

OPPORTUNITY

L. HOLLINGSWORTH WOOD
Chairman

EUGENE KINCKLE JONES
Executive Secretary

CHARLES S. JOHNSON
Editor

A JOURNAL OF NEGRO LIFE

Published Monthly by

The Department of Research and Investigations

NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE

127 EAST 23rd STREET, NEW YORK, N. Y.

Telephone Gramercy 3978

WILLIAM H. BALDWIN
Secretary

LLOYD GARRISON
Treasurer

ERIC WALROND
Business Manager

VOL. 4

DECEMBER, 1926

No. 48

Contents

Cover—The Holy Family—(See note on page 369)

Editorials—

- The Industrial Future of Negroes
- Criminal Intelligence
- A New Crime Law
- Unions and Negro Trade Schools
- League of Nations' Policy Toward "Backward Races"
- The Cover

Where is the Negro's Heaven? *By Kelly Miller*... 370

The Dark Nation—*A Poem. By George Sterling* ... 373

Welcome the New South—*A Review by Alain Locke*. 374

Crossing Over. *By Elmer A. Carter* 376

Pan's Altar—*A Poem. By Olive Ward* 378

The Pink Hat—*A Sketch. By Caroline Bond Day* .. 379

The Sun-Flower Man. *By Dorothy Kruger*..... 380

From the Darker Side. *By Izzetta Winter Robb* 381

Edmund T. Jenkins. *By Benjamin Brawley* 383

On the Death of a Young Friend. *By Edward Silveira* 383

A Fraternal Organization with Social Vision. *By Jesse O. Thomas* 384

Doing His Bit. *By Nimrod B. Allen* 385

Health Opportunities in Harlem. *By Henry O. Harding, M.D.* 386

For Roland Hayes—*A Poem. By Dorothy Burgess* .. 387

The Dark Tower. *By Countee Cullen* 388

Who's Who 390

The Ebony Flute 391

Pot Pourri 392

Our Book Shelf 393

Survey of the Month 398

Index, 1926 400

Single Copies, FIFTEEN CENTS—Yearly Subscriptions, ONE DOLLAR AND A HALF, FOREIGN, \$1.75.

Entered as second-class matter, October 30, 1923, at the Post Office at New York, New York, under the act of March 3, 1879.

Editorials

WHEN the Immigration legislation of 1921 and 1924 restricted the influx of European workers it was expected that one effect would be the increased importance of American born labor. Negro workers, while not sharing actively in that sudden passion for a restriction policy so manifestly stimulated by the political revolt against the melting pot with its questionable racial emphasis, yet recognized in the limitation of competitors new industrial opportunities. The World War had accidentally revealed to them the enormous pressure of yearly European immigration against their migration from the

south to the industrial centers of the north, and this relationship has carried through the Immigration legislation with a logic which seems to bind their industrial future to the policy of restriction. Now the question is, to what extent Negro labor is actually being used as a substitute for the reduced numbers of European immigrants, and to what extent they will be used in the future for labor in the industrial plants.

Since 1820 over 36,000,000 immigrants have come here. The tempo of American industries in 1914 was adjusted to the consumption of a million new workers annually. They went for the most part into the lower grades of work. Between 1900 and 1910 there were admitted 8,795,386 immigrant aliens. Of this number 5,788,449, or over 65 per cent, came from the four countries: Austria, Hungary, Italy and Russia. These countries have supplied the greatest numbers of recruits for unskilled labor. The Immigration Legislation was so phrased as to restrict with greatest severity the so-called non-nordic groups. The "Old immigration" made up of English, Germans, Scandinavians and Swedes, has not been a serious competitor of Negro labor, for these were in large part skilled workers and farmers. Under the present immigration quota the four countries, Italy, Austria, Hungary and Russia, representing the "new immigration," which together averaged 600,000 workers a year before the law was passed, are reduced to less than 10,000. The 3 per cent quota contemplated about 360,000 arrivals annually, or about 45 per cent of the usual. When emigration is deducted it develops that, measured in man power, the net immigration is only about 11 per cent of the usual. Again, the industries included under the census classification as manufacturing and mechanical, require annually about 214,000 new workers to replace those lost by retirement, promotion and death. This is quite apart from population growth. When it is considered that before the war these industries could use a million new workers annually it is obvious that the estimate is not extravagant. The population increases at the rate of about 1,400,000 annually, or 14 per thousand. This means increased demands for goods, and consequently new workers to supply these demands.

