

The Philadelphia Negro

A Social Study

W. E. B. DuBois

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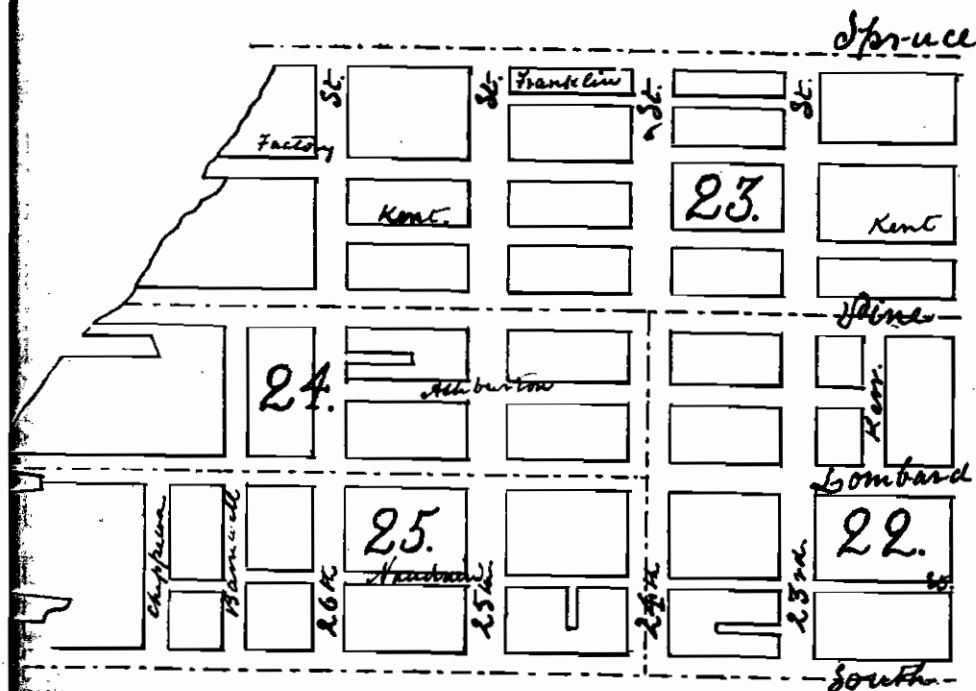
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SEVENTH
WARD

[Taken from publications of the American Academy, No. 150, July 2, 1895.
The large figures refer to voting precincts.]

THE PHILADELPHIA NEGRO.

CHAPTER I.

THE SCOPE OF THIS STUDY.

1. **General Aim.**—This study seeks to present the results of an inquiry undertaken by the University of Pennsylvania into the condition of the forty thousand or more people of Negro blood now living in the city of Philadelphia. This inquiry extended over a period of fifteen months and sought to ascertain something of the geographical distribution of this race, their occupations and daily life, their homes, their organizations, and, above all, their relation to their million white fellow-citizens. The final design of the work is to lay before the public such a body of information as may be a safe guide for all efforts toward the solution of the many Negro problems of a great American city.

2. **The Methods of Inquiry.**—The investigation began August the first, 1896, and, saving two months, continued until December the thirty-first, 1897. The work commenced with a house-to-house canvass of the Seventh Ward. This long narrow ward, extending from South Seventh street to the Schuylkill River and from Spruce street to South street, is an historic centre of Negro population, and contains to-day a fifth of all the Negroes in this city.¹ It was therefore thought best to make an

¹ I shall throughout this study use the term "Negro," to designate all persons of Negro descent, although the appellation is to some extent illogical. I shall, moreover, capitalize the word, because I believe that eight million Americans are entitled to a capital letter.

intensive study of conditions in this district, and afterward to supplement and correct this information by general observation and inquiry in other parts of the city.

Six schedules were used among the nine thousand Negroes of this ward; a family schedule with the usual questions as to the number of members, their age and sex, their conjugal condition and birthplace, their ability to read and write, their occupation and earnings, etc.; an individual schedule with similar inquiries; a home schedule with questions as to the number of rooms, the rent, the lodgers, the conveniences, etc.; a street schedule to collect data as to the various small streets and alleys, and an institution schedule for organizations and institutions; finally a slight variation of the individual schedule was used for house-servants living at their places of employment.²

This study of the central district of Negro settlement furnished a key to the situation in the city; in the other wards therefore a general survey was taken to note any striking differences of condition, to ascertain the general distribution of these people, and to collect information and statistics as to organizations, property, crime and pauperism, political activity, and the like. This general inquiry, while it lacked precise methods of measurement in most cases, served nevertheless to correct the errors and illustrate the meaning of the statistical material obtained in the house-to-house canvass.

Throughout the study such official statistics and historical matter as seemed reliable were used, and experienced persons, both white and colored, were freely consulted.

3. **The Credibility of the Results.**—The best available methods of sociological research are at present so liable to inaccuracies that the careful student discloses the results of individual research with diffidence; he knows that they are liable to error from the seemingly ineradicable faults of

² See Appendix A for form of schedules used.

the statistical method, to even greater error from the methods of general observation, and, above all, he must ever tremble lest some personal bias, some moral conviction or some unconscious trend of thought due to previous training, has to a degree distorted the picture in his view. Convictions on all great matters of human interest one must have to a greater or less degree, and they will enter to some extent into the most cold-blooded scientific research as a disturbing factor.

Nevertheless here are social problems before us demanding careful study, questions awaiting satisfactory answers. We must study, we must investigate, we must attempt to solve; and the utmost that the world can demand is, not lack of human interest and moral conviction, but rather the heart-quality of fairness, and an earnest desire for the truth despite its possible unpleasantness.

In a house-to-house investigation there are, outside the attitude of the investigator, many sources of error: misapprehension, vagueness and forgetfulness, and deliberate deception on the part of the persons questioned, greatly vitiate the value of the answers; on the other hand, conclusions formed by the best trained and most conscientious students on the basis of general observation and inquiry are really inductions from but a few of the multitudinous facts of social life, and these may easily fall far short of being essential or typical.

The use of both of these methods which has been attempted in this study may perhaps have corrected to some extent the errors of each. Again, whatever personal equation is to be allowed for in the whole study is one unvarying quantity, since the work was done by one investigator, and the varying judgments of a score of census-takers was thus avoided.³

³The appended study of domestic service was done by Miss Isabel Eaton, Fellow of the College Settlements Association. Outside of this the work was done by the one investigator.

Despite all drawbacks and difficulties, however, the main results of the inquiry seem credible. They agree, to a large extent, with general public opinion, and in other respects they seem either logically explicable or in accord with historical precedents. They are therefore presented to the public, not as complete and without error, but as possessing on the whole enough reliable matter to serve as the scientific basis of further study, and of practical reform.

CHAPTER II.

THE PROBLEM.

4. **The Negro Problems of Philadelphia.**—In Philadelphia, as elsewhere in the United States, the existence of certain peculiar social problems affecting the Negro people are plainly manifest. Here is a large group of people—perhaps forty-five thousand, a city within a city—who do not form an integral part of the larger social group. This in itself is not altogether unusual; there are other unassimilated groups: Jews, Italians, even Americans; and yet in the case of the Negroes the segregation is more conspicuous, more patent to the eye, and so intertwined with a long historic evolution, with peculiarly pressing social problems of poverty, ignorance, crime and labor, that the Negro problem far surpasses in scientific interest and social gravity most of the other race or class questions.

The student of these questions must first ask, What is the real condition of this group of human beings? Of whom is it composed, what sub-groups and classes exist, what sort of individuals are being considered? Further, the student must clearly recognize that a complete study must not confine itself to the group, but must specially notice the environment; the physical environment of city, sections and houses, the far mightier social environment—the surrounding world of custom, wish, whim, and thought which envelops this group and powerfully influences its social development.

Nor does the clear recognition of the field of investigation simplify the work of actual study; it rather increases it, by revealing lines of inquiry far broader in scope than first thought suggests. To the average Philadelphian the

grade, because of the peculiar social environment in which the whole race finds itself, which the whole race feels, but which touches this highest class at most points and tells upon them most decisively.

Many are the misapprehensions and misstatements as to the social environment of Negroes in a great Northern city. Sometimes it is said, here they are free; they have the same chance as the Irishman, the Italian, or the Swede; at other times it is said, the environment is such that it is really more oppressive than the situation in Southern cities. The student must ignore both of these extreme statements and seek to extract from a complicated mass of facts the tangible evidence of a social atmosphere surrounding Negroes, which differs from that surrounding most whites; of a different mental attitude, moral standard, and economic judgment shown toward Negroes than toward most other folk. That such a difference exists and can now and then plainly be seen, few deny; but just how far it goes and how large a factor it is in the Negro problems, nothing but careful study and measurement can reveal.

Such then are the phenomena of social condition and environment which this study proposes to describe, analyze, and, so far as possible, interpret.

5. *Plan of Presentment.*—The study as taken up here divides itself roughly into four parts: the history of the Negro people in the city, their present condition considered as individuals, their condition as an organized social group, and their physical and social environment. To the history of the Negro but two chapters are devoted—a brief sketch—although the subject is worthy of more extended study than the character of this essay permitted.

Six chapters consider the general condition of the Negroes: their number, age and sex, conjugal condition, and birthplace; what degree of education they have obtained, and how they earn a living. All these subjects are treated usually for the Seventh Ward somewhat

minutely, then more generally for the city, and finally such historical material is adduced as is available for comparison.

Three chapters are devoted to the group life of the Negro; this includes a study of the family, of property, and of organizations of all sorts. It also takes up such phenomena of social maladjustment and individual depravity as crime, pauperism and alcoholism.

One chapter is devoted to the difficult question of environment, both physical and social, one to certain results of the contact of the white and black races, one to Negro suffrage, and a word of general advice in the line of social reform is added.

CHAPTER III.

THE NEGRO IN PHILADELPHIA, 1638-1820.

6. *General Survey.*—Few States present better opportunities for the continuous study of a group of Negroes than Pennsylvania. The Negroes were brought here early, were held as slaves along with many white serfs. They became the subjects of a protracted abolition controversy, and were finally emancipated by gradual process. Although, for the most part, in a low and degraded condition, and thrown upon their own resources in competition with white labor, they were nevertheless so inspired by their new freedom and so guided by able leaders that for something like forty years they made commendable progress. Meantime, however, the immigration of foreign laborers began, the new economic era of manufacturing was manifest in the land, and a national movement for the abolition of slavery had its inception. The lack of skilled Negro laborers for the factories, the continual stream of Southern fugitives and rural freedmen into the city, the intense race antipathy of the Irish and others, together with intensified prejudice of whites who did not approve of agitation against slavery—all this served to check the development of the Negro, to increase crime and pauperism, and at one period resulted in riot, violence, and bloodshed, which drove many Negroes from the city.

Economic adjustment and the enforcement of law finally allayed this excitement, and another period of material prosperity and advance among the Negroes followed. Then came the inpouring of the newly emancipated blacks from the South and the economic struggle of the artisans to maintain wages, which brought on a crisis in the city, manifested again by idleness, crime and pauperism.

