

THE AMERICAN
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
NO. 11 381

" LAWYER WALKER OF GLOUCESTER "

"LAWYER WALKER OF GLOUCESTER"

(AS TOLD TO TWO NORTHERN FRIENDS)

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

TO

MY EVER FAITHFUL WIFE AND HELPMATE

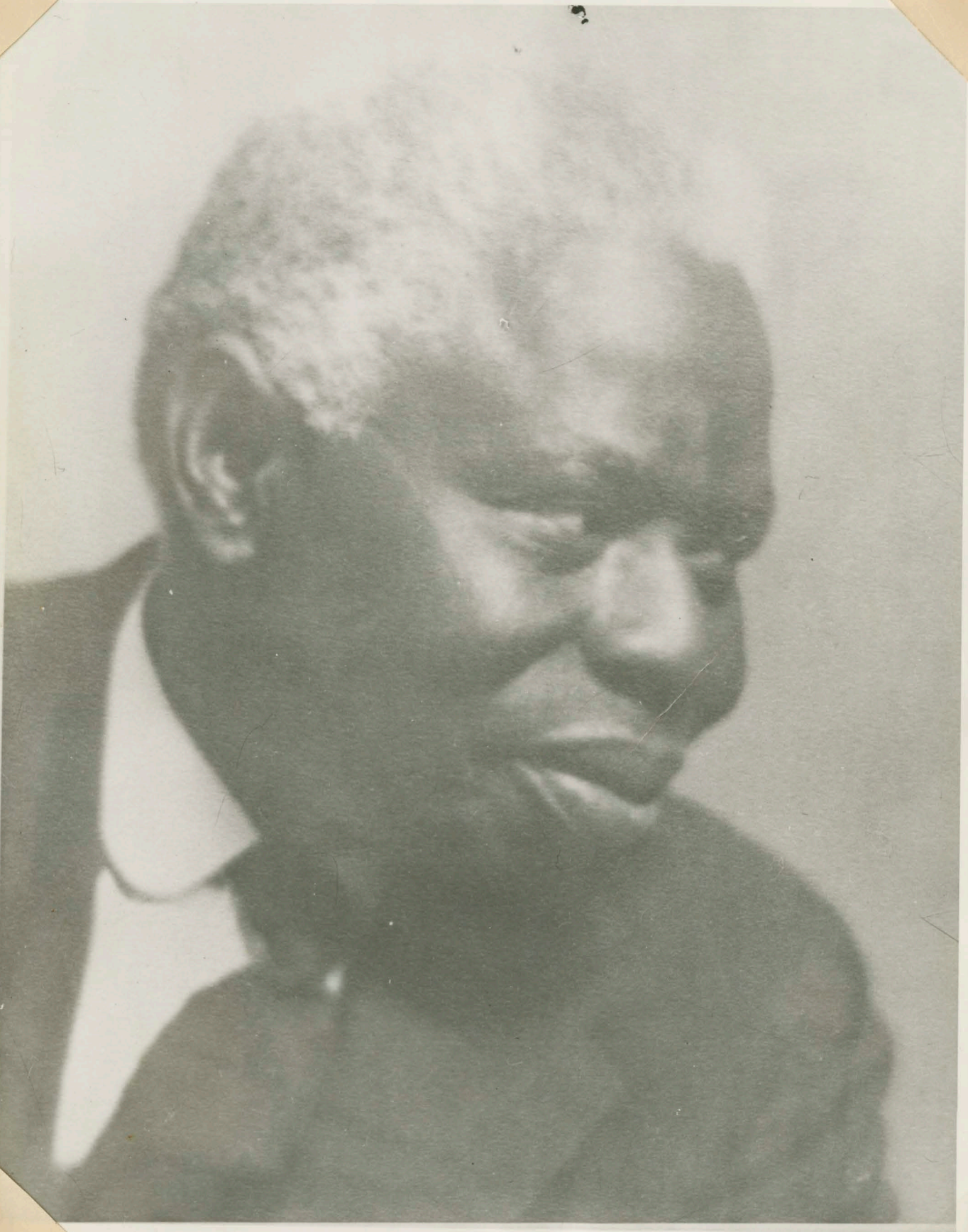
ELLEN YOUNG WALKER

WHOSE PATIENT UNDERSTANDING MADE

LIFE FULL AND HAPPY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. "FREE BELLS DONE RING!"	1
II. I DECIDE TO FIND MY FUTURE	22
III. FREEDOM AND THE FOLKS BACK HOME	43
IV. MY PLUNGE INTO BETTERMENTS	60
V. CONTRIVING TO STUDY LAW	75
VI. I ADVENTURE FOR MYSELF	95
VII. THE AMAZING CAREER OF THE GLOUCESTER LAND AND BRICK COMPANY.....	110
VIII. MAKING THE COUNTY DRY	127
IX. WHAT HAPPENED AT OLD BOTTOM JAIL AND AFTER.....	144
X. THE GAME OF MONEY RAISING	158
XI. JIM CROWISM	179
XII. THE COLOR LINE IN HEALTH	199
XIII. SOME POLITICAL SKIRMISHES	214
XIV. GLOUCESTER LAW AND LYNCHING BEES	230
XV. WAKING UP THE STATE	247
XVI. GO-OPERATING WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT	265
XVII. AT LAST -- THOSE TRAMPS!	285
XVIII. RACE RELATIONSHIPS: A MUTUAL PROBLEM	297
XIX. "DE OLE SHEEP DONE KNOW DE ROAD"	319



THOMAS CALHOUN WALKER.

Miss Florence L. Lattimore
Monterey Road
Great Barrington, Mass.

CREDIT: LANE, NEW YORK, N.Y.

De ole Sheep done know de Road.

CHORUS.

Oh de ole sheep done know de road, De ole she'p done know de road, De

ole sheep done know de road. De young lambs mus' find de way. *Fine.*

Oh, soon-er in de mornin' when I rise, De young lambs mus' find de way.
My brudder aint ye got yer counts all sealed, De young lambs, &c.

D.C. dal Cho.
Wid crosses an' tri-als on eb - ry side, De young lambs mus' find de way.
You'd bet-ter go get em 'fore ye leave dis field, De young lambs, &c.

2 Oh, shout my sister, for you are free, De young lambs, &c.,
For Christ hab bought your liberty, De young lambs, &c.,
I raly do believe widout one doubt, De young lambs, &c.,
Dat de Christian hab a mighty right to shout, De young lambs, &c.
Cho.—Oh, de ole sheep, &c.

3 My brudder, better mind how you walk on de cross, De young lambs, &c.,
For your foot might slip, an' yer soul git lost, De young lambs, &c.,
Better mind dat sun, and see how she run, De young lambs, &c.,
An' mind don't let her catch ye wid yer works undone, De young lambs, &c.
Cho.—Oh, de ole sheep, &c.

Miss Florence L. Lattimore
Monterey Road
Great Barrington, Mass.

CHAPTER I"FREE BELLS DONE RING!"

"I remember as if it were yesterday how my old grandmother used to jump up and down, clapping her hands and shouting; 'Free Bells Done Ring!' Free Bells Done Ring! De slavery chains done broke at last! De Lawd done set us free!'"

"All of us Gloucester Negroes used to gather under the honey-pod tree, that sheltered the slave auction-block, on anniversaries of our emancipation to hear the Proclamation read all over again and give thanks to 'de Lawd' for giving us our freedom. Men, women, and children like me, joined hands and shouted, jumped, swayed, and sang our most joyous spirituals while tears of gratitude rolled down the faces of the older black toilers - free at last!"

"Think of their choosing the auction block as a place to celebrate!" I could not help exclaiming. "How did they happen ever to do that?"

Mr. Walker was silent. Then he said: "Because there wasn't any other place. They asked for the use of the Court House but it was refused -- the same Court House where I have been arguing cases for so many years for white and Negro clients alike. You know law-breaking doesn't follow the color line," he added quickly as he noted my surprise.

"The whole world seems to be praying now for what my people prayed for during their years of bondage. Isn't it so? Bondage from new forms of slavery, and I don't believe it is possible to get rid of all of the differ-

ent kinds of slave blocks it's standing on now until it learns some of the lessons I've had to learn down in the Old Dominion just after the Rebellion and since."

Suddenly I was struck by a new idea. "Now Mr. Walker," I said, "I was just going to ask you to tell me some of the stories back of those lessons but, do you know, I think you've got to write them down in a book!"

At this suggestion his short but powerful figure sank still further into the over-stuffed chair and an expression of genuine consternation spread over his face. "What?" he asked, "Me? Write a book? Why the judges can hardly get me to write a brief! I've planned almost every kind of project you can think of but I never wanted to write a book. I don't know how, wouldn't know what to say, and haven't time, I don't know how you ever came to suggest such a thing! It's all I can do to manage a lively law-practice, run my farm, look after a lot of stray children, and attend to my speaking engagements. And my telephone rings all the time."

"But your experiences in attending to those things are just what are so timely and interesting," I argued. "Inter-racial situations all along the line and you've found out how to manage your race and mine so we can work together. I don't know anything that would entertain and help both races more than to have you tell us some of those experiences and how you handled them from the Reconstruction Period till now. And you certainly aren't through yet!"

"No," he said, with a determined shake of the head, "I am not through. That's why I am so surprised at ^{your} supposing I could write a book. Every day there are new racial tensions and new honey-pod trees springing up everywhere to hide new slave blocks that nobody notices until it is too late. You know I can see the place where the old honey-pod tree and auction block

used to be from where I live now."

"They aren't there any more?"

"No. They were taken away so a road could be straightened. I never pass there without thinking of them and wishing I could live long enough to help destroy the new ones."

"You mean, don't you, that you'd like to help write a new Emancipation Proclamation? I think," I persisted, "if you would just tell your experiences down in Virginia they might teach the rest of us what they taught you. What a heritage to hand on to your own people - and mine!" This last was, I well knew, an appeal he could not ignore. A leading white attorney in the North, who knows him well, had said that Lawyer Walker was "the wisest, wittiest, most useful fellow lawyer in the United States". If only he would tell some of the experiences that had given him his wisdom!

"What you say about my experiences helping people I can never meet to get on with each other," he said thoughtfully, "is the only reason I'd ever take time to tell them but I wouldn't know what to say. You'll have to dig it out of me. If you'll tell me what to say I'll say it!"

This was an entirely unexpected proposition and not one to be hastily turned down. "Don't you know anybody who could help you do it?" I asked.

"Not anyone who knows my work quite as you do," he said, referring to certain welfare projects in which we had co-operated, "and I can't do it alone. I couldn't and wouldn't."

"It will have to be entirely your book," I hazarded, "I'm not going to tell you what to say or select the stories. I don't believe you have ever told anybody what happened to you before you took that plunge into betterments, as you call it. It must go back to slave days. But I can promise that our

4

4

friend here will help. She is a wonder at taking notes and we can get in a stenographer. I still have some note-books I kept when I was in Virginia in connection with the projects that included both races."

"I wouldn't know how to begin, if I sought to go back to slave days, unless it was with being born." he said, smiling. "I was born into an interracial situation and never got out."

"Its going to be easy to start like that and go right on from one kind of project to another -- to now. When we are too busy to get together wouldn't Mrs. Walker write out some of the stories and send them up?"

He was silent for a moment and then remarked: "She'd like to but she is as busy as I am. I wish I could give out the stories without mentioning myself! That's the way I'd like to do it but I don't see how I could. I wouldn't think of telling them unless it would really help my people - especially the young people who are so confused about racial issues." Neither your young white people nor mine seem to know anything about the situations that have brought us all where we are today.

"I'd want to make it clear that what I tell will refer only to Virginia and to Gloucester. Conditions in other parts of the South may not be the same as those we had to tackle in Gloucester -- the very heart of the Old Dominion. I'd like to plan the book before I go back and tell Mrs. Walker. She'll be 'Mis' Ellen' in the book. That's what our people call her in Gloucester."

"Mis' Ellen it will be then," I said, picking up a note-book and pencil, "And how do you want to be referred to, as Doctor Walker, now that you are a LL.D, or Mr. Walker? You've asked me to address you by your legal title when I write you."

"Well," he answered thoughtfully, "how would it be to call me 'Lawyer

Walker," as my people call me in Gloucester because there are other people there of the same name. And that's why I asked you to use it on my mail. I appreciate that LL.D. but I didn't deserve it and that's why I don't like to have it used on me. When they gave it to me at the University of Virginia I just stood up and let them put the robe on me and never said a word. I didn't think I ought to have it and I couldn't even thank them for it. I got the citation and went and sat down. That's all there was to it. I don't know how they ever happened to give it to me."

Here Lawyer Walker's face broke into a happy smile. "There are some other names I'm called that fit me better," he said, "like Buy-Land Walker given when I was a student at Hampton, because even then I wanted to get my people to buy land and build homes of their own. And - Oh yes! - I've often been called the Fied Piper of Gloucester because I was always picking up stray children and taking them home with me."

"Any others?"

"Well, of course the white people mostly call me 'Tom' - what I'm called depends on which race people belong to and what kind of experience they've had with me. But 'Lawyer Walker' is what I'd like to be called in the book."

"Lawyer Walker it is then," I said, "and now we can begin. It isn't going to be hard once you get started, and you've already decided how you want to begin. But what shall we do about the dialect? In stories you have already told me there seem to have been a number of different kinds. I'm afraid there will be a good many kinds of spelling if we put the words down as they sound in the various anecdotes. We can't possibly know which is right."

Here Lawyer Walker's eye-brows were raised in surprise and he burst out laughing. "Why, my people don't always talk alike just because they live in

Gloucester!" he said, "White folks don't either. When I meet people I try to speak the way they do. It depends on whom I am with. How'd one of the oldest members of my race feel if I talked with him as I do with our school teachers? Or what would one of our normal school pupils think if I began to talk in dialect? Just put the word down the way it sounds and let it go at that. Perhaps it will never be twice alike."

"All right," I said, greatly relieved, "then we won't worry over dialects. But what will we name the book?"

"I can't think of anything until I find what you are going to dig out of me," he said.

"I haven't the least idea what experiences you are going to tell," I again protested, "all I know is that it will be about getting on with folks - yours and mine - and how to get them to work out their problems together."

Lawyer Walker settled back in the over-stuffed chair of our living-room and shook his head. "Don't think I have succeeded in doing that yet," he demurred. "All I can do is to tell how I have tried to do it. I haven't always managed to do it. Sometimes we have inched ahead and then something has come up to set us back. What I have learned and what I should like to hand on is what I've found out from both kinds of experiences. I've learned from them all."

"You remind me of a remark a very wise traveller made to me once," I observed. "He said all he knew he had learned from hard experience and that his experience was what he got when he was looking for something else."

"It's the hard way but the sure way," he said, "and it is those experiences that have paid off in knowing how to get on with both races that I'd like to tell about for the book. We mustn't leave all the know-how to the politicians. It was the first lesson my parents had to learn back in slave days and it's my people's biggest problem now, how to get on with dif-

ferent types of you white people. I was born in a slave cabin on Colonel Baytop's plantation but my father was owned by Steven Fields who was about five miles away. And they were very different kinds of men."

"Didn't your parents live together?"

"Why, no. The overseers issued passes to my father so he could go to see my mother once a week, or sometimes oftener, but it was the custom, in slavery times, for the mother to keep the children. There were two older than I when I was born."

"It wasn't unusual for slaves belonging to different masters to raise families that way," explained Lawyer Walker when he saw how perplexed I was by this strange state of affairs. "The masters, of course, had to give their consent to such unions. As you know, slaves weren't allowed to have the regular marriage ceremony but, if the masters approved, they celebrated by what was called 'jumpin' ober de broomstick', and, often, a dance down in the quarters. I suppose this had the same meaning that the bridegroom's carrying the bride over the threshold of their new home has for white people."

"Where I live now is only about three miles from the old Baytop plantation. The 'Great House' there was one of those imposing mansions with huge pillars and wide verandas common to the aristocratic homes in the old South. It was the envy of everybody in the County. The plantation itself was known as Spring Hill."

"And your father - what kind of work did he do on his master's plantation?" I asked.

"My father had a trade. At Steven Field's another slave had trained him to be what was known as 'a scientific, professional brick-layer'. He not only worked on that plantation but was sometimes hired out for wages that be-

longed, of course, to his master. He and his old mother lived in a cabin together."

"Tell me," I said, "I want to get this straight. Under the slave system which of the two masters really owned you and had the right to auction you off?"

"My mother's master," he answered. "That was the established custom. Steven Fields was a kindly man but he had nothing to say about us children. This fact haunted my father day and night. He did not know what Captain Baytop might do with us. You can imagine how such a fear came to dominate him when he lived so far away. It was a common fear that found expression in a song about a little slave-child who was torn from his mother's arms and auctioned off from the slave-block to be sent 'down de ribber' and who was never heard from again. My parents told me they never heard it sung without deep forbodings that such a tragedy would happen to us. Their greatest longing was to have a home together and to have all their children with them. They were devoted to us."

"Just how old were you when the Rebellion ended?" I asked.

"Only a baby -- about six months old. Rumors had been circulating for some time that the war wasn't going any too well for the Confederate side. My father said the slaves could get no definite news but the grape-vine was bringing in stories night and day about troops and battles, and he was always wondering what was in store for us. The slaves learned to watch their overseers and masters closely in an effort to detect increasing tensions and unusual comings and goings up at the Great House.

"Suddenly," continued Lawyer Walker, speeding up his story, "when it could no longer be concealed that fighting was getting very close to York-

town my father's master, Steven Fields, called all his slaves together and broke the news that the Yankees were just across the river there and that they hopelessly outnumbered the rebel forces at our nearby Gloucester Point.

"Then came the bomb-shell! 'You will all soon be free!' announced Steven Fields.

"My father said that he had a curious experience when he heard this astounding news. As if in a vision he saw before him -- not Steven Fields but the honey-pod tree waving over the old slave-auction block. It would shelter slaves no mo'! His wife, his children, were never going to be auctioned off to the highest bidder and taken away to -- he could not know where. Had his wife heard the news too at Baytop's? Reports had come that some masters were already taking their slaves away to hide them in the mountains. Would Captain Baytop do that with his family he wondered?"

Lawyer Walker paused. He seemed to be going back to his father's experience as if it were as real to him as one of his own. Then he continued: "But the vision suddenly vanished. He was brought sharply back by the voice of Steven Fields. 'I will put nothing in the way of those of you who want to go over to the Union lines,' he was saying, 'But all who want to stay here as freedmen are welcome to do so.' Then he raised his voice significantly and said, 'I have no intention of doing what some other owners are doing -- hiding their slaves in the Blue Ridge mountains!'"

"And then?" I asked,

"The stunned slaves scattered. Some left to join the Yankees but my father, loyal to the master who had proved himself honorable, decided to stay. He was alarmed by that mention of the Blue Ridge mountains and wanted to be where he could quickly get into touch with my mother.

"Meanwhile Captain Baytop gave his slaves the same assurances that

10

Steven Fields had given to his. My mother said she could never describe her unspeakable relief and thanksgiving. The vision that came to her was that of a little home where she and my father could bring up their children without fear of that slave block under the honey-pod tree. She hoped that her husband would be allowed to stay on at Steven Fields until they could make future plans together. She knew that my father would get to her somehow to discuss the great news. I remember her saying that she went to sleep that night for the first time without fear in her heart."

"However, later on, Captain Baytop changed his plan, and one dark and stormy night, she and my grandmother were rudely wakened and ordered to dress themselves and the children without loss of time. Then they were bundled into a wagon and driven as fast as the horses would go to Cappahosic. At Cappahosic they were pushed into a boat and rowed to a place where a train was ready to start for Richmond. At Richmond they were packed into a railway coach and taken into the wilderness of the Blue Ridge mountains. And there, for the remaining period of the war, ^{they} were concealed -- a frightened and submissive group.

"That was how my devoted parents were separated and thrown completely out of touch with each other and with no means of letting each other know of their whereabouts."

"I had no idea you had such an experience as that!" I said. "How did they find each other?"

Lawyer Walker put out his hand to signify he would come to that later. Then he said: "Another day came when Steven Fields again called his slaves together. My father tells how he waited silently until all

the slaves were perfectly quiet. Then he announced tersely: 'The Confederate Army has been forced to surrender. You are now free! You may go wherever you wish but again I say, that you are welcome to stay on here with me until you can make better arrangements'.

"Again my father chose to remain. You see he had learned his trade there and thought that maybe there would be paid work for him on the plantation. He did not realize that his old master would probably not now have any money for wages.

"Of course, now that the plantations were not to be worked any longer in the old way how could either former masters or ex-slaves earn anything? It took a little time for the full force of the shock to register.

"Would you mind putting in the book about how much your parents represented in capital to their masters?" I asked. "I think it would interest people to know. We are ignorant of such things these days."

"Of course," was the answer, "the value of a slave depended on a good many factors. All the slave auctioneers knew that. I suppose, in the case of my mother, she would have brought about seven hundred dollars on the auction block. My father was worth more because he had a skilled trade. His master got quite a good sum yearly by hiring him out. In this connection you may be interested to know that a few years ago I visited the farm where Booker Washington was born. The heirs of the original owner had filed suit for a partition of the property. At the office of the clerk of Franklin County I found the owner's Will filed. Attached to it was an appraisal of his personal property which consisted largely of slaves. Booker T. Washington was listed as worth "\$200" and his mother, Amanda, was valued at twice that sum. I thought how false

such valuation was of the wealth of spiritual coin that lay concealed behind his slave boy's black face!"

"I'm glad you told me that," I said. "I understand now why your father considered Steven Fields a fair man. He knew the loss he had suffered when his slaves were freed."

"Naturally, my father was always afraid of what might happen to my mother and his first thought was how quickly he could get to her. He almost ran all the way to Captain Baytop's plantation, without having to wait for an overseer's pass this time, but when he got to her cabin --it was empty. He wandered around the Baytop plantation hoping to pick up some clue connected with her disappearance but could find none, beyond the fact that she and her children and mother had been driven away in the night.

"One rumor, however, he did finally hear. It was that the Government was sending the Yankee soldiers to hunt out former slaves who had been hidden in the mountains and sending them to Richmond under the protection of Union soldiers until other plans could be made for them. Could it be, he wondered, that his family too had been taken to Richmond and that he might find them if he hunted for them there? If so, there was no time to lose." Here Lawyer Walker stood up as if he were about to start off himself.

"But how could he get there without money? He had never had any money. If he were to get there quickly he would have to go by train but that was out of the question because of the expense. The only possible way was to bundle up enough food to last several days and to walk the nearly seventy miles to Richmond. He had never slept off the plantation before or been free to go where he chose and he used to tell how, at night, he slept wherever he could find cover along the roads.

"When he finally reached Richmond he did not know where to get any information. Everything was in chaos. So he wandered through the colored sections, up one street and down another, scanning the faces of the terrified Negroes who huddled in little groups not knowing what might happen to them next. But he found no trace of his own family. He was tortured by a growing fear that they were not there but hidden in the mountains.

"Then, as he passed a group of refugees he heard somebody say that Union soldiers were guarding Lumpkin Jail because former slaves had been put there until orders came to set them free. And, as it happened, when he had distractedly made his way there, the order had then come and he found his wife, her mother, and all the children just about to leave, hungry but safe.

"What a dramatic way for you to begin life!" I exclaimed.

"They have both told me about it many times," he went on. "My mother said she prayed 'de Lawd' would bring her husband to her before they were sent away. She couldn't grasp the fact that she was free, to go where she pleased, but thought some new master would take charge of them unless her husband came."

"Had they had anything at all to eat?"

"Just chicken corn, unground, the way it is thrown to the chickens. My mother ^{crushed} ~~ground~~ it between her teeth before giving it to us. It was all that kept us from starving. The Freedmen's Bureau hadn't been started yet. My mother said it gave her strange, new feelings to hear groups of ex-slaves, passing the jail, shout at the top of their voices: 'Free Bells Done Ring,' and another song, sung to the accompaniment of shuffling, bare feet, haunted her all her life. It was:

"Slavery chains done broke at last,
Broke at last, broke at last;
Slavery chains done broke at last,
Gonna praise God till I die!"

14

"But when night came she couldn't help being homesick for the old slave cabin at Baytop's and she kept praying, with all her strength, that my father would somehow -- miraculously -- find them."

Here Lawyer Walker sat back again and let his arms drop. He, as well as we ourselves, had been through a real experience that had happened long ago. "Lumpkin Jail," he continued, "is now part of the Virginia Union University, that gave me my LL.D. I never go there or pass it without seeing in my mind's eye the reunion of that devoted couple."

"It's a queer name for a jail," I commented.

"Better than the Devil's Half Acre which is what it was commonly called," he said. "It started out as a boarding house, where owners could board slaves that were up for sale, for thirty cents a day. It belonged to a fat man named Robert Lumpkin. It was completely equipped with four main buildings -- one with barred windows -- and several smaller jails for selected inmates, a business office for slave traders, kitchen, bar, and of course, the auction platform, all inside a high fence.

"I sometimes wonder if the students who use some of those buildings now ever think of the purpose to which they were once put -- protecting my mother and her little family for instance."

"Did the Union soldiers help you all to go somewhere else?" I asked.

"There wasn't any organization as early as that, everything was in a state of chaos," he replied. "My father thought only of getting us all back to Gloucester, but how? Then he happened to come across a man who had a covered wagon and who would take us there but how to pay him?"

My father told him that there was still unharvested food in the truck garden he had been allowed to raise near his cabin that he would give him and also a ham when we got there.

"I was only about three years old at this time but I vividly remember how my grandmother dropped on her knees, when she heard that the man had agreed to this arrangement, lifted her hands to Heaven, and gave thanks to God for this blessing. To her that covered wagon was like a golden chariot 'comin' for to carry me home!"

"To which plantation did you go back?" I asked. "Surely not to Baytop's?"

"Yes, we did -- after stopping at Steven Fields to pay our driver's bill. It happened that my mother's former owner had died after the Emancipation and his son, Lieutenant Baytop, had come home to take charge of the plantation. He was a different kind of man from his father and had a lovely young wife who played a strange role in my life.

"My father thought it better to take us there for the time being and to go back himself to Steven Fields where his old mother was waiting for news of him and where he thought he might find work. There wasn't room for us all in his cabin."

"How amazingly it all worked out," I said, "that he found you all again and was able to get you back to Gloucester!"

"It is interesting to note," commented Lawyer Walker, "that in spite of the Emancipation there was no apparent change in my father's status. He continued to hire out, here and there, as a bricklayer, but there was little such work to be found. Services like his had once been

in great demand but the white folks couldn't pay to have it done after the slaves were freed. Many of them moved out of their "great houses" because they could not afford to keep them up. Poverty had come to Steven Fields too. However, my father stayed on there for several years, in a drifting sort of way, with everything around him getting worse and more and more run down."

"But, with sorrow and discouragement all around me, I, myself was having a wonderful time," he observed. "It somehow happened that Lieutenant Baytop and his affectionate wife formed a strong attachment for me. They didn't have any children and begged my parents to let them borrow me. They called me their "play-child" and treated me as if I were their very own. It seemed as if all the parental love and tenderness they would have felt for their own child were given this very black little boy; the son of a former slave. Both my parents were full-blooded Negroes."

"Did the Baytops just play with you?" I asked.

"Why no! They treated me as if I were really theirs," he replied. "Every night they tucked me up in a little trundle bed next to the one they slept in. And they gave me my name too, Thomas, after my father, and Calhoun for the Senator --- General Calhoun of South Carolina. They never let me know I was black and I, unaware as yet of any color line, lived with them as naturally as if I were with my own parents. They never made fun of me in any way even though I maintained complete silence until one time when I must have been near five years of age.

"That day marked a turning point for me," he observed with a laugh.

"I saw a snake gliding into the old slave kitchen where I was playing and to warn my aunt who was cook, I shouted, "Nake, nake!" That snake opened my career as a speaker and it hasn't ended since. But I never thought of dictating a book."

"What did your parents think of your staying with the Baytops?" I asked.

"Well, of course, their dream was to have a home of their own and to have all their children with them," he replied. "As long as they stayed on where they were they could not realize that they were free. Physically they were slaves no more but they were still surrounded by the customs and traditions of the slave system. And economically, of course, they were at a loss as to how to feel free of obligations unless they moved where no services were expected of them.

"One day my father found an old cabin that had been the laundry for a "big house" which had burned to the ground. This, he rented. It was ^{on} a plantation named 'Retreat'. It was like most slave cabins, just one room with an earth floor and a loft above that had to be reached by a ladder.

"This place became the first home they ever had and they wanted to have me with them along with the rest of the children. But, strange to say, the Baytops did not want to give me up. I have never fully understood this because I was too little to be of the least use about the place.

"My parents were very conscious of this beautiful relation between the kind son of my mother's former owner and me, and let me stay

until I was nearly seven years old. Then my father thought I could begin to help around the new quarters. So he took me away."

"How did you feel about leaving your white foster parents and going home?" I asked.

"Of course I didn't want to leave them and they didn't want to have me go. The Baytop's was home to me. It was a complete change of everything I was used to when I went to sleep in the loft of a one-room cabin with my brothers."

"I wonder," I said, "if any other slave-children had such a thing happen to them!"

"I've never heard of any but, of course, it may have happened. I wouldn't know. But those first seven years were all-important to me in my later life for they demonstrated the kindness and understanding of some white people.

"That was my first experience with white folks. It made me sure there were others like them -- somewhere -- although I have not always been able to locate them when it has come to what you call "inter-racial" problems. I don't recognize race as much as you folks do. What I recognize is different kinds of human beings no matter what their skin's like."

"You weren't really old enough to work when you went back to your family, were you?" I asked.

"My father thought I was. It is difficult to explain how former slaves felt about working their children," said Lawyer Walker thoughtfully. "It wasn't their age that they took into account as we do now. In those

early post-bellum days one's childhood imperceptibly ended when he was able to do chores and then take up regular work in the fields. Not having any schools at all there wasn't a pre-school age, as now; no educational system to decide when a boy should go to work. It never occurred to them that there should be education for Negroes.

"My childhood ended abruptly when I was ten. There were eight members of the family and I was needed to help take care of them. First, my father set me to hauling wood in an old solid-wheeled cart drawn by two oxen named Lion and Lamb. The loading and unloading were heavy tasks for so young a boy. I remember how tired I used to get! And besides doing that I had to work in the fields and help an old man make bricks.

"You may be interested in the fact that in our tide-water country my father, in his brick-laying and plastering work, would have to make his own lime by burning oyster shells in pens, or, as he called them, lime 'kills'. Then, when the 'kills' was finished he set fire to it and it would burn for days, until the shells were reduced to a crisp. When it cooled off he would sift and powder the shells to make 'lime'.

"It was a pretty big change for you -- having always been a play-child!" I said.

"Yes, but stern necessity lay back of my father's decision," continued Lawyer Walker. "He felt keen responsibility for bringing me up in what he thought, with his slave's background, was the right way.

"My parents lived on the ground level in the one room where they cooked, ate, and slept. Where we all slept, up in the loft, I could

hear my father praying, early in the morning. He would wake me up almost shouting in his earnestness: "Oh God! Please take care of my chillun 'cause I don' know how!"

"Those prayers and my father's deep humility shown in his agonized pleading for spiritual guidance and help are with me to this day. But it was the care, counsel, and quiet advice of my mother that gave practical shape to my life plans. Through all our unbroken hardships she always had something cheerful to say and I never heard her utter an unkind word to anyone -- whatever the provocation. It was her practical teaching about how to get on with difficult people that set my action pattern on racial issues."

"I think that is a wonderful heritage," I said. "Tell us some of the things she said!"

"She was deeply religious. She never learned to read the Bible but she based her teaching on kindness to everyone and the need for bringing out the best in people. It all added up to what I have heard her say over and over again when we met injustices. "Now you 'member' she told us, 'if anyone throws a brick at you you toss him back a -biscuit!'"

"That's just what we all need today, isn't it?" I said.

"It meant more than you can know," added Lawyer Walker. "My mother meant 'give him the best you've got'. For it was only on Sunday mornings, as a special treat, that each of us had a biscuit made of white flour. We children looked forward to those biscuits all the week. The rest of the time we lived on corn meal, molasses, and pork fat.

"It took a whole quarter of my father's scant weekly earnings to supply our family with fat from the back and sides of a hog -- so little

could he earn. My mother helped by taking in washing but, after the war, the white people were too poor to pay more than a pittance for such work. Twenty-five cents was as much as she could earn in a whole week. Sometimes people paid her with old clothes, meal, or meat. The problem of earning enough between them to keep us alive was always foremost in my parent's minds. It was just drudgery, drudgery, drudgery for almost nothing and with no future in sight at all except in Heaven. Nobody had planned for freedom. All the Negroes had thought of was being free and the white people had thought the Confederacy would win. Many Negroes thought so too but I don't believe that is the only reason they guarded so faithfully the wives and children of the men who were fighting to preserve the slave system." He shook his head and smiled. "They would have done it anyhow," he said, "that's the kind of people those Negroes were."

I looked at the short figure with the powerful shoulders seated opposite me in the big chair, at the animated black face shining with love for his people who were so loyal even in bondage, so patient and so disadvantaged -- even yet -- and could not help asking: "How did it ever happen that you did free yourself from what was in effect a second slavery during the Reconstruction period and become leader of - not only your own people but mine?"

"Its as we were saying a little while ago," he commented quietly, "My mother and I decided not to wait for a future to come to us so she helped me to go and hunt one. I'll tell you about that for the next chapter. She helped me to run away from home!"

CHAPTER III DECIDE TO FIND MY FUTURE

"I suppose," Lawyer Walker began, the next time we met to discuss what occurred after his boyhood was snapped off as ^{it were} if a dry twig, "the time has come to tell what it was like for a boy from an ex-slave family to do such an unheard of thing as to plan for his future himself. As I told you, my parents were so beaten down and hopeless they thought of nothing but the struggle to keep their children alive. And, as there was no alternative, I had no other thought either."

"Then," I said, "something very startling must have happened to shake you out of such a rut. What was it?"

Lawyer Walker sat very still for a moment looking as if he were on the point of telling some tremendous event. But when he finally did start on again it was an anti-climax. "It really wasn't anything at all," he said, almost under his breath, "hardly an incident, it wouldn't be of interest to anybody but myself. But," he added, sitting up very straight, "insignificant as it seemed it was like a touch-off to a bomb for me. Everything in me woke up and has stayed awake ever since!"

"About how old were you at that time," I hurried to say, and "Aren't you going on with the story?"

"Of course!" he exclaimed. "I was just reliving the thrill of the experience over again. I was all of thirteen years old when it happened

but I didn't know how to read, or write, or figure. What little schooling I had had didn't get me that far. My father didn't want me to have any more."

"How did he happen to get the idea of letting get that much?" I asked.

