

E8399 Ne. Atlanta 2.

ATLANTA UNIVERSITY PUBLICATIONS;
No. 2.

SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL CONDITION
OF NEGROES IN CITIES.

REPORT OF AN INVESTIGATION UNDER THE
DIRECTION OF ATLANTA UNIVERSITY:

AND

PROCEEDINGS OF THE SECOND CONFERENCE FOR THE
STUDY OF PROBLEMS CONCERNING NEGRO CITY LIFE,

HELD AT

ATLANTA UNIVERSITY, MAY 25-26, 1897.

ATLANTA, GA.

ATLANTA UNIVERSITY PRESS.

1897.

ANDOVER-HARVARD
THEOLOGICAL LIBRARY

OCT 31 1916

ANDOVER
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

E8399 Ne. Atlanta 2.

ATLANTA UNIVERSITY PUBLICATIONS,
No. 2.

SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL CONDITION
OF NEGROES IN CITIES.

REPORT OF AN INVESTIGATION UNDER THE
DIRECTION OF ATLANTA UNIVERSITY:

AND

PROCEEDINGS OF THE SECOND CONFERENCE FOR THE
STUDY OF PROBLEMS CONCERNING NEGRO CITY LIFE,
HELD AT
ATLANTA UNIVERSITY, MAY 25-26, 1897.

ATLANTA, GA.
ATLANTA UNIVERSITY PRESS.
1897.

ADDRESS BEFORE THE WOMEN'S MEETING.

BY MISS LUCY C. LANEY ('73), AUGUSTA, GA.

Ladies : A little more than a quarter of a century ago this American Republic, after much painful travail, brought forth the youngest child of civilization—the Negro citizen. To-day we, the offspring of that birth, stand upon the entrance of a glorious future if we will accept and faithfully comply with the conditions upon which we may claim the boon.

To find out and to discuss some of these conditions is the object of this conference and the women's section of it. For a long time many were disposed to think that the condition of most importance was politics, and for years politicians, honest and dishonest, ignorant and wise, struggled in vain to bring about that consummation devoutly to be wished, true manhood in our race. Some vainly hoped that that miserable deformity wrongly called education, viz., the conning of a few facts from text-books, was *the* condition to be complied with. Still another class said honestly and devoutly that the condition and the only condition to be met was the development of our religious nature. A fourth class united the second and third conditions, and after somewhat modifying the third, gave to the world as the watchword of Negro development "the Bible and the spelling-book." Any *one* of these made the rule of life, made the only condition to be met, has been to those who followed it an *ignis fatuus*, for it has misguided them and led them into dangerous places. Each by itself is but a part of a grand total.

No person is responsible for his ancestors ; nor should he be held responsible for their sins and short-comings, though he bear about in his body the marks and scars of those sins ; but every woman can see to it that she gives to her progeny a good mother and an honorable ancestry. I care not how humble may be the house in which two loving hearts may set up their household gods, if blessed with a manly and God-fearing husband, a womanly and God-fearing wife, intelligence and health, that place is a *home*, the nearest approach on earth to

heaven. The chief joy of home is mother. You may place upon the brow of a true mother the greenest laurel or you may give into her keeping the highest civic honors, but these to her will be found wanting if weighed in a balance over against her home. To her the blessedness of motherhood is the greatest joy, a crown more costly than pearls of royalty.

Marriage, the beginning of home, is a matter of great importance and should not be carelessly entered into. It is the place to take the proverbial stitch in time. From this point a shadow may be cast which will darken the pathway of coming generations. This is not a question that can be settled on a basis of gain or convenience, but as has been said: "A tie that only love and truth should weave and nothing but death should part."

Motherhood, honored by our blessed Master, is the crown of womanhood. This gives her not only interest in the home and society, but also authority. She should be interested in the welfare of her own and her neighbors' children. To woman has been committed the responsibility of making the laws of society, making environments for children. She has the privilege and authority, God-given, to help develop into a noble man or woman the young life committed to her care. There is no nobler work entrusted to the hands of mortals.

Faithful mothers, mothers who know their duty and perform it,—such must have been the mother of the Gracchi,—such a mother we read of in holy writ: "All nations shall rise up and call her blessed."

Will not the intelligent mother gather to her heart her sons and daughters and teach them to be pure in life and chaste in conversation, and see to it that there be no double standard set up in her home, and none in her community if she be able to tear it down?

Too often that mother who is careful of her daughter's environment, the formation of her girl's character, is negligent as to her son's. He may choose his own company,—be the molder of his own character. If the daughter should drag the robes of her womanhood in the dust that mother would be covered with shame and grief,—but the son of that mother may trample down his manhood and there will scarcely be a blush; only the old but false cry, and pernicious as it is false, "Boys must sow their wild oats."

Our boys need the careful, loving hand of mother; perhaps not more

so than the girls—but certainly not less.

Shall the boys be left to the tender training of the saloons and the fascinations of women degraded by sin? God forbid it! Women of to-day, awake to your responsibilities and privileges.

The Mothers' Congress recently held at Washington was not only a most unique gathering, but as the years roll on and men and women study more carefully that most important of all questions,—the children of the nation,—it will be found to be the working out of the noblest ideas of the noblest minds and most loving hearts of the age. That vast assemblage of men and women discussing questions most vital to the welfare of their children shows how great is the lamentation in Rama, Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted because they are not.

Shall we not catch inspiration from that Congress and in our literary societies, ladies' clubs, and even in our churches study our children by the search-light of the new psychology and with the spirit of the true and loving mother?