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CONTENTS.

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- To Capt. D'Alene in a Canvas Canoe,
Illustrated. *Walter S. Willard*
- The Negro's Anthropological Position,
Professor J. L. Wortman
- A Typical Tune of Zanzibar,
Illustrated. *John Philip Sousa*
- Mrs. Spoopendyke "Does" the Capitol,
Florence Huntley
- Three Caskets, *Benjamin Hodges, U. S. N.*
- Some Queer American Characters, *James C. Pilling*
Illustrated.
- What is News? *52 Washington Correspondents*
A Symposium.
- The Advance in Middle Pacific, *Howard M. Boynton*
- Stories About Men of Renown.
- Transfigured, *John Kendrick Bangs*
- The Analostan Idea.
- Chat About Books and Book-Folk,
Sophie de Suzzara-Verdi
- To the Æolian Harp,
A Relic. *Anonymous*
- A Romp With the Muses:
The "Bud," *Philander Johnson*
A Threnody, *W. B. H.*
Four Fits of Laughter, *James S. Dolph*
The Maiden's Reverie, *R. H. Titherington*
A Voiturean Rondeau, *Jason Warner*
Some Things Love Me, *Thomas B. Read*

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THE NEGRO'S ANTHROPOLOGICAL POSITION.

BY PROFESSOR J. L. WORTMAN.*

ONE of the truly great and pressing political problems of the day which the American statesman is called upon to solve is the so-called "Negro Problem" or "Race Question," and notwithstanding the fact that it has been elaborately discussed from almost every point of view for the past five decades, it is apparently no nearer a final solution to-day than it has ever been. It is a curious fact, and one worthy of especial note, that, with all this discussion, some of the most important factors, which, to the scientific mind, appear to lie at the very foundation of the question, and to constitute its very pith and substance, have been lost sight of entirely, or, if they have been considered, have been so lightly touched upon as to make little or no impression upon the minds of thinking people. I refer more in particular to the anthropological phases of the subject, by means of which and which alone we are enabled to form anything like even an approximate idea of the mental characteristics, intellectual capabilities and general anatomical make up of the two races. The statesman who shall attempt a solution of this problem without being thoroughly and fully equipped with the necessary information upon these points, will ultimately find himself committing blunders which future generations will not find it easy to undo.

It is the object of the present article to review the subject briefly from this particular standpoint of the anthropologist, and to draw such conclusions as appear to be warranted by a careful consideration of the facts. In following this line of inquiry it is well to remind the reader of the present attitude of the modern school of anthropology with reference to the relationship of the human species to other members of the mammalian class. It is needless to add, in this connection, that anthropologists have long since been compelled to abandon the obsolescent theories of the Mosaic cosmogony as entirely insufficient to explain the numerous facts which have been brought to light within comparatively mod-

ern times. These discoveries have a direct bearing upon the origin and development of man, his antiquity upon the earth's surface, together with a host of other problems of minor importance; and while these questions cannot be said to be finally and definitely settled, yet enough is now known to convince the most profound and conscientious students in this field of research that the advent of the human species upon the earth is to be placed at a time so remote as to be scarcely within the grasp of the human mind, when estimated by a period of years; that he is descended from a lower and more primitive type of the mammalian class, that his development or descent has been a slow and gradual one, and finally, that during the progress of this development numerous separations and divisions have occurred, some going to people one country, others to find another home, where conditions of soil and climate were most congenial to their tastes. In the race for supremacy which followed the conditions have not been always equal, and as a consequence some of these early offshoots have been stranded and left in that comparatively primitive stage of development which must have characterized the ancestors of the human stock. What particular incentive there should have been for one offshoot to advance and another to remain more or less stationary, whether it is to be attributed to conditions of environment or whether it is to be accounted for upon the basis of some peculiar characteristic in the mental fiber and make up of the two peoples, we, perhaps, shall never know; but it is a fact, as I shall endeavor in the following pages to demonstrate, that one division of the human family, at least, possesses special and distinctive anatomical characteristics which bear the unmistakable imprint of their lowly origin when compared with their more successful competitors.

Until naturalists came to comprehend the meaning of the term *species* there was a wide diversity of opinion upon the question whether the different divisions of the

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ences of Philadelphia, the Biological Society of Washington, and the Philosophical Society of Washington, late Anatomist of the United States Army Medical Museum.

human family were to be classified as a single species with several distinct and strongly-marked varieties, or whether they were best grouped into several species. Much of this difference of opinion arose from the comparatively wide anatomical distinctions that are to be found between the Negro type and the white man. These differences are of such a nature that few naturalists would hesitate, did they find them elsewhere than in the human kind, to classify them as separate and distinct species, definable by well-marked and ever-present characteristics. But the influence of early theological teachings has so warped the judgment of many students of the subject, that they are led to a strange inconsistency in this matter. Whatever classification of the human family is finally adopted, however, whether we make out one or more species, it is clearly evident, as a scientific fact, that the primary division must be made on a line separating the Negro and his allies from the rest of mankind; and it may here be mentioned as a fact of no little significance, that in every essential anatomical characteristic in which he differs from the rest of mankind he approaches the anthropoid or man-like apes.

