

"Home to Harlem," Claude McKay's Damaging Book, Should Earn Wholesale Condemnation of Negroes

Fellowmen of the Negro Race, Greeting:

It is my duty to bring to your attention this week a grave evil that afflicts us as a people at this time. Our race, within recent years, has developed a new group of writers who have been prostituting their intelligence, under the direction of the white man, to bring out and show up the worse traits of our people. Several of these writers are American and West Indian Negroes. They have been writing books, novels and poems, under the advice of white publishers, to portray to the world the looseness, laxity and immorality that are peculiar to our group, for the purpose of these publishers circulating the libel against us among the white peoples of the world, to further hold us up to ridicule and contempt and universal prejudice.

McKay's "Home to Harlem"

Several of these books have been published in America recently, the last of which is Claude McKay's "Home to Harlem," published by Harper Bros. of New York. This book of Claude McKay's is a damnable libel against the Negro. It is doing a great deal of harm in further creating prejudice among the white people against the Negro. I have now before me what purports to be a writeup or review of the book by "John O' London's Weekly." I am going to reproduce the entire review for the benefit of those who desire to see the impression such books create on the minds of white people. Claude McKay, the Jamaican Negro, is not singular in the authorship of such books. W. E. B. Du Bois, of America; Walter White, Weldon Johnson, Eric Waldron, of British Guiana, and others, have written similar books, while we have had recently a large number of sappy poems from the rising poets.

White Publishers Use Negroes

The white people have these Negroes to write the kind of stuff that they desire to feed their public with so that the Negro can still be regarded as a monkey or some imbecilic creature. Whenever authors of the Negro race write good literature for publication the white publishers refuse to publish it, but wherever the Negro is sufficiently known to attract attention he is advised to write in the way that the white man wants. That is just what has happened to Claude McKay. The time has come for us to boycott such Negro authors whom we may fairly designate as "literary prostitutes." We must make them understand that we are not going to stand for their insults indulged in to suit prejudiced white people who desire to hold the Negro up to contempt and ridicule. We must encourage our own black authors who have character, who are loyal to their race, who feel proud to be black, and in every way let them feel that we appreciate their efforts to advance our race through healthy and decent literature.

Writers to Fight Negro Cause

We want writers who will fight the Negro's cause, as H. G. Wells of the white race fights for the cause of the Anglo-Saxon group. Let us imagine Wells prostituting his intelligence and ability as an author to suit Negro publishers, as against the morals or interest of the Anglo-Saxon race. It is impossible. Yet there are many Negro writers who have prostituted their intelligence to do the most damaging harm to the morals and reputations of the black race. The following is the review of Claude McKay's book by the white paper, "John O' London's Weekly":

THINKING BLACK

A Negro's Extraordinary Novel About Negroes

If we may judge by the novels and plays which reach us in gay and un-European bindings, "high brow" America has "gone nigger." A few years ago there was Mr. Eugene O'Neill's "Emperor Jones" (it was, alas! a dis-

Marcus Garvey, Foremost Negro Leader, Condemns Harmful Trend of Books of a New Group of Race Writers

SAYS JAMAICAN NEGRO'S LATEST OFFERING IS AN INSULT TO BLACK RACE

Sappy Poems and Pernicious Novels Written by "Literary Prostitutes" to Suit White Publishers

Halt Must Be Called on Libelous Writers So That Negro Race May Develop Helpful Authors

mal failure on the London stage); more recently there have been Mr. Carl van Vechten's "Nigger Heaven"—which became almost a "best seller," even in England—the poems of Louis Varrey, Mr. J. W. Vandercreek's "Black Majesty," and many others of which the average English reader has never even heard. Now, in "Home to Harlem" (Harper, 7s. 6d.), we have a remarkable novel about Negro life in America by a Negro author who has spared us neither vividness nor truth.

A Wanderer

Mr. Claude McKay has had a career highly colored with the romance that belongs to all wanderers. He was born in Jamaica, of parents who had been abducted from their native Madagascar and auctioned as slaves. At the auction, we are told, they went on a "death-strike," vowing that if they were not sold to the same master they would kill themselves. Mr. McKay, who seems to have shown an early aptitude for learning, was offered the chance of an education in the United States by a friend and took it.

