

L. HOLLINGSWORTH WOOD
Chairman
EUGENE KINCKLE JONES
Executive Secretary

Opportunity

A JOURNAL OF NEGRO LIFE

PUBLISHED BY

The Department of Research and Investigations
NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE
127 EAST 23rd STREET, NEW YORK CITY

WILLIAM H. BALDWIN
Secretary
A. S. FRISSELL
Treasurer

CHARLES S. JOHNSON, *Editor* Telephone Gramercy: 3978 PAUL G. PRAYER, *Business Manager*

VOL. I

JUNE, 1923

No. 6

Contents

COVER—ETCHING OF ALEXANDER SERFEYEVITCH PUSHKIN
by Albert A. Smith

EDITORIALS

The Verdict of "Common Sense"
The New Vivisectionists
The Conference of Social Work
Two Incidents

ARTICLES

Page

The Negro's Struggle for Health	4
<i>by Eugene Kinckle Jones</i>	
The Schools and The Vocational Life of Negroes	8
<i>by Elise Johnson McDougald</i>	
On Opportunity—A Poem	11
<i>by Pierre R. Gaillard</i>	
Negroes at Work in Baltimore, Maryland	12
<i>by Charles S. Johnson</i>	
The Social History of the American Negro—A Review	20
<i>by William Leo Hansberry</i>	
What One Organization Accomplished for Health	21
The Negro Who Wanted to Become a Fireman	22
Boy Scouts	23
Our Young Artists	24
POT-POURRI	26
OUR BOOKSHELF	28
The Mind in the Making	
<i>Reviewed by G. A. Steward</i>	
Negro Education in Africa	
<i>Reviewed by C. H. Thompson</i>	
Social Work—An Outline of Its Professional Aspects	
<i>Reviewed by J. B. Buell</i>	
The Bulletin Board	29
The Interracial Forum	31
A Negro Business College	32

Single Copies, fifteen cents; Yearly Subscription, One Dollar and a Half.

on the health conditions among Negroes, as recreation which affords fresh air and wholesome exercise is recognized as an aid to health.

In the United States there are now among the Negroes 6000 physicians, 3000 trained nurses, 150 hospitals and sanatoria; 100 national or state sick-benefit societies with many hundreds of locals; 500 social service workers engaged in active service among the colored people. Fifteen years ago, there were probably no trained colored social workers. There is a Negro physician now for every 1700 of Negro population. Twenty-five years ago, not only were there few colored physicians, but it was claimed that Negroes had no faith in colored physicians and would not call in even a white physician except in cases which threatened to be fatal.

The Negro's struggle for health might be considered an effort of the race to survive. And yet in the mind of each individual, it is simply an

effort on his part to live as long as possible and to contribute as much as possible economically as well as spiritually to the world.

With the educational facilities being extended throughout the south, with the migration of Negroes from the south to the north still in progress, bringing more Negroes within the zone of better living conditions, with Negro leaders increasing in their appreciation of the value of public health education, and with the whole standard of living of Negroes being raised to a higher level, there is sufficient reason to expect a continued improvement in the health of the race. This will result not necessarily in any increase in the per cent. of increase decennially in the Negro population, but certainly in a steady increase in the population due, if not to more births, certainly to a much greater percentage reduction in deaths than in births.

The Schools and the Vocational Life of Negroes

By ELISE JOHNSON McDOUGALD

A discussion of the school and its relation to the vocational life of the Negro, brings us to the consideration of two of the most vital activities of human life—learning and earning. These are vital to all; and, to the Negro, who is like all other folk, the effort to secure, a chance to learn and to earn, has brought about an heroic change. Within a year, 84,000 Negroes left the states of South Carolina, Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia and Tennessee. It is significant that all of these states rank in the lowest third of states in educational progress in the nation. After years of patient endurance, the Negro by migrating, has made the problem of education and vocation, a national, rather than a sectional one.

Now that the problem is nation-wide, its relation to the problems of the human race in general is becoming more apparent. It is, after all, simply a phase of the big struggle of the modern era—the struggle of the Common Man for fullest development. The Negro is regarded as the commonest of common men in America, and any consideration of his welfare, in any field of endeavor, is highly in accord with the tendency of the present age—"appreciation of the genius of the common man."