Thus we see that twice the Philadelphia Negro has, with a fair measure of success, begun an interesting social development, and twice through the migration of barbarians a dark age has settled on his age of revival. These same phenomena would have marked the advance of many other elements of our population if they had been as definitely isolated into one indivisible group. No differences of social condition allowed any Negro to escape from the group, although such escape was continually the rule among Irish, Germans, and other whites.

7. *The Transplanting of the Negro, 1638-1760.*—The Dutch, and possibly the Swedes, had already planted slavery on the Delaware when Penn and the Quakers arrived in 1682.¹ One of Penn's first acts was tacitly to recognize the serfdom of Negroes by a provision of the Free Society of Traders that they should serve fourteen years and then become serfs—a provision which he himself and all the others soon violated.²

Certain German settlers who came soon after Penn, and who may or may not have been active members of the Society of Friends, protested sturdily against slavery in 1688, but the Quakers found the matter too "weighty."³ Five years later the radical seceders under Kieth made the existence of slavery a part of their attack on the society. Nevertheless the institution of slavery in the colony continued to grow, and the number of blacks in Philadelphia so increased that as early as 1693 we find an order of the

¹ Cf. Scharf-Westcott's "History of Philadelphia," I, 65, 76. DuBois' "Slave Trade," p. 24.

² Hazard's "Annals," 553. Thomas' "Attitude of Friends Toward Slavery," 266.

³ There is some controversy as to whether these Germans were actually Friends or not; the weight of testimony seems to be that they were. See, however, Thomas as above, p. 267, and Appendix. "Pennsylvania Magazine," IV, 28-31; *The Critic*, August 27, 1897. DuBois' "Slave Trade," p. 20, 203. For copy of protest, see published fac-simile and Appendix of Thomas. For further proceedings of Quakers, see Thomas and DuBois, *passim*.

Council against the "tumultuous gatherings of the negroes of the towne of philadelphia, on the first dayes of the weeke."⁴

In 1696 the Friends began a cautious dealing with the subject, which in the course of a century led to the abolition of slavery. This growth of moral sentiment was slow but unwaveringly progressive, and far in advance of contemporary thought in civilized lands. At first the Friends sought merely to regulate slavery in a general way and prevent its undue growth. They therefore suggested in the Yearly Meeting of 1696, and for some time thereafter, that since traders "have flocked in amongst us and . . . increased and multiplied negroes amongst us," members ought not to encourage the further importation of slaves, as there were enough for all purposes. In 1711 a more active discouragement of the slave trade was suggested, and in 1716 the Yearly Meeting intimated that even the buying of imported slaves might not be the best policy, although the Meeting hastened to call this "caution, not censure."

By 1719 the Meeting was certain that their members ought not to engage in the slave trade, and in 1730 they declared the buying of slaves imported by others to be "disagreeable." At this milestone they lingered thirty years for breath and courage, for the Meeting had evidently distanced many of its more conservative members. In 1743 the question of importing slaves, or buying imported slaves, was made a disciplinary query, and in 1754, spurred by the crusade of Say, Woolman and Benezet, offending members were disciplined. In the important gathering of 1758 the same golden rule was laid down as that with which the Germans, seventy years previous, had taunted them, and the institution of slavery was categorically condemned.⁵ Here they rested until 1775, when,

⁴ "Colonial Records," I, 380-81.

⁵ Thomas, 276; Whittier Intro. to Woolman, 16.

after a struggle of eighty-seven years, they decreed the exclusion of slaveholders from fellowship in the Society.

While in the councils of the State Church the freedom of Negroes was thus evolving, the legal status of Negroes of Pennsylvania was being laid. Four bills were introduced in 1700: one regulating slave marriages was lost; the other three were passed, but the Act for the Trial of Negroes—a harsh measure providing death, castration and whipping for punishments, and forbidding the meeting together of more than four Negroes—was afterward disallowed by the Queen in Council. The remaining acts became laws, and provided for a small duty on imported slaves and the regulation of trade with slaves and servants.⁶

In 1706 another act for the trial of Negroes was passed and allowed. It differed but slightly from the Act of 1700; it provided that Negroes should be tried for crimes by two justices of the peace and a jury of six freeholders; robbery and rape were punished by branding and exportation, homicide by death, and stealing by whipping;⁷ the meeting of Negroes without permission was prohibited. Between this time and 1760 statutes were passed regulating the sale of liquor to slaves and the use of firearms by them; and also the general regulative Act of 1726, "for the Better Regulation of Negroes in this Province." This act was especially for the punishment of crime, the suppression of pauperism, the prevention of intermarriage, and the like—that is, for regulating the social and economic status of Negroes, free and enslaved.⁸

Meantime the number of Negroes in the colony continued to increase; by 1720 there were between 2500 and 5000 Negroes in Pennsylvania; they rapidly increased until there were a large number by 1750—some say 11,000

⁶ See Appendix B.

⁷ "Statutes-at-Large," Ch. 143, 88r. See Appendix B.

⁸ "Statutes-at-Large," III, pp. 250, 254; IV, 59 ff. See Appendix B.

or more—when they decreased by war and sale, so that the census of 1790 found 10,274 in the State.⁹

The slave duties form a pretty good indication of the increase of Negro population.¹⁰ The duty in 1700 was from 6s. to 20s. This was increased, and in 1712, owing to the large importations and the turbulent actions of Negroes in neighboring States, a prohibitive duty of £20 was laid.¹¹ England, however, who was on the eve of signing the Assiento with Spain, soon disallowed this act and the duty was reduced to £5. The influx of Negroes after the English had signed the huge slave contract with Spain was so large that the Act of 1726 laid a restrictive duty of £10. For reasons not apparent, but possibly connected with fluctuations in the value of the currency, this duty was reduced to £2 in 1729, and seems to have remained at that figure until 1761.

The £10 duty was restored in 1761, and probably helped much to prevent importation, especially when we remember the work of the Quakers at this period. In 1773 a prohibitive duty of £20 was laid, and the Act of 1780 finally prohibited importation. After 1760 it is probable that the efforts of the Quakers to get rid of their slaves made the export slave trade much larger than the importation.

Very early in the history of the colony the presence of unpaid slaves for life greatly disturbed the economic condition of free laborers. While most of the white laborers were indentured servants the competition was not so much felt; when they became free laborers, however, and were joined by other laborers, the cry against slave competition was soon raised. The particular grievance was the hiring out of slave mechanics by masters; in 1708 the free white mechanics protested to the Legislature against this

⁹ DuBois' "Slave Trade," p. 23, note. U. S. Census.

¹⁰ See Appendix B. Cf. DuBois' "Slave Trade," *passim*.

¹¹ DuBois' "Slave Trade," p. 206.

custom,¹² and this was one of the causes of the Act of 1712 in all probability. When by 1722 the number of slaves had further increased, the whites again protested against the "employment of blacks," apparently including both free and slave. The Legislature endorsed this protest and declared that the custom of employing black laborers and mechanics was "dangerous and injurious to the republic."¹³ Consequently the Act of 1726 declared the hiring of their time by Negro slaves to be illegal, and sought to restrict emancipation on the ground that "free negroes are an idle and slothful people," and easily become public burdens.¹⁴

As to the condition of the Negroes themselves we catch only glimpses here and there. Considering the times, the system of slavery was not harsh and the slaves received fair attention. There appears, however, to have been much trouble with them on account of stealing, some drunkenness and general disorder. The preamble of the Act of 1726 declares that "it too often happens that Negroes commit felonies and other heinous crimes," and that much pauperism arises from emancipation. This act facilitated punishment of such crimes by providing indemnification for a master if his slave suffered capital punishment. They were declared to be often "tumultuous" in 1693, to be found "cursing, gaming, swearing, and committing many other disorders" in 1732; in 1738 and 1741 they were also called "disorderly" in city ordinances.¹⁵

In general, we see among the slaves at this time the low condition of morals which we should expect in a barbarous people forced to labor in a strange land.

8. *Emancipation, 1760-1780.*—The years 1750-1760 mark the culmination of the slave system in Pennsylvania

¹² Scharf-Westcott's "History of Philadelphia," I, 200.

¹³ Watson's "Annals," (Ed. 1850) I, 98.

¹⁴ See Appendix B.

¹⁵ Cf. Chapter XIII.

and the beginning of its decline. By that time most shrewd observers saw that the institution was an economic failure, and were consequently more disposed than formerly to listen to the earnest representations of the great anti-slavery agitators of that period. There were, to be sure, strong vested interests still to be fought. When the £10 duty act of 1761 was pending, the slave merchants of the city, including many respectable names, vigorously protested; "ever desirous to extend the Trade of this Province," they declared that they had "seen for some time past the many inconveniencys the Inhabitants have suffered for want of Labourers and Artificers," and had consequently "for some time encouraged the importation of Negroes." They prayed at the very least for delay in passing this restrictive measure. After debate and altercation with the governor the measure finally passed, indicating renewed strength and determination on the part of the abolition party.¹⁶

Meantime voluntary emancipation increased. Sandiford emancipated his slaves in 1733, and there were by 1790 in Philadelphia about one thousand black freedmen. A school for these and others was started in 1770 at the instance of Benezet, and had at first twenty-two children in attendance.¹⁷ The war brought a broader and kindlier feeling toward the Negroes; before its end the Quakers had ordered manumission,¹⁸ and several attempts were made to prohibit slavery by statute. Finally, in 1780, the Act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery was passed.¹⁹ This act, beginning with a strong condemnation of slavery, provided that no child thereafter born in Pennsylvania should be a slave. The children of slaves born after 1780 were to be bond-servants until twenty-eight years of age—that is,

¹⁶ "Colonial Records," VIII, 576; DuBois' "Slave Trade," p. 23.

¹⁷ Cf. Pamphlet: "Sketch of the Schools for Blacks," also Chapter VIII.

¹⁸ Cf. Thomas' "Attitude of Friends," etc., p. 272.

