

Hampton Yearly Report 1897

ANNUAL REPORT

Vol. 26. No. 9.

September, 1897.



# SOUTHERN WORKMAN AND HAMPTON SCHOOL RECORD

The common problem, yours, mine, everyone's,  
Is—not to fancy what were fair in life,  
Provided it could be—but finding first  
What may be, then find how to make it fair  
Up to our means.

Robert Browning.

# THE SOUTHERN WORKMAN

—AND—

## HAMPTON SCHOOL RECORD.

Vol. xxvii.

Hampton, Virginia, September, 1897.

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### REPORT OF THE HAMPTON CONFERENCE.

#### CONTENTS.

DR. FRISSELL'S ADDRESS - - - - -	167
THE "EXPERIENCE MEETING" - - - - -	167
THE PUBLIC SCHOOL—"Our Strongest National Fortification." - - - - -	169
THE AGRICULTURAL CONFERENCE - - - - -	171
THE WOMEN'S CONFERENCE - - - - -	175
INDUSTRIAL VERSUS UNIVERSITY EDUCATION - - - - -	178
REVIEW OF MR. HOFFMAN'S BOOK, by Prof. Kelly Miller - - - - -	180
"THE PROBLEM OF AMUSEMENT," by Prof. W. E. Burghardt DuBois - - - - -	181
REFORMATORY FOR COLORED YOUTH - - - - -	184
SOME THINGS THAT LIE ACROSS THE PATHWAY OF OUR PROGRESS, by Francis J. Grimké, D. D. - - - - -	185
RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CONFERENCE - - - - -	190
AFTERMATH - - - - -	197

Instead of the Conference of Hampton Graduates usually held on Friday after Anniversary, there was appointed for this year, a general Negro Conference to continue for three days, July 21, 22, and 23, for the discussion of the present condition and needs of the race. Many prominent Negro men and women from various parts of the country had been invited to be present and to deliver papers on topics affecting the welfare of their people. The invited guests, together with the teachers attending the Summer Normal School, and other representatives of the race have formed large and enthusiastic audiences. The tone of the conference has been unusually high, and the discussions uniformly marked by intelligence, earnestness and liberality. It is not too much to say that this conference has been one of the most important of its kind ever held, and while recognizing present weakness and limitations in the Negro, it sees in him large promise for the future. The resolutions printed at the close of this report give in condensed form its helpful suggestions and recommendations.

At a preliminary meeting held early Wednesday morning, standing committees were appointed and programs made out for the different sessions.

At eleven o'clock the conference was formally opened with prayer, followed by an outline by Dr. Frissell, of the topics to be discussed.

#### DR. FRISSELL'S ADDRESS.

The thought of this conference should be that we are gathered here not for any set speeches but to confer together as to how we can improve the condition of the colored people. There are present representative men and women of the colored race. We are very fortunate in having them with us, and feel that great good must come out of this gathering.

The question of getting homes is one of great importance to the Negro race, while that of obtaining land is one in which every one should be interested, for ten years from now there will be no such chances for buying land as there are now. Companies are forming in the West already for getting hold of the land in this section.

Another matter of importance is that of occupations and trades. It is natural that Hampton should think about these things because it has always devoted much time and money to instruction along these lines. We feel that there is great danger that the colored people will be pushed out of the occupations that were once theirs, because white tradesmen are coming in to fill their places; we are not to feel antagonistic to these people, but we are to give such trade instruction that the young people of the race may be able to hold these places. Our new trade school represents that thought.

The matter of the home life of the people is another question of vital interest. That pile of brick out there means a building for domestic science. Our young women are to have chances such as they have never had before to make good milliners, dressmakers, laundresses, and cooks of themselves, for they are to have as good instruction as is given anywhere in the country. To-morrow's session will be given up to those people who have for many years given time and thought to the consideration of this sort of work.

We must hear from those interested in agriculture. The question is how to make more of the farms, how to teach the young people to love and care for them.

Then the question of the schools is always important. As the colored people rise there is a demand for better schools and better teachers. We hold at this institute that no man or woman ought to go into the schools of the South who is not fully prepared for the work.

Out of this discussion ought to come that which shall help the whole colored race, and we should not be satisfied unless great good does come from it.

Before opening the meeting to you I want to extend my word of welcome, and to tell you how glad we are to see you here. To-day we are to hear some reports of the condition of the colored people in different sections of the state. The meeting is to be informal—a sort of experience meeting.

#### THE "EXPERIENCE MEETING."

##### PROPERTY.

The first report was made by Mr. Fitch, the School's field missionary, who has gathered statistics in many counties of Virginia. He chose to speak of the counties of Charlotte and Appomattox, not because they are the best, but because they have great possibilities, although they are the least fertile districts of the state. The total value of property owned by colored people in Charlotte County, is \$69,302.66, including horses worth \$9,399.00; in Appomattox, the value is \$45,693.60, including horses valued at \$5,798.

Prof. Cromwell, who spoke later, said that this report was marvelous when contrasted with the conditions in 1870. In that year he visited Charlotte County, and then \$2000 would have been a liberal estimate for the

cal than allowing them to go on in their evil way. I also called their attention to the statistics which show the connection between crime and insanity, and mentioned the fact that there are now 80,000 inmates of the State Insane Asylum. Furthermore, I said, that if we are to change the conduct of men we must change their conditions; if the body is covered with rags the soul is generally in the same condition; and as the home is the unit of the state we must have moral training for those young people in our communities who are deprived of proper home influences, and so fall into wrong doing.

