smiles . . . and of course, someone nut! And them eyes-good Lord, misunderstanding immediately. And handed the singer a bouquet of roses. man!-didn't you see 'em flash? And how? Well, I'm going to turn the Then the picture flickered out. But wasn't they jus' grand! Now who house over to Miss Virginia Lee herthere was one more caption and scene: but a joker could roll her eyes like self. And, ladies and gentlemen, when "Miss Virginia Lee arrives at the stage that. Hey! Hey! Look a-yonder. Miss Lee is through I'll guarantee that door of the Lyric." And finally: "And Catch that step. Well if that wouldn' each and every one of you will be abnow Miss Virginia Lee herself!"

HE orchestra in the pit struck up girl 'cause ain't nobody in the world of doubt, a genuine Novelty in Blue. Alabamy Bound, but the old one which gal's makin' without being one o' Aunt em disappeared behind the scenes. moans about the Mississippi River be- Hagar's children. Look! Look! feling so deep and wide that you can't lows-can't you see it in her strut, fel- NCE more the orchestra struck up see your honey babe on the other side. lows? Hot dog!-hey! hey! Look a- U Alabama Bound. Once more the The curtain ran up and revealed the yonder. I mean that gal's got Elgin brown maiden shambled onto the dimusual plantation scene, that is, a scene movements in her hips with a twenty lit stage. But this time instead of with a cabin; a river, a steamer and year ga'ntee!" the black boy concluded singing, she spoke. Did the people Negroes picking cotton in a far-away in a frenzy of delight as the singer think she was colored? Well! that field. A conventional affair, the audi- finished her song and dance. ence thought, But a moment later when actual smoke began curling from A ND once more the brown boy ations, and she was overwhelmed. the chimney of the cabin, and the old A chuckled: "And I don't mean Would they like to see her take off stern wheel steamer gave the illusion maybe!" But the yellow boy was silent. her make-up, and would they like to of paddling her way up the river, they The house shook with applause. The see her put it on again—and sing? changed their opinion. Now the or- singer bowed and smiled and smiled Oh, would they? Well, she would. chestra ceased playing. Stage lights and bowed. The curtain fell. But And so a man darted from behind the were subdued. Behind the scenes a the audience continued shaking the scenes and helped her take off her rich contralto rang out:

If you smell vo' biscuits burnin' Just ooze yo' damper down!

'Cause vo' sweet mamma she's gonna leave this town!

The audience roared. Presently the singer shambled before them and began to sing. She felt bad . . . She felt blue ... But it wouldn't be long ... Train was waiting . i . She didn't have no time to lose . . . She had the Down Home Blues. And when she had finished this blues song she changed her tempo and sang! That Darktown Strut, accompanying she tune with an eccentric dance that plunged the house into periodic outbursts of applause.

"She sings and dances like a darkey," someone on the lower floor ventured. "I bet she is a darkey," another

chimed in.

But farther away, up in the gallery, the Negroes weren't so sure about her identity. "Boy!" a black youngster in of the house followed his example. the front row was arguing, "that's a Others were shifting uneasily in their zigaboo jus' as sho's I'm born."

"And I don't mean maybe!" echoed the brown boy at his elbow.

a yellow boy in the row behind them plain everything." a colored girl sing here."

brown boy chuckled again.

"But big boy," the black youth came snarled: "All right-explain."

house with applause. Then of a sud- brown make-up, and lo and behold, her den, a man on the first floor leaped face was as white as snow. Then she to his feet and shouted: "Folks! do took off her black, curly wig and reyou know that's a darkey gal?"

The audience gasped.

"Well I was jus' a-waitin' to see if anyone in the house had nerve enough to say that in a louder tone than a whisper," a man with a long mustache joined in. "I know it's a darkey and it's an insult and a disgrace to us. We ain't never had nothing like this in the Lyric before."

"Well what are we going to do about it?" a third man asked.

"I know what I'm going to do about it!" a man with red hair bellowed. "I'm going to take my hat and walk out, and all of you who call yourself decent'll do likewise." And he got up and made his way toward the door. Half a dozen men in different sections

Ketchem interrupted as he emerged fashioned song like Swanee River "Oh shut up that nonsense, fellows," from behind the scenes. "I can ex- without her make-up?

"And I don't mean maybe!" the other five paused, too. So the man we want to hear, ain't it, folks?" with the red hair wheeled around and "Yes!" responded the audience in

mesmerize a 'gator, nothin' else would. solutely and unequivocally convinced Boy, I'd bet my life that's a colored that she is, without the least shadow Alabamh Bound. Not the new could make the turns and twists that ... I thank you!" And John Ketch-

> was the very finest possible tribute they could pay her for her impersonvealed her own hair—a mass of flowing

Snickering sheepishly, the man with the red hair shuffled back down the aisle and dropped into his seat. Others who'd started out with him did likewise. The white folk laughed a reluctant laugh. The colored folk laughed that way, too.

