

## EVOLUTION OF A SUPERIOR RACE

(Literary Diegst)

"In the American mulatto the evolution of a superior race may be seen in process." This is the concluding sentence of an article on "The Superiority of the Mulatto," contributed by E. B. Reuter, of the University of Chicago, to *The American Journal of Sociology* (Chicago). By "superior" the writer means superior to the pure Negro race. At the same time, it should be noted, he denies any essential racial inferiority of the Negro to the white. That the mulatto is gaining ground he deduces in the first place from an examination of a list entitled "Who's Who in Colored America," compiled by Negroes and containing the names of 139 of the best-known American Negroes. In this list, Mr. Reuter says, there are not more than four men of pure Negro blood. The successful men of the race are, in fact, he asserts, nearly all of biracial ancestry. An examination of many other Negro lists of successful colored physicians, writers, artists, musicians, and business men bears out this statement, and he believes it to be true of the past as well as the present and of other countries than the United States. He goes on:

"In all times in the history of the American Negro, and in all fields of human effort in which the Negroes have entered, the successful individuals, with very few exceptions, have been mulattoes. The black Negroes, either past or present, who have made any marked degree of success are decidedly rare exceptions.

"Nor is this a peculiarity of the American racial situation. The same thing seems to be true in other countries in which a mixed-blood race exists alongside a pure-blood native race. Boaz, pointing out the 'relative high degree of culture' attained by certain African tribes in western Sudan, owing to their contact with the invading Arabs, remarks: 'The invaders intermarried with the natives; and the mixed races, some of which are almost purely Negro, have risen high above the level of other African Negroes.' In South Africa the mulattoes are on a distinctly higher cultural level than are the natives of unmixed blood. In the British West Indies the more cultured mulattoes have been formed into a middle-class group, separated from, and superior to, the black peasantry. The individuals of the race who have risen to prominence in political or professional affairs have been members of the mixed-blood

caste. In north Brazil the mixed-blood group of Portuguese, Indian, and Negro ancestry are on a distinctly higher social and intellectual plane than are either the Negroes or the native Indians. In Mexico and elsewhere in Central and South America the half-breeds form a more or less distinct and separate class somewhat inferior to the whites and distinctly superior to the pure-blood natives. In the Philippines the half-castes of Chinese-Moro, as well as those of Spanish-Moro origin are well in advance, intellectually, of the pure-blood natives. Every man of the Filipino group who has risen above mediocrity under the Spanish as under the American occupancy of the islands has been a man of biracial ancestry. Elsewhere the same thing is true. The mixed-blood race everywhere occupies a higher status than does its darker-colored racial parent, and it is from the ranks of the mixed bloods that the superior individuals who appear from time to time among the backward races have sprung."

This superiority of the mixed races can not be explained, Mr. Reuter thinks, by showing that one of the races contributing to the mixture is superior to the other. In the case of the mulatto he denies that we have any proof of the "inferior racial capacity" of the Negro, tho the fact that he is in a lower cultural stage is obvious. Investigators have tried to calculate the probable ratio of successful mulattoes to successful pure bloods on the theory of heredity, but Mr. Reuter asserts that the facts show that the mulatto is nearly ten times as able as could be expected on this theory alone. He goes on:

"A different explanation would seem to lie with those who approach the problem from the point of view of ethnology and folk psychology. Here the weight of authority has, until recently at least, been on the side of an unequal native capacity and possibility of mental development among races. But the consensus of scholarly opinion at the present time seems to be to regard the backward races, not only as not having been proved to be inferior in mental ability, but as being, in so far at least as their inherited mental capacity is concerned, substantially equal to the culture races."

Some who admit this racial equality would account for mulatto superiority solely on the ground of superior opportunity. That such opportunity exists, Mr. Reuter denies. The superiority is due, on his theory, entirely to selection, and we have here, therefore, a stage of evolution in actual progress—the development of a new racial product.

"Whatever talent there is among the mulattoes remains among the mulattoes; whatever talent there is among the black group marries into the mulatto caste." He goes on:

"In either event the talent of the whole race finds its way into the mulatto group. The descendants of these talented men are mulattoes, and whatever of the father's superior mentality and energy they may show or carry becomes an asset to the mulatto group, and the full-blood group is correspondingly impoverished. The mulatto caste is constantly reenforced by the addition to it of the best of the variant types which appear among the numerically larger group.

"When this fact of marriage selection is recognized, it becomes possible to account for the demonstrated superiority of the mulatto group without assuming anything in regard to the inherent inferiority of the black race and without exaggerating the opportunities which the mixed bloods have had to assimilate the culture of the white group. The selective influence operating through the channels of conventional marriage would, in the course of a few generations, undoubtedly produce a somewhat superior group.

"But the validity of the present position is in no way dependent upon the hypothesis of race difference. It rather reenforces the position of those who, while maintaining essential race equality, have not been able to account satisfactorily for the superiority of the mulattoes without placing an undue emphasis on the better opportunity they have had to assimilate the culture of the white group. The white man's assumption of the mixedbloods' superior capability, entirely aside from any question as to the accuracy of the assumption, created in the Negro race the tradition of mulatto superiority. The social superiority of the mulattoes in the presence of their inability to form a closed caste has operated, through the influence of marriage selection, to bring into the group the favorable variant types produced by the entire race. The effect on the whole and through the course of generations, has been to build up on the basis of the cultural class divergence a group that is not only culturally and traditionally superior, but one whose ancestry contains practically every superior man the race in America has produced and which is, in consequence, a group of greater inherent possibility than is the branch of the race from which the favorable variant types have been successively abstracted."



OLYMPIC MOUNTAINS FROM KINNEAR PARK