Excerpts from:

DUSK OF DAWN

An Essay toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept

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With a New Introduction by Irene Diggs

pp. 3-96

Transaction Publishers
New Brunswick (U.S.A.) and London (U.K.)

1984
CHAPTER I. THE PLOT

FROM 1868 to 1940 stretch seventy-two mighty years, which are incidentally the years of my own life but more especially years of cosmic significance, when one remembers that they rush from the American Civil War to the reign of the second Roosevelt; from Victoria to the Sixth George; from the Franco-Prussian to the two World Wars. They contain the rise and fall of the Hohenzollerns, the shadowy emergence, magnificence and miracle of Russia; the turmoil of Asia in China, India and Japan, and the world-wide domination of white Europe.

In the folds of this European civilization I was born and shall die, imprisoned, conditioned, depressed, exalted and inspired. Integrally a part of it and yet, much more significant, one of its rejected parts; one who expressed in life and action and made vocal to many, a single whirlpool of social entanglement and inner psychological paradox, which always seem to me more significant for the meaning of the world today than other similar and related problems.

Little indeed did I do, or could I conceivably have done, to make this problem or to loose it. Crucified on the vast wheel of time, I flew round and round with the Zeitgeist, waving my pen and lifting faint voices to ex-
plain, expound and exhort; to see, foresee and prophesy, to the few who could or would listen. Thus very evidently to me and to others I did little to create my day or greatly change it; but I did exemplify it and thus for all time my life is significant for all lives of men.

What now was this particular social problem which, through the chances of birth and existence, became so peculiarly mine? At bottom and in essence it was as old as human life. Yet in its revelation, through the nineteenth century, it was significantly and fatally new: the differences between men; differences in their appearance, in their physique, in their thoughts and customs; differences so great and so impelling that always from the beginning of time, they thrust themselves forward upon the consciousness of all living things. Culture among human beings came to be and had to be built upon knowledge and recognition of these differences.

But after the scientific method had been conceived in the seventeenth century it came toward the end of the eighteenth century to be applied to man and to man as he appeared then, with no wide or intensive inquiry into what he had been or how he had lived in the past. In the nineteenth century however came the revolution of conceiving the world not as permanent structure but as changing growth and then the study of man as changing and developing physical and social entity had to begin.

But the mind clung desperately to the idea that basic racial differences between human beings had suffered no change; and it clung to this idea not simply from inertia and unconscious action but from the fact that because of the modern African slave trade a tremendous economic structure and eventually an industrial revolution had been based upon racial differences between men; and this racial difference had now been rationalized into a difference mainly of skin color. Thus in the latter part of the nineteenth century when I was born and grew to manhood, color had become an abiding unchangeable fact chiefly because a mass of self-conscious instincts and unconscious prejudices had arranged themselves rank on rank in its defense. Government, work, religion and education became based upon and determined by the color line. The future of mankind was implicit in the race and color of men.

Already in my boyhood this matter of color loomed significantly. My skin was darker than that of my schoolmates. My family confined itself not entirely but largely to people of this same darker hue. Even when in fact the color was lighter, this was an unimportant variation from the norm. As I grew older, and saw the peoples of the land and of the world, the problem changed from a simple thing of color, to a broader, deeper matter of social condition: to millions of folk born of dark slaves, with the slave heritage in mind and home; millions of people spawned in compulsory ignorance; to a whole problem of the uplift of the lowly who formed the darker races.

This social condition pictured itself gradually in my mind as a matter of education, as a matter of knowledge; as a matter of scientific procedure in a world which had become scientific in concept. Later, however, all this frame of concept became blurred and distorted. There was evidently evil and hindrance blocking the way of life. Not science alone could settle this matter, but force must come
to its aid. The black world must fight for freedom. It must fight with the weapons of Truth, with the sword of the intrepid, uncompromising Spirit, with organization in boycott, propaganda and mob frenzy. Upon this state of mind after a few years of conspicuous progress fell the horror of World War—of ultimate agitation, propaganda and murder.

The lesson of fighting was unforgettable; it was eternal loss and cost in victory or defeat. And again my problem of human difference, of the color line, of social degradation, of the fight for freedom became transformed. First and natural to the emergence of colder and more mature manhood from hot youth, I saw that the color bar could not be broken by a series of brilliant immediate assaults. Secondly, I saw defending this bar not simply ignorance and ill will; these to be sure; but also certain more powerful motives less open to reason or appeal. There were economic motives, urges to build wealth on the backs of black slaves and colored serfs; there followed those unconscious acts and irrational reactions, unpierced by reason, whose current form depended on the long history of relation and contact between thought and idea. In this case not sudden assault but long siege was indicated; careful planning and subtle campaign with the education of growing generations and propaganda.

For all this, time was needed to move the resistance in vast areas of unreason and especially in the minds of men where conscious present motive had been built on false rationalization. Meantime the immediate problem of the Negro was the question of securing existence, of labor and income, of food and home, of spiritual independence and democratic control of the industrial process. It would not do to concenter all effort on economic well-being and forget freedom and manhood and equality. Rather Negroes must live and eat and strive, and still hold unfaltering commerce with the stars.

Finally, I could see that the scientific task of the twentieth century would be to explore and measure the scope of chance and unreason in human action, which does not yield to argument but changes slowly and with difficulty after long study and careful development.

My intent in this book is to set forth the interaction of this stream and change of my thought, on my work and in relation to what has been going on in the world since my birth. Not so much its causal relation, for that in sheer limitation of opportunity was small; but rather of its intellectual relations, of its psychological interactions, and of the consequent results of these for me and many millions, who with me have had their lives shaped and directed by this course of events.
Chapter 2. A New England Boy and Reconstruction

As I have written elsewhere, "I was born by a golden river and in the shadow of two great hills." My birthplace was Great Barrington, a little town in western Massachusetts in the valley of the Housatonic, flanked by the Berkshire hills. Physically and socially our community belonged to the Dutch valley of the Hudson rather than to Puritan New England, and travel went south to New York more often and more easily than east to Boston. But my birthplace was less important than my birth-time. The Civil War had closed but three years earlier and 1868 was the year in which the freedmen of the South were enfranchised and for the first time as a mass took part in government. Conventions with black delegates voted new constitutions all over the South; and two groups of laborers—freed slaves and poor whites—dominated the former slave states. It was an extraordinary experiment in democracy. Thaddeus Stevens, the clearest-headed leader of this attempt at industrial democracy, made his last speech impeaching Andrew Johnson on February sixteenth and on February twenty-third I was born.

Less than a month after my birth Andrew Johnson passed from the scene and Ulysses Grant became President of the United States. The Fifteenth Amendment enfranchising the Negro as a race became law and the work of abolishing slavery and making Negroes men was accomplished, so far as law could do it. Meanwhile elsewhere in the world there were stirring and change which were to mean much in my life: in Japan the Meiji Emperors rose to power the year I was born; in China the intrepid Empress Dowager was fighting strangulation by England and France; Prussia had fought with Austria and France, and the German Empire arose in 1871. In England, Victoria opened her eighth parliament; the duel of Disraeli and Gladstone began; while in Africa came the Abyssinian expedition and opening of the Suez Canal, so fateful for all my people.

My town was shut in by its mountains and provincialism; but it was a beautiful place, a little New England town nestled shyly in its valley with something of Dutch cleanliness and English reticence. The Housatonic yellowed by the paper mills, rolled slowly through its center; while Green River, clear and beautiful, joined in to the south. Main Street was lined with ancient elms; the hills held white pines and orchards and then faded up to magnificent rocks and caves which shut out the neighboring world. The people were mainly of English descent with much Dutch blood and with a large migration of Irish and German workers to the mills as laborers.

The social classes of the town were built partly on landholding farmers and more especially on manufacturers and merchants, whose prosperity was due in no little degree to the new and high tariff. The rich people of the town were not very rich nor many in number. The middle class were farmers, merchants and artisans; and beneath
these was a small proletariat of Irish and German mill workers. They lived in slums near the woolen mills and across the river clustering about the Catholic Church. The number of colored people in the town and county was small. They were all, save directly after the war, old families, well-known to the old settlers among the whites. The color line was manifest and yet not absolutely drawn. I remember a cousin of mine who brought home a white wife. The chief objection was that he was not able to support her and nobody knew about her family; and knowledge of family history was counted as highly important. Most of the colored people had some white blood from unions several generations past. That they congerated together in their own social life was natural because that was the rule in the town: there were little social knots of people, but not much that today would be called social life, save that which centered about the churches; and there the colored folk often took part. My grandmother was Episcopalian and my mother, Congregational. I grew up in the Congregational Sunday school.

In Great Barrington there were perhaps twenty-five, certainly not more than fifty, colored folk in a population of five thousand. My family was among the oldest inhabitants of the valley. The family had spread slowly through the county intermarrying among cousins and other black folk with some but limited infiltration of white blood. Other dark families had come in and there was some intermingling with local Indians. In one or two cases there were groups of apparently later black immigrants, near Sheffield for instance. There survives there even to this day an isolated group of black folk whose origin is obscure.

We knew little of them but felt above them because of our education and economic status.

The economic status was not high. The early members of the family supported themselves on little farms of a few acres; then drifted to town as laborers and servants, but did not go into the mills. Most of them rented homes, but some owned little homes and pieces of land; a few had very pleasant and well-furnished homes, but none had anything like wealth.

My immediate family, which I remember as a young child, consisted of a very dark grandfather, Othello Burghardt, sitting beside the fireplace in a high chair, because of an injured hip. He was good-natured but not energetic. The energy was in my grandmother, Sally, a thin, tall, yellow and hawk-faced woman, certainly beautiful in her youth, and efficient and managing in her age. My mother, Mary Sylvina, was born at Great Barrington, January 14, 1831, and died there in 1885 at the age of fifty-four years. She had at the age of thirty a son, Ielbert, born of her and her cousin, John Burghardt. The circumstances of this romance I never knew. No one talked of it in the family. Perhaps there was an actual marriage. If so, it was not recorded in the family Bible. Perhaps the mating was broken up on account of the consanguinity of the cousins by a family tradition which had a New England strictness in its sex morals. So far as I ever knew there was only one illegitimate child throughout the family in my grandfather's and the two succeeding generations. My mother was brown and rather small with smooth skin and lovely eyes, and hair that curled and crinkled down each side her forehead from the part in the middle. She was rather
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silent but very determined and very patient. My father, a light mulatto, died in my infancy so that I do not remember him. I shall later speak more intimately of him.

I was born in a rather nice little cottage which belonged to a black South Carolinian, whose own house stood next, at the lower end of one of the pleasant streets of the town. Then for a time I lived in the country at the house of my grandfather, Othello, one of three farming brothers. It was sturdy, small and old-fashioned. Later we moved back to town and lived in quarters over the woodshed of one of the town’s better mansions. After that we lived awhile over a store by the railway and during my high school years in a little four-room tenement house on the same street where I was born, but farther up, down a lane and in the rear of a home owned by the widow of a New York physician. None of these homes had modern conveniences but they were weatherproof, fairly warm in winter and furnished with some comfort.

For several generations my people had attended schools for longer or shorter periods so most of them could read and write. I was brought up from earliest years with the idea of regular attendance at school. This was partly because the schools of Great Barrington were near at hand, simple but good, well-taught, and truant laws were enforced. I started on one school ground, which I remember vividly, at the age of five or six years, and continued there in school until I was graduated from high school at sixteen. I was seldom absent or tardy, and the school ran regularly ten months in the year with a few vacations. The curriculum was simple: reading, writing, spelling and arithmetic; grammar, geography and history. We learned the alphabet; we were drilled rigorously on the multiplication tables and we drew accurate maps. We could spell correctly and read clearly.

By the time I neared the high school, economic problems and questions of the future began to loom. These were partly settled by my own activities. My mother was then a widow with limited resources of income through boarding the barber, my uncle; supplemented infrequently by day’s work, and by some kindly but unobtrusive charity. But I was keen and eager to eke out this income by various jobs: splitting kindling, mowing lawns, doing chores. My first regular wage began as I entered the high school: I went early of mornings and filled with coal one or two of the new so-called “base-burning” stoves in the millinery shop of Madame L’Hommedieu. From then on, all through my high school course, I worked after school and on Saturdays; I sold papers, distributed tea from the new A & P stores in New York; and for a few months, through the good will of Johnny Morgan, actually rose to be local correspondent of the Springfield Republican.

Meantime the town and its surroundings were a boy’s paradise: there were mountains to climb and rivers to wade and swim; lakes to freeze and hills for coasting. There were orchards and caves and wide green fields; and all of it was apparently property of the children of the town. My earlier contacts with playmates and other human beings were normal and pleasant. Sometimes there was a dearth of available playmates but that was peculiar to the conventions of the town where families were small and children must go to bed early and not loaf on the streets.
or congregate in miscellaneous crowds. Later, in the high school, there came some rather puzzling distinctions which I can see now were social and racial; but the racial angle was more clearly defined against the Irish than against me. It was a matter of income and ancestry more than color. I have written elsewhere of the case of exchanging visiting cards where one girl, a stranger, did not seem to want mine to my vast surprise.

I presume I was saved evidences of a good deal of actual discrimination by my own keen sensitiveness. My companions did not have a chance to refuse me invitations; they must seek me out and urge me to come as indeed they often did. When my presence was not wanted they had only to refrain from asking. But in the ordinary social affairs of the village—the Sunday school with its picnics and festivals; the temporary skating rink in the town hall; the coasting in crowds on all the hills—in all these, I took part with no thought of discrimination on the part of my fellows, for that I would have been the first to notice.

