joined the Pilgrim Baptist Church the following year, he took to writing church songs as some people take to drinking gin. Why Dorsey's songs should have been different from other church music can be left to the imagination.

As it turned out, 1921 was a good year in which to join Pilgrim Baptist Church, for that was the year the National Baptist Convention met in Chicago More important still, that was the convention which was lifted out of its chairs by a song called "I Do, Don't You?" A W Nix did the singing, and the response by the audience was terrific More important was the fact that a small wheel started turning in the heart of an inconspicuous young convert The song lifted the boy like angels' wings Nothing he had pounded out at parties or stomps had ever moved him so completely. Here was his calling. He would make such music.

The effects of that decision are still unmeasured Dorsey considers "I Do, Don't You?" the first of the so-called "gospel songs" He credits C A Tindley, its composer, with originating this style of music All of which may be fair enough, but it should be quickly added that the songs of this genre have come a long way since Georgia Tom's conversion.

Tindley's productive period fell between 1901 and 1906 Most of his compositions were gospel songs in the conventional sense: tabernacle and revival songs His, however, leaned heavily on Negro spirituals At least one widely used song book classifies Tindley's "Stand by Me" as a spiritual. "Nothing Between" could go in the same group with equal reason.

Thomas A Dorsey joined Pilgrim and commenced to write "gospel songs" at a time when Tindley's were catching on—after fifteen years of delayed action. It is therefore not surprising that Dorsey's first successful songs were distinctly in the mood of his tutor's. The earliest of these, "If I Don't Get There," published in the popular Gospel Pearl Song Book, reveals its debt in the very wording of its title. The second followed the same line "We Will Meet Him in the Sweet By and By" The Special Edition of the National Baptist Hymnal included this one Both have the Dorsey touch, both have swing and bounce, both are definitely "live"; but there is little in either of the special quality that marks the more mature Dorsey as an "influence." They are standard tabernacle songs. Perhaps there was a reason.

Like most young fellows who join the church in their early twenties, Dorsey had his temptations Right off the bat, the devil showed him a red apple a forty-dollar-a-week offer to play the blues. Georgia Tom was entranced He fought against the allurement briefly, then gave up the struggle The blues are not thrown off by casual resistance Trifle with them, and they'll get you. They got Georgia Tom. He left the church rocking and swaying to savage rhythms

The band he joined was called the Whispering Syncopators. It was directed by Will Walker, and among its members were Les Hite, Lionel Hampton, and a half dozen other boys who have since become jazzmen of note Georgia Tom played with the outfit around Chicago and then accompanied them on an extended tour When they started a second turn through the country, he was left behind Instead, he organized a band for Ma Rainey, the "gold-neck mama" (thanks to a necklace of twenty-dollar gold pieces) of the early blues era. This was a step up, and he went on tour with her at an increased salary. The tricks were running his way.

One day, jittery with excitement, he found himself standing before the dog-license cage in the City Hall. It was an embarrassing moment, for what he really wanted was a marriage license When he got himself straightened out, it was just five minutes before the bureau closed An hour later, all hitched up and everything, he was off with the band for engagements in the South While his new wife was not the girl who provoked his sighs in Atlanta, she had her own

glory, and Dorsey knew that things were breaking his way Yet his mind wasn't right Something told him he was straying God had to put a stop to it.

That was the time he got sick For eighteen months he was unable to work The doctors couldn't do him any good. His money melted away, and his wife had to take a job in a laundry Still he grew worse and worse His weight went down to 117 pounds It was then that his God-fearing sister-in-law decided to take a hand She took him back to church It was just what he needed, he commenced to improve immediately As a matter of fact, it occurred to him that perhaps his sickness was less of the body than of the mind To prove it, he sat down that very week and wrote a new song, one of his ringing successes, "Someday, Somewhere"

Even a song that has since been so widely approved by church people of all denominations throughout the Christian world as "Someday, Somewhere" put no meal in the barrel immediately No publisher wanted it, and when Dorsey had a thousand copies printed at his own expense, nobody would buy them With money his wife borrowed, he bought envelopes and stamps and circularized people who should have been interested Nothing happened, not a single sale There were no choirs interested in singing this kind of number No musical directors were impressed The situation called to mind W C Handy's experiences with his blues compositions The only thing left to Dorsey was to get out and sing his song to the people themselves

The very next week he made a start, arranging with a preacher to introduce the number in a church service He arrived as arranged, took his seat on the front row, and waited for his call The preacher preached The people sang and prayed The collection was raised Finally church was dismissed Dorsey was still sitting on the front row, waiting to be called upon for his song The next Sunday he tried again Then the next, and the next On the latter occasions he got to sing his song, but the rewards were meager He counted himself lucky when he sold a dollar and a half's worth of song sheets Still the humiliating business went on He wouldn't give up Eventually the Brunswick Recording Company rescued him by giving him a job arranging music for their recording artists

Thereafter things went better He took his wife out of the laundry

In six months he had a thousand dollars in the bank. But he hadn't learned his lesson yet. Temptation came strolling around again. This time, oddly enough, it strummed a guitar, and its name was Tampa Red.

The young singer came to Dorsey's house one evening with some words for a song He wanted them set to music and a musical arrangement made Dorsey hemmed and hawed. He had had his fill of blues and stomp music and all the likes of that Besides, this particular lyric was entitled "It's Tight Like That" and was way out of line. The guitarist pleaded, Dorsey hedged For two hours the battle raged In the end Georgia Tom won out over Thomas A. Dorsey He went to the piano and knocked out the music.

The next day they took it to Vocalian Recording Company, played it The record people jumped with glee They promptly waxed the number and gave it to the world Result the first royalty statement brought $2,400 19 Tight? Well, I reckon! Dorsey rewarded his loyal wife with all the fine clothes she had dreamed about while she was working in the laundry and he was ill The rest of the money he put in the bank. But God didn't like "It's Tight Like That," and He didn't like the money that came from it The bank failed, and it has never yet paid off Thomas A Dorsey took that for a lesson

He has behaved himself ever since God is pleased, and the church folks are so happy you can hear them a half mile away They are clapping their hands, patting their feet, and singing for all they are worth Why shouldn't they? They had as good a reason as the composer for singing

How many times did Jesus lift me,
How many times did my burdens bear?
How many times has He forgiven my sins?
And when I reach the pearly gates,
He'll let me in.

Since his return to his true love, definitely and finally, Dorsey has written some songs in the tempered, conventional style of gospel music everywhere. His "Take My Hand, Precious Lord" is a good example It seems to be almost universally approved and is sung in many churches where there is still a definite resistance to the main

body of the Dorsey music. The resistance is understandable. Georgia Tom is still lurking about. The composer of "Stormy Sea Blues" and "It's Tight Like That" is entitled to come out and take a bow when the congregation sings:

Just hide me in Thy bosom till the storm of life is o'er,
Rock me in the cradle of Thy Love
Just feed me (feed me, feed me, feed me, Jesus) till I want no more;
Then take me to that blessed home above

It is not surprising that the swing bands fell for the stuff, nor that a church singer like Sister Thorp could join Cab Calloway without changing her songs Neither is it surprising that the church folks resented this use of their music and complained bitterly. They have their case, and it's a good one

Meanwhile, the vogue of the ineptly described "gospel songs" continues. Dorsey's campaigns in the churches resulted in the organization of hundreds of choirs that would not blush at the strong rhythms of the new songs. Where the senior choirs wouldn't handle them, the younger elements in the churches have insisted on the organization of junior choirs to sing them In Negro communities school children sing them on the streets Here, indeed, is church music that can hold its own against anything on the hit parade. Taxicab drivers tune in Rev Clarence Cobb's church on Sunday night His choir sings the new songs almost exclusively, and they make them jump, to say the least.

A flock of other composers have come along since Dorsey showed the way. One of the best is Reverend Cobb himself Another is Roberta Martin Dorsey says he discovered her when she was playing and singing in a storefront church on South State Street Her "Didn't It Rain" is miles ahead of the old spiritual which also bears that name Something has been added.

What these composers have evolved is perhaps a compound of elements found in the old tabernacle songs, the Negro spirituals and the blues. Georgia Tom can probably be thanked for the latter In any case, the seasoning is there now, and, like it or not, it may be hard to get out. Indeed, some churchgoers are now bold enough to ask, "Why shouldn't church songs be lively?"

To this Dorsey would undoubtedly answer, "Amen," but he has also stated his case in verse:

Make my journey brighter,
Make my burdens lighter,
Help me to do good wherever I can.
Let Thy presence thrill me,
The Holy Spirit fill me,
Keep me in the hollow of Thy han'.

Clap hands, church!

LAWRENCE OF THE RIVER

Zora Neale Hurston

THIS is about a man of the cow lands of Florida. The heart of cow Florida is the Kissimmee Prairie, which stretches for more than a hundred miles from just south of Orlando to the upper Everglades. It embraces the headwaters of the St Johns River and it gives Florida high rank among the beef producers of the Union.

Lawrence Silas, the dark brown, stockily built Negro, is in and of the cow lands He is important, because his story is a sign and a symbol of the strength of the nation It helps to explain our history, and makes a promise for the future Lawrence Silas represents the men who could plan and do, the generations who were willing to undertake the hard job—to accept the challenge of the frontiers And remember, he had one more frontier to conquer than the majority of men in America He speaks for free enterprise and personal initiative. That is America

Considering that Florida is in Dixie, it will sound like poker playing at a prayer meeting when you read that Lawrence Silas, Negro, is one of the important men of the cow country But that is the word with the bark of it The cattlemen of the state have a name for him, and it is good.

They talk about him readily, and with admiration They do not tell you about his thousands of head of cattle, his fifty-odd miles of fence, or his chunky bank account They like more to tell you about his character and his skill, as if to say that you ought to have sense enough to know that a man like that is just bound to have something to put away.

When I called Silas' attention to this recently, he replied quietly: "Well, I have never had my word doubted in business My plan is: Treat everybody right and honest, pay your just and honest debts; and tell the truth Whenever you find a man that ain't right, why, feed him with a long-handled spoon Pass and repass when you find out he won't deal right"

"But," I said, "you handle a lot of horses. How about horse trading? Don't you have to lie in a horse deal?"

"Some folks do a powerful lot of it, so they must figure they have to I don't see it that way If I think somebody is interested in buying, I tell 'em I want to sell the horse I give so much for him, and I got to have so much for him He ain't no good to me, but maybe he is all right for you In that way, nobody can't say I lied to beat him out of his money. Then we don't lose no friendship over the deal."

"As simple as that?"

