

The Commoner.

Booker Washington's Work.

The Springfield, Mass., Republican contains an interesting account of the last annual conference at the Tuskegee Institute. For ten years this conference has been held at Tuskegee, Ala., and Booker T. Washington has been its leading spirit. The institute is really a part of the educational work which has made Mr. Washington the most conspicuous living member of his race. More than two thousand negroes, representing farmers and artisans as well as teachers and students, were assembled in the chapel and the time was devoted to short speeches, each participant presenting in a few words his own experience or his views upon the subjects under discussion.

Mr. Washington reviewed the progress of the colored race during the last half century and predicted even greater improvement during the next fifty years. He warned his hearers against self-indulgence and going into debt; and urged upon them the importance of saving their money and buying a home.

Reports were presented from other similar societies; a Texan woman described a society formed in her state, with twenty-five hundred members, which had purchased fifty thousand acres of land and was doing much to help poor men to secure homes.

The resolutions adopted by the conference represent so well the purpose and spirit of the gathering, as expressed by the speeches, that they are given in full:

1. We have reached the 10th annual session of the Tuskegee negro conference. During all the years since the conference was started, we have clung steadily to its original purpose, namely, to encourage the buying of land, getting rid of the one-room cabin and the abuse of the mortgage system, the raising of food supplies, building better school houses, the lengthening of the school term and the securing of better teachers and preachers, the doing away with sectarian prejudice, the improvement of the moral condition of the masses and the encouragement of friendly relations between the races. In all these particulars we are convinced from careful investigation that substantial progress is constantly being made by the masses throughout the South.

2. We would urge our people not to become discouraged while the race is passing from what was largely a political basis to an economic one, as a foundation for citizenship.

3. We urge, since the country school is the backbone of the intelligence of the masses, that no effort be spared to increase its efficacy. Any injury to the country schools brings discontent to the people and leads them to move to the cities.

4. Statistics show that crime, as a rule, is not committed by those who have received literary, moral and industrial training.

5. Regardless of how others may act, we urge upon our race a rigid observance of the law of the land, and that we bear in mind that lawlessness begets crime and hardens and deadens not only the conscience of the law-breaker, but also the conscience of the community.

6. The rapid rise in the price of land throughout the South makes it doubly important that we do not delay in buying homes, and the increased demand for skilled workmen of every kind makes it necessary that a larger proportion of our young people prepare themselves for trades and domestic employment before they are crowded out of these occupations.

7. Community and county fairs, as well as local conferences and farmers' institutes, should be organized as rapidly and widely as possible.

8. We call the attention of our women, especially, to the wealth there is for them in the garden, the cow, the pig and the poultry-yard.

9. We note with pleasure that landlords are

building better houses for their tenants. We feel sure that all such improvements are a paying investment from every point of view.

Mr. Washington's work is worthy of all commendation. His school, with thirteen hundred students and nearly a hundred teachers, is a splendid monument to his own energy, ability and lofty purpose, as well as proof that the negro's hope lies in his intellectual and moral development.

Race prejudice and race pride are such that no white man could do the work that Mr. Washington is doing. No white man could so secure the confidence of the negroes or win their affection, and without confidence and affection little can be done. It would be fortunate for the country if Mr. Washington's work at Tuskegee could be duplicated in other southern states. The white people of the south have thus far furnished almost all the money used in the education of the negroes and they have, of course, an immediate and powerful interest in the uplifting of the race. But the work which is being done by Booker Washington ought to appeal strongly to the philanthropists of the North, many of whom have been quick to condemn the southern whites, but slow to aid them in solving the tremendous problem which was thrown upon them by emancipation.



Prof. Ross on Cheap Labor.

The dismissal of Prof. Ross from Stanford University occurred before THE COMMONER entered upon its journalistic career and its readers may not have seen the speech which led Mrs. Stanford to demand his resignation.

She had been more or less hostile to him since 1896 because of his opposition to the gold standard, and this hostility had been increased by the Professor's advocacy of the municipal ownership of municipal franchises; but the speech on coolie labor was the last grievance, and, added to the others, caused her to protest against his retention as a member of the faculty.