The census of 1920 shows a shift of 371,229 Negroes from agricultural pursuits to industry. The sections with largest basic industries demanding

Where Is the Negro's Heaven?

By KELLY MILLER

No recent book has stirred the thought and emotions of Negroes to greater depths and variety than has Carl Van Vechten's novel of Negro life in Harlem. Mr. Kelly Miller in this article offers evidence of sociological value, against the rapidly crystallizing notion that Harlem represents the pinnacle of Negro culture in the United States.—Editor's Note.

SENATOR JOHN SHERMAN, of Ohio, noticing the exceptional advantages and advancement of the colored people of the national capital before the Emancipation Proclamation, called Washington the Negro Heaven. The title has been undisputed until quite recently when New York laid claim to the proud distinction. But Washington is not willing to yield the palm without requiring her rival to prove her claim. Up to the census of 1900, Washington city contained the largest Negro population of any municipality in the United States, if not in the world. The tide of Northern migration, stimulated by the World War, has rapidly swollen the number of Negroes in Northern cities, shifting Washington to the third or fourth place as to the Negro population. According to the census of 1920, New York contained 152,467 Negroes, Philadelphia, 134,229, Washington, 109,966, and Chicago, 109,458. The estimated figures for 1925 greatly increase the lead of the Northern cities and throw Washington still further in the rear.

New York has at present an estimated Negro population of over two hundred thousand, three-fourths of whom are segregated in the Harlem District, which constitutes the so-called Negro Heaven. Undoubtedly the most interesting and spectacular phase of the Negro problem is now presented in Harlem. The Negro's problems grow out of his presence. Such a mass of Negroes suddenly transplanted from Southern towns and villages and from the open country and thrust into the midst of the greatest and most progressive city in the world, partaking of its industrial life and general opportunities, sharing the energy of its rushing current, a part of, and yet apart from the surrounding social scheme, excites the liveliest social interest and attention. The outcome of this field of racial adjustment is bound to be watched with a degree of social attention which no other point of race contact can at present command. The New Negro, of whom we have recently heard so much is nothing but the old Negro exposed to the Harlem environment.

Carl Van Vechten, the well known critic and author of the realistic school has recently published a novel entitled *Nigger Heaven*, which is merely an artistic portrayal of the Harlem Negro, in his gayer mood for joy and jazz.

The mad quest for "kicks" and thrills, the saturnalia of song, dance and wine, the revelry of the cabaret are merely outbursts of Negro nature which would break forth at any place and time under like provocative conditions. The so-called Negro art is merely the Negro soul turning itself

wrong side out for white people to weep over and laugh at. The Negro life in Harlem is mainly effervescence and froth without seriousness or solid supporting basis. The riot of frolic and frivolity is characteristic of Babylon on the verge of destruction rather than of Heaven, the blissful abode of tradition.

The Washington Negro occupies a unique place in the scheme of race relationship which gives this group a peculiar and far reaching social significance. While New York, Philadelphia and Chicago have a larger number of Negroes counted by themselves, yet as a percentage of the total population they are practically negligible. Two hundred thousand Negroes of New York in the midst of six million whites have no more relative significance than a single apple in a half bushel basket. On the other hand, the Negroes in Washington constitute one-fourth of the total population, and necessarily color and complicate every feature of the community life. The great metropolitan city plods its accustomed way unconscious of the relative handful of Negroes and unconcerned about them, except in their restricted, segregated area. If every Negro should withdraw over night from the greater New York, nothing would be missed except the jazz and the blues. But with Washington, it is otherwise. The atmosphere and attitude of the national capital is the resultant of many sectional and local components. Here the North and the South meet. The race feeling is the complex of the two. If the population might be likened unto a triangle, it could be said to have a Southern base and a Northern altitude. Socially the Negro is treated according to the formula of the South; while politically, he is dealt with after the notion of the North. In order to establish a plausible basis of political equality, both races were reduced to a political null—on the theory that all zeroes are equal.

