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A Mississippi Leader

Hon. W. E. Mollison, a Lawyer and Bank President.

A Pioneer Anti-Bellum Leader and a Son of the State of Jefferson Davis, Who has Won a High Place in the Confidence of His People—A Safe and Conservative Leader and a Counsellor for His Race—His Early Career and Educational Advantages—A Prize Winner at College.

Our people in this country must not despair. Various criticisms are heard from our enemies. Higher education, they say, is a failure. Our efforts to elevate ourselves have been wrong in theory. We have retrograded and so on until the very din has bewildered our own better judgment. Let us take heart of grace. These adverse criticisms are false and unjust, and the most cursory examination will demonstrate the fact. In every State, village and hamlet, especially throughout the South, there are numbers of manly Negroes with high aims and untiring industry. These men are fitting themselves for leadership by their acquisitiveness and culture. They are settling this so-called race question by their lives and fine example, and in most cases with rare modesty, which is ever the handmaid of merit. One

fine example of this type of worthy men is Hon. W. E. Mollison, of Vicksburg, Miss., whose picture we produce in this issue. He is a lawyer, a financier, a bank president, a man of rare culture and fine balance, and a true leader. His career is full of hope and eloquent of possibility to his people. Mr. Mollison was born just two years before the opening of the great civil war, at Mayersville, in Issaquena county, where afterward he filled almost every station in the gift of his people. After completing what the common schools of the time called a course, he went to Fisk University at Nashville, where he took rank as a student and scholar. He entered Oberlin College with the class of 1883, ranking second in Latin and third in Greek in a class of 85 men from all over the earth. In his literary work he had the unusual distinction of having had an article published in the Oberlin College Review while he was in the preparatory department. He took high rank as a debater and speaker and was popular with his fellow students of all races and creeds.

He was prevented from completing the college course at Oberlin by what he considered the call of duty, and took up the battle of life at his home in 1880, when he took up the study of law and entered the business and public career which has made him a power in his state and section. He was admitted to the bar in 1881 in the town in which he was reared and within a few hundred yards of the site of the

Men of the Hour.



HON. W. E. MOLLISON,

President of the Lincoln Savings Bank and a Leader at the Mississippi Bar, Vicksburg, Miss.

cabin in which he was born. In 1880 he took a prominent part in matters political, representing his county in the state and district conventions of that year. He has frequently since that time represented Mississippi in National Republican Conventions.

From that time to the time when he was elected president of the first bank to be organized by colored men in the state he has been prominent in the political and business worlds. He was appointed by a Democratic state administration to be Superintendent of Public Education for his county, and while holding that place was elected to the offices of clerk of the circuit and chancery courts, a place that he filled for eight years, having been elected the second time without opposition. He voluntarily gave up the office, de- while holding that place was elected clining to be a candidate to enter the practice of law, for which he has always had a fondness. He moved with his family to Vicksburg, Miss., in 1892, and since that time has en-

joyed one of the most important practices in the state. He has appeared in a number of the most important civil and criminal cases that have been tried at the bar of which he is a member. In the vast number of cases in which he has appeared he has met COL AM—FOURTEEN

with a success that would surprise those who do not understand conditions that surround him. He is frequently engaged by white clients in all sorts of cases, civil and criminal, and it is the frequent remark that without making the great efforts before the juries, occasions frequently arise in which the effort is necessary, and it is on these occasions that he shows up to such advantage. His white fellow lawyers are the first to congratulate him upon any great piece of work, and juries give him verdicts without any apparent effect of race prejudice, about which so much is heard. Mr. Mollison has a splendid

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Afro-American Council.

Meet at Louisville and Holds a Rousing Convention.

Delegates from All Sections of the Country in Attendance—Dr. Washington's Great Speech—Editor Fortune re-Elected President—A Strong Address to the Country—Recalcitrants Placated—Notes and Incidents of the Meeting—Election of Officers.

LOUISVILLE, KY., Special.—Representative colored men and women from all parts of the United States, met at Odd Fellows' Hall, 13th and Walnut streets, Wednesday morning, July 1st, to attend the fifth annual meeting of the National Afro-American Council.

It was an intelligent body of men and women bent on a close scrutiny and study of the problems which are affecting the race to-day. Editor T. Thomas Fortune, who has just returned from the Philippine Islands, as a Special Commissioner of the United States, and who is President of the Council, presided.

It was seen at the very beginning, that some of the delegates from New York and Massachusetts, had come to the meeting bent on trouble, to carry the day or to rule or ruin. President Fortune was equal to the emergency, and kept the machinery of the Council in good running order and everything passed off smoothly. A most interesting program was carried out. Among COL AM—EIGHTEEN the speakers being Dr. Booker T. Washington, whose address is printed elsewhere; editor T. Thos. Fortune; lawyer Wm. M. Farmer, of St. Louis, Mo.; Mr. Wm. H. Lewis, of Boston, Mass., and many others. Trouble began when the New York delegation took advantage of the technicality to object to the membership fee of \$5.

They refused to enter then, but adjourned to the True Reformers' Hall, and organized a National Afro-American Suffrage Convention by electing Geo. E. Wibecan, of Brooklyn, N. Y., president; Fred A. Chew, Troy, secretary. The whole of the afternoon was spent in adopting a constitution, and in the session the next morning officers were elected.

Among those who took part in the organization were: J. E. Bruce, A. C. Cowan, Little Cowan, J. W. Thompson, William Abbott, F. H. Gilbert, E. E. Guy, C. S. Morris, F. E. Smith, New York; A. B. Jefferson, M. E. Walker, H. W. Barnet, J. E. Churchman, Wm. Jones, A. B. Cozey, New Jersey; Jordan Thompson, J. C. Carter, J. C. Hayes, J. J. Smallwood, Silas Jones, B. J. Johnson, T. W. Hill, F. M. Moses, Frank Pullman, W. L. Norvell, P. W. Harris, James H. Hayes, L. L. Marshall, J. L. Harris, Virginia.

The Council went right along with

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