

The BOOKER T. WASHINGTON Papers

I met in the South conceded that the suffrage had been necessary to guard his (the negro's) civil rights. That it is still necessary Booker Washington himself will tell you." If this correctly states your view and if you are willing to be quoted as holding it, it will help those of us at the North who believe that the now popular gospel of negro disfranchisement is not only one of sad tidings to the poor but one certain to result in the hardening of the white race and the degradation of the black. In my view no material or even educational gains can make up for the negro's loss of faith that he has the rights of a man if he shows himself a man. Yours very truly,

Charles B. Spahr

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From Charles Waddell Chesnutt

Cleveland, O. May 2, 1903

My dear Dr. Washington: I meant to have written you sooner to congratulate you on your recent good fortune in the matter of the Carnegie bequest. Any personal advantage it may bring to you, you have certainly earned, and it will greatly enhance the usefulness of Tuskegee.

I wish I could see as good results, either now or in prospect, for the policy of conciliation of the South of which you have been the most distinguished advocate. Under it, whether because of it or not I do not know, the rights of the Negro have steadily dwindled, until, by the decision of the Supreme Court in the Alabama case,¹ the Negro in the South has no rights which the government, as constituted, can compel Southern white men to respect. I believe in manhood suffrage, and the speeches of the Northern men at Richmond, truckling away the fundamental rights of citizenship, have filled me, as they did some of the Southerners present, with a very wholesome disgust. Under that decision, aided by the acquiescence of the North, and the inability of the colored race to command, by