For two years he studied scientific farming in an American college, but the call of literature was not to be resisted, and so he left college to become a wanderer, a stoker, a Pullman-car attendant, a dock hand on the quays not only of New York but of London and Marseilles. It is in Europe, indeed, that he does his writing. "Home to Harlem," which is his first novel, has already gone into three editions in America within the space of two months.

A Social Document

"Home to Harlem" is not so much a novel as a social document about a race that few of us have tried to understand. Its hero is a slightly sentimental gentleman of color named Jake, who deserts from the American Expeditionary Force in France, not because he is a coward but because he is impatient to be "doing something." He comes to London to work at the docks at Limehouse, but after a time there comes the irresistible call of New York's colored colony: "It was two years since he had left Harlem. Fifth Avenue, Lenox Avenue, and One Hundred and Thirty-fifth Street, with their chocolate-brown and walnut-brown girls, were calling him. 'Oh, them legs!' Jake thought. 'Them tantalizing brown legs!' Barron's Cabaret! Leroy's Cabaret! Oh, boy!"

And so Jake goes back to Harlem, with its cabaret, "speakeasies," its gin and flashing razors, its cinemas, in which only colored actors and actresses are shown on the screen, its rouged dusky-brown girls ("rouge on brown, a warm, insidious chestnut"), its intermingled poverty and luxury—a riot of color and gaiety (mixed with squalor), at which the white man can only stand amazed. And as for the morals of Harlem, we are shocked only when we begin to reflect that there aren't any morals there at all.

Fantasia

Jake has his adventures. He falls in love with a Congo entertainer at a cabaret, who disappears from his life as quickly as she comes into it. He gets mixed up with a gin-drinking Negress and her odd assortment of friends; becomes embroiled in a strike; becomes (as did his creator) a Pullman-car attendant; meets a Negro student who opens a new world of culture to his gaze; falls ill almost to death; recovers, and, at the end, meets again the little Congo Rose who had set his heart aflame at the beginning. These are some of the episodes that make up a book that, in spite of the fact that it has the most slender of plots, holds our attention till the last page. We read on, not so much because of Jake's adventures as because of the shock and surprise of being in a new and unfamiliar world; because of the extraordinary vividness with which Mr. McKay brings its scenes before us. Here, for instance, is how Mr. McKay describes an all-black Harlem cabaret:—

"It was a scene of blazing color. Soft, barbaric, burning, savage, clashing, planless colors . . . all rioting together in wonderful harmony. There is no human sight so rich as an assembly of Negroes ranging from lacquer black through brown to cream, decked out in their ceremonial finery. Negroes are like trees. They wear all colors naturally, and Felice, rouged to a ravishing maroon, and wearing a close-fitting,

chrome-orange frock and cork-brown slippers, just melted into the scene."

We learn from Mr. McKay many hitherto unsuspected things about Negro life, about their cooking, their food, about their attitude to white men and to each other, about their work, and about their almost incredible night life. The full-blooded Negro, for instance, has a contempt for the half-caste that is almost as violent as the old Marylander's for the Negro.

And again: "Jake was very American in spirit and share a little of that comfortable Yankee contempt for poor foreigners. And as an American Negro he looked askew at foreign niggers. Africa was jungle, and African bush niggers, cannibals. And West Indians were monkey-chasers."

The Real Tragedy

But the real tragedian of "Home to Harlem," in spite of his many misfortunes, is not Jake, but Ray, the Negro student. As he himself confided to Jake:—

"The fact is, I don't know what I'll do with my little education. I wonder sometimes if I could get rid of it and go and lose myself in some savage culture in the jungles of Africa. I am a misfit—as the doctors who dole out newspaper advice to the well-fit might say—a misfit with my little education and constant dreaming, when I should be getting the nightmare habit to hog in a whole lot of dough like everybody else in this country. Would you like to be educated to be like me?" Here, one feels, is unspeakable tragedy.

Proud Blood of the Negro

In the autobiography Claude McKay tries to make out that his parents were from Madagascar, and that they were so proud as to have gone on a death strike against being enslaved. I do not believe this. I don't believe McKay can trace his ancestry back to Madagascar. It is most likely that he came from the Congo. Negroes who are descendants from proud ancestors generally retain some of their proud blood. No proud man of any race ever debases his race. It is always those of low ancestry who are always willing to play the monkey for the satisfaction of others. But it is a trait of those libellers against the black race to always suggest when they come in contact with white people that they represent the best blood of the Negro.

