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BENJAMIN'S
POCKET HISTORY
— OF THE —
A AMERICAN N NEGRO.

— — — — —
A STORY OF THIRTY-ONE YEARS,
FROM 1863 TO 1894

— BY —
R. C. O. BENJAMIN,

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Keep this in your pocket as a Reference Book.

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MARION PRINT.
157 WESTMINSTER STREET,
PROVIDENCE, R. I.

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Yours for the Race,

R. C. O. Benjamin.

INTRODUCTION.

R. C. O. BENJAMIN, of Providence, R. I., the author of this little pocket history, is classed among the foremost men of the Negro race. In vindication of their rights, and setting forth their progress since emancipation, he has written fourteen different works, the latest being: "Southern Outrages," giving the history, data, etc., of every Negro that has been lynched in the South since 1865 up to the present time. (1894.) Among his other works are: a "History of the West Indies," "The Boy Doctor," "Life of Toussaint L'Ouverture," "Origin of the Negro Race," "Don't," a book for girls, "Poetic Gems," etc. All of his books show him to be a man of considerable ability and deep thought. Aside from being a prolific writer, Mr. Benjamin is an orator of great force and power, an able lawyer, and in the pulpit, a fiery and convincing preacher. The Washington D. C. *Bee* says of him: "Mr. Benjamin is one of the most gifted orators in this country, and in state and national campaigns is in much demand as a campaign speaker. His speeches are characterized by breadth of view, purity of diction, and comprehensive knowledge of the subject." "As a lawyer, preacher and author," says the Alexandria, Va. *Leader*, "Mr. Benjamin has no peer on the American platform."

The white as well as the colored press in general, speak of his eloquence, learning, profound research and original wit and humor in the highest terms. The Nashville, Tenn. *Daily American*, calls him the "funniest man on the lecture platform." The Washington, D. C. *Post* is of the opinion that his

word painting when in the pulpit, cannot be excelled by any man in this or any other country. The editor of the *Morning Oregonian*, Portland, Oregon, after listening to one of Mr. Benjamin's Lectures delivered in that city, said editorially, (June 9th, 1891): "It was full of bright thoughts, practical suggestions, and amusing incidents; . . . the discourse was a strong one; his array of facts convincing; his sarcasm was biting and pungent; his rhetorical flights were brilliant and often thrilling. The subject proved to be an effort of great power and force, and held his hearers' attention riveted, for nearly three hours with his oratorical splendor." Such are the tributes paid the author of this little book, by the leading newspapers of the land. From the Los Angeles, California, *Graphic*, April 28, 1894, we clip the following item: "R. C. O. Benjamin, whose recently published book on 'Southern Outrages' is attracting wide-spread attention, once claimed Los Angeles as his home. While a practitioner before the Los Angeles Bar, his oratory, wit and brilliancy, won for him many clients of both races. He also enjoyed the distinction of being the only Negro who ever edited a white daily newspaper in California." Mr. Benjamin is a representative Negro, an educated man, and an honor to his race. His lectures, public addresses, discourses and sermons are being collected by the writer for publication in the near future, and we venture to say that the views and opinions contained in them will be of value to the whole Negro race.

JOHN H. BALLOU,

Attorney at Law.

Providence, R. I.

MARVELOUS.

History furnishes no example of emancipation under circumstances so unfavorable as that of the American Negro. When Russia emancipated her serfs, Alexander declared that "liberty without the means of living was a fatal gift." "Liberty and Land" was the Russian watchword, and every free-man was provided a homestead. The American Negro was suddenly thrown upon the world, ignorant, poor, helpless, and without a foot of land; still in the thirty-one years, (from 1863 to 1894,) he has struggled to full manhood. The progress in music, in education, in the professions, in literature and in the accumulation of wealth, made by the American Negro is one of the marvels in history. No people ever had such an experience of great and sudden transition, slaves yesterday, free men to-day, Scholars to-morrow.

POPULATION.

To begin with, at the close of the rebellion it was asserted without contradiction, that the Negro would "die out," the double and rapidly increasing population of the Negro however, has fully demonstrated that he is a living and not a dying race. The idea of his becoming extinct finds no support in this fact. The Negro population in 1870 was 4,880,000, of 1880, 6,580,000, of 1890 nearly 10,000,000; 600 Negro children are born every

day. At the present rate of increase, in 1985 there will be 192,000,000 Negroes in the United States.

