

MARCH • 1901

many points is weak and needs to make itself strong, but at the same time we are convinced, through direct and reliable evidence, that there never was a time in the history of the race when so much real progress is being made materially, educationally, and morally as is true at the present time. This progress is slow, but it is steady and sure, and no one need become discouraged or lose hope for the negro race. Mr. Thomas, on the other hand, would, it seems, lift the race up much as one would build a house. This cannot be done. If the author of "The American Negro" had spent his time during the last ten or twenty years in going through the South, speaking directly to the colored people in their schools, their churches, conventions, and associations, about the weak points that he brings out in his book, and this book had been the natural result of his efforts in this direction, we confess that we should have more respect for him and for what he says. The people in the United States do not have a very high regard for a man who goes to England to make known the weak points in the life of Americans. The people of Boston do not have high regard for an individual who goes to New Orleans to condemn Boston. The citizens of Atlanta do not have much respect for an individual who goes to New York to condemn the people of Atlanta. The men of the white race will not have high regard for a writer who seems to withdraw himself from his own race and goes outside of it to emphasize its weak points before an audience of another color.

The remedy for such an extreme case of the blues as Mr. Thomas evidently has is to be found in going right into the field among the people and entering into hard, earnest work for their uplifting. So long as the men and women who are actually engaged in a first-hand manner in the lifting up of the negro do not become discouraged, so long we shall have great faith in the future. It is sad to think of a man without a country. It is sadder to think of a man without a race; and this, we fear, is about the position in which Mr. Thomas may be described as having voluntarily placed himself through the medium of his book.

[Booker T. Washington]

*Outlook*, 67 (Mar. 30, 1901), 733-36. An autograph draft appears in Con. 215, BTW Papers, DLC. It makes clear that the statistical data on Virginia are from the Richmond *Dispatch*.