"Sure In the first place, I know horses too well to let anybody sell me any crow bait, and then the people know that I know what I'm doing, so any horse I ever own would be good for somebody They might not suit for what I want "

Silas knows horses, their uses and treatment, from nose to fetlock, and cows from horns to tail brush The other breeders know that he knows Therefore, the richest dealers and breeders in the business will come to him for expert advice before buying or selling herds

He buys and sells for Lykes Brothers, one of the biggest outfits in the world Young Pat Johnson, whose father was one of the Florida pioneers in the game, comes to him for advice as he would to a father If Lawrence Silas says it is so, then it is so So be it in the grand lodge.

By repute, his hands are as skilled as his mind and eyes He can sit on a gap, which is what the cow people call a corral gate, and let the cowboys run—actually run—a herd of cattle past him No matter how large the herd, amount of dust or the speed, when the last steer has passed he can tell you exactly how many passed the gap He never misses one—or adds one.

Then take mammying-up, for instance That is a cow term for matching up every cow mother with her own calf at calving time

"With hundreds of cows and calves to mammy-up, how can you always tell which calf belongs to which cow?" you ask him

He smiles tolerantly "Oh, there is ways to do that Don't care how many you got of the same color, there is a difference between 'em if you know how to look All I need to do is to pen 'em one day, and the next day I can tell you which is which Supposing you had twenty red calves to mammy-up If you look at 'em good, one's color is just a teeny bit different One is got a different set around the shoulder The hair is curled in a peculiar way on one front leg, maybe, and so on and so forth.

"Things like that will tell you. You can't depend on the calf. He will mammy-up with any cow. Then, too, I think hard about it, and some of them calves come before me in my sleep It is something you have to get straight, else you'll get the wrong marking brand on 'em. Some breeders who can't do it themselves will get me to do it for 'em, and then set up on the corral fence and wonder can I do it. I always tell 'em, 'Ten dollars for any mistake I make' "

And when you consider that thousands of cows are calving at the same time, you feel like the man who got down on his knees to ask God for some groceries He was asking for everything he wanted in barrel lots, and finally asked God to send him a barrel of pepper.

He caught himself and said, "Hold on there a minute, God. That's a darned lot of pepper when you stop to think about it "

Lawrence Silas knows what to do for every kind of sickness that a cow can have.

Then, again, cow people insist that the moving, separating and general handling of cows is a highly technical job. Silas, with a cigar forever in his mouth, not only handles his own, but other owners get his outfit to handle theirs

It is something out of this world to a cowman to see Silas sit on a fence with his dehorner in his powerful hands and point. Not so many cows are dehorned as there used to be The present custom is to clip off the points of the horns so that they cannot gore each other in a fight. Silas can point five hundred pairs of horns in a day.

Lawrence Silas passes that off as all in a day's work. "I ought to be able to do that. I was born to the cow business. I been hunting cows since I was five years old."

"Cow hunting?"

"Oh, that is what we call it here in Florida. When I was a boy that was just what we done. You see, there's been cows down here in this prairie ever since the Spaniards first landed in America Some of them they brought over got away, and so the Indians had big herds round here on the St. Johns River long before the white folks moved in on 'em. Today you don't hunt wild cows. We got bred cows with a lot more beef on 'em than they used to have These imported Brahma and Guizerat bulls make a lot of difference in the beef Lykes Brothers brought the first ones over here from Texas.

B. F. Lester bought up some, and I distributed 'em round here for him.

"Yeah, I been fooling with cows and riding the swamps ever since I was five years old. I was so little, I had to let down the stirrup in order for me to reach it After I scrambled up on the horse, then I would pull the stirrup up after me. Used to stay out in the woods for months at a time before I was ten years old I didn't have to, but I always did hate farming, and so I used to stay off to keep from working round the farm.

"My father was a cowman before me He come down here from somewhere in Georgia, and settled at Whittier (now Kenansville) First he worked for some white folks, while he bought a cow or two at a time as he got hold of the money Then he would sell his he and buy a she After a while he got to the place where he could go into business for himself He owned several thousand acres of land when he died, and over two thousand head of cattle He left thirteen head of children and no will Mamma couldn't hold what he left together It was all gone in no time I was eighteen years old when he died

"Well, then, I had to start out fresh I went to work for some white folks too I rode the woods and butchered for men who had big herds It wasn't long before I was running crews for some of 'em I have run crews of from eight to ten men, and rode herd on ten to twelve thousand cattle and more

"I learnt to be a good butcher while I was about it I butchered whole herds at a time for owners who did business with Swift and Company, Cudahy, and other big meat packers like that I kept the count and the weights myself They all trusted me to do that. The men that owned the cattle I butchered didn't know how much they had coming to 'em till I turned over the figures to 'em and the money. Nobody ever found me off a penny.

"The way I got my pay was, the cattlemen give me one cent on the pound and the hides for butchering for 'em. I furnished all the help and the equipment The hides alone would bring me two or three dollars apiece After it was all done, the owners would come to me for their money

"I went into the cattle business just like my father did. Bought a cow or two at a time, sold my hes and put the money into shes

Sarah, my wife, she took in sewing and kept the house going while I put all that I could rake and scrape into cows. Finally we come to have quite a few. Yes, indeed.

"Then too, I made some few friends that really meant me good. Mr Pat Johnson was a big man in the business, and somehow he liked to put me in the way of making something any time he could. Mr. B. L. Lester and Mr. Earl Bronson did the same It was sort of lucky for me when the Lykes Brothers took a liking to me From that day on, our friendship ain't ever changed They was just plain Florida crackers with nothing but grit and git to start off with, but they run the business into the millions. They got cows in Florida, Texas, Cuba, South America and all over Now they own steamship lines, lumber and I don't know what all We was friends when they was poor, and we're still friends now when they are rich None of them Lykes boys ain't changed a bit Mr Tom and Mr Howe Lykes let me bring their Brahma bull up to Kissimmee so I could breed 'em when they knowed I couldn't afford to buy bulls I got some fine ones now, but then it was different."

"You have a mixed crew, white and colored, and they all seem to be enthusiastic about working for you," he was reminded "How do you manage to keep your men happy like that when so many bosses are having labor troubles?"

"Well," Silas replied, "I try to deal fair and then a little more than fair with my men. When work is plentiful I pay 'em what is right When work is slack, if any of them come to me in need, I let 'em have the money. I eat what they eat. I sleep where they sleep. I don't ask a one of them to do nothing I wouldn't do my ownself. And then, I don't ever use my power of hiring and firing to beat no man out of his manhood If one of my hands don't like what I got to say about his work, he can invite me out I'll go out in the swamp with him and give him satisfaction The rest of the crew can stand around and see fair fighting done If he is a good cow hand and still wants to work for me after we settle our differences, it is all right with me. 'Course, no man ain't got no business running no cow crews unless he can take care of himself. There ain't no servants in the cow business Every cow hand figures himself a king."

(Curly, one of the Silas crew, here whispers out of the corner of his mouth that the boss does all right for himself with his dukes, in spite of his fifty-five years.)

"Is cow hunting dangerous? Sure it is, and then again it ain't. You got to know what you doing Yeah, cows is just as risky as bulls to fool with. She don't fly hot so often, but when she got fight in her she'll hook you quicker than a bull And you can't dodge her as easy, because she don't take out after you with her eyes shut like a bull Sometimes a bull will come out of a bunch like a whirlwind, and if you don't watch yourself, you'll be thunderstruck by lightning Naturally a cow horse is trained for things like that He knows how to shift But even so, it's nip and tuck at times More than once I have seen my horse doing all he could to get away from a bull charge, but the bull would be so close behind us till the horse's tail would be laying on the bull's horns One case in particular, it was a long race before the horse outdistanced that bull

"Another time it looked mighty like I was going to be riding herd on God's big range I didn't have no flank girth on my horse I roped a bull, but my throw was short, and I only got the rope on one front foot That bull whirled and charged, and I mean charged! My horse—he was a good one—kept away from the bull's horns, but I'm telling you, he had to do some fast turning in a close place Then I felt my saddle slipping So I had to put the catch dogs on the bull Them dogs knowed just what to do They run in and caught the bull and held him That gave me chance to get the rope off my saddle

"A lot of times during branding, I've just barely beat a bull to the fence. One of 'em got so close till he hooked my pants clean off me.

"But I reckon a stampede is the worst thing that can happen in the cow business. Stampedes are funny things. When cows are moving around at night and lowing, there ain't no danger of a stampede. But you take a big herd that's all tired out from a long drive, and get all bedded down and quiet, then most anything will stampede 'em. One cow can get up and sniff around, and the whole bunch is up and off like a tornado. If you get caught in front of the bunch, you just got to be fast enough on your feet or horse to keep in front. If you try to cut across the herd, they will run over

you. It's a terrible and cruel thing. I have seen 'em run over anchored horses, and them horses would be stomped out as flat as a piece of paper. All the hair off the horse's hide would be tromped off smack and smooth.

"Never will forget one big stampede I saw down round the Everglades at Fort Bassenger. Eleven hundred steers went into a stampede. We men heard it in time and run in every direction The stampede headed for a big swamp. Wasn't a thing we could do. The next morning we followed the trail down to the edge of that swamp. We knowed that the ground was too soft for 'em to get across. They didn't, but you couldn't see no cows at all. All you could see was horns—just a whole lake of horns.

"Yes, I done broke plenty wild horses, and I been throwed aplenty. Don't care how good you can ride and how long you been doing it, there's times when you can't stay on.

"Things done changed a lot in my fifty years on the range. The open range is gone. You don't throw cows no more by the chin-and-horn hold. Now we rope from a horse. The cows been bred up from them stringy-meat wild cows to heavy blooded ones. The Florida cow business done come to be something. It is a good thing too. It's bound to be a lot of help to the Government in this tight spot. I figure we cowmen is something like a good catch dog—sort of holding things until the folks up there in Washington can get another rope on things.

"Natural, the future to me looks something different from the past. I don't expect to keep on staying out on the range thirty and forty days at a time like I do now. A human man can't do it. I'm buying more land all the time and extending my fences When I can't stay on the range so much, I figure on handling smaller herds, but a better grade of cattle. I'll be a cowman as long as I live and always be buying more cows I might even die out on the range with a cigar in my mouth Wouldn't be nothing wrong with that."

Biddy, Biddy bend, my story is end,
Turn loose the rooster, and hold the hen.

WILLIAM DE FLEURVILLE

John E. Washington

Of all Lincoln friendships, that with William Fleurville is perhaps the most interesting from many angles First, it was the oldest in Springfield, and, second, it was the oddest, being with a colored man

It has always been a question in my mind why Lincoln had such confidence that the Negro, if freed, would become a good citizen So far as the world in general knew, he was surrounded only by colored people who had been slaves and others recently freed, a group of unschooled people, humble, with knowledge of nothing else than that of the hoe and plow; a people with no known history but that similar to the most ignorant of primitive groups, physical beings uncultured, unlettered and unsung.

