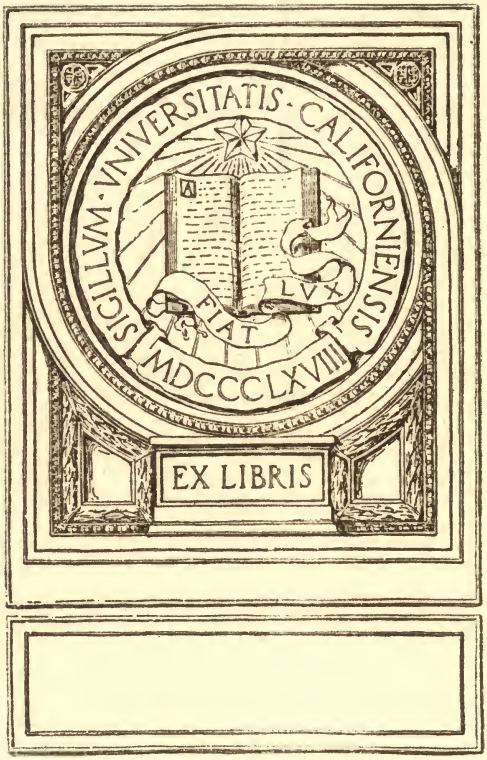
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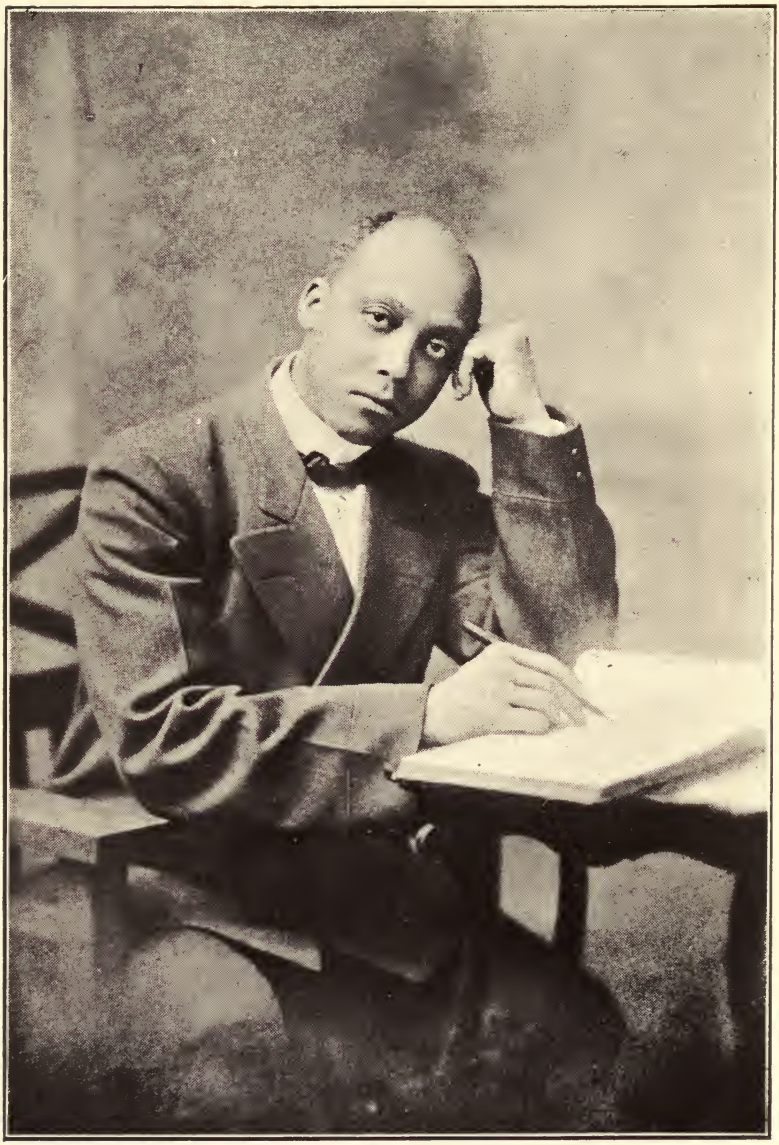

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THE BLACK MAN'S BURDEN

BY

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WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

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Illustrated by Portraits and Views

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This volume is dedicated to my mother, Addie, whose affection and foresight inspired me in my youth with a desire to get an education, and to my wife, Mary Ella, whose patience and fidelity have supported me in my ambition to be of service to my race.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Among the students who entered Tuskegee Institute in the fall of 1890 was a young man from Roanoke, Alabama. Like most of the students who came to us in those early days, he was very poor, and in order to make his way he found it necessary to enter the night school. This meant that he was compelled to work during the day in order that he could have the privilege of going to school for a few hours at night while he was slowly accumulating a fund sufficient to permit him to enter the day school later on.

Like most of the students of that day, too, he had had little preparation before entering Tuskegee and he was therefore compelled to begin at the very bottom and work his way up. He had not been in school very long, however, before he succeeded in attracting the attention of his teachers by the earnestness which he displayed, both in the work to which he was assigned during the day and in his studies in the class room at night. We were soon convinced, therefore, that we had found in him the sort of material we wanted in our students.

From that time to the present I have watched that young man grow in strength and in usefulness, until to-day I do not know a single graduate of Tuskegee who has more completely carried out in his life the spirit

which the school has sought to instill in its students, nor do I know one who is doing a more useful or more successful work for his race and for the community in which he lives.

This book is the story of that young man's life, as far as he has been able to tell it for himself.

Books of this kind have a value which is not confined to the information which they give. To those who are interested in learning, not merely of the condition, but something of the spirit of Negro education in the rural industrial high schools of the South, a personal narrative such as this is more valuable than any amount of statistics. Such books serve to give an insight, such as no mere formal statement or report could give, into the actual conditions under which education is carried on in the South to-day, showing something of its difficulties and mistakes, as well as its successes. But these are also books of inspiration. They show what pluck and patience and understanding can do, in the face of many difficulties and discouragements, to establish schools that will not only instruct, but will direct and inspire the masses of our people in their efforts for better things.

Although this book is the record of the experiences of a single individual, it is mainly the story of a school. It is a story of progress, for fortunately many of the difficulties which have surrounded Negro education in the remote and distant rural districts in the South are growing less. There is a better spirit everywhere. All through the South there is a growing interest, among the white people as well as colored, in the effort to make the Negro rural school something more than a mere

name; something more than a mere object in the landscape.

To a very considerable extent the rural Negro school is getting to be the center of Negro rural life; to a very considerable extent the teachers in the rural districts are coming to be the recognized leaders in the community. More and more the rural school is beginning to connect itself with the practical interests of every-day life in the community. Girls are learning to read and write, but they are also learning to work and sew; boys are learning to use arithmetic, but they are also learning to plow and to plant.

This result has been largely brought about through the influence, direct and indirect, of such schools as the one described in this volume. These schools, at any rate, have laid the ground and prepared the way for the work that is now just beginning.

They have done this by showing the masses of the Negro people what education, real education, is, and by showing the white people that, in any effort to make himself a more useful and more law abiding citizen, education is just as important and just as necessary to the black boy as to the white.

It is in this sense that I can say of the book that Mr. Holtzclaw has written that it is the story, not merely of the life of an individual, or of a school, but it is at the same time a very important chapter in the history of Negro education.

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON.

Tuskegee Institute, Alabama.

PREFACE

In presenting this book to the public, I do so with many misgivings. Several times during the past five or six years I have written short sketches of my life for various newspapers and for such magazines as the *Saturday Evening Post* and *World's Work*. I have published also, from time to time, in our own school paper, *Southern Notes,* articles touching upon my work as a teacher here at Utica and elsewhere in the South.

The sketches that make up this volume have been read with more or less interest by my friends, but I had not thought of ever publishing them in book form until about two years ago, when the Rev. Henry E. Cobb, of New York City, a friend of mine for many years, read one of them and was so much impressed with it that he wrote to me, urging me to publish the sketches, or to put them, at least, into more permanent form. Since that time I have received a great many letters from my friends in various parts of the country repeating Dr. Cobb's suggestion.

As the work in which I am engaged, and to which I am devoting my life, belongs to the public,—at least, I have always liked to think so,—I feel that I should accede to their wishes.

There is another reason for the publication of this

book. I know that whatever I am able to tell about my own life is typical; it is the story of many others like myself who have struggled to get an education and to be of use in the world, but whose efforts will never be known. It is because I want the world to know something of these unknown and, perhaps, less fortunate young men of my race that I have tried, as best I could, to tell my story here. It is necessary that the two races in this country should know each other intimately, if they are to live together; and that, in substance, is why I have written this book.

In the preparation of this narrative I am indebted to Dr. Robert E. Park, of the University of Chicago; to Mr. H. M. Rideout, of Harvard University, and to Professor John Chilton Scammel, of the University of North Carolina.

THE BLACK MAN'S BURDEN

CHAPTER I

I have some recollection of the house in which I was born, and of the great plantation which belonged, in the days of slavery, to one of those traditional Southern planters about whom we have read so much. I have seen the windowless house in which I first saw the light,—the light that scantily streamed through the cracks in the wall. It was a little cabin, fourteen feet by sixteen feet, made of split pine poles, with only dirt for a floor.

It was in this cabin, near Roanoke, Randolph County, Alabama, that my mother was left alone one Saturday night. My father had gone away to secure food for her, and when he returned, Sunday morning, I was there to greet him. My mother and I were completely alone at the time of my birth.

I have always felt that I have an advantage over most men of my race in that I was born on a day of rest. It was the first piece of good fortune that came to me, and I want to be grateful for it.

This was in the closing days of Reconstruction, when there were stirring times in nearly every part of the country, but of course I do not remember much about what happened then. I recall, however, some things that occurred four or five years later when, although the South

had been legally reconstructed, the law had not changed the sentiments of the people very much.

I distinctly remember that there were no colored school-teachers at that time and, in my own locality, there were no Northern white teachers. The few colored schools that existed at all were taught by Southern white men and women. Before I was old enough to attend school myself I used to go along now and then with the others, and I remember that one of these Southern white teachers took a great liking to me and, passing our house one day on his way home, predicted to my mother that I would some day be a lawyer. I did not know what that meant then, but I got the impression that it meant I was going to be something great, and I did not forget it.

Almost as soon as the Negro pupils got as far as "baker," and certainly when they got as far as "abasement," in the old blue-back speller they were made assistant teachers, and in a short while, relieving the white teachers, they became the only teachers we had. When I was seven years old there was not a white teacher in our community. The colored teachers were doing pretty good work, but the best of them had advanced only about as far as the fourth grade. There is one thing, however, that they had learned to perfection, and that was the use of the rod, and of this kind of education I got my full share every day. My great trouble was that if I got a whipping at school, I was likely to get another one when I reached home.

This was not always the case, however. One year it had been agreed that I should study nothing but arithmetic, and before I had been at school many days I had

undoubtedly reached the limit of my teacher's ability in that branch. For several days I had no lessons. At length, one day, without warning, he jumped at me like a fierce tiger, and with a hickory switch, which he had previously roasted in the fire, he beat me to the floor and continued to flog me until some grown pupils interfered. When I started home that afternoon I became exhausted and sat down on a log on the roadside, from which I was not able to rise on account of the lacerated condition of my flesh. My father found me after dark and carried me home. That was the only time that I can now recall ever having seen my father very angry. He wanted to whip that school-teacher, but my mother's advice prevailed, and I was sent back to school as soon as I could walk. Those early experiences made me vow that if ever I got to be a school-teacher I would not whip the little ones and let the big ones go free.

My father,—who, like my mother, had been a slave,—was a young and inexperienced man when he married. My mother, however, had been married twice before, and she was the mother of three children. Her first marriage was performed in slavery time by the simple act of jumping back and forth over a broom in the presence of her master and mistress. In the course of time as more children, including myself, came along, until there were six of us, my father found it very difficult to keep the wolf from the door.

My mother helped him by cooking for the landlord's family, while my father worked on the plantation. Our landlord,—one of those Southern planters, now commonly referred to as a "gentleman of the Old South,"—

like many others of his class, had had his fortune, consisting largely of slaves, swept away by the ravages of the Civil War. The result was that, although he had a large amount of land left, he was nevertheless a poor man. The agreement between him and Father, which was nothing more than a verbal contract between them, provided that he was to furnish land, mules, feed, seed,—in fact, everything but labor,—and it further provided that he was to help do the work and receive as his share three-fourths of all that the land produced, while we were to receive the other one-fourth.

Although he agreed to help, he seldom did any manual labor. He was in the fields every day, however, going from place to place among the various Negroes that were serving under contracts similar to ours. At one time my father ventured, in the most modest way, to call his attention to the fact that he was doing no work, but he very kindly, yet firmly, explained that he was doing more work in a day without a tool in his hand than my father was doing in a month. He tried to make my father understand this. I do not know whether my father understood it or not, but I could not.

We never prepared our land for cultivation, but simply planted the seeds on the hard ground in March and April and covered them with a turn plow; then we cultivated the crop for two months. Naturally, the returns were small. When the crop was divided in the fall of the year three loads of corn were thrown into the white man's crib and one into ours; but when it came to dividing the cotton, which was done up into bales weighing five hundred pounds each and which sold for seventeen cents a

pound, every bale went to the white man. He was at great pains to explain to my father each year that we ate ours during the year.

I remember how puzzled I used to be in trying to conceive how it was possible for people to eat a crop,—especially cotton out of which cloth is made,—before it was produced. In later years, however, and many times since then, I have seen whole crops eaten two or three years before they were planted.

Our landlord furnished us food from his smoke-house from March to July, and from September to December. This food consisted of corn meal, out of which we made corn-pone by mixing it with water and salt, and smoked sides of meat, from hogs that we raised. All the rest of the time we had to find something to do away from the plantation in order to keep supplied with bread and clothes, which were scanty enough. The land was poor and would hardly have produced enough to support all the people that lived on it, even if it had been under better cultivation.

Each year the landlord would "run" us, and he would charge from twenty-five to two hundred per cent. for the advances, according to the time of the year. No wonder we ate our crops up.

The method of obtaining food and provisions on this plantation was interesting. The landlord owned the store, —one large room about forty feet by sixty feet, which he kept well supplied with flour, meat, meal, and tobacco. This store was usually open only on Saturdays, when all the Negroes from the plantation would come up and pass the day at the store, which was a sort of "social center."

Meantime their rations for the following week were being issued. For an unmarried male laborer the usual ration was a pound of meat, a peck of meal, three pounds of flour, and a plug of tobacco.

I remember hearing the men complain very often that they were charged for rations that they did not get, and I remember that at one time a lawsuit arose between the landlord and a Negro on the plantation who could neither read nor write. When the trial came off at the store the landlord presented his books to show that the Negro had obtained certain rations during the year. The Negro denied having received such rations, and as proof he presented his "book," which consisted of a stick, one yard long, trimmed in hexagon fashion and filled with notches, each notch representing some purchase and in some ingenious way the time of the purchase. After the jury had examined the white man's books they began an examination of the Negro's stick, and the more he explained his way of keeping books the more interested the jurors became. When the trial was over, the Negro won the case, the jurors having decided that he had kept his books properly and that a mistake had been made by the white bookkeeper.

My mother cooked for the "white folks," and, her work being very exacting, she could not always get home at night. At such times we children suffered an excruciating kind of pain,—the pain of hunger. I can well remember how at night we would often cry for food until falling here and there on the floor we would sob ourselves to sleep. Late at night, sometimes after midnight, mother would reach home with a large pan of pot-

liquor, or more often a variety of scraps from the "white folks' " table (she might have brought more, but she was not the kind of cook that slipped things out of the back door); waking us all, she would place the pan on the floor, or on her knees, and gathering around we would eat to our satisfaction. There was neither knife, fork, nor spoon,—nothing but the pan. We used our hands and sometimes in our haste dived head foremost into the pan, very much as pigs after swill. In the morning, when mother had to return to her work before we children awoke, she was accustomed to put the large pan on the dirt floor in the middle of the cabin where we could find it without difficulty. Sometimes, however, our pet pig would come in and find it first, and would be already helping himself before we could reach it. We never made any serious objection to dividing with him, and I do not recall that he showed any resentment about dividing with us.

One day my brother and I were given a meal of pie-crust, which my mother had brought from the "white folks' " table. As we were eating it, Old Buck, the family dog, who resembled an emaciated panther, stole one of the crusts. We loved Old Buck, but we had to live, and so my brother "lit onto" him and a royal battle took place over that crust. As my brother was losing ground, I joined in the struggle. We saved the crust, but not until both of us had been scratched and bitten. I do not know who needed the crust most, we or the dog, for those were the days of hardships. Very often we would go two or three days at a time without prepared food, but we usually found our way into the potato patches,

and the chickens were not always safe where we passed, for my brother occasionally, by accident, would step on a little one, and of course we would then have to cook it as a matter of economy. I recall that in that section of Alabama where I lived there is a kind of root called hog potato, which grows abundantly in the swamps and marshy places. I have never known it by any other name. I used to spend hours every day in the swamps about our house wading in the slush above my knees, turning up the mud in search of those potatoes. After they were roasted they had a taste like that of the white potato with which people in the Northern states are familiar. By means of these potatoes, together with berries and other wild fruits, we were able to keep body and soul together during those dark days.

As I now remember it, my father's continuous effort was to keep the wolf from the door. He presently quit the big plantation and spent a year working on the Western railway of Alabama, at Loachapoka in Lee County, about fifty miles from home. There were no railroads or stage coaches to carry him to and from his work, so it required two weeks to make the round trip, much of which lay through immense forests where a narrow foot-path was the only passage. He would remain away from home three months at a time, working for the handsome sum of a dollar a day, out of which he boarded himself and furnished his working-clothes. I remember how mother and we children would sit in our dark little cabin many nights looking for him to come at any moment, and sometimes it would be nearly a week after we would begin to look for him before he would come. I don't

think we ever had a letter from him; we only knew that the three months were up, and that it was time for him to come to us.

He usually brought from forty to fifty dollars home, but by the time we paid out of that amount what we owed the white gentleman, on whose place we still lived, for the advances obtained of him in my father's absence there would not be much left for us.

The lack of food was not the only hardship we had to endure. We found it very difficult to find clothes and even shoes, which was very trying when the winters were cold. I never wore a pair of shoes until I was fifteen, and when I did begin to wear shoes I never wore them until the weather was cold. In fact, I made it a rule never to put on my new shoes until Christmas morning, no matter how cold it was. Usually in the summertime the only garment that we children wore was a simple shirt. These shirts were not always made of shirting, but were often of homespun, and when this material could not be had a crocus sack, or something of the kind, was used instead. I remember that the first suit of clothes I owned I paid for myself with the money I had made by splitting rails. It took me a good part of the fall season to split the two thousand rails that were required to get my little suit, but I succeeded in my undertaking, with occasional help from my father in finishing the job. The fact that I bought this suit with my own labor made me think all the more of it.

Although the census taker of 1880 classed my parents as illiterates, they had a very clear understanding of right and wrong; in their own way they were moral teachers,

and they knew how to make their lessons impressive. By no stretch of the imagination could either of them have been classed with what was known at that time as an ignorant Negro, though neither of them could read or write.

One day while I was alone in the "white folks'" kitchen, where I had accompanied my mother to her daily work, I spied a little round box on the shelf. It was a box of matches such as I have not seen in twenty years. Curious to see what a match-head was like, I pinched one without removing it from the box. An explosion was heard, and the box was blown off the shelf, to my consternation. With a switch my mother began to administer to a rather tender part of my anatomy the treatment with which it was already familiar, explaining all the while that I must learn to mind my own business. The white lady, with whom I was a favorite, interceded for me, saying that I should not be whipped for a little thing like that; it was most natural; I had reached the age of investigation. My mother desisted, shaking her head as she left the scene, saying she would "investigate" me, and from time to time she did. So in matters of conduct, at least, whether large or small, I had the advantage of a loving but firm discipline.

In such matters of conduct, or of morality, if you please, my mother was always teaching me some little lesson. I remember that at one time, when I must have been five or six years old, I was sent up to the "big house" to borrow some meal from the "white folks" for supper. On my way back, while climbing over an old-

fashioned rail fence, I discovered, while pausing for a few minutes on the top rail, a hen's nest full of eggs. The bait was tempting. I was hungry and wanted the eggs. I had never heard anybody say anything about taking that which did not belong to you, but somehow I felt that it was wrong to take those eggs. I knew they belonged to the white lady up at the "big house." After thinking the matter over for nearly a half hour, I decided to compromise by taking only a few of them, so I got as many as my little pocket would hold and carried them home. Sidling up to my mother in a rather sheepish fashion, I showed them to her and told her that I had found them, which was the truth. I remember that my mother was amused, but she kept her face turned from me and proceeded to teach me another one of those little lessons, which stayed by me and supported me in after years.

She told me it was wrong to steal from the "white folks," that "white folks" thought all Negroes would steal, and that we must show them that we would not. She said she knew I did not steal them, but that it would look that way, and that I must show that I did not by taking them right back to the white lady and giving them to her. That was a great task. After having spent an hour in going a distance of 300 yards, I reached the white lady with the eggs and told her that I had found them. I have always suspected that my mother had been there and had seen the white lady before my arrival. At least, that is the way it appears now, as I look back on it, for the good lady gave me an old-fashioned lecture about

stealing and told me that, whenever I wanted anything she had, I should come up and ask for it. Then she gave me two of the eggs. I was quite young at that time, as I have said before, but I was not too young to learn, and that lesson and others like it remained with me.

CHAPTER II

When I was four years old I was put to work on the farm,—that is, at such work as I could do, such as riding a deaf and blind mule while my brother held the plow. When I was six years old my four-year-old brother and I had to go two miles through a lonely forest every morning in order to carry my father's breakfast and dinner to a sawmill, where he was hauling logs for sixty cents a day. The white man, Frank Weathers, who employed a large number of hands, both Negroes and whites, was considered one of the best and most upright men in that section of the country.

In those days there were no public schools in that part of the country for the Negroes. Indeed, public schools for whites were just beginning to be established. This man set aside a little house in the neighborhood of the sawmill, employed a teacher, and urged all the Negroes to send their children to this school. Not a great many of them, however, took advantage of his generosity, for this was at the time when everybody seemed to think that the Negro's only hope was in politics.

But my father and mother had great faith in education, and they were determined that their children should have that blessing of which they themselves had been deprived.

Soon, however, Mr. Weathers had cut all the timber

that he could get in that section, and he therefore moved his mills to another district. This left us without a school. But my father was not to be outdone. He called a meeting of the men in that community, and they agreed to build a schoolhouse themselves. They went to the forest and cut pine poles about eight inches in diameter, split them in halves, and carried them on their shoulders to a nice shady spot, and there erected a little schoolhouse. The benches were made of the same material, and there was no floor nor chimney. Some of the other boys' trousers suffered when they sat on the new pine benches, which exuded rosin, but I had an advantage of them in this respect, for I wore only a shirt. In fact, I never wore trousers until I got to be so large that the white neighbors complained of my insufficient clothes.

Those benches, I distinctly remember, were constructed for boys and girls larger than I was, and my feet were always about fourteen inches above the ground. In this manner I sat for hours at a time swinging my feet in an effort to balance myself on the pine-pole bench. My feet often swelled, so that when I did get on the ground to recite I felt as if a thousand pins were sticking through them, and it was very difficult for me to stand. For this inability to stand I often got a good flogging, for I could not convince the teacher that I was not trying to "make believe."

School lasted two months in the year,—through July and August. The house was three miles from our home, and we walked every day, my oldest sister carrying me astride her neck when my legs gave out. Sometimes we would have nothing more than an ear of roasted green

corn in our baskets for dinner. Very often we had simply wild persimmons, or ripe fruit picked from our landlord's orchard, or nuts and muscadines from the forest. If we had meat, ten to one it was because "Old Buck" had caught a 'possum or a hare the night before. Many a night the dogs and I hunted all night in order to catch a 'possum for the next day's noon meal.

Although we were young, we were observant, and in this way we learned some things in that school,—among them, that the teacher, who was a married man, had fallen in love with his assistant teacher. He was constantly "making eyes" at her. She evidently reciprocated his affection, for at the end of the school year they eloped, and there was a great stir in the community in consequence. The people met at the little schoolhouse and very nearly decided that they would have no more school, but my father was there and counselled them that we had all suffered enough already from the affair and that we ought not to punish ourselves further. I attended the meeting myself with my father and I remember that my sympathies were all with "Miss Deely." True, she had run away with the principal of the school and nobody knew where they were, but I could not see what right anybody had to interfere with her love affairs, and I ventured to tell my mother so. Mother did not argue the question, but sat down and took me across her lap and proceeded to correct my views on the subject. Then she put the matter to me in the form of a question. She asked me how would I like to have some nice little lady run away with my father and leave me there for her to

take care of. That settled it with me. Miss Deely was forever afterward in the wrong.

At the end of the first school year there was a trying time in our family. On this occasion the teacher ordered all the pupils to appear dressed in white. We had no white clothes, nor many of any other sort, for that matter. Father and Mother discussed our predicament nearly all one night. Father said it was foolish to buy clothes which could be used for that occasion only. But my ever resourceful mother was still determined that her children should look as well on this important occasion as any of our neighbors. However, when we went to bed the night before the exhibition we still had no white clothes and no cloth from which to make them. Nevertheless, when we awoke the next morning, all three of us had beautiful white suits. It came about in this way: my mother had a beautiful white Sunday petticoat, which she had cut up and made into suits for us. As there is just so much cloth in a petticoat and no more, the stuff had to be cut close to cover all three of us children, and as the petticoat had been worn several times and was, therefore, likely to tear, we had to be very careful how we stooped in moving about the stage, lest there should be a general splitting and tearing, with consequences that we were afraid to imagine. At the exhibition the next night we said our little pieces, and I suppose we looked about as well as the others; at least, we thought so, and that was sufficient. One thing I am sure of,—there was no mother there who was prouder of her children than ours. The thing that made her so pleased was the fact that my speech made such an impression that our

white landlord lifted me off the stage when I had finished speaking and gave me a quarter of a dollar.

If there happened to be a school in the winter time, I had sometimes to go bare-footed and always with scant clothing. Our landlady was very kind in such cases. She would give me clothes that had already been worn by her sons, and in turn I would bring broom straw, from the sages, with which she made her brooms. In this way I usually got enough clothes to keep me warm.

So, with my mother's encouragement, I went to school in spite of my bare feet. Often the ground would be frozen, and often there would be snow. My feet would crack and bleed freely, but when I reached home Mother would have a tub full of hot water ready to plunge me into and thaw me out. Although this caused my feet and legs to swell, it usually got me into shape for school the next day.

I remember once, when I had helped "lay by" the crops at home and was ready to enter the little one-month school, it was decided that I could not go, because I had no hat. My mother told me that if I could catch a 'coon and cure the skin, she would make me a cap out of that material. That night I went far into the forest with my hounds, and finally located a 'coon. The 'coon was a mighty fighter, and when he had driven off all my dogs I saw that the only chance for me to get a cap was to whip the 'coon myself, so together with the dogs I went at him, and finally we conquered him. The next week I went to school wearing my new 'coon-skin cap.

Exertions of this kind, from time to time, strength-

ened my will and my body, and prepared me for more trying tests which were to come later.

As I grew older it became more and more difficult for me to go to school. When cotton first began to open,—early in the fall,—it brought a higher price than at any other time of the year. At this time the landlord wanted us all to stop school and pick cotton. But Mother wanted me to remain in school, so, when the landlord came to the quarters early in the morning to stir up the cotton pickers, she used to outgeneral him by hiding me behind the skillets, ovens, and pots, throwing some old rags over me until he was gone. Then she would slip me off to school through the back way. I can see her now with her hands upon my shoulder, shoving me along through the woods and underbrush, in a roundabout way, keeping me all the time out of sight of the great plantation until we reached the point, a mile away from home, where we came to the public road. There my mother would bid me good-bye, whereupon she would return to the plantation and try to make up to the landlord for the work of us both in the field as cotton pickers.

But when I became too large to be conveniently hidden behind our few small pots I had to take my place on the farm. When I was nine years old I began work as a regular field-hand. My mother now devised another plan to keep me in school: I took turns with my brother at the plow and in school; one day I plowed and he went to school, the next day he plowed and I went to school; what he learned on his school day he taught me at night and I did the same for him. In this way we each got a month of schooling during the year, and with that month of

schooling we also acquired the habit of studying at home. That we learned little enough may be seen from the following incident: I was ordered to get a United States history, and my father went to the store to get one, but the storekeeper, not having one, sold him a "Biography of Martin Luther" instead, without telling him the difference, so I carried the book to school and studied it for a long time, thinking that I was learning something about the United States. My teacher had neglected to tell me the name of the land I lived in.

It was hard enough for me to find a way to go to school. When it was not one obstacle, it was another. More than once I worked hard for eleven months in the year without receiving a single penny. Then, in order to enter school, I split rails at fifty cents a hundred during the month of December to get money with which to buy clothes.

When I reached the age where my school days were for the time at an end I was hired out to a white man for wages, in order to help support the family. Seeing that there was no chance for further schooling, I became morose, disheartened, and pulled away from all social life, except the monthly religious meetings at the little cabin church. Nevertheless, I gathered all the books I could find or borrow and hid them in the white man's barn, where I spent every bit of my spare time in trying to satisfy my desire for knowledge of the world of books. In this manner I spent all my Sundays. It was during this time that I came across the "Life of Ignatius Sancho," who was an educated black West Indian. It was the first thing in the way of a biography of a colored

man that I had found, and I cannot express the inspiration I received from learning for the first time that a colored man could really make history.

It was in 1880 that my father finally despaired of getting ahead by working on the share system,—that is, by working crops for half of the profit. Encouraged by the success of other Negroes around him and urged on by the determination of my mother and the persistence of us children, he determined to strike out for himself. His idea was, first, to rent land, furnish his own stock and farm implements, then after having paid for his stock, to buy land. I remember that when he announced this plan to us children we were so happy at the prospects of owning a wagon and a pair of mules and having only our father for boss that we shouted and leaped for joy.

Sure enough, he carried out his plans,—in part, at least. He rented a farm of forty acres, for which he paid annually three bales of cotton, worth one hundred and fifty dollars. He bought a mule, a horse, and a yoke of oxen, and so we started out for ourselves. The effort brought about a transformation in the spirits of the whole family. We all became better workers and for the first time began to take an interest in our work. However, before the crops were laid by, many troubles arose: one of our oxen broke his neck, one mule was attacked with some peculiar disease (I think they called it the "hooks"), and the horse became so poor and thin that he could not plow.

I shall never forget that mule. His ailment was a peculiar one; he could plow all day with ease, seemingly in perfect health, but after he lay down for the night he

could not get up again. If we would help him to his feet, he would eat a good meal and work faithfully all day long. Consequently, the first thing I heard in the morning was my father's voice arousing me from sleep, saying, "Son, son, get up, day is breaking; let's go and lift the old mule up." We also had to call in a neighbor each morning. Toward the end of the season old Jim began to get so weak that it was difficult for him to do any plowing, and before the crop was laid by he gave out entirely. At this juncture, not to be outdone, my brother and I took the mule's place at the plow, with my sister at the plow-handles, and in this way we helped to finish the crop after a fashion, so as to be ready to enter school the first day it opened in August.

The faithful ox that was left to us was always on hand, and it was my duty to plow and haul with him. In order to plow with an ox one has to put a half inch rope around his head, and let it extend to the plow-handles, for use as a line and bridle. That ox's head was so hard that a sore was cut into my hand, from jerking him for four years, and the scar is still there.

My father was without experience in self-direction and management, having always, up to that time, had a white man to direct him. As a consequence, our effort to do business for ourselves was not wholly successful. I have already spoken of our trials during that first year. Things went well during the early part of the second year, and the crop was laid by with little mishap, except that my father, who plowed without shoes, stepped on the stub of a cane, which, entering his foot, made him useless as a field-hand for the greater part of the year. I recall

that Father carried a piece of cane two inches long in his foot for more than a month, until he finally drew it to the surface by the application of fat meat poultices. How much better it would have been if he could have had a modern surgeon who would have drawn the splinter in two minutes. The crops were laid by, however, by the first of August, and we entered the little school, where we remained for one month. Our corn crop that year was splendid. We gathered it and piled it in heaps in the field one Friday and Saturday. On Sunday there was a cloudburst, and all the corn was washed away by the little creek that passed through the plantation. This was a severe blow to us, one from which we were never wholly able to recover.