"The result of our efforts has been that a board of trustees has been incorporated. There are eleven gentlemen on the board. We are proposing to take a farm in Hanover County. The soil of the farm is a light, sandy loam well adapted for trucking; there is also some woodland. After the farm is well started we expect to raise more than we shall need for use on the place. The first thing needed is money for two buildings to be used as dormitories, one for the girls and one for the boys. After they are up we shall need two other buildings for training shops, as we expect to teach trades, and we shall of course need some machinery in these buildings. We need \$75,000 to start this reformatory, and I hope that half of that amount will be given by December and the other half by the spring. The money you give goes directly to the Virginia Trust Company at Richmond; no one speaking for this object collects any money. The payment of \$3 makes an annual member, \$50 a life member, and \$1000 an honorary life member."

Then turning to Dr. Frissell, Mr. Smythe said, "Your work here, sir, is educational, and will make crime impossible among those whom you send out, but you can reach only a small proportion of our colored youth, and there is a crying need for the reformatory work also. Before closing I want to say that our good friend, Mrs. Langhorne, has been my inspiration in this matter."

Mrs. Langhorne then rose, and related the following touching incidents:

"When I am at home in Culpeper, I visit the jail regularly; I make it a rule to get there at least once a week. I want to tell you about one young girl of fifteen years that I saw not a great while ago. This poor child had come from the country to the town to work, and the sight of the stores with all the pretty things in them was too much for her; she was morally very weak. One day she stole a pocket book. I feel that there is a great deal of carelessness, shown by employers in leaving such things about. Of course she was arrested, convicted, and thrown into jail. When I went into the prison I found her in one of the iron cages. You know in the South where the buildings used for jails are not very substantial, they have provided large cages to put the prisoners in; they are made of iron bars that are very strong. This cage was about eight by twelve feet with a division between; on one side of the division was this poor child, in the other four or five young men. After this girl had been shut up there for thirty days, which was her sentence, what ideas of decency could she have? When she found herself in jail, she began to think of her friends. Knowing that she had disgraced them and herself she felt that she couldn't stand it, so in the night she tried to commit suicide, by hanging herself to the bars overhead by her apron strings. When the young men next to her discovered what she was doing, they called to the warden. At first he paid no attention to them, but finally they made so much noise that he had to come. After he had cut her down he took a cowhide and gave her a severe whipping for what she had tried to do. When I went to see her, there she was on her pallet just as she had lain after he got through beating her, her apron still tied around her neck, her clothes torn and disheveled, and the marks of the whip on her body still quivering. Such things as that makes me wonder if we are a Christian people.

Another instance I remember is of a little boy, who was put into a cell with a maniac, and in the night this poor little child was bitten and almost torn to pieces by the maniac.

So I feel as if it was a heavenly idea to have a reformatory where these poor little children may be taught and made into good men and women, and not left to grow up to be the most miserable creatures on God's earth."

At the close of Mrs. Langhorne's remarks Mrs. Coppin, in her quick, impulsive manner, her voice quivering with emotion, said, "I shall put my name down for a hundred dollars towards that object, though I shall have to go out and earn it before I pay it." This started the ball rolling, and Mr. Weaver pledged twenty-five dollars for the Gloucester School, and in less time than it takes to write it, over two hundred dollars were subscribed. The audience seemed so enthusiastic that the matter was put into the hands of one of the gentlemen of the conference, in order that he might get the names of others who wished to give, after the session had closed.

The Friday afternoon session was held in Academic Hall, which was crowded by members of the conference whose interest seemed augmented rather than decreased by the long sessions they had already attended. It was opened by Rev. Francis J. Grimké, D. D., of the Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church, Washington, whose paper is printed below. The speaker gathered up his slender, well-knit frame as if to throw the disk, and hurled his maledictions on shoddy work and pulpy character with such stern intensity that a visitor remarked in a whisper, 'That man is the Savonarola of his people.'

#### SOME THINGS THAT LIE ACROSS THE PATHWAY OF OUR PROGRESS.

There are two classes of obstacles that confront us in our efforts to rise. The first are those that lie outside of ourselves, that are set up by others; the second are those that lie within ourselves, and that we ourselves set up. It is of the latter class that I desire to speak, as by far the most serious, and to us the most important. The fact that lawlessness is increasing in the South, that the spirit of injustice towards us is more pronounced now, perhaps, than ever before; that the white people of the North, to a very large extent are either indifferent to these outrages or are in sympathy with them; that capital and labor in the North are both unfriendly to our employment; that the press of the country is hostile to us; and that the pulpit of the land is silent when it comes to the matter of our rights, gives to the future a very sober aspect; but such things are not nearly so depressing as those which fall under the second head. It is when we come to study the Negro himself, to look at him from within, that the most serious aspect of the problem confronts us; so much so that it becomes extremely difficult, at times, to say, whether the gathering darkness is to be temporary or permanent, whether the end is to be success or failure, victory or defeat. If the Negro will give careful thought and attention to himself, to the things which tend to build him up, to make him strong, physically, intellectually, morally, spiritually, no obstacles that can be thrown up from without can permanently obstruct his way, or impede his progress; he is bound to go forward. And so vice versa, if he neglects himself, if he allows himself to run to weeds, to fizzle out, there is no power in the universe outside of himself that can hold him up and push him forward. He is bound to go down. The important thing for us as a people, therefore, is to know what these obstacles are that lie within us, and to ad-

dress ourselves seriously and earnestly to their removal. Hence, with a view of helping us to an intelligent understanding of what the real task is that lies before us, I desire at this time to call attention to a few of these obstacles.