These poor children of nature knew but one thing—that almighty God rules the world, and from tradition they had heard that some day their bonds would be broken by death and then they would be free. In this extremity their hopes and songs were all of the hereafter. Earth had no claims for them, but Heaven was a land of freedom and pleasure where all their sorrows would be healed I knew that these American representatives of an African people, snatched from freedom and transplanted into slavery by a people foreign to them in every way, had traditions unwritten, a spirit to fight on equal terms with others, a desire to die rather than to be slaves—a spirit of honesty and devotion to duty, and a spirit of gratitude for favors rendered, even by those who opposed them I had been told that God only knew why he allowed this group of His devoted children to suffer. Only God saw in them material for a new race, although the schooling and labor must of necessity be severe to bring these rough seeds to bear fruit in a barren land He knew that with proper leadership and in the proper time, these poor children would at His appointed time become the most loyal and obedient class of citizens that was needed in what America was destined to be—a land where freedom really dwelt—a land where race and color are not barriers—a land where East is really East, West is West, and men are men.

I wanted to go everywhere that Lincoln and his family went. I

felt that in Springfield, where Lincoln lived and was buried, there were also some old people left, or if there were not, then some descendants certainly were in this place and these could tell me stories they had remembered.

I had a friend named Charles Pickett who had come to Washington from Springfield with Speaker Cannon and had also served Senator Cullum. He lived with my mother-in-law for many years and he related many Lincoln stories and Springfield stories as told to him by his people.

Charlie said the old people of Springfield told how nearly every colored person in town lined the streets, stood on boxes, waved and yelled as Lincoln passed by on his way to the station to entrain for Washington While many were glad that he was to be made President of the United States, nevertheless many colored people were so sad to see him go that it was with tears in their eyes that they said good-bye and others waved a sad farewell.

While many rich white folks could go to Washington to see their friend inaugurated, all the colored could do would be to ask God in their prayers to keep him safe from harm and bring him back to them so that they could again be free to tell him their troubles. He had been the lawyer to whom all the colored folks in Springfield went in time of need, which was often, and now he was going away. While all the white people were happy, the colored felt that he would never return to plead for them and their rights any more. Charlie said he heard that the day when Lincoln's body was brought back, every colored person in town who could get a few pennies bought and wore a little black crepe on his arm and stood in line to see the funeral procession pass by. Some of these old people even went to Chicago to attend the ceremonies and they said that the hearse was drawn by two black horses, each attended by a colored groom dressed in black with a crepe hatband and crepe badge. In Springfield I later learned that the old horse Lincoln used to "ride the circuit" was led behind the coffin by an old colored man who had known Lincoln for many years.

My friends, the Picketts, had arranged for me to stay at the home of Dr and Mrs S A Ware, and when I had been comfortably provided for, I was invited to eat breakfast with her and her husband, who was a physician. When I told Mrs. Ware the object of my visit

to Springfield was gathering material for a book on Lincoln and the colored people who knew him and facts I could weave together to prove the theory I had always entertained, etc., she smiled and said to me:

"You can study Lincoln in the large mirror before you on the dining-room wall." Then she began a story that answered the question as to the source of Lincoln's belief that the Negro would respond to education.

She said that her great-grandfather was a barber named William de Fleurville but went by the name of Florville, and was born in Haiti and that the mirror originally hung in front of the barber chair in which Lincoln sat while being shaved and having his hair trimmed. She stated that her brother, who had recently died, made a study of everything pertaining to Fleurville and that the main facts about him were as follows

William de Fleurville was born in Cap Haitien, Haiti, West Indies, about 1806 In this island at this period there were constant revolutions, one faction in power today, and another tomorrow In 1821-22 the great revolution took place and it became necessary for de Fleurville's godmother, his only relative, to flee the country and go to Baltimore, a city where Catholics found a haven She immediately put the boy in St Mary's Convent After a little while she died and the Orphan's Court bound him out as an apprentice in a barber shop He soon learned the trade While learning the barber trade he secured employment as a general all-around man in the home of Dr Elias H Merriman who later moved to Springfield to continue his practice of medicine there.

The old French town of New Orleans, Louisiana, had always been a mecca for the various wealthy Haitians, not only because the French language was spoken there, but because of its French atmosphere and localities similar to those of the various French settlements in the West Indies.

De Fleurville didn't like Baltimore, its people, its language and the climate, and resolved to go West to New Orleans and St Louis where his relatives stated he followed the Father Marquette trail that every Haitian child knows in detail. Here he could again live in an

environment similar to that of his childhood days, and hear and speak his native language.

It didn't take long for de Fleurville to see the conditions of the blacks in these towns where they were held as slaves. He saw them bought, whipped and sold. He even heard of many free Negroes who were captured and sold at auction in these cities.

These towns were celebrated for their large slave markets. Spurred on by the high price paid for Negro flesh, traders would seize any Negro who could not prove his ownership, place him on the block and demand a price for him Once incarcerated, there was no appeal either to the Louisiana or Missouri law which a colored person could make to prove he was not a runaway slave. While most free Negroes had their "free papers," many were lost by carelessness, some were stolen, and in some cases slave traders, upon seizing and searching a victim, would destroy the "free papers" and hold the possessor as a runaway Negro.

De Fleurville having been born a freeman in a free country feared that he too, a stranger, might suffer the loss of his liberty, and decided to leave these dangerous places for one where he could be free to do as he pleased and not live in dread of being captured and sold.

In J C. Powers' *Early Settlers of Sangamon County* we find the following·

On a hunting excursion from St Louis, he (de Fleurville) sailed up the Mississippi, into the Illinois, and thence the Sangamon River. It was in the fall of 1831. It was late evening. As he approached the village (New Salem), he fell in with a man wearing a red flannel shirt and carrying an axe on his shoulder, just returning from a day's labor in the woods. They fell into an easy conversation, and walked to a little grocery store together. The tall man was Abraham Lincoln who soon learned the stranger was a barber, nearly out of money and aiming to reach Springfield.

This was enough to enlist the good will of Mr Lincoln who took him to his boarding house (Rutledge Tavern), told the people of his business and situation. That opened the way for an evening's work among the boarders, and the next morning, he started on his way rejoicing, and reached Springfield the second day.

This was in the fall of 1831. Powers knew both Lincoln and de Fleurville, hence in all probability while he was gathering material for his book he consulted de Fleurville, as he did others whose names and family records are in his book. Herndon knew all about the friendship between Lincoln and Fleurville, but made no reference to him in his books.

We see how easily Lincoln and de Fleurville became acquainted and how Lincoln desired to help him by getting him work enough from this boarding house to make expenses for the balance of the trip

The first person de Fleurville met in Springfield was Dr Elias H Merriman whom he had known in Baltimore and worked for when a boy. Dr. Merriman immediately assisted him. He soon secured employment in the home of General James D. Henry; a noted fighter in the Black Hawk War.

As soon as he could procure the necessary equipment for his office, he opened the first and only barber shop in Springfield in 1832 From that time until his death he became famous as "Billy the Barber" In 1831 he married a fair-complexioned woman whose name was Phoebe Rountree She was born in Glasgow, Kentucky, February 4, 1811. Five children were born to them, Samuel, Alseen, Sineet, Varneel, and William.

He had the best citizens as his customers, and by thrift became one of the wealthiest men in the community in spite of the demands of a family of five children.

De Fleurville possessed commendable musical talent, playing well on several instruments, including the flute and violin. The latter is said to be still in existence and in an excellent state of preservation. It was well known that he was in demand at the town socials among the best people and that he often was accompanist for Lincoln when the latter was spending an evening at an important social function. An interesting comment on his musical abilities is found in the following quotation from the *Sangamon Journal,* Aug 22, 1835

The Springfield Artillery made their first appearance in full uniform yesterday . . .

Attached to the company is a military band, who have new instruments, and promise to make adepts in their profession.

"Jack" Hough was leader of the band, and John Ives, Amos Camp, and "Billy" Fleurville were among the musicians, the latter playing the clarinet. The company was uniformed in blue with red cuffs, and a wide red collar extending down the front of the coat, and tall red plumes waving from their helmets.

The article states that each member of these organizations bought his own uniform.

As a business man, de Fleurville advertised his shop. Almost constantly he kept a witty advertisement in the *Illinois State Journal,* and as it became necessary from time to time to move his shop, he sought to make it more attractive with a large collection of paintings and engravings to amuse and entertain the "troubled minds, so their gloomy despair would vanish."

De Fleurville from time to time ran a special feature in the *Springfield State Journal.* It was in the form of comic prose and poetry about his services and place of business and was designed to attract new business.

His barber shop was the "club house" of Springfield to which nearly every man in Springfield would come to give and hear the latest news It was packed nearly every evening. This place was Lincoln's second home, and if he could not be found elsewhere, he was sure to be in de Fleurville's shop swapping tales with the owner and patrons, making new business contacts and discussing the leading topics of the day If there was one spot in Springfield where he could be free to stand before the tall stove and swap yarns with the "boys," it was in this place of merriment and business.

Lincoln gained many a customer here, often left his law books here for days This shop was his free breathing place and he came to it daily to give and to take in the debates that were in the constant making. So close were the relations between Lincoln and de Fleurville that an editorial in the *Illinois State Journal* was published with the following information

"Only two men in Springfield understood Lincoln, his law partner, William H Herndon, and his barber, William de Fleurville."

The latter knew from the beginning that Lincoln's great purpose, after becoming head of the nation, was the preservation of the

Union; that Lincoln was not politically an abolitionist, and he thought that emancipation, if it came, would be incidental to the defeat of the Rebellion. De Fleurville liked Mrs. Lincoln and she was fond of him, but he had no use for, nor would he tolerate, the drinking Herndon in his place.

De Fleurville was very thrifty Almost from the beginning of his business career he began to acquire property At one time he owned practically a whole city block, 8th Street to 9th Street on Washington Street, Springfield His first property was purchased April 1, 1836 Between 1836 and 1864 he acquired twelve distinct pieces of property and in 1848 he purchased four lots for $100 each They were situated halfway between the Public Square and Illinois Wesleyan University, whose trustees bought his property, paying him $1,200 Lincoln was his adviser and attorney in every legal matter Another de Fleurville enterprise was the first clothes-cleaning establishment in Springfield. One of his advertisements mentions it.