No matter how white America may estimate him, the Negro knows that he has contributed sufficiently toward the building up of this country, to warrant his claiming a respected place in the nation. Still more than that, he feels he is a factor in the work of the world. He has reason to be proud of the fact that, in making these contributions, he has benefitted other groups in the nation even more than he has his own. Since we are considering the question of learning and

earning, let us note what the Negro has meant to America along these lines. He has played a vital part in the educational system. The educational philosophy of the Negro, Booker T. Washington is the out-standing contribution, among the contribution of educators, white or black, to education in America. In the matter of earning, his attitude on the dignity of labor has done great good in the life of the United States. After weighing these values, the nation has decided that vocational education is good and necessary, not only for the black child but for the white. With the monument—Tuskegee—as a model, trade schools are everywhere planned, and trade courses are very rapidly being added in already existing schools. Federal legislation and aid in educational matters is a modern development, and even there, the effect of this leader's teachings is to be noted. For the government is greatly concerned, not only with raising the general educational standards, but, is anxious that the vocations, notably agriculture and Domestic Arts, be closely linked up with schools all over the country. There can be no doubt that the Negro has greatly influenced the forward movements in education in this country.

As has happened in other contributions of the Negro to America, entire good has not been the result where he is concerned. So tremendously forceful was the philosophy and personality of Washington, that he swayed the thought of the nation to the extent that other educational programmes for Negroes were greatly discounted. Institutions of higher learning in the south experienced a great set-back. Both interest and funds were transferred to schools giving trade

Address delivered before the Section on The School at the National Conference of Social Work in Washington, D.C., May 16th, 1923.

training. To meet this situation, other Negro leaders waged a vigorous campaign of counteraction. It was necessary to voice and even to agitate the need of the Negro for preparation in the fields of the sciences and in the liberal and fine arts. Factions of thought arose among the Negroes themselves over the growing tendency away from the chance to make contributions to America along lines other than in the trades. Happily, the contending forces are blending themselves toward a constructive policy of education which includes all phases of culture.

White educators are still dazzled, to a large extent, by a one-sided programme of vocational education for all Negroes. This enthusiasm has not as yet found full expression in actual practice. This is pointedly true of the educational officials in the employ of the city and state. The suspension of effort in vocational education is doubtless due to the deterring attitude of the white labor unions who greatly fear competition, in the skilled trades. The actual trade training now given in the public trade schools in the north and south to Negroes is still insignificant. For instance, in New York City, a recent study disclosed the following facts: Out of nearly 2000 workers, not quite 30% were using trade training. Further, it was found that this training was not secured in the public trade schools of the city. Not one trade school graduate came within the scope of the study. The training used was secured in industry and largely in the unorganized shops. This is almost an absolute condition in the men's trades. In this same study, less than 5% of the workers were found to be using advanced technical training, and this small per cent. had paid for this training in such schools as Pratt Institute and the Academy of Designs, etc., in the north; and in such schools as Hampton and Tuskegee, before coming north. Wider studies would bear out the conclusion that the state systems are doing very little for Negro education in the vocations.

The public elementary and high schools of the north provide a better chance for preparation for vocations other than the trades. The same standard is maintained for both races who, for the most part attend the same schools. The chief draw-back is the lack of money among the masses to support the child through a lengthy course in school.

In the south, however, the situation is the other way about. There the northern philanthropist has taken care, to a great extent, of the vocational education of the Negro, not only in Hampton and Tuskegee, but in many other smaller schools throughout the south. This, however, does not come as it properly should under the state. As far as elementary education for the Negro in the south is concerned, the reports of the several state superintendents of education show that the amount of monies used for the Negro is criminally below that used for whites. This is having the moral effect of casting scorn upon the lowered rating which the southern states get in the scale for all states. High school education for Negro youth in the south may be said to be practically

non-existent as a state function. Negroes are paying state taxes and in addition paying sums to private Negro colleges for the secondary education they cannot get from the state. This tragic situation in the educational system of the south is reflected in the almost insurmountable handicap met by the migrant youth when he enters the northern public schools.

From the above, it would seem that educational officials, both north and south have discrepancies in their work among Negroes which must eventually be met if the good of the youth of the nation is really the basis and reason for educational work.

