

THE MONITOR

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HARDING'S SPEECH

Commenting on the President's Birmingham speech the Pittsburg Courier wisely says:

"Certainly the Negro race has its own peculiar characteristics. But they are simply racial. But surely racial characteristics are not to be used as a basis for establishing degrees of racial importance. When

President Harding asks that Negroes unfit to vote be denied the ballot, he does so because of the unfitness of the man, and not because of his race. When he asks that white men unfit to vote be prevented from voting, he does so because of the unfitness of the man, and not because of his race. This is good and sound advice. When the President says that the race problem has become universal, he is

correct; but he cannot mean that the Negro race has contributed any more to the universality of the problem than any other race whose members are scattered all over the earth. When our President asserts that social equality must be eliminated from the whole question of political and economic equality, he invites the undying query: what is social equality? Who has the unchallenged right to fix a standard? When the President asks that Negroes be Negroes without imitating white men, he speaks well, but not sufficiently. What he should mean, and he probably does mean, is that the Negro should be the very best possible man, without qualifications at all. What is the best Negro? Or, what is the best white man? The statement means nothing, unless the President, by making use of it, meant to convey the idea that the best man is the white man; and that the Negro is less than the best, and therefore inferior, and for this reason "social equality" is impossible. Is this his meaning?"

Social equality has never disturbed the Negro. The intelligent Negro knows that equality is a matter of opinion. If the Jew thinks he is equal to the Gentile, that is his opinion and to him that is the law of equality. If the Japanese thinks he is equal to the American white man, that is his opinion, and to him that is law enough on the question of equality. One man is equal to another only when he is. The Jew is equal to the Gentile only when he is. Social equality is a question for the individual, and the Negro knows the truth quite as well as does the white man. But where confusion arises is when the white man refers to social equality as something desired by Negroes because by its acquisition they think they establish a racial equality through social contact. The Negro does not think any such thing. He has never accepted any race as being superior to his own. He has accepted the truism that the white race, by unlawful practices, has gained a decided economic advantage over the Negro, especially in the United States. But this economic advantage has nothing to do with race equality.

If the South and North will give the Negro his educational, political

and his economic justice—give him all America has to offer any other American in these fields of endeavor, the President's philosophy of the "fundamental, eternal and inescapable race differences" would find greater support among Negroes than among whites. The one complaint of the Negro is the refusal of the United States to allow him to demonstrate the truth that racial differences as such deal not in "equalities and inequalities superiority and inferiority," but in racial characteristics only.

As American citizens the Negro desires to be treated as other Americans who differ from him only in race and racial characteristics. He rebels against an Americanism which treats a white American better than it does a black American. This is not Democracy. His own racial identity the Negro desires most of all. His own racial characteristics are his inherited wealth; he wants that left to him without invasion of any source. He knows himself better than anyone knows him; he prefers his own leadership, and would succeed admirably under it, if his leaders were allowed to prosecute a leadership in harmony with their own racial ideals. But white leadership invariably intervenes. He desires his share of the work to be done in his own country at a wage in keeping with the standards of living in his country. He desires to be included among the nation's assets. He desires simply to share the fruits of his country with the same freedom and tolerance as he enjoys when he goes to war for the flag.

If the country will take hold of the suggestions of the President, and decide to reduce them to practice with as much sincerity as attended their utterance there is every reason to hope that the few imperfections lurking in the philosophy of President Harding will be worked out as the program progresses.

LETTERS FROM OUR READERS

Comments President's Speech
 EDITOR MONITOR:

I was asked what I thought of Mr. Harding's speech. From many angles I heartily appreciate and approve of Mr. Harding's speech. The Negro has the same right to be highly educated as any other race, and should be given the same rights and privileges as all other Americans in this land of the free and the home of the brave, if there be such a place. The Negro has no problem—it is the white man's problem. The Negro does not want social equality, but he does want equal educational opportunities, justice of the law and the privilege to go in any public place where he is able to pay his way, the same as all other races. When the Negro is allowed his rights, given him by the 14th and 15th amendments—there will be no Negro Problem.

Politically, I do not believe there ought to be a solid South and a solid North, pretending they are fighting over the Negro Problem—there should be no race problem. Every voter should vote for the party they think would look after all the people and the interests of the United States.

One word for the Ku Klux Klan—you say you are for 100 per cent Americans, if so you should consult the Negro first for your organization. In all battles or all other places of trust, the Negro has proven himself 100 per cent American.

SERG. BAILEY.

COUNCIL BLUFFS, IA.

A well-appointed luncheon was served at the Commercial Cafe, 1013 West Broadway, Tuesday in honor of Mrs. R. D. Dickson of Pine Bluff, Ark. Covers were laid for seven. Mrs. D. M. Nixon was hostess. Those present were: Mesdames J. P. Jackson, W. M. Moore, T. S. Wright, C. Wilson, and D. Bottoms. The center piece was of roses.

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August Anderson

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