"Well I'll be damn, if that ain't an ofay!" the black boy growled. And for the last time the brown boy added his inevitable "and I don't mean maybe!" while the yellow boy harped a triumphant "Ah-hah! didn't I tell you so! Didn't I tell you so!"

All this, of course, had gone on while Miss Virginia Lee sat at her make-up table. Now she rose, and walking toward the wings, tossed her black, curly wig behind the scenes: Then returning to the center of the stage, she faced her audience. Would "Wait a minute, gentlemen!" John the people have her sing some good old-

"No!" shouted the man with the put in. "What ails you, anyhow? "You can't explain nothing!" the red hair. "Tell us how you learned to Don't you know they'd shut up the man with the red hair shouted. But sing blues so well. Then fix up like Lyric forever an' ever 'fo' they'd let one of the six who had so readily you was before and sing us some more joined him came to a halt. Then the songs like that first one. That's what

one big chorus. So with her whole back strongly, "there's been some "Ladies and gentlemen," John face flushing crimson, Miss Virginia changes made 'round here since the old Ketchem began. "I'm terribly sorry Lee told her story. It was short and Attucks flung her doors open. And this rather unpleasant echo has crept simple: She was reared on her fathbesides, you can't fool me. I know my into our program. But I knew it was er's plantation in Georgia, and she'd people when I see 'em, 'specially if coming. I heard the mumbling all learned to sing blues by listening to they're in motion. Look at them teeth, over the house. That's how I got on the colored folk singing in the fields. will you—white as the meat of a coco- my guard. Now, I'll clear up the (Will you please turn to page 421)

THE N.A.A.C.P. BATTLE FRONT

A HOSPITAL'S PREJUDICE

TV7 HAT does it matter that the Sloane Maternity Hospital excluded a previously accepted colored nurse from a special training course in obstetrics when it was found she was

Of course, it was a slight and an insult to the colored nurse, Miss Gladys L. Catchings. And it was another of the slights, another of the barriers which Negroes as a group by their experience in America, have come to

But why did the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People make an issue of it in the daily newspapers of New York City and of the entire country? Why has the N. A. A. C. P. been writing to leading citizens, contributors to the fund for the Medical Center in New York, asking them to protest against this action by the Sloane Maternity Hospital authorities? What, after all, was at stake in the case of Gladys L. Catch-

To begin with, the subject of public health is one that cannot be divided by groups. It is one that concerns every citizen of the country. If any group is less well cared for medically and in public health administration than other groups in America, that group will adversely affect the health of the entire community.



Miss Gladys L. Catchings

due to the difficulties placed by race prejudice in the way of colored medical students. They are not wanted at most white institutions. If they do complete their course, there are only very few hospitals where they may serve as internes and complete the training necessary before engaging in private practice.

is a crying need for well-trained Negro I confront colored nurses. The case bia University replied that control of doctors and nurses in America. The of Miss Catchings emphasizes the fact. the Sloane Maernity Hospital was now government reports show that there It will be remembered that she was vested in the Presbyterian Hospital, are only 3500 colored doctors in Amer- head nurse of the obstetrical division which has for its slogan: "Without ica, or one doctor to each 3343 Negroes, of the Freedmen's Hospital in Wash- Regard to Race, Creed or Color". whereas there is one white doctor to ington. She applied for a course in Moreover, the Presbyterian Hospital each 553 whites. The discrepancy is Sloane Maternity Hospital in New is part of the Medical Center of New partly due to the length and expense York, an advanced course for graduate York, a community project on a hitherof the training required to become a nurses, in order to round out her to unattempted scale, purporting to be doctor. But it is perhaps just as much training and increase her public use- for the benefit of all citizens, and con-

fulness to her race and to the community. She was highly recommended for this course, on the basis of her previous service and achievement by the head surgeon of the Freedmen's Hospital. She was accepted for the course by the Sloane Maternity Hospital, was assigned a room, attended one class and then, suddenly, was informed that she could not continue. that she must leave-because of the color of her skin.

Was this because white people object to the most intimate personal service by Negroes? Was this because there was anything objectionable about Miss Catchings personally, or any imputation against her skill and competence as a trained nurse? Not at all. It was a plain case and a particularly ugly one, of white caste discrimination. of the determination to close an avenue of opportunity on grounds of the most bigoted form of snobbery, race hatred, the determination on the most un-American of grounds to prevent a qualified person from having opportunity to advance.

What did the N. A. A. C. P. do? It appealed to the authorities of Sloane Maternity Hospital. After a brief correspondence these authorities abruptly declared the matter closed. The N. A. A. C. P. then wrote to the trustees of Columbia University, who had jurisdiction over the Sloane Mater-It must be remembered that there THE same barriers and obstacles nity Hospital. The Secretary of Colum-



Richard Wallace, Jr. George Moore, Jr. Third Prize Binghamton, N. Y.



Second Prize

John Clay Third Prize Binghamton, N. Y. Steubenville, O.



N. A. A. C. P. Prize Babies Percy Henry, Jr. Second Prize Cincinnati, O.



Leslie Bugg Ninth Prize Pasadena, Calif.



William Campbell Second Prize Lexington, Ky.