However, we struggled on. The next year, just as we were ready to gather our crop, a disease called the "slow fever" broke out in our family. It was a great scourge, and all the more serious because we were not able to employ a physician and because my father was compelled to be away from home during the day, working for food to keep us alive. My brother Lewis was born in the midst of this raging epidemic, and my mother was not able to leave her bed to wait on those who were sick. The only attention we got was that which neighbors could give, during the little time that they could spare from picking their own cotton. Although I never took to my bed during the two months that we suffered, I was almost as sick as any of the family. Mother had us put in little beds that hovered round her bed, and she waited on us the best she could until she was almost exhausted. But, in spite of her efforts, Lola, my oldest sister, and

the most beloved member of the family, died. I distinctly remember that this so affected me that I did not care to live any longer. The fact is, I wanted to join her, for in my youthful mind I felt that she was better off than we were. It was after she had been buried and after we had returned from the little cemetery, all of us being still far from well, that I heard my father pray his first prayer before the family altar. The calamity was a great blow to him and brought about a change in his life that lasted as long as he lived.

The fourth and last year that we tried to get on by our own initiative we had several unique experiences. At the end of that year, we came out so far in debt that, after we had paid our creditors all the cotton we had made, they came and took our corn and, finally, the vegetables from our little garden as well as the chickens and the pig. I felt that we ought to fight and not to allow all our substance to be taken from us, and I told my father so, but he insisted that we must obey the law. My mother, however, was a woman with considerable fire in her make-up. When they came and entered the crib to take the corn we children commenced to cry; then my mother came out and with considerable warmth demanded that a certain amount of corn be left there. She said that was the law. I do not know how she knew anything about the law, but I do know that the white man who was getting the corn respected her knowledge of the law and left there the amount of corn that she demanded. Having succeeded thus far, she demanded that he leave the chickens and vegetables alone, and this he also did. However, we were so completely broken

up at this time that we applied to a white man for a home on his place,—a home under the old system. My father only lived a short while after that, and he was never able again to lift himself from the condition of a share tenant.

On the morning of Christmas Day, 1889, my father seated himself on the roots of a large oak tree in the yard just after breakfast, and, calling me to him, said: "Son, you are nearing manhood, and you have no education. Besides, if you remain with me till you are twenty-one, I will not be able to help you. For these reasons, your mother and I have decided to set you free, provided you will make us one promise,—that you will educate yourself."

By that time Mother had come up, and there we all stood. My mother and I were crying, and I am not sure that my father was not. I accepted the proposition and hurried off across the forest, where about a mile away I secured work with a white man, at thirty cents a day and board. Although we usually took a week for Christmas, that day my Christmas ended. I was very much excited. It was difficult for me to restrain myself. I was free. I was now to enjoy that longed-for opportunity of being my own master. The white man for whom I worked could neither read nor write. For that reason I feared to let him see me with books lest he should resent it, but nothing ever came of my apprehensions.

At the end of six months I ran across quite accidentally,—I will say providentially,—the *Tuskegee Student,* a little paper published by the Tuskegee Normal and In-

dustrial Institute, at Tuskegee, Alabama. In it there was the following note:

"There is an opportunity for a few able-bodied young men to make their way through school, provided they are willing to work. Applications should be made to Booker T. Washington, Principal."

I scribbled up some sort of application and addressed it simply to "Booker T. Washington," with nothing else on the envelope. All the same, it reached him, and I was admitted.

Then came the question of clothes to wear to Tuskegee. Up to that time I had worn only two garments at a time, a cotton shirt and a pair of cotton trousers. I had never worn an undergarment of any kind, and I had an idea that such garments were only worn on Sundays to keep the starched top clothes from scratching. Now that I was about to be off for Tuskegee, I had not only to provide myself with collars, cuffs, and at least one stiff-bosomed shirt, but I had to learn to wear them. My white neighbor gave me collars, shirts, and so on, second-hand, and they were all too large by three sizes. Imagine a boy with a number thirteen neck circled by a number sixteen collar about an inch and one-half too high for him, and you have a picture of me as I prepared to go away to school.

However, clothes was at this time one of my minor troubles. I was still giving my wages to my mother to help support the family. It was hard for me to forego the continuance of this help, especially as the family had grown so large by this time, and needed more money.

Nevertheless, the desire for education overcame all these scruples.

But there was still another subtle influence working against me. All the older neighbors counselled me not to go to Tuskegee. They said it was nothing but an old Baptist school where they fed you on bread,—corn bread, —and worked you to death. They said that boys who had no money and had to work their way through would be looked down on by the more fortunate; that Booker T. Washington was an infidel; and, lastly, that I had enough education anyway. I could teach school, and what else was there for me to do?

This appeal to my ignorance and my vanity was hard to overcome. Nevertheless, I decided to go and spend three months, by which time I expected to get all that Tuskegee had for me, and return.

The first day of October, 1890, therefore found me at Tuskegee. I presented myself at Mr. Washington's office for my entrance examination. I was now a young man, but I could not tell in answer to his questions in what country I lived, nor what state, nor what county. I knew that I was from Roanoke, and to me Roanoke was the whole thing. Mr. Washington put his hands over his mouth and laughed a little, then he sent me to his wife (she was Miss Murray at that time) for further examination. I remember one question she asked me,— "What are the parts of speech?" I had never studied written language, so I answered, according to my knowledge, that the parts of speech were lips, teeth, tongue, and throat. My final examination was on the farm, where I was sent to strip fodder from some sorghum

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cane. Here I was much like the proverbial rabbit in the briar-patch,—I could easily make a hundred per cent. I stripped the cane so clean that it shone.

Accordingly, I was admitted as a regular work student, working one year on the farm in the day time and attending school at night. The first night when I went to bed in Tuskegee I found myself between two sheets, something I had not been accustomed to. During the night an officer came in and asked me some questions about night-shirts, comb, brush, and tooth brush, with all of which I was but slightly familiar. He made me get up, pull off my shirt, collar, tie, and hose, and he told me I would rest better without them. I thought he was playing a college trick on me, but I obeyed. I could not see the reason for wearing one shirt in the day time and a different one at night.

Before I left home we had some peculiar ideas about what a "college" (as we called all boarding-schools at that time) was like. We all thought it was composed of one immense building with, say, four stories, and that the first year you were at school you were placed on the first floor, and promoted from floor to floor until you reached the top floor, when you would have finished school. Exceptionally bright students might skip a floor.

Well, it so happened that when I reached Tuskegee I was placed to begin with in the attic, and there was great rejoicing at home when I sent back the intelligence that I was on the highest floor. It was a confirmation of what the old folks at home had said,—I already knew enough without going to school.

My education began at Tuskegee the first morning the

sun rose upon me there. When I walked out upon the campus I took a cursory view of the situation, and was startled at what I saw. There, before my eyes, was a huge pair of mules drawing a machine plow, which to me at that time was a mystery. To my right, a little distance, was a brick machine making bricks nearly as fast as I could count. To the rear was the sawmill, with its throbbing steam-engine, turning out thousands of feet of lumber daily.

There were girls cultivating the flowers and picking berries, and boys erecting huge brick buildings, while others, suspended high in the air, were painting buildings. Some were hitching horses and driving carriages, while others were milking cows and making cheese. Then there were great fields of beef cattle, and other fields of young growing horses and mules. I wandered around among these things until I came to the blacksmith shop. There I found some boys studying drawing, and others hammering iron, each one with an intense earnestness that I had never seen before in young men.

Close by was the machine shop where molten iron was being fashioned into various articles, from plow-shares to steam-engines.

Out on the parade grounds was a host of young men dressed in beautiful blue uniforms as spotless as a minister's robe, marching to and fro about the campus to the exquisite music of a brass band.

All these groups of boys and girls that I saw were presided over by a man or a woman, whom I afterward learned was an instructor, and the complete, almost abject, obedience accorded by the students was some-

thing that interested me greatly. The truth was that I saw so many things there that day that I was bewildered, but as I looked about me it gradually dawned on me that I had at last found the looked-for opportunity.

Simultaneously with this opportunity for self-education came many real hardships,—to say nothing of imaginary ones,—which nearly ruined my health. I was poorly clad, and the winter then setting in was unusually cold. I had only one undershirt and one pair of drawers. I could not, of course, put these articles in the laundry, and, therefore, I had to pull them off on Saturday nights, wash them in my room, and get them dry enough to wear to breakfast Sunday morning. Consequently many Sunday mornings found me sitting at the breakfast table wearing damp underwear. I could do no better without leaving school, and this I was determined not to do. Fortunately, I had a small tough frame that it was difficult to shake. Then, too, the life that I had lived, back in the country, had taught me to rely on myself in times of difficulty.

I now recall circumstances that assure me that it was only my determination that kept me at Tuskegee and enabled me to enjoy its opportunities. My hardest task, after all, was to ignore the advice of my student friends, who were always saying to me: "You ought to go home. This work is too hard for you. This old school is working you to death; this fare of cow peas and bread and molasses will kill you. What you need is nourishing food."

These arguments were hard to controvert, especially when there was truth in them, for Tuskegee was poor,

and had difficulty in feeding her students in those days. But I could see no virtue in the argument so long as the very students that were advising me were themselves facing the same hardships.

I struggled on, and was at length promoted from the position of a common laborer to that of a hostler in charge of all the boys dealing with horses, and then to the much-sought position of special assistant to the farm manager.

CHAPTER III

But my most vivid recollections are of Dr. Washington as he appeared to me in those days. He was at that time a young man, about thirty-five years old. He was not in any way striking in appearance, but there was a peculiarity about him that I could not understand then, nor can I understand it now. I was for a time his office boy, and I tried hard to understand him, so as to be able to please him. After considerable time in his office I learned to know his ways pretty well. At any rate, when I was ready to leave the office to go into other departments of the school he seemed really grieved.

Tuskegee was a crude place at that time, compared to what it has become since. There were no local telephones, so that when a message was to be delivered from one part of the campus to another, sometimes a distance of a quarter of a mile, it had to be sent by the office boy. Mr. Washington used to remark at times, where I feel sure he thought I could hear him, that I was the only boy he had found who could deliver a message quickly enough for him. This was one of his methods of encouraging boys, and it certainly did encourage me; for when I carried a message, after hearing a remark like that from Mr. Washington, I always ran the whole distance to my destination and back.

One thing about Mr. Washington that impressed me

was his regularity. He was as regular as the clock. He appeared at his office in the morning exactly at eight o'clock, remained until twelve, very often took part in an Executive Council meeting until one, and then went to lunch. At two o'clock he would again be in his office and would invariably remain there until half-past four, when he would leave and tramp across the plantation; sometimes he would run for a mile or two, as fast as he could go, for exercise. When he returned he would go to his library and there would pass the time until six, when he would go to dinner. After dinner he played with the children for a while and then returned to his library until 8:40. He would then go to Chapel for evening prayers with the whole student body. This prayer service was one that Mr. Washington seldom ever missed and he always appeared on the rostrum exactly on the minute.

Mr. Washington had a grasp of the details of the work of Tuskegee that seemed almost incredible. I remember one evening that I was startled to hear my name, together with that of one of my friends, called out by Mr. Washington from the chapel platform. He simply said, "William Holtzclaw and Charles Washington may rise." I was so weak in my knees that I could scarcely stand, but I knew nothing else to do but to rise at the command of that voice. After we stood up and the whole school was looking at us, Mr. Washington simply said: "These young men may pass out of the Chapel and go and pick up the tools they worked with to-day." We had been ditching and when the work-bell rang had left our tools where we were working, when they should have been carried to the tool-house.

If the water main, or water pipe, had a defect in it so that it was leaking anywhere on the grounds, Mr. Washington was almost sure to see that something was wrong and to call the matter to the attention of the Superintendent of Industries.

If he came into the dining-room while the students were eating their meals, he would notice such small details as a student's pouring out more molasses on his plate than he could eat and would stop in the dining-room, send for the matron, have some bread brought to the student, and wait until that student had eaten all the molasses he had poured on his plate.

If one walked about the campus at night, he would be sure to meet Mr. Washington almost anywhere on the grounds. For instance, he might be found in the kitchen at two o'clock in the morning examining the method of preparing the students' breakfast. He seldom seemed to me to take sufficient rest for an average man.

One thing that impressed me very much in regard to Mr. Washington's character was the way he could concentrate his mind on a subject. It seemed that when he was thinking about one thing everything else left him. He was often completely oblivious of his surroundings.

One night he came to my room and, calling me, told me to go to the barn and get him a horse and buggy at once; he went so far as to tell me that some legal matters had to be attended to. This was about ten o'clock. In a few minutes I had the horse and buggy at his door and drove him down to the town of Tuskegee, a mile away, to the office of a lawyer. After about an hour he came out of the office to the buggy, where I was holding the horse,

and told me he would not have finished his business with the lawyer for a couple of hours, and if I cared to, I could leave the horse and buggy there and walk back to school, and he would bring them when he came. This I did, while he proceeded with his conference with the lawyer. At two o'clock in the morning he knocked again on my door and, handing me a half dollar, asked if I would not go back down town and get the horse and buggy, as he had come away and forgotten them.

More than once when Dr. Washington would be dictating some very important letter to his stenographer he would stop for a few minutes to think seriously about some phase of the matter under consideration, when he would become so oblivious of what was going on that he would forget the existence of the stenographer, and would ring for me, his office boy, and tell me to send in the very stenographer that was then before him.

In matters of dress Mr. Washington was exceedingly scrupulous. He never wore any superfluous clothes, never used a cane in walking, nor did he cumber himself with anything that could with decency be dispensed with, but he would never wear any garment that was not immaculately clean. He changed his clothes often, and was always very careful to keep his top clothes pressed properly.

We students all loved him. We would do anything for him. As an illustration of our confidence in Mr. Washington, I recall that in 1898, when I was a member of the senior class, the chaplain of the 9th Cavalry, then preparing to go to the Spanish-American war in Cuba, came by the school to get recruits. This chaplain,—

with the rank of captain, I believe,—addressed the young men in the chapel on the subject of joining the 9th Cavalry, and he asked Mr. Washington to say a few words. Mr. Washington, of course, was too wise to advise any of the young men to go to war, but he spoke of patriotism and of duty to one's country in a general way, and left the impression that it would be a good thing for those who felt like doing so to join the 9th Cavalry. When the meeting was over, however, a great many of us were confused. We could not decide within ourselves whether Mr. Washington really meant for us to go to war or not, so we called a meeting and discussed among ourselves whether or not Mr. Washington wished us to go to war, and every boy in the house seemed to be of one mind, and that was that Mr. Washington really meant what he had said in his talk, and that if he desired us to go and join the 9th Cavalry, we were all ready to go. For myself, I was already convinced that Mr. Washington desired that some of us should go, and so I was ready to go and did go to the recruiting office in the town the next day and offered myself as a recruit, but I had been in the school eight years and my health was so poor that I could not pass the examination; therefore I did not have the pleasure of joining the 9th Cavalry. It was more a desire to please Mr. Washington, however, than patriotism that caused me to try to join. So anxious was I to do what I thought was Mr. Washington's wish that after I had graduated, a few months later, I went to Whitesburg, Ga., and raised a company of my own in the hope of getting it through to Cuba, but before it was drilled into shape the war came to a close.

This all goes to show what a grip Mr. Washington had on his students, and he had the same influence over the young women that he had over the young men. He was always kind and considerate. If he scolded you and you took offence at it, he would laugh at you. I have seen him administer some severe verbal punishments to students, but I never saw him in all my stay at Tuskegee become angry with any of the students, though I have often seen him try to make students believe that he was angry.

I have come in contact with Mr. Washington constantly since those years, even until the present time, and I have seen very little change in him. His character, as it manifested itself in those days, remains the same, so far as I am able to see. If he becomes excited at any time, it is always when other people are quiet, and when other people are excited Mr. Washington is always quiet. Taken all in all, I have never seen another man who impressed me in the same way that Mr. Washington does.

Tuskegee was not so large as it is now, and one man, Mr. C. W. Green, had charge of the farm, brick-yard, truck gardening, stock raising, and several other similar departments. For this work he required several foremen, who were appointed from among the young men that showed ability to lead the other boys. He had some peculiar ways of testing the boys. I remember that his final trial in my case was to sound my honesty in regard to money matters.

One day he went away from the school hurriedly and while leaving he told me to get his trousers and have them pressed for him by the time he returned. When I

went to get them I found they had a large wad of money in the pocket. I took it out carefully, counted it, and buried it in the ground in a secluded spot.

When Mr. Green returned one of the first things he wanted to know was about the money. I led him to the lonely spot and dug it up and gave it to him. His remark was: "I guess you will do. There is a place I have in mind for you." The next day he suggested to Mr. Washington that he take me out of school and make me foreman on the farm, to begin with a salary of thirty dollars a month and to have one meal daily with the teachers. If I succeeded in the work, I was to have further promotion, both in salary and in the distinction of having my three meals with the teachers, thus virtually becoming a member of the faculty.

As I was still in the preparatory grades, it was with reluctance that Mr. Washington agreed to this proposition, but I was notified of the plan. After having considered it for a week, I respectfully declined to accept the offer, and I went into the Printing Office, to begin a four-year-study of that trade.

I wanted to learn what was in books. I was fond of reading and of study, and printing was and still is very interesting to me. I carried a book with me everywhere I went, so as not to lose a second of my time. While driving my mules, with a load of wood, I would read until I had reached the place of unloading. Mr. Washington took note of this and on one occasion, while admonishing the students to make good use of their time, he said: "There is a young man on the grounds who will be heard from some day, because of his intense ap-

plication to study and diligence in his work." From some of the circumstances I knew that he was speaking of me. The fact that I might be "heard from" later made me double my resolutions.

In September, 1891, I had one hundred dollars to my credit in the treasury of the Institution, so that I was now ready to enter the day school, to measure arms with the more fortunate students. But sickness overtook me, and when I emerged from the hospital after about two months of illness my doctor's bill was a hundred dollars and my accumulated credit went to pay it.

This was the penalty that I had to pay for trying to make too rapidly the transit from a lower to a higher civilization. When I lived without undergarments at home my health was conserved, because of the uniformity of my habits. At college it had been injured because I could wear proper garments one week, but might not be able to do so the next. Moreover, Tuskegee gave me such living rooms as I had never lived in before, as hitherto I had lived in log houses, which are self-ventilating. Now I had either too much ventilation or none at all.

Whenever I hear people talk about the high death-rate of colored people, I cannot help recalling my own experiences, not only in the circumstances just stated, but in hundreds of others, from the time I can remember until within a few years ago. As our people emerge from a lower to a higher civilization there is bound to be more or less falling by the wayside. It is not an easy matter to live for years in a house that has no windows, —in which the only light comes through the cracks or

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the open door even in the winter time, in rain and in storm,—then suddenly to find oneself the occupant of a well-built house, with glass windows and other comforts, and trying to adjust oneself readily to these new conditions.

I have known people, who had been poor all their days, to become suddenly the possessors of what to them was wealth. They would move into a good house, the first they had ever lived in, and in less than two years several members of the family would die, and everybody would say that the good house had killed them.

I used to wonder how it was that a good house could kill black folks and never affect the whites. The truth is, as I afterward learned, that when people who have always been accustomed to wear inexpensive clothes find themselves in a position to buy woolen underwear they very often wear the woolen underwear alternately with cotton, which of course will be disastrous to any man, whether he be black or white. This is only one of the thousand reasons why the black people in passing from a lower to a higher civilization show such a high death-rate.

After my illness I went home to recuperate, but I returned to Tuskegee within a few weeks. As I had no money, I was again permitted to enter the night school and work during the day. This time, as I have said, I took up the printer's trade. Here I broke the conventional rule of acting "devil" for six months, and began setting type after having been one month in the office. Within six months I was one of the school's regular

compositors, and within one term I had sufficient credit with the treasurer to enter the day school.

But I was not yet to enter. A letter came from my father, saying, "If you wish to see me again alive, I think it will be well to come at once." I went, and my father died in a few days after I reached home,—June 27, 1893. All hope of future schooling seemed now at an end. My only thought was to do the best I could with the heavy load left on my hands. I pulled off my school clothes, went to the field, and finished the crop Father had started. He had left a heavy debt, so I began to teach school in order to pay it.

Of course I knew little, but I taught what I did know —and I suppose some things that I did not. I think, even now, that I did the people in that community some good. I made them whitewash their fences and clean up their houses and premises generally, just as I had been taught to do at Tuskegee. The white people, to whom belonged the huts in which the Negroes lived, were much pleased at the way I taught the people to improve their surroundings, and when I was ready to go they made me a flattering offer to remain.

This was a very poor community. There was no schoolhouse except a little abandoned log cabin, which was given by a white man on condition that we fix it up. I could not get many people interested at first, so I took the boys whom I could interest, together with a few of the girls. We made mortar of mud with which we stopped the cracks until the house was air tight, and we also made a mud ceiling. There were no windows nor

shutters. It was not a government school, but had to be paid for by those who sent their children.

I taught three months and received in cash one dollar, but the produce I received was something wonderful. I told them I would take corn, peas, potatoes, molasses, pork, shucks, cottonseed,—in fact, anything with which they wished to pay me. Wagons were secured and loaded; for several days all sorts of provisions were hauled to my mother's house and stored away for winter.

Not all the patrons, however, were willing to pay. Some would dodge me when they saw me coming with my wagons to get some produce. At one time when I drove up to a gate and called for the man of the house the little girl who had been one of my pupils came to the door and said: "Come on, Professor; Papa is under the bed. He said, 'Tell him I am not in.'" Before I got in, however, I heard the mother say: "Come out from under there, ol' man, and give this teacher some satisfaction for what he has done for your children." And by the time I got in the house he was standing up as straight as a Sioux chief. Suffice it to say, I got two fine sides of meat from that house and a barrel of molasses. Once you get a colored man upon his feet, there is no telling what you can get out of him.

I called at another woman's house to make a collection. She met me at the gate and said: "'Fore God, 'Fessor, I ain't got a thing that I can give you. I ain't got nothing here but the cat you see behind me. If you want him, you can have him." She was eager to pay, so I accepted the cat and allowed her one dollar for it, and I turned it loose before I got out of sight. At another

house where I went for a collection the good woman looked all over the house to see what she could find to give me. There was nothing of value but a pair of scissors. She took them and forced them into my pocket against my protest, saying that I must have something for the work I had done for her children. In this way I taught school for three years, and so managed to support my mother and her family.

During the winter of 1893-4 I taught in Whitesburg, Georgia, a little village on the C. R. C. railroad, between Atlanta and Carrolton, Ga. Here I found the Negroes still a power in Georgia politics. The Hon. Bob Sewall, the man with whom I boarded, was the boss Negro politician of that congressional district, a district that afterward became known as Congressman Adams's district. In political conventions I have seen him have every white man in attendance, including some eminent lawyers, fought to a standstill,—"beaten to a frazzle," so to speak.

Gradually, these white Republicans grew weary of his domination, and they began a systematic effort to eliminate the Negro from the party, or, to state it in another way, they began an attempt to set up a white wing to the party. To make the matter plain, I had been appointed "secretary" to the Hon. Bob, and was in reality at the head of the Republican party in that district. For Uncle Bob, as I called him, could read and write with difficulty, but he was a good speaker. I wrote all his letters and newspaper articles, and composed all his speeches. It always amazed me to see how much natural power he displayed in delivering those compositions.

But the white Republicans kept after Uncle Bob's scalp.

At length, he came to me one day and said, "Sec., something must be done. Those fellows are going to beat me unless something can be done." I told him I would take the matter in hand. Our first move was to begin the fight through the columns of the local Democratic papers, for there was no Republican paper.

The first article, which called forth applause and comment from seventeen Democratic papers, was signed "Clodknocker." In it I appealed to the black Republicans to cut loose from the half-hearted white Republicans, and I showed that those who called themselves the "White Wing" were in reality only a white feather in the wing of a Republican blackbird, as the party was nine-tenths black.

I then asked what constituted a true Republican. In answer I quoted from General Grant's "Memoirs" and showed clearly, from General Grant's definition of a Republican, that there was not a single white man in Carroll County who could be called a Republican. That article killed the white wing of the Republican party in that county as dead as a doornail, for when the general convention met three weeks later only one white Republican was there. The last time I heard of Carroll County that white wing was still dead, but the black wing was also gone.

Up to this time all this tirade in the papers had been accredited to Uncle Bob, but it now leaked out that I was the culprit, and I at once became popular, an honor to which I had never aspired. There now came showers of letters and invitations to write articles for county papers or to address political meetings of many kinds. I had

offers of money for my influence in the campaign that elected a Democratic governor, Atkinson, but I never accepted a single dollar from any one for such service, though I wrote articles and delivered numerous addresses.

All this, however, was a sort of pastime to me. I was all the while teaching school and trying to improve my meager education by study. My aspiration was to be the leading teacher in that county, for the man who held that honor could not have made the third grade, in an honest examination, to save himself; nevertheless, he held a first grade certificate.

Because of my efforts to insure honesty in the examinations I incurred the displeasure of the leading teachers in one county in which I taught. To obtain a third grade license in that county, all that was necessary was to pay the president of the teachers' "Passing Club" five dollars, and you got the license; ten dollars, and you got the second grade; fifteen dollars, and you got the first grade. It was because of my efforts to expose these methods that I lost my popularity with the teachers.

"How could these people write grade papers?" was the question, and for its answer the good old superintendent of education in that county would have given a great deal. The examinations were taken under the inspection of himself and three other persons, all with nothing to do but to see that each man took a fair examination. I have seen teachers come into the examination room with tablet and pencil, who, being under suspicion, would be placed in seats of honor in the center of the room, where they would remain all day, sleeping fully half the time. They would not write more than two pages during the two

days that the examination lasted; yet, when the papers would be graded, they would receive the first grade, and what is more, their papers would be excellent. How was it done? Easily enough. The principal of the city school at the county seat was president of the "Passing Club." When the white superintendent would send to Atlanta for a tablet of some special color to be used in the examinations, the president of the club would find out where he obtained them, and would proceed to get some of the same kind and hide them over at his house. After the examination would be over, the superintendent would gather up the tablets and lock them in a room of the Court House that was provided for that purpose. Within ten days he and his commissioners would meet, unlock the door, and examine and grade the tablets. Meanwhile, the president of the club and his aids would have removed the original tablets by night, and would have placed in their stead the others all prepared by experts. What could the superintendent do but give first grade to those persons whose papers apparently deserved it?

Having secured the aid of a few teachers and ministers, I commenced a crusade against these frauds, and when I left Georgia the practice in Carroll County was nearly stopped.

But my mother still wished me to be educated. At length, she married again, for no higher reason than to permit me and the other children, who were growing up, to go to school. My hopes for an education were now again renewed, and I began to get ready to go back to

Tuskegee, where nearly everybody had forgotten my existence.

Like other politicians, however, I was without money. I went to Governor Atkinson, then Democratic Governor of Georgia, to borrow a few dollars until school should close. He knew me well by reputation, and although he was himself a poor man, he readily gave me the money as a gift, and also a little kindly lecture on the advisability of staying out of politics. The good Governor died shortly after that, but I have ever since followed his advice.

CHAPTER IV

Things went smoothly for a while, now that I was back at Tuskegee. Then my brother came, and I had to help support him. As soon as I had adjusted myself to this situation a letter came from my thirteen-year-old sister, who was then hired out to a hotel as chambermaid. The letter read: "I cannot amount to anything if I stay here. I want to be something. Will you help me?" There was no alternative, so I sent for her at once. Knowing that I should have to support her almost wholly, I was almost in despair.

At one time I had only one pair of trousers, and they had been worn until they were threadbare. I had patched them so often and so long that the patches refused to hold, therefore it was necessary to devise some other way to mend them. Being a printer and bookbinder, I knew the properties of printers' glue, and so I used to do my patching on Sunday at the printing office while the others were attending the services. I remember that on one occasion while Bishop Derrick was preaching one of his most powerful sermons in the chapel I was patching my trousers in the printing office, and by the time he had finished his sermon I had finished my trousers. His text was: "Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy." I was eager to do this, but I found it difficult to reconcile the Holy Sabbath with holey trousers. These patches looked

well, while they lasted, but the ingredients in the glue further injured the cloth so that within a few days the patches began to fall off, one by one, taking more cloth with them. In my embarrassment, I went to one of the teachers, from whom I thought I could get some sympathy and perhaps a pair of trousers; but I got neither. What I did get was a dignified lecture on independence and self-reliance. After that I made up my mind that I would go naked before I would ask for another garment. Mrs. Washington came to my rescue and provided me with a fine second-hand Prince Albert suit, which she had found among the second-hand clothes sent to the school by kind friends to meet just such emergencies. My fellow-students, both boys and girls, made all sorts of faces at me when I appeared in my new suit, calling me "Preacher," "Reverend," "Doc," and other similar names. This did not lessen my gratitude to Mrs. Washington, for the Prince Albert suit enabled me to remain in school.

Shortly afterward I was made a substitute teacher in the night school at Tuskegee at eight dollars a month, and my pecuniary burdens came to an end.

Toward the end of my senior year I decided to compete for the Trinity prize of twenty-five dollars, which was offered for the best original oration. Remembering Mr. Washington's constant advice that a man gets out of a thing just what he puts into it, I tried to put one hundred dollars' worth into my oration. Fortunately, no other contestant put in quite so much.

During this my last year at school I received many offers of work as a teacher in other schools. Tuskegee

also offered me a place as a teacher in its academic department, but my mind was made up. In the first place, I had from childhood wished to be a lawyer, but my father, in his lifetime, as well as my mother, was opposed to my studying for that profession. Father wished me to be a teacher, and just before his death he called me to his bedside and repeated his wish,—that I lay aside the thought of studying law and become a teacher of my people. He had some very peculiar ideas about lawyers. With him the name was synonymous with "liar."

If anything more than his wishes had been needed to change my ideas regarding the study of law, it would have been found in my career at Tuskegee, which certainly does not encourage the study of law, although it may not directly discourage it. Mr. Washington's constant advice to us in his Sunday evening talks was that after leaving school we should go into one of the remote rural districts, where we were most needed, and teach. For eight years I had listened to this kind of teaching and this, added to my father's wishes, made it seem that there was nothing else for me to do but to find one of those backwoods places and render it whatever service I could.

Mr. Washington's arguments were often reinforced by stories from his own experiences. Here is one that I remember:

He once called upon a woman somewhere in Massachusetts to solicit a contribution for Tuskegee. The woman, who was poor herself, went into a corner of the house and pulled from a hiding-place a few pennies, which she gave him. Meantime she explained that she

was poor, and really had no money to give to charity; but she was so eager that the struggling boys and girls at Tuskegee should have a chance to educate themselves that she refused to use matches in her house, and used strips of paper instead, for lighting her lamps. In this way she saved her match money for the aid of Tuskegee. This so impressed me that I felt bound to try to be worthy of such generosity.

So I refused all positions that were offered to me and determined to go to Mississippi, which to my mind was the darkest section of the South for a colored man. I had no money, for the prize money that I had won in the oratorical contest had to be used to defray the expenses of my mother, who came to see me graduated. While I was debating as to what I should do, or rather how I could get away from Tuskegee, Mr. William J. Edwards, who had graduated at Tuskegee five years before, crossed my path. I told him of my plans to go to Mississippi, and to try to do what he was doing in the southern part of Alabama, where he had founded an industrial school, then five years old.

He showed great interest in my project and invited me to take a position at Snow Hill and remain there until such time as I should be in a position to carry out my plans in Mississippi. I accepted a position as a printer in that school. The school had no printing office, but a good friend of his had given to it a little press. I knew the printer's trade, so I set up the press and got ready for work. But there was no type. I organized the teachers, —eight in all,—into a publishing company and induced each one of them to contribute a dollar out of their small

wages. Mr. R. O. Simpson,—a Southern planter of considerable means, who had always been interested in the school, and who had, in fact, helped Mr. Edwards to found it,—came by one day and examined my little press. Then he said, "Despise not small beginnings," and gave me a ten-dollar bill. Putting this with what I had obtained from the teachers, I bought eighteen dollars' worth of type, and so began the trade of printing at Snow Hill.