¹⁹ Dallas' "Laws," I, 838, Ch. 881; DuBois' "Slave Trade," p. 225.

beginning with the year 1808 there was to be a series of emancipations. Side by side with this growth of emancipation sentiment went an increase in the custom of hiring out Negro slaves and servants, which increased the old competition with the whites. The slaves were owned in small lots, especially in Philadelphia, one or two to a family, and were used either as house servants or artisans. As a result they were encouraged to learn trades and seem to have had the larger share of the ordinary trades of the city in their hands. Many of the slaves in the better families became well-known characters—as Alice, who for forty years took the tolls at Dunk's Ferry; Virgil Warder, who once belonged to Thomas Penn, and Robert Venable, a man of some intelligence.²⁰

9. *The Rise of the Freedman, 1780-1820.*—A careful study of the process and effect of emancipation in the different States of the Union would throw much light on our national experiment and its ensuing problems. Especially is this true of the experiment in Pennsylvania; to be sure, emancipation here was gradual and the number emancipated small in comparison with the population, and yet the main facts are similar: the freeing of ignorant slaves and giving them a chance, almost unaided from without, to make a way in the world. The first result was widespread poverty and idleness. This was followed, as the number of freedmen increased, by a rush to the city. Between 1790 and 1800 the Negro population of Philadelphia County increased from 2489 to 6880, or 176 per cent, against an increase of 43 per cent among the whites. The first result of this contact with city life was to stimulate the talented and aspiring freedmen; and this was the easier because the freedman had in Philadelphia at that time a secure economic foothold; he performed all kinds of domestic service, all common labor and much of the skilled labor. The group being thus secure in its daily

²⁰ Cf. Watson's "Annals" (Ed. 1850), I, 557, 101-103, 601, 602, 515.

bread needed only leadership to make some advance in general culture and social effectiveness. Some sporadic cases of talent occur, as Derham, the Negro physician, whom Dr. Benjamin Rush, in 1788, found "very learned."²¹ Especially, however, to be noted are Richard Allen,²² a former slave of the Chew family, and Absalom Jones,²³ a Delaware Negro. These two were real leaders and actually succeeded to a remarkable degree in organizing the freedmen for group action. Both had bought their own freedom and that of their families by hiring their time—Allen being a blacksmith by trade, and Jones also having a trade. When, in 1792, the terrible epidemic drove Philadelphians away so quickly that many did not remain to bury the dead, Jones and Allen quietly took the work in hand, spending some of their own funds and doing so well that they were publicly commended by Mayor Clarkson in 1794.²⁴

The great work of these men, however, lay among their own race and arose from religious difficulties. As in other colonies, the process by which the Negro slaves learned the English tongue and were converted to Christianity is not clear. The subject of the moral instruction of slaves had early troubled Penn and he had urged Friends to provide meetings for them.²⁵ The newly organized Methodists soon attracted a number of the more intelligent, though the

²¹ *The American Museum*, 1789, pp. 61-62.

²² For life of Allen, see his "Autobiography," and Payne's "History of the A. M. E. Church."

²³ For life of Jones, see Douglass' "Episcopal Church of St. Thomas."

²⁴ The testimonial was dated January 23, 1794, and was as follows: "Having, during the prevalence of the late malignant disorder, had almost daily opportunities of seeing the conduct of Absalom Jones and Richard Allen, and the people employed by them to bury the dead, I, with cheerfulness give this testimony of my approbation of their proceedings as far as the same came under my notice. Their diligence, attention and decency of deportment, afforded me at the time much satisfaction.

WILLIAM CLARKSON, Mayor."

From Douglass' "St. Thomas' Church."

²⁵ See Thomas, p. 266.

masses seem at the end of the last century not to have been church-goers or Christians to any considerable extent. The small number that went to church were wont to worship at St. George's, Fourth and Vine; for years both free Negroes and slaves worshiped here and were made welcome. Soon, however, the church began to be alarmed at the increase in its black communicants which the immigration from the country was bringing, and attempted to force them into the gallery. The crisis came one Sunday morning during prayer when Jones and Allen, with a crowd of followers, refused to worship except in their accustomed places, and finally left the church in a body.²⁶

This band immediately met together and on April 12, 1787, formed a curious sort of ethical and beneficial brotherhood called the Free African Society. How great a step this was, we of to-day scarcely realize; we must remind ourselves that it was the first wavering step of a people toward organized social life. This society was more than a mere club: Jones and Allen were its leaders and recognized chief officers; a certain parental discipline was exercised over its members and mutual financial aid given. The preamble of the articles of association says: "Whereas, Absalom Jones and Richard Allen, two men of the African Race, who for their religious life and conversation, have obtained a good report among men, these persons from a love to the people of their own complexion whom they beheld with sorrow, because of their irreligious and uncivilized state, often communed together upon this painful and important subject in order to form some kind of religious body; but there being too few to be found under the like concern, and those who were, differed in their religious sentiments; with these circumstances they labored for some time, till it was proposed after a serious communication of sentiments that a society should be formed without regard to religious tenets, provided the persons

²⁶ See Allen's "Autobiography," and Douglass' "St. Thomas."

lived an orderly and sober life, in order to support one another in sickness, and for the benefit of their widows and fatherless children."²⁷

The society met first at private houses, then at the Friends' Negro school house. For a time they leaned toward Quakerism; each month three monitors were appointed to have oversight over the members; loose marriage customs were attacked by condemning cohabitation, expelling offenders and providing a simple Quaker-like marriage ceremony. A fifteen-minute pause for silent prayer opened the meetings. As the representative body of the free Negroes of the city, this society opened communication with free Negroes in Boston, Newport and other places. The Negro Union of Newport, R. I., proposed in 1788 a general exodus to Africa, but the Free African Society soberly replied: "With regard to the emigration to Africa you mention we have at present but little to communicate on that head, apprehending every pious man is a good citizen of the whole world." The society co-operated with the Abolition Society in studying the condition of the free blacks in 1790. At all times they seem to have taken good care of their sick and dead and helped the widows and orphans to some extent. Their methods of relief were simple: they agreed "for the benefit of each other to advance one-shilling in silver Pennsylvania currency a month; and after one year's subscription, from the dole hereof then to hand forth to the needy of the Society if any should require, the sum of three shillings and nine pence per week of the said money; provided the necessity is not brought on them by their own imprudence." In 1790 the society had £42 9s. 1d. on deposit in the Bank of North America, and had applied for a grant of the Potter's Field to be set aside as a burial ground for them, in a petition signed by Dr. Rush, Tench Coxe and others.

²⁷ Douglass' "St. Thomas."

It was, however, becoming clearer and clearer to the leaders that only a strong religious bond could keep this untrained group together. They would probably have become a sort of institutional church at first if the question of religious denomination had been settled among them; but it had not been, and for about six years the question was still pending. The tentative experiment in Quakerism had failed, being ill suited to the low condition of the rank and file of the society. Both Jones and Allen believed that Methodism was best suited to the needs of the Negro, but the majority of the society, still nursing the memory of St. George's, inclined toward the Episcopal church. Here came the parting of the ways: Jones was a slow introspective man, with a thirst for knowledge, with high aspirations for his people; Allen was a shrewd, quick, popular leader, positive and dogged and yet far-seeing in his knowledge of Negro character. Jones therefore acquiesced in the judgment of the majority, served and led them conscientiously and worthily, and eventually became the first Negro rector in the Episcopal church of America. About 1790 Allen and a few followers withdrew from the Free African Society, formed an independent Methodist church which first worshipped in his blacksmith's shop on Sixth near Lombard. Eventually this leader became the founder and first bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church of America—an organization which now has 500,000 members, and is by long odds the vastest and most remarkable product of American Negro civilization.²⁸

Jones and the Free African Society took immediate steps to secure a church; a lot was bought at the corner of Fifth and Adelphi streets in February, 1792, and by strenuous effort a church was erected and dedicated on the seventeenth

²⁸ There is on the part of the A. M. E. Church a disposition to ignore Allen's withdrawal from the Free African Society, and to date the A. M. E. Church from the founding of that society, making it older than St. Thomas. This, however, is contrary to Allen's own statement in his "Autobiography." The point, however, is of little real consequence.

of July, 1794. This was the first Negro church in America, and known as the First African Church of St. Thomas; in the vestibule of the church was written: "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light." Bethel Church was erected by Allen and his followers in 1796, the same year that a similar movement in New York established the Zion Methodist Church. In 1794, too, the Methodists of St. George's, viewing with some chagrin the widespread withdrawal of Negroes from their body, established a mission at Camperdown, in the northeastern part of the city, which eventually became the present Zoar Church.

The general outlook for the Negroes at this period was encouraging, notwithstanding the low condition of the masses of the race. In 1788 Pennsylvania amended the Act of 1780, so as to prevent the internal and foreign slave trade, and correct kidnapping and other abuses that had arisen.²⁹ The convention which adopted the Constitution of 1790 had, in spite of opposition in the convention, refused to insert the word "white" in the qualifications for voters, and thus gave the right of suffrage to free Negro property holders; a right which they held, and, in most counties of the State, exercised until 1837.³⁰ The general conference of Abolition Societies, held in Philadelphia in 1794, started an agitation which, when reinforced by the news of the Haytian revolt, resulted in the national statute of 1794, forbidding the export slave trade.³¹ In 1799 and 1800 Absalom Jones led the Negroes to address a petition to the Legislature, praying for immediate abolition of slavery, and to Congress against the fugitive slave law, and asking prospective emancipation for all Negroes. This latter petition was presented by Congressman Waln, and created an uproar

²⁹ Carey & Bioren, Ch. 394. DuBois' "Slave Trade," p. 231.

³⁰ The constitution, as reported, had the word "white," but this was struck out at the instance of Gallatin. Cf. Ch. XVII.

³¹ Cf. DuBois' "Slave Trade," Chapter VII.

in the House of Representatives; it was charged that the petition was instigated by the Haytian revolutionists and finally the Negroes were censured for certain parts of the petition.³²

The condition of the Negroes of the city in the last decade of the eighteenth and the first two decades of the nineteenth century, although without doubt bad, slowly improved; an insurance society, in 1796, took the beneficial features of the old Free African Society. Some small essays were made in business, mostly in small street stands, near the wharves; and many were in the trades of all kinds. Between 1800 and 1810 the city Negro population continued to increase, so that at the latter date there were 100,688 whites and 10,522 blacks in the city, the Negroes thus forming the largest per cent of the population of the city that they have ever attained. The free Negroes also began to increase from the effect of the abolition law. The school established in 1770 continued, and was endowed by bequests from whites and Negroes. It had 414 pupils by 1813. In this same year there were six Negro churches and eleven benevolent societies. When the war broke out many Philadelphia Negroes were engaged on land and sea. Among these was James Forten—a fine character, expressive of the best Negro development of the time. Born in 1766, and educated by Benezet, he "was a gentleman by nature, easy in manner and able in intercourse; popular as a man of trade or gentleman of the pave, and well received by the gentry of lighter shade."³³ For years he conducted a sail-making trade, employing both whites and Negroes. In 1814 he, Jones, Allen and others were asked, in the midst of the alarm felt at the approach of the British, to raise colored troops. A meeting was called and 2500 volunteers secured, or three-fourths of the adult male

³² "Annals of Congress," 6 Cong., I Sess., pp. 229-45. DuBois' "Slave Trade," pp. 81-83.

³³ Quoted by W. C. Bolivar in *Philadelphia Tribune*.

population; they marched to Gray's Ferry and threw up fortifications. A battalion for service in the field was formed, but the war closed before they reached the front.³⁴

The Negroes at this time held about \$250,000 of city property, and on the whole showed great progress since 1780. At the same time there were many evidences of the effects of slavery. The first set of men emancipated by law were freed in 1808, and probably many entitled to freedom were held longer than the law allowed or sold out of the State. As late as 1794 some Quakers still held slaves, and the papers of the day commonly contain such advertisements, as:

"To be Sold for want of Employ, For a term of years, a smart active Negro boy, fifteen years of age. Enquire at Robert McGee's board yard, Vine street wharf."³⁵

³⁴ Delany's "Colored People," p. 74.

³⁵ Dunlap's *American Daily Advertiser*, July 4, 1791. William White had a large commission-house on the wharves about this time. Considerable praise is given the Insurance Society of 1796 for its good management. Cf. "History of the Insurance Companies of North America." In 1817 the first convention of Free Negroes was held here, through the efforts of Jones and Forten.

CHAPTER IV.

THE NEGRO IN PHILADELPHIA, 1820-1896.