In Washington the Negro labors under the same social disabilities or disadvantages as in the South, with the exception of the fixity of law. The federal government cannot afford to vitiate the integrity of the law to meet the exactions of local prejudice and proscription. The silent force of custom and tradition obviates that necessity. There are no jim-crow laws on the federal statute, but there are jim-crow practices under federal connivance. Separate schools exist in the District of Columbia rather by common consent and acceptance than by categorical congressional enactment. There are no separate cars, although sundry futile attempts have been made to this effect. There are no laws forbidding the intermarriage of the races; and yet the two races rarely intermarry. But comprehensively

speaking the Negroes of the national capital occupy the same sort of separate social existence as in the South. In public functions involving semi-social contact, the line of demarkation is sharply marked and understood. Occasionally a Negro official falls in line to call on the President at a public levee. Negroes are not accepted as guests in hotels or as patrons in restaurants, barber shops, theaters, or places of amusement, except on the basis of separate assignment of seats and accommodation. The federal government has taken on the spirit and method of local proscription. Negroes in the civil service are segregated, either by separate assignment of rooms, or by being given separate desk assignment in the same room. Mr. William Monroe Trotter, the intrepid editor of the *Boston Guardian*, greatly embarrassed President Woodrow Wilson by confronting him to his face with the charge of segregating federal employes on the ground of race and color. The press of the country sided with Mr. Trotter that the practice was undemocratic, un-American and wrong in principle. But the exposure had little effect upon the practice. Notwithstanding forced explanations, evasions and semi-denials of bureau chiefs and heads of department, segregation continues under Republican and Democratic administrations alike. The writer was a member of a delegation headed by Mr. Trotter to protest the continuance of the invidious practice under President Coolidge. Racial segregation of federal employes was reprobated in principle. Cautious assurance was given that practice would be checked, as it could be prudently done, with hope of its ultimate elimination.

The question of residential segregation is now raging in every city with a considerable Negro contingent, from Atlantic City to Los Angeles, and from New York to New Orleans. The District of Columbia has become the fountain head of this agitation. Attempts to fix legal boundaries of racial habitation have been estopped by decision of the Supreme Court of the United States. In all of the large cities of the country the two races occupy separate residential areas. Public sentiment always finds a way to enforce its feeling as effectively without the law as with it. There are no discriminatory laws on the statute books of New York state, and yet Harlem is as sharply delineated, as if pencil drawn and knife cut. The Negroes are being relegated to the land of Goshen in all our great cities, which as completely pens them in to themselves as were the Jews in the land of Egypt, in the days of the Pharaohs.

The Negro has a habit of falling heir to the fairest portions of the cities in which he dwells. This is certainly true of the capital of the nation. The colored population occupies fully a square mile in the Northwest quadrant, the most favored section, overlooking the Capitol, Washington Monument and the principal public buildings with the Potomac River on the rim of the dim horizon. This section is within easy reach of the business heart of the city and is traversed by the principal arteries of

travel and trade. The interlacing broad streets and avenues are lined with choice shade trees planted in the early years of the city's development in harmony with the original design. The beautiful parks, squares and triangles scattered throughout express the last word in municipal landscape planning. The whites are now seeking residence in apartment houses and in remoter suburban subdivisions; but they must needs traverse the Negro section in going and coming from business portions of the city or the public offices. Palatial residences built by the most wealthy and fashionable element a generation ago are now occupied by Negro owners or tenants.

Thus the Washington Negro, unlike his New York rival for the heavenly title, is not crowded into seven-story apartment houses, where normal home life and wholesome social intercourse become all but impossible.

Washington is the only city in the country that has a Negro elite of sufficient size to make it a worthwhile social entity. All social distinction, among black folks as among white, according to the traditional conceit, is based upon occupation. The Negro learned from slavery to look down on people who must needs work with the hands and to idolize and extol those whom circumstances or good fortune lifted above the necessity of manual toil. His contempt for the poor white man who must work for a living the same as himself is deep seated and abiding. The black man's fondness for seizing upon meaningless forms of distinction and of exploiting them to a ridiculous degree is well known. The Negroes of the national capital before the Civil War were mainly free persons. They were a hard working lot with no more social distinctions among them than might be expected among a peasant class. They all worked as waiters, coachmen, barbers, and attendants upon families of wealth. Besides a few school teachers and preachers, there were no Negroes in the so-called higher pursuits such as they are understood today. Colored society with all of its airs and pretensions was created during the days of reconstruction. These were days of sudden and swift transformation among black folk. Lucky Negroes were translated from the corn field to Congress. Negro senators, congressmen, legislators and officials sprung up like magic. Washington was the center of the display of all of this suddenly acquired glory and glamor. The newly made Negro gentility imitated all of the dress and fastidious manners of the master class from whose sway they had recently been released and were easily prone to better the instruction. There used to be a saying in the South: "if you want a thing run into the ground, let the Negro get a hold of it." The whole population of the national capital began to look up to and imitate these artificial standards.