"I think he must have got it from his half brother William Morris," he replied. "He had been sold to a slave trader in Petersburg before the war and had been trained as a butler. Somehow or other he managed to learn how to read and write. After the Emancipation he came back to Gloucester and started the first school for Negroes in Gloucester County in an old brick-making shop. I was only ten when this school opened but my father wouldn't let me attend it because he said he needed me to work. Later, when he was not so busy, he let me go for a short time but I used to suffer tortures because of my size - I was even smaller than much younger boys in school, I used to stay in a corner and pretend I didn't know the answers to the teacher's questions for fear the bigger boys would make fun of me if I called attention to myself by reciting. My embarrassment was so agonizing that I learned practically nothing at all."

"William Morris couldn't have learned much as a butler," I said, "how could he keep on very long?"

"Because we knew less than nothing, I suppose, because he did teach for several years. And then Jim Lemon, who was a free Negro even before the Rebellion, and who owned a cabin on a small tract of land at Sassafras Stage, offered it for a school house. It was about eight miles from where we lived but somehow or other father said I could go.

"However, that didn't work out either. I was so little and so over-worked I got too tired getting there. Sometimes, at first, the other boys would take turns carrying me but, after a few such lifts, I just stopped

3

trying to get there. After that my father discouraged me by saying I was too old to fool my time away in school anyhow and that he needed me in the fields."

"And you overcame all that!" I said admiringly.

"Don't let me give you a wrong impression about my father," he said rather hastily, "His attitude only reflected the attitude of everybody else and one that still prevails among many Southern people. He didn't know any better at that time. How could he?"

"He needed you to work in other ways than in the fields," I observed. "What was it that happened to change everything?"

"It was at the post-office," he began. "Mail came by stage three times a week. Then people would drive in from all parts of the County to visit together while waiting for the mail to be sorted.

"On the momentous day, about which I am going to tell you, I saw old Doctor Tabb get his mail at the window, tear open an envelope, and throw it on the floor and then walk off. Instantly I was seized with intense curiosity to know what there was on that envelope that made the post-master know it was for Doctor Tabb. I knew it would be swept up and burned as trash so I picked it up, tucked it in my shirt so nobody would ask what I was doing with it, and slipped off to a patch of woods where I could study it without being watched.

"What I saw completely mystified me! I knew most of the letters of the alphabet in print but script was something else again. I had never even seen my own name in writing. Noone in our family had ever received a letter so here was my chance. Perhaps I could find out how to write by studying Doctor Tabb's name that must be so clear that he and the post-master recog-

nized it.

"I was in a great state of excitement as, there in the wet sand, beside a creek, I traced over and over with my finger lines like those on the envelope saying as I did it: 'Doctor Tabb, Doctor Tabb, Doctor Frosser Tabb', until I could at last make all the letters I knew must spell his name and without looking at the copy.

"When I had thoroughly mastered my lesson, and had taught myself to associate the sound of his name with the letters, it happened - the event! I wasn't hopelessly ignorant. I now knew I could learn to read not only printed letters but writing!"

"Then and there," announced Lawyer Walker, as he brought his fist down on the chair-arm with a gleam of triumph in his eye, "an unshakable determination took hold of me. Somehow, somewhere, come what might, I was going to get an 'edication'!"

We both leaned back in our chairs to review this miracle in our minds. "That's a wonderful story!" I said. "But, with your father feeling as he did how did you ever get to Hampton?"

Lawyer Walker held his finger-tips together, fanning them rhythmically as I noticed he did when he had an unusually precious memory to relate. At last it came out.

"Maybe I would never have gotten to Hampton if something else hadn't happened one never-to-be-forgotten summer day following the second school year. Anybody watching me wouldn't have seen anything happening to me but - inside my life got changed inside out.

"My father decided to take me with him to what he said was a 'meeting'. He told me no more and I thought only of getting a day off and a ride off.

As we jogged along the eight miles to Cappahosic in the old ox-cart, little did either of us suspect what the acquaintance of a particular white man we would meet there was going to mean to our hopeless, planless lives.

"When we reached the River I was amazed to see my father join a group of other Negroes who were waiting for a rowboat that was approaching the shore. From it stepped a man whose appearance I shall never forget; he was so erect, such a distinguished looking white man with a stern yet kindly face and an eye keen as an eagle's.

"Frank Page, our Sunday-school teacher, greeted him as if he were receiving the Saviour himself. Then he turned and introduced this man as the great General Armstrong in whose Negro regiment he had served during the War and who had given him his first lessons in reading. Yes, it was General Armstrong who had headed the famous Negro Regiment of the United States Troops and who was then the chief official of the Freedmen's Bureau at Hampton.

"It was the greatest experience any of us had ever had for all that day General Armstrong discussed our problems with us. He talked with us just as if we were white folks--not former slaves. He urged us to buy land, if we could, to learn to read and write, to have hope and to pray. We asked how Negroes could learn to read and why 'our children were not allowed in the schools.' Then he told us of a school for Negro boys and girls that had been opened at Hampton*-(not so far distant) from where we were.

* Now the Hampton Normal and Agricultural College.

"Many deep thoughts and plans were born in my mind as I watched and listened to General Armstrong. I was utterly carried away by the concern of this aristocratic white man for us poor Negroes that nobody had bothered about before—at least not in that way. I could scarcely believe that a man of such dignity and intelligence, even if he did take an interest in us, actually believed that Negroes—boys like me—were worth educating. We drank in every word he said, and, before he left, he promised to send us a teacher from Hampton.

"It was Frank Page who had arranged this visit from the General for he was genuinely anxious to have his people learn how to read. In his class in Sunday-school he taught us from the Bible but, while doing that, he also tried to show us how to read a little. This had never been allowed before the emancipation. When he saw my great longing to go as far as I could, he gave me his old spelling-book. From this I was able to work out the alphabet—after a fashion. It was because of the interest I had shown in this that Frank had asked my father to take me to the meeting.

"Did General Armstrong send you a teacher right away? I asked.

"No, Hampton had not been going long enough to have many of its students who were ready to teach but the General had aroused in us an interest in knowing how to read and, as the church became more active, the Negroes saw the value in being able to read the Bible and their ambition to have their children learn spread rapidly. So my uncle and a few of his friends talked about starting a school for Negroes. They began by getting a war veteran as teacher but it was not long before the children learned the little he knew.

"After a while General Armstrong sent us George Taylor, one of Hampton's first graduates. He was a young man bristling with plans of all sorts for our benefit. It was he who finally taught me how to put letters together so as to form simple words. That, to me, was pure magic! No one else in our big family could do it! The school term was four months but my father could spare me only the two months that outdoor work was impossible.

"Two years later when General Armstrong wanted George to go back to Hampton, he sent Anderson Byrd to take his place. During the three or four years that Anderson taught in Gloucester, he boarded with us and slept in the same loft-bed with my brother and me.

"Even so, my chances to learn were few. Work on the farm, from dawn to dusk, always had to come first. I was elated when my father let me enter school the first of January but disheartened when I was taken out the first of March to work in the fields again. However, my determination to get educated only grew stronger with each disappointment.

"One day I said to my teacher and loft-mate: "I want to go to Hampton mah self!!"

"I'll see that you get there!" he promised. So he put in an application for me which my mother approved but my father would not listen to a word about it. He said that I must stay home to help make crops and look after the other children.

"I's plannin to make a brick-layer outer you." he said.

"I remember crying bitterly over this. Then one day I stood up in front of my father and showed him my fixed determination. "If you won't lemme go to Hampton I's gwine to run away from home and go anyhow an' if I

do you won' see me no mo' til I is twenty-one years ole. Den I dun
got my eddication an' you caint boss me no mo'."

"This declaration of independence brought on a real crisis. For the first time in my life I heard my mother and father in a dispute. At last, I heard my mother say: "Thomas, you gwine to make mah boy run away from home jes' cause he wanner get some eddication."

"Although nothing was decided between them about my plan, my mother and I made secret preparations by gathering together what we could of the things I would need for my great adventure."

"I think she was perfectly splendid," I said.

"She certainly was!" The amount necessary just for steamer fare to Hampton was \$1.25 which seemed to us a colossal sum. Indeed, it was several months before the two of us together were able to lay by that amount. My mother earned every cent she could by back-breaking labor and I got a few pennies by picking up odd jobs here and there, until we had hidden away, in all, \$2.25. What clothing there was for me to take with me was mainly old worn shirts--most of them too big--that her customers had given her with their washing."

"Can you imagine our excitement when the day finally came for me to disappear?"

"No," I said, "tell me about it. Don't leave out a thing. It was a great adventure."

"Well," he said, putting his fingers together, crossing his ankles and speaking in a confidential manner. "Early that September morning with my few clothes tied in a bundle, I started off stealthily to walk the fourteen miles to Gloucester Point where the steamer made a

landing to take on passengers for Old Point Comfort and Norfolk."

"I skurried along barefoot, looking back anxiously every little while to see if my father was following me to drag me back to work on the farm. But all I saw, not long after I started, was Jerry Gregory, who also planned to go to Hampton, jogging along in an old "jezzie" wagon driven by his father."

"But instead of stopping to pick me up, as I naturally thought they would, they drove right on past without noticing me! My mother told me later that as they went by our cabin she had run out and asked Mr. Gregory if, when he overtook me, he would give me a lift to the boat. But Mr. Gregory had shouted back indignantly that he would do that only if her husband first gave permission. His disapproval of a wife's outwitting an obstinate husband, and the disgrace she felt at having a child run away fell swiftly upon my devoted mother."

"I had almost reached the landing and had lost my fear of being overtaken by my father when I heard a pounding of hoofs. On looking back, to my horror, I saw him in his "jezzie" wagon coming down the pike at top speed."

"At this terrifying spectacle I put for the woods, thinking, of course, he was going to grab me and take me back home. But, to my amazement, he called to me in a friendly voice, helped me into the wagon and drove me the rest of the way! He didn't say much nor did he give me any money to help out but, when the boat was ready to sail, he suddenly hugged me and said good-bye."

"I often think of this experience when I meet irate fathers of runaway

boys in the Juvenile Courts and it has never ceased to be a matter of wonderment to me as to what could have happened to lead him to do this act of belated kindness! It may have been a final plea from my mother not to force me to run away just to get "some eddication," but I never did find out.

"After buying my ticket on the boat I had only a dollar left and oh, but wasn't I hungry! This I confessed to Aunt Patsy, the stewardess, so she brought me some cheese and a horse-cake."

"What on 'earth is a horse-cake?" I broke in.

"Oh, a horse-cake? Why it's one of those six-inch cookies made with molasses and ginger. This took eight cents more out of my little hoard so when we docked I had exactly ninety-two cents left! A carriage was waiting to take passengers from the boat to the Institute but, tired though we were, Jerry and I could not afford to ride. I needed every one of those ninety-two cents to pay for "some eddication."

"At last we wearily set foot upon the Hampton campus, but it struck us both as odd that nobody seemed at all impressed by our arrival nor in the least interested in us. I, being short for my age, looked much younger than I really was. We did not then realize that neither of us was exactly prepossessing in appearance. Indeed, we must have borne every mark of the country bumpkins that we were.

"The first thing that happened to us was when we were taken into the dining hall. Loud yells of "Fish!" and jeers greeted us as we entered. At first we thought this meant fish to eat but, when none was served, we realized that it was just an announcement that new students had arrived. The noise died away and we had a hearty meal of corn-bread and molasses.

"Of course the school was very primitive and poorly equipped at that time. We were sent to Marquand Cottage for the night after being given two empty mattress cases and told to fill them with wheat straw at the barn. Two pallets, a small tin oil lamp, a stand and two chairs were the furnishings of our room. But poor as it was, none other has ever impressed me as being so completely beautiful and satisfying. It was the beginning of a cherished dream come true. I loved it.

"Our first night was not to pass without excitement. We had been tipped off that new students were always "bucked"—it was called—and that country boys, "greenhorns" or "fish", like ourselves, were considered especially good sport. The method used in "bucking" a new boy was to bend him over a barrel and give him a vigorous whaling. So we bolted our door a bit fearfully and went to bed—but pop-eyed and alert.

"Sure enough! Soon we heard shuffling around outside and then came a call for us to "Open up!" We kept perfectly quiet. However, the shuffling kept on and then we heard the sound of a table being dragged across the hall and up to our door. Next a head appeared through the opening of our transom. I had taken pains to provide myself with the hall broom in case of such an attack and, with the stick, I promptly, without saying a word, entered into combat with the intruder.

"Then bedlam broke loose, both outdoors and in. There was shouting as if the house were on fire. By that time we were no longer "green" and surmised that this was only a scheme to frighten us into running into the hall and so lay ourselves open to a mass attack. When the hazers realized that we were not going to come out, the noise slowly subsided. We had won the day, or rather, what was left of the night.

"Hazing is a form of teasing leading up to what often becomes genuine juvenile delinquency. What happened the first night after we got to Hampton taught me a lesson I never forgot in my law practice although it was all meant only as a kind of rough sport.

"Our next fight was of a different kind, but, will you believe me when I tell you that it was a hot one and, with no less a person than General Armstrong himself. Do you think I ought to put that in the book?"

"Tell me about it. I can't say until I hear the story. Since you stayed at Hampton I think you must have won out."

"It was General Armstrong's custom," he resumed, "to have all the boys come to his office. There were eleven of us, of different sizes but all of about the same type and grade. I had known only two of these boys personally: Jerry Gregory and one, named Moseley, who measured exactly seven feet with no shoes on and who looked even taller than that when he stood next to my little more than five!

"I can remember every detail of this second meeting with General Armstrong. He stood there in his office, so erect, stalwart and so very reserved! He was a type born to command, yet at the same time he gave the impression of being wonderfully intuitive and sympathetic. I have never found this combination of qualities in anybody else! He possessed a dominant spiritual power; a coordination of mental force and gentleness--compassion is perhaps the right word. No life could ever be quite the same after it had come under the influence of that master soul, dedicated to helping such as ~~us~~ poor Negroes!

"By quick, decisive speech he came straight to the point with the little ragged, untutored group quaking there before him. He told us briefly, just as if we were soldiers, that, if we wished to enter Hampton Institute, we would have to pass examinations and that he was sending us immediately to various teachers for that purpose.

"To one of the eleven, at least, these words were, indeed, fateful. I knew I was too ignorant on every subject in the whole round world to make a passing mark on any kind of an examination on anything! However, I had to obey. First, I was sent for a quiz in reading but I could not make out the simplest sentences. Although I had studied the alphabet in Frank Page's old spelling-book and later managed to learn a few simple words, it was entirely beyond me to read a whole sentence. In grammar I somehow did fairly well, considering my background. As to the test in arithmetic, I was not quite—but almost—a total blank. Nevertheless, although the results were no worse than I knew they would be, I was not at all prepared for what followed.

"The General received the reports from the teachers and he sent for us again. Sorrowfully he told us there was no class at Hampton low enough for us to enter and that we would all have to pack up and go home. That was that! After this curt and unexpected dismissal we shuffled out of his office in silence and straggled back to our rooms. I was in the lowest depths of despondency. I gathered my few belongings together but kept trying to think of some way by which I could manage to stay on so as to get "edicated" and not have to go home in disgrace. What would my father say?

"Suddenly, I had an idea. I stopped short and made an irrevocable decision—I wouldn't go! I called the boys together. I had never seen Moseley's seven feet tower above me as they did then. But there was no fight in him. I said: "I aint goin' to obey Gener'l Armstrong. I aint goin' home an' I is goin' right over now to tell 'im so." I turned on my heel and started off.

"Although I was the smallest as well as about the youngest in the bunch, they all fell in with my idea and promptly appointed me spokesman. I then marched stiffly back, my followers at my heels, to the General's office.

"Gener'l Armstrong," I said, making myself as tall as I could, "We dun come here to get some eddication 'cause we don' have none. We's 'shamed to go home without eddications so we aint goin' home 'til we gets 'em." My jaw was set and I stood my ground waiting for it to open beneath my feet.

"Dead silence followed this declaration. General Armstrong looked me straight in the eye but made no response whatever. My audacity must have surprised this seasoned army officer, accustomed to being obeyed by his Negro troops without question. He kept on looking quietly down on my small black quaking self for what seemed to me an eternity. There was nothing left for us to do but to turn and leave. I felt to my boots that anything might happen after that. But I had said we did not intend to go and we didn't.

For several days we were totally ignored. Still we were allowed to stay on in our rooms and were admitted to the dining room for meals.

"At last the General sent for us. We did not know what kind of punishment was in store and were all very much frightened. He began by asking each one of us in turn if he had worked on a farm and what kind of chores he was accustomed to do. When he came to me I was so afraid that the kind of work I had done would not qualify me, and so aware that he knew I had been the leader of the group that had disobeyed his order, that all I said was, "I can do anything what you tell me to do." It wasn't a very brave answer, I confess, but my feeling was that I wanted him to know that I was sorry; I had been obliged to be disobedient because I wanted to be 'edicated' and would never be so again if only he would let me stay! Again he and I looked each other straight in the eye without wavering and I somehow felt sure he understood and knew he could trust me after that.

"The General then made known to us his plan which was to open a night school for students who were not far enough along to enter day school classes. This, of course, meant us. He said that Booker T. Washington had agreed to teach such a night school but that we would all have to work hard during the day to earn our board and to pay for our schooling, for the Institute itself was very poor.

"I was eighteen at that time and so, in years, I was old enough to work but physically I was too small for the assignment given me and I hadn't had the kind of food that could make me very strong. I guess that some of the strength that should have gone into making me grow to normal size went into doing a man's heavy labor when I was only a very little boy.

"Yes, I was all of eighteen years old yet so ignorant I could not enter even the lowest class! They had to make one for us out of nothing.

But it was the very ignorance of that group of boys that was responsible for the start of the now famous "Work Class" or "Work Year" system at Hampton. Had I known enough to enter regular day classes the "Work Year" system might never had been established so, like much else that seems calamitous, it turned out to be a blessing after all."

He smiled patiently.

"Never did I work harder, he continued, than during that first year at Hampton. Each boy was given some task connected with the school upkeep and growth. Some worked on the farm, others on new buildings and still others were sent to the saw-mill or box factory. I had to carry a hod of bricks, climbing up and down a ladder set against a four-story building. It was heavy work for anyone--almost impossible for one of my size--but when I was so tired I thought I could not go on I remembered that I had promised the General I would do anything I was told to do. Not for the whole world would I disappoint him who was giving me my longed-for chance to get "edicated". But my shoulders bear testimony to the weight of that hod.

"We worked from seven in the morning till six in the evening with an hour off for midday dinner. We went to classes for two hours every night, studying our lessons as best we could whenever we found a few minutes. Taps came at ten o'clock and a watchman patrolled the campus to see that all lights were out. But I used to hang an old army blanket over my window and study on towards morning.

"The main body of day students looked down on us "work students," showing their contempt for us in different ways. We had to wear our work clothes to meals and ate at a special table by ourselves. After some weeks of carrying the hod I was transferred to the saw-mill. Following that,

when I entered the dining-room, some of the students turned up their noses and shouted scornfully, "Turpentine!" No girl would have anything to do with a saw-mill boy because of the smell of turpentine on him.

"Later, I was assigned to the box-making department. Here I had an opportunity, or made one, to study while working. I took my books with me to the mill and, with an inclined board to serve me as a book-rest, I studied while I nailed together boxes for packing fruit-cans and crabs. Many a time have I struck my finger instead of a nail while looking at a book. I was careful not to steal time for this from my work and made as many boxes as the boys who didn't study. After a while I was advanced to be chief box maker. I hoped the General knew this. I was so anxious to have him pleased.

"You will be interested, I know, to hear about our teacher, Booker T. Washington, who did such splendid pioneer work for our people against terrible odds. He influenced us greatly by his earnestness and the extraordinary, unrelenting zeal he showed in helping us--the unpromising first night class--for he sought to teach us not only book knowledge but particularly right principles and ideals of manhood.

"He acted towards us boys not only as a conscientious teacher but as a wise father too. Undeveloped though we then were, he threw upon us the mantle of responsibility for helping our own people; indeed all humanity, whatever the color; even the Southern whites, he said. Many a night, when our lessons were finished and he had gone over our next night's lesson to give us what he called the "high points", he would sit and talk with us informally, just as one of us.

"To drive home some ideal or lesson in conduct, he would often illustrate his point by a yarn we wouldn't forget. I recall one of his stories about an old man who bought a mule. He was asked: 'Do you think you can raise a crop with that old plug?'

"The old man looked his questioner up and down and said: 'No. I didn't buy him to make no crop. I bought him for a mortgage.' He meant that, as a penniless sharecropper, he could only get supplies from the store by presenting his mule as security.

"I have often told this story to my people in order to impress them with the fact that it is necessary for every Negro to own something and to become a tax-payer if only for reasons of security.

"Sometimes Booker Washington would call us together in his class-room for special talks on how to live in the face of temptations; urging us to be always upright, truthful, and to stay out of bad company.

"He often talked to us about getting on with white people. He used to say: 'Not all white folks are your enemies. Wherever you go you will find at least one white person who will be your friend. In fact, some white people will be so friendly that, if you happen to be in Hell, they will get between you and the fire. But of course you must make yourself liked by having good manners and - always - common sense, and by remembering the training you got from your father and mother and here at school'. On several such occasions he served us refreshments, such as lemonade and cake. I don't suppose you can possibly imagine what such treatment meant to us awkward and ignorant country boys as preparation for leadership in helping our untutored people."

"But he, and everybody else at Hampton, expected us to work long hours.

That first year, those of us who were in the Work Class had to work ten hours a day, winter and summer, by daylight or lamp-light. For this we were credited with twenty dollars a month less the ten dollars that was taken out for board. I remember the thrill I got when, at the close of the school year, I went to the school treasurer, General Marshall, to ask how much he was holding for me and he said my credit was all of ninety-two dollars! It was not only the colossal size of the sum that struck me as wonderful but the fact that it amounted to just one dollar for every penny I had for my education when I first entered school. I was superstitious enough to think it was a good omen."

"I wonder if you remember what you did with it?" I asked.

"Oh, of course I left it with the treasurer towards the next year's expenses!" he replied in surprise. "My whole heart and mind were set on making good to General Armstrong and going on with my education. I was to enter the day classes in the fall and had to contrive in every way possible to earn enough for that.

"General Armstrong gave us Work Class fellows a wonderful surprise at the closing exercises of that first year. In his address he referred to us as 'the Plucky Class', saying, in his quick, firm way, 'I am proud of them!' But the deepest memory of all the inspiring influences that impressed me so at Hampton was the way General Armstrong conducted devotionals. No greater contrast can possibly be imagined to the crude interpretation of spiritual life found in our poor, country churches, with preachers who did not know how to read the Bible at all, or only just a little, than the quiet, uplifting spirit of true worship General Armstrong always developed. He was not a fluent speaker but he had a faculty for making himself felt as a powerful, spiritual

force by everyone who came into contact with him.

"I have heard a great many graduating addresses in my life but none as inspiring as the one given by General Armstrong at the time of my graduation in 1883. He impressed us with the thought that our education should not be selfishly used. It was something to be shared. He said we had been trained to go out and show our people how to live right, how to become good citizens ourselves so we could show them how to help. He told us that the destiny of our race was in our own hands.

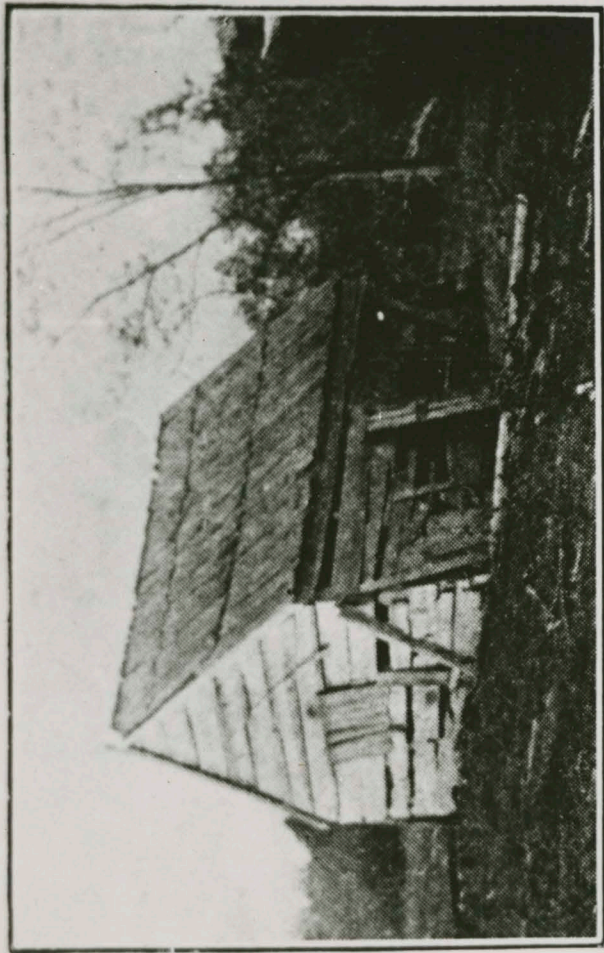
"I shall never forget my last talk with General Armstrong just before I left Hampton to go back home to an uncharted future. "Tom," he said, placing his hand on my shoulder and looking down on me kindly, "the world has yet to see what God can do with a man fully given over to Him."

"Those words affected me so profoundly that the fields, the trees, even the old cabins seemed to re-echo them and have re-echoed them ever since.

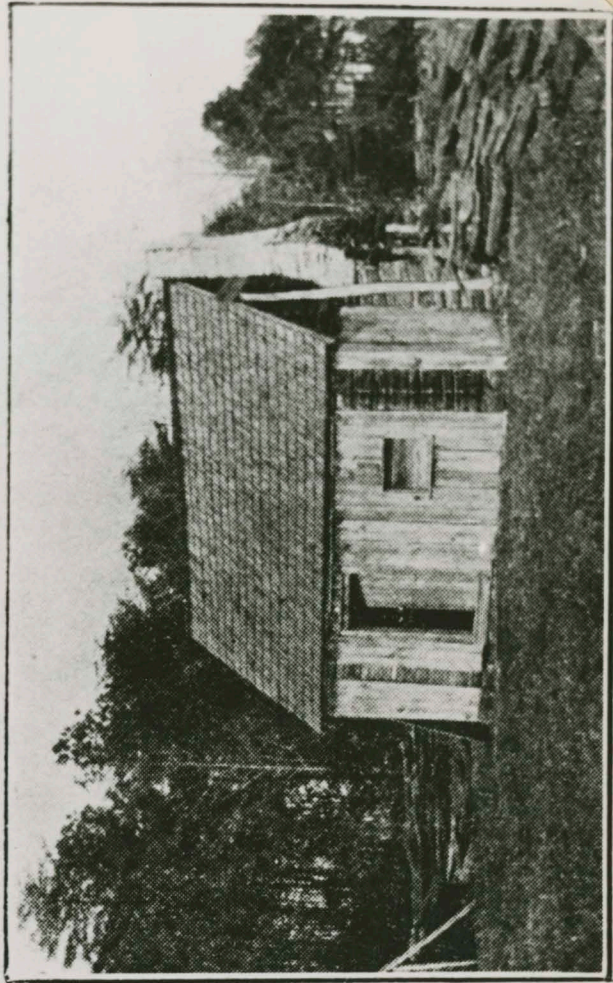
"It may be," Lawyer Walker added, after a long pause, "that in the early days of our emancipation the things that had to be done for my people were more challenging than now, that they were simpler and were spade-work that always brings quicker and more obvious results than improving complex situations such as face us now. But, however that may be, modern education certainly needs to re-define its aims and objectives so young people can understand them. I think the test of an education is its value in fitting the student spiritually, as well as mentally for the tasks of this New Age as General Armstrong tried to fit us newly freed and seemingly hopeless Negroes to work out our own destiny -- ignorant Negroes like me.

"And now," said Lawyer Walker, sitting back as if he had concluded the block of memories that began with his seeking a future at Hampton and ended with a shouldering of the future of his people, "I've gone on living into another era that needs an Emancipation Proclamation on another level than the one that freed just our bodies, and a different kind of Reconstruction Period that will help every race in the world."

MR. WALKER'S
BIRTHPLACE



WHERE HE WENT
TO SCHOOL



Miss Florence L. Lattimore
Monterey Road
Great Barrington, Mass.



CHAPTER IIIFREEDOM AND THE FOLKS BACK HOME

Lawyer walker sat in the big chair quietly waiting to begin a new chapter, with a mischievous readiness to answer any question asked of him, like a school boy primed for an oral examination.

"What is ^{it} to be today?" he queried, "Political skirmishes?"

"I didn't know you had ever had any!" I said. "But if you did there will certainly be room for them later on."

"I could talk a whole book about politics." he announced. "I've had a great deal of fun with them - filling some petty offices in Gloucester,"

"I can hardly wait to hear about that but we haven't got you home from Hampton yet. There were all those folks back on the old plantations that you haven't said anything about - how they were getting along in those dark days of the Reconstruction Period, what they believed, and did. How did the situation impress you after your years at Hampton?"

"Oh, the contrast! There were only worse conditions than when I left. Things either get better or worse. Nobody had taken the trouble to keep things up and so they had gone down. Not one influence had come in to help either race and yet it was evident that things could not go on as they were.

"Getting back home was like entering another world from the one I had been in at school. There everybody was talking of progress and how to learn from each other; how to farm, take care of stock, put up buildings, and how to plan for everything ahead.

"At school everything was on the move. We were taught always to look for

better ways of doing everything from praying to plowing. At first I thought that the high social ideals that had been instilled into me at Hampton were too advanced to be applied to Gloucester, couldn't even get a start there. That was my reaction when I first got home."

"In other words, there was no hope except in becoming a pioneer."

"Exactly!" he said. "But I didn't know how to begin or where to start. At Hampton there were others to discuss everything with but, back in Gloucester, there just wasn't anyone with whom I could talk things over."

"Ex-slaves were so used to being told what to do that they didn't have any initiative. They were quite incapable of planning for themselves or their children. Most of them were huddled into one-room cabins and eeked out a meagre subsistence from crabbing, digging oysters and fishing. Some of them got to be just lazy loafers and gave a bad name to the rest of us. They got as worthless as the Negro who asked a stranger for three cents to pay for a ferry crossing. The man looked him over and said: "If you are as worthless as that, you are just as well off on one side of the creek as the other," and walked onto the boat leaving the old fellow dangling his feet off the dock."

"That many Negroes did only such work as required the least effort to sustain themselves in idle poverty was not surprising. To many ex-slaves, freedom was synonymous with freedom from toil. How to make my people get up and work off their burdens themselves became the problem of problems for me."

"How about the old plantations?" I asked. "Didn't the white people want to employ the ex-slaves at the work they used to do? I don't see how they could get on without them."

"Why, the white people were badly off too, following that destructive war!" he replied. "Their condition was pitiful. They were not in any position to help us, even if they wanted to. Many plantations had been broken up and the owners had disappeared. The neglected land had become impoverished and was no longer a source of income—indeed, usually a complete loss.

"I suppose white people, never having been bodily owned and controlled by another race, cannot realize fully the blessings that freedom can bring. Whatever the white American has lacked, he has always owned himself. And to own oneself is to own one's future.

"Besides the generally depressing appearance of the land and dwellings, there was the discouraging fact that there were practically no schools for Negro children and only a few churches housed in broken down, cast off buildings. Crimes were frequent and many Negroes were in jail. Everywhere, I saw marks of a steady downward trend. How to stop it?"

"How did you stop it?" I asked.

"I just made up my mind to do it, even if I had to do it all alone." he replied. "If your determination is strong enough you'll find the way."

"Tell some more about the impressions that were made upon you by your people when you returned from Hampton!" I said.

"What most distressed me, on my return," he went on, "was the run down, hopeless condition of my family. My father and mother, together with my five brothers and sisters, were in the same one-room cabin I had left when I ran away to school. The first night I got back I climbed up the old ladder to the loft and into bed with my brothers just as I used to do. Everything was worse and more primitive than I had remembered it.

"Was Gloucester much the same town as when I last saw it?" I asked.

"It wasn't a town at all!" he surprised me by saying. "It is always hard for Northerners to realize the lay-out of my County. It was just a straggling settlement that centered in the Court House. I live only a quarter of a mile from there on the main road with about twenty-five acres of farm land. In travelling over the County its different sections were indicated, not by sign posts, but by crossroads with a general store or a grist-mill on a corner. When I got home there were some ten thousand people in the County but only a few hundreds lived in the Court House section."

"But," I persisted to clear up my confusion, "your postal address is Gloucester."

"Yes, just 'Gloucester,' or more correctly 'Gloucester Court House'. The Court House gets its name from the County -- the County doesn't get its name from the Court House!" he laughed at my increasing perplexity. "The main units in Virginia are counties. That's why rural betterments are so important down there. But to answer your question, Gloucester hasn't changed much since you were there except for more houses. It has the same main road that loops around in the Court House area with side roads branching off here and there. But it's just as happens, no lay-out like modern settlements.

"It has never had a railroad I'm thankful to say. Nowadays people come by bus from boats docking at Mobjack Bay. The boats proceed up short break-water rivers named by the British colonists -- the York, Severn, and Ware. The nearest railway station is some thirty-five miles distant. It is tide-water country, formerly laid out in great landed estates, one of the earliest Cavalier settlements of the aristocratic Old Dominion. Many of its families are conspicuous in American history, the so-called 'F.F.V's' of Virginia.

"But there never was any segregation in Gloucester. The Negroes, as slaves,

often stayed on in the plantation cabins after the Emancipation or moved where they pleased to get a living. Gloucester isn't like many other Southern places in letting Negroes walk on only one side of the street - and then next the gutter so we could step off when we saw white folks coming. We walk and shop on whichever side of the street we want to - even on Saturdays. And we sit wherever we choose to at court hearings.

"There are several theories about all this. Some think the friendly feeling between the races is due to the fact that Gloucester is midway between the North and the South so that racial attitudes have moderated there. I myself feel that the general attitude of chivalry and fair-play held by many plantation owners has left its mark and influence on both races from the days of the first colonial settlements. Any way you explain it I can testify to the fact that the races stand by each other in racial crises.

"Of course this doesn't mean that the white people have understood or sympathized with the needs of my people after the Rebellion, or our efforts to get educated."

"I certainly wasn't thinking of including school boards!" I couldn't help exclaiming, and we both laughed.

"Naturally," he continued, "neither race had any of the attitudes I had been taught at Hampton and when I took my head-long plunge into betterments for my people I knew I would get all sorts of criticism from both sides. But deep down inside I depended on a certain sense of chivalry I felt sure was in the more progressive members of both races. For there is some chivalry in the worst of us.

"Why, one day a horse ran away in Gloucester and the wife of the white man who was driving it might have been thrown out and killed if an old Negro, who hated white people more than anything else in this world, had not put him-

self in the road and saved her life at the greatest risk to his own. In times of distress the meanest of us can render services to those we have reason to hate."

"There must have been all sorts of individual situations," I said, "because of the many different kinds of white people the Negroes had come up against as, for instance, the two types of masters your parents belonged to. One could hardly generalize about white people in such a situation. Yet, whatever kind they were your people didn't have any schools or churches."

"It was forbidden."