His donations to the Catholic Church were large for his time, some running as high as $700 at a time. He also gave liberally to other churches and charities

I was told that the lifelong friendship between Lincoln and de Fleurville certainly manifested itself in business, because from the very beginning to the end, Lincoln was his attorney in nearly every transaction and was his confidential adviser in all legal matters

While Lincoln himself had very little to invest in real estate, the fact that he was able to advise de Fleurville in his dealings shows plainly the Emancipator's ability in handling civil as well as criminal matters. Lincoln knew real estate He was a surveyor and knew the country and could tell "Billy" just when property was to be bought at a bargain Undoubtedly this knowledge was correct for his client certainly made a success as a real-estate dealer. The two letters of Lincoln here reproduced are proofs of Lincoln's relations to de Fleurville's real-estate affairs.

Bloomington
Sept. 27, 1852

C. R. Welles, Esq
Dear Sir

I am in a little trouble—I am trying to get a decree for our "Billy the Barber" for the conveyance of certain town lots sold to him by

Allen, Gridley and Prickett—I made you a party, as administrator of Prickett, but the Clerk omitted to put your name in the writ, and so you are not served—Billy will blame me, if I do not get the thing fixed up this time—If, therefore, you will be so kind as to sign the authority below, and send it to me by return mail, I shall be greatly obliged, and will be careful that you shall not be involved, or your rights invaded by it

Yours as ever
A Lincoln

Attached to this letter is the following explanatory note by the son of Prickett

The Billy the barber—alluded to in this letter—was an old colored man who lived here, a barber by profession He also played the flute at the Evening Entertainments In those days our music on such occasion was the flute Piano Violin or harp and Billy often played or Served on the Table at My Mothers home Entertainments My Father in connection with Allen & Gridley laid off an addition to Bloomington He gave Billy two lots, in Consideration that he shave him during his lifetime, which Billy did, and he also shaved him at the time of his death Billy failed to have his deed recorded & lost it—a fact he did not discover until after the death of My Father He then got Mr Lincoln to get another—Wells was the Administrator of My Father's Estate—The Widow of old Billy Sold the lots Some years after his death for $2500—Some of his children are Still living here.

Thos. C. Prickett

Springfield,
Feb 10, 1860

Mr W Packard, Esq.
Dear Sir

William Fleurville, a colored barber here, owns four lots in Bloomington, on which I have been paying the taxes for him several years, but which I forgot to, though under promise, when I was at Bloomington last—will you please collect the ten dollars fee we

spoke of, add enough of your own money, pay all the taxes due, and send me the receipt or receipts? If you will I shall be greatly obliged; and besides, will return you the money you advanced by the first mail William Thomas, Larrimore and others there know about these lots.

Yours truly,
A Lincoln

Mrs Ware related how wide-awake her great-grandfather was when it came to the making of a dollar, and he was always trying to do something to advertise his business She spoke particularly about his poetry and his newspaper advertisements, but had none to show me Imagine my delight when a Lincoln collector and scholar in Springfield gave me the following clippings from Springfield papers

Illinois State Journal March 23, 1833

William Fleurville, the barber king of the village, announced that he had erected a new barber pole, against which the storms of factions, the hurricanes of the prairies, a common size earthquake or a runaway team will dash in vain.

July 20, 1833, the *Journal* carried another article.

William Fleurville announced that he had removed his barber shop west of the Court on the Public square

NOTICE EXTRAORDINAIRE

The subscriber feels himself called upon to apologize to his trusty subjects, for closing the Palace door against them during the audience hours on Friday last It cannot be supposed that my high station precludes me from the attacks of sickness Therefore be it known, that on the day above written, the stomach of his majesty manifested utter rebellion to the lawful deposits made by order of the Princess Royal, I regret to state, that they were removed notwithstanding the remonstrances of my Secretary, and, in short, of my whole Cabinet, including the Knight of Industry, consequently I was completely prostrated, I could not have taken a friend by the nasal organ and flourished my razor without serious hazard to the jugular. In addition to these facts noted, it may be properly stated, that my eldest

son (heir apparent) is cutting his teeth—a crisis that needs all the care and kindness of a devoted parent. Times are pregnant with important events Among them, and not the least, is the approaching election I am personally friendly to all the candidates No one of them has any reason to fear my opposition I shall exert myself to secure the election of them all To effect this object I would say to them that nothing is so necessary as to have "a smooth face" I am adept in making smooth faces My terms are very moderate I shall rise in price on some after the election.

June 14 *Wm. Fleurville*

In an article to the same paper in 1835, he writes:

My government is in a prosperous condition New subjects daily present themselves, and if my kingdom continues to increase I shall appoint a register, whose duty it shall be to attend on application for office.

While I take pleasure in acknowledging the loyalty of my subjects, I rejoice that I can communicate to you in a formal way that the Heir Apparent has finished cutting his teeth, and is progressing to manhood as fast as times will admit

For the past season I have attended to my subjects daily, with the exception of two or three days during which, owing to the treatment of my mineral physician, my bursers stuck out in bold relief and were so swollen that it was impossible for me to articulate. Nevertheless, Secretary Marberry his barber assistant attended regularly.

In conclusion, his majesty would suggest the propriety of his subjects (particularly those whose names are registered) to pay into the treasury all demands that may be found against them, as the pecuniary affairs of the government at this time is not in a very flourishing condition.

William Ashby of Springfield who has contributed so much to this account of Fleurville thinks the facts were that in his "register" were plenty of overdue accounts for shaves, hair cuts, beard trimmings. What he wanted his subjects (customers) to do was to pay their assessments.

Sangamon Journal
March 4, 1837

WILLIAM FLEURVILLE

Hair Dresser & Barber Shop & etc.

They who could get the public favor
Must learn to utter some palaver,
Sound their own fame—or at least show
They'll hold the trump while others blow.

Know fashions votaries of either sex,
I am "Habile" in this art complex
For such as wish (if such there be so silly)
Mere red or white (but why 'paint the lilly')

Powders and Puffs, cosmetics too I'll find—
All things, indeed, not needed to adorn the mind.
To such as care for curls for top knots seek—
Heads I can dress as a la Kemble or as a la Grecque.

I've skill for those, whose hair to curl or cut,
Even those who dash with a bald occiput—
And I never force one unnatural grin
On those who yield to me their chin;

While waiting too for the art tonsorial
You may see my specimens of the art pictorial
Perhaps too it is well to hint, that
I'm at least becoming a democrat.

Peoria Register and Northwestern Gazetteer, Feb. 24, 1838.
William Fleurville, lately from Springfield, and more recently from Bloomington, located permanently in Peoria, a few doors above Brooks and Cogswell's. Advertisement started Jan. 6, 1838.

The following advertisement in the *Sangamon Journal*, Springfield, April 2, 1841, is most interesting as it shows his religious desire to remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.

Sangamon Journal
Springfield

April 2, 1841

Barber Shop Removed.

The subscriber has removed the shop once occupied by him a few doors east of Johnson's City Hotel where he will be glad to wait upon those who will favor him with their custom

He would also inform his friends that he will not hereafter, open his shop on Sundays, but that he may serve all he will keep his shop open late on Saturday nights Anxious at all times to give his whole attention to business on week days, he hopes to be indulged on the Sabbath in devoting his time to those duties which properly belong to that day

Wm. Fleurville

March 19, 1841

Illinois State Register
Sep 3, 1841
Wm Fleurville, Barber & Hair Dresser

Billy will always be found on the spot,
With razor keen and water smoking hot,
He'll clip and dress your hair, and shave with ease
And leave no effort slack his friends to please
His shop is north-west of the public square,
Just below the office of the mayor,
Strangers or friends may always find him there,
Ready to shave them well or cut their hair.

On Sunday until 9 o'clock he'll shave,
And then to church he'll go, his soul to save.
To his old customers, for favors past,
His gratitude, indeed, will ever last,
He hopes by attention and efforts rare,
A part of public patronage to share.

Illinois State Register
Nov. 12, 1841

Billy Fleurville
"Billy the Barber"
Has removed his shop to a new building opposite the north front of the State House (on Washington Street)
The pressure of the times have so embarrassed the people and affected the minds of many, that the Razor is not to be trusted in the hands of any but the skilled barber. The papers tell of men, most every day who are in the habit of shaving themselves, or committing suicide with this dangerous instrument To prevent such a fate let every man who is hard run (and who is not) call on Billy and he will take off the beard with such ease, and cut the hair with such skill, that his patron will forget that he ever had the blues. And then Billy has a large collection of paintings and engravings to amuse and entertain the troubled mind, which will so enliven their spirits that the gloom of despair will vanish like the dark before the glory of the sun To the young men, who would like the girls to be pleased with them, Billy would say, "come and I'll fix you off to take their eye." Old bachelors, under the operation of Billy's skill can be made to look ten or twenty years younger than they really are, thus they may at the eleventh hour, secure for themselves a wife and a dozen of little ones Farmers and strangers are particularly and respectfully solicited to give Billy a call

His charges were reasonable For shaving one year $15 (75¢ a month) For cutting men's and boys' hair, 15¢, and 20¢ for cutting girls' hair.

While spending the night at the Rutledge Tavern with Lincoln, Fleurville conversed freely with the boarders and answered many questions about himself and his native land, Haiti One of Fleurville's relatives in Chicago said that from that night Lincoln always seemed interested in the land and people from which Fleurville came Hence when he became President, it was not surprising that he had a bill passed recognizing the independence of Haiti, and also had placed in it an offer of steamship passage to any person who wanted to go and live there At first there was no colored Minister

wanted from Haiti by the State Department, but Lincoln said he would receive one, and a colored man from this island home of William de Fleurville was received by the great Emancipator with all the honors given to any other diplomat Undoubtedly Fleurville's influence upon Lincoln during their long acquaintance had much to do with bringing this event to pass

Mrs. Ware seemed to be delighted when she was telling me about Fleurville's devotion to the Catholic Church, about his generosity to the poor and about his giving to all kinds of churches that needed assistance.

I was not surprised, therefore, when I read in the One Hundredth Anniversary Edition of the *Illinois State Journal,* November, 1931 an article by Bernard J Walsh on the History of the Catholic Church in Springfield, under the title "Growth of Catholicism in Community during 97 Years," that the first Mass in Springfield was celebrated "At the home of William de Fleurville, a West Indian known as Billy the Barber"

Although he was Catholic, he helped with his contributions the establishment of the First Christian Church, now the largest Protestant church in Springfield, Illinois The Christian Church was built in Springfield with money donated by its members and anyone else in the community who would give to it It was to be used by all sects alike Then the Mormons came to town to gain converts and the idea of their using the Church did not appeal to the members so they went to the contributors and got the following release, dated Springfield, May 27, 1839

The undersigned subscribers to the building of the church on lots one and two in Edward's addition to the town of Springfield, understanding that difficulties have arisen in relation to the use of said Church or meeting house, do appoint and direct that said meeting house or church, be held and used exclusively by and for the use of the church established in Springfield, calling themselves the Christian Church, the said meeting house being the same used by that church since the year 1834

Stephen T Logan	[*Lincoln's second law partner*]
Elijah Iles	[*Lincoln's captain in Black Hawk War*]
John T Stuart	[*Lincoln's first law partner*]

John F. Rague [*Architect of the Illinois State Capitol and the Iowa Territorial Capitol Bldgs*]
John Todd (Dr) [*Brother of Mrs. Lincoln's father*]
William Fleurville
(and thirty-five other leaders of the town of Springfield)
Recorded in the Recorder's Office in Springfield.

