Booker T. and W.E.B.

BY

[DUDLEY RANDALL](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/dudley-randall)

“It seems to me,” said Booker T.,

“It shows a mighty lot of cheek

To study chemistry and Greek

When Mister Charlie needs a hand

To hoe the cotton on his land,

And when Miss Ann looks for a cook,

Why stick your nose inside a book?”

“I don’t agree,” said W.E.B.,

“If I should have the drive to seek

Knowledge of chemistry or Greek,

I’ll do it. Charles and Miss can look

Another place for hand or cook.

Some men rejoice in skill of hand,

And some in cultivating land,

But there are others who maintain

The right to cultivate the brain.”

“It seems to me,” said Booker T.,

“That all you folks have missed the boat

Who shout about the right to vote,

And spend vain days and sleepless nights

In uproar over civil rights.

Just keep your mouths shut, do not grouse,

But work, and save, and buy a house.”

“I don’t agree,” said W.E.B.,

“For what can property avail

If dignity and justice fail.

Unless you help to make the laws,

They’ll steal your house with trumped-up clause.

A rope’s as tight, a fire as hot,

No matter how much cash you’ve got.

Speak soft, and try your little plan,

But as for me, I’ll be a man.”

“It seems to me,” said Booker T.—

“I don’t agree,”

Said W.E.B.