This brings us to a discussion of the second phase of our subject—a consideration of the vocations in which the Negro is engaged. In the north, almost any study will show that the largest numbers of Negroes are engaged in the unskilled processes in industry. It will show him to be doing the most taxing work in the porter service and in the food departments on the trains and in the stations of the great railroads. It will show that he is the laborer on the roads and along the docks; and in the large manufacturing plants in almost every industry. When strong, his is the heaviest task; when not so robust, the most menial. Then, he is the elevator operator, or messenger or porter in the large apartment and loft buildings throughout the north. For all of the above mentioned work, he needs only elementary education for use while on the job. This, however, does not mean that he possesses only such education as he uses; for it is now a recognized fact that there is a great waste to the community in the lack of opportunity for the Negro to serve to his maximum capacity. The entrance of the Negro into the semi-skilled and skilled trades is generally slight in the north. The greater progress has been made in the west. However, slight, the fact that entrance has been made and is being held is significant. If the promotional policy of the northern employer can be gradually made more favorable, Negro workers will make a normal progress. Where merit and examination systems have prevailed, healthy progress has been noted. This tendency in industry to force the Negro downward is most noteworthy for a body of social workers. It is at the root of many of the problems which the social worker is called upon to help solve. In passing, consider just one; because of it, the women of the Negro race are compelled to supplement the low wage of their men. They enter the laundries, shops and factories, or, continue to labor in the homes of the more fortunate women, to the neglect of their own. This forced neglect of the home during the day necessitates undue freedom for the children and lack of care as to feeding, recreation and discipline. As social workers, many other problems will immediately come to your mind which arise from this condition of the Negro mother. One cannot resist the temptation to pause for a moment and pay tribute to the mothers of the Negro race. And, to call attention to the service she is rendering the nation in her struggle against great odds to educate and

care for one group of the nation's children. If the mothers of the race are to be honored by Federal legislation, the artist's imagination will find a more inspiring subject in the modern Negro mother, self-directed but equally as loyal and tender as the pitiable and much extolled black mammy of slavery days.

A picture of the vocational life of the Negro in the north is not complete if only industrial lines are included. In that section, Negroes are following almost as many vocations as are the whites. The numbers in any of the skilled callings are perhaps unduly small. The variety is nevertheless great. They hold not only positions seldom associated with Negroes, but also attain distinction for the character of the work done. One would hardly think of a white monthly magazine of national circulation having as the head of its news service, a colored woman who rose in the organization from the position of stenographer. Nor, that one of New York's largest department stores employs Negro saleswomen, one of whom is head of stock in her department. One would hardly think that a busy New York post office station would have as its superintendent, a colored man who rose from junior clerk, and now has a force of 30 men under him. Would one usually think of a Negro as being the assistant manager in one of the important stores of a drug syndicate? Or, would one imagine that a colored editor-in-chief would pass upon every sheet of music accepted for publication by a music house with branches in several countries? One does not usually think of the scores of Negroes in commercial work or of the many officials of city and state when one discusses the vocational life of the Negro. To have a true picture, it is absolutely necessary to touch up the dull gray of trade life with such high lights as the following: The largest Negro community in the world—Harlem, is fairly typical as to variety of occupation. There among the 152,000 Negroes, we find 63 physicians, with a need for many more. There are 28 dentists who are anxious for students to study that profession to meet the needs of the future. There are over 900 musicians, mostly entertainers, who are kept busy amusing the pleasure-seeking crowds at inns, restaurants and theatres. Two hundred and fifty or more public school teachers find constant employment among white and colored children. They have risen to positions in the high schools and on the administrative staffs in the elementary schools. Over 200 nurses are engaged in the service of the city, in clinics, in tenement house inspection, in public schools and city hospitals. They are engaged in private duty and in settlement work. There is one private sanitarium, owned and operated by Negro physicians, where a Negro nurse has supervision over Negro nurses. One should not forget that the vocational life of the Negroes of New York includes 50 lawyers with representatives in the legal employ of the city and state and one in the state assembly at Albany. One should also bring to mind such positions as Collector of Internal Revenue of the

port of New York and Municipal Civil Service Commissioner.

Turning to the southern section, progress along business lines is even more marked. There commercial enterprises along practically every line have grown up and Negroes have attained wealth and culture as a result. The Negro is now weighing the cost of this progress in terms of nerve strain and spiritual drain and is expressing his findings in the migration mentioned before.

After this brief summary of conditions, north and south, in school and industry, one realizes that constructive work is under way. Education is on the increase—the Negro must get his just share. Industry is becoming more humanized—the Negro must also be regarded in the new light. The two agencies for human good—the school and industry, must work together more effectively. It has gradually become apparent that an additional agent must step in and make the transition from one to the other less difficult and to keep the spirit of the school alive in industry. Especially is this necessary in the case of the Negro youth. They graduate by the hundreds and go to work or trade school or high school. When the time comes to seek a place in the work of the world, they meet the greatest difficulty. Lack of innate ability on the part of the Negro boy or girl is not the underlying cause of these difficulties. Limited opportunity, a lack of knowledge of the opportunities which exist and a lack of help in making the necessary adjustments are the potent factors in the trouble. It appears that one of the greatest needs of the Negro youth is, not only training in all branches of learning, according to ability and interest, but adequate co-ordination and guidance both in education and work, toward the fullest use of that training.