The printing shop actually made money. Nearly all the white merchants in the towns in the neighborhood of Snow Hill sent in their work, and I made fair profits. At the end of that year I received a letter from Mr. Washington, who was then in Europe, telling me that he had recommended me to an English syndicate to take charge of a training school in the island of Montserrat, which, I believe, is one of the Leeward Islands, in the West Indies. I felt that I ought to accept this position because the work was purely missionary.

In a few weeks I was on my way to Montserrat, but when I reached New York City to embark I received a cable from Mr. Sturgis, of Birmingham, England, telling me that he had been informed that the island had been destroyed by a tornado, and that perhaps there were no inhabitants left. I found myself in New York for the first time, practically without money, for it was here that I was to get the funds with which to finish the trip.

Mr. Washington, who happened to be in New York at the time, looked me up and lent me my fare back to Tuskegee, where I was to await further information. I remained there over a month, but no word came from England. Upon Mr. Washington's advice that it was

time to find something else to do, I determined to try my fortune in Mississippi. However, I was a stranger, and could make no headway. All the public schools had been taken up, so that I could not get a school to teach, and I got for a few weeks the job of handling cotton at a warehouse. Then I tried hotel work, but I found that altogether distasteful to me.

As there seemed nothing else to do, I determined to make a situation for myself. Purchasing a set of sewing-machine tools, I set out as a traveling clock repairer, but I had never repaired a clock in my life, so that the first two or three clocks that I attempted to fix were left not much better off than they were when I found them. After a while, however, I was able to do good work, and I made from five to ten dollars a week. Still the work, as well as the results, was too uncertain for me.

At length, I wrote to Mr. Edwards again and told him the exact situation, and that I would like to come back to Snow Hill.

I received an immediate reply from him, with money for railroad fare, telling me that he had no opening for me at the time but would be glad to have me come back and wait until he could find something for me to do. I was at Snow Hill but a short time before he placed me in the responsible position of financial agent for the Institution.

At the end of that year I went again to Mississippi, but failed in my undertaking, as I had done before. Then the trustees of Snow Hill elected me treasurer of the school, and raised my salary to twenty-five dollars a month. By this time I began to think that perhaps I had

Mrs. William H. Holtzclaw

better settle down. My convictions on this point were so pleasantly satisfied that after a year I was married to Miss Mary Ella Patterson, a Tuskegee graduate, who was at the head of the Women's Department of the Snow Hill school.

We decided that we would like to build a home, so Mr. Edwards borrowed the money for us with which to build it. We were to pay him back each month out of our twenty-five dollars, and he was thus to pay the persons from whom he borrowed the money,—some Northern friends whom I do not know. It looked now as if we had settled down for good, yet in my own mind I was not settled. I knew that some day I would go to Mississippi, though I confess it seemed now as if the trip had been postponed indefinitely.

In the course of time we had a very dear addition to our family, a little son, whom we named William Sydney, for my brother and myself. The birth of this little boy brought into our family great happiness,—happiness such as only those can know who have had a similar experience, but after six months he was taken from us by an attack of pneumonia. I had no more interest in our home after that; in fact, I felt better away from it, and I think my wife felt the same way.

I had been for two years trying to persuade her to think as I did about the Mississippi venture, but she would not be convinced. After the death of our child, however, she was willing that I should make the venture again. One year later I went to Mr. Edwards and told him that I had decided to go to Mississippi for the last time, and that I did not intend ever to return to Snow

Hill again. I had returned so many times that it had become a joke, and everybody looked for me back the next week. The fact is, the last time I had returned it had taken almost all the courage out of me. This time I burned the bridges behind me.

Three times I had failed to carry out what I had taken on myself as a duty; now I felt like a coward.

About that time somebody sent me a copy of Orison Swett Marden's book, "Pushing to the Front." I read it immediately. Up to that time it was Mr. Marden's masterpiece. No one can read the book without catching some of its inspiration. It not only aroused me, but seemed also to condemn me; every chapter I read seemed to say, "You are a coward not to stick to what you know to be your duty."

At length, when I had finished the book I threw it down, stood up, and resolved that I would go to Mississippi, and that nothing but death should ever again come between me and the fulfilment of my purpose.

CHAPTER V

It was no easy matter for me to leave Snow Hill, where I had made so many friends, chief among them being Professor Edwards, principal of the school, and his good wife, Susie. Of all the friends I have made in my lifetime no one has been a better one than Mr. Edwards; not only did he prove himself a friend during the four years I passed with him, but he had been a friend to me even before then and he has been ever since. We have always counselled together, and even at this day whenever any important matters affecting either of us arise, each is sure to call on the other for suggestions and advice.

During those years Mr. Edwards, being older and more experienced than I was, was a guide to me. I took note of all he did and I think I often patterned my own work after his. Therefore, instead of my settling down and making Snow Hill my home because of my four years' pleasant stay there, contact with Mr. Edwards stimulated my desire to work in an even darker field, if that were possible, than Snow Hill. Day after day I saw him struggling to build up an institution in one of the most neglected sections of Alabama. I saw him often when he was without decent clothes or sufficient food; yet he was happy. I saw him year by year going forward,

not by leaps and bounds, but at a snail's pace, yet with a determination that could not be overcome.

I saw the condition of the community about him, and witnessed the splendid fight he was making against tremendous odds; and I entered heart and soul into the work he was doing. One of the ways in which I sought to help him to enlighten the community was by editing and publishing a weekly paper, making it pay for itself. I even went so far as to try to make it a daily paper by reducing its size, but this last venture only lasted two weeks. So far as I know, however, it was the only daily paper ever published by a Negro in Alabama.

On Sundays, I went out into the surrounding country and organized the people into what I called "The Black Belt Improvement Society." This society grew to be a permanent factor in our work. Under its auspices an annual fair was held at the school. It also maintained a savings department which, during my last year there, when all savings were returned to the members, succeeded in declaring an annual dividend of thirty-seven per cent. This organization was afterward renewed in Mississippi, and later I shall tell something of its results.

All this contact with the people of the surrounding country had bound me closely to them, so that, I repeat, it was difficult for me to get away.

My wife had been ill for some time, so when I was ready to leave it was not possible to take her along with me, therefore it was agreed that she should remain behind and that I should go alone.

What little money I had I left with her. I took with me not quite enough to pay my railroad fare, for I ex-

pected to sell my wife's bicycle when I reached Selma, the next town, and thus secure the balance of my fare to Utica, Mississippi, for which I was bound. But I could not sell the bicycle, so there I was with the machine on my hands and not enough money to pay my fare.

However, I proceeded on my way in the direction of Utica with what money I had, paying fifty cents for the bicycle to travel in the express car. My ticket carried me about two hundred and fifty miles. When my money gave out I found myself in a strange and unfrequented section of Mississippi. I got astride my bicycle and rode until I came to a town called Cleveland. There I put up for the night in the waiting-room of the little station. Late in the night when the station agent was ready to close up he told me I would have to get out. I knew nobody, and there did not seem to be any place where I could pass the night, so I went out into the neighboring woods and fell asleep, with my head on my bicycle for a pillow.

I prayed that night before I went to sleep that I might be guided in a dream, which should tell me whether to proceed or what to do. This was in October, and during the night there was a heavy frost. About three o'clock in the morning I awoke to find my hair and clothes covered with frost, and I had not dreamed a thing.

Without having had any instruction or guidance as to what I should do, it seemed to me that the best thing to do first would be to shake off the frost, and see if I could not get a little warmth into my bones. Then I wandered about the town, knocking at one door and then another, trying to find some one who would be kind enough to

take me in. But every one was convinced that I was a tramp, and therefore would not admit me. As a matter of fact, I suppose I was a tramp, but that did not seem to me a good reason at that time for shutting the door on me. Every householder I succeeded in arousing would send me to the next one, until, after a while, one told me that I would find an old fertilizer house down the railroad where I might stay. I found the house and occupied it for a time. At dawn I jumped astride my bicycle and battled my way southward through the cane brakes, swamps, and marshes of Boliver County toward Utica.

Boliver County is the fourth county southward from Memphis on the east side of the Mississippi River, right in the heart of the Mississippi Delta. It is noted as a cotton raising county. The lands are very largely owned by the whites, in tracts of a hundred to several thousand acres, but there are several well-to-do Negroes in the county, and have been ever since soon after the Negroes were set free. It was of this county in the early days of reconstruction that the late Senator, B. K. Bruce, was sheriff. It was from this county also that he was later sent to Washington as United States Senator from Mississippi. Another thing of interest about this county is the fact that the Negro town of Mound Bayou is located here. This town is situated on the Y. & M. V. railroad, about halfway between Memphis and Vicksburg, and is generally spoken of as the largest and most progressive purely Negro settlement in the country.

When I set out for Mississippi I had it in my mind that probably I should attempt to start a school at Mound Bayou or somewhere in Boliver County. I first stopped

two miles south of Mound Bayou at a little deserted village called Renova. Here I found about a hundred empty houses, two churches, and a hotel. There were eight or ten houses occupied by Negroes. The empty houses had formerly been occupied by saw-mill laborers, but the mill had been moved and the laborers had moved with it. These houses were all for sale, together with several hundred acres of land in their neighborhood.

The land agent who had charge of these sales, and who evidently expected to build another Mound Bayou there, was a graduate, as he told me, of Fisk University. I tried to make a deal with him and start a school there, but for some reason the more I talked about purchasing the land, the more he distrusted me, until at length he grew so suspicious that we could not transact any business at all. I could not convince him that a man that was not a college graduate could build a school. Seeing my inability to work with him, I went to Memphis to talk the matter over with the gentleman who owned the land and the houses, but before I reached Memphis the land agent at Renova had communicated in some way with the Memphis gentleman, and had undoubtedly made him believe that I was a tramp, and so I could not get a conference with him, after having reached there. I then went down to Mound Bayou, where I was received most cordially by Mr. I. T. Montgomery, founder and chief factor of the town. He seemed to be very much interested in my plans, and after he had shown me about the town we had a conference about the feasibility of my project.

He asked me some searching questions, among them how and where I expected to get the money to establish

my enterprise. This was a question I could not answer, and for this reason Mr. Montgomery did not see any wisdom in encouraging me to make an effort at Mound Bayou. However, he was careful not to discourage me. I remember that he bade me go on, and keep in touch with him, and in the meantime he handed me some leaflets containing a description of how he had founded Mound Bayou. I read this description with a great deal of interest, and it gave me courage and hope, which I needed very much at that time. I remember that one of the leaflets contained something like the following statement as to how Mr. Montgomery had founded Mound Bayou:

"On a summer morning in July, 1887, the fast express dropped me at a cross-road sawmill. I was accompanied by a civil engineer, with whom I had spent the day previous in the trackless forest northwest of the town of Shaw. It was not yet day when we disembarked from the train. We went a short distance to the quarter mill and were generously treated to a hearty breakfast.

"Immediately afterward we started to tramp northward on the line of railway. After a walk of nearly three miles my companion paused and said, 'Here is the land.'

"I gazed north and south along the railway right of way, which cut a wide path, something like the street of a great city, through the forest and jungle. On either side were impassable barriers of cane, which stood twenty-five feet high, interwoven with briars and thickly studded with mighty trees, some of which were one hundred and fifty feet in height.

Charles Banks
(*See page 226*)

"I tramped up and down, looking for a place of entrance. Finally I found a hunter's trail which had been kept open by wild beasts and wandering cattle. This led along the bank of the bayou from which the locality derived its name. A mile farther along this path came out to the railway again. We, however, turned farther north and found the woods somewhat more open. As the falling shadows reminded us that the day was nearly done we stood upon the spot now occupied by the town."

Now, that section of Mississippi through which I was travelling was wild and little frequented. I was told by the people along the route that I was likely to meet bears and panthers, wild cats and catamounts. As I had no means of defense, all I could do was to ride in a hurry, and that I did, though not so fast as to escape being attacked by a wild cat about dusk one evening.

Before I left that section my wheel broke down. Then I had to put it on my shoulders, roll up my trousers, and proceed to my destination afoot. I remember walking once all day without water, not having found a single place where I could get any that was fit to drink. At length when it was nearly night I came to an old church where there was a cistern about thirty feet deep, with sparkling water at the bottom. I went to this well and looked in. There was no bucket with which to get the water, but there was a rope, so I tied my hat to the rope, put a stone into it, and let it down. When the hat was full of water it pulled loose from the rope and remained in the well.

I was so famished for water that I attempted to go

down into the well, to get both the water and the hat. I put a pole down, then went down on it, and after having obtained my hat and a drink, I started up the pole again, but found it was so sleek that I could not climb it. There I was in the bottom of a well, many miles from any house, with dark approaching. I was desperate and made many frantic efforts to get out, but could not until another traveller came along, who, like myself, was looking for water. He was a white farmer, living in the neighborhood. He yelled down to know what I was doing there, and when I told him he let down a rope, and said: "Catch hold there and I will pull you out, though most 'niggers' ain't worth it." After he had got me out, however, and I had thanked him profusely, he carried me on to his house, took me into the kitchen, and gave me a substantial meal of molasses and bread. I don't know when I have so appreciated a meal.

In my travels I had an opportunity to see and examine at first hand that section of the country known as the Delta, through which I passed. I talked with its people, both white and black, and tried to get their point of view in regard to the Negro. Starting at Memphis, I passed through all that interesting territory along the Y. & M. V. railroad, by way of Tunica, Merigold, Mound Bayou, Renova, Shaw, and Leland. I then travelled over what was then known as the "Loop," a branch of the Y. & M. V. railroad lying along the east bank of the Mississippi River. Here I had an opportunity to observe the counties of Issaquena, Sharkey, Washington, Tunica, Cohoma, and some others. They were all largely populated with Negroes, some of them, notably Issaquena, having about

twenty-five Negroes to one white. I then left the railroad and travelled in a southerly direction through a forest of canebrakes, such as I had never seen before, until I reached the village of Dockery, on the Sunflower river, about thirty-five miles east of Rosedale. After having passed a while there in making observations I went to Ruleville in Sunflower county, still farther east, where I reached the railroad again. I then tramped along the railroad from there to Indianola, thence to Greenwood, a junction on another branch of the Y. & M. V. and the Southern Railway in Mississippi. All along this journey I interviewed many classes of people, and learned many interesting facts. For instance, I called to see a wealthy white planter at Minter City, and when I drove into his great plantation,—with its mansion on the river bank and several hundred Negro cabins, all whitewashed, in the background,—it gave me a feeling that I was going into a city. When I tramped up to his gate I was told that I would find him at the store about a hundred yards away. I walked down to the store and the planter met me at the door, shook my hand, and I sat down by the fire in the rear of the store. I began the interview at once. First I told him my plans candidly, and asked his advice. He listened carefully to all that I had to say, then he said, talking deliberately:

"I believe you are about to engage in a good work, and I would like to see the Negro educated, but, candidly, I do not think that the kind of school you would like to start would do any good in the Delta. I really think it would do harm. What I want here is Negroes who can make cotton, and they don't need education to help them

make cotton. I could not use educated Negroes on my place, but since you have asked me for advice, I will tell you candidly that here in the Delta is no place to start a school. Such a school as you speak of is needed, but not here. I have read about the great work of Booker Washington, and I believe you are headed in the same direction, but you cannot succeed here. I advise you to go out of the Delta into the hill country farther east and establish your school,—in a place where Negroes own their own lands, or, at least, where they are renters and are more independent. In case you do that, I will become a contributor to your school, and I will take bright Negroes from my plantation and send them to your school to be educated." Here I ventured to put in a word, and began by saying, "But they will be educated." But before I had finished the sentence he interrupted, "I hope you will keep them there or send them somewhere else when they are educated."

Then he offered me a ten-dollar bill for the trouble I had taken in coming to see him.

One thing that interested me about all these talks was that the majority of the planters I interviewed in the Delta seemed to be afraid of the results of Negro education. I found a few who seemed to be a little afraid of the Negro in general, and a great many who doubted the wisdom of Negro education. These were high-grade men whom I interviewed,—men of culture and wealth. But I also talked to some of the common people; for instance, at Greenwood I had a conversation with a railroad section foreman. It was late on a Saturday evening and I wanted to go to a little town called Parsons,

the terminus of the Y. & M. V. railroad, and twelve miles north of Greenwood. The last train of the day had gone, and no other train was going in that direction before Monday morning. I had an engagement to address an audience there on Sunday at twelve o'clock. I went to the railroad section foreman's shanty, where he was changing his clothes and taking a shave, and asked him if he would not let me have his hand-car to go the twelve miles. He seemed to realize my predicament and decided to accommodate me, provided I could get his laborers to pull the car that distance. I was elated over the prospects of making the trip on the hand-car. Just then he began questioning me about my business, and when I told him frankly what I was doing in Mississippi he became very suspicious, and I noticed that his face became flushed, while he was still shaving. He turned toward me, with the razor in his hand and his face still flushed, and, with a few oaths, he began to accuse me of being a railroad detective, all of which I denied in a hurry. Then he stopped and said, "If I thought you were, I would proceed to use this on your neck instead of mine." I found it necessary to close the interview immediately, and I did not wait until the hand-car was ready to go.

I then called, outside of the town, at the home of a very wealthy planter and politician, whose father had been a senator of the United States and perhaps one of the strongest men Mississippi has ever produced. I had previously arranged for the interview, which proved to be the most interesting one that I had on this trip. So far as I could see, he was a bachelor who lived out on

his plantation in a splendid modern house. Here he was surrounded by a host of Negroes; several of the women ministered to his wants about the house. His very manner showed that he was lord of the situation. It was a hot day and I was struck by the fact that he met me at the door clad in only two thin garments and he carried a large palmetto fan in his hand. He paid very little attention to me, but one could not fail to observe that he was a gentleman of the old school, although he was not an old man. He was a great talker, and he gave me very little opportunity to reply to him. He began by saying that he had very little faith in the Negro's becoming anything but a laborer. He referred to the Negroes on his plantation and told how much he valued them as laborers; then he began to speak of the Negro's morality, or rather, his lack of morality; for he said that they had none. On this subject he had a great deal to say, and he wound up by saying that there were no Negro women who were chaste, and that the morality of Negro men need not be discussed. Here I ventured to suggest to him that perhaps his knowledge of Negro women was limited to the women of his own plantation or to those of his neighbors' plantations, or, perhaps, to the women that one would usually see on the streets of a city. He was quick to see the point, and after a moment's thought he seemed to realize that he had been rather broad in his statement, and, as if to make amends, he said: "I did not mean to say that there may not be some good Negro women,—somewhere. For instance, I think a woman like Booker Washington's wife is all right." He said that Negroes in general were dishonest and untrustworthy;

but he added that he was acquainted with one who could be trusted anywhere at any time. While he didn't believe in Negro education, he seemed to be willing to give it a trial, and he thought that this ought to be the attitude of all white men, but he said candidly that the Delta was not the place for a school for Negroes. All in all, that was a pleasant interview that I had,—with a man of great intelligence, strong convictions, and undoubted sincerity. I say this, in spite of the fact that I found it impossible to agree with him during the interview.

I have often been asked why I did not start my school in the Delta of Mississippi. What I have said here will in some degree serve as an answer. You cannot build a school that will be useful unless the people are in sympathy with your efforts. Another reason was that I intended from the first that my school should be a boarding-school, and for that reason I thought that it ought to be on high land, out from the Delta, so that it would not suffer from overflows caused by the breaking of levees. And, too, there was a minor consideration that had a great deal of influence with me. I had been born and reared in a hill country, and did not know that such level tracts of land existed until I saw the Delta lands. To a man born and reared in a mountainous country there is something about the dead level of the Delta country that is very depressing. It certainly depressed me. It even worried me to ride my bicycle on the dead level miles after miles. I wanted some hills to climb, and then I thought,—perhaps foolishly,—that I would teach my children to sing, "My Country, 'Tis of Thee." I did not see how I could put any sense into that stanza

that says, "I love thy rocks and rills, thy woods and templed hills." I knew that some of these children had never seen a rock or a rill. They had seen the woods, it is true, but not the templed hills.

Speaking further of interviews, when I left Greenwood I made my way in a southerly direction until I came within ten miles of the I. C. R. R. Here I had my first interview with one of the lords of the hills. He was a fine type of the old-fashioned white man, lived in the same old brick mansion that his father had occupied on a plantation where slaves went to and fro forty years before; and, to make it more interesting, several of these former slaves still lived on the plantation, which was literally dotted with their descendants. The plantation was in a high state of cultivation, the work being done by Negroes as tenant farmers. The land owner's name was Cameron,—a man who had been asked to allow his name to go before the voters as a candidate for governor of Mississippi, but this, I think, he refused to do because of failing health. What interested me especially about this man and his surroundings was the tremendous influence that he wielded over the Negroes living on his plantation. Once while we were looking at the retreating mass of men and mules as they were leaving the mansion on their way to the fields for the day's work, he began talking of them in a reminiscent fashion. He said:

"Thirty or forty years ago when Negroes were voters here in Mississippi it was my custom on election day to march them up to the polls just as you see them marching to the fields; and they voted as I told them to vote. It used to be a saying that whoever the Cameron Negroes

voted for in this section was sure of election. They will do anything I say do. If I were to tell them to lynch you at this minute, in less than a half hour you would be hung up to a tree."

Here I ventured to suggest that where people possess such a spirit it might not be a good place to start a school. He did not seem to catch the point, but continued his reminiscences, saying: "Some years ago there was a little strip of a Negro tramp around here, who in a fit of anger killed one of my best Negroes. I was completely exasperated, and told the Negroes to take the boy down back of the field and lynch him." Here he hesitated to go further, but I was eager to hear the story completed and I asked, "Did they lynch him?" He simply remarked, "Well, I have not seen him since," and so I could not get him to discuss the matter any further.

I had a most satisfactory conversation with this man,—the most satisfactory that I had at all. He not only believed in Negro education, but also in education for all men. He had a quaint way of putting this belief by saying that education and nothing else could make the Negro any worse than he was; but beneath all he showed that he thought all people should be educated. He invited me to build a school on his plantation, offered me a splendid tract of eight acres for a site as a gift, and said, "If you wish to fight, I will help you in the battle." He then took me in his buggy and carried me to his quarters and introduced me to all the Negroes. One of them, H. T. Pinquite, whose ancestors had been slaves on the Cameron plantation, proved to be an interesting figure. He was renting a large section of the plantation and sub-

renting it to other Negroes. I think he was operating about forty plows. It was with this man and his wife that I passed about a week. Since that time I have had the pleasure of teaching three of their children. Mr. Cameron seemed to be in earnest about the building of the school near his plantation, and I was seriously considering the matter myself; therefore I cannot say what might have taken place had Mr. Cameron not died soon after I left.

Before I reached Utica my bicycle became an increasing burden. I met a young Negro boy who wanted to trade for it, and he offered me his Ingersoll watch and two dollars in cash, which I promptly accepted. Thus I entered Utica with a dollar watch and two dollars in money, a condition in which I should not have found myself but for this bargain. I was met by the head deacon of the Baptist Church, A. C. Carter, who took me three miles out into the country to his house and very carefully explained that he could keep me only one week. Deacon Carter was an influential man in the community. Not only was he a deacon of the Baptist Church, which had about four hundred members, but he was respected by everybody, white and black alike. What he said in the community carried a great deal of weight. I was told, and I afterward believed, that it was he, together with Oliver Broom and Tom Williams, who usually made and unmade both the preachers and the teachers in their community. Indeed, these three men had been singled out by the county authorities, headed by the County School Superintendent, and had been designated Trustees of the Negro Public School; therefore, the pub-

lic school had been entrusted to them. They made arrangements for me to board at the home of a young school-mistress, who agreed to board me for two dollars a week, but stipulated that I was to pay every Saturday. Fortunately, I had two dollars for the first week, so I began boarding.

I went down town the next day to make the acquaintance of the white people and to see how they felt about the matter of a new teacher in their community. In order to get a financial standing in the community, I first visited the bank to deposit my two dollars. The banker looked at me rather curiously when I asked him a few questions about deposits and withdrawals. He naturally hesitated about taking my small deposit, especially when I told him I would have to draw it at the end of the week. However, after questioning me considerably, he accepted the deposit and gave me a check book.

At the end of that week I gave my landlady a check for two dollars, whereupon she protested that it was not necessary to pay until the end of the month. I insisted on her taking at least $1.75 of it, but she would only do so on condition that thereafter I should pay her at the end of the month. I realize that I did not treat my landlady fairly, but at the time I only considered the fact that it was necessary for me to establish my credit. I was safe for four more weeks, although that was my last penny, and from that time until the present I have never had any trouble in getting all the credit I wanted in Utica.

My first effort to ascertain the sentiment of the white people was made on the same day that I opened the bank

account. I called on Col. J. B. Chapman, a leading white citizen and the only attorney of the place. I told him all about my plans and asked his opinion. I have not forgotten his reply; it was about the same opinion you will hear in the average Southern community. What he said was about as follows:

"Well, if you can do anything to improve the 'niggers,' every decent white man in this town will be glad to see you do it. I know some 'niggers' can improve, like old Tom Williams and Alf. Carter, but you will never do anything with some of these young 'niggers,' and it is a waste of time to try. If you start out here and do as a 'nigger' did last year,—he came here and collected money from the people, saying he was going to start a school, and then absconded with the money,—there is no telling what will happen to you. But if you are making an honest effort to make the 'nigger' better, you will find the best white people of this town and of this state supporting you."

He assured me that he favored my plans as I outlined them. I tried to get him to become a member of the trustee board, but he declined on the ground of not knowing anything about that kind of work. However, he said he would help me in every way he could, and from that time to the time of his death Colonel Chapman was true to his word and to the work that I was doing. He became so interested in the school that if he saw one of the boys in town in the least disorderly he would promptly report it to me. He did this on several occasions.

Another man, whom I met in those early years, was a young planter, whose father and grandfather had been

large slave-owners. He was the Hon. Alexander Yates, at that time postmaster of the town. I explained my plans to him, and he evinced more than usual interest from the very first, telling me, just as Mr. Chapman had done, about the man who had preceded me. He warned me against a possible recurrence of that sort of thing, and ended by saying that if I meant business I could depend on him for help. This was certainly encouraging to a man who had just drawn a check for the last cent he had in the world.

Mr. Yates became more and more interested in the school as the years went by, and many are the acts of kindness which he has shown us during these years of its existence. I have asked him for many favors, and never yet have I been refused. During this time I have borrowed from him,—in emergency cases,—many hundred dollars, and often without one cent of interest, nor has he ever required anything more than my personal note, which was usually no more than a promise to pay when I was able.

Among other persons that I consulted were the Curry Brothers, Z. Wardlaw and Company, Mimms and Newman, and Kelley-Simmons and Company, and from them all I received a great deal of encouragement, as I shall show later. In the meanwhile Deacon Carter had been busy among the white officials, and he had succeeded in getting me an audience with the town councilors. At this meeting I put my plans before the officials, who evinced considerable interest in them and expressed the opinion that the plan was a good one, if it could be carried out. They were themselves at that time just estab-

lishing a separate school district for the white youth of Utica, and something had to be done for the few colored children who lived within the corporate limits; so they quickly agreed to make my project a part of the separate school district and to pay me twenty dollars a month for teaching the Negro pupils of the town.

This much settled, I went to the county seat, where I had some difficulty in securing an audience with the Superintendent of Education. Upon my second visit, however, he received me cordially, and listened attentively to my plan as I unfolded it to him. He was perfectly willing that I should teach the public school of Utica, but as he could only pay two teachers a given amount, and as I was compelled to have four, that left nothing for my own services. However, I accepted the proposition, took the examination, received the necessary license, and opened the public school the first Monday in November, 1902. While teaching this public school I continued to agitate the question of an independent school, and I went from door to door and from church to church among both white and colored people, getting contributions and pledges of whatever amounts they could give.

CHAPTER VI

By September, 1903, everybody seemed to conclude that the school project would be a failure, and enthusiasm was fast dying out. This was due in a large measure to the fact that we found it impossible to buy a tract of land anywhere near Utica upon which to start a school. First of all, the majority of land owners doubted the wisdom of selling any part of their land for a Negro school; and, in the second place, we had no money with which to buy land; which was not very important, however, as it does not always require ready money to buy land in the South.

In the meantime I had organized the colored people into an educational association, of which I was president. We had our meetings every Monday night, and as many call meetings during the week as we found necessary. But, as I have said, enthusiasm was dying out. The people were beginning to feel that I was a humbug; that I had collected all the money I could and would soon be gone. So they decided to elect a treasurer into whose hands I was to place all the money I collected.

Up to this time I had collected only seventy-five cents. I welcomed this move to elect a treasurer, and promptly turned the seventy-five cents over to him. If I remember correctly, the Rev. Essex Gary was elected treasurer. No sooner had I turned over the money to Mr. Gary than

some one objected to his leaving the house with it, saying that it would never be seen again. Mr. Gary became indignant and resigned on the spot, and it looked as if I was going to get the seventy-five cents back. It would have been given to me, perhaps, but for the fact that some fellow started a general disturbance,—probably Dan Griffin, though I do not remember now.

Mr. Gary was the local minister of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, the membership of which consisted of two dozen men and women, who had been persuaded that there was some way of getting to Heaven outside of the Baptist Church. Mr. Gary seemed to take himself very seriously and he was respected by all who knew him, so far as I could see. But it seems as if he had been treasurer of a secret society, and that while he was treasurer the society "went dead," so to speak, and when the money was counted the men and women were not satisfied with Mr. Gary's accounting. His friends maintained that he had been strictly honest, but a few persons whom he considered his enemies always contended that he had not given a proper accounting of the funds.

Dan Griffin was a young recruit to the Baptist Church, and his feelings toward the Methodist people were none too good. He was intent on running the Church, the school, and all the societies on a high plane. Some years before he joined the Church he had been a man of the world, pure and simple, and had been considered somewhat rough in his character. Now that he was a Christian he was as willing to fight for the Church and for righteousness as he had been willing to work for the evil

forces. This, I suppose, accounts for his raising a rough-house when he felt that the wrong man had been elected treasurer.

However, we had to have a treasurer, so another ballot was taken, and it was decided that no man in the house could be trusted with the money. By way of compromise some one then suggested that Mr. W. J. Ferguson, a white man and the president of the Bank of Utica, should be elected treasurer, which was done. When Mr. Ferguson was notified the next day he considered it the biggest joke of the season. He accepted, however, and began acting as the treasurer of the new organization.

Now that we had a treasurer we were ready to go forward, though not very far with only seventy-five cents. The majority of the people were beginning to abandon the project and things were looking decidedly gloomy. Something extraordinary had to be done. In order to revive their spirits, and to show them that I meant business, I went to E. H. Curry Brothers and asked for a loan of a few hundred dollars with which to provide lumber for a schoolhouse. They not only granted the loan, but also took it upon themselves to provide a couple of carloads of lumber at reasonable prices, without any security whatever except the word of a few colored men whom they knew.

I think that by this time I had convinced them of the possibility of my project. But when the lumber arrived we had no land upon which to place it, so by permission we stacked it up in the little churchyard. Enthusiasm revived now, even among the white people, and a good woman in the town soon agreed to sell us twenty acres

of land. We bought this land without paying a cent of money; we simply promised to pay within three years, and we began the erection of the first schoolhouse that the colored people of that section of the state had ever built.

Before all this took place, however, I had to spend three weeks explaining to the Methodist people and the Sanctified Folks why I had put the lumber in the Baptist churchyard. I at length convinced them I was not going to build a Baptist school, but a school for all the people.

