

Racial Purity: A Reply to Mr. Clement Wood

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK HERALD MAGAZINE SECTION—Sir: Mr. Clement Wood's discussion of the negro problem in the HERALD of December 17 is an admirably courageous statement of the case for the negro, which he has also presented, eloquently, in his fine novel, "Nigger," but, as I ventured to suggest in my review of that book, it leaves a good deal to be said: not in contravention of Mr. Wood's diagnosis, but by way of supplement, or possible alternative to the unhappy conclusions that may be drawn from his essay. His statements of fact are, I think, beyond question. The negro has met, and is meeting, injustice; there is no room for argument as to the need of better treatment for him, economically, socially and politically. The white man is ready with his peccot, and realizes that the sins—or, better, the mistakes—of the fathers must still be expiated through many generations. But does it follow that this must produce, ultimately, a complete mingling of the races? Must we, in order to aid the negro to lift himself up, ask him to marry into the family?

I, for one, cannot look forward to a chocolate-colored human race with equanimity. I hope for a better world than that could be, for my children's children. And I think there are still many Americans old-fashioned enough to believe in the value—and possibility—of racial purity. Further, I claim, emphatically, that there is such an aggregate human entity as the ineptly labelled Anglo-Saxon race, in spite of the sneers which often greet that term to-day, and in spite of the doctrines of hair-splitting scientific anthropologists. And upon the continued dominance of that race depends the future of these United States. It may be overwhelmed, drowned in the "rising tide of color" and other lowering elements, but if that happens the result will be destructive. The point is worth some elaboration, since it is fashionable to deny the existence of such a race.

Mr. Wood quotes Dr. Manoel de Oliveira Lima of Brazil to the effect that "pure races are a historical error," and Mr. Wood himself asks: "What is a white man? What is a negro? Where does the one end and the other begin?" We are constantly being reminded that the "Anglo-Saxon" of to-day is a very mixed creature with many various strains in his blood. That is, of course, all quite true, from the historical and anthropological viewpoint. None the less, everyone knows precisely what is meant when we venture to speak of the Anglo-Saxon (Anglo-Norman would be much more nearly correct) and of his traditions, his ideals, and his ways of thinking and acting. The connotations of the term are not obscure. Indeed, the type has been fairly fixed for centuries—at least since the days of Elizabeth, and many of its roots run back to the meeting of the barons at Runnymede. It is a living, enduring cultural group, as individual as the Jew or the Spaniard.

I prefer the term "English thinking peoples" to denote it. That is broad enough to include its representatives everywhere, in Canada, New Zealand, Australia, as well as in Great Britain and in the large remnant of still unmongrelized citizens of the United States: men and women, who think and act upon much the same motives as did their ancestors of four centuries ago, to go no further back. And that term, English thinking, definitely excludes many who speak English, perhaps as their only language, but who none the less feel and act as did their Oriental or African forebears a thousand—or five thousand—years ago.

It is fatuous, little more than quibbling with words, to deny the existence of an English thinking race. The same civilizing forces that produced a Sir Philip Sidney can give us, to-day, a Leonard Wood. A generation ago they gave the world a Lincoln. That race needs no admixture of negro, or Slav or Oriental to further its growth—nor can it safely tolerate any such mingling.

Let us not call this a claim to superiority, but to a differentness. The Jew excels us, in some ways. We recognize the Chinese as our superiors at some points. But it does not follow that either the English or Chinese race will gain by any merger; rather, each would lose. The best

development demands racial purity, when an efficient type has become fixed. A fairly sound analogy may be drawn from the humble poultry yard, even for the evolution of a civilization. The Rhode Island Red is a bird of mixed ancestry but is become a fixed type; so is the Black Minorca. But no poultryman will advocate mating the two breeds.

