

*The Future of the American Negro* · 1899

the following in reference to the closing of a coloured school in a town in Alabama: —

“Eufaula, May 25, 1899.

“The closing exercises of the city coloured public school were held at St. Luke’s A. M. E. Church last night, and were witnessed by a large gathering, including many white. The recitations by the pupils were excellent, and the music was also an interesting feature. Rev. R. T. Pollard<sup>6</sup> delivered the address, which was quite an able one; and the certificates were presented by Professor T. L. McCoy, white, of the Sanford Street School. The success of the exercises reflects great credit on Professor S. M. Murphy, the principal, who enjoys a deservedly good reputation as a capable and efficient educator.”

I quote this report, not because it is the exception, but because such marks of interest in the education of the Negro on the part of the Southern white people can be seen almost every day in the local papers. Why should white people, by their presence, words, and many other things, encourage the black man to get education, if they do not desire him to improve his condition?

The Paine Institute in Augusta, Georgia, an excellent institution, to which I have already referred, is supported almost wholly by the Southern white Methodist church. The Southern white Presbyterians support a theological school at Tuscaloosa, Alabama, for Negroes. For a number of years the Southern white Baptists have contributed toward Negro education. Other denominations have done the same. If these people do not want the Negro educated to a high standard, there is no reason why they should act the hypocrite in these matters.

As barbarous as some of the lynchings in the South have been, Southern white men here and there, as well as newspapers, have spoken out strongly against lynching. I quote from the address of the Rev. Mr. Vance,<sup>7</sup> of Nashville, Tennessee, delivered before the National Sunday School Union in Atlanta, not long since, as an example: —

“And yet, as I stand here to-night, a Southerner speaking for my

<sup>6</sup> Robert Thomas Pollard of Selma, Ala., was born in slavery in Gainesville, Ala., in 1860. A graduate of Selma University in 1886, he became a Baptist clergyman and later returned to Selma University, where he served twenty-one years as its president.

<sup>7</sup> James J. Vance, a minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church.