

slavery, Wright is too liberal. While realising that it was a struggle between opposing economies, wage slavery versus chattel slavery, he gives the moral and humanitarian motives more prominence than they actually wielded.

In the second section, Wright surveys the blight that results from 300 years of oppression. The Negro must know his place, his behaviour must be branded as inferior, and he must be compelled to labour at the behest of others. The picture reminds us forcibly of the position of the Non-European in democratic South Africa. Like the mass of the Non-Europeans in South Africa, the majority of the American Negroes are bound helplessly to the soil. The picture of the Black Belt of the South—as painted by the Movies, the Radio, the Press, and even the Church—is charming and idyllic. The Negroes, however, live a totally different life. They fear the “Lords of the Land”, toil from sun to sun and bow and grin when they meet White faces. If the Negroes protest, they are termed “bad niggers”. The Lords of the Land preach the doctrine of White supremacy, causing the poor Whites to form mobs and to start lynching—the innocent or the guilty. Wright realises that there is no fundamental difference in the interests of the Negro or the Poor White, but has to admit that the problem is far from nearing a solution.

The migration of a large minority, more than two million Negroes, from the plantations in the South to the industrial regions in the North, took place mainly during the First World War period. The war created a labour scarcity in the North. Great was the relief at the thought of leaving behind the bonds of Queen Cotton. Just as great was the eventual disappointment and the frustration of the Negro in his new surroundings in the North. Death waited for them on the city pavements. The “Bosses of the Buildings”, decreed that the “niggers” must be maids, cooks, and labourers. Life in the overcrowded city tenements bred disease and ruin, at a profit. . . . As in the South, so in the North, a barrier has been created and maintained between the Black and the White worker. Surreptitiously the Bosses counsel the Black folks to have nothing to do with the White workers. The Bosses help to build Negro churches, and generally ingratiate themselves as benefactors.

In the final chapter the author sums up the position of the Negro in America. In the main there is still confusion of thought. But there is some hope. The fear of Black and White lessens in the face of the slowly widening acceptance of an identity of interests. Servility to the bosses is being replaced principally in defence of their few remaining rights. The Negro is beginning to realise what he wants. He wants to share in the upward march of American life, and no amount of opposition from the lords of

industry will bar his progress.

“Twelve Million Black Voices” serves a useful purpose. The magazine-soaked reader is made to realise that there is no equality in “God’s own country”. The numerous photographs bear witness to the economic and social degradation of a people. The book helps to blast still further the myth of “American democracy”. It deserves a place in every library.

R. G.

Letter.

A MEMBER RECOMMENDS

Dear Members,

Well, another Conference has come and gone. Were you there? If not, I hope you have listened carefully to the report of your delegates, for this Conference, unlike its predecessors, has given us much to do and to think about.

To me, one of the most positive discussions was that on “Activising Branches”. From this there must follow practice. We were given suggestions; so now, if we really call ourselves “League Teachers”, it is our duty to see that those worthy suggestions are put into practice.

The first of them which offers itself to every member, is the one on membership. You know what the strength of your Branch was on 31st May. Is it up to that strength now? If not, what are you personally going to do about it? If it is the same, what are you personally going to do about it? Can you not increase the number? Have you been at slack or new teachers yet? Are there slack members right in your Branch? Have you found out why? Can you remedy it? Of course you can. In fact, you must, for in the League there should not be any lax member. There is too much to do, and so little done by some members.

Your Branch has so many activities which should mean so much to you. Do you have discussion groups, lectures? What about inter-Branch debates? Even country Branches could visit other nearby Branches, if only for a sporting event preceded by a discussion on some aspect of the League’s work. Has your Branch a news letter? Or is such an understanding too difficult for widely dispersed country Branches? Well, then, write a letter to another member on a particular League principle? Surely you have something to say about our policy—or do you just accept everything as correct?

Now for our Clause 2 (c). Has your Branch a Parent-Teacher Organisation? Are there any non-teacher Associates in your Branch? Do non-teacher friends know that your Branch would welcome them? Have you ever discussed it with them?

Why not invite them to some of your Branch meetings? Membership may follow.

Are you a member of any other organisation that is battling to remove the Colour Bar? If not, why not? You have a duty to do, so begin it now.

If the above has not forced you into activity, I can offer many more suggestions later. If you have any to offer, I would gladly accept them.

Yours for the League,

Maitland.

Facta Non Verba.

NOTES IN SCHOOL

By THE TEACHER.

I.