"I remember once, as a special confidence, I was taken to a little place the Negroes used to steal away to to pray in slavery times," I said. "The Negro who took me said it was very secret and was called "Aswego" because those who knew about it had to make a little detour to find it when they went along the road on errands."

"Yes, in ante-bellum days we had neither schools nor churches. Later on a few religious services were held in cast off buildings. Crimes became frequent and many of my people were always in jail. Everywhere I could see a steady, downward trend. I didn't know what we were coming to."

"That puts what was done into the class with history." I said.

"I only remember the personal side of the situation; the deplorable plight of my mother and the whole family. My parents and five brothers and sisters were in the same one-room cabin I left when I ran away to school. I had to climb up the same old ladder to the loft and into bed with my brothers, just as I used to. Everything was worse than I remembered it. I had forgotten the dirt floor in our one room."

"However, it was the worn, dragged-out appearance of my mother that shocked me most. But she hung on to her religion. That, indeed, was her only comfort as it was with my people as a whole. I heard her telling one of the younger children just what she had told me, years before, "If anyone throws you a brick you toss him back a biscuit!" And she practiced that philosophy herself but her life had only despair in it.

"My father too had deep religious faith. Although he was an illiterate man, he used to sing a bit of a spiritual which I think he composed himself. It ran like this:

"Justice, Justice!

Why can't you wait?

In about four thousand years

I'll meet you at the Gate."

From the beliefs prevalent at that time I imagine he meant that God knew man was going to be bad and His Son said: "Spare them, spare them! Don't punish them now. Give Me time and I'll redeem them. Wait 'til I've had time!" This meant that Jesus would pay the debt of Adam and Eve if God would only give Him time.

"I could not help contrasting the deeply reverent religious services I attended at Hampton with the very emotional meetings in our own broken down churches in Gloucester, led by men who could neither read nor write. Unable to study the Bible how could they preach instructive and helpful sermons? What could be done? I remembered the deep and lasting impression that General Armstrong and many visitors had made upon me in the talks and sermons they gave the student body and contrasted them with the unbelievably primitive beliefs of my people. However, their loyalty to what they believed

was outstanding.

"To gain any sort of understanding of the "Old-time Negroes" it is necessary to know something of their religious beliefs and their way of expressing them. For instance, they were still explaining the many "squalls" common to our part of the country by saying just what my parents had said to me when I was little--that the thunder was God shuffling his feet and that lightning was God blinking his eyes.

"They had more reverence towards Christmas and Easter than most people of education, even though their understanding of the significance of these holy days was very hazy. They had never had any real teaching about the life of Jesus and the purpose for which He came, yet they regarded His birth as a miraculous event to be celebrated with adoration and His death as a tragedy to be thought of as a genuine personal sorrow and loss.

"On Christmas Eve we children were told that if we had been good and if we went to bed early that night, Jesus would send us gifts by way of Santa Claus who was a Christian. I remember how we climbed the ladder to the loft in great excitement, fearing we might miss seeing him if we fell asleep; how we struggled to keep awake.

"Sometimes our efforts were rewarded by seeing the big, shadowy form that was my father, in such disguise that we believed it was Santa, as he silently made his way to our stockings and put a bit of candy or a cake and a simple toy into each one. And oh, how happy we were when, at the first gleam of dawn, we scampered over to see what the little child Jesus had sent us! Nobody but Jesus gave us Christmas presents because He alone knew whether or not we had been naughty in our hearts.

"Older people went to church on Christmas morning to join in solemn thanksgiving and prayer. They would not have understood our modern shouts of "Merry Christmas!" No, Christmas Day was a soul-searching occasion on which they made every effort to be worthy of "de Lawd" who had given them so many blessings and at last their freedom. I have often thought that the sense of spiritual relief my people showed at such times could not have been given expression if they had not worshipped racially by themselves, unfettered by any ritual. Without knowledge of any creed they poured out their praise and joy in the exuberance of their glorious spirituals in gratitude for the liberty that no one had taught them how to use.

"At Easter time our older people, without knowing why, fasted and prayed from sundown of the Thursday before Easter until sundown of the following day. Although they neither ate nor drank they testified that that they were neither hungry nor thirsty. Then, on Good Friday, they gathered in the broken-down old churches for worship and stayed on to what they called "the love feast" in the evening.

"This was the ceremony of foot washing in keeping with the Biblical tradition. Emotionally and in imagination they were actually with their Master as He performed that ceremony. I doubt if anywhere deeper humility and greater love could be found than in these ignorant black supplicants. Basins and towels were brought and one man, called "the old brother," would reverently wash the feet of the men present followed by another man carrying a towel with which to dry them. Two women likewise performed the ceremony for those of their own sex and this was continued until all present had been served.

"At the conclusion of this rite there would be a repast of coffee, cakes and fat biscuit made by the older women and served to the whole congregation. This having been eaten, they would gather in circles, moving slightly from side to side until all were in perfect rhythm. One of them would then start singing a spiritual and the rest would join, naturally in parts, until all were lifting up their voices to their Lord and calling on each other to "Look at your dyin' Lawd," repeating, "Behold, Chillen, de Lamb of God! Jest look at yo' dyin' Lawd!" Each one, emotionally felt present at the crucifixion.

"Easter Sunday was another solemn day of prayer with thoughts on the resurrection of Christ. There were crude sermons on the significance of the occasion but to me, fresh from the enlightening and simple teachings at Hampton, the ignorance displayed was depressing. Minister and congregation alike had strong spiritual aspirations and deep humility but their explanations of Bible themes and the celebrations partaken in on these holidays were not only pitiful but sometimes fantastic. One felt like crying and laughing at the same time--both with compassion.

"For instance, one day I was remonstrating with a young Negro who insisted on taking the thirtieth of May as a holiday although it meant throwing the entire machinery of his employer out of gear and his possible loss of his job. I asked him what the thirtieth of May meant to him anyway, or any other holiday for that matter? He said he did not really know the meaning of any of them but he had supposed the thirtieth of May was the second day following the birth of Christ. He said he had heard something about a Second Coming and thought he ought to celebrate it as a holiday, come what might.

"Although I was still a young man, I had what, to me, was a curious, indeed an embarrassing, experience. Some of the ministers began coming to me for advice about church affairs. Sometimes they consulted me about their sermons; next they sought my help even before they began to prepare their sermons. They were just starved for guidance and information. I was sometimes seriously referred to as a "pastor of pastors."

"Even with such spiritual help, church meetings could not hold together unless their buildings did! I had to restrain the rising tide of eagerness for organization, which I was guilty of stimulating, until there was some suitable place in which to operate. I suggested that the first thing to do was to repair and improve the church buildings that were so broken down and poor that religious meetings often had to be held under a bush-arbor. Our own church, known at that time as Sassafras Stage, was an unsightly, ramshackle place no longer even safe to meet in. The church leaders said if I would give them advice and help they would start a remodelling program at Sassafras.

"Now I knew little more about fixing over old buildings than I did about theology but, as the others knew nothing at all about it, they depended upon me for technical advice. This I used to get from Hampton, going there from time to time to lay our problems before General Armstrong and other Hampton officers. From them I got much needed help and came back to pass it on to the church officers.

"Because my father was a bricklayer and plasterer he and another member were appointed chairmen of the building committee. The material was, of direct necessity, gathered literally piece by piece. I made my own contribution by laying the foundation and doing the plastering. We worked long

hours and hard so that, before many weeks had passed, the broken-down old Sassafras Stage Church had taken a new lease on life. Even its name was improved. It was called Bethel Baptist Church and grew until it had a large and devoted congregation.

"Now I'm going to tell you another story to show you how people of good will can get things done by helping each other without regard to race. It happened that our pastor was a distant cousin of mine, Reverend John W. Boothe, a licensed minister who had gone through the Civil War as his master's bodyguard. Fortunately he had been able, during that period, to pick up enough education so he could read the Bible. His master must have helped him along with his desire to preach because later on this same white man, a former slave-owner who was a Baptist, together with leading white Baptist ministers and several Negro ministers, in a mixed council, actually ordained him! He turned out to be one of the best plain, but helpful, preachers of the Gospel I ever knew and he really lived up to what he preached. He remained pastor of that old church for forty-two years, -r until his death.

"I speak especially of this Church because many of the most progressive uplift movements among the Negroes of Gloucester started there; backed and supported largely by former slaves. Old Brother James Lemon, the man who gave us the use of a cabin for a school house in the early days and who was clerk of the church, was one of the first men of his day to take forward steps in its advancement and in that of the community. He really was one of the most God-fearing men I have known. It was the help, encouragement, and pushing along of Negroes with such characters as his and Reverend Boothe's that lifted Gloucester County out of its run-down condition and started it on the upward path.

"The members were, naturally enough, entirely ignorant as to how a church should be run as we had never had a real church of our own during slave days. In every neighborhood, however, there was some leading colored man chosen by the people to be "the shepherd" and a leading woman who was given the title of "mother of the Church."

"Prospective church members, in my day, were expected to prove their spiritual fitness for joining by convincing the pastor that they had had "a real experience with God." One man I knew spent many hours on his knees wrestling with God over his conversion. Finally, he went down to a graveyard and, looking up into the heavens where the moon shone brightly, he shouted:

"Now Lawd, if I'se converted, shoot down dat der moon so I'll know."

"He came to me in great distress because the moon had stayed on where it was. He said, "How's I gwine know if I'se converted? De Lawd makes de stars to shoot and if I'se converted why didn't he shoot down de moon?"

"Of course, there were few, if any, church records and fewer members who knew how to keep any. If a member of the church transgressed in one neighborhood, but lived in another, the "shepherd" of the neighborhood in which the transgression was committed notified the "shepherd" in the neighborhood where the person lived who had "sinned" --as they called it-- and he was summoned before that "shepherd" and a group of members of the church to answer the charges laid against him. These were "serious" occasions.

"A fellow by the name of Spencer Reid committed the offense of not paying his church dues. Uncle Daniel Seymour, his "shepherd" was notified of this. Uncle Daniel then announced that Spencer must not take any further part in the services until he had settled up. This discipline was known as

"stopping the voice."

"One night, at a "shout", Spencer Reid began to sing: "Jes' look at yo' dyin' chillun, Lawd ... Behold de lamb of Gawd dat taket' away '...'" with his group around him on the floor shouting.

"Suddenly, Uncle Daniel's voice boomed out: "Who dat singin dere?"

"Someone replied: "Bro' Daniel, dat's Spencer Reid singin'!"

"The old man drew closer to the ring and called: "You, Spencer, you Spencer, didn't I tole you dat yo' shouldn' sing here no mo' 'til yo' had paid yo' church dues, suh?"

"Spencer stopped singing for a moment and then shouted back: "Bro' Daniel, I ain't done paid all mah dues but I is done paid fifteen cents on 'em."

"Well den," said Uncle Daniel, "You go 'long 'n sing fifteen cents wuth but don' you sing no mo' den dat!"

"This was only one of a number of disciplinary methods used in that day. Other crude ways of bringing members back into line were also in vogue because the old leaders, such as Uncle Daniel, were strong on morals and looked down with horror on anything that breathed of "fonducation" as adultery was called. All such offenses were dealt with severely by the church.

"In the church I attended, before going away to school, old Brother Elijah Munro and old Deacon Beverly Burrell, neither of whom had any education, were in charge of the Sunday School. In fact, Deacon Beverly could not read or write.

"Anyone who undertakes to start betterment work in a backward community, like ours, has to serve in many capacities and with the vision of a progressive goal always clearly in mind. I soon found it necessary to act as Sunday School Superintendent, as Bible Class teacher, even as musical director, although I

knew little or nothing about singing. All this went along with our religion.

"I think these facts are of special significance in understanding our spirituals. Our field songs reflect our years of bondage but, with their new ability to read the Scriptures and with native interpretations as to their meaning, our spirituals reached the zenith of their power. And at last our people had their own churches in which to sing from their hearts-- of the sad old days when "they "couldn't hear nobody pray!" These were followed by thanks to God for their liberation. Little by little the Emancipation Proclamation was beginning to bear fruit. But the full harvest is not yet.

"Some of the older people and a number of the larger boys and girls helped speed up church activities by visiting families in the community and giving special attention to the children. Nearly every home in the area responded.

"I had already learned, the hard way, that people become most interested in what they have made sacrifices to help support. They don't want to lose on their investment! So I urged each member to give one cent a month towards the work of a "Publishing Society and Missionary Department." I couldn't make it more because sometimes even that one penny came hard.

"One old colored preacher I knew could rarely collect any of the small salary due him from his poverty-stricken congregation. So he used to go every Saturday to the storekeeper and ask to borrow five dollars. And just as regularly he repaid the loan on the following Monday with the very same bill. Finally the storekeeper asked him why he borrowed the money if he was able to bring it back on Monday.

"His answer was; "Cause I never have five dollars of my own left by Saturday night but I fin' I can preach so much stronger when I have five dollars in my pocket. That's why I borrow them from you."

"Many would-be members were so poor they had no suitable clothes to wear to church or anywhere else. But, again, Hampton teachers came to their rescue so that whole families could join in the new social life of the congregation.

"Then the missionary spirit got hold of us and, as time went on, Sunday Schools, similar to ours, were opened in each of the neighborhood communities. In some sections, too far from any of our churches to be reached by the children, small religious groups were formed to meet around in our people's homes. It was encouraging and also pitiful to see the response of the Negroes to just a little send-off.

"It certainly was, " I said. "Then what did you do?"

"The next step, of course, he replied was to get these smaller groups organized into the Gloucester Sunday-School Union. This was in 1885. To get it started I had to take the Presidency and immediately became so involved that I have never been able to get out of it. It is a county affair and there certainly is not much about any of our betterment movements that we don't discuss at those meetings; domestic relations, ways to better our home life and human relationships, the training and education of children of all ages, and always is stressed the importance of owning the home that you live in. Owning homes of their own was a brand new idea for my people in the Reconstruction Period but that is a story in itself, and I shall have more to say about it further on.

"But to finish up about the churches: instead of the seven tumble-down buildings of my boyhood days, there are eighteen well-built Baptist churches in Gloucester County pastored, on the whole, by a splendid set of men; some of whom are college graduates.

"Had it not been for the inspiration and fellowship I received from some of these Negro leaders, my outlook and my life could not have been as rich as they have. Through these men I have been encouraged, during some very difficult times, not to put God off in the corner of the fence and try to fight my battles alone, but to seek the aid and support that come to us only through spiritual power.

"I was invited, one time, as representative of my own church, Bethel, to speak at an anniversary meeting of another church.

"Of all the churches in Gloucester County," I said, to an overflowing house, "Bethel is the one best known in Heaven and also the one best known in Hell, for did not Bethel help start more churches and Sunday-schools for Heaven than any other in the County? And haven't it's members caused the devil more worriment than any other group in Gloucester?"

"At that, shouts of "Amen, amen!" came from every part of the building."

CHAPTER IVMY PLUNGE INTO BETTERMENTS

"The last time we worked on the book I told you how shocked I was, when I got home, to find conditions so bad in every way and how, just because they seemed so hopeless, I felt I had to stay right there and tackle them.

"Hampton graduates were expected to go somewhere to teach other Negroes in the winter and most of them got positions up North in the summer to eke out their miserable teacher's salaries. Such schools as there were for our people were open only a few months when it wasn't possible to work in the fields. Several of my classmates were going North and one of them wanted me to go along with him. But one look at my family and the dilapidated old cabin they still lived in was enough to show me where my duty lay. And everywhere there were plenty of our people as miserable as mine.

"I had been trained at Hampton that what I had learned there was a heritage I must pass on to others and although I saw no way of doing this in Gloucester at that time still one thing was clear -- I should have to break up the family habit of 'livin' out of the store' by managing to plant a garden.

"My father, like most Negroes in those days, could earn so little that all he got had to go to buy food for the family. So I suggested that we tend a crop of corn -- corn being our principal means of sustenance. But he always made the same reply: 'We can't. We have no land for it.'

"And right there I came up against my first real estate proposition. And I've never seen a time when I wasn't up against them, first for our family, then

for my people, and for myself. When I look at the big real estate schemes of today I have to laugh at my small beginning, all by myself and against the prejudice of white people who didn't want to sell land to Negroes.

"What I did was to go to a Quaker, named Girard Hopkins, who had come to Gloucester from Maryland. He was an eccentric old fellow but he had the traditional attitude of helpfulness towards my race. He was willing to rent me a field of about twelve acres. Little did I suspect, at the time of this transaction, how large a part this man was to have in my first plunge into betterments.

"I started right in plowing and cultivating those acres with an old broken down horse I managed to get hold of, just like any ordinary farmer. But, because I had been 'edicated' and yet stooped to do regular truck garden labor, Negroes passing by would stop and stand for hours to see how I did it. It was to them like a white plantation overseer taking off his big gloves and wide-brimmed hat, and working along with field hands. I couldn't make out, at first, whether the shock they received was one of displeasure or respect. But all of them certainly expected me, now that I was a Hampton graduate, to strut around in a stuffed shirt, stiff collar, and a superior air; that is, to ape the planters of the Old Dominion.

"Because I didn't then realize the extent of their misconceptions about me I didn't quite know how to take such curiosity -- on the part of both races. But, in later years, I learned that, although they had looked down on me at the time for degrading myself I had, unknowingly, demonstrated to those opposing 'eddications' for such as I that the process did not mean making a fellow useless and stuck up. This was really an entirely new idea.

"That fall I succeeded in housing about twenty-five barrels of corn for our family, or nearly a hundred and twenty-five bushels. And after it was

safely put away my mother's face underwent such a transformation, from hopelessness to joy, that I realized for the first time the weight of the load she had been carrying. 'Now,' she said, dropping her hands into her lap with a deep sigh, 'I won't have to go to de store no mo' two or t'ree times a week fo' a peck o' meal!' Having their own corn and so not having to worry through the winter was a totally new experience for my parents. They were made over.

"Encouraged by this success I started raising pigs and urged my mother to keep chickens. When this too had been accomplished we were still more independent of the dreaded store and debt and finally, little by little, we owed it nothing. We were, as a family, a going concern. And then, when autumn came, I was appointed teacher at Old Poplar School.

"That was a real turn in your life!" But wasn't it the same school you were so glad to leave when you ran away to Hampton?"

"The very same school and, what is worse, the same rickety old building." said Lawyer Walker. "It was even worse than before and impossible to heat. I had hoped never to lay eyes on it again. And it was difficult to teach there for another reason; some of the boys and girls had been fellow pupils when I went there myself. You can imagine how they felt when I undertook to run the place. There was a big enrollment and I taught there six years for winter terms of four months each. To have a Hampton graduate in charge was a big attraction and the number of pupils constantly increased."

"I hope you got some salary from somewhere!" I ejaculated.

"I got \$22.50 a month during the first part of my teaching and was then raised to \$25.00. This went up to \$27.50 and later to the top salary of \$30.00 a month or \$120.00 a year.

"I don't need to say that the outfit of clothes I had at Hampton, even

for graduating, were of the poorest kind to start with and had had years of wear. But I had to make them do, and the same old overcoat that had been my standby and that had been old fashioned to begin with, was patched in so many places that everybody recognised me whether I was coming or going, without having to see my face. I needed lots of other things besides a new coat but what I really worried about was not clothes but the \$15.15 I still owed on my tuition bill at Hampton. I wanted a reputation for discharging every cent of an obligation promptly so both races would be able to say of me: 'He lives like he talks and he talks like he lives.' I wanted to earn the trust and confidence of my community. My people didn't know how to manage because of the over-hang of shiftless slavery habits.

"Soon there was a crisis at school. I had been teaching at Old Poplar's but a few weeks when the enrollment jumped to over eighty and the tumbled-down old building couldn't be made to hold us any longer. We had no choice but to move into Poplar's church. And although it was larger it was even worse because it was very cold and totally unsuited to school purposes. To meet the crisis we had to get, (I didn't know how,) a new school building. But how?

"We always had the general sympathy of the better element of the white people in the County but they didn't always see the necessity for us to get educated and didn't make any financial contribution to help us Negroes. When it came to the allotment of public funds we had small chance of any help at all.

"However, I felt it was proper and right to lay the matter before the County Superintendent of Schools in spite of the customary discrimination between the races. When I did this he said, with an air of finality; 'There is no money for such a purpose'. Not only could we have no school house to hold us but my pupils had to bring pennies until enough had been scraped together to buy

a piece of blackboard. We had no desks at all and no other school furniture; not even slates, pencils or paper, let alone books. We were furnished nothing.

"The School Board purposely limited our teaching facilities by blank refusal. When, later, it turned down our plan for a high-school in which we could train our own teachers, I put the matter up to it in its business aspect. I said: 'Why, if the white people have one and we are not allowed to have one, should not our taxes be reduced?' It had no answer to that question. So I went on to remark that we Negroes did not see how self-respecting white folks could permit poor Negroes to pay for education exclusively for white children when they did not help ours. But, no comment.

"In fact, I found that helping my people to get 'some eddication' proved to be as difficult as I had found it to get some for myself. To get enough money for even a small start seemed like a life long battle front to us. I realized that I had had my mother to help me off but my people had nobody to help them in the way it was necessary that they should be helped. For without education they couldn't get out of debt, progress, or function as free citizens. All they knew was how to suffer, pray and hope. Their dumb, seemingly inexhaustible patience was prolonging a situation which I saw as a post-slavery rut, another form of slavery that was no longer that of their bodies but slavery of their minds.

"You may think it strange but one of my most difficult tasks had been to keep white people from interpreting our pleas for good schools, pay for our teachers on the same scale as that for white teachers, and school supplies, as efforts to get 'social equality' or charity instead of a tax-payer's legitimate claim. I have even been misjudged about this by some of my own people. They said I was favoring segregation because of my belief that,

in those sections where there is a preponderance of Negroes, or large communal groups of them as in certain parts of the South, it is common sense to recognize that all-Negro schools, with well-trained Negro teachers who understand the home conditions and race problems of Negro pupils, are better for the early period of transition than mixed schools where a small white minority would surely dominate because of local white sentiment. The spirit of segregation would be everywhere apparent in such sections. The admitted desire for white ascendancy would certainly dictate the choice of a white teacher by a white School Board and there you would have an atmosphere of Negro inferiority and consequent racial bitterness. Note that I am speaking of grade schools.

"My experience is that there is natural segregation among all races when they are thrown with others that are different, and that this should not be regarded as racial antagonism. Of course, as a principle, segregation is altogether wrong. I am speaking of local situations in the South, and keeping the time element in mind. We have to meet today realistically.

"But to go on with my story about Old Poplars."

"First, won't you tell how it got such a name?" I asked.

"It was at an old stage stop where there was a row of poplar trees that had been a land-mark for as long as anybody could remember. The church was in such bad condition that the County Superintendent at last put up a one-room building into which we moved. But it was so much too small that we had to go back again into the Old Poplar church. And not only was the one-room building impossibly small but there were too many children for one teacher to handle.

"I was at a loss to know what to do next. But I firmly believed that

if it was right for my people to get their children educated there must be some way to do it and it was up to me to work it out.

"So, as usual, I took my problem to the always good friends at Hampton. They helped the teacher partly by finding a student who was willing to come to Gloucester to help me for the balance of the term but said it was up to me to find some means of raising her salary. To do this I advised with my people and finally got them to see the necessity, not only of paying a teacher for their children but of somehow providing a place big enough to bring this about.

"My people were so poor and lacking in skills that this was a pretty big order for them to fill no matter how deeply they cared to do it. So I went again to the School Board and got them to agree to pay the additional teacher \$20.00 a month provided we would ourselves add another room to the recently built one-room school we could not use because it was so small.

"I remember how I felt when the teacher arrived and the new school-house wasn't ready! She taught the younger boys and girls at one end of the miserable old church while I taught the older ones at the other. It took endless managing.

"Frankly, this was the situation: We, or I, had said a second room would be added as our part of the bargain and yet we had nothing but sheer necessity to help us make good on this promise. Our people had no cash on hand to pay for materials or anything. But finally our ingenuity got to working. We had a get-together and distributed all the ideas we could think up for earning money. One was collecting old rags and paper as well as junk - including scrap iron. These were traded in for lumber at the saw-mill.

"Now it happened that the saw-mill owner was, fortunately for us, another Quaker named Weaver. He had come to Gloucester from the North and had the usual

Friendly attitude towards us Negroes. He became interested in our project and said he would be glad to help us out. So, besides letting us trade in all the junk we could find he employed some of our people and let them work in his mill beyond the regular hours, paying them for the extra time in such building material as we needed for the new school-room.

"We did something else that helped surprisingly. We developed quite a thriving trade in sumac which grows abundantly in our part of the country. Our people called it 'shoe-make', confusing its real name, I suppose, with the purpose to which it was put; tanning hides for shoes. And after the 'shoe-make' was bagged we exchanged it at the general store for nails and window panes.

"Of course we couldn't raise enough by such means to keep our promise. We had to use other ideas too. We gave entertainments and solicited contributions from a nickel up. That was starting high for us but the need was great. A nickel looked as big to us as a ten dollar bill. We got into a regular whirl of money raising, for besides paying for most materials, we had to hire a carpenter. To get him started I advanced his wages out of my salary and, as it was vacation, I could devote myself to the building. Why, in just three weeks our new room was far enough along so it could be used.

"So at last we had kept our end of the promise to the School Board and had a two-room school that met our minimum needs. We got the carpenter to make some pine seats and desks and at last were ready for the thrill of the dedication exercises."

"It must have been just that," I broke in, "a perfectly thrilling occasion!"

"I wish you could have seen those people!" continued Lawyer Walker, with

enthusiasm, "The fathers and mothers who had taken active part in the drive for the project had an entirely new racial experience waiting for them when they assembled as Negro freedmen in the new school room they had personally helped earn and build for their children. They had given something instead of receiving it from outside. Their faces shone with this new kind of happiness. And -- Oh, how they sang!" Lawyer Walker leaned back and closed his eyes, smiling as his memory grew vivid.

"I suppose," I said softly, "that you can hear them yet. I wish I could!"

"Spirituals that aren't sung from the heart aren't such spirituals as I heard that night," he said. Then pulling himself together again he continued. "This gift from my people proved of greater value than we had expected. Although none of us knew it its dedication proved to be the beginning of industrial education in the Virginia public schools. Great things often steal in like that, don't you think?" he said suddenly, "Just a seemingly insignificant beginning by a few leading to far-reaching results for all, an inching along against obstacles that seem insuperable and then -- an unexpected development! I say this because, in addition to her regular school work, the new teacher started sewing and cooking classes for the girls while I took the larger boys and organized them into a work club; instructing them as best I could along agricultural lines.

"When summer came and school was out I got them together and contracted with some big farmers to thin out their corn. The boys were paid twenty-five cents a day while I, as leader, got fifty cents. The work they did was so good that it made quite an impression on Girard Hopkins, the Quaker, and the second summer we thinned over fifty acres for him. He had been on a sharp watch of me ever since he rented me land to raise the first crop of corn for

my own use.

"About how far was the school from where you lived?" I asked.

"Only two miles or so. Near enough so I stayed many an afternoon, after school hours and until dark to help children who had difficulty with their lessons. Twice a week I taught an evening class of older people at the school and two nights at my home. Sometimes they got so interested they would stay till midnight. Every Friday I gave a talk on the education of children in some part of the County, while on Sundays I visited at least two churches, sometimes more, for the same purpose. Without being at all aware of it I had become the self-appointed, unpaid Superintendent of Schools of Gloucester County, because there wasn't another soul in the world to do the work."

"A full time job, all over-time, and no extra pay." I said.

"Well," he observed, "as I look back on my schedule for those days I can account for carrying it on only because I think I must have had an ever-lasting constitution. Many^a time I taught school from nine in the morning till four in the afternoon and then, after supper, drove as many as twenty miles to speak at a meeting. I had somehow managed to get enough money to buy a young horse just so I could get around the County speaking on home improvement and education. You can't imagine how pitifully eager my people were to hear about home-making and child training! Those who came to hear me could neither read nor write but how they longed to learn and to have their children know how!

"After these distant evening meetings I would reach home about day-break, get a snatch of sleep before breakfast, and start right off to school again. I was able to keep this sort of thing up month after month. It made

me glad to be able to do it for the more I found to do to help the children the happier I was."

"I suppose that was why your everlasting constitution held you up, don't you think so too?" I asked, "Otherwise I don't see how --"

He interrupted. "Oh, it wasn't entirely that because teaching school wasn't always smooth sailing for me, especially at the beginning. Several of my pupils were older and much stronger than I was -- much bigger. And some of them bitterly resented my being put over them as a teacher. They let me know it too! Hardest of all was having six of the boys members of our family, two brothers and four cousins."

"I take back what I just said," I apologized, "I give the credit to your constitution."

"Yes it was. Why, one day my student-relatives defended a girl who had been reading a Jesse James novel during a school session. In those days this was a first class sin. I happened to pass through the room and saw the girl who was a member of the advanced class, in my assistant's room, reading this novel. When I saw what type of book it was I opened the stove door, stuffed it in, and burned it up."

"An act of great moral courage under the circumstances," I commented.

"It really was," he continued, shaking with laughter. "I wondered what would be handed out to me for doing it and, sure enough, at recess my six relatives banded together and let me know in a very menacing way that they would not stand for my assuming so much authority. After recess they were boisterous, unruly, and did and said everything they could think of to irritate me and to destroy school discipline."

"Finally, one of my own brothers decided he would take matters into his

own hands. The school house was built on a hill and the back window was about six feet above the ground. This window was open and the boys began circling around me with the obvious intention of pitching me out head first.

"But I sensed danger and quickly turned the tables on them. Instead of going out myself I seized on ^a fellow, a first cousin of mine, and began forcing him out through the window instead. Then the others, thwarted and fearing what might happen, begged me to let go of Bob. I had hoped this would come about and was only too glad to stop for I must confess that I was not at all certain I could win out in a real knock 'em down, drag 'em out fight such as was brewing.

"That evening my brothers went and told my father and mother what had happened at school that day. To my dismay my father took their side and encouraged their spirit of insubordination but my mother remained calm and neutral. Then, for the first time in my life, I spoke out and gave my father a piece of my mind. I told him that if he were a student in that school and acted as those boys had acted, I would whale him or die trying.

"After that I never had any more trouble with any of my relatives about methods of school discipline. All those boys, except one, remained in school, followed my directions and advice, and later entered Hampton Institute."

"And the difficult teen-ager?"

He laughed again. "Would you believe it, that girl, over whose reading of a Wild West thriller the incident started, went to Hampton too and, after being graduated, she returned to Gloucester and taught there for wome ten years. I must honestly admit that her early fondness for Jesse James'

novels apparently --"

I interrupted and finished his sentence for him. "Did her good." I said.

Again a long, pleasantly reminiscent pause, Then he said: "Do you know I have not been able to see that the very latest educational programs of the progressive schools -- all of which proclaim the necessity for training the whole boy or girl, and not just their heads -- excel in vision the working plan of an old friend of mine, an illiterate ex-slave named Jennie Dean?"

"It wasn't long after the Emancipation Proclamation that Jennie Dean started out with great vigor and determination to provide a school where Negro children could follow exactly that kind of an educational program. Poor though she was, she began with what she had which was an old slave cabin near the battlefield of Manassas. She integrated all the back-breaking chores of those primitive times into a single project. She described her program something like this: "Mondays we washes, Tuesdays we irons, Wednesdays and Thursdays we takes to book larnin', Fridays we bakes, and Saturdays we gets ready for Sundays." Who can match that?"

I shook my head. "Another humble beginning with a big result." I said.

"Yes. And Jennie Dean's project later became the Manassas Industrial School, now a public grade school for my people, developing by modern equipment, her system for an all-around training of youth. She was a wonderful woman esteemed by all who knew her. She gave Negro children of that difficult transition period just what they needed to train them to manage their own homes, to be thrifty, and to be co-operative with others of their race."

"In my school development work in Gloucester I came to realize that, just as what Booker Washington would call 'a matter of common sense,' I had been trying to carry out Jennie Dean's ideas for a balanced education. Conditions

14
in Gloucester were not very different, when I took hold, than those with which Jennie Dean contended in her old cabin at Manassas. Both of us had complete confidence in the latent capacities of Negro children and this was later confirmed, in a most unexpected way, by no less an expert than a professor of psychology, a research man, in a large eastern University.

"He told his graduate class, one day, that 'most Negroes don't have the mental abilities of dogs.' Now it happened that a white friend of mine heard him say this and promptly challenged him to prove it. To her gratification he accepted the challenge and to support his statement he came down himself, with a trained assistant, to the school Jennie Dean had founded and made the same tests on the rural children, just applying there for admission to the fall term, that he had made on white applicants to the Freshman class of the University up North.

"To the amazement of both these specialists their findings showed that our disadvantaged rural Negro children graded as high, potentially, as had the applicants to his University. And I want to give him credit for having eaten, while at the school, at the same table with members of the all-Negro faculty and for saying afterwards that he had found the conversation so educationally stimulating ~~that~~ he had never once thought of the color line! He even admitted openly that his previous concepts of our race had been based chiefly on his personal experience with a rather simple-minded Negro handy-man employed around his place.

"Now I was in close touch with this investigation as, at that time, a trustee of the school, and his convinced approval of giving Negroes full educational opportunities revealed to me, once more, that many of our most serious racial handicaps are due to the two races being kept apart on profess-

ional levels and so remaining unaware of each others interests, capacities, and needs. If, as in the study made by this professor and his assistant, both races are willing to accept facts that have been intelligently and impartially gathered and analysed, then I feel that my conviction as to the desirability of co-operation between members of both races will open up still more new fields of progress for them both. It is happening in many parts of our country but not often enough and not everywhere.

"I attached great significance to the spirit, intention, and results of the professor in taking up that challenge. He, too, came to feel the worth whileness of even the least of my people and the justice of their appeal for more education.

"Before he left the professor's assistant expressed his amazement at his discovery that a little wisp of a rural Negro could not identify different pieces of money. He said he had outfitted himself for school by trading rabbit-skins, eggs, and butter at the store in exchange for shoes and other clothing. In educational tests he had been a blank but otherwise, 'said the psychologist, 'he is a genius!'"

CHAPTER VI

CONTRIVING TO STUDY LAW

"Everyone will wonder," I said, "how you managed to study law and become a lawyer while you were teaching all day, farming, and doing a great many other things. Somehow I would have expected you to want to go further as a progressive farmer and to teach your people along that line. That is, I should think that one who loved the land so much would not be drawn to running a law office in a section where your legal competitors were former slave-owners, ex-officers of the Confederate Army and against Negroes entering the professions. I've often wondered about your legal experiences since I saw your name on one glass door in the County Court House and, across the hall from you, another door with the name of one of the leading white lawyers of Gloucester."

Lawyer Walker threw back his head and laughed. "I can see how it would be hard for a Northerner to understand that," he said. "But no one would think it was strange in Gloucester. The people are used to that sort of thing. It's just a case of both races having the know-how of getting on with each other. Now that you speak of it I'll tell you that, in one case I was retained by a white man and the ex-Confederate Officer lawyer across the hall was retained by a Negro. Both our names appeared on the same papers connected with the case."

