

The INSTITUTE MONTHLY



JANUARY 1921

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Institute, West Virginia.

D. H. L. Jr.
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THE WEST VIRGINIA COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE

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EDITORIAL STAFF

S. H. Guss

C. E. MITCHELL, BUSINESS MANAGER.

D. A. LANE, JR.

Address all Communications to "THE INSTITUTE MONTHLY", Institute, West Virginia

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EDITORIALS

On the twenty-sixth, twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth of this month, we welcome the Farmers' and Home-Makers' Fair to Institute.

The Farmers
and Home-
Makers' Fair

The development and encouragement of agriculture, horticulture, poultry farming, the raising of live stock and the scientific management of home economics are included in the purpose and function of this school, and our hearty support is given to any and all movements in this direction. It is our desire to make this, not Institute's fair, but an undertaking of the people of West Virginia.

It is gratifying to have official corroboration and approval given to the cause for which one has been striving during long years. It is all

The
Future of
Institute

the more gratifying when the cause in question is not small and unimportant, but one upon the success of which depends the welfare of hundreds and thousands of people, even of generations yet unborn.

Such a cause is that of the West Virginia Collegiate Institute. With due apology to Mr. Kipling, we would say:

"If Institute were what Institute seems,
And not the Institute of our dreams,
If she were only bricks and paint,
How soon we'd chuck her,—but she ain't!"

The Editor was privileged recently to hear the story told of the birth and rise of Negro education in this State. An inspiring story it was, of courage and daring and hardship and sacrifice on the part of those who were willing and determined to go "all the way", if necessary, in order

that the Negro youth of West Virginia might have educational facilities placed at their disposal. By the efforts of these sturdy souls, generally with the hearty co-operation of State officials, there has been developed through long years, in the State of West Virginia, a public educational system for Negroes, of which the West Virginia Collegiate Institute is the crowning achievement. Established by an Act of the State Legislature in 1891, the school was authorized by a similar Act of 1915 to give collegiate instruction, issue appropriate collegiate degrees and do extension work in agriculture, home economics and other subjects, thus laying the foundation upon which might be built, during the coming years, a typical State Land-Grant College, with its ramifications extending into every phase of community activity within the Negro citizenship of the State. This is the goal toward which the West Virginia Collegiate Institute is striving.

We repeat, then, that the placing of the official seal of approval upon such a program is legitimate ground for congratulation. Near the beginning of this school year, Dr. C. D. Jarvis and Dr. Walton C. John, experts in Education, the former a specialist in Agricultural Education and the latter in the subject of Land-Grant Colleges, were sent out by the United States Commissioner of Education, Dr. Philander P. Claxton, to make a survey of the West Virginia Collegiate Institute and recommendations concerning its future. This they did. Their findings were, in short, that the school is admirably located, and that the faculty is competent and fully qualified to carry on standard college work, but that the enrollment of the school has out-grown its buildings and equipment, and that its scope and function is limited, first, by the large number of secondary students, and second, by the lack of modern facilities for demonstration work in "profitable and business-like agriculture." Upon the basis of these findings, the following recommendations were made by these experts:

1. That secondary instruction be discontinued and that the work of the normal department be based upon two years of previous high school work.

2. That normal instruction be continued only until such time as the collegiate enrollment at the institution warrants its abandonment.

3. That the collegiate work be strengthened to provide for: (1) the training of teachers, especially teachers of agriculture and home economics in the secondary schools; (2) the training of men for the occupation of farming and women for home-making.

Howard, Commodore Robert E. Peary and a host of others whom the world has called great and good men. Among the many achievements for which this college is distinguished there is one, now forgotten largely, but of which she may well be proud. Back in the time when slavery was still within the land, in a time when education of the enslaved race was prohibited in the South and strongly opposed in the North, Bowdoin College, in the face of existing sentiment, admitted and trained a member of the proscribed race and presented to the world, in the Class of 1826, America's first college-bred Negro.

During the ninety-odd years which have passed since that time, the rise of liberal education within this people has advanced at a rapid rate. Now you will find a goodly number of the Negro youth, for the most part in Negro colleges throughout the southland, but also with representatives in the colleges of the North and West, by the side of their fairer neighbors, engaged in the earnest quest of that training for life which the world calls its highest and the knowledge which it calls its best.

To each of these young Negroes comes the time when he must depart from college to assume the duties of manhood and make use of the knowledge which he has gained. Buoyant of heart he is, and full of high resolve, and yet with a vague sense of premonition, for he knows that on account of his race it will be his lot to meet conditions which many will not have to meet and fight a battle which many will not be called upon to fight. He knows that *he* will be an active factor in that problem of the twentieth century which is called The American Negro Problem. Out of it he came for a little while when his college career began; back into it he goes at its close.

