

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 7, NO. 343.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, JUNE 8, 1907.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

THE NEGROES' WONDERFUL PROGRESS.

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IN an address delivered at the commencement of the Livingstone College, Salisbury, N.C., Governor Glenn said to the graduates of this Negro seat of learning:

“The Negroes have made wonderful progress in the last forty-two years. Out of the 10,000,000 Negroes in the United States, one-third live in the South. We cannot strike you without striking ourselves. Listen to your progress: There are 21,000 carpenters among you, 20,000 barbers, 15,000 masons, 12,000 dressmakers, 10,000 engineers, 15,000 firemen, 5,000 shoemakers, 4,000 musicians, 4,000 lawyers, 16,000 ministers, 500 inventors, 4,000,000 in gainful occupations, 77 per cent. of all the Negroes farm, 746,500 are farmers, the Negroes own 21 per cent. of all the farms they cultivate, and 45 per cent. of all the Negroes are at work. These facts show that the Negro race is not lazy, as some of your enemies proclaim so loudly from the housetops so often.”

These facts show a good deal more to him who cares to reflect than they do to Gov. Glenn. They show what a slave class can become when conditions are changed for the better. The slave owners of forty-two years ago denied the slave class the possibilities of growth arising from bourgeois freedom. The slave class was not properly endowed; it lacked initiative, invention, foresight, ability, etc., etc.; so ran the argument. But once freed from chattel slavery, the slave class proved this argument fallacious. Its members are now hailed as the mainstay of the South, and their progress elicits eulogistic outbursts. This too, despite the most terrific obstacles, unsuccessfully designed to make emancipation an historical failure.

How similar is the argument in the case of the modern slave class, the wage workers! They too are denied the possibilities of development under Socialism. They too are held to be lacking in the superior qualities necessary for the democratic ownership and operation of industry. They—so it is said, not only by their slave

drivers, the capitalists, but their own members—are cowardly and ignorant; clods without ambition and aspiration, like the black chattel slaves. But what boots such argument—admitting its correctness—in the face of the Negroes' rise, as proclaimed by Gov. Glenn? What boots such argument in view of the deep significance attached to that rise? Must future history again refute the slanderers of a slave class? Must it demonstrate once more that new conditions create new men? Given a condition in which the working class is its own master, dependent on its own resourcefulness and wisdom, and it will once again demonstrate that a slave class under changed conditions can become a triumphant class, bearing great social responsibilities and eliciting the highest praise. Of this, the present prowess of the working class,—which its libellers would fain deny—is a conclusive indication. Such circumstances will be abundantly created under Socialism, with its social instead of private ownership and control of capital; and production for social use instead of private exploitation. And they will also be achieved, capitalist obstacles to the contrary notwithstanding.

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Uploaded October 2009

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