

May 2018

Di Bois, W.E.B.

Follow this and additional works at: http://dh.howard.edu/og_manusripts

Recommended Citation

"Di Bois, W.E.B." (2018). *Manuscripts, Publications and Other Written Work*. 28.
http://dh.howard.edu/og_manusripts/28

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the OG Series at Digital Howard @ Howard University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Manuscripts, Publications and Other Written Work by an authorized administrator of Digital Howard @ Howard University. For more information, please contact lopez.matthews@howard.edu.

Pageant - The Star of Ethiopia, by W.E.B. Dubois
Washington, D.C. Ball League Park. October 11, 1915

Pub. in Crisis Dec 1915. p 91-94

Unsigned mss on hearing Dr. Dubois lecture and
on seeing "The Star of Ethiopia"

Forwarded by Robert M. Pierson, Univ. of Maryland
Sept 1956

Monday, October 11, 1910.
Pageant - Ball League Park.
The Star of Ethiopia - DuBois.

This afternoon I bought tickets at 216 W Street, waiting in line for some minutes until my turn came after three or four negroes. One other white woman came just after me. On a long table in the room were hundreds of circulars having to do with the event. One referring to a pageant.

I bought two fifty-cent reserved seats. We are here early and find ourselves almost alone in our section while those behind us - 30 and 20 cent seats - are filling fast.

There are two - I think three bands on the scene. Before us a ^{200 or more} drum corps (drummers) attended by several troops of boy scouts in uniform carrying

their group servants. This band parades the grounds headed by its drum major who steps importantly and wields a sword with a purple bow on the cudgel.

This band played for a time then took to marching about.

Another band is at our left near the pavilion reserved for performers.

I'm not sure whether there is a third in the stand far to the right but it must be noted there's a strong echo.

We have good second row seats almost directly in front of the main stage. While the three bands cut the air at once and the workmen at the several points about the edge of the field adjust their

lights ready to be thrown on the stage we are noting the settling

their troupe servants. Their band parades the grounds headed by its drum major who slips importantly and wields a sword with a purple bow on the cudgel.

This band played for a time then took to marching about.

Another band is at our left near the pavilion reserved for performers.

I'm not sure whether there is a third in the stand far to the right but it must be unless there's a strong echo.

We have good second row seats almost directly in front of the main stage. While the three bands cut the air at once and the workmen at the second points about the edge of the field adjust their

lights ready to be thrown on the stage we are noting the settling

in front of us and
feeling curious about
what back of us. The
stage setting is Egyptian.
At the back of the stage a
wall with central doorway
above which opens the
and across which are
displayed rows of Egyptian
warriors, or something else.
- Maybe some of their gods
or deities part of them are
off to the left - presumably
in the desert sands is the
sphinx. Back of him shines
a light against a white
signboard or part of a
stage. "Silence" in big
green letters runs across
one section. Still to the
left of the sphinx is what
I suppose is a pyramid
with its many steps.
In front of the Egyptian
background - wall, temple
entrance, whatever it is,
is another platform &
two stands far out
in front. - But

dear me, I'm missing
the spirit & general aspects
in my attention to detail.
At least I must return to
the drama major who
— here come the program.
And yonder a live figure,
like those on the Egyptian
temple, crosses the field
at a run, a lithe young
colored boy in brown
tights and a white diaper
carrying a long spear.
One near the sphinx
is a girl ^{in a} pink
veil ^{and white stockings} and white stockings.
Far across the field to the
left I see there is another
series of steps leading up between
two dark walls in which
shadows of passing
forms are thrown out
strongly. There is
noise enough from
the pavilion for the
performances. Out
beyond all — past the park
boundary fence, to each
side of the big bill.

board, crowd in the
dingy, houses of some of
Washington's colored people.
A number will watch
the jagant from the
benches & windows of these
houses.

In

O Southland, O Southland,

So far, so far away
We dream of thee all
through the night
and long for thee by day.

