

JANUARY · 1900

Extracts from an Address in Birmingham

Birmingham, Alabama, January 1, 1900

I wish to congratulate you among other things upon the excellent and far reaching work that has been done in Birmingham and vicinity through the wide and helpful influence of the Alabama Penny Savings Bank. Few organizations of any description in this country among our people have helped us more, not only in cultivating the habit of saving, but in bringing to us the confidence and respect of the white race. We must make up our minds that in order to be respected we must cultivate habits of economy, thrift and industry. No people who spend all that they make, can ever attain to any high degree of success. No matter how much education they may receive, they will not be respected so long as they are without bank accounts and without homes. There is no question but that one of the weak points of the race is that we lack in too large a degree the saving habit. We are too much inclined to spend all that we earn at the end of the week or yield too often to the temptation when we get a few dollars ahead to cease work until all of that is spent. I most earnestly advise you to save money, not so much for money's sake, but because a bank account represents foresight, self-denial, thrift and economy.

The people who save money, who make themselves intelligent, and live moral lives, are the ones who are going to control the destinies of the country. Our children should be taught from their youth to save money. There is no more useful lesson that can be taught in our schools, than the habit of saving pennies and nickels. Every school, so far as possible, should have its savings bank department. In this same connection it is most important that we bear in mind that we can never attain any high degree of success until we own our homes and until we cease to live in rented cabins in dirty, filthy alleys. Many of us throw away enough money every two or three years, to buy a respectable home. Whenever a man owns a home, he begins to respect himself, begins to take pride in keeping that home clean and attractive and in making himself and family happy and comfortable. The home is the foundation upon which our civilization is based. If it is weak, all else will be uncertain and unsatisfactory.