

THE SUCCESS OF NEGRO EDUCATION.

EXTRACTS FROM THE ADDRESS OF BOOKER T. WASHINGTON.

There have been 1501 students enrolled in all of the departments of this institution during the past year. This number does not include the 452 pupils who attend the Practice school ("The Children's Home"), the Town night school the Greenwood Night school, the Afternoon Cooking class conducted in the town of Tuskegee and the Night Bible class. The students have come from 36 states and territories, and in considerable numbers from the following foreign places; Africa, the Bahama Islands, Central America, Cuba, Hayti, Porto Rico, Trinidad and Barbadoes.

The interest of the public centers just now on the question of the benefits of negro education. The charge is made and it has been repeated with emphasis by some, that no matter how much strength of mind, or ~~xxx~~ skill of the hand the black man may acquire, after all the weak point is that education does not help but retards his moral growth. It is further charged that educated negro youths are more given to crime than was true in the older generations. In passing, may I remark that a study of the criminal statistics of the world show that it is the young people that are most given to crime. If this charge has any color of truth, the public ought to be informed of it. If the charge is untrue, its falsity should likewise be made known. Let me give an illustration point that ought to be of value;

At the close of our school year about 525 young men left the school for a vacation.

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I find by careful investigation that the services of practically all of these young men had been engaged many days before they left school. In several cases their railway tickets were sent them. One firm in Mississippe employed 25 students for the summer and sent tickets for their railway passage. In other cases, agents representing various industrial plants came in person to urge students to enter their employment. Still others solicited students by mail and telegraph. Those seeking the labor of our students were practically all southern white people. In the majority of cases the students were sought for labor which required not only skill, but a high degree of intelligence. A manufacturing firm in Birmingham keeps a standing order with us to the effect that it will employ every man that we recommend. It is safe to say that if the number of students leaving the school for vacation had been twice as large, each one would have been able to find work of some kind.

Investigation shows further that our students command an average wage that is three times as large as that which they earned before receiving any training at the Tuskegee Institute. That is, expressed in dollars and cents, the southern white people place three times as much value upon the services of an educated negro as they place upon the services of an uneducated one.

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The foregoing statement seems conclusive, as to the effect of the education upon the economic worth of the negro. But what are the facts as to the effect of education? If evidence is needed to prove that education does not harm him morally, I would submit the fact that no negro who holds a diploma from any chartered institution in Alabama can be discovered in any prison in that state. Within the last few months I have asked and secured direct information as to the criminal records of the

graduates of fifteen of the largest and oldest negro colleges and industrial schools and the facts are that only two graduates out of the total number have been sentenced to prison, and at the present time not a single man or woman bearing the diploma of one of these fifteen institutions wears the prison garb.

The records of the south show that 90 per cent of the colored persons in prisons are without knowledge of trades, and 61 per cent are illiterate. This statement alone disproves the assertion that the negro grows in crime as he secures education. If the negro at the north is more criminal than his brother at the south, it is largely because the north withholds from him the opportunity for employment that the south gives. It is not the educated negro who has been guilty of, or even charged with crime. It is, as a rule, the man who has a mere smattering of education or who is in total ignorance.

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From the point of view of intellectual growth and self help, the education of the negro has been a success. Few white Americans realize what sacrifices on account of his poverty the negro has made to secure education and that practically no school has been opened that has not been filled. View the picture of a black woman teacher from the Tuskegee Institute teaching a school for weeks under an oak tree, then with hatchet and saw leading the way in the building of a school house and receiving for her services a pittance of \$10. a month. Later, see her closing her school at 2 o'clock that she and the older children may cultivate the acres of land about the school building, from which three bales of cotton are raised toward the support of the school so that the term is finally lengthened from three to seven months.

By comparison after years of civilization and opportunity in Italy, 38 per cent of the population are illiterate. In Spain 65 per cent in Russia 78 per cent, in the average South American country 80 per cent while after 40 years of freedom and opportunity the America negro has only 44 per cent of illiteracy to his debit.

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As to his commercial growth, let us now take the negro in Virginia for example. He began life forty years ago in complete poverty, scarcely owning clothing or a day's food. Right here, I lay emphasis upon the conditions in Virginia for the reason that the Hampton Institute is located in that state and is the oldest and most widely known of such institutions. From an economic point of view, what has been accomplished for Virginia alone, largely through the example of work of the graduates of Hampton and other large schools in that state.

The reports of the State Auditor show that the negro today owns at least 1-26th of all the real estate in that Commonwealth, exclusive of his holdings in towns and cities, and that in the counties east of the Blue Ridge mountains he owns 1-16th; in Middlesex county he owns 1-8; in Hanover 1-4. In Georgia the official records show that largely through the influence of educated men and women from Atlanta schools and others, the negro owns over 1,500,000 acres of land and added last year \$1,520,000 to their taxable property, making the total amount upon which they pay taxes in that state alone \$16,700,000. From nothing to \$16,000,000 in one state in forty years does not seem to prove that education is hurting the race very much.