DuBois' Royal House

If I am not mistaken, a friend told me that DuBois stated and suggested that he has claim to the ancestry of a Royal House in East Africa. It is rather amusing to hear these libellers of the race talking about their royal ancestry when they represent the lowest type of ancestry. Negroes of royal ancestry always want to be proud of their race; they do not think any race better than their own. Yet DuBois called a black man an ugly man simply because he was black. Those of you who remember his article in the "Century Magazine" in 1920 will remember that he positively stated that to be black was to be ugly. The black royal blood of East Africa believes in the honor and integrity of the black race. DuBois to the contrary believes that the standard of beauty is to be found in the white man.

Something Funny

It is funny that these writers are always suggesting that they are from royal black blood and yet they are prostituting their intelligence and ability as authors and writers against their race for the satisfaction of white people.

We are calling a halt on these libelous writers so that we may develop authors and poets worthy of our race and who will fight for the cause of the race.

With very best wishes, I have the honor to be

Your Obedient Servant,

Marcus Garvey

President-General, Universal Negro Improvement Association.

Paris, France, Sept. 11, 1928.

Address: 57 Castletown Road, W. Kensington, W. 14, London, England.

Every Negro should send his friend, mother, father, brother, sister, sweetheart, wife, or other relatives a copy of the book that is being read the world over,

"AFRICA FOR THE AFRICANS" THE PHILOSOPHY OF MARCUS GARVEY

All Leaders in the U. N. I. A. should have a copy to study the principles of the greatest Negro movement
Vol. I, \$1.75; Vol. II, with 25 Illustrations, \$3.00; combined offer, \$4.50 post paid
Large Size Pictures of Hon. Marcus Garvey (for framing), 40 cents. African fundamentalism (for framing), 40 cents.

SEND ORDERS TO MRS. AMELIA SAYERS, BOX 22, STATION L, NEW YORK CITY

Marcus Garvey, in Classic Attitude, Gives the Point of View of the Aroused Negro

Tells English People Some Striking Truths That the Statesmen Withhold From Them—Black Africa is in Rebellion Against Oppressors

(Continued from page 2) I am here representing 400,000,000... I am here representing 400,000,000... I am here representing 400,000,000... I am here representing 400,000,000...

Highlights of Marcus Garvey's Speech in West London, England, September 2

To the thoughtful mind, the whole thing (the Kellogg peace pact) appears so hypocritical and false that I wonder really what it contains to the world... I believe in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost...

God Is the God of All and for All—There Could Be No Hell More Fearful Than the Hell the Black Man Dwells in on Earth Today

When I was accused in Germany of trying to defame Germany and therefore encouraged the enemy of Germany towards the black, I felt ashamed... I am not speaking for myself, I am speaking for the millions of black people who are suffering...

How to Make Our Contribution

Let us for a moment get our eyes about us and ask ourselves the question: What have we as a race contributed to the present civilization? Drop the whole literary output of the Negro through the American continent...

A LITERACY TEST NOW REQUIRED OF NEW YORK VOTERS

Most residents of this state are aware of the fact that a literacy test is required of voters... The state agents, on conducting a literacy test, are required to read the Constitution...

MARCUS GARVEY SPEAKS OUT IN LONDON ADDRESS

Nothing to be ashamed of. I am glad that the Negro people of this world are being educated... I am glad that the Negro people of this world are being educated...

Quick Action! THE LARGEST SELLING ASPIRIN IN THE WORLD for 10c St. Joseph's Pure ASPIRIN AS PURE AS MONEY CAN BUY

Prohibition Not Good For Chinese People, Says General Chiang

Conditions in America

That Baby You've Longed For

SEPTEMBER 26, 1928! OPENING DATE SEPTEMBER 26, 1928! UNIVERSAL LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

A Baby in Your Home

SEPTEMBER 26, 1928! OPENING DATE SEPTEMBER 26, 1928! UNIVERSAL LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

READERS ARE REQUESTED TO MENTION THE NEGRO WORLD WHEN REPLYING TO ADVERTISEMENTS

