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EMORY R. JOHNSON

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The Academy acknowledges with gratitude the assistance received, in planning this volume, from Mr. James Parton Haney, Secretary of the National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education, and Director of Art and Manual Training in the Public Schools of New York City (Manhattan and the Bronx). Thirteen of the topics and contributors were suggested by Mr. Haney, whose intimate knowledge of Industrial Education made his recommendations of special value.

RELATION OF INDUSTRIAL EDUCATION TO NATIONAL PROGRESS

BY DR. BOOKER T. WASHINGTON,
Principal Tuskegee Institute, Alabama.

When the history of industrial education in this country comes to be written it will be found that, directly and indirectly, the Negro has had an important part, not only in defining its aims and shaping its methods, but in advertising its importance to the world. The first industrial school of any importance in the United States was Hampton Institute, a school founded for Negroes, at Hampton, Va. At the time this school was established, in 1868, the value of industrial education in preparing primitive people for European civilization had already been perceived by certain missionaries in Africa and elsewhere. The idea of introducing it in America, for the purpose of solving the problem which was created by the sudden liberation of nearly 4,000,000 slaves, was first clearly conceived and carried into effect by General Samuel Chapman Armstrong, although this application of the idea was not even at that time entirely new.

In 1853 Frederick Douglass drew up for Harriet Beecher Stowe a plan for "an industrial college, in which shall be taught several important branches of the mechanical arts." In this paper Mr. Douglass said:

The fact is, that the colored men must learn trades; must find new employments, new modes of usefulness to society; or they must decay under the pressing wants to which their condition is rapidly bringing them. . . . We must become mechanics; we must build as well as live in houses; we must make as well as use furniture; we must construct bridges as well as pass over them, before we can properly live or be respected by our fellow-men. We need mechanics as well as ministers. We need workers in iron, clay, and leather. We have orators, authors, and other professional men, but these reach only a certain class, and get respect for our race in certain select circles. To live here as we ought, we must fasten ourselves to our countrymen through their every-day cardinal wants.

I mention this statement of Frederick Douglass because it indicates that even before the war which liberated them had made the position of the Freedman in this country a problem of national

importance, the need of industrial education for the masses of his race had been recognized by this great leader of the Negro people.

I will perhaps be able to give a clearer notion of the methods of this school at Hampton and of the significance of its work if I say something about the conditions that existed directly after the war, and the character of the schools that were established for the Freedman at that time. From the very start Hampton Institute has been, in many vital respects, different in its aims as well as in its methods from the other schools for the Freedman then established. I think it is fair to say, for instance, that the first schools and colleges for Negroes were all of them more or less dominated by the notion that they were to continue and finish the work that had been incidentally begun by the Civil War. They felt it was their mission to free the slaves. The war had brought these slaves physical freedom; the schools were to give them moral and intellectual freedom. Calhoun had said that if the time ever came when a Negro could master the intricacies of the Greek language he would admit that he had been wrong in his notions about slavery. The schools established directly after the war were eager, apparently, to take up that challenge. They wanted to prove the capacity of the Negro to study and learn everything that the white man had studied and learned.

It had been said of the Negro in slavery that he was intellectually inferior to the white man; that he was unable to learn the things that the white man had learned. To disprove this statement was to emancipate him. Consciously or unconsciously the desire to complete his emancipation, in the way I have indicated, influenced very largely the work of these other schools.

I do not wish to lessen or disparage in any way the importance of the work that was accomplished by these first Negro schools. The work was necessary. I am convinced that the most precious gift that freedom brought to the Negro, the thing that has helped him more than anything to realize that he was actually free, has been the opportunity given him to learn to read. All this, as I have said, was in the direction of emancipating the Negro; it gave him his moral and intellectual freedom; but it did not actually fit him to live in the new world which emancipation had brought him. This important task was first taken up in a practical way by industrial schools.

Let me illustrate a little farther some of the ways in which some of the schools and colleges founded directly after the war failed to prepare their students for the actual life that was before them. It was the idea of the men who founded the Negro colleges directly after the war that it was necessary and important to educate men and women to be the leaders and teachers of their race. No doubt it was important that the men and women who were to be the leaders of the race should have the very highest and best education that it was possible to give them, but there were a great many things, as we can see now, that they might have and should have learned that would have been more valuable than the little smattering of Greek and Latin that they obtained.

For instance, the men who became the political leaders of the race during the reconstruction period needed to know less the languages than they did the political history of Greece, of Rome, and of Europe. In all of these countries there had been slavery, and every state of Europe had, at some time in its history, been compelled to face the social, the political, and the economical problems that grew out of the transition of its laboring class from a condition of slavery, in some form or other, to a condition of freedom. But the Freedmen in the Negro colleges had no opportunity to study these things. They learned the outward form of the Greek and Latin language, but they learned very little of the history that was behind the language and behind the literature which they studied.

The young colored men who entered the colleges right after the war were not prepared to learn these things, even if the colleges had been prepared to teach them. They were not prepared because they knew at that time almost nothing about their own life; almost nothing about the problems which beset them on every hand. Not knowing these things they were not prepared to interpret the history and understand the significance of what they learned regarding other peoples who had passed through similar periods of transition. More pressing than all else for the masses of the Negro people directly after the war was the need of learning to work as free men for wages. As I have frequently said in my talks to the masses of my people, the Negro had been worked in slavery for two hundred and fifty years; it was necessary that he should learn to work in freedom. It has taken some time for the masses of the Negro peo-