It has been the custom of western railroads to employ Asiatic labor, and Mrs. Stanford probably felt that Mr. Ross' remarks were a reflection upon her husband's business methods.

Of course, there is no excuse for her conduct unless the university which she has so liberally endowed was intended not for an institution of learning, but as a literary bureau for the vindication of Mr. Stanford's financial operations, but aside from their bearing on the university controversy, Prof. Ross' words are valuable because they present the Chinese question from his point of view.

The speech was delivered in the city of San Francisco and the following extract is taken from the report given by Organized Labor:

But what American labor objects to is exposure to competition with a cheaper man. The coolie cannot outdo him, but he can underlive him. He cannot produce more, but he can consume less. The Oriental can elbow the American to one side in the common occupations because he has fewer wants. To let him go on, to let the American be driven by coolie competition, to check the American birth-rate in order that the Japanese birth-rate shall not be checked, to let an opportunity for one American boy be occupied by three Orientals so that the American will not add that boy to his family, is to reverse the current of progress, to commit race suicide. Everything we

call progress has helped to develop man who can produce much and can consume much; it has abhorred the cheap man. It has favored and fostered not the man of crude palate, of tough stomach, of low organization, of few wants and of little intelligence and energy, but the superior man.

Starting with the Oriental peoples of Egypt and Babylonia, civilization has in 3,000 years swept around the globe, insisting on better, finer and brainier men as it went, and now by the waters of the Pacific it is face to face with peoples like the Chinese and Hindoos and the Japanese, who are nearest to reproducing the economic conditions of those ancient peoples which rocked the cradle of civilization.

Shall we allow the process of uplifting the common man to be defeated by this confrontation? Shall we suffer the work already done to be nullified? Shall we look idly upon this inverted competition of the cheap man and the dear man, the low-grade man and the high-grade man, and allow the survival of the unfittest to proceed unchecked?

A policy of restriction on immigration is not, under such circumstances, unfair or predatory or blame-worthy. Remember, we do not assail the Oriental peoples. We do not propose to treat the Orient as the powers are treating China. We are not grabbing lands or seizing ports, or extorting railway contracts, or forcing trade at the cannon's mouth. We entertain no enmity and cherish no designs against the trans-pacific peoples. We hope they will prosper and elevate their working people by the means we have used. But we are absolutely determined that California, the latest and loveliest seat of the Aryan race, shall not become, if we can help it, the theater of such a stern wolfish struggle for existence as prevails throughout the Orient.

As this week opened with St. Patrick's Day it is appropriate that this number should contain Moore's beautiful poem:

The Shamrock.

Through Erin's Isle,
To sport awhile,
As Love and Valor wandered,
With Wit the sprite,
Whose quiver bright
A thousand arrows squandered.
Where'er they pass,
A triple grass
Shoots up, with dew-drops streaming,
As softly green
As emeralds seen
Through purest crystal gleaming.
Oh, the Shamrock, the green, immortal Shamrock!
Chosen leaf
Of bard and chief,
Old Erin's native Shamrock!

Says Valor, "See
They spring for me,
Those leafy gems of morning!"
Says Love, "No, no,
For me they grow,
My fragrant path adorning."
But Wit perceives
The triple leaves,
And cries, "Oh, do not sever
A type that blends
Three godlike friends,
Love, Valor, Wit forever!"
Oh, the Shamrock, the green, immortal Shamrock!
Chosen leaf
Of bard and chief,
Old Erin's native Shamrock!

So firmly fond
May last the bond
They wove that morn together,
And ne'er may fall
One drop of gall
On Wit's celestial feather.
May Love, as twine
His flowers divine,
Of thorny falsehood weed 'em;
May Valor ne'er
His standard rear
Against the cause of Freedom!
Oh, the Shamrock, the green, immortal Shamrock!
Chosen leaf
Of bard and chief,
Old Erin's native Shamrock!