

**Front Matter****[Front Matter]****[Title Page and Credits]****The American Negro Academy.****Occasional Papers, No. 1.****A REVIEW**

OF

**HOFFMAN'S RACE TRAITS AND TENDENCIES OF THE AMERICAN NEGRO,**

BY

**KELLY MILLER.****Price, Twenty-five Cents.**

WASHINGTON, D. C.

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**OCCASIONAL PAPERS.**

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**Chapter: Introduction****Chapter: Introduction****A Review of Hoffman's Race Traits and Tendencies of the American Negro****[Introduction]**

In August, 1896, there was published, under the auspices of the American Economic Association, a work entitled "Race Traits and Tendencies of the American Negro," by Frederick L Hoffman, F. S. S., statistician to the Prudential Insurance Company of America. This work presents by far the most thorough and comprehensive treatment of the Negro problem, from a statistical standpoint, which has yet appeared. In fact, it may be regarded as the most important utterance on the subject since the publication of "Uncle Tom's Cabin;" for the interest which the famous novel aroused in the domain of sentiment and generous feelings, the present work seems destined to awaken in the field of science and exact inquiry

Mr. Hoffman has spent ten years in painful and laborious investigation of the subject, during which time he has been in touch with the fullest sources of information, and has had the advice and assistance of the highest living authorities in statistics and social science. The temper of mind which he brought to this study may be judged from his own words: "Being of foreign birth, a German, I was fortunately free from a personal bias which might have made an impartial treatment of the subject difficult." <sup>1</sup> There are other assurances that the author possesses no personal animosity or repugnance against the Negro as such. But, freedom from conscious personal bias does not relieve the author from the imputation of partiality to his own opinions beyond the warrant of the facts which he has presented. Indeed, it would seem that his conclusion was reached from *a priori* considerations and that facts have been collected in order to justify it.

The main conclusion of the work is that the Negro race in America is deteriorating physically and morally in such manner as to point to ulterior extinction, and that this decline is due to "race traits" rather than to conditions and circumstances of life. Not only do we find this conclusion expressly set forth in connection with every chapter, but it is also easily discernible in foot notes and quotations, in the general drift of cited references, and between the lines. In order to give the clearest possible statement of the author's position his own words will be used.

"The conditions of life therefore... would seem to be of less importance than race and heredity."  
2

"It is not the *conditions of life* but in *the race traits and tendencies* that we find the causes of the excessive mortality." <sup>3</sup>

"For the root of the evil lies in the fact of an immense amount of immorality, which is a race trait." <sup>4</sup>

"A combination of these traits and tendencies must in the end cause the extinction of the race."  
5

"It is not in the conditions of life but in race and heredity that we find the explanation." <sup>6</sup>

"The mixture of the African with the white race has been shown to have seriously affected the longevity of the former and left as a heritage to future generations the poison of scrofula, tuberculosis, and most of all, of syphilis." <sup>7</sup>

If the reader will keep constantly in mind the key suggested by these quotations, he will peruse the book itself as well as this review with greater ease and facility.

## Notes

1 Author's preface.

2 Page 51.

3 Page 95.

4 Page 95.

5 Page 176.

6 Page 312.

7 Page 311.

## Chapter 1

## Chapter 1

## Chapter I

*Subject.* Population.

*Gist.* "For some generations the colored element may continue to make decennial gains, but it is very probable that the next thirty years will be the last to show total gains, and then the decrease will be slow but sure until final disappearance." <sup>8</sup>

I have taken this quotation from another work by the same author as it represents more clearly than any other condensed statement the substance of the present chapter. This proposition is a most important

one, and therefore its establishment needs to be inquired into with the greatest particularity. If a race does not possess the requisite physical stamina, it is impossible for it to maintain a high degree of moral and intellectual culture or compete with its more vigorous rivals in the race of civilization.

"All the elements of society are conserved in its physical basis, the social population." <sup>9</sup>

Since the author relies mainly upon the eleventh census for facts to establish his conclusion, and since the accuracy of this census is widely controverted, we may fairly call upon him to prove his document before it can be admitted in evidence.

The following quotation from Senator Mills reflects the opinion of many eminent students of public problems as to the accuracy of this enumeration: "The announcement that our population is only 62,662,250 was a genuine surprise, not only to those who looked for the dark side of the picture, but also to those whose faith in the administration and its census bureau had never for a moment wavered. The census of 1880 gave 50,155,783. The present returns give an increase of 12,466,476, which is at the rate of 24.86 per cent. That this number is not even approximately correct may be seen by comparing the increase in this decade with the gain in others which have preceded it. Any alleged fact that is without the pale of probability stands impeached at the very threshold of the inquiry, and must be verified by competent evidence." Basing his estimates upon the school census, the Senator continues: "The state of Texas is deprived, by the incorrect returns, of at least three representatives in Congress. Alabama loses 240,000, Tennessee and North Carolina 170,000 each, and Virginia, Kentucky, and Louisiana 100,000 each." <sup>10</sup> Whatever force there may be in the protest of the eloquent Texas Senator, applies with special emphasis to the colored element; for it goes without saying that errors in enumeration in the South would be confined mainly to the Negro race, and since the bulk of the race is confined to this section such errors would have a most disastrous effect upon its rate of increase as shown by the census reports.

The following table exhibits the development of the colored population for the last one hundred years, as well as its decennial rates of increase and percentage of the total population.

*Colored Population of the United States.*

| Year.              | Colored Population. | Decennial Increase. | Increase per cent in 10 years. | Per cent of total population |
|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1790               | 757,208             |                     |                                | 19.27                        |
| 1800               | 1,002,037           | 244,829             | 32.33                          | 18.88                        |
| 1810               | 1,377,808           | 375,771             | 37.50                          | 19.03                        |
| 1820               | 1,771,656           | 393,848             | 28.50                          | 18.39                        |
| 1830               | 2,328,642           | 556,986             | 31.44                          | 18.10                        |
| 1840               | 2,873,648           | 545,006             | 23.44                          | 16.84                        |
| 1850               | 3,638,808           | 765,169             | 26.63                          | 15.69                        |
| 1860               | 4,441,830           | 803,022             | 22.07                          | 14.13                        |
| 1870 <sup>11</sup> | 5,391,000           | 949,170             | 21.37                          | 13.84                        |
| 1880               | 6,580,793           | 1,189,793           | 22.07                          | 13.12                        |
| 1890               | 7,470,040           | 889,247             | 13.51                          | 11.93                        |

If we begin with 1810, the first census year after the constitutional suppression of the slave trade, we see from this table that the growth of the Negro element followed the ordinary law of population, viz: a gradual decline in the rate of increase. In 70 years the decennial rate of increase declined from about 30 per cent to 22 per cent. But from 1880 to 1890 there was a *per saltum* decrease from 22 to 13 per cent -that is, the decline in ten years was equal to that of the previous seventy. And all this has happened during an era of profound peace and prosperity, when the Negro population was subject to no great perturbing influences. When a number of observations follow with reasonable uniformity a fixed law, but a single result deviates widely from this law it is usual to suspect the accuracy of the discrepant observation. The author nowhere assigns any adequate cause for this sudden "slump" in the increase of the colored population. Instead of attributing it, in part at least, to the probable imperfection of the eleventh census, he relies wholly upon a blind force recently discovered and named by him "race traits and tendencies." The capriciousness of this new factor, in that it may suspend operation indefinitely or break loose in a day, does not seem to have occurred to the author, at least it does not seem to affect the confident assurance with which he relies upon it. As has been shrewdly remarked by an able reviewer, "It would seem incumbent on him (Mr. Hoffman) further to prove that these race traits, after being held in abeyance for at least a century, first took decisive action in the decade 1880 to 1890." <sup>12</sup>

In 1810 there were 1,377,808 Negroes in the United States. In 80 years this number had swollen to at least 7,470,040, and that, too, without reinforcement from outside immigration. It more than quintupled itself in eight decades. Does it not require much fuller demonstration than the author anywhere presents to convince the ordinary mind that a people that has shown such physical vitality for so long a period, has all at once, in a single decade, become comparatively infecund and threatened with extinction?