10. *Fugitives and Foreigners, 1820-1840.*—Five social developments made the decades from 1820 to 1840 critical for the nation and for the Philadelphia Negroes; first, the impulse of the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century; second, the reaction and recovery succeeding the War of 1812; third, the rapid increase of foreign immigration; fourth, the increase of free Negroes and fugitive slaves, especially in Philadelphia; fifth, the rise of the Abolitionists and the slavery controversy.

Philadelphia was the natural gateway between the North and the South, and for a long time there passed through it a stream of free Negroes and fugitive slaves toward the North, and of recaptured Negroes and kidnapped colored persons toward the South. By 1820 the northward stream increased, occasioning bitterness on the part of the South, and leading to the Fugitive Slave Act of 1820, and the counter acts of Pennsylvania in 1826 and 1827.¹ During this time new installments of Pennsylvania freedmen, and especially their children, began to flock to Philadelphia. At the same time the stream of foreign immigration to this country began to swell, and by 1830 aggregated half a million souls annually. The result of these movements proved disastrous to the Philadelphia Negro; the better classes of them—the Joneses, Allens and Fortens—could not escape into the mass of white population and leave the new

¹These laws were especially directed against kidnapping, and were designed to protect free Negroes. See Appendix B. The law of 1826 was declared unconstitutional in 1842 by the U. S. Supreme Court. See 16 Peters, 500 ff.

Negroes to fight out their battles with the foreigners. No distinction was drawn between Negroes, least of all by the new Southern families who now made Philadelphia their home and were not unnaturally stirred to unreasoning prejudice by the slavery agitation.

To this was added a fierce economic struggle, a renewal of the fight of the eighteenth century against Negro workmen. The new industries attracted the Irish, Germans and other immigrants; Americans, too, were flocking to the city, and soon to natural race antipathies was added a determined effort to displace Negro labor—an effort which had the aroused prejudice of many of the better classes, and the poor quality of the new black immigrants to give it aid and comfort. To all this was soon added a problem of crime and poverty. Numerous complaints of petty thefts, house-breaking, and assaults on peaceable citizens were traced to certain classes of Negroes. In vain did the better class, led by men like Forten, protest by public meetings their condemnation of such crime²; the tide had set against the Negro strongly, and the whole period from 1820 to 1840 became a time of retrogression for the mass of the race, and of discountenance and repression from the whites.

By 1830 the black population of the city and districts had increased to 15,624, an increase of 27 per cent for the decade 1820 to 1830, and of 48 per cent since 1810. Nevertheless, the growth of the city had far outstripped this; by 1830 the county had nearly 175,000 whites, among whom was a rapidly increasing contingent of 5000 foreigners. So intense was the race antipathy among the lower classes, and so much countenance did it receive from the middle and upper class, that there began, in 1829, a series of riots directed chiefly against Negroes, which recurred frequently until about 1840, and did not wholly cease until

² A meeting of Negroes held in 1822, at the A. M. E. Church, denounced crime and Negro criminals.

after the war. These riots were occasioned by various incidents, but the underlying cause was the same: the simultaneous influx of freedmen, fugitives and foreigners into a large city, and the resulting prejudice, lawlessness, crime and poverty. The agitation of the Abolitionists was the match that lighted this fuel. In June and July, 1829, Mrs. Fanny Wright Darusmont, a Scotch woman, gave a number of addresses in Philadelphia, in which she boldly advocated the emancipation of the Negroes and something very like social equality of the races. This created great excitement throughout the city, and late in the fall the first riot against the Negroes broke out, occasioned by some personal quarrel.³

The Legislature had proposed to stop the further influx of Southern Negroes by making free Negroes carry passes and excluding all others; the arrival of fugitives from the Southampton massacre was the occasion of this attempt, and it was with difficulty that the friends of the Negro prevented its passage.⁴ Quakers hastened to advise against the sending of fugitives to the State, "as the effects of such a measure would probably be disastrous to the peace and comfort of the whole colored population of Pennsylvania." Edward Bettle declared in 1832: "The public mind here is more aroused even among respectable persons than it has been for several years," and he feared that the laws of 1826 and 1827 would be repealed, "thus leaving kidnappers free scope for their nefarious labors."⁵

In 1833 a demonstration took place against the Abolitionists, and in 1834 serious riots occurred. One night in August a crowd of several hundred boys and men, armed

³ Scharf-Westcott's "History of Philadelphia," I, 824. There was at this time much lawlessness in the city which had no connection with the presence of Negroes, and which led to rioting and disorder in general. Cf. Price's "History of Consolidation."

⁴ Southampton was the scene of the celebrated Nat Turner insurrection of Negroes.

⁵ Letter to Nathan Mendelhall, of North Carolina.

with clubs, marched down Seventh street to the Pennsylvania Hospital. They were joined by others, and all proceeded to some places of amusement where many Negroes were congregated, on South street, near Eighth. Here the rioting began, and four or five hundred people engaged in a free street fight. Buildings were torn down and inmates assaulted on Bedford and St. Mary streets and neighboring alleys, until at last the policemen and constables succeeded in quieting the tumult. The respite, however, was but temporary. The very next night the mob assembled again at Seventh and Bainbridge; they first wrecked a Negro church and a neighboring house, then attacked some twenty Negro dwellings; "great excesses are represented as having been committed by the mob, and one or two scenes of a most revolting character are said to have taken place." That the riots occurred by prearranged plan was shown by the signals—lights in windows—by which the houses of the whites were distinguished and those of the Negroes attacked and their inmates assaulted and beaten. Several persons were severely injured in this night's work and one Negro killed, before the mayor and authorities dispersed the rioters.

The next night the mob again assembled in another part of the city and tore down another Negro church. By this time the Negroes began to gather for self-defence, and about one hundred of them barricaded themselves in a building on Seventh street, below Lombard, where a howling mob of whites soon collected. The mayor induced the Negroes to withdraw, and the riot ended. In this three days' uprising thirty-one houses and two churches were destroyed and Stephen James "an honest, industrious colored man" killed.⁶

The town meeting of September 15 condemned the riots and voted to reimburse the sufferers, but also took occasion to condemn the impeding of justice by Negroes when any

⁶ Hazard's "Register," XIV, 126-28, 200-203.

of their number was arrested, and also the noise made in Negro churches. The fires smouldered for about a year, but burst forth again on the occasion of the murder of his master by a Cuban slave, Juan. The lower classes were aroused and a mob quickly assembled at the corners of Sixth and Seventh and Lombard streets, and began the work of destruction and assault, until finally it ended by setting fire to a row of houses on Eighth street, and fighting off the firemen. The following night the mob met again and attacked a house on St. Mary street, where an armed body of Negroes had barricaded themselves. The mayor and recorder finally arrived here and after severely lecturing the Negroes (!) induced them to depart. The whole of the afternoon of that day black women and children fled from the city.⁷

Three years now passed without serious disturbance, although the lawless elements which had gained such a foothold were still troublesome. In 1838 two murders were committed by Negroes—one of whom was acknowledged to be a lunatic. At the burial of this one's victim, rioting again began, the mob assembling on Passyunk avenue and Fifth street and marching up Fifth. The same scenes were re-enacted but finally the mob was broken up.⁸ Later the same year, on the dedication of Pennsylvania Hall, which was designed to be a centre of anti-slavery agitation, the mob, encouraged by the refusal of the mayor to furnish adequate police protection, burned the hall to the ground and the next night burned the Shelter for Colored Orphans at Thirteenth and Callowhill streets, and damaged Bethel Church, on Sixth street.⁹

The last riot of this series took place in 1842 when a mob devastated the district between Fifth and Eighth

⁷ *Ibid.*, XVI, 35-38.

⁸ Scharf-Westcott's "Philadelphia," I, 654-55.

⁹ Price, "History of Consolidation," etc., Ch. VII. The county eventually paid \$22,658.27, with interest and costs, for the destruction of the hall.

streets, near Lombard street, assaulted and beat Negroes and looted their homes, burned down a Negro hall and a church; the following day the rioting extended to the section between South and Fitzwater streets and was finally quelled by calling out the militia with artillery.¹⁰

While these riots were taking place a successful effort was made to deprive free Negroes of the right of suffrage which they had enjoyed nearly fifty years. In 1836 a case came before the court of a Negro who had been denied the right of voting. The court decided in a peculiar decision that free Negroes were not "freemen" in the language of the constitution and, therefore that Negroes could not vote.¹¹ The reform convention settled the matter by inserting the word "white" in the qualifications for election in the Constitution of 1837.¹² The Negroes protested earnestly by meetings and appeals. "We appeal to you" said they, "from the decision of the 'Reform Convention,' which has stripped us of a right peaceably enjoyed during forty-seven years under the constitution of this commonwealth. We honor Pennsylvania and her noble institutions too much to part with our birthright, as her free citizens, without a struggle. To all her citizens the right of suffrage is valuable in proportion as she is free; but surely there are none who can so ill afford to spare it as ourselves." Nevertheless the right was lost, for the appeal fell on deaf ears.¹³

A curious comment on human nature is this change of public opinion in Philadelphia between 1790 and 1837. No one thing explains it—it arose from a combination of circumstances. If, as in 1790, the new freedmen had been given peace and quiet and abundant work to develop sensible and aspiring leaders, the end would have been

¹⁰ Scharf-Westcott, I, 660-61.

¹¹ Case of Fogg vs. Hobbs, 6 Watts, 553-560. See Chapter XII.

¹² See Chapter XII and Appendix B.

¹³ Appeal of 40,000 citizens, etc., Philadelphia, 1838. Written chiefly by the late Robert Purvis, son-in-law of James Forten.

different; but a mass of poverty-stricken, ignorant fugitives and ill-trained freedmen had rushed to the city, swarmed in the vile slums which the rapidly growing city furnished, and met in social and economic competition equally ignorant but more vigorous foreigners. These foreigners outbid them at work, beat them on the streets, and were enabled to do this by the prejudice which Negro crime and the anti-slavery sentiment had aroused in the city.

Notwithstanding this the better class of Negroes never gave up. Their school increased in attendance; their churches and benevolent societies increased; they held public meetings of protest and sympathy. And twice, in 1831 and 1833, there assembled in the city a general convention of the free Negroes of the country, representing five to eight States, which, among other things, sought to interest philanthropists of the city in the establishment of a Negro industrial school.¹⁴ When the Legislature showed a disposition in 1832 to curtail the liberties of Negroes, the Negroes held a mass meeting and memorialized the lawmaking body and endeavored to show that all Negroes were not criminals and paupers; they declared that while the Negroes formed eight per cent of the population they furnished but four per cent of the paupers; that by actually produced tax receipts they could show that Negroes held at least \$350,000 of taxable property in the city. Moreover, they said, "Notwithstanding the difficulty of getting places for our sons to learn mechanical trades, owing to the prejudices with which we have to contend, there are between four and five hundred people of color who follow mechanical employments."¹⁵ In 1837 the census of the Abolition Society claimed for the Negroes 1724 children in school, \$309,626 of unencumbered property, 16 churches and 100 benevolent societies.

¹⁴ See Minutes of Conventions; the school was to be situated in New Haven, but the New Haven authorities, by town meeting, protested so vehemently that the project had to be given up. Cf. also Hazard, V, 143.

¹⁵ Hazard's "Register," IX, 361-62.