For the first time colored men were given clerkships in the federal government. These positions became at once a badge of social distinction. At the same time a system of public schools was inaugurated which imported Negro teachers from all

points in the North where good educational advantages had existed. Picked colored men and women were drawn from all parts of the land by the political and educational attractions of the national capital. For the first time, since Jamestown, there were assembled a considerable body of Negroes who were lifted above the level of manual labor and domestic service. This group constituted what was known far and wide as the Washington colored society.

Upon the overthrow of the reconstruction governments in the South, the political "lame ducks" flocked to the national capital to secure berths in the clerical service of the government. Practically every Negro of distinction sought residence or sojourn here. Frederick Douglass, Senator Bruce, John M. Langston, Governor Pinchback were among the celebrities who helped to give dignity and tone to the newly formed social group. At that time Washington had no rival to the title of "Negro Heaven."

This sudden political influx and the pretentious regime which it inaugurated, produced a chasm in the Negro population which two generations of temperate judgment and good sense have hardly been able to efface. Although under the democratizing effect of the public schools, these arrogant distinctions are gradually fading away, still the social breach between the masses and the classes of Negroes in Washington is more pronounced than in any other city of the country.

It requires a pyramidal ordering of society to give exclusiveness beyond the reach of the multitude. Those who reach the top are looked up to with admiration, jealousy, covetousness and despair by the masses below, who finding themselves hopelessly excluded from the charmed circle, console themselves with the philosophy of the fox who always describes the high hanging grapes as sour. This bad eminence may rest upon blood and birth, as in the South, upon culture and tradition, as in New England, or upon ostentatious wealth among the parvenues of recent riches. But with the New York Negroes there is no traceable line of differentiation. The bootblack, the bootlegger, the gambler, the dancer, the songster, the woman of good looks and glad rags—whosoever will, may come.

The Washington Negro has the only complete school system in the country practically under his own control. Three out of nine members of the Board of Education are assigned to the colored race, who are supposed to see to it that the colored branch of the system suffers no disadvantage in comparison with the whites. The schools are divided into two grand divisions—white and colored in harmony with the understood and accepted policy of the community. The superintendent is a white man under whose general supervision both divisions are operated on equal footing and along parallel lines. The first colored Assistant Superintendent is in charge of all colored schools and has complete original jurisdiction in appointment, promotion and assignment of eight hundred teachers and officials.

The colored teachers and officials have the same rank and pay as do the whites of corresponding grade and work. The courses of study and standards of instruction are uniform throughout. In providing for school buildings, appointments and facilities, there is supposed to be absolutely no discrimination. There is an understanding in Congress that the colored schools shall receive their full proportion of appropriations for school purposes. Fifteen thousand Negro children sit at the feet of these eight hundred teachers. The Washington public school system is justly famous throughout the country. The Negro division contributes its full share to this national distinction. The colored high and normal schools enroll over three thousand pupils above the eight grade level. This number of secondary pupils cannot be approximated in any other city—not even New York, Philadelphia and Chicago, with a much larger total Negro population. The faculties of these high and normal schools are recruited by graduates from Harvard, Yale, Columbia, and indeed from every college and University in the North and West which does not limit the opportunity for education and culture to considerations of race and color. There are four women doctors of philosophy from Yale, Harvard, Chicago and from the Sorbonne of Paris, France, in the number. I believe that these are the only Negro women doctors of philosophy from institutions of the highest standing, in the United States.

The annual competitive drill where a thousand male cadets under fifty Negro officers display their military skill before the assembled city constitutes a social event, not paralleled in America, if in the world.

Howard University, the largest and best equipped institution for the higher and professional education of the colored race, is located at the national capital. This institution has over two thousand students drawn from all over the United States and from foreign lands pursuing courses which will fit them to stand in the high places of leadership and authority. The faculty of this institution comprises one hundred and fifty professors and instructors mainly of the colored race who along all lines of the arts and sciences as well as in the technical and professional pursuits dispense wisdom and technique to this multitude of ambitious youth who hunger and thirst after knowledge, Howard University and the public schools together center about the city of Washington the cream of the intelligensia of the Negro race.