It is passing strange that it escaped the attention of a statistician of Mr. Hoffman's sagacity that, even granting the accuracy of the eleventh census, the natural increase of the Negro race was greater than that of the whites during the last decade. The number of immigrants who came to this country between 1880 and 1890 was 5,246,613. I am informed by the census

bureau that this number does not include the immigrants who came from British North America and from Mexico after 1885. This number was estimated by the statistical bureau of the Treasury Department to be 540,000, making the total number of immigrants 5,787,613. If this number be subtracted from the increase of the white population during the last decade (11,589,920) their rate of increase will be reduced to 13.35 per cent as compared with 13.51 per cent for the blacks. Nor is this all. The immigrants were for the most part in the full maturity and vigor of their productive powers, being the most fecund element of our white population. If allowance be made for their natural increase from 1880 to 1890 the white race would show a decennial increase appreciably below that of the blacks. If the Negro, then, is threatened with extinction, the white race is in a still more pitiable plight.

The table on page 6 does indeed show plainly that the Negro does not hold his own as a numerical factor of our mixed population. Whereas he represented 19 per cent of the entire population in 1810 he now represents only 12 per cent. But the cause of this relative decline is apparent enough. It is due to white immigration and not to "race traits" as Mr. Hoffman would have us believe. It would be as legitimate to attribute the decline of the Yankee element as a numerical factor in the large New England centers to the race degeneracy of the Puritan, while ignoring the proper cause -the influx of the Celt.

Mr. Hoffman's conclusions as to the Negro population are not generally accepted by students of social problems. Their position

is more clearly stated in a recent notice of the work now under review. "Concerning the first of these chapters dealing with population he (Mr. Hoffman) reaches conclusions very different from those generally held by those who have discussed the subject on *a priori* grounds. The general impression has been that the colored population was increasing at a rate greater than that of the whites, owing both to the greater number of children born and also to the fact that all children of a mixed race were counted as blacks. From such a condition of affairs it would naturally be assumed that the race to which all half-breeds were credited would, especially if prolific, rapidly gain upon the other race." <sup>13</sup>

On the appearance of each census since emancipation, there has been some hue and cry as to the destiny of the Negro population. Public opinion has been rhythmical with reference to its rise and fall above and below the mean line of truth. In 1870 it was extermination; in 1880 it was dreaded that the whole country would be Africanized because of the prolificness of a barbarous race; in 1890 the doctrine of extinction was preached once more; what will be the outcry in 1900 can only be divined at this stage, but we may rest assured that it will be something startling.

Negroes in Cities.

The author's studies in the minor features of the Negro population form the most interesting and valuable work which has yet been undertaken on the subject. The urban drift, the tendency to concentration, and the migratory movements of the black population are treated with fullness and force. It is interesting to know that there are 13 cities in which the colored population exceeds 20,000, and 23 in which it exceeds 10,000, and that the rate of increase of the colored element in these centers is enormous -more than 30 per cent. The concentration of the colored population in certain sections of

cities is quite suggestive. The following table will disclose some of the striking features which Mr. Hoffman has exhibited at length. <sup>14</sup>

| City.        | Colored population. | No. Wards. | Colored population in wards. |
|--------------|---------------------|------------|------------------------------|
| Chicago      | 14,271              | 34         | 9,122 in 3 wards.            |
| Philadelphia | 39,371              | 34         | 8,891 " 1 "                  |
| Boston       | 8,125               | 25         | 2,547 " 1 "                  |
| New York     | 23,601              | 24         | 13,008 " 3 "                 |
| Brooklyn     | 10,287              | 26         | 3,100 " 2 "                  |

This tendency to concentration in undesirable places is found to be greater in Northern than in Southern cities. Every large city has its white wards and its black wards, which the politician knows as well as the seaman knows the depths and shallows of the sea.

The evil of this tendency cannot be denied or gainsaid; but its cause is not far to seek nor hard to find.

### Black Belts.

The author also notes with alarm that the Negro population is congesting in the black belts of the South. There are 70 counties in this section with an aggregate area of over 50,000 square miles in which the colored population outnumbers the white nearly three to one. The general conviction is that the Negroes will be gathered into black settlements scattered throughout the Gulf states. The superintendent of the tenth census writes on this subject: "I entertain a strong conviction that the further course of our (Negro) population will exhibit that tendency in a continually growing force; that this element will be more and more drained off from the higher and colder lands into the low; hot regions bordering on the Gulf of Mexico." <sup>15</sup>

Commenting on this subject Mr. Hoffman says: "This tendency if persisted in will probably in the end prove disastrous to the advancement of the colored race, since there is but the slightest prospect that the race will be lifted to a higher plane of civilization except by constant contact with the white race." <sup>16</sup>

It is undoubtedly true that the Negro has not the initiative power of civilization. What race has? Civilization is not an original process

with any race or nation known to history. The torch has been passed from race to race and from age to age. Where else can the Negro go? The white race at present has the light. This concession is no reproach to the Negro race, nor is it due to any peculiar race trait or tendency.

There is a stretch of country extending from southern Pennsylvania to northern Alabama, containing sections of Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Alabama, and embracing the Appalachian system of mountains. This section contains a population of nearly 3,000,000 souls. They belong for the most part to the most thrifty element of our complex population -an element whose toughness of moral and mental fiber is proverbial. The Scotch-Irish are famed the world over for their manly and moral vigor. And yet this people have sunken to the lowest depth of poverty and degradation -a depth from which, without the assistance of outside help, they can be lifted nevermore. <sup>17</sup> Is this condition of depravity and inability of self-initiative due to "race traits and tendencies?"

Then, supposing the Negroes to be concentrated in the black belts, as seems inevitable, will they necessarily be shut out from wholesome contact with civilization? Not at all. Just how far personal and servile contact can elevate the moral and manly tone of a people is not quite

evident. But the result of indirect missionary contact is, perhaps, the surest way to lift a race into civilization. I point to Japan as a recent, striking illustration of this argument. The black belts will afford the richest field for missionary and philanthropic endeavor. No section of this country can remain long in an uncivilized state or relapse into barbarism that has in its midst a Hampton Institute or a Booker T. Washington.

## Notes

8 Frederick L. Hoffman, in the *Arena*, April, 1892.

9 Giddings' "Principles of Sociology," page 79.

10 Senator Roger Q. Mills, in the *Forum*, April, 1891.

11 Estimated by General Francis A. Walker, *Forum*, July, 1891.

12 W. E. B. Du Bois, Ph. D., in the *American Academy of Political Science*, January, 1897.

13 Miles Menander Dawson, in the *Quarterly Publications of the American Statistical Association*, September-December, 1896, page 142.

14 Page 14.

15 General Francis A. Walker, *Forum*, July, 1891.

16 Page 20.

17 See *New York Evangelist*, June, 1897.

## Chapter 2

## Chapter 2

## Chapter II

*Subject.* Vital Statistics.

*Gist.* "The vitality of the Negro may well be considered the most important phase of the so-called race problem, for it is a fact which can and will be demonstrated by indisputable evidence that of all races for which statistics are obtainable and which enter at all into the consideration of economic problems as factors the Negro shows the least power of resistance in the struggle for life." <sup>18</sup>

Death Rate.

Statistics are collected from ten of the largest cities with the result that the death rate among the whites is 20.12 per 1000, and among the blacks 32.61. It is acknowledged that the great bulk of this excess in the colored death rate is due to infant mortality. This fact of itself would suggest that the real cause is condition rather than race traits. This truth shall be established out of the mouth of Mr. Hoffman's own witness. "Fifty per cent of the (Negro) children who die never receive medical attention." <sup>19</sup>

"The indifference to medical attendance in cases of illness of their children is due to ignorance." <sup>20</sup> To the ordinary mind this would imply the most unfortunate condition.

Birth Rate.