EDUCATION.

The doctrine of incapacity has been exploded; the mean notion that the Negro was incapable of learning and grappling with science and philosophy or becoming first-rate theologians or historians was only preached in the interest of slavery and has faded away in the light of facts to the contrary. Five years after the surrender, (1870) only a tenth of the Negro children eligible to school opportunities, were actually reported therein. In 1890 we find that within a fraction, ONE HALF of the eligibles are reported in school. The figures to authenticate this statement are as follows—According to census figures, in 1870 there were 2,789,679 Negroes above the age of ten years who could not read or write. If we should make an approximation of a million for Negroes under ten years we should have 3,789,679, who could not read or write twenty years ago. With a population of 4,880,000 we should have ONE AND A TENTH MILLION of Negroes who could not read in 1870. If it is a fact that the increase of the population from 1870 to 1890 has been 70 per cent, it would be unfair to say that with the great and constantly increasing educational facilities in all the departments of state and church education and the Negro's eager cry for learning, that his educational increase from 1870 to 1893 should be less than four times that of

1870. If then, the great educational endeavors of twenty years in all departments and all lines, justifies and increases four times as large as that of 1870 we have in 1893 FOUR AND FOUR TENTH MILLIONS who can read and write. Of this balance of illiteracy a majority are ex-slaves, elderly persons, who may not read the letter, but who are yet intelligent by contact and association. The showing as to Negro school teachers in the United States is a bright ray of hope for the Negro's future, when the fact is considered that these teachers have been prepared and put into the field during twenty-five years; very little more than the school life allotted an individual. Two-thirds of these teachers are Normal and High School Graduates: number of teachers, 25,000; number of pupils, 1,512,890; private students, 200,000, added to this is over 8,000 young people enrolled in the Industrial and Mechanical Institutions, and nearly as many more who attend denominational schools. The Denominational Colleges, Normal Schools and Academies are manned by Negro presidents, principals, professors and instructors. There are sixty-three Negro presidents in Negro colleges, denominational or otherwise. For the scholastic year 1891-2, of the \$834,646.41 contributed by various societies, denominations, etc; \$316,446.92 was contributed by the Negro himself, being nearly one-half the entire expenditure. It is a marvelous accomplishment that in less than a generation, the Negroes should have educated men in every avenue and calling of life; that their young men should graduate from the oldest and best colleges in this land, and win honors in classes composed of the sons of the Puritans, the

Roundheads and Cavaliers and command their respect and confidence.

THE PROFESSIONS.

In 1863 a Negro Lawyer was an unknown quantity; 1864 finds 600 of them with a National Bar Association. There are also deans and professors of law in their law schools, circuit court commissioners, several judges, a large number of clerks of courts, several district, commonwealth and city attorneys. The medical profession has not been a whit behind the legal; over 700 graduates in the practice of medicine have come forth since 1863, and are occupying honorable stations in the medical jurisprudence of our common country. Nearly every state has its Negro Medical State Organization. In Dentistry, there are seventy-three practicing physicians in the South and nearly the same number in the North. In Pharmacy over one hundred have been graduated.

LITERATURE.

Thirty years ago a Negro who could read a newspaper was looked upon as a curiosity, to-day he owns publishes and edits over two hundred journals, several magazines and has a National Press Association. Several of our journalists hold responsible positions on the leading white dailies as

editors of departments and reporters; essays, short stories and poems appear in the leading white magazines of the Country from the pen of Negro writers. A Greek grammar by a Negro author is in use in the schools of Ohio. Since 1865 over 500 books and pamphlets have been published by Negro writers. They have been mainly histories of the race, autobiographies, poems and works on science, fiction, religion and general literature. At least two thirds of these publications are made in their own offices and on their own presses.

THE CHURCH.

The denominations in which the Negro is most largely found are: Methodist Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, Colored Methodist Episcopal Church in America, the Methodist Protestant, the African Union Methodist Protestant, the Union American Methodist Episcopal Church, the Zion Union Apostolic Church, Evangelist Missionary Church in America, Congregational Methodist Church, Christian Church, Protestant Episcopal, Cumberland Presbyterian, Presbyterian Church in America, Presbyterian Church in the United States, United Presbyterian Church, Lutherans, Catholics, Congregationalist and Regular Baptist Churches.