These differences between the Negro and white may now be taken up in detail; and, considering the external features first, we note the long, narrow head, with its low, retreating forehead and protruding jaws, in comparison to the rounded skull and reduced face of the white. In the Negro the nose is flat and thick, the nostrils are nearly circular or transversely oval, while in the white the nose is more prominent and the nostrils linear. The neck of the Negro is shorter and thicker than the white man's, and the shoulders, as a rule, are narrower. The abdomen is relaxed and more pendulous, and the navel is situated nearer the symphysis pubis than in the white. The arms are longer in proportion to the body, the hips are narrower, the calves of the legs are lean and thin, and the hands and feet are longer, narrower, and flatter than in the white.

These characteristics of the limbs of the Negro are decidedly simian and constitute so many approaches in the direction of the ape. This is especially apparent in the length of the arms, which always reach below the middle of the femur, and in some instances almost to the knee, while in the white the arm never reaches below the middle of the femur. The hand is nar-

row, the fingers are long and thin and surmounted by much-curved nails. The thumb is comparatively ill-developed and decidedly more monkey-like than in the white. The foot is large, broad and flat, almost entirely lacking that characteristic arch to the instep found in the white. The toes are longer, more prehensile and spread apart. It has been stated that if a Negro and a white man should walk across a floor in their bare feet after having first stepped in water the tracks could be readily distinguished, so characteristic is the shape of the foot.

With respect to the internal anatomy the most important differences are those found in the skull. As I have already remarked, the Negro's skull is long and narrow. This condition is known as dolichocephaly in contradistinction to brachycephaly, or short and broad-skulled, which mostly obtains in the European. In the Negro the actual cubic capacity of the average cranial cavity is less by twenty cubic inches, or thereabout, than in the average white. The frontal region, wherein the cerebral hemispheres lie, is narrow, less developed, and noticeably smaller than in the white man's skull, and we have as a consequence the low retreating forehead of the Negro. The relation of the facial skeleton to the brain case of the Negro skull constitutes one of its most pronounced characteristics, and it is to this circumstance that the Negro countenance owes that distinctive peculiarity of expression so constantly noticed. The upper jaw is decidedly prognathous or, in other words, projects forward. The index of this character is found in the so-called facial angle of anthropologists, which consists of the angle formed by two lines, one drawn from the base of the incisor teeth to the most prominent point of the forehead, the other from the base of the incisor teeth along the base of the skull. As the face is short and the frontal region well developed, the angle will approach a right angle, or 90° ; but in proportion as the face is drawn out and projects forward and the frontal region is little developed, the angle will be small. In the skull of the dog, for example, this angle is very acute; in the monkey it is less so, and in the white man it approaches nearest to a right angle. For this reason we have the term orthognathous, or having straight jaws, in contradistinction to prognathous, or having protruding jaws. The skull of the white is, therefore, spoken of as orthognathous. Now in the Negro skull

this angle measures from 65° to 70° , although it may drop as low as 60° , while in the average European it runs from 80° to 85° . In the adult chimpanzee it is 35° , and in the orang it is 30° . We will readily see, therefore, that as the Negro departs from the white man he approaches the ape.

Nor is this all; the flattened nose and oval nostrils follow as a necessary complement to this character, and to give some idea of the prominence and importance naturalists attach to this feature, it is noted that they have separated on this line the new world monkeys, in which the nose is exceedingly flat and little developed, and the nostrils circular and wide apart (*Platarrhini*), from the old world monkeys, in which the nose is better developed and the nostrils closer together (*Catarrhini*). In proportion as the brain has been developed the face has been shortened, the nose has become more prominent, and the nostrils more linear. In this development the white man has outstripped the negro, who to-day bears in his countenance the evidence of anatomical inferiority, and, if I may be allowed to say it, the marks of his simian ancestry.