But the death rate is only one factor in the vital equation. The birth rate is equally important. Mr. Hoffman concedes, with reluctant reservation, that the colored birth rate may be greater than that of the whites. "That the birth rate of the Negroes is in excess of that of the white population is probably true even at the present time, at least as compared with the native whites." <sup>21</sup> This is indeed a very feeble admission of a very obvious fact. Mr. Hoffman contends that the death rate of the Negro race is much greater than that of the whites. It has already been shown that, leaving immigration out of account, the increase in the Negro population is greater than that of the white race. How can these two facts be accounted for except it be on the basis of a higher birth rate for the blacks? Mr. Hoffman will have either to alter his estimates or mend his logic.

Direct testimony on this subject must have been known to Mr. Hoffman. Of course no one is qualified to write on vital statistics in America who is not familiar with the investigation of Dr. Billings. Let the reader compare the following quotation as to the relative birth rate of the races, and, noting date of data upon which the conclusion is based, decide for himself as to the ingenuousness of Mr. Hoffman's reluctant admission: "Dr. Billings, in his luminous report on the vital statistics of the United States (1886) shows that 1000 colored women (age from 15 to 49) give birth to 164 children,

and 1000 white women to only 127, yearly; that is to say, three colored women have as many children as four white." <sup>22</sup>

Is the Negro Threatened with Extinction.

Before Mr. Hoffman's conclusion as to the threatening aspect of the high death rate of the Negro race can be accepted, several questions must be answered by him.

1. Is the death rate of the colored race higher than that of a corresponding class of whites subject to the same moral and social environment? The general opinion is that it is not; nor does the author attempt to prove the contrary. In discussing this question Dr. John S. Billings states: "If we could separate the vital statistics of the poor and ignorant whites, the tenement house population of our Northern cities, from those of the mass of the white population we should undoubtedly find a high rate of mortality in this class, and especially in infancy and childhood." <sup>23</sup>

2. Is the high death rate for the cities sustained throughout the country at large? Luckily the census of 1880 gives a complete answer to this question. The death rate of the United States in 1880 was 15.09 per 1000; South Carolina 15.80; Alabama 14.20; Mississippi 12.89; Georgia 13.97; Massachusetts 18.59; New York 17.38; Pennsylvania 14.92; New Jersey 16.33. This shows plainly that the Southern states with the largest Negro contingent do not show any higher death rate than the Northern states where the Negro is not a considerable factor. There is no evidence, certainly none brought forward by the author, to show that the death rate of the Negro in the country at large is much in excess of that of the whites. "In the rural districts the mortality of the Negro is not excessive; it is in the cities and towns where he is brought into close contact with the evils and vices of civilization that he dies so rapidly." <sup>24</sup>

3. Is the death rate, even in the cities, so great as to foreshadow extinction? Nothing is great or small except by comparison. The death rate among the Negroes in the large cities at present is not as great as it was among the whites forty years ago; that is, if we may rely upon the statistics which Mr. Hoffman himself has presented.

*Mortality among Whites in Southern Cities.*<sup>25</sup>

| City.             | Period.    | Death rate. |
|-------------------|------------|-------------|
| Mobile, Ala       | 1852 -1855 | 54.39       |
| Charleston, S. C. | 1851 -1860 | 29.79       |
| Savannah, Ga      | 1856 -1860 | 37.19       |
| New Orleans, La   | 1849 -1860 | 59.60       |

Under improved sanitary regulations these rates have been lowered until at present they are not at all alarming. May not the same improvement in his environment effect similar changes in the death rate of the Negro?

Let us compare the death rate of the Negro race with that of the Germans as presented in the census of 1880.

| City.       | Colored death rate. | City.      | Death rate. |
|-------------|---------------------|------------|-------------|
| Washington  | 32.60               | Konigsberg | 31.50       |
| Baltimore   | 32.81               | Munich     | 33.40       |
| Richmond    | 28.48               | Breslau    | 31.60       |
| Louisville  | 30.73               | Cologne    | 27.00       |
| New Orleans | 30.42               | Strasburg  | 29.60       |

This high death rate of the American Negro does not exceed that of the white race in other parts of the civilized globe. If race traits are playing such havoc with the Negroes in America, what direful agent of death, may we ask the author, is at work in the cities of his own fatherland?

4. Does the death rate among Negroes show a tendency to increase? In the District of Columbia there has been a gradual decline in the death rate of the Negro population from 40.78 in 1876 to 29.54 in 1896.<sup>26</sup>

Again, Mr. Hoffman's statistics will show a steady improvement in Southern cities for the last twenty years.

*Death rate among Negroes in Southern Cities.*<sup>27</sup>

| City.             | Periods.   | Death rate. | Periods.   | Death rate. |
|-------------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| Mobile, Ala       | 1876 -1880 | 39.74       | 1891 -1893 | 30.91       |
| Charleston, S. C. | 1876 -1885 | 43.83       | 1886 -1894 | 44.06       |
| Savannah, Ga      | 1876 -1880 | 51.66       | 1891 -1894 | 32.26       |
| New Orleans, La   | 1880 -1884 | 52.35       | 1890 -1894 | 39.42       |

A recent report of the Labor Bureau throws much light on the subject.

*Annual Death Rate of the Colored Race for three quinquennial periods.*<sup>28</sup>

| City.     | 1880 -1885. | 1885 -1890. | 1890 -1895. |
|-----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Atlanta   | 37.96       | 33.41       | 32.76       |
| Baltimore | 36.15       | 30.52       | 32.47       |

|            |       |       |       |
|------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Charleston | 44.08 | 46.74 | 41.43 |
| Memphis    | 43.01 | 29.35 | 21.11 |
| Richmond   | 40.34 | 38.83 | 34.91 |

This table shows an unmistakable decrease in the death rate for the successive quinquennial periods.

All of which tends to prove that this high death rate is due to condition and is subject to sanitary check and control.

In further confirmation of the fact that the death rate among Negroes is on the decline, the Army records will afford valuable testimony.

*Death rate of Colored Soldiers in the U. S. Army.*<sup>29</sup>

|                           |      |
|---------------------------|------|
| Average from 1883 to 1892 | 9.07 |
| Average in 1894           | 6.26 |
| Average in 1895           | 5.03 |

In 1895 it is lower than that of the white soldiers. The same general law of a gradually decreasing death rate is here revealed.

If the death rate of the Negro population in cities is not higher than that of corresponding classes of whites; if the records of the census for the country at large do not show it to be in excess of other classes; if the highest rates are not above those of the whites a half century ago, nor higher than those of other civilized communities of the Caucasian race at the present time; and if this rate is constantly decreasing under more favorable sanitary appliances -it is hard to justify the author's position as to the low vital powers of the race, or to reach the conclusion that extinction will be its ultimate fate.

The Northern Negroes.

In further proof of the low vitality of the Negro race the author shows at great length that the race cannot thrive in the North. For

every Northern community for which statistics are available it appears that the death rate is in excess of the birth rate. It does not seem to have occurred to the author that economic and social environment may lead to this deplorable result. Dr. Walker, in a publication which has already been referred to, states: "The industrial *raison d'etre* of the Negro is here (in the South) found at its maximum. In the Northern states this *raison d'etre* wholly disappears. There is nothing, aside from a few kinds of personal service, which the Negro can do which the white man cannot do as well or perhaps better." <sup>30</sup>

In the North the Negro race lives in industrial and social captivity; not being in sufficient numbers to form an independent constituency, they whine and pine over certain abstract principles of equality and brotherhood, but which, alas, fade into impalpable air under the application of a concrete test. They sit in the shadow of the tree of liberty and boast of its protecting boughs, but must not aspire to partake of the fruit thereof. The undershrubbery purchases shade and protection at too dear a price when it sacrifices therefor the opportunity of the glorious sunlight of heaven. No healthy, vigorous breed can be produced in the shade. No

wonder, then, that the productive sensitiveness of the Northern Negro is affected by his industrial and social isolation among an overshadowing people who regard him with a feeling composed in equal parts of pity and contempt.

Consumption among Negroes.