Later, I was protected in part by the fact that there was little social activity in the high school; there were no fraternities; there were no school dances; there were no honor societies. Whatever of racial feeling gradually crept into my life, its effect upon me in these earlier days was rather one of exaltation and high disdain. They were the losers who did not ardently court me and not I, which seemed to be proven by the fact that I had no difficulty in outdoing them in nearly all competition, especially intellectual. In athletics I was not outstanding. I was only moderately good at baseball and football; but at running,
a considerable expenditure for books which were not free in those days—more than my folk could afford; but the wife of one of the mill-owners, or rather I ought to describe her as the mother of one of my playmates, after some hesitation offered to furnish all the necessary school books. I became therefore a high school student preparing for college and thus occupying an unusual position in the town even among whites, although there had been one or two other colored boys in the past who had gotten at least part of a high school education. In this way I was thrown with the upper rather than the lower social classes and protected in many ways. I came in touch with rich folk, summer boarders, who made yearly excursions from New York. Their beautiful clothes impressed me tremendously but otherwise I found them quite ordinary. The children did not have much sense or training; they were not very strong and rather too well dressed to have a good time playing.

I had little contact with crime and degradation. The slums in the town were not bad and repelled me, partly because they were inhabited by the foreign-born. There was one house among colored folk, where I now realize there must have been a good deal of gambling, drinking and other looseness. The inmates were pleasant to me but I was never asked to enter and of course had no desire. In the whole town, colored and white, there was not much crime. The one excess was drunkenness and there my mother quietly took a firm stand. I was never to enter a liquor saloon. I never did. I donned a Murphy "blue ribbon." And yet perhaps, as I now see, the one solace that this pleasant but spiritually rather drab little town had

against the monotony of life was liquor; and rich and poor got drunk more or less regularly. I have seen one of the mill owners staggering home, and my very respectable uncle used to come home now and then walking exceedingly straight.

I was born in a community which conceived itself as having helped put down a wicked rebellion for the purpose of freeing four million slaves. All respectable people belonged to the Republican Party, but Democrats were tolerated, although regarded with some surprise and hint of motive. Most of the older men had been soldiers, including members of my own family. The town approached in politics a pure democracy with annual town meeting and elections of well-known and fairly qualified officials. We were placidly religious. The bulk of the well-to-do people belonged to the Episcopal and Congregational churches, a small number of farmers and artisans to the Methodist Church and the Irish workers to the Catholic Church across the river. The marriage laws and family relations were fairly firm. The chief delinquency was drunkenness and the major social problem of the better classes was the status of women who had little or no opportunity to marry.

My ideas of property and work during my boyhood were vague. They did not present themselves to me as problems. As a family we owned little property and our income was always small. Spending money for me came first as small gifts of pennies or a nickel from relatives; once I received a silver dollar, a huge fortune. Later I earned all my spending funds. I can see now that my mother must have struggled pretty desperately on very
narrow resources and that the problem of shoes and clothes for me must have been at times staggering. But these matters seldom bothered me because they were not brought to my attention. My general attitude toward property and income was that all who were willing to work could easily earn a living; that those who had property had earned it and deserved it and could use it as they wished; that poverty was the shadow of crime and connoted lack of thrift and shiftlessness. These were the current patterns of economic thought of the town in my boyhood.

In Great Barrington the first glimpse of the outer and wider world I got, was through Johnny Morgan's news shop which occupied the front end of the post office. There newspapers and books were on display and I remember very early seeing pictures of "U. S." Grant, and of "Bill" Tweed who was beginning his extraordinary career in New York City; and later I saw pictures of Hayes and of the smooth and rather cruel face of Tilden. Of the great things happening in the United States at that time, we were actually touched only by the Panic of 1873. When my uncle came home from a little town east of us where he was the leading barber, he brought me, I remember, a silver dollar which was an extraordinary thing; up to that time I had seen nothing but paper money. I was six when Charles Sumner died and the Freedmen's Bank closed; and when I was eight there came the revolution of 1876 in the South, and Victoria of England became Empress of India; but I did not know the meaning of these events until long after.

In general thought and conduct I became quite thor-

oughly New England. It was not good form in Great Barrington to express one's thought volubly, or to give way to excessive emotion. We were even sparing in our daily greetings. I am quite sure that in a less restrained and conventional atmosphere I should have easily learned to express my emotions with far greater and more unrestrained intensity; but as it was I had the social heritage not only of a New England clan but Dutch taciturnity. This was later reinforced and strengthened by inner withdrawals in the face of real and imagined discriminations. The result was that I was early thrown in upon myself. I found it difficult and even unnecessary to approach other people and by that same token my own inner life perhaps grew the richer; but the habit of repression often returned to plague me in after years, for so early a habit could not easily be unlearned. The Negroes in the South, when I came to know them, could never understand why I did not naturally greet everyone I passed on the street or slap my friends on the back.

During my high school career I had a chance for the first time to step beyond the shadow of the hills which hemmed in my little valley. My father's father was living in New Bedford and his third wife who had greatly loved my own father wanted my grandfather to know and recognize me. The grandfather, a short thick-set man, "colored" but quite white in appearance, with austere face, was hard and set in his ways, proud and bitter. My father and grandfather had not been able to get along together. Of them, I shall speak more intimately later. I went to New Bedford in 1883 at the age of fifteen. On the way I saw Hartford and Providence. I called on my uncle in Amherst
and received a new navy-blue suit. Grandfather was a gentleman in manner, precise and formal. He looked at me coolly, but in the end he was not unpleasant. I went down across the water to Martha’s Vineyard and saw what was then “Cottage City” and came home by way of Springfield and Albany where I was a guest of my older half-brother and saw my first electric street light blink and sputter.

I was graduated from high school in 1884 and was of course the only colored student. Once during my course another young dark man had attended the school for a short time but I was very much ashamed of him because he did not excel the whites as I was quite used to doing. All thirteen of us had orations and mine was on “Wendell Phillips.” The great anti-slavery agitator had just died in February and I presume that some of my teachers must have suggested the subject, although it is quite possible that I chose it myself. But I was fascinated by his life and his work and took a long step toward a wider conception of what I was going to do. I spoke in June and then came face to face with the problem of my future life.

My mother lived proudly to see me graduate but died in the fall and I went to live with an aunt. I was strongly advised that I was too young to enter college. Williams had been suggested, because most of our few high school graduates who went to college had attended there; but my heart was set on Harvard. It was the greatest and oldest college and I therefore quite naturally thought it was the one I must attend. Of course I did not realize the difficulties: some difficulties in entrance examinations because our high school was not quite up to the Harvard

standard; but a major difficulty of money. There must have been in my family and among my friends a good deal of anxious discussion as to my future but finally it was temporarily postponed when I was offered a job and promised that the next fall I should begin my college work.

The job brought me in unexpected touch with the world. There had been a great-uncle of mine, Tom Burghardt, whose tombstone I had seen often in the town graveyard. My family used to say in undertones that the money of Tom Burghardt helped to build the Pacific Railroad and that this came about in this wise: nearly all his life Tom Burghardt had been a servant in the Kellogg family, only the family usually forgot to pay him; but finally they did give him a handsome burial. Then Mark Hopkins, a son or relative of the great Mark, appeared on the scene and married a daughter of the Kelloggs. He became one of the Huntington-Stanford-Crocker Pacific Associates who built, manipulated and cornered the Pacific railroads and with the help of the Kellogg nest-egg, Hopkins made nineteen million dollars in the West by methods not to be inquired into. His widow came back to Great Barrington in the eighties and planned a mansion out of the beautiful blue granite which formed our hills. A host of workmen, masons, stone-cutters and carpenters were assembled, and in the summer of 1884 I was made time-keeper for the contractors who carried on this job. I received the fabulous wage of a dollar a day. It was a most interesting experience and had new and intriguing bits of reality and romance. As time-keeper and the obviously young and inexperienced agent of
superiors, I was the one who handed the discharged workers their last wage envelopes. I talked with contractors and saw the problems of employers. I pored over the plans and specifications and even came in contact with the elegant English architect Searles who finally came to direct the work.

The widow had a steward, a fine, young educated colored fellow who had come to be her right-hand man; but the architect supplanted him. He had the glamour of an English gentleman. The steward was gradually pushed aside and down into his place. The architect eventually married the widow and her wealth and the steward killed himself. So the Hopkins millions passed strangely into foreign hands and gave me my first problem of inheritance. But in the meantime the fabrication and growth of this marvelous palace, beautiful beyond anything that Great Barrington had seen; went slowly and majestically on, and always I could sit and watch it grow.

Finally in the fall of 1885, the difficulty of my future education was solved. The whole subtlety of the plan was clear neither to me nor my relatives at the time. Merely I was offered through the Reverend C. C. Painter, once excellent Federal Indian Agent, a scholarship to attend Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee; the funds were to be furnished by four Connecticut churches which Mr. Painter had formerly pastored. Disappointed though I was at not being able to go to Harvard, I merely regarded this as a temporary change of plan; I would of course go to Harvard in the end. But here and immediately was adventure. I was going into the South; the South of slavery, rebellion and black folk; and above all I was going to meet colored people of my own age and education, of my own ambitions. Once or twice already I had had swift glimpses of the colored world: at Rocky Point on Narragansett Bay, I had attended an annual picnic beside the sea, and had seen in open-mouthed astonishment the whole gorgeous color gamut of the American Negro world; the swaggering men, the beautiful girls, the laughter and gaiety, the unhampered self-expression. I was astonished and inspired. I became aware, once a chance to go to a group of such young people was opened up for me, of the spiritual isolation in which I was living. I heard too in these days for the first time the Negro folk songs. A Hampton Quartet had sung them in the Congregational Church. I was thrilled and moved to tears and seemed to recognize something inherently and deeply my own. I was glad to go to Fisk.

On the other hand my people had undoubtedly a more discriminating and unromantic view of the situation. They said frankly that it was a shame to send me South. I was Northern born and bred and instead of preparing me for work and giving me an opportunity right there in my own town and state, they were bundling me off to the South. This was undoubtedly true. The educated young white folk of Great Barrington became clerks in stores, bookkeepers and teachers, while a few went into professions. Great Barrington was not able to conceive of me in such local position. It was not so much that they were opposed to it, but it did not occur to them as a possibility.

On the other hand there was the call of the black South; teachers were needed. The crusade of the New England
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schoolmarm was in full swing. The freed slaves, if properly led, had a great future. Temporarily deprived of their full voting privileges, this was but a passing set-back. Black folk were bound in time to dominate the South. They needed trained leadership. I was sent to help furnish it.

I started out and went into Tennessee at the age of seventeen to be a Sophomore at Fisk University. It was to me an extraordinary experience. I was thrilled to be for the first time among so many people of my own color or rather of such various and such extraordinary colors, which I had only glimpsed before, but who it seemed were bound to me by new and exciting and eternal ties. Never before had I seen young men so self-assured and who gave themselves such airs, and colored men at that; and above all for the first time I saw beautiful girls. At my home among my white school mates there were a few pretty girls; but either they were not entrancing or because I had known them all my life I did not notice them; but at Fisk at the first dinner I saw opposite me a girl of whom I have often said, no human being could possibly have been as beautiful as she seemed to my young eyes that far-off September night of 1885.

CHAPTER 3. EDUCATION

IN THE LAST DECADES

OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

TODAY both youth and age look upon a world whose foundations seem to be tottering. They are not sure what the morrow will bring; perhaps the complete overthrow of European civilization, of that great enveloping mass of culture into which they were born. Everything in their environment is a meet subject for criticism. They can dispassionately evaluate the past and speculate upon the future. It is a day of fundamental change. On the other hand when I was a young man, so far as I conceived, the foundations of present culture were laid, the way was charted, the progress toward certain great goals was undoubtedly and inevitable. There was room for argument concerning details and methods and possible detours in the on-sweep of civilization; but the fundamental facts were clear, unquestioned and unquestionable.

Between the years 1885 and 1894 I received my education at Fisk University, Harvard College and the University of Berlin. It was difficult for me at the time to form any critical estimate of any meaning of the world which differed from the conventional unanimity about me. Apparently one consideration alone saved me from complete conformity with the thoughts and confusions of then current social trends; and that was the problems
of racial and cultural contacts. Otherwise I might easily have been simply the current product of my day. Even as it was, the struggle for which I was preparing and the situations which I was trying to conceive and study, related themselves primarily to the plight of the comparatively small group of American Negroes with which I was identified, and theoretically to the larger Negro race. I did not face the general plight and conditions of all humankind. That I took for granted, and in the unanimity of thought and development of that day, this was scarcely to be wondered at.

It was a day of Progress with a capital P. Population in all the culture lands was increasing, doubling and more; cities everywhere were growing and expanding and making themselves the centers and almost the only centers of civilization; transportation by land and sea was drawing the nations near and making the lands of the earth increasingly accessible. Invention and technique were a perpetual marvel and their accomplishment infinite in possibility; commerce was madly seeking markets all around the earth; colonies were being seized and countries integrated in Asia, Africa, South America and the islands.

Above all science was becoming religion; psychology was reducing metaphysics to experiment and a sociology of human action was planned. Frightening the vast concept of evolution, religion went into its heresy trials, its struggle with "higher criticism," its discomfort at the "revised version" of the New Testament which was published the year I entered college. [Wealth was God.] Everywhere men sought wealth and especially in America there was extravagant living; everywhere the poor planned to be rich and the rich planned to be richer; everywhere wider, bigger, higher, better things were set down as inevitable.

All this, of course, dominated education; especially the economic order determined what the next generation should learn and know. On the whole, looking at the marvelous industrial expansion of America, seeing the rise of the western farmer and the wages of the eastern mechanic, all was well; or if not, if there were ominous protests and upheavals, these were but the friction necessary to all advance. "God's in His heaven; All's right with the world," Browning was singing—that colored Robert Browning, who died just after I received my first bachelor's degree.

