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NOTES AND EXCHANGES

THE SOUTHERN WORKMAN, founded by General Armstrong in 1872 and published monthly by The Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, at Hampton, Va., is a magazine devoted to the interests of undeveloped races.

It contains direct reports from the heart of Negro and Indian populations, with pictures of reservation, cabin, and plantation life as well as information in regard to the school's graduates and ex-students who have, since 1868, taught more than 250,000 children in 18 states in the South and West. It also contains local sketches; a running account of what is going on in The Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute; studies in Negro and Indian folklore and history; and editorial comment; while at the same time it provides an open forum for the discussion of ethnological, sociological, and educational problems.

Our subscribers are distributed among 35 states and territories and we believe that the paper has had an important influence both North and South on questions concerning the Negro and Indian races.

The *New York Times* says of the **SOUTHERN WORKMAN**: "It is devoted to what may be called the current literature of the Negro and Indian races, and to the description and discussion of their nature, their work, their deeds, their life. The discussion is sober, careful, candid, and, what is of much importance, it is exceedingly readable."

TERMS: The price is One Dollar a year in advance. A special rate of 75 cents a year will be made to clubs of ten or more. Correspondence is invited in regard to agents' rates.

EDITORIAL STAFF: H. B. FRISSELL, HELEN W. LUDLOW, J. E. DAVIS, W. L. BROWN
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CONTRIBUTED ARTICLES: The editors of the **SOUTHERN WORKMAN** do not hold themselves responsible for the opinions expressed in contributed articles. Their aim is simply to place before their readers articles by men and women of ability without regard to the opinions held. In this way they believe that they will offer to all who seek it the means of forming a fair opinion on the subjects discussed in their columns.

LETTERS should be addressed

THE SOUTHERN WORKMAN, Hampton, Virginia

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Agriculture, and should be read widely both by those who are living on the farm and by those who are interested in the problems of country-life education, scientific agriculture, farm demonstration work, and rural business affairs. It can be secured, free of charge, by writing to Dr. A. C. True, Director of the Office of Experiment Stations, Washington, D. C. Bulletins relating to agricultural education may be secured, free of charge, by applying to the United States Commissioner of Education, or the Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., and the various state departments of education, state colleges of agriculture, and state experiment stations.

Professor Hays points out in his Introduction that Congress has spent something less than \$100,000,000 in agricultural research and education, the major part of it during the last twenty years. "The development of a wonderful body of scientific knowledge of farming and farm homemaking has been well begun; and the organization of methods for conveying this inspiring and effective knowledge to all the people has been well started," he says. The agricultural high schools in Minnesota, Nebraska, and Wisconsin, he declares, have succeeded in preparing for country life youth of both sexes, who have become better farmers, homemakers, and citizens, because these schools have considered seriously the needs of country life. He then passes to a consideration of the establishment of a system of consolidated rural and village schools for the purpose of giving farm youth the advantages of instruction in scientific agriculture, home economics, and vocational work, as well as an insight into social and civic affairs.

CRIME AMONG NEGROES¹

KELLY MILLER

THE criminal status of the Negro race is a matter that should be carefully weighed and investigated, and cautious and reasoned conclusions deduced therefrom. The anti-Negro doctrinaires are ever prone to seize upon the surface appearance of things criminal and utilize them to blacken and blast the reputation of the race.

The Census of 1890 made a study of criminal statistics. Although the Twelfth Census made no such investigation, there was a special bulletin issued in 1904, which made a partial examination of criminal statistics.

The one essential fact, so far as the Negro race is concerned, is that twelve per cent of the population contributed thirty-two per cent of the crimes of the United States. This ratio was practically the same for 1890 and for 1904. During the interval of fourteen years there had been no absolute increase in Negro crime, but in some

¹ Abstract of an address delivered in Cleveland Hall Chapel, on July 15, 1909, before the thirteenth annual Hampton Negro Conference.

instances there was a relative increase, as compared with that of the white population. In 1890, there were 24,227 Negro prisoners in the United States. In 1904, there were 26,870 such prisoners. Although there was some discrepancy in the methods of return at the two census periods, the underlying fact remains that the criminal status of the race had made no notable increase, as compared with the growth of the Negro population, during the intervening fourteen years.

The sociologist first ascertains the facts. Then he accounts for and interprets them. Finally, he generalizes upon them and points out their prophetic import. The orator, on the other hand, first generalizes and prophesies, and afterwards finds it is necessary to ascertain the facts lying at the basis of his generalization and prophecy. Now the fact is that the Negro has a criminal record about three times as great as his numbers entitle him to. How shall we account for this?

If one should go to England or any other part of the earth and study the condition of the people who live in poverty in the crowded cities, he would find an overwhelming preponderance of crime among the submerged element as compared with the general population. The Negro shows this high criminal rating because he constitutes, in the United States and especially in the large cities, the submerged stratum where the bulk of actionable crime is found the world over. Crime is a question of condition, not one of color.