And first may be mentioned, a lack of cohesiveness, or the disposition to hold together and to pull together. Two things are perfectly clear to my own mind touching our future in this country. The first is that for years to come, we are to remain separate and distinct, having little or no social relation with the whites. It is sometimes said the wisest policy for us to pursue in this country, is to lose sight of the fact that we are Negroes, but this is impossible. Everywhere we go the fact of our color is thrust upon us. At every step we are reminded of the fact that we are Negroes. If we attempt to travel, or enter a restaurant or hotel, or a place of worship, or are in search of employment we are confronted with the fact of our color. Go where we will it is the same. In the South, especially, this sentiment in favor of separation is rapidly crystallizing into law. Marriages between the two races have been forbidden in nearly all the old slave-holding states; and the movement toward separate cars for whites and blacks is also rapidly spreading. While in the North there are no separate cars, and no laws against the inter-marriage of the races, the lines in other respects are just as closely drawn. So far as I can see, there is not only no disposition to recognize the Negro socially, on the part of the whites, as a class, but the feeling against such contact and association, instead of diminishing, is increasing. So that whether the Negro wants to remain a separate and distinct people in this country or not, the simple fact is that he cannot help himself. He is separate, has been, and is likely to be for years to come. In no part of the United States will you find white and colored people mingling on terms of social equality, except in very rare and exceptional cases, of particular individuals, in particular localities. Nor will you find any disposition, anywhere in this country, to encourage such social contact. The trend is the other way. The decree of separation between the two races in this country is just as firmly fixed, for the present, at least, as the laws of the Medes and Persians.

The second thing that is perfectly clear to my mind, touching our future in this country is that as a race, we are to sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish together. We can't get away from each other. Never mind what progress I as an individual may make, never mind how intelligent or wealthy I may become, the social laws and customs that operate against the Negro as a class will operate against me. His fate will be my fate. We are all classed together, and are treated alike, whatever our condition,—rich or poor, high or low, educated or uneducated. The one has just as much difficulty as the other in getting a meal at a restaurant, or accommodations in a hotel, or a shave in a barber-shop, or in renting a house. Both are forced to ride in the same dirty, filthy cars in the South, and to sit in the equally dirty and filthy sitting rooms at the depot. There is no more disposition to recognize the one socially than the other. Whatever class distinctions we may make among ourselves, in the eyes of the white man, we are all one. The educated Negro is no better received than the uneducated Negro; the wealthy Negro than the poor Negro; the light complexioned Negro than the pure, unadulterated Negro. The knowledge of the fact that we have one drop of Negro blood, however white we may be, shuts us out just as completely. Whatever our condition, whatever our complexion, we are all bound up together. Our fate is one. We rise or fall together. Such being the case, our duty is to recognize that fact, and in the light of it to pull together for the common good. The spirit of co-operation, in all those things which tend to build

us up as a people, to give us power and influence and respectability, we should carefully foster. Even if it were possible, in our present condition, social contact with the whites is not desirable. If that contact is to be a healthy one, and is to be mutually beneficial, we must come together as equals in fact, as well as in theory, which is not true at present. We are not the equal of the white man; nor does he recognize us as such. Not until we have lifted ourselves to his level in wealth, in intelligence, in social position, and this equality is by him recognized, can we afford to lose sight of the fact that we are colored, or cease to hold together as a class. When we are both on the same level, and this is recognized by both, then, and not till then, are we prepared to come together in a way that will be of any permanent value to either, and in which each may preserve his self-respect.

The duty which lies immediately before the Negro therefore, is the duty of self-development, the duty of making the most of himself, and of his present opportunities. And in order to do this certain things are necessary, and among them, unity of action, the power of combination, of uniting our forces for the accomplishment of definite ends and objects. The weaker we are, the more necessary it is that we unite our forces, that we cultivate this power of cohesiveness, of coalescence. The strong can afford to stand apart, it may be, but not the weak. Their salvation consists in holding together, and working together. United they stand, divided they fall. In matters of business, this is especially true. If the Negro is ever to make any headway in this direction, there must be co-operation, he must be sustained through the patronage of his own people, and his own people must sustain him not simply because they may be interested in him as an individual, but because it is a race enterprise, involving larger interests than the immediate profits that may accrue to the individual running the business. The success of the enterprise means much to the individual owner, but it means vastly more to the race. As these race enterprises multiply, as the Negro merchant takes his place in the business world, as success crowns his efforts through race sympathy and co-operation, the race moves forward, is lifted to a higher level. And this is what we need as a race,—the disposition to rally to the support of each other in all such enterprises because of the effect which their success will have upon the general status of the race. We are not to ignore the individual, but at the same time we are also to think of and live with reference to those wider interests that pertain to the race as a whole. In this element, however, we are sadly deficient; and in this deficiency is to be found one of the serious obstacles to our progress. Professor Shaler of Harvard, you will remember, urges this very fact as an evidence of the Negro's incapacity for civilization. "The Negro," he says, "never heartily engages in a partnership of a voluntary character." It behooves us therefore, as a race, to look well to ourselves in this respect, and to endeavor to remedy this defect, by keeping the thought constantly before us and by seeking to impress ourselves and those who may come under our influence, with its importance, as a stepping-stone to higher and better things.

