

ATLANTA UNIVERSITY PUBLICATIONS, No. 1

SECOND EDITION--ABRIDGED ✓

MORTALITY AMONG NEGROES IN CITIES

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONFERENCE
FOR
INVESTIGATIONS OF CITY PROBLEMS
HELD AT
ATLANTA UNIVERSITY, MAY 26-27, 1896

PRICE, 25 CENTS

WISCONSIN
HISTORICAL
LIBRARY

ATLANTA, GA.
ATLANTA UNIVERSITY PRESS
1903

83XN
A88

1083XN
.A38

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.

83XN
188

State Historical Society
OF WISCONSIN,
MADISON, - WIS.

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.

MOTHERS' MEETINGS.

BY MRS. GEORGIA SWIFT KING ('74), ATLANTA, GA.

If it is true, that of the three main factors in the make-up of the individual,—the home, the school and the church,—the greatest is the home, and since it is true that the home is what the parents make it, the mother by nature having the larger share in the making, then it follows that the destiny of the Negro race is largely in the hands of its mothers.

Statistics resulting from recent investigations indicate with respect to the Negro population of the United States; first, a general decrease in the birth-rate; second, an alarmingly excessive infant death-rate; third, because of inherited tendencies and defective education,—physical, intellectual and moral,—a greatly excessive death-rate among adults; fourth, that so little does the birth-rate exceed the death-rate that the race is doing little more than reproducing itself. These indications furnish food for thought, and reason for investigation and action.

The alarming increase of infanticide (without reference to the immoral, brutal class) seems to result from the overworked, discouraged, desperate state of many *laboring* mothers, upon whom the burden of family support so largely rests.

The large death-rate of both infants and adults, I believe, may be traced to poverty and ignorance of the laws of health; an ignorance not confined to the illiterate, for how many highly intelligent people there are who have almost no knowledge of the symptoms of ordinary diseases; who do not know when to send for the doctor, nor how to care for the sick. I recall several instances during the present year where promising lives in intelligent homes have been sacrificed on the altar of ignorance and the most extravagant economy; what wonder that the illiterate and poor die in so great numbers!

Does this excessive death-rate indicate a corresponding mental and moral decay? What is the remedy for such conditions?

The blood of the fallen is required at the hands of the intelligent

class. The demand is apparent for preachers who study the signs of the times and deal practically with the needs of the hour; for teachers, capable, conscientious, consecrated; for physicians, skilled, honorable, philanthropic. But these agencies alone can not meet the demands and should be supplemented by other methods.

Observation and experience lead me to conclude that a most excellent medium for effectual instruction of the masses, is "Mother's Meetings," where all questions of human interest are pertinent and may be freely discussed; where all classes of women may become better informed; where even the illiterate, by regular attendance, may gain much essential knowledge of such vital subjects as: The laws of sanitation; Selection of foods; Economic cooking; Proper and wholesome dress; Care of infants; Needs (physical, mental and moral) of childhood; Care of boys and girls through the critical period between childhood and maturity; How to fortify young men against the follies of immorality and young women against the dangers of imprudence.

The science of health and heredity and prenatal influences, and all that pertains to household morality and economy, may be handled with such simplicity in these meetings, that not only the mothers but the whole people may receive real benefit.

When difficulty is experienced in getting the mothers to these meetings I have met with some success by taking the meetings to the mothers, that is, to their immediate neighborhood.