Another reason, in my judgment, which contributes to the seeming increase in Negro crime is the fact that, during the last fifteen years, there has grown up, on the part of the white race, a spirit of racial exclusiveness and intolerance. This is outwardly manifested in the public provisions for the sharp separation of the races in all matters where there is likely to be anything like intimacy of contact. Formerly there was a kindly personal and patriarchal relation between the races, but in these latter days it is becoming hard and business-like. "If the Negro offends against the law, let him perish by the law," is the prevailing motto and method. A famous English writer sometime ago said: "If you wish to destroy a feeble race, you can do so more easily by the law than without it. Make the laws as rigid as possible and enforce them rigidly." Those who watch events closely must have noticed the application of this principle in certain parts of the country.

I believe, from observation and examination, that, taking the Southern courts as a whole, the Negro in some cases is treated unusually severely, and in others with unusual lenity. Balancing the two extremes, he gets substantial justice; but there is a difference between fairness and justice. *Fairness* consists in equal distribution of favor; *justice* in equal application of rights. The laborer in the parable, who entered at the eleventh hour, was received on terms of compensatory equality with the one who had borne the heat and burden of the day, but the more strenuous workman could not accuse the master of the

vineyard of injustice, but merely of unfairness. If the Negro gets justice in the Southern courts, the white man gets less than justice, which makes an unfair distribution of penalties.

When Negroes commit crimes among themselves they are not apt to be punished with undue severity, but when they commit crime against the white race punishment is sure, swift, and severe. On the other hand, when the white man commits an offence against the Negro, acquittal is almost sure to follow; and even if convicted he is released with a slight fine and does not go to swell the prison record of his race. Even where the white man commits an offence against his own race he is not apt to receive the full rigor of the law. When two races are living together, the race which assumes superiority is wont to regard itself as sacred in the eyes of the other, and is very reluctant to humiliate any of its members, even by due process of law.

I believe that all will agree that a white person in Massachusetts is in every way as upright and as well behaved as the white person in any other place in the world, and yet, if we follow statistics, we find that the white people in Mississippi are angels of grace as compared with the white people of Massachusetts. In Massachusetts there are 5,477 whites in prison; in Mississippi only 114. The ingenuity of the Yankee sociologist can easily explain away this seeming discrepancy. By the same process of reasoning the glaring criminal discrepancy between the races can be accounted for. There are probably no more white prisoners in Massachusetts than there ought to be, but no man in his senses, not even Governor Vardaman, will claim that only 114 white persons in Mississippi should be "in durance vile." By parity of reason it is fair to say that probably in the South the number of Negro prisoners is a just measure of Negro crime, but the number of white prisoners falls immensely below the number of white offenders against the law.

If the entire Negro population should withdraw from the South and its place supplied by whites occupying a similar status, the crime rate of that section would not be appreciably affected. In the United States as a whole there is an average of one prisoner to every one thousand of the population. In the South Atlantic states, where the Negro is found in largest numbers, the criminal rate is almost exactly the same as that of the nation at large. In the North Atlantic states where there are few Negroes, there is a still higher average, and in the Western states where there are no Negroes, comparatively speaking, the rate is highest of all. It is impossible to trace any connection between race and crime. If the Negro in the North shows a much higher criminal rate than the Negro in the South, it is also true that the white race in the North shows a greater ratio of crime over that same race in the South.

The Negro in this country is the sacrificial race. He is the burden bearer for the white race. He constitutes the mud sill of society and suffers the ills of that lowly place. He performs the rough work

of society. He suffers the affliction and even commits the crimes, which always fall to the lot of his status. Were it not for him the white race would suffer corresponding ills. The Caucasian should appreciate the vicariousness of the black man's lot and not strive by false reasoning and forced argument to make his burdens greater than they are at present.

Just as the Negro death rate, three times as great as that of the whites, is clearly due to his condition, so his crime rate, bearing the same disproportion, is also attributable to the same cause.

What should be the attitude of the Negro men and women of light and leading towards this high criminal record and the interpretation just placed upon it? In the first place, they should strive insistently and incessantly to reduce this rate. It is always more satisfactory, from a sociological point of view, to remove an evil than to explain the cause for its existence. Laws are made for the protection of the weak. It makes my heart bleed when I see a Negro violating the law, which is his only safeguard and protection under our scheme of civilization. This Samsonian folly pulls down the pillars of the temple of justice, the only asylum for the weak. Colored men should use their best offices to persuade those who are in control of the law-making agencies in the states and in the nation to enact only such laws as can be cheerfully upheld and obeyed by all without compromise of becoming dignity and self-respect. The white race should enact laws of such equity and fairness that Negroes will have no cause to complain of their unrighteousness and injustice. For if the laws themselves are unrighteous, where shall we look for righteousness?

Let the Negro obey the Ten Commandments and the white race the Golden Rule. Then all will be well. Ephraim will not envy Judah, and Judah will not vex Ephraim.

CRIME AMONG NEGROES¹

J. THOMAS HEWINS

TH**ERE** is an increase in crime among the Negroes in the State of Virginia, and I think statistics will show an increase in crime among Negroes throughout the South. Our aim is to find a remedy for this evil. The greatest panacea for the prevention of crime among Negroes as well as among other people, is education, which signifies a thorough preparation for one's life work.

During my nine years' practice at the bar, I cannot recall one case where any Negro of fair intelligence committed a crime. Of 176 prisoners in the city jail of Richmond, not one has had a thorough

¹ Abstract of an address delivered on July 15, 1929, before the Hampton Negro Conference.