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Howard University Journal

A WEEKLY PAPER PUBLISHED BY THE STUDENTS OF HOWARD UNIVERSITY, WASHINGTON, D. C.

Volume XIII

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 29, 1915

Number 4

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*The Economic Condition of the Negro Men Common Laborers in Washington, D. C.



Economic question in the city of Washington is of greater moment than that of the Negro common laborer. By common laborer, as treated in this paper, we mean men engaged in those occupations that require a minimum amount of skill or no skill at all. Yet since we are not able to determine all the branches of labor that might be classified as common labor, we cannot give the exact percentage of the Negro population that are common laborers. For this reason, we are going to consider the common laborer from points of wages, temptation to criminal influences, housing condition, and home life. These are the vital economic problems of this vast portion of the Negro population.

A man's wages, or income, is the backbone of his adjustment. In a day as highly and purely economical as this in which we live, the "Almighty Dollar," is the measure of man. The Negro common laborer in this city, therefore, must be measured by this same standard. We say, all other things being equal, a man's wages must determine the kind of home in which he lives, the kind of food he eats, and the grade of clothing he wears. The average wages paid the Negro common laborer is about \$8.50

**Read before the Social Science Club of Howard University by M. B. McAden, '16*

per week. The irregularity of work on account of the weather oft-times lowers this amount. Consequently, those who do out-of-door work, such as street sweepers, car track workers, and those who do various other kinds of work are ever at the mercy of the weather. This class of labor gets \$1.50 per day for actual time made. In case of an interruption during the hours of work the time is made out at the rate of 18½ cents per hour. The number of cart drivers is very large. For this branch of labor, the wage is from \$6.00 to \$8.00 per week; hours from 10 to 12 per day. With these wages let us turn first to the kind of houses in which the laborer can afford to live.

Housing is one of the largest problems in our social and economic relation in Washington. The question, "where does a man live?" when asked brings to our minds not only the location in a particular part of the city but also a mental picture of the kind of house that must be in that section. When we think of the homes of the Negro common laborers in this city our minds, involuntary, go to some one of the 200 alleys. This does not mean that all of this class of Negroes live in the alleys but those who live in the alleys are common laborers. These 200 alleys have a population of about 12,185, living in the 2,437 houses yet used for habitation by Negroes.

There are in Washington today 20,000 houses that are insanitary, poorly lighted, illy ventilated, and with inadequate sewerage. Sixty-five per cent of these houses are rented by Negro common

(Continued on Page 4)

The Things To Forget



St time goes on and we go on with it, more rapidly than we like, it becomes necessary to cling to the remembrance of a few things and let go of a great many others. The mind, the average mind, has not room to hold all that has been learned, observed, or experienced in the course of a life-time. And the first things to forget are the failures, the disappointments, the crumbling of our idols upon their feet of clay, and the hard knocks dealt us in the concourse of the broad highway. The things to remember are the many blessings that have been our portion from the beginning: the kind face, the hospitable welcome, the thought that was taken for us when we took no thoughts for ourselves, the sympathetic understanding that out-ran our own and found an excuse for our short comings.

Let us drop out of sight and out of mind all that there is in the past that may be as clogs on the wings of the soul to prevent it from flying. There is too much put into our hands to do, with each new day, to make it safe and wise for us to brood upon by-gones. Whatever we remember out of that past, let it be what is profitable for us here and now to think about. Let us see everything through a poetic vision, (the only genuine idealization), and view life as a brilliant drama, a splendid picture, a garden ever fresh and fair.

We may keep afresh the rare, inspiring example of one who is no longer with us in the physical

(Continued on Page 5)

N. A. A. C. P. Meeting

The monthly meeting of the college branch of the N. A. A. C. P. was held Tuesday the twelfth. The meeting was made especially interesting by student reports of what the Negroes are doing in several cities of the country. Mr. Frazier gave a very good resumé of the activities of the Baltimore colored people in educational, religious, and business spheres; Miss Smith told of the Negro accomplishments in Mississippi; Mr. Dingle gave us an idea of the Negro's progress in Savannah; and Mr. Holmes told of his efforts to establish a permanent branch of the N. A. A. C. P. in Denver, Colorado. Such varied discussions will do more toward impressing the students of the great work of service which is before them than a dozen public meetings. The students, however, do not yet give the organization the support which is needed for a wide-awake, active branch.