The Sanctified Folks, sometimes called "Spot or Wrinkle Folks," was the name of a new religious sect, or, at least, it was new in Mississippi. It was headed by the saintly leader, C. P. Jones, with headquarters at Jackson, the capital of the state, and it had for its motto, "Absolute perfection in every member." It was, and is to this day, a forceful, domineering religion. It was sweeping everything before it in our neighborhood. First, because it was new, and Negroes will accept anything new; and, second, because it was a religion that was fundamentally correct and that appealed to the hearts of those who embraced it and of many who did not. But the Baptist people, who had been dominating the community during all the years that the Negroes had been free, were fighting this new religion with all their might. Their arguments were interesting. At some points the two denominations came almost together in their beliefs, and in some others they were wide apart; for instance, the Baptist had a doctrine stated in these words, "Once in Christ and never out," while the Sanctified people

had a doctrine which made it plain that the man who was born of God cannot sin. One would think that the believers in these two religions could have agreed, but they did not. The trouble was that the Sanctified leader was too much in earnest for the Baptist folks. He preached that "Men should live absolutely pure lives, without spot or wrinkle." The Baptist people said that while they would like to see this done, it was impossible, and that the only being that could live absolutely without sin in this sinful world was an angel. Some amusing incidents occurred. A great many members of the Baptist and Methodist Churches left and went to the Sanctified Church, and at length the Methodist preacher himself became Sanctified, but failed to carry his congregation with him. There is no doubt that the Sanctified people were in earnest about the saving of souls as well as about making men better. Their sermons were full of power and very convincing. They had no church-house in which to worship, but at first they were allowed to use the Methodist and Baptist churches. They were soon put out of these, however, and then they began to hold meetings in the open air. I remember that one of their methods was to require each member that joined them to renounce himself or herself and publicly confess all previous sin. These confessions caused a good deal of turmoil whenever they were made, and the people that made them were so much in earnest that very often they told secrets that carried them to the divorce courts and to prison, broke up families, and caused a general readjustment.

I was told that the year before I came to Utica, when

the Sanctified people first made their appearance, the turmoil was even greater than it was after I came. A story is told of a local minister who was officiating one night at a service when a sister offered herself for membership. The local minister asked her to tell all her previous sins, and she began to tell things that startled the audience. On and on she went with her story, involving men and women until everybody was tense with excitement; then she came to a point in the narrative where she evidently thought she ought to stop, but the minister, who by this time was happy, shouted to her to go on with the story and tell it all. Then she hesitatingly began to relate some incidents in her life which involved the minister himself, and he then said, "Take her out, brethren, she is crazy." After that new members were not required to tell more of their experience than they felt like telling. There is no doubt, however, that the Sanctified Church during the past twelve years has done more to develop good character and Christian spirit in this community than any other church. Its leader and founder, the Rev. C. P. Jones, whom I have already mentioned, is a strong and forceful character. He is an earnest minister of the Gospel, truly a man of God, and he has many lieutenants who are just as earnest, if not so forceful. The denomination is rapidly spreading throughout the South.

I now started out on foot, went from house to house among both white and colored people soliciting their aid, and received it in a degree that enabled me to pay for the lumber and land within three months. Meantime, I had opened school in the open air, for I had been unable to get permission to teach in the little church.

School opened the first Monday in November, 1902. It is a custom of the public schools in Mississippi to have three Negro trustees, at least one of whom is to be on hand at the opening day to install the new teacher.

One of them certainly was on hand the morning we opened school. He sang, I read the Bible, and he offered a long and solemn prayer. At its close he attempted to lead the children in the Lord's prayer, and he got as far as the daily bread, but, although he struggled desperately, he could not get any further. Thereupon he deliberately went back and started afresh, but when he came to the daily bread he stopped again. The children, who had been suppressing their amusement, now burst out in a hearty laugh, whereupon Miss Lee, who was my first assistant, took up the prayer and finished it for him. Then he stood up and began a lecture on good manners, which was directed apparently at the students, but in reality at me, for he seemed to blame me for the students' laughter, although he had not yet put me officially in charge. Nevertheless, he turned them over to me in a few minutes and school was opened.

These were dreary times, indeed, with many hardships, with many difficulties that were mere annoyances. We were still teaching in the open air, out under the big trees amidst the shrubbery. This would have made a very good schoolhouse but for its size. In such a schoolhouse one could get along very well, if he could keep his pupils close enough to him, but the chances are, as I have found, that they will put bugs down one another's collars, and while you are hearing one class the other children will chase one another about. Their buoyant spirits will

not permit them to keep quiet while they are in the open. It is pretty hard to hear a class reciting and at the same time to witness a boxing-match, but those who teach in the open air must be prepared for such performances. These annoyances were accentuated by the fact that some of my pupils were forty years old while others were six. After a while we moved into an abandoned house, which we used for a schoolhouse, but it was little better than teaching out of doors. When it rained the water not only came through the top, but through the sides as well. During cold winter rains I had to teach while standing with my overcoat on and with arctic rubbers to protect myself against pneumonia. During those rainy days Miss Lee would get up on a bench and stand there all day to keep her feet out of the water and would have an umbrella stretched over her to keep from getting wet from above. The little fellows would be standing in the water below like little ducks. They stood these conditions exceedingly well. Many of them were not protected with overshoes or any shoes, but they came to school each day just as if they had been properly clad.

It is impossible to describe the hardships that we suffered during that winter, which was severe for the South. As the winter came on and grew more and more severe a great many of the children were taken with pneumonia, la grippe, and similar ailments. I wished, in the interest of health, to abandon the school for a few weeks until better weather; but neither pupils, nor teachers, nor parents would listen to this, and so the school continued under these circumstances until the new schoolhouse was ready for use. It is needless to say that some of the

pupils never survived those conditions; in fact, the strange thing is that any of us did.

During this time I would teach during the day, and at night would go to some appointed place from five to fifteen miles away in the country, speak to the people, stir up enthusiasm for education, and bring back a little collection to help carry forward the new school. Sometimes this collection would be twenty-five cents and sometimes as much as three dollars. On Thanksgiving Day we held a Thanksgiving service, the first that had ever been held among the colored people in Utica. It took nearly half the day to explain to them what was meant by Thanksgiving Day, but once they understood it, they contributed freely from their little savings, to the amount of thirty-seven dollars and fifty cents.

During all this time I had been bitterly opposed by the colored Baptist minister, whose word was law to every colored man and woman in the community. He had fought me from every point of vantage; I had made one attempt to reconcile him, but he would not hear me; then I had simply let him alone. After a while he came within a hundred yards of the school in which I was teaching and sent for me to come to him, saying that he wished to talk with me. I went down to the road where he was, we sat down on the ground, and this, as near as I can remember, was the substance of his remarks:

"Brother Holtzclaw, I have come to talk with you on the matter of your efforts here. I have watched you constantly and have done everything in my power to injure you. I have tried to block your progress, and I have tried to break you up because I thought you were a hum-

bug. I simply did not like your face when I first saw you, but I have seen my mistake, and I have come humbly to beg your pardon. I would have come as far as the schoolhouse, but I did not feel worthy to put my foot on the ground until I should confess my sins, and I want to beg you to forgive me. I promise you that in the future I shall help you push forward that which I now see to be a great work. Let us pray."

He got down on his knees and prayed such a prayer as I have not heard since. Then he called on me to pray, and there we were by ourselves down on the roadside.

Meanwhile, a Negro passed by on a mule and went up town and told everybody that the Baptist preacher had "Professor" Holtzclaw down on his knees in the road praying over him, or doing something, he could not tell what. The news went abroad at once, and a great many people came up to see what had really happened. I think there was a mild suspicion that I had conjured the preacher. This was, perhaps, due to his sudden conversion, when it became known.

Meanwhile, we got up out of the road and shook hands. After it was all over I found myself admiring the man, and I could see the same admiration for me in his face. Since that time we have been warm friends. No minister has done more by word or act to make the work at Utica a success than this same Baptist preacher.

This story is worth telling because it is one of many like instances that took place in the beginning; and because it reveals the cause of the failure of many an enterprise in various communities. If you cannot get on

Principal Holtzclaw and the farmers felling the trees
used in the construction of the first
schoolhouse at Utica

with the colored preachers in a place, your chances of success are slim in that community.

The work on the new schoolhouse was progressing. Strange to say, all the lumber that I have spoken of, which was provided by the Curry Brothers, was finishing material. It contained no framing. All the work that had been done up to this time was finishing work; we had not yet bought the material for the foundation. As we had no money with which to buy it, we felled some trees in the forest, which came to us as a sort of contribution. Colored people do not regard trees as private property in the far South,—at least, they did not use to do so,—and it was not difficult for us to obtain the gift of those whom we consulted. I led the farmers into the woods where we felled the trees, then we placed them on the wagons, hauled them to a near-by saw-mill, and had them cut into lumber on shares. In this way we succeeded in getting enough framing to finish the first building.

Despite the start we had made, however, I was fully aware of the weakness of our organization, and so I began to strengthen it by forming a more extensive organization on a legal basis. It was then that I obtained the services of the Hon. Paul D. Rattcliff, a reputable attorney of Raymond, the county seat of Hinds County; and he drew all the plans of the organization according to my wishes and as nearly like those of Hampton and Tuskegee as we could. We obtained a charter from the State of Mississippi, and elected a new board of trustees. This body consisted of some of the Negroes already serving as trustees, together with some influential white

men in the community and some white men and women in the North and West, whose consent to serve on the board I had previously obtained.

The wisdom of having a mixed board of Northern and Southern white men and of Negroes has been amply justified. These trustees were not simply figureheads, but were men and women deeply interested in the progress of the colored race and of the South in general. Not long after this organization was formed some of the trustees began to visit the school, coming from as far away as Wisconsin and California, in order to familiarize themselves with our effort. The Southern white men who were chosen were of the highest type of progressive citizens, and were not only interested in the school as a school, but would have been just as much interested in any other effort that had for its object the betterment of the condition of the whole people. These Northern and Southern whites have met the Negro trustees annually at the institution, and all the meetings have been of the most harmonious sort. They have investigated the school and all its conditions, and have remedied matters very often as they could not otherwise have been remedied. The majority of the trustees pass a whole day at the school once a year; and the Chairman of the Board, Dr. Henry E. Cobb, of New York City, usually performs the annual duty of presenting diplomas to the graduates. After twelve years of contact with these men from various parts of the country, I am convinced that the best sort of an organization for this kind of Southern work is an organization composed of Southern white men, Southern Negroes, and Northern white men. In such

an organization the corporation gets the benefit of the various points of view, and under such circumstances there is little reason why it should not keep itself in line with all that is best for itself and for everybody concerned. As I have said before, our Board of Trustees, —to whom all our property is deeded, and who control and direct the destiny of this work,—is made up of interested individuals from various parts of the country.

The personnel of the Board as it now stands is as follows: The Northern and Western whites are: Messrs. Henry E. Cobb, of New York City; Francis B. Sears, of Boston; W. J. Schieffelin, of New York City; George L. Paine, of New Haven, Conn.; John H. Storer, of Boston; Miss Fidelia Jewett, of San Francisco, and Miss E. M. Perkins, of Cleveland, Ohio. The Southern whites are: Bishop Theodore D. Bratton, of Jackson, Miss.; Messrs. R. W. Millsap, of Jackson, Miss.; W. J. Ferguson, of Utica, Miss.; D. C. Simmons, of Utica, Miss., and Z. Wardlaw, of Utica, Miss. The Southern Negroes are: Messrs. Emmet J. Scott, of Tuskegee, Ala.; Charles Banks, of Mound Bayou; L. K. Atwood, of Jackson, Miss.; and W. H. Holtzclaw, Dan Lee, Ples McCadney, Harrison Flanders, and Isaiah Marshall, of Utica, Miss.

CHAPTER VII

So far, in describing the methods by which the school was started, I have spoken principally of my own efforts, but it would not be just to omit the loyal men,—A. C. Carter, Tom Williams, Henry Sampson, Dan Lee, Dan Griffin, Aaron Caldwell, Isaiah Marshall, Ples McCadney, Essex Gary, Zed McNeal, S. W. Harris, Harrison Flanders, and others,—who met with me every Monday night, without fail, rain or shine, for four long years in our effort to keep up the enthusiasm and thus raise the money with which to carry on the school. These men were all farmers. All except two were tenant farmers,—that is, they lived on and cultivated the lands belonging as a rule to non-resident white men. They are known in the South as prosperous farmers. Such farmers are usually those who rent large plantations for which they pay from one to twenty bales of cotton, worth $50 a bale, as an annual rental. Then they sub-rent to less progressive farmers, charging them a little more in proportion than they paid themselves, and in this way securing for themselves some financial benefit for the risk and the responsibility that they assumed. Besides, they usually cultivated with their own hands a certain portion of land for which they in reality paid no rent. They were unassuming, hardworking, honest individuals. They and their families made up the bulk of those who were

found in the church and at Sunday school on Sundays, and they were in every way the leaders of the community. This class of persons is interesting, if for no other reason than because they no longer exist as a class in this community. At that time, however, I believe this class was the rule and not the exception. I do not mean that they were all always the good men that they should have been, or even up to the standard of the men whose names I have mentioned. On some plantations conditions were bad. I have in mind now one of these influential men who had charge of a plantation southwest of the town of Utica. If all that was said of him was true, he was far from being a good man. I visited that plantation several times, and I was struck with the fact that, although he was an unmarried man, there were six women farmers who were employed by him and who lived in the same house with him at the headquarters of the plantation. More than once when I inquired what kind of a man he was the reply would be that he had no wife of his own and that he had little respect for the wife of any one else. Nevertheless, he was boss of the situation there, and had great influence with the owner of that plantation, who was a merchant in the town. This Negro usually came to town every Saturday and brought with him between ten and twenty men, women, and children from the plantation. They would all usually make some purchases before they went back, but hardly one of them could buy a penny's worth until this man's name was attached to the bargain. I found that it was best to have little to do with this class of farmers, and I cultivated the friendship and good-will of better men.

The women, too, should not be forgotten,—that is, the wives of the good men I have spoken of and of others like them.

Our methods in building up our enterprise were simple: we had subscription lists printed, and every person kept one and placed thereon the name of any person who wished to become interested in the upbuilding of the school. Then we gave festivals, sociables, and various other entertainments, to which everybody in the community contributed fried chicken, baked chicken, baked pigs, turkeys, and other edibles. These things were sold to the young people and indeed to any one that could be induced to buy. It is surprising how much small change could be brought together in this way.

Mothers sent in their mites. The following letter from one of them was received at a critical time:

"dear fessor Please cept dis 18 cents it is all I has I saved it out n my washin dis week god will bless yo will send some more next week"

Similar letters accompanied baskets of eggs and other home products, and all breathed the fervent hope that I might succeed, that their children might have a chance to go to school in a good "school 'ouse."

Suffice it to say that within six months after we started in the open air we had a new schoolhouse almost completed. Up to this time the excitement occasioned by the building of a new and strange sort of school in the hitherto sleepy community had spread so rapidly that young people had been attracted from every direction; hence, although we started with twenty pupils, we now found ourselves with two hundred and twenty-five, one

hundred and fifteen more than had ever before been known to attend school in that place. It is a fact that this extra one hundred and fifteen pupils were not resident pupils. They had come from a great distance and were finding lodging with friends in cabins here and there, wherever they could; and this proved exceedingly unsatisfactory, so much so that I readily saw that if the school was to be a permanent success, it would have to provide some method of taking care of those pupils who came from a distance,—that is, that we should have to set up a boarding department.

In the first place, I myself had had no regular boarding-place. My wife was still in Alabama, and I was receiving from her daily letters in which she begged permission to join me. I had asked her not to come, because I felt that the conditions would be intolerable for her. Still, she continued writing me to let her come, even after I had told her the exact conditions,—namely, that I was teaching out of doors, and that my living quarters were not much better. Her answer came by return mail. She said it did not matter what the conditions were, or what the hardships might be in the future, she preferred to come on and live with me and share them. There was nothing for me to do but consent, so she soon joined me.

As soon as she reached Utica we decided that it would be best to set up housekeeping, and use our own home as a temporary boarding-place for the school. We rented a little ramshackled log cabin, located in the middle of a cotton plantation near the school. It had one room and a loft above made by laying some loose boards upon the joists. In this room my wife and I lived. I improvised

a kitchen at the back of the room with a stick-and-dirt chimney. We bought two chairs, a bedstead, two knives, two forks, two plates, and a frying-pan, and Mary, my wife, made a bedtick of crocus sacks and filled it with hay from the fields. This constituted our household goods; and with the exception of this bedtick filled with hay from the field there was nothing else in the house. But I was not to enjoy even this comfort long, for within a week two students came who wanted to board with us and go to school. We got another bedtick, filled it with hay, and put it up in the loft. The young man and I used that part of the house, while my wife and the young woman lived below. These were our first boarding-students.

The conditions were trying: the winter was cold, there was not covering enough, and I had no money with which to buy more. But my wife and I were used to hardships of this kind, and so was the young woman, but the young man could not hold out.

My wife was born and reared in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, so she was a city girl, and after the fashion of city girls she had always been accustomed to using a cooking-stove in preparing her meals, and she did not know how to cook at the open fireplace with a frying-pan. The consequence was that the task fell to me, and my wife tells me even now that she has never had a meal since then that has tasted so good as did those that I prepared in the frying-pan.

It is impossible to describe accurately the conditions through which we passed in order to get the school firmly established. Even after we had more room and fifty girls and boys as boarders it was almost, if not quite, as

Old log cabin where the Utica Normal and Industrial Institute had its birth. This house was used as the first dormitory and was occupied by Principal and Mrs. Holtzclaw and their only child.

difficult to make them comfortable, with our scanty means, as it had been that first winter. At one time, in fact, the young women determined to revolt,—to "strike," as it were. They came to my office and said that they could not stand any longer the condition under which they were living, and that they would have to give up the effort to get an education. It was very cold; there was not enough fuel to go around, and not enough bedding. They were actually suffering for covering. I agreed with them that it was hard, but I asked them to come to the little chapel that night, promising that they should all have honorable dismissal from the school, if they so desired.

We went to the chapel two hours earlier than usual, at 7 o'clock. After prayers I gave them a little talk in which I told them something of my own experience at school and of Booker Washington's having slept under a bridge when a boy; then I called on them to remember their future before taking the step that they were about to take. When I had finished talking I was surprised to see that there were fifteen or twenty girls crying hysterically. They all came and shook hands with me before they left the chapel, and they declared they would never leave school of their own volition.

It was then 8 o'clock, and it was snowing. There would be much suffering that night, yet I did not know what I could possibly do to make the students comfortable. When I went down from the chapel and opened my mail I was surprised to find that a friend in New York City had sent me a check for fifty dollars, with the wish that I should spend it for the comfort of the stu-

dents. I took ten of the boys and set out for town, but when we got there the stores were all closed and the people gone to bed. I went down and woke up one of the merchants, told him the conditions, and got him to dress himself; then he came to the store and sold me fifty quilts. These were carried back and laid over the sleeping girls in twenty-five beds. Those girls slept warm that night, even though they did not know why. Some of them declare, even to this day, that they got warmed up in the chapel during my talk and stayed warm the remainder of the night.

Our difficulties were not all of this material sort. We had to adjust ourselves to the conditions that existed in the community, and that was a difficult task. It is so easy to be misunderstood by both whites and blacks. For instance, one of my first plans in the early years was to drill the boys in military tactics, both as a matter of physical training and as a matter of discipline. The majority of the boys had to work in the fields during the day, so I devised a plan of drilling them one or two hours at night out in the open fields. They drilled with their old shot guns and fired a blank volley now and then. It was not long before a committee of colored men called on me and advised me to stop drilling the boys. They said that the white people were becoming excited and were freely saying that I had come into the state to bring about a return of '76. I did not know just what was meant by '76, as I was a baby in '76, but, in obedience to their wishes, I stopped drilling for the time, and it was several years before we resumed this practice. Drilling (with-

out guns) is now a part of the daily routine, and nobody thinks anything about it.

There are many stories told in Utica about the Reconstruction period of 1876. I have heard many of them from the lips of old residents, both white and colored, and, from all that I can glean, the trouble seems to have had its origin in the determination of the white people at that period to rid themselves of Negro domination and to reinstate themselves politically. The principal point of hostilities was about twenty miles from here, in the vicinity of Clinton, where took place what were known at that time as the "Clinton Riots,"—riots in which the whites and the Negroes clashed, and in which several lives were lost. I had read of these riots, but the stories told by men who had seen them,—especially by one man who acknowledged that he had taken part in them,—were exceedingly interesting. The activity of the white people in Copiah county also, a few miles south of Utica, —which, it will be remembered, called forth at that time an investigation by a committee sent from Washington by the United States Government,—caused the Negroes to be subdued and stripped of political power. Although Utica was not the storm center of all this trouble, being between the two main points, it was drawn into the difficulty. Suffice it to say that when the trouble was all over, and peace and order were again restored, it seems that the Negroes had been shown "their place." Ever since that time the good white people of Utica and of all the other sections of the South have been working to keep harmony between the races. Here at Utica, therefore, the white people naturally looked with suspicion upon any

stranger that came into their community and seemed to be preparing for future trouble. Therefore, when the news came to me that they objected to my drilling the boys, I stopped at once. I did not wish to antagonize them in any way, but on the other hand I wanted to cultivate their friendship, so that we could all work together for a more peaceable community.

In this connection, let me tell of our first effort to have public exercises in the church at night. The people had warned me that it was a dangerous thing to attempt and had threatened not to let their children attend the exercises. But I created so much interest and enthusiasm among the young people while I was making my preparations that on the night when the exercises took place there were more people, both white and black, in attendance than had ever before been in the church.

The church building was located deep in the forest, and it was not lighted, except by two or three smoky lamps that hung from the rafters. We charged ten cents admittance, which two of the deacons were to collect at the door. As soon as it was dark some one fired off a pistol. Women and children screamed and men sought places of safety. The deacons at the door were knocked down and run over, and all the people that the house could hold came in free of charge. Those who could not get in proceeded to break the windows, and one or two young fellows were on the roof ripping off the boards so that they could look through.

In the midst of all this confusion it was, of course, impossible for us to proceed with our concert. I made an effort to call the crowd to order, but only succeeded in

producing more confusion. About this time a note was passed up to the stage. It read as follows: "If you do not proceed with that concert, we will show you how we do business in Utica." I did not know just what the note meant, but I was just as much disturbed as if I did. One of the deacons attempted to interpret its meaning for me, and he said it meant that if I refused to go forward with the concert, I would be shot. It was impossible, however, to proceed, and no one was shot. My next attempt to give a concert was in a new building which was still not quite finished. We had completed the second story, but nothing had been done to the interior of the first story, and in order to get to the second story we had to use a ladder, as a stairway had not been constructed. So many people went up this ladder into the building that the floor on which they were seated began to give way. While we were down on our knees at prayer I happened to cast my eyes over the audience and I saw that the floor had given way in the center, it seemed to me, at least a foot. Something had to be done immediately, otherwise it would only be a matter of a few minutes before the floor would break through and many lives would probably be lost. I tiptoed out and went down-stairs and asked several colored men who were standing here and there to help me saw some timbers to brace the floor. No one of them would help, simply giving as their reason: "It's Sunday. We can't work on Sunday." A few hours after that I saw one of those same men, a member of the church, buying "Blind Tiger" whiskey not fifty yards from the house.

I succeeded, however, with the assistance of Dan Lee,

the leading colored carpenter of the community, in propping up the floor and preventing a catastrophe. It was done so quietly that Dr. Cyrus Hamlin, of Tougaloo University, who was delivering a sermon, never knew what was going on down-stairs, nor did the audience know.

CHAPTER VIII

While I am relating the story of the struggles of what is now the Utica Normal and Industrial Institute, I must not fail to mention one of its earliest friends, the late President of the Board of Trustees, the Rev. R. C. Bedford, of Beloit, Wisconsin. In fact, Mr. Bedford's interest in the work at Utica dates back to a period before its founding, for when I told him, a year before I went to Utica, that I expected to settle there, he promptly came down from Illinois, went to Utica, and made an examination of the conditions there before he would permit me to undertake work in Mississippi.

Soon after I had begun work at Utica he paid me a visit and passed several days with me, assisting, suggesting, and advising as to the best way to proceed. Ever after that until his death he made from one to two visits to Utica annually, always bringing with him many helpful suggestions in regard to the work. I have met few men who have been as much interested in the development of the Negro, and of all the people in the South, as Mr. Bedford was. Time alone can tell the value of what this man did for us. In those early days, when we were confronted at times almost with starvation and when things seemed hopeless, it was the constant letter that came from Mr. Bedford that brightened our pathway,

strengthened our hearts, and made it possible for us to stand firm.

His faith in the possibilities of the work at Utica was always strong, and he was one of the few persons that I have met whose belief that we would succeed anything like approached my own. He was a true friend of the Negro.

The work grew day by day. While its influence was spreading the task of maintaining the school was becoming even more burdensome. Outside assistance had to be found, and I went to Boston and New York. I had already been in correspondence with Mrs. Mary Clement Leavitt, who had become somewhat interested in the work. I had also interested Mr. John Wells Morss, a Boston attorney, who sent me his check for ten dollars,—the first outside assistance that I received for my work, and it came at a time when I was nearly ready to give up. It may be that this one gift saved the situation.

When I reached Boston I had three dollars left from my long trip. I used one dollar and a quarter of that to pay for a small room for a week,—for a room that was not heated, in which there was scant furniture, and I was not accustomed to the Northern climate. With the rest of the money I purchased a meal ticket; by this time I was absolutely without a cent. The next day I called on Mrs. Leavitt, told her my story, and she, becoming greatly interested, did what she could for me.

She had just returned from a trip around the world, and she had thus had the opportunity to come in contact with various races of men. This trip had stimulated her interest in humanity as a whole, so she often said, and

GINN MEMORIAL HALL, Academic building, nearing completion.
The work on this building is being performed
wholly by student labor

had inspired her with a keen desire to help the colored people of her own country. She accordingly entered enthusiastically into my plans and sought to devise ways to help me.

From that day until eight years later, when she passed away, she was my constant friend and helper. She had been a school-teacher in Boston for many years, and had in this way become acquainted with a great many people. Besides that, in her public work in the Women's Christian Temperance Union she had come into close touch with many of the best women of the country.

The largest single donation that has ever come to the Institution came from the estate of the late Mr. F. B. Ginn, of the well known publishing company of Boston of that name, in 1907. Mr. Ginn, in his boyhood days, had been a pupil of Mrs. Leavitt, and when she called on him for a contribution, or rather put me in touch with him, he promptly subscribed $500 toward the purchase of a large plantation, which we now own. A few months later, although he was in good health, he seemed to have a premonition of what was to come and wrote me a letter asking if I would rather take $300 then or wait and take $500 when I had raised the $25,000 for the purchase of the plantation. I promptly replied that I preferred to wait for the $500. Meantime, before I had raised the $25,000, Mr. Ginn had passed away, but in his will he did not forget what he considered his obligation to the work at Utica.

This is one instance of the many that took place during that first week in which Mrs. Leavitt introduced me to some of her friends in Boston.

The week was passing; my meal ticket had been punched until there were few meals left, and I had begun to fear that I should have to give up the room. I called on business man after business man in Boston, but was turned away, frequently with scant consideration.

At length my earnest prayers were answered, and by the merest accident I called to see Mr. Edwin D. Mead, who seemed to me to be one of the really great men of New England. He listened attentively to my story and read Dr. Washington's letter, one from the governor of Mississippi, another from the mayor and other friends at Utica, and still another from Mr. W. J. Edwards, with whom I had previously worked in Snow Hill, Alabama. After he had read these letters carefully and had questioned me closely he invited me to lunch the next day at the Twentieth Century Club.

I enjoyed that luncheon for several reasons,—one was that my meal ticket had been punched for the last time the night before. There I met a number of prominent men, among them Dr. Charles F. Dole, who has ever since shown a lively interest in the Utica School. I addressed the Twentieth Century Club for five minutes and received many congratulations, and the next morning I received from Dr. Dole a contribution of seven dollars and fifty cents, which was sent with his cordial good wishes. Since that time Dr. Dole, Mr. Mead, and others whom I was fortunate enough to meet at the Club have been constant friends and supporters of my work.

Meanwhile, the school was not prospering at home. There was such dissension among the local supporters that it seemed as if the project would be broken up in

spite of all I could do. To check this, I decided to hurry back before there had been time to make the trip North worth while.

Just when I had nowhere to turn for help I received a check for one hundred dollars from the John F. Slater Fund of New York. It was the first hundred dollars I had ever received, and it seemed a tremendously big sum. I hardly knew what to do with it. The workers for whom it was intended would not accept it, and I thought it too much money to put into one schoolhouse at one time, so I began to devise a number of wonderful things to accomplish with so large a sum. Stern facts, however, showed that it would not go very far toward the completion of the building, but it did go far enough to avert an impending disaster and to save the Institution to do its share in bringing about the results for which we are all working in the South.

In spite of all difficulties the school was growing both in influence and reputation among the local white people. This is shown by the following editorial, which appeared in the Utica *News,* a paper edited by one of the leading young white men in the town:

"There is in our community, just outside of the corporate limits of the town, a movement which I feel we do not fully comprehend. It is an industrial school,—founded by William H. Holtzclaw and his wife, two Negroes from Booker T. Washington's school, who seem destined to do work here among us for the good of all the people,—a school that is of more significance than we at the present time realize."

I frequently made use of the newspapers to put the in-

terests of the school before the people of both races in the community, and in all these communications I sought to make clear that the Utica Normal and Industrial Institute was a sincere effort to improve the condition of the masses of my own people in the community. I knew that the best white people were perfectly sincere in the belief that many of them held that education was not a thing that did the Negro any good. I knew, also, that the best people in the community, if they were moved by no higher purpose than their own interests and the interests of the white race, would support any effort that they were convinced was really for the good of my race. For that reason, I took every means I could to advertise among the white as well as the colored people the practical results of our work. I did this to convince the community that education did actually make better and more efficient men and women of the Negroes; that a Negro was, or could be, a real asset to the community, that he could become an efficient, law-abiding citizen, preventing disorder and promoting peace between the races.

CHAPTER IX

During the first summer after the school was organized I determined to take a quartet of young men singers on a tour as a means of interesting more people in our efforts. We travelled through the Catskills and the Adirondacks, along the North Shore of Massachusetts, as far north as Bar Harbor, Maine, and also in the White Mountains, and we met with several interesting adventures. One night, quite late in August, we found ourselves at a place not far from Fabyan, N. H., where it was not possible to get shelter for the night. We stayed about the little railroad station until it was locked and we were turned out of doors. It was very cold considering it was a summer night, so cold that we did not dare lie down on the ground for any length of time, so we walked back and forth on the railroad to keep warm. Late in the night, however, the boys became so tired that they dropped here and there upon the ground and went to sleep. The next morning Mr. William A. Harris, one of my teachers, who had charge of the quartet, found he had contracted a severe cold. He never recovered from that exposure, and now lies in the little cemetery near Utica. As for me, I walked the entire night. I did not dare stop. I suppose I walked many miles back and forth on the railroad tracks before day.

In Georgetown, New York, I was surprised to receive

an invitation from the proprietor of one of the leading summer hotels to address his guests in the parlor after dinner. He was careful to explain that his guests were largely Southern people, and I accepted the invitation with some reluctance, as I had never before addressed an exclusively Southern audience in a Northern state.

I appeared promptly at 8 o'clock P. M., and spoke for about an hour. Never before had I experienced such a reception as I experienced that night, and I was surprised to see when I had finished my plea for my race that several of my audience were visibly affected.

A lady, evidently of much culture, came up and, between sobs, said: "I want you to know I am a Southern woman. My father owned slaves. I know all about your people; I know their faults and their virtues. I approve of all that you have said in your wonderful address. I believe you are the right man for your great task in Mississippi."

She then broke down completely, and her husband came up and took her by the arm. As he carried her away, still weeping, he winked his eye at me in a rather significant way, and said to her in a low voice: "Come on, dear; the 'niggers' will come through all right. When you get back down in Mississippi your cook will change your tune." I was thoroughly surprised when I learned for the first time that I was talking to Mississippians.

While I was on this tour I received a letter from Miss Fidelia Jewett, of San Francisco, and a correspondence was then begun that has never ceased. She became interested in my work and visited the institution the following year. We had not finished the first building when she

came, accompanied by her friend, Miss Martin, one of the professors of Leland Stanford University. Although we had no place to take care of guests at that time, we prepared a little rough-hewn table, provided with still rougher food, in the dirt-floor cabin. The ladies made themselves comfortable and seemed happy. They became so much interested in all that we were trying to do that Miss Jewett resolved to erect a building for us in memory of her mother. This building is known as the Mary K. Jewett Memorial Hall, and is one of our most substantial buildings.