During the days of Reconstruction, when the South found itself facing the unforeseen and undesired situation of having almost half of its free population composed of its former slaves, its vital and all-over-shadowing question was "What to do with the Negro," who as a slave was an asset, but as a free man a burden and a menace. "How shall we solve this Negro Problem?" asked the South. "By gradual assimilation?" A certain racial pride abhorred it. "By annihilation?" Religion and humanity cried out against it. "By deportation?" Uncontrollable physical facts prevented it. Thus the South and the Nation were brought to realize that the Negro and his former masters were destined to live side by side for generations to come, and that therefore some working plan should be devised whereby this dwelling-together might be accomplished.

This was no easy task. The Nation, by Constitutional amend-

ment, gave to the Negro full rights of citizenship, but in so doing opposed the sentiment of the entire South. The South, therefore, fearing that Negro suffrage meant a Negro balance of power and perhaps political dominance, deprived the Negro of the right to vote. Fearing his economic competition, the South relegated him to the most menial occupations only. Fearing "social equality" and shuddering at the thought of racial amalgamation, the South placed a social taboo upon him. "He shall be among us, but not of us; between him and ourselves there shall be a great gulf fixed." The South's solution of the problem was and is to make the Negro, now constituting a third of its population, a political, economic and social nonentity.

But this solution did not and does not satisfy the Negro himself. He longs for all the attributes, rights and privileges of his manhood and citizenship. "I am a man," he cries with the Roman poet, "and I consider that nothing which pertains to a man is foreign to me". Thus the Negro's problem of life in the United States becomes that of how "to live usefully, blamelessly, honorably, and patiently, getting for himself whatever scraps of refinement, learning and beauty he may, and keeping his hold on a citizenship which he is grudging and denied",—and this mainly in a section of the country where much that makes life worth living is marked "For White Men Only!"

These are the conditions into which the young college-bred Negro must go,—the contending forces which he must meet. He cannot escape them, for they stare him in the face, bar his further progress, and woven as they are into the very warp and woof of his existence and that of his race, they present to him a *task* to be accomplished, a *duty* to be performed. To him, as he goes forth from college, comes the voice of ten million struggling ones, crying,—"What do you bring to us form the Mount of Revelation,—what word to lighten us on our way,—what balm to soothe our tortured limbs and heal our aching hearts? What of the problem,— what of the task, my son?" And if he cannot give an answer to this cry as the fruit of his intellectual labor, then he is of all men the most pitiable, for it is here that he finds the first part of his task, that of guiding his race aright.

Now this young college graduate, unlike many of his race, can look at the situation before him from without rather than from within,—in the illuminating light of his broader knowledge rather than from the enclosed and darkened limits of his personal experience. Viewing the situation in this light, he realizes first of all that conditions existing in the South, although in some respects unparalleled, are on the whole such as might have been expected, and not at all peculiar to this age or to

4. That the work in agriculture be greatly strengthened. This necessitates: (1) the enlargement of the farm; (2) the erection of modern farm buildings and the purchase of the necessary equipments, (3) the purchase of live stock of various types; (4) the employment of enough help.....; and (5) the employment of one or more additional science teachers and one or more additional teachers of agriculture.

5. That additional dormitories be erected if necessary..... The elimination of the first two years of high school may make this unnecessary.

6. That several neat and comfortable cottages be erected for the use of faculty members and other employees.....

7. That a new administration building be erected.....

8. That the maintenance fund be increased sufficiently (1) to increase the salaries of instructors, (2) to repair buildings and to purchase the necessary laboratory and farm equipment, and (3) most of all, to maintain the farm in such a way as to provide a perpetual demonstration of the attractiveness of the farming industry.

Their recommendations are, in a nut shell, that the West Virginia Collegiate Institute be converted, as rapidly as possible, into a typical Land-Grant College, doing collegiate work in various departments.

It is interesting to note, in this connection, that the retiring State Superintendent of Schools, the Honorable M. P. Shawkey, in his report for the two years ending June 30, 1920, made the following statement:

"It has been thought that the Collegiate Institute might soon be developed into a school of distinctly college grade and that perhaps Bluefield might specialize on teacher-training work for the state. A little further time and thought will possibly reveal the proper course for each of these institutions more clearly."

"More time" is his plea.