"I wonder," I said, as I bent over my notes, "if many readers of your book will ever believe that!"

"It's a matter of record," he said, smiling placidly, "and there are other such records. The way I contrived to study law illustrates exactly what I mean. You are quite right; I never meant to study law and even now I do like to raise fine hogs and to farm but, like so many sudden turns in my life, I had nothing to say about it. One day the law just up and took me!

"It happened this way. ~~One day~~ I was passing Gloucester Court House," he said, "and having a few minutes to spare, I dropped in to see what was going on. What took place the short time I was there changed the whole course of my life. That's the way things have happened to me right along."

"I don't agree with you on that," I replied. "From what I know, it's you that have happened to things!"

"A Negro girl, not more than fourteen years old," he continued, "was being tried for housebreaking and larceny of a few dollars by a white family where she worked as cook and housemaid. You know how that is.

"The story the white employer told was that one Sunday the family went to church leaving her locked out until their return. When they got back they found her inside the house and claimed she had not only eaten food but had taken money too.

"The little girl, with no one to defend her, told the Court it was because she got so cold outdoors that she climbed back into the house through a window and had eaten some food because she was hungry. She denied absolutely that she had taken any money and no evidence was offered to prove that she had.

"Her case went to the Jury which pronounced her guilty and she was sentenced to two years in a penitentiary where criminals of all sorts and ages were to be her companions.

"When I heard this verdict a wave of personal shame and moral fury swept over me. I was filled with a bitter sense of injustice because I felt that the girl had done ^{nothing} really bad and that any kind of a lawyer with a heart in him could have cleared her and kept her from being branded as a criminal, and compelled to associate with criminals yet there was no member of her race in Gloucester qualified to defend her at this crisis in her life.

"Right then and there I determined to study law myself. I couldn't wait to begin! But I did not have the faintest idea how even to start down there in Gloucester.

"I had no money for anything but barest living expenses on my teacher's salary of \$27.50 a month and that for only a few months out of the year. Neither did I think I ought to give up my other work in the County until some of the things I had set going could get along without me. But the less chance I saw of studying law the more I felt I must just contrive to do it somehow. I couldn't get the case of that young girl out of my mind. My determination to become a lawyer never wavered and I believed that somehow, from somewhere, an opportunity would come for me to help such as she by becoming a qualified lawyer.

"As it happened, there was living in Gloucester, an old Confederate soldier, Major Benjamin F. Bland, a lawyer and a bachelor. His servant and office-boy had been taken ill, with what later proved to be tuberculosis. One afternoon, on my way to the Post Office which was next to Major Bland's cottage, I saw the Major out in his yard trying to cut up some wood.

"I stopped and offered to do this chore for him but he refused, saying, rather coldly, that he did not want any "college man" waiting on

him. This could only mean that he disapproved higher education for Negroes. He wouldn't even let me have the axe but, knowing he would soon get tired, I just stood by and waited for this to happen.

"When he got out of breath and had to drop the axe for a moment's rest, I picked it up and chopped a big box of wood for him. He thanked me rather haughtily and tried to pay me for the service but I would not take any money. He then surprised me by asking me into his house and made me sit down in his home office. Until long after dark we sat there talking man to man. We even discussed the race problem!

"The next morning I passed his house again on my way to teach school. I knew his man was too ill to work so I went in and offered to feed and water his horse before school time. At this he stood up very straight and refused absolutely unless he could pay me for it. So I just went out and did it anyway. I came back that afternoon and, without asking his permission, did some more needed chores. When things had gone along this way for a week he again tried to pay me; offering me the same wages he had given his servant which were ten dollars a month. But again I refused.

"I kept on doing the Major's chores after school hours and he formed the habit of having me stay on in the evening to talk about General Armstrong, his ideals, the educational methods he had inaugurated at Hampton Institute, and other matters that he seemed to feel were of mutual interest and concern. Of course, I never could say enough in praise of that Northern General even to this old Confederate officer who, as a member of the Virginia Senate had heard General Armstrong speak there on Industrial Education.

"I had found out that Confederate officers had great curiosity about the Northern General who had led Negroes against the South and afterwards had come down to start and even to live in an ^{Negro} Industrial and Agricultural school. He asked me about the kind of influence General Armstrong had on the Negro troops; how he had disciplined them, what his attitude was toward the southern white people and just what the school was teaching anyway.

"The fact that I, a Hampton graduate, did not consider myself above doing his chores as a handy-man seemed to have been a revelation to him. After I had told how General Armstrong had instilled ideals of service, regardless of color, and of what he had meant to me personally, he wanted to hear more and more about him and his plans for us Negroes.

"Major Bland and I came to understand each other so well that at last I felt the time had come to speak up to him about the desperate need of my people for a qualified Negro lawyer who would stand by them in Court in a way no white Southerner ever could. I told him about the young Negro girl who had been sent up because there was nobody to defend her, and came right out with my reaction to that trial. "Major" I said, "I want to study law so as to give the kind of help that that girl needed and didn't get. Do you think I could make a lawyer out of myself?"

"You might make a pretty good lawyer, Tom," he replied slowly. Then he added doubtfully, "if you could manage to let those devilish politics alone!"

"I'm going to let politics alone whether I can study law or not," I retorted with a shake of my head. "I want to study law but I don't know how to go about it nor what books to get."

"Oh," he said easily, "I have some elementary books I will hunt up for you as soon as I can. They are not right here.

"I waited impatiently for the books and one day he said he couldn't locate the ones he had in mind but he would send to some law-book publisher for new ones. When they came he said they were mine and he wouldn't let me pay one cent for them although I knew they had cost him the whole of eighteen dollars.

"The price of those books seemed to me a whole fortune compared with my small salary at school. I had never had such a big gift in my whole life; and this from a Confederate Officer who had been opposed to education for me and my people! I can't tell you how it encouraged me to have him change his attitude towards my race."

"It was all because of your pioneering methods," I interposed. But this he ignored and continued.

"As you can imagine, having the books was one thing but for me to get the sense out of them was quite another! When I started to study them, with all their legal phrases and classified headings, I became completely bewildered. I certainly was in a new quandary about studying law. It was an embarrassing situation for me because now that Major Bland had got me the books I owed it to him to use them.

"I decided the only way to manage was to be perfectly frank so I said: "Major Bland, I find that even though I now have the books, I just don't know how to start studying them. Will you show me how to begin?"

He gave my question a minute's thought and then said cordially: "Why, of course, Tom! I'll be glad to do that. I'll assign you the first lesson now and you can come back next Wednesday and after that recite to me regularly two nights a week here in my study."

"In such an unexpected way did my law training begin. The Major and I kept up this schedule regularly for three whole years during which time I helped him by acting as his clerk; taking notes for him at the bar, and writing them out in the evening. It was a very happy arrangement.

"At the end of this time his health failed so he could not keep on any longer but I was fortunate in securing the interest of one of the most liberal white men of the South and an eminent lawyer who took me right into his otherwise all-white office. He was General William B. Taliaferro who, by the way, had represented Gloucester at the hanging of John Brown.

"Although a Confederate General in the Rebellion, he went out of his way to help me get a legal training. He made me feel free to make up for those books I needed, but could not afford, by going to his home and using his private legal library there. Often when he and I were both working in his library he would open up a discussion with me on my personal problems as a Negro. It was just as if I were white or he were not a former Confederate General. We even discussed the slave system for hours at a stretch."

"Those are just such incidents as we need for the book!" I said with enthusiasm.

"Just think of this," he said. "Occasionally I would ^{be} studying in his library at meal time. Then his wife and daughter would fix up a tray for me there. They made me feel entirely welcome by such acts of kindness and consideration, showing they really wanted me to think of them as my friends.

"I hope these facts will help acquaint people of both races with some of the relations that have existed between certain white and colored people when there has been mutual respect and there were impersonal interests to discuss.

"I continued to receive unfailing, professional help in my studies from these leading white lawyers without fee or feeling of obligation. However, their generosity and kindness made me feel responsible for justifying their faith in me by the hardest study I have ever done in my life. Often I would go from school to a meeting, get home at ten or eleven at night, and then begin studying law. Many a time my father would come in and blow out the light saying "You'll kill yourself over those books, Tom. Time to go to bed."

"However, I persisted in studying with General Taliaferro for more than a year until he considered that I was ready for my examinations.

"In those days a candidate for admission to the Bar was examined by a Board of Judges assembled for that purpose. I had to wait till they came to Gloucester. When my great test came there were some forty white lawyers present, all of them watching me closely and with very mixed expressions. Some were obviously not in favor of my being examined because I was black.

"The old Judge proved to be mighty friendly for, to my astonishment, he said, "I am going to examine this man now but I am not going to do it publicly before you all. Come on with me, Walker, to the jury room!"

"In there, just with him, my fears vanished for he was both understanding and kind. He threw questions at me for three and a half hours, I answering every one. I fumbled over a few but when I did he drew out of me whether or not I knew what I was talking about even when I had difficulty in expressing myself in the exact legal terms. He certainly didn't spare me any as to legal fundamentals. Then he took me back to the big court room and went on the bench to announce the result while I held my breath.

"I have examined this young man," he said, "as thoroughly as I have ever examined anyone in my life. Furthermore, I was more critical of him than I would be with a white boy because I knew you would criticize me for what I am going to say and that is: He has passed a better examination than anybody I have tested in forty years!"

"Great as was the surprise of the white lawyers at that declaration it was nothing compared to my own amazement. To add to it, a minute later all the white lawyers present came up—actually welcomed me to the Bar! I want that to go down in the book as a big step forward in race relations!

"Needless to say, I also had the good wishes of both Major Bland and General Taliaferro and, when in 1887 I was given a certificate that enabled me to practice law in Virginia, they rejoiced with me as warmly as if I were white."

"I didn't know such a thing could happen in those days," I said. "Now tell about your very first case, it ought to be put in the book."

"Well, fortunately for me, my first court case was one in which I was associated with Major Bland. By that time he had somewhat recovered his health but could not take an active part in the procedure. He sat beside me so as to help me as the trial developed.

"I was defending a man indicted for destroying a line stake. Whenever the Major thought I was not following the most effective line of defense he would write a note and slip it along to me. In it he would suggest certain questions that would be advantageous for me to ask when examining a witness. With the help he gave me in this way I succeeded in clearing the accused.

"And when I went to his office that evening to talk over my experience, he was so proud to have me win that he actually put his arms around me and hugged me—he a Southern Major in the Confederate Army and I born a full-blooded

slave!

"No oratory or scenic effects were tolerated by the Major. He trained me to such regard for factual detail that even now, when I argue a case in court, I recall advice given me on this or that point by Major Bland.

"I never had a set-back nor a snub from the older lawyers in Gloucester County on account of my race. Further than that, General Taliaferro made me his law-partner. Our names once appeared together on the docket for the same case in which he, strangely enough, defended a Negro and I was retained by a white client.

"But not all my legal experiences were of so pleasant a character. On several occasions I was denied the right to qualify, in some counties, when I made application for admittance, because "it was against the custom for Negroes to qualify" in these particular courts. Although this appeared at times, like a complete obstruction, I kept my feet on the ground and tried to approach such difficulties with courteous rather than combative words in an effort to gain what were my legal rights.

"Of course lawyers have their flurries even when they belong to the same race but when the opposing lawyers are members of different races there is a new factor added, and you never can tell what may happen.

"Once, during the trial of a divorce case in King William County, the judge read a letter from the opposing counsel who had wanted to pursue some studies in jurisprudence, asking that the case be postponed for six months until he had finished the course. This struck my funny-bone and I rose and said: "Your honor, I oppose the continuance of the case. I am not willing that my client shall be penalized in order that my opponent may have an opportunity to go to the University of Chicago for the purpose of learning enough law to meet me in this court." And my objection was sustained.

"In some places I had to wage a very determined fight to rescue Negro children or some needy client from what appeared to me an unjust accusation. Usually, however, when I had won the opportunity to appear for a Negro, opposition, as such, practically died away.

"I found the profession of law a difficult one because of the low wage scale of most of my clients. Not only did they not have the money but they had not been trained to pay for services such as legal advice. Furthermore, I was usually the first lawyer my clients had ever consulted and they naturally looked upon me as a racial friend; one who just happened to know law.

"Although so much of my work is necessarily free, there are some cases I just cannot afford to take. For instance, there was a man living in a County other than my own, who was married to one girl but was in love with another. He wrote, asking me to get him a divorce and naming a large fee--in fact, about the largest fee I have ever been offered. I could not help another man do a thing that I considered wrong so I returned the papers and refused to take the case. It is always the big-pay fellows who want me to do the things I cannot conscientiously undertake whereas the ones who have not one cent in the world deserve all the help I can give them."

"I don't see how you managed to get on," I commented, "with a family to support."

"I could not have done it, he answered, if I had been entirely dependent upon legal fees. Ever since I started our first home garden and persuaded my mother to keep chickens, after my return from Hampton, almost all of the food consumed by our family has been raised on our own land. We even earned some money from raising hogs. A farm is a real necessity

to one in my position if he is to meet his obligations and maintain a proper standard of living.

"I knew a white lawyer who raised fine cattle on his expensive "gentleman farmer" estate. He has given much help to my race with money he received as legal fees from big corporations. He was a good friend of mine too. The difference between us was not only one of color, but he raised his stock from profits of his law business while I raised hogs so I could do a large part of my legal work for nothing.

"The legal profession has been to me chiefly a means of rendering service to my people in a good many different ways. To accomplish constructive results I have found my knowledge of law as well as my experience in many forms of social work an invaluable combination.

"Generally speaking, I have found the Southern white man very sceptical at first as to the Negro's legal ability. My technical aim, upon being admitted to the bar, was to prepare myself so well for my cases as to demonstrate that the law has no color line. A knowledge of law, the ability to express that knowledge, training to think on one's feet, alertness to discover flaws in an opponent's argument and ability to reveal them were, to me, fundamental requirements.

"Upon one occasion, in the course of a trial at Gloucester Court House, a very expert white lawyer took exception to my position regarding a legal proposition. To tell the truth, I had some doubts about it myself. But it seemed so rational that I said to the Court: "I believe this position must surely be backed up by some law or authorities although I am not able, at the moment, to give any reference." However, I knew if it were not law it ought to be. So I asked the Court for one hour in which

to send to my home for citations, making the proposition to the Court and to the opposing lawyer that if I could not establish the fact that the position I had taken was based upon sound law, I would give up the case.

"The hour was granted and I immediately sent home asking Mrs. Walker to help me out. Before the time was up she got the books over to me and I turned to the pages she had marked. They bore out the contention I was making!

"I found out later that this incident had been told around and that it had won for me the confidence of the bench and the bar as well as the general local public. It was through this case, also, that the question was finally settled as to whether a Negro could be recognized as a fully qualified lawyer in that community. So much hangs on such a little thing sometimes!

"Previous to this incident the attitude of the Courts towards Negro lawyers in those counties where Negro lawyers were not accustomed to appear, had a damaging effect upon my practice, even among Negroes. After I had won that case with citations, I was occasionally called to other counties to defend and look after Negroes' interests. My law practice has since expanded to include white as well as Negro clients in different parts of the State.

"You can hardly expect me not to urge more of our young people to study law; that is, those who are socially minded. It provides such a big field for helping the exploited and down-trodden. However, what I do emphasize is that aspiration to help along social justice should be the motive for going into it.

"As you know, it has been my custom to go up and down the State wherever I heard that a Negro child had been arrested. In other counties than Gloucester I have appeared suddenly in places where I wasn't known, without giving advance notice to anybody. That's how I came to be spoken of as 'the children's lawyer' and 'the walkingest man in Virginia' -- because often there wasn't any way I could manage to get to the court except by walking."

"Didn't the State supply legal defense for your people?" I asked.

"Not one cent at that time." he answered. "You can see how necessary it was for me to be on hand in days when the crimes of which children were accused ranged all the way from actual murder down to stealing a loaf of bread -- or maybe I ought to say 'up to stealing a loaf of bread' because when they were almost starved bread was a necessity and often the only way they could get it was by stealing it."

"Didn't the old slave day habits of their elders influence the children who had no sense of doing wrong when stealing?" I asked.

"Certainly. Not having had any individual possessions or property many of the Negroes, until they did acquire them, continued the old plantation ways and felt they had a perfect right to food enough to live on. But all children take any food they want, when they are hungry, no matter whom it belongs to, don't they?"

"Of course," I said. "But I take it you mean that when a Negro child acted naturally and copied the acts of his elders too, when he had the impulse, he got run in for it when, under identical circumstances, a white child wouldn't?"

"In those days, without Negro lawyers, none of my people had a full chance to prove their innocence and they didn't know how. In helping such accused Negroes I used to say to myself: 'Well, for what else did those ex-Confederate officers trouble to teach me law?' I loved my work."

"In some places I had to make very determined fights to defend Negro children from perfectly false accusations. We didn't have any social workers to help collect evidence in those days so, before I prepared my defense, I advised with as many of my people as I could find who knew anything about the circumstances.

"I would just happen around where the child was known in order to familiarize myself with his home conditions and backgrounds. Nowadays this is known as "the neighborhood test." I found this method paid out in social justice instead of injustice. No white person could have done this for an accused Negro and one of its greatest values was that it helped my people realize that they had a right to legal counsel.

"My legal work has sometimes led me into places where I had actually to take my life in my hands; places to which I have gone with no conviction that I would be allowed to get away alive. It was always possible that some hot-headed white man might shoot a Negro lawyer who was opposing him. Such things have happened in courts sometimes.

"Once I went way up in a part of the State where no Negro lawyer had ever been before and where the court-room was so crowded that I had to elbow myself in and push my way up to the bar. In some parts of Virginia where they know who I am I have had no trouble but in other parts, just because they do know who I am, my life is in danger. I have gone into counties where Negroes were charged with rape on white women and have had to fight in the courts by myself. Sometimes the charge is a frame-up but I hold that even if the man is guilty, he has legal right to a fair trial. It must be proven.

"There were times, in the old days, when Negroes arrested for crime of any sort were tried on the color line rather than on their guilt or innocence. Conditions have now so changed in most places in Virginia that the Negro gets fair play in the courts, especially if he has a Negro lawyer to defend him.

"The attitude held in Virginia towards Negro lawyers has greatly changed since first I entered the profession. Not very long ago Virginia passed a law making every lawyer practicing within the State automatically a member of the State Bar Association. Before that time, Negroes were ruled out from such membership, it being so stated in the By-laws. I now receive notices of these meetings but I do not go because no Negro would be welcome at the banquet.

"Although, as I have said, Major Bland had trained me to avoid histrionics in Court and I disliked that sort of pleading myself, I did resort to them on one occasion with unexpected results.

"Some years ago I undertook the defense of two men who had broken into a house and stolen some hams. Following their arrest they had confessed the deed before a deputy sheriff. Of course the men were guilty but, from my knowledge of their family circumstances, they were, in my opinion, victims of a wrong social order since even, when working, they could not earn enough to feed their large families. However, when I went to the Court House to see what could be done for them I was non-plussed to be shown their signed confessions.

"I thought carefully about what stand it was right for me to take and decided to tell the wife of one of the men to be at the Court House on the day of the trial and to be sure to bring with her every one of

her five children.

"I want you and the children to be in plain sight of the judge and the jury," I said, "so be sure to sit right behind me. I don't know exactly what I am going to do because the men have confessed to the theft and there is no evidence to the contrary. But, if you see me wipe my eyes you and all the children must wipe your eyes, too. You watch me now, and make the children watch you and do just what you do."

"When I stood up and turned so as to face the Court, I saw she was following my directions and watching me like a hawk. In arguing the case I tried to enlist the sympathies of the judge and jury. I pictured these poor men who loved their children, growing desperate at hearing them cry from hunger.

"Gentlemen," I said, in a voice that trembled with emotion, "these men were driven by hunger and privation to do this thing! They are known to be naturally law-abiding citizens and would never have done such a deed otherwise. The fact that they have confessed and signed written statements, proves that at heart they are honest men."

"At this point I drew out my handkerchief and wiped my eyes. Immediately, I heard sniffles from all the children behind me and their mother burst into heart-rending sobs. The judge and jury were more profoundly affected than I had dared anticipate and some of them, too, began wiping their eyes. To my amazement, instead of sentencing the culprits to the penitentiary for five years, which would have been usual, the judge sympathetically gave them a three months jail term and a small fine.

"A judge once said to me: How do you do it? One day you cry a case out of court and the next you laugh a case out of court? "Well, it's

just natural to me to present the human side of folks," I answered, "and it always has a good effect on the juries."

"So many of the charges against my people were unfounded that Gloucester people often say, 'Oh, he'll get them out some way!' Now, that isn't true—not if they are really guilty, but the children—well, who is guilty when a little child goes wrong?"

"I once heard a white judge, experienced in handling large numbers of Negro cases, say: "Even when Negroes are criminals they are usually petty criminals. A Negro will steal a ham or a leg of lamb while the white criminal of equal intellectual status will attempt nothing less important than the robbing of a bank or embezzling from a wealthy corporation."

"His testimony was to the effect that the Negro is not naturally "a criminalistic thief" but, as it were, almost an honest thief, stealing things he needs but which his unfortunate economic position denies him." This was a somewhat prevalent view.

"Actually, of course, and unfortunately for me, crime does not take different forms in Negroes and whites. I am sorry to say that not every Negro convicted of a theft is a petty thief. So I was obliged to say to the judge, who made the remark, "Judge, I cannot unqualifiedly endorse your opinion because, only recently, I found myself defending two Negroes who were charged with stealing an entire unit of a new saw mill!"

"A country lawyer, like a country doctor, has all sorts of cases coming to him. So he has to be ready to meet all the different phases of the law. Not only are there criminal and civil cases, but many others requiring social readjustment which, in my opinion, should be handled in such a way as to bring about a better relationship between the races.

"I would like to tell you about the following case as an illustration of what I mean. I hope you will want to put it into the book.

"Shortly after the First World War, a firm of oystermen went into Mobjack Bay in Matthias County with the idea of digging oysters to the exclusion of everybody else. They staked off many areas, claiming them for themselves under what pretended to be the "Baylor Survey."

"Ever since Negroes were obliged to shift for themselves, following their release from slavery, many of those in tide-water of Virginia have depended upon oystering as a means of livelihood. Up to this time they worked unmolested because of a general statute in the State which prohibited the taking of oysters from the public rocks by any organized groups such as Companies.

"This action by the firm of oystermen caused consternation among us and resulted in both Negro and white tongers banding together to take oysters from these rocks that had been so unfairly staked off. The firm resented this action and caused forty or fifty of the men to be arrested and brought to Matthias Court House.

"I was employed as counsel for the defense of this group together with Major Taliaferro. A bitter fight ensued which lasted for a week or more but finally we succeeded, not only in bringing about a legislative enactment requiring the firm to return part of the disputed area to public use, but also in having a strict limitation put upon the oyster inspector's authority in assigning oyster areas.

"Often one of my people will make an unexpected, humorous remark that livens up a day of dull proceedings, or will express a bit of religious philosophy that is such a characteristic trait of the Negro.

"Some years ago I defended an old colored man charged--not with 'stealing' but with having 'taken' something to eat. His accuser was a poor white man who tried, in his testimony, to make it appear that the Negro had committed a most heinous crime.

"This the defendent emphatically denied. He rebuked the Judge saying:

"Boss, you can say anyting you wan' to, but I knows better! You ain' doin' no mo' to me den dey did to ma Jesus an' he ain' said one mumblin' word!"

"It reminded me of one of the songs often heard in our Negro churches. It goes along this wise: "You better min', you better min'; cause you got to give account in the Judgment!"

CHAPTER VI

A REI ADVENTURE FOR MYSELF

The next time we met, Lawyer Walker was full of appreciation of the beauty of nature--the exceptionally fine day, the new green on the trees, the early promise of summer. I did not recognize, at first, that what I thought was a detour from the chapter he had come to relate was a direct approach to one of his most unique experiments in pioneering with folks. He settled back comfortably in his chair, stared at the ceiling and put his finger-tips together. Then I knew a story was about to come.

"For me," he began, "there has always been a glorious sense of romance connected with the acquisition of land--land with grass and flowers growing on it and, yes, even weeds. But, at the time I am going to tell you about, the romance for me went further than mere ownership of ground for," and here he paused and smiled, "I was soon to become involved in building a house and making that house into a home! It was the carrying out of a plan I had even while I was at Hampton where I met my future wife."

"Oh," I exclaimed, "you are going to let me put that in the book?"

"I couldn't leave it out," he said, "for without her the plan could never have been carried on. She had just the same social ideals that I had for our race and she had a wonderful way of getting on with people. This was because she really loved folks. Anyhow, because of

this I had to get a home before we could start.

"Of course, few emancipated Negroes owned any land."

"How could they?" I said in an aside.

"Oh, you don't understand!" he checked. "Not all the Negroes in Virginia had been slaves. I remember hearing of one free Negro named Anthony Johnson who was credited with owning two hundred and fifty acres that he got by grant as early as 1651. He was said to have been a slave owner--the first Negro slave owner in the United States, I believe.

"I wish our schools taught more about all this," I observed.

"Very few people know the real story about us," he said, "even those who are most interested in us."

"I'm afraid you include me," I said.

"Did you know that the first Negroes who came to America were not slaves?"

"No!" I admitted.

"Did you know that one of them founded the first Negro town and became, according to the records, the first Negro landowner in these United States?"

"No!"

"Did you know that he brought in other Africans and made slaves of them?"

"No!"

"Do you know it has been suggested that if the name of our race were changed it would fade out the color line?"

"No!"

He looked at me mischievously. "It's the Negro researchers who have brought this out," he said, "but how get white people to read it?"

"Even before the Emancipation Proclamation some slaves had obtained their freedom some way or other and possessed small tracts. In my own Gloucester County a group of free Negroes settled on two hundred and fifty acres which they called Easter Town, even before the Rebellion began. After the war they increased their holdings to more than four hundred and fifty acres, as is shown by the United States Census for 1880. That same report states that Negroes owned, in all, some five hundred and forty-six acres right in Gloucester County.

"According to tradition some newly freed Negroes bought small pieces of land, or thought they did, but, as they did not know how to read or to figure, no legal titles were passed. Of course, this exposed them to all sorts of fraudulent practices by unscrupulous people. Indeed, the ignorance of these Negroes was so dense that their exploitation by some white people was nothing short of inhuman.

"For example, old Uncle John Hobdey, who lived in the lower part of Gloucester County, used to tell us how a Yankee sold him a piece of land that didn't belong to him at all but to a Gloucester white man. This Yankee gave Uncle John a deed even before the money was paid over. What this so-called deed really had on it read something like this: 'As Moses led his children out of the wilderness so I led one hundred dollar bills out of this Old Nigger.'"

"An old Negro came more than a hundred miles to get me to sue for land he'd been cheated out of in Cumberland County. He had what he thought was a deed for it but some white man had told him that this deed was no good.

My investigation showed that this old Negro had a common law wife and the white man, who wanted the land for himself, led the woman to believe that one third of the land belonged to her and got the two to fussing about it. As the old Negro couldn't read or write the white man made him give him a deed after fooling the old Negro out of a hundred dollars too. When this old fellow found that all his land was gone he came to me and the deal was so crooked that I was able to get all the land back. Any number of such cases are going on now.

"Before I started my land owning campaign my people had come to accept the idea of getting out of debt to the store by raising as much food as possible themselves. This was a big step forward and would have led to greater advantage if the unfair lien system hadn't developed. It proved difficult to get the Negroes to fight this scheme even after they saw it was vicious.

"As one sleepy old fellow said to me after I had spent a half hour trying to wake him up to the advantage of supplying his family with food from his own garden instead of going further into debt to the store; 'Oh ye-ah, ah see what yo' mean. Quit foolin' in de ribber an' grow co'n!'

"When they had no land of their own Negroes had to rent some in order to raise crops but they had no money with which to pay rent. So they promised to give the landlord part of each crop in lieu of cash. As they had to have food and clothing during the tilling season the store-keeper came to the rescue and provided it. And not only did he take a lien against the incoming crop but also against any of the meagre wages the family might earn otherwise. It is easy to see how dishonest store-keepers took advantage of such a situation with customers who did not know how to add and subtract and who had nobody at hand to protect them from such exploitation.

"One of the first things Negroes had to learn after their Emancipation was how to handle money for when one of them went to the store to buy something he had to leave even the simplest transaction in the hands of the store-keeper. More often than not, according to the store-keeper's reckoning, the crop was worth less than the amount of the bill. The cancelling of the bill was, therefore, impossible. Year after year the renter remained in debt--no matter how hard he worked.

"The psychological effect of hopeless indebtedness is as deadly to a man's spiritual growth as low economic status is to his material prosperity and progress. Poverty, as such, is a blessing to no man. In many instances in order to keep from starving, stealing became the only way out although it was not then considered as "theft" either by those who took or those who lost. This attitude was a relic of slavery relations and the tolerated 'basket habit', as taking food from the big house to the slave cabin was termed.

"Crime, like corn, grows by cultivation. Poverty and hopelessness are wonderful fertilizers for crime production and the seed from which crime germinates finds its best bed in a substandard home.

"Viewing this situation from every angle, I came to the conclusion that it was up to me to solve the problem but how--I did not know. However, I finally hit upon a plan that appeared to me entirely practical and one that really would improve the living conditions of my people in a way that would spread. First of all, I must own the land on which I grew corn, not rent it. And I saw just one way to get others to follow suit. I must make a demonstration. Yes, I must begin by owning some land myself.

"Again I approached Mr. Hopkins, the old Quaker from whom I had been

6

renting ground for my garden. He owned hundreds of acres in that section and I decided, if possible, to persuade him to sell a piece of his land to me outright. Now^a teacher's salary in those days was not such as to make one a capitalist. It brought me, as Mr. Hopkins knew, but little more than a hundred dollars a year. However, lack of money did not then, nor has it since, deterred me from buying land or for going ahead with anything that was primarily for the good of my people. So, with an assurance born of my ability to pay at least half of what I thought the purchase price ought to be, I kept watch for Mr. Hopkins driving down the road, as he often did, past the field where I was working.

"At last I saw him coming along and motioned him to stop. I then laid my proposition before him with my reasons for making it. But all my hopes were instantly dashed. Mr. Hopkins immediately and emphatically refused to listen further on the stated ground of my financial deficiency. "Oh no, Tom, I sell land for money, not for promises!" he said when I wedged in a suggestion to pay a small amount down and give him my note for the remainder.

"Of course nobody could force him to sell me what was his if he did not want to do it but my reason for buying it as a step in the progress of my people so filled my mind and heart that I could not resist expressing my viewpoint on the situation right then and there.

"Mr. Hopkins," I said, taking a firm stand in the road while he sat back in his buggy, "You and other white men are complaining all the time because my people are stealing your cattle, sheep, hogs and anything else that is movable. Do you suppose they steal because they think it is a better way than being honest? Do you think they like to steal? I say to you that if I, myself, cannot get land to raise pigs and chickens and sheep, and anything else I need,

stealing will become as necessary to my family's and my own survival as it is to others. I want a chance for us all to be independent. I should like to have the entire purchase price to hand over to you right now, of course, but since I have not got it I offer you what I have and give you my word of honor for the ultimate payment of the rest. But I honestly can't say just exactly when it will be."

"He heard my appeal through and then, without further discussion, he tightened his lips, whipped up his long-necked horse and went rattling down the road in a cloud of dust.

"I watched him out of sight with a heavy heart but I didn't let his refusal cause me to give up my plan. To pioneer with folks, one sometimes has to wait until a lot of brush is cleared out. But in all my experiences there has been no lesson so difficult to master as that of waiting for folks to catch up with a new idea.

"Yet in this situation, as in so many others, I found there was nothing else for me to do. I knew that if I waited long enough something was bound to happen. It always did.

"Sure enough! Some weeks later I saw the quaint outfit of Mr. Hopkins driving down the road towards my field. I have always thought that this crochety individual in faded overalls, brogan shoes and wide straw hat, represented more than the general run of the Southern type of white farmer. He, himself, together with his old long-necked horse, who also had an unusual mind of his own about stopping and starting, symbolized one definite stage of Gloucester's development, or lack of it, in the Reconstruction Period. It always made me laugh.

When, on this particular day, he got right up to me, Mr. Hopkins and his horse for once showed themselves to be of the same mind at the same time--both of them wanted to stop.

"Say, Tom" drawled Mr. Hopkins, leaning out and resting the reins loosely on his knees as if preparing for a leisurely chat, "how much did you say you could pay me on that piece of land you wanted to buy?"

I could hardly keep my face straight at this obvious pretense for I knew that Mr. Hopkins did not need to ask me such a question. He was not the kind of man to have so soon forgotten our last conversation about the sale of his land.

"Fifty dollars down," I answered promptly, adding decisively, "and my note for the rest."

"Mr. Hopkins pretended to reflect on this for a moment and then, after asking a few more question as to what tract I had in mind, he said, "Well, Tom, go cut off as much of that piece as you want, have it surveyed and report to me." Then he snapped his whip and off he went.

Here Lawyer Walker stretched out on his chair and laughed till he had to wipe his eyes just as I did mine.

"The land that Mr. Hopkins sold me at that time, he resumed, consisted of thirty-eight acres for which he charged me ten dollars an acre. Even my fondest anticipations as to the thrill of ownership fell short of the new feeling of security, power and self-respect that swept through me and overwhelmed me completely when at last I received my first deed to a piece of land all the way through to China!

"So new was this sense of security through actual ownership that I couldn't wait to start a campaign for interesting others in making a like

purchase. I did this even though the problem of how to make good on my notes was still in the question-mark stage with my land as yet unpaid for.

"I knew my new land was not much good yet for raising any kind of a crop but I went into the wooded section of it, raked up leaves, and got some wood mold which I put on the place I planned for a garden. Then I planted it to black-eyed peas and other things that would grow there until the soil could be improved. I have since sold that same tract of land, after cutting timber from it twice, for enough to pay me back for all I put into it and I've enjoyed ~~it~~ every minute of it too.

"That's a most interesting story," I said, "but I can't wait to hear about the new home you built for your family. You told us how crowded you all were in that little one-room cabin."

"Yes," he replied: "as you say, our first cabin had only one room with a loft. It was clear to me that, not only to give my mother the comfort she so sorely needed, but also to make a definite impression on the people I was trying to interest in home building, first of all I would have to make a conspicuous demonstration by building a new home for my own family and moving in. In other words, I would have to become an example."

"Furthermore, the young Hampton graduate I was planning to marry saw the opportunity to make a demonstration for the sake of our people just as I did. Then too, she looked forward keenly to the joy of home-making for ourselves. I felt the time had come to act so I made the proposition to my father that he and I together put up a six-room house in which we could all live. It would be a great help to him and my mother and I was sure it would be a happy arrangement for us all.

"My father was deeply moved by the idea of having a real home but

he did not see his way to help much financially. He still owed money on the place where he was living. However, when I promised to take care of that small balance, he agreed to do all he could towards building and finishing the house.