Another discouraging element in the problem, is the tendency of the Negro towards the light and trivial, instead of towards the more serious and weighty matters of life. That this should be so among the masses of our people is not surprising. They have not yet developed the capacity or the taste for higher things. In their present condition, it is but natural that they should find their greatest delight in feasting and dancing, in frivolous amusements and the like; but among those who have had superior advantages, and who have risen above the rank and file, we certainly have a right to expect

something different. Paul said, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child; but when I became a man I put away childish things." That is the law of progress, of true development. It is somewhat surprising therefore, and makes the way look pretty dark, to find little or no difference between the educated and uneducated classes of our people in this respect. And yet, such unfortunately is the case to a very large extent, even in a city which boasts of its culture, and where it is often said, 'There is more intelligence and general culture in it among our people, than you will find in any other city in the country.' Although there is a larger number of educated young men and women there than you will find elsewhere, yet it is a difficult matter to get them together for anything that is improving. If there is a dance or euchre party, or something which promises, as they call it, a jolly time, you can get them; you can get them in large numbers, you can pack any hall, or any parlor; and you can get them night after night, and hold them until twelve, one, and two o'clock in the morning. But if there is a lecture to be given, or some topic of practical importance to be discussed, or some work to be done for the general good, or some class to be organized for self-improvement, you may get a few after a good deal of coaxing. And even those who come, as a general thing, will be found to be but slightly interested. You never discover in them any real enthusiasm, or interest, or see them when they really seem to be in earnest, to put any heart in what they are doing, until you see them whirling on their toes or turning on their heels or shuffling a pack of cards, or *en route* for the theatre. Why is it that in this city the colored Young Men's Christian Association has been more dead than alive for years? Not because there are not plenty of young men, and educated young men at that, but because it is impossible to get them interested in the more serious aspects of life. It is the gay, giddy, frivolous things of life that they are living for. They have no taste for, nor inclination toward the higher and better things. I know not how this may impress others but to me, it is a very serious matter. In view of the great problem which confronts us in this country as a race; in view of the stupendous amount of work there is yet to be done in this upward struggle upon which we have entered, it is certainly not very reassuring to find those who ought to be the leaders of the people, whose motto ought to be *Excelsior*, and who ought to be examples to inspire and encourage the advancing host to press onward and upward, frittering away their time on such trivialities. If the race ever goes up in this country; if it ever rises superior to its present condition, it won't be by dancing and card playing, by encouraging a tendency, which is already too strongly developed among us, towards the light and trivial. If the intelligent and cultivated Negro settles down to such things, finds his highest delight in mere amusement, what hope is there that the masses of our people will do any better, what right have we to expect them to do any better? There is a duty here, devolving upon our educated classes with reference to those who are not so far advanced as themselves, which, I am afraid, has been but little appreciated. As we rise in the scale, the light that emanates from us, the kind of life we live, ought to be a guide and inspiration to those who are coming on behind. They ought to be able to point to our example, and to feel that it is the way of life to them and not the way of death.

Another element of discouragement in the problem is that the Negro is too apt to have a good opinion of himself. I refer particularly to the educated Negro, or those who have had some educational advantages. Self-depreciation is not one of his weaknesses. He is not apt to think that any position is too big for

him to fill. He is apt to take credit to himself for all that he is entitled to and more. I remember once having received a call from a gentleman who was an aspirant for a certain position, and who desired my influence. Among the things that he said in speaking of himself was, that he felt that he was just as well fitted for it as any man living; and then, thinking perhaps, that that was rather a sweeping statement, he modified it by saying, "unless he be a man of gigantic intellect, and vast learning." And so during President Harrison's administration, you will remember how many candidates sprang up for the circuit judgeship. Almost every colored lawyer in the country felt that he was qualified for the place; and the President was soundly denounced for not selecting one of them. These are but samples of many illustrations that might be adduced of this tendency of which I am speaking. And I have placed it among the obstacles in the way of our progress, because one of the conditions of growth, of development, is the consciousness that something is lacking, that something is yet to be attained. Nothing is to be gained by overestimating ourselves. Hence the wisdom of the inscription over the Delphic Oracle, "Know thyself." And this was the objective point in the teaching of Socrates. By a series of questions skillfully framed he brought the learner to see just how little he really knew, and with that as a starting point, prepared the way for future progress and development. Egotism, self conceit, is never a hopeful sign, and its appearance among us as a people is to be discouraged. It is a sign of weakness and not of strength. It retards rather than stimulates action. There is a good deal of this over estimation of our ability and attainments, this swell-headism, if I may so express it, especially in a certain class among us, that must be knocked out of us, if we are to go forward. We simply make ourselves ridiculous by laying claim to what we do not possess. Modesty is a virtue that we need to cultivate. We are not to undervalue ourselves, nor are we to overvalue ourselves. It is in the knowledge of what we really are, that lies the secret of power and the hope of development.

Another discouraging element in the problem is that the Negro is too easily satisfied. If he goes into business and makes thirty or forty or fifty thousand dollars, he is too apt to imagine he is rich, and to relax his efforts. The white man who is worth fifty thousand dollars works just as hard as he did when he was worth only five thousand. And even after he gets up to one hundred thousand, he goes on working just the same. One hundred thousand does not satisfy him, he wants two hundred thousand. And when he gets two hundred thousand he wants three, four, five, six hundred thousand. And when he gets six hundred thousand he wants a million. And when he gets one million, then he wants many millions. And even then he is not satisfied. But it is not so with the colored man. He doesn't trouble himself very much after he has accumulated fifty or a hundred thousand dollars. He is ready to retire and live on his income.