Dr. Claxton, United States Commissioner of Education, seems to be of somewhat the same opinion, for, in a review of the recommendations made by the experts sent from his office, he agrees with them in general, but asks, in so many words, two pertinent questions: Is the number of high schools for Negroes in the State sufficient to warrant the discontinuance of secondary education at Institute?—and will it ever be wise to discontinue all normal education at Institute? He doubts the justification of an affirmative answer to either of these questions, but agrees that such normal work as might be considered necessary at Institute,

i. e., training of teachers for secondary schools, would be a function of the college department.

Out of seeming disagreement of experts there emerges, then, this salient feature of agreement,—that *at some time in the future*, the school should be doing collegiate work only. When that time shall be depends absolutely upon the rapidity with which facilities for secondary education are developed throughout the State. *Just as soon as a sufficient number of efficient high schools are placed at advantageous locations throughout the State, just so soon can Institute discontinue secondary work, and move on to her higher calling altogether.*

We have the faith to believe that this will take place—faith in local administrators, faith in State administrators, faith that the Negro citizens of the State will determine and see to it that every deserving community of Negroes will be able to boast of its high school. Upon the basis of this faith we see in the distance a vision of a rejuvenated system of public education for Negroes in the State of West Virginia,—a system in which well-equipped and well-taught primary and elementary schools send well-prepared students to efficient high schools in the larger communities, and to Bluefield from smaller communities,—a system in which Bluefield trains teachers for primary and elementary grades,—a system crowned, not by the West Virginia Collegiate Institute, but by West Virginia State College, training teachers for secondary schools, awarding collegiate degrees in Arts, Science, Education, Agriculture, Engineering, Home Economics, Business Administration and the Mechanical Arts, and doing community and extension work throughout the State. Is not this our duty?

The Task of the College-Bred Negro.

"Way down East", on the banks of the Androscoggin River as it flows through the state of Maine, stands a college. An annual enrollment of four or five hundred students makes her one of the "small" colleges of New England; yet upon the roll of her alumni are the revered names of Longfellow, Hawthorne, Franklin K. Pierce, General O. O.

his people. He knows that the natural aftermath of *all* slavery is a refusal to recognize the rights of the freedmen, and he is not discouraged that fifty years have not sufficed to remedy conditions, which were two hundred fifty years in the making. Because of the naturalness of the problem he hopes for a natural solution, and for it he is willing patiently to strive, confident that increasing culture and education of both races must ultimately conquer all.

What lines, he says, shall Negro culture and education follow? Now the trend of modern education, especially during the last few years, has been in the direction of vocationalism, and it would seem the policy of wisdom for Negro education to fall in line. Furthermore, the masses of any people, and especially of a people low in the industrial scale, constitute the farmers, artisans, mechanics and manual laborers of the people, and as such they should be trained to perform the functions of those classes most efficiently. This was the gospel preached by him who was for twenty-five years the Negro's prophet, priest and king, and to this gospel, as far as it goes, the college-bred Negro says a fervent "Amen".

He agrees also that one of the best means of securing an economic foothold is through the ownership of property; and to that end, none are more earnest than he in advising a people who are peculiarly expectant of some day reaching "mansions in the sky" to attach sufficient importance to the possession of homes upon earth and to the development of the homely virtues of thrift, economy and enterprise. But, looking again through the eyes of his broader knowledge, he perceives further, that the testimony of the ages is that progress, civilization and culture, do not spread from below upward, but from above downward. He looks, in his own country, at the American Indian, and sees a race which after four hundred years of Christian influence has made an advance in civilization so small as to be negligible, because it would not absorb the *culture* offered to it. He looks across the sea at China and at the Empire of the Orient, and sees there a race which passed through centuries of utter stagnation, from which it did not rise until it had the wisdom to send its picked youth to Western centers of civilization and fountain-heads of Western education, there to learn what great men have done and wise men thought. And he concludes, this college-bred Negro, that more important than the training of "workers to work",—more important even than the possession of houses and lands, is the training of "*thinkers to think*", upon which training all the rest depends. And it is this that he considers his special task and province among those numbered in his race in America,—the dissemination

among the capable, of that training of mind, morals and taste for which modern culture stands, that generations of his race to come may have a goodly heritage, and enter into the House Beautiful.

