

BOOK CHAT

By MARY WHITE OVINGTON, Chairman, Board of Directors of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

"BLACK CAMEOS"

By R. Emmet Kennedy. Published by Messrs. Albert & Chas. Boni, 39 West 8th Street, New York City. Price \$2.50 postpaid.

"Black Cameos" are sketches of black people living in Southern Louisiana and whom this author, a white man, speaks of with kindly affection. Mr. Kennedy tells us in his preface that he began to collect Negro spirituals at the age of thirteen, "and it was easy work, living as I did, in a small town where the primitive types of Negro were all about and showed great willingness to let me take down their songs and comments and conversations." This book is made up of notes, bits here and there, songs, sometimes with the music, amusing anecdotes. It takes its place with Gonzales' "Black Border," the collection of Gullah tales.

Mr. Kennedy's preface is so pleasing, his emphasis on the Negro's habit of "thinking in picture," "his naive, unhampered imagination," "his natural disregard for syntax and correct pronunciation, his graceful elisions and gentle eliminations of any harsh consonants," that one has a right, perhaps to expect more than one receives in the bulk of the book. For the stories that he tells us, while probably wholly charming when recited by a master of the dialect, are not extraordinary when read to one's self. They often turn upon the misuse or misunderstanding of English. Take, for example, this one called "Chivalry."

The Saturday night "feesh fry" was in full swing. Everybody was having a good time except one lanky, lonely looking colored girl sitting over in the corner of the room. She had been a wall flower all evening. After a while a tall, dandy, black-velvet complexioned young colored man walked over to her and said: "Scuse me, Miss young lady, but ain't yo' name Miss Magnolia Johnson?" "Yas suh, mah name Miss Magnolia Johnson."

"Well, Miss Magnolia, is yo' program fill' yet?" "No suh, Gawd knows mah program ain' fill'." "No suh, 'cause all I bin had to eat dis evenin' was one slice o' watum millin'."

It is in the collection of spirituals that the writer seems to me to have done most valuable service. There are sixteen given with the music and many more with only the words. These are woven into the stories, often are a large part of the stories. In his preface Mr. Kennedy tells us "the spirituals or hymns, or 'ballets' of the Southern Negroes are original productions which the authors go about singing from church to church, the congregations learning them by word of mouth. If they become popular, the authors have them printed on narrow strips of paper, and they are sold to the church members at five cents each. Many of them attain to almost gigantic proportions in number of stanzas, fifteen to twenty being considered a small number to tell a Bible story with every intimate detail."

Mr. Kennedy believes that while some of the Creole songs of Louisiana Negroes may have a relationship to old Spanish and Provencal compositions, the devotional songs are essentially spontaneous. "They are the unpremeditated melodies that have never been learned or pondered over and worked out for artistic effect." To which we say "amen" and wish that the Hampton and Fisk quartettes, and others less famous, could take this to heart and cease to make great music commonplace by their imitation of Glee Club forms. How one does hate education when it lays irreligious hands on this noble primitive music. Gretna, the village of which

The Week's Editorial. White Press

(From the Brooklyn, N. Y. Citizen of April 6, 1925.)

NEGROES' RIGHTS INVOLVED.

The rights of the colored race in America to the franchise is involved in a case which has been argued in the courts in Texas and which will be appealed from them to the highest tribunal in the land, the United States Supreme Court. Not only are the rights of the Negroes involved but the good faith of the Nation is at stake.

A law passed by the Texas State Legislature in 1923 declared that no Negro should be eligible to vote in a Democratic primary. Dr. L. A. Nixon, a Negro, sued for \$5,000 damages from officials when his ballot was refused in the primaries. The courts decided against him. This decision was affirmed by the Federal District Court on appeal.

The court defended the action of the officials since it was in accordance with the law, which had been upheld by the Supreme Court of the State. It was held that the law did not infringe the rights of the Negro to vote, since it was a primary and not an election.

This is begging the question. Nomination at a Democratic primary in Texas means election of the nominee, and to be deprived of the right to vote at a primary is to strike a blow at the victim's right to participate in the choice of officials. "This case will profoundly affect the Negro in America," very truthfully remarks James Weldon Johnson, Secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. So long as Negroes can be deprived of free access to the ballot, just so long can their economic, legal, political and other rights be disregarded with impunity.

The people of the South, who forced the Eighteenth Amendment upon the Nation and who demand that it be respected, have themselves for many years violated the provisions of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. The decision of the courts that a primary is not unconstitutional is based upon a technicality. Such decisions as this tend to bring the law into contempt. The people want justice to rule, not legal technicalities, in "the administration of justice."

The National Urban League Launches Industrial Program

New York, April—The National Urban League has announced the inauguration of its national industrial program which has been under contemplation for the past year for the purpose of conducting a strenuous nation-wide campaign for larger opportunity for Negro workers. The director of this program is T. Arnold Hill, who for the past eight years has been the executive secretary of the Chicago Urban and League and western field secretary of the national organization.