Had it not been for the race problem early thrust upon me and enveloping me, I should have probably been an unquestioning worshiper at the shrine of the social order and economic development into which I was born. But just that part of that order which seemed to most of my fellows nearest perfection, seemed to me most inequitable and wrong; and starting from that critique, I gradually, as the years went by, found other things to question in my environment. At first, however, my criticism was confined to the relation of my people to the world movement. I was not questioning the world movement in itself. What the white world was doing, its goals and ideals, I had not doubted were quite right. What was wrong was that I and people like me and thousands of others who might have my ability and aspiration, were refused permission to be a part of this world. It was as though moving on a rushing express, my main thought
was as to the relations I had to other passengers on the express, and not to its rate of speed and its destination. In the day of my formal education, my interest was centered upon the race struggle. The fight on the moving car had to do with my relations to the car and its folk; but on the whole, nothing to do with the car's own movement. My attention from the first was focused on democracy and democratic development and upon the problem of the admission of my people into the freedom of democracy. This my school training touched but obliquely. We studied history and politics almost exclusively from the point of view of ancient German freedom, English and New England democracy, and the development of the United States.

Here, however, I could bring criticism from what I knew and saw touching the Negro. I was brought up in the primary democracy of a New England village. I attended the town meeting every spring and in the upper room in that little red brick town hall, fronted by a Roman "Victory" commemorating the Civil War, I listened to the citizens discuss things about which I knew and had opinions: streets and bridges and schools, and particularly the high school. Baretown Beebee, a dirty, ragged old hermit, used regularly to come down from his rocks and woods and denounce high school education and expense. Regularly the responsible citizens of the town sat and listened and then quietly voted the usual appropriation. That one recurring incident was a splendid part of my education.

The rest of my early political knowledge came largely from newspapers which I read outside my curriculum. I read of the contests of the Democratic and Republican parties, from the first seating of Hayes, through the administrations of Garfield and Arthur, Cleveland, Harrison, Cleveland again, and McKinley in 1895. All this complied with the conventional theory of party government, and while the issues were not as clear cut and the motives as unmixed as they ought to have been, nevertheless the increasing triumph of democratic government was in my mind unquestioned. The Populists as a third party movement beginning during this time, did not impress me.

The year before I entered college, England killed the arbitrary power of the Justice of the Peace and the County Squire, doubled the number of its voters and was forced into a struggle to yield Ireland home rule; eventually Japan attempted a constitution with elective representatives; Brazil became a republic while I was at Harvard, and during that time France fought successfully to curtail the political power of the Catholic Church.

My problem then was how, into the inevitable and logical democracy which was spreading over the world, could black folk in America and particularly in the South be openly and effectively admitted; and the colored people of the world allowed their own self-government? I therefore watched, outside my textbooks and without reference to my teachers, the race developments throughout the world. The difficulty here, however, was securing any real and exhaustive knowledge of facts. I could not get any clear picture of the current change in Africa and Asia.

Lynching was a continuing and recurrent horror during my college days: from 1885 through 1894, seventeen hundred Negroes were lynched in America. Each death was
a scar upon my soul, and led me on to conceive the plight of other minority groups; for in my college days Italians were lynched in New Orleans, forcing the Federal government to pay $25,000 in indemnity, and the anti-Chinese riots in the West culminated in the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1892. Some echoes of Jewish segregation and pogroms in Russia came through the magazines; I followed the Dreyfus case; and I began to see something of the struggle between East and West in the Sino-Japanese War.

The three years at Fisk were years of growth and development. I learned new things about the world. My knowledge of the race problem became more definite. I saw discrimination in ways of which I had never dreamed; the separation of passengers on the railways of the South was just beginning; the race separation in living quarters throughout the cities and towns was manifest; the public disdain and even insult in race contact on the street continually took my breath; I came in contact for the first time with a sort of violence that I had never realized in New England; I remember going down and looking wide-eyed at the door of a public building, filled with buck-shot, where the editor of the leading daily paper had been publicly murdered the day before. I was astonished to find many of my fellow students carrying fire-arms and to hear their stories of adventure. On the other hand my personal contact with my teachers was inspiring and beneficial as indeed I suppose all personal contacts between human beings must be. Adam Spence of Fisk first taught me to know what the Greek language meant. In a funny little basement room crowded with apparatus,

Frederick Chase gave me insight into natural science and talked with me about future study. I knew the President, Erastus Cravath, to be honest and sincere.

I determined to know something of the Negro in the country districts; to go out and teach during the summer vacation. I was not compelled to do this, for my scholarship was sufficient to support me, but that was not the point. I had heard about the country in the South as the real seat of slavery. I wanted to know it. I walked out into east Tennessee ten or more miles a day until at last in a little valley near Alexandria I found a place where there had been a Negro public school only once since the Civil War; and there for two successive terms during the summer I taught at $28 and $30 a month. It was an enthralling experience. I met new and intricate and unconscious discrimination. I was pleasantly surprised when the white school superintendent, on whom I had made a business call, invited me to stay for dinner; and he would have been astonished if he had dreamed that I expected to eat at the table with him and not after he was through. All the appointments of my school were primitive: a windowless log cabin; hastily manufactured benches; no blackboard; almost no books; long, long distances to walk. And on the other hand, I heard the sorrow songs sung with primitive beauty and grandeur. I saw the hard, ugly drudgery of country life and the writhing of landless, ignorant peasants. I saw the race problem at nearly its lowest terms.

At Fisk I began my writing and public speaking. I edited the Fish Herald. I became an impassioned orator and developed a belligerent attitude toward the color
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I was determined to make a scientific conquest of my environment, which would render the emancipation of the Negro race easier and quicker. The persistence which I had learned in New England stood me now in good stead. Because my first college choice had been Harvard, to Harvard I was still resolved to go. When I heard that Harvard, seeking to shed something of its New England provincialism, was offering scholarships in various parts of the country, I immediately wrote, and to the astonishment of teachers and fellow students, not to mention myself, received Price Greenleaf Aid of $300.

I was graduated from Fisk in 1888 and took as my subject "Bismarck." This choice in itself showed the abyss between my education and the truth in the world. Bismarck was my hero. He had made a nation out of a mass of bickering peoples. He had dominated the whole development with his strength until he crowned an emperor at Versailles. This foreshadowed in my mind the kind of thing that American Negroes must do, marching forth with strength and determination under trained leadership. On the other hand, I did not understand at all, nor had my history courses led me to understand, anything of current European intrigue, of the expansion of European power into Africa, of the Industrial Revolution built on slave trade and now turning into Colonial Imperialism; of the fierce rivalry among white nations for controlling the profits from colonial raw material and labor—of all this I had no clear conception. I was blithely European and imperialist in outlook; democratic as democracy was conceived in America.

So far my formal education had touched politics and religion, but on the whole had avoided economics. At Fisk a very definite attempt was made to see that we did not lose or question our Christian orthodoxy. At first the effort seemed to me entirely superfluous, since I had never questioned my religious upbringing. Its theory had presented no particular difficulties: God ruled the world, Christ loved it, and men did right, or tried to; otherwise they were rightly punished. But the book on "Christian Evidences" which we were compelled to read, affronted my logic. It was to my mind, then and since, a cheap piece of special pleading. Our course in general philosophy under the serious and entirely lovable president was different. It opened vistas. It made me determine to go further in this probing for truth. Eventually it landed me squarely in the arms of William James of Harvard, for which God be praised.

I became critical of religion and resentful of its practice for two reasons: first the heresy trials, particularly the one which expelled Briggs from the Presbyterian Church; and especially the insistence of the local church at Fisk University that dancing was a "sin." I was astonished to find that anybody could possibly think this; as a boy I had attended with my mother little parlor dances; as a youth at Fisk I danced gaily and happily. I was reminded by a smug old hypocrite of the horrible effects my example might have even if my own conscience was clear. I searched my soul with the Pauline text: "If meat maketh my brother to offend," etc. I have never had much respect for Paul since.

After graduation, the members of the Fisk Glee Club went to Lake Minnetonka, a resort in Minnesota, for the
summer of 1888, with the idea of working in the dining room and giving concerts. I was to act as their business manager. During college I had developed rather as the executive and planner, the natural secretary of affairs rather than ornamental president and chairman. The only difficulty about the Minnesota excursion was that I had never worked in a hotel in my life; I could not wait on table and therefore became one of the bus boys. It was so unusual a pageant to watch the dining room that I made no tips and for a long time had difficulty in getting enough to eat, not realizing that in that day servants in great hotels were not systematically fed but foraged for food in devious ways. I saw the Americans, rich and near-rich, at play; it was not inspiring. The servility necessary for the successful waiter I could not or would not learn. After the season, I went on ahead and succeeded in making engagements for a respectable number of concerts for the students who followed me down all the way to Chicago; while I went on to Harvard to enter the junior class.

I was happy at Harvard, but for unusual reasons. One of these unusual circumstances was my acceptance of racial segregation. Had I gone from Great Barrington high school directly to Harvard I would have sought companionship with my white fellows and been disappointed and embittered by a discovery of social limitations to which I had not been used. But I came by way of Fisk and the South and there I had accepted and embraced eagerly the companionship of those of my own color. It was, of course, no final end. Eventually with them and in mass assault, led by culture, we were going to break down the boundaries of race; but at present we were banded to-

gether in a great crusade and happily so. Indeed, I suspect that the joy of full human intercourse without reservations and annoying distinctions, made me all too willing to consort with mine own and to disdain and forget as far as was possible that outer, whiter world.

Naturally it could not be entirely forgotten, so that now and then I plunged into it, joined its currents and rose or fell with it. The joining was sometimes a matter of social contact. I escorted colored girls, and as pretty ones as I could find, to the vespers exercises and the class day and commencement social functions. Naturally we attracted attention and sometimes the shadow of insult as when in one case a lady seemed determined to mistake me for a waiter. A few times I attempted to enter student organizations, but was not greatly disappointed when the expected refusals came. My voice, for instance, was better than the average. The glee club listened to it but I was not chosen a member. It posed the later recurring problem of a "nigger" on the team.

In general, I asked nothing of Harvard but the tutelage of teachers and the freedom of the library. I was quite voluntarily and willingly outside its social life. I knew nothing of and cared nothing for fraternities and clubs. Most of those which dominated the Harvard life of my day were unknown to me even by name. I asked no fellowship of my fellow students. I found friends and most interesting and inspiring friends among the colored folk of Boston and surrounding places. With them I carried on lively social intercourse, but one which involved little expenditure of money. I called at their homes and ate at their tables. We danced at private parties. We went on
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excursions down the Bay. Once, with a group of colored students gathered from surrounding institutions, we gave Aristophanes' "The Birds" in a colored church.

So that of the general social intercourse on the campus I consciously missed nothing. Some white students made themselves known to me and a few, a very few, became life-long friends. Most of them, even of my own more than three hundred classmates, I knew neither by sight nor name. Among my Harvard classmates many made their mark in life: Norman Hapgood, Robert Herrick, Herbert Croly, George A. Dorsey, Homer Folks, Augustus Hand, James Brown Scott, and others. I knew practically none of these. For the most part I do not doubt that I was voted a somewhat selfish and self-centered "grind" with a chip on my shoulder and a sharp tongue.

Something of a certain inferiority complex was possibly present: I was desperately afraid of not being wanted; of intruding without invitation; of appearing to desire the company of those who had no desire for me. I should have been pleased if most of my fellow students had desired to associate with me; if I had been popular and envied. But the absence of this made me neither unhappy nor morose. I had my "island within" and it was a fair country.

Only once or twice did I come to the surface of college life. First, by careful calculation, I found that I needed the cash of one of the Boylston prizes to piece out my year's expenses. I got it through winning a second oratorical prize. The occasion was noteworthy by the fact that the first prize went to a black classmate of mine, Clement Morgan. He and I became fast friends and spent a summer giving readings along the North Shore to help our college.

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costs. Later Morgan became the center of a revolt within the college. By unwritten rule, all of the honorary offices of the class went to Bostonians of Back Bay. No Westerner, Southerner, Jew, nor Irishman, much less a Negro, had thought of aspiring to the honor of being class day official. But in 1890, after the oratorical contest, the students of the class staged an unexpected revolt and elected Morgan as class orator. There was national surprise and discussion and later several smaller Northern colleges elected colored class orators.

This cutting of myself off from my fellows did not mean unhappiness nor resentment. I was in my early young manhood, unusually full of high spirits and humor. I thoroughly enjoyed life. I was conscious of understanding and power, and conceited enough still to think, as in high school, that they who did not know me were the fools, not I. On the other hand, I do not think that my classmates found in me anything personally objectionable. I was clean, not well-dressed but decently clothed. Manners I regarded as more or less superficial and deliberately cultivated a certain brusquerie. Personal adornment I regarded as pleasing but not important. I was in Harvard but not of it and realized all the irony of "Fair Harvard." I sang it because I liked the music.

The Harvard of 1888 was an extraordinary aggregation of great men. Not often since that day have so many distinguished teachers been together in one place and at one time in America. There were William James, the psychologist; Palmer in ethics; Royce and Santayana in philosophy; Shaler in geology and Hart in history. There were Francis Child, Charles Eliot Norton, Justin Winsor, and John
I foresaw that such discipline would best fit me for life. . . . I believe foolishly perhaps, but sincerely, that I have something to say to the world, and I have taken English in order to say it well.” Barrett Wendell rather liked that last sentence. He read it out to the class.

It was at Harvard that my education, turning from philosophy, centered in history and then gradually in economics and social problems. Today my course of study would have been called sociology; but in that day Harvard did not recognize any such science. I had taken in high school and at Fisk the old classical course with Latin and Greek, philosophy and some history. At Harvard I started in with philosophy and then turned toward United States history and social problems. The turning was due to William James. He said to me, “If you must study philosophy you will; but if you can turn aside into something else, do so. It is hard to earn a living with philosophy.”

So I turned toward history and social science. But there the way was difficult. Harvard had in the social sciences no such leadership of thought and breadth of learning as in philosophy, literature, and physical science. She was then groping and is still groping toward a scientific treatment of human action. She was facing at the end of the century a tremendous economic era. In the United States, finance was succeeding in monopolizing transportation, and raw materials like sugar, coal and oil. The power of the trust and combine was so great that the Sherman Act was passed in 1890. On the other hand, the tariff at the demand of manufacturers continued to rise in height from the McKinley to the indefensible Wilson tariff of 1894. A financial crisis shook the land in 1893 and popular discon-
tent showed itself in the Populist movement and Coxe's Army. The whole question of the burden of taxation began to be discussed and England barred an income tax in 1894.