As the work developed I saw that what was most needed among the people was the training and development that Dr. Washington was giving to the people of Alabama,—industrial education. So I turned my attention toward starting that department. As we had no apparatus, nor shops, nor money, I decided to go to New York and see what could be done. The first person I called on was Dr. Henry E. Cobb, minister of the West End Collegiate Church. I entered his office and approached him, with no little hesitation, but his cordiality surprised me. I laid my plans carefully before him and he agreed to consider them and to let me hear from him.

Some weeks later, after he had corresponded with Mr. Edwards, Dr. Washington, and others, he concluded that he would help me. He invited me to come before one of his Wednesday evening prayer meetings and tell my story to his congregation, who showed surprising interest in my address. After the services a large number of the people came forward, shook my hand, and many of them left a dollar in my palm. At one time the hand-shaking was

so lively that I had to use both hands, and I went away the next morning with $250.

Dr. Cobb and the members of his church, who felt that it would be desirable for the students to learn the printer's trade, gave us a little press and two or three cases of type, while a lady gave some apparatus to start a sewing-room, and thus we had two industries. Another person gave fifty dollars for some farm tools, and I took part of the money that had been collected that night to buy tools for the beginning of a blacksmith shop. The result was that in less than two months we had these new enterprises running, and they have been doing business ever since. They have grown until some of them are in a position to enable the students to learn valuable trades.

Other industries were added from time to time until there were twenty-two on the grounds,—practical and scientific agriculture, stock raising, poultry raising, carpentering, building and general wood-working, blacksmithing, broom-making, painting, saw-milling and general lumber manufacturing, printing, bookbinding, steam engineering, electrical engineering, brick masonry, shoemaking, tailoring, plain sewing, dressmaking, millinery, laundering, and general housekeeping.

Everybody was kept very busy, but a great deal of the work was imperfectly performed, and our lack of funds made it impossible for us to employ as many instructors as we needed. One teacher sometimes performed what should have been the duties of a half-dozen teachers. This in itself made it impossible for the work to be done in anything like the best possible way, and the teachers

Utica Institute swine herd. Large boar near center weighed 840 pounds and took first prize and championship at State Fair in 1913

themselves were not always thoroughly trained, so it happened that, although everybody, both teachers and students, were in earnest, the teaching of trades was very often carried on in a most haphazard way. Sometimes a teacher had to be placed in charge of some division about which he or she knew almost nothing, and had to gain sufficient experience day by day to teach the pupils that came under him or her. The whole thing was an experiment, but because of the earnestness and sincerity of the workers there was a perceptible improvement from day to day. But it did not matter how hard we worked or how earnest we were, we could never reach anything like perfection, and even now after twelve years of work we find ourselves struggling toward better work in all departments but still a very long way from accomplishing such splendid results as have been accomplished by Hampton, Tuskegee, and similar institutions. From time to time, however, changes have been made in the working forces, both in the academic and industrial divisions, and better, stronger, and more experienced teachers have been found and added until the work now turned out is far superior to what it used to be, although we all feel that it is still far inferior to what it should be; but there is solace in the fact that gradual improvement has been made.

As the school grew in influence and in efficiency I began to see more and more the wisdom of Dr. Washington, not only in the kind of instruction he was giving the young Negro men and women who attended his school, but also in the influence that he sought to exercise upon the community, as a whole, white and black. In order to understand the significance, for example, of a school like

our own, it is necessary to understand the conditions under which it grew up. In the first place, it was established in the black belt section of the state, on the line between two counties, Copiah and Hinds. In Hinds County, the county in which the capital is located, there were at that time about 52,000 inhabitants, of whom 40,000 were Negroes. Of these 40,000 more than 13,000 could neither read nor write a single word. Copiah is what we call a hill county, and contained about two Negroes to one white person.

Of the 12,000 whites in Hinds County 7,000 lived in the seven towns, thus leaving but 5,000 whites scattered over a county the extent of whose territory is nearly that of the state of Rhode Island, while a great majority of the Negroes lived in the country districts. In the immediate vicinity of Utica the Negroes outnumbered the whites seven to one. Outside the towns, notwithstanding this preponderance of Negroes, careful investigation revealed less than half a dozen comfortable Negro schoolhouses. Why was this so? It seems to me that it is explained by the fact that the colored people were so lacking in leadership that if they attempted to build without outside aid it took them two or three years to complete a comfortable building. Before this time had elapsed all interest was usually gone. There was no enthusiasm, and still less cash, so the work stopped, and the house stood incomplete,—a monument to lost enthusiasm and lack of leadership. Show me a good school building in Mississippi's rural districts, and there I will show you an unselfish young man or woman who has sacrificed time and strength to make such a building possible. There must

first be leaders in the rural districts before there can be schools with proper buildings.

I have suggested that one cause of the poor condition of schools was the poverty of the Negroes themselves as a whole. I use this word poverty advisedly, for I consider him poor indeed who has never learned how to make proper use of his earnings. Negroes in this section of the country make quite as much money as, if not more *per capita* than, is made by a similar class of farmers anywhere else in the country; but the greater part of this money is spent foolishly. This is the rule, though there are splendid exceptions. I have put emphasis on the fact that we must have leaders in every community before we can have proper schools because I know the kind of jealousies and the bickerings that arise wherever enterprises are undertaken. I know that there are usually two or more factions which it is difficult to get to work in harmony. In order to bring about harmony and induce teamwork while raising funds among the people to establish and maintain a school community, there must be a leader whose opportunities have been at least a little better than those of the average man, and who has the confidence of all factions. Then, too, whatever money is furnished by the state for the building of schools in rural districts is disbursed through the county officers who are given great latitude with the funds. The amount that any given community can obtain for a Negro school depends, to some extent at least, on the ability of the teacher in that community or on an intelligent board of trustees who can impress their needs as well as the justice of their cause upon these county officers. For

instance, there is a law on the statute books of this state to the effect that each county is entitled to an agricultural high school, but few counties, so far, have taken advantage of building such schools for Negroes. When our schools can send sincere, progressive men into the various counties, men who understand and can get in touch with the white officials and press their cause, agricultural schools will become as common for Negroes in Mississippi as they now are for whites.

The matter of local taxation, however, is very important in any discussion of uplifting rural Negroes. I am fully aware of the state's duty to educate its citizens of all colors, but I also know that Negroes should learn how to tax themselves in order to build up their own community. And in order to accomplish this they need leaders. Dr. Booker T. Washington has fully demonstrated this fact in Macon County, Alabama, the county in which Tuskegee Institute is located. Gradually he has sent out into that county a stream of earnest, consecrated men and women who have gone right to the heart of the people and have turned into proper channels large sums of money that formerly went for candy, cheap jewelry, and tobacco. The result is, as I am told, that $5,000 a year is contributed now by the Negroes of Macon County, over and above what may be received from the state or any other source. Therefore our greatest effort in all these rural districts should be to teach the people how to use their own earnings for their betterment,—to use them for the substantial and not the ornamental things of life, —to teach them to depend upon themselves, to find in their own communities and about their own doors a

means of progress and betterment, and not to look to any outside source whatever. These leaders must smite the rock and let the people drink of the waters that will flow freely. Why should people look to any other section of the country for the means of educating and uplifting themselves when they may have it here at their own doors simply by trying? From the beginning it has been our object to send out from this institution young men and women who will take the lead wherever they may locate. Our aim has been to teach them that, instead of constantly appealing for funds from everywhere else except at home, they should seek to make of every man with whom they come into contact a sort of home missionary,—one who will not only be interested in the making of his own locality but who will gradually begin to look out upon the world to see if there is not something he can do toward helping someone else.

Speaking of conditions, the political situation must be considered, because it certainly has its bearing upon the progress of any undertaking of the colored man in the South. When the Hon. James K. Vardaman, who up to that time had been an ordinary newspaper editor in the Delta of Mississippi, was before the people asking them to elect him Governor of the state, he made the Negro question his principal issue, and went from one end of the state to the other delivering addresses that inflamed the passions of the whites against the Negroes. Taking for his text very often some real or supposed crime of some ignorant, degraded Negro and putting it before the people in a way to arouse in them a deep hatred of all Negroes, Mr. Vardaman did a great deal to bring about strained

relations between the races,—at least, until he was better understood.

Recently I heard him deliver an address in which he grew most eloquent while speaking of the natural advantages of Mississippi, and the applause was vociferous. But when he suddenly shifted to the dangers of woman suffrage because of the presence of large numbers of Negro women in the South there was a painful silence (quickly broken by an "Uncle Jim's" story), and an intelligent white gentleman, standing near me at the edge of the crowd, remarked to one of his friends: "See, he is eloquent when he is sincere; but when he gets on the Negro question he becomes tiresome." One of Mississippi's leading white citizens, turning to a Negro schoolteacher who was standing near by and looking somewhat dejected, said: "Cheer up, old man. There's plenty room in this country for us all,—especially in Mississippi. The substantial people of the South pay no attention to such stuff as this."

I remember Mr. Vardaman was quoted almost daily in the papers as saying that God Almighty created the Negro a menial, a servant of servants, a hewer of wood and a drawer of water, and that he would be this until the end of time; it was, therefore, the duty of the white man to use every effort to keep him in his place. It struck me as strange that the voters did not see in this assertion that Mr. Vardaman was flatly contradicting himself. He boldly declared that if he was elected Governor he would use all his power to prevent lynching, yet he created the impression that as a private citizen he would join a mob to lynch a Negro, under certain conditions. After he was

elected Governor he proceeded to do just as he said,—prevent lynchings. But many citizens, among them some of his friends, refused to give him credit for this service, classing his acts with those of a man who would set his own house on fire in the rear in order that he might come around in front and show his neighbors how he could put the fire out.

Mr. Vardaman not only sought to show by every possible means that the education of the Negro was detrimental to the white man, but also that it spoiled the Negro and made him useless. He abolished the only Normal school for Negroes that the state possessed, claiming that the white people paid the taxes and that their money should not be spent to educate the Negro.

In all this, however, he was not entirely unopposed, for there was a large contingent of the best white people throughout the state who knew that he was wrong and who did not hesitate to tell him so. Among them was the Hon. Alfred Holt Stone, of Greenville, Mississippi. Let me quote his words used in the heat of the campaign: "The public school education of the Negro is meager enough, in all conscience." Speaking of the taxes paid, he continued: "In the form of direct taxes, it [the Negro's tax] may not be large, but no fair-minded man can deny that indirectly the Negro pays as great a tax as any agricultural class in America. We have the sum of $139,706 paid by the Negroes in four counties of this state alone. The amount expended on Negro education in the entire state,—sixty-six counties, I believe,—is placed at about $400,000." Defending the use that the Negro makes of his education, he said: "What would a

Delta planter do, if he could not pick up a Negro who could read and write whenever he wanted him?"

But the hardest blows, perhaps, were delivered upon the Vardaman following by the late Bishop Charles B. Galloway, who not only believed in fair play for all men but had the courage of his convictions. He never rushed into political conflicts except when he was fired by the wish to see justice done to the weakest and the humblest, to defend the defenseless, or to cause righteousness to prevail. When he did speak he had the advantage of great learning, accurate information, and much prestige, all of which compelled men of every political faith to stand still and listen to the truths which he propounded. I say he had an advantage because many of those who opposed him were conspicuously lacking in the qualities that he possessed.

When Negro education was being assailed most vigorously the Bishop defended it in many great utterances, from one of which I take the following extract:

"I have studied, with no small degree of pains, the records of the graduates of most of the leading colored institutions of learning in this country, and I am gratified with the result. I have been unable to find a single graduate from any representative Christian institution that has been convicted of any infamous crime. Education elevates all people, and I deny, with all the emphasis of my being, the charge that education does not elevate and make better the black man."

While this political turmoil was going on the Utica Institute was established. It succeeded, mainly, I suppose, because it had no politics of its own.

CHAPTER X

In the midst of all this political flurry the Utica Normal and Industrial Institute grew year by year, fostered by the kind feeling of both the local white people and the colored people, who gave their money annually to help its growth. If there is a white man in Utica who has not contributed to the expenses of the Institute, I do not know him.

While this work was going on it dawned on me that still further activities should be commenced in that community,—that is, that we should help the people in general to rise with the school. This was a difficult matter, for people who are completely down are sometimes quick to resent any suggestion of that fact, even when a way is made to help them up. This is just the condition we had to meet, but by organized methods we in time succeeded.

One of our most profitable means of reaching the people was by organizing the teachers, of whom there were several at this time, into what we called a "Teachers' Extension Movement." The various members of this organization were assigned a given locality in which to work, entirely apart from their school duties. They were to do all in their power to show the people in that locality how to better their condition,—that is, they were to buy a few acres of land, to have chickens and pigs and a mule,

to pay for their little homes, to plant fruit trees and shade trees, and to build a comfortable little house of two, three, or four rooms to take the place of the old one-room cabin.

The amount of work these teachers succeeded in doing was something astonishing. They labored with the people incessantly, in season and out of season, and occasionally they would have the entire faculty visit the different working-places and there make demonstrations, deliver addresses, and help in a general way toward spreading knowledge. These meetings have continued until the present time.

As an example of the direct and simple manner in which it is possible to teach the masses of the people, I recall an experience of my own. One night, after having delivered an address to the people of the Bear Creek community, I went home to pass the night with one of them. The next morning at breakfast there was only salt pork and bread before us, with sugar and coffee. It was a dry meal, and the fact that it was an average breakfast made it no more palatable. I was sitting near a window, —a hole in the wall,—and I noticed that blackberry vines laden with ripe, luscious berries were hanging over the window. I reached out, picked a few, put them into a saucer, put some sugar on them, and proceeded to eat. Soon the whole family were eating berries.

Such almost unconscious lessons as this have gone on until a large part of the fruit and berries that used to go to waste is now preserved and used the year round.

One other way of helping the people has been through our Negro Farmers' Conference, which meets annually

at the institution. At these conferences Negro farmers gather from all over the state of Mississippi and discuss their business, their troubles, their joys and sorrows, their progress or failure. They always end by "resoluting" a little,—making determinations to better their condition. The following sketch taken from the Springfield (Mass.) *Republican,* February, 1905, will give a fairly clear idea of the object of these conferences:

"A recent conference of Negro farmers and educators at the Mississippi institution put its conclusions into resolutions that are worth printing for the good sense and serious thought that is in them, as follows:

" 'Resolved: That it is the sense of this Conference that unless the Negro is something apart from the rest of humanity, he must follow the beaten path of history by making the soil the source of all prosperity, the basis of his temporal existence. We believe that the race that owns a due proportion of the soil and has improved it after the manner of modern civilization will receive the respect and encouragement of mankind. We, therefore, urge our people to struggle by every honest means to buy land, to build good modern houses, to dignify them, to pay taxes upon them, and never mortgage them. We urge also that every man see to it that his poll tax is paid.

" 'Resolved: That we give more attention to the building up of the public schools, for it is to these schools we are to look for the education of the masses of our people. We urge that better schoolhouses be constructed in every county, that a higher grade of teachers be installed in those schools, and that the people tax themselves to secure proper schoolhouses and better teachers. We think it wise that committees in the different states go before the

legislatures to try to induce them to introduce instruction in agriculture in the public school curriculum. [Such instruction is now given in the public schools of this state.] We urge the parents to make more and more sacrifices for the education of their children. We believe it would be wise and right, since our race needs wise and true leaders, to put a good proportion of the brightest youths in the best colleges with a view to training them for leadership. We urge our people to give more attention to the industrial education of their sons and daughters. We wish to declare our faith in the efficacy of industrial education, as taught here at the Utica Normal and Industrial Institute, under William H. Holtzclaw, and at Tuskegee, Alabama, under the leadership of Dr. Booker T. Washington. We believe that the individual who has been taught to love and dignify common toil and is honest and respectable will be sure to live a useful and helpful life.

" 'It is evident that in this country we are destined to pass many years side by side with the white and other races, if not to live here for all time. It is further evident that we shall be useful, prosperous, and happy in proportion to our ability to find a way to live in peace and harmony with our neighbors of the other race. This can be done by practicing the highest virtues as we understand them. In this matter, it will not hurt us to act toward our neighbors after the example of the lowly Nazarine, even though the world laughs and calls us cowards.

" 'We are grateful to the executive of this state, to public sentiment, and to the officers of certain counties for the tremendous efforts they have put forth to crush out the outrages perpetrated against Negroes in these coun-

A group of teachers in the Utica Normal and Industrial Institute who were trained at the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute

ties. In this way they have won a victory that the world should applaud. It is our own belief that ministers, teachers, and other public servants can serve the best interests of the South by exerting their influence to keep the masses of our people away from the cities. Nowhere in the world is there such an opportunity for us as is offered on the plantations of the South.

" 'Were we permitted, we would urge the Southern planters to furnish their laborers better houses, giving them humane treatment, general encouragement, and protection against outrages.

" 'We urge with all our souls that no Negro allow the acquisition of a little learning or of wealth to make him pompous, so as to delight his enemies and disgust his friends. We should remain sober, with a deep sense of imperfection, diligent in every pursuit, with simplicity in manners.'

"When counsels so wise are put in practice, whites and blacks will be good neighbors."

Year by year these conferences have grown and have developed in importance, and have formed the basis of our general extension work.

The resolutions adopted at the Conference reflected more the sentiment of the leaders of the Conference,—the preachers, teachers, lawyers, and doctors in attendance, —than they did the sentiments of those with whom we have to deal. These leaders, however, are men who have come up from the soil and who are acquainted with every feature of the situation. It is very clear, therefore, that when they essay to speak for the benefit of the farmers it is nearly the same thing as if the farmers spoke them-

selves. For instance, when one of these leaders began to deliver an address before the assembled farmers, according to the custom of the conference, moans and groans of approval could be heard throughout the audience, increasing more and more as the speaker proceeded to give an account of what he had experienced on the farm.

These conferences are not held for the purpose of hearing a recitation of stories or of giving leaders an opportunity to display their oratorical powers, but they are held for the serious purpose of helping the farmers become better and more progressive, and of giving the leaders an opportunity to hear the farmers' stories and to familiarize themselves with the conditions so as to be in a position to help in the general progress of the community. For example, I recall that Dr. Proctor, a Negro physician of Vicksburg, delivered a most helpful address on the prevention and the cure of the disease known as the hookworm, while Dr. Harrison, a druggist from the same town, delivered an address on what medicine could be obtained from any ordinary drug-store for the prevention and the cure of the diseases of horses. Another physician talked to the people about how to prevent tuberculosis and how to treat those already suffering with tubercular symptoms. Prof. George W. Carver, head of the department of Agricultural Research at Tuskegee, spent two hours before the assembled farmers, with a sweet potato in his hand, about which he delivered a most effective lecture. When he had finished, the farmers came up and shook his hands, and many were the remarks they made about that potato. I remember hearing

one old farmer say, " 'Fessor Carver, I been eatin' and makin' 'tatoes sixty years an' I never knowed till yet that there was so much in a 'tatoe." After these conferences the assembled farmers go away feeling encouraged, more interested in their home life, and better fitted to be at the head of families; in other words, they feel that they are becoming citizens.

CHAPTER XI

Another way in which we helped the people was through the organization of our Black Belt Improvement Society. Our people are great lovers of societies, so much so that a man who does not belong to one is hardly counted. I was not a member of any society until I organized the Black Belt Improvement Society at Utica,—a society similar to the organization that I had originally established in Snow Hill, Alabama.

As soon as the doors were opened the colored people flocked in, until almost everybody in the community had been initiated and had "ridden the goat." But this society had a serious purpose, for its object was to help the colored people who were at the very bottom of the pit of mental darkness by showing them how to make a start and build themselves up gradually to the status of property-owning citizens. The following extracts, taken from its constitution and by-laws, will give some insight as to how it proposed to accomplish its object:

"There shall be ten degrees in this society.

"(1) Members of the first degree shall be those who have and show a *desire* to better their condition.

"(2) Members of the second degree shall be regularly employed at some occupation.

"(3) Members of the third degree shall be required to own at least one cow, one mule, or a horse.

"(4) Members of the fourth degree shall possess twelve chickens, two pigs, and a cow, together with an orderly house.

"(5) Members of the fifth degree shall be required to own live stock and to have purchased land and to be striving to pay for it.

"(6) Members of the sixth degree shall be required to own at least one acre of land and have erected upon it a neat and comfortable dwelling house.

"(7) Members of the seventh degree shall own forty acres of land.

"(8) Members of the eighth degree shall own one hundred acres of land.

"(9) Members of the ninth degree shall own five hundred acres of land.

"(10) Members of the tenth degree shall own one thousand acres of land and shall possess such other qualifications as the central society may require."

"Any member who is educating a son or daughter in some institution may be permitted to hold the fourth degree, regardless of the other qualifications mentioned.

"No member is in good standing so long as there is a mortgage on any of his substance."

The following stenographic report, made of Mr. Buck Davis at a recent conference of farmers, will shed some light as to the effect that this new organization has had upon the progress of the people in the community:

"Five years ago, while riding along one evening, I happened to meet Mr. Holtzclaw. He stopped me and asked me what did I owe, or whether or not I was in debt. In them times I did not think it was anybody's business how

much I owed. I think Mr. Holtzclaw saw how I felt about it, for he said: 'The reason I ask you is, I want to show you how to get out of debt.' As I wanted to get out of debt, I then told him I owed $60.60. I had been working as a share tenant for thirty years and had been making big cotton crops every year most of that time, but it had taken all that I made every year to pay my debts and still they was not paid. Mr. Holtzclaw told me that the Black Belt Improvement Company would show me how to get out. I then let them take charge of my affairs. It was not long before I was able to go and hand over to the merchant all the money I owed him. He did not want to take the money at first; said he did not care whether his good customers paid him or not, just so they kept on paying. I stuck to the Black Belt Improvement Company and attended the farmers' conferences, listening to others tell how they got out! So I worked on, under the direction of the Black Belt Improvement Society, until now I am on foot and have got started. I feel a little above owing a man now. I feel independent. I was in debt thirty years; now I do not owe any man. I have bought a lot of land on which I have paid $10 and I owe $15 more. Also, I have bought a ten-acre farm plot and have paid $50 on it. I mean to build me a house on the first lot and keep the other for farming. I have dug every nickel I possess out of the ground. I am a member of the Black Belt Improvement Company and a friend to the Utica Institute and I know Mr. Holtzclaw has helped me to become what I am."

This society has grown rapidly; in recent years it has been incorporated by the state of Mississippi, and it is no longer called the Black Belt Improvement Society, but

The Black Belt Improvement Company, capitalized at $30,000, and it has in its possession several hundred acres of valuable lands, which it is regularly selling to the colored people in the vicinity of the school in small tracts upon easy payments.

As the school is situated five miles from the town and has no magistrate within easy reach, the Black Belt Improvement Company established a Community Court of Justice, wholly independent of the state or local courts. This court attends to all the misdemeanors that happen within the Utica Institute colony outside of the school proper. It has grown until it has come to be recognized by all the residents as the tribunal before which they must come, if they disobey the established customs of the community. For instance, one day a resident was accused of having stolen some corn from his neighbor's crib. His case was promptly called on a Saturday afternoon during the rest hour, and the whole Utica colony,—men, women, and children,—turned out. I was in the judge's seat, as they have always honored me with that "office." "Lawyers" were appointed on both sides, and the case was thoroughly thrashed out. I charged the jury (we have but five jurymen), who withdrew and after a while returned a sealed verdict. When it was opened it read somewhat like this:

"We, the jury, find according to the evidence that the defendant, when he left the neighbor's crib, did have something under his coat like a sack of corn, but we the jury are unable to say that every lump a man has under his coat is of necessity a sack of corn. We, therefore, recommend that the man be discharged with the cost of

court and warned that hereafter when he leaves a neighbor's crib he should carry his coat on his arm, so that the world can see that he has no corn."

The man was dismissed, and so far as I know no more corn has been reported stolen in the Utica colony.

Another case in point was a man who had been reported for whipping his wife. After all the evidence was in, and the "lawyers" had made their arguments, the "jury" retired and disagreed. I asked the parties to the controversy if they would be willing to abide by the decision of the "judge," and when they promptly agreed to do so I ordered the man to stand still and let his wife strike him thirty-nine times. This she proceeded to do, and the court adjourned, and no case of wife-beating has come under my notice since.

These happenings served in the early years to break the monotony and dispel gloom, and at the same time they taught valuable lessons and created a spirit of general progress in the right direction. By these methods,—the extension work, the conferences, and the Black Belt Improvement Society,—we have been enabled to get a firm grip on the people, not only in the immediate vicinity of the school, but throughout the two counties in which we labor, and even farther still.

In those early days the community was very different from what it is now. The Negroes were constantly "crossing one another's paths," so to speak, so that there were every week somewhere in the neighborhood some quarrels to be adjusted. These misunderstandings between neighbors were usually thrashed out in the courts, very often entailing considerable expense on one or the

other of the parties, and sometimes on both. Once we had succeeded in getting all the people of the community to agree to accept the decision of our local court in all these small matters, it was an easy matter to keep them out of the state and county courts, and in this way to save them a great deal of money,—to say nothing of time. In all these years not one member of the community has failed to keep his pledge to abide by the decision of the local court.

At this stage of our work various newspapers and magazines were beginning to take interest in our efforts, and they endorsed from time to time, either in editorials or in articles, the effort we were making. *Collier's Weekly* at this time published a strong editorial describing the work in detail as its reporter had gleaned the story on our grounds. Soon after this editorial was published I received a large number of letters from various parts of the country offering assistance, both moral and financial. In this way our efforts were brought, more and more, to public notice.

During that same year the *Natchez Democrat*,—a white Democratic paper published at Natchez, Mississippi,—published in full the story of its own representative. The story gives a pretty clear idea of the situation at this time, and is as follows:

"Quietly, and without the blowing of a trumpet, William H. Holtzclaw, of the Utica Normal and Industrial Institute, located at Utica, Mississippi, is doing a remarkable work for the uplift of his people in that community.

From a humble beginning, a few years ago, under the shade of an old oak tree, the Utica Normal and Industrial Institute has assumed mammoth proportions. At present (March, 1908) it has on its farm of 1500 acres fourteen buildings, large and small, where more than 400 students are taught the various trades and are given an English education by its faculty of twenty-two teachers. But the good of the school cannot be measured by buildings and land alone. Its influence upon the people of that community is so remarkable and the possibilities for greater work in the future are so encouraging that the careful observer is compelled to make a mental reservation in favor of the future of the Negro race.

"Under the example set by the school authorities, the men of the community seek to have more comfortable homes for their families; the young men, who used to shoot dice within a stone's throw of the little house used for holding monthly church services, have taken on a more serious air, are less boisterous, and are at least careful of their morals. As a direct result of the industrial propaganda, they are content to stay on the farms and thus win competence for themselves and their families instead of flocking to the cities, and the Negroes of the community themselves contribute on an average of fifteen hundred dollars a year to the support of the institution, thus learning the glorious lesson of self-help.

"The greater part of the funds necessary to maintain the Institution annually comes from the North, but the white people of the immediate community lend their financial aid and moral support to an astonishing degree. This statement is verified by the names of Bishop Charles B. Galloway, Mr. W. J. Ferguson, President of the Bank

Students marching to chapel for services on Sunday morning

of Utica, and other leading Mississippi white men. This work is destined to be a factor in the development of the Negro in this state, and by his work and from his public speeches William H. Holtzclaw proves that in matters affecting his race he will make a leader safe and sane."

CHAPTER XII

In February, 1906, the Tuskegee Institute celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary, and Dr. Washington invited a number of his former graduates to return and deliver addresses. I was one of the speakers, and found myself on a program containing the names of Bishop Galloway and Andrew Carnegie.

This marked what we may call a turning point in Utica's history. By this time we had outgrown our existing buildings, and it had dawned upon us that if the progress already made by the Institute was to be continued, we would be compelled to have more land in order that we might grow. I had an option on a tract of good land adjoining our present site, at a price of $18,000. It belonged to one of our fellow-townsmen, who assured me that as soon as I was able to raise the money he was ready to make the deal. Several of our friends had pledged small sums until about $5,000 had been pledged. It was then that I received a letter from Mr. Carnegie's secretary, announcing that he would contribute five thousand dollars to a twenty-five-thousand-dollar endowment fund, or the same proportion of any smaller amount that was raised for the same purpose.

This brought happiness to the entire Institution, and every one felt that in due time we would be able to raise the remaining amount. Mr. Ferguson, our treasurer,

who was also president of the Bank of Utica, was so sure that we could raise the balance that he promptly sent for me and told me to go ahead with the purchase of the land, that he would make a donation and pay the remaining sum.

I now sent for my attorney, a young white man, Mr. Paul D. Ratcliff, who has been connected with the school from the first, and who has transacted all its legal business. We had a conference with the owner of the land, made the trade, and set the day for payment. Promptly on that day the attorney returned, ready to secure the needed money from the bank and pay for the land. He was surprised and shocked when the gentleman handed him an unsealed note, addressed to me, which read: "Dear Sir: In regard to the land proposition, I have decided not to sell." This surprised us all,—including the lawyer, who realized that we should have tied the owner by making a deposit when the bargain was originally made. We tried to reason with the owner of the land, but he would not budge.

Some of my friends suggested that I should sue him, which of course could have been done with possible success, but my attorney strongly advised against such a course, saying it was better to lose the land and wait for other opportunities than to incur the ill-will of my white friends. This wise counsel I followed and the matter was dropped. But we were all the while outgrowing the existing plant.

Finding it impossible to get more land, we now settled down to do the best we could with what we had; and our efforts to help the people never ceased. Our Annual

Farmers' Conferences were growing in influence and in helpfulness. The following report of the conference held the twelfth of February, 1907, will give some idea of how the conferences were carried out:

The third annual conference of the Utica Normal and Industrial Institute was held in the chapel of Mississippi Hall, February 12. The stories of the farmers, told in their simple way, indicated that progress is being made in a very satisfactory manner. We give below some extracts which may prove interesting.

Mr. Henry Stubblefield said: "I have been farming for seventeen years. I have been renting for sixteen years, and have paid more than $3,000 rent. After this Institution was started here, I began to attend these conferences and I began to believe that I could get a home and pay for it. I bought 129 acres, and I have paid $500, and will pay the rest as soon as I make the cotton."

Mr. Frank Wallace said: "I started out working for wages, then on shares, then I rented land. I saw I was paying enough rent to buy land, so I bought. It took me five years to pay for it, and I had to disfurnish myself to do it, but now I own 120 acres. I tell you, if you want anything you've got to work hard and let pleasure alone till you get it."

Mr. Wallace was a little black man, considerably under the average size, with every appearance of being of unalloyed African descent. The entire audience manifested much interest in his story, at the end of which many questions were asked. Among them was one by a minister, away back in the audience, who seemed to doubt the truth

of Mr. Wallace's statements. But before Mr. Wallace could answer the question another minister who happened to be presiding promptly asked the questioner to take his seat, saying: "I believe that man is telling the truth. I have paid $5,000 myself for rent in the same time."

As the questions were flying thick and fast about the house an aged woman arose to make a statement, and everybody became quiet. She began by saying, "Did you say you have bought that land and paid for it, and you'se a real black man too?" Mr. Wallace bowed his head like an African chief, then she groaned exultingly, and said, "I sho' is glad to see you doing something, 'cause they always says down my way that you can't do anything 'cepten' you half white."

Mr. Frank Lewis said: "I have been farming for forty years. I don't know how much I have paid for rent. I tried to buy a house, but I fell through after I had nearly paid for it. If I had taken the advice of my wife, I would not have lost it. I had decided never to try no more, but after coming to this conference, I have determined to try again."

Mr. Harrison Flanders said: "I was a slave, and was let loose after the war with nothing but an old mother to care for. When I decided to buy a home I went right at it and paid for it in five years. When I got ready to buy I did not have any money, but I had a good many friends among the white people, and one of them stood by me while I worked to pay for the land. I don't see any reason why any Negro should not buy a home in this country, unless he is too trifling to make the friendship of the white people, and too lazy to work. I have a good

little home and am educating my children. I wouldn't live in this country now without a home. I would go where I could get one."

At the close of Mr. Flanders' remarks questions were again in order, and as usual some very searching and personal questions were asked. I remember one of them was asked by a woman. She said, "Brother, you said you didn't have a cent when you started, and paid for your hundred acres of land in five years?" Upon receiving an affirmative answer, she remarked, "And did you get it all honest?" This threw the audience into convulsions of laughter, because the majority of them knew Mr. Flanders and knew how serious he would take such questions, for he tries to be a very straightforward man in all his business relations.

