

## On race mixtures & passing

The New York Evening Post makes the following statement in regard to what it seems to consider a remarkable discovery in relation to the comparative increase of the white and black races in the southern states:--

"It is extraordinary how it sometimes happens that a question is discussed at great length and by many disputants, while one important element in the problem is left out of sight by everybody. This curious fact has been freshly illustrated in the debate as to the relative increase of the white and black races in this country, and the prospect of the blacks outnumbering the whites at the South. After all that has been written it has been left for the Rev. Dr. William F. Warren, President of Boston University, to point out a factor which has all along been overlooked, viz: that while the white is credited by the census simply with its own white offspring, the negro is credited not only with all its own proper descendants, but ~~also~~ also with all the increase of the mixed population of the country, and over and above this, with all the children of white men by negro or mixed mothers, and with all the children of white women by negro or mixed fathers. Dr. Warren justly observes that to state this fact is to show its great significance in any estimate of the relative propagating power of the two stocks, and he de-

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believes that, were the census men to turn the tables, and reckon to the increase of the white man every child in which the slightest strain of the white man's blood can be detected, we should get a showing wonderfully changed."

This idea thus magniloquently heralded as a mighty truth over which all previous writers upon the subject have stupidly and blinded stumbled, not only has not the merit of newness but is practically of not the least importance so far as the comparative numerical strength or increase of the two races is concerned, it is entirely immaterial whether the child of a negro woman has a black father or a white one. He is a negro all the same and goes to swell the ranks of that race not only in the census reports but in society, in the schools, in the church and every relation of life where the line is drawn between the races. Not only that, but the child of a white woman which shows the taints of negro blood, is by that fact separated by an infinite distance from the white race and usually takes the mother down with it to the lower level, thereby adding in a curious manner to the reproductive vigor of the colored race. These affiliated white females, though <sup>not</sup> numerous are not as rare as might be supposed. By statutory enactment one eight of colored blood makes a colored man. It requires therefore three white an-

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cestors to give the descendant of a negro the legal status of a white man. This succession of white intermixture is of course very infrequent, much more frequently the first admixture is lost by intermarriage of the offspring with pure black or one having a scarcely perceptible trace of white. The chance of individuals being lifted out of the legal plane of the black race and placed on the white level is rendered still more remote by the fact that so long as there is any visible admixture the burden lies upon the alleged colored man to prove that he has seven-eighths of unmixed Caucasian blood in his veins. But even when the legal status of the white man has been reached in this manner the remote descendant of negro sires still remains a negro. The tradition of his race attaches to him even after all trace of visible admixture of blood is lost. His mother was known to be a negro and the fear of race-admixture bars his admission into the ranks of whites. In every southern community may be found instances where the admixture is not visible but the community remembers the descent and the individual thus apparently lifted out of Africanism in default of opportunity to establish himself as a white man, sinks back into the blackness which marks the other race and his children are unmistakably African. In other words, it requires three generations or almost a century of

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unmixed white blood upon one side, to give the legal status and perhaps two or three more equally unquestionable crossed to give even the rank of the lowest white type. These successive generations of admixture, it should be remembered, must all be illegitimate, one eight of colored blood being an absolute bar to marriage. This fact not only renders convincing proof of the requisite whiteness very difficult but makes such a thing as the absorption of any appreciable portion of the colored race by the white race an impossibility.

It is entirely proper therefore, that this element of the population of those states should be credited to the colored race in estimating the probabilities of the future growth. The son of a white man by any woman having a visible admixture of colored blood is just as much a negro as if all the nigritude of the Dark Continent was concentrated in his veins. It is not a question of the actual reproductive power of a specific number of individuals of each race, each carefully protected from access to the other race. No one has any interest in such a controversy. It is not an abstract question of procreative power, but a serious inquiry in regard to results. The question is whether the white race as it is situated at the South will keep pace in numbers with the colored race as it

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situated at the South. The real inquiry is whether the numbers of those who must be recognized and taken to be negroes (non-whites) will increase more or less rapidly than the pure Caucasians. The fact that the issue of one white parent and one black or partially black parent, is accounted black or is simply the misfortune of the white race and one of the advantages of the colored race is the competition.

