

The Looking Glass

LITERATURE.

ELIAS LIEBERMAN on "The Parade of the Drafted Men" in the *New York Times*:

"The marching men, the fighting men,
"The soul of Lincoln alive again,
"Alive in the sleet of the buffeting North,
"Spurring the dark-skinned legions forth,
"Shackled no longer, to rise and go
"In quest of a dream through the whirling snow."

"The Taxation of Negroes in Virginia," by Tipton Ray Snavelly, is one of the publications of the University of Virginia under the Phelps-Stokes Fellowship. It is an unsatisfactory and unpleasant publication, as one would expect. The splendid efforts by which Virginia Negroes have bought over a million and a half acres of land since Emancipation are stated grudgingly and with every attempt to slur their character. The Negro's "lack of persistence" and "nomadic propensities," "thriftlessness" and "lack of foresight" are repeatedly insisted upon. Every evidence of discrimination against him is minimized. It is admitted that Negroes pay more for property than a white buyer would pay, but a page of reasons excuses this. It is admitted that whites are assessed at about one-third the value of their real estate, and Negroes at nearly one-half, but it would seem that there are adequate reasons for this. So eager is the author to make out a good case for the whites that he drops easily into this remarkable contradiction:

It may be stated here that while a large majority of the members of the convention thought it a wise plan to curtail the Negro vote the method for doing this was not to be one of any sort of discrimination merely along racial lines. Whatever laws were passed would be, it was hoped, administered strictly and

The Negro, learning that his disfranchisement was one of the purposes of the convention, did not attempt to meet the requirement of registration—especially when the capitation tax was imposed as a prerequisite also. He felt that the ballot was not worth the trouble. Realizing that payment of the capitation tax six

justly to whites and Negroes alike.

months before election was essential for voting and that the ballot was a privilege not to be enjoyed except by paying it, he, as he did not enjoy the privilege, felt no compunction in allowing the tax to become delinquent.

The net result of this gentleman's study is the astonishing conclusion that the rich people of the State of Virginia "support" the State, while the poor people pay only 4 1-10 per cent.!

One wonders if the Stokes Fund is being properly spent in promoting such "science."

Harry A. Williamson has published during the last six years ten articles on the "Negro Free Mason" in various leading craft publications in this country and abroad.

We welcome *The Liberator* as a successor to the defunct *Masses*, particularly when its prospectus promises that

It will assert the social and political equality of the black and white races, oppose every kind of racial discrimination, and conduct a remorseless publicity campaign against lynch law.

"Penciled Poems," by Ray G. Dandridge, has come to us and is not without merit. The author is a bed-ridden invalid.

"The American Labor Year Book" for 1917-18 has been issued by the Rand School, New York. It is edited by Alexander Trachtenberg and contains succinct information on labor and social subjects. It costs but sixty cents.

Lightbourne's "Commercial Directory of the Virgin Islands" is full of information.

THE PRESENT SOUTH.

NO one can understand the South without taking account of its essential underlying barbarism among the white people who represent its power today. The *Courier Journal* is simply supporting an out worn fiction when it talks about "the perfect understanding between black and white."

We get down to the bed rock of real relationships when we read after the editor of the *Little Rock Daily News*:

The *News* has no fight to make on the race, because God Almighty placed a mark upon the brow of Ham, made his nose flat, his skin black and his hair kinky—we would close to him no avenue in which his feet are fit to tread. That he is the intellectual inferior of the white man and will ever be so as long as man is superior to the monkey, as long as brains make intellect. That the Negro can never attain any social position in this country all goes without saying.

If Negroes of the present generation could be taught the limitations of race and conditions of servitude as their forebears knew and recognized, there need never be ill-feeling between the races.

But as long as Negroes go wild with riotous disposition to murder; as long as they set lustful eyes on white women, as long as any of them seek to break down the barrier that has been between the Negro and the white man for a thousand years, our protests will continue to be vigorous, our revenge will continue to be "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," and we will neither be slow or timid about our methods of consummation.

This may be "Southern brutality" as far as the Boston Negro can see, but in polite circles we call it Southern chivalry, a Southern virtue that will never die.

Add to this a letter from F. B. Lander in the *Semi-Weekly Leader* of Brookhaven, Miss.:

The people of the country have no conception of the race conditions that exist in Washington. I did not have—though I visited here often—until I came here to live. If the people knew the real status of affairs, they would band themselves together and make a protest that would be heard in all the states in this Union. And it is my purpose to tell them a few things and to put them to thinking and to cause them, if I can, to make their protest.

This is one of the prettiest cities in the world. It has magnificent buildings—public and private; it is clean and well kept; it abounds in lovely parks and beautiful shade trees, but it is infested with black men and women and children at every turn. You cannot enter a street car that they do not jostle you. You cannot take a seat in any one of the beautiful parks that one of them does not take a seat beside you. You cannot enter a public building that they are not in evidence. Many of the finest apartment houses use them as sub-managers. Not a few of the stores have them as clerks. They are on the police force. They are everywhere; doing the work; usurping the places, holding positions that white men and women ought to have. You cannot picture in your imagination a worse race condition, a condition of more race equality than exists right here in the Capital of the Nation.

Anything that ought to be done can be done. "The truth is mighty and will pre-

vail." I may not live to see it; it may not come in my day; but if the people of Mississippi will start a movement to redeem the Capitol from Negro domination, the movement will spread more rapidly mayhap than some people think. Neighbor states will take it up; and some of the Northern States will not be as slow catching step as you may imagine; and in the end the Negro will be relegated to the back seats of the street cars, and taken off of the police force, and instead of door-keepers be made janitors, and placed in positions where they belong.

The Beaumont, Tex., *Enterprise* says:

Northern Negroes do not have much luck in the South. They usually get slammed in the mouth or shot by some fellow who doesn't understand them. Southern Negroes fare little better in the North.

"THE CRISIS," to the contrary, the only place for the southern Negro is in the South, and both *The Enterprise* and *The Post* are shoulder-to-shoulder in their efforts to keep them where they belong.

Here we have the real South, not strutting and pretending and playing the "gentleman," but brutal, naively ignorant, and impudent. This is the South which it is the business of the Negro to civilize.

Even when we get glimpses of that small minority called the "better" South we have such astonishing statements as this from the *Columbia State*:

The State holds that no policy towards any race not grounded on principles of righteousness and justice is wise or expedient. The Negroes need comfortable houses, better schools and just treatment. They cannot save or substantially help themselves with the ballot.

This is false and *The State* knows it is false. It knows that there is no mass of people in the world that has secured "comfortable houses, better schools, and just treatment" without the ballot. It would not think of making such a statement concerning any other people on earth except Negroes, and it makes it concerning Negroes because it does not dare face dominant public opinion in South Carolina. Such opinion, for instance, as is illustrated by this extract from the Anderson, S. C., *Farmer's Tribune*:

"Recently a number of people have called the *Tribune's* attention to a condition in Anderson that we hardly believed could exist and not until yesterday afternoon at 4 o'clock when we viewed the situation, did we fully realize that right in the heart of the city of Anderson is a rope mill, where white girls and women work almost side by side with big strapping, odiferous Nigger