

## **A NEGRO LEADER'S VISION**

**T**HE Civil War freed the black man from slavery, but it did not solve the negro problem. It gave the negro a different legal status, but it did not give him a social or an economic position that satisfied him. He has been fighting his way up ever since, sometimes with the help, and sometimes against the opposition, of the white man. It is fair to say that he is nearer real equality with the white man than he ever was before; but there is still a long way for him to go, and he would be a bold man who should predict how his further advance will affect the nation, or how far racial differences can come to be forgotten in the sense of common citizenship.

The negro movement in the United States has always been in two columns. One, started by Booker Washington and now led by Maj. Moton, aims at educating the negro economically and at raising his self-respect and his social status through making him a more competent and useful man. The other, led by Dr. Burghardt Du Bois, aims at immediate and complete political enfranchisement as the indispensable foundation of the negro's improvement as a citizen. Both parties have thought of the negro as an American simply and have considered only the problem of adjusting him to his environment here in the United States.

Now another leader has arisen, one Marcus Garvey, a negro from Jamaica, who has seen much of the world and who has got the sort of all-round education that an observant traveler gets. He has a very different ambition for the negro, an ambition that treats him not as an American but as an African, a member of the black race. He has interested a great many of the prosperous and influential negroes in New York in his plan, and, though the more conservative regard him as a visionary, he makes many and eager converts to his cause.

He has organized the Negro Improvement Association, which aims at emancipating the negro everywhere from every sort of legal

and social disqualification. He plans to establish a central government that shall guide the destinies of the black race wherever it is dispersed; much, he says, as the Pope and the Catholic Church direct their millions in every land. He has raised money to finance a commercial steamship company—the Black Star Line—to bind together the negro peoples in Africa, America and the West Indies, and his dream is the perfect freedom, the intellectual and political independence, of his people in the homeland in Africa.

The idea is a tremendous one; we can see how it would appeal to the ambitious negroes of the United States, though we cannot help questioning the feasibility of awakening the negroes of Africa to the advantages of the plan and the ability of the leaders to carry out successfully so extraordinary a scheme. Hitherto it has taken generations of preparation and genius of the highest sort to create a nation; this is an attempt to do more—to nationalize an entire race, and one that has so far had no deep consciousness of race unity.

The methods that Mr. Garvey means to employ to further the purposes of his organization are not yet made public. It does not appear whether it is the plan to encourage the wholesale emigration of all negroes to Africa, but while they remain here an attempt to divide their allegiance between the United States and a super-government of their own leaders would be pretty sure to increase the difficulties and dangers of the present situation.