"This project, like getting my education in law, required much contriving. I was able to buy the needed materials from saw-mill owners and others on credit. My father did much of the brick-laying and plastering but we had to hire a carpenter for the work of construction. When the walls were up and the roof on, we whitewashed it on the outside. This was in striking contrast to the unpainted cabins to be seen everywhere in Gloucester.

"By dint of hard work and penny-pinching I made the installment payments for the land, taking up the notes as they came due until I got to the last one. But that one was certainly a poser! As the new building progressed I naturally thought more and more about my approaching marriage and I have to admit that the money intended for the final payment went into the purchase of some much needed household things for the new home.

"Splendid!" I exclaimed. "Who wouldn't have done that for such a rare girl as Mis' Annie?" and we laughed together over the romantic but financially awkward situation.

"Yes, I was in a fix! What should I do about my debt to Mr. Hopkins? I felt very shamefaced about that. I had never slipped up on a deal with him before. But after thinking it over I decided to go straight to him and confess just what had happened to me, and how I felt about Mis' Annie even if he kicked me out of his house.

"So I did. Then I waited and braced myself for a caustic rebuke. But, to my amazement, the old fellow seemed immediately interested in my love affair in itself! He wanted to know all about my romance even before we discussed the land deal - just as if he were again a young fellow ^{too} himself. You just can't tell ahead what folks will do, can you?" said Lawyer Walker with an appreciative laugh. "When I had satisfied his curiosity about Mis' Annie and we finally got down to finances I discovered that he was so pleased to have me lay all my cards on the table that he showed his approval of me, as well as his confidence in me, by offering to sell me an additional hundred and twenty-six acres!

"Well, to get on with my story. Mis' Annie - as she was everywhere known - and I married sooner than we had at first planned. And long before the house was completed we all moved in - my own family and my lovely little bride. My mother, who had looked so tired and discouraged, was one of the happiest women I ever saw at getting out of a dirt-floored, run down old cabin into a house with enough rooms to move about in. It meant a decent standard of living for us all at this long last.

"I wish I could have known Mis' Annie," I said. "I have only seen the photographs of her and the three little girls. She looked like a slim little person with such an earnest face. I heard she was much loved."

"Nobody could help loving Mis' Annie!" said Lawyer Walker. "You may not know that she was born in the South but was raised in a New England minister's family - a family of culture, that understood our people and believed in our being educated as far as we could go. She was always reaching out for the finer aspects of people and of Nature. That was what was so wonderful about her - her spirit of responsive co-operation to our people

12
who just naturally came to her with their problems and worries. All the best qualities of American democracy had been developed in her and she brought them to our people in the South when, after four year's study at Hampton Institute, she consented to cast in her lot with them and me as my wife.

"It has never ceased to be a source of wonderment to me that this girl, who, until she entered Hampton, had been completely out of touch with the problems and discriminations with which our race had to cope in the South, could so thoroughly identify herself with us. This may be partly explained by the Christian training she had received in the home of the Episcopal minister where her aunt was housekeeper, but more of it was due to her innate love for people and sympathetic understanding of the forces that make folks what they are and do what they do - which is often beyond my comprehension!

"There is an element of prejudice in both Northerners and Southerners towards each other traceable, probably, to over-sensitiveness of criticism in the Southerners and sometimes to a superior attitude of Northerners. My people detect that very quickly. But, although Mis' Annie had been raised in the North no prejudice towards the South was experienced by her. Her Northern training was unnoticeable except in her manner of enunciation and speech which charmed everybody. I noticed often how our people tried to emulate her.

"To understand our life together in Gloucester one has to remember that social service was not a recognised part of our responsibility as it is today. The Negro hadn't had opportunity to share community life enough to know what it meant to be 'a good citizen'. Helping others was a personal and private matter. And so, because I had to be away much of the time during my term as Government Custom's Officer, people would come to her instead.

Everybody trusted her absolutely and valued her sound judgment. Her influence and love of home life greatly helped in our home building campaign and in the problems of schools - which were always with us. She loved children and it was really she who started me off in bringing home neglected waifs - but I'll tell you later on about what occurred at Old Bottom Jail. That didn't happen until we had moved into a home of our own - one big enough for ourselves and our three little daughters.

"You certainly had plenty to look after then!" I observed.

"I surely did. They have taught me more about the necessity for strategy in dealing with people than all my clients combined. Their different personalities, the way they were insistently laws unto themselves, their determination, often completely against my own desires for them, taught me a tolerance and patience which a mere outsider, whom I could put out of my mind at will, never could. However, after the first startling realization, as a parent, that they were individuals in their own right and not rubber-stamps of ourselves, it proved wise to get down to the business of planning the kind of life out of which each child could develop her individuality most fully. The oldest of our daughters was about twelve years old when my wife passed away."

"I don't see how you ever managed with the three little girls after that," I said as he paused. "Could you send them to school in Gloucester?"

After a difficult moment he said: "There were public schools near where we lived but, of course, my children were not allowed to attend them. A Hampton graduate stayed with us several years as governess and then the two oldest went to a boarding school that was built and operated in Richmond by Northern white people. Of course, nowadays they could get good

teacher training right in Gloucester." training right in Gloucester."

"In that splendid plant that started out as a slave mansion and that you bought, without a dollar, at the auction." I added, laughing.

"I have said that all I know I got from hard experience." he continued. "It was the endless difficulties I had getting my own children educated that made me feel so deeply the need for local higher education for all Negro boys and girls in Gloucester; schools integrated with the life of the church and all the upbuilding County movements. When that can be brought about our young people can slide right into good citizenship without a break - perfectly naturally.

"Mis' Annie and I had always taken a great interest in a fellow student of hers at Hampton - Miss Ellen Young. We both admired her earnestness and the fine quality of her work. She was one of my wife's best friends. She went into the deep South and taught domestic science at Payne College, in Georgia. She certainly knew all the problems of our people at first hand and had the same social vision that we had all gained at Hampton. She was as interested in our work at Gloucester as we were in hers.

"So it came about that some four years after Mis' Annie's passing I married Ellen Young. And how she warmed up our broken home! She was a second mother to my daughters and wanted to carry on Mis' Annie's work to help our people in every way possible. In all the years we lived together and up to a few years ago -- long after we began this book -- when she died I never knew her to become irritated at anything or to say anything against anybody. And we lived through some pretty difficult times, I can tell you. She carried harmony wherever she went and had a wonderful way with the waifs I had started bringing home with me when Mis' Annie was alive. Everyone loved Mis' Ellen, as she was called all over the County.

"I am so glad I could know her," I said. "I remember that the last time I saw her was in your home - that had a lot of little boys in it at the moment. She was not only beautiful to look at but she had a fine dignity and poise. I think she was quite famous for that quality. It is all too rare. I have heard many people speak of her. And, of course, I have heard them tell of Mis' Annie too."

There was a long pause. Lawyer Walker was evidently thinking very deeply about something he had not quite made up his mind to say. The stenographer waited quietly behind the portieres that divided the study where we worked on the book from the next room; an arrangement that made it easier for him to talk informally. She too had come North to find wage-earning opportunities that the South did not offer to her people.

At last I said very gently "Pretend that you are speaking to a large audience of renters and tell what you would say to them. You haven't said what was the effect of your new house on the cabin populace. What was the reaction of your people?"

"No," he said, "I'd like to remember a little more about Mis' Annie-- out loud. I wouldn't tell it to a crowd of renters. That story will keep until next time. Of course Mis' Annie was the center of my housing demonstration for me and that's why I'd like to say a little more about her. Not only people but all kinds of animals were attracted to Mis' Annie. When she was out doors even the shyest birds would fly to her and light on her shoulders. She would feed them and talk to them in her beautifully modulated voice and they seemed to talk to her. Even migratory birds stayed with her all winter. Flowers bent towards her when she touched them."

"She gave us slip-shod Negroes, who used so much dialect, new ideas about speaking. We learned from her gentle courtesies and kinder ways. We always felt a difference of quality between her and ourselves - but Mis' Annie herself never seemed to notice it."

CHAPTER VII

THE AMAZING CAREER OF "THE GLOUCESTER LAND AND BRICK COMPANY"

When the long pause had ended, and the stenographer back of the curtain had stopped wiping her eyes, Lawyer Walker suddenly sat up very straight and laughingly observed, with abrupt changing of subject, "You know, being an example is one thing but getting other people to be examples is quite another! That was something I speedily found out."

"I can tell you that consequences of becoming an example swiftly descended upon us! Word spread all over the County that we had built a new house, and had actually white-washed it. Our arrangements became the subject of endless discussions by both whites and Negroes. Some people travelled as much as twenty and even thirty miles in their solid wheeled ox-carts and mule wagons just to stare at this epoch-making structure--as it indeed proved to be. The road was clogged with them.

"At first we did not know how to manage with rows of people watching our every move. But when some of them, after leaning on the fence and staring, asked how they too could have houses like ours, it dawned on me that at last I was succeeding. Interest in land buying and home building was actually being aroused. And when this thought struck in full force we began to act up to it with enthusiasm. We were really making an educational demonstration to a degree we had not planned. I then began travelling from one end of the County to the other holding night meetings and talking to endless numbers of hitherto listless renters in an attempt to make them save, buy land, and build real homes of their own for their

2-

families. I was on the crest of the wave!

"But still I had a lot to learn. In spite of their newly roused ambition to get out of their miserable one room, often windowless, cabins I found I couldn't budge them when it came to their making a definite effort to buy land on which the house they wanted could be built. Again, I found myself alone and despairing in a campaign I had thought would go off with a flourish.

"I realized that it had never occurred to the white people that it wasn't right for Negroes to live in such shacks. For it was traditional in the South. They never quite understood my zeal to get my people out of the remnants of slave housing. Everybody was used to the things as they were. Furthermore, the cabins ^{were} already built, ramshackle though they were, the Negroes were still living in them, weren't they? Why worry? Besides, the idea of entering into the unknown field of business enterprise was one that was beyond the imagination of my ignorant people. Neither they nor the County white seemed able to make such an adjustment. Their bodies were now free but their minds were too dull to respond. Their existence still was without a future.

"I decided that nothing short of ^a super-extra vigorous campaign for land buying would bring even hope of success and an end of disease-breeding, misery making, one room cabins in which young folks didn't have a chance to learn decency and thrift. I was heartened by the fact that the whole populace had been so stirred by my own new home.

"As usual, I followed my old pattern of getting the ministers interested. They let me preach about the moral value of home owning in every church in

Gloucester County. At mere sight of me coming through the doorway ministers would step down from their pulpits any Sunday to give "Brother Walker" time to tell the congregation about the necessity for getting a piece of land, building a home, and living a Christian life in it.

"You're only renters now," I would declaim, (And here Lawyer Walker did declaim as in imagination he stood in a pulpit in our living-room, arms shooting out in full platform delivery gestures) "Even if its no bigger than a sheet--buy land! What's the sense of paying out rent when you can buy land with the same money! At the end of a year all you have is receipts for money you have thrown away! Buy it, view it with pride! Build on it, live in the house and, for the first time you'll find yourself a free and self-respecting citizen!"

The speech over, he sat down heavily to get his breath. "I tell you," he said, mopping his brow, "I was downright tenacious! As I walked along the road I kept wondering what I could say and do next. I got to telling the story Booker T. Washington told us boys one day when he was explaining how terrible it would be if any of us became tenant farmers. He said there was a Negro renter who had a great, big, old rooster that was sort of a pet in his family. Being only a tenant farmer, without a home of his own to live in, he had to move so often from one farm to another that the rooster learned to watch out for signs that the family was going to move again. And whenever he saw signs of a break-up he would come up to the door, turn over on his back, and cross his legs ready to be tied so as to be certain he would not get left behind. I always got a big laugh at this story but--no action, or almost none. Yet there was, I remember, one old man known as Uncle Ned, who did buy a tract of ten acres. I passed his

place one evening and found him puttering at the entrance. "Uncle Ned," I said, "what are you going to name your place?"

"He thought a moment and then he answered, "I'se gwine ter name it 'Who'd-a-thought-it'."

"Who'd-a-thought-it? Why are you going to name it 'Who'd-a-thought-it?"

"Well," he said, with a droll side glance at me, "I'se callin' it dat 'cause my old master, Willie Perrin, sold it an' his old slave, Ned Hall, he bought it. Who'd-a-thought an ole slave like me 'ud buy a property from his master?" And I left him clapping his knees in great glee. Ned's place is called 'Who'd-a-thought-it' to this day.

"But there were few Negroes who had the initiative of Uncle Ned. To begin with, one would have to hunt up a piece whose owner was willing to sell to a Negro and then somehow have the gumption to find money enough to pay for it. After much wasted effort, I was forced to the conclusion that it was a total lack of initiative that kept my people from getting the new homes they so much needed. Initiative was something the master always supplied in the slave days. Although now free, they were still under the old thought current of waiting to be told what to do. If I was ever to get them to buy land and build, the initiative must be supplied by me--but how? It was a bad situation and, as you say, I had to "happen" to it. It wasn't going to 'happen' to me.

"Finally, I decided the thing to do was to form a "Company", so-called, to buy a relatively large tract of land in the name of this "Company" and divide it into smaller tracts that would then be offered for sale to Negroes whom I would have to work up to the point of buying.

"Of course, after this idea struck me, there was nothing else to do but

to go and see Mr. Hopkins. He took a corn cob pipe out of his pocket, lighted up and told me to go ahead. I laid the proposition before him with great enthusiasm. To my surprise and gratification my plan seemed to suit his fancy. And, after asking me all about it, he agreed to sell land for this project starting with the hundred and twenty-six acres that he offered me once before--the time I told him I was going to get married. This he said he would let me have for ten dollars an acre.

"But, see here, Tom," he said, "this deal's got to be with you personally. I can't get into any business transaction with your "Company", not now, anyway," he added with an amused smile.

"So, while as a "Company", purchasers were to be given possession of the land, I had to agree to be personally responsible for collecting all the money from them, and for reporting fully to Mr. Hopkins from time to time on the exact financial condition of the "Company" to the last cent.

"It wouldn't be easy and there wasn't any money in it for anybody but at last I had a new talking point. It was not long before I was able to get fifty Negro men actively interested in the enterprise and, although we had no capital whatever, we formed a "Company", so-called, and named it "The Gloucester Land and Brick Company."

I interrupted, pencil poised, "Brick? Why brick? I can't imagine."

"I suppose it does seem a funny title to you up here," he answered, "but anybody around Gloucester in those days would know why, even though all the new houses were of course to be built of wood. I chose that name for--well, psychological reasons. You see, all the houses of white folks had brick chimneys up their sides while the little Negro cabins had

chimneys of clay and twigs. I knew it would be a good drawing card to have the Company stand for brick chimneys--just like "quality" white folks. I knew it would get the women especially because all the Negro women naturally wanted to have something the same as the Whites.

"Our "Company" made a rule that a house put up on any of the ten small tracts, that we made out of the big one, must have at least three rooms. We had to do this to keep our people from building new one-room cabins. They had to be taught what standards of home life were. It may seem unimportant to you but I tell you--the effect of this rule on my people was nothing short of epoch-making!

"Another rule was that everybody who came along and took a piece of land had to agree to pay at least one dollar a month or twelve dollars a year for it. So, because Mr. Hopkins had insisted that I carry the entire financial risk of the enterprise myself, I had to be treasurer and keep track of our finances by having purchasers make payments direct to me once a month. There couldn't be any one day for payments to be made because they fell due at so many different times."

"But," I put in, "if you had a law practice, went everywhere speaking, raised hogs, and farmed, how did you manage to run an office where they would know where to find you?"

"They didn't," he said flatly. "I didn't get anything but trouble out of it as far as the business end was concerned and neither did anyone else. But my heart was in the home-owning business for my people. I just told the buyers they would have to wait around for me at my house, inquire at the Court house, or catch me when and where they could. They would sometimes hail me as I drove my old buggy down the road--or wait for me at

the barber shop. I never knew when or where I would get paid.

"Then the Company never had a regular office?"

"Why certainly!" exclaimed Lawyer Walker with alarmingly raised eyebrows. "The official office and all the files of the "Gloucester Land and Brick Company" were wherever I happened to be when a buyer located me! The whole Company set-up I carried always with me in my pocket--printed receipt blanks for payments and everything else needed to transact business with prospective buyers. Sometimes I'd pick them up off the road, drive them to the tracts, and tie them up to one as I drove them home. I sold land as President of the Company and took in payments as Treasurer.

"We never dropped off a man just because he didn't happen to have the money for his payments. I'm afraid that, in this respect, I used the confidence Mr. Hopkins had in me and my--well, working capital, you might call it. The purchaser of the land got the deed to it as soon as he had paid me twelve dollars. This I, as lawyer of the Company, drew up. What I spoke of as capital was Mr. Hopkins' signature on every deed I drew since he had cautiously reserved a lien on the whole tract for any balance still due him. There was some financial risk I confess but I took that because such a relationship with a buyer put me in a position where I could help him along and talk out to him about thrift and how to get ahead, so he could pay up. I enjoyed doing that. But you see why it was that nobody else could be treasurer."

"Who then paid the taxes?" I asked, eager to get the financial and affairs of the extraordinary Gloucester Land ^{and} Brick Company perfectly straight in my notes.

"There you've certainly struck another problem!" he answered. Most Negroes had never heard of taxes. In ante-bellum days only the plantation owners had to bother about taxes. I told them when they bought that some day they would get a bill for taxes due. I used to get them up in my buggy and pound it into them what taxes were for-- for care of the roads, for schools, and other things to keep the community going. I said that everyone who owned land had to pay taxes according to its value plus that of any house that got put up on it. Furthermore, I hammered into them that every tax-payer, white or black, had just as much right as any other tax-payer to the use of anything his tax money paid for. My purpose was, of course, to make our land-owners and home builders know their new obligations and their new commercial relationship to the community.

He dropped his voice and spoke with great seriousness, "Just here I want to say--for the book--that one factor contributing to the decline of land ownership by my people today is the feeling among young Negroes that their participation in the civic affairs of their communities is not wanted by the whites except by low-down politicians who would like to buy their votes."

"But now, as to the Gloucester Land and Brick Company, you see that a man had four or five years in which to complete his purchase price--to get through hunting for me. It was to my and his interest to get him paid up as soon as possible. So, if I could, I stimulated a purchaser to pay five dollars a month instead of one. I always looked for a slump in him when he had finished paying for his land and it usually came. So, the minute his last payment was made I jumped on him to put up a house before the habit of saving had died out of him.

"He would say: 'I jus' cyan't do it!'"

"Don't tell me that you can't do it!" I would protest. "Haven't you been paying right along on your land and can't you keep on and pay for a house? Just go to the saw-mill now, today, and say to the man there: 'I want some lumber.' Tell him you've got to build a house right off and say you'll work for him two days a week until you have paid him for that lumber.

"And the man would do it. He had just needed a little pushing along. But the first I would know about it would be seeing a pile of lumber on his tract. He never came to tell me he had given in. Next he would get a carpenter and perhaps he and his boys would build that house practically alone under the carpenter's directions. They learned by having to do it. This sort of thing happened over and over again and that was the way the movement for land-owning and home-building started off, little by little, until it "caught" and spread over the entire County. I kept quoting to undecided prospects the old adage: "He who chops his own wood warms himself twice."

"We did not move very fast towards purchasing as much as five or six hundred acres, as I had aimed to do, but the yeast was working even in the white people. Yeast doesn't recognize the color line I've discovered. With this awakening of the Negroes and the favor with which our home-building project was regarded by some of the best white citizens, we kept on purchasing land and building decent homes in greater numbers, as the reports of the Tax Commissioner of Virginia authoritatively show. This land-owning program was carried on until almost all the Negroes of Gloucester County had moved out of one-room log cabins into little homes of their own. Few houses now have less than three rooms. Nearly all are

white-washed or painted and all have brick chimneys. ^{Today} there's only one cabin left in Gloucester County. It is occupied by an old man from Mississippi whose father was sold 'down de ribber' from Gloucester.

"Under the honey-pod tree--on that old slave auction block?" I asked,

"Yes."

"When, as president of the Gloucester Land and Brick Company, I bought the first piece of land from Mr. Hopkins I met my obligations promptly. Occasionally, later on, I confess I did not always have the necessary amount on the exact date when payment was due but I would always walk right up to him on the dot and tell him I did not have the money just then but I would pay bank interest.

"Well," he would say, looking at me even more kindly as time went on. "I would like to have the money, Tom, but--oh, go on and pay interest, you rascal you!" I went on that way with him until I had paid up every cent.

"Mr. Hopkins got so used to having land deals with me that finally he would say, "If you will be personally responsible, Tom, it will be all right with me." But he always put heavy emphasis on "personally."

"He encouraged me to go ahead but always on strictly business terms. I confess that I used to think him a trifle hard with us struggling Negroes but later on I came to see that he was teaching me an invaluable lesson as to the importance of maintaining the exact terms of a contract into which I had freely entered. If he had not been so business-like with us our projects would not have been financially so sound. He even sold our "Company" another tract of ninety-six acres.

"Most of those we bought were on the main road. Negroes own more main front road/in Gloucester than in any other County of equal size in Virginia. I

would say, 'Let's buy out here on the road!' and we did. We bought another tract of land on a public highway from this same Mr. Hopkins.

"Not only did I keep on preaching that every head of a family should buy land and pay the taxes promptly after the purchase but also that he should keep his property free from mortgage and then he should organize or take part in land clubs and associations for mutual benefit with other property owners. There was a whole string of things following on to purchase of land from us but we didn't scare them with that all at once.

"Did you ever stop to think how my people got along without banks after they began to earn money? Before there was a bank in Gloucester, nobody had any way of knowing whether a man had any money or not. It was all a matter of speculation and gossip. If he was thrifty he was supposed to have something hidden away in an old sock or bag or trunk or even buried in the yard. Occasionally I would find out that a possible land buyer had saved by ^{his} making a loan to someone else. Usually no account of such loans could be kept by the borrower for he did not have the knowledge of how to do it. He trusted the man from whom he borrowed.

"When the first bank opened in Gloucester County I was unqualifiedly opposed to it because I feared that the colored people, who had begun to acquire homes and savings or who had completed payments on their homes, would be tempted to borrow money from it and later, when they found they could not pay their obligations, would lose their property by foreclosure.

"After a while this fear was removed by the appointment at the bank of a cashier named Marshall Lewis whose father was one of the best white lawyers in Tidewater Virginia. He seemed to be a thorough-going Christian, too, for he believed that one's life should be consecrated to service and not given

over entirely to the making of money. He became one of the best friends our people had.

"You must have had a good many foreclosures I should think," I observed.

"No! People did expect us to have them because of our--informal, shall I say?--methods of doing business anywhere along the road. But it is the exact truth that we did not have a single failure that forced us to foreclose although we sold about ten thousand acres of land to Negroes. Involved in these purchases were two hundred and fifty or three hundred families without even one default. Some sold back their interests, of course, under stress of unforeseen circumstances, but no one lost a cent by that.

"This record gave the officers of the Bank confidence in us colored people and many of them can now go there and get all the money they need. However, careful inquiry is always made as to the purpose for which the loan is asked. When it came to buying land for a home the Bank did all it could to help; and so gave genuine cooperation to our Gloucester Land and Brick Company.

"This attitude of the Bank has been a good thing for us. It put the emphasis, not upon race, but on moral values and honesty in business. Integrity is not a racial attitude. My aim has always been to substitute knowledge for suspicion, for suspicion had developed on both sides. The white man was still prejudiced against the Negro and the Negro mistrusted the white man. But honest people, of whatever race, may deal with each other without fear. Mr. Hopkins tried me out before he even began to trust me further.

"Other help was forthcoming, too. When the many new land-owners needed

teaching as to the planting and cultivating of their gardens and farms, Hampton and the Government cooperated in a practical way to find just the right men to fill our need. And now I'll have to tell you a joke on myself!

"As it turned out, by having put myself in the position of being an example, I had to let these specialists advise me as well as the others I had told to use them. My people would not have taken expert advice from these white men if I had not told them I was willing to take it, too.

"What then happened was that an expert from the Department of Agriculture of the United States Government came to help us. He said he thought a certain piece of my own land could be so improved that, instead of the yield of five bushels of corn per acre that I had been getting from it, it could be made to yield ten. This statement seemed pretty far-fetched to me but since I had been playing up the advice of these experts and urging cooperation with them I, as an example, had to accept it myself in spite of my misgivings. And I had to admit that the demonstration acre on my farm did yield just what the County Agent had said it could—ten bushels of corn instead of the customary five! You never saw anything like the way this experience the Agent had with me increased his prestige and the worst sceptics hurried to follow his advice. I had to be an example in humility that time. It wasn't easy!

"Before long it was possible to organize those who were working pieces of land into an Agricultural Association so we might cooperate with each other in putting into practice the teachings we had been given. We now have a regular farm demonstrator for the County and a popular agricultural and school fair every year. It's a going concern. White and colored people

come from miles around to see it.

"All our activities taken together, Gloucester Negroes were showing considerable improvements. Many of the tracts on which they live are small but they have been worked so successfully as to make the families cultivating them economically stable and have helped maintain equilibrium in the County.

"By the trial and failure method I found the most effective inducement to own land was to keep on stressing the Emancipation argument, to tell the Negroes they are not really emancipated until they emancipate themselves by owning their own homes as had been impossible in the old plantation days."

"But what has happened to your wonderful Gloucester Land and Brick Company," I asked.

Lawyer Walker smiled, "Well," he said, "after I saw such a conviction had got well down into them and that the people all around there were really awake enough to their duty to themselves and their children so they would go ahead anyhow, we just let the "Company" fade out. That's all there was to it. Its purpose was accomplished as anyone driving around the County could see with his own eyes. This conclusion of the "Company" project was, of course, a great relief to me. Now I could put my time into my legal work and my farm and stop being a walking real estate office.

"I have made similar efforts to help other counties develop land and home projects but I have not been very successful. The mere ownership of land and of making the necessary sacrifices to this end, have scant appeal to the average rural Negro. You see -- and here Lawyer Walker brought his fingers together again -- home-owning is more than mere land

and house owning. The difficulty has been that leaders could not be found to emphasize the joy side of better home life, the thrill of having helpful and healthful environments for the children and the wonderful rewards of gardens and small self-operated farms." He paused for some moments and then said softly, "To make a true home the everlasting fire of spiritual living must burn upon its hearth and it was the appeal to this aspect of their religious natures that finally impressed the Gloucester Negroes.

I maintain, even more than I did before our "Company" was formed, that the happiest and sanest family life is to be found in progressive, rural communities. Don't leave the word "progressive" out of the book. It means leadership but it can be developed if you make some sacrifices first to show up a need and keep on teaching folks the know-how and encouraging and boosting them along.

"Being a tide-water person I remind myself, when there seem to be no untapped human resources left, that the tide always turns after reaching its lowest ebb. So I have forced myself to hope that a time will come when all our people can have adequate educational advantages including courses in scientific agriculture. It is in us Negroes to be farmers and the sooner such inducements are offered the quicker will interest in land and home owning revive.

"I recently stopped to have a little visit with an old friend who owned a large farm. I asked him how much land he had.

"Well," he said proudly. "Mor'n a hundred acres, about two-thirds of it open an' I grubbed mos' of it open too."

"I asked him how long it was since he had been in the City and he said he had never been outside of Gloucester County in his life although the City was only about fifty miles away.

"It has taken all de time I got ter look after dis farm and raise five chillun," he continued. "Tree of 'em I sent ter college an' de udder two learned to do tings wid dair han's. I'se done well on God's eart'. My wife is contented here and I'se gwine to stay in dis County. If I went to de City I'd be walkin' on somebody else's groun'. Here, I'se walkin' on my own groun'. I know dis dirt," he went on, looking down on it and digging his heel deep into it lovingly, "Dis is God's dirt, too, His an' mine." He looked on joyously, "Here I don' have to come into competition wid nobody but--God!"

"Come," he said, taking my arm, "I wants you to see my horses, cows, hogs, an' udder tings. We have plenty to eat. We don' want for nuttin. I tried to get my boy who went to college to come out an' buy annuder farm roun' here an' wid his eddication to show me how to run mine better. I wish mo' of dese young people loved de eart' as I do. I don' owe nobody nuttin. All I'se made I'se made out of dis dirt. I'se never goin' nowhere from dis farm 'til I goes to Heaven!"

I believe there are many young Negroes who would love farming and farm homes if they were taught the right way and saw the future there is in rural opportunites, the way this old friend of mine does. A farm-home is a place to come back to, to plan for with one's own initiative, to improve. Those who have no place to tie to are apt to become migrant, to drift to big cities aimlessly. They get what amounts to a gambling habit with regard to work--guided by rumors of better chances elsewhere than where they are.

I once protested with such a migrant worker, telling him where there were good opportunities if he would just stay in one place and take advantage of them. His answer was given with a shake of his head.

"I'd as soon die with an ager as a fever," he said, and strolled off to--he did not know where.

"Tell me," I said, after he got over laughing at this memory, "are there as many such drifters today as there used to be? "Has there been any check-up to show?"

This produced an electrical effect on Lawyer Walker. "Drifters, down our way," he said with an air of resignation, "continue to drift with the tides -- crabbing, oystering, and what not. But many who used to be willing to make sacrifices for unmortgaged homes buy automobiles on time and let their homes go. I know a case where a man let the roof go from over his wife's head just to get a car." He began to gesture as if he were addressing an assembly. "Yes, if I had my way I'd say to the legislature: "Pass a law prohibiting Negroes from buying automobiles until every one of them had some land and had built an unmortgaged home on it!"

"But you haven't stopped your home-building campaign because of such a discouraging state of affairs?" I said.

"Drop it? It's part of me! If I started it without knowing just how to begin, until I got Mis' Annie, neither do I know how to leave off. I never shall. Don't all the downward trends of today show that if our youth are to be saved the beginning must be in their homes? I can still see some splendid results from our campaigns in rural sections, particularly where the church and Sunday School are strong, I have to confess that the urban centres show little if any improvement."

"But you wouldn't have to organize another Gloucester Land and Brick Company to start them up again, would you?" I asked.

"No, because there would be this difference. Standards of house building are higher but standards of home life are lower. Gadgets don't solve moral problems. Grown-ups are less responsible as parents. And so there is more juvenile delinquency.

"Remember! Juvenile delinquents grow up!"

CHAPTER VIII

MAKING THE COUNTY DRY

"I hope that you agree with me in believing that the liquor problem is not primarily a liquor problem. I think it is just one of the many evils that weak-minded self-indulgent people fall into and then drag others down along with themselves. The problem is folks who lack enough will power to keep from doing the first time what they know to be risky and anti-social. Logic doesn't stop them, consideration for others doesn't stop them, religion doesn't stop them. What has to be stopped is liquor itself.

"I confess I have found liquor dealers and liquor-liking folks as hard to get on with as any I ever met anywhere! And it hasn't been because they were strong in organization but because they had no sense of social responsibility; they are weak in their ideas of what men and women were meant to do and to be."

"If I were a bigger audience I'd applaud," I said. "Every social worker knows that what you have just said is true."

"Abraham Lincoln has always been an inspiration to me. I have often thought of the letters he wrote to the Temperance Organizations of his day when they asked him to address their Conventions. He regarded the drink habit as a form of slavery, which it was. He said, 'If slavery is not wrong, then nothing is wrong!'

"I saw that if the intemperance in our County, the slavery to drink

which was on the increase--was not done away with, nothing would be secure. Moreover, Lincoln freed us from our physical bondage, but the chains that bound us to the drink evil were of our own forging. We, ourselves, would have to break them by driving out the saloons and by education of the rank and file of our citizens.

"I made up my mind that Gloucester County, at any rate, was going to be given an opportunity to write its own Emancipation Proclamation against the slave system of the liquor men."

"Some proposition!" I said.

"Yes, how to make the fight was no simple matter" he replied "because almost all Negro men drank and the evil was growing. As a result, crime was rampant in the County. Even high crimes, such as slaying and house-breaking, were all too frequent and one or more Negroes were convicted and sent up every month. Lesser crimes, such as petty larceny and the infraction of minor laws were numerous. I saw that, unless this was halted, it was almost useless for me to go on in my efforts to improve the condition of my people in any way at all. I was down-hearted and utterly discouraged about helping them but still determined to do it somehow. I saw that the sale of liquor had to be abolished by law and the law had to be enforced or I wouldn't back it. It was easy to get a drink when an open bar-room was operated in a grocery store. There were thirty-five bar-rooms in Gloucester County. More important still, my poor ignorant people had to be taught from the ground up that drink was a curse--just a different kind of slavery. I, myself, have never touched liquor.

"To start this campaign I decided I had to organize temperance societies in the churches on the assumption that a church would of course

readily fall in with the movement. I soon learned otherwise and was amazed at the opposition I met from some of the older, better class men; even including officers and, would you believe it, preachers of some of the churches—both white and colored!"

"Stood for salvation and ruin at the same time!" I chimed in. "Can't you give me a story on that for the book?"

"Yes! Here's one I shall never forget. A certain meeting was held in Bethel Church. Among those who came was an old deacon, Uncle Beverly Burrell, as everybody called him. He had expressed himself as much interested in my efforts to teach temperance. Another was Elijah Monroe, at that time pastor of the congregation. Brother Elijah had little or no formal education but he certainly had a way of getting people to church and keeping them there all day." Here Lawyer Walker shook with a reminiscent chuckle.

Well, on this occasion, Uncle Beverly was the first speaker. He made what I considered to be one of the best temperance talks I had ever heard. It hit the target right in the very center! When he was through Brother Elijah, the preacher, took the floor and stated his answer to Brother Beverly.

"Clearing his throat pompously, he began; 'Bruddern an' Sisters, doan yo' tink id's mighty hard for an old darkey to go 'long all day in June an' cut wheat if he caent get a little whiskey to drive de heat out'en him? Bruddern an' Sisters, doan yo' tink id's mighty hard for an ole darkey to keep goin' every day in December cuttin' wood w'en he caent get a lil whiskey to drive out de cold? Now, dem of yo' who tink Brudder Beverly's right, go over onto dat side wid him an' dem of yo' who tink I'se right, come over onto dis side wid me.'

"There was an exciting stirring in the audience and then, to my utter chagrin, nearly the entire congregation, following this graphic appeal, rose and went over to the side of Brother Elijah. Old man Beverly stood for a moment stunned with amazement, then he rose, folded his arms and began to walk slowly and majestically over to Elijah's side himself saying, 'Dere now 'Lijah, dey all dune come over on your side an' now I dune come, too!'"

"By this time, of course, the meeting was brcken up, leaving me completely defeated for the time being. However, I decided to take it in my stride and determined to abolish those thirty-five saloons in spite of this opposition from those I had expected to help me most."

"Is that enough for the book?" he asked.

"No," I exclaimed, "Go on!"