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A Letter from a G. A. R. Veteran

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Mr. A. L. Taylor,
Dear Sir:

I received THE JOURNAL today and I thank you for the same. The photograph was fine. My little three year old granddaughter picked me out quickly. She said, "There is grandpa." I think you people did finely by Scott's 900; we were evermore than pleased, also pleased with the students. They had a fine appearance, and I for one wish to thank you for your kindness to us while we were there. I appreciated the banquet: it was fine, and I wish to send my sincere thanks to those young ladies who sang so nicely and also to the pianist. It was real nice of them; and the professor was very nice to us; please thank him for us. That occasion will long be remembered by us.

I enclose a P. O. order for one dollar, and shall be pleased to receive THE JOURNAL.

Sincerely yours,
P. L. Austin.

The Girls' Club Officers

The Girls' Club of the College of Arts and Sciences met on Thursday the 14th and elected the following officers: President, Miss Dorothy Pelham; Vice-President, Miss Maude Brown; Secretary, Miss Mabel Thomas; Assistant Secretary, Miss Cochran; Corresponding Secretary, Miss C. Oliver; Treasurer, Miss L. Gatewood.

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Friday, October 29, 1915

The Business Department of THE HOWARD UNIVERSITY JOURNAL is pleased to announce an increase in subscriptions over previous years, and wishes to thank those who are giving their support in the present subscription campaign. Those who plan to subscribe to THE JOURNAL on some indefinite date, are urged to subscribe now. THE JOURNAL is a serial story of University life, extending through a period of eight months. Each weekly issue of THE JOURNAL is an installment of this exciting story, and every installment should be read in order to appreciate fully the story. The story is advancing; subscribe now.

The appeal should also be

made for individual subscriptions. Frequently, one subscription is made to answer the purposes of several students, but the plan is seldom satisfactory; inasmuch as each week some member of the group does not get to see the paper. Special rates of 75 cents per year are made for students of Howard that each one may be able to subscribe. Those who are not students pay one dollar for subscriptions. The students are also given the privilege of mailing subscriptions, at students rates, to relatives or friends in or out of the city. These inducements are made for the benefit of the students, and for the good of the University. Each issue of THE JOURNAL is an advertisement for Howard. Every student is requested to take as many subscriptions as he is able. It should be done now. Do not wait until just before the election of the next JOURNAL staff, do not wait until Christmas or Thanksgiving; but subscribe now. Promptness in this matter puts the Business Department in position to carry out its obligations on the expense side, as well as to insure efficiency in publishing.

—I. G. Bailey, Mgr.

The Economic Condition of the Negro Men Common Laborers in Washington, D. C.

(Continued from Page 1)
laborers. The average rent is \$12.50 monthly. The owners keep them just sufficiently repaired to stay within the law. All of these houses are not in these alleys, or or plague spots as some times called, many of them are, like the alleys themselves, located right in the midst of the homes of the elite of Washington.

The numbers of families found in these homes of the common laborer is significant, oft times we find a family for each of the four or five rooms in the house, all related perhaps, and the man in

each at work, yet satisfied with the crowded condition. Money, therefore, that should go for renting and preparing better homes goes for things less important and more degrading. The disease of any one in the family oft times means the death of all.

Nothing concerning the Negro common laborer is perhaps of as great importance as his children and those yet unborn. This is caused mostly from the fact that the majority of this class of Negroes are unlettered and untutored. They have migrated into
(Continued on Page 8)

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The Things to Forget

(Continued from Page 1)

presence, for it does us good if we try to walk in those steps and model our lives upon that pattern. But to grieve merely to make a luxury of sorrow does not help the needy world. Let us not keep before us the bogey of the past mistakes that cannot now be helped. History may repeat itself if it likes; it does not need the lugubrious aid of our reiteration. The thing for us is to go on, without looking back, and if we do not like the melancholy aspect of today, tomorrow is coming. The sunrise is just as new and original for us, and the hand of yesterday has no hold upon the immediate hour.

—V. M. Scott, '16

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Young Men's Christian Association

The members of the Y. M. C. A. in listening to Dean Kelly Miller's lecture on "Life" last Sunday afternoon in Library Hall, heard one of the best and most representative men of the Negro Race, in a most interesting and fascinating manner, unfold his broad subject. Dean Miller developed his topic from the saying of Jesus, "I have come that ye might have life and that ye might have life more abundantly." In delivering his lecture Professor Miller emphasized the fact that "Life" in its biggest meaning was a summation of aggregated lives, social, physical, moral, and spiritual, and an actual experience in the world to-day with them. In closing his discourse Professor Miller said, "Life beyond human existence, I leave for another story, but I speak of a life which you and I know and feel in the experience of our existence, the highest aim and purpose being to glorify God and enjoy Him forever."

