

tangible personal property in behalf of the Federation's bond-brokerage clientele.



Here are the circumstances. Woman Suffrage organizations are circulating petitions for a popular vote on woman suffrage under the "public policy" law. The number of signatures of registered voters needed exceeds 100,000, and it isn't easy to get that many for any purpose. But the brewery ring is evidently frightened, and has arranged with the Civic Federation as noted above. To secure the help of the Federation it agrees to the Federation's tricky taxation amendment. In return, the Civic Federation agrees to two proposals of no special interest to either party to this delectable combine. The object of both parties is to file a petition with three demands, before the woman suffragists get their 100,000 signatures. This would head off the suffragists, for the "public policy" law allows only three proposals to be voted on at an election.



In themselves, the three proposals of this combine relate to desirable reforms—taxation, direct primary, and short ballot. But democratic advocates of those reforms will be wise to refuse their signatures to the petition. The primary reform and the ballot reform are therein proposed only to head off the suffrage petition. The tax reform is a La Salle street "fake." It proposes an amendment to the State Constitution providing for "classification of property for purposes of taxation, with taxes uniform as to each class within the jurisdiction levying the same." Properly safeguarded, this would be a good amendment. Without safeguards, it would permit "jackpot" legislatures to exempt stocks and bonds, while more heavily taxing such property as vehicles and houses. And *that is the intention*. No such amendment ought to be tolerated by the people of Illinois until it can be safeguarded with the Initiative and Referendum in good workable form. No legislature of Illinois ought to be allowed to classify property for purposes of taxation until the people are given power, through the Initiative and Referendum, to prevent Big Business favoritism.



Catharine R. Gilbert.

In the death of Mrs. Catharine R. Gilbert of New York, The Public loses another long-time friend; the social movement that is identified with Henry George's memory another useful, weariless and unostentatious worker. To this

cause she was one of Thomas G. Sherman's converts,—he whose earlier perceptions of the far-reaching evil effects of our unscientific methods of taxation were confirmed and developed by Henry George's writings until he came into substantial accord with George's remedial philosophy. All the rest of her life their cause was also hers. It offered to her vision the solution of the mystery of the greatest part of human suffering,—the mystery of the stagnation of human progress in the midst of marvelous progress-serving achievements, the mystery of the blight upon human faith in Creative beneficence. Mrs. Gilbert died on the 14th. At the burial service in Grace Church, New York, on the 17th, Lawson Purdy made the address, concluding it with reading from the last chapter of "Progress and Poverty"—"The Problem of Individual Life." The Public is especially indebted to Mrs. Gilbert for inspiring those fine editorials by her sister, Mrs. Lizzie Nye Northrup*, which gave its earlier readers so much satisfaction; but her friendship and service through all these years were of a quality and constancy which admit of no enumeration.



THE NEGRO CONSCIOUSNESS AND DEMOCRACY.

The thirteenth annual session of the National Negro Business League, held under the presidency and chairmanship of Booker T. Washington, has just adjourned.

The meetings were held in Chicago in a Negro church building, before practically exclusively colored audiences, only a few months after a very different series of meetings had been held in the same city for the same purpose—the uplifting of the race. This other series of meetings was, of course, the convention of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

The one convention reminds the observer irresistibly of the other; the success of either movement depends upon the success of the other. The gospel preached by Mr. Washington to his colored business men will yield fruits to be sure, but bitter ones, if the gospel preached by Burghardt Du Bois and Oswald Garrison Villard is ignored by either Negroes or whites.



Lest this observation be taken as an adverse criticism of the National Negro Business League, let us hasten to indicate the admirable work it is doing.

*See The Public, volume vi, pages 276, 435, 564, 580.

The league is the offspring of Tuskegee and Mr. Washington's practical mind. In nearly every city throughout the country—North and South—where the number of Negroes in business is sufficient to form a nucleus, a business league is formed. Its primary function is in each case inspirational, and in many cases it acts secondarily as a chamber of commerce for the colored people. In connection with these leagues other and more directly practical organizations, the Negro Bar Association, the Negro Press Association, the Negro Bankers' Association, and the Negro Funeral Directors' Association have sprung.

The purpose of the parent organization in its national aspect is easily gathered from such an annual meeting as has just been held in Chicago. Before a large audience of colored people the more successful business men of their race stand up and testify to the worth of their business experiences. As one of the delegates expressed it to the writer it is an "experience meeting." Then the experiences and their meaning are driven home by Booker T. Washington in his annual address.

See, he tells his audience, what your brothers are doing. Do not, he urges, revile the white man because he denies you equal rights and privileges, but learn from him that Business is the avenue through which your limitations may be transcended. When you graduate from college do not clamor for further recognition, but follow the example of Mr. X., who has so convincingly told us of his success, and start a brick yard in the South. Or if you of the other sex feel cramped and limited, follow the example of Mrs. Y. and start a national business in toilet preparations. But don't quarrel with wealth or with the *status quo*. This address with its cheerful optimism, its comparison of the Negro race's wonderful progress in fifty years with the "noble" Indian's retrogression and helplessness in the same time, and its sturdy note of self-sufficiency, being ended, there are more business experiences.

Then there are reports from the other organizations. The bankers, for instance, tell how the number of Negro banks has increased from two in 1900 to about fifty-seven at the present time, and how those of them enrolled in the Negro Bankers' Association are planning a strong central bank to handle the reserve funds of its members and to exercise mutual control and support and to organize the Negro credit on a systematic basis. Then State reports are read showing how the State organizations—of which there are over thirty—have used their opportunities for work and propaganda during the year.