We come next to consider the teeth, and here again we find the same unmistakable evidence of a lowly condition in the Negro skull. In the white man the shortening of the face and consequent reduction of the facial skeleton has materially affected the dental arch. To such an extent is this true that it is almost the exception to find, nowadays, a perfectly well-formed arch with a normal set of teeth. The teeth that have been most affected by this change are the last molars, which have been truly said to be in an advanced stage of disappearance, and at no very distant period the European skull will be further characterized by the absence of the third molar or *dens sapiens*. Indeed, from my own investigations I have the record of many persons in whom this tooth has never appeared at all. This I find to be characteristic of whole families, and it proceeds from generation to generation, becoming more and more fixed.

In cases where it is developed it is always smaller than the other molars, the roots are connate or grown together, and it is so lacking in vitality as to be subject to rapid decay, frequently necessitating early removal. The crown is ill-defined, hardly ever bearing more than two cusps, and frequently only one, whereas the other molars in advance of it normally possess

four. Another tooth which has been affected by this change, although not to the same extent, is the lateral incisor of the upper jaw. In many persons this tooth is very small and peg-like, and in others again it may be altogether wanting. Finally, the frequent deformity of the dental arch and the malposition of the teeth in the European skull still further attest the fact that this part of the facial apparatus has been profoundly affected by some cause, and this, in my judgment, is to be attributed to the shortening of the facial skeleton.

Turning next to the anthropoid ape, as representing the other extreme in the series, we note that the tooth line is much longer, the sides of the dental arch are nearly straight, and the individual teeth are relatively larger and stronger than in the human jaw. The last molar is as large or a little larger than the others, its roots are always well developed, the crown bears four distinct cusps and it is never, to my knowledge, absent. There are other dental characteristics, such as the enlarged canines, the existence of a space or diastema between the canines and the incisors of the upper jaw, together with others of less importance, which distinguish the dentition of the ape from that of man, but which need not be considered here.

What, we may now enquire, is the position of the Negro with reference to these two extremes? In the first place, the simian character of the straight molar-tooth line is often to be noticed. The last molar, which attains its most distinctively simian proportions in the Australian and Malay, is in the Negro skull almost always well developed, with its full complement of cusps and roots, and in a series of forty African skulls which I have examined was always present. Its size, although slightly inferior to the other two molars, is yet such as to indicate a perfectly healthy and normal organ without any evidence of degenerative tendencies.

The next series of characteristics to be compared are those relating to the brain, and while they may be said to be less striking in point of difference, pronounced differences are, nevertheless, apparent. In animals low in the scale of intelligence, the surface of the cerebral hemisphere of the brain is smooth. As we ascend in this scale the cortical substance, or grey matter of the brain, which lies upon its outer surface, is thrown into wrinkles or folds which assume definite positions with relation to

the surface of the organ, and constitute the convolutions and fissures of the brain mass. In proportion, therefore, as the brain is much convoluted in that proportion is there a greater increase of the cortical substance, in which reside the intellectual faculties. In the brain of the adult white man do we find the greatest degree of convolution, but this character is gradually acquired, since the cerebral hemispheres of the newborn infant are perfectly smooth. Now, while the anthropoid ape possesses a well convoluted brain constructed upon identically the same plan and pattern as that of man, the amount of brain substance, both actually and relatively, is less. The convolutions are fewer in number and coarser, and the fissures are not so deep. The Negro brain follows the same rule, and although much superior to the brain of the ape in size, nevertheless has fewer, coarser convolutions and shallower fissures than the brain of the average European.

I will conclude this statement of the anatomical characteristics of the Negro by a brief reference to my own observations upon the larynx and tongue bones of the Negro race as compared with the white man, and although they are not so complete as I could desire, yet they are sufficient for the present purpose. The bone which lies at the root of the tongue is known to the anatomist as the hyoid bone, and its function is to furnish support and attachment to certain muscles of the larynx and tongue. This bone is in reality a compound structure made up of five distinct pieces, which unite as age advances to form a single U-shaped piece. The central or basilar part consists of a thin, slightly curved plate of bone to which the other more or less styloid pieces are joined. Now, in the ape this central piece or body of the hyoid is well developed and its depth is always equal to or greater than its breadth. In the white man, on the other hand, its depth is never more than one-half of its breadth, and may be even less than this. In the Negro I have found the depth to be relatively much greater than in the white, in some instances quite equaling that of the ape. Taking the proportion of depth to breadth of the body of the hyoid in the ape as 100, in the Negro it is 75, or thereabout, and in the white about 50. This character is correlated with others of the larynx, such as occasional vestiges of the laryngeal pouch in the Negro and its entire absence in the white. Again, the larynx of the Negro exhibits two small cartilagin-

ous bodies, which are constantly present and highly characteristic of the ape, but are never found in the white.