The author enters into the causes of mortality and points out that in addition to infant mortality, which has already been noticed, consumption, pneumonia, and vicious taints of blood are the most alarming ones. With gloomy forebodings we are reminded that: "Its (the Negro race) extreme liability to consumption alone would suffice to seal its fate as a race." <sup>31</sup>

The following citation will express the truth of the situation as clearly as it is possible to do: "From close personal observation, embracing a professional life of nearly forty years among the Negroes and from data obtained from professional brethren in different sections of the South, I have no hesitancy in declaring that insanity and tuberculosis were rare diseases among the Negroes of the South

prior to emancipation. Indeed, many intelligent people of observation and full acquaintance of the Negro have stated to me that they never saw a crazy or consumptive Negro of unmixed blood until these latter years. The fact of their comparative exemption from these ailments prior to emancipation is so well established.." <sup>32</sup>

"Man is an organized being, and is subject to certain laws which he cannot violate with impunity. These laws affect him in the air he breathes, the food he eats, the clothes he wears, and (in) every circumstance surrounding his habilitation. In the wholesale violation of these laws after the war, as previously stated, was laid the foundation of the degeneration of the physical and mental condition of the Negro. Licentiousness left its slimy trail of sometimes ineradicable disease upon his physical being, and neglected bronchitis, pneumonia, and pleurisy lent their helping hand toward lung degeneration." <sup>33</sup>

It will be noticed that Dr. Miller accepts all the facts alleged by our author, but places the causes squarely upon the ground of conditions, habits and circumstances of life. He does not seem to be acquainted with Mr. Hoffman's discovery of "race traits." The fact that under the hygienic and dietary regime of slavery, consumption was comparatively unknown among Negroes, but that under the altered conditions of emancipation it has developed to a threatening degree, would persuade any except the man with a theory, that the cause is due to the radical changes in life which freedom imposed upon the blacks, rather than to some malignant, capricious "race trait" which is not amenable to the law of cause and effect, but which graciously suspended its operation for two hundred years, and has now mysteriously selected the closing decades of the nineteenth century in which to make a trial of its direful power.

No people who work all day in the open air of a mild climate and who sleep at night in huts and cabins where crack and crevice and skylight admit abundant ventilation, will be subject to pulmonary weakness. Now take the same people and transplant them to the large cities of a colder climate, subject them to pursuits which do not call for a high degree of bodily energy, crowd them into alley tenements where the windows are used only for ornament and to keep out the "night air," and a single door must serve for entrance, exit, and ventilation, and lung degeneration is the inevitable result. The cause of the evil suggests the remedy. The author in a previous chapter points out the threatening evil of crowding into the cities; a counter movement which would cause a return to the country, or would at least stay the mad urban

movement, would not only improve the economic status of the race but would also benefit its physical and moral health. Here is an open field for practical philanthropy and wise Negro leadership.

The increase in consumption among Negroes is indeed a grave matter, but it is possible to exaggerate its importance as sociological evidence. If we listen to the alarmists and social agitators, we would find a hundred causes, each of which would destroy the human race in a single generation. The most encouraging evidence on this subject from the Negro's point of view is afforded by the last report of the Surgeon General of the United States Army. The statistics thus furnished are the most valuable for comparative study, since they deal with the two races on terms of equality, that is, the white and colored men are of about the same ages and initial condition of health, they receive the same treatment and are subject to the same diet, work, and social habits. "It is to be noted, also," says the Surgeon General, "that during the past two years the rates for consumption among the colored troops have fallen so as to be much lower than those for the whites, whereas formerly they were much higher." <sup>34</sup>

The following table prepared by Mr. Hershaw, shows plainly the gradual decrease of the death rate from consumption in Southern cities for the past fifteen years.

*Death rate per 1000 among Negroes from Consumption.*<sup>35</sup>

| City.      | Period.    | Rate. | Period.    | Rate. | Period.    | Rate. |
|------------|------------|-------|------------|-------|------------|-------|
| Atlanta    | 1882 -1885 | 50.20 | 1886 -1890 | 45.88 | 1891 -1895 | 43.48 |
| Baltimore  | 1886       | 58.65 | 1887       | 55.42 | 1892       | 49.41 |
| Charleston | 1881 -1884 | 72.20 | 1885 -1889 | 68.08 | 1890 -1894 | 57.66 |
| Memphis    | 1882 -1885 | 65.35 | 1886 -1890 | 50.30 | 1891 -1895 | 37.78 |
| Richmond   | 1881 -1885 | 54.93 | 1886 -1890 | 41.63 | 1892 -1895 | 34.74 |

It appears that the total death rate as well as that due to consumption among Negroes reached the maximum about 1880 and has been on the gradual decline ever since.

Consumption is only one of the contributing causes of the total death rate. It has been shown that the death rate from all causes does not necessarily point to the extinction of the race. This being so, there is no need of unnecessary alarm over a single factor; for in sociology, as in mathematics, we cannot escape the fundamental truth that the whole is greater than any of its parts.

Vital Capacity and Economic Efficiency.

The author's proposition as to the low vitality of the Negro and its effect upon his economic efficiency is contrary alike to the traditional and prevalent belief. The whole fabric of slavery rested upon the assumption that the Negro was better able to resist the trying condition of the southern climate than the white laborer. The industrial reconstruction of the South is building upon the same foundation. No one doubts that the Negro is able to resist certain miasmatic and febrific diseases which are so destructive to the white race in the tropical regions of the earth. Science and wise hygienic appliances have improved the condition of the white race in this respect, it is true, but will not the same appliances benefit the Negro in the same degree?

Dr. Daniel H. Williams, surgeon-in-chief of the Freedmen's Hospital, at Washington, D C., informs me that during his professional experience he has performed upward of 3000 surgical operations, one-fourth of which at least were upon white patients, and that he has found

unmistakable evidence of higher vital power among the colored patients. I am also informed that this is the general opinion of the medical profession.

Although the author treats exhaustively the whole catalogue of diseases and the numerous ills which flesh is heir to, it can be safely claimed that he does not establish his main proposition set forth in the beginning of the chapter, and that at least a Scotch verdict is demanded: "not proven."

## Notes

18 Page 37.

19 The Health Officer of Savannah, quoted by Mr. Hoffman, page 62.

20 Page 63.

21 Page 33.

22 M. G. Mulhall, F. S. S., in North American Review, July, 1897.

23 Tenth Census, Vol. XI, p. xxxviii.

24 Dr. John S. Billings' comments upon Vital Statistics of the Tenth Census, Vol. XI, p. xxxviii.

25 Pages 53 and 54.

26 Report of the Health Officer of the District of Columbia, 1896, page 7.

27 Pages 53 and 55.

28 Bulletin of the Department of Labor, No. 10, May, 1897, page 286.

29 Surgeon General's Report, 1896, Table XII.

30 Dr. Francis A. Walker, in the Forum, July, 1891.

31 Page 148.

32 "The Effects of Emancipation upon the Mental and Physical Health of the Negro," by Dr. J. F. Miller, Superintendent Eastern Hospital, Goldsboro, N. C., page 2.

33 Ibid, page 6.

34 Report of Surgeon General of the Army, August, 1896, page 89.

35 L. M. Hershaw, Esq., in Atlanta University Bulletin, No. 2. page 16.

## Chapter 3

## Chapter 3

## Chapter III

*Subject.* Anthropometry.

*Gist.* "In vital capacity, the most important of all physiological characteristics, the tendency of the race has been downward." <sup>36</sup>

Ample statistics are presented to show that in proportion to structure

the Negro is heavier than the white man. This fact, the author tells us, is ordinarily considered favorable to a healthy development and freedom from pulmonary weakness. "The elaborate investigations of the medical department of the New York Mutual Life, in 1874, of the Washington Life, in 1886, the Prudential Insurance Company of America, in 1895, and the New York Mutual Life, in 1895, prove conclusively that low weight in proportion to age and stature is a determining factor in the susceptibility of an individual to consumption." <sup>37</sup>

In order to explain away this apparent advantage in favor of the Negro, the author has invented a unique physiological principle, viz: "A physiological law may hold good for one race and not for another." <sup>38</sup> It is noticeable that the author applies this principle only when it suits his convenience but withholds it whenever it runs across his theory.

By a series of measurements based, confessedly, upon insufficient data, it is concluded that the Negro has a smaller lung capacity, smaller chest expansion, and a higher rate of respiration than the white man, and that the Mulatto is inferior to both the parent races in these vital functions. These differences are considered a powerful factor in lung degeneration, and proof positive of physical inferiority. In these respects he tacitly repudiates his erstwhile principle that "a physiological law may hold good for one race and not for another," and assumes that the two races are subject to like conditions of disease and death.