If it be objected that I am wandering from the specific problem it must be noted that it can best be considered as merely a part of the larger problem, and that the remedy for the threatened evil (if there be any) is applicable more widely than merely to the negro section of it. Mr. Hilaire Belloc (alone, so far as I know, among publicists) has pointed a possible way out in suggesting that the immiscible races must agree to keep apart—with respect, justice and friendship for each other, but with a strict refusal of any merger.

Utopian? Perhaps; but steps may obviously be taken toward bringing that result about, by education and a rational "control of life" especially in such cases as that of the negro, as I shall point out.

Mr. Wood courageously goes to the root of the matter in his discussion of what most of us will prefer to call miscegenation. And he is fully justified in placing the greater blame for that upon the white man. "The furtive commingling," says he, "is a fact that increases." One of the best pictures of the process and of its tragic consequences is given, in the form of fiction, in Mr. H. A. Shands's remarkable novel, "White and Black." Unfortunately, it needs no proof. Furthermore, any observer possessed of common sense and a knowledge of the imperfections of human nature, and of its incomplete self control, will admit that such furtive commingling will continue wherever the races live so closely intermingled as they do in the South. It happens, of course, everywhere, but is comparatively negligible in northern cities or where there are but few negroes.

On the other hand, no white man, and probably no enlightened, thoughtful negro, desires to see this process continued. Here and there some colored brother is bold enough to advocate it, but he is, I think, less entitled to speak for his race than such men as the late Booker Washington, or Dr. Moten. It is also possible that as negro racial self-consciousness increases, becoming more and more aware of itself, it may happen that a justified race pride may arise; that the negro may come to realize that the more he respects himself, as a negro, the better man he will become. It is pitifully true that the greatest curse of the black man is his desire to become white. If he would progress he must outgrow that desire. Education leading toward that end should be the chief aim of negro leaders.

But practically, what can be done to stop, or at least to minimize, this racial commingling? Mr. Wood justly remarks that "we cannot accept an unending succession of intensifying race conflicts, riots, lynchings, klannings and retaliatory murders." Apparently he thinks—however little he likes it—that the only way out is by interbreeding. And, unhappily, that seems, in truth, the thing most likely to happen—unless an enlightened humanity can sufficiently discipline itself to prevent that end. It will happen, unless intelligent, concentrated effort is able to direct the blind forces of evolution. Man, the late John Burroughs argued, is becoming himself "a biological legislator." Here is a specific case which cries out, insistently, for conscious direction and control of natural forces. Is it impossible?

It is not impossible, I believe, if both races can be educated to a point where they may cooperate, for the benefit of each, to so direct these human impulses as to preserve racial integrity, for both black and white. The key to the solution lies in segregation—but that term must be properly understood.

By segregation I do not mean "Jim Crow" cars, a colored "Ghetto" as a part of a dominantly white community, or anything of that sort. As Mr. Wood says, "the social bond is rather close, to promise success for that plan." Segregation must be far more complete than that. And it must be voluntary. Such a result is, plainly, difficult of attainment, but it is

thinkable. For it might be attained by setting aside certain areas in the South (Alabama, for instance), areas large enough to hold practically all the black race.

It would be necessary to induce them to go there, and to aid them, for generations, in every possible way, to develop their own culture therein. The white man must move out of the black country, and the black men must concentrate their energies in their own land. They will need the help of the white man, for many years, as teacher, friend, helper; even, we may say, as elder brother, in the sense in which the brotherhood of man is a reality.

I am, of course, quite aware that such a suggestion will be called wildly visionary, impossible, fantastic. But—is it really so? Might it not, rather, become no more than a hastening and guidance of tendencies already apparent? There is to-day 75 per cent. of negroes in the population of Alabama. As their numbers increase the natural economic tendency will be to drive out the whites. Let us hasten rather than impede this movement. Of course it implies sacrifice on the part of the white man, for whom the nation must find compensation somehow. It has been shown in more than one exclusively negro community that, under certain conditions, the negro can learn to take care of himself. He might be developed to industrial and intellectual success as well as to agricultural efficiency. Given greater opportunity he might go far. Such an experiment need not become another Hayti—not if unselfish guardianship be exercised so long as it might be needed.