11. *The Guild of the Caterers, 1840-1870.*—The outlook for the Negro in Philadelphia about 1840 was not encouraging. The last of the first series of riots took place in 1842, and has been mentioned. The authorities were wakened to their duty by this last outbreak of barbarism, and for several years the spirit of lawlessness, which now extended far beyond the race question and seriously threatened the good name of the city, was kept within control. However, in 1849, a mob set upon a mulatto who had a white wife, at the corner of Sixth street and St. Mary's, and there ensued a pitched battle for a night and a day; firemen fought with firemen; the blacks, goaded to desperation, fought furiously; houses were burned and firearms used, with the result that three white men and one Negro were killed and twenty-five wounded persons taken to the hospital. The militia was twice called before the disturbance was quelled. These riots and the tide of prejudice and economic proscription drove so many Negroes from the city that the black population actually showed a decrease in the decade 1840-50. Worse than this, the good name of the Negroes in the city had been lost through the increased crime and the undeniably frightful condition of the Negro slums. The foreign element gained all the new employments which the growing industries of the State opened, and competed for the trades and common vocations. The outlook was certainly dark.

It was at this time that there arose to prominence and power as remarkable a trade guild as ever ruled in a mediæval city. It took complete leadership of the bewildered group of Negroes, and led them steadily on to a degree of affluence, culture and respect such as has probably never been surpassed in the history of the Negro in America. This was the guild of the caterers, and its masters include names which have been household words in the city for fifty years: Bogle, Augustin, Prosser, Dorsey, Jones and Minton. To realize just the character of this new economic

development we must not forget the economic history of the slaves. At first they were wholly house servants or field hands. As city life in the colony became more important, some of the slaves acquired trades, and thus there arose a class of Negro artisans. So long as the pecuniary interests of a slaveholding class stood back of these artisans the protests of white mechanics had little effect; indeed it is probable that between 1790 and 1820 a very large portion, and perhaps most, of the artisans of Philadelphia were Negroes. Thereafter, however, the sharp competition of the foreigners and the demand for new sorts of skilled labor of which the Negro was ignorant, and was not allowed to learn, pushed the black artisans more and more to the wall. In 1837 only about 350 men out of a city population of 10,500 Negroes, pursued trades, or about one in every twenty adults.

The question, therefore, of obtaining a decent livelihood was a pressing one for the better class of Negroes. The masses of the race continued to depend upon domestic service, where they still had a practical monopoly, and upon common labor, where they had some competition from the Irish. To the more pushing and energetic Negroes only two courses were open: to enter into commercial life in some small way, or to develop certain lines of home service into a more independent and lucrative employment. In this latter way was the most striking advance made; the whole catering business, arising from an evolution shrewdly, persistently and tastefully directed, transformed the Negro cook and waiter into the public caterer and restaurateur, and raised a crowd of underpaid menials to become a set of self-reliant, original business men, who amassed fortunes for themselves and won general respect for their people.

The first prominent Negro caterer was Robert Bogle, who, early in the century, conducted an establishment on Eighth street, near Sansom. In his day he was one of the

best known characters of Philadelphia, and virtually created the business of catering in the city.¹⁶ As the butler or waiter in a private family arranged the meals and attended the family on ordinary occasions, so the public waiter came to serve different families in the same capacity at larger and more elaborate functions; he was the butler of the smart set, and his taste of hand and eye and palate set the fashion of the day. This functionary filled a unique place in a time when social circles were very exclusive, and the millionaire and the French cook had not yet arrived. Bogle's place was eventually taken by Peter Augustin, a West Indian immigrant, who started a business in 1818 which is still carried on. It was the Augustin establishment that made Philadelphia catering famous all over the country. The best families of the city, and the most distinguished foreign guests, were served by this caterer. Other Negroes soon began to crowd into the field thus opened. The Prossers, father and son, were prominent among these, perfecting restaurant catering and making many famous dishes. Finally came the triumvirate Jones, Dorsey and Minton, who ruled the fashionable world from 1845-1875. Of these Dorsey was the most unique character; with little education but great refinement of manner, he became a man of real weight in the community, and associated with many eminent men. "He had the sway of an imperial dictator. When a Democrat asked his meial service he refused, because 'he could not wait on a party of persons who were disloyal to the government, and Lincoln'—pointing to the picture in his reception rooms—'was the government.'" ¹⁷ Jones was Virginia

¹⁶ Biddle's "Ode to Bogle," is a well-known squib; Bogle himself is credited with considerable wit. "You are of the people who walk in darkness," said a prominent clergyman to him once in a dimly lighted hall. "But," replied Bogle, bowing to the distinguished gentleman, "I have seen a great light."

¹⁷ See in *Philadelphia Times*, October 17, 1896, the following notes by "Megargee": "Dorsey was one of the triumvirate of colored caterers—the

born, and a man of great care and faithfulness. He catered to families in Philadelphia, New Jersey and New York.¹⁸ Minton, the younger of the three, long had a restaurant at Fourth and Chestnut, and became, as the others did, moderately wealthy.¹⁹

Such men wielded great personal influence, aided the Abolition cause to no little degree, and made Philadelphia noted for its cultivated and well-to-do Negro citizens. Their conspicuous success opened opportunities for Negroes in other lines. It was at this time that Stephen Smith amassed a very large fortune as a lumber merchant, with which he afterward handsomely endowed a home for aged

other two being Henry Jones and Henry Minton—who some years ago might have been said to rule the social world of Philadelphia through its stomach. Time was when lobster salad, chicken croquettes, deviled crabs and terrapin composed the edible display at every big Philadelphia gathering, and none of those dishes were thought to be perfectly prepared unless they came from the hands of one of the three men named. Without making any invidious comparisons between those who were such masters of the gastronomic art, it can fairly be said that outside of his kitchen, Thomas J. Dorsey outranked the others. Although without schooling, he possessed a naturally refined instinct that led him to surround himself with both men and things of an elevating character. It was his proudest boast that at his table, in his Locust street residence, there had sat Charles Sumner, William Lloyd Garrison, John W. Forney, William D. Kelley and Fred Douglass. . . . Yet Thomas Dorsey had been a slave; had been held in bondage by a Maryland planter. Nor did he escape from his fetters until he had reached a man's estate. He fled to this city, but was apprehended and returned to his master. During his brief stay in Philadelphia, however, he made friends, and these raised a fund of sufficient proportion to purchase his freedom. As a caterer he quickly achieved both fame and fortune. His experience of the horrors of slavery had instilled him with an undying reverence for those champions of his down-trodden race, the old-time Abolitionists. He took a prominent part in all efforts to elevate his people, and in that way he came in close contact with Sumner, Garrison, Forney and others.

¹⁸ Henry Jones was in the catering business thirty years, and died September 24, 1875, leaving a considerable estate.

¹⁹ Henry Minton came from Nansemond County, Virginia, at the age of nineteen, arriving in Philadelphia in 1830. He was first apprenticed to a shoemaker, then went into a hotel as waiter. Finally he opened dining rooms at Fourth and Chestnut. He died March 20, 1883.

and infirm Negroes. Whipper, Vidal and Puruell were associated with Smith at different times. Still and Bowers were coal merchants and Adger was in the furniture business. There were also some artists of ability: Bowser, who painted a portrait of Lincoln, and Douglass and Burr; Johnson, the leader of a famous colored band and a composer.²⁰

During this time of effort, advance and assimilation the Negro population increased but slowly, for the economic struggle was too earnest for young and indiscriminate marriages, and immigrants had been frightened away by the riots. In 1840 there were 19,833 Negroes in the county, and ten years later, as has been noted, there were only 19,761. For the next decade there was a moderate increase to 22,185, when the war brought a slight decrease, leaving the Negro population 22,147 in 1870. Meantime the white population had increased by leaps and bounds:

POPULATION OF PHILADELPHIA COUNTY, 1840-1870.

Date.	Whites.	Negroes.
1840	238,204	19,833
1850	389,001	19,761
1860	543,344	22,185
1870	651,854	22,147

In 1810 the Negroes had formed nearly one-tenth of the total population of the city, but in 1870 they formed but little over one thirty-third, the lowest proportion ever reached in the history of Philadelphia.

The general social condition showed some signs of improvement from 1840 on. In 1847 there were 1940 Negro children in school; the Negroes held, it was said, about \$400,000 in real estate and had 19 churches and 106 benevolent societies. The mass of the race were still domestic servants—about 4000 of the 11,000 in the city

²⁰ This band was in great demand at social functions, and its leader received a trumpet from Queen Victoria.

proper being thus employed, a figure which probably meant a considerable majority of the adults. The remainder were chiefly employed as laborers, artisans, coachmen, expressmen and barbers.

The habitat of the Negro population changed somewhat in this period. About 1790 one-fourth of the Negroes lived between Vine and Market and east of Ninth; one-half between Market and South, mostly in the alleys bounded by Lombard, Fifth, Eighth and South; one-eighth lived below South, and one-eighth in the Northern Liberties. Many of these, of course, lived in white families. In 1837 a quarter of the Negroes were in white families, a little less than one-half were in the city limits centring at Sixth and Lombard or thereabouts; a tenth lived in Moyamensing, a twentieth in the Northern Liberties, and the remaining part in Kensington and Spring Garden districts. The riots concentrated this population somewhat, and in 1847, of the 20,000 Negroes in the county, only 1300 lived north of Vine and east of Sixth. The rest were in the city proper, in Moyamensing and in Southwark. Moyamensing was the worst slum district: between South and Fitzwater and Fifth and Eighth there were crowded 302 families in narrow, filthy alleys. Here was concentrated the worst sort of depravity, poverty, crime and disease. The present slums at Seventh and Lombard are bad and dangerous, but they are decent compared with those of a half century ago. The Negroes furnished one-third of all the commitments for crime in 1837, and one-half in 1847.

Beginning with 1850 the improvement of the Negro was more rapid. The value of real estate held was estimated to have doubled between 1847 and 1856. The proportion of men in the trades remained stationary; there were 2321 children in school. Toward the time of the outbreak of war the feeling toward the Negro in certain classes softened somewhat, and his staunch friends were

enabled to open many benevolent institutions; in many ways a disposition to help them was manifested: the newspapers treated them with more respect, and they were not subject so frequently to personal insult on the street.