On the whole it may be said that this is the least interesting chapter in the whole book. The data are so slender and the arguments are so evidently shaped to a theory, that we are neither enlightened by the one nor convinced by the other. But the author's judgment must be justified. The gloomy warning comes with Catonian regularity at the end of each chapter. Listen to his last words: "A combination of these traits and tendencies must in the end cause the extinction of the race." <sup>39</sup>

If the Negro is inferior in vital function and power to the Caucasian, he will be a public benefactor who scientifically demonstrates the fact. But the colored race most stubbornly refuses to be argued out of existence on an insufficient induction of data and unwarranted conclusions deduced therefrom.

## Notes

36 Page 176.

37 Page 149.

38 Page 158.

39 Page 176.

## Chapter 4

## Chapter 4

## Chapter IV

*Subject.* Amalgamation.

*Gist.* "The crossing of the Negro race with the white has been detrimental to its true progress and has contributed more than anything else to the excessive and increasing rate of mortality from the most fatal disease, as well as to its consequent inferior social efficiency and

diminishing power as a force in American national life." 40

The importance of this proposition is apparent when we consider that the Negroes in this country are a thoroughly mixed people. The pure African type has been well nigh obliterated. It is pointed out also that the mongrel progeny has been produced by illicit intercourse between the white male and the black female. The moral and conservative qualities of a race reside in its womanhood. The Negro people, then, have missed these transmitted qualities. The author is either ignorant of or ignores the large class of mixed Negroes who are the legitimate offspring of colored parents, but would place the whole class under the ban of bastardy.

After judicially balancing the testimony furnished by world-renowned authorities upon the effect of race crossing, the author espouses one side of the contention with all the ardor of a retained advocate.

Three points are sought to be established.

#### 1. The Mulatto is Physically Inferior to both Parent Races.

The opinions of examining surgeons during the civil war are quoted which quite unanimously show that the Mulatto is strongly inclined to consumption, scrofula, and vicious taints of blood.

The following table, made out on the basis of Gould's measurements, is full of interest:

|                     | White.              | Black.              | Mulatto.            |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Weight              | 141.4 pounds.       | 144.6 pounds.       | 144.8 pounds        |
| Circumference chest | 35.8 inches.        | 35.1 inches.        | 34.96 inches.       |
| Capacity of lungs   | 184.7 cubic inches. | 163.5 cubic inches. | 158.9 cubic inches. |
| Rate of respiration | 16.4 per minute.    | 17.7 per minute.    | 19.0 per minute.    |

It appears from this table that in the most important vital organs and functions the Mulatto is inferior to both parent stocks. This

opinion is almost or quite universal among competent authorities upon this subject. And yet the last word of science has not been uttered on this question. There is no subject in all the domain of social science which offers a more interesting or more fruitful field for investigation. The Freedmen's Hospital at Washington, and similar institutions elsewhere, by prosecuting accurate and scientific methods of inquiry can throw much light upon this subject.

#### 2. The Mulatto is Morally Inferior to the Blacks.

This alleged inferiority is attributable to the fact as well as to the manner of generation. Strangely enough Mr. Hoffman does not employ the statistics which would seem to bear out his suggestion. The eleventh census shows that there were 10,377 pure and 3,218 mixed Negroes in penitentiaries in 1890. Supposing that uniform methods of race-tests were used throughout the census inquiry, this would show that while the mixed Negroes constitute only 16 per cent of the total Negro population, they furnished 30 per cent of the penitentiary convicts. But these figures cannot be relied upon since the census bureau acknowledges that it has no definite method of determining the different shades of color and grades of mixture among Negroes.

It is also alleged in proof of this proposition that illicit intercourse between the races is carried on mainly with the Mulatto women. Can this not be explained on grounds other than native depravity? The light-colored Negro woman is made the victim of the lustful onslaught of the male element of both races. She is placed between the upper and nether stress of the vicious

propensities of white and black men. And if her sins are greater, is it not because her temptations are greater also? The following quotation from a distinguished Southerner is significant; "There was little improper intercourse between white men and Negresses of the original type in the period before emancipation (after the creation of the Mulatto class)." <sup>41</sup> Every time a Negro woman is indicted on this score some white man is inculpated. The reproach hurled against colored women from such sources reminds us very much of the lines in Butler's Hudibras:

The selfsame thing they will abhor,  
One way, and long another for.

### 3. The Mulatto is Intellectually Superior to the Blacks but Inferior to the Whites.

In substantiation of this proposition it is claimed that the greater number of Negroes who have attained distinction have been those of mixed blood. The truth of this statement must be conceded, and yet the cause should not be overlooked. Leaving aside the doctrine of inheritance as a debatable question, the initial advantage of the mixed over the pure Negroes was considerable. Feelings of blood ties prompted many a slave holder to deal kindly by his slave descendants, and often to liberate them and give them a start in the race of life. That an infusion of white blood quickens the energy and enlivens the disposition of the progeny is probably true; but that it adds to the intellectual capacity is far from a self-evident proposition. The Negroes who have shown any unusual intellectual activity, in America at least, have usually been of the purer type. Phyllis Wheatly, Benjamin Banneker, Ira Aldridge, Blind Tom, Edward W. Blyden, and Paul Dunbar are illustrations of this argument.

The investigation of Dr. Gould as to circumference of head and facial angle are exhibited in the following table:

|                       | White.       | Mulatto.     | Black.       |
|-----------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Circumference of head | 22.1 inches. | 22.0 inches. | 21.9 inches. |
| Facial angle          | 72.0°        | 69.2°        | 68.8°        |

A difference of one-tenth of an inch in head circumference and of four-tenths of a degree in facial angle affords a very slender physical basis on which to predicate intellectual superiority.

The author lays great stress upon the following table made out by Dr. Hunt.

#### *Weight of the Brain of White and Colored Soldiers.*<sup>42</sup>

| No. of. cases. | Degree of color.    | Weight of brain. |
|----------------|---------------------|------------------|
| 24             | White               | 1424 grammes.    |
| 25             | Three parts white   | 1390 "           |
| 47             | Half white          | 1334 "           |
| 51             | One-fourth white    | 1319 "           |
| 95             | One-eighth white    | 1308 "           |
| 22             | One-sixteenth white | 1280 "           |
| 141            | Pure Negro          | 1341 "           |

Twenty-four cases are taken to represent fifty million people, and

the law of averages thus obtained is confidently relied upon. Nor are we informed as to what methods were employed to ascertain the exact composition of blood of the 22 cases that are rated as one-sixteenth white. But, supposing we accept this table, overlooking for the time being the fact that the brain weight of one white person is taken as typical of two million others, and also conceding the undisclosed method of Dr. Hunt in detecting homeopathic dashes of white blood, does it "clearly prove that there is an increase in the brain weight with an increase in the proportion of white blood?" If this table shows anything it is that the pure Negro and the Mulatto have about the same brain weight and that they are both superior in this respect to all degrees of mixture between them, but inferior to those of more than one-half white blood.

But it is rather unusual at this late day to base intellectual capacity upon the shape and size of skull. Investigations have shown that facial angle and capacity of cranium and cephalic index afford no certain criterion of thought power or susceptibility to culture. The latest word on this subject is given by Prof. Ripley, in a series of articles on "Racial Geography of Europe," in Appleton's Popular Science Monthly for 1897.

