

*The BOOKER T. WASHINGTON Papers*

had the ballot as there is today. Then disfranchisement certainly does not indicate a turn for the better, as Mr. Taft maintains. To make stealing legal and public does not indicate a more healthy morality; and although the operations of a thief are artistic, that is no reason why the police should not guard the people. Disfranchisement indicates a distinct lowering of the moral tone of the South. Heretofore, this section was not bold enough and strong enough in its deviltry to flaunt it before the world as law. Certainly in this instance Mr. Taft pandered to dishonesty. Why are we to maintain a bland indifference to our political interests? Why is not such advice given to the offscourings of Europe's destitution who come to America? Is the democracy a failure and are the principles of equality to be found only in the poetry of politics? In declaring that our only hope is economic independence, Mr. Taft overlooks the most insistent warning of all history, and that is that any people who grow materially rich while remaining spiritually poor sow the seeds of their own decay and dissolution. Mr. Taft's speech is important, not only as a message from Roosevelt but also because Mr. Taft is slated to a seat on the bench of the Supreme Court or the candidacy for the Presidency under the Republican party. Mr. Carnegie's speech was important as coming from one of the richest men of the world. He enunciated a sound principle when he declared that the degradation of one race was the degradation of all. He too, paid a magnificent tribute to Mr. Washington, pronouncing him as the best "climber" the world has ever seen. His tribute to Negro music in general and the Tuskegee choir in particular was well deserved. Probably the old plantation melodies were never better rendered.

*Voice of the Negro*, 3 (May 1906), 315-22.

To Archibald Henry Grimké

Tuskegee Institute, Alabama. June 2, 1906

Dear Mr. Grimke: I am sorry that many duties have prevented earlier answer to your favor of May 25th.