They were still kept off the street cars in spite of energetic protest. Indeed, not until 1867 was a law passed prohibiting this discrimination. Judicial decisions upheld the railways for a long time, and newspapers and public opinion supported them. When by Judge Allison's decision the attitude of the courts was changed, and damages granted an evicted Negro, the railway companies often side-tracked and left cars which colored passengers had entered. Separate cars were run for them on some lines, and in 1865 a public ballot on the cars was taken to decide the admission of Negroes. Naturally the conductors returned a large majority against any change. Finally, after public meetings, pamphlets and repeated agitation, the prospective enfranchisement of the freedmen gained what decency and common sense had long refused.²¹

Steps toward raising Negro troops in the city were taken in 1863, as soon as the efficiency of the Negro soldier had been proven. Several hundred prominent citizens petitioned the Secretary of War and were given permission to raise Negro regiments. The troops were to receive no bounties, but were to have \$10 a month and rations. They were to rendezvous at Camp William Penn, Cheltenham Hills. A mass meeting was soon held attended by the prominent caterers, teachers and merchants, together with white citizens, at which Frederick Douglass, W. D. Kelley and Anna Dickinson spoke. Over \$30,000 was raised in the city by subscription, and the first squad of soldiers went into camp June 26, 1863. By December, three

²¹ See Spiers' "Street Railway System of Philadelphia," pp. 23-27; also unpublished MS. of Mr. Bernheimer, on file among the senior theses in the Wharton School of Finance and Economy, University of Pennsylvania.

regiments were full, and by the next February, five. The first three regiments, known as the Third, Sixth and Eighth United States Regiments of Colored Troops, went promptly to the front, the Third being before Fort Wagner when it fell. The other regiments followed as called, leaving still other Negroes anxious to enlist.²²

After the war and emancipation great hopes were entertained by the Negroes for rapid advancement, and nowhere did they seem better founded than in Philadelphia. The generation then in its prime had lived down a most intense and bitter race feud and had gained the respect of the better class of whites. They started with renewed zeal, therefore, to hasten their social development.

12. *The Influx of the Freedmen, 1870-1896.*—The period opened stormily, on account of the political rights newly conferred on black voters. Philadelphia city politics have ever had a shady side, but when it seemed manifest that one political party, by the aid of Negro votes, was soon to oust the time-honored incumbents, all the lawless elements which had city government for a half-century had nurtured naturally fought for the old régime. They found this the easier since the city toughs were largely Irish and hereditary enemies of the blacks. In the spring elections of 1871 there was so much disorder, and such poor police protection, that the United States marines were called on to preserve order.²³

In the fall elections street disorders resulted in the cold-blooded assassination of several Negroes, among whom was an estimable young teacher, Octavius V. Catto. The murder of Catto came at a critical moment; to the Negroes it seemed a revival of the old slavery-time riots in the day when they were first tasting freedom; to the better classes of Philadelphia it revealed a serious state of barbarism and lawlessness in the second city of the land; to the politicians

²² Pamphlet on "Enlistment of Negro Troops," Philadelphia Library.

²³ Cf. Scharf-Westcott, I, 837.

it furnished a text and example which was strikingly effective and which they did not hesitate to use. The result of all this was an outburst of indignation and sorrow, which was remarkable, and which showed a determined stand for law and order. The outward expression of this was a great mass meeting, attended by some of the best citizens, and a funeral for Catto which was perhaps the most imposing ever given to an American Negro.²⁴

²⁴The following account of an eye-witness, Mr. W. C. Bolivar, is from the *Philadelphia Tribune*, a Negro paper: "In the spring election preceding the murder of Octavius V. Catto, there was a good deal of rioting. It was at this election that the United States Marines were brought into play under the command of Col. James Forney. Their very presence had the salutary effect of preserving order. The handwriting of political disaster to the Democratic party was plainly noticed. This galled 'the unterrified,' and much of the rancor was owing to the fact that the Negro vote would guarantee Republican supremacy beyond a doubt. Even then Catto had a narrow escape through a bullet shot at Michael Maher, an ardent Republican, whose place of business was at Eighth and Lombard streets. This assault was instigated by Dr. Gilbert, whose paid or coerced hirelings did his bidding. The Mayor, D. M. Fox, was a mild, easygoing Democrat, who seemed a puppet in the hands of astute conscienceless men. The night prior to the day in question, October 10, 1871, a colored man named Gordon was shot down in cold blood on Eighth street. The spirit of mobocracy filled the air, and the object of its spleen seemed to have been the colored men. A cigar store kept by Morris Brown, Jr., was the resort of the Pythian and Banneker members, and it was at this place on the night prior to the murder that Catto appeared among his old friends for the last time. When the hour arrived for home going, Catto went the near and dangerous way to his residence, 814 South street, and said as he left, 'I would not stultify my manhood by going to my home in a roundabout way.' When he reached his residence he found one of its dwellers had his hat taken from him at a point around the corner. He went out and into one of the worst places in the Fourth Ward and secured it.

"Intimidation and assault began with the opening of the polls. The first victim was Levi Bolden, a playfellow, as a boy, with the chronicler of these notes. Whenever they could conveniently catch a colored man they forthwith proceeded to assail him. Later in the day a crowd forced itself into Emeline street and battered in the brains of Isaac Chase, going into his home, wreaking their spite on this defenceless man, in the presence of his family. The police force was Democratic, and not only stood idly by, but gave practical support. They took pains to keep that part of the city not in the bailiwick of the rioters from knowing anything of

This incident, and the general expression of opinion after the war, showed a growing liberal spirit toward the

what was transpiring. Catto voted and went to school, but dismissed it after realizing the danger of keeping it open during the usual hours. Somewhere near 3 o'clock as he neared his dwelling, two or three men were seen to approach him from the rear, and one of them, supposed to have been either Frank Kelly or Reddy Dever, pulled out a pistol and pointed it at Catto. The aim of the man was sure, and Catto barely got around a street car before he fell. This occurred directly in front of a police station, into which he was carried. The news spread in every direction. The wildest excitement prevailed, and not only colored men, but those with the spirit of fair play, realized the gravity of the situation, with a divided sentiment as to whether they ought to make an assault on the Fourth Ward or take steps to preserve the peace. The latter prevailed, and the scenes of carnage, but a few hours back, when turbulence was supreme, settled down to an opposite state of almost painful calmness. The rioting during that day was in parts of the Fifth, Seventh and Fourth wards, whose boundary lines met. It must not be supposed that the colored people were passive when attacked, because the records show 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth,' in every instance. No pen is graphic enough to detail the horrors of that day. Each home was in sorrow, and strong men wept like children, when they realized how much had been lost in the untimely death of the gifted Catto.

"Men who had sat quietly unmindful of things not directly concerning themselves, were aroused to the gravity of the situation, wrought by the spirit of a mob, came out of their seclusion and took a stand for law and order. It was a righteous public sentiment that brought brute force to bay. The journals not only here, but the country over, with one voice condemned the lawless acts of October 10, 1871. Sympathetic public gatherings were held in many cities, with the keynote of condemnation as the only true one. Here in Philadelphia a meeting of citizens was held, from which grew the greater, held in National Hall, on Market street, below Thirteenth. The importance of this gathering is shown by a list its promoters. Samuel Perkins, Esq., called it to order, and the eminent Hon. Henry C. Carey presided. Among some of those in the list of vice-presidents were Hon. William M. Meredith, Gustavus S. Benson, Alex. Biddle, Joseph Harrison, George H. Stuart, J. Effingham Fell, George H. Boker, Morton McMichael, James L. Claghorn, F. C. and Benjamin H. Brewster, Thomas H. Powers, Hamilton Diston, William B. Mann, John W. Forney, John Price Wetherill, R. L. Ashhurst, William H. Kemble, William S. Stokley, Judge Mitchell, Generals Collis and Sickel, Congressmen Kelley, Harmer, Myers, Creely, O'Neill, Samuel H. Bell and hundreds more. These names represented the wealth, brains and moral excellence of this community. John Goforth, the eminent lawyer, read the resolutions, which were seconded in

Negro in Philadelphia. There was a disposition to grant him, within limits, a man's chance to make his way in the world; he had apparently vindicated his right to this in war, and his ability for it in peace. Slowly, but surely, therefore, the community was disposed to throw off the trammels, brush away petty hindrances and to soften the harshness of race prejudice, at least enough to furnish the new citizen the legal safeguards of a citizen and the personal privileges of a man. By degrees the restrictions on personal liberty were relaxed; the street cars, which for

speeches by Hon. William B. Mann, Robert Purvis, Isaiah C. Weirs, Rev. J. Walker Jackson, Gen. C. H. T. Collis and Hon. Alex. K. McClure. These all breathed the same spirit, the condemnation of mob law and a demand for equal and exact justice to all. The speech of Col. McClure stands out boldly among the greatest forensic efforts ever known to our city. His central thought was 'the unwritten law,' which made an impression beyond my power to convey. In the meanwhile, smaller meetings were held in all parts of the city to record their earnest protest against the brute force of the day before. That was the end of disorder in a large scale here. On the sixteenth of October the funeral occurred. The body lay in state at the armory of the First Regiment, Broad and Race streets, and was guarded by the military. Not since the funeral cortege of President Lincoln had there been one as large or as imposing in Philadelphia. Outside of the Third Brigade, N. G. P., detached commands from the First Division, and the military from New Jersey, there were civic organizations by the hundreds from Philadelphia, to say nothing of various bodies from Washington, Baltimore, Wilmington, New York and adjacent places. All the city offices were closed, beside many schools. City Councils attended in a body, the State Legislature was present, all the city employes marched in line, and personal friends came from far and near to testify their practical sympathy. The military was under the command of General Louis Wagner, and the civic bodies marshaled by Robert M. Adger. The pall-bearers were Lieutenant Colonel Ira D. Cliff, Majors John W. Simpson and James H. Grocker, Captains J. F. Needham and R. J. Burr, Lieutenants J. W. Diton, W. W. Morris and Dr. E. C. Howard, Major and Surgeon of the Twelfth Regiment. This is but a mere glance backward at the trying days of October, 1871, and is written to refresh the minds of men and women of that day, as well as to chronicle a bit of sad history that this generation may be informed. And so closed the career of a man of splendid equipment, rare force of character, whose life was so interwoven with all that was good about us, as to make it stand out in bold relief, as a pattern for those who have followed after."

many years had sought by every species of proscription to get rid of colored passengers or carry them on the platform, were finally compelled by law to cancel such rules; the railways and theatres rather tardily followed, and finally even the schools were thrown open to all.²⁵ A deep-rooted and determined prejudice still remained, but it showed signs of yielding.

It cannot be denied that the main results of the development of the Philadelphia Negro since the war have on the whole disappointed his well-wishers. They do not pretend that he has not made great advance in certain lines, or even that in general he is not better off to-day than formerly. They do not even profess to know just what his condition to-day is, and yet there is a widespread feeling that more might reasonably have been expected in the line of social and moral development than apparently has been accomplished. Not only do they feel that there is a lack of positive results, but the relative advance compared with the period just before the war is slow, if not an actual retrogression; an abnormal and growing amount of crime and poverty can justly be charged to the Negro; he is not a large taxpayer, holds no conspicuous place in the business world or the world of letters, and even as a working man seems to be losing ground. For these reasons those who, for one purpose and another, are anxiously watching the development of the American Negro desire to know first how far these general impressions are true, what the real condition of the Negro is and what movements would best be undertaken to improve the present situation. And this local problem is after all but a small manifestation of the larger and similar Negro problems throughout the land.

For such ends the investigation, the results of which are here presented, was undertaken. This is not the first time such a study has been attempted. In 1837, 1847 and 1856

²⁵ Cf. Appendix B.

studies were made by the Abolition Society and the Friends and much valuable data procured.²⁶ The United States censuses have also added to our general knowledge, and newspapers have often interested themselves in the matter. Unfortunately, however, the Friends' investigations are not altogether free from a suspicion of bias in favor of the Negro, the census reports are very general and newspaper articles necessarily hurried and inaccurate. This study seeks to cull judiciously from all these sources and others, and to add to them specially collected data for the years 1896 and 1897.