Wauget - Detroit, Mich.

Changing attitude in
the north for the worse.
Some of every race
have been slaves.

Learn to value ourselves.
Sub-consciously at least
we learn to think your-
selves as inferior.

I count no man my
superior because he is
white - or because he
is black - only when he
is superior in character.

Southland
All Freedom
Waves your flag
Nobody knows.
Swing along.

Were you there when
they crucified my lord?

Oh, sometimes it causes
me to tremble, tremble
tremble —

Were you there when they
crucified my lord?

Were you there when they
nailed him to the tree?

Oh, sometimes, it causes
me to tremble, etc.

"The Race's scholar."

The pageant - what it ought to mean to you and me.

In a sense there will be no end to this war. When things happen on such a tremendous scale, it means a change for humanity.

Every problem must look at itself anew - as in a new world.

One says - Everything that is happening today is against us -

Suffrage - segregation - friendships in the race - yet he looks contented. Individual satisfaction things happen beyond comprehension. Try to understand. To guide affairs, not be carried along.

Segregation - We find ourselves contradicting ourselves - whatever attitudes

A curious matter of
our own philosophy
what attitudes we take.
We cut by compromise.
We need special training
-- organization --

Just what is meant by
organization. Something
more intensive than
"organization means in
a vague, general way.
Efficiency, honor, vision.

Efficiency we say today as
we think of Germany.
Pageant illustration.

Training masses of men
more difficult than
training individual.

First - get hold of the people
who could do the things I
want done - experiences -
not experimenter.

As a race - problem of
getting the efficient
men. We have talked as
if the raw material was
about the same. Now it
must change. Get hold
of the individuals.

Calls for a knowledge
of human nature, calls
for sacrifice of our
own desire to do things,
gets rid of so-called
democracy. Assumptive
by men that difference
means inferiority and
superiority - it means
being different things.
In training - everything
that administers to the
forming of a group.

War - breaking time
civilization. Efficiency
does not solve all
problems - not that of
the present. Men and
women willing to
sacrifice for the whole.
The finest thing in the
present - simplicity
all working together.
Difficult one may
not know the
general idea.
Always there must
come in any great
group movement

the clash between the
interests of the individual
and the group. Argument
does not prove. If we
are going to get what
the race needs we
must sacrifice as
individuals. Bringing
back an old English
word "honor". If we think
of doing right of morals,
we do not today think
of "honor", "honorable deed".
We go back to this.
No nation at war today
can say my record is
honorable. We realize
it because we realize
it. We realize today realize
it. No lack of religion
no lack of creed upon creed.
As in our own race.
The attempt of men to
make new honorable by
machinery. The reason
the elaborate pageant
went well was not be-
cause it was an organiza-
tion than because it has

in it honorable men.
Faith in the thing that
might fail. Honor - life
itself - the great adventure
vision - the thing we need.
Among the colored people
most efficacious, much
honor, singular lack
of efficiency.

Patience - Can't be more
than a fine sort of failure.
- attitude of one friend.

The modern distribution of
wealth is one of the phases
of civilization in the thought
of today. Do we colored people
realize that? There is
coming a time when we
are going to use the utmost
efficiency of every
individual. Group
idea usually is "We
must follow what they
have done."

Interpretation of history
the interpretation of group
meetings. When two
groups meet the greater
group prevails.

The white and the colored
groups coming together.

The world has known
time and time again
a leader group to be so
strong that it refuses
to give up its individu-
ality and a third
group grows.

In Europe groups
absorbed. Lesser and
and colored groups lost.

Here in North America
where color prejudice
is stronger, our people
must have vision.

Pagant cost \$500. Could
it have been done cheaper?

Idea that race is same
as others - not to be laughed
at - same greatness

same sordidness. If the
idea carries - cheap at any
price. The pagant
may not be the way.

But not sure. In all
dramatic instinct - God
putting ourselves in the

place of other men.
The beginning of vision -
it must come in many
ways.

