This is pre-eminently the age of young men. Nearly every business or profession is calling for young men--young blood. Age being at a discount, great are the opportunities of youth. For the immediate needs of young men, the international Y.M.C.A. Training School was established in Springfield, Mass.

Every year finds a crowd of young men--most of them scarcely more than children--going to the great metropolis to seek their fortunes. Most of them, upon arriving at the goal of their hopes, find themselves without social companionship, the long evenings unemployed, and no choice between loneliness and dissipation. There is a truism to the effect that “Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do,” which is too often illustrated by the lives of the young men of a great city. And if this be true of the white population, it comes home to us with greater force when we consider the condition of our own young men.

In his annual report to the trustee board of Tuskegee Institute, Mr. Booker T. Washington dwells at some length on the Negro’s tendency to seek city life, and the reasons therefor. He says in part:

There are several influences that are constantly exerting themselves against the Negro growing up on the soil at present. One of these is the lack of public school facilities in the country district, and the frequent and unwise
agitation of the question about dividing the school fund in proportion to the tax paid by each race. In the cities and larger towns the Negro parent finds a comfortable schoolhouse and a school in session eight or nine months. Another thing which sends a larger number of Negroes to the cities than many realize is the surety of getting police protection in the city when one is charged with crime. I think I do not overstate the matter when I say that for every lynching or attempt at lynching that takes place in the country, a score of colored people leave the country for the city. This whole question is one that should receive very serious attention.

The above being true, all projects aiming to uplift and protect the youth of the Race should meet with our careful consideration, and if desirable, should be incorporated into our daily lives, and the message has a special significance to us because of the alleged susceptibility of the Negro to the crime of the metropolis. According to Mr. Washington, the city has become a great factor in the race question; and such being the case there can be no better way of uplifting and elevating the Race than by the influence of right living for our young men,—a pure, clean, Christian manhood.

In response to the demand, then, and to meet the need of society in furnishing social and educational life for young men, the Young Men’s Christian Association came into existence. It has not only accumulated a great amount of capital in its plants, but has created a new profession—the salaried offices for management of the work and its departments, known as secretaryships and physical directorships.

“The Young Men’s Christian Association,” says the Springfield Republican,
aims to do in a popular way for the young men of the city what the Christian
college seeks to do for its students.... A study of the social conditions of young
men by C. C. Michener, shows that five out of six of the young men of our cities
are living away from home, that only 15 per cent. are in business for themselves,
and that the average age at which men marry is twenty-five years. These facts
show the importance of a wholesome social environment. Many young men leave
school by the time they are fourteen years of age, and need opportunities for
further study. The Association aims to afford advantages for social gatherings and
education to young men in this important part of their lives. There is a great
demand for men able to take charge of the Association work. The profession
which has developed, is more and more furnishing a remunerative life-work for
specially trained men, and the training school specially founded to furnish these
men.

The course of study combines the advantages of a liberal and technical education and
may be divided into two general divisions--theory and practice. The course extends over three
years, and is designed to prepare the students to become the friends and advisers of young men in
all that concerns body, mind and spirit. Man is studied physically in anatomy, physiology and
hygiene; mentally in literature and in psychology and pedagogy; morally and religiously in
ethics, sociology and the Bible. The most exact modern university spirit pervades the exercises
of the class-rooms, and the laboratory investigation is applied throughout. The secretarial course
is really one of applied Christianity.

The study of young men physically is pursued in the subject of physiology. And here lies
the greatest interest for our readers because in this connection is studied hygiene which aims to
fit the future secretary to advise young men regarding the care of their health. By it they are taught to give aid to the injured, and a study of personal purity, which helps the student to deal with the strongest temptation which besets young men. The problem of personal and social purity is carefully discussed and its necessity emphasized. Space forbids our dwelling at length on the good things that engender a noble life which are found in the training school work. Any one who will investigate this system must rejoice at the blessings which flow from it to the youth of our country, giving us upright men and pure and happy homes.

In the class of 1903 our race was represented by Mr. David Wilder, the first colored man to graduate from the International Young Men’s Christian Association Training School, Springfield, Mass., and enter the work for colored young men. He will take charge of the colored branch at New Haven, Connecticut, September 1, as general secretary. Mr. Wilder was the only colored member of a class of twenty-five.

Mr. Wilder was born in Mobile, Alabama, and was graduated from Talladega College. His thesis read at Springfield, was accepted cum laude, and he has the pleasure of knowing that no man was more popular in his class, nor stood higher in his studies. In describing his reception on graduation day, during the final exercises, he says:

I was a little surprised, but pleasantly so, and somewhat taken aback, at the approval shown by the audience the moment I stepped forward and received my diploma at the hands of President Daggett. Before, the applause had been moderate, but pronounced enough to let the receiver know that the audience was in full sympathy with him and heartily approved of his success. But when I, representing in my personality the race to which I belong, stepped before that vast concourse of refined and intellectual people, the applause was so pronounced and
prolonged that I could not at first comprehend its meaning; but afterwards it was made clear to me, when a white-haired Anglo-Saxon came to me, clasped my hand in approval, and congratulation and reminded me how far-reaching was the event which had just transpired. I then felt fully my individual responsibility as a representative of my people, and I realized the full significance of the words, “No man liveth to himself alone.”

Mr. Wilder will be the first colored man to enter this new profession where the work is pleasant and satisfying to the unselfish members of the race who delight in “lifting as they climb.” Colored young men’s and young women’s Christian Associations are needed in every large city of this Union and trained workers must be at the head of such organizations. We earnestly commend this work to the consideration of our young men and women who have not yet decided upon a future course in life.