The same is true as a general thing, I am sorry to say, in the matter of education. There are some noble exceptions of course. The white man goes to college and graduates; but that does not satisfy him. His studies are kept up after he leaves college. The time never comes when he is ready to relax his effort and give up the pursuit of knowledge. It is not so, however, with the colored man. He soon gets weary and ceases to grow. After the college course is completed very little is done to perfect himself, to broaden and deepen the culture which he has received. Even in the case of professorships I have noticed the same tendency, or weakness. After a few years of study, sufficient to perform the routine duties of the class-room, all effort is relaxed,

If he can barely keep up with his classes, he is apt to be satisfied. The white man goes on, and on, and on, until he has covered the entire field, including not only the special subject in hand, but all related subjects as well. In this way he grows to be a large and scholarly man, a man of broad and varied culture. The danger of the Negro is in being content with a mediocre development, in advancing up to a certain point and then stopping, while the white man moves on. There is a reason, of course, for this difference. The Negro has enjoyed less than the white man, and is content therefore with less. He measures himself by the condition of the people with whom he is identified in point of wealth and intelligence, and because he is considerably ahead of the rank and file he is satisfied. The white man, taking the same standard,—the condition of the people with whom he is identified—cannot be satisfied with what the Negro is satisfied with. More is expected of him, more is required of him. He must do more, must go farther forward, if he is to hold his own and receive any recognition. That this tendency of the Negro, to be too easily satisfied, is perfectly natural, in view of his present environment, is true. It is also true, however, that unless this tendency is overcome, he is sure to lag behind, and to continue in his present position of inferiority. He must enlarge his ideas; he must not be satisfied with less than the white man is satisfied with. He must not stop short of where the white man stops. He must show the same perseverance, the same industry, the same ambition to excel.

Another discouraging element in the problem, and one that is immediately connected with what has just been said, is that the Negro has not yet come, except here and there, to understand the secret of success in the struggle of life. He wants to rise. He wants to be on the top. He is dissatisfied with his present condition. He finds fault because he cannot get employment, because he is shut out of this avenue or that. He assumes that the world owes him a living, and that it is his right to be employed; and in case he is not, looks upon it as a personal wrong, as if some principle of right or justice had been violated. To him every thing is wrong, and the trouble, as he looks at it, lies in the condition of things about him. If these conditions could be changed, things would be better. And the way to change them, he thinks, is by legislation, or agitation. He thinks that the white man ought to be led either from a sense of gratitude, or be compelled as a matter of right to open his places of business to him, and show him other considerations. And this he has been expecting to be effected through a favorable public sentiment, or through the action of some political party. Doubtless a change in the condition of things about us would make it easier and pleasanter for us, but it will never be effected in the way in which we are looking for it to be brought about. There is no power in heaven or earth that can change these conditions, except the Negro himself. The change must first begin in him. The reason why things are as bad as they are is largely his own fault. I am speaking here principally of our industrial and business prospects. In conversing with a gentleman some time ago on this subject,—one of the most gifted men of our race, and one who has given much as serious thought to this problem, I believe, as any man living,—he said, "If the Negro will only use faithfully the opportunities he now has, as he develops capacity other opportunities will open up." In other words, the thought which he desired to convey was this: the Negro must take his place in the battle of life, and expect to win his way just as any body else, on his merit. That is the principle upon which he must triumph, if success ever crowns his efforts.

It is to this aspect of the subject that I desire to

direct attention in closing. It is a mistake for the Negro to assume that the world owes him a living; that he has a right to be employed. No such right exists. If a man starts a business—the manufacture of cloth or shoes or hats—he cannot get along without employing somebody; but there is no law human or divine, in the Bible or out of it, which makes it obligatory upon him to employ me or any other particular individual. He may or he may not, as he sees fit, without violating any principle of right or justice. If I can do the work he wants done, and can convince him that it is to his advantage to employ me, that I can do it as well, or better than any body else, he may employ me, he will be almost sure to. In business there is very little sentiment. The end is not philanthropy, but gain, money making. The business man is looking for the man who can do the best work, and the most work, in the shortest time for the least money,—the man who, combining skill and diligence, will enable him to reap the largest profits on his investment. Whenever he finds that man, whatever his color may be, he will be sure to make a place for him and bid him welcome. Color prejudice in this country may prevent the full operation of this law at once, but the principle of merit is the principle which sooner or later is sure to triumph. If it is more profitable to employ colored men, business is not going to hesitate long about the matter. Business is intensely selfish. It wants all it can get, and it is bound to take the road that will yield what it wants soonest. A statement was published in the New York *World* five years ago that bears directly on this point, and which serves to illustrate the principle. According to the statement, a reporter of the *World* happened to be passing where a large building was going up, and his attention was arrested by the fact that all the hod-carriers were colored men. It was rather a novel sight in New York City, and so, stopping, he hunted up the contractor to know what it meant. And this was the explanation which he received. "While travelling in the South", he said, "I observed the manner in which this class of work was done by the colored men, and was so much pleased that I thought I would try them. They have given perfect satisfaction. They work very much more rapidly than either the Italians or Irish. Five of them will carry more bricks and mortar in a day than a dozen Irish or Italians. Hereafter they will do my work as long as I can get them". The preference that was given to these men, was not because the builder and contractor had any special love for the Negro or interest in him. It was simply because, from a business standpoint, he found out that it was to his advantage to employ him, that he could get more work out of him for the same money than out of the Irish or Italians he had been employing. His motive was a purely selfish one, but the Negro got the benefit of it all the same. And ultimately, that is going to be true, not only in the matter of hod-carrying, but in every other department of work. This is the principle upon which business is conducted everywhere. It puts its money where it will yield the largest returns. And in that fact, lies hope for the Negro, provided there is anything in him; and it indicates the lines along which his efforts should be mainly directed. If he hopes to succeed in this world of fierce competition, he must cease to expect anything from political parties, or from the charity of friends, and learn to depend on his own merit.