"Well," he continued with a relishing smile, "Another time I went to a meeting of a number of churches that had united and the moderator, who was partly with me and partly against me - you know how they do, that wobbling that is considered neutral, - decided to give me a half hour in which to talk on temperance. However, when he announced my subject a commotion started which, by the time I had spoken five or ten minutes, grew into an uproar. They even stood up and threatened my life and the Chair shouted to me, 'Take your seat!' But this I refused to do. I was trying to create a sentiment against intemperance, knowing, as I did, that the saloons were responsible for the crime that our people were committing and I felt sure some of the people there really wanted to hear the facts. Finally I did succeed in getting at least part of my say over.

"But later a cousin of mine led the crowd against me and I came as

near to being mobbed that evening as I ever did in my life. The lynching spirit was certainly there. And that is saying a good deal.

"Word went all over the County of how people had attacked me in a church while I was trying to explain to them the dangers and evil of forming drink habits. Some of those who were at the meeting but who had not then been in sympathy with what I said, either came over entirely to my side or openly expressed disapproval of the kind of treatment that had been given me. The movement profited, momentarily, by the usual sympathy aroused for an under-dog and it was certainly a new experience for me to have any credit as a pioneer.

"I continued to fight until I was forced to acknowledge that it just wasn't humanly possible, at least at that time, to organize temperance movements in the churches. I came to a realization of the fact that the older people, including the pastors, were too ignorant to know the value of change, too uneducated to read any literature I had on the subject and as to the ministers they were too anxious to stand in well with their supporting congregations to do anything unpopular.

"After all, it is knowledge of actual facts together with their acceptance that makes the convinced teetotallers. Nobody, seeing the harm liquor was doing in Gloucester, could believe it was safe.

"So I decided that if I couldn't get the grown folks to listen to me I would see what I could do with the children. I started the organization of temperance societies in the so-called public schools to teach children the truth about what drink actually does to people and homes. The teachers cooperated with me splendidly and together we planned tableaux and other forms of entertainment to demonstrate these lessons so that no one would

ever forget them. I used to tell the children that drunkards were weak-willed sinners and who of us wanted to be a weakling?

"I knew that much of the drink habit among men was due to bad home conditions. My wife, who was greatly in sympathy with our campaign, then joined with some of the teachers--among them graduates of Hampton--in a movement for organizing the wives and other women into Home and Social Clubs. At these meetings they discussed such topics as better home training for children, the art of making the home more attractive so that their husbands and sons would not be drawn to the liquor bars, and what they, themselves, could do to help in freeing the County from the open saloons.

"An encouraging sign was that the white people, too, began to think about this matter of intemperance. One afternoon when I was in the village I got into conversation with an old white preacher by the name of William Wyatt and two other white men. Mr. Wyatt asked me what I thought could be done to reduce crime among Negroes.

"I replied, 'Let's begin by the abolition of the liquor traffic since practically every man who is arrested here for committing some crime is also addicted to drink. If men are so weak they can't resist temptation, then there will have to be a law to strengthen their back-bones.'

"But when I brought up the subject of having a local option election, Mr. Wyatt said disgustedly, 'Oh, what's the use! The Negroes will all vote for the bar-rooms and we will be beat out of our boots.'

"I don't think so," I replied.

"You can't do anything with those Negroes. Didn't they come near killing you?" he said. "And in^a church?"

"Yes, they certainly did," I had to admit, "but I haven't given up because of that. If you white folks will carry half of the white votes and give me one year in which to work, I promise you that at the end of that time at least one-half of the Negroes will vote for local option!"

"His reply to that was a contemptous, 'You couldn't do it to save your life!'

"Very well," I replied, "I take you up on that! I mean to try it anyway."

"What did you do then?" he asked.

"My first move was to gather together for a conference a group of leading white and colored men interested in helping Gloucester and so, inevitably in favor of the temperance movement. My father was among them. He was always with me in my fight for temperance. Although he was an ignorant man when it came to books he got on the right side of every moral question that was raised. The day they came near mobbing me in the church it was my father who had stood on guard beside me, ready to protect me from violence.

"After long discussion, all came to the conclusion that there was no way out of our difficulties other than that of making open war upon the saloon. They were somewhat skeptical, however, of the possibility of carrying the County for local option because so many of the Negroes drank and were certain to support the saloon-keepers.

"I said I felt sure that, given a year to work in, we could succeed in educating the Negroes to such an extent they would be convinced that money spent for liquor brought only misery to them and their families and that at least one-half of the voters would cast their votes for local option. Although they considered me unduly optimistic, the other members

accepted this challenge.

"The first thing I did was to make sure there was a live temperance society in every school my people had in the whole County. I had in mind the gaining of support for local option although I was careful not to make this fact known. I intended doing it by some new methods of education for there is no escaping the fact that, whether for good or evil, graphic presentation of facts is what makes a lasting impression upon youth. I had to make the children look with horror on drink because of its results.

"The loyal cooperation of the teachers in this exciting campaign reached new heights. Working together we got the children so enthusiastic on the subject of temperance that they became my main support and were lively, vocal backers. I got maps and charts to show the effect of alcohol upon the various organs of the human body and when they went home they told their surprised parents all about it. In fact, they got their mothers and fathers so roused and so interested that when the teachers told the children to invite their parents to come with them to an evening meeting they would arrive in large numbers and would sit and listen open-mouthed to whatever I or some other speaker taught them about liquor.

"Gradually the former prevailing sentiment began to change. Several men who had been my bitter opponents became supporters of the movement. At last the time was ripe to extend our campaign to the old folks I could not reach at first. I talked again in the churches, at the cross-roads, and anywhere else that I got a chance. We had temperance meetings going strong in every community of Gloucester County.

"When I thought the information about liquor had been sufficiently

put over I went back to my committee. "Now," I said, "If you will get the judge to grant you a petition for a local option election, I think I can assure enough votes to carry the County." I'll never forget that risk or that moment!

"A petition required a certain number of signatures. With the help, at long last, of church leaders of both races, we got a sufficient number of petitioners to hold the election and when the question came up for a vote, more than three-fourths of the Negro vote was in favor of local option. It was successful beyond any expectations I had dared to hold."

"Oh, what a triumph!" I exclaimed.

"Yes, it was to the great surprise of many that our County went dry. I, for one, had the huge satisfaction of seeing every one of those thirty-five bar-rooms put clean out of business. And with the dissolution of these saloons, crime began to die out in Gloucester. During the time the bar-rooms had been open, the jail always had from six to twelve men and women confined in it while two or three were sent to the penitentiary for felony every month.

"After liquor was no longer to be had, fewer and fewer crimes were committed until the time actually came, and it is a matter of record, when the jail door stood wide open because there was no one to put inside or to get out. This campaign was noteworthy in that not one dollar was contributed to it by anybody. I used my own horse and buggy to get around and my friends helped in any way they could at their own expense.

"When the Gloucester campaign was over, the next County, Lancaster, sought my services--in a volunteer capacity, of course! --for the people there were in the same condition morally, or immorally, perhaps I might

better say, than the residents of my own County had been in. Of course, this aroused the saloon keepers there to a downright fighting mood. Little did they want to see the same thing happen to them that had happened to their fellow saloon-keepers in Gloucester!"

"Don't stop," I said, "this is just what we need for the book--actual instances."

"All right," he continued. "On one occasion, a committee consisting of one white and one colored man from Lancaster County came to see me at my home and offered me one hundred dollars each for ten speeches--or a thousand dollars in all--if I would go to Lancaster County and talk in favor of the saloon. I listened meekly as could be to all they had to say and when they were through I said, "Now, gentlemen, I am a sort of business man. You will have to reduce your proposition to writing."

"This they very readily did--both of them signing the paper. I read it and then left the room to look for my wife. I found her upstairs. Handing her the paper I said: 'Now, Honey, you put this in the bottom of your trunk, right away quick, and be sure that you don't say anything to anybody about it.'"

"What is it?" she asked.

"Oh, just a contract that these gentlemen brought me today." I replied.

"She put it in her trunk and in the hall, on my way to the sitting-room where the men were waiting for me I opened the front door. Then I walked in and said: 'Gentlemen, you both know my position on this liquor question or you wouldn't have made me this proposition. You have insulted my wife and children as well as me by your offer. I am certainly as poor as anybody in Gloucester but you can't buy me off on what I believe to be

right. If you don't get away from this house pretty quick, I will break my foot off kicking you out. I need your thousand dollars but I would beg my bread before I would stoop to taking them. Get out of here!"

"They did get out in a hurry and I went straight to the telegraph office. I wired the Chairman of the Local Option Committee in Lancaster: "Good news. Get a meeting for me to speak at White Stone Saturday at three o'clock."

"Now there was a hall in White Stone which no Negro had ever dared enter except as janitor or laborer. However, it was in that hall that I found arrangements had been made for me to speak. Few political meetings in that County had ever had as large an audience as that one. Both white and colored people came from all quarters of Northern Neck to this local option meeting. The place was packed with both races. They had heard all that had happened at Gloucester.

"An old white Baptist preacher, who couldn't help having an inborn feeling of prejudice towards colored people, presided. I spoke for an hour and before I finished I took out of my pocketbook the proposition that had been made to me by their own liquor-men and, handing it to the chairman asked him to read it to the audience. The silence was complete and the people bent forward to listen. This showed the liquor lobby up for what it was--an enemy of all the people, of both races.

"I then said I wished to announce that I was there speaking in support of temperance and Local Option at my own expense and that I intended to continue on the basis of free service to all until the cause was won; that I wasn't in the slave-market of the liquor business.

"Here Lawyer Walker pointed a long black finger at me and said sententiously; "Just here I want to make particular mention of the part taken

by certain white men who not only gave hearty support to the work I was doing but, even at the risk of their own lives, gave me physical protection during this bitter campaign.

"I want you to put that in the book. And here's more.

"The night following that meeting I spent at the home of Abel Carter, a colored man. I learned later that two white men had guarded his house until full daylight, so sure were they that the saloon men had planned to get me and do away with me. Have you got that down?"

"I certainly have," I assured him, "Every word!"

"The next night a meeting had been arranged in a different community. The way lay through a desolate sparsely settled section. Abel Carter was to drive me in his buggy but even before we got started four white men appeared riding horseback. I did not know why these white men should think it necessary to accompany us; they did not give any reason for doing it but they must have had a good one for one of them rode ahead of the buggy, one behind, and one on each side of me. And so they continued to do until we arrived at the hall. Everybody saw them guarding me.

"Now, all four of these men were prominent in the community. One was the Honorable MacDonald Lee, long-time owner and editor of the Irvington Journal, the leading newspaper of Northern Neck, Virginia, and for four years State Commissioner of Fisheries for the Commonwealth of Virginia. Another was Doctor J. M. Newbell, a physician whom I had wired to get up the meeting and who had stayed close to me all evening fearing a shot might be fired from the audience. The third was the Reverend Frederick Claybrook who had presided at the previous night's meeting. All three of them were prominent supporters of the Local Option fight in the temperance crusade in Virginia from the 1890's on. The fourth man who guarded me was Doctor Arthur James,

a Methodist minister. His son was later connected with the State Department of Public Welfare in Virginia and a better friend I haven't got in the whole world than that man.

"Before leaving the meeting that night we saw a group of saloon-keepers with their Negro hoodlums apparently waiting for a chance to take my life. But these same four white men stayed with me as bodyguards and furnished me the protection that alone brought me safely through. Never have I forgotten this brave public service given by four prominent Southern white men to me, a Negro. I thanked them from my heart and I still do."

Here Lawyer Walker fell into such a long silence of reminiscence that I said: "Surely that isn't all, is it?"

"No," he said quietly, "we continued this campaign for three weeks more, holding meetings almost every night wherever we could get people to assemble. Many who had come to believe in local option kept bringing new people and more of their friends and so the sentiment in favor of it grew. As time went on, the campaign became so heated and popular that many white women began attending—a most unusual thing in those days. As a result of this campaign, every bar-room in that County too was wiped out of existence.

"Another occasion proved more than usually exciting—which is quite an understatement. I was asked to speak at a meeting in Hanover County in a large Negro church. The Reverend Stokes, a rather uneducated minister but a splendid man, had invited me. He announced publicly that I was going to preach and that he expected a big crowd. Many of the church leaders in this particular County had refused to let me speak in their churches so that I had been obliged to hold my meetings out doors—anywhere at all. I was, therefore, especially glad for this opportunity.

"Reverend Stokes drove me to the meeting. He said he had a premonition somehow that something violent was going to happen. So, while we were still a half mile from the church, he told me to get out of the buggy. Then he tied his horse by the side of the road and we walked the rest of the way. Before we entered the church he said, 'If, when we come out of the meeting you don't see me, you just go on. You know where the buggy is. I'll meet you there.'

"When we got to the church we found it crowded. Even more people were standing outside beneath the windows than could get inside. The service opened in the usual way, the Pastor leading. When I was presented I gave as my text: 'Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging.'

"I had not gotten very far in outlining my subject when an old deacon rose and said, "We don wan' no politics in tdis church and tdat thing you' is talkin' about ain't nuttin' but politics and we ain't goin' to have it here! Dose white folks done brought you here to take away our privileges."

"This was the signal for an immediate planned-ahead commotion and the crowd became so unruly that I could not make myself heard so as to explain what I meant by giving this text. Then several men started lunging towards the pulpit with angry words and gestures that would have led anyone to think his last hour had come.

"Now, it happened that this church was built on the side of a hill so that the rear windows were about five or six feet above the ground. Plainly, the only escape open to me was by one of those windows. It did not take me long to take advantage of it. The crowd that was trying to get me thought that I had run on into the woods behind the church. But, instead of that I had, under cover of darkness, crawled underneath the church, itself. It was a long time before I could think of this piece of pioneering as funny

but I can now. There I had to stay for about an hour and a half until the woods had been thoroughly searched and I was sure that there was not a single person hanging around.

"But still I waited a while longer and then came out and made my way down the road to the place where the horse had been tied. But there was no horse there! Reverend Stokes had thought it the part of wisdom to take him away in order to lead the crowd to think he had gone home alone instead of waiting for me. He finally returned and met me walking towards him. I was glad enough to climb into the buggy and we started off for his house. But we had to get there by a different road than one we had come by because both of us felt pretty sure the crowd was in ambush somewhere, still waiting to get me for a finish."

"That wasn't the end, was it?" I asked anxiously.

"No, that was not the end of the fight in Hanover County. I kept right on making speeches for local option by roadsides or on corners or wherever I could get an audience until that County, too, went dry.

"My reputation as a temperance worker naturally began to spread and soon I received invitations to speak in other parts of the State. I did not ask for any remuneration and all I got out of it was my railroad expenses--and that only sometimes. To carry our State for local option was worth almost any sacrifice to me.

"In one speech I made before the Legislative Committee I told the story of an old colored man who used to stay out nearly all night and then came home drunk. He did this so often that his wife devised a way to try to stop him. She bought a spool of silk thread and before he got home she unwound it and stirred the thread up in a glass of Julep.

"When he finally appeared, drunk as usual, she said to him,
"There 'is something nice on the table for you, Rastus."

"He eagerly drank all that was in the glass, too drunk to detect anything out of the ordinary, and soon dozed off. Waking up, he felt to see what it was that was sticking out of his mouth. He pulled and pulled at the thread but never could seem to come to the end of it. Calling his wife in alarm, he shouted: "Oh, come here an' help me, 'cause I'se all ravellin' out!"

"I tried to impress the Committee with the fact that failure to enact the bill before them that prohibited the sale of beer and wine on Sunday would result in the "ravellin' out" of much manhood and family life.

"I kept working for Local Option through nearly all the Tidewater Counties of Virginia. It was a great satisfaction to me to have roused the Negro forces to help in winning the fight for, under the leadership of a spirited group of white people, Virginia put herself on record as favoring what later developed into the Eighteenth Amendment.

"But, alas, following the later repeal of that Amendment, Virginia went back to her former ways as to selling liquor. And, of course, as a result there has been a crime wave that has steadily increased until it has come to be one of our most serious problems, tied up as it is with the lowest political elements of our population.

"The work that I have done in the cause of temperance and my experience as a lawyer have only strengthened my conviction that there is nothing like alcohol to destroy the peace and happiness of the family and to bring poverty and disease and misery into the home.

"I made every conceivable appeal to get my people to see that the temperence campaign was a vital part of an emancipation program. And, as they all worshipped Abraham Lincoln, I used to quote what he wrote about it: 'The one victory we can ever call complete will be that one which proclaims that there is not one slave or one drunkard on the face of God's green earth.'"

"I said this with all the force there was in me, and I say it to-day because the liquor men are getting higher and higher up on top. It's time to go stump-speaking again, on all the cross-roads, in schools, and in churches, armed with the facts.

"Television could help immensely if it were not taking the side of Brudder Beverly and 'lijah! Let the cocktails stay on the roosters on our farms!"

CHAPTER IXWHAT HAPPENED AT OLD BOTTOM JAIL -- AND AFTER

"Tell me, Lawyer Walker," I said when we got together for another chapter of the book, "isn't there a special story connected with your beginning to take stray children into your own home? All Your projects seem to have been precipitated all of a sudden by some emergency or other - something totally unforeseen. I have always wondered what it was that time."

At this Lawyer Walker burst out laughing so infectiously that I laughed with him although I had no idea what the story was.

"Oh, it was that affair at Old Bottom Jail!" he said. "It was the result of a little sight-seeing trip I took one day in Richmond. It involved me in more problems than I had thought possible - as well as Mis' Annie, my socially-minded wife. However," he said, solemnly, "looking back on it all I can trace the first constructive legislation for juvenile delinquents in Virginia to something that happened when I was waiting for a train back to Gloucester and, just to pass the time, visited the Richmond City Jail - better known as the Jail in the Bottom, or Old Bottom Jail.

"It was on a Monday. I had made an address in one of our churches the day before but, as no trains went on Sunday that would take me home, I had to stay over. Some of our adult Negro misdemeanants were usually to be found in that Jail so I thought I would go in and see how things were.

"To my surprise, the guard refused to let me in because it wasn't visiting time and I had no pass. But I told him I was a lawyer from out of town and didn't know when I would have another chance to go through so perhaps an exception could be made in my case.

"Finally he called the jailer who was prevailed upon to make a special case of me and to take me through himself. I saw hundreds of prisoners there, both white and Negro - no segregation when it comes to crime! - and I was just about to leave when, on the last floor, we came to a cell that had thirteen utterly miserable Negro boys crowded into it. Why, the oldest wasn't more than sixteen, and the youngest, as I now recall, was nine or ten.

"The jailer couldn't get me past that spot. I stood there amazed! I have no words with which to describe their condition - no words that are bad enough. It wasn't only that they were clad in dirty rags and alive with vermin but that their faces showed such resentment and defiance. They all had the terrible hardness that comes from hate and despair.

"Seeing my horror the jailer tried to lead me on past them but I wouldn't go. I questioned him as to how long these boys had been there, what they had done to get sent up, how long they would have to stay, But to all my questions he said he did not know. And the records in the office yielded no information either, as to their past, future, or period of confinement.

"Faced with this impasse I left the jail and hurried over to the City Hall to hunt up old Judge Crutchfield, the Police Justice. When I found him I told him of the startling situation I had discovered and asked him to free those boys from that horrible place. I told him it was a legal injustice to a Negro girl that had led me to study law and I was determined to rescue those boys in Old Bottom Jail.

"But," argued the judge, "However you may feel about it there is no law on the books that will let you take them out. And I can't do it -ono

matter who asks me to. I'll say this," he added, "if you can find any authority for turning them out or for handing them over to you, I will do it. I myself do not know of any such authority."

"Now, the idea of his turning the boys over to me personally was an entirely new one and so startling that, for a moment I stood there speechless. Then the idea began to 'work' on me and I saw it might be the only way to get the boys out. That was the urgent necessity no matter what the situation would be later. So I left Judge Crutchfield and went across the hall to the Commonwealth Attorney's office. The Commonwealth Attorney was the Honorable Henry Pollard who had helped me prepare for my bar examination. He listened to me sympathetically enough but said he could not but agree with Judge Crutchfield that there was no law on the books to permit the Judge to free those boys from Jail. "However," he said, "lets go over and see Judge Richardson."

"One glance at my watch showed me I could not possibly catch the one train by which I could get home that day. So I went along with the Commonwealth Attorney only to hear Judge Richardson also affirm that there was no law by which the boys could be released. 'These children are under the same rules and regulations that adult prisoners are,' he said, 'and I don't see that anything can be done about it.'

"This appeared to bring my investigation to a close but yet I couldn't give up. I turned to Judge Richardson and expressed my indignation. 'Judge,' I said, 'you know that when you white folks haven't got a law you need you just up and make one. I want you to make a law now that will turn those boys over to me. I will be personally responsible for anything that may come up and will bring them back to you whenever you order it.'

"The Judge looked impressed by this extraordinary proposition and a little shocked. Turning to the Commonwealth Attorney he said: 'Now how can I do that? The people would run me out of office if I did such a thing!' After a

moment of thinking, I said, "Judge, I promise you that if you are criticized in any way for such a step I will make myself responsible for it publicly!"

At this, to my great relief and surprise, the Commonwealth Attorney backed me up by saying, "Judge, you can rely on Tom Walker. If he tells you he will bring the boys back if they are wanted, he will do it!"

"Yes," parried the Judge, "but you are forgetting that first I have to get them out of jail. And how can I do that when there is no law permitting such a thing?"

"I then struck in again with two new suggestions. "Judge Richardson" I said, "Why don't you just give me an order for the jailer to turn these boys over to me now, today? I will be personally responsible to you and, I say again, if they are wanted I will bring them back - one or all of them - whenever you order it."

"Done!" said the Judge bringing his fist down on the table, and then and there he wrote an order directing the jailer to release all those boys right over to me.

"It might not have been so surprising if I had asked custody of just one boy but to ask for the whole thirteen was going some. However, as long as I was to have them I was in a great hurry to get it over--not because I had any plan for them, which I hadn't, but for fear certain authorities might have a change of mind and nullify the hasty order.

"So, clutching it firmly in hand I took it to the jailer. He was so astonished that he read and reread it, looked me over from head to foot, and read it again. But there was the signature of the judge!

"We went up together to that crowded cell and he turned over to me all those poor, frightened youngsters--some nearly naked and all of them alive with vermin and caked with dirt. Not knowing what I was going to do with them they were shaking with fright and looking at me with terror-stricken eyes.

"As soon as the jail door clanged shut behind us I was suddenly confronted with the problem of where to take these terrible looking children. Up to that moment I had but one thought--how to get them out of that cell, away from that prison, and out of sight as quickly as possible for there wasn't any law to protect us. I stood there waiting for some idea to strike me. Then I remembered, all at once, some Negro friends living next door to the church, where I had spoken the day before, Mr. and Mrs. Thorpe. He was a deacon in the church and both he and his wife had the right kind of hearts. In my dilemma, I realized that only people with hearts like theirs would be inclined to help me out--it needed Christian grace!" Lawyer Walker paused to explore his memory further. "

"I can't wait to hear what happened next!" I said. "Surely Mis' Annie"

He raised his hand with a reassuring wave. "Now wait," he said. "Don't get ahead of my story. First, the Thorpes. They were certainly astonished when they opened their door and saw us crowding up on the steps. I told the story briefly and asked if they could possibly let at least a few of the boys sleep on some floor, or in the attic, that night. Being the sort of people I knew they were they said they would, provided the boys first got well-scrubbed and clothed. And they both,

together with their son, undertook to attend to this unattractive and difficult task. Mrs. Thorpe and her son did the scrubbing while Mr. Thorpe and I hurried out to beg the necessary clothing from some neighbors. When we got back and the boys had put on what we brought, a transformation had indeed been wrought.

"Although it cannot be said that the clothes were anywhere near the right size or otherwise suitable, still they did make it possible for me to board a train with them without creating a sensation among the other passengers. And, furthermore, the look of fear and hatred had vanished from the boys' faces.

"To help me out still more, in this, my latest plunge into betterment, the Thorpes agreed to keep six of the boys over night so I could dispose of the others and get back for the rest next day. The other seven I took with me to Gloucester. And on the way a prayer of my father's came back to me vividly. It was as if I could hear him imploring the Lord, on his knees, after some County Negro had been sent up, "O Lawd! Keep ma' chillun' out o' jail!" And I thought how glad he would be to know how hard I was trying to keep out the children of other people too.

"My hope was to place the boys with Gloucester families who would give them the necessary parental care and a chance to go straight in life. Of course this meant taking them home with me first to get somewhat civilized. And, as I had no way of letting my wife know ahead what I was bringing back with me maybe you can imagine the kind of expressions that followed one another across her face when she first opened the door and saw us all standing there. First there was wonderment, then a rather forced smile of sympathy as she appraised the boys and their outfits,

IK

followed by a look of consternation when I told her we would have to keep them all with us until I could think out what else to do with them.

"She said later that at first what shocked her was the idea of feeding them--they all looked so starved. The housekeeping end of my undertaking I had not taken into account, nor the sleeping arrangements for so many on top of an already sizeable family. And when I said I had to go right back to Richmond to attend to the other six, who were taxing and over-taxing the hospitality of the Thorpes, she was almost filled with despair. However, being Mis' Annie, she soon regained her natural poise and made her ragged visitors feel they were with friends.

"So I hurried back to Richmond and spent that night at the Thorpes' but I saw I must place the rest of the boys outside of Gloucester and another idea made me get the outfit onto a train at dawn next morning for Lunenburg. The boys were dazed and sleepy but it had occurred to me that an old Hampton friend of mine was school teacher there and that maybe his wide acquaintance with the Negro families would solve the placing out problem for me. The boys had to be located in the shortest possible time and I needed someone who could give suggestions for immediate relief.

"It was so very early in the morning when we got to my friend's house that he was still asleep. But I woke him by knocking at the door and he immediately got up and made a fire while the poor chilled boys crowded about. I remember how his old father came hurrying down stairs, alarmed by the uproar, and shouted: "Whar' you get dose boys? Wha' dem chillun' doin' hyer?" The mother, however, started getting breakfast for us all --fewer than there had been because two of my charges had run

away soon after our arrival and before the sun was up. This was a serious matter for me because of my guarantee to Judge Richardson. But I explained the situation to my friend and he said he would hunt down the runaways and then he would dismiss his school for the day and drive us around looking for homes. I wanted to get back to Mrs. Walker that night because I did not know what might happen to her while I was away.

"Before more than a few hours had passed we caught the runaways, all piled into a wagon, and started off. Wherever my friend thought there was any hope at all of a family's being willing to take a boy, or of being able to direct us to some other family that might, my friend stopped. This shopping trip for homes was so successful that before I had to leave for Gloucester places had been found for the whole six. After delivering them to their new foster families I said good-bye to them and promised to come back again as soon as possible to see how they and the families were getting on."

Here Lawyer Walker leaned back and closed his eyes, with a deep sigh of relief.

"I guess that is the way you felt on your way home!" I said.

"Well, a load certainly rolled off my shoulders when I boarded my train but--I wasn't through. I had all the rest to dispose of. I used the same method I did in Lunenburg, with the other seven I had left under the watch-care of Mrs. Walker. I drove my buggy around with them, hunting only homes I could be sure were good, until all the children were settled. Then the load rolled off Mrs. Walker too.

"This is the way we started to take in strays, and other temporarily

or permanently homeless children. The very first year I handled and placed a hundred and forty-two Negro boys and girls from all kinds of places - jails, almshouses, broken homes, or just lost."

"Give me another story" I said eagerly.

"A permanent addition was made to our family in a most unexpected way." he began. "One day a County Judge was out hunting when he came across a queer little hut located in the center of a piece of swamp land. It was made of reeds fortified with cornstalks. After seeing some destitute looking children crawling in and out of it, he asked me to go over and investigate. This I did and actually discovered three little boys living there, the oldest one looking after the other two.

"They had tried, apparently, to copy our local potato houses, fashioning the entrance after that of a dog-house in and out of which they crawled on their hands and knees. From them I learned that their father had talked about buying a piece of land and putting up a new home. Then their mother had run away with another man, and soon after that, their father disappeared. The old cabin in which they had been living, they told me, had a broken roof so that the rain all came in but there were four sisters still there when they left to build a shelter for themselves.

"A sad looking little group they were, ragged, dirty and very hungry. The younger ones seemed to have absolute trust in the oldest who was only a boy himself. Of course, I took them right along with me and, after stopping for the sisters, I left all the children with a friend except for the oldest boy whom I took home to Mrs. Walker."

"You must have had sympathetic cooperation from your people to enable you to do a thing like that" I said.

"I certainly did" he replied, "and I want to make clear that to get foster homes I had to make a spiritual appeal to my people. There wasn't a cent in it for anybody - nothing to compensate them for the expense and trouble these children brought into their homes. And everyone knows that a family giving free care is more critical of a child's behaviour than if it is a boarder. All they get out of it is the pleasure of giving service.

"Mrs. Walker and I feel the same way. We never intended to make our home into an institution but treat the children as if they were our own. At first we took in girls too, sometimes, but later only boys. I always had a waiting list of good families for the children. More ^{children} came from the cities than from the country and they certainly were ignorant of farm life. One little fellow didn't know the difference between horses and calves. One day he scrambled on the back of a calf but the ride did not turn out just as he expected. The calf enjoyed the joke as much as we did - judging from the way it filliped its heels after the spill."

"Tell me" I said, "If you should ask your wife what, in her opinion, was the most difficult situation, connected with the children, that she had ever been placed in, what do you think she would say?"

"Well," he answered reflectively with a laugh, "I guess it would probably be the experience that started with Judge Walton's writing me to ask if I could find homes for three nice little boys, from three to six, whose father had deserted and whose mother had just been killed by a train.

"Although we had four boys living with us then, I replied that I thought I could place them if he could manage to get them to Gloucester. Then I got a telegram from a different part of the State announcing that four destitute children had been started on their way to me.

"Now, it never occurred either to Mis' Ellen or to me that all of these children would arrive at approximately the same time! So she left the house alone after the four boys, who were already with us, had gone to school. What was her amazement, on getting back some time later to see a State Officer--white of course--wandering around the yard with three little Negro youngsters. She said he looked so relieved to see her that she had to laugh, and he lost no time in getting away after turning the children over to her care.

"That made seven children on hand. My wife was just getting the new little boys to bed--don't ask me how or where! --in our already crowded household when there was a knock on the door. On opening it she was dumfounded to see a man, a woman, and four little children standing there--two boys and two girls, all between the ages of three and eight.

"The man said: "These are the children mentioned in the telegram. My wife and I have been commissioned by the court to bring them to you."

"For a moment my wife was too astonished to speak. She stood there trying to think where she could put them. Then she felt someone nudging her from behind. It was the little boy who had been taking care of his little brothers in the swamp house. "Mis' Ellen," he whispered, "you take the girls and give me the boys. I'll manage!"

"Then he hurried off with the boys, making his own arrangements for them, while my wife took care of the man, his wife, and the two little girls. Finally they were all stowed away for the night but I never could understand how it was done."

"But how did your wife ever manage about meals and everything?" I said, aghast at the housekeeping dilemma.

"Oh, it worked out all right. All those three children were unusually bright and vivacious. The littlest was very winsome--only three and a half. He clung to Mis' Ellen and called her 'Mama' so we just had to keep him for ourselves. I placed his two brothers in homes near each other. I always try to find homes of like social stratum and in the same neighborhood if there are brothers, so they can go to the same school. But it isn't often that I can find free foster homes for two brothers together. I am talking now about children most too young to be of any use about the place--quite the opposite.

"They all loved Mis' Ellen. They ate what we had and fell into the farm routine naturally. If they were old enough they would help with the chores only as an opportunity to keep the home pleasant for us all. But never as a task. And we can testify to this: " Here Lawyer Walker again shook his finger at me and laughed. "If boys are taught to cook so things taste good, and to take care of the home because it is a place in which they are happy, they like it. However, " he went on warningly, "our experience with hundreds of boys is that such activities must be presented always as a cooperative enterprise. What they do not like is to be ordered to do something alone. We have found little boys to be sensitive social beings, quick with enthusiasm for anything that involves team work.

"Some of the boys were even precocious. One of them, at the age of ten, insisted on reading my adult newspapers and magazines. By doing this his vocabulary was made up of long words--the longer the better.

"For instance?" I suggested.

"Well, nothing ever 'wore out.' It became 'insufficient.' He would say: 'I won't go out this morning because it is raining and my shoes is

insufficient. I visit him every year at his place of business which he has made "sufficient" for the support of his family by hard work.

"Here's a curious thing! When the boys were large enough to help with the outside chores, which they loved, they assumed the attitude of graduates from indoor work and would say, 'Mis' Ellen, you will have to get another chile to help 'cause I'se gwine out to learn to help on de farm."

"Just naturally every 'graduate' showed a sense of personal responsibility for arranging with other children to take his place.

"I learned a big lesson once from an experience with four big boys--almost men. They were too big for the kind of treatment we gave the children and I wondered how they would react to the quiet life they led with us, particularly the quiet evenings, to which I imagine they were totally unaccustomed. They had been very disadvantaged so I sent them to school, shared the farm work with them, and spent the evening hour, before we all went to bed, talking thoughtfully of deep, important subjects the way Booker T. Washington used to talk to us boys at Hampton. And Mis' Ellen used to take part, too, giving them ideals of what women, wives, and mothers ought to be and so often were not because they had not known right views about life and its problems.

"From their faces we felt they were opening up inside somewhat but neither of us expected their reactions--whatever they were--to mature as a spiritual influence right away. So I was especially glad when one of them looked me up, later on, because he wanted to say how much our home life had meant to him; he had learned new attitudes while he was a member of our household. All three of these young fellows became self-respecting

14 15
citizens and we found we had learned as much from them as they did from us; we learned that what a little child can best get by training older ones absorb by example. Just as I found out in the days of the Gloucester Land and Brick Company--I have had to keep on trying to be a good example.

"The children themselves have taught me many a lesson. I could tell you of many acts of unselfishness, kindness, done by some of them who had known only neglect and cruelty. More than once I have seen a hungry little boy deny himself a scrap of bread--without knowing that I saw him--so that his little sister might not go hungry.

"I am always feeling still more humble before the ever changing opportunities that come to me to pioneer with my people. And there was always happiness for us when children were around--children, animals, growing things, and God's earth!"

CHAPTER XI

THE GAME OF MONEY RAISING

"Here I am!" he said cheerfully, as we again settled down. "Ready to have another chapter dug out of me. What do you want me to talk about today?"

"Well," I said cautiously, "would you be willing to tell how you raise the money for some of your later projects? That splendid Gloucester Training School with its big buildings and those others you took me through when I was down there? Old Poplar School was built by actual labor of you and your people but when it came to the larger ventures you must have had to raise large amounts of cash. It's hard to raise money even for popular movements but, in your case, you had everything against you from the very start. How did you manage?"

"Made a game of it!" he announced promptly. "There wasn't any other way to do it. Everybody likes to have a good time and, as small contributions come easiest for big community measures I get best results from a large group and it costs the people no more than to go to a movie. But--I have to make it attractive in order to compete. However, sometimes I have been helped most with a very small group or with just one person."