"An important point to be noted in this connection is that this shape of the head seems to bear no direct relation to intellectual power or intelligence. Posterior development of the cranium does not imply a corresponding backwardness in culture.... Europe offers the best refutation of the statement that the proportions of the head mean anything intellectual.... In our study of the proportions of the head, therefore, we are measuring merely race, and not intelligence in any sense.... Equally unimportant to the anthropologist is the absolute size of the head. It is grievous to contemplate the waste of energy when, during our civil war, over one million of soldiers had their heads measured in respect to this absolute size, in view of the fact that today anthropologists deny any considerable significance attaching to this characteristic. Popularly a large head with beetling eyebrows suffices to establish a man's intellectual credit, but like all other credit it is entirely dependent upon what lies on deposit elsewhere." <sup>43</sup>

A still more renowned authority tells us: "The development of the intellectual faculties of man is to a great extent independent of the capacity of the cranium and the volume of the brain." <sup>44</sup>

The question of the relative intellectual capacity of the different races is one of much speculative interest. I am giving the matter more attention than it would seem to warrant, because the author makes the supposed mental inferiority of the race the basis of the only practical suggestion which he has to offer, viz: that all of our educational and philanthropic endeavor so far has been based upon wrong principles, and a radical change in this regard is demanded so as to bring the treatment in harmony with the capabilities of the lower race. Several authorities will be cited which, I think, will be more than sufficient to offset Mr. Hoffman's insistent opinion.

"There are hundreds if not thousands of black men in this country who in capacity are to be ranked with the superior persons of the dominant race; and it is hard to say that in any evident feature of mind they characteristically differ from their white fellow citizens." <sup>45</sup>

Prof. Shaler is himself a Southerner, a professor in Harvard University, and a noted student of current problems.

"Granting the present inferiority of the Negro, we affirm that it has never been proved; nor is there any good reason to suppose that he is doomed forever to maintain his present relative position, or that he is inferior to the white man in any other sense than as some white races are

inferior to others." 46

"Yet the Negro children exhibit no intellectual inferiority; they make just the same progress in the subjects taught as do the children of white parents, and the deficiency they exhibit later in life is of quite a different kind." 47

Mr. Hoffman compels us once more to combat the arguments of the slave holding class: that is, that the Negro is intellectually and morally an inferior creature (they did not, however, affirm physical inferiority) and that it is only by servile contact with the white race that his nature can be improved. The progress along these lines which the race has made even under the severest disadvantages is sufficient answer to this argument.

If I'm designed yon lordling's slave,  
By nature's law designed,  
Why was an independent wish  
E'er planted in my mind?

The Negro's intellectual and social environments hang as a millstone about his neck; and when he is cast upon the sea of opportunity he is reproached with everlasting inferiority because he does not swim an equal race with those who are not thus fettered. We are reminded of the barbarous Teutons in Titus Andronicus who, after pulling out the tongue and cutting off the hands of the lovely Lavinia, upbraid her for not calling for sweet water with which to wash her delicate hands.

No, no, Mr. Hoffman, the philanthropists have made no mistake. They have proceeded on the supposition that the Negro has faculty for faculty and power for power with the rest of his fellow men, and that his special needs grow out of his peculiar condition. Any alteration in this policy would violate the dictates both of science and humanity.

Mixed Marriages.

The remainder of this rather long chapter is devoted to the number and character of mixed marriages, with the conclusion that the number is on the decrease and the character of one or both of the contracting parties is usually unsavory, and that such unions can form no determining factor in the ultimate solution of the problem.

A study of the fertility of such marriages and the physical, moral, and intellectual stamina of the progeny would furnish valuable sociological data.

## Notes

40 Page 188.

41 "Plantation Negro as a Freeman," by Phillip A. Bruce, pages 53 and 54.

42 Page 185.

43 Appleton's Popular Science Monthly, March, 1897.

44 A. De Quatrefages' "Human Species," chapter XXX.

45 Prof. N. S. Shaler, Arena, December, 1890.

46 Wm. Matthews, LL. D., on Negro Intellect, North American Review, July, 1889.

47 Benjamin Kidd's "Social Evolution," page 295.

## Chapter 5

## Chapter 5

## Chapter V

*Subject:* Social Conditions.

*Gist:* "Immorality is a race trait." <sup>48</sup>

Religion and Education.

Under the sub-heads of religion and education statistics are presented showing the progress of the race along these lines. A total church membership of 2,673,977 shows that there is one communicant to every 2.79 of the Negro population, against one in every 3.04 for the whites, There were 1,288,736 pupils in the common schools and 34,129 in the higher schools, colleges, and universities. Ordinarily these facts are regarded as the most wonderful evidences of progress which the world has ever witnessed on the part of a backward people. But not so with Mr. Hoffman; the necessities of his

theories compel him to explain away every apparent advantage in favor of the Negro. The author announces with an implied negative response to the suppressed question: "It remains to be shown whether the educational process which the race has undergone during the past quarter of a century and the additional efforts and opportunities for religious instruction have materially raised the race from its low social and economic condition at the time of emancipation." <sup>49</sup>

This statement needs no refutation, for it will fall beneath the ponderous weight of its own absurdity.

Criminal Record.

The following table, if unexplained, tells a startling tale of the Negro's criminal propensity:

*Prisoners in the United States, 1890.*<sup>50</sup>

|         | Total. | Male.  | Female. |   | Male, per cent. | Female, per cent. |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|---|-----------------|-------------------|
| White   | 58,052 | 53,519 | 4,433   |   |                 |                   |
| Colored | 24,277 | 22,305 | 1,972   |   |                 |                   |
|         |        |        |         | Proportion of Negro criminals to total (over 15)  | 29.38           | 30.79             |
|         |        |        |         | Proportion of Negro population to total (over 15) | 10.20           | 11.09             |

The Negro element, which constitutes only 12 per cent of the population, commits 30 per cent of the crimes. Before concluding that this preponderance of crime is due to "race traits," let us examine more closely into the circumstances of the case. The discrepancy in the administration of the law in the South has undoubtedly some effect upon this relative showing. In order to escape the charge of slander, I will use the words of a distinguished Virginian who boasts of "my southern ancestry, birth, rearing, residence and interest."

"And is not the law the same for all, and does it make any distinction between rich and poor, white and black? Literally, the law is the same for all. Then what more can be desired? The trouble is not that the laws are partial, through some of its enactments, namely, the whipping-post, chain-gang, and poll-tax laws, were aimed principally against the Negro; but the trouble is with the interpretation of the laws by the juries, who merely voice the

public sentiment, which is superior to the law itself. The average jury is a whimsical creature, subject to all kinds of influences, though mostly of a sentimental character. In criminal matters where whites are concerned, it seems ever to lean to the defense; and the strongest arguments of the prosecution are easily offset and upset by appeals on behalf of youth, family, station, respectability, etc., or, perhaps the whole family, weeping, is placed in full view of the jury, and the susceptible jury, sure at least in such cases to weep with them that weep, speedily brings in a verdict of acquittal where guilt is clearly manifest; or it says jail where it ought to say penitentiary; or one year where it ought to say ten; and ten years where it ought to pronounce death. But the Negro has none of these sentimental advantages. Too poor to employ competent counsel, his liberty and life are necessarily committed to incompetent hands, when the proverb of 'poor pay, poor preach' becomes reality... But are Negroes treated unfairly by juries and public opinion? Yes, and the experience and observation of every fair-minded man will confirm the assertion. One cardinal proof is that a white man seldom receives punishment for assault, however brutal, however unprovoked, however cowardly, be it maiming, homicide, or murder upon a Negro unless, forsooth, the assailant be some degraded creature, disowned by his own caste. Of the numberless instances -running into the thousands -during the past twenty-three years, of homicide and murder of blacks by whites, there is no single instance of capital punishment, and few, very few, instances of imprisonment beyond a few months in jail, or a slight fine. The fact is the juries, which are the sole judges of the evidence, will accept testimony against a Negro that they would reject in the case of whites; and on the other hand they will frequently reject, or at least discredit, testimony of the Negro against the white man, however well supported it may be. But to compound for sins we are inclined to by damning those we have no mind to, in case of any difficulty between white and black, and the former is injured or loses his life, lucky is the latter if the homicide is not declared murder -when courts of justice, though sure to inflict the highest penalty in his case, are found to be too slow, and he is dragged forth and slain, unshrived and unshriven, as if he were a monstrous wild beast of whose presence earth could not be rid too quickly." <sup>51</sup>

The social degradation of the Negro is the greatest factor contributive to this high criminal record. We naturally associate poverty, ignorance, and crime as being indissolubly connected. The Negroes represent the stratum of society which commits the bulk of crime the world over. If we exchange places the same story would be narrated of the whites. The census records nowhere show that there is any connection between crime and race, but between crime and condition.

