

The Looking Glass

LITERATURE

CLEMENT WOOD in *The Survey*:

Lost in a tiny valley place
A wandering man began his growing;
At last a tribe, and a swelling race,
And then a mighty populace,
A widening group, that stretched its span
Into the brotherhood of man
Through a call too deep for knowing.

Not you alone, O wanderer, grew
To a mighty people, joyward growing;
A million brothers joined with you,
And millions more of many a hue—
Joined your affectionate estate
That you and all might be truly great
In a world too fair for knowing.

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Lawrence Shaw Mayo writes in *The Atlantic Monthly*:

Has anyone ever explained satisfactorily the language of the South? If not, I am willing to submit my theory of its origin. The general supposition has been I suppose, that climate gradually converted the more or less pure Shakespearean English of the early Virginians into the present interesting vernacular. Why the pronunciation of the colored people should be like unto it is obvious: they learned their English from the whites. But let us look at it from another angle. When the African immigrants, to use a delicate phrase, learned the English language, they must have spoken it with an accent. When the colored mammys talked to the white children intrusted to their care, they unconsciously, but inevitably, transmitted their pronunciation and inflection to the rising generation of their masters and mistresses. So in a half century or so, Shakespearean English became African-English, the present-day English of the Southern states.

BRITAIN'S NEGRO PROBLEM

JOHN H. HARRIS, Secretary of the Aborigines Society, a white Englishman who has long interested himself in the Negro, has written an illuminating article for the *Atlantic Monthly* on "Britain's Negro Problem".

He says: "It is true that, up to the present time, Great Britain has been spared the odium of racial riots and lynchings; but racial antagonisms are, in some respects, more violent in character, and, in certain areas, are more deep-seated, and the economic effect more widely distributed, than in the American Continent." He notes the traditions in British Imperial policy: "In one territory white men own all the land, and the natives none at all; in another ter-

ritory, the natives own all the land, and the whites can only with difficulty obtain terminable leases; in yet another territory, the natives have the franchise, while, in the adjoining territory, under the same Government, they are denied the vote; in one territory, well-to-do Negroes rejoice in luxurious motor cars, and travel where they will, while in another region, the Negro may not walk along the footpath; in one area, there are 'Jim Crow' cars; in another, most Negroes ride first-class on the railways."

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Leaving out entirely for some reason the British West Indies where there is certainly an important Negro problem, he takes up the problems of Africa. He notes first, the West African dependencies with seventeen million Negroes and speaking of the accumulations of wealth there, he says:

"The basis of Negro prosperity in British West Africa lies in a recognition of native landrights, and in the illimitable value of the vegetable products of the primeval forests and the native plantations—chiefly the oil-palm and cocoa." He especially notes the cocoa industry of West Africa and the way in which West Africa has assumed the lead in the world production of cocoa: "The total value of the output of cocoa from the Gold Coast alone, for the years 1911 to 1920, was close upon \$200,000,000, the whole of which has been produced by the 1,000,000 Negroes of the territory, as Sir Hugh Clifford, late Governor of the Gold Coast Colony, says: 'When it is remembered that cocoa cultivation is, in the Gold Coast and in Ashanti, a purely native industry; that there is hardly an acre of European-owned cocoa-garden in the territories under the administration of this Government—this remarkable achievement of a unique position as a producer of one of the world's great staples assumes, in my opinion, a special value and significance'."

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This, of course, has put some wealth in the hands of Africans with which they have educated their children, and Mr. Harris notes the consequent problem as to the place which the educated African is going to occupy in Africa. He says little of the attempt to suppress them under a caste system and rather leaves the impression their situation is most favorable. This, of course, is hardly true.

Turning to South Africa, Mr. Harris shows how the seven and one-half million natives and mulattoes there are pressed behind the color bar. He says:

"The 'color bar' is the major problem of South Africa, and it excites bitterness in

three main directions, either of which must, sooner or later, bring South African statesmen to the very position which confronted Abraham Lincoln, when he made his famous speech in June, 1858. South Africa cannot secure permanent peace while she pursues a racial, economic, and political policy, half-slave and half-free. The three racial directions along which South Africa is attempting to find either salvation, or a *via media* are: (a) Land; (b) Industrial Occupation; (c) Franchise."