Mr. Hill, whose headquarters are now in New York City, has had a most successful administration in Chicago and the west. In Chicago he developed the league from its incipency to the point where it had sixteen workers and a budget of \$3,000 per year. He laid the foundation for league organizations in a number of western cities and became the outstanding authority on the problems of race relations and the Negro industry in social work circles regardless of color. During the Chicago race riots he was instrumental in bringing together the leading white and colored citizens of Chicago resulting in the establishment of the Chicago Commission of Race Relations which published a report which is considered the most authoritative report on race conditions yet presented. Before leaving Chicago, Mr. Hill was a member of the Executive Board of the Council of Social Agencies and the Social Workers Club. He also was a member of the committee representing all of social agencies of Chicago which published an authoritative report on the financing of social agencies. Mr. Hill is thirty-six years of age, a graduate of Virginia Union University and has specialized in the social sciences at New York University. The program of the Industrial Department is as follows: 1. To standardize and co-ordinate the local employment agencies of the league so that exchange of information and more regular correspondence between them can assure applicants for work more efficient and helpful service and employers of labor a more efficient group of employees. 2. To work directly with large industrial plants both in

STRAY LEAVES

A Department of Current Poetry

By WILLIAM D. ROBINSON.

(All contributions to this Department must be typewritten, "real poetry," accompanied by stamped and addressed return envelope, and sent to 1501 1/2 Taylor St., Columbia, S. C., to the Editor of this column. Allworthy manuscripts will be printed under your own name. Amateurs and poet-aspirants, this is your chance to develop that talent, if you have it.) The Editor of this Department offers his services to anyone desiring poems on any subject for any occasion, such as epitaphs, memoriams, expressions of friendship, or topics for programs of all kinds.

On the afternoon of April 8th, I was a guest at the home of the Reverend Richard Carroll, who is now convalescing, an invalid. As I sat and talked with him, I was suddenly moved by the thought of how sweet to him now is the memory of his own life of Christian ministry. Poor indeed is the man who has no pleasant past to look back upon when the stern yet kindly Laws of Nature takes him away from the busy world and shuts him in.

SHUT IN.

By William D. Robinson.

To sit day after day, and watch the passing Of long and tedious hours, each announcing The slow approach of the all-wasting deep That engulfs all at last within Time's sleep! One has full time to visit Memory Land, Rove thru the past, thru dark or sunlit strand, Live all one's happiest hours o'er again, Filled as we've filled them, each with joy or pain.

Full pleasant 'tis to have our loved ones near us, Attentive to our every need; to cheer us, Flowers and coolest summer breezes blowing, Bright sunshine thru the trembling leaves affowing, Blithe birds in sweetest melody asinging, And everything with living joy aringing, Or in drear winter, sit by cozy hearth, With children's voices blent in simple mirth.

But oft there are moments when the sweetest joy That comes to those shut in,—pangs that annoy, Come from the silent land of Memory, Where all our thoughts and dreams and deeds rove free, Things that we thought of, dreamed of, deeds we have done,

Lofty or base,—each struggle lost or won, Revive and pass before our souls again, Reviving long-dead joys and prides or pain.

O happy man the man who has a pleasant past! Not like a dungeon where the slave is cast, As is the memory of a selfish soul, In which vile thoughts, base dreams, and low deeds roll In the vile filth of unforgiven sin.

But sweet is the memory of a soul shut in, A life lived only some other to bless! Whose past is a record of unselfishness,—

More precious yet than all earth's silver and gold, Is a life of loving service to enfold One in its sweet embrace when Nature's law Is stern to us, yet kind, and we withdraw From the busy crowd, shut in, awaiting Cure of the greater Cure,—and recreating The world that was, Reflection softly steals Into the mind and thru the mists reveals, In the mirror of the Past, Memory, The gold-rimmed shadows of the things to be.

Then pleasant 'tis to sit and dream away The tedious hours of the ardy day, Away from the crowds and the busy din, Away from the thoughts of struggling men, In the invalid's little world, shut in.

cities where the league is established and the communities removed from such centers to procure larger opportunity for work and for advancement on the job for Negro workers and to stimulate Negro workers to a fresh determination to "make good" on the job so that their future in industry may be assured.

3. To help through available channels of information to ascertain points at which there is an over supply of Negro labor, and to use existing agencies of publicity and placement to direct Negro labor, including migrants, to those points where they are most needed and where their families will most easily become adjusted.

The Department of Research and Investigations of the League, Charles S. Johnson, Director, is cooperating with the Industrial Department by making an investigation of the experiences of Negroes with Trade Unions throughout the United States—the results of which study will immediately be placed at the disposal of the Industrial Department.

MR. HENRY HALL announces the marriage of his niece MARY COLEMAN to MR. WILLIAM O'DELL Saturday, April 19, 1925 at 5 P. M. At Home 904 Washington St., Columbia, S. C.

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