In the battle of life, it is the fittest that survives. And, if the Negro does not fit himself for the conflict, he will perish and deserves to perish. The fact that he is a Negro will win for him no sympathy or consideration, and ought not to; nor ought he to expect it to. If he cannot stand on his merit, he ought to go down, and will go down, whether he wants to or not. The fact

that we were brought here without our consent; that we were held as slaves for two hundred and fifty years; that we have enriched this country with our toil without receiving any compensation; the fact that we were emancipated and started on our career without a penny or a foot of ground, so to speak, may be interesting to remember, and if we succeed, may render our success all the more glorious. That record, however, painful as it may be, and as pathetically and eloquently as it may plead in our behalf, is powerless to help us. No door of opportunity will swing open to us because of what we have been; nor will it put a dollar in our pockets. And the sooner we recognize this, the better it will be. The question is not what we have suffered and endured, but what have we now to offer; what can we now do; and how can we do it? The dead past must bury its dead. It is with the living present that we have to deal; and with that present, not as we think it ought to deal with us, but as we find it, and as it is willing to deal with us. The wise thing for us to do is not to waste our time in vain regrets, as we are too apt to do, over opportunities that are denied us, but to vigorously embrace the opportunities that are opened to us, whatever they may be. If we do well whatever our hands find to do, we won't be kept waiting very long for something to do. Faithfulness and efficiency are qualities that are sure to win recognition and to come to the front.

There is always a demand for faithful, conscientious, well-qualified workmen in every sphere of life, and therefore, the solution of our present difficulties, so far as employment is concerned, is to qualify ourselves; to so qualify ourselves that whatever we undertake to do, will be done so well, that there will be a demand for our services. And yet, unfortunately, this is just the thing we do not seem to see, just the thing we are not doing. One of the most discouraging features of the present outlook to my mind, is the insensibility, the indifference, that is discoverable everywhere among all classes of our people to this great principle of efficiency, of thoroughness, of preparation, as the means and the only means by which we are to win recognition, and make a place for ourselves. With most of us quality goes for nothing. The tendency is to slur over everything, to shirk whenever we can, to get through what we have to do as soon as possible, and with as little exertion as possible. The thought of perfection as an end, of doing what we undertake to do, in accordance with the most approved methods, with a view of producing the most perfect results, is seldom or never thought of. And what is the consequence? In many departments of work, once almost entirely controlled by us, we are rapidly being superseded. This is especially noticeable in the lines of work where we once encountered the least opposition. The colored man as house-servant in the North is a rapidly diminishing factor. The same is true of the colored coachman and footman. This is no mere accident. Be assured there is some reason for it. Looked at superficially, we are apt to say, it is the result of prejudice, it is due to his color. But a profounder study of the subject will reveal the fact that it is not his color so much as his inefficiency, his unprogressiveness, the inferior character of his work.

Here is a clipping which has in it a most important lesson for us. It is entitled "How Harry Climbed." Harry was an errand boy for a grocer, or rather he was general utility boy. He swept the store, set out the boxes containing the vegetables on the sidewalk in the morning, took them in at night, carried parcels, and as he learned more and more about the business, waited on customers. He was paid a small stipend at first, and then his wages were increased as his services became more valuable. There were two or three clerks in the store, and over all was the employer. Harry aspired to be a clerk, and in due time was promoted to that position. In odd times

he studied the market reports and knew the prices of things and the sources of supply; he read agricultural journals and became an expert in judging of butter and cheese, of apples and other fruits, of potatoes and other vegetables. He studied up the history of foreign fruits and other importations, and he became generally a cyclopedia as to all matters connected with grocery supplies."

Here is another clipping in the same line entitled, "The Reason for Success."

"In spite of hard times, the unceasing demand for employment, the crowding of thousands into our great cities in the hope of bettering themselves,—hope which so often proves itself unfounded—the fact remains that there is room at the top. The supply of fully trained, competent workers is not equal to the demand. The girls who wonder why some of their associates succeed where they themselves fail, many find a valuable lesson in the following brief account of the way in which some young women rose from lower to higher positions.

A young woman recently found employment in a queensware store. She immediately began a course of study, in her leisure moments, upon glassware and china. She then read some recent works on the appointments of the table, and in a short time, by applying herself to her business, became the most valued employee in the store.

In a millinery establishment the young woman who found time for reading a book or two on colors and their harmonious combination, found her own taste greatly improved and her ability to please patrons much greater. She was soon a favorite with the employers and customers.

The young woman who, to earn an honorable living, went into my lady's kitchen, and instead of gossiping every evening found time to read a few good books and household papers, was soon too valuable a housekeeper to be kept in a subordinate position in the kitchen. She knew how a table should look for a formal dinner, she knew which dishes were in season, she knew how to serve a meal in its proper courses, and more than that, she knew something of the food value of different dishes."

The spirit exhibited by this young man, and these young women, the disposition to qualify themselves to do well the work committed to them is just the spirit that we need and must have if we are to succeed. People may tolerate inferior work for a time, where they cannot help themselves, but when the opportunity presents itself of doing better they will be sure to embrace it. Nothing is clearer than the fact therefore, that if the Negro doesn't do better than he has been doing, than he is now doing; if he is not a little more careful about how he does his work, if he does not put a little more conscience and brain into it; if he does not become a little more wide awake and progressive; in the language of the Scriptures, even that which he now hath of opportunity, will be taken from him. In nearly all of our cities, it is a notorious fact, that most of our people who work out at service, are not worth having. They do their work so poorly, take so little interest in what they do, that they are tolerated from sheer necessity and that is all. They would be superseded to-morrow, if a better class of domestics could be obtained. This is what the white people say; and this is what the colored people say, who employ them when they can get them. And the same is true of those who sew for a living. Everywhere the complaint is heard from those who are in business as to the inferior character of the help which they are obliged to accept. One lady said to me—a prominent dress maker—"They don't seem to care how they do their work; even after you have shown them, it has often to be ripped up and done over again". This lady finally had to go out of the business, because of the difficulty of securing competent

help. And any one who has had many dresses made, knows in what a careless, slipshod manner they are often put together.

