

Even if no Negro had yet risen to the intellectual or moral level of exceptional white men, this would prove nothing against the capacity of the race; so long at any rate as some Negroes rose, as they do now, to higher intellectual and moral levels than many white men.

Kelly Miller himself is an instance in point, on the intellectual side. We do not discuss the moral side, since there are no moral tests suitable for individual comparisons. On the intellectual side, however, Professor Miller is manifestly the peer of most white men in his vocation, and the superior of many. In his specialty, mathematics, his professional reputation must testify for him; but in his power of lucid, exact, impressive, persuasive, convincing and genuinely eloquent speech, his lecture, the first in this book, is testimony enough in itself. Whoever says that the Negro that uses language for the expression of thought with the precision and power of Kelly Miller in this lecture is an imitator, has himself no conception of what it means to use language for expressing thought. Mr. Miller imitates conventional spelling, yes. He imitates conventional grammar, yes. And in these respects it may be fairly added that his imitations reach a higher degree of excellence than do the orthographical and rhetorical imitations of whole armies of his self-assumed superiors of the white race. But beyond spelling and grammar and the other imitable conventionalities of speech, this man's lecture in the book before us reveals an intellectual power over the conventional instruments of human expression that would put to scorn the white man who should expose his ignorance by calling this product of Kelly Miller's pen an "imitation."

We choose Kelly Miller especially from among the contributors to this book, all of them able and some of them white men, because he is par excellence a black man. What we have said of Professor Miller's lecture is true also of the lecture of Professor W. E. Burghardt Du Bois, of Atlanta University. But as Professor Du Bois is not of pure Negro lineage, it might be replied as to him that the Caucasian part of his inheritance, though insufficient to exempt him from "Jim Crow" regulations on railroads, or to qualify him for participation in white men's gustatory performances except as cook or waiter, fully accounts for his intellectual equipment and power. So also we might refer to the lecture of Professor Roscoe Conkling Bruce as evidence of Negro intellectuality. But Professor Bruce, too, has Caucasian as well as Negro ancestry. As to him, moreover, it might be urged with added force of the same kind, such as the kind is, that his intellectual equipment and power are attributable not only to the Caucasian part of him, but also to his baptismal name. One can't quite tell what kind of wild goose chase the anti-Negro argument will lead one out upon if it be but given a chance to

spread its wings. So we ignore Professors Du Bois and Bruce, as men whose pronounced Caucasian ancestry may be pointed at to explain away their "apparently" Negroid abilities.

But Kelly Miller is not to be so explained. If enough Caucasian blood courses through his veins to account for his intellectuality, it has been singularly ineffective in modifying his features. He is a very type of the pure Negro—crispy curl of hair, spreading nostrils, coal black skin, thick lips, beautiful white teeth, and all. If there is a difference between Negro blood and white man's blood—a difference, by the way, which no physiological tests have yet disclosed—then Kelly Miller must be a full-blooded Negro. Yet he is a man of fine presence, of charming manners (cultivated, of course, but not counterfeit imitations), in full control of his scholarly attainments, capable and modestly self-respecting, whom any university might be proud to include in its faculty. He is a man whom one or another of the best white men's universities would in fact have in its faculty, were it not for the white man's unfounded prejudice against Negroes, and Mr. Miller's own devotion to the work of helping lift his race farther up from servitude to service.

To all white men of fair mind, we commend this book. They may not help the Negro race by reading it. But that makes little difference, for the Negro race is rapidly helping itself. They may, however, improve their abilities to help their own race.

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### THE AMERICAN NEGRO.

*The Negro and the Nation. A History of American Slavery and Emancipation.* By George S. Merriam. Published by Henry Holt and Company, New York.

Ten years after the Civil War, this book would have been considered valuable only—in Northern communities at any rate,—as a sane and interesting historical narrative of a past period, or at best for the analogical lessons it might afford in cases of recurrence of slavery in newer and more subtle forms than the chattel variety upon the basis of race. Today the book is valuable for the light it throws upon the progress of the same old race question that made the Civil War, and which the Civil War was mistakenly supposed to have settled for good and all. For this purpose, equally with the other, it is a book of unusual merit and value.

Beginning with the origin of Negro slavery in the Colonies, the author follows its development, and the controversies over it, chronologically down to the Reconstruction acts of Congress and the Negro Amendments to the Constitution ("corporation amendments" they might better be called, since the principal one has served plutocratic corporations famously and the Negro not at all); for this is not a treatise nor a series of controversial

essays, but the history of one of the sociological processes of our national life.