It was said in Springfield and Chicago, where I met some of Fleurville's descendants, that the saddest moment of his life was when he bade Lincoln good-bye, after cutting his hair and trimming his beard for the last time Both reviewed the principal events of their friendship of many years Both had met as poor strangers, both came to the same town to establish themselves in vocations that would provide for their future Lincoln went into law, Fleurville into business. From lowly beginnings one became the greatest of American citizens—the other, the highest that he could attain to because of the color of his skin, a successful business man and a Christian

Fleurville often said to members of his family that when Lincoln left he felt he would never see him again, and when they shook hands and said good-bye, there was a momentary pause while one gazed into the eyes of the other Then the President-elect turned and slowly left the shop where he had spent so many delightful hours

Mrs Ware said from the time the news of Lincoln's assassination reached Springfield, April 15, 1865, until Fleurville died, he was never the same. His high spirits went when his old friend was shot and, although invited to join the funeral party with Lincoln's best and oldest friends, preferred to go in the funeral procession with the colored citizens of Springfield because he was one of them and felt as they did, that his place was with the colored group who felt Lincoln's passing the most

On April 3, 1868 Fleurville made his last will and died ten days later He was buried by Thomas C Smith and by the same undertakers that buried Tad and Mrs Abraham Lincoln His illness, which was very severe, was short and Dr George D Allen who attended him made thirty visits from April 1st to April 13th, and charged the estate $56 for services rendered

Fleurville left all his personal property and income from his property to his widow, Phoebe Fleurville, and made her executrix.

After her death the real estate was divided equally among his children and his adopted son, Samuel Henry Fleurville

With Fleurville's passing, the city of Springfield lost one of its most colorful characters. He had seen it grow from a mere hamlet into the capital of the State He had known and served not only its leading citizens, but the State's most celebrated politicians, who came to the meetings of the Legislature and also to attend sessions of the Circuit Court

As a musician he had played at many of its most important gatherings As a Christian he had helped establish a house of worship as a tribute to the religion of his Haitian forefathers and had assisted other religious denominations in doing likewise As a father he had successfully raised and educated a large family and amply provided for them As an uncommissioned ambassador of a little faraway island, he had so conducted himself that the name Haitian came to be respected by all and stood for liberty of smaller groups, and as tradesman his business methods were above reproach.

His early education and his associations never went to his head so that he forgot the people of his native land and those of his own color in America Throughout a long life he constantly strove to carry out the principles of friendship and love for all His funeral was one of the largest ever held in Springfield and was attended by the most distinguished people of the city which he had helped to develop and which he loved so much.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Arna Bontemps was born October 13, 1902, in Alexandria, Louisiana Most of his early years were spent in California He attended elementary and secondary schools in and around Los Angeles and college at the University of California, Los Angeles, and at Pacific Union College, Angwin, California, receiving a degree from the latter in 1923 Since then he has studied at Columbia University and at the University of Chicago Taught in private schools in New York from 1923 to 1931, in Oakwood Junior College, Huntsville, Alabama, from 1931 to 1934, in Shiloh Academy, Chicago, from 1935 to 1938 Awarded Julius Rosenwald Fellowship 1938-1939, and again in 1942-1943, Crisis Poetry Prize in 1926, Alexander Pushkin Poetry Prize, 1926 and 1927; Opportunity Short Story Prize, 1932. Reviews regularly for the *Herald Tribune Books* and the *Chicago Sun Bookweek* Is now Librarian at Fisk University and professor of creative writing, also at Fisk

Partial Bibliography *God Sends Sunday,* 1931, *Popo and Fifina, Children of Haiti,* 1932, *You Can't Pet a Possum,* 1934, *Black Thunder,* 1936, *Sad-Faced Boy,* 1937, *Drums at Dusk,* 1939, edited the autobiography of W C Handy, *Father of the Blues,* 1941, compiled an anthology of Negro poetry, *Golden Slippers,* 1941, *Fast Sooner Hound,* 1942

Articles appeared in *The Horn Book, Common Ground*

William Stanley Braithwaite was born December 6, 1878, in Boston, Mass, but his ancestry is British His father and grandfather were men of standing in the West Indies. Braithwaite, despite the place of birth and classical turn of his mind, is mainly self-educated He is the author of three volumes of poetry, but he is more widely known as a critic and an anthologist For a number of years he was on the

literary editorial staff of the *Boston Transcript* More recently he has been a member of the English Faculty of Atlanta University In 1918 he was awarded the Spingarn Medal Awarded honorary M A , Atlanta University, 1918, Litt D , Talladega College, 1918 Member of Poetry Society of America, New England Poetry Society

Partial Bibliography *Lyrics of Life and Love,* 1904, *The House of Falling Leaves, with other poems,* 1908, *The Poetic Year for 1916, The Story of the Great War,* 1919, *Our Essays and Critics of Today,* 1920; *Sandy Star,* 1926, *Going over Tindal, A Fragment Wrenched from the Life of Titus Jabson,* 1928, *Frost on the Green Leaf,* 1928, (ed) *The Book of Restoration Verse,* 1909; *Anthology of Magazine Verse and Year Book of American Poetry* (seventeen volumes, 1913-1929), *Golden Treasury of Magazine Verse,* 1918, *The Book of Modern British Verse,* 1919; *Victory!* Celebrated by thirty-eight American poets, With an Introduction by Theodore Roosevelt, 1919; *Anthology of Massachusetts Poets,* 1922, *Our Lady's Choir, A Contemporary Anthology of Verse by Catholic Sisters,* 1931; *The House under Arcturus, An Autobiography,* 1941.

Articles appeared in *The New Republic; Journal of Education; Phylon.*

Benjamin Brawley was born April 22, 1882, in Columbia, South Carolina He received a B A degree at nineteen from Atlantic Baptist College (now Morehouse College) in 1901, and a similar degree from the University of Chicago in 1906 His second book was a history of Morehouse College; his first, *A Short History of the American Negro* (1913) had reached a fourth edition a quarter century later in 1939, the year of Brawley's death at fifty-six His textbooks on English literature, Freshman English, English drama and English literature are widely used in Negro colleges His *The Negro Genius* A New Appraisal of the Achievement of the American Negro in Literature and the Fine Arts (1937) is the standard work in its field, with its dispassionate consideration of the work of such Negro writers as Charles W. Chesnutt, Countee Cullen,

Jessie Fauset and others. Brawley obtained his M.A. degree from Howard University in 1908, was pastor of a Baptist Church in Brockton, Massachusetts, for some years and in 1912 he married Miss Prowd of Jamaica. He was dean and professor of English at Morehouse College from 1912 to 1920; professor of English at Shaw College from 1923 to 1931, and then until his death in Washington, D C., a week after suffering a stroke, he was professor of English at Howard University Brawley was also president of the Association of Colleges for Negro youth in 1919-20

Partial Bibliography· *A Short History of the American Negro,* 1913; *History of Morehouse College,* 1917, *The Negro in Literature and Art,* 1918; *A Social History of the American Negro,* 1921, *A Short History of Drama,* 1921; *A New Survey of English Literature,* 1926, *Freshman-Year English,* 1929; *Doctor Dillard of the Jeanes Fund,* 1930, *Negro Builders and Heroes,* 1937, *The Negro Genius,* 1937, *Paul Lawrence Dunbar,* 1937.

Articles appeared in *Dial, Southern Workman, North American Review.*

Charles S. Johnson was born July 24, 1893, in Bristol, Virginia. He received his A B from Virginia Union in 1917 and Litt D in 1928; Ph D from the University of Chicago in 1918; L H D from Howard University in 1941. He served as a Director of Research and Investigations for the Chicago Urban League, from 1917 to 1919; Investigator of Negro Migration for the Carnegie Foundation in 1918; Associate Executive Secretary for the Chicago Commission on Race Relations from 1919 to 1921; Director of Research and Investigations for the National Urban League in 1921, editor of *Opportunity* from 1923 to 1929; Director of Race Relations, Swarthmore College, since 1933 Served in the First World War as regimental sergeant-major. Awarded the William E Harmon gold medal for distinguished achievement among Negroes in science for 1930 American member of Commission appointed by the League of Nations to investigate forced labor in Liberia, 1930; secretary of the Commit-

tee on Negro Housing, President Hoover's Conference on House Building and Home Ownership, 1931; member of the Sociology Committee, Tennessee Valley Authority, 1934. Trustee of the following Julius Rosenwald Fund; Bethune-Cookman College, Encyclopedia of the Negro, Schomburg Collection. Member of the executive committee of the Southern Commission on the Study of Lynching; member of the Southern Sociological Society; member of President's Committee on Farm Tenancy, and Technical Committee on Tenancy; member of Executive Committee of the Southern Policy Committee; member of the Advisory Board of the National Youth Administration of Tennessee; trustee of the Delta Co-operative Farm, member of the executive and planning committee of the 1940 White House Conference on Children in a Democracy; member of the editorial board of the *American Sociological Review,* director of the Southern Rural Division of the Negro Youth Study for the American Youth Commission and Council on Education, chairman of the American Missionary Association, Division of the Board of Home Missions; member of the Southern Sociological Society (first vice president), Social Research Council, N E.A., Alpha Phi Alpha

Partial Bibliography· (ed) *Ebony and Topaz,* 1927 Co-author: *The Negro in Chicago,* 1922; *Race Relations,* 1934; *The Collapse of Cotton Tenancy,* 1935. Author *The Negro in American Civilization,* 1930; *Economic Status of the Negro,* 1933; *Shadow of the Plantation,* 1934; *Preface to Racial Understanding,* 1936, *The Negro College Graduate,* 1936 (Anisfield Award, 1938); *Growing up in the Black Belt,* 1941; *Statistical Atlas of Southern Countries,* 1941; *Patterns of Negro Segregation,* 1943.