Before, however, we enter upon the consideration of this matter, we must bring to mind four characteristics of the period we are considering: (1) The growth of Philadelphia; (2) the increase of the foreign population in the city; (3) the development of the large industry and increase of wealth, and (4) the coming in of the Southern freedmen's sons and daughters. Even Philadelphians hardly realize that the population of their staid old city has nearly doubled since the war, and that consequently it is not the same place, has not the same spirit, as formerly; new men, new ideas, new ways of thinking and acting have gained some entrance; life is larger, competition fiercer, and conditions of economic and social survival harder than formerly. Again, while there were perhaps 125,000 foreign born persons in the city in 1860, there are 260,000 now, not to

²⁶See Appendix C. The inquiry of 1838 was by the Philadelphia Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, and the report was in two parts, one a register of trades and one a general report of forty pages. The Society of Friends, or the Abolition Society, undertook the inquiry of 1849, and published a pamphlet of forty-four pages. There was also the same year a report on the health of colored convicts. A pamphlet by Edward Needles was also published in 1849, comparing the Negroes in 1837 and 1848. Benjamin C. Bacon, at the instance of the Abolition Society, made the inquiry in 1856, which was published that year. In 1859, a second edition was issued with criminal statistics. All these pamphlets may be consulted at the Library Company of Philadelphia, or the Ridgway branch.

mention the children of the former born here. These foreigners have come in to divide with native Americans the industrial opportunities of the city, and have thereby intensified competition. Thirdly, new methods of conducting business and industry are now rife: the little shop, the small trader, the house industry have given way to the department store, the organized company and the factory. Manufacturing of all kinds has increased by leaps and bounds in the city, and to-day employs three times as many men as in 1860, paying three hundred millions annually in wages; hacks and expressmen have turned into vast inter-urban businesses: restaurants have become palatial hotels—the whole face of business is being gradually transformed. Finally, into this rapid development have precipitated themselves during the last twenty years fifteen thousand immigrants, mostly from Maryland, Virginia and Carolina—untrained and poorly educated countrymen, rushing from the hovels of the country or the cottages of country towns, suddenly into the new, strange life of a great city to mingle with 25,000 of their race already there. What has been the result?

[NOTE.—There was a small riot in 1843 during the time of Mayor Swift. In 1832 began a series of literary societies—the Library Company, the Bancker Society, etc.,—which did much good for many years. The first Negro newspaper of the city, the "Demosthenian Shield," appeared in 1840. Among men not already mentioned in this period should be noted the Rev. C. W. Gardner, Dr. J. Bias, the dentist, James McCrummell, and Sarah M. Douglass. All these were prominent Negroes of the day and had much influence. The artist, Robert Douglass, is the painter of a portrait of Fannie Kemble, which its Philadelphia owner to-day prefers to attribute to Thomas Dudley.]

the rise of their race to forward the good-hearted but hardly imperative demands of a crowd of women? Especially, too, of women who did not apparently know there were any Negroes on earth until they wanted their votes? Such logic may be faulty, but it is convincing to the mass of Negro voters. And cause after cause may gain their respectful attention and even applause, but when election-day comes, the "machine" gets their votes.

Thus the growth of broader political sentiment is hindered and will be until some change comes. When industrial exclusion is so broken down that no class will be unduly tempted by the bribe of office; when the apostles of civil reform compete within the ward Boss in friendliness and kindly consideration for the unfortunate; when the league between gambling and crime and the city authorities is less close, then we can expect the more rapid development of civic virtue in the Negro and indeed in the whole city. As it is to-day the experiment of Negro suffrage with all its glaring shortcomings cannot justly be called a failure, but rather in view of all circumstances a partial success. Whatever it lacks can justly be charged to those Philadelphians who for thirty years have surrendered their right of political leadership to thieves and tricksters, and allowed such teachers to instruct this untutored race in whose hand lay an unfamiliar instrument of civilization.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A FINAL WORD.

56. *The Meaning of All This.*—Two sorts of answers are usually returned to the bewildered American who asks seriously: What is the Negro problem? The one is straightforward and clear: it is simply this, or simply that, and one simple remedy long enough applied will in time cause it to disappear. The other answer is apt to be hopelessly involved and complex—to indicate no simple panacea, and to end in a somewhat hopeless—There it is; what can we do? Both of these sorts of answers have something of truth in them: the Negro problem looked at in one way is but the old world questions of ignorance, poverty, crime, and the dislike of the stranger. On the other hand it is a mistake to think that attacking each of these questions single-handed without reference to the others will settle the matter: a combination of social problems is far more than a matter of mere addition,—the combination itself is a problem. Nevertheless the Negro problems are not more hopelessly complex than many others have been. Their elements despite their bewildering complication can be kept clearly in view: they are after all the same difficulties over which the world has grown gray: the question as to how far human intelligence can be trusted and trained; as to whether we must always have the poor with us; as to whether it is possible for the mass of men to attain righteousness on earth; and then to this is added that question of questions: after all who are Men? Is every featherless biped to be counted a man and brother? Are all races and types to be joint heirs of the

new earth that men have striven to raise in thirty centuries and more? Shall we not swamp civilization in barbarism and drown genius in indulgence if we seek a mythical Humanity which shall shadow all men? The answer of the early centuries to this puzzle was clear: those of any nation who can be called Men and endowed with rights are few: they are the privileged classes—the well-born and the accidents of low birth called up by the King. The rest, the mass of the nation, the *pöbel*, the mob, are fit to follow, to obey, to dig and delve, but not to think or rule or play the gentleman. We who were born to another philosophy hardly realize how deep-seated and plausible this view of human capabilities and powers once was; how utterly incomprehensible this republic would have been to Charlemagne or Charles V or Charles I. We rather hasten to forget that once the courtiers of English kings looked upon the ancestors of most Americans with far greater contempt than these Americans look upon Negroes—and perhaps, indeed, had more cause. We forget that once French peasants were the “Niggers” of France, and that German princelings once discussed with doubt the brains and humanity of the *bauer*.

Much of this—or at least some of it—has passed and the world has glided by blood and iron into a wider humanity, a wider respect for simple manhood unadorned by ancestors or privilege. Not that we have discovered, as some hoped and some feared, that all men were created free and equal, but rather that the differences in men are not so vast as we had assumed. We still yield the well-born the advantages of birth, we still see that each nation has its dangerous flock of fools and rascals; but we also find most men have brains to be cultivated and souls to be saved.

And still this widening of the idea of common Humanity is of slow growth and to-day but dimly realized. We grant full citizenship in the World Commonwealth to the “Anglo-Saxon” (whatever that may mean), the Teuton

and the Latin; then with just a shade of reluctance we extend it to the Celt and Slav. We half deny it to the yellow races of Asia, admit the brown Indians to an ante-room only on the strength of an undeniable past; but with the Negroes of Africa we come to a full stop, and in its heart the civilized world with one accord denies that these come within the pale of nineteenth-century Humanity. This feeling, widespread and deep-seated, is, in America, the vastest of the Negro problems; we have, to be sure, a threatening problem of ignorance but the ancestors of most Americans were far more ignorant than the freedmen's sons; these ex-slaves are poor but not as poor as the Irish peasants used to be; crime is rampant but not more so, if as much, as in Italy; but the difference is that the ancestors of the English and the Irish and the Italians were felt to be worth educating, helping and guiding because they were men and brothers, while in America a census which gives a slight indication of the utter disappearance of the American Negro from the earth is greeted with ill-concealed delight.

Other centuries looking back upon the culture of the nineteenth would have a right to suppose that if, in a land of freemen, eight millions of human beings were found to be dying of disease, the nation would cry with one voice, “Heal them!” If they were staggering on in ignorance, it would cry, “Train them!” If they were harming themselves and others by crime, it would cry, “Guide them!” And such cries are heard and have been heard in the land; but it was not one voice and its volume has been ever broken by counter-cries and echoes, “Let them die!” “Train them like slaves!” “Let them stagger downward!”

This is the spirit that enters in and complicates all Negro social problems and this is a problem which only civilization and humanity can successfully solve. Meantime we have the other problems before us—we have the problems arising from the uniting of so many social

questions about one centre. In such a situation we need only to avoid underestimating the difficulties on the one hand and overestimating them on the other. The problems are difficult, extremely difficult, but they are such as the world has conquered before and can conquer again. Moreover the battle involves more than a mere altruistic interest in an alien people. It is a battle for humanity and human culture. If in the hey-day of the greatest of the world's civilizations, it is possible for one people ruthlessly to steal another, drag them helpless across the water, enslave them, debauch them, and then slowly murder them by economic and social exclusion until they disappear from the face of the earth—if the consummation of such a crime be possible in the twentieth century; then our civilization is vain and the republic is a mockery and a farce.

But this will not be; first, even with the terribly adverse circumstances under which Negroes live, there is not the slightest likelihood of their dying out; a nation that has endured the slave-trade, slavery, reconstruction, and present prejudice three hundred years, and under it increased in numbers and efficiency, is not in any immediate danger of extinction. Nor is the thought of voluntary or involuntary emigration more than a dream of men who forget that there are half as many Negroes in the United States as Spaniards in Spain. If this be so then a few plain propositions may be laid down as axiomatic:

1. The Negro is here to stay.
2. It is to the advantage of all, both black and white, that every Negro should make the best of himself.
3. It is the duty of the Negro to raise himself by every effort to the standards of modern civilization and not to lower those standards in any degree.
4. It is the duty of the white people to guard their civilization against debauchment by themselves or others; but in order to do this it is not necessary to hinder and

retard the efforts of an earnest people to rise, simply because they lack faith in the ability of that people.

5. With these duties in mind and with a spirit of self-help, mutual aid and co-operation, the two races should strive side by side to realize the ideals of the republic and make this truly a land of equal opportunity for all men.

57. **The Duty of the Negroes.**—That the Negro race has an appalling work of social reform before it need hardly be said. Simply because the ancestors of the present white inhabitants of America went out of their way barbarously to mistreat and enslave the ancestors of the present black inhabitants gives those blacks no right to ask that the civilization and morality of the land be seriously menaced for their benefit. Men have a right to demand that the members of a civilized community be civilized; that the fabric of human culture, so laboriously woven, be not wantonly or ignorantly destroyed. Consequently a nation may rightly demand, even of a people it has consciously and intentionally wronged, not indeed complete civilization in thirty or one hundred years, but at least every effort and sacrifice possible on their part toward making themselves fit members of the community within a reasonable length of time; that thus they may early become a source of strength and help instead of a national burden. Modern society has too many problems of its own, too much proper anxiety as to its own ability to survive under its present organization, for it lightly to shoulder all the burdens of a less advanced people, and it can rightly demand that as far as possible and as rapidly as possible the Negro bend his energy to the solving of his own social problems—contributing to his poor, paying his share of the taxes and supporting the schools and public administration. For the accomplishment of this the Negro has a right to demand freedom for self-development, and no more aid from without than is really helpful for furthering that development. Such aid must of necessity be considerable: it must furnish schools

and reformatories, and relief and preventive agencies; but the bulk of the work of raising the Negro must be done by the Negro himself, and the greatest help for him will be not to hinder and curtail and discourage his efforts. Against prejudice, injustice and wrong the Negro ought to protest energetically and continuously, but he must never forget that he protests because those things hinder his own efforts, and that those efforts are the key to his future.