It is a good history, too; an impartial history in the best sense. It is not one of those flabby or deceptive histories which self-styled nonpartisans put forth. The "non-partisan" historian, if his work escapes flabbiness, is pretty sure to mislead his readers by half statements in one direction or inflated statements in another. The historian who is at all fit, is a partisan on every historical controversy he handles. Pretenses of non-partisanship are indications either of indifference or hypocrisy. This is not, however, to justify the partisan historian in making his work unfair. The good historian, while partisan, is also judicial. He has the ability and the honesty to marshal the facts against his own view as well as those that favor it, and to draw his conclusions in the light of day, with no concealment of his own temperamental, or traditional, or intellectual, or moral bias. And this is the kind of historian that the author of the book before us appears to be.

He is evidently a democrat of the fundamental species,—a Jeffersonian democrat, a Lincolnian democrat,—whose democracy knows no distinctions of race; and he is without pretense of being neither a democrat nor an aristocrat. He is frankly a fundamental democrat who handles his material "on the square."

While, for instance, he exposes and condemns the "black codes" of the Southern States for the devices they clearly were to re-establish Negro slavery, he is not blind to the local bitterness which the circumstances of the Reconstruction period following the "black codes" naturally engendered at the South. "Fancy the people of Massachusetts," he writes, "were the state-house on Beacon hill suddenly occupied by Italian, Polish, and Russian laborers—placed and kept there by a foreign conqueror." At the same time he is not unjust to the "scalawag," the "carpet bagger" and the Negro legislator. The first was any Southerner, good as well as bad, who did not go on political strike with the aristocracy; the second was any Northerner, good or bad, who had migrated to the South as he might have migrated to the West; and the Negro legislators, some good and some bad, some intelligent and some fools (like all legislators), produced nothing as bad even at the worst as the "black codes" that preceded and provoked their enfranchisement. The Southerner who condemns this as unjudicial is himself unjudicial. He may be a sectional patriot, or a true blue Caucasian, but he is not judicial if he condemns "scalawags" or "carpet baggers" or Negro legislation without discriminating.

We have given but an instance of the judicial quality of this book. It is characteristic of its spirit and letter throughout. The author treats the Negro neither as angel nor devil, neither as

philosopher nor fool, but as man—and as man demoralized by the degradations of slavery. It is with the same considerateness that he treats the other race, and all the persons and political parties and industrial or social classes within the scope of his work. His condemnation of the partisanship of the majority of the eight-by-seven Presidential Commission of 1876, is another instance.

From Jefferson, who, as he says, wrote "the universal and undying ideas that the authority of governments rests solely on their justice and public utility, and that every man has an inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," who "did not flinch, as did many of his associates, from giving that right a full and general application to blacks as well as whites," and who was not "a mere doctrinaire," for, "as he revolted from the abstract injustice of slavery, so its concrete abuses as he saw them, filled him with horror," the author quotes this additional and pregnant sentiment: "The whole commerce between master and slave is a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions—the most unremitting despotism on the one part and degrading submission on the other."

Mr. Merriam's book is one which every genuine democrat, regardless of party, should read at this time of reaction against the Negro's human rights. Not for its preaching; there is very little of that, if indeed any at all. But for its lucid, judicial and democratically sympathetic narrative of the American Negro's relations to the development of the American Republic. Although the author nowhere explains the national anti-Negro reaction (for it is national as well as sectional) upon the grounds that Quincy Ewing does, yet the explanation so clearly expressed by Ewing (p. 266), that the Negro race question is at bottom a labor question, the question of how to hold this race in virtual slavery to the white race,—is a clear inference from the circumstances which the author groups into his able historical narrative of "the Negro and the Nation."

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## PAMPHLETS

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### Vivisection.

The dumb brutes can neither make speeches nor frame declarations of right against the cruelty of scientists who dissect them alive, but Miss Lindaf-Hageby can speak for them, and she does. Her speech at the public meeting of the American Anti-Vivisection Society last February, to be had in pamphlet form of the society at 2025 Broadway, New York, is a moderate, well poised, instructive and powerful plea. Its theme is opposition to vivisection because, first, it goes "against the moral, the spiritual, the ethical progress of the human race," and second, it cannot be productive of useful results.