The Freedmens Hospital, acknowledged to be the most complete and best equipped institution of its kind between Baltimore and New Orleans is in close physical juxtaposition and professional relationship with Howard University. This institution is in charge of a colored surgeon-in-chief with a highly skilled staff of assistants under him.

A residuum of the by-gone political glory still lingers in the national capital. Washington is still the headquarters of the Negro politician, although like Othello, he finds that his occupation is all but

gone. A few officials are still left, with many more who call but are not chosen. The tradition of senators, representatives, registers, recorders, and other high officials is still here. There are many thousand Negroes on the federal pay roll, which of itself, alligns them with the preferred class among the race.

The Negroes of Washington have reached the point of complete professional self sufficiency. Howard University has turned out an army of physicians, lawyers, teachers and clergymen, who never leave the city as long as there is the slightest likelihood of local need of their services. A white physician of Negro patients is almost as unusual as a white minister of a Negro parishioner. Negro lawyers in the main look after the needs of the Negro client, while the preacher and the teacher have a complete monopoly.

To these may be added an increasing number of successful business men who are beginning to see and to seize the immense business opportunity wrapped up in the needs and necessities of so great a mass of Negro flesh and blood.

So great a body of Negroes, lifted by occupation above the level of ten-fingered service constitute an element of social importance which neither New York nor any other community can hope to approximate.

Washington has the fault or the misfortune of all groups of Negroes everywhere. There is no middle class. The connecting link is missing. There are no local productive industries in the District of Columbia. Realtors and local merchants constitute the sum total of business men. The Negro only in limited numbers enters these lines. The great bulk, except the favored persons above described, are common laborers or domestic servants. The social maladjustment between the upper and the lower levels of position and occupation frustrates concerted action and greatly retards the common progress.

But in Washington, as in New York, the proletariat must be entertained. Theaters, movie houses, dance halls and cabarets are springing up everywhere. There is no lack of facilities for en-

joyment on the part of any social element. There is little or no race friction here, of which any considerable portion of the community is conscious for any considerable proportion of the time. Once in a great while some outbreak or agitation arouses the people to self-consciousness; but like a hasty spark, they straightway grow cold again. There is nothing that interferes with the uniformity of a good time among all classes.

The Negro race in every mood is prone to the enjoyment and the delights of life. Moments of grave reflection over the hardships and ills of his lot are quickly forgotten in anticipation of a good time.

Washington is the social capital of the Negro race. Social celebrities from all parts of the country find fulfilment of their highest ambition to shine at some great function in the national capital. Every four years a president of the United States is inaugurated. The occasion is usually featured by an inaugural ball. Although the Negroes may have little cause for jubilation over the incoming administration, they usually have two or three inaugural balls, whereas the whites are satisfied with one. The minor inaugural receptions are too numerous to enumerate. On such occasions, the Negroes usually take option on every available dance hall or place of amusement, placing the whites at a great disadvantage. The writer recalls that on the very night when the fate of the Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill was hanging in the balance in the Senate Committee, the Negroes were fiddling and dancing the time away in every dance house in Washington in celebration of the Thanksgiving festivities. At the time of President Coolidge's inauguration, I counted twenty placards within a few blocks announcing as many different inauguration receptions. I have even seen the announcement of a dance in an undertaker's window. Who says the Negro feels that his is an oppressed race?

The capital city furnishes the best opportunity and facilities for the expression of the Negro's innate gayety of soul. Washington is still the Negro's Heaven, and it will be many a moon before Harlem will be able to take away her scepter.

The Dark Nation

By GEORGE STERLING

Shall Africa not come into her own
 And shall they not be answered who have kneeled?
 Is theirs a wound that never will be healed,
 And theirs a music never to be known?
 Surely their hands shall reap whose hands have sown,
 And more than grain, for never yet was field
 That held not final flowers in its yield,
 And man, One saith, lives not by bread alone.
 Uncomprehended and misunderstood
 A future source of beauty and of good,
 They cry aloud, "How long?" And none may see
 The lilies that their children's hands shall pull,
 Who, flower-crowned, shall say, in years to be:
 "Lo! I am black, but I am beautiful!"