Of these denominations there are about twenty-three thousand organizations, twenty-four thousand Church edifices with a seating capacity of

nearly seven millions. The value of Church property may be approximated at \$35,000,000, the number of Church members 3,600,000. In the distinctive Negro Methodist bodies there are twenty-six bishops. Many of the largest edifices and finest church buildings in the South are those owned by Negroes, and it may be said without fear of successful contradiction, that the Negro church system has assumed coherence and has become effective from the fact that all of the Negro's interest, particular his social life centres in his church. His motto is first to seek the kingdom of God, believing that all other things will be added to his prosperity.

MECHANICAL AND INDUSTRIAL.

To nearly all of the Negro schools are connected mechanical and industrial features and these school are yearly sending forth skilled labor which demands a consideration and can easily compete in all lines of industry where prejudice does not debar them. Thirty years ago, the hoeing of corn and tobacco and the performance of domestic labor was as high as the Negro was allowed to reach, with a few exceptions; to-day he is able to compete with the skilful industrial white mechanic. At the Patent Office at Washington City the list of patents granted by the United States to Negroes since 1863 number over two hundred.

AGRICULTURE AND LABOR.

Neither the Southern States nor the nation seem to appreciate the value of the Negro as a laborer. The productive value of Negro labor is the wealth of the South, and a very considerable part of the wealth of the nation. The large farms and plantations of the South, without Negro labor would go to waste with sickening weeds. Every staple and crop raised there is dependent on Negro labor. Think of the vast annual production of cotton, rice, tobacco, corn, sugar cane, sweet potatoes, watermelons, peanuts and other staples; the resin, turpentine, lumber and other interests; the mines, the mills, the factories, the foundries that the South is developing, and that all is dependent on Negro labor; and that the trades are in the hands of the Negro, and that the mechanics are Negroes, that the various grades of servants and help are Negroes—think of these things and an opinion may be formed of the value of the Negro as a laborer.

The cotton which the Negroes make in the South is shipped to the North, and there it sets turning the many thousand spindles and looms, and the turning of the spindles and looms puts bread into the mouths of tens of thousands of Northern Families and money in the pockets of Northern capitalists. This cotton is made into thousands of fabrics and shipped to all parts of the world, and is a source of revenue to those who pack goods, and in various ways provide facilities for packing for those employed in transporting, and those who provided the facilities for trans

porting, and also those, who, under varying circumstances, as merchants or otherwise handle the goods. The spool of cotton used by the humblest sewing woman in New York City is spun from the cotton made by the Negroes of the South. The merchant who sells the thread, and the banker who takes on deposit the merchants money, are alike benefited.

AS A CONSUMER.

The Negro is not only valuable as a producer, but he is also valuable as a consumer. If the Negroes spend on the average, only fifty dollars a year each, for necessaries which they do not produce, as dry goods and notions, hats, shoes, clothing, furniture, household goods and furnishings, tools, machinery, implements, school and other books, the expenditure for 8,000,000 Negroes would be \$400,000,000 a year. Thus the North—for the things mentioned are Northern products—has a market among the Negroes for its wares of \$400,000,000 a year,—a market not to be despised.

MUSIC AND THE ARTS.

There are a large number of excellent crayon portrait painters; several have won recognition for their ability as professionals. E. M. Bannister of Providence, R. I., has now the distinction of being one of the leading landscape painters in this country. One of the best known representatives

in the art of sculpture is a Negro woman, Miss Edmonia Lewis. In music the American Negro vocalists and composers are taking front rank with the great musicians of the world. So eminent an authority as Dr. Antonin Dvorak, the great Bohemian composer, voluntarily says: "I am now satisfied that the future music of this country must be founded on what are called Negro melodies. These are the folk songs of America and your composers must turn to them. In the Negro melodies of America, I discover all that is needed for a great and noble school of music. They are pathetic, tender, passionate, melancholy, solemn, religious, bold, merry, gay, or what you will. It is music that sets itself to any mood or any purpose. There is nothing in the whole range of composition that cannot be supplied with themes from this source."

WEALTH.