These things we discussed with some clearness and factual understanding at Harvard. The tendency was toward English free trade and against the American tariff policy. We revered Ricardo and wasted long hours on the "Wages-fund." The trusts and monopolies were viewed frankly as dangerous enemies of democracies, but at the same time as inevitable methods of industry. We were strong for the gold standard and fearful of silver. On the other hand, the attitude of Harvard toward labor was on the whole contemptuous and condemnatory. Strikes like that of the anarchists in Chicago, the railway strikes of 1886; the terrible Homestead strike of 1892 and Coxe's Army of 1894 were pictured as ignorant lawlessness, lurching against conditions largely inevitable. Karl Marx was hardly mentioned and Henry George given but tolerant notice. The anarchists of Spain, the Nihilists of Russia, the British miners—all these were viewed not as part of the political development and the tremendous economic organization but as sporadic evil. This was natural. Harvard was the child of its era. The intellectual freedom and flowering of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were yielding to the deadening economic pressure which made Harvard rich but reactionary. This defender of wealth and capital, already half ashamed of Sumner and Phillips, was willing finally to replace an Eliot with a Lowell. The social community that mobbed Garrison, easily hanged Sacco and Vanzetti.

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It was not until I was long out of college and had finished the first phase of my teaching career that I began to see clearly the connection of economics and politics; the fundamental influence of man's efforts to earn a living upon all his other efforts. The politics which we studied in college were conventional, especially when it came to describing and elucidating the current scene in Europe. The Queen's Jubilee in June, 1887, while I was still at Fisk, set the pattern of our thinking. The little old woman of Windsor became a magnificent symbol of Empire. Here was England with her flag draped around the world, ruling more black folk than white and leading the colored peoples of the earth to Christian baptism, civilization and eventual self-rule. Only two years before, in 1885, Stanley, the traveling reporter, became a hero and symbol of white world leadership in Africa. The wild, fierce fight of the Mahdi and the driving of the English out of the Sudan for sixteen years did not reveal its inner truth to me. I heard only of the martyrdom of the drunken Bible-reader and freebooter, Gordon.

The Congo Free State was established and the Berlin Conference of 1885 was reported to be an act of civilization against the slave trade and liquor. French, English and Germans pushed on in Africa, but I did not question the interpretation which pictured this as the advance of civilization and the benevolent tutelage of barbarians. I read of the confirmation of the Triple Alliance in 1891. Later I saw the celebration of the renewed Triple Alliance on the Tempelhofer Feld, with the new young Emperor Wilhelm II, who, fresh from his dismissal of Bismarck, led the splendid pageantry; and finally the year
I left Germany, Nicholas II became Czar of all the
Russias. In all this I had not yet linked the political
development of Europe with the race problem in America.

In 1890, I took my bachelor’s degree from Harvard and
was one of the six commencement speakers, taking as my
subject “Jefferson Davis.” This was a better subject than
Bismarck for Davis was no hero of mine; yet the New
York Nation said, July 3, 1890, that I handled my subject
“with absolute good taste, great moderation, and almost
contemptuous fairness.” I was graduated just at the begin-
ing of the term of President Harrison, when the trusts
were dominating industry and the McKinley tariff making
that domination easier. The understanding between the
Industrial North and the New South was being perfected
and in 1890 the series of disfranchising laws began to be
enacted by the Southern states destined in the next six-
teen years to make voting by Southern Negroes practically
impossible.

Already I had received more education than most young
white men, having been almost continuously in school
from the age of six to the age of twenty-two. But I did not
yet feel prepared. I felt that to cope with the new and
extraordinary situations then developing in the United
States and the world, I needed to go further and that as a
matter of fact I had just well begun my training in knowl-
dge of social conditions. On the other hand, I had no re-
sources in wealth nor friends. I applied for a fellowship in
the graduate school of Harvard and was appointed Henry
Bromfield Rogers fellow for a year and later the appoint-
ment was renewed; so that from 1890 to 1892 I was a fellow
in Harvard University, studying in history and political

science and what would have been sociology if Harvard
had yet recognized such a field. I worked on my thesis,
“The Suppression of the Slave Trade,” taking my master’s
degree in 1891 and hoping to get my doctor’s degree in
another two years.

Then came one of these tricks of fortune which always
seem partly due to chance: in 1882, the Slater Fund for the
education of Negroes had been established and the board
in 1890 was headed by ex-President R. B. Hayes. President
Hayes went down to Johns Hopkins University and talked
frankly about the plans of the fund. The Boston Herald
of November 2, 1890, quoted him as saying: “If there is
any young colored man in the South whom we find to have
a talent for art or literature or any special aptitude for
study, we are willing to give him money from the educa-
tion funds to send him to Europe or give him an advanced
education.” He added that so far they had been able to
find only “orators.” This seemed to me a nasty fling at my
black classmate, Morgan, who had been Harvard class
orator a few months earlier, and indirectly at me.

The Hayes statement was brought to my attention at a
card party one evening; it not only made me good and
angry but inspired me to write President Hayes and ask
for a scholarship. I received a pleasant reply saying that
the newspaper quotation was incorrect; that his board had
had some such program in the past but had no present
plans for such scholarships. I proceeded to collect letters
from every person I knew in the Harvard Yard and places
outside, and literally deluged the unfortunate chairman
of the Slater Fund, intimating that his change of plan
did not seem to me fair or honest. He wrote again in
apologetic mood and said that he was sorry the plan had been given up; that he recognized that I was a candidate who might otherwise have been given attention.

I sat down and wrote Mr. Hayes a letter that could be described as nothing less than impudent and flatly accused him of bad faith. He was undoubtedly stirred. He apologized again, re-asserted his good faith, and further promised to take up the matter the next year with the board. Thereupon, the next year I proceeded to write the board: “At the close of the last academic year at Harvard, I received the degree of Master of Arts, and was re-appointed to my fellowship for the year 1891-92. I have spent most of the year in the preparation of my doctor’s thesis on the suppression of the slave trade in America. I prepared a preliminary paper on this subject and read it before the American Historical Association at its annual meeting at Washington during the Christmas holidays. . . . Properly to finish my education, careful training in an European university for at least a year is, in my mind and the minds of my professors, absolutely indispensable.” I thereupon asked respectfully “aid to study at least a year abroad under the direction of the graduate department of Harvard or other reputable auspices” and if this was not practicable, “that the board loan me a sufficient sum for this purpose.” I did not of course believe that this would get me an appointment, but I did think that possibly through the influence of people who thus came to know about my work, I might somehow borrow or beg enough to get to Europe. To my surprise, I was given a fellowship of seven hundred and fifty dollars, half grant and half repayable loan, to study abroad; with the promise that it might possibly be renewed for a second year. I remember rushing down to New York and talking with President Hayes in the old Astor House, and then going out walking on air. I saw an especially delectable shirt in a shop window. I went in and asked about it. It cost three dollars, which was about four times as much as I had ever paid for a shirt in my life; but I bought it.

I sailed in the summer of 1892 on a Dutch boat, the old “Amsterdam,” landing in Holland. I wrote gaily, “Holland is an extremely neat and well-ordered mud-puddle, situated at the confluence of the English, French, and German languages.” My first memory of it is inextricably interwoven with the smell of clover and the sight of black and white cows.

Europe modified profoundly my outlook on life and my thought and feeling toward it, even though I was there but two short years with my contacts limited and my friends few. But something of the possible beauty and elegance of life permeated my soul; I gained a respect for manners. I had been before, above all, in a hurry. I wanted a world, hard, smooth and swift, and had no time for rounded corners and ornament, for unhurried thought and slow contemplation. Now at times I sat still. I came to know Beethoven’s symphonies and Wagner’s Ring. I looked long at the colors of Rembrandt and Titian. I saw in arch and stone and steeple the history and striving of men and also their taste and expression. Form, color, and words took new combinations and meanings.

My introduction to Europe had some characteristic incidents. In my journey up the Rhine I found myself with a Dutch family: a lady, two daughters about my own age or
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a little younger, and a girl of ten or twelve. They were white and I therefore avoided them; when they strolled to one end of the deck I strolled to the other; but at last they approached and introduced themselves. They spoke both English and German, and I ended by having a delightful trip and by feeling more at home with cultured white folk than I had before in my life. This experience was continued when I spent a summer with Oberpfarrer Dr. Marbach in Eisenach. There were other boarders, German, French, and English, boys and girls; we had a delightful time. There was only one false note, when an American husband and wife from the West came, and were so alarmed about my social relations with German girls that they solemnly warned the Marbach family against racial intermarriage. The warning was quite unnecessary. I had already told the daughter, Dora, with whom I was most frequently coupled, that it would not be fair to marry her and bring her to America. She said she would come "gleich!" but I assured her that she would not be happy; and besides, I had work to do.

In the fall I went up to Berlin and registered in the university. In groups of one hundred we went into a large room with a high ceiling ornamented with busts of Berlin's famous professors. The year's Rector Magnificus was the widely famous Rudolf Virchow. He was a meek and calm little man, white-haired and white-bearded, with kindly face and pleasant voice. I had again at Berlin as at Harvard unusual opportunity. Although a foreigner, I was admitted my first semester to two seminars under Schmoller and Wagner, both of them at the time the most distinguished men in their line; I received eventually

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from both of them pleasant testimony on my work. That work was in economics, history, and sociology. I sat under the voice of the fire-eating Pan-German, von Treitschke; I heard Sering and Weber; I wrote on American agriculture for Schmoller and discussed social conditions in Europe with teachers and students. Under these teachers and in this social setting, I began to see the race problem in America, the problem of the peoples of Africa and Asia, and the political development of Europe as one. I began to unite my economics and politics; but I still assumed that in these groups of activities and forces, the political realm was dominant.

But more especially, I traveled; living cheaply, I saved good sums for the numerous vacations. I went to the Hansa cities; I made the celebrated Harzreise up to the Brocken in the spring. One Christmas vacation I spent in making a trip through south Germany along with a German-American and an Englishman. We visited Weimar, Frankfort, Heidelberg and Mannheim. Over Christmas Day and New Year's we stopped in a little German "Dorf" in the Rheinpfalz, where I had an excellent opportunity to study the peasant life closely and compare it with country life in the South. We visited perhaps twenty different families, talked, ate and drank with them; listened to their gossip, attended their assemblies, etc. We then went to Strassburg, Stuttgart, Ulm, München, Nürnberg, Prague and Dresden. In those places we stayed from one to five days following our Baedekers closely and paying much attention to the München and Dresden art galleries. The whole trip cost about eighty dollars. Later I went down to Italy; to Genoa, Rome and Naples, and over to Venice
and Vienna and Budapest; up to Krakau, where the father of a fellow-student was the head of a Polish library. From this friend, Stanislaus von Estreicher, I learned of the race problems of the Poles. Then by Breslau I came back to Berlin. In 1940, von Estreicher died in a German concentration camp, after he had refused to be one of Germany’s puppet rulers of Poland.

I received a renewal of my fellowship and spent a second year in Germany. By that time I knew my Germany well and spoke its tongue. I had associated with some of the lower nobility, many of the “Gelehrten,” artists, businessmen, and members of the Social Democracy.

I returned to the United States by way of Paris where I stayed as long as possible and then, having reduced myself almost to the last cent, took passage to the United States in steerage. It was by no means a pleasant trip, but perhaps it was good introduction to the new life; because now at last at twenty-six years of age and after twenty years of study I was coming home to look for a job and begin work.

I need not dwell on the difficulties of finding that job. It was a disturbed world in which I landed; 1892 saw the high tide of lynching in the United States; Cleveland had entered his second term in 1893 and the Chicago Exposition had taken place. The Dreyfus case had opened in France with his conviction and imprisonment, and he was destined for twelve years to suffer martyrdom. The war between China and Japan broke out the year of my return. I had rejoiced in the million dollar gift of Daniel Hand for education in my graduation year but recognized clearly the blow that democracy received when Congress
CHAPTER 4. SCIENCE AND EMPIRE

FROM the fall of 1894 to the spring of 1910, for sixteen years, I was a teacher. For two years I remained at Wilberforce; for something over a year, at the University of Pennsylvania; and for thirteen years at Atlanta University in Georgia. I sought in these years to teach youth the meaning and way of the world. What did I know about the world and how could I teach my knowledge?

The main result of my schooling had been to emphasize science and the scientific attitude. I got some insight into the laws of the physical world at Fisk and in the chemical laboratory and class in geology at Harvard. I was interested in evolution, geology, and the new psychology. I began to conceive of the world as a continuing growth rather than a finished product. In Germany I turned still farther from religious dogmas and began to grasp the idea of a world of human beings whose actions, like those of the physical world, were subject to law. The triumphs of the scientific world thrilled me: the X-ray and radium came during my teaching term, the airplane and the wireless. The machine increased in technical efficiency and the North and South Poles were invaded.

On the other hand the difficulties of applying scientific law and discovering cause and effect in the social world were still great. Social thinkers were engaged in vague statements and were seeking to lay down the methods by which, in some not too distant future, social law analogous to physical law would be discovered. Herbert Spencer finished his ten volumes of Synthetic Philosophy in 1896. The biological analogy, the vast generalizations, were striking, but actual scientific accomplishment lagged. For me an opportunity seemed to present itself. I could not lull my mind to hypnosis by regarding a phrase like “consciousness of kind” as a scientific law. But turning my gaze from fruitless word-twisting and facing the facts of my own social situation and racial world, I determined to put science into sociology through a study of the condition and problems of my own group.