The Negro has a higher criminal record than the Caucasian, it is true, but so has the foreigner a greater average than the native whites. The strongest possible argument in this connection rests upon the fact that the presence of a large number of Negroes in any community does not increase its total criminal average. The North Atlantic division, including the states of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, has a criminal record of 833.1 to the million, while the South Atlantic division, including the states of the Southern Atlantic coast shows a record of 831.7. The Western division has an average of 1300. The section that has the fewest Negroes has the

highest average, and the states that have the largest quota of blacks show the lowest criminal rates. If we compare state with state the same interesting results are revealed. The criminal record of New York (million basis) is 1369, of South Carolina 702.6, of California 1703, of Alabama 720.1.

But, says the objector, a difference in the rigidity of the enforcement of the law may account in some measure for this disparity. Let us then take the city of Washington, one-third of whose population are Negroes, and compare its police reports with those of Boston, whose Negro element is a negligible fraction. It will be conceded, I think, that the enforcement of law in both cities is rigid. The major of police for the District of Columbia, in his last report remarks: "Those familiar with the conduct of police affairs in this country generally contend that there is a constant increase of crime; that it keeps pace with the growing population. While such may be true of the principal cities of the United States, facts and figures support the claim of this department that in this respect the District of Columbia occupies a distinct standing of its own. Its comprehensive moral status is above that of most communities. Were it not for the depredations chargeable to theft, there would be comparatively little crime to chronicle. This offense must always exist

here, unless through some unexpected agency a complete change should be effected in the social conditions which prevail. The abiding place of a large class of idle, illiterate, and consequently vicious persons, it is but reasonable that the respectable element should be preyed upon to a considerable extent." <sup>52</sup>

The percentage of arrests for Boston during 1896 was 9.37, whereas for Washington it was only 8 and a fraction. These facts would seem to furnish sufficient evidence that crime adheres to circumstances and condition and not to race and color.

But, says the author, in the North (where legal processes are acknowledgedly fair so far as the Negro is concerned) the race shows a criminal record which is out of all proportion to its numerical strength. In Pennsylvania 2.23 per cent of its population commit 16.16 per cent of the crimes; in Chicago 1.30 of the population are responsible for 9.84 of the offenses, and so for other Northern communities. The Negro's criminal status is from six to eight times greater than his numerical weight. It has been shown in another place that from a social and economic standpoint the Northern Negro is completely submerged. The criminal outbreak under the circumstances is only natural.

It is also true that where numbers are small proportions are high. The startling criminal showing of the Northern Negro can be accounted for largely on this principle. Suppose that there were but one Chinaman in a community, and coming, as he naturally would, into hostile contact with a wide area, he should be arrested and convicted. The criminal records of that community would show that one hundred per cent of the Chinese population belonged to the criminal class.

I append the following table, extracted from the census of 1880, to establish this principle. The Negro in the country at large shows a much higher criminal rate than the foreign whites, but if we limit our inquiry to those states where the foreign population is small, the conditions will be reversed.

*Number of prisoners in several southern states (to the million of population.)*

| State.  | Foreign white. | Colored. |
|---------|----------------|----------|
| Florida | 2,624          | 1,797    |

|             |       |       |
|-------------|-------|-------|
| Georgia     | 2,272 | 2,181 |
| Louisiana   | 1,810 | 1,728 |
| Mississippi | 2,498 | 1,783 |

If, on the other hand, we select those states in which the Negro element is small and the foreign element large the result is very decidedly to the disadvantage of the Negro.

The Northern Negro has a criminal record which is not only out of all proportion to his numerical strength, but is two or three times as great as that of his black brothers in the South. It is hard to see how "race traits" could account for this discrepancy.

#### Rape and Lynching.

The attempts at rape and the consequent lynchings are also offered in evidence of the evil propensity of the race. It is undoubtedly true that the alleged assaults upon white women by colored men have done more than all other causes combined to give the race an evil reputation and make it loathsome in the eyes of mankind. "It throws over every colored man a mantle of odium and sets upon him a mark for popular hate more distressing than the mark set upon the first murderer... It has cooled our friends and heated our enemies" <sup>53</sup>

The alleged culprit in such cases, especially if he be a colored man and the victim a white woman, is almost certain to die without due process of law. The native, savage furor of human nature asserts itself in the presence of such dastardly outrages, and neither legal enactments nor moral codes nor religious sanction can restrain it. The perpetrators cannot be defended or pitied. It is a waste of sympathy to wail over the deep damnation of their taking off. And yet we must remember that when the two races are concerned rape has a larger definition than is set down in the dictionaries. There can be no doubt that there have been many lynchings chargeable to rape, when the true cause should be designated by a different, though an ugly name.

Let us not forget, also, that not more than one-third of the lynchings are even chargeable to rape. The causes include the whole catalogue of offenses, serious and trifling, from the committal of murder to jostling against a white man on the street. The attempt to show that lynching and rape are coextensive is misleading and unjust.

So the effort to show that rapeful assaults are due to "race traits" can, I think, be clearly disproved. In a pamphlet which is certainly

not flattering to the Negro, a learned medical authority tells us: "I might remark in passing that, notwithstanding the horrible crimes perpetrated under the influence of the *furor sexualis* by the Negro, I believe that he compares quite favorably as regards sexual impulses -taking all abnormalities into consideration -with the white race. The more I see of white men in so-called refined society, the more contempt have I for quite a large proportion of male humanity." <sup>54</sup>

To summarize the points of the argument, showing that rape is not peculiarly characteristic of the Negro:

1. Rape has been practiced among all races and nations.
2. The committal of rape by white men is by no means an infrequent occurrence. Two instances of white men committing heinous assaults upon white children occurred in Washington during the preparation of this article.

3. In Africa rape is so severely punished that it is comparatively unknown.
4. In the British Islands and in South America where the Negroes live in greatest relative abundance, the crime is unheard of.
5. When the care and safety of the white women of the South were entrusted to the keeping of the slaves, they returned inviolable all that had been entrusted to their hands.
6. Of the hundreds of lady missionaries of the North who have trusted their lives and virtue to the emancipated race whom they came to uplift, not a single case of violation has been reported to their friends at the North.

#### Social Morality.

The present state of social morality is mirrored in the number of illegitimate offsprings. The figures which show that the rate of illegitimacy among Negroes in Washington has increased from 17.60 per cent of total births in 1879 to 26.46 per cent in 1894 have been widely quoted and remarked upon. These are facts of record and cannot be gainsaid or denied. According to the opinion of medical men and others in positions to observe, these figures if anything fall short of the truth. It is also probable that the other large cities of the country, if as closely studied, would make as startling a showing.

The only alarming feature of the situation is the constant *increase* in the illegitimate rates. That twenty-five per cent of the births among Negroes are illegitimate will not alarm anyone where it is considered that even this low moral status represents a gain of seventy-five per cent over the conditions prevailing under slavery.

Mr. Hoffman having on hand a theory, was spared the pains of inquiring further into the causes which led to this deplorable state of things. The reviewer suggests that this increase in social immorality among the Negroes of Washington is due to the great rush of ignorant, purposeless colored people to the national capital, a condition of things which always leads, in its first effect, to social looseness and impurity. The very late marriages among the better element of the colored people also help to account for this awful state of things. But perhaps a greater than any cause yet assigned as leading to the social degradation of Negroes in cities is the excess of the female over the male element of the population. On account of the importance of this subject, I append a table showing this excess for the cities whose colored population is over 20,000.