On Sunday afternoon, October 17, Dr. Parks thrilled the hearts of a large and appreciative audience in his mastery lecture on the subject "The Application of Christian Principles to the Industrial Problem." Young men of Howard, do not fail to take advantage of the great opportunities afforded you in hearing and coming in touch and contact with great men, by absenting yourselves from these weekly meetings held every Sunday afternoon at three o'clock for one hour only under the auspices of the Y. M. C. A. "They are summoned here, they come, that you may have life." The last of the series of interesting lectures from great men for the month of October will be delivered in the University Chapel, Sunday afternoon, October 31, at 4:30 p. m., by another one of our foremost representatives, Prof. William Pickens.

—S. M. B.

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The Alpha Phi Literary Society

On Friday evening, October 22, the Alpha Phi Literary Society was entertained by a very elaborate program rendered by members of the Freshman Class. These young Howardites should be praised highly for their efforts to produce a program of such character. Mr. Gordon gave with much grace and style, a reading from Edgar Allen Poe. Many others of the class displayed literary ability of a high type. We hope that this effort, on the part of the Freshmen, will act as a stimulus to arouse activity in all other classes that are requested to serve The Alpha Phi.

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The Y. P. B. of the W. C. T. U. Holds Installation Exercises

On last Saturday evening in the assembly room of Miner Hall, Y. P. B. of the W. C. T. U. held installation exercises of the newly elected officers. A very inspiring installation address was delivered by Mrs. Alma Scott, the State President of The National W. C. T. U. Mrs. Scott's address was followed by a few brief but instructive remarks by Professor Logan, the Secretary of the Y. M. C. A. of Howard University.

After the installation, the social committee added much to the occasion by serving delightful dainties which were enjoyed by all.

The present officers were installed: President, Miss M. M. Rayfield; Vice President, Mr. Wm. H. Foster; Secretary, Miss Olive Smith; Assistant Secretary, Miss Lillian Lawrence; Treasurer, Miss Carrie Sutton; Auditor, Mr. DeWitt Walton; Chaplain, Mr. Clarence Frisby.

Program for Sunday, October 31, 6:30 p. m.

Song service 6:15 P. M. to 6:30 P. M.

Symposium: The effect of alcohol upon the Negro:

From an economic view, Dr. Parks.

From a scientific view, Dr. Waring.

From a social view, Dean Miller.

From a political view, Dean Cook.

Mr. Burroughs' Recital

Mr Charles Burroughs' reading in the chapel Saturday evening, October 16, gave pleasure to all who heard him. Mr. Burroughs gave selections from Shakespeare's Macbeth, from Mr. Service, the Canadian poet, and from Mr. Noyes. His interpretation of the Witches' scene from Macbeth was especially effective and dramatic. The short poems were read with a great deal of feeling and beauty. The reading is a delightful form of entertainment and Mr. Burroughs was particularly pleasing. He is a graduate of Dr. Curry's School of Expression in Boston and is now a reader for the Board of Education of New York City.

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ATHLETICS

Geo. B. Washington, Editor

Storer College 0; Howard Academy 0

In a game, brimful of clever plays, and unexpectedly exciting, the Academy foot ball team on last Saturday battled with Storer College. When the whistle screamed, indicating that the game was over, neither team had crossed the other's goal. Though out-weighted by their opponents, the Academy boys demonstrated their right to be rated among the best team of their class.

Both teams resorted to the old-fashion football and at times the Storer attack showed flashes of power, but the punch was lacking. In the first quarter the Academy boys by a series of end rushes

and line plunges carried the ball to Storer's fifteen yard line, only to lose it on downs. In the next period Storer showed a reversal of form and rushed the ball up the field to Howard's seven yard line. At this point the brilliant defensive work of Carter, Pannell, Jones, and Garrett saved the day for the Academy.

Storer opened the third period with a determination to start something, and after several consistent gains lost the ball by a fumble on Howard's ten yard line. After this Storer never got within striking distance of the Academy's goal line. The Academy team showed to the best advantage in the final period, when by the use of several well executed forward passes and end runs, it brought the ball from its own fifteen yard line to Storer's ten yard line. At this point Storer's line loomed up as a stone wall, and the whistle ended the fray with the ball in mid-field in Storer's possession.

