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The Negro in Business

Booker T. Washington



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This historic book may have numerous typos and missing text. Purchasers can usually download a free scanned copy of the original book (without typos) from the publisher. Not indexed. Not illustrated. 1907 edition. Excerpt: ... CHAPTER XXXI THE AMERICAN NEGRO AND HIS ECONOMIC VALUE Within the last two years and more I have had letters from the Sandwich Islands, Cuba, and South America, all asking that American Negroes be induced to go to these places as laborers. In each case there would seem to be abundant labor already in the places named. It is there, but it seems to be not of the quality and value of that of the Negro in the United States. These letters have led me to think a good deal about the Negro as an industrial factor in our country. To begin with we must bear in mind that when the first twenty slaves were landed at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1619, it was this economic value which caused them to be brought to this country. At the same time that these slaves were being brought to the shores of Virginia from their native land, Africa, the woods of Virginia were swarming with thousands of another dark-skinned race. The question naturally arises: Why did the importers of Negro slaves go to the trouble and expense of going thousands of miles for a dark-skinned people to hew wood and draw water for the whites, when they had right about them a people of another race who could have answered this purpose? The answer is, that the Indian was tried I and found wanting in the commercial qualities which the Negro seemed to possess. The Indian would not submit to slavery as a race, and in those instances where he was tried as a slave his labor was not profitable and he was found to be unable to stand the physical strain of slavery. As a slave the Indian died in large numbers. This was true in San Domingo and in other parts of the American continent. The two races, the Indian and the Negro, have often been compared to the disadvantage of the Negro. It has been more...

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