Articles appeared in *Survey, Missionary Review; American Journal of Sociology, Survey Graphic.*

Sterling A Brown was born May 1, 1901, in Washington He went to public schools in that city Later he attended Williams College where he was elected to Phi Beta Kappa in his junior year After graduation he went to Harvard University for an M.A This required only one

year. Since then he has had a distinguished career as a professor of English, principally at Howard University. His writing has kept pace. His first published book, a volume of poems called *Southern Road,* won him a Guggenheim fellowship. He has since written several books of criticism on the Negro in American literature. He served as adviser in Negro studies in the Federal Writers' Project. That he is still in the midst of widespread creative and scholarly activities is indicated by the simultaneous announcement of three new books by him, books ranging from an anthology of writings by Negroes to a book of observations on the Southern scene

Partial Bibliography *Southern Road,* 1932; *Negro in American Fiction,* 1937, *Negro Poetry and Drama,* 1937. Co-Author: *Negro Caravan, Writings by American Negroes,* 1941.

Articles appeared in *Opportunity, Survey Graphic.*

Charles Waddell Chesnutt was born June 20, 1858, in Cleveland, Ohio. At sixteen he began to teach in the public schools of North Carolina When twenty-three years of age, he was appointed principal of the State Normal School in Fayetteville. In 1887, after doing newspaper work in New York City and working as a court stenographer in Cleveland, he was admitted to the bar. In North Carolina Chesnutt had studied the traditions and superstitions of the Negro, and in August of 1887 the *Atlantic Monthly* presented his first short story "The Goophered Grapevine" In 1928 Chesnutt was awarded the Spingarn Gold Medal, for his "pioneer work as a literary artist depicting the life and struggle of Americans of Negro descent" Mr. Chesnutt remained a court reporter, except in 1900-1901, till his death —November 15, 1932. (See Essays—Gloster, "Charles W Chesnutt, Pioneer in Fiction of Negro Life" for a detailed discussion of his work)

Partial Bibliography *The Conjure Woman,* 1899, *The Wife of His Youth, And Other Stories of the Color Line,* 1899; *The House Behind the Cedars,* 1901, *The Colonel's Dream,* 1905.

Allison Davis was born October 14, 1902, in Washington, D C He received his A B. at Williams College, 1924, *summa cum laude,* Valedictorian; M A at Harvard University, 1925; did graduate study at Harvard from 1931 to 1932 Awarded Rosenwald fellowship in 1932-1933 for foreign study at the London School of Economics, Rockefeller fellowship in 1933 to 1935 for field work; graduate study (on Rosenwald fellowship) at the University of Chicago, 1939-40; Awarded Ph.D at Chicago, 1941 Dr. Davis has held the following positions instructor in English, Hampton Institute, Virginia, 1925-1931; professor of Social Anthropology, Dillard University, New Orleans, La., 1935-1939, director of research on Negro Adolescent Personality for the American Youth Commission of the American Council on Education, 1938-1939, staff member, Division on Child Development and Teacher Personnel, American Council on Education, 1940-1942, Head, Department of Education, Atlanta University, Atlanta, Georgia, 1941-1942 (on leave); Assistant Professor of Education, University of Chicago, 1942— He is a member of the following honorary societies Phi Beta Kappa, Sigma Psi, Phi Delta Kappa.

Partial Bibliography *Children of Bondage* (with John Dollard), 1940, *Deep South* (with B B and M R Gardner), 1941

Articles appeared in *The Sociological Review, The Journal of Negro Education, The American Sociological Review, Review of Educational Research*

William Edward Burghardt Du Bois was born February 23, 1868, in Great Barrington, Massachusetts "I was educated in the public schools of Massachusetts and at Fisk University, Tennessee I entered the junior class of Harvard and received my bachelor's degree in 1890 I was for two years a fellow, receiving my M A in 1891, and my Ph D in 1895 Meanwhile I spent two years of study in Germany pursuing courses in history and social science. I returned to the United States to teach for two years in Wilberforce University, and one year in the University of Pennsylvania, and then became

professor of history and economics in Atlanta University, Atlanta, Georgia, where for thirteen years I conducted a series of annual studies of social conditions among American Negroes. In 1910 I removed to New York and became an official of the new N A A C P, and for twenty-three years I edited and published *The Crisis,* a 'Record of the Darker Races.' I returned to Atlanta University as head of the department of sociology in 1933, where I am still at work. In 1939 I became editor of *Phylon,* the Atlanta University Review of Race and Culture, issued quarterly beginning in 1940 " Dr Du Bois is the recognized leader of the school of American Negro thought which is in favor of contending for complete equality of opportunity, as against the conciliatory policy of Booker T. Washington and R R Moton

Partial Bibliography *Suppression of the African Slave Trade,* 1896, *The Philadelphia Negro,* 1899; *The Souls of Black Folk,* 1903; *John Brown,* 1909, *Quest of the Silver Fleece,* 1911, *The Negro,* 1915, *Darkwater,* 1920, *The Gift of Black Folk,* 1924, *The Dark Princess,* 1928, *Black Reconstruction,* 1935; *Black Folk, Then and Now,* 1939, *Dusk of Dawn,* 1940.

Articles appeared in *The South Atlantic Quarterly, Current History Magazine, Review of Reviews, The Nation, World's Work, The New Republic, Outlook, Forum, American Magazine, North-American Review, Independent, Christian Century, The World Today, Foreign Affairs; Homiletic Review, Opportunity, The Crisis, Survey*

Rudolph Fisher was born, 1897, in Washington. A long list of scholastic honors at Brown University won him the rare distinction of membership in both Phi Beta Kappa and Sigma Xi, while his gifts as a speaker secured him election to the forensic society, Delta Sigma Rho He was thus entitled to wear three national keys. With a master's degree in biology, he turned to medicine, meanwhile teaching embryology His internship completed, he spent two years at Columbia on a fellowship in medical research. During his intern-

ship, the *Atlantic Monthly* published his first short story. His short stories and articles appeared in many magazines, etc. Mr. Fisher died in 1934.

Partial Bibliography: *Walls of Jericho,* 1928; *The Conjureman Dies,* 1932.

Articles appeared in *Atlantic Monthly, American Mercury; The Crisis, Opportunity, Survey Graphic, McClure's, The Book League Monthly, Books, New York Herald Tribune, The Journal of Infectious Diseases.*

E Franklin Frazier was born September 24, 1894, in Baltimore, Maryland He received his A B *cum laude* at Howard University, 1916, at Clark University his M A in 1920 and his Ph D at the University of Chicago in 1931

In 1920-21 he was research fellow at the New York School of Social Work, fellow of the American Scandinavian Foundation to Denmark, 1921-22, director of Atlanta School of Social Work, 1922-27, professor of Sociology, Fisk University, 1929-34, professor and head of the department of sociology, Howard University, since 1934 Was awarded Guggenheim fellowship to Brazil and West Indies, 1940-41 Fellow of the American Sociological Society, member of the Society for Research in Child Development

Partial Bibliography *The Negro Family in Chicago,* 1932, *The Free Negro Family,* 1932, *The Negro Family in the United States* (Anisfield Award for best book in the field of race relations), 1939, *Negro Youth at the Crossways,* 1940.

Articles appeared in *American Journal of Sociology, Social Forces, American Sociological Review, Modern Quarterly, Opportunity, Southern Workman, Current History, The Nation, Forum.*

Hugh Morris Gloster was born on May 11, 1911, in Brownsville, Tennessee He attended Howe Institute, Manassas High School, and LeMoyne College, completing his high-school and junior-college work at the last-named institution in 1927 and 1929 respectively. In 1929 Gloster entered Morehouse College, where he became editor of *The Maroon Tiger*, the student publication, and obtained his B A. degree with high honors two years later After receiving his degree at Atlanta University, Gloster accepted a teaching position at LeMoyne College, where he rose rapidly from the rank of instructor to that of professor. At LeMoyne he was co-editor of the official college publication; co-captain of the leading team in the successful $150,000-building-fund drive, co-chairman of the gymnasium financial campaign, a member of the faculty committees on athletics, student activities, curriculum revision and Greek-letter organizations, and faculty advisor of the student paper, the student Y M.C A. and the student N A A C P Since joining the faculty of Morehouse College in 1941, Gloster has distinguished himself as teacher, student-counselor and faculty committeeman. He serves as advisor of the student paper, the student yearbook and the student Y M C A , as editor of *The Morehouse Alumnus,* official college publication, and as chairman of the faculty committees on defense savings and student social activities In addition to carrying on his work at Morehouse, he is exchange professor of English at Atlanta University, where he offers graduate courses in American literature and eighteenth-century English literature Though a young man, Professor Gloster has made an enviable record in his special field In February, 1943, he obtained the Ph D degree in English at New York University, where he maintained a straight "A" record and was regarded as one of the most distinguished students in the Graduate School His study at New York University was supported by two fellowships—the first from the General Education Board for the academic year 1938-1939 and the summer of 1939, and the second from the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity for research in 1940 on his dissertation, *American Negro Fiction from Charles W. Chesnutt to Richard Wright,* which is in line for early publication.

Articles appeared in *Opportunity* and *Phylon*. Professor Gloster is also co-editor of *The Brown Thrush* (1935), an anthology of verse by Negro college students.

William Christopher Handy was born November 16, 1873, in Florence, Alabama, where he attended the public schools from 1880 to 1892. He began his musical studies at home and continued at the Kentucky Musical College. Handy taught music from 1892 to 1893; was teacher and professional musician from 1893 to 1900, orchestra leader for minstrel shows until 1903; band and orchestra leader from 1903 to 1912, composer and publisher since 1912. President and treasurer of Handy Bros Music Co., member of American Federation of Musicians, American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers, Music Publishers' Protective Association; treasurer of the Negro Actors Guild.

Partial Bibliography: *Negro Authors and Composers of the United States*, 1935, *W C Handy's Collection of Negro Spirituals*, 1938, *Father of the Blues*, 1941; ed *Blues An Anthology*, 1926. Composer: "St. Louis Blues," "Memphis Blues," "Beal Street Blues"—and many other compositions.

Langston Hughes was born February 1, 1902, in Joplin, Missouri. He attended Central High School in Cleveland and after graduation spent the next two years in Mexico with his father. His first poems were written in high school and published in the school magazine. In 1921 he entered Columbia University and left after a year to work at various odd jobs, ending up as a seaman on trips to Africa and Holland as well as cook in a Montmartre night club for a winter in Paris. Back in America, worked as a busboy in the Wardman Park Hotel in Washington, where Vachel Lindsay attracted attention to his work by reading three poems (that he had left beside Lindsay's plate in the dining room) to his audience at a recital in the Little Theatre of the hotel. In 1925 he received his first poetry award in the

Opportunity literary contest Through the contest, Carl Van Vechten became interested in his work and was instrumental in having Hughes' first book of poems published, *The Weary Blues* His education was completed through a scholarship at Lincoln University in 1929 Since that time he has earned his living as a professional writer, lecturer, dramatist, song writer and translator He is executive director of the Harlem Suitcase Theatre, the only Negro workers' theatre in New York Received the "Palms" Intercollegiate Poetry Award in 1927, the Harmon Award of Literature in 1931, in 1934 was selected by Dr. Charles A Beard as one of America's twenty-five "most interesting" personages with a "socially conscious" attitude, and in 1935 was granted a Guggenheim fellowship for creative work.