Nor is this ail. In this connection, there is still another element that ought to be mentioned, in which we are also sadly deficient, and yet without which we cannot hope for success, and that is reliability, trustworthiness. We are not only careless and indifferent as to the quality of our work, but in the great majority of cases little or no confidence can be placed in our word. The idea of promptness, of keeping engagements, of doing what we undertake to do, and at the time we undertake to do it, doesn't go for very much with us. It doesn't seem to strike us as a matter of any special importance whether we live up to our promises and engagements or not. Say this is a slander upon the race, if you will; denounce it as false, if you will. It is true, nevertheless. No denial, or expression of indignation on our part, can alter the fact. Would to God that it were a slander, that it were false, but it is not. Everywhere, among all classes of our people, as you have dealings with them, you are made painfully conscious of this fact. A gentleman said to me some time ago, "When I thought of building some houses, I said to myself, I will give this work to colored men. I want to encourage my own race, but I have found them so unreliable that I don't think they will do any more work for me. I have really lost money by the frequent delays in the work. I have some tenants waiting to take possession, and the houses would now be yielding me an income had the workmen kept their word. They would promise me to be there at a certain time and then would not come. Or they would begin a piece of work and stop before it was finished and go off, and sometimes it would be several days before I would see them again. The fact is, a picnic, or excursion, a parade or something which promises a good time, is sufficient to lead them to drop whatever they are doing, whether in so doing they will be able to keep their engagements or not. The important thing with them is having a good time; the engagement gives them little or no concern. If, in the future, I refuse to employ these men, they will say, it is because I do not want to encourage my own race, whereas the fact is, I prefer to employ them. But business is business. Hereafter I am going to look out for my own interests, and will give any work I may have to men that can be relied upon." And in this, he was right. The colored man who is qualified to work, does his work well, and who is reliable, and trustworthy, if he is discriminated against on the ground of his color, may reasonably complain. But if he is not well-qualified, if he does poor work, and does it when it suits his convenience instead of in accordance with the terms of the contract, if he is discarded for some one else, he has no one to blame but himself. And instead of complaining, he should thank God that such is the case, if thereby he may be brought to a sense of his deficiency, to see why he is discriminated against, and thus be stimulated to mend his ways, to do better.

There is a providence, I believe, in these doors of opportunity that are now closed against the Negro. And the design of that providence, I believe, is to impress upon him, in the very beginning of his career as a freeman, the one, indispensable condition of success, and that is fitness, ability to do well what is to be done. The Negro has not yet come to accept that fact, has not yet settled down to a basis of merit as the one, and the only one, upon which he is to win his way in the battle of life. And until he learns that lesson, these doors of opportunity will be kept closed. And I for one am not sorry that they are. If they were opened it would do him no good in his present state of mind; it would hinder rather than help him in his real

development, in that it would give him an entirely false philosophy of life. Besides, though they were opened and he permitted to enter, unless there were a very decided change in his entire spirit and method of doing his work, it is evident that his occupancy would be a very brief one. His incompetency, the shoddy character of his work, his unreliability, would soon put him just where his color is supposed to put him now. By keeping these doors shut, God is forcing the Negro back upon himself,—to a more careful self-inspection, forcing him to think of his own resources, of his own capabilities; forcing him to turn his eyes from the imaginary help which lies outside of himself, to the possibilities that lie within him,—to the apprehension of the fact that upon his merit he must stand or fall. When the Negro learns that lesson, and addresses himself earnestly to the work of properly qualifying himself, and comes forward in the race of life, asking to be accepted or rejected simply on his merit, he will not only hold what he has at present, but other doors will open, and other and larger opportunities will present themselves. What we need as a race to day, and what we must have, if things are to get better, if the shadows are to fall apart and light is to break upon our pathway, are larger and more frequent doses of this gospel of preparation, of thoroughly fitting ourselves for the work which our hands may find to do. For as some one has said, "No matter what may be the starting place, the rule is ever the same. He who keeps to his work, and does that work well, is starting towards the top, whether his duty consists in rolling cloths or making books, in selling prints and laces, or in drumming away at some profession." And this is the gospel which we must preach from our pulpits, in our churches, in our schools, colleges, universities, in our homes, and through the columns of the press everywhere, day by day, week by week, month by month, year by year, and with ever increasing emphasis, line upon line, and precept upon precept, here a little, and there a little. There must be no let up. This insensibility, this widespread indifference to this all-important matter of quality in work must be broken up. A new spirit must be generated. This is the lesson which you need, which I need, and which we all need to learn, and must learn if this poor race of ours is to survive in the struggle. Here is the key to the future, and that key will respond to no touch but our own. White men cannot help us except in an indirect way. We have got to work out our own destiny. The power that is to level the mountains of prejudice and opposition and make clear the pathway of the Negro in this country, lies within the Negro himself, in his own intelligence and pluck and fidelity and conscientiousness and high resolve to make the most of himself, to put his best into whatever he does. If he uses that power, he will succeed; if he does not he will fail, and ought to fail.