Mr. George Beechamp said: "I have been farming for twenty years, but I have never thought of buying a home. I have cattle, hogs, horses, but no home. This is my first time to come to this conference. I am going home and start out at once to buy me a home. After hearing how these other brethren have done it, I feel that I can do it, too."

A voice was heard in some part of the house at this juncture, saying: "Mr. President, I want to say that that brother need not let the stories he is hearing here fool him. It takes a long sight longer to buy a home and pay for it than it does to tell about it after you get it. I want to tell you, brother, it took me fifteen years to pay for my home, and during that time I had to undergo all sorts of hardships; getting a home and getting it paid for means to get up before day and stay up late at night; it

means you have got to hide yourself on Sunday to keep folks from seeing your rags while they are going to church with their fine slick clothes on; it means that you have got to see the mouths of your wife and daughters stuck out day by day, while they accuse you of mistreating them; it means that your neighbors will put the devil in your children's heads every time your back is turned; it means that you must eat corn bread and salt meat mixed with cowpeas, and leave off sugar and coffee, and rice, and biscuit, and a whole lot of other things. Bretheren, I am telling you what I knows, and if you ain't prepared to stand these things, you better stay like you is."

During all the time that this little speech was being made there were groans of "Yes, Lord," "Tell it, brother," "That sho' am the Gospel truth," and the house was in an uproar. It seemed that the sentiment was going in the wrong direction; one man stood up and said, "If that is the case, I believe I'll stay like I is." The presiding officer, seeing that only one side of the question had been discussed, and fearing that a wrong impression would be created, asked the man that had spoken so plainly: "Did you mean to say that you ate corn bread and salt pork during all these years that you have been buying your place?" Whereupon the man quickly replied: "I didn't say anything about salt pork; I said I et salt meat and corn bread; and I didn't have salt meat all the time, and what coffee I had I made it out of brand, and I sweetened it with molasses I made; and that is what these others got to do, if they get any land paid for." The President suggested to him that times were different now from what they used to be, whereupon he

retorted, "Times don't never get no different with a man that ain't got nothing."

The President then asked him to tell how he got on after he had succeeded in buying a home and getting a start. "That's a horse of another color," he replied. "You feels mighty good when you gets in your buggy on Sundays with two black mares hitched to it, and drive along putting dust over those same folks that used to laugh at you and try to make your wife and children believe you didn't have any sense; and you feel mighty good, bretheren, when you can go to church and take a trunk of rations along, and spread the table for your neighbors and hear the preacher say, 'I am going to take dinner with that brother,' and you can put a dollar in the collection for the heathen in Africa. It is all good when you get to it, but it's mighty bad along the way, and none but the pure in heart can get there."

Mr. Fair said: "I am a farmer; I make lots of cotton. I have made two attempts to buy land, but failed both times. I have not lost heart; I am going to try again."

Mr. Dan Lee said: "I started out with one cow, one hog, and one dog. I rented a mule for $50 a year. I bought one hundred acres of land, and worked and trusted in the Lord, believing that He would bring me out more than conqueror if I trusted in Him, and He did. Since these annual conferences began I bought 120 acres more. I have a good home and have educated one son and a daughter. I love to work because I can see what is going with my labor."

Mr. Rivers said: "I paid nineteen bales of cotton,—$950,—a year for rent for ten years. I had no idea of

A scene showing farmers coming from Assembly Hall at one of our farmers' conferences

buying land or getting a home until I heard Mr. Holtzclaw's talk in the first conference here. I just waked up that day. I went away from that conference with a determination to get a home. Since then I have bought sixty acres of land, put it under cultivation, and I now have something to live for. I can do twice as much work as I used to do, and I enjoy it. If it had not been for these conferences, my eyes might have remained closed to the end of my life."

The President as usual had addressed the conference at its opening, and at its close Prof. L. J. Rowan, president of the State Agricultural College, spoke to the farmers and urged them to possess the land they cultivated. Many short but helpful addresses were delivered during the session by persons engaged in various professions.

While we were working to better the condition of our people, it is fair to say that in many parts of our section of the country other agencies,—composed of white men, religious men, and scholars,—were doing what they could to improve conditions. The following extract, taken from a report of a grand jury composed of white men and published broadcast, will be of interest:

"We find that the disgraceful vice of white men living with Negro women in unlawful cohabitation has grown to an alarming extent and threatens our commonwealth with a mongrel race which will be a menace to our country. We find that the various officers of the law, throughout the county, and especially the mayor of the city of ———, who especially neglects his duty in this respect, have apparently ignored the existence of this vice. Espe-

cially have we found this to be the case within the city of ———, where we find in many instances black women have been fined by the mayor small sums and their white paramours shielded, or let go free, or their names withheld for fear of exposing them. We condemn this without terms, and we earnestly recommend that white men who have Negro women concubines be dealt with to the fullest extent till the vice is broken up, or such undesirable citizens find it more congenial to seek other places. We find that the city of ——— is honeycombed with white gentlemen who have their Negro concubines, with whom they reside after night, but because of insufficient evidence to secure a conviction, we have passed up several instances for the consideration of the next grand jury."

Anyone caring to investigate will find, I believe, that such cases as are here attacked by this earnest grand jury are growing less year by year, being at the present time in many places fully eighty-five per cent. less than they were formerly. I doubt if this vice was ever as bad anywhere as this zealous grand jury seemed to think it was. Various grand juries and other public servants have from time to time attacked not only this crime, but also other forms of evil that exist between the races, and a great deal has been done to eradicate such vices.

But the main thing that is so rapidly obliterating these crimes against society is the education of the Negro woman,—I mean that true education that is bringing her into the consciousness of the beauty and importance of the highest Christian womanhood. To the properly edu-

cated Negro woman crimes against society are as repugnant as they should be.

As a matter of fact, there are economic conditions at the bottom of many of the crimes against society. Poverty and crime sometimes go hand in hand. I have no doubt that conditions in the little cities of the South would be very different to-day, had it not been for the tendency that has been manifesting itself for several years on the part of the Negroes to leave the country districts and crowd themselves into the cities. This movement has often taxed the ability of the cities to maintain order and to furnish sufficient labor of a congenial sort to induce continued exertion. For this reason the newcomers have often had to resort to gambling and other more serious offences in order to make a living at all. This condition of affairs brought about a dependent class of men and women,—men and women who had an ever increasing aversion to work of any sort. Thus many crimes that should have been dying a natural death secured a new lease on life. And when men once learn to disrespect, in even the least degree, one class of women they find it increasingly difficult to respect any class of women. But, some one retorts, the homes of Southern white men have always been open to all women that wanted work to do, but they have constantly refused this work, showing that they are not immune from suspicion on account of poverty. These persons hold that not only will the Negro women on the streets refuse to work in the homes of white men for wages, but that even the educated Negro women refuse to work,—that is, they

prefer to do nothing. For instance, Mr. A. H. Jennings writes in the New York *Evening Post:*

"I note with pleasure the gleam of light cast across the gloomy prospect of a warring Europe by your prediction that a horde of foreign women, forced by their destitution abroad, will come to this country to accept domestic service. If the dreadful event of this multitude of women being impoverished, destitute, and widowed must come to pass, and they come here looking for homes and work, many can find a hearty welcome in Virginia and throughout the South.

"The Negroes who do the household work of the South are yearly becoming more inefficient, more trifling, more exacting. In 'old times,' even after the war, the darkies were trained, but that training has vanished now. It is practically impossible to secure a trained cook or housemaid now; we are forced to accept such service as a worthless servant class can give, or do the work ourselves. An honest white woman, willing to work, whether trained well or not, can find a good home and fair wages at two out of three doors at which she may knock in Virginia."

Mr. Jennings' view as given herewith may be taken as typical, but I believe he is not able to read the heart of the Negro maid who refuses to work in his home. Many girls from this institution have gone into the homes of some of the best white people in this section of the country as well as in the Northern states. They have served as maids, cooks, and general house girls, and in every case but one that I have investigated they have given satisfaction. In the few cases where they have not re-

mained in the homes as long as I thought they should I have asked them to write me frankly why they could not stay in a place that seemed to me to be so desirable. Invariably I have received two replies: one, that, although the people for whom they worked were kind and considerate, they have found it necessary to seek other employment where better wages could be had, the average wage of the housemaid in the South being, I believe, somewhere between six and ten dollars a month; the other, that they did not receive sufficient protection and that their only hope was to seek another occupation.

I believe this last reason is the more important,—for them and for all the rest of us. Respectable Negroes will trust their daughters in the future in the homes of only such white men as they can trust to protect them.

To resume: This grand jury about which I was speaking was composed of earnest men, and the South is full of men and women of both races who are determined that this section shall be rid of such evils as I have described. Wonderful changes have taken place in the past few years. Sentiment has changed so greatly that in many parts of the South to-day white men who would stoop to things that used to be condoned would now become outcasts from their own people and would be hated by the Negroes. If Negro women find that they will be treated with the respect that is due them as women, and that they will receive living wages, I believe more of them will do the domestic work of the South, and that no great number of European women will be needed here.

When the evils that exist between the races are eliminated better relations will take their place, notwithstand-

ing the fact that there may continue to be spasmodic eruptions. And this is true, in spite of the fact that the good that is going on day by day is not given half the prominence in the newspapers and periodicals that is given to the evil.

I have in mind now the tragedy that took place at Harriston, in Jefferson County, a few months ago. Two Negro youths, probably crazed with cocaine and other drugs, ran amuck in the city, taking the lives of several prominent white men before they themselves were killed, —to say nothing of causing the death of several other Negroes. Several papers in various parts of the country almost magnified this incident into a race riot, when, as a matter of fact, no stretch of the imagination could magnify it into any such thing. The citizens of the little town simply protected themselves against two drug-crazed youths,—ignorant youths who had never had an opportunity to go to school. Such incidents should not be magnified and called race riots, for everybody knows that a race riot would be a very different thing; besides, anything like a serious race riot in any part of the South is such a remote possibility that even a suggestion of it is altogether out of place.

In this connection, I do not wish to say that the lynching spirit was not at all present in the Harriston affair, but from all that I could learn from eye-witnesses the facts are substantially as I have stated them here. The fact is that lynching has gone on so long in many parts of our country that it is somewhat difficult to draw at this time a sharp line marking off distinctly the point where the lynching spirit stops and the spirit of legal

procedure commences. You cannot tell what the most peaceable community will do at any moment under certain conditions. After careful study of the whole situation, however, I am convinced that in spirit, at least, the lynching habit has become a sort of institution. I have come in contact with men, who, although they regret the stigma that lynchings bring upon their community, nevertheless feel that no great harm has been done to society by a lynching, and in every instance where a crime has been committed beyond doubt by the person lynched many people feel that that person got no more than he deserved. Negroes, however, are opposed to lynching in nearly every instance for any crime whatsoever. Nevertheless, some ignorant Negroes in a few instances have followed the example of the white people in regard to lynching.

During a great deal of the time that this "race riot" was being discussed in the newspapers, quietly and without the blowing of trumpets a number of white and colored people were meeting in the courthouse in a town in an opposite county and discussing the problems concerning both races, trying to devise ways and means by which their difficulties might be overcome.

I had the pleasure of taking part in two of these meetings. I delivered an address in which I discussed as thoroughly as I could the whole race situation as it exists here in Mississippi, and tried to point out remedies for some of our difficulties. The white people who were present were so much impressed with my remarks that I was invited to deliver another address in the courthouse on the same subject. Addresses were delivered by three of the leading white ministers who lived in the town,

and the meeting turned out in the end to be a sort of love feast. The spirit of good-will was in the air, so to speak.

Various committees were appointed to consult the officials in order to arrange for other meetings and to keep alive the spirit of brotherly love; and I have every reason to believe that these meetings have done a great deal to strengthen the friendship of one race for the other in this section.

At the same time that the trouble in Harriston occurred another agency,—The Southern Sociological Congress,—was holding meetings in the capital of the state and seeking to find remedies for the South's racial difficulties. Three or four columns of various daily papers were taken up with discussions of the "race riot" at Harriston, while three to five lines in a few of the daily papers were given to the efforts to prevent just such occurrences. But quiet work is going on throughout the South, in spite of the absence of any notoriety, and it is bound to bear fruit in the end.

CHAPTER XIII

Our work and influence were increasing every year, and in our present quarters we were beginning to feel cramped in many ways. Mr. Ferguson, president of the Bank of Utica and treasurer of our Board of Trustees, opened up negotiations with a wealthy white planter who owned a plantation five miles south of the town, consisting of 1,500 acres,—property that was to be bought for about fifteen dollars an acre. It was improved land and contained some of the best soil in that section. Just as the trade was almost settled it became noised about that some of the white people living in that immediate neighborhood began to feel that the school was better off where it was, and that it might prove a bad addition to their side of the village. About that time I received through the mail an ultimatum signed by possibly one hundred and fifty white men, not one of whom I knew. The ultimatum, short and to the point, was as follows:

"W. H. Holtzclaw, Utica, Miss.:

"We, the undersigned, demand that you do not build a school or college near this community."

As no addresses were given, I could make no reply.

Inasmuch as the trade had been practically completed,

with the exception of paying the money, I had a meeting of my local board to see what should be done. When I read the ultimatum to them they stampeded, and of the nine seven voted to call off the trade. I had always been guided largely by what they said, but in this case I believed that they were wrong. However, I meant to go slowly. I consulted Mr. Ferguson and my other white friends, and they suggested that I should go and see some of the men that had signed the ultimatum. I called on one or two of them,—those that I thought were the leaders,—and asked them what were their objections to our having the land. They said the plantation was so situated that they thought that if the present owner was going to get rid of it, they ought to have it themselves; and that they had determined to buy it.

In deference to their wishes, I agreed that if they wished to buy it, I would have nothing more to do with it. They were getting together for the purpose of purchasing it, but before they could make their arrangements the financial panic of 1906 came on and they abandoned the idea of buying the plantation. The way then seemed clear for me to purchase the place, and the owner was urging the trade with all his might.

I did not have sufficient money at the time to make the purchase, but my friend, Mr. Ferguson, president of the bank of the town, had agreed to furnish me any amount of money necessary to secure the property, at reasonable interest. But the purchase money, including the apparatus to be bought with the plantation, amounted to about $25,000, while I had only a few thousand dollars, which friends had contributed for the other trade that had

failed, and which they had allowed me to hold, pending some solution of the land problem.

Meantime, although many of the white people who lived only a mile away from the plantation had assured me that as they did not care to buy under the present financial conditions they were perfectly willing that I should buy, the colored people throughout the community had worked themselves up to a high pitch of excitement. They declared that the white people would never allow us to buy that plantation. But the white men on the local Board of Trustees were ready to accept the responsibility, and were urging me to go forward.

This was a case, however, where I felt it necessary to go slowly, as my white friends all advised me to do. Five of the colored trustees owned land by this time, and had it paid for. In order to borrow sufficient money from the bank to carry out the purchase, we thought that it might be necessary to give some kind of security, so that loyal band of Trustees, finally convinced that I was going forward, agreed in one of our meetings that each man should mortgage his plantation. I shall never forget the enthusiasm with which they made their offers.

I carefully explained to them that if I should fail ultimately to raise the money necessary to finish paying for the plantation, each of them would lose his property and would again be at the bottom. But their faith never wavered. They still pleaded for the opportunity to mortgage their little plantations and homes that the trade might be put through. I reported this to the bank, which promptly refused to accept the collateral, agreeing to let me have the money all the same.

Among those earnest farmer-trustees was one, Harrison Flanders, who owned a little plantation very near the edge of town. He had several sons to be educated and was eager for the school to be properly established. So eager was he that he offered, if we could not get more land, to sell us half of his own little plantation, to be added to the little that we already had and in this way make room for the growing school. Everybody felt that this was so supreme a sacrifice that none of us could afford to accept it, even though he urged it with all his heart.

Excitement in regard to the purchase of the plantation ran high, and meetings were being held among the colored people in which they thoroughly discussed the matter and appointed committees to warn me not to go forward with the purchase. It is difficult for one not acquainted with the situation to understand the state of panic that possessed the colored people at this time. All the day before the time for concluding the bargain my friends called upon me and urged me not to go down to the plantation the next day, saying that if I did so the chances were that I should never get back alive. To save me, I could not conscientiously share their feeling in the matter.

On the morning of the day when I was to go down and finish the trade and make the first payment, while I was at the breakfast table, a Negro man came down the public road on horseback, at full speed, jumped off at my gate, and ran in, without taking time to hitch his horse. He said he had something to tell me, and that he did not want to tell it in the presence of my wife. I urged him to sit

down at the table and say what he had to say, as I preferred for my wife to hear anything he had to tell. I had guessed what was on his mind. He said that he had been asked by one of my white friends to come and warn me not to go down that road that afternoon; that if I did so, they believed my life would be in danger. The good man was greatly frightened and was panting like an overheated ox. My wife dropped her knife and fork and turned pale,—that is, as pale as she could. I thanked the man for his kindness, and refused to discuss the matter any further. He left, and I went to my office as usual, transacted a day's work, and at half-past four got astride my little pony and made off to the plantation to complete the trade, while my wife stood on the veranda and watched me out of sight.

I did not return until ten o'clock that night, and she tells me those hours were some of the most anxious of her whole life. Every person that passed along the road she expected to be someone riding up to tell her that I had been assassinated.

I had to go to the plantation alone. No man, not even the old reliable trustees, would agree to accompany me. My teachers, mostly women, were all afraid. Several of them had packed their trunks and were ready to go home, and one had actually bought a ticket. When I reached the plantation the man was there ready to close the trade, and many of the white people that the Negroes thought were ready to do violence to me were only there to see that their neighbor, who was selling his plantation, came through all right. They greeted me pleasantly. Indeed, I have never met men who were more gentlemanly than

they were. Not one sign of ill-will did I see. When the trade was finished I returned home alone. My friends were greatly surprised when I told them the next day that I did not even have a pocketknife with me. They thought surely I would have armed myself. The bank promptly paid the money, lending me $10,000 on my personal note,—the same bank that five years before had refused, and with good reason, because they did not know me, to lend me $300 to purchase forty acres.

The task now before us was to pay for that land and move over onto it the few temporary structures that we had built at the original site. Therefore I left the school in charge of Mr. D. W. L. Davis, Superintendent of Industries, my most trusted lieutenant, and made a campaign for funds.

From September to the 23d of December I worked in various states as I had never done before. On December 23d I returned, lacking seventeen thousand dollars, in spite of the fact that the twenty-five thousand dollars was to be paid December 26. I think the bankers themselves began to feel a little uneasy, and perhaps began to doubt my ability to raise the money in time. The night I reached home I was so worn out that I was unable to get about and was confined to my room. About eleven o'clock that night the president and the cashier of the bank called on me to see how I had succeeded on my money-raising trip. When I told them that I still lacked $17,000 of having sufficient money I was surprised that they showed no signs of displeasure, but rather seemed to be pleased that I had got together $8,000, and after a short conversation they assured me that if the $25,000

was not ready at the proper time, I need not be uneasy: the bank would carry it as long as I desired.

I could not feel quite discouraged, though I must confess I was almost disheartened at this time, but the attitude of the bankers strengthened me, and I telegraphed to some of the subscribers asking if, under the circumstances, they would not allow us the use of their pledges, even if I had not quite met the conditions.

On Christmas Day, at eight o'clock in the morning, I received a message from one of the subscribers in which he said he did not care to change the original plans. Two hours later I received another telegram from him in which he said he had changed his mind, and that he was mailing a check for the amount of his pledge. Then I began to feel encouraged. Twenty minutes later I received another telegram from a lady in Boston who said that although she was on her sick bed, from which she never expected to rise (she was 96 years old), she was writing me perhaps the last check she would ever write, —for five hundred dollars,—and that I might expect it in due time. My dejected spirits were now rising by leaps and bounds.

Two hours later a fourth telegram came, this time from Mrs. Leavitt, saying she had been notified that a legacy had been left as an endowment,—to be used in the purchase of the land.

I now needed but fifteen hundred dollars more. I called the teachers and students together in the chapel and told them the situation, whereupon the teachers rose in a body and said they would contribute one month's salary each toward the balance. The students ran to their

rooms, got out their Christmas money, which consisted of about twenty-five cents apiece, and contributed from one to five cents each. Our assistant treasurer, Mr. Smith, counted it all up and found that still about thirteen hundred dollars was needed.

The mail came then, and I went down to open it. There was that thirteen hundred, contributed by several dozen different individuals, with a few dollars over. So I was ready to "take Christmas," even though mine lasted only one-fourth of a day.

CHAPTER XIV

I have referred to the fear that the colored people generally felt about moving to and fro among our white fellow-citizens in this section of the country. Our student body shared fully this sentiment. For instance: one night, just after we had come to the new plantation, a lamp exploded in a room occupied by some of the girls. There was much commotion among the students and the girls screamed at the top of their voices. When I reached the scene and inquired regarding the trouble, the girls said that a white man was breaking into the house. I began to feel around in the dark and, sure enough, there was a real white man. When I found him he said yes, he had been trying to break into the house to put out the exploded lamp, which he had seen from the road as he was passing, but later had settled down to enjoy the excitement he had created.

This fear of the whites was shown on another occasion. In the fall of 1908 Dr. Booker T. Washington and a party of thirty of the leading colored men from various parts of the country made a tour through Mississippi.

On learning that Dr. Washington was going to visit the state, I extended him a most cordial invitation to visit Utica. As soon as he accepted the invitation, I promptly issued a circular announcing that he would speak in the

Institute chapel on a certain date. The excitement throughout the community immediately became intense. I could not understand it, so I called my trustees together, as was my custom, to consult as to Dr. Washington's visit.

For the first time in the history of the school, I had to send out three invitations before I could get a meeting. The fact is, I had to go out and almost compel them to come in. Once they were assembled, I put the matter of Dr. Washington's visit before them, and they promptly advised me that it would be a very unwise thing to have him come to Utica; in fact, they thought it would be a dangerous thing, that Dr. Washington could never pass safely through the streets of Utica. They delivered fiery addresses, for which many of the members have always been noted, and ended up by voting almost to a man (I think there were two exceptions) that we ask Dr. Washington not to come to Utica,—for his good and for ours.

I then asked them to answer two questions for me: one, what were their objections to Dr. Washington's coming to Utica, and the other, what real harm could come to him if he did visit Utica. To these questions I could not get a single answer; they would only shake their heads and shrug their shoulders. Some of them finally notified me, as they left the meeting, that I might have him come if I wanted to, but that they would not attend the meeting.

Although I did not want to take any risks with Dr. Washington, I was determined to have him visit Utica. Having been deserted by the colored people, I now turned my attention to the white. I went down into the village,

cornered one of my good white friends, one of the leading business men of the place, and asked him for his candid opinion and whatever advice he might give as to Dr. Washington's visit.

He was very deliberate, and said: "Holtzclaw, I want to see Booker and hear him speak, and I am going to hear him while he is in this state, if I have to travel two hundred miles, but I really would not advise you to have him come, if you have the least idea that there is any danger. We are just now experiencing the hardships caused by the money panic of a year or so ago, and we don't know but that some crazy, drunken fellow, having heard so many things about Washington, might attempt to do violence to him; and that would disturb the friendly relations between the races here which everybody has been working so hard to cement. Then, too, Booker might say something in his address that would cause trouble for you after he is gone. I repeat, therefore, that for complete safety I believe it would be better not to have him come."

I said to him: "But I have already invited him, and, to tell you the truth, I would rather abandon my school than withdraw that invitation. I do not care to live in a place where Dr. Washington cannot come with perfect safety. Besides, he is already on his way and will be in Memphis to-morrow."

My friend replied: "Well, I think you had better let him come under those circumstances, but I do hope he will be as wise in his utterances as he is credited with being."

I confess things were looking cloudy, but I had lost

none of my determination, although I certainly had no intention of subjecting Dr. Washington to any danger. I thanked this gentleman for his advice, then called on another leading white man. After getting him back in his office behind closed doors, I put the subject before him. He seemed greatly surprised that I even thought of such a thing as Dr. Washington's being injured in Utica, and said: "Let him come right ahead. He will be as safe in Utica as he would be in New York;" and so I made my rounds of the leading men of the city.

For fear that they would not talk to me as freely as they would among themselves, I sought the services of one of my best white friends and asked him if he would not look over the town and the neighboring country and give me his frank opinion as to Dr. Washington's visit. He complied as hurriedly as possible, and when he had finished he told me that there was not the slightest danger in the proposed trip; that every man and woman with whom he had talked were ready and eager to see Dr. Washington; that I should have him come without doubt.

So I determined to let the matter go through. I went to the city marshal and told him of the apprehension of the colored people, and asked for his best protection of Dr. Washington. After laughing heartily at me, he assured me that he would be on hand and that nothing in the world would happen to him. He seemed greatly astonished that I should feel any doubt.

I then boarded a train and met Dr. Washington in Memphis, where I went over the whole matter with his private secretary, Mr. Emmett J. Scott, and Mr. Charles Banks, cashier of the Bank of Mound Bayou and the

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON HALL, erected by student labor. In the upper right-hand corner the first school-house used by Principal Holtzclaw at Utica

leader of the party in Mississippi. On we came to Utica, reaching there at 8 o'clock in the morning. To my surprise, Utica had more people in it that day than I have ever seen there before or since. For several hundred yards the railroad track was lined with people. The white ladies themselves had come down and lined up on each side of the railroad to see Dr. Washington as he emerged from the train.

There were several fine-looking men on the train,—bishops, elders, doctors, and what not,—so one or the other was frequently pointed out as Dr. Washington by the people in the crowd. One of them would say: "There he is now. No, there is he over there with the big hat on." At length, Dr. Washington stepped from the train, almost the most unpretentious-looking man in the crowd. The city marshal was right on hand. Dr. Washington bowed to the ladies and to all the crowd, and amid their cheers he stepped briskly toward his carriage, with the marshal on one side and me on the other.

I was careful to stay by his side, because I had said to the colored people when they were in their highest pitch of excitement that when he came I would be right by his side, and if any harm came, I would meet it first; I would see to that.

One of those same colored men that had said he would not be out that day at all was there, and was so excited that he jumped into the carriage while it was going and shook hands with Dr. Washington. Amidst all this excitement, Dr. Washington was perfectly placid, and apparently not the least disturbed. All the way to the school the road banks were lined with people, and when

we went into the chapel where he was to speak, nearly all the leading white people were among the auditors. Our chapel could not hold a tenth of the people that tried to enter.

Dr. Washington had scarcely begun his address before he captured his entire audience, white and black. They forgot all about their troubles, and I think they experienced brotherly feeling there that day such as they had never felt before. The magic of his personality and the power of his oratory completely won the hearts of all the people present.

One can scarcely realize the good that this visit accomplished, though hundreds of people were disappointed that they could not enter the building to hear him speak. So keen was their disappointment that a hurried message was sent to me from the white people of the town, asking if they might not erect a platform at the station and have him speak for ten minutes before he left. This was in order to give the white people a better opportunity to hear him. We were all very sorry that Dr. Washington's train schedule would not permit him to accept their invitation.

I have never seen in all my stay in Utica any stranger come into the town who received so much attention as Dr. Washington did; and it is the fervent hope of all that he may find it possible to come to Utica again.

In his address Dr. Washington made the same impression upon the minds of the leading white people who heard him speak that he always makes wherever he speaks,—that is, that he is a wise, conservative, trustworthy leader. One of the foremost white men of Utica

said to me the next day: "Holtzclaw, I am glad that you had Booker Washington come here. I have heard of him for twenty-five years, but this is the first time I have had an opportunity to hear an address by him. If we had enough men in this country like Booker Washington, we would be soon rid of many of the ills that beset us."

CHAPTER XV

I have tried to find out what made the colored people so afraid of the white people, but I have not been able to determine the cause, especially as the white people, as a rule, have always acted most kindly toward the colored people, so far as I could see. I am sure, however, that much of their fear was the result of rumors of what were known as White Caps. This was an organization of white people located principally in Lincoln county, a county on the southern border of our own, who were daily, or rather nightly, terrorizing the more respectable Negroes of that county, causing many of them to abandon the homes they had paid for and leave the county without any compensation for their property or any protection for their lives. Not only were these White Caps operating in Lincoln county, but they occasionally engaged in depredations in other counties. A body of such men were seen passing through our own town during this period. What their object was I have never been able to determine, as they passed through quietly and did not molest anybody. It is clear, then, that the Negroes of our locality were not so much afraid of the white people that they came in contact with as they were afraid that some action on their part might inflame the white people and cause them to form a White Cap organization. So far as I could see, then and even since then, this fear of

the white people in our locality was wholly without foundation. Still, I sympathized with the fear, because I knew of the Lincoln county White Cap organization. Governor Vardaman himself and many other white people in the state recognized the danger of allowing an organization of lawless men to terrorize the Negro population, and so took steps to crush out the White Caps, and this they succeeded in doing. If I remember correctly, the Federal authorities also took part in crushing out this organization, and as a result of these efforts many members of the White Cap bands were arrested and prosecuted; some were sent to the penitentiary for long periods and others got off with heavy fines. The result was that we have heard no more of White Capping in any part of Mississippi.

On the particular occasion of Dr. Washington's visit, however, the fears seem to have been caused by vague newspaper rumors of many things that were happening somewhere in the state. In fact, there were one or two papers in the state,—notably, one previously owned by Governor (now United States Senator) Vardaman,—that advised the white people not to attend Dr. Washington's lecture in the capital city; but the white people paid no attention to the advice and attended the lecture in large numbers, so large, in fact, that the strain upon the Coliseum in which he spoke proved too great and the gallery that contained the greater number of the leading white people came down with a crash just after Dr. Washington had finished his talk. Several people were injured, one man having several bones broken. Among the most prominent of those injured was the late Bishop

Charles B. Galloway, a friend of Dr. Washington and his race, and indeed a friend of everybody.

One of our methods that has done a great deal of good has been to publish in our little paper, the *Utica News,* a monthly letter to the farmers,—a letter in which we try to keep them abreast of the times and to help them in various ways.

The following letter, which was written at a time when the Mexican boll-weevil seemed destined to destroy the cotton crops of the South, will serve to give an idea of how we sought to help the farmers during these difficult times:

"This is the time of year when every farmer who expects to succeed must begin to move and make every hour count. In some sections farmers seem to be dazed on account of the appearance of the dreaded boll-weevil. This is unnecessary. There is no need to pull up stock and branch and go to other sections, for it seems certain that the boll-weevil will continue until the entire cotton section has been visited. The sensible man will stand his ground and make the best of the situation. It has been conclusively proven by experiments made by the Agricultural Department at Washington that cotton can be raised in spite of the boll-weevil. There are some regulations, however, that must be observed.

"In the first place, the land on which you expect to plant cotton must be thoroughly prepared and the cotton must be planted two or three weeks earlier than you have been accustomed to plant, and nothing but the best and earliest varieties should be planted. Then the crop must be worked at shorter intervals than you have been accustomed to work it,—that is, it must be pushed rapidly up

to maturity. Meantime, you must not depend upon your cotton crop entirely. Plant plenty of corn, make not only what you need for your own use, but have some for sale. Have all the vegetables and potatoes that you can use. Have some hogs, some chickens, in other words, *live at home.* The man who lives at home does not care much about boll-weevils.

"You will find it greatly to your advantage in making this crop to chop down all your hedges, chop around the ends of the rows, burn up the brush, dig up and burn the stumps and give the cotton a fair chance. The main point is, however, that you must begin to work now, not wait several days later. If the boll-weevil scare succeeds in making you do what you should have been doing all the time, it will be a blessing in disguise.

"One thing we must all remember, in connection with this year, and that is that we cannot hope to go to the merchants and buy things on credit, as we have been doing. We should buy those things, and those things only, that we are compelled to have. Fewer clothes should be worn; one or two pairs of shoes less; the extra Sunday hats and fancy calicoes should be left off. Let us buy only those things that are absolutely necessary for this year. If you will follow these suggestions, I believe you will have nothing to regret at the end of this year.

"William H. Holtzclaw."