Another part of the task of the college-bred Negro concerns the relation between his race and the one within which it lives. It is an unfortunate fact, partly true in the North but almost entirely so in the South, that these two races, the White and the Black, rarely see any but the worst sides of each other. The two worlds of these people touch only on their outermost edges, where live the lowest and most depraved of both races, so that neither knows the highest aspirations and ideals of the other. Between these two, and in an ever-increasing number, comes the college-bred Negro. He is enabled to stand on the plane of Truth, elevating and leveling. If, moreover, it is his good fortune to claim as Alma Mater a college under whose guidance he matched intellects and rubbed elbows with members of the other race, he has discovered, to his surprise perhaps, that there are no differences between the two races, beyond physical externalities, which do not result directly from the fact that the one race possesses, while the other lacks, a long-continued heritage of culture and an environment of unlimited opportunity.

This Negro, I say then, having crossed the sea of misconception and misunderstanding, stands as an ambassador between the two races to present the appeal of the one to the other. And this is the burden of his plea: "Oh men of the South, —and ye of the North as well! We respect that legitimate *pride* which is possessed by all races, the Black as well as the White, —but we protest against that *prejudice* which is a reproach and a hindrance to whatever race is influenced by it,— and in the name of the Nation's progress we earnestly maintain that no secure and lasting civilization can be established in the South if the Negro is to remain an ignorant and disturbing third of its population!"

Twenty-five years ago, from the growing city of Atlanta, there came a voice,—out of the wilderness, as it were,—saying: "In all things purely social, we can be as separate as the five fingers; yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress. Viewed in the setting of its time, this seemed a wise saying. To it both South and North assented. To it the Negro silently consented. To it the Negro would still consent if, during the past fifty-odd years he had not demonstrated, in the face of disheartening circumstances a capacity for rapid assimilation and achievement which the world has never equalled. But now the best colleges of the land testify to his capacity for education and professional training. Negro farms, Negro homes, Negro newspapers, Negro

banks, are evidences of his progress along the lines of economic thrift and industry. Whenever he has been assigned a task by the national government, he has done yeoman service. A hundred battle fields, from Fort Wagner to Carrizal and the Argonne, are the mute witnesses of his patriotism and valor. Hence, to the mind of the college-bred Negro, the diplomatic and smoothly-phrased terms of the "Atlanta Compromise" and the apologetic course of action which has indirectly resulted therefrom, must give place to the candid presentation of the claims of justice.

"All things purely social," he maintains, are purely personal. The social integrity of a race, like of an individual, lies within its own keeping, and the test to be applied should be simply that of personal preference and personal privilege. But "in all things essential to mutual progress,"—political, economic, cultural,—the ultimate test to be applied, the limit to be fixed, is that of *capacity*, and *capacity alone*. "If ye can drink of the cup that I drink of, and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with," ye shall enter into the salvation with which I am saved! And it is the task of the college-bred Negro to contend, day in and day out, that nothing short of this will ever bring about a permanent solution of that problem which is sapping the life of the South and hindering the progress of the Nation.—D. A. L., Jr.

Mrs. Elizabeth M. Mitchell

In a quiet and unostentatious manner, Mrs. Elizabeth M. Mitchell, formerly head of the Department of Music of the West Virginia Collegiate Institute, is accomplishing wonderful results in the new field of moving pictures of Negro life at its best.

"For a number of years I have made a study of moving pictures," Mrs. Mitchell stated recently to a representative of the Associated Negro Press, "and I seldom saw anything showing the better side of the life of our people. Even the picture of 'Pershing's Crusaders' did not show our soldiers at their best on the contrary, it seemed that only the ridiculous side of our race was desired to be shown. From that time I determined to devote my life to the educational travelogue showing to the people of America that we have a better side."

Having come to this resolution, Mrs. Mitchell has spared neither

time nor money in the accomplishment of her purpose. She has toured Northern Africa and Southern Italy in search of material, which she has combined with government releases and other scenes of Negro life in America, and with the picture thus produced she is now touring the United States, presenting "our side of the story," to the American public. Her present tour is through Illinois, eastern Missouri, Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, and Louisiana.

Too much commendation cannot be given Mrs. Mitchell for this undertaking. Institute regretted her departure, and now rejoices with her in her success.

ON THE CAMPUS

Dr. C. G. Woodson was the feature speaker at the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity convocation in Nashville, Tennessee, on December twenty-seventh. On December sixteenth and seventeenth, he addressed the students of Virginia Union University at Richmond, and the Virginia Normal and Theological Seminary at Lynchburg, on *The Negro in Our History*. On January thirteenth, he spoke to the student body of the Bluefield Colored Institute upon the same subject.

The West Virginia Collegiate Institute contributed one hundred forty-four dollars and fifty cents in the recent drive to raise ten thousand dollars among colored people for the work of the International Committee of the Y. M. C. A.