IT IS A LONG time since I spent the pennies my mother gave me to drop in the plate at the little Sunday School down the road. When the guilty moment approached I sang as lustily as the rest: "Hear the pennies dropping, dropping, dropping, everyone for . . ." as the brown plate passed from one impish hand to another, and the organist played *accelerando*. But the first Sunday Schools, founded in 1780 in the slums of Gloucester, England, had nothing to do with the Church. In fact, many religious groups fought bitterly against the Sunday Schools because they regarded them as a menace to the sanctity of the Sabbath. Sunday was the only day the poor children were able to attend and in these first Sunday Schools they were given lessons in the very earthly subjects of reading and writing. In my time (and, I suppose, in yours) Sunday School meant the chance to buy a sugar-stick!

II.

In England the Ministry of Education has introduced the Children's Bill into the House of Commons. The object of the "Children's Charter" is to bring a full and joyous childhood to boys and girls who grow up in institutions. There are about 138,000 of these unwanted children in England. When the Bill was being debated by the Commons Standing Committee a young man crashed into the House and tried to make his views known to the worthy legislators. Of course, he was thrown out. But I have just read his amazing tale of the 12 years he spent in an orphanage run by a religious sect. It was rare for the inmates to get an egg more than once a year—at Easter. Once, when the Bishop came for the sports, they had a strange red fruit—tomatoes. And he, personally, tasted bacon for the first time when he was seventeen—he had then joined the army. The worst offence in the

institution was wetting the bed. Some boys, he says, did it till they were fifteen years old. The punishment was grim. The rising bell was rung at 6 a.m. and after morning prayers there was an inspection. The miserable little wretches who had wet their beds had to go to the bathroom—unless they were under five years—with the clammy sheets wrapped around their naked bodies. There they waited in bare feet on the cold concrete floor—windows wide open, winter and summer—for the sister to arrive to administer punishment. They were forced to get into a cold bath. If they were "difficult", four boys were detailed to duck them. Youngsters of eight years screamed for mercy. Blue with cold, they were afterwards made to run around to restore circulation.

The young man, William Narkey, was not known to Charles Dickens. In fact, he left the institution in 1936.

III.

EXACTLY A YEAR AGO public attention was drawn to a glaring abuse of the system of managerial control of non-European education. The Press gave wide publicity to the case. A young Coloured teacher had been brutally sjambokked by a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church, the Rev. G. C. Uys, who was also manager of one of the local schools. In the Criminal Court the minister was fined £10 or seven days, the sentence being suspended for one year. Since then the teacher has brought a civil action against the recalcitrant manager. He claimed £200 "for pain, suffering and loss of reputation". Last month he was awarded £100 damages for the injury to his reputation and an additional £10 for pain and suffering. All costs were also to be paid by the defendant. The case sets an admirable lead to the many shy victims of managerial and ministerial abuse. The League now has a special Defence Committee and is building up a large Defence Fund. Deeds must be fitted to the words of the leading article in the September, 1947, issue of *The Educational Journal*: *Under such circumstances the only remedy at the moment is public exposure. Teachers must not allow their rights to be trampled upon by the managerial boot. They must rise from their servile subordination. Recourse must be had to the Courts of Law.*

IV.

IF YOU HAVE BEEN teaching for at least 10 years and then become so seriously ill that you are unable to continue teaching, and it is likely that you will have to leave the profession permanently, you may be placed on temporary sick pension for a period not exceeding five years. The amount of the pension is calculated in the very same way as for retirement on account of age—I gave the method last month. During your term on this sick pension the S.G.E. will require you to furnish further medical

evidence of your disability to teach, and if he is satisfied that your disability is permanent, he will grant you a permanent pension. But if at any time during your sick pension evidence shows that you are able to teach, the pension is withdrawn after six months' notice or immediately you start teaching again, whichever is the sooner. If you resume teaching within twelve months of the withdrawal of your sick pension, your period on sick pension is regarded as special leave of absence without salary.

V.

THE SHORTAGE OF BUILDING materials and architects has been officially given as the reason for not erecting the many schools required. It has been officially stated that the money is there. Almost half-a-million is lying idle. The authorities, it is claimed, are willing, anxious, excited, to spend the money. But they cannot make the bricks nor train the architects. There is reason in the argument. When they had the bricks and architects, how could one have expected them to make the money. Now

they have the money, how could one. . . . Meanwhile, money, bricks and architects were there in abundance to add a new £33,000 wing to the Sea Point Boys' High School. Recently opened by the Administrator, the new building shows how shortage can be overcome for the Whites. But poor Trafalgar, and Livingstone . . . where's that hall?

VI.

DESPITE THE PROTESTS OF Mr. Wildschutt, the Teachers' League and the other Teachers' Associations, the Administrator has just raised the rate of pension contribution from the present 6 per cent. to 7½ per cent., the increase to take effect from 1st April, 1949. This means teachers will pay 1/6 in every pound they earn. The new rate, it must be clearly understood, will bring no corresponding increased benefits. No change has been made in the pension laws, except that teachers will have to pay more for the same return. Within the last few years the pension rate has increased by 50 per cent. Is there something wrong?

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