In order to understand the significance of such a letter as this, one must know something about the boll-weevil pest. This little insect, which made its way over from Mexico into the United States by way of Texas, almost paralyzes the cotton industry wherever it goes. Nothing

has happened to the South since the Civil War that has so affected the people economically as this insect has done. In its ravages, it may be compared with the gypsy moth of New England, except that it exists largely upon the fruit of the cotton stalk, and unless the cotton producer follows those improved methods of cultivation that have been worked out by experts of the United States government and other agencies, the chances are that he will produce no cotton at all. Ever since the Civil War the Negroes of the Mississippi cotton belt have produced one crop annually, and that was cotton. There has been very little diversification. Up to the time the boll-weevil made its appearance they not only did not know how to produce any other crops besides cotton, but the majority of them cared little or nothing about other crops. After the coming of the boll-weevil the man who formerly produced thirty bales of cotton found that he could produce only five or six, on the same land. The white planters who owned large tracts of land, on which cotton had been planted for thirty years, found that these lands now planted in the old way would in many cases hardly produce sufficient cotton to pay the rent. Hence, they were unable to borrow money under such conditions from the local banks to "furnish" the Negroes and keep them trying to make cotton. In a majority of cases, as soon as the Negro could not get "furnished," he lost confidence in his landlord, and in his heart at least began to class him with what is usually called "po' white trash"; and as soon as an agent from some more favored section of the country (I mean a section where the boll-weevil had not gone) came seeking labor the Negroes were ready to

join him and run from the boll-weevil, not realizing seemingly that the pest was gradually making its way to all the sections where cotton grew. I have seen as many as a hundred wagons, each loaded with a separate family, passing through our locality from somewhere south of us, going northward to escape the depredations of the boll-weevil. Such people only needed to be taught to stand firm and work out their own salvation. In the vicinity of this institution few people have gone away to escape the weevil. They have remained here, planted their crops, and worked under the direction of the school; and as a result they are gradually learning how to produce cotton in spite of the boll-weevil. After five years of fighting this pest, we are about to conquer, the results being that, whereas we produced about one-tenth of a crop when the boll-weevil made its first appearance, at the present time this locality is producing fully two-thirds of the normal crop.

Meantime, our farmers' conferences were still doing their work annually. At these conferences I always delivered an address to the farmers assembled, which, with the resolutions, was published not only in our own paper, but also in many daily papers throughout the state of Mississippi. The following extracts, which were taken from the Jackson *Daily News,* will give some idea of how I sought to help the farmers:

"February 12.—The Mississippi Negro Farmers' Conference met in the main auditorium of the Utica Normal and Industrial Institute to-day at ten o'clock A. M. After preliminary exercises Prof. William H. Holtzclaw,

president of the conference, addressed the audience. The following remarks from his address were heartily received:

" 'Ladies and Gentlemen: We have come together in this our sixth annual conference further to consider ways and means to better the condition of the Negro farmers of this state, and to hear, from your own lips, of the progress you have made since last we met. Constituting as we do so nearly two-thirds of the population of the state of Mississippi, our conduct is bound to have a tremendous bearing upon the character of this commonwealth.

" 'In this connection, I want to call your attention to the amount of crime set down to the credit of the Negroes of this state. I have recently seen a statement to the effect that 1,400 Negroes out of a million were in the chain gangs of this state during the past year. Now I think you will agree with me that, even after allowing ample latitude for too ready apprehension and conviction and all unfairness that may enter trials, the amount of criminality is entirely too great. We must do something to change these conditions. I feel that if we set our faces sufficiently hard against crime it will grow continually less. We must show the criminal that there is no place in our society for him, that we will tolerate him under no circumstances. We are all eager to see the day when lynchings will be as negligible a quantity in Mississippi as in Massachusetts.

" 'We can help to bring about this condition by our absolute refusal to tolerate crime in any sense among us. There is not a state in the Union, in my opinion, that offers greater advantages to its Negro population than Mississippi. There is plenty of land for sale all over the

state at reasonable prices. Here is a great opportunity for us to plant ourselves firmly in the soil and make useful citizens. Let us strain ourselves to more than fulfill the duties of citizenship.

" 'To complain of obstacles is one thing and to surmount them is another. Our salvation here in the South is very largely a matter of Christian intelligence, thrift, industry, and morality. We must possess these or we must ultimately fail.

" 'I realize that we have many things to hinder us, but nothing has yet arisen to prevent us from being truthful, honest, upright, energetic, and moral men. Nothing has so far arisen to prevent our acquiring homes and developing them in the highest sense. I feel, therefore, that just so long as these things are not prevented, nothing can stay our progress, if, indeed, there be any that wish to accomplish this ignoble end.' "

CHAPTER XVI

Just after this conference had closed Dr. Henry E. Cobb, of New York City, one of our leading trustees, requested me to give a full statement of what had been accomplished up to that time, April, 1909; and I wrote him the following letter, which I take the liberty to give here, because it sums up well the work that we had succeeded in doing during the first six years of our labors:

"My dear Dr. Cobb: In reply to your letter of recent date asking for a statement of the work of this Institution, permit me to say that although we started here in a wilderness six years ago, with absolutely no capital, with no immediate friends, strangers amidst strange surroundings, our motives questioned on the one hand, and our ability to accomplish our object on the other, with nothing but hope founded on faith, we have gone steadily forward in the building up of an industrial educational Institute similar to Hampton and Tuskegee, until to-day our institution is among the most successful in this section of the South.

"In all our departments,—industrial, academic, Biblical, night and day school,—we have enrolled five hundred students this year, and have employed twenty-five teachers and officers. Our teachers have been educated at some of the best schools in the country, North and South. Although we are careful not to neglect the academic work, our school is distinctly industrial, and among the

industries agriculture takes first rank. Domestic science, I believe, comes second. When I tell you that ninety-five per cent. of my people in the state of Mississippi are engaged in some form of agriculture you will readily understand why we are careful to give accurate training in this particular subject. Other industries taught are carpentry, wheelwrighting, blacksmithing, sawmilling, and general lumber manufacturing, brick laying and plastering, broommaking, printing and bookbinding, dairying, stock-raising, poultry raising, sewing and dressmaking, millinery, cooking, electrical engineering, laundering, and general housekeeping. Some of these industries,—the sawmill, for instance,—are well equipped and are more than self-supporting, while the majority of them must still come under the 'infant industry' class.

"On the grounds proper there are three large buildings and eleven small ones; out on the plantation there is one large building surrounded by thirty cottages, farmhouses, barns, and so on. The farm proper, including timber lands, consists of one thousand five hundred and ten acres. The entire property is valued at seventy-five thousand dollars, and I am happy to say that there is not one cent encumbrance on a single dollar's worth of the property.

"But our labors have not been confined to the building of a material Institution. We have built our Institution, as it were, in the hearts of the people. We have changed the condition of things so materially that it is difficult to describe the changes that have taken place. Six years ago the ownership of homes by my people was almost wholly unknown; it was difficult to find a Negro that had a home of his own with more than two rooms, regardless of the size of his family. To-day Negroes in

the neighborhood own more than three thousand acres of land, and many of them have erected comfortable cottages with from three to five rooms, having some pictures on the walls and some books on the shelves as well as some flowers in the yard.

"You will better appreciate the value of the changes when I tell you that six years ago some of the people were so vicious that all idea of evening services at the various churches had to be abandoned by the older people in order to keep their sons and daughters out of prisons and chain gangs. When a gathering was attempted at night it usually resulted in a free-for-all fight, in which revolvers and razors were used indiscriminately, to the injury of some of the congregation and the imprisonment of others.

"It is gratifying to note that all this has nearly passed away at Utica. In practically all the churches the services are orderly and are held night or day, at the will of the worshipers. No 'blind tiger' whiskey is sold about the churches now; and many of the congregations compare favorably with audiences I have seen in more enlightened sections of the country.

"Six years ago there were men and women living together as man and wife and rearing children, without the semblance of a legal tie, but I am glad to say that public sentiment has so changed that it has compelled the discontinuance of these illegal and degrading practices. All the persons living together illegally were made to marry by due forms of law, or leave town, and they are now happier. The former state of things could not exist here now. Not only would the colored people themselves refuse to tolerate it, but the white officers of the law would not permit it.

"All this measures, though very inaccurately, the work we have helped to accomplish during these six years, outside of what might be expected of an ordinary school. Now, just a word about how we have done it.

"We organized ourselves into what we called 'extension workers,' then we divided the local territory into as many divisions as there were teachers in the faculty, assigning a given division to each worker. All the time that was not spent in the actual work of the school was spent among the people. Once a month the teachers would meet in our chapel and compare notes, and once a year all the people in the various divisions were brought together for a conference and for general instructions; we learned of them, and they learned of us. The work has been enlarged until this year the whole county of Hinds, a section of territory equal to the state of Rhode Island, is under the practical moral charge of the twenty-five teachers of our school. We shall further enlarge the scope of the work from year to year.

"The results of this extension work have impressed every one of our friends that has visited the school. When Dr. G. S. Dickerman, of New Haven, Conn., secretary of the John F. Slater Fund Trustees, visited us about a year ago, his parting remark to me at the little station was: 'What impresses me most about your work is, not what you have done at the school, but what you have done in this community.'

"Dr. Bradley Gilman, of Boston, formerly for many years pastor of the Church of the Unity at Springfield, Mass., who paid us a visit last October at the time Dr. Booker T. Washington was here, has written me the following letter:

" 'My dear Mr. Holtzclaw: Among many incidents

of my recent trip through the South with Dr. Washington nothing is more firmly or agreeably stamped upon my memory than is my visit to your school at Utica. What I saw there gave me every assurance of your success. What I said to you there I repeat now: namely, that such good work and results as you show at Utica,—you being a graduate of Tuskegee,—is a veritable guarantee of the wisdom and worth of the Tuskegee method.

" 'I hope that you will go on with great courage and that you will find ample support for your work, which richly deserves support. The solution of the Negro problem by true education is the only solution, and my visit to the South made me more hopeful of results than I was before.'

"It may also interest you to note what Dr. Washington himself thinks of my efforts. He says:

" 'It was my privilege to visit Utica, Mississippi, and to see something of the work of the Utica Normal and Industrial Institute, of which Mr. William H. Holtzclaw is Principal, in October, 1908. I cannot speak too cordially of the effective way in which Mr. Holtzclaw and his co-workers are attacking the problems presented to them. The school is located in a section where it has an opportunity to do effective work among the Negro people.

" 'Mr. Holtzclaw is deserving of the encouragement and support of all who may become interested in the work he is doing at Utica.'

"William Holtzclaw,

"Principal."

It has always been my policy to keep the school out of debt and the property unencumbered. At the end of the

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF THE UTICA NORMAL AND INDUSTRIAL INSTITUTE.—Left to right, top row: Miss C. J. Lee, Assistant Dean; D. W. L. Davis, Superintendent of Industries; P. Brooks Peters, Dean, Academic Department. Second row: Foster G. Smith, Private Secretary to the Principal; William H. Holtzclaw, Principal; F. Lawrence Anderson, Treasurer. Bottom row: Mrs. Mary E. Holtzclaw, Superintendent of Girls' Industries; Miss Addie Hendley, Dean, Girls' Division

school year, if I did not have quite sufficient funds to meet all our obligations, I have appealed to Negro friends and then to the whites, and have resorted to many devices for raising money among my own people, in order to keep the Institution out of debt.

CHAPTER XVII

Some time ago, accompanied by more than a dozen of my co-workers, I went into the country to learn what was the condition of the Negroes in that section, and found myself in the midst of a progressive colony of them,—a colony that owned altogether about five thousand acres. And this is in the state whose former Governor declared publicly that the Negroes were going backward, and that they were incapable of assimilating the white man's civilization.

Just before I reached the colony I stopped at a store owned by a white man. Only one white man, the proprietor, was at the store, and he was sitting on the gallery, chatting with about twenty Negroes. While getting some refreshments I found out that the relation between the races was of the most cordial sort. And when I reached the Negro colony and talked with them, I found that they all spoke in the highest terms of their white neighbors.

To ride up and down seven miles of territory owned by Negroes, to look into their beaming faces, and to receive their warm handshake is a satisfaction that no one can know who has not lived among and grown up with the people. The success of this particular community is due to a Negro teacher who settled here some years ago. Some of the Negroes own as much as seven hundred

acres of land, and are replacing the old one-room cabin with neat, modern cottages. The model for these little homes is the one occupied by the teacher himself. At his house we had supper, which was prepared directly from his gardens, barnyards, and fields, the cooking and preparation of the food being all that the most fastidious could desire. After more than twenty persons had partaken of this hospitality there seemed to be enough for twenty more. Where people live on the products of their own fields, gardens, and barnyards, food is seldom scarce.

Near by were school buildings, which had been erected by this Negro teacher, with the assistance of his neighbors. Everything was apparently neat and trim. The test of a school, however, is its backyard, so I withdrew from the crowd and went on a tour of inspection. Everything was in excellent condition; even the horse lot and cow barn were clean and sanitary.

In addition to the school, there was a little store, a place where the teacher supplied the neighbors when they did not have time to go to the white man's large store up the road. Into his school this teacher is trying to introduce what we call "industrial features," such as cooking and sewing, and some of the good neighbors are like they used to be at Utica,—they "don't want their children taught to work for white folks."

Valuable work is being done through the indirect influence of our school by some of its graduates.

A few years ago there appeared at my office three little girls, with their brother, all knocking for admittance. Presently their father appeared. He had brought them through the country. All covered with dust, he ap-

proached and asked if I would arrange some way whereby his children could help to educate themselves; he had a large family and found it practically impossible to send them all to school unless they could work to pay at least a part of their expenses. He was a local preacher, and was what you would call a "good liver" as a farmer.

I admitted the four young people, with the understanding that he would pay what he could and that I would permit them to work out the remainder. After five years of work and study at this Institution, they all four were ready to be graduated when one of them died. The other two girls, Ada and Minnie, with their brother, Fred Morrison, returned to their home at Learned, and began "community work," as they had seen it carried on here. They had, the last time I visited them, the best school community to be found in their county. The County Superintendent of that county states that it is the first model school for Negroes ever constructed in his county. What is more, these young people, together with their father, so worked on the hearts and minds of their little community that they succeeded in inducing the people themselves, together with their white neighbors, to raise sufficient funds to build this schoolhouse without outside assistance.

It is a splendid rural schoolhouse, with three good rooms, two of them used for teaching the ordinary day pupils and the third for teaching cooking and sewing, the "domestic arts." In it they have a cook stove, a sewing-machine, and some other simple apparatus. Outside the boys are taught trucking and farming on a little plot of land belonging to the school. The two young women do

the inside work, together with the academic teaching, while the brother teaches the boys farming and blacksmithing. He has a portable blacksmith shop, which he himself erected on a little one-horse wagon. After he has used this shop for a given number of days each week at the little school at Learned he then travels through the country as an agent of the Jeanes Fund, visiting all the Negro schools in the county, teaching them blacksmithing and farming, trying to imbue them with the idea of progress so that they may succeed in their school community just as he has done in his. It is this kind of work, done by the young men and women whom we shall be able to send out from time to time from various schools, that will bring about the salvation of our people in the rural districts.

One other incident will, perhaps, emphasize the point. One day I was walking out to our plantation along a lonesome country road when I was overtaken by a farm wagon the occupants of which were a man and his wife and his mother-in-law. Upon their invitation, I got up to ride with them. The wife, a more than ordinarily intelligent woman, started the conversation.

" 'Fessor," she said, "this is my old man. Ever since I heard that lecture of yours down yonder at Zion, two years ago, we's been a-living better. My old man was not there, but I went home and told him how you said we could live, and we started out to live that way. We began raising all sorts of vegetables, and chickens and eggs, so that we now have plenty of everything to eat at home and something to sell every week. The flour you see on this wagon right now is bought with some chickens

and eggs I have just sold. Me and the old man makes the crops and Mamma raises the chickens and gathers up the eggs. I sho' is glad you spoke there that day. Everybody in that neighborhood is living better; they all has chickens and eggs."

This shows, at least, that opinion is changing among the masses of the people. They are learning to move upward and forward, to measure themselves by higher standards, and to hope for better things. To bring about this condition is the first step,—the pioneer work.

But our greatest work is among those who come to us as students. For instance, a girl came to school not long ago who did not have a change of clothes nor a cent of money. She brought her mother's only milch cow, which she offered in payment for her schooling. The cow really did not seem to be worth the feed that was necessary to bring her to the point of usefulness, but in order to encourage the young woman we accepted the cow and allowed her to proceed with her education, working as she went.

This young woman is typical of many who enter the Institution under adverse circumstances and afterward become useful in the communities to which they return. I have in mind a young woman who entered the Institution several years ago, simply because she had nowhere else to go; she had no father and she had been abandoned by her mother. She finished the course of study and has since proved to be one of the most energetic workers that we have sent out.

At the present time she is engaged as a teacher, in the charge of girls, in the Robert Hungerford Industrial

Corene Haney, offering her mother's only cow for her entrance fee and schooling at the Utica Normal and Industrial Institute

School, Eatonville, Florida. The following paper written by her at the time of her graduation will be of interest because of the light it sheds upon the whole subject:

"Memory carries me back six years ago, when I was but a little ragged, illiterate girl, roaming the fields and public roads of Utica, with no idea of ever becoming a boarding-student of any institution. Being a poor girl, without a father's aid, I had to struggle very hard for a living. Mother had to work away from home the greater part of the time, hence I received little or no fireside training.

"The church services were limited,—preaching once a month, and Sunday school every Sunday. Very often, however, I could not attend these services, because of my mother's absence, bad weather, or a long distance which rendered it unsafe for me to go alone.

"Fortunately, most of my associates were school girls, and my being so far behind them inspired me to want an education.

"My opportunity for obtaining an education in those early days was indeed meager. The rural school, three or four miles from home, made it impossible for me to attend school in the winter, for at that time only a few months were taught, and those in the heart of the winter. I was too small at the time to walk such a distance in bad weather, and when I became large enough to attend school, regardless of weather, I had to work for my support. Mother, having other children to support, was not able to aid me in any way toward getting an education. What little opportunity I had for learning, therefore, came from what my older sister taught me in odd moments. I remember quite well that the first books I ever

owned were given to me by a white lady for sweeping her yard. They were too high for me at the time; however, by my sister's help, I managed to get some benefit from them.

"The year 1902 was my last year on the home farm; it was the hardest and most discouraging year of my life. Just as I was about to give up all, Mr. Holtzclaw came to Utica and took charge of the St. Peter's public school, which was the beginning of the Utica Normal and Industrial Institute. I first started as a day student. A few weeks afterwards the principal, having an occasion to go North, offered me the great opportunity of staying with his wife while he was away. She, seeing my condition, became interested in me at once, and when the time came for me to return home she offered me an opportunity to educate myself, providing I would do whatever was assigned to me to do with all my heart. I eagerly grasped the opportunity, for I was indeed anxious for an education.

"In the beginning, my work seemed hard on account of my not knowing how to do it properly. I knew little or nothing about house work, therefore I became discouraged. But, my teachers being kind and patient with me, and by my taking in and carrying out the lessons taught me from day to day, it was not long before I found pleasure in doing my work, and it has resulted in good for me.

"To-day my mind in retrospect sees those days I thought so dark. Behind me is a struggle of six years; before me a world of duties. I do not regret a moment of my time spent at Utica. I am proud of the Institution and what it has done for me. Had it not been for our noble Principal, who left his comfortable home to come

to this most needy section, I would still be groping in utter darkness. By making the best of my time and talent I have been able to receive certificates from four different departments of the Institution, which means that I can do the work intelligently.

"My future life shall be devoted to my people, to whom in a small way I shall be what Utica has been to me.

"I find no words to express my gratitude to the Utica Institute. It has been to me what Lincoln was to the slaves. He freed their bodies, and his life teaches us true freedom of the soul. Utica Institute has freed my body, for I am no more confined to one line of work, but I can, with intelligence, cook, wash, iron, sew, and keep house. It has freed my soul by giving me a moral education.

"I am ever grateful to our Principal for that wholesome instruction he has given me year after year. Dear to my memory are those words that fell from his lips once upon a time as I sat under the oak: 'No man has within him the power to keep another permanently down. With a strong and healthy body, will power and determination, all obstacles can be trampled under foot as one moves towards the goal.' I am indebted to him for the everlasting principles of right which he taught and for the foundation of success which he tried so earnestly to impress upon me.

"THEODOSIA SKELTON."

While this educational work was progressing we were still carrying on the local work to the best of our ability, extending the scope of the Institution and trying to make it more and more substantial. We had begun the erection of the largest building we had ever attempted,—Booker T. Washington Hall,—but just as it was about

two-thirds completed, June 9, 1910, we were visited by a severe cyclone that completely destroyed this building together with several others. As it was just after the closing of school, the buildings had been vacated and no lives were lost.

But we were left practically without shelter. When the storm occurred it was about bedtime, and two ministers had come to spend the night with me. They had just retired, both sleeping in the same room. When the storm was at its height I heard buildings falling, and our house was shaking so violently that I thought I had better go in and see how my guests were faring. I found them both down on their knees praying. One of them, however, got up at intervals, looked out of the window to see how the storm was progressing, and then kneeled again to pray. Before the storm had ceased, one of the teachers came to my window, and knocking excitedly, said that several of the buildings had been destroyed. I knew before he told me what had happened, but I did not have the courage to face the desolation, and when he assured me that no lives had been lost I directed him to go back to his room and remain until morning.

By daybreak I had made my plans for rebuilding,—plans that extended over two years of work.

Going to work vigorously, I made a strenuous campaign, and as a result, aided as I was by many of my friends both at home and in the East, I succeeded in raising within ninety days fourteen thousand dollars. While I was busy raising this money Mr. D. W. L. Davis, our faithful and efficient superintendent of industries, was on the spot, and he superintended all the building and

repairing. He succeeded so well with the work that when the trustees met four months later to inspect the work we were doing they felt constrained to give Mr. Davis special commendation. The Institute owes a great deal to the devoted teachers that have been connected with the school from time to time.

At one time, in the early history of the school, while I was away from home trying to raise funds, I received this note from one of the teachers,—a woman: "Dear Principal: I regret to have to bother you, but I am actually almost barefooted and cannot go from one building to another. If you can send me enough money to get a pair of shoes, I will not bother you again soon."

Mr. D. W. L. Davis, an expert blacksmith, stuck by his post from year to year, on a salary so small that when he was called to neighboring towns on Saturdays to do horseshoeing he used to bring back, as a result of his work, more than half the amount of his monthly wages. This money he turned into the school's treasury. Without such devoted helpers as these were the school could not have gone forward,—indeed, could scarcely have continued to exist.

While speaking of those who have helped me I must not forget the service of my good wife, Mary Ella, without whose help I should most certainly have lost heart and failed.

Born in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, in a city, and having gone from there while yet a girl to Tuskegee Institute, where she remained until after she was grown, she never knew anything about country life until she began work at Snow Hill, Alabama, the same school in which I

worked for four years. I was greatly impressed even then with the way in which she adapted herself to country life, but it was after we had married and had entered upon our work at Utica that I began to understand her character, her willingness to make sacrifices in order that good might be accomplished. In all these years that I have lived and worked with her I have come to know that there are few sacrifices she would not make, if by so doing she could further the interests of our people.

For instance: in the early history of this school, when we were just starting the school and were both strangers, it became often necessary for me to leave her for three and four months at a time,—a stranger among strangers, —but she always bore it with a fortitude that nothing seemed ever to disturb, except when I told her, as I often did, that she seemed to be happier when I was away from home than when I was there.

As the work has grown from year to year greater responsibilities have attached to it, but these responsibilities, until within recent years, have always devolved upon her shoulders in my absence, and even now those whom I leave in charge of the school when I am away depend very largely upon her judgment in matters pertaining to the best interests of the school.

From the very first she has been a teacher in the Institution, having had charge for the past few years of the girls' industries as director. She has her office in the girls' building and maintains regular office hours the year round, where all girls have free access to her when necessary. This has lifted from me all along a great burden, for no problems ever arise among the girls that cannot

be settled without my taking a greater part than a mere consultation with my wife.

Although I am given most of the credit for the work that has been done here, it is but fair to say that the greater portion of this credit should go to Mary Ella, for it seems to me that she has been truly the power behind the throne, and sometimes all around the throne.

There are many other consecrated workers connected with this Institution that might be mentioned. There are two at least that must be mentioned, the Misses Clara J. and Mary Lee, first cousins, the two young women who were with me when I first opened a public school in this section of the country and who have been with me ever since, honored teachers and efficient workers. The latter is now Mrs. Harris, but she is still actively engaged in the work, being the widow of William H. Harris, who was mentioned in a former chapter as having sacrificed his life in the interest of this work in its early history.

CHAPTER XVIII

For many years the Southern people, living in one of the richest sections of our country, did not develop their agricultural interests as the farmers in the middle West and other sections have done, but in recent years the entire South has been waking up in this respect; all at once it has seemed to realize what it has been losing; consequently it is now showing an interest in the development of its agricultural resources that is hardly equalled anywhere else in the country. But the greater part of the interest thus far shown has been largely for the benefit of white farmers. Especially has this been true of whatever funds have been expended in the interest of agricultural education. So far as I have been able to determine there has been no particular disposition to deprive the Negro of any agricultural rights and privileges, but the deprivation came through neglect. The legislators and public servants in various places seemed all at once to realize how much the South has been losing by not giving sufficient attention to agriculture, and they began to try to remedy the evil all at one stroke. In these rapid improvements the interest of the Negro is too often entirely overlooked. For instance, at a recent meeting of the legislature of Mississippi a law was enacted making it possible to establish agricultural high schools in every county in the state, but for whites only. This law

was unconstitutional, as under the reconstruction constitution white and colored men were to receive like treatment. I thought that older and more experienced men in the state should take the lead in such matters, but no one came forward.

Meantime, the schools for whites only were being established here and there in various counties, and all the people, both white and black, were being taxed for their support. I had watched all this very carefully and had been trying to find some way by which this neglect of the Negro could be brought to the attention of the proper authorities; but as the white people of my own county had not attempted to establish such a school, I had no direct way of reaching the matter.

At length, in one of the counties a Negro refused to pay his taxes. A suit was brought and the case soon reached the Supreme Court of the state, where the school law was declared unconstitutional; so those counties that had established schools had to cease operations. Then the legislature met again, and the air was full of rumors to the effect that a way would be found within the law to continue the establishment of these white schools without making similar provision for Negroes. But the majority of the white people of the state did not sympathize with these rumors.

With a sincere wish to see the white schools continued, but with a still stronger desire to see the Negro youth of the state enjoy the same privilege, on January 1, 1910, I addressed the following open letter, in conjunction with and with the approval of leading white and colored men, to the legislature on the subject:

"To the Hon. C. E. Franklin and the Honorable General Assembly, of the state of Mississippi, Jackson, Mississippi.

"Sirs: At the meeting of the last general assembly a bill introduced by Senator Franklin, establishing Agricultural High Schools in the state of Mississippi, was introduced and favorably passed upon.

"It was afterward discovered that this bill inadvertently made provision for the establishment of agricultural schools for whites only. The right-thinking masses of the people immediately concluded that this was an oversight which was not intended by the author or sanctioned by public opinion. As soon, therefore, as the matter could be brought before the supreme court, the law was declared unconstitutional, in accordance with the will of the white people. Naturally, the black people of the state rejoiced at this finding, for it proved conclusively the opinion for which the better class of white people, as well as the better class of Negroes, have contended for many years: namely, that there is no desire on the part of the better class of white people in the state of Mississippi to lift themselves up by casting the Negroes down.

"But we now have further proof (although further proof is unnecessary) in the new agricultural bill, which I learn from the Jackson *Daily News* is now in the hands of Senator Franklin, for introduction.

"We might as well look matters squarely in the face, and speak the truth without reserve. It is the opinion in sections outside of the state of Mississippi that the Negroes in this state do not get a square deal from their white fellow-citizens. That, being excluded from the ballot, and having no direct representation at the capital, and being, therefore, compelled to take whatever is given

them, they are, as a matter of fact, deprived of much that they by right ought to have. When I say this opinion is pretty general I speak from experience,—experience gained from personal contact with individuals in many of the states from Mississippi to Maine.

"I think I may venture the assertion that the feeling is not so general among leading Negroes in Mississippi as it is among members of your own race in other states. But whatever may be the facts in the case, this new agricultural bill should be enough to remove any doubt from all sincere seekers after the truth. For although no Negro, perhaps, has had any influence whatever upon any one who has had to do with the making of the present bill, its provisions, nevertheless, are such as to convince any right-thinking Negro that the best white people of this state have his interests at heart, as well as their own.

"When the masses of the Negroes of this state were deprived of the ballot, and representation, there were many honest men and women who felt that this was a direct blow at the Negroes' liberty, and some even ventured to think that it was an effort to re-enslave them, in spite of the fact that the statesmen of that day fought hard to convince the public that they bore no ill-will toward the black men, and would not re-enslave them if they could.

"Mississippi was not allowed, at this time, the benefit of the doubt as to her intentions, as she stood before the bar of public opinion; but was held to be guilty of an effort to re-enslave, as it were, until she should prove herself innocent. But notwithstanding many indiscretions of certain types of politicians, I think you will agree with me that this bill which, I understand, is brought into being by some of the best people of Mississippi, and

which is to be introduced by Senator Franklin, himself one of the bravest of leaders, should be final proof that Mississippi is seeking the good of all her people, black as well as white, poor as well as rich.

"But what if, after being introduced, such a bill should fail to pass the Legislature? I do not think I speak rashly when I say that the failure to enact such a measure as provided, simply because it provides agricultural education for all the people alike, would be almost a calamity. For many years thereafter we should stand condemned before the bar of public opinion. It is for these reasons that I have ventured to address you on behalf of the Negroes of this state, to humbly beg your influence toward the enactment of this agricultural high school bill.

"Mississippi's great treasures are all buried beneath her rich soil; with a million Negroes, untrained in the very methods which this bill seeks to provide, it would be impossible for her white citizens to extract this great treasure so long as they tried to carry this load of Negro ignorance. It would be a veritable millstone about their necks,—a millstone that must remain until it has been loosed by such a measure as is now before us.

"I believe you will find it easy to excuse the liberty I may seem to assume in thus addressing you, when you remember that this means of petition is the only way my race has of making its wants known to you. The laws are made by you, my race having absolutely no voice in either the making or the administration of them. We cannot appeal from them, but must accept them, whatever we may think of them. It is for this reason that I appeal for your support of this latest measure which has for its object the enlightenment of a million black citizens who are virtually at your mercy.

Young men making furniture in the cabinet division

"Although we are not represented in your general assembly, we are with you in every act, in every scheme you may devise for the enlightenment of our farmer classes, and for the development of our state. Believing firmly as I do in your interest in all the people of the state of Mississippi, and believing that the interests of both whites and blacks are conserved in this bill, I again summon the courage to beg your support for the bill as lastly drawn.

"Very sincerely yours,

"Wm. H. Holtzclaw,

"Principal the Utica Normal and Industrial Institute, Utica, Miss."

I do not know what effect this letter had, or indeed whether it had any effect at all, but I do know that a bill was passed within a few days authorizing the establishment of agricultural high schools in every county in the state for both Negroes and whites. In such efforts as this letter to the Legislature represents I have not worked alone but in coöperation with many of the good white people who have been interested in my race and also with many of the leading Negroes of the state, nearly all of whom are anxious about the progress of the Negro farmers of the state.

So far as I know, very little progress has been made toward establishing such schools as I have just mentioned for colored people, but that is not the fault of the law.

One other incident I may mention that will show how I have tried to help in other directions is in connection

with the lynching evil. These efforts took various forms, one of them being the following letter, which I wrote to the Governor of the state at a time when lynching had grown to such an extent in various parts of the South that a mob of young Negroes had caught the spirit and had lynched one of our own race in the Mississippi Delta. The strange thing about it, so the papers reported, was that certain white people applauded these Negroes while they did the lynching. I felt this disgrace upon our state so keenly that I submitted the following letter to the Governor:

"In these trying days for my race, when so many of them are being put to death without the semblance of a trial and when our state is listed so prominently among the states that have recently suffered from the evils of lynch law, it is difficult for one deeply interested in it and in all that pertains to its progress, and that of the South generally, not to raise a voice of protest.

"News comes to us of persons lynched to the extent of one a day for ten days, and to make it worse, eight lynchings happened on the same day.

