

# The Census and the Negro

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WHEN the census figures of 1900 were published they revealed the fact that in the forty years since slavery the negro population had doubled. It was 4,441,830 in 1860 and 8,833,994 in 1900. Now that we are beginning to get returns from the 1910 census, we learn that during the past ten years the race has added almost another million (994,300) to its stature, so that according to the thirteenth census the negro population was 9,828,294, and if it has increased at the same rate since 1910 that it did before, namely, 11.30 per cent. for the decade, or about 100,000 per year, it is now considerably more than ten millions.

The importance of these facts is that it assures the physical existence of the race. The negro is not dying out. The rate of increase among negroes is not as great as it was some years ago, but that is true of every civilized country in the world in which the population is not increased by immigration. The census of 1911 shows, for example, that the rate of increase for the English people, measured by the excess of births over deaths, is 12.4 per cent. The natural rate of increase of the white population, excluding increase by immigration, was estimated at twenty per cent. in the period 1880 to 1890, and is not quite fifteen per cent. for the period from 1900 to 1910. The census shows that the white population is increasing more rapidly than the negro in the Southern States. This is due in part to the fact that, while there is a movement of the black population northward from the border States like Kentucky, Tennessee and Maryland, there is at the same time a movement of the white population southward, particularly in the direction of Florida, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas. The statistics show, for example, that while the negro population has actually decreased in the border States I have mentioned, and the increase in Virginia and Delaware was no more than 1.6 per cent., the

increase of the negro population in the Northern States was 18.4 per cent.

This does not mean, as some persons have said, that the negro population is shifting from the Southern to the Northern States. The fact is that the total increase of negro population in the North, during the decade from 1900 to 1910, amounted to no more than 167,879. During the same period negro population in the South has grown from 7,922,969 to 8,749,390, an increase of 826,421. As a matter of fact, the increase in the North over the South has been no more than one half of one per cent. of the whole negro population.

The truth is, that negro emigration from the border States has not been directed exclusively toward the North. On the contrary there has been, perhaps, an even larger movement of the negro population South and West. For example, in Arkansas, Oklahoma and West Virginia the negro population has not only increased in numbers more rapidly than in most other Southern States, but this increase has been more rapid than that of the white population in the same States. In Oklahoma the white population increased 115.5 per cent. from 1900 to 1910. In the same period the negro population increased 147.1 per cent. In West Virginia the percentage of increase for white was 26.4 per cent.; for negroes, 47.5 per cent. In Arkansas the percentage of increase for whites was 19.7 per cent.; for negroes, 20.7. In Florida, where there has been a large immigration from the North during the past decade, the negro population increased less rapidly than the white. In spite of this fact, the percentage of increase was 33.8, showing that there has been a very considerable negro immigration into Florida from other parts of the South. The average increase of negro population in the Southwestern States—Kansas, Louisiana, Texas and Oklahoma—has been 17.1 per cent.

Another striking fact which the cen-

sus figures have disclosed is that in the readjustment which is now taking place in the South between the city and the rural population, the negro on the whole remains in the country, while the white man goes to town. This is shown, for one thing, by the relative decrease of the negro population in all the larger cities in the South. The four cities which had a larger negro population than white in 1900 will serve as an illustration. These cities were Charleston, S. C., Savannah, Ga., Montgomery, Ala., and Jacksonville, Fla. In 1900 the population of Jacksonville was 28,429. In 1910 it had grown to 37,699. In 1900 there were 57 negroes in the population to 43 whites; in 1910 the ratio was 51 negroes to 49 whites. Montgomery, Ala., increased its population in the same period from 30,346 to 38,136. In 1900 the ratio of negroes to whites was 56 to 44; in 1910 the ratio was 50.6 negroes to 49.4 whites.

In the case of Charleston, S. C., while the population as a whole increased from 55,807 in 1900 to 58,833 in 1910, the negro population of the city actually declined. In 1900 the proportion of negroes to whites was 56.5 to 45.5; in 1910 it was 53 to 47.

Another fact which indicates that the negro is gaining in the rural districts, as compared with his white neighbor, is the rapid increase in the number of negro farmers. In every Southern State except Florida the census shows that the number of negro farmers has increased more rapidly than the negro population as a whole. In spite of the fact that the white population has grown more rapidly than the colored population in all but two of the fifteen Southern States, in only five of these States has the number of white farmers grown more rapidly than the negro farmers.

In conclusion, I do not believe I can

do better than quote a statement of President E. C. Branson, of the State Normal School at Athens, Ga., who, in a very interesting paper on farm life conditions in the South, sums up his own observation in regard to the negro as follows:

"Another significant economic tendency in the Southern farm life is the fact that negroes are resisting the lure of city life and sticking to the farm better than the whites. In every Southern State, except Kentucky, the white farmers are a lessening ratio. On the contrary, the negro farmers in the South, except in Florida, Louisiana and Texas are a growing ratio. In South Carolina and Alabama the negro population on the farm grew in the last census decade nearly twice as fast as the negro population in general in these two States; more than twice as fast in Mississippi, and nearly three times as fast in Georgia.

"On the other hand, there is the steady drift of white farm owners and white tenants cityward; the first for business opportunities and social advantages, and the last for work in the mills and factories. Thus the growth of urban population in Georgia was three and a half times, and in Mississippi, five times, the growth of rural population. Negroes rent the vacated farms and remain in the country, and oftentimes they move back into the country from the towns—a thing seldom true of the whites.

"Thus there are fourteen Mississippi counties in which the negro farmers outnumber the white farmers five to one; in four of these more than twenty-five to one; in one of them nearly thirty to one.

"And I may add, that the negro is fast rising out of tenancy into ownership. In ten counties of Mississippi the farms cultivated by negro owners outnumber the farms cultivated by white owners. But the increasing ownership of farms by negroes throughout the South is a conspicuous fact, even when they are thinly scattered in white communities. The fact appears so uniformly upon the county tax digests that it has ceased to be surprising.

"It means, of course, that the negro is working out his own salvation upon an economic basis. It may be that he is traveling along a hard, difficult road; but in simple truth there seems to be no other way."

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