

*The Future of the American Negro* · 1899

are going to put him into a Jim Crow car and run the risk of losing that ten thousand dollars a year? No, they will put on a Pullman palace car for him.

Some time ago a certain coloured man was passing through the streets of one of the little Southern towns, and he chanced to meet two white men on the street. It happened that this coloured man owns two or three houses and lots, has a good education and a comfortable bank account. One of the white men turned to the other, and said: "By Gosh! It is all I can do to keep from calling that 'nigger' Mister." That's the point we want to get to.

Nothing else so soon brings about right relations between the two races in the South as the commercial progress of the Negro. Friction between the races will pass away as the black man, by reason of his skill, intelligence, and character, can produce something that the white man wants or respects in the commercial world. This is another reason why at Tuskegee we push industrial training. We find that as every year we put into a Southern community coloured men who can start a brickyard, a saw-mill, a tin-shop, or a printing-office, — men who produce something that makes the white man partly dependent upon the Negro instead of all the dependence being on the other side, — a change for the better takes place in the relations of the races. It is through the dairy farm, the truck-garden, the trades, the commercial life, largely, that the Negro is to find his way to respect and confidence.

What is the permanent value of the Hampton and Tuskegee system of training to the South, in a broader sense? In connection with this, it is well to bear in mind that slavery unconsciously taught the white man that labour with the hands was something fit for the Negro only, and something for the white man to come into contact with just as little as possible. It is true that there was a large class of poor white people who laboured with the hands, but they did it because they were not able to secure Negroes to work for them; and these poor whites were constantly trying to imitate the slaveholding class in escaping labour, as they, too, regarded it as anything but elevating. But the Negro, in turn, looked down upon the poor whites with a certain contempt because they had to work. The Negro, it is to be borne in mind, worked under constant protest, because he felt that his labour was being unjustly required; and he spent almost as much effort in planning how to escape work