"Suppose I tell you the story of the most important money-raising I ever did in my life, without knowing it, and from just one little bit of a person. "

"As you will remember, my very first project when I got back from school, was for my family so we could have a truck garden. This was made possible by a Quaker, the old Poplar School project was put over with the help of a Quaker saw-mill owner, and the story I am going to tell you now is about a Quaker—a real old-time one in gray Quaker dress and Quaker bonnet who was so deaf she had to hold a long ear trumpet out in front of her so she could hear."

"I was speaking at a small gathering in a Philadelphia Quaker Meeting House along with the Hampton singers. Doctor Frissell was in charge of the trip, the purpose of which was to raise money for the Institute. He was assisting General Armstrong at the time and took me along too. So I could give people a clear idea of the needs of Negro schools for which Hampton was training Negro teachers. You can see how my experiences at Old Poplar fitted into the Hampton plan. I usually spoke in between the singing of spirituals by the quartet."

"The particular night I am referring to I had just said: "In the school I come from you can shut the door, bar all the windows, and run a rabbit out!" when someone interrupted from the audience."

"What's that?" asked a little deaf lady, interrupting me sharply and straining forward towards me with her trumpet. "What did you say about rabbits?"

Doctor Frissell motioned me to step down close to her so she could hear me better and I said: "Why! The cracks in the floors, the gaps in the ceilings, and the holes in the walls are all so big that a rabbit can run in and out any of them!"

"She sat back as if to take in this extraordinary fact and as I went on she seemed to get more and more 'concerned', as the Quakers say, and more thoughtful still when I told how little Negro children, five or six years old, tagged along with the older ones begging to come in so they too could learn how to read and write. The children who did enter cried with disappointment when I had to close the school after only four months in a winter session because there wasn't a cent left with which to run it."

"I told how the pupils walked miles and miles to get to school dressed in such rags that their parents wouldn't send them to church. We have "I said, "so few books that three or four children have to read out of the same one at the same time. Not only that. When the parents come to enroll their children, at the opening of school, some of them always ask me if they may not stay and listen so that they might keep up with their children by learning too--the same things."

"This particular meeting broke up without incident, as they say, but we were asked to hold another one in a house outside of Philadelphia. We were glad to do that but when the evening set for it came it was so stormy, with such a driving rain, we were sure nobody would come out and that it was useless to try to hold it. However, we had promised, and when we got there we found almost no audience--just four Quaker women, all sitting there sedately in the simple Quaker garb. One of the four was the little deaf one who was so disturbed about the rabbits.

"When I had finished telling more about our rural Negro schools she went up to Doctor Frissell and said: "How I wish it were my time and chance to do some good for those people!"

"But he did not suspect what her reactions from this meeting were going

to bring about for us all. You cannot imagine my own astonishment when, a little while later, I opened a letter from Doctor Frissell enclosing a check for six hundred dollars from this little deaf Quaker, Anna T. Jeanes! He told me to see how much I could do with it and then to let her know."

"I was completely overwhelmed to have her include me when I was campaigning for Hampton in speaking as I did. But she had given to Hampton too. I was never good at postponements and could hardly wait to call my people together and tell them what had happened, but before I did I made myself sit down and have a quiet talk with--myself."

"I knew what effect such an unheard of gift might have upon my people to whom it would look as big as a million dollars does to a business man. I had to contrive some way to help them keep their balance by doing something themselves to deserve the gift. So I said to myself: "It's up to you to show your people how to demonstrate the same spirit that prompted Miss Jeanes. And the only way we can do it is to try to match what she has given to the very extent of our ability."

"This we did, and we accounted for every penny and sent her a full statement about our use of her gift. We found that this was just what pleased her most because, although such ^a gentle, unassuming little person, she studied the effect of her contributions very closely."

"Doctor Frissell told me how, one day, ~~how~~ she showed a trace of spice in spite of her calm, quiet ways. She sent for Doctor Frissell and Doctor Washington of Hampton, and Mr. George Foster Peabody of the General Education Board."

"Does the remember that thee called upon me and I gave thee a check?" she asked Doctor Frissell.

"Indeed I do!" he answered.

"And, Mr. Peabody, does thee remember that thee wrote me about making a gift through thee?"

"I most certainly remember it," replied Mr. Peabody. "I am grateful for the privilege you gave me of sharing in this rich opportunity for service. I thank you for it."

"Oh, thee does not have to thank me!" she flashed back with spirit, "It is I who need to thank all of you. And," she added, "I didn't have to do it to save my soul from Hell, either!"

"She then astonished them all by saying she had decided to give one million dollars to be known in perpetuity as "The Fund for Rudimentary Schools for Southern Negroes." One of her stipulations was that members of both races should jointly control this Fund and she named Dr. Frissell and Dr. Booker T. Washington to the Board of Trustees at the very beginning."

"And so was started the Jeanes Fund that has been of such inestimable help to our people. Not only did new school houses spring up, to replace those that rabbits had been hopping through, but the appropriations matched other funds we ourselves raised towards making school terms longer than only four or at most five, months out of the year and for supplementing the pitifully small salaries of eighteen or twenty dollars a month paid the teachers."

"The little meeting, that rainy night, which seemed so hopeless and forlorn because only four people came--and those all older women--turned out to be one of the most important I have ever addressed. I sometimes wondered if the other three, besides Miss Jeanes, heard of what happened there, or if they had gone home thinking it had been a failure for Hampton. What it did was to give an opportunity for an earnest little white woman to hear about

problems for the solution of which we Negroes desperately needed the help she was so glad to give."

"It was a combination of the appeal made by Doctor Frissell, the splendid singing of the quartet and a description of actual conditions that made her decide to put so large a sum into education for Negroes. This experience has buoyed me up in the innumerable money-raising campaigns I have had to initiate and carry through."

"I, myself, haven't found that possession of the almighty dollar is as powerful as the ability to get on with folks. Money is quickly spent but friendliness continues to yield a steady support. In fact, it seems to raise all kinds of obstacles to happiness for one to get more money than he needs for keeping the right standard of living and having some to give away. For sheer bewilderment at how to get on with folks, give me a millionaire!"

"However, I am the first to admit that to get on with our social problems and to find out how to solve them, money has to be raised."

"It seems to me that giving away money is a subject that has been less thought out than almost any other social action. Every agency that needs money for the sake of an honest purpose is handicapped by other agencies that aren't really effective and that are not socially as important, yet who do get money."

"Naturally the task of raising money for schools and welfare movements for Negroes has been a heavy one. I have never made a cent out of money-raising and I have never tried to raise money for any movement or organization in whose work I myself did not sincerely believe. Of course, this has opened up many invitations I have had to refuse but it has helped me work with enthusiasm in raising money for movements I thought deserved it."

7

"Nobody likes to raise money any more than people like to be solicited for it but it just has to be done. My people were so poor and public interest so lacking in efforts to educate them and provide places for them to go when they were so sick they couldn't be cared for in their miserable cabins that one day I just sat down by the side of the road, determined to stay right there until I had thought through to a working philosophy for money-raising. It was no laughing matter but my first decision was that it had to become one!"

"I wonder what you mean by that!" I said.

"I mean that you can't get anywhere unless your audience is at ease and in for a good laugh time! Yes sir, folks expand when they laugh. They become open-minded and happy. The trick of money-raising then, was to make them have a good time while being asked to give to a worthy cause. Then you have to go ahead with facts to prove the cause is really worthy."

"People often ask me to tell just how I go about raising money."

"Why not tell your future readers?" I suggested.

"Well," he said, "in Virginia I sometimes arrange a rally. Often I say to a man I know well - (usually someone very good looking) -, that I am going to use him in the cause and tell him how I propose to do it. If he enters into it the way I suggest, after I get the crowd together, I say something like this:"

"I am not going to talk to you tonight about New York or London but about something you know about--something you see every day. I am not going to talk about Demosthenes or Socrates but see that man sitting there? Yes, that one. He's as black as the hinge of midnight. He's the one I'm going to talk about and I'm going to tell you what he needs."

"Then I say to the people, "Come forward! I want every man and woman present to give as much in this collection as Brother Jones--the blackest man here--will give. Brother Jones, start this collection. A man who looks as homely and black as you do has got to pay for it. Come on, now, and give a dollar, give a quarter. If you can't give a quarter, give a dime. If you can't give a dime, give a nickel--even a penny, but give something. You white folks stay away, stay away! I want to see what colored folks can do. They got religion! After the colored folks are through, then we'll see what the white folks will do. But let the colored folks come first."

"By this time the whole crowd will be laughing and in good humor. Sometimes money can be raised quickly by such methods."

"How do you think your children are going to be taught if you don't give us something to pay the teachers?" I once asked the parents and friends of a poverty stricken rural school. I had been invited to take charge of the money-raising campaign at the outdoor closing exercises so a dairy course could be added to the industrial and agricultural classes already established. It was a hot, threatening day and my remarks had no effect at all. The women, all in starched white, kept on fanning themselves while the men slapped at the mosquitoes and flies and looked off in the distance."

"Trouble with you is you can't see 'education' as plain as you can see your cow!" I exclaimed.

"This made them all look up. "You all keep cows or you ought to. What difference does it make to you whether you give a dollar for education--that you don't seem to want your children to have--or a cow? All right, if you won't give me a dollar for your own child's education maybe you will give me a dollar to buy a cow that this school will teach him how to take care of.

Let's start the school herd and forget that it's for education. Who will give me money for a cow?"

"The women stopped fanning and laughed expectantly, the men hitched forward and put their hands in their pockets. But the hands didn't come out, they weren't quite touched off yet."

"Suddenly a hand went up."

"Yes, sister," I said pointing to someone in the back row. Everybody turned around."

"I will give \$25.00 for the tail," came the offer.

"A tail, a tail has been given, with a tassel on the end, but where is the rest of the cow that has to swing the tail?"

"We'll give its hind legs \$1.00 each," came in giggles from the spokesman for a group of little girls. "Will that be enough?"

"That's fine. We now have the hind legs, who will give the front legs? You? Thanks! Now who will give the body so there will be something for the legs to hold up? There are a lot of different parts to a cow, you know. Almost anybody can afford to give a tooth or an ear. They come cheaper."

"I'll give a tooth," "I'll give an ear!" came from different parts of the audience. By this time they were competing with each other for different parts of the cow. No one wanted to be left out. One child bought its whiskers but wasn't sure cows had any."

"Even the closest old farmer had brought his hand out of his pocket by that time with something in it, and the children were untying the knots in the corners of their handkerchiefs."

"The sum we had set out for was fully raised and every contributor was invited to come back later to pat the cow. A white contributor told me

afterwards he would give a cow outright from his blooded herd up North so we had our cow-money to put towards the teachers' salaries. Without the cow I doubt if I could have raised more than a few dollars from that particular crowd."

"As I have said, money-raising must be made a happy and cooperative undertaking between the asker and the giver. But it has to be staged; often without advance planning, and I have found it easiest when there is a collaborator. I have often, during my opening remarks, seen a responsive face of someone I can work into being an interlocutor by suddenly addressing him personally with:"

"You have a question, friend, tell me, what is on your mind?" Then the whole audience becomes eagerly interested."

"I can think of nothing more appealing than the stories of parents or young people who applied for registration at our schools when we entirely lacked resources to admit them. I have told about children who have never seen money and whose business background has been trading garden truck at the store. Some have shoes paid for by trading butter and eggs."

"One day at a boarding school, of which I was trustee, a teen-age brother enrolled his younger sister chiefly because a domestic science course was offered. He said their parents died and he had done the housework and run the farm, too, until this sister was old enough to help. He said she was a devoted little mother to those still younger and he thought she had earned some training. He was going to act as housewife as well as to continue carrying on the farm until she "got educated." Over and over I could duplicate such appealing cases."

"And yet, money-raising for such schools is always difficult and without the big, generous Funds and Foundations we could not have carried on. I can never say enough in appreciation of their help to supplement our own inadequate resources but yet we must never give up efforts to make our people shoulder as much of the responsibility as they possibly can. That sense of responsibility is vital to our well-being."

"A money raiser has to be careful. Appeals for my people that move some white folks to active help, like the little old deaf Quaker, seem only to increase race antagonism in others."

"Can you give an example of that?" I asked.

"Why yes," he replied: "the time I asked our school trustees to qualify for a Rosenwald grant for Negro schools. You see, it was this way. The Rosenwald Foundation made grants for school projects it approved provided the trustees furnished their quota. But when I put a proposition for improvements of our schools up to our School Board they flatly refused. They didn't seem to want us to get on anyway."

"What did you do then?" I asked. "Did you have to give up?"

"Oh no," he said, "I just put on my hat and went to Chicago to talk over the proposition with Mr. Rosenwald, himself. I told him it was my people who really were being punished instead of the School Board. My proposition to him was that we be allowed, under his rules, to side-step our non-cooperative School Board altogether and somehow raise the money ourselves since we were the interested parties."

"I couldn't make him see, at first, that what he was trying to relieve us of was what we were willing to shoulder ourselves since our School Board had refused to help and the alternative was to give up our determination

to have good schools.

"To show what I meant, I told him about Old Poplar School; how we earned the lumber by overtime at the saw-mills, worked on the building ourselves and finally raised enough by penny collections to get the thing finished--all pulling together. I said we wanted to be independent of School Boards, if necessary, and of worrying over whether they were for us or against us. We wanted to get on without them if they didn't want to help us."

"This story finally put the proposition over but I shall never forget the expression on Mr. Rosenwald's face when at last my project struck home. When I said, "Mr. Rosenwald, we want to be let in on our own salvation!" he burst out laughing and said, "All right then! I will match dollar for dollar whatever you are able to raise yourselves when a School Board won't come across!"

"I never heard a story to match that one before," I said. "It was..."

"Well, I went home feeling our self-respect had been saved," he said, "but I confess that when I faced the problem of again raising money for another Gloucester school, I felt a little as I did when I went out of Old Bottom Jail with thirteen delinquent boys hanging onto my coat tails and no idea what to do with them."

"Plainly it was now up to me to devise means by which my people could earn extra money to give for the school because many of them were so poor they could not contribute even to a penny collection. However, I firmly believe that their inability to give ought not to stand in the way of their feeling they were free and useful citizens having a privilege, as well as an obligation, to share in the community project of getting a new

school to which their own children could go. Surely even the poorest had that right! It must not be presented as a burden, but as an opportunity to use their freedom by refusing to remain inactive and ignorant, whatever the School Boards did."

"Right here in Gloucester we were in immediate need of a High School so that we could start training our own teachers. Our achievement in getting a new school building with the whole of two rooms and additional teacher had seemed, in the early days, a big step forward but most of the children who were taught did not go beyond what would now be called the fifth grade and that was not far enough. My career as a teacher had lasted only six years but the education of my people continued to be one of my keenest, ever-present interests. As I realized the limitations of our provision I became more and more dissatisfied and began to plan for a school that would carry Negro boys and girls through the seventh grade. It seemed to me that the white School Board members would be glad to see us providing teacher-training for our own young people. Wouldn't you have thought that way too? White teachers did not want positions in schools for Negroes."

"You were certainly right!" I replied.

"On several occasions I took up this matter with the School Board but was met with lively opposition, first on one point and then on another. One member made the excuse that there was no money for such an undertaking as a High School for Negroes. The Superintendent of the Gloucester Public Schools emphatically expressed the opinion that, beyond knowing how to read and write, Negroes didn't need any further education. He, for one, would never approve the appropriation of one penny towards any advanced training."

"Inwardly, I became very indignant when the mental ability of our children was attacked. I held onto my temper but, as I left the room, with the picture of their eager little faces before me, I turned and said, "Gentlemen, I am sorry you cannot help us but we are going to have a High School anyhow!"

"I hadn't an idea in the world as to how it could be done but if the white people would not let any part of the colored people's tax money go towards training Negro teachers we must, somehow or other, build such a school ourselves. I asked a group of colored men to my home to confer on the matter. This was followed by a public meeting at Bethel Church to lay the project before all of our people."

"Most of them showed their usual moral courage and enthusiastically decided that it was right to have such a school. And since we could not get it from the School Board they would all begin to raise the necessary funds themselves."

"The need was so obvious that this time we got a loan from the Bank, appropriations from the Jeanes and Rosenwald Funds and the balance we raised penny-nickel-and-dime fashion."

"A few opposed us, as always, and contributed nothing but discouragement and criticism. This is always the case with a project requiring imagination and idealism. But the opposition couldn't hold the rest of us back. Again we did the impossible."

"That was the only really practical way to manage," I said approvingly. "But tell me some more."

"I suppose you would like to hear about my most daring adventure of all," he exclaimed. "It happened at a much later date and was due to my

being over tempted by a bargain at an auction. There was special need, at that time, for a boarding department for the Gloucester Training School."

"The Gloucester Training School," I said, "I thought it was a High School that you succeeded in building."

"That was the High School," he replied. "We just called it the Training School because of the prejudice of some white people to Negroes having facilities on a par with schools their own children attended."

"But to return to my story," he went on, "the Training School was the only place in Gloucester where our boys and girls could go beyond the seventh grade. There was no building where the girls could live whose homes were too far from the School to make the daily journey. But so eager were our people to take advantage of what the School offered that many pupils came twenty or twenty-five miles in motor trucks or automobiles. Others drove from twelve to fifteen miles daily in buggies. I saw this state of affairs could not continue yet we not only had no room for them in existing buildings but no money was available to put one up. Again, there had to be a pioneer plunge for the sake of betterment."

"Now, it happened that not far from our School was a forty-three acre farm belonging to the County with an old building on it that was once used as an almshouse--originally a slave-owners' mansion. It happened that, just at this time, the old place was put up for sale at public auction at Gloucester Court House. Everybody went including myself. Suddenly, although I didn't have a dollar, I started in bidding with the rest because I was struck by the idea that the place was the practical answer to our need for a boarding department of our teacher-training enterprise! I was

so carried away by this idea and by the realisation that the opportunity would not come again, that I kept on bidding until, all at once the auctioneer called out 'Going, going, gone!' and, pointing his finger at me, he shouted: "T. C. Walker, it's yours at \$2,175.00!"

"For a moment I sat there dazed, I confess. However, possession of the place seemed so altogether right for the future development of our school that I had been confident as I bid, that others would realize our necessity and would help pay for the property. But I was to have a few realisations myself first. I was sharply reminded of the financial side of my newly assumed responsibilities when the Commonwealth Attorney touched me on the shoulder and told me to come right over to his office to make the down payment and fix up the papers."

"I had not faced the fact that a down payment had to be made immediately but I certainly was not going to fail on a deal. So I played for a little time--until the next day--and went to Hampton just as fast as I could get there."

"Luckily for me, Doctor Buttrick,, of the General Education Board of the Rockefeller Foundation, happened to be there with Doctor Frissell when I burst in with the news about the old almshouse and told them what a fix I had gotten myself into for the School. To my immense relief they were very sympathetic and saw the matter just as I did because it was acreage near the school and had a building on it already."

"Doctor Buttrick said: 'I'll take care of one thousand dollars for a cash payment so you can go back to the County Treasurer and settle that. And I'll take up the matter of title with my Board.' The hope was that the Board would retain the title until I could somehow complete the

purchase price.

"So with a thousand dollars in hand I went back and faced the Commonwealth Attorney who gave me time to get the balance.

"This I finally did with the help of a Bank loan and contributions-- mostly from Northern friends of Negro education. Three other colored men went with me to the Bank where I borrowed what was still owed on my personal note. This the other two endorsed. I had hoped I could raise the rest from my own people but some of the men were disgruntled. They didn't see the necessity for the purchase and so I had to assume the entire obligation myself."

"You don't mean," I said incredulously, "that they let you do that? How could you manage with all your other responsibilities and struggling movements?"

Lawyer Walker parried this question a little. "Oh, I managed," he said, "but it took me two or three years to do it. You see, some of my people couldn't understand what it was all about. That shows how much they need education. They thought I was scheming to get control of this property myself because it was in my name after I completed the purchase price. So, in order to show them that I was acting in good faith, I finally got the County surveyor to cut off twenty acres, including the part on which the house stood, and Mrs. Walker and I signed a deed giving it to the School Board. We then fitted up the old slave mansion as a boarding place for the girls and teachers. It houses thirty."

"So the girls were cared for at last! But what to do with the boys? Fortunately, there was another building on the property that had been a laundry and we decided to use it for them. But we had no furniture for it.

However, a man named Carter, who had three boys of his own, got a club, of which he was the leader, so interested in this project that the members said they would raise enough funds to fix it up. We now have seven buildings and nobody blames me any more for what I did, without a dollar, at the auction. What I saw in the future for our training School has now become its past."

"It has become a most interesting bit of history!" I amended.

"All pioneering is history I suppose," he said reflectively.

"But I must tell you of one of the liveliest occasions in our fight to get the schools we had been paying for for years. An illiterate old Negro made a last minute rescue of one of our dearest projects after the white people had raised every objection possible to it because, they explained, they were "opposed to Negroes having so much education!"

"Certain members of the white School Board, and some County authorities too, did not hesitate to pile one insult on another when I went before them to make a plea for my people. So I took to the argument that if they would put themselves in our place they might see the situation as it really was. I said: 'Hearing you folks talk like that makes it difficult for me to keep my people from getting prejudiced against white folks. It is a question of justice. We pay our taxes.'"

"Well," they finally said, "You can use our discarded high school building if you will move it onto the two acre tract"--referring to one they had in mind."

"But another Board member immediately objected saying: "That tract is too small. "

"Now we were too experienced in dealing with School Boards not to have anticipated that some hitherto concealed obstacle would be brought out to defeat our plan, after a first move of apparent generosity. We were so sure that some such thing would happen that we had taken along an old Negro friend primed to turn the tables on the Board at exactly the right moment."

"The time came. 'You say two acres ain't enough?' he said, peering at the objecting Board member. 'Well then, I'll give four acres myself!' And, with a flourish in my direction exclaimed 'Lawyer Walker, draw the deed.'

"The blank look on the faces of those School Board members, at this sudden solution of our new problem by this old Negro, made us leave with the feeling that one more small advance had been made in the development of our Gloucester schools and by a member of our own race. We all laughed as we went out feeling that it was to everybody's interest for us to have properly trained Negro teachers if we were to have segregated schools."

"It always gives me a genuine thrill when I see extreme prejudice falter and break from the impact of an appeal to a hitherto undiscovered sense of justice. It can and does happen!" I said.

Lawyer Walker thought a moment. Then he said: "Well, I suppose a good illustration of what I just said is the story of what happened when a danger point was reached for Negro children because of the way they were over-crowded into unfit vehicles. When I made an appeal for safe and humane provision one school official met it with: 'You Negroes have been living here a good many years without such transportation for your children. Why are you setting up such a howl now?'"

"I said: 'That is true. Your white children have had transportation for long years and all that time Negro parents have been paying taxes for it. Now you have an opportunity to pay us back for what we have provided so that your children can ride free.'

"The point I want to make is that this unswerving stand for fair play resulted in a committee of representative white and colored people to work out this whole matter on a tax-paying, non-racial basis. This was actually done."

"Sometimes I have shifted money-raising to new shoulders by starting clubs of interested individuals who will carry on annually without any more help. Such an organization was developed after I found that going up and down the whole State of Virginia raising money for Negro schools was seriously interfering with my other work. I had to remember always that I had to raise some money for myself and my family by running my farm profitably and by practicing law."

"The School Improvement Leagues, educational associations, and other groups along with many churches and Sunday Schools formed the Negro Organization Society to carry the load of improving public school buildings, teachers' salaries, extension of school terms, school libraries and furnishing books and clothing to children whose parents could not send them to school unless such necessities were supplied."

"Our progress has been, on the whole, relatively steady but anyone who will come down to look us over will see how much remains to be done and won't see how much has already been accomplished because nobody nowadays can imagine how much of nothing we Negroes had to start with."

"Glancing back over my many experiences in money raising it summarizes to this: Believe in your proposition yourself, take your hearers into your

confidence in its value and plan, work up a genuine co-operative spirit of happiness in helping others.

"After all, money raising, like everything else, must be based on understanding the needs of that for which funds must be raised as well as the needs of those who give -- the need for learning how to help. Both must be taken into account. This reminds me of a story told of two Negro messengers who were sent up to the firing line during the Rebellion with important dispatches. Before they got there they were both shot down. One of them found he was blinded and the other had lost the use of his legs. So the blinded one took the lamed one on his back to do the seeing and together they went right on and delivered their dispatches.

"People just can't get on without learning how to supplement, how to help each other to understand one another's handicaps, and to join forces."

"It can all be done with zest and I've always found that the first thing to do in a money-raising campaign is to raise a laugh."

CHAPTER XI

JIM CROWISM

We had planned to talk on quite another topic than Jim Crowism at our next appointment on behalf of the book, But Lawyer Walker came in laughing and pointing his finger straight at me he exclaimed triumphantly, "I guess we will have to take up Jim Crowism today after all!"

Then, settling into a chair he continued. "The Northerners certainly haven't anything on the Southerners here in this building. Those other stories I was going to tell you today will have to wait for another chapter."

"What," I exclaimed, "can have happened to you here? I'm sure anyone who did anything rude will be glad to apologize if I follow it up."

"Oh no, it wasn't as bad as that," he hurried to say, "just a matter of climate. I'll tell it before I succeed in forgetting it. I've learned how to do that about all such incidents. It was only that there was no one in the lobby when I came so I stepped into the elevator. But the elevator did not start right off and before it did a nice, white-haired old gentleman got in too. However, when he saw me he backed out again and said he would wait for the next trip."

"Oh, I'm sorry! I said, "what did you do?"

"Why I immediately followed him out and stood at his back with the apology that if I had seen him come in I would have waited. Then we entered the elevator together with with me well behind him--white man first. The funny part of it was the reaction of the Negro elevator operator. He tipped me a wink and I saw him burst laughing when the old gentleman and I both got out on this floor--I trailing him in the proper segregatory fashion. Quite Southern I assure you."

"It's a shame that it happened to you," I said with indignation.

"Don't feel that way about it," he hurried on to say, "he was doing what to him was the proper thing--upholding the aristocratic heritage of the Old South, dominated by the action patterns of white ascendancy--that is, by Jim Crowism. I had to conform to his pattern to show him that I understood him better than he understood me. This I did by being very mannerly according to his idea of good manners. It was exactly the same situation I was in with Major Bland at first.

"Please," he said, when he noticed my distress, "I only told you of this incident because it decided me to let you dig for the chapter on Jim Crowism right now. It brought the subject uppermost in my mind. Don't be down on that nice old gentleman! He's what an ole' time Negro would call 'quality' -- just out of date. He might come 'round as gracefully as Major Bland in time but--not by argument; only by being managed as I had to manage the Major.

"But to get on with my subject," he said, "I have sometimes attempted to get a rational explanation from such white people as to why, in a democracy worth dying for, the federal, state, county and municipal governments fail to recognize us, native born tax-payers, as fellow citizens

having as full citizenship rights^{as} those that are given newly naturalized citizens from foreign countries. I sometimes think that if freshly naturalized Europeans refugees found themselves denied expression of their political freedom, in ways still current in many of our States affecting the American Negro, they might feel they would better have stayed where they were.

"Members of other racial groups are not forcibly segregated as we are. One of the first things they are urged to do is to vote in every election. They speak and sing of "the freedom that is America" but it is a freedom the native-born Negro has not yet completely experienced; you know that from your own observations.

"Only a grim sense of humor can prevent a Negro's having a rather hopeless feeling about his citizenship rights when he hears of dinners that are given by Chambers of Commerce to welcome newly naturalized citizens into full voting and other privileges, and remembers how his ancestors were inducted into the slave system upon their arrival at these shores---immigrants too, but not of their own free will.

"A certain white Christian minister actually glowed with enthusiasm when he told of being invited by his Chamber of Commerce to be host to a group of nine hundred newly naturalized people from thirty-two countries. New citizens from four different nationalities sat at his table. After dinner, they all joined in singing the National Anthem and "God Bless America." He said the zest with which those foreign born people sang made thrills run up and down his spine for, himself a native America, he had no idea that the United States meant so much as "a refuge and home for freedom loving people."

"A white friend of mine reminded him that in many parts of the United

States first class citizenship did not include Negroes like me whereas newly naturalized people stepped immediately into a citizenship unhampered by trick literacy tests such as we were often subjected to or the Grandfather's Clause, or segregation. He was astonished and said he had not thought of that. That's why I want it put in the book. Maybe other ministers don't realize it either.

"The Southern people have always believed they know us better than the Northerners but it was the Northerners who came down to help us and who first demonstrated in Virginia that we were worth educating. Remember, though, not all Northerners took that view. There were slaves in Boston once. The misconceptions of white people about Negroes seem inexhaustible but I admit that I have had to correct a good many misconceptions in myself about white people in my work as pioneer."

"Just what do you mean by that?" I said.

"Well," he observed reflectively, "I used to take for granted that a national calamity like a total war, in which Negroes made equal sacrifices along with the whites, would end Jim Crowism on trains at any rate. But even in the Second World War our Negro men in uniform travelling from points north of Washington to points south on furloughs, or to camp, were separated from their white comrades in arms after leaving the Capital of our democracy and segregated in "colored" cars for the remainder of their journeys. That still happens."

"Tell me about it," I said.

"Well," he replied, "in one instance, a light-colored Negro soldier, travelling at night in a day coach, had his white wife and child with him. At

Washington the conductor told him to move to the Jim Crow car and his wife and child started to go with him. This the conductor would not allow. He said they had to stay "white." As the argument went on the whole car full of people got aroused and took the Negro's side. The conductor could do nothing but let him "stay white" too!"

"I wonder whether any one of those white passengers would have shown such moral courage if it had not been for the support of the others!" I commented.

"I have spoken before of the need for individuals of each race seeking out individuals of the other who are worthy of trust," he continued, "but a Negro in uniform is not a racial proposition. He is a representative of Uncle Sam--a white uncle, by the way--in the service of a democracy that has not shown itself to be very democratic towards the Negro, in the service or out of it.

"Although segregation and racial discrimination in the armed forces have caused some bitterness among our people, their overall patriotism has not wavered. Rather have they spoken up for the practice of the democracy for which they were told they must fight.

"A Negro fisherman, whose work takes him far out into the Atlantic, told me how he felt when one day he saw a submarine rise right near him. Thinking it was an enemy craft he expected attack and possible death. When he discovered it was an American vessel, he said, 'Such a wave of gratitude for my country swept over me that I realized for the first time how much I cared for it!'

"The war spirit stirs up the dregs of old prejudices from the very bottom. As General Armstrong said, "War is not a remedy for anything." It

has, indeed, brought new tensions in contacts between the races."

"If you can tell a story to illustrate that I'd like to put it in," I said.

"Here's one of the many. There were some fanatically prejudiced white soldiers who expressed themselves as opposed to Negroes wearing the uniform of the United States and so informed some Negro soldiers of my acquaintance who were standing near. The white soldiers said that under no circumstances should any of them be required to salute a Negro, soldier or not. At this, one of the Negro soldiers stiffened up, saying, "I am an American. If need be I will die for my country. I care nothing whatever for your salute but I do care for my country."

"Now it so happened that just after this rejoinder some white officers came along. The Negro soldiers snapped to attention, saluting them respectfully as they passed. The officers returned the salute with equal respect while the white soldiers looked on."

"Those two opposing attitudes gave a good demonstration of wrong race relations and right race relations bound up in the same incident." I remarked.

"I heard another Negro private who had just returned from overseas service," he went on, "remark that he had found out there are many advantages for Negroes in other countries that are not permitted them in the United States." But he added, "in spite of all that, give me the United States!"

"Segregation and Jim Crowism mean just the same thing--discrimination against the Negro. Foreigners of many races are free to go where we are still refused admittance. Segregation is found not only in places where we may live

but is widespread in churches, schools, trains, busses, restaurants and many places of amusement even in our capital city of Washington; although there are signs of its breaking down.

"When it comes to housing it is common knowledge that districts where Negroes are permitted to live are often poorly policed, poorly lighted, and more neglected in every way than are white neighborhoods. I wish white people would take the trouble to check me up on this. Negroes often have to live in sections that, because of unsanitary conditions, have been abandoned as unfit by white people. Segregation has been statistically proven to be a disease-breeding, degrading practice. The alleys in Washington where many Negroes have to herd in back of high-grade white residences are publicly recognized as a national disgrace.

"Now right here I want to point out that Negroes, like people of every other race, like to live in colonies of their own people but on a basis of free association, congeniality and similar standards of living. This I suppose may be called voluntary segregation. It is to the principle of enforced segregation to which my people object for it makes white supremacy the dominating factor in deciding where the Negro shall live, work, play, even worship and find entertainment.

"That aspect of segregation known as "Jim Crowism" is the expression of antagonism against our particular race. It has its roots chiefly in fear of social equality and all that it might lead to; also in hate and prejudice of many sorts against us. It cannot be eliminated over night. I believe that legislation to abolish its unjust practices is educationally helpful but I know that anti-segregation laws will be no more effective than our Constitutional amendment against racial discrimination unless the attitudes

that promote segregation are dissipated by democratic ideals of citizenship and by fair-minded attitudes of individuals whose example will be influential.

"It is within my own lifetime that some white people of the South seriously considered, as the only way to settle the race problem, our 'repression, colonization, segregation and even our extermination!' I have sometimes wondered what means they thought of using to exterminate us."

"It seems incredible!" I said.

"White folks haven't known what to do with us!" he exclaimed. "Their attitude expresses itself so oddly that often a Negro doesn't know what treatment he is going to get from a white group - even when he is invited to make an address before it.

"Sometimes organization groups have asked me to speak in hotels. If I happen to find myself alongside a white person going to the meeting and he invites me into the elevator, obviously as someone accompanying him, I do not get put out. But, if I am alone and wait for the regular elevator the operator will probably say, "Go around to the freight elevator!"

"One time this happened even after I showed the operator the bulletin board where my name as speaker appeared in large letters right by the elevator door.

"Another time, when I was scheduled to speak at a white branch of the Inter-racial Commission, I had to ride up to the meeting by the freight elevator in order to keep the date. Those coming to hear me went up from the lobby. I had a good laugh at that because the Commission is trying to eliminate this type of degrading discrimination against us but they did not think to prevent its happening that very night.

"Jim Crow skirmishes have always kept me busy as a lawyer. Not only have I had an increasing number of my own people to defend but also more of the white people have become aroused about difficulties they constantly have to surmount in order to justify their attitudes towards us. As you know, I rarely get an opportunity to handle members of both races at the same time. A mixed audience in the South is not to be expected. I came to see that mere defensive measures against unfair practices towards us would absorb all my energies and get us nowhere. The more we were shoved around as a race the more I saw the necessity for teaching our children how to be proud of being Negroes and how to help their race on by being courteous and self-respecting. I used to say that when you save a man or woman you save only a unit but when you save a boy or girl you save a whole multiplication table."

"Could you tell," I asked, "what is the psychological effect of segregation--whether expressed by Jim Crowism on trains, in hospitals, places of entertainment or worship, or residence districts?"

"It is just the same as a quarantine sign for contagious diseases," he answered. "It generates a strange fear as of something "catching." The distance widens between the races; they become more suspicious and more ignorant of each other. Some white people are afraid to meet a Negro walking along a "white" street at night. They believe he is there for no good purpose because it is not the "colored" section.