What the extent of such admixture is it is not only impossible to say but no statistics ever will, or ever can be obtained on the subject that will be at all reliable. Be it more or less the effect is not merely the increase the natural ratio of numerical gain of the colored race, but also to diminish in nearly the same degree the numerical gain of the white race. The white blood that finds its way into colored veins is lost forever to the white race. It is swallowed up in the great stream of negro life. It may leave its trace in the mental and moral characteristics of the race but the physical status of individuals is no more likely to be effected thereby than their social relations. After the lapse of centuries it may be that the distinctive features of the race will be somewhat modified but they will not disappear nor be come any less easily distinguished from the Caucasian.

The fringe of mixed-bloods of each generation are likely to be absorbed into the mass of negro life by the next. If they were so conditioned that it was impossible for them to be thus absorbed, but were compelled to go on generation after generation, reducing by intermarriage with each other or by illicit relations with the white race, the medium of colored blood in their veins, then indeed the idea which seems to have just dawned upon the mind of the good bishop might be of practical importance. Otherwise it is only valuable as offering a reasonable explanation of what might otherwise be considered an amazing and almost incredible fecundity of the colored race.

It can only become important as modifying in any degree the deductions made from the comparative growth of the two races in the past or as bearing on the probabilities of the future when the intermixtures become more numerous than the offsprings of the unmistakable negro stock and successive generations of white parentage so frequently eliminate the traces of colored blood as to begin to restore to the white race the numbers previously lost thereby. This time, of course, can never come. The white blood which finds its way into negro veins is lost in the great stream of colored life. It may leave its trace in the mental and moral characteristics of the lives resulting therefrom but

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their physical characteristics will not be lost. After the lapse of many centuries it may be that the race will as a whole become somewhat lighter in hue and less pronounced in feature, but the fringe of mixed bloods the intermediary links between the races is not likely to perceptibly increase because the individual cases arising in one generation will be absorbed in the next. But there is not the most remote prospect that the white race will ever receive accessions of Caucasianized negroes sufficient in any generation to make up the losses it will sustain by increasing the numbers of the negro race through intermixture of blood. The Southern whites are naturally very ready to claim that this admixture is becoming less frequent. There is at least room for doubt in regard to the fact and it would seem to be certain that it is not decreasing to such an extent as to have any appreciable effect on the ratio of increase. To just the extent that this admixture occurs the colored race is absorbing the white, with the evident effect of improving the former and depreciating as well as limiting the numbers of the latter.

It has been attempted also to claim that the pre-  
dominance in favor of the colored man in the matter of  
numerical gain, is in some way dependant on the census

of 1870 which was defective in some states. Aside from the fact that its defects are shown to have consisted entirely of a failure to enumerate the whole population and that this defect applied to both races about evenly, one who will note the facts will see the disproportion is shown to be quite as great by leaving the census of 1870 entirely out of consideration. In the eight South Atlantic coast states east of the Mississippi, the white race has increased 340 per cent, since the first census enumeration up to 1880. In the same states the blacks have gained in the same period 500 per cent. The absorption of white blood has no doubt added to the vigor as well as the numbers of the colored race. It has done much to change its character and prepare it for a more exalted destiny. The colored man of the United States has in a large measure ceased to be an African. He is an American in thought and sentiment and to a considerable degree by affiliation also. The process which is now going on at the South and has been in progress there for more than two centuries, is really the evolution of a new race. The American negro is in no danger of extinction and has no chance of absorption. Instead of being weakened by juxtaposition with the more highly developed race, he is quietly assimilating its character.



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istic and gaining fresh vigor from each new act of  
oppression and wrong to which he is exposed. This  
very faculty of absorbing advantage from apparently in-  
mical forces--of flourishing in an exposure that would  
seem certain to destroy--is conclusive evidence of that.

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