And those efforts must be mighty and comprehensive, persistent, well-aimed and tireless; satisfied with no partial success, lulled to sleep by no colorless victories; and, above all, guided by no low selfish ideals; at the same time they must be tempered by common sense and rational expectation. In Philadelphia those efforts should first be directed toward a lessening of Negro crime; no doubt the amount of crime imputed to the race is exaggerated, no doubt features of the Negro's environment over which he has no control, excuse much that is committed; but beyond all this the amount of crime that can without doubt rightly be laid at the door of the Philadelphia Negro is large and is a menacé to a civilized people. Efforts to stop this crime must commence in the Negro homes; they must cease to be, as they often are, breeders of idleness and extravagance and complaint. Work, continuous and intensive; work, although it be menial and poorly rewarded; work, though done in travail of soul and sweat of brow, must be so impressed upon Negro children as the road to salvation, that a child would feel it a greater disgrace to be idle than to do the humblest labor. The homely virtues of honesty, truth and chastity must be instilled in the cradle, and although it is hard to teach self-respect to a people whose million fellow-citizens half-despise them, yet it must be taught as the surest road to gain the respect of others.

It is right and proper that Negro boys and girls should desire to rise as high in the world as their ability and just desert entitle them. They should be ever encouraged and

urged to do so, although they should be taught also that idleness and crime are beneath and not above the lowest work. It should be the continual object of Negroes to open up better industrial chances for their sons and daughters. Their success here must of course rest largely with the white people, but not entirely. Proper co-operation among forty or fifty thousand colored people ought to open many chances of employment for their sons and daughters in trades, stores and shops, associations and industrial enterprises.

Further, some rational means of amusement should be furnished young folks. Prayer meetings and church socials have their place, but they cannot compete in attractiveness with the dance halls and gambling dens of the city. There is a legitimate demand for amusement on the part of the young which may be made a means of education, improvement and recreation. A harmless and beautiful amusement like dancing might with proper effort be rescued from its low and unhealthful associations and made a means of health and recreation. The billiard table is no more wedded to the saloon than to the church if good people did not drive it there. If the Negro homes and churches cannot amuse their young people, and if no other efforts are made to satisfy this want, then we cannot complain if the saloons and clubs and bawdy houses send these children to crime, disease and death.

There is a vast amount of preventive and rescue work which the Negroes themselves might do: keeping little girls off the street at night, stopping the escorting of unchaperoned young ladies to church and elsewhere, showing the dangers of the lodging system, urging the buying of homes and removal from crowded and tainted neighborhoods, giving lectures and tracts on health and habits, exposing the dangers of gambling and policy-playing, and inculcating respect for women. Day-nurseries and sewing-schools, mothers' meetings, the parks and

airing places, all these things are little known or appreciated among the masses of Negroes, and their attention should be directed to them.

The spending of money is a matter to which Negroes need to give especial attention. Money is wasted to-day in dress, furniture, elaborate entertainments, costly church edifices, and "insurance" schemes, which ought to go toward buying homes, educating children, giving simple healthful amusement to the young, and accumulating something in the savings bank against a "rainy day." A crusade for the savings bank as against the "insurance" society ought to be started in the Seventh Ward without delay.

Although directly after the war there was great and remarkable enthusiasm for education, there is no doubt but that this enthusiasm has fallen off, and there is to-day much neglect of children among the Negroes, and failure to send them regularly to school. This should be looked into by the Negroes themselves and every effort made to induce full regular attendance.

Above all, the better classes of the Negroes should recognize their duty toward the masses. They should not forget that the spirit of the twentieth century is to be the turning of the high toward the lowly, the bending of Humanity to all that is human; the recognition that in the slums of modern society lie the answers to most of our puzzling problems of organization and life, and that only as we solve those problems is our culture assured and our progress certain. This the Negro is far from recognizing for himself; his social evolution in cities like Philadelphia is approaching a mediæval stage when the centrifugal forces of repulsion between social classes are becoming more powerful than those of attraction. So hard has been the rise of the better class of Negroes that they fear to fall if now they stoop to lend a hand to their fellows. This feeling is intensified by the blindness

of those outsiders who persist even now in confounding the good and bad, the risen and fallen in one mass. Nevertheless the Negro must learn the lesson that other nations learned so laboriously and imperfectly, that his better classes have their chief excuse for being in the work they may do toward lifting the rabble. This is especially true in a city like Philadelphia which has so distinct and creditable a Negro aristocracy; that they do something already to grapple with these social problems of their race is true, but they do not yet do nearly as much as they must, nor do they clearly recognize their responsibility.

Finally, the Negroes must cultivate a spirit of calm, patient persistence in their attitude toward their fellow citizens rather than of loud and intemperate complaint. A man may be wrong, and know he is wrong, and yet some finesse must be used in telling him of it. The white people of Philadelphia are perfectly conscious that their Negro citizens are not treated fairly in all respects, but it will not improve matters to call names or impute unworthy motives to all men. Social reforms move slowly and yet when Right is reinforced by calm but persistent Progress we somehow all feel that in the end it must triumph.

58. *The Duty of the Whites.*—There is a tendency on the part of many white people to approach the Negro question from the side which just now is of least pressing importance, namely, that of the social intermingling of races. The old query: Would you want your sister to marry a Nigger? still stands as a grim sentinel to stop much rational discussion. And yet few white women have been pained by the addresses of black suitors, and those who have easily got rid of them. The whole discussion is little less than foolish; perhaps a century from to-day we may find ourselves seriously discussing such questions of social policy, but it is certain that just as long as one group deems it a serious *mésalliance* to marry with another just

so long few marriages will take place, and it will need neither law nor argument to guide human choice in such a matter. Certainly the masses of whites would hardly acknowledge that an active propaganda of repression was necessary to ward off intermarriage. Natural pride of race, strong on one side and growing on the other, may be trusted to ward off such mingling as might in this stage of development prove disastrous to both races. All this therefore is a question of the far-off future.

To-day, however, we must face the fact that a natural repugnance to close intermingling with unfortunate ex-slaves has descended to a discrimination that very seriously hinders them from being anything better. It is right and proper to object to ignorance and consequently to ignorant men; but if by our actions we have been responsible for their ignorance and are still actively engaged in keeping them ignorant, the argument loses its moral force. So with the Negroes: men have a right to object to a race so poor and ignorant and inefficient as the mass of the Negroes; but if their policy in the past is parent of much of this condition, and if to-day by shutting black boys and girls out of most avenues of decent employment they are increasing pauperism and vice, then they must hold themselves largely responsible for the deplorable results.

There is no doubt that in Philadelphia the centre and kernel of the Negro problem so far as the white people are concerned is the narrow opportunities afforded Negroes for earning a decent living. Such discrimination is morally wrong, politically dangerous, industrially wasteful, and socially silly. It is the duty of the whites to stop it, and to do so primarily for their own sakes. Industrial freedom of opportunity has by long experience been proven to be generally best for all. Moreover the cost of crime and pauperism, the growth of slums, and the pernicious influences of idleness and lewdness, cost the public far more than would the hurt to the feelings of a carpenter to work

beside a black man, or a shop girl to stand beside a darker mate. This does not contemplate the wholesale replacing of white workmen for Negroes out of sympathy or philanthropy; it does mean that talent should be rewarded, and aptness used in commerce and industry whether its owner be black or white; that the same incentive to good, honest, effective work be placed before a black office boy as before a white one—before a black porter as before a white one; and that unless this is done the city has no right to complain that black boys lose interest in work and drift into idleness and crime. Probably a change in public opinion on this point to-morrow would not make very much difference in the positions occupied by Negroes in the city: some few would be promoted, some few would get new places—the mass would remain as they are; but it would make one vast difference: it would inspire the young to try harder, it would stimulate the idle and discouraged and it would take away from this race the omnipresent excuse for failure: prejudice. Such a moral change would work a revolution in the criminal rate during the next ten years. Even a Negro bootblack could black boots better if he knew he was a menial not because he was a Negro but because he was best fitted for that work.

We need then a radical change in public opinion on this point; it will not and ought not to come suddenly, but instead of thoughtless acquiescence in the continual and steadily encroaching exclusion of Negroes from work in the city, the leaders of industry and opinion ought to be trying here and there to open up new opportunities and give new chances to bright colored boys. The policy of the city to-day simply drives out the best class of young people whom its schools have educated and social opportunities trained, and fills their places with idle and vicious immigrants. It is a paradox of the times that young men and women from some of the best Negro families of the city—families born and reared here and schooled in the

best traditions of this municipality have actually had to go to the South to get work, if they wished to be aught but chambermaids and bootblacks. Not that such work may not be honorable and useful, but that it is as wrong to make scullions of engineers as it is to make engineers of scullions. Such a situation is a disgrace to the city—a disgrace to its Christianity, to its spirit of justice, to its common sense; what can be the end of such a policy but increased crime and increased excuse for crime? Increased poverty and more reason to be poor? Increased political serfdom of the mass of black voters to the bosses and rascals who divide the spoils? Surely here lies the first duty of a civilized city.

Secondly, in their efforts for the uplifting of the Negro the people of Philadelphia must recognize the existence of the better class of Negroes and must gain their active aid and co-operation by generous and polite conduct. Social sympathy must exist between what is best in both races and there must no longer be the feeling that the Negro who makes the best of himself is of least account to the city of Philadelphia, while the vagabond is to be helped and pitied. This better class of Negro does not want help or pity, but it does want a generous recognition of its difficulties, and a broad sympathy with the problem of life as it presents itself to them. It is composed of men and women educated and in many cases cultured; with proper co-operation they could be a vast power in the city, and the only power that could successfully cope with many phases of the Negro problems. But their active aid cannot be gained for purely selfish motives, or kept by churlish and ungentle manners; and above all they object to being patronized.

Again, the white people of the city must remember that much of the sorrow and bitterness that surrounds the life of the American Negro comes from the unconscious prejudice and half-conscious actions of men and women who do

not intend to wound or annoy. One is not compelled to discuss the Negro question with every Negro one meets or to tell him of a father who was connected with the Underground Railroad; one is not compelled to stare at the solitary black face in the audience as though it were not human; it is not necessary to sneer, or be unkind or boorish, if the Negroes in the room or on the street are not all the best behaved or have not the most elegant manners; it is hardly necessary to strike from the dwindling list of one's boyhood and girlhood acquaintances or school-day friends all those who happen to have Negro blood, simply because one has not the courage now to greet them on the street. The little decencies of daily intercourse can go on, the courtesies of life be exchanged even across the color line without any danger to the supremacy of the Anglo-Saxon or the social ambition of the Negro. Without doubt social differences are facts not fancies and cannot lightly be swept aside; but they hardly need to be looked upon as excuses for downright meanness and incivility.

A polite and sympathetic attitude toward these striving thousands; a delicate avoidance of that which wounds and embitters them; a generous granting of opportunity to them; a seconding of their efforts, and a desire to reward honest success—all this, added to proper striving on their part, will go far even in our day toward making all men, white and black, realize what the great founder of the city meant when he named it the City of Brotherly Love.