I was going to study the facts, any and all facts, concerning the American Negro and his plight, and by measurement and comparison and research, work up to any valid generalization which I could. I entered this primarily with the utilitarian object of reform and uplift; but nevertheless, I wanted to do the work with scientific accuracy. Thus, in my own sociology, because of firm belief in a changing racial group, I easily grasped the idea of a changing developing society rather than a fixed social structure.

The decade and a half in which I taught, was riotous with happenings in the world of social development; with economic expansion, with political control, with racial difficulties. Above all, it was the era of empire and while I had some equipment to deal with a scientific approach to social studies, I did not have any clear conception or grasp of the meaning of that industrial imperialism which was beginning to grip the world. My only approach to mean-
lings and helpful study there again was through my interest in race contact.

That interest began to clear my vision and interpret the whirl of events which swept the world on. Japan was rising to national status and through the Chinese War and the Russian War, despite rivalry with Germany, Russia and Great Britain, she achieved a new and nearly equal status in the world, which only the United States refused to recognize. But all this, I began to realize, was but a result of the expansion of Europe into Africa where a fierce fight was precipitated for the labor, gold, and diamonds of South Africa; for domination of the Nile Valley; for the gold, cocoa, raw materials, and labor of West Africa; and for the exploitation of the Belgian Congo. Europe was determined to dominate China and all but succeeded in dividing it between the chief white nations, when Japan stopped the process. After sixteen years, stirred by the triumph of the Abyssinians at Adowa, and pushing forward of the French in North Africa, England returned to the Egyptian Sudan.

The Queen's Jubilee then, I knew, was not merely a sentimental outburst; it was a triumph of English economic aggression around the world and it aroused the cupidity and fear of Germany who proceeded to double her navy, expand into Asia, and consolidate her European position. Germany challenged France and England at Algeciras, prelude to the World War. Imperialism, despite Cleveland's opposition, spread to America, and the Hawaiian sugar fields were annexed. The Spanish war brought Cuban sugar under control and annexed Puerto Rico and the Philippines. The Panama Canal brought the Pacific nearer the Atlantic and we protected capital investment in San Domingo and South America.

All this might have been interpreted as history and politics. Mainly I did so interpret it; but continually I was forced to consider the economic aspects of world movements as they were developing at the time. Chiefly this was because the group in which I was interested were workers, earners of wages, owners of small bits of land, servants. The labor strikes interested and puzzled me. They were for the most part strikes of workers led by organizations to which Negroes were not admitted. There was the great steel strike; the railway strikes, actual and threatened; the teamsters' strike in Chicago; the long strike in Leadville, Colorado. Only in the coal strike were Negroes involved. But there was a difference. During my school days, strikes were regarded as futile and ill-advised struggles against economic laws; and when the government intervened, it was to cow the strikers as law-breakers. But during my teaching period, the plight of the worker began to sift through into the consciousness of the average citizen. Public opinion not only allowed but forced Theodore Roosevelt to intervention in the coal strike, and the steel strikers had widespread sympathy.

Then there were the tariff agitations, the continual raising and shifting and manipulation of tariff rates, always in the end for the purpose of subsidizing the manufacturer and making the consumer pay. The political power of the great organizations of capital in coal, oil and sugar, the extraordinary immunities of the corporations, made the President openly attack the trusts as a kind of super-government and we began to see more and more clearly the
outlines of economic battle. The Supreme Court stood staunchly behind capital. It outlawed the labor boycott, it denied the right of the states to make railway rates. It declared the income tax unconstitutional.

With all that, and the memory of the Panic of 1873 not forgotten, came the Panic of 1893 and the financial upheaval of 1907. Into this economic turmoil, politics had to intrude. The older role of free, individual enterprise, with little or no government interference, had to be surrendered and the whole political agitation during these days took on a distinct economic tinge and object. The impassioned plea of Bryan in 1896 that labor be not "crucified upon a cross of gold" could not be wholly ridiculed to silence. The Populist Movement which swept over the West and South, I began now to believe, was a third party movement of deep significance and it was kept from political power on the one hand by the established election frauds of the South, of which I knew, and by the fabulous election fund which made McKinley President of the United States. With this went the diversion of the Spanish war with its sordid scandals of rotten beef, cheating and stealing, fever and death from neglect. Politics and economics thus in those days of my teaching became but two aspects of a united body of action and effort.

I tried to isolate myself in the ivory tower of race. I wanted to explain the difficulties of race and the ways in which these difficulties caused political and economic troubles. It was this concentration of thought and action and effort that really, in the end, saved my scientific accuracy and search for truth. But first came a period of three years when I was casting about to find a way of ap-

plying science to the race problem. In these years I was torn with excitement of quick-moving events. Lynching, for instance, was still a continuing horror in the United States at the time of my entrance upon a teaching career. It reached a climax in 1892, when 235 persons were publicly murdered, and in the sixteen years of my teaching nearly two thousand persons were publicly killed by mobs, and not a single one of the murderers punished. The partition, domination and exploitation of Africa gradually centered my thought as part of my problem of race. I saw in Asia and the West Indies the results of race discrimination while right here in America came the wild foray of the exasperated Negro soldiers at Brownsville and the political-economic riot at Atlanta.

One happening in America linked in my mind the race problem with the general economic development and that was the speech of Booker T. Washington in Atlanta in 1895. When many colored papers condemned the proposition of compromise with the white South, which Washington proposed, I wrote to the New York Age suggesting that here might be the basis of a real settlement between whites and blacks in the South, if the South opened to the Negroes the doors of economic opportunity and the Negroes co-operated with the white South in political sympathy. But this offer was frustrated by the fact that between 1895 and 1909 the whole South disfranchised its Negro voters by unfair and illegal restrictions and passed a series of "Jim Crow" laws which made the Negro citizen a subordinate caste.

As a possible offset to this came the endowment of the General Education Board and the Sage Foundation; but
they did not to my mind plan clearly to attack the Negro problem; the Sage Foundation ignored us, and the General Education Board in its first years gave its main attention to the education of whites and to black industrial schools. Finally the riot and lynching at Springfield, the birthplace of Abraham Lincoln, one hundred years after his birth, sounded a knell which in the end stopped my teaching career. This, then, was the general setting when I returned to America for work.

Wilberforce was a small colored denominational college, married to a state normal school. The church was too poor to run the college; the State tolerated the normal school so as to keep Negroes out of other state schools. Consequently, there were enormous difficulties in both church and state politics. Into this situation I landed with the cane and gloves of my German student days; with my rather inflated ideas of what a “university” ought to be and with a terrible plainness of speech that was continually getting me into difficulty; when, for instance, the student leader of a prayer meeting into which I had wandered casually to look local religion over, suddenly and without warning announced that “Professor Du Bois would lead us in prayer,” I simply answered, “No, he won’t,” and as a result nearly lost my job. It took a great deal of explaining to the board of bishops why a professor in Wilberforce should not be able at all times and sundry to address God in extemporaneous prayer. I was saved only by the fact that my coming to Wilberforce had been widely advertised and I was so willing to do endless work when the work seemed to me worth doing.

My program for the day at Wilberforce looked almost as long as a week’s program now. I taught Latin, Greek, German, and English, and wanted to add sociology. I had charge of some of the most unpleasant duties of discipline and had outside work in investigation. But I met and made many friends: Charles Young, not long graduated from West Point, was one; Charles Burroughs, a gifted reader, was a student in my classes; Paul Laurence Dunbar came over from Dayton and read to us. I had known his work but was astonished to find that he was a Negro. And not least, I met the slender, quiet, and dark-eyed girl who became Mrs. Du Bois in 1896. Her father was chef in the leading hotel of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and her dead mother a native of Alsace.

We younger teachers had a hard team fight, and after a two years’ struggle I knew I was whipped and that it was impossible to stay at Wilberforce. It had a fine tradition, a strategic position, and a large constituency; but its religion was narrow dogma; its finances cramped; its policies too intertwined with intrigue and worse; and its future in grave doubt. When, therefore, a temporary appointment came from the University of Pennsylvania for one year as “assistant instructor” at $600, I accepted forthwith in the fall of 1896; that year Abyssinia overthrew Italy and England, suddenly seeing two black nations threatening her Cape to Cairo plans, threw her army back into the Sudan and re-captured Khartoum. The next year, the free silver controversy of Bryan and McKinley flamed.

The two years at Wilberforce was my uneasy apprenticeship, and with my advent into the University of Pennsylvania, I began a more clearly planned career which had an unusual measure of success, but was in the end pushed
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aside by forces which, if not entirely beyond my control, were yet of great weight.

The opportunity opened at the University of Pennsylvania seemed just what I wanted. I had offered to teach social science at Wilberforce outside of my overloaded program, but I was not allowed. My vision was becoming clearer. The Negro problem was in my mind a matter of systematic investigation and intelligent understanding. The world was thinking wrong about race, because it did not know. The ultimate evil was stupidity. The cure for it was knowledge based on scientific investigation. At the University of Pennsylvania I ignored the pitiful stipend. It made no difference to me that I was put down as an "assistant instructor" and even at that, that my name never actually got into the catalogue; it goes without saying that I did no instructing save once to pilot a pack of idiots through the Negro slums.

The fact was that the city of Philadelphia at that time had a theory; and that theory was that this great, rich, and famous municipality was going to the dogs because of the crime and venality of its Negro citizens, who lived largely centered in the slum at the lower end of the seventh ward. Philadelphia wanted to prove this by figures and I was the man to do it. Of this theory back of the plan, I neither knew nor cared. I saw only here a chance to study an historical group of black folk and to show exactly what their place was in the community.

I did it despite extraordinary difficulties both within and without the group. Whites said, Why study the obvious? Blacks said, Are we animals to be dissected and by an unknown Negro at that? Yet, I made a study of the

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Philadelphia Negro so thorough that it has withstood the criticism of forty years. It was as complete a scientific study and answer as could have then been given, with defective facts and statistics, one lone worker and little money. It revealed the Negro group as a symptom, not a cause; as a striving, palpitating group, and not an inert, sick body of crime; as a long historic development and not a transient occurrence.

Of the methods of my research, I wrote:

"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 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 some 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."

At the end of that study, I announced with a certain pride my plan of studying the complete Negro problem in
the United States. I spoke at the forty-second meeting of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences in Philadelphia, November 19, 1897, and my subject was “The Study of the Negro Problems.” I began by asserting that in the development of sociological study there was at least one positive answer which years of research and speculation had been able to return, and that was: “The phenomena of society are worth the most careful and systematic study, and whether or not this study may eventually lead to a systematic body of knowledge deserving the name of science, it cannot in any case fail to give the world a mass of truth worth the knowing.” I then defined and tried to follow the development of the Negro problem not as one problem, but “rather a plexus of social problems, some new, some old, some simple, some complex; and these problems have their one bond of unity in the fact that they group themselves about those Africans whom two centuries of slave-trading brought into the land.”

I insisted on the necessity of carefully studying these problems and said: “The American Negro deserves study for the great end of advancing the cause of science in general. No such opportunity to watch and measure the history and development of a great race of men ever presented itself to the scholars of a modern nation. If they miss this opportunity—if they do the work in a slip-shod, unsystematic manner—if they dally with the truth to humor the whims of the day, they do far more than hurt the good name of the American people; they hurt the cause of scientific truth the world over, they voluntarily decrease human knowledge of a universe of which we are ignorant enough, and they degrade the high end of truth-seeking in a day when they need more and more to dwell upon its sanctity.”

Finally I tried to lay down a plan for the study, postulating only: that the Negro “is a member of the human race, and as one who, in the light of history and experience, is capable to a degree of improvement and culture, is entitled to have his interests considered according to his numbers in all conclusions as to the common weal.”

Dividing the prospective scientific study of the Negro into two parts: the social group and his peculiar social environment, I proposed to study the social group by historical investigation, statistical measurement, anthropological measurement and sociological interpretation. Particularly with regard to anthropology I said:

“That there are differences between the white and black races is certain, but just what those differences are is known to none with an approach to accuracy. Yet here in America is the most remarkable opportunity ever offered of studying these differences, of noting influences of climate and physical environment, and particularly of studying the effect of amalgamating two of the most diverse races in the world—another subject which rests under a cloud of ignorance.”

In concluding, I said:

“It is to the credit of the University of Pennsylvania that she has been the first to recognize her duty in this respect and in so far as restricted means and opportunity allowed, has attempted to study the Negro problems in a single definite locality. This work needs to be extended to other groups, and carried out with larger system; and
here it would seem is the opportunity of the Southern Negro college. We hear much of higher Negro education, and yet all candid people know there does not exist today in the center of Negro population a single first-class fully equipped institution, devoted to the higher education of Negroes; not more than three Negro institutions in the South deserve the name of 'college' at all; and yet what is a Negro college but a vast college settlement for the study of a particular set of peculiarly baffling problems? What more effective or suitable agency could be found in which to focus the scientific efforts of the great universities of the North and East, than an institution situated in the very heart of these social problems, and made the center of careful historical and statistical research? Without doubt the first effective step toward the solving of the Negro question will be the endowment of a Negro college which is not merely a teaching body, but a center of sociological research, in close connection and co-operation with Harvard, Columbia, Johns Hopkins, and the University of Pennsylvania.

"Finally the necessity must again be emphasized of keeping clearly before students the object of all science, amid the turmoil and intense feeling that clouds the discussion of a burning social question. We live in a day when in spite of the brilliant accomplishments of a remarkable century, there is current much flippant criticism of scientific work; when the truth-seeker is too often pictured as devoid of human sympathy, and careless of human ideals. We are still prone in spite of all our culture to sneer at the heroism of the laboratory while we cheer the swagger of the street broil. At such times true lovers of humanity can only hold higher the pure ideals of science, and continue to insist that if we would solve a problem we must study it, and there is but one coward on earth, and that is the coward that dare not know."

