

MAN'S BURDEN

Written for the
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Negro College Tells of The Coloured Races Economic In America

members of the Royal Society of Science. Edison had offered him 200,000 dollars and a free hand in research, to work in his laboratories.

In medicine, the negro doctor Williams had performed the first successful operation on the human heart.

James Weldon Johnston wrote exquisite poetry in the King's English. Paul Robeson's singing was known round the world. In Memphis a negro, W. C. Handy, had been the originator of the "Blues," which swept the world.

Three Stages

THERE have been three stages in the attitude toward the negro in the States, says the professor. The first stage was to consider him a dumb animal. The second was to pity him and give him charitable concessions. That did him no good, it accustomed him to "hand-outs." The third stage had now arrived, when all the negrophiles asked was equal advantages and equal privileges, so that the negro could develop into a valuable citizen.

THE basic problem, says the professor, is economic.

In the south, the negro has held only positions that are servile. He has been bootshiner, liftman, servant and cook. Naturally, he has not been able to win the white man's respect, since he does this menial work. Individual negroes have won respect, but that is not enough. The negrophiles want more than respect for the occasional negro as an individual; they want respect for the negroes as a race.

They believe he can never win this until he wins his economic freedom. The negroes themselves are partly to blame.

Close to the college, says the professor, is a little negro grocery store. It is nice, clean, an open store. Across the road is a white chain-store, which sells its goods at a penny less. The negro customers go to the white store instead of to the negro. They drag down the economic status of the negro trader and deny him the volume of business that would enable him to compete with the white men.

When the negro is ill with a trifling complaint, he goes to a negro doctor. When he has anything seriously wrong with him, he goes to a white doctor.

If he has a suit for five or ten dollars, he goes to a negro lawyer. If he has one for a substantial sum, he goes to the white lawyer.

He has not learned yet to patronise his own people. When he learns the value of race solidarity, his economic improvement will follow.

No more than the white man does the negro want amalgamation of the two races. All he wants is equal opportunities.

THAT the negro, left to work out his own destiny, can live in responsibility and self-respect is proved by the all-negro community of Mound Bayou, in Mississippi. It is a small community, but a contented one. It has its own judge and town marshal; its own stores, sawmill, gristmill and cotton gins. In the centre of the



—S. P. Andrew photo.

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town stands a 115,000-dollar consolidated school with 800 pupils and 15 teachers. Its principal is a graduate of Tuskegee Institute.

THIS community, recently described in the "Survey Graphic," was founded 50 years ago by a remarkable negro, Isaiah T. Montgomery, who had been a body-servant to Jefferson Davis. Believing that the greatest hope for the freed negro was a future on the land, Davis and his brother after the war sold the Davis plantation to their former slaves. For many years these negroes, led by Montgomery, managed the estate so successfully that it became the third largest cotton producer in the south.

Then the falling price of cotton and legal troubles with the Davis heirs, who claimed title to the land, forced the negroes to give it up.

New Lives

IN the late 80's, the Yazoo and Mississippi Railroad, building a line from Memphis to Vicksburg, obtained large grants of public land from the State of Mississippi. Much of it was alluvial swamp, heavily forested, uninhabited. Naturally the railroad wanted to get people on the land. Hearing of Isaiah Montgomery's success at the Davis plantation, the railroad proposed to the ex-slave that he start a negro colony. Montgomery looked the land over and picked out 840 acres.

OUT of the dense forest, the black people hewed their homes. More and more negroes came; more and more land was bought. To-day the community covers 30,000 acres, farming everything from cotton to corn.

Behind these facts lies a significant truth. In Mound Bayou the negro lives in self-respect. There the negro is living a normal, human life. Impulses of helpfulness, co-operation, goodwill, and living at peace with one's neighbours, and normal expression.



—S. P. Andrew photo.

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