

THE PARTING OF THE WAVES.

By Dr. W. E. B. DuBois.

(The Author of "The Souls of Black Folk.")

In the April number of The World To-day, Dr. W. E. B. DuBois contributed an interesting article on the race question under the head of "The Parting of the Waves." Among many other things, he observes: "The points upon which American Negroes differ as to their course of action are the following: First, the scope of education; second, the necessity of the right of suffrage; third, the importance of civil rights; fourth, the conciliation of the South; fifth, the future of the race in this country. The older opinion as built up under the leadership of our great dead, Payne, Crummell, Forten and Douglass, was that the broadest field of education should be opened to black children; that no free citizen of a republic could exist in peace and prosperity without the ballot; that self-respect and proper development of character can only take place under a system of equal civil rights; that every effort should be made to live in peace and harmony with all men, but that even for this great boon no people must willingly or passively surrender their essential rights of manhood; that in future the Negro is destined to become an American citizen with full political and civil rights, and that he must never rest contented until he has achieved this. Moreover, notwithstanding speeches and the editorials of a subsidized Negro press, black men in this land know that when they lose the ballot they lose all. They are no fools. They know it is impossible for free workmen without a ballot to compete with free workmen who have the ballot; they know there is no set of people so good and true as to be worth trusting with the political destiny of their fellows, and they know it is just as true to-day as it was a century and a quarter ago "that taxation without representation is tyranny." Finally, the Negro knows perfectly what freedom and equality mean—opportunity to make the best of oneself, unhandicapped by wanton restraint and unreasonable prejudice. For this the most of us propose to strive. We will not, by word or deed, for a moment admit the right

of any man to discriminate against us simply on account of race or color. Whenever we submit to humiliation and oppression it is because of superior brute force; and even when bending to the inevitable we bend with unabated protest and declare flatly and unswervingly that any man or section or nation who wantonly shuts the doors of opportunity and self-defense in the faces of the weak is a coward and knave. We refuse to kiss the hands that smite us, but rather insist on striving by all civilized methods to keep wide educational opportunity, to keep the right to vote, to insist on equal civil rights and to gain every right and privilege to a free American citizen. But, answer some, you can not accomplish this. America will never spell opportunity for black men; it spelled slavery for them in 1619 and it will spell the same thing in other letters in 1919. To this I unswervingly reply: I do not believe it. I believe black men will become free American citizens if they have the courage and persistence to demand the rights and treatment of men, and cease today and apologize and belittle themselves. The rights of humanity are worth fighting for. Those that deserve them in the long run get them. The way for black men to-day to make these rights the heritage of their children to struggle for them unceasingly, and if they fail, die trying.—Ed.

Mrs. Anna L. Newby, 2228 Wahash avenue, who conducts one of the most fashionable rooming houses in Chicago, has a lively bunch of real live grass widows, domiciled in her home. They consist of Mrs. Minnie Barber, who is pretty as a beautiful peach, Mrs. Edward Tidington, who will not experience any trouble in drawing to herself another husband, Mrs. Marshall, who can pass as a queen every day in the week, and the last but not the least, Mrs. Newby, is also a dashing grass widow and whenever she is ready to take another dive into the sea of matrimony, we know of a fine looking gentleman who is ready and willing to step forward and ask her to become his bride. Mrs. Blue is the only old fashioned widow who resides at Mrs. Newby's house, an old maid whose name we are afraid to mention is also on the market for this is long year and if a man cannot find a wife among these ladies he is mighty hard to suit.

Broad Ax, Salt Lake City Utah, 23 Apr 1904, p. 1 DuBois

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