

BIBLICAL RECORDER

RALEIGH, N. C., WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 1903.

JOSIAH WILLIAM BAILEY, EDITOR.

VOLUME 69, NUMBER 12.

THE PROPER ATTITUDE FOR THE SOUTHERN WHITE MAN TOWARD THE NEGRO.

One would like to drop this subject; but it seems that it is impossible. There have been forty years of it now—not to count those that culminated in the bloodiest war of modern times—and it is a fact, worthy of recording, that at this moment there is more discussion, more concern, and more intolerant passion on the subject of the race problem—that is, the relations of the races—than there ever has been.

We wonder what would happen if all at once by universal agreement the subject should be dropped. We are not disposed to protest against candid discussion of any topic affecting the general welfare in a democracy. Free speech is at once the breath and the test of liberty. If a people cannot bear free speech they cannot bear freedom. But we believe that discussion of this subject has reached a point where it does more harm than good.

Newspaper men know that you can wear a subject out. Education has been all but worn out in North Carolina. Temperance has suffered much by over-treatment. But so far the newspaper men find matter on the negro very taking, especially sensational matter. It is true that such considerations determine the contents of a paper. One makes up a paper much as a caterer sets a table. There must be variety; and there must be appeal to the human appetite—or interest—for news. Undoubtedly, though, this has been carried too far in recent years. Yellow journalism—making a sensation every day—is an abomination; and there is no little yellow journalism on the subject of the negro.

Since discussion has served to make the matter worse, and has contributed not a jot to the alleviation of conditions, would it not be well to suspend it? Then each man would have not the national but the personal race-problem. Instead of being stuffed by an hysterical (and in some cases depraved) press with theoretical notions, he would have at hand the practical business of dealing with the colored man in the domain of his activity. Instead of having the troubles of thousands of people whom he does not know, he would have only his own troubles. Instead of a political and social problem, he would have a business problem, and at times a problem in the restraint of vice.

Would it not be better?

I have two negroes. One is always about to walk into my parlor or sit down to dine with my family. He also threatens to be President. This negro keeps me awake at night. He lives in my papers. He is my problem. Honestly I have not seen many of him. Have you?

My problem with this negro is a night-mare.

My other negro cooks for me when I go afishing. He goes half-a-mile for fresh water. He digs my bait. He takes care of my money when I go on the pond. He sits up until eleven o'clock waiting on me. He arouses me at 3.30 a. m., and has a cup of coffee ready when I come out of my room. From the time I leave the station until I take the train coming home that negro is looking after me. I have never known him to lose his temper. He finds the reward of his life in setting a tempting dish before me and in hearing expressions of pleasure. He is always cheerful and busy, and is the most willing servant in the world.

Do you know him?

My problem with this negro is merely the problem of keeping someone else from hiring him.

Now there are bad negroes; there are common negroes, there are mean negroes; and there are good negroes. There are as many grades of hogs

or peas; and as many of white people—just as many. There are mean white people, common white people, bad white people and good white people. These categories apply, I believe, to every thing outside of heaven.

Now because some peas are bad I shall not turn against all peas. Nor shall I pronounce a curse upon all swine because I have seen sorry ones. I will discriminate. I will condemn the bad and praise the good; and by so doing I shall by the power of nature, bring up the good and diminish the bad.

I think we shall have to do this with regard to the negroes. We must cease to classify them as a mass, marking them all bad and driving ourselves and our friends into nervous prostration about them. That may do for the Leopard's Spots, but that is all it will do for; and Leopard Spots is a novel. The man on the farm is not writing a novel. There may be romance in the cornfield, but that is not what the farmer is after.

The theory that the negro will develop under the influence of education into a black-faced Caucasian has been abandoned—even in the North. The negro is undeveloped, but he is not an undeveloped whiteman. He will never be the white man's equal. His race is an inferior race. But he can be improved; and the alleviation of our troubles lies along the line of improving him. He may not be capable of citizenship or anything of that sort. As we see it, he will never be of as much importance in this respect as he has been. But he can be made more willing, more effective, more intelligent, more reliable. And his progress will come—as has every other race's—not by way of the college—but by way of his work. The farmer who teaches a negro to be reliable and industrious has done more for the elevation of the negro and of the race and more to solve the race problem than all the newspapers, debaters and teachers. On the other hand, no one does so much to intensify and make hopeless the problem as the man who convinces the negro that the white man is against him, has no hope for him and no use for him.