Mr. W. W. Sanders, State Super-

visor of colored schools, Mr. C. C. Rossey, president of Concord State Normal School, and Mr. B. F. King, Superintendent of Mercer County, visited the school on December fourteenth.

Mrs. Amelia Lowry of Clarksburg, Miss Rebecca Green of Charleston and Madame Hazel Johnson of Washington, D. C. were Christmas callers at the school. Miss Lowry was the guest of Mr. and Mrs. R. H. Lowry of the village. She and Miss Green are alumnae of the school, and Mrs. Johnson is a former student.

Mr. George Leon Johnson, Mrs. Marie P. Johnson and Mr. T. Thomas Taylor of Chicago, who travel in concert under the name of the Johnson-Taylor-Johnson trio, were heard here in vocal and piano recital on the night of December thirteenth. The program was above average in the selection of numbers, and was rendered with pleasing effect. Mr. John-

son and his company are annual visitors here, and are always welcomed cordially.

Perhaps the duet, the *Miserere* from *Il Trovatore*, rendered by Mr. Johnson and his wife, was the choice selection.

Mr. Taylor was at his best in Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata* and in a suite of Negro characteristic sketches composed by Mr. R. Nathaniel Dett.

Before a small but appreciative audience, Madame Florence Cole-Tolbert, the foremost soprano of the Negro race, accompanied by Miss Helene Clark, rendered an unusually pleasing program, in the chapel, on the afternoon of January tenth. Madame Tolbert won her audience at the outset by her brilliant rendition of Bishop's *Lo! the Gentle Lark*, with its long-sustained high notes and bird-like trills which she sang with astonishing ease.

A group of love songs by Cadman were among the numbers on her program. At the close, Madame Tolbert sang the well-known aria, *Caro Nome* from *Rigoletto*, which is the selection with which she won the diamond medal awarded by the Chicago school of Music when she was a student at that school. Miss Clark, in addition to accompanying Madame Tolbert, rendered two piano solos in a very capable manner.

The Misses Sarah E. and Neddie

L. Rucker of Atlanta, Georgia, sisters to the wife of President Davis, spent the Christmas holidays at Institute, visiting President and Mrs. Davis.

Members of the faculty and administrative force of the school who left the campus for the Christmas holiday period, spent their vacations as follows: Dr. H. S. Blackiston in Philadelphia; Miss Fay Hendley in Salisbury, North Carolina; Miss Mary Roan in Cincinnati, Ohio and Nashville, Tennessee; Mrs. Anna D. Fleming in Wilmington, North Carolina; Mr. C. O. Hubbard in Richmond Virginia; Miss Jennie Reid in Gallipolis, Ohio; Mr. David A. Lane, Jr. in Washington, D. C. While in Washington, Mr. Lane attended the sessions of the National Negro Academy.

Owing to an oversight, we failed to mention in our last issue, that Miss Jennie Reid of the Business Office, spent the Thanksgiving recess in Wilberforce, Ohio, and while there witnessed the football game between Wilberforce University and Institute.

Miss Ednora Prillerman, daughter of Professor and Mrs. Byrd Prillerman, spent the holidays with her parents in the village.

Miss Beatrice Wade, of the Third Year English class, has returned to school after an illness of three week.

The West Va. Collegiate Institute

announces

The Annual Summer School

which will be held from

June 13 to July 22, 1921

RURAL and URBAN TEACHERS will be offered courses in Rural Problems, in the Organization and Administration of Rural Schools, and a review of the common branches, etc.

ELEMENTARY GRADE TEACHERS will be offered an intensive drill in all subjects required in the Uniform Examination for the Elementary Certificate. Courses will be arranged to meet special needs of the teachers who are working for a Short Course Certificate.

Courses will be offered for CONDITIONED STUDENTS and for those who are working for ADVANCE CREDITS.

CREDIT TOWARD A COLLEGE DEGREE will be given for courses in Economics, English, Foreign Languages, History, Mathematics, the Natural Sciences and Sociology.

OTHER COURSES will be offered as the need arises.

For detailed information address


John W. Davis, President

or

S. H. Guss Director

Institute, West Virginia

AGRICULTURE

O OTHER human occupation opens so wide a field for the profitable and agreeable combination of labor with cultivated thought as agriculture. Population must increase rapidly, more rapidly than in former times, and ere long the most valuable of all the arts will be the art of deriving a comfortable subsistence from the smallest area of soil. No community whose every member possesses this art can ever be the victim of oppression in any of its forms. Such community will be alike independent of crowned kings, money kings and land kings.

Abraham Lincoln

1859