An experiment to meet just this need has been tried for the past four years by the Board of Education in New York City. In the district where the majority of Negroes live, one teacher was assigned to three elementary schools to guide the upper grade boys and girls as to choice in courses in high school and as to work and vocation. At first the work was carried on in one school, and in the third year expanded to include three. Improvement in the technique of counseling, led to the giving of information in group talks or lectures, reserving the individual interview for those with special problems. In this way, a great many more children were reached. Reference to the statistics below will give some idea of the volume and character of the work. One will notice the growth in the work of actual guidance with an elimination of relief and correctional work. This has been accomplished by the co-operation extended by agencies equipped to do that work.

PURPOSE OF INTERVIEWS.

	1920-21	1922-23
Educational	605	720
Vocational	61	51
Financial	67	31
Health	39	11
Social	143	17
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	915	830

In the doing of this experimental concrete work, a constant effort was made to unearth the larger needs. Vocational guidance led to the adoption of administrative measures used successfully with other groups. As will be noted in the following statements, it led to the inauguration of new and untried work to meet new situations. Among them are these:

1. Mental tests, at first used only by counselor to help in the diagnosis of educational and vocational problems, were later made the basis of grading classes, into slow and rapid groups within the grade. These tests clarified the understanding of teachers as to the wide range of intelligence among Negro children.
2. A special class was established outside of school to give instruction to a special group of over-age and mentally slow girls in semi-skilled domestic work. These girls were tired of school and expressed but one choice—and for this there were no classes in school. They must go to work with no preparation. At the end of the course they were placed and watched over by the teacher, who adjusted wage and other troubles. One of these girls worked in one place for three years and is being replaced by this teacher this month in order to secure for her higher wages.
3. To meet the demand for trained directors of cafeterias, dietician and household managers, a completely equipped cafeteria was installed in the pre-vocational departments in one of the elementary schools. This work leads to the higher courses in the same lines in the high schools.
4. To foster the work of vocational guidance, the North Harlem Vocational Guidance Committee was formed.
5. As a result of the need for wider policies

in placement and guidance, the U. S. Department of Labor and the Board of Education made a survey of the occupations open to Negroes in New York City. This is now being edited for publication as a government bulletin.

6. The high school placement department of the Board of Education was induced to make an equal effort for the Negro youth in its questionnaire campaign for larger opportunities for the high school pupil. Favorable advertisement was therein given to the colored child.

As a result of this work, the percentage of children going to work has been steadily reduced and the percentage of successfully guided pupils is shown in the records being made by these students in lessons and character rating in the high schools. Sixty-seven per cent. of the girls guided in the first year of the work are still there and, to mention only one side, they have attained an average of B+ in personality and character. There has been a keener interest on the part of teacher and parent in the future life work and education of the colored child and the community in general has become a part of the work. This has been brought about by talks at public meetings of all kinds, at churches, fraternities, clubs and mothers' meetings.

This much has been accomplished in one community and its chief value lies in the light it sheds on the possibilities for other communities. What has been done in one place can be adapted to another. With such efforts to improve the methods in learning, and to tie them up to the efforts to improve the opportunities in the field of earning, there can be no cause for depression over what can be done to improve the relation of the school to the vocational life of the Negro child.

On Opportunity

PIERRE R. GAILLARD

*The chance to all in life some good or ill
To do is opportunity; the rich
Can aid the poor; the poor develop will
To help themselves; the selfishness to which
Are dedicated lives to flesh enrich
Can be submerged in homage to the soul—
Responding weakly to its every itch,
The greed for gold men leave beyond control
Enmeshed in plagues of lust, in meanest human role.*

*The chance to rise to heights—materially—
Subserving health of self and soul to gain,
Is wanted most this opportunity.
Who covet most this—blindly borne—abstain
From aught that acts to lessen, of this bane,
The ready reaching. Yet, to most it fails
To come at all but few it favors fain.
Tho' sought in legion, still, it sickly trails;
Against the iridescent chance for good it pales.*

*To do the ill the chance is never lost.
This opportunity is easiest
Perceived; and grasped it gravitates to cost
The sacrifice of sacred virtues, best
In life of soul and flesh; with subtle zest,
Unfolds itself so that, in every phase,
Its patrons, weak ones, may survey the crest
Of it—a summit cleft, but sheen to gaze,
To lure who would it scale unwise, to sorrow's maze.*

*Abundant opportunity to lead
For good: from ignorance to knowledge, light
Of life; to God, from grimy sin—this need
Persists; from pestilence of war;—when might
In arrogance and tethed in arms the right
Ignores—to major service wrought for weal
Of universal man; to lead which blight
Away, the prejudices—race in zeal
To race; from vanities assumed, to what is real.*