In time of world war.
America the economic
center. With these things
must come also spiritual
leadership. What ten
million people want
they can have. ?

Education is more and
more becoming a rich
man's luxury - but not
entirely for those who
get rich by saving.
The next vision of what
this race has been,
is today, & must be if
wants it.

If we emphasize race
groups, are we bringing
up autagonism.

Here for one group
rises on the ideal that
one group must rise on
the fall of another. The
logical outcome in the
present war. We can

give a much finer
ideal. If there is more
for different individuals,
so also for different races.
Man to carry out his
work must have freedom
not only from those
under him but also
from those above. We
are afraid to give the
zein to efficiency.
Fear of the man who
can do things - efficiently
- so curbing - not only
of efficient colored men
but of efficient white
men. This must
give way. Individual
beauty, individual way
of working out things -
We must want
freedom not only for
ourselves but in a
bigger way - for all
men - all groups -
all who suffer.
A vision of dignity, truth,
beauty begins. What you
know - extending to others -

Oh freedom, Oh freedom
Oh freedom

And before I'd be a slave
I'd be buried in my grave
And go home to my lord
and be free,
Star of Egypt, Star of Egypt,
And before I'd be a slave, etc.

One of our best friends
Senator Clapp
I came to hear Dr. Dubois
I do not know when I
have ever felt so well
repaid. He has given
you one of the most
instructive addresses
I have ever heard.
(Some of addresses he
has made for your
people here and elsewhere.)

The same obstacles in
your pathway have
always stood in the
pathway of all the
masses. Things in
your way & efficiency
also in the way of the
young white man.
Once he invents a
machine etc - he is
welcome, once he
raises the cry of quality
for all, that moment he
sees a wall.

The slave or the grave-
to stone in the past an
alternation - there will

come a time when
the oppressed will not
have to contemplate
these alternatives.
During the coming
winter I proposed
it will be my privilege
to address you on
subjects of interest
— our interests are common.

Edmundo Ustón

Dr. Blachistone Barnes
of Liberia, ex-member
of Cabinet of Liberia.
Writer, thinker, orator.

"The Meaning of this War!"
1906 - 10 or 12 yrs. ago.
Prophecy come true.
Prediction of beginning
of cent. Bible!

October 29/1910.

Mr. W. E. B. DuBois lectured last night at the Bethel literary, between 15th and 16th Streets on M & a large audience even the galleries being filled. There was no admission charged but a silver collection was taken at the door, two young ladies presenting the plates as we entered. Mrs. Ventresca, Lois, and I went together.

When we entered we saw only one other woman who we were sure was white. There may have been more however and only about half the audience had gathered. Later Senator Clapp appeared on the platform next to Dr. DuBois. a strange feeling it gives one going to a gathering where nearly everyone is black. I wondered whether they feel anything like the same when they are in our gatherings or what a reversal would be like.

Mr. Ventresca and I
kept pointing out men
in front whom they thought
might be Dr. DuBois. I
always said "No". Then
they would ask, "Are you
sure you'd know him?"
I was sure. I knew
him the minute he crossed
the field ~~the~~ pageant field
the other evening. He
looks just like his picture
in one edition of "The
Soul of Black Folk."
In last night's audience
and in the group on the
platform he was conspicuous
and distinguished, looking
that one could easily
have singled him out
as "the scholar of the race"
and a man of ^{uncommon} intellectual attainments,
if one had never seen
his picture. He was in
evening dress. "He looks
like a Frenchman," said
Mrs. Ventresca. His manner
was very gracious, being

at the same time dignified
and friendly. He has the
look of the scholar written
all over him - though in
his rougher attire the other
evening and with his busy
manner the practical side
of the man was more
noticeable. A rather
amusing speech - un-
intentionally humorous -
was made by one of the
platform brethren last
night who rose to ^{pron}
a vote of thanks to Mr.
DuBois! "People often
ask me, 'what is the use
of a man who can do
nothing but think.'
he prefaced his remarks.
They blundered on with
what was intended to be a
compliment to the man
left them who had
demonstrated the use of
"a man who can do nothing
but think." Mr. DuBois
was modestly inclining
his head and held his

hands to his face, in a way he has, which prevents us knowing whether his expression betrayed his feeling toward the compliment.

