

THE NEGRO AND THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

To the Colored People in the South:

The problem of providing proper school facilities for our children is of gravest importance to us as a race. The thinking people of New York and Massachusetts feel that a ten months' school session is necessary to fit their children for life, and a generous public school system answers this demand. How much less can we afford to give our children? The object of this appeal is to force from colored fathers and mothers, from colored men and women who feel and think, a prompt and effective answer to this vital question.

The great majority of our people must depend upon the public schools for all the education they will receive. Not more than one per cent of the colored children of school age will enter a private or an endowed school, and upon the public school rests the burden of educating the remaining ninety-nine per cent, if indeed, they receive any education. It is evident that our progress in the industries, in business, in college and industrial school, as in morality and religion, will be based upon the foundation work done in the public schools.

To fail here, then, to neglect our youth in the most formative period of their lives, is to do them an irremedial harm. To speak more definitely, I find

States are not supporting an effective school system for our people, especially in the smaller towns and rural districts. The system is but little better for white children outside of the large cities. More fault-finding with public officials will not educate our children. In the present condition of the public schools, I would urge with all the earnestness I can summon, that our ministers, teachers, business men, leaders, parents, and newspapers insist that our people shall

1. Go before the public school authorities and ask for better school facilities.

2. See that all taxes, especially the poll taxes, which go directly in most States into the school fund, are promptly paid.

3. Co-operate in every way possible with the public school officials, and raise money by private subscription, or other methods, to supplement the present school funds. The school terms are extended for several months. Unless the school is in school for at least six months in the year, it is impossible for him to be prepared for the next school month.

4. If the school term is extended, a good, comfortable home and properly furnished schools to be built. The school terms are not fit for a day in.

It is important that in the most important period in our history, immediate attention to the public schools is fundamental. The community will do its duty if the whole race will be lifted and sustained and a general quickening will be evident everywhere.

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON.
Tuskegee, Ala., April 25, 1904.

EVIDENCES OF PROGRESS.

Professor Richings Shows What the Colored People Have Done in Forty Years of Freedom.

An illustrated lecture was a feature at the Church of Our Father last Sunday at 7:30 p. m., when Mr. G. F. Richings lectured on the Evidences of Progress of the Colored People Since Emancipation. The lecture itself was a gem, and the one hundred illustrations which he used on his panorama, illustrated every point he made in his lecture. Mr. Richings has made a careful study of the colored people, and has written many valuable articles concerning them.

He has put his more than twenty years' experience in the form of a book, which is brim full of information concerning colored people, and which is beautifully illustrated. He is a pleasing speaker and is admirably equipped for the work. The Washington Post, speaking of his lecture, said:

"Mr. Richings used one hundred stereopticon pictures to illustrate his lecture. The pictures included colored men who are engaged as bankers, lawyers, doctors, merchants, inventors, contractors, artists, electricians and founders of colleges. One picture was that of a hotel owned by W. Berry, at Athens, Ohio. Mr. Berry began business with forty dollars of borrowed capital, and he now owns a building costing \$60,000. A cotton factory at Concord, N. C., operated and owned by colored people, was also presented. Mr. Richings paid high tribute to the

"True Reformers," located at Richmond, Va., where they have a large bank.

The most interesting set of pictures during the evening were those illustrating the work of Booker T. Washington, of Tuskegee, Ala. Mr. Richings presented pictures illustrating his school from its beginning in 1881, where the work was started without either money or friends. The school now has 2,600 acres of land, with more than a hundred buildings, 150 officers and teachers, and this year enrolled 1,800 students. It costs about \$400 a day.

Mr. Richings said in closing the lecture, that the Negroes do not ask for special legislation in their behalf. All they want is fair treatment and an opportunity to earn an honest living, the basic opportunities granted to other races in this country.

HOWARD'S MEDICAL CLASS

Received Diplomas and Prepared to Await the Course of Events.

The commencement exercises of the Medical Department of Howard University will be held at the First Congregational Church Tuesday evening, May 10, 1904, when a large and representative class will receive diplomas in medicine, dentistry and pharmacy. The class in medicine numbers 36; in dentistry 11, and in pharmacy 15. These exercises mark an epoch in the history of this great school and are looked forward to each year as the crowning event. The following program will be rendered:

Overture—"The Yankee Consul," Robyn; Intermezzo—"Cupidietta," Tobani; March—"Unole Sammy," Holzman. Invocation. Quartette—"Good Night, Beloved, Good Night," Oliver. Mr. Elzie S. Hoffman. Conferring of degrees, by Rev. John Gordon, D. D., President of the University—in medicine. Patrol—"The Picaninnies," Laurendeau. Conferring of degrees in dentistry. Characteristic—"In the Cabbage Patch," Logan. Conferring of degrees in pharmacy. Valse—"Babes in Toyland," Herbert. Charge of the class, by Prof. Robert Reyburn, A. M. M. D. Two Step—"A Stroke of the Pen," Horet. Benediction. Finale—Excerpts from "The Sultan of Suba," Wathall. Music by Hoffman's Orchestra, Mr. Elzie S. Hoffman, Director.

The graduates of this class hale from nearly every State and territory as well as from the Islands of the sea. Among them is Mrs. Clara Smyth-Fraction, who made a high per cent in pharmacy. She is the daughter of Hon. John H. Smyth, ex-minister to Liberia, West coast of Africa, one of the most scholarly men of the race and Superintendent of the Virginia State Industrial Reform School, at Hanover, Va. She was educated in the public schools of Washington, completing the high and normal courses with high honors. She was appointed and taught successfully in the public schools here for several years until her marriage to Mr. J. M. Fraction, himself a teacher. Mrs. Fraction took a special course in German and literature under Mrs. Mary Church-Terrel and has served in the capacity of substitute in the High Schools, teaching Latin, history and English. She will spend her vacation in Hanover, Va., with her parents and hopes to begin the practice of her profession at an early date.



DR. BOOKER T. WASHINGTON.

that after careful investigation the Negro children in the ex-slave States are in school on an average of 107 days in the year, and that only one-third of the children of school age are in school; that in North Carolina, for example, the average school term is only 68 days, and that only 22.5 per cent of the Negro children attend school at all. I find that in thirteen of the former slave States, 90 per cent of the Negro children of school age did not attend any school for as much as six months during the year 1900, taking that year as an example.

It requires no argument, then to prove that if these conditions control, we shall continue to be classed as an ignorant, illiterate people.

With these facts before us, the main question then is, What shall be done? The first answer is that we pay our taxes and thereby aid the State in supporting the public schools. Because of their poverty, and perhaps, in some cases, their indifference, the

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