

Growth of Class Privilege In the United States

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NO sooner does the virus of caste distinction penetrate a nation's vitals than good and evil in that nation come to be judged from the point of view of the PRIVILEGED classes alone. Particularly is this altered viewpoint noticeable in the United States in matters of education. How shall the children of servants be trained? Once we said, as men; now we whisper, AS SERVANTS, and then we shall have better service. How shall the children of mechanics be trained? As carpenters, we are beginning to think, and then we shall have better houses.

This logic seems sound, and it is sound if house service and houses are the SOLE OBJECTS OF NATIONAL LIFE, but are they? It is perfectly obvious to the mistress that good house service is sadly needed, but is it so obvious to the servant that HER life's horizon should be limited to the combing of an old woman's hair? It is true that you want good houses in which to enjoy life, but has the artisan no right to some enjoyment of life outside the privilege of building houses FOR YOU? Here lies the eternal danger of class hierarchy and caste—a danger which in the past has ruined lives, overturned governments AND BURIED CIVILIZATIONS. Today this noxious weed is springing up in America, right here in a land founded as A MIGHTY PROTEST against such world foolishness. It is allowed to grow but slightly molested, because its victims today are largely black people. But let us not be lulled by this fact into false security.

THE NEGRO PROBLEM IS BUT THE SIGN OF GROWING CLASS PRIVILEGE AND CASTE DISTINCTION IN AMERICA AND NOT, AS SOME FONDLY IMAGINE, THE CAUSE OF IT.

Indiana Gazette, 13, Apr 1905, p. 3 DuBois article

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