There must be quite a little of mocking in a face like his at times. It shows in his pictures, not unkind, for it is expressed in a smile - a smile born of the understanding of human nature's foibles and frailties and society's foolishness and blunders but also with it the cynicism and tolerance that comes from larger experience with life, deeper understanding. He would have less of understanding, less of frank appreciation of the deeper reality of life, if he were free from the little touches of irony one discovers not only in his writing but in

the very man himself -
and I think such a man
would be less genuinely
kind just because less
understanding. He
showed from his frank
earnest address last
night which reached
down, perhaps, to his
audience but yet with
no compromise of his
larger ideas, good ideas,
- he showed that he is a
great man among them
a man able to interpret
the complex and puzzling
problems of life with simple
lofty beauty and clearness.

How lonely such a man
must be and discouraged
at times with the ignorance
about him - yet not to be
pained for he has the higher
satisfaction with all.

Perhaps it was my
imagination, but several
things happened which
I thought must indicate
in a way the best

inability of the mass of
the people who hear to
really understand. I re-
minded them mightily.
He was applauded and
applauded and saluted
by the audience on its feet
- tip toes. But with it all
I wondered if he felt a little
sinking of the heart, -
wondering just how much
really it was worth. Or
perhaps in his features
he understands this
limitation and appreciates
all the more their right
intentions. He spoke of
"vision" for his people as
a thing of slow acquisition
which must come through
many channels. Afterward
one of the choruses - perhaps
the leader - rose and
asked the chorus to sing.
"I think the chorus have
got the vision Dr. DuBois
spoke of - they have
caught it and are going
to put it to practical use"

and so on, much more.
As people are suddenly
moved in evangelistic
meetings, thought perhaps
perhaps the only dis-
crepancy was that their
speech was not quite
the facility for expressing
what he really meant
with fine shades. This
and the speech (sincere
enough) about the "man
who cares only himself",
the almost blustering
air toward the close of
the meeting - votes of thanks
and so on - even the
over-expressed air of
good feeling at certain
points he made and
the almost too easy
response, made me
wonder just what was
the real condition back
of everything. However,
the general impression
I got of the meeting was
very favorable. I felt
so much better repaid

than usual - whether
because of my own
attitude or for some
thing essential in the
address and the gathering
that made it more worth
while. They seem to
have such a real cause
back of whatever they do.
There were many very
nice-looking people in
the audience - I suppose
they were the better class
of colored people - many
perhaps connected with
Howard University and
those especially active
in work for the better-
ment of their race and
in touch with the more
advanced ideas of the
day.

The choros sang again
the songs they rendered
in the pageant. The
effect was not so good
as the first, in space.
We were too near the
front. Individual singers

and individual voices
were too easily dis-
tinguished and there
was something lack-
ing in the big effect
of the massed voices
as they came across the
field from the far end of
the grand stand at the
pageant.

I told Mrs. — of hearing Dr.
DuBois lecture. She was
eloquently non-committal.

Ideas from Dr. Dubois's lecture.
Young people, black or
white matters not, are
hindered in their efforts
at attaining efficiency
by interference and im-
patience with their early
mistakes. Let alone they
might demonstrate their
real efficiency. (^{mysticism}
(children))

The things that hinder
the black race are the
same that have been
obstacles to every race,
in the struggle of individuals,
too, the same is true.
Universality.

We are unable to under-
stand the real meaning
of many things as they
happen in the world
and we make mistakes.
We must never give up
trying to understand,
going to those who can
interpret for us.

True democracy does
not mean that all shall
have the same opportunity
to do the same thing,
but that each shall have
the opportunity to do the
thing he can do best.