

SCIENCE

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RACE PROBLEMS IN AMERICA¹

THE development of the American nation through amalgamation of diverse European nationalities and the ever-increasing heterogeneity of the component elements of four people have called attention to the anthropological and biological problems involved in this process.

I propose to discuss here these problems with a view of making clear the hypothetical character of many of the generally accepted assumptions. It will be our object to attempt a formulation of the problems, and to outline certain directions of inquiry, that promise a solution of the questions involved, that, at the present time, can not be answered with scientific accuracy. It is disappointing that we have to accept this critical attitude, because the events of our daily life bring before our eyes constantly the grave issues that are based on the presence of distinct types of man in our country, and on the continued influx of heterogeneous nationalities from Europe. Under the pressure of these events, we seem to be called upon to formulate definite answers to questions that require the most painstaking and unbiased investigation. The more urgent the demand for final conclusions, the more needed is a critical examination of the phenomena and of the available methods of solution.

Let us first represent to our minds the facts relating to the origins of our nation. When British immigrants first flocked to the Atlantic coast of North America, they found a continent inhabited by Indians. The population of the country was thin,

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¹ Address of the vice-president and chairman of Section H, American Association for the Advancement of Science, Baltimore, 1908.