Partial Bibliography· *The Weary Blues,* 1926; *Fine Clothes to the Jew,* 1927, *Dear Lovely Death,* 1931, *The Dream Keeper,* 1932; *Scottsboro Limited,* 1932, *Shakespeare in Harlem,* 1942, *Not Without Laughter,* 1930; *Popo and Fifina* (with A Bontemps), 1932, *The Ways of White Folks,* 1934, *The Big Sea,* 1940

Articles appeared in *The Nation, Scribner's Magazine, Travel; American Mercury, Woman's Home Companion, Asia, Theatre Arts Monthly.*

Zora Neale Hurston was born, January 7, 1903, in Eatonville, Florida. Attended high school at Morgan Academy of Morgan College, Baltimore Started in college at Howard University but transferred to Barnard College in her sophomore year and took her B A there in 1928 Dr Franz Boaz obtained for her a fellowship in anthropology to do research in folklore, and immediately upon graduation, she returned South. By reason of four years' work in this field, Miss Hurston was invited to join the American Folklore Society, American Ethnological Society and American Anthropological Society. While working in the field, she began to think of writing and decided to "write about" her "people as they are, and not to use the traditional lay figures " Miss Hurston received a fellowship from the

Rosenwald Foundation in 1935 and Guggenheim fellowships in 1936 and 1938.

Partial Bibliography: *Jonah's Gourd Vine,* 1934; *Mules and Men,* 1935; *Their Eyes Were Watching God,* 1937, *Tell My Horse,* 1938; *Moses, Man of the Mountain,* 1939, *Dust Tracks on the Road,* 1942

Articles appeared in *Forum, Saturday Review of Literature, Saturday Evening Post, American Mercury.*

James Weldon Johnson was born June 17, 1871, in Jacksonville, Florida He received his B A and M A degrees at Atlanta University in 1894 and 1904 respectively, and also studied for three years at Columbia University Johnson started as teacher in, and principal of, a Negro school in Jacksonville, which he built up to high-school grade, and at the same time studied law In 1897 he was admitted to the Florida bar, as the first Negro attorney since the Civil War. In 1901 he went to New York, where he and his brother, J Rosamund Johnson, together with Bob Cole, collaborated in the writing of popular songs and light opera with great success On one song they cleared $13,000, which they took to France and promptly spent in several light-hearted months Johnson then was appointed United States Consul, first in Venezuela, then in Nicaragua, and was as successful a diplomat as he had been a song writer. In 1912 his first book, the *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* appeared anonymously (its authorship was not acknowledged until 1927). He edited a book of American Negro poetry and two of Negro spirituals; he wrote the English libretto for the opera *Goyescas,* which was produced at the Metropolitan Opera House in 1915; he was long secretary of the N.A A C P.; and he received the Spingarn Medal in 1925. In 1930 he became professor of creative literature at Fisk University, and from 1934 was also visiting professor of literature at New York University. Mr. Johnson was killed instantly in a train wreck in 1938.

Partial Bibliography· *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man,* 1912; *Fifty Years and Other Poems,* 1917, *Self-Determining Haiti,* 1920; (ed) *The Book of American Negro Poetry,* 1922, (ed with J. Rosamond Johnson) *The Book of American Negro Spirituals,* 1925; *The Second Book of Negro Spirituals,* 1926, *God's Trombones,* 1927, *Black Manhattan,* 1930, *St. Peter Relates an Incident of the Resurrection Day,* 1930, *Negro Americans, What Now?* 1934, *Along This Way,* 1934; *Selected Poems,* 1936.

Articles appeared in *American Mercury, Forum, Century, Harper's Magazine, Mentor, World Tomorrow, Charities and the Commons, Southern Workman.*

Alain Le Roy Locke was born September 13, 1886, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania " only son of Pliny I and Mary (Hawkins) Locke, native Philadelphians and school teachers, and thus into smug gentility A professional career was mandatory, all the more so because of the frantic respectability of the free, educated Negro tradition; their main bulwark against proscription and prejudice First it was to be medicine, which early ill-health toned down to the family calling After public schools, the Central High School (1902), and the Philadelphia School of Pedagogy (1904), I entered Harvard College, from which I was graduated with honors in philosophy and English in 1907 . . On a Rhodes Scholarship from Pennsylvania, the next three years were spent at Oxford, followed by a year of further specialization in philosophy at the University of Berlin Returning home in 1911, I spent six months traveling in the South—my first close-range view of the race problem—and there acquired a lifelong avocational interest of encouraging and interpreting the artistic and cultural expression of Negro life, for I became deeply convinced of its efficacy as an internal instrument of group inspiration and morale and as an external weapon of recognition and prestige So, while teaching philosophy at Howard University from 1912 to the present, I have devoted most of my literary effort and time to this avocational interest of Negro culture, with occasional excursions into the sociological side of the race question. My connec-

tion with the literary and art movement, styled in 1925 the 'New Negro Renaissance,' was thus a logical outcome of this artistic creed and viewpoint"

Dr Locke received his Ph D at Harvard in 1918 He is a member of Phi Beta Kappa, the American Philosophical Association, the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures and the League of American Writers, and a corresponding member of the Academie des Sciences Colonials, Paris Besides his books, he has edited volumes of Negro poems and plays, and writes frequently for the literary and sociological magazines. Recently he visited Haiti, as an exchange professor.

Partial Bibliography *Race Contacts and Inter-Racial Relations,* 1916, *The Problem of Classification in Theory of Value,* 1918, *The New Negro,* 1925, *The Negro in America,* 1933; *Negro Art, Past and Present,* 1936, *The Negro and His Music,* 1937; *The Negro in Art,* 1940, *When Peoples Meet,* A Study in Race and Culture Contacts (with B. J Stern), 1942

Articles appeared in *Independent, North American Review, Survey; The Nation, Theatre Arts, Forum, The World Tomorrow; Magazine of Art, Survey Graphic.*

Claude McKay was born September 15, 1890, in Sunny Ville, Jamaica, West Indies Received no formal education, but an older brother gave him some elementary instruction At fourteen years of age, he became a member of the Kingston native constabulary There he began to write dialect verses, and became a sort of unofficial poet laureate of the Colony Later, he successfully published two books of poems, and was the first Negro to receive the medal of the Institute of Arts and Sciences. This happened when he was twenty-two years of age. With the money received with the award, he came to the United States and entered the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute After a brief stay at both Tuskegee and Kansas State College, he realized that neither farming nor teaching agriculture, even to help his countrymen, was his *forte,* and he used the balance

of his scholarship to go to New York. From 1914 on his experiences include a go at running a restaurant and working as waiter in summer hotels and in dining cars. He began to write poetry again and his first work appeared in the *Seven Arts* under the name of "Eli Edwards." His work attracted the attention of other writers and critics In 1918, while in London, Frank Harris acclaimed him as a genius and he worked on Sylvia Pankhurst's radical pacifist paper, *The Worker's Dreadnaught* Back in New York he became a protégé of Floyd Dell and Max Eastman and joined them as associate editor of *The Liberator,* from 1919 to 1922 Mr McKay visited Russia as an observer at the Fourth Congress of the International and from there went to France, where he stayed for ten years His first novel *Home to Harlem* was a success and since its publication he has been a free-lance writer.

Partial Bibliography: *Songs of Jamaica,* 1911; *Constab Ballads,* 1912; *Spring in New Hampshire,* 1920, *Harlem Shadows,* 1922; *Home to Harlem,* 1927, *Banjo,* 1929, *Gingertown,* 1931, *Banana Bottom,* 1933, *A Long Way From Home,* 1937, *Harlem Negro Metropolis,* 1940.

Roi Ottley was born August 2, 1906, in New York City. He attended the public schools of New York City, St Bonaventure's College, University of Michigan, as well as St John's Law School for two years In addition, he has taken special writing courses at the College of the City of New York, New York University and Columbia University under Hatcher Hughes He has traveled throughout the United States and parts of South America, as well as having lived two years in the West Indies.

"I began my writing career in 1930, as a columnist for the *New York Amsterdam-Star News* I conducted a weekly feature called 'Hectic Harlem,' in which I discussed a wide range of subjects—political, social, cultural, economic and folk—which incidentally has provided me with a running account of contemporary history In 1931, I completed a novel, *Black Mistress,* which did the rounds of the publishers but never was published. By 1935 I had become one of

the editors of the *Amsterdam-Star News*—a period roughly of two years—during which time, in addition to my column, I edited material for publication and wrote editorials and signed features. I joined the New York City Writers Project in 1937 as an editor, where I directed research on Negro life. I also have completed a history of the Negro in sports, called *Trumpets for Idols,* which is now going the rounds of the publishers. Besides the above I have done considerable press-relations work for such organizations as the City-Wide Citizens Committee, in helping to prepare reports, statements, publicity and pamphlets for publication—this, of course, was done without remuneration I also have contributed articles to other Negro newspapers, the *Baltimore Afro-American* and the *Pittsburgh Courier* In addition I have written book reviews for the *New York Times* and *Herald Tribune* While my writing experience has included the preparation of speeches for a number of responsible public men—white and Negro—I am not at liberty to quote their names At present I am Publicity Director for the National C I O Committee for American and Allied War Relief"

Partial Bibliography *New World A-Coming,* 1943.

Articles appeared in *New York Amsterdam-Star News, New Theatre Magazine, New York Times, New York Herald Tribune, New Republic, Common Ground, Travel Magazine, American Magazine*

Theodore R Poston was born in Hopkinsville, Kentucky, July 4, 1906 Finished the Booker T Washington Grammar School, Attucks High School in Hopkinsville, received an A B degree from Tennessee State College in 1928, and did graduate work at New York University in editorial and short-story writing "One story of mine, 'A Matter of Record,' was given honorable mention by O'Brien in his last collection of *Best Short Stories.* Another story, 'The Making of Mama Harris,' is included in the recent anthology *Negro Caravan* I am a member of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity and the Washington Chapter of the Newspaper Guild I entered newspaper work the

year after my graduation from Tennessee State and have served as managing editor of the *New York Contender,* New York editor of the *Pittsburgh Courier,* city editor of the *New York Amsterdam-Star News* and feature writer and reporter for the *New York Post* (daily). I came to Washington in September, 1940, as public-relations consultant for the National Advisory Defense Commission and have since served in that capacity for the Office of Production Management, War Production Board and the War Manpower Commission. At present, I am chief of the Negro News Desk in the News Bureau, Office of War Information."