I had, at this time, already been approached by President Horace Bumstead of Atlanta University and asked to come there and take charge of the work in sociology, and of the new conferences which they were inaugurating on the Negro problem. With this program in mind, I eagerly accepted the invitation, although at the last moment there came a curious reminiscence of Wilberforce in a little hitch based on that old matter of extemporary public prayer. Dr. Bumstead and I compromised on my promise to use the Episcopal prayer book; later I used to add certain prayers of my own composing. I am not sure that they were orthodox or reached heaven, but they certainly reached my audience.

Without thought or consultation I rather peremptorily changed the plans of the first two Atlanta Conferences. They had been conceived as conferences limited to city problems, contrasting with the increasingly popular conferences on rural problems held at Tuskegee. But I was not thinking of mere conferences. I was thinking of a comprehensive plan for studying a human group and if I could have carried it out as completely as I conceived it, the American Negro would have contributed to the development of social science in this country an unforgettable body of work.

Annually our reports carried this statement of aims: "This study is a further carrying out of a plan of social study by means of recurring decennial inquiries into the
same general set of human problems. The object of these studies is primarily scientific—a careful search for truth conducted as thoroughly, broadly, and honestly as the material resources and mental equipment at command will allow; but this is not our sole object; we wish not only to make the Truth clear but to present it in such shape as will encourage and help social reform. Our financial resources are unfortunately meager: Atlanta University is primarily a school and most of its funds and energy go to teaching. It is, however, also a seat of learning and as such it has endeavored to advance knowledge, particularly in matters of racial contact and development which seemed obviously its nearest field. In this work it has received unusual encouragement from the scientific world, and the published results of these studies are used in America, Europe, Asia, and Africa."

Social scientists were then still thinking in terms of theory and vast and eternal laws, but I had a concrete group of living beings artificially set off by themselves and capable of almost laboratory experiment. I laid down an ambitious program for a hundred years of study. I proposed to take up annually in each decade the main aspects of the group life of Negroes with as thorough study and measurement as possible, and repeat the same program in the succeeding decade with additions, changes and better methods. In this way, I proposed gradually to broaden and intensify the study, sharpen the tools of investigation and perfect our methods of work, so that we would have an increasing body of scientifically ascertained fact, instead of the vague mass of the so-called Negro problems. And through this laboratory experiment I hoped to make

the laws of social living clearer, surer, and more definite. Some of this was accomplished, but of course only an approximation of the idea. For thirteen years we poured forth a series of studies; limited, incomplete, only partially conclusive, and yet so much better done than any other attempt of the sort in the nation that they gained attention throughout the world. We studied during the first decade Negro mortality, urbanization, the effort of Negroes for their own social betterment, Negroes in business, college-bred Negroes, the Negro common school, the Negro artisan, the Negro church, and Negro crime. We ended the decade by a general review of the methods and results of this ten year study and a bibliography of the Negro. Taking new breath in 1906 I planned a more logical division of subjects but was not able to carry it out quite as I wished, because of lack of funds. We took up health and physique of American Negroes, economic co-operation and the Negro American family. We made a second study of the efforts for social betterment, the college-bred Negro, the Negro common school, the Negro artisan, and added a study of morals and manners among Negroes instead of further study of the church. In all we published a total of 2,172 pages which formed a current encyclopaedia on the American Negro problems.

These studies with all their imperfections were widely distributed in the libraries of the world and used by scholars. It may be said without undue boasting that between 1896 and 1920 there was no study of the race problem in America made which did not depend in some degree upon the investigations made at Atlanta University; often they were widely quoted and commended.
It must be remembered that the significance of these studies lay not so much in what they were actually able to accomplish, as in the fact that at the time of their publication Atlanta University was the only institution in the world carrying on a systematic study of the Negro and his development, and putting the result in a form available for the scholars of the world.

In addition to the publications, we did something toward bringing together annually at Atlanta University persons and authorities interested in the problems of the South. Among these were Booker T. Washington, Frank Sanborn, Franz Boas, Jane Addams and Walter Wilcox. We were asked from time to time to co-operate in current studies. I wrote a number of studies for the Bureau of Labor in Washington. I co-operated in the taking of the Twelfth Census and wrote one of the monographs. I not only published the Atlanta Conference reports, but wrote magazine articles in the World's Work and in the Atlantic Monthly where I joined in a symposium and one of my fellow contributors was Woodrow Wilson. At the same time I joined with the Negro leaders of Georgia in efforts to better local conditions; to stop discrimination in the distribution of school funds; to keep the legislature from making further discriminations in railway travel. I prepared an exhibit showing the condition of the Negro for the Paris Exposition which gained a Grand Prize. I became a member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 1900 and was made a fellow in 1904.

I testified before Congressional Commissions in Washington and appeared on the lecture platform with Walter Page, afterwards war ambassador to England; I did a considerable amount of lecturing throughout the United States. I had wide correspondence with men of prominence in America and Europe: Lyman Abbott of the Outlook; E. D. Morel, the English expert on Africa; Max Weber of Heidelberg; Professor Wilcox of Cornell; Bliss Perry of the Atlantic Monthly; Horace Traubel, the great protagonist for Walt Whitman; Charles Eliot Norton and Talcott Williams. I began to be regarded by many groups and audiences as having definite information on the Negro to which they might listen with profit.

At the very time when my studies were most successful, there cut across this plan which I had as a scientist, a red ray which could not be ignored. I remember when it first, as it were, startled me to my feet: a poor Negro in central Georgia, Sam Hose, had killed his landlord's wife. I wrote out a careful and reasoned statement concerning the evident facts and started down to the Atlanta Constitution office, carrying in my pocket a letter of introduction to Joel Chandler Harris. I did not get there. On the way news met me: Sam Hose had been lynched, and they said that his knuckles were on exhibition at a grocery store farther down on Mitchell Street, along which I was walking. I turned back to the University. I began to turn aside from my work. I did not meet Joel Chandler Harris nor the editor of the Constitution.

Two considerations thereafter broke in upon my work and eventually disrupted it: first, one could not be a calm, cool, and detached scientist while Negroes were lynched, murdered and starved; and secondly, there was no such definite demand for scientific work of the sort that I was doing, as I had confidently assumed would be easily forth-
principle of action that colored teachers should be encouraged in colored schools; that the races in the schools should be separated socially; that colored schools should be chiefly industrial; and that every effort should be made to conciliate Southern white public opinion. Schools which were successfully carrying out this program could look for further help from organized philanthropy. Other schools, and this included Atlanta University, could not.

Even this would not necessarily have excluded Atlanta University from consideration at the hands of the philanthropists. The university had done and was doing excellent and thorough work. Even industrial training in the South was often in the hands of Atlanta graduates. Tuskegee had always been largely manned by graduates of Atlanta and some of the best school systems of the South were directed by persons trained at Atlanta University. The college department was recognized as perhaps the largest and best in the South at the time. But unfortunately, at this time, there came a controversy between myself and Booker Washington, which became more personal and bitter than I had ever dreamed and which necessarily dragged in the University.

It was no controversy of my seeking; quite the contrary, I was in my imagination a scientist, and neither a leader nor an agitator; I had nothing but the greatest admiration for Mr. Washington and Tuskegee, and I had applied at both Tuskegee and Hampton for work. If Mr. Washington's telegram had reached me before the Wilberforce bid, I should have doubtless gone to Tuskegee. Certainly I knew no less about mathematics than I did about Latin and Greek.
Since the controversy between myself and Mr. Washington has become historic, it deserves more careful statement than it has had hitherto, both as to the matters and the motives involved. There was first of all the ideological controversy. I believed in the higher education of a Talented Tenth who through their knowledge of modern culture could guide the American Negro into a higher civilization. I knew that without this the Negro would have to accept white leadership, and that such leadership could not always be trusted to guide this group into self-realization and to its highest cultural possibilities. Mr. Washington, on the other hand, believed that the Negro as an efficient worker could gain wealth and that eventually through his ownership of capital he would be able to achieve a recognized place in American culture and could then educate his children as he might wish and develop his possibilities. For this reason he proposed to put the emphasis at present upon training in the skilled trades and encouragement in industry and common labor.

These two theories of Negro progress were not absolutely contradictory. I recognized the importance of the Negro gaining a foothold in trades and his encouragement in industry and common labor. Mr. Washington was not absolutely opposed to college training, and sent his own children to college. But he did minimize its importance, and discouraged the philanthropic support of higher education; while I openly and repeatedly criticized what seemed to me the poor work and small accomplishment of the Negro industrial school. Moreover, it was characteristic of the Washington statesmanship that whatever he or anybody believed or wanted must be subordinated to dominant public opinion and that opinion deferred to and cajoled until it allowed a deviation toward better ways. This is no new thing in the world, but it is always dangerous.

But beyond this difference of ideal lay another and more bitter and insistent controversy. This started with the rise at Tuskegee Institute, and centering around Booker T. Washington, of what I may call the Tuskegee Machine. Of its existence and work, little has ever been said and almost nothing written. The years from 1899 to 1905 marked the culmination of the career of Booker T. Washington. In 1899 Mr. Washington, Paul Laurence Dunbar, and myself spoke on the same platform at the Hollis Street Theatre, Boston, before a distinguished audience. Mr. Washington was not at his best and friends immediately raised a fund which sent him to Europe for a three months' rest. He was received with extraordinary honors: he had tea with the aged Queen Victoria, but two years before her death; he was entertained by two dukes and other members of the aristocracy; he met James Bryce and Henry M. Stanley; he was received at the Peace Conference at The Hague and was greeted by many distinguished Americans, like ex-President Harrison, Archbishop Ireland and two justices of the Supreme Court. Only a few years before he had received an honorary degree from Harvard; in 1901, he received a LL.D. from Dartmouth and that same year he dined with President Roosevelt to the consternation of the white South.

Returning to America he became during the administrations of Theodore Roosevelt and William Taft, from 1901 to 1912, the political referee in all Federal appoint-
ments or action taken with reference to the Negro and in many regarding the white South. In 1903 Andrew Carnegie made the future of Tuskegee certain by a gift of $600,000. There was no question of Booker T. Washington's undisputed leadership of the ten million Negroes in America, a leadership recognized gladly by the whites and conceded by most of the Negroes.

But there were discrepancies and paradoxes in this leadership. It did not seem fair, for instance, that on the one hand Mr. Washington should decry political activities among Negroes, and on the other hand dictate Negro-political objectives from Tuskegee. At a time when Negro civil rights called for organized and aggressive defense, he broke down that defense by advising acquiescence or at least no open agitation. During the period when laws disfranchising the Negro were being passed in all the Southern states, between 1890 and 1909, and when these were being supplemented by “Jim Crow” travel laws and other enactments making color caste legal, his public speeches, while they did not entirely ignore this development, tended continually to excuse it, to emphasize the shortcomings of the Negro, and were interpreted widely as putting the chief onus for his condition upon the Negro himself.

All this naturally aroused increasing opposition among Negroes and especially among the younger classes of educated Negroes, who were beginning to emerge here and there, especially from Northern institutions. This opposition began to become vocal in 1901 when two men, Monroe Trotter, Harvard 1895, and George Forbes, Amherst 1895, began the publication of the Boston Guardian. The Guardian was bitter, satirical, and personal; but it was well-edited, it was earnest, and it published facts. It attracted wide attention among colored people; it circulated among them all over the country; it was quoted and discussed. I did not wholly agree with the Guardian, and indeed only a few Negroes did, but nearly all read it and were influenced by it.

This beginning of organized opposition, together with other events, led to the growth at Tuskegee of what I have called the Tuskegee Machine. It arose first quite naturally. Not only did presidents of the United States consult Booker Washington, but governors and congressmen; philanthropists conferred with him, scholars wrote to him. Tuskegee became a vast information bureau and center of advice. It was not merely passive in these matters but, guided by a young unobtrusive minor official who was also intelligent, suave and far-seeing, active efforts were made to concentrate influence at Tuskegee. After a time almost no Negro institution could collect funds without the recommendation or acquiescence of Mr. Washington. Few political appointments were made anywhere in the United States without his consent. Even the careers of rising young colored men were very often determined by his advice and certainly his opposition was fatal. How much Mr. Washington knew of this work of the Tuskegee Machine and was directly responsible, one cannot say, but of its general activity and scope he must have been aware.

Moreover, it must not be forgotten that this Tuskegee Machine was not solely the idea and activity of black folk at Tuskegee. It was largely encouraged and given financial aid through certain white groups and individuals in the
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North. This Northern group had clear objectives. They were capitalists and employers and yet in most cases sons, relatives, or friends of the abolitionists who had sent teachers into the new Negro South after the war. These younger men believed that the Negro problem could not remain a matter of philanthropy. It must be a matter of business. These Negroes were not to be encouraged as voters in the new democracy, nor were they to be left at the mercy of the reactionary South. They were good laborers and they might be better. They could become a strong labor force and properly guided they would restrain the unbridled demands of white labor, born of the Northern labor unions and now spreading to the South.

One danger must be avoided and that was to allow the silly idealism of Negroes, half-trained in Southern missionary "colleges," to mislead the mass of laborers and keep them stirred-up by ambitions incapable of realization. To this school of thought, the philosophy of Booker Washington came as a godsend and it proposed by building up his prestige and power to control the Negro group. The control was to be drastic. The Negro intelligentsia was to be suppressed and hammered into conformity. The process involved some cruelty and disappointment, but that was inevitable. This was the real force back of the Tuskegee Machine. It had money and it had opportunity, and it found in Tuskegee tools to do its bidding.

There were some rather pitiful results in thwarted ambition and curtailed opportunity. I remember one case which always stands in my memory as typical. There was a young colored man, one of the most beautiful human beings I have ever seen, with smooth brown skin, velvet eyes of intelligence, and raven hair. He was educated and well-to-do. He proposed to use his father's Alabama farm and fortune to build a Negro town and independent economic unit in the South. He furnished a part of the capital but soon needed more and he came North to get it. He struggled for more than a decade; philanthropists and capitalists were fascinated by his personality and story; and when, according to current custom, they appealed to Tuskegee for confirmation, there was silence. Mr. Washington would not say a word in favor of the project. He simply kept still. Will Benson struggled on with ups and downs, but always balked by a whispering galley of suspicion, because his plan was never endorsed by Tuskegee. In the midst of what seemed to us who looked on the beginnings of certain success, Benson died of overwork, worry, and a broken heart.