In the short space of seven years—between 1866 and 1873, the Negro deposited in the "Freedmen's Bank" \$53,000,000, this whole amount was stolen from him. With patience and thrift he went to work, and to-day his wealth is fixed at the following figures—

Alabama,	- -	\$ 9,200,125,
Arkansas,	- -	8,100,315,
California,	- -	4,006,209,
Chicago, alone,	- -	2,500,000,
Connecticut,	- -	500,115,

Colorado, - -	\$ 3,100,472,
Delaware, - -	1,200,179,
Dist. of Columbia,	5,300,633,
Florida, - -	7,900,040,
Georgia, - -	10,415,330,
Illinois, - -	8,300,511,
Indiana, - -	4,004,113,
Indian Territory, -	600,000,
Iowa, - -	2,500,372,
Kansas, - -	3,900,222,
Kentucky, - -	5,900,000,
Louisiana, - -	18,100,528,
Maine, - -	175,211,
Maryland, - -	9,900,735,
Massachusetts, -	9,004,122,
Michigan, - -	4,800,000,
Minnesota, - -	1,100,236,
Mississippi, - -	13,400,213,
Missouri, - -	6,600,340,
Montana, - -	120,000,
Nebraska, - -	2,500,000,
Nevada, - -	250,000,
New Hampshire, -	300,125,
New Jersey, - -	3,300,185,
New Mexico, - -	290,000,
New York, - -	17,400,756,
North Carolina, -	11,010,652,
North Dakota, - -	76,459,
Ohio, - -	7,800,325,
Oregon, - -	85,000,
Pennsylvania, - -	15,300,648,
Rhode Island, - -	3,400,000,
South Carolina, -	12,500,000,
South Dakota, - -	175,225,

Tennessee, - -	10,400,211,
Texas, - -	18,010,545,
Utah, - -	75,000,
Vermont, - -	1,100,371
Virginia, - -	4,900,000,
Washington, - -	573,000,
West Virginia, - -	5,600,721,
Wyoming, - -	211,115;

The total amount of property owned by the race is \$263,000,000.

This report, which has been going the rounds and accepted as a most remarkable showing, is an under estimate by several millions. For in the State of Virginia alone, according to the report of the Auditor of Public Accounts, the Negro's property is valued at \$9,625,578. This is over four million and a half more than the above table. In Texas the property interests of the Negro are estimated at twenty millions, which is two millions more than the above table. Likewise in South Carolina, Georgia, Mississippi and Louisiana, the report of the Auditor of Public Accounts shows the estimate of the Negro's wealth to be from two to four millions more than is given in the above table. With these corrections, the correct estimate of the wealth of the Negro is not less than \$300,000,000. This added to church property would give \$335,000,000.

POLITICAL.

As already shown, the Negro within thirty years in the face of every opposition has produced

Philosophers, Astronomers, Historians, Physicians, Lawyers, Artisans and Mechanics. In every sphere of human activity he has been represented by men whose intellect and genius have challenged the admiration of the American people. Not less so in the political arena; we have been creditably represented in every branch of this government. We have had diplomats, Senators, Congressmen, Lieutenant-Governors, and various state officers.

The money of the Nation has been made legal by the signature of a Negro (Bruce.) as Register of the Treasury. The political privileges of the Negro in the future will be what he makes them.

His rapid increase in numbers, and therefore, in power, will make him an uncertain and dangerous factor in politics. The nearer he arrives to a comprehension and an appreciation of the responsibilities of citizenship, to that extent will he enjoy the benefits of political society of government.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Thirty years ago the Negro knew nothing of co-operation; now he has banks, building and loan associations, insurance companies and co-operative stores, and holds stock in mines and railroads. One Negro owns a whole street car system, (Pine Bluff, Arkansas.) Negro societies, charitable and otherwise, are multifarious and beneficial. The halls and other property owned by the different societies may be approximated at \$8,000,000. The Negro has also given a great deal of attention to his domestic comfort. The "little old log cabin in the

lane" has given place to palatial residences, and his plantations and farm houses are fitted with comforts and conveniences unknown to white planters of thirty years ago. The social status of the Negro has kept pace with his financial and educational improvements. Thousands of homes amongst us are the centers of refinement and culture—of which our brother in white knows nothing, because fettered by kitchen aristocracy he lacks the moral courage to step across the barriers of prejudice. That the so called immorality of the Negro was imposed upon the mothers of the race by the low, degraded and debased natures of the slave-holding class, is evident by the fact that, since emancipation the fathers of the race are Negroes, lawfully wedded to the mothers of their children.