Many other characters of greater or less anatomical importance could be cited which further distinguish the Negro from the white, but to my mind the evidence already adduced is sufficient to establish the following propositions: (1) That there are important and well-marked anatomical differences between the Negro and the white, and (2) That in every such character in which he departs from the white the Negro approaches the ape. There is yet to be discovered a *single character* in which the white man resembles the ape more than does the Negro, a fact which in itself is of the widest possible significance.

It now remains to consider briefly the mental characteristics of the two races, and before so doing it is well to remark that the individual development of the Negro is more rapid than the white. He attains the adult stage earlier in life, and is consequently subject to an earlier decline. The growth of the brain of the Negro continues for a shorter period than in the white, and the closure of the cranial sutures, which marks the limit of development of this organ, takes place at an earlier period, and, according to some of the best authorities, in an order resembling that of the ape more than of the white man.

The young of all allied species of animals resemble one another more closely than do the adults, and this is especially true of the ape, Negro, and white. In the young anthropoid skull the facial angle may reach as high as 60 degrees, while in the adult, as we have already seen, it is only 35 degrees. It is only when the age of puberty is reached that the anthropoid and Negro begin to manifest those characters which distinguish them from the white, and from this time forward they become more and more strongly marked. Up to the age of puberty the Negro child is not inferior to the white child in intellectual capacity, but may even be superior, as those who have had experience with this matter will testify. No sooner, however, does the Negro child reach the fatal period of puberty than the brain ceases to grow, the cranial sutures begin to unite and the intellectual faculties remain stationary. The adult stage is marked by almost total lack of intellectual advancement, and in his mental habits the Negro resembles the child. This is especially manifested in his love of pleasure and physical enjoy-

ment, his inconstancy of impressions, lack of interest in the future, and the abnormal development of his emotional nature. He has no high ideal of civilization which he is striving to reach; he is not a producer of knowledge of any kind; he has never invented anything worthy of note, and, when we come to regard him in his true light, we find him an intellectual dwarf, sometimes a clever imitator, it is true, but totally lacking in those sturdy, vigorous mental characteristics which the civilization of the white man demands.

It has been truly said of the Negro that "some tribes have founded states, possessing a peculiar organization; but as to the rest, we may boldly assert that the whole race has neither in the past nor the present performed anything tending to the progress of humanity or done anything worthy of preservation." The Negro has never been more highly developed than he is to-day. In that vast stretch of country reaching from the Sahara to the Cape, the home and headquarters of the Negro race, not a single monument, mound or ruin has yet been found to attest the fact of any former greatness or higher degree of civilization. He is simply a savage belonging to the lowest ranks of the human family, and this is abundantly demonstrated by every fact and feature of his anatomical structure.

What is here said applies in particular to the Negro upon his own native heath. How has his contact with civilization affected these facts, and what prospect, if any, is there of his becoming anything different? Putting entirely aside the question of mixed blood, which does not constitute a factor in the problem, I am compelled to state it as my conviction that the prospect is anything but reassuring. Wherever the Negro is left to himself he very soon relapses into those conditions of savagery which he is practicing to-day in the tropical forests of his African home. The Negroes who were brought to the West Indies as slaves, after more than a century of contact with the whites are to-day liv-

ing in the tropical forests of Guiana in as low a condition of barbarism as is to be found in any African tribe. This would undoubtedly be the fate of all the Negroes of the United States if the immediate influences of our civilization were withdrawn. His brain has not reached that stage of development by which he can help himself to work out the problem of his own civilization, and the evidence of this fact is so abundant upon every hand that it appears to me to need no further comment. With all the benefits and advantages which he has enjoyed he cannot be said to be practicing our civilization to-day, but clumsily imitating it without knowing its meaning or its object.

How different a picture can we draw of the white man! He has an intellectual history,—a history reaching back into the dim twilight of tradition. His mental condition, as we now find it, is the result of generations and generations of tireless, ceaseless struggle, in which every nerve, fiber, and cell of the brain substance has been exerted to its utmost capacity. It has thus become stronger and stronger, capable of wider and better thoughts. It is an inheritance worthy of our loftiest pride and profoundest respect. It alone is responsible for that civilization which to-day overshadows the world, and whose influence is felt even in the remotest places.

The Negro is the intellectual inferior of the white man, and he can no more hope to become his equal in this regard, until his brain has been subjected to the same vicissitudes of mental endeavor, than he can hope to change his color. It is a fact, and a fact which cannot be changed or affected by philanthropy any more than his mental equality can be established by a law of Congress. In our politics, the Negro as he stands to-day, with the burdens and responsibilities of citizenship upon his shoulders, occupies a false position—a position which he is neither intellectually qualified to fill nor mentally capable of maintaining.