From facts like this, one may gauge the bitterness of the fight of young Negroes against Mr. Washington and Tuskegee. Contrary to most opinion, the controversy as it developed was not entirely against Mr. Washington's ideas, but became the insistence upon the right of other Negroes to have and express their ideas. Things came to such a pass that when any Negro complained or advocated a course of action, he was silenced with the remark that Mr. Washington did not agree with this. Naturally the bumptious, irritated, young black intelligentsia of the day declared, "I don't care a damn what Booker Washington thinks! This is what I think, and I have a right to think."

It was this point, and not merely disagreement with Mr. Washington's plans, that brought eventually violent outbreak. It was more than opposition to a program of
education. It was opposition to a system and that system was part of the economic development of the United States at the time. The fight cut deep: it went into social relations; it divided friends; it made bitter enemies. I can remember that years later, when I went to live in New York and was once invited to a social gathering among Brooklyn colored people, one of the most prominent Negroes of the city refused to be present because of my former attitude toward Mr. Washington.

When the Guardian began to increase in influence, determined effort was made to build up a Negro press for Tuskegee. Already Tuskegee filled the horizon so far as national magazines and the great newspapers were concerned. In 1901 the Outlook, then the leading weekly, chose two distinguished Americans for autobiographies. Mr. Washington’s “Up from Slavery” was so popular that it was soon published and circulated all over the earth. Thereafter, every magazine editor sought articles with his signature and publishing houses continued to ask for books. A number of talented “ghost writers,” black and white, took service under Tuskegee, and books and articles poured out of the institution. An annual letter “To My People” went out from Tuskegee to the press. Tuskegee became the capital of the Negro nation. Negro newspapers were influenced and finally the oldest and largest was bought by white friends of Tuskegee. Most of the other papers found it to their advantage certainly not to oppose Mr. Washington, even if they did not wholly agree with him. Negroes who sought high positions groveled for his favor.

I was greatly disturbed at this time, not because I was in absolute opposition to the things that Mr. Washington was advocating, but because I was strongly in favor of more open agitation against wrongs and above all I resented the practical buying up of the Negro press and choking off of even mild and reasonable opposition to Mr. Washington in both the Negro press and the white.

Then, too, during these years there came a series of influences that were brought to bear upon me personally, which increased my discomfort and resentment. I had tried to keep in touch with Hampton and Tuskegee, for I regarded them as great institutions. I attended the conferences which for a long time were held at Hampton, and at one of them I was approached by a committee. It consisted of Walter Hines Page, editor of the Atlantic Monthly; William McVickar, Episcopal bishop of Rhode Island; and Dr. Fressel, principal of Hampton. They asked me about the possibilities of my editing a periodical to be published at Hampton. I told them of my dreams and plans, and afterwards wrote them in detail. But one query came by mail: that was concerning the editorial direction. I replied firmly that editorial decisions were to be in my hands, if I edited the magazine. This was undiplomatic and too sweeping; and yet, it brought to head the one real matter in controversy: would such a magazine be dominated by and subservient to the Tuskegee philosophy, or would it have freedom of thought and discussion? Perhaps if I had been more experienced, the question could have been discussed and some reasonable outcome obtained; but I doubt it. I think any such magazine launched at the time would have been seriously curtailed in its freedom of speech. At any rate, the project was dropped.
Beginning in 1902 considerable pressure was put upon me to give up my work at Atlanta University and go to Tuskegee. There again I was not at first adverse in principle to Tuskegee, except that I wanted to continue what I had begun and if my work was worth support, it was worth support at Atlanta University. Moreover, I was unable to be assured that my studies would be continued at Tuskegee, and that I would not sink to the level of a "ghost writer." I remember a letter came from Wallace Buttrick late in 1902, asking that I attend a private conference in New York with Felix Adler, William H. Baldwin, Jr., George Foster Peabody, and Robert Ogden. The object of the conference was ostensibly the condition of the Negro in New York City. I went to the conference and I did not like it. Most of the more distinguished persons named were not present. The conference itself amounted to little, but I was whisked over to William H. Baldwin's beautiful Long Island home and there what seemed to me to be the real object of my coming was disclosed. Mr. Baldwin was at that time president of the Long Island Railroad and slated to be president of the Pennsylvania. He was the rising industrial leader of America; also he was a prime mover of the Tuskegee board of trustees. Both he and his wife insisted that my place was at Tuskegee; that Tuskegee was not yet a good school, and needed the kind of development that I had been trained to promote.

This was followed by two interviews with Mr. Washington himself. I was elated at the opportunity and we met twice in New York City. The results to me were disappointing. Booker T. Washington was not an easy person to know. He was wary and silent. He never expressed himself frankly or clearly until he knew exactly to whom he was talking and just what their wishes and desires were. He did not know me, and I think he was suspicious. On the other hand, I was quick, fast-speaking and voluble. I found at the end of the first interview that I had done practically all the talking and that no clear and definite offer or explanation of my proposed work at Tuskegee had been made. In fact, Mr. Washington had said about as near nothing as was possible.

The next interview did not go so well because I myself said little. Finally, we resorted to correspondence. Even then I could get no clear understanding of just what I was going to do at Tuskegee if I went. I was given to understand that the salary and accommodations would be satisfactory. In fact, I was invited to name my price. Later in the year I went to Bar Harbor for a series of speeches in behalf of Atlanta University, and while there met Jacob Schiff, the Schieffelins and Merriam of Webster's dictionary. I had dinner with the Schieffelins and again was urged to go to Tuskegee.

Early in the next year I received an invitation to join Mr. Washington and certain prominent white and colored friends in a conference to be held in New York. The conference was designed to talk over a common program for the American Negro and evidently it was hoped that the growing division of opinion and opposition to Mr. Washington within the ranks of Negroes would thus be overcome. I was enthusiastic over the idea. It seemed to me just what was needed to clear the air.

There was difficulty, however, in deciding what persons ought to be invited to the conference, how far it should
include Mr. Washington's extreme opponents, or how far it should be composed principally of his friends. There ensued a long delay and during this time it seemed to me that I ought to make my own position clearer than I had hitherto. I was increasingly uncomfortable under the statements of Mr. Washington's position: his depreciation of the value of the vote; his evident dislike of Negro colleges; and his general attitude which seemed to place the onus of blame for the status of Negroes upon the Negroes themselves rather than upon the whites. And above all, I resented the Tuskegee Machine.

I had been asked sometime before by A. C. McClurg and Company of Chicago if I did not have some material for a book; I planned a social study which should be perhaps a summarizing up of the work of the Atlanta Conferences, or at any rate, a scientific investigation. They asked, however, if I did not have some essays that they might put together and issue immediately, mentioning my articles in the Atlantic Monthly and other places. I demurred because books of essays almost always fall so flat. Nevertheless, I got together a number of my fugitive pieces. I then added a chapter, "Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others," in which I sought to make a frank evaluation of Booker T. Washington. I left out the more controversial matter: the bitter resentment which young Negroes felt at the continued and increasing activity of the Tuskegee Machine. I concentrated my thought and argument on Mr. Washington's general philosophy. As I read that statement now, a generation later, I am satisfied with it. I see no word that I would change. The "Souls of Black Folk" was published in 1903 and is still selling today.

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My book settled pretty definitely any further question of my going to Tuskegee as an employee. But it also drew pretty hard and fast lines about my future career. Meanwhile, the matter of the conference in New York dragged on until finally in October, 1903, a circular letter was sent out setting January, 1904, as the date of meeting. The conference took place accordingly in Carnegie Hall, New York. About fifty persons were present, most of them colored and including many well-known persons. There was considerable plain speaking but the whole purpose of the conference seemed revealed by the invited guests and the tone of their message. Several white persons of high distinction came to speak to us, including Andrew Carnegie and Lyman Abbott. Their words were lyric, almost fulsome in praise of Mr. Washington and his work, and in support of his ideas. Even if all they said had been true, it was a wrong note to strike in a conference of conciliation. The conferences ended with two speeches by Mr. Washington and myself, and the appointment of a Committee of Twelve in which we were also included.

The Committee of Twelve which was thus instituted was unable to do any effective work as a steering committee for the Negro race in America. First of all, it was financed, through Mr. Washington, probably by Mr. Carnegie. This put effective control of the committee in Mr. Washington's hands. It was organized during my absence and laid down a plan of work which seemed to me of some value but of no lasting importance and having little to do with the larger questions and issues. I, therefore, soon resigned so as not to be responsible for work and pronouncements over which I would have little in-
fluence. My friends and others accused me of refusing to play the game after I had assented to a program of cooperation. I still think, however, that my action was wise.

Meantime, the task of raising money for Atlanta University and my work became increasingly difficult. In the fall of 1904 the printing of our conference report was postponed by the trustees until special funds could be secured. I did not at the time see the handwriting on the wall. I did not realize how strong the forces were back of Tuskegee and how they might interfere with my scientific study of the Negro. My continuing thought was that we must have a vehicle for both opinion and fact which would help me carry on my scientific work and at the same time be a forum less radical than the Guardian, and yet more rational than the rank and file of Negro papers now so largely arrayed with Tuskegee. With this in mind, as early as 1904, I helped one of the Atlanta University graduates, who was a good printer, to set up a job office in Memphis.

In 1905 I wrote to Jacob Schiff, reminding him of having met him in Bar Harbor in 1903: "I want to lay before you a plan which I have and ask you if it is of sufficient interest to you for you to be willing to hear more of it and possibly to assist in its realization. The Negro race in America is today in a critical condition. Only united concerted effort will save us from being crushed. This union must come as a matter of education and long continued effort. To this end there is needed a high class of journal to circulate among the intelligent Negroes, tell them of the deeds of themselves and their neighbors, interpret the news of the world to them, and inspire them toward definite ideals. Now we have many small weekly papers and one or two monthlies, and none of them fill the great need I have outlined. I want to establish, therefore, for the nine million American Negroes and eventually for the whole Negro world, a monthly journal. To this end I have already in Memphis a printing establishment which has been running successfully at job work a year under a competent printer—self-sacrificing educated young man. Together we shall have about $2,000 invested in this plant by April 15."

Mr. Schiff wrote back courteously, saying: "Your plans to establish a high class journal to circulate among the intelligent Negroes is in itself interesting, and on its face has my sympathy. But before I could decide whether I can become of advantage in carrying your plans into effect, I would wish to advise with men whose opinion in such a matter I consider of much value." Nothing ever came of this, because, as I might have known, most of Mr. Schiff's friends were strong and sincere advocates of Tuskegee.

It was with difficulty that I came fully to realize the situation that was thus developing: first of all, I could not persuade myself that my program of solving the Negro problem by scientific investigation was wrong, or that it could possibly fail of eventual support when once it was undertaken; that it was understood in widening circles of readers and thinkers, I was convinced, because of the reception accorded the Atlanta University Studies. When, however, in spite of that, the revenue of the University continued to fall off, and no special support came for my particular part of its work, I tried several times by personal effort to see if funds could not be raised.
In 1906 I made two appeals: first and boldly, I outlined the work of the Atlanta Conference to Andrew Carnegie, reminding him that I had been presented to him and Carl Schurz some years before. I hoped that despite his deep friendship for Mr. Washington and the Tuskegee idea, he would see the use and value of my efforts at Atlanta. The response was indirect. At the time a white Mississippi planter, Alfred W. Stone, was popular in the North. He had grave doubts about the future of the Negro race, widely criticized black labor, and once tried to substitute Italians on his own plantations, until they became too handy with the knife. To his direction, Mr. Carnegie and others entrusted a fund for certain studies among Negroes. Why they selected him and neglected an established center like Atlanta University, I cannot imagine; but at any rate, Stone turned to me and offered to give the University a thousand dollars to help finance a special study of the history of economic co-operation among Negroes. I had planned that year, 1907, to study the Negro in politics, but here was needed support and I turned aside and made the study asked for.

About the same time, I approached the United States Commissioner of Labor. For several years I had been able to do now and then certain small studies for the Bureau of Labor, which had been accepted and paid for. It began with a proposal to Carroll D. Wright for a study of the Negro in a Virginia town in 1898, which Mr. Wright authorized me to make on my own responsibility, promising only to print it if he liked it. He did like it. This was followed by a study of the Negro in the Black Belt in 1899 and among Negroes in Georgia in 1901, and I now approached the Bureau with a new proposal.

I asked United States Commissioner of Labor Neill, in 1906, to authorize a study of a Black Belt community. I wanted to take Lownes County, Alabama, in a former slave state with a large majority of Negroes, and make a social and economic study from the earliest times where documents were available, down to the present; supplemented by studies of official records and a house to house canvas. I plied Commissioner Neill with plans and specifications until at last he authorized the study. Helped by Monroe Work, now at Tuskegee Institute, and R. R. Wright, now a bishop of the A. M. E. Church, and a dozen or more local employees, I settled at the Calhoun School and began the study.

It was carried on with all sorts of difficulties, including financing which was finally arranged by loans from the University, and with the greeting of some of my agents with shotguns in certain parts of the county; but it was eventually finished. The difficult schedules were tabulated and I made chronological maps of the division of the land; I considered the distribution of labor; the relation of landlord and tenant; the political organization and the family life and distribution of the population. The report went to Washington and I spent some weeks there in person, revising and perfecting it. It was accepted by the government, and $2,000 paid for it, most of which went back to the University in repayment of funds which they had kindly furnished me to carry on the work. But the study was not published. I knew the symptoms of this sort of treatment: in 1898, S. S. McClure had sent me to south
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Georgia to make a study of social situations there. He paid for the report but never published the manuscript and afterward did the same thing in the case of Sir Harry Johnston.

