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THEIR ANCESTRAL HOME

By CHARLES HALLOCK in the Pathfinder

Inasmuch as the Anglo-African bishop, John William Henry, of San Francisco, has publicly declared, at the National capital, that the American citizen of the not very distant future is to be an amalgamation of all resident races of men, including the typical negro, it will be interesting to know where the progenitors of this black element sprang from. Especially gratifying will it be to us of the Caucasian race to know that they are not from the lowest stock on the Dark Continent. Indeed, we so-called Americans, past and present, and up-to-date, have all along known that our home negroes were more intelligent than those of the West Indies English and Spanish colonies, and an explanation of this physiological fact follows:

First, as those who are familiar with the history of the Dark Continent are aware, the people of Africa have been more responsible for the enslavement of their own race than any other nation, notwithstanding the traditions which are current among the world's censors placing the blame upon mercenary Caucasians. From the very beginning the penal code of many tribes has been the underlying cause of such large numbers of blacks being sold into slavery.

Under home laws the principal crimes were witchcraft, murder, and manslaughter—witchcraft taking the precedence. Convicted persons had always the choice between death or slavery and exile, and instinctively they chose expatriation. In some sections whole families were arbitrarily sold by their own kinsfolk and townspeople for jealousy or reprisal for the least criminal act. They are so sold to this day to parties who will buy them, though the market is very much curtailed by the suppression of the slave trade years ago in English and American possessions, and more recently in Brazil and other progressive countries.

We of America do not need to kick ourselves much for conscience's sake in regard to this matter. Indeed, the moral and social status of those Africans who were introduced among us has been so vastly improved by the association, or contact, as events have demonstrated, that no specialized missionary work wherever applied throughout the globe has been so thorough or constant. Negroes were not, as a rule, filched from their homes by white depredators, but were gathered into convict gangs by their own village chiefs and driv-

en to the baracoons (barracks), where they were held until purchased and shipped off to foreign lands.

Neighbors who had domestic quarrels had only to prefer charges of witchcraft in order to get each other into the chaingang—ordeals by poison, or fire, determining their guilt, subject to the caprice of the petty officials administering them; and these in turn were easily susceptible to bribes. As a rule, white slave-traders, or contractors, as they were termed, had native chiefs in their service who went on raids for the purpose of collecting slaves for export, so that, between the upper and nether milestones, common people had a poor chance for a permanent residence on the Dark Continent.

From an old number of Goldwaite's Geographical Magazine, we may learn that most of the negroes who were brought to the United States were obtained from tribes living near the coast, and from a district located 100 to 300 miles inland, between the Sengal river, the Gulf of Guinea, and the Gaboon; while a part of the blacks, who were imported by thousands to the plantations of South America, came from a latitude farther south.

The result is that an important difference in ancestry exists between most of the negroes of the United States and those who inhabit the eastern part of South America. The largest part of our states negroes, though by no means all of them, are of pure African lineage, and their ancestors spoke languages which were entirely distinct from those spoken by the Bantu tribes exported from the more southern portions of the African west coast, and which, as a whole, are a superior race of people. Nevertheless, through much suffering and trouble our negroes have developed wonderfully for advantages denied to the Africans who live farther south in the western hemisphere, and are now above the latter in the scale of intelligence and civilization.

The most serious handicap which our present generation of Anglo-Africans has to carry, and one seldom thought of by those who are working for his salvation, is lack of family antecedent. He belongs to the innumerate; to the grand army of ciphers. In these days of egoism, when every white man who is proud of himself is studying to trace his lineage, the black man is absolutely without recourse.

This disability was felt even in slave times, before

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