

# BAHA'IS PRESENT PROGRAM TO HELP RACE RELATIONS

*(Editor's Note:—This is the first of a series of articles discussing the program of the Baha'i movement and the part it plays in the elimination of Racial prejudices.)*

PORTSMOUTH, N.H., Aug. 30—The Baha'is of America in its effort to establish peace among warring races, religions and nations, number among their varied activities three summer schools, one of which is famous Green Acre, at Eliot, Maine. The location of this center on the Piscataqua river and rural scenes of beauty is conducive to exhilaration as well as rest and during the past forty years many great characters of various races have sought its stimulus and shelter.

This season's program, which extends through July and August, includes a course in race relations featuring racial likenesses and differences, conveying the scientific evidences and the Baha'i teachings. It is conducted by Genevieve L. Coy, Ph.D., formerly of Columbia university, now of the Dalton school of New York. The work goes deeply into the study of the so-called races, from the dawn of history until the present. It includes such topics as, What constitutes a race? What racial characteristics prevailed in earliest history? What parts of the earth were occupied? What color had peoples? What culture? Interesting facts brought out were that knowledge of color differences in early times is vague; that most scientists now recognize but three races; that differences between them are not well defined; that all races are more or less mixed; that skin color is due to environment; that national culture is often mistaken for racial culture and that there is a tremendous racial admixture in the United States and South America. It is a wise provision of nature that those living under a tropical sun should be protected by a dark skin and woolly hair. On the other hand, some scientists are of the opinion that a very fair skin is a faded or bleached one. All shades are useful and beautiful. The early race was probably neither white nor black. The development of agriculture and the use of iron have sometimes been the means of separating races.

Another period was given to the

discussion of racial antipathies. Factors in this are the survival of tribal clannishness; variance of religion; this enables some to regard themselves as the chosen of God and other accursed and unclean; dislike for what appears to be "new," "strange" and "different"; dissenting ideals of what constitutes physical beauty; tribal sense; that is, a belief that holding together is necessary to survival; trade and economic rivalries. Even the cut of the beard in the past has been the means of separating peoples. It was brought out that physical differences which have slight foundation and are always superficial have unhappily had great effect in separating races. It cannot be denied by the thoughtful that racial differences conflict with the fundamentals of true religion. Yet how persistent are they?

The effort to measure the capacities of different groups or races by intelligence tests is interesting but exceedingly difficult in estimating results. The reason is that when backward races have the same cultural advantages their median and average intelligence rises. This may be illustrated by the higher rating of migrants from the South when given the advantage of better school systems in the North. When the Negro lives on terms of equality with the whites, suffering no economic, social or cultural handicaps, it is quite reasonable to assume that he will measure up to the attainments of the whites in every particular. Environment and opportunity make all the difference.