Much of the propaganda work is done through the Negro churches, and it has been one of the tasks of Mr. Washington to rescue these institutions from their other-worldliness, and guide them into those channels of social outlook where they can render a maximum amount of service to the members who hold them in such high esteem and give them such a relatively greater part in their lives than the members of the dominant race give their churches.



Such, in brief, is what you may see and hear at an annual meeting of the National Negro Business League. What are we to think of it as a factor in the spread of fundamental democracy?

No two persons would think alike in the matter, of course. The individualist democrat and the social democrat would view the influence of this League from very different standpoints. The writer's idea of democracy would lead him to view the work of the League with only qualified assurance and hope, if it were alone in the field and if there were no Burghardt Du Bois to balance its tendencies.

To take the positive aspects of the matter first, however, the work of the League, as far as it goes, is a triumphant answer to the people who talk the usual nonsense about the inferiority of the Negro. The Negro is different from the white man, they say, and must remain so. To the older answer—"Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? Fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a Christian is?"—to this the Negro business man adds, "Hath not a Negro business ability, hath he not established banks, printing works, newspapers, publishing houses, missionary enterprises in Liberia, Negro communities with lighting and water plants, and are they not all flourishing and paying dividends; and are not the Negro lawyers making good in the courts?"

But this very success will bring its own limitations to the Negro consciousness. We whites who have had banks and business enterprises and fortunes for many years are beginning to get rather disillusioned about them. At the very time when we see that they are destroying even white equality (not using that last word, however, in its mechanical sense)—the colored man, apparently oblivious of the meaning of our Socialism, Singletax, or the more spontaneous and naive invocation of dynamite, the colored man in the person of Mr. Washington and his disciples, unknowing the

meaning of the word "villainy" in the quotation, and meaning its very opposite, gleefully exclaim: "The *villainy* you teach me I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction."

The white man who claims that the Negro cannot and should not try to imitate the white civilization, and who says that the Negro consciousness is a different consciousness from ours, is simply making the claim that the Negro is slightly different from human. For what are the distinctively white qualities and virtues if they are not those very qualities which we call human?

A friend in discussing the matter with the writer said that what was wanted to solve the problem was a psychological inquiry into the Negro consciousness, and that all action in the premises should await and be based on that. This is a promising theory, but a little reflection shows that its promise is altogether false.

The only Negro consciousness that has value for democracy is the Negro self-consciousness. And the moment you present the Negro with a chart of his consciousness, he takes up a certain attitude toward it which is unpredictable—which was necessarily not in the consciousness as originally analysed—and your labor is in vain as far as its original intention was concerned. But if you could reduce the Negro to an analysable resultant of hereditary and social forces you are using a method which is just as valid if applied to the white man. In your reduction of the Negro to the sub-spiritual, you reduce the white to the sub-spiritual; you place both races on the plane of what is philosophically known as naturalism, on the plane where efficiency, survival, and not love, is the final good.

The Negro answer to such a reduction is Mr. Washington's doctrine of *laissez faire* democracy, the piling up of Negro fortunes, the aggressive business enterprise of Negro business men, the creation of Negro capitalist and Negro proletariat, and the duplication in Negro circles of our own whole round of industrial troubles.

That this is no idle fancy would be evident to anyone who spoke to some of the Negro delegates to the recent conference. One prominent Southern colored man denounced the unions to the writer. Because they excluded Negroes? No, but because they put a buffer between the worker and the stimulus of straight competition, so that the worker was not spurred to "do his damndest."



But must we not admit that real democracy requires two conditions for its ideal success? The

first of these is that every man is an end in himself—not a means merely to your end or mine. And the second and just as important condition is that all truly human ends are reconcilable and co-ordinate, so that—as a recent writer, Professor Warner Fite, has pointed out, in a remarkable book—in a fully conscious society, conflict and personal sacrifice are eliminated by that mutual recognition and intelligence which sees to it that while I gain my ends through your instrumentality, I shall do it in such a way that my doing so enables you to gain your ends while working for mine.

Right here is where Dr. Du Bois and his school supplement the work of Dr. Washington. They see that the Negro cannot gain anything more than a material and partial victory by becoming more and more self-sufficing. Two camps of self-sufficing and self-regarding peoples will never constitute a democracy. Every white advance in the conception of social justice must be shared with the Negro. The Negro who is graduated from a college must not be allowed to take Dr. Washington's advice to go South and start a brick yard, if he has academic abilities that can be employed in other and more ideally fruitful ways. The white unions, for instance, must cease their suicidal and immoral policy of discouraging or excluding Negro members. The Negroes must not meet such exclusion with a self-sufficient, "Well, I shall achieve in some other way." They must insist on achieving in that particular—by insisting on admission to every union that claims to be Labor.

To achieve the proper solution of this problem, in short, simply means that whites as well as Negroes shall be guided by ideals as well as by opportunism, shall have the courage of their lip-service to spiritual realities, shall either admit that they do not believe in democracy at all but only in the struggle for existence, or else pursue their achievement of democracy in the only way possible, by the frank recognition of and action upon the spiritual implications of democracy and self-consciousness.

LLEWELLYN JONES.

CONDENSED EDITORIALS

FUNDAMENTAL DEMOCRACY WORLD-WIDE.

Louis F. Post, in the *Chicago Daily Press* of Aug. 16

No thoughtful person doubts that Theodore Roosevelt and his political party are facts of great significance. Both man and party are startling signs of