A practical beginning could be made by properly assisted colonization. But, clearly, the first steps must be in the education of

both races to an understanding of the idea. Carefully analyzed, this solution offers no violent opposition to natural forces. It calls for no more than self-conscious guidance, a "control of life" en masse, greater, it is true, than any ever hitherto attempted, but not an impossibility, though it would demand the utmost exercise of philanthropy, the wisest legislation, and above all, a long process of the most careful education.

If it be objected that this is to create a dangerous imperium in imperio, I reply that we have that condition already, wherever large groups of immiscible peoples exist among us, as they do, for instance in New York and Chicago. Further, the theory of our Government is that of federation. To create a black State is merely to carry that idea to a logical extreme. Recognition of the patent fact that, as a whole, we are not a homogeneous people might lead to a better establishment of "State rights" and to a sounder federation. The basic ideal, in this case, is racial integrity. If we are fit to survive we should be able to work out a *modus vivendi* by which separate races may live, side by side, in amity and cooperation. That such a happy result has never yet been attained in past history does not demonstrate that it is forever impossible.

The difficulties are colossal. I am not blind to them, either on their economic or social or political sides. But—what else is there to save the ultimate destruction of the whole race in its reduction to a brown mixture? Will anyone seriously claim that such mongrelization is better than a sane parallel development of the races, no matter what sacrifices or initial struggles such a segregation must involve?
H. L. PANGBORN.

Political History

THE PARTY BATTLES OF THE JACKSON PERIOD. By Claude G. Bowers. Houghton Mifflin Company.

THAT there have been scores of volumes written of the period treated in this work Mr. Bowers's countless footnote references bear witness. But the difference between those books, from which much of his material is drawn, and Mr. Bowers's is that the "Jackson period" was only a part of their stories while here it is the whole thing. Dramatic that period was—although some of its drama had unconscious "comic relief"—and like all good drama it was intensely passionate and picturesque. Moreover, and this is its special phase developed here, it was a time which marked the beginning of modern party organization, party discipline, party conventions, of the introduction of that curse of politics, the spoils system, of the first serious use of the press as a medium of party propaganda, and the first awakening of the politicians to the need of cultivating the mass of the people.

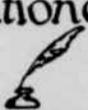
All the picturesqueness and passion of the eight years of Andrew Jackson's Presidency have been crowded into this volume and these qualities are enforced by the author's style which appears to have thrived on what it fed upon. Like a good dramatist, Mr. Bowers sets his stage first with a capital picture of Washington, its physical appearance, its customs and manners, at the time his story begins, a stage setting composed with a free hand from contemporary writers. All through the text the social picture is preserved, both in relation to individuals and politics, and it is this feature of the book that makes it the intriguing tale it is. The sketches of Jackson, Adams, Clay, Van Buren, Benton and the various members of Jackson's Cabinets are inimitable, as are those of the men forming the Kitchen Cabinet and of Edward Livingston.

But this, as its title states, is a volume devoted to the party battles of Jackson's time. And Mr. Bowers traces these from beginning to end with a clarity not often found in works devoted to American political history. If it be genius to make such struggles of the past plain to the reader then this author may be said to have genius as a political writer. For these battles are described from the beginning of the advance of the opposing forces, through the opening skirmishes to the

final shock in a manner to hold the reader's interest to the end, and always with as complete an array of facts as the voluminous records of the time permit. If all political history was written with the charm and authority possessed by this one most of us would know more than we do about American politics. But there are very few Claude G. Bowers writing political history.

Wayne Whipple has been writing stories based on history these many years and has two for this season. "The Story of Young Abraham Lincoln" and "The Story of Young George Washington" (Altemus). Both books give a fairly complete survey of the lives of their subjects, though the emphasis is on the younger part of their days. There is plenty of good material in the books and careful thought has gone to their writing.

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