

NOVEMBER · 1899

before me says, "Would that the South had a thousand Booker Washingtons." Echoing that sentiment, I am Very sincerely yours,

Oswald Garrison Villard

TLS Con. 162 BTW Papers DLC.

¹ Oswald Garrison Villard (1872-1949), editor of the New York *Evening Post*, was a grandson of the abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison. Educated at Harvard, where he received a B.A. in 1893 and an M.A. in 1896, Villard at first planned a career as a teacher of American history but soon turned to journalism as his father, the railroad baron Henry Villard, groomed him to take over the *Evening Post*. He inherited ownership of the *Evening Post* in 1900, and turned it into one of the best-known liberal papers in America. The supplement of the *Evening Post* eventually became *The Nation*, one of the leading journals of liberal opinion, under Villard's editorship from 1918 to 1932.

Villard inherited not only the family newspaper, but also the reform causes which his family had championed. Throughout his life he took great pride in being the grandson of the Great Liberator, and his interest in black advancement began with his support of black education in the late 1890s. Villard, his uncles Francis Jackson Garrison and Wendell Phillips Garrison, and his mother Fanny Garrison Villard were all donors to Tuskegee Institute. They also gave money, however, to Atlanta University and other schools for higher education of blacks. In 1905, with the death of BTW's closest white associate William H. Baldwin, Jr., Villard filled the vacuum and became BTW's link with the northern philanthropists. As head of the Baldwin Memorial Fund, Villard raised several hundred thousand dollars for Tuskegee before 1908. BTW often sent Villard items for his paper that were too controversial to appear over his own signature on such topics as lynching, peonage, and discrimination in the South.

Villard became disillusioned with BTW's conservative approach and his refusal to become publicly outraged at racial injustice, and by 1908 their relationship had cooled somewhat, although Villard still consulted BTW on educational matters and favorably reported the Tuskegean's work in the *Evening Post*. In 1909 Villard was the author of "The Call," which led to the founding of the NAACP. He served as its first disbursing treasurer and was on the board of directors for many years.

Villard's interest in reform spanned most of the liberal causes of his generation, including woman suffrage, civil liberties, pacifism, and anti-imperialism. He wrote a number of books on the American press and on international affairs and wrote a biography of John Brown which was the standard work on Brown for many years. (See Villard, *Fighting Years*; Wreszin, *Oswald Garrison Villard, Pacifist at War*; Humes, *Oswald Garrison Villard, Liberal of the 1920s*.)

² BTW had T. Thomas Fortune ghost an article for the New York *Evening Post*. (See Fortune to BTW, Feb. 10, 1900, below.) The article, "Lifting Up the Negro," contained an account of how Tuskegee students were an example of self-help as they acquired an education and then went out to teach others in the "grand army of industrialism that will help build up the material fortunes of the race, and make our beloved Southland 'blossom as a garden of the Lord.'" (New York *Evening Post*, Mar. 10, 1900, 13.)