"I am greatly interested in this question, because it is altogether likely that the lynching spirit which has hitherto been shown by whites only may take hold on the Negroes after a while and manifest itself in ways that will shock this nation.

"It is the spirit of lawlessness. The same spirit that swings up a poor, ignorant, degraded Negro in the South and riddles his body with bullets is the identical spirit that dynamites a house in other sections, and occasionally assassinates a high official. It is anarchy, under present

conditions in disguise, and anarchy is chaos. Committing more crimes cannot be a cure for crime.

"I appeal to you, my dear Governor,—not on behalf of those who have suffered so directly from mob violence, but on behalf of the law-abiding Negroes who by suggestion may in the end be led to follow this deplorable example of murder to satisfy some real or fancied injury, —I appeal to you to use your great influence to check mob violence amongst us.

"Dispatches tell us that only the other day a mob of Negroes lynched one of their own race in Merigold, while they were applauded by white men. It does not need a prophet to tell where such actions will ultimately lead. It is an easy step from lynching a Negro while being applauded by white men to murdering a white man while being applauded by Negroes.

"I take the same position in regard to this lynching by Negroes in Shelby that I take in regard to all lynchings, —that it is absolutely unjustifiable under all circumstances, is a relic of barbarism, and ought not to be tolerated in a civilized country. It is vain for civilized men to try to justify so barbarous a practice as that of taking human life without some process of law.

"Here in the South white men make the laws, they interpret the laws, and they should enforce the law to the last letter, not override it. All the machinery of the government is in their hands; they can destroy or defend, and the black man can say nothing but look on, and it matters not what may be his opinion of the white man's sense of justice. Every time you make a law and fail to abide by it so long as it is on the statute books you have done just that much to undermine the structure of civilized government.

"People who resort to mob violence as a cure for any evil overlook the fact that ignorance is at the bottom of every crime that provokes the mob spirit. A few hundreds of us, realizing that fact, are working day and night to wipe out ignorance and, consequently, crime from among us.

"We deplore the existence of crime among our people, but we have faith that it can be overcome by intelligent training in industry, morality, and Christianity. When every Negro is engaged in some useful and congenial occupation, crime will be reduced to the minimum. I beseech you, therefore, to open the schoolhouse door to every Negro child, as much for the sake of the future of your own people as for mine. If you will lend your great influence to the work of helping us to better the condition of our people, I pledge you the hearty efforts of ten thousand educated Negroes in this state who will see to it (so far as they can) that crime is wiped out and that there shall neither be excuse nor occasion for the mob.

"I was born in the South; have lived here and rendered whatever service I could toward its development and progress. I am deeply interested in all that pertains to its welfare. I would not speak or write a single word save for the purpose of helping it forward, and I am writing you this letter because I know that your influence in this state and throughout the country is great, and I feel that a word from you at this time would count tremendously in the direction of peace and prosperity in our beloved Southland.

"WILLIAM H. HOLTZCLAW,
"Utica, Miss."

It is probably not generally known outside of Mississippi that we have a class of white people here who are as much opposed to lynching and other forms of evil as are the people in any other state in the Union. The following letter, which I received from the Governor of Mississippi, is to the point in this connection:

"Mr. W. H. Holtzclaw,

"Utica, Mississippi:

"I am in receipt of your letter of the 6th instant in reference to enforcement of law and opposition to lynch law and all forms of crime. In all of this you have my most hearty concurrence. I have done, and will continue to do, everything in my power to contribute to the enforcement of law, and to the punishment of all who offend. I do not know where the eight lynchings occurred of which you write, nor had I before heard of the lynching of a Negro by Negroes at Merigold. I should be glad to receive some data on this point, and will bring that and all other lynchings in this state to the attention of the courts, with the view of having the offenders punished. I have everywhere said, when speaking of the subject, that the people are in a sad condition when they look upon laws as something to use when it suits them and to defy or evade when it does not suit them, for laws of every kind should be equally and impartially enforced against every offender, and all should receive equal protection of the laws. I have heard of the industrial work in which you are engaged, and am glad to know that you are also stressing the strict enforcement and observance of law.

"Yours truly,

"E. F. Noel,

"Governor."

I may add here that this determination on the part of Governor Noel is typical of nearly every governor that Mississippi has had in the past twenty years or more. The white people who wish to see their state rid of this evil welcome help, if it has weight, even when it comes from Negroes.

I sent the Governor clippings from various papers telling of the Merigold lynching, and received the following letter:

"Mr. W. H. Holtzclaw, Principal,
"Utica, Miss.

"Sir: I am in receipt of your letter of the 19th inst. I will take up the matter with the officers and do what I can toward vindicating the law in regard to each of the cases you have mentioned, and I intended doing it before I heard from you as to the Chunkey case. I have no information in regard to the other case, except through you.

"E. F. Noel,
"Governor."

In my efforts to help the people I have always had the encouragement of the best white people, not only in Utica but wherever I have been. It is the impression in many places that white people are not interested in the education of the Negro. This may be true in some respects, but it is not true enough to be made a sweeping statement; for I have observed that the white man in Mississippi wants to see education count for something tangible, and whenever he can see that education means something to his home, to his community, and to the progress of his

state as well as to the Negro, he is usually found lending assistance to that sort of education.

For instance, one day I was booked to deliver an address to the colored people at the little town of St. Elmo, in Claiborne county, Mississippi,—a county which has all its public schools come together annually for public exhibition, graduation exercises, and so on. The meetings are convened at different points in the county each year, and this year it was to be at St. Elmo. When my train rolled up to the station early in the morning I was greatly surprised to see that the congregation up to that time was composed of the white people almost entirely, and what is more, these white people were very busy preparing the stage on which the Negro students were that day to receive their certificates of graduation. They were not only building a spacious stage with the lumber that they had furnished, but were decorating that stage with various decorations, including red, white, and blue, and with a profusion of United States flags, which hung like a crimson cloud in the distance.

I ventured to ask one white man why was all this interest being manifested by the white people when the Negroes themselves seemed so disinterested. The answer was that the white people gained quite as much from these general gatherings as the Negroes, and for that reason the various towns were eager to have the gatherings. Whenever education, educators, and educational processes can produce something that white men want, they favor the education of the Negro just exactly as other men do.

CHAPTER XIX

The founding and maintaining of an industrial and literary institution as a center of influence in a neglected section of the country has been my aim ever since I left school. It seems fitting, therefore, that some summary of the results of my efforts should be given here.

In the New York *Independent* of February 22, 1912, Mr. William Pickens, Professor of Latin in Talladega College, has an article entitled "Utica," which seems to me to serve so well as a summary that I feel justified in giving herewith liberal extracts from it. Mr. Pickens says:

"A thing happened in Jackson in the latter part of April, 1911, which caused the people of that city and of many other parts of the State to run their fingers over the map in search of Utica. This incident leads back through a chain of recollections to the first causes which made it possible,—first the incident and then the antecedent history.

"A Negro club in Jackson decided to promote an oratorical contest among the various Negro institutions of the State. The contest was held in Jackson last April, and there were offered a first, a second, and a third prize. There were representatives from the various colleges,—Jackson College, Alcorn College, Tougaloo University,

Rust University, and others,—and among them was represented only one 'Normal and Industrial Institute,' that of Utica. After the Utica orator had spoken, the institute band struck up a lively air amid the wildest applause. But, band or no band, the audience was thundering its verdict in favor of the clear superiority of that Utica oration. The judges agreed with the audience, and the representative of the Normal and Industrial Institute was awarded the first prize and a fitly inscribed gold medal. And what is more, this Utica orator is a little, ordinary-looking, country black girl.

"On the following week I was on my way to deliver the commencement address at this Institute, and, hearing in Meridian of the contest, I made the very natural remark that it would be hard for a judge to vote against one girl if she did at all well. But doubt vanished from my mind when I heard the oration itself repeated at the Commencement exercises. It was clear, convincing, and in both rhetoric and matter it was of the superior sort, and was delivered with the naturalness, the enthusiasm, and the spontaneity which characterize the birth of thought and dispel all doubt as to its originality.

"The faith, the enthusiasm, and the pluck which carried this little Black Belt heroine to success is characteristic of the work of which she is the immediate product. Eight years ago, William H. Holtzclaw, a graduate of Tuskegee, after three repeated failures to found a school, being aroused to a fourth effort by the words of some book as the Scotchman was encouraged by the perseverance of a spider, finally succeeded in starting a 'normal and industrial' school with one teacher and twenty pupils, one mile from Utica,—just thirty miles from Major Vardaman and scarcely a longer distance from Congress-

man Williams. He has now more teachers than he had pupils at first, and the number of pupils has more than squared itself. The Negro population of this section greatly preponderates.

"At the original site of the school only one hundred acres of land could be purchased, which soon proved to be very inadequate for the school's development. With characteristic pluck the principal decided to move the school to a site where land could be bought. This was six miles from the original site, five miles beyond the town in another direction. In the summer of 1910 the frame buildings were torn down, moved, and put together again on the new site, and students and teachers have put so much work into laying off and beautifying the new location that the stranger would not take it for less than one year old. In recognition of such pluck, friends in the North furnished $25,000 to purchase 1,600 acres of land. It was a great task to accomplish so large a moving in one summer, and the difficulty was increased by having the largest dormitory blown to the ground when it was about two-thirds reconstructed on the new site.

"I wish to call attention to the fact that this is the work of young Negroes. These twenty-five teachers, in charge of nearly 500 students, are practically boys and girls themselves, recent graduates of Tuskegee, of American Missionary Association schools, and of various smaller schools. The young Negroes are ordinarily regarded as an appalling problem for the South, but when they are seen in a magnificently useful work such as this at Utica one gets the idea that if the problem is given opportunity and time it will solve itself. The new life brought by the invasion of these young educated Negroes has so vitalized the community that the Negro farmers

FACULTY OF THE UTICA NORMAL AND INDUSTRIAL INSTITUTE

1 Mr. David W. L. Davis
2 Mr. Lemuel E. Bynum
3 Mr. William A. Bender
4 Mr. F. Lawrence Anderson
5 Mr. Preston B. Peters
6 Mrs. F. L. Anderson
7 Mrs. P. B. Peters
8 Miss Clara J. Lee
9 Miss Reba Lathan
10 Mrs. Mary L. Harris
11 Miss Lizzie Johnson
12 Miss Lucile L. Clopton
13 Miss Lillian Frazier
14 Mrs. A. J. Shootes
15 Mr. Albert J. Shootes
16 Miss Mabel Clopton
17 Miss Theodosia Skelton
18 Mr. John W. Matthews
19 Miss Mamie R. Wong
20 Miss Ada B. Alston
21 Mr. Foster G. Smith
22 Mr. William Holmes
23 Mr. Lewis Patterson
24 Mr. William H. Holtzclaw
25 Mrs. William H. Holtzclaw
26 Mr. S. P. Weathersby
27 Mr. Charles M. Gettis
28 Miss Katherine G. McBeth
29 Mr. George Davis

have acquired thousands of acres of land in the last half dozen years.

"Another usual representation is that between the young Negro and the white South there is an especially bitter antagonism. I doubt the truth of that as a general statement, but, if it be the rule anywhere else, it is certainly contradicted at Utica, Miss. I have seen many Negro schools of this class and similarly situated in the South, but I have never seen one in the success of which the white people of the community were more interested. Many white citizens in the town of Utica are contributors to this Negro school, some of them offering annual prizes to stimulate industry, scholarship, and manhood among the students. One business man gives annually a gold watch and chain worth $65 as a prize, with no other condition than that the faculty shall vote it to 'the most manly young man of the school.' That is a thing to contemplate: a white man in the state of Mississippi,—where the idea of the Negro's being a man has for a decade been most vigorously and most eloquently attacked,—that a white man in such a community is offering a valuable prize to call young black men to manhood. And this man's name is not printed by the newspapers nor his deed advertised; unless we go all the way to Mississippi and talk to black folk there, we should not learn that such a man exists in that state. On April 26 two young white men, scarcely out of their twenties, as members of the trustee board of this independent Negro school, were seated with the Negro trustees and farmers, giving and taking counsel as to the best means of advancing the interests of the institution—and somewhere else in Mississippi the newspapers were advertising a white man because he had said that Negro education is a mistake.

Why does the newspaper do this? The probable explanation reminds me of a bit of history I have learned about the famous Senator of a Southern State who has made much money and acquired much notoriety by his attacks upon the Negro, especially in the North. He was once asked by a Negro friend of his, who was raised with him from childhood and whom the white man evidently loved: 'Senator, how is it that you are so affectionate and so kind to me personally and yet say such awful things about my people?' The chuckling big Senator, in true antebellum fashion, slapped his Negro friend on the back and said: 'Boy, there's money in it; the Yankees like to hear it, boy. There's money in it.' And then he related how hard he had to work in his senatorial capacity to earn $8,000 a year, but how one spectacular anti-Negro speech, delivered for a few weeks through the North, would bring him $25,000 and no end of publicity.

"It encourages the heart of a man to see the strong and ambitious Black Belt children that attend this school. Their commencement program was odd, but interesting. They delivered orations and exhibited various manual arts from the same platform, many of the latter taking place simultaneously, to the great entertainment of the audience. Two girls made a hat from start to finish; another cut out from the bolt of calico, sewed, and finished a girl's waist, while the audience looked on; iron was forged and welded, a horse was brought onto the platform and neatly and quickly shod by two boys, clothes were washed and a 'farmer's dinner' was cooked; a chicken was killed and cooked 'scientifically,' as the young woman explained who performed that part, and then four big farmers and their wives were called to take seats at a table on the platform, to show how to serve a

dinner, and that chicken and the rest of the food was just as scientifically eaten. One little black girl, who was helping to cook this dinner, like a true farmer's wife, led the whole vast congregation in plantation songs while she worked. She led in the solo parts, and while the audience repeated the chorus she deftly kneaded dough or cut the biscuits or opened the steaming oven. A race that can smile at adversities and season its simple dinners with a song will be 'mighty hard' to kill. Their literary performances were encouraging to see; often crude, but always prophetic.

"These Black Belt children are of strong bodies and quick intellects. They are ambitious of attainment, proud of their opportunities, and exceedingly proud of their Negro teachers. I learned from one young man how narrowly he escaped receiving this year's prize for 'the most manly young man' and what a confident determination he has to merit it next year.

"A conviction has taken me, after much observation of the kind, that Negro students under Negro teachers, especially teachers of the younger generation, seem in all their performances, both physical and intellectual, to display an exhilarating freedom of body and soul. There was a naturalness and spontaneity in all that these boys and girls did.

"With what enthusiasm the impartial historian of the future will scan the records of these pioneer efforts of young black men! When he comes across an example like this one at Utica he will fairly gloat over the material. The personal sacrifice which many of these young builders have suffered simply cannot be told. The material rewards for Negro educational work in the South are exceedingly poor. But this poverty serves one good

purpose; it weeds out all save those who do the work for love and who find life in the work itself."

In the foregoing article Mr. Pickens has shown how Utica Institute,—which has been struggling along quietly, though earnestly, for a dozen years,—is constantly being brought to the attention of the people of Mississippi by the ability of some of its students in some sort of contest.

Very recently another incident occurred which brought the school to the attention of the people of Mississippi, both white and black, in a way that it had never been before. It was the occasion of the State Fair in November, 1913. For the first time the Fair management, all white business men, decided that they would set aside two of the ten days of the Fair to be known as Negro days, and that Negroes should be given an opportunity to show the public what they were doing in Mississippi along agricultural and mechanical lines, as well as educational. They especially appealed to the Negro schools of the state to demonstrate their worth. All the leading schools of the state took part and put on excellent exhibits.

Utica again was brought to the front by the character of its exhibit and by the work of its students in connection with the Fair. It had on the fair grounds the largest and most comprehensive exhibit of any colored school, and it won all the first prizes offered to schools,—money, medals, badges,—and all the second prizes except one, which went to the State Agricultural and Mechanical College.

A dramatic contest between pupils of the various schools was also a feature of the week. This was won by

the Utica Institute. And in the oratorical contest, which was held at the same time, Utica won the second prize.

The stock raisers of the state were very much surprised to find that the pigs exhibited by the Utica Institute were superior to all the others,—the largest one on exhibition, weighing 840 pounds, took first prize and championship. The chickens, ducks, geese, and other live stock from the Institute all took first prizes.

The following extract from the Jackson *Daily News,* written by one of its reporters, will give a clear idea of the exhibit with which this Institution made such an impression on the minds of the people:

"The exhibits of chief interest (in the Negro division) of course are those of their schools; that from the Utica Normal school with its 560 students, almost all of whom are largely self-supporting, is a revelation. This school was established ten years ago by President Holtzclaw, and has been maintained wholly by his efforts and by the gifts of the people. It is run at an annual cost of about $30,000 and each year is better training the young men and women for their place in life.

" 'Book learning' of course counts there for its full value, but it is in the practical work of the farm and home that they excel.

"Educated in the Tuskegee school of Booker Washington, President Holtzclaw is certainly a worthy disciple of his teacher, and is striving to do here what he can toward building up another Tuskegee Institute; and he is succeeding marvelously well. The products shown here were all grown on the school farm, and this year they put up 2,100 gallons of fruits and vegetables, 500 of which were

in this exhibit. Six thousand pounds of corn and 4,000 pounds of sweet potatoes were used in building these front walls and in making the display, and miles and miles of pea-vine hay was brought up to add to the exhibit.

"Vegetables, fruits, and so on, are raised here of the best quality, and among other products of the place is the excellent broom corn. On the place they have a broom factory, making their handles and likewise the brooms there, which are of excellent quality.

"Well-made shoes, excellent garments of every style, beautifully designed fancy work, and all the dainties known to the most exacting palate are displayed here, with furniture of the best grade, all made by the students of our native woods.

"There is shown a bed, which the boys made; a mattress, which the girls made; and they had raised the cotton with which it was stuffed and the geese from which they had picked the feathers that filled the pillows; and the sheets, comforts, and quilts all were made right there by the girls; thus demonstrating to the students that they can make their things at home, if they desire."

My present life is that of a teacher who finds very little time to teach, as it takes nearly all my time and thought to raise the forty thousand dollars annually that is required to carry on the work of the Utica Normal and Industrial Institute. I have to be away from the school in search of funds a little more than a third of each year.

When I am at the school I rise in the morning at 6 o'clock (or seven, according to the time I retire), and, unless there is urgent work to be done at the office, I go

on horseback to all the different departments; then I go for a long ride over the plantation, to see the boys at their work. I return to breakfast at 8 o'clock, and at 8:40 I am in my office, where I remain until noon. After one hour for luncheon I return to the office, where I wrestle with various problems until 4. Then I have dinner and recreation, and play with Mary and the children. At 7 P. M. I again return to the office for work and study until 8:40, when I go to the chapel and lead the prayer service, which closes the day's work for all the school. It is then my habit to read until ten or eleven o'clock.

In connection with this schedule, I teach two classes during each day, and teach a general lesson by means of an address to the whole student body every Sunday evening.

My favorite recreation is horseback riding. I have never learned to play any games. Poverty made it impossible for me to do so while I was at school, and I have never had time since. There is just one exception, —croquet,—which I learned to play when I was a boy. And I am proud of knowing how to play that game; I shall never forget C. N. Findlay, my good old Alabama teacher, who had the good judgment to teach his pupils to play as well as to teach them their "a-b-c's."

We have a habit-forming routine at the school, which resolves itself into the following schedule:

The rising bell rings 5:10 A. M.; 5:50, the first breakfast bell; 6, the breakfast bell; twenty-five minutes for breakfast; 6:25 to 6:45, preparation for daily inspection of rooms; 6:50, work bell rings; 7:25, morning study hour; 8:20, school bell rings; 8:25, young men inspected

on battalion grounds as to their toilet; 8:40, morning devotion; 8:55, current news period; 9:20, classroom work begins; 12, all work closes; 12:10, dinner; 1:00 P. M., work bell rings; 1:30, class work begins; 3:30, class work ends; 5:30, bell rings to stop work; 6, supper; 6:30, study hour; 7, night school begins (for those who work in the day and go to school at night); 8:40, evening devotion; 9:20, first retiring bell; 9:30, retiring bell.

This schedule is varied on Sundays, so as to have both Sunday school and preaching services in the morning, leaving the afternoon open for those who wish to go into the country to do missionary work.

Of my school life at Tuskegee I have said little for want of space. It would be easy to write a whole book on Tuskegee, covering the eight years that I passed there. And the data that I have given regarding the founding of the Utica Normal and Industrial Institute will serve as a sort of history of the Institute, inadequate though it is.

Many changes have taken place since the Institute was started in Mississippi. About six hundred young men and young women have been educated and sent into various parts of the state, and a large number of them are engaged in teaching in the rural schools, where I think they can do the most good at this time.

A very small per cent. of them are engaged in various kinds of domestic service, both in the North and South. Progress has been made, also, in every part of Mississippi and the South. Negroes have advanced steadily in various industrial organizations, building schools and churches, improving their home life, buying property, and in many other ways making themselves substantial

citizens of the state. The whole state, white as well as black, has made tremendous progress during the past twelve years. Let me relate this little incident to show something of the progress that has been made in one particular instance.

Some years ago, on a frosty morning, I was standing at the depot of Jackson, the capital of the state, and I saw an emaciated horse trying to draw a cart through Capitol Street, the main street of the city. The mud was so deep and slushy in the middle of the street that the horse went down until only the top of his back and the end of his nose could be seen. A number of Negro men got around him to pull him out; but before they succeeded he was dead. That was on the main street; the same street to-day is one of the most beautiful streets I have ever seen in any town, substantially paved, as are all the other principal streets in the city. This will give some slight idea of the progress that has been made there.

At that time Jackson had a population of seven thousand people. Now it has a population of approximately thirty thousand, and the Negroes of that town paid taxes last year on nearly a million dollars' worth of property.

I have mentioned these facts because without them there is danger that my readers would think that I have exaggerated the facts in regard to the progress that has been made by the colored people in the vicinity of Utica, and especially the progress that has been made in establishing an Institution which started in the open air, with no means or influence, and has reached a commanding place in the educational world in a few years, with twenty-five teachers, five hundred students, seventeen

hundred acres of land, and buildings, apparatus, and property valued at more than a hundred and sixty thousand dollars.

In what I have said about my work I trust I have not taken too much credit to myself, for I attribute all that I have been able to accomplish to the good fortune that has attended me from the day of my birth. In the first place, in the choice of my mother, I consider that I was one of the most sensible babies ever born; and in the choice of my father, there was surely no mistake. Then, as I have said before, I was early under the influence of some of the best white people I ever knew,—white people who took an interest in me and helped me in many ways. I can never forget "Miss Roberson" (Mrs. Andy Robinson), the white lady who in my youth gave me such encouragement and direction as even my mother, because of lack of education, was unable to give. Later, when I was nearly a young man, I came under the influence of that matchless teacher, Booker T. Washington, and also of Warren Logan, "the gentleman of Tuskegee," whose character cannot be surpassed; and when I began my first work as a teacher at Snow Hill, Alabama, after I had finished my course at Tuskegee, I was again blessed by coming in direct personal contact with one of Alabama's greatest white men, Mr. Ransom O. Simpson, of Furman, Alabama,—a man who is devoting his declining years to the development of The Snow Hill Institute for the colored race, to bettering the condition of the Negroes on his extensive lands, many of whom were his former slaves; and then my real fortune came when I married the greatest and most lovable woman I ever saw.

When I came to Mississippi I fell directly in with such great white men as the Hon. A. H. Longino, who was then Governor of the State, and the late Bishop Charles B. Galloway, who, taken at his full value, was perhaps the greatest man Mississippi has produced. Then there were such good men and sympathetic fellow-citizens as Major R. W. Millsaps and Bishop Theodore Dubois Bratton,—men who enjoy the reputation of living many years ahead of their time when it comes to questions affecting the South. I have already spoken of Mr. Ferguson, Mr. Yates, and others (like the Simmons brothers), my fellow-citizens here at home without whose assistance I could hardly have accomplished what I have. I should also mention such consecrated men as Prof. J. B. Lehman, who, although a Northern man, is in close sympathy with all that is Southern, and who has done and is still doing, as President of the Southern Christian Institute at Edwards, Miss., a telling work for Negro boys and girls of the South. And there are hundreds of other noble white men,—like Doctors Hamlin and Holmes, Dean and President, respectively, of Tougaloo University, and still others, in and out of Mississippi,—who have stood by me in all my efforts.

I ought to mention the Christian white women of Utica and the surrounding country, some of whom, even though not wealthy, contributed as much as one hundred dollars at a time. When in the early years we were trying to establish a boarding department, these Christian women contributed wash pans, dippers, water buckets, brooms, quilts, and many other useful things to help us forward.

I have never felt that I have been able to give them any just and adequate returns for their generosity.

I have already mentioned my great friend, Mr. Bedford, than whom I have never met a greater man nor one more consecrated to the cause of a race other than his own.

Among the many colored men who have helped me is the little band of Negro farmers who gathered with me for the first time, ten years ago, and who have met my every call since that time. Then there is Mr. Emmett J. Scott, Private Secretary to Dr. Washington, of whom some one wrote, "The man who made Booker Washington." That happy phrase is none too strong to indicate the character of Mr. Scott. There is no doubt that he stands high up in the list of the South's leading characters. He has watched my every move and helped me when he found an opportunity; and Mr. Charles Banks, capitalist and leader of the Negro colony of Mound Bayou, is ever ready to do something for Utica, as he is for every other good cause.

Then there are Elder Charles P. Jones, of Jackson, better known by his followers as "the man of God," who has helped as a sort of spiritual adviser, his lieutenant Elder W. S. Pleasant, L. K. Atwood, and many others too numerous to mention. All these, to say nothing of the noble and self-sacrificing young teachers who have been connected with the work from time to time, have helped me and made it possible for me to build this Institution. Now when we add to this my opportunity to come into contact with some of the best people of the

PRINCIPAL HOLTZCLAW AND HIS FAMILY

1 William H. Holtzclaw
2 Mary E. Holtzclaw
3 Alice Marie
4 Jerry Herbert
5 Robert Fulton
6 Addie, mother of Mr. Holtzclaw
7 Ernest, youngest brother
8 Adeline
9 Flora Garfield, a niece

Northern states I think it will be agreed that, in many respects, I have been very fortunate.

But this is not all. I have a family that is a perpetual source of enjoyment when I can be at home with them. My eldest son, Robert Fulton, now eleven years old, rises in the morning when I rise, at six o'clock, and follows me to the office, where he takes charge of the telephone exchange until breakfast, at eight, unless he is sooner relieved by the regular "hello girl"; then he pounds off letters on the typewriter with more intelligence than one would expect of a boy of his years, or climbs upon the third story of the new building, where he pursues his trade of carpentry. Jerry Herbert, nine years old, gives me pleasure by his antics with the horses and pigs, for which he has a special liking. Then there is Alice Marie, seven, as sedate as you please, quiet and studious, with a love for music and cooking. I must not leave out Ella Adeline, five, who always manages to get into my arms first. And last, and also least, and youngest, is "Bill,"—William Henry, Jr.,—three years old. All these add to the sum total of my happiness, and make life worth much more than the living.

If anything else were needed to make the life of a Black Belt school-teacher one of pleasure, it would be found in his interest in the student body. I like to watch a girl, who enters school so crude as to seem almost deformed, pass from one stage to another from year to year, until after a while she stands forth on Commencement Day literally transformed in soul and body,—a new creature, because of the new atmosphere in which she has been permitted to live. Or I like to watch the boy who

comes to school with all his possessions tied up in a bandanna handkerchief, and many of the petty sins of his locality still tied up in his head. One of these I now have in mind. He had a decided disposition to take unto himself the things that belongeth to other men. One night he broke into the Commissary and took two dozen boxes of salmon. Being overtaken by the fleet-footed night guard, he was hauled into my office the next day, and when I asked him what county he was from he could not tell me; nor could he tell the name of any officer except the sheriff.

Despite the vigorous criticism of the Faculty, the Executive Council refused to expel this young man. Plainly, neither he nor the world could be made better by his expulsion. Imagine the joy of one's heart when several years later such a young man stands before an immense audience, erect as a Sioux chief, and proclaims himself redeemed. All these things have added greatly to my happiness; so much so that I feel like saying to all these young Negro men and women seeking happiness and usefulness at the same time: "Go into the Black Belt of the South, out into the rural districts, and wrestle with her problems. It will prove gymnastics for your body, exercise for your mind, and balm for your spirit."

However, I do not wish to leave the impression that my life has been one round of pleasure. It has not—far from it. I have certainly had my troubles. But always the object before me has loomed so large as to eclipse all minor difficulties. When in traveling in strange and distant cities I have found the hotels "crowded," I have slept in parks and railway stations, and if my body suf-

fered, my soul was so aflame with the fire of enthusiasm that it never flagged nor held aught against my fellowmen. When I have had to ride on the open cars for three consecutive days and nights, with no rest and with only such food as might be sold by the sandwich man through the window at way stations, I have suffered little because I have had no time to think of personal ills. My mind was fixed on the cause for which I live and work. I have no time to sing minor notes. I have determined that the tune of my life shall be played on major keys.

When I was at school I had considerable reputation as a debater,—never having lost in a public debate during my career as a student. And when I won the Trinity Church Prize,—the most coveted prize awarded at Tuskegee,—I chose for my subject, "Education as Related to Prosperity."

Since that time I have retained such abilities as I had because I have had many occasions to exercise them. I have had to speak in public. I have been called upon to be the Commencement speaker at many of the leading schools in this and other states. At the moment I am writing these closing words I have before me nine such invitations, only two of which I can accept on account of conflicting dates. I never speak just to be speaking. I only speak when I see an opportunity to accomplish some good.

Only a few weeks ago I delivered an address at Union, Mississippi, where a small race riot had just been "pulled off." I was surprised, when I reached the little church where I spoke, to see so many white people present. When I rose to speak they came close to the speaker's

stand, and there was on their faces anything but a pleasant look. I soon thawed them out, however, and when I had finished they came to me in large numbers and shook my hand. One of them said: "We came here to raise —— to-day, but your speech has taken it all out of us. We really feel ashamed of ourselves." The colored brethren set a good table, and the whites had a good old-fashioned dinner, and all went off well.

I am writing these last paragraphs in Natchez, where I have come to deliver the Commencement address at the city school, with its twelve hundred students, and am now in the beautiful home of Professor Brumfield, the principal. I have just finished my address, and Professor Brumfield tells me it was exceedingly good. I spoke before a representative audience of white and colored citizens in the same hall where Booker T. Washington was entertained upon his last visit to the city, and at the conclusion of my address one of the leading white lawyers of Natchez, together with other white citizens, came up, shook my hand cordially, and said: "I want to tell you how I value your address. It was one of the best addresses I have ever heard. This doctrine you preach should be preached all over the South. Blacks and whites alike would be much benefited by it."

And now I must speedily bring this narrative to a close, for I have about overtaken myself. I should sum up, however, that my readers may have a comprehensive view of the whole story.

The Utica Normal and Industrial Institute, which I have by great struggle brought to its present standing,

annually enrolls about five hundred students and employs thirty teachers and officers; besides, through its many kinds of extension work, it reaches and influences annually about thirty thousand souls. It now owns seventeen hundred acres of land, and operates twenty industries, together with its literary work; and its buildings and property are valued at one hundred and sixty thousand dollars. It also has its own electric light plant and its water works. Our endowment at the present time is thirty-two thousand and five hundred dollars.

We have never been able, for lack of room and current funds, to accommodate more than half of the students that annually clamor at our doors for admittance. As soon as we can secure an endowment fund of, say, five hundred thousand dollars, we shall be in a position to overcome some of the present handicaps and make the work far more useful.

I see more clearly than ever before the great task that is before me, and I propose to continue the struggle. It is an appalling task: a state with more than a million Negroes to be educated, with half a million children of school age, thirty-five per cent. of whom at the present time attend no school at all (only thirty-six per cent. in average attendance), a state whose dual school system makes it impossible to furnish more than a mere pittance for the education of each individual child,—yet these children must be educated, must be unfettered, set free. That freedom for which Christian men and women, North and South, have worked and prayed so long must be realized in the lives of these young people.

This, then, is my task, the war that I must wage; and I propose to stay on the firing line and fight the good fight of faith.

THE END.