For Storer the entire back-field played excellent ball, with Allen, the sturdy quarter-back, having a shade on the others. The work of Green, left end, also deserves special mention. For Howard, Pannell stood head and shoulders above his teammates. Captain Jackson at quarter, and the tackling of Brooks were also prominent features of the game.

The Varsity team plays Shaw at Raleigh, N.C., on November 6; and the Academy team will play Manassas here on November 3.

Complete details of these games will be given through the Athletic columns of THE JOURNAL.

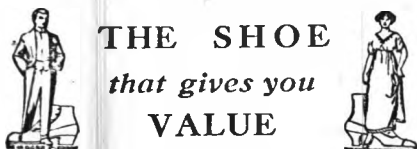
"H" Awarded Track Men

The following are the names of students who were granted the privilege by the Athletic Council of wearing the Howard "H":

H. C. Stratton, J. W. Love, C. C. Wimbish, Thomas M. Dent, T. L. Alston, J. P. McCain, J. P. Sampson, J. A. Franklin, Clayborne George, Aaron Boulding, H. M. Martin, Captain,; William H. Foster, Manager.

There is no doubt that this was the most self-sacrificing and most loyal track team that Howard University has ever had. These men did not even have their shoe strings furnished them in the way of equipment. They bought their own shoes, uniforms, and even paid their own entry fees to the St. Mary's Meet in Baltimore. They built a track upon which to hold the Outdoor Meet in Baltimore and paid their own entry fees to the A. A. U., and now they will be forced on account of the lack of funds in the Athletic Council treasury to buy their own "H".

—Rube



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The Economic Condition of the Negro Men Common Laborers in Washing- ton, D. C.

(Continued from Page 4)

Washington from the surrounding counties of Maryland and Virginia. They have, under illusion, left the suburbs for the city. They have left the free atmosphere, sunshine, fresh air, flowers and landscapes for a home in an alley and occasionally for work on a street. Here they come and become satisfied with conditions as they chance to find them, and as a man in "Snow's Court" said to me a few days ago: "I never allow myself to want what I can not get". This condition, then, of the home life renders it both difficult and discouraging when

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we think of improving them. The dependence of ambition upon reality is the death of ambition itself. What then must be the condition of a child of the common laborer, that is born under an unlucky star amidst degradation, crime, disease, and disorder? Such a child can be but a part of his environment. When we consider how all the senses are assaulted by the material things that spring out of the alleys, we cannot marvel that so large a number Negroes is backward in appropriating the higher gifts of civilization. There is nothing to look upon to suggest beauty, order, or conformity to law. Every thing is present to teach the law of confusion and the fact of failure. Dirt, trash and filth have acquired the supremacy, and from earliest infancy the eyes gaze upon an arrangement of things that indicate indecency, and dependency of spirit upon matter. The first sounds that awaken the ear and mind are discordant, repellant, and beyond their power to change; therefore, they become satisfied. The first odor that meets their nose is foul and filled with corruption. Children are, in short, met by all the elements that offend and numb human senses. They grow up with a highly developed instinct, not for play, but for fight.

Temptation to crime and crime itself is higher among the Negro common laborer than any other class in Washington. Alley life is a producer. Drunkardness among many of the women as well as many of the men is a common practise of every day life, reaching its climax on pay day, and Saturday, and rest day, Sunday. Gambling in the middle of the alleys is common. Vice in its most immortal sense is specialized. The number of the illegitimate children in the alley home is but one-third less than the legitimate. Not quite half of the common laborers attend church.

Those who go, for the most part, live on the streets. Church is carried by social workers to many of those in the alleys. Life, for the alley man, has produced in him a degrading sense of his own personal power and worth.

In the midst of harsh landlords and the irregularity of work, the common laborer has one relief: the charities of the city. The Associated Charities during the past year helped 3,557 families with 13,455 persons in number. Seventeen hundred and eighty-one of these were Negro families, and 1,500 were families of common laborers with a total number of 6,716 persons.

There are 10,000 colored women members of families of laborers at work in this city who help to maintain and oft-time even support the family. Some of these are daughters, wives or mothers. Caring for their homes and offsprings has to be neglected while they care for those of the upper classes. They themselves cry often for bread and are not fed.

The economic condition of the Negro common laborer is such that it drives him to crime; forces him to live in poor and undesirable houses; and takes away pride and comfort of home life; and, finally; places him on the ragged edge of the poverty line.

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