Dr. Grimke's paper, which made a profound impression, was followed by a short discussion, and by the reading of the report of the Committee on Resolutions by Rev. Geo. F. Bragg. The committee consisted of Rev. Mr. Bragg, Prof. Brown, Rev. Mr. Booth, Mrs. R. D. Bowser, Prof. Cromwell, Dr. Grimke, Mr. Banks, and Mrs. Langhorne.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON RESOLUTIONS AT THE FIRST GENERAL HAMPTON NEGRO CONFERENCE.

The conference heartily commend the work of Hampton Institute in its endeavor to study the sociological problems of American Negroes. After a consideration of the urgent needs of the Negro people the conference recommends:—



First: That Negroes be urged to become landholders, and we suggest as the best means to this end the formation of land companies to purchase large tracts, which may be subdivided and sold on terms to suit the masses;

Second: That building associations and savings banks are the best means of securing homes;

Third: That our people establish and patronize business enterprises among ourselves for the supplying of our own wants and the employment of our own labor;

Fourth: That industrial exchanges be established in cities for the encouragement of our skilled workmen and workwomen;

Fifth: That school boards in our large cities introduce industrial training into the public school system;

Sixth: That the people be urged to practice more rigid economy in their expenditures; that teachers and others in positions of influence impress upon our girls ideas of economy, neatness, and simplicity, and that ministers advise their congregations against extravagant expenditure for church edifices and against costly funerals;

Seventh: The distribution from time to time of simple, pointed, and brief tracts for the people, containing information and advice on agriculture, domestic economy, hygiene, and other questions affecting our welfare;

Eighth: That mothers' meetings and fire-side schools be carried on in every community; that special attention be given to the training of girls in domestic service and household duties; and that in cities, special efforts be made to provide for the proper reception, assistance, and friendly guidance of young men and women who are strangers to city life.

Ninth: We believe that we need to pay particular attention to the moral welfare of our own people, and to impress a spirit of sacrifice upon our educated and professional classes. We deeply deplore the criminal propensities of our lowest classes, and should strive by all honorable means to prevent their increase, the most practicable means to this end being the establishment in every southern state, of a reformatory for juvenile offenders, who may thus be reclaimed from vice and made useful citizens;

Tenth: That there is need of a duly authorized person, qualified by special preparation, experience, and zeal to spread among our people by lectures and personal talks a knowledge of practical methods of social regeneration and reform;

Eleventh: And, finally, after conference and discussion we steadfastly continue in our belief that the Negro has a bright future in this country; and that by cultivating peace and harmony with our fellow citizens, and by reliance on the aid of our Heavenly Father we may reasonably hope for its realization.

**AFTERMATH.**

That the conference was a success there is no room for doubt. The pleasure and satisfaction expressed on all sides, the general desire that the gathering be an annual one, the earnestness of all in attendance, the unflinching determination to get at the whole truth—the real, not the “ideal truth”—and the evident desire to profit at once, and to help others to profit, by the suggestions brought forward—all these things go to show that the conference fulfilled its mission.

It was the means also of furthering the acquaintance of Hampton workers and graduates with members of the Negro race who have attained distinction in various walks of life, yet are working toward the common end—for the people, and with the people, for their uplifting. On the other hand, it has

helped to make Hampton's aims and motives better understood by the intellectual leaders of the colored race, for sincere and cordial appreciation of Hampton training, and testimony to its good results have been general on the part of those formerly somewhat antagonistic to the principles of education laid down by Gen. Armstrong.

During the hours not occupied by the various sessions the large number of guests from a distance were shown the new trade school, and the various other departments of the School, and were taken out sailing when the weather permitted, while those who remained until Saturday had a drive to Shellbanks which they will not soon forget. On the return of this party on Saturday afternoon, Mrs. Coppin called a short, extra session to confer with her in regard to plans for helping young girls, particularly those in domestic service. The methods that have been successfully tried in Philadelphia were talked over, and those present urged to try similar ones. With indefatigable zeal Mrs. Coppin devoted herself, during the few days following the conference, to the cause of the young girls who have so warm a place in her motherly heart. She spoke in the churches of Hampton and Norfolk, and was much interested in the work of the Coppin League, a flourishing club for young colored girls, started by some of our resident graduates, who, living in attractive homes of their own, gladly open them to their younger sisters whom they are trying to help.

Prof. DuBois went from Hampton to Farmville, Va., where he is spending the summer making sociological studies for the Department of Labor, in Washington. Mr. Fortune also remained South to study various problems which interest him, particularly the reason why the colored people, as a rule, do not become leading merchants. Articles on this and kindred subjects appear from time to time in the New York Sun over Mr. Fortune's signature. Mrs. Coppin, Prof. Scarborough, and Prof. Johnston assisted on the program of the annual meeting of the American Association of Educators of Colored Youth, which was held at Atlantic City, August 3, 4, and 5. And so the seed sowing continues; let us hope that abundant harvests may bless and prosper the Negro race in America.

**METEOROLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS.**

*Taken during the month of July, 1897.*

Mean temperature	79.4
Highest	91
Lowest	65
Rainfall (inches)	3.84
No. days clear	10
“ “ partly cloudy	9
“ “ cloudy	12
“ “ rainy	12
Prevailing direction of wind	S. E.

Twenty-seven forecasts of the weather were received from Washington, D. C. Of these twenty proved to be correct, seven partly correct.

*During the month of August, 1897.*

Mean temperature	77.6
Highest	91.
Lowest	65.
Rainfall (inches)	2.42
No. days clear	14.
“ “ partly cloudy	3.
“ “ cloudy	14.
“ “ rainy	5.
Prevailing direction of wind	N. E.

Twenty-six forecasts of the weather were received from Washington, D. C. Of these twenty-one proved to be correct, four partly correct, and one wholly incorrect.

C. L. GOODRICH.