Articles appeared in *New Republic; The Nation, Scribner's, Opportunity, The Crisis, Phylon.*

Asa Philip Randolph was born April 15, 1889, in Crescent City, Florida. As a child he spent most of his time earning enough to keep the family going. When he had completed his high-school course at the Cookman Institute in Jacksonville, he traveled North. He took courses, mostly in political science and economics, at the College of the City of New York He had a succession of varied jobs. He married in 1915 Two years later he and Chandler Owen launched *The Messenger,* a monthly magazine with the subtitle "The Only Radical Negro Magazine in America" Because of the militant stand against the World War which Randolph adopted he was arrested in Cleveland in June, 1918, by the Department of Justice, but was released after a few days in the city jail.

Randolph began to contribute to other publications, he became an instructor in the Rand School of Social Science in New York. In 1921 he ran as the Socialist candidate for Secretary of State in New York, and at other times for the Assembly and Congress Until 1925, even though he had organized a union of elevator operators in New York City in 1917 and participated in organizational campaigns among motion-picture operators and garment-trade workers, he still considered himself a writer and editor rather than a labor organizer.

In August of that year he and a small group of men met in a

Harlem recreational hall to outline a campaign to organize sleeping-car porters Randolph was elected president and general organizer of the union, which as yet existed only on paper Shortly afterward the masthead of *The Messenger* was changed to read "The Official Organ of the Brotherhood of Sleeping-Car Porters."

By 1928 the Brotherhood, with over half the porters and maids organized, was ready to threaten strike, if the Pullman Company refused to negotiate, but the strike was cancelled

The case between the Brotherhood and the Pullman Company dragged on for many years In 1934, when the Railway Labor Act was amended, porters were brought within the scope of the law Membership jumped, and when an election was held in 1935, the vote was 6,000 for the union to 1,400 against it In August, 1937, Randolph was finally able to announce the signing of a contract with the Pullman Company, giving the employees $2,000,000 in pay increases and guaranteeing them shorter hours with pay for overtime "Porters were looked upon as clowns," Randolph says "Now they must be taken seriously"

Randolph is still a Socialist, though not an "orthodox Marxian" In his spare time he is writing two books—one a social history, the other autobiographical.

Partial Bibliography Co-Author, *Terms of Peace and the Darker Races, The Truth About Lynching.*

J Saunders Redding was born October 13, 1906, in Wilmington, Delaware He grew up in a family where two points of view on race and religion were represented by his two grandmothers: Grandmother Redding, black and taciturn, whose hatred of whites spread a spiritual poison; and Grandmother Conway, squat and solid and yellow, whose prayers could bring God's presence into the very room. The conflicts these two old women planted in the child's mind were to mature years later when the grown boy attended Brown University and felt himself fighting blindly and alone against the whole white world. Then, in 1940, with funds provided by the Rosenwald Foundation, the University of North Carolina invited him to "go out into

Negro life in the South. Go anywhere you like." *No Day of Triumph* was the result of what his eyes saw and his ears heard from the Atlantic Coast to the Mississippi Delta regions. Mr. Redding did his undergraduate work at Brown University and graduate work there and at Columbia University. He has had several years' teaching experience in colleges in the South, and recently as the head of the English department of the State Teachers College at Elizabeth City, North Carolina At present he is professor of English literature and creative writing at Hampton Institute, Virginia

Partial Bibliography *To Make a Poet Black*, 1939, *No Day of Triumph*, 1942

Articles appeared in *North American Review, Transition, Harper's Magazine, American Mercury, Atlantic Monthly.*

Walter Francis White was born July 1, 1893, in Atlanta, Georgia, and lived in the South until 1918, when he became an executive officer of the N A A C P He is a graduate of Atlanta University, and has also done post-graduate work in economics and sociology in the College of the City of New York He received from Howard University in 1939 the honorary degree of LL D As an official of N A A C P, he has made investigations of forty-one lynchings and eight race riots; has traveled more than 400,000 miles in the United States and Europe He attended the Pan-African Congress held in 1921 in England, Belgium and France, and in 1927 he went to France for a year of writing and study as a Guggenheim Fellow His first novel *Fire in the Flint* was published in England, France, Germany, Russia, Norway, Denmark and Japan He is a member of the American Center of the P E N Club He has contributed articles to many magazines and newspapers. Upon the retirement of Mr James W Johnson in 1931 as secretary of the N A.A.C P, Mr. White was elected as his successor. He was appointed by President Roosevelt as a member of the Advisory Council for the Government of the Virgin Islands in March 1934, from which position he resigned in May, 1935 He is a member of the Board of Visitors of the

New York Training School for Boys He was appointed in 1935 chairman of the Harlem low-cost housing project under the New York City Housing Authority He has taken a prominent part in the fight against lynching and for enactment of Federal legislation against this evil, especially in the marshaling of public opinion on behalf of the Costigan-Wagner anti-lynching bill in the 74th Congress, and he has led the forces which succeeded in bringing to passage the Gavagan anti-lynching bill in the 75th Congress In 1937 he was awarded the Spingarn Medal for his personal investigation of lynchings and race riots and for his remarkable tact, skill and persuasiveness in lobbying for a Federal anti-lynching bill

Partial Bibliography *Fire in the Flint,* 1924; *Flight,* 1926, *Rope and Faggot,* a Biography of Judge Lynch, 1929

Articles appeared in *Survey, The Nation, American Mercury, Century, Harper's Magazine, Congressional Digest, Saturday Evening Post, Survey Graphic.*

Carter G Woodson was born December 19, 1875, in Buckingham County, Virginia He studied at Berea College, Kentucky, and received his B A and M A at the University of Chicago He studied at the Sorbonne, and in 1912 received the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Harvard University He has traveled widely in Europe, Asia and Africa He taught for many years, but his most valuable work has been the founding of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, and the editing of *The Journal of Negro History,* which since 1916 has been doing notable research in the history of the Negro

Partial Bibliography· *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861,* 1915, *A Century of Negro Migration,* 1918, *History of the Negro Church,* 1921; *The Negro in Our History,* 1922 (now in its seventh edition 1941), *Negro Orators and Their Orations,* 1925; *Free Negro Owners of Slaves in the United States in 1830,* 1925; *Free Negro Heads of Families in the United States in 1830,* 1925; *The Mind of*

the Negro As Reflected in Letters During the Crisis, 1925; *African Myths,* 1928; *Negro Makers of History,* 1928; *The Rural Negro,* 1930; *The Professional Man and the Community,* 1934; *The Story of the Negro Retold,* 1935; *The African Background Outlined,* 1936; *African Heroes and Heroines,* 1939, Co-Author· *The Negro Wage Earner,* 1930; *The Negro as Business Man,* 1929

Articles appeared in *Journal of Negro History, Southern Workman, Negro History Bulletin, The Crisis, Opportunity*

Richard Wright was born September 4, 1908, in Natchez, Mississippi He gained most of his education through hard experiences and a thirst for reading H L Mencken's *Book of Prefaces* became his literary bible for several years, resulting in a desire to write He knocked about in all parts of the country, finally landing in Chicago, where he became interested in the labor movement and, as the result of a few published poems, gained a place on the Federal Writers' Project. In New York City, two years later, he again obtained a position with the Writers' Propect and wrote the *Guide to Harlem* He developed an interest in communism, after a few attempts at political jobs for the Republican and Democratic parties, and began to write regularly for *The New Masses,* later as its contributing editor Won the $500 *Story Magazine* prize for the best story written by a Writers' Project Worker in 1938 Was awarded a Guggenheim fellowship in 1939; Chosen by the Schomburg Collection Poll as one of the "twelve distinguished Negroes" of 1939, received the Spingarn Medal in 1940 for achievement in the field of Negro interests

Partial Bibliography *Uncle Tom's Children,* 1938, *Native Son,* 1940; *Twelve Million Black Voices,* 1941.

Arthur A Schomburg was born 1874 in San Juan, Puerto Rico. He was educated at the Saint Thomas College. In 1891 he came to the

United States. He was president of the American Negro Academy and co-founder of the Negro Society for Historical Research. His most important contribution to world knowledge is the Schomburg Collection—10,000 books, 3,000 manuscripts, 2,000 etchings and several thousand pamphlets "He searched the book marts in Latin America, Western Europe and the United States for materials on the Negro In 1926 the Carnegie Corporation presented the collection to the New York Public Library It was placed at the 135th Street Branch in the heart of Harlem Schomburg served as curator until his death, June 10, 1938 The literature of the Schomburg collection is not only devoted to the Negro in the United States but every section of the globe where black people have lived in numbers enough to call for attention Thus Africa, the West Indies, Brazil and other regions in South America are represented The Haitian collection is perhaps the best in this country The writings of European Negroes found in this library are distinguished by Alexander Pushkin's poems, Jacobus Capitein's Latin thesis, Dumas' novels and various editions of the autobiography of Gustavus Vasa Many of the works of most of the major and many of the minor American Negro writers are here These treat of war, peace, politics, labor, history, science and folklore Some of the rare items include textbooks from the Republic of Liberia and grammars of the various African languages"—From *What Is the Schomburg Collection?*

George Samuel Schuyler was born February 25, 1895, in Providence, R I He was educated in the public schools of Syracuse, N Y ; he served during the First World War, as a private, non-commissioned officer and as First Lieutenant from 1912 to 1918, Civil Service Clerk in the Quartermasters' Corps of the U S Army from 1918 to 1920; was a member of the editorial staff of *The Messenger* from 1923 to 1929, and served as its Assistant Editor from 1926 to 1928 He is now a member of the editorial staff of the *Pittsburgh Courier,* and conducts a regular column "Views and Reviews."

Partial Bibliography *Black No More,* 1931; *Slaves Today,* 1931

Articles appeared in *World Tomorrow; The Nation, The New Masses, The Debunker, American Mercury, The Modern Quarterly; The Messenger, Common Ground.*

John E. Washington was born in Annapolis, Maryland, some fifty years ago [1942] of slave parents After the loss of his father and mother he was raised in Washington by a beloved grandmother, just around the corner from Ford's Theatre, where Lincoln was assassinated He worked his way through Howard University, studying dentistry in the School of Dentistry there, and art in the College of Liberal Arts He has practiced dentistry in the District of Columbia for many years, at present he is teaching commercial art at the Cardozo High School He lives in Highland Beach, the second incorporated colored town in the United States, where he is one of the commissioners and secretary of the town His interesting piece of Lincolniana—*They Knew Lincoln,* published in 1942, has been acclaimed by critics as a valuable contribution to the subject.

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