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WHAT THE NEGRO THINKS *by Robert Russa Moton* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.50)

FROM his desk at Tuskegee, Dr. Moton has been able to look out upon his people and see the reaction of the black man to his white brother's impositions. Gently, Dr. Moton disparages the claims of many white men who boast, "I know the Negro"; he indicates the limitations of the contacts between them and the Negroes they know as far as understanding the entire race is concerned. He has been to some pains to point out how much better the Negro knows the white man, whom he has classified as "quality folks" or "sho' nuff 'ristocrats", at the very top; "half-strainers", in the middle; "crackers" or "saggers" or "rednecks", at the bottom of the bottle.

Like other writers of his race who have treated the question of the Negro's place in American life, Dr. Moton discusses the discrimination against the black man in railroads and other common carriers, in schools, in cities; he dwells upon that popular prejudice which has brought the Negro to believe that he has no chance at the polls or in the courts. He speaks, with pointed briefness, of the rôle of the Negro in the governing bodies of our country.

To all this the Negro has his own reac-

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tions. "In the midst of all this, the Negro thrives. . . . Above it all, his voice rises, singing; and the note of his joy has become the symbol of our modern America." Yet he takes his persecutions most seriously. "Catch him off his guard, and you will find him neither smiling nor singing but thinking and thinking hard." To him, the white man, says Dr. Moton, sometimes seems a bit pathetic in his insistence upon keeping the worth of the Negro hidden, in refusing to "recognize skill and talent, honor and virtue, strength and goodness simply because it wears a black skin". To him, the white man's apparent dread of the Negro is incomprehensible, the more so, perhaps, because there are a few white people who are known and loved for their sympathetic attitude and who "become the shadow of a great rock in a weary land".

The Negro is not looking for "special privileges" but for recognition by public authority of his right to enjoy equal privileges with other American citizens. Dr. Moton believes the outlook for the realization of this hope, for the eventual arrival of such recognition, is growing ever brighter, despite the fact that public authority may be powerless to overcome that prejudice and discrimination which "should be properly regarded as purely private and personal".

If only for the chapters on "Knowing the White Man" and "The Negro's Reaction", the revelation of *What the Negro Thinks* will appeal to many readers.

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