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The Problem of The City Child

By ANNA J. COOPER

A new note for the Crisis and a very much needed note, is struck in the October Postscripts where Dr. Dubois calls attention to the swaggering insolence in manners of certain of our young people. As a leader of thought and teacher of good manners and correct social intercourse, as well as a fighter for rights and recognition, our newspapers and magazines are likely to be so absorbed in the latter as to crowd out entirely all criticism of morals and manners among ourselves; and, from persistent examples and illustrations with due condemnation and bitter denunciation of wrongs inflicted on members of the colored race, too often the cue is taken to wear the perpetual chip on the shoulder and imagine that common politeness and decent behavior will be construed as some sort of inferiority complex.

There is nothing in my judgment more deplorable in all the disadvantages and drawbacks from American race prejudice than the ingrowing race consciousness that narrows every thought and every act into relativity with "The Question" and prevents young and old from seeing, feeling, acting as human first and, black, brown, yellow or white accidentally and secondarily.

Life has its own problem for all of us, and when you get down to the core the Souls of Black Folks are just like the souls of set and the individual, whatever other folks. For each the task is his handicap, must set to with what power he has to make the most of it or else to smash the slate.

To suppose our wrongs and our suffering the only wrong and the

only suffering in the universe is to become self-centered and an intolerable bore; while to think and talk perpetually from this center eventually shuts out all harmony of action, all beauty in human contacts, all appreciation of artistic achievement. A certain detachment is necessary in order to judge even ourselves and a certain open-mindedness, a sweeping the cobwebs of prejudice and narrowness from our own brains and hearts and souls before we can see life in the round and enjoy the fullness of human sympathy and human striving. We may yet learn to pity prejudice as a disease, a sort of myopia or near-sightedness which calls for light—more light and better light, rather than for heated declamation and fisticuffs. At any rate it is a good practice to see whether there may not be the same fault, or one at least just as unreasonable, in our own camp. First pull out the beam that is in thine own eye then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote from thy brother's eye.

Young people, however, are not philosophers, they take their cue and set their pace generally from what they hear their elders say. It becomes us therefore to remember "a chiel's amang ye takin notes," and in their presence refrain from discussions that engender bitterness and hard feeling. If on both sides the Great Divide, the good rule: Speak no evil were strictly followed especially in the presence of children and other irresponsibles, there would be fewer senseless clashes and insulting behavior which so easily run into riot and bloodshed, and Americans of all shades might hope to live down the reputation they now seem to have as the worst mannered nation in the world.