I finally approached the bureau and tried to find out when it would be published and was told that the bureau had decided not to publish the manuscript, since it “touched on political matters.” I was astonished and disappointed, but after a year went back to them again and asked if they would allow me to have the manuscript published since they were not going to use it. They told me it had been destroyed. And while I was down in Lowndes County finishing this study, there came the news of the Atlanta riot. I took the next train for Atlanta and my family. On the way, I wrote the “Litany of Atlanta.”

By this time I was pretty thoroughly disillusioned. It did not seem possible for me to occupy middle ground and try to appease the Guardian on the one hand and the Hampton-Tuskegee idea on the other. I began to feel the strength and implacability of the Tuskegee Machine; the Negro newspapers were definitely showing their reaction and publishing jibes and innuendoes at my expense. Filled with increasing indignation, I published in the Guardian a statement concerning the venality of certain Negro papers which I charged had sold out to Mr. Washington. It was a charge difficult of factual proof without an expenditure of time and funds not at my disposal. I was really at last openly tilting against the Tuskegee Machine and its methods. These methods have become common enough in our day for all sorts of purposes: the distribution of advertising and favors, the sending out of special correspondence, veiled and open attacks upon recalcitrants, the narrowing of opportunities for employment and promotion. All this is a common method of procedure today, but in 1904 it seemed to me monstrous and dishonest, and I resented it. On the other hand, the public expression of this resentment greatly exercised and annoyed Mr. Washington’s friends. Some knew little about these activities at Tuskegee; others knew and approved. The New York Evening Post challenged me to present proof of my extraordinary statements and refused to regard my answer as sufficient, which was of course true.

Then came a new and surprising turn to the whole situation which in the end quite changed my life. In the early summer of 1905, Mr. Washington went to Boston and arranged to speak in a colored church to colored people—a thing which he did not often do in the North. Trotter and Forbes, editors of the Guardian, determined to heckle him and make him answer publicly certain questions with regard to his attitude toward voting and education. William H. Lewis, a colored lawyer whom I myself had introduced to Mr. Washington, had charge of the meeting, and the result was a disturbance magnified by the newspapers into a riot, which resulted in the arrest of Mr. Trotter. Eventually he served a term in jail.

With this incident I had no direct connection whatsoever. I did not know beforehand of the meeting in Boston, nor of the projected plan to heckle Mr. Washington. But when Trotter went to jail, my indignation overflowed. I did not always agree with Trotter then or later. But he was an honest, brilliant, unselfish man, and to treat as a crime that which was at worst mistaken judgment was
an outrage. I sent out from Atlanta in June, 1905, a call to
a few selected persons "for, organized determination and
aggressive action on the part of men who believe in Negro
freedom and growth." I proposed a conference during the
summer "to oppose firmly present methods of strangling
honest criticism; to organize intelligent and honest
Negroes; and to support organs of news and public opin-
on.

Fifty-nine colored men from seventeen different states
signed a call for a meeting near Buffalo, New York, during
the week of July 9, 1905. I went to Buffalo and hired a
little hotel on the Canada side of the river at Fort Erie,
and waited for the men to attend the meeting. If sufficient
men had not come to pay for the hotel, I should certainly
have been in bankruptcy and perhaps in jail; but as a
matter of fact, twenty-nine men, representing fourteen
states, came. The "Niagara Movement" was organized
January 31, 1906, and was incorporated in the District of
Columbia.

Its particular business and objects are to advocate and
promote the following principles:

1. Freedom of speech and criticism.
2. Unfettered and unsubsidized press.
4. The abolition of all caste distinctions based simply
   on race and color.
5. The recognition of the principles of human
   brotherhood as a practical present creed.
6. The recognition of the highest and best human
   training as the monopoly of no class or race.

The Niagara Movement raised a furor of the most dis-
concerting criticism. I was accused of acting from motives
of envy of a great leader and being ashamed of the fact
that I was a member of the Negro race. The leading weekly
of the land, the New York Outlook, pilloried me with
scathing articles. But the movement went on. The next
year, 1906, instead of meeting in secret, we met openly at
Harper's Ferry, the scene of John Brown's raid, and had
in significance if not numbers one of the greatest meet-
ings that American Negroes have ever held. We made
pilgrimage at dawn bare-footed to the scene of Brown's
martyrdom and we talked some of the plainest English that
has been given voice to by black men in America. The
resolutions which I wrote expressed with tumult of emo-
tion my creed of 1905:

"The men of the Niagara Movement, coming from the
toil of the year's hard work, and pausing a moment from
the earning of their daily bread, turn toward the nation
and again ask in the name of ten million the privilege of
a hearing. In the past year the work of the Negro hater has
flourished in the land. Step by step the defenders of the
rights of American citizens have retreated. The work of
stealing the black man's ballot has progressed and the
fifty and more representatives of stolen votes still sit in
the nation's capital. Discrimination in travel and public
accommodation has so spread that some of our weaker
brethren are actually afraid to thunder against color dis-
discrimination as such and are simply whispering for ordinary decencies.

"Against this the Niagara Movement eternally protests. We will not be satisfied to take one jot or title less than our full manhood rights. We claim for ourselves every single right that belongs to a freeborn American, political, civil, and social; and until we get these rights we will never cease to protest and assail the ears of America. The battle we wage is not for ourselves alone, but for all true Americans. It is a fight for ideals, lest this, our common fatherland, false to its founding, become in truth the land of the Thief and the home of the Slave—a by-word and a hissing among the nations for its sounding pretensions and pitiful accomplishment.

"Never before in the modern age has a great and civilized folk threatened to adopt so cowardly a creed in the treatment of its fellow-citizens, born and bred on its soil. Stripped of verbiage and subterfuge and in its naked nastiness, the new American creed says: fear to let black men even try to rise lest they become the equals of the white. And this is the land that professes to follow Jesus Christ. The blasphemy of such a course is only matched by its cowardice.

"In detail our demands are clear and unequivocal. First, we would vote; with the right to vote goes everything: freedom, manhood, the honor of your wives, the chastity of your daughters, the right to work, and the chance to rise, and let no man listen to those who deny this.

"We want full manhood suffrage, and we want it now, henceforth and forever.

"Second. We want discrimination in public accommoda-

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tion to cease. Separation in railway and street cars, based simply on race and color, is un-American, undemocratic, and silly. We protest against all such discrimination.

"Third. We claim the right of freemen to walk, talk, and be with them that wish to be with us. No man has a right to choose another man's friends, and to attempt to do so is an impudent interference with the most fundamental human privilege.

"Fourth. We want the laws enforced against rich as well as poor; against Capitalist as well as Laborer; against white as well as black. We are not more lawless than the white race, we are more often arrested, convicted and mobbed. We want justice even for criminals and outlaws. We want the Constitution of the country enforced. We want Congress to take charge of the Congressional elections. We want the Fourteenth Amendment carried out to the letter and every State disfranchised in Congress which attempts to disfranchise its rightful voters. We want the Fifteenth Amendment enforced and no State allowed to base its franchise simply on color.

"The failure of the Republican Party in Congress at the session just closed to redeem its pledge of 1904 with reference to suffrage conditions at the South seems a plain, deliberate, and premeditated breach of promise, and stamps that party as guilty of obtaining votes under false pretense.

"Fifth. We want our children educated. The school system in the country districts of the South is a disgrace and in few towns and cities are the Negro schools what they ought to be. We want the national government to step in and wipe out illiteracy in the South. Either the
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United States will destroy ignorance, or ignorance will destroy the United States.

"And when we call for education, we mean real education. We believe in work. We ourselves are workers, but work is not necessarily education. Education is the development of power and ideal. We want our children trained as intelligent human beings should be, and we will fight for all time against any proposal to educate black boys and girls simply as servants and underlings, or simply for the use of other people. They have a right to know, to think, to aspire.

"These are some of the chief things which we want. How shall we get them? By voting where we may vote; by persistent, unceasing agitation; by hammering at the truth; by sacrifice and work.

"We do not believe in violence, neither in the despised violence of the raid nor the lauded violence of the soldier, nor the barbarous violence of the mob; but we do believe in John Brown, in that incarnate spirit of justice, that hatred of a lie, that willingness to sacrifice money, reputation, and life itself on the altar of right. And here on the scene of John Brown's martyrdom, we reconsecrate ourselves, our honor, our property to the final emancipation of the race which John Brown died to make free."

Meantime, I refused to give up the idea that a critical periodical for the American Negro might be founded. I had started in Memphis with the help of two graduates of Atlanta University the little printing shop that I have already mentioned, and from this was published weekly a paper called The Moon beginning in 1906. The Moon was in some sort precursor of The Crisis. It was published for a year in Memphis and then the printing office given up and in 1907 in conjunction with two friends in Washington there was issued a miniature monthly called the Horizon. The Horizon was published from 1907 to 1910, and in the fall of 1910 The Crisis was born.

Gradually I began to realize that the difficulty about support for my work in Atlanta University was personal; that on account of my attitude toward Mr. Washington I had become persona non grata to powerful interests, and that Atlanta University would not be able to get support for its general work or for its study of the Negro problem so long as I remained at the institution. No one ever said this to me openly, but I sensed it in the worries which encompassed the new young President Ware who had succeeded Dr. Bumstead. I began to realize that I would better look out for work elsewhere.

About this time an offer came from the city of Washington. The merging of the white and colored school systems into one, had thrown colored folk into uproar lest their control of their own schools be eliminated. The new and rather eccentric W. C. Chancellor, superintendent of schools, wanted an assistant superintendent to put in charge of the Negro schools. To my great surprise he offered the position to me, while I was on a chance visit to the city. I asked for time to consider it. My reaction was to refuse even though the salary was twice what I was getting; for I doubted my fitness for such a job; but when I thought the matter over further and my position of Atlanta University, I began to wonder if I should not accept.

I was not called upon to decide, for forces started
moving in Washington. The Tuskegee Machine was definitely against me and local interests in the Negro group were opposed. A prominent colored official took the matter straight to President Theodore Roosevelt and emphasized the "danger" of my appointment. He never forgot the "danger" of my personality as later events proved. The offer was never actually withdrawn, but it was not pressed, and I finally realized that it probably would not have gone through even if I had indicated my acceptance.

Still my eventual withdrawal from Atlanta University seemed wise. Young President Ware had received almost categorical promise that under certain circumstances increased contributions from the General Education Board and other sources might be expected, which would make the University secure, and perhaps even permit the continuance of my studies. I was sure that I was at least one of these "circumstances," and so my work in Atlanta and my dream of the settlement of the Negro problem by science faded. I began to be acutely conscious of the difficulty which my attitudes and beliefs were making for Atlanta University.

My career as a scientist was to be swallowed up in my role as master of propaganda. This was not wholly to my liking. I was no natural leader of men. I could not slap people on the back and make friends of strangers. I could not easily break down an inherited reserve; or at all times curb a biting, critical tongue. Nevertheless, having put my hand to the plow, I had to go on. The Niagara Movement with less momentum met in Boston in 1907 and in Berlin in 1908. It began to suffer internal strain from the dynamic personality of Trotter and my inexperience with organizations. Finally it practically became merged with a new and enveloping organization.

This started with a lynching 100 years after the birth of Abraham Lincoln, in his birthplace. William English Walling dramatized the gruesome happening and a group of liberals formed a committee in New York, which I was invited to join. A conference was held in 1909. After the conference, a new organization, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, was formed, which without formal merger absorbed practically the whole membership of the Niagara Movement, save Trotter, who distrusted our white allies and their objects. With some hesitation I was asked to come as Director of Publications and Research, with the idea that my research work was to go on and with the further idea that my activities would be so held in check that the Association would not develop as an organ of attack upon Tuskegee—a difficult order; because how, in 1910, could one discuss the Negro problem and not touch upon Booker T. Washington and Tuskegee? But after all, as I interpreted the matter, it was a question of temperament and manner rather than of subject.

Here was an opportunity to enter the lists in a desperate fight aimed straight at the real difficulty: the question as to how far educated Negro opinion in the United States was going to have the right and opportunity to guide the Negro group. I did not hesitate because I could not. It was the voice without reply, and I went to New York.

One may consider these personal equations and this
clash of ideologies as biographical or sociological; as a matter of the actions and thoughts of certain men, or as a development of larger social forces beyond personal control. I suppose the latter aspect is the truer. My thoughts, the thoughts of Washington, Trotter and others, were the expression of social forces more than of our own minds. These forces or ideologies embraced more than our reasoned acts. They included physical, biological and psychological forces; habits, conventions and enactments. Opposed to these came natural reaction: the physical recoil of the victims, the unconscious and irrational urges, as well as reasoned complaints and acts. The total result was the history of our day. That history may be epitomized in one word—Empire; the domination of white Europe over black Africa and yellow Asia, through political power built on the economic control of labor, income and ideas. The echo of this industrial imperialism in America was the expulsion of black men from American democracy, their subjection to caste control and wage slavery. This ideology was triumphant in 1910.

CHAPTER 5. THE CONCEPT OF RACE

I WANT now to turn aside from the personal annals of this biography to consider the conception which is after all my main subject. The concept of race lacks something in personal interest, but personal interest in my case has always depended primarily upon this race concept and I wish to examine this now. The history of the development of the race concept in the world and particularly in America, was naturally reflected in the education offered me. In the elementary school it came only in the matter of geography when the races of the world were pictured: Indians, Negroes and Chinese, by their most uncivilized and bizarre representatives; the whites by some kindly and distinguished-looking philanthropist. In the elementary and high school, the matter was touched only incidentally, due I doubt not to the thoughtfulness of the teachers; and again my racial inferiority could not be dwelt upon because the single representative of the Negro race in the school did not happen to be in any way inferior to his fellows. In fact it was not difficult for me to excel them in many ways and to regard this as quite natural.

At Fisk, the problem of race was faced openly and essential racial equality asserted and natural inferiority strenuously denied. In some cases the teachers expressed this