EQUAL TO THE TEST.

Bearing in mind the point from which the Negro started, what people have ever achieved so much in thirty-one years?

This progress is the more remarkable because it has been achieved in the very teeth of hostile and opposing forces. As the Negro's footprints in the sands of time can be traced by the blood of his ancestors, so has his upward struggle been marked by fierce and bloody encounters with his unrelenting foes. With unconquered prejudice and subtle malignity the wealth and brains of the late slave-holding class; their sympathizers and henchmen have combined, and persistently exert their all-

powerful influence in and out of Congress; through every ramification of the States and National government; through every avenue of life to retard the Negro's progress and perpetuate his poverty and degradation. Every scheme, device, fraud, violence and cool calculating murder, have been perpetrated to destroy the legitimate fruits of freedom, to deny, to resist, nullify and cheat him out of his constitutional guaranteed rights and privileges as an American Citizen. To set a people free is one thing, but to throw stumbling blocks in their way and expect them to get along with nothing but reprobation of their success, is to give one of the races of human nature a mighty test. The Negro seems to have been equal to the test; if however, it is thought that his progress has been slow, it must be remembered, that he is yet in the twilight dawn after centuries of barbarism in his own land; a hundred years of slavery in this, and the insidious influence of prejudice, since his freedom, on account of his color, closing every avenue of progress. The wonder is that any perceptible improvement should have been made in so short a time; his history reads like a romance, only recently he was a savage in the wilds of Africa. Yesterday he was a slave, bought and sold in the markets as a beast of burden; to day he is a citizen of the most progressive country of the earth, with brain developed and mind expanded, standing side by side with all other races of the earth in civilization playing with credit his part in the great drama of the world.

CONCLUSION.

Taking in the entire scope of the past, and allowing some play of fancy as to the future, it hardly seems after all, a calamity to the Negro to have forced him away from the African wilds, and to have held him in bondage; for God has overruled it for good to him and possibly to the land of his fathers. For what is more probable than, that the American Negro will return to Africa, not in irons as he came out, nor bearing neither chains nor rum to curse others, but with a Bible in his hand, and a story of a mighty Saviour upon his lips. In the order of Providence there is no evil without some compensating benefit. The bleeding African was torn from his savage home by his ferocious neighbors, sold into slavery, and cast upon this continent. Here the race has been wonderfully multiplied, compared with anything ever known in barbarous life; the descendants of a few thousands have become millions, and all from the first made acquainted with the arts of civilization, and above all been brought under the light of the Gospel. To the poor the Gospel is preached—and never did the Gospel come to a people with such fitness. A great company, already in heaven, who have come out of great tribulations, and washed their garments and made them clean in the blood of the lamb, will bless God to all eternity that so many of their race were taken from Africa, though amid tears and bloodshed, and placed in this land, though under the galling yoke, where a great light has shined in upon their darkness, and so many

have been made heirs to the incorruptible crown. "God moves in a mysterious way," and who dares dispute but that the race was sent here to be **SCHOOLED** in the rigors of slavery, more especially that they may yet be the instruments in the hands of God to work out the destiny of Africa. What is more probable that through the American Negro will come at last the blessings of Christian civilization to that dark continent. Down through not many ages, the missionary and the merchant, the scholar and the agriculturist, the soldier and the statesman, and representatives of rich corporations from every section of the now "dark continent" (and it may be from all quarters of the globe) may meet together upon some central mountain or fertile plain in the land of Ham, and unite in the general chorus of her redemption.

Mr. Jas V Smith Special Mes
Says to my Sec, Jan 11 1864

And now upon the parts of Senate
and House of Reps, will deliberate
the high allegation of giving
earliest support to the Nat.
Gov in all its measures for
crushing the infernal rebellion
that has so long distracted
our country. We should cordially
give our assist ~~and~~ our
honors and hear our

proprietor to sustain the
Pres. in his most arduous
duties.

We have given the names
of many of our noble
Sons to the cause of
our Gov this proclamation
to the world our
devotion to freedom
and liberty. Let us
not now contribute
any aid in any power
to lead that cause
for which we have
readily poured so much
and which will so surely
Triumph