General Botha tried to settle the land problem by giving forty million acres to seven million natives and 260 million acres to a million and a half whites:

"Within the white area of the Union—Cape Colony, Transvaal, Orange Free State, Natal—no colored man may purchase or lease land; within the black areas no white man may either purchase or lease land; but, in both cases, exceptions may be made by the competent authority. The separation of these areas began in 1916, and only the most optimistic persons anticipate that the process of removing "interlopers" will be completed before 2016!"

With regard to labor, Mr. Harris points out that: "The actual cause of the recent 'Rebellion' in South Africa was the industrial color bar, and it came very near to landing South Africa in civil war. It is no use burying our heads in the sand and assuming that the struggle is ended; far from it; for it has only just begun, and it must go on until South Africa has become wholly slave or wholly free—and the love of gold is the root of all the evil."

He goes on to show the economic foundation of revolution in South Africa: "The Negro worker is paid about £30 per annum, with board and lodging; the white worker receives from £400 per annum up; but the white labor unions will not allow the Negro workers to engage in any skilled or semi-skilled tasks, of which there are, all told, some fifteen to twenty from which the native is barred by color (the same 'bar' is applied to half-castes). The Negro worker, therefore, is restricted to the position of a hewer of wood and drawer of water. For nearly thirty years the Negro workers have acquiesced in this situation; but with the rapid advance of education has come a sense of power, and a knowledge that, given adequate organization, the Negro can break the fetters fastened upon him by white labor. The attempt of the Negro to rise in the industrial scale has recently received powerful stimulus from a quite unexpected quarter, namely, the effect of the war on the gold market, which means that, unless the color bar is abolished, a large number of the gold mines will be ruined."

In East Africa, Britain has "no serious Negro problem" because, as Mr. Harris says, they are not far enough advanced to

see their danger in the face of the European land-grabbers.

Mr. Harris refers to the problem of European liquor and says with all thinking persons "the major Negro problem, after all, is that of franchise and self-government". He concludes with these words: "The problems of the Negro and Negroid races of British Africa awaiting solution will tax British statecraft to the uttermost. The United States of America has a pretty big task, with 15,000,000 Negroes; but Great Britain has responsibility for almost as many as she has white subjects in the British Isles. A generation ago, Negro problems could wait years for solution; today, time presses if danger in half a dozen directions is to be averted."

THE MIGRATION OF NEGROES

A. L. MANLY writes in the *Philadelphia Public Ledger*:

Some time ago one of our large Western industries was confronted with the grave problem of increasing production to meet increasing demand. Labor was growing scarce; the plants were running at full capacity for the labor on hand. The production manager called the heads of departments together and stated that he was forced to the necessity of employing Negroes to make up the labor shortage. Every department head objected, on the ground that the present force would not work with Negroes. After long discussion the production manager said: "I am going to employ Negroes, and, what is more, you are going to use them. Call your foremen together, repeat to them just what I have told you and bring me the answer one week from today."

The plant employs normally 3000 men. When this ultimatum was delivered to the foremen only three refused to accept. This happened more than a year ago. The last report obtained shows that not only did the Negroes start off right, but there has been no friction of any sort, production has kept pace with increased labor supply and the plant has enlarged its capacity and is employing more Negroes.

The shortage of labor in great industrial centers is largely due to the maladjustment of employment. Race plays too big a part in the distribution of workers in the plant. The usual custom is to assign certain race groups to certain definite tasks. According to this system, no effort is made to find out the latent qualities of the individual. His race generally determines the task to which he will be assigned before he ever reaches the job. Too often the failure of the individual to fit into the prescribed place is ascribed to laziness or racial stupidity, but never to the fact that the individual was wholly unfitted for the task to which he was assigned, but might have proved a success in some other employment.

The inspired cry of "labor shortage" is the usual dust screen kicked up to befog the mind as to the real situation. The real