

THE MONITOR

A Weekly Newspaper devoted to the civic, social and religious interests of the Colored People of Omaha and vicinity, with the desire to contribute something to the general good and upbuilding of the community.

Published Every Saturday.

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Address, The Monitor, 1119 North Twenty-first street, Omaha.

THE FIRST.

This is the first issue of The Monitor, a weekly newspaper published primarily in the interstices of the 8,000 colored Americans in Omaha and vicinity, to chronicle their social and religious activities and to discuss matters of peculiar importance to them as touching their civic and economic rights, duties, opportunities and privileges. Further than this, it has as its general aim and purpose the contributing of something to the upbuilding and good of the community, to the dissemination of information bearing on race progress throughout the country and to the formation of a sound and righteous public opinion.

The first editorial in the first issue of The Monitor gives opportunity for explanation and forecast. We take it to tell WHY we have come TO BE and WHAT we hope TO BECOME.

The Monitor has come into being to satisfy a popular demand, to meet an urgent need, namely, that of a special publication, and mouthpiece for the colored people of this community. And this need, it is only fair to point out, is the result of education along this line on the part of others, to whom full credit should be given for their laudable endeavors. We have been educated to appreciate the value and usefulness of a publication of our own by The Progress, a pioneer in this field, published for some years by F. L. Barnett; and The Enterprise, founded by the late G. F. Franklin, and continued, until a few months ago, by T. P. Mahammitt; not forgetting two or three other later and shorter-lived publications like the Afro-American Sentinel, published by Cyrus D. Bell, and The Progressive Age, by G. Wade Obee. All these publications, whatever their faults or limitations may have been, have had their influence in educating our people to appreciate the usefulness and need of such race journals. This is especially true of the two first-named. Moreover, it may be just as well to point out, in passing, that these publications, limited in resources though they were, gave employment to some of our boys and girls, who otherwise might have been unemployed. Let us remember this.

The necessity for a local weekly, such as The Monitor aims to be, is due to the fact that colored Americans, like other race groups in our polygenous, or many-raced nation—which is still in the process of nationalization—form a distinct and well-defined social group, having their classes and gradations, with their separate social and religious activities. Their standards and ideals, in corresponding classes, are those of the communities in which they live, PROVIDED that they are permitted to

come into helpful contact with those standards and ideals; but at the same time, there is a large inner circle of activities which belongs exclusively to themselves. These need to be noted, discussed, directed and encouraged or reproved, as the case may be. This is the province of the newspaper of the special group. The larger daily, and we in this community are favored with a fair-minded and friendly press, thinks and speaks in the terms of the whole community—not of any particular class. The special group, the special interest, must have its special organ.

Then, again, there may arise matters affecting the rights of a particular class which, in the larger community life the daily serves, may be overlooked. Then it becomes the duty of the special organ to speak.

The peculiar place unfortunately assigned to the colored American, even in the most favored communities where he is found in any appreciable number, makes it expedient that he shall have a newspaper of his own, devoted especially to his interests. It has its educational value for him and also for his white neighbor, if he will read it. Papers of this class can be of good service in a community.

The Monitor hopes to fill an honorable and useful place in its chosen field in this community, full of splendid possibilities. It will strive to gather news of interest, local and general; it will give from time to time illustrated articles of our homes and people; it will publish articles from special writers to make its readers think; it will welcome short letters on timely topics from its readers. Its editorial policy will be independent, frank and fearless, courteous and kind, sane and conservative. We shall strive to make it a paper of such a high standard that it can be read with pleasure and profit in any home in the land.

ENCOURAGING SIGNS.

We have abundant grounds for encouragement in the growing sentiment in many parts of the country to remove causes of irritation by forbidding the presentation of moving pictures and plays which misrepresent our race and create prejudice. In this connection the action of the Pittsburg, Pa., city council, noted on the first page of this issue, is significant and highly gratifying to all lovers of truth and justice. Similar action has been taken in other cities. Should an attempt be made to show these photoplays here, we know that our mayor and city commission will fall in line with the authorities of Boston, Chicago, Pittsburg, Cleveland, St. Paul and other cities in forbidding their presentation with the objection-

able features against which protest has been made.

Equally gratifying and significant is the recent decision of the supreme court in declaring the unconstitutionality of the "grandfather clauses" in the constitutions of Oklahoma and Maryland. The decision of the court was unanimous. No less significant than the decision has been the hearty endorsement by the press of the country of its righteousness and justice. Of course, there have been some notable exceptions, but their number is relatively negligible. The majority favor it and the consensus of opinion upon the part of the leading newspapers of the country is to the effect that the decision strikes the death blow to those discriminatory laws which favor one class of citizens above another and in so doing are subversive of the fundamental principles upon which democracy rests.

Let us do our full duty and never doubt that day will break and right will triumph.

It is with pleasure that we publish as our first cut that of Richard B. Harrison, the talented dramatic reader, who gives two recitals at St. John's A. M. E. church next week. Mr. Harrison and the editor were born in London, Ontario, Canada, about the same time and were boys together. Subsequently both families removed to Detroit, Mich., where the friendship continued. Richard carried the London Advertiser and the editor of The Monitor had his first and only thrill as "a millionaire"—have you ever had it?—when, as a lad of seven or eight years of age, he earned his FIRST FIVE CENTS selling Advertisers. It is with great pleasure, therefore, that we have the opportunity of thus publicly welcoming Mr. Harrison to Omaha, the great city of the west, in which for twenty-four years we have been permitted to labor in our chosen calling.

There are some features of this publication of which we are particularly proud. We have been fortunate in securing the co-operation of Mrs. Lucille Skaggs Edwards, who is to serve as editor of the special department, "For Our Women and Children"; of Mr. William G. Haynes, who will be the editor of "Science Notes," and of Mr. E. W. Pryor, who will edit "Culinary Hints and Recipes." What each has said in this first issue indicates the ability with which these departments will be conducted.

Personally, we prefer to ride in the street cars. They are good enough for us. But if we should desire to ride in a jitney, we wish to have that privilege. And that reminds us to call our readers' attention to the fact that Omaha has a good street car system. The company gives good service and is improving and extending its service as rapidly as can reasonably be expected.

The ordinance to regulate jitneys, which was recently passed by the city commission, places them in the same class with other public vehicles for the transportation of passengers. Any discrimination, therefore, upon their part which is not applicable to all passengers alike is unlawful. A hint to the wise is sufficient.

The Monitor is published in the interests of all the people. It is not a denominational or a factional paper of any kind. We want this clearly and definitely understood at the outset.

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