By roundly condemning the sorry negroes; by refusing to employ them; and on the other hand, by praising the good ones and giving them plenty of work, we can do most to relieve ourselves of trouble and to serve our day and generation. And we need invoke the law in only one respect in which it is not now invoked, that is, in preventing vagrancy.

We believe the farmers of the South would protest against the exportation or segregation of the negroes. They are of immense advantage as labor. We could not make our crops without them. They likewise protest against higher education for the negroes as a whole. It absolutely destroys their efficiency—takes them out of the one domain to which they are adaptable. The true position for the Southern man with respect to the colored race, then, is this: To discriminate between the good negroes and the bad ones; to reward and encourage the good ones, and to punish the bad ones, even to the killing, by quick legal process, of those who commit the nameless crime; to bend our energies toward improving the negroes in their work, toward improving their intelligence, and toward improving their attitude toward us; toward restraining and punishing the vicious, compelling the lazy to work, and making the goodness of the good ones worth while to them as it is to us.

The pleasantest things in the world are pleasant thoughts, and the greatest art in life is to have as many of them as possible.—Bovee.

BEYOND TO-DAY.

If we could see beyond today
As God can see;
If all the clouds should roll away,
The shadows flee,
O'er present griefs we would not fret,
Each sorrow we would soon forget,
For many joys are waiting yet
For you and me.

If we could know beyond today,
As God doth know,
Why dearest treasures pass away
And tears must flow,
And why the darkness leads to light,
Why dreary paths will soon grow bright!
Some day life's wrongs will be made right;
Faith tells us so.

If we could see, if we could know,
We often say!
But God in love a veil doth throw
Across our way;
We cannot see what lies before,
And so we cling to Him the more;
He leads us till this life is o'er;
Trust and obey.

—Christian Work.

DYSPEPSIA AND DIVORCE.

Bad cookery and slovenly housekeeping were the direct cause of four hundred divorces in the city of Chicago last year. This statement, by the head of the Chicago Bureau of Charities, furnishes every housewife in the land with a subject for serious reflection, for husbands' tempers and digestions are equally frail in Maine, Illinois and California, and divorces know not geographical limits. During 1902, it appears, four hundred deserted wives who applied at the Bureau of Charities for assistance, and later obtained divorces, admitted that they could "neither cook nor keep house," and of course they could not expect to keep husbands. For these unhappy marriages the men themselves were to blame in great measure, and they need not pose as objects of popular sympathy. Why did they marry women ignorant of the first requisites of a happy domestic life?

If this unfortunate condition of affairs is paralleled elsewhere, sociologists will have to wrestle with the knotty problem of how a young man before proposing matrimony may gauge accurately a young woman's knowledge of domestic science. Shall he seek the advice of some noted authority like Mrs. Hiller, and receive thorough coaching in the subject in order to become a competent judge of his beloved's qualifications? Shall the question: "Can you cook?" precede the question: "Will you wed?"—Standard.

TOO MUCH SCHOOLING?

"Brain fever at twelve—and we are left alone."
"We pushed her, and God knows how we have suffered for our mistake."

"She graduated, but she never recovered, and in two years we had no daughter."

"I thought more of a diploma than I did of my child. Now, I have only the diploma."

"Everything that love and skill could suggest was done. But our eyes were opened too late."

"Promotion! Promotion!" was our cry. Then our little girl was promoted. But not in the way we hoped."

"We placed an education above health, and the life of a promising boy of eighteen is the price we paid for our mistake."

"It was music and painting added to a tired brain. Now our house is still—a monument to our thoughtlessness."

"What would not my husband and I give of our means today if we could undo the past and bring back our only child! That is the hardest part to bear; the feeling of what we might have done. From the housetops would we cry out to parents to take care!"—Nine American Parents, in the Ladies Home Journal.

The stronger our faith, the greater will be our happiness and safety, so that we can cheerfully do and suffer what God imposes upon us, and this because we know that He is merciful and full of love toward us.—Selected.