#### *Colored population.*

| City.       | Colored males. | Colored females. | Excess of females. | Number of females to every 100 males. |
|-------------|----------------|------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Baltimore   | 29,165         | 38,131           | 8,966              | 131                                   |
| Richmond    | 14,216         | 18,138           | 3,922              | 128                                   |
| Atlanta     | 12,400         | 15,717           | 3,317              | 127                                   |
| Washington  | 33,831         | 41,866           | 8,035              | 123                                   |
| New Orleans | 28,936         | 35,727           | 6,791              | 123                                   |
| Nashville   | 13,334         | 16,061           | 2,727              | 120                                   |
| Charleston  | 14,187         | 16,849           | 2,662              | 119                                   |
| Savannah    | 10,493         | 12,485           | 1,992              | 119                                   |

|              |         |         |        |     |
|--------------|---------|---------|--------|-----|
| Memphis      | 13,333  | 15,396  | 2,063  | 115 |
| Louisville   | 13,348  | 15,324  | 1,976  | 115 |
| Philadelphia | 18,960  | 21,414  | 2,454  | 113 |
| St. Louis    | 13,247  | 13,819  | 572    | 104 |
| New York     | 12,649  | 13,025  | 376    | 103 |
| Total        | 228,099 | 273,952 | 45,875 | 120 |

Such a disproportion between the sexes can forbode no good to society. In the West, where the male element predominates over the female among the white population, the evil effect on society is painfully apparent. If every colored man in Washington were married and every male minor had a mate selected for him, there would

still be left Negro females enough to form a manless community larger than Annapolis, Md. Now, no one should wonder at the moral corruption under these circumstances. These 8000 females, for whom marriage is impossible, be it remembered, are not restrained by the inhibitory influence of pride, station, and self-esteem. This is no doubt the greatest evil which threatens the social integrity of Negro life, and forms the most serious and perplexing of our city problems.

As startling as the records of crime and immorality are, they are only the outgrowth of circumstances and conditions, Human nature at best is weak, and under fostering circumstances has always yielded to the power of sin and uncleanness. The author tells us that immorality is a race trait. This is sadly too true, but it is a human race trait, and is limited to no particular variety thereof.

## Notes

48 Page 95.

49 Page 216.

50 Page 218.

51 "The Prosperity of the South Dependent upon the Elevation of the Negro," L. H. Blair, pages 55 -58.

52 Report of Metropolitan Police Department for the year 1896, page 11.

53 Frederick Douglass' "Lessons of the Hour," page 8.

54 "Sexual Crimes among the Southern Negroes," by Drs. Hunter McGuire and G. Frank Lydstron, page 8.

## Chapter 6

## Chapter 6

## Chapter VI

*Subject:* Economic Conditions.

*Gist:* "As a general conclusion it may be said that the Negro has not yet learned the first element of Anglo-Saxon thrift." <sup>55</sup>

### The Negro as a Farm Hand.

Attempt is made to show that the Negro has deteriorated as a farm laborer, and that as an industrial factor he has not held his own in the development of the resources of the South. With a process of reasoning with which we are fully familiar by this time, these assertions are sought to be upheld. The decline in agricultural interests throughout the country has had its effect upon the apparent efficiency of the farming class everywhere. The mad rush to the cities, with a vain hope of improvement in condition, has well nigh demoralized agricultural pursuits.

### The Negro as an Industrial Factor.

The investigations which have been undertaken to determine the industrial efficiency of the Negro have shown results not unfavorable to him. The recent discharge of white workmen in the cotton mills of Charleston, and the substitution of colored workmen in their places, is quite significant. The hindrances which the Negro has to meet in the industrial field are fully suggested in the address to

the public of the discharged white employes of the Charleston establishment: "If the colored man's status precludes him from competing with the office-holder, it should exclude him from competing with our wives, sons, and daughters in the light pursuits of the country. We affirm, by our physical powers and brave hearts, not to sit supinely by and witness this Negro horde turned loose upon the pursuits of our mothers, our wives, our widows, our daughters, our sisters, and rob them of their living." <sup>56</sup>

This is the solemn declaration of 800 workmen in the metropolis of South Carolina, and represents fairly the white labor sentiment of the South. The trades unions and labor organizations preach the same doctrine. If the alleged low industrial efficiency of the Negro is to be chargeable to race traits, it should be attributed to the domineering and intolerant race traits of the white workmen who are not disposed to give the colored man a fair chance. The fact that in almost every contention between white and colored workmen the employers take the side of the Negro, is an eloquent argument in behalf of the industrial merits of the latter; for these employers are in the business for profit and not for philanthropy.

### Accumulation of Property.

The accumulation of property on the part of the blacks shows that in Georgia they own \$12,941,230, in North Carolina \$8,018,446, and in Virginia \$13,933,908. The land held by the colored people in Virginia alone has an area nearly equal to that of the State of Rhode Island. These facts make a decidedly favorable showing.

## Notes

55 Page 307.

56 The Literary Digest, July 24, 1897, page 361.

## Chapter 7

## Chapter 7

## Chapter VII

Conclusion.

The need of this chapter is hardly apparent, for the author's conclusion is as clearly set forth in the beginning as at the close of the treatise. As to his leading conclusion, the author is not only out of harmony with the general opinion prevalent among students of the Negro problem, but is also strangely inconsistent with his former self. The same author who in 1896, wrote: "It is not in the condition of life, but in the race traits and tendencies, that we find the cause of excessive mortality,"<sup>57</sup> in 1892 affirmed: "The colored

population is placed at many disadvantages which it cannot very well remove. The unsanitary condition of their dwellings, their ignorance of the laws of health, and general poverty are the principal causes of their high mortality."<sup>58</sup> The Frederick L. Hoffman of 1892, according to the general judgment, is much nearer the true analysis than the Frederick L. Hoffman of 1896.

The author's conclusion will not stand the philosophical tests of a sound theory.

1. It is based upon disputed data. The accuracy of the eleventh census is not acceptable either to the popular or the scientific mind.
2. It is not based upon a sufficient induction of data. The arguments at most apply to the Negroes in the large cities, who constitute less than 12 per cent of the total population.
3. It does not account for the facts arranged under it as satisfactorily as can be done under a different hypothesis. The author fails to consider that the discouraging facts of observation may be due to the violent upheaval of emancipation and reconstruction, and are, therefore, only temporary in their duration.

I do not know whether the author believes in Providence as a determining factor in society or not. It may not be accounted scientific to take cognizance of any element which cannot be quantified, counted, weighed, or measured. But I do know that the wisest of our species have always believed that God is the controlling factor in human affairs. The Negro's hopes and aspirations are built upon the foundation of this belief. We are told in His word that he visits the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation. If the Negro, then, will conform his life to the moral and sanitary laws, may not the evil tendencies now observable be eradicated or overcome? The first effects of emancipation are always harmful to the moral and physical well-being of the liberated class. The removal of physical restraints, before moral restraints have grown strong enough to take their place, must always result in misconduct. The Jews in Egypt labored under circumstances remarkably similar to those of the American Negro. After their emancipation, it required them forty years to make the progress which the scientific process would have required them to make in forty days. Such was their moral and physical degeneracy, that only

two persons of all the hosts who left the land of Egyptian bondage survived to reach the Promised Land forty years afterward. Luckily for the Hebrews, there were no statisticians in those days. Think of the future which an Egyptian philosopher would have predicted for this people! And yet out of the loins of this race have sprung the moral and spiritual law-givers of mankind. We should not be discouraged because the Negro does not make a bee-line from Egyptian bondage to the Promised Land beyond the Jordan. He, too, must tarry awhile in the wilderness before he enters upon the full enjoyment of the heritage of freedom.

To the Negro I would say, let him not be discouraged at the ugly facts which confront him. The sociologists are flashing the search-light of scientific inquiry upon him. His faults lie nearer the surface and are more easily detected than those of the white race. Let him not be overwhelmed when all his faults are observed, set in a note book, learned and conned by rote, to be cast into

his teeth. If all the ugly facts about any people were brought to light they would furnish an unpleasant record. When the Savior told the woman of Samaria all that she ever did, a very unsavory career was disclosed. If all the misdeeds of any people or individual were brought to light, the best of the race would be injured and the rest would be ruined. The Negro should accept the facts with becoming humility, and strive to live in closer conformity with the requirements of human and divine law. He does not labor under a destiny of death from which there is no escape. It is a condition and not a theory that confronts him.

Kelly Miller.

## Notes

57 "Race Traits and Tendencies," by Frederick L. Hoffman, page 95.

58 "Vital Statistics of the Negro," by Frederick L. Hoffman, Arena, April, 1892.