"Yet, in many of the finest houses, in "white" sections, you will find highly regarded Negro maids and, in the South, Negro women are sought as "Mammies," as cooks who handle the food, and in every other intimate relationship

of domestic life by the white families. The antipathy cannot be physical in such arrangements as those but it seems to become so outdoors; for example, in a bus, in Jim Crow cars, white movie houses, in elevators and many other places. Can you yourself explain it to me?"

"I only wish I could!" I said miserably.

"Some day, perhaps, the psychologists will open a clinic for the treatment of race-prejudice," he said brightly. "Race prejudice is a dangerous complex as race riots prove. Results from them demonstrate that the white race cannot make much headway, itself, at the expense of ours."

"I don't think it has always been at the expense of yours spiritually," I protested. "That is, in spiritual compensations, you have often triumphed over us--in slavery times very often. Your spirituals are evidence of it."

"In that connection," he said, "I'll have to give you a story that the slaves themselves used to tell about one of their number who was called Uncle John.

"Uncle John was owned by a planter who often boasted that he was the richest man in the County. He got richer and richer as the years passed until he thought of nothing else. One night he had an alarming dream. It was that the richest man in the County died at half past six in the morning. He took it as a warning and lay awake becoming more and more terrified at its possible significance. But six-thirty passed and he was still alive.

"When he went out to inspect his crops one of his slaves asked him if he had heard the news."

"What news?"

"Uncle John died this morning."

"What time?" he asked.

"Half past six."

"He was the best man on this plantation!" exclaimed the owner.

Then, as he saw the grief stricken faces all around him the meaning of his dream came to him. To all the other slaves Uncle John had, indeed, been the richest man in the County. Could it be that he was the poorest in their sight?

"Just as, in many white churches, so it is in restaurants and shops," he continued. "Even when not regulated by law, the spirit of segregation establishes segregation. Whole groups of people seem to feel it is somehow aristocratic to act as if they were superior to the whole Negro race. They will dine along with Chinest at Chinese restaurants and eat without protest in the same places as foreigners of different origin without raising the bogey of 'social equality'. But not with us, although we do not seek it.

"I have sometimes had to go without luncheon in counties where I went to plead cases for my clients because the local hotel or public restaurants would not admit me. Occasionally, a friendly and understanding white citizen has gone to his home and brought me back a tray of food that I have eaten in the Court House for lack of any other place to sit down."

"Tell me," I said. "In the Jim Crow institutions when a Negro is attended by a white physician in a hospital, does he go to his "white office" after discharge? I know your family thinks everything of the one you consult."

"Oh yes, white physicians often have a large Negro practice. Usually such doctors, or dentists, have separate entrances for us, separate waiting rooms, and sometimes separate treatment rooms--although not always."

"Is there the same difference of standard in the Negro waiting rooms that there is in white and Jim Crow cars on the railroads?" I asked.

"Well," he said reluctantly, "generally the white waiting-rooms are superior to those reserved for us colored people."

"But where the treatment rooms are the same for both races," I pursued with surprise, "are the same stethoscopes and other instruments used for both races?"

Lawyer Walker smiled kindly. "You will find the same inconsistencies in that respect as exist all along the invisible color line, the same difference as between inter-state and local busses. Yes, they are often just the same. If a white physician does not wish a Negro practice he will send Negroes elsewhere or say he is 'too busy.' We understand and go away.

"If more Negroes could get good medical training and internships we would go to them usually, of course. We feel that the Jim Crowism is not as often in the doctors as in their white patients. To develop a white practice they have to observe white prejudices.

"The thing I am glad to say," he went on, "is that in my long and varied experience it has been the genuine aristocrats, the 'quality' people, and the best physicians, who have been most sympathetic and helpful to us in our welfare struggles and who have given us the most encouragement, once our leaders have, themselves, taken the initiative.

"Moreover, here and there, race attitudes are changing and sometimes in an extraordinary way, often where you'd least expect it too. For instance, I was the first Negro ever asked to speak in a certain white church in Virginia and the meeting was thrown open to both races. About half of those who came were white and the rest were Negroes. The church could not

hold them all so the windows were opened and many listened from outside -- all grouped together.

"What I had been asked to talk about was facts and facts are always just what I want to give. Among other facts I told them how the white children rode to school in busses while the Negro children have to walk. This was such news to them that, following my talk, they made this situation a local issue and in less than a year the authorities provided busses for the Negro children, too.

"It is this kind of result I mean when I say our progress depends mainly on our own initiative in presenting our housing difficulties, segregation and struggles to get educated so we can be intelligent citizens. Yet it is exactly such initiative that the Negro often finds it hardest to take because of the road blocks of race prejudices.

"I am often invited to speak in white churches, before women's clubs, and in private schools about our race problems. I don't remember any more heartening ovations than I have had at some high grade white schools and they have asked me to come again, too."

"They need to be educated about your people," I said, "and, little by little, the leaven will work."

"I hope so," he said rather sadly, "but I have often wondered when travelling how many, even of those among the whites who think they are our friends, have ignored the signs "White" and "Colored" and sat Jim Crow in trains south of Washington or have ever raised their voices in protest against this segregation practice. The only Negroes that white people meet on such trains are the waiters and porters who serve them.

"A white friend of mine rode in a Jim Crow car to find out the truth.

She learned, first hand, how patent medicine fakes, cancer and tuberculosis 'cures', low-grade magazines, and other undesirable things were peddled in the crowded Jim Crow cars but not permitted in those set aside for white people. One day the conductor told her it was against the law for her to ride in colored cars. She answered that she was acting in accordance with the Constitution of the United States and if that conflicted with any law she was for letting the law take its course. Both were respectful to each other and she had no further trouble."

"One mustn't be provocative in fading out the color line," I commented. "But first steps are better taken by those having the initiative, the whites. I've travelled Jim Crow both in trains and ⁱⁿ other public vehicles without incident in Virginia. If enough of us did it, quietly and courteously, as individuals, the problem would be solved I think. Is there any sign of a let-up?"

"There was a meeting in Virginia some time ago," he answered, "to strengthen segregation laws. It disturbed my people greatly. But I said: 'If you want to get a bull off a bridge, don't rush at him, shouting and waving a red flag, but approach him cautiously, in a friendly manner, and lead him gently away.'"

"What I meant was that when a white leader urging tighter segregation gets panicky over the race problem the last thing we ought to do is to get panicky too. Some of my people say that if we had money, votes, and a champion in the legislature the movement for wider segregation would have stopped short. But much experience in dealing with fanatical folks has convinced me that, while money, votes, and political influence would have brought some change it would not, in the long run, add to race progress because it would be built on a wrong foundation. In fact, such methods bring secondary reactions that may make situations worse than ever. And they would certainly weaken our own morale -- the worst thing that could happen. The bull might then have gored us and been publicly hailed as victor!"

"You use the bus a good deal," I said, "can't you tell of some segregation incident that happened to you personally?"

"Why yes," he replied. "Just a few weeks ago I was sitting at about the center of a bus on the Greyhound Line. This was in accordance with a decision of the Supreme Court that segregation was not legal on interstate transportation even though it might be practiced on local vehicles, where, as you know, only the back seats can be used by Negroes. That is, we become subject to federal regulations just as interstate freight. On interstate vehicles we could sit down wherever there was a vacant seat. But you can't change human nature by legislation.

"Well, a bunch of white people came in and the back seats were vacant. But the white people would not take them; they didn't want to sit in "nigger seats" they said. So the conductor asked me to move to the rear. Of course the law was on my side but I rose with a bow and said, 'With pleasure!' At least, I thought, I can build up a reputation for courtesy in my race and I got a quiet laugh out of it too. The white folks did not look any too comfortable. On local busses I have to segregate myself on a "nigger seat."

"Once a Negro lawyer in Richmond spoke of this and said: "How do you manage to get along with those crackers down there?"

"Why," I answered, "I don't have much trouble with the crackers. My trouble is with myself. If I can keep myself from getting mad the crackers won't bother me.

"One thing I have to laugh at," he went on, "often white people who don't notice me on the streets in the South or sit beside me in an interstate bus, will stop and shake hands with me if they meet me in a place where they

are not known. It's very spotty indeed but, you know, spots fade out and will fade out more in the light of the days that are to come."

"It's knowing how to get on with folks that helps you bring about a better understanding between the races!" I observed.

"But our young men still are barred from many lines of work solely on account of their color. Opportunities for young Negroes have been created by some of our own leaders, especially such wage-earning occupations as will make it unnecessary for our young men to leave their home towns and go to find work in large urban centers. But it has been a difficult struggle and still is."

"You mean commercial enterprises? Where did the capital come from?" I asked.

"Some of Negroes had capital to invest in projects that would pay back in profits. For instance, a group of us organized a transportation company to operate trucks and busses by qualified Negroes. Driving a truck did not involve a college education but this move roused bitter opposition from those white people who did not want any Negroes to enter their field. But some other white people joined with us to build up lines routed between Virginia and New York. We have also established another route running south.

"The stand I took in this fight was that the opposing factions must both see the need for some organization that would help both races. I argued with the opposition that if they expected Negroes to be honest, and of benefit to the communities in which they live, they would have to face the necessity for their being assured of economic stability. If

there was nothing for them to do they might get on the relief rolls.

"I have already told of some typical experiences Negro passengers have when travelling on bus lines--but not all. They are often refused food and service in lunch rooms at bus stops. I, myself, have gone hungry many times when travelling and have watched women and children being denied the right to buy food at public lunch counters. Sometimes we can get a bit if we hang around until all the white passengers have been served but more often we go without unless we have brought some food with us.

"The same sort of thing is true of cities. When trying to buy a sandwich over a lunch counter to take along with me I have had a Negro waiter say to me, 'No, boss, this food is for white patrons only.'

"After pleading in vain that the Negro's body has as much need of nourishment as the white man's, I felt that the only way out was for Negroes to establish places of their own where food could be bought. I have, therefore, spent much time and effort in encouraging them to enter such lines of business as would meet the needs of our people along travelled routes such as restaurants, lunch counters, etc.

"It has been an uphill and discouraging piece of work because of white objections to our working up new opportunities that were regarded as competitive with white business. I said to one such objector: 'I should think you white people would favor our having our own places near bus stops where Negroes can buy some food. If only to survive, we have no choice but to develop legitimate business activities for ourselves.' But he couldn't see it that way."

"Speaking of equality in business opportunities," I observed, "What is it the white people are afraid of? Is it that equal status in schools, transportation and business might lead to social equality? We don't think the Chinese, or even naturalized Russians, are trying to get into our social sets just because they freely attend our public schools, sit where they please on local vehicles, south or north, and enter any kind of business they want to."

"I can't understand it myself!" he replied. "And I doubt if anybody can. I find it true that pioneering by us is necessary because experience has shown me that we must not expect to depend upon white people to take the initiative in freeing us from later manifestations of racial bondage. We must win our way by earning the respect of both races. I have often made myself unpopular by taking up the cudgel in defense of white people, insisting that they were not all hostile to us and that, if some of them were, it was the business of friendly Negroes to help change that attitude."

"It is largely our own weaknesses that prevent us from attaining our rightful place in our country's life. No Negro should depend too much on organized groups either but, as an individual, he must stand for impartial justice to all races. If all the members of our big organizations were individually mature, think how much they could do!"

"However, there are certain matters where it seems to me that just common sense indicates that white leaders should help us until the color line fades more than it has. In this view I am violently opposed by some highly intelligent members of my own race. They say my attitude is that of the scorned 'white man's Negro' but I say it is a matter of judgment in timing."

"Can't you give an illustration of what you mean?" I asked.

Lawyer Walker thought awhile and then said: "Suppose I tell you about a situation in Virginia where some friendly white citizens suggested that the Board of Visitors of the State College for Negroes be organized with Negro personnel. I myself had doubts as to the wisdom of such a change at that time. That is, I considered it premature. The senator from my district, in speaking of this to another senator in the cloak-room of the Capitol said: 'Walker has not revealed the whole truth that is wrapped up in this discussion. He believes that the Board of Visitors of the Negro State College in Petersburg should be kept in the hands of the influential white elements because only they can secure a large enough appropriation for its operation.'

"He saw right through me and my apparent inconsistency in thinking that the Board should remain white, or mainly white, although I had so often appealed for complete Negro personnel in connection with other institutions for Negroes. I said that, in my opinion, it would be well to have one or two Negroes on the Board of Visitors but, as a matter of practical common sense, I believed the time had not yet come for that and if we stood out for it the standards would drop for lack of maintenance funds.

"Perhaps you can see, from what I have just told you, why many of my own people call me 'a white man's nigger.' But that can't do me any harm unless it is taken in the wrong way. But to fail to get support for important Negro institutions because of fear of being called names is to me what Booker Washington would call lack of common sense rather than inconsistency."

"What do you do when people treat you like that?" I asked.

"Toss them a biscuit?"

"I tell them they are making the color line tighter," he replied.

"A color line is a color line and it is just as wrong for us to make it against white people - so many of whom are our good friends - as for white people to lay down one to hold us back. To let oneself get bitter about anything at all erects a barrier. What we want is to break barriers down."

"How do you get them to see your point of view?" I asked.

"Sometimes I don't, but this is what I say," he answered. "As a lawyer, I am well aware of ^{the danger of} prejudging a case. Prejudice means pre-judging - in this case, judging a character by the color of the skin. That is emotional and emotions pass. Ignore them where you can, I say, just as I did that incident in your elevator but don't raise a subordinate issue at a time when it will risk an important need of our boys for an educational opportunity they can't otherwise get. I take the name-calling and add it to the collection I already have - and prize it! It's a form of Jim-Crowism."

"How did that term apply to segregation?" I asked.

"It's from the refrain of an old Negro song and dance," he replied.

"It is 'Wheel about and turn about and jump Jim Crow.' Race prejudice can boomerang. We must all keep that from happening."

"Next time let's do a chapter on an alarm clock for the State," he remarked suddenly.

"Now what can you mean by that?" I demanded.

"You'll see when we get to it," he said mischievously as he picked up his brief-case.

CHAPTER XIITHE COLOR LINE IN HEALTH

"I have already told how I have had to serve my people in all sorts of ways I hadn't been trained for," said Lawyer Walker as we prepared to start another chapter, "and now maybe I ought to say something about my having to lead off along the color line in health. Certainly, my three years at Hampton hadn't qualified me to do that except in general standards. I felt the limitations of my knowledge very keenly because of the desperate need of my people for information about preventive measures and care of their sick. Neither I, nor any other Negro in the State, could get such help anywhere but from the white people and yet, every time we tried to make a working contact with health officials we got thwarted by the color line.

"But I knew perfectly well that my people would take hold and apply such measures as they could if only they had the information given them in such a way that they would know how to use it. Even the oldest and most illiterate Negroes wanted to be taught about health. And they expected me to get it for them. Of course what I wished most was to have my people have practical white workers, who had had actual experience in the health field, teach them and particularly to get an opportunity for my people to ask such workers about their own health problems in open discussion. They had made sacrifices for churches and schools and I didn't doubt that they

would work for health if it weren't for the stone wall of race prejudice.

"I had spoken for years, in meetings and out, of the health danger we were to the white people as well as to ourselves. I pointed out that my people were taking communicable diseases into white households every day without knowing it. At night they went back to homes where there might be typhoid fever, tuberculosis uncontrolled, and the worst social diseases. I said that for their own sake they must get us educated because we were barred from getting training for our own people in public health work.

"I told the white people that we could get along, for the time being, with the school buildings we already had but that health conditions among Negroes had always been bad and were getting worse; that they could look at the official mortality rates if they wanted proof of it. Those rates were soaring higher much faster than those of the white people. My people made up one-third of the population of the State at the time of which I speak and more than three-quarters of the population was officially listed as "rural."

"The color line in health--well, epidemics just don't take any notice of it. But the insurance companies do! I don't know anything more democratic than a disease virus. No travelling salesman for even a nationally advertised product can solve the problem of distribution better than a disease germ. They are no respectors of persons nor are they halted by segregation--just the opposite, as every white health officer knows too well. They are not limited in their spread by race, creed or color or by anything but education as to how to prevent their spread, how to care for cases infected by them, and how to handle sanitation problems.

"Do you know that when I made such speech^{es} white physicians and white nurses were staffing the institutions for the Negro sick? Wouldn't you think that the feeling about segregating us would make the white people naturally insist that a Negro staff wait on an all-Negro clientele? It would be humanly understandable to me if some of the white physicians, and particularly the white nurses, had refused to treat colored patients and had excluded them from their practice. But they didn't! Every time you try to do it you will find that you can't rationalize about the color line.

"Do you know that when we Negroes tried to have certain institutions for Negro sick manned by colored staffs the white people put up determined opposition? To us it is plain common sense to take the view that staff members who have been brought up with the negro race would have better understandings of its characteristics and needs than white personnel could possibly have--no matter how hard they tried. You'd think, now wouldn't you, that white people who objected to sitting beside a Negro in a public bus when he is well would not insist upon giving him intimate physical care when he is sick in a hospital? What negro physicians we have would seem to have the right to internships in institutions for Negroes and that negro nurses would be permitted training for health work that would obviously help the entire community?

"It's incredible!" I said.

"But it was all too true," he went on with a grave shake of the head. Please be careful not to let the impression get into the book that white physicians and white nurses are neglectful of colored patients. That would

not be generally true as I and my family know from personal experience. I am talking only about the color line and of how it holds us back every time we try to do what seems to us only common sense with equal advantages to both races. The provision for our care has been so poor that we have wanted to make as little use of it as possible. That's my point. Jim Crow hospitals naturally have the same inconsistencies as all other Jim Crow devices.

"In the early days, and in some places yet, Negroes were segregated in hospital basements where conditions were anything but healthful and hospital services were very inferior from a health standpoint. But gradual improvement has taken place here and there and there is evidence to indicate that they will be speeded up when we get more Negro physicians and Negro nurses. I could illustrate the good and the bad with many actual instances but instead I'd like to tell how one white health officer jumped the color line and, in one important situation wiped it out when those who would have objected weren't looking.

"Everybody knew what our health situation was but nobody bothered about it. There had been a lot of see-sawing, back and forth, about health problems and a good deal of racial misunderstandings about it - on both sides. So I made up my mind I had to speak up for my poor people who were getting sick and dying every day for lack of knowledge the white people had or could get.

"One day I told a health officer who hadn't been in office very long, and who had sympathy and a sense of humor, how utterly discouraged I was about the hard and fast character of the color line and how dangerous the existing conditions were among my people. His response was just what I

had hoped for and he comforted me by saying that some pretty hot discussions had been going on in groups of leading white citizens as to letting us Negroes take part in certain health movements. He said: 'I am having just as hard a time with the color line as you are but a few white liberals have given in - to a limited extent.'

"I was so surprised that I asked how he had managed to get them interested in our health education and his answer was: "I showed them the figures to prove that your death rate from tuberculosis, typhoid fever, and other communicable diseases, was nothing short of appalling and I told them that just one big epidemic among your people might conceivably wake us up but, as long as I was a health officer I didn't intend to let that happen!"

"I have had many a talk with him," I said, "but I didn't know about this. He told me he was of Irish extraction and he had a delightful Irish humor."

"Well, then you can imagine how he said to me, with a twinkle in his eye, that I might as well understand what he was doing for us. He said he was 'forgetting to remember' a ruling, in what was then the most active white organization for social betterment, that Negroes could not become members of it. He said: 'I am not going to speak of it or raise any discussions about that ruling but I'm going to talk about how much we need the information you have, about health conditions among Negroes, that we cannot get, and maybe, somehow, you and a few others of your race will just naturally find yourselves functioning along with the whites in health education work.'

"And, as a matter of fact this unexpected opportunity did come about and later several of us were serving on the executive committee! They couldn't themselves get the information about Negro health that we had any more than we could get the information we needed that they had. It surely is a strange

world! I told you that this health officer left us with the impression that we would be slipped in to carry out a certain part of his program but in time we discovered that the Constitution and By-Laws of the organization had been quietly changed so that we had a right to belong. I want to put that in the book because it shows, not only the civic necessity for citizens to work together as citizens, for the good of all and without regard to race, but it demonstrates what one white person can bring about if he admits that fact and is unafraid and objective.

"Yes, it was the attitude of that health officer that got us our first working relationship with experienced leaders in social work from all over the country. We then learned that our white leaders had been conferring with social workers in other states about the dangerous conditions that had been revealed to them. Finally, so as to manage to have the best methods for different lines of work explained to the local public, they arranged a week-long conference with lectures and discussion periods held in Richmond. Then they hoped such movements as fitted Virginia's need would be started there. The meetings, it was announced, were to be public and of course we thought that meant that we could go.

"I knew, from my trips up North with the Hampton quartet, that the color line wouldn't exist for the Northern leaders who were coming yet, when we put out feelers to make sure our people were to be allowed in we were debarred by the color line. Yes, our black faces were to keep us from sharing the information and discussions about preventive and remedial health measures that I knew the Northern leaders would be so glad to let us listen to. Meetings advertised as 'public' were not open to us. That is what I was told when I asked about them."

"I wondered and wondered how it would be possible to make the intelligent white people - many of them kindness itself when it came to personal relations with my people - realize the risk they were running for themselves and their children by not letting us learn what the conference people were coming down to say at what was called the Conference of Social Work. I wondered how they would feel if they knew how much we wanted to come and that we - couldn't. They wouldn't be fooled by some statements that had been made to the effect that we weren't interested enough in health to come even if they let us. Look at our terrible mortality tables!

"However, as has so often happened, there were progressive white people who saw the health issue as more important than the race issue and special arrangements were made for some lectures and discussions which we were permitted to attend. And did we go? Why, my people were so eager to attend that many of them had to be turned away. Some of the Northern speakers said they had never before had such interested listeners and questioners as those Negroes. They were just starved for everything that had to do with babies, and juveniles, the aged and infirm, health and sickness. I myself had never seen them more anxious not to miss one word of guidance or advice.

"And it came to me, as I listened to those specialists in the kinds of betterments I had to plunge into, down in Gloucester in those early post-bellum days, that the welfare of all the people should be state-wide as well as promoted by private organizations. I saw anew that child delinquency, crime, disease, and so on, in my race have nothing to do with mental inferiority or being considered second class citizens but were due to our ignorance, our complete unawareness, of our rights as human beings - just that. It wouldn't be constitutional for the State to walk the color line so the next thing to do was to wake up the State!"

"I thought you began first with the City." I said. "What was it you said at some meeting that Doctor Douglas H. Freeman wrote up ^{the} next day in the News Leader? Someone sent me a copy of his editorial and it spoke specifically of what you personally had done to help both races and of how, wherever he went, as executive secretary of the Anti-Tuberculosis Association, he found you had been there first among your own people. What was it that made such an impression on everybody that night?"

Lawyer Walker looked puzzled for a moment and then burst out with: "Oh, I remember that! It wasn't so much what I said as Doctor Freeman's reaction to it. He is one of the best friends my people have ever had in Virginia. He isn't editor of that newspaper any more but is one of the South's most valued writers and historians. But what I said that evening was due to the fact that he was then Director of Publicity of our rather new State Board of Health which had our Irish friend on its staff. And he made a remark about my people that showed he was laboring under what I considered a dangerous misapprehension. It was a packed meeting, crowded to the doors of our church in Richmond with many distinguished white citizens besides delegates to the Conference on Social Work and Negro leaders too. I could not let the misunderstanding go uncorrected and so I spoke up then and there.

"Just what was it that you said to develop such an editorial from Doctor Freeman?" I persisted, "What was it he had said to rouse you so?"

"Well," Lawyer Walker said, settling back more firmly in his chair, "first of all, I knew he was genuinely our friend and that he wouldn't have made the derogatory remarks that he did before that critical audience of both races if he hadn't really believed he had a case - if you will pardon my legal term for it. It had to do with publicity material about all

the diseases that were dragging my people down and measures to prevent them, the information I told you we needed so much. Everybody always took very seriously everything Doctor Freeman said and he was one of the drawing-cards of the evening. So when, in his formal address, he made some derogatory remarks about us, in describing the educational work of his Association, I had to explain what had happened - from our point of view."

"But just what did he say?" I prompted,

"He said the Association had put out all sorts of helpful health pamphlets, free to the public, and spread out on the counters for all to see but Negroes had shown no interest in coming for them although the statistics of the Board of Health revealed increasing prevalence of tuberculosis, typhoid fever, and other dangerous diseases among us.

"How could I take that sitting down - knowing the situation as I did?"

"Of course you couldn't," I agreed, "but just what did you say?"

"Why, as soon as he had finished, I sprang to my feet and said: "Doctor Freeman, I can tell you why my people don't come for those pamphlets. They need them the worst way. But a few days ago I went to the office myself, for the purpose of getting some to study and pass on to my people. This is what happened: As I came up the steps a member of your staff saw me and yelled out: 'Hello Tom! What you doin' hyah?' It was as if there was something funny about a Negro wanting to learn how to prevent his race's health troubles!

"I said further, that there were not only Jim Crow health services and Jim Crow trains but there were Jim Crow hospitals too. I said that when my people refuse to go to them they are laughed at as being 'superstitious', but the only thing they are 'superstitious' about is from experience - they are

what you call 'superstitious' about the kind of treatment they may get there. This is because they have tried them out for medical advice and don't want to go through it again in many cases. Of course they need it. There are very few Negro physicians as yet, because Negroes have hardly any places to get good medical training, or hospitals to practice in if they do get it. I say right here that if Negro mortality goes down it will be because the manners of some of the health workers have gone up.

"I grant," I went on, "that my people are often uncouth and ignorant. They have been disadvantaged in every conceivable way from birth to the grave. But the advantaged people, like doctors and nurses, haven't - in our eyes - the same excuse. They should set us examples of courtesy as a matter of self-respect and without regard to our race. I tell my people, when such humiliations come to them as came to me when I went to your office for the health pamphlets for my people, that they must not be rude, like some of the white people, but for the sake of the reputation of their own people they must always be courteous and polite.

"I said that insurance companies cannot call us good risks as long as we have such a death rate, have no health education, or adequate medical help. Let me say, and emphasize, the fact that there are some white physicians who try to make up to us in kindness and attention for the experiences they know that our people so often have with other kinds of doctors and nurses. Such kindly doctors have encouraged and helped us by their example. I know this from the experience of my own family.

"I concluded by saying that no money could ever pay certain white physicians and white nurses for their consideration of the medical needs of my wife. I said all this in a bantering, friendly way but I delivered

some home truths about both races. I couldn't let those social work leaders from the North think my people weren't interested in learning about health after all I had said about their being allowed to hear some of them speak at special meetings arranged for us at the Conference."

"What did Doctor Freeman do?"

"He sprang to his feet just as soon as I had finished and was wondering what reaction I'd get from him and such a mixed audience. This is what he did: He said, 'I thank you for telling me about that incident at the office. I will do everything in my power to see that such a thing does not happen again.' Doctor Freeman is a true Southern gentleman!"

"And what was the reaction of the audience?"

"Everybody laughed, of course. Some of the best white people were nodding their heads shamefacedly and poking the others next them. My own people looked rather serious but I myself was laughing all the time and the atmosphere was friendly - but it struck the color line in health. So you can imagine how grateful I was for that editorial Doctor Freeman published next morning about the meeting and his appreciation of the progress my people were making in almost every direction. He said our efforts had been helpful to both races and, of course, nothing could have gratified me more than that from such a source as Doctor Freeman.

"I looked at Lawyer Walker in despair. "Lawyer Walker," I said, "you know perfectly well that the editorial gave all the credit to you and was about you. He told what you have done - at your own expense and what sacrifices you have made and how you always want to stay in the background and give other people the credit. It seems to me -"

"You must remember," he broke in, laughing and shaking his head, "that Doctor Freeman is just what I told you he is - a Southern gentleman."

"Our ignorance about health and sanitation is still much misunderstood," he continued. There has been a general movement of Negroes into urban centers - the most run-down parts of them - and, if you think a moment about what you have seen in rural districts, it will seem natural to you for our people not to know anything about municipal house-keeping. How could they without some instruction?

"What is basically wrong is lack of training in sanitation as it affects rural homes and farms. If our people got that they would carry the principles of it with them wherever they went. In my housing campaigns I always stress sanitation for humans as well as for the live stock that farmers are so apt to take better care of than they do of their wives and children."

"Everybody expects someone else to do the whole thing," I remarked.

"And, in this connection, about how much has politics to do with the sanitation problem? Doesn't it step over the color line and tangle up the issues?"

Lawyer Walker thought very hard over an answer to this for several moments. Then I heard a self-satisfying chuckle. "Politics, like germs," he began, "do go back and forth across the color line when it comes to any issue that has money in it for the winner. It's just too bad that the voting public is so indifferent that innocent people have to suffer for it. Yes, political considerations do sometimes hold back simple reforms and upset already established adjustments between the white and colored races.

"I'll have to tell you a story of how I couldn't keep out of politics because of a legal battle that kept the whole community indignant and amused.

"The Board of Health," he said, stopping to laugh at the mere memory of the contest, "was strongly on our side in a fight involving its authority over sanitary conditions in barber shops. It was one of the liveliest and bitterest struggles I ever undertook. I think I have never laughed as much or

been so roused in any contention as in that one. It revealed the absurd extent to which race prejudice can be carried. It was the crisis of an effort of white barbers to eliminate Negro barbers from competition with them.

"The humorous aspect of it was that, in the old days, it was always the slave who attended to the menial task of shaving his master. And, naturally enough, after our Emancipation, it was the free Negro who continued to carry on this trade; particularly in Southern cities. The Negro barber took pride in his work and in his shop and was patronized by the best white people.

"The white barbers wanted to segregate barbering so as to get this patronage for themselves and then to raise prices.

"Negroes were not generally eligible to join the Barber's Union. In Richmond there was a Negro Auxiliary, but membership in it hindered rather than helped the Negro cause for the simple reason that Negro members were required to pay dues but were never allowed to vote. They soon saw through this little ruse of membership in the so-called Auxiliary.

"Every trick on the calendar was tried to defame the Negro barbers and to undermine the preference that many white men had for them. The Union it was that had made a 'little mistake' this time by claiming among other things, that Negro barber shops were unsanitary and a menace to public health. To support this claim they offered a bill, known as the "Barber Bill," in the General Assembly of Virginia.

"This bill provided for the regulation of barbering in the whole state and was thinly disguised as "a health measure." One of its provisions was to take the supervision and regulation of barber shops out of the hands of

the official Board of Health and give it to a so-called Barber Board to be appointed from members of the Barber's Union. Furthermore, this Bill made it mandatory that only graduates of a Barber's College would be allowed to enter the trade. And, since Negroes were not permitted entrance to this College, they would be forced out of the business because the penalty for evasion was a heavy fine." Here Lawyer Walker paused for a hearty chuckle. Then, "since when had shaving and hair-cutting required a "College" degree! There was another provision that abolished the customary apprenticeship of training for barbering, just to make sure the Negro would not compete.

"Now here was a business in which an adjustment had already been worked out between the Southern white man and the Negro; one that had always brought them into friendly contact and which was one of the few business enterprises in which the majority of Southern white men definitely preferred Negro to white service and in which sanitary standards had usually been maintained.

"But at last the health authorities swung into action with all the power they had, against the attempt of the white barbers to relieve them, an officially appointed agency, of the supervision of sanitary conditions in barber shops. Their arguments against the bill were spirited and weighty. By taking the Department's part in the fight I found myself cooperating with white people against white people on a health issue. Surely a strange turn of events!

"I was so deeply incensed over the injustice of this Bill that every time it came up I volunteered my legal services free in opposing it and stayed

in Richmond just as long as it was under debate to the exclusion of almost everything else. The last time it appeared the hearings lasted for a whole month but we finally succeeded in bringing the measure down to defeat. Should it come up again, I certainly intend to be on hand to help with the fight, provided I am physically able to get there, even though those not so close to the facts as I, have said that I am trying to keep the Negro in "servitude" and "menial business." I hear that sometimes even yet.

"However, I am very sure that the white barbers who wish to monopolize the barbering trade would resent anyone's saying that they themselves wish to enter "servitude" or to monopolize a "menial business" by eliminating competition from barbering. At this time the Negroes have several up-to-date barber shops in Richmond. The passage of such a bill--now dead in committee--would put them out of business.

"But, we watch the corpse!"

CHAPTER XIII

SOME POLITICAL SKIRMISHES

"You asked me once if politics didn't get into our efforts for betterments down in Gloucester. Of course they did! But still, I was keenly aware of Major Bland's warning to me "to keep out of those devilish politics," when I asked his advice about studying law. I certainly did not contemplate ever becoming a candidate for any office. I believed that it was by education that my people could be helped most--education in every department of life but not political entanglements. However, I did not realize at that time that betterments were involved with politics in a very practical way." So did Lawyer Walker start in for the next chapter.

"We Negroes played but a small part in County or State Government in the early eighties. Many of us were qualified voters but did not know the first thing about how to exercise our civil rights.

"I soon realized that there could be no hope for an alert Negro citizenry unless definite training were given to the end of getting our taxpayers' rights. And so classes were started, from time to time, to give instruction in such matters and to wake our voters up. Gradually the men became impressed with the importance of the ballot--to see that it was, in truth, a sacred obligation to use it and to use it right. That was always the point I stressed most.

"We constantly emphasized the fact that a Negro ought to stand on his dignity and not sell his vote. We told him he ought to support whichever party gave him opportunity to use his ballot for public welfare including

his own race. He must not vote for any party that tried to take it away from him. I eulogized Abraham Lincoln and the party through which he had worked for Negro rights, and because it did just that.

"Generally speaking, southern white men did not think that Negroes should have the ballot at all and, consequently, were bitterly opposed to having any Negroes hold public office. But there were some progressive white men—especially in Virginia—who even then voted for the man they considered best fitted for the office without regard to his color. In addition to these there was an element among the white people that would not support a Negro openly but behind the curtain, if it approved him, would back him for this and that small office.

"Here Lawyer Walker paused with a quiet, amused smile. Then he said: "But after four or five years of work helping to educate my people for the duties of citizenship, my name was suggested as candidate for the office of Justice of the Peace. This was with the approval of the white Republicans in the County and many of the best Democrats. Please make a note of that for the book!"

"I thought this over and concluded that getting in on this was not the kind of politics Major Bland had warned me against. However, I took no part in the election campaign but left the whole matter in the hands of my white and colored friends in both parties. I believe it was due to the fact that so many Democrats voted for me that I was elected by a large majority. When, two years later, I was renominated for the same office, again I won and again by a large majority and mixed vote.

"Then it was suggested to me that I become a candidate for the Board of Supervisors or County Commissioners from my district. I was nominated against one of the most popular white merchants in our village, not because

of my color, of course, but in spite of it. He was a Democrat and a splendid business man. In no instance was color prejudice brought into the election. We fought the campaign on issues involving the business and financial policies of Gloucester County, for the good of all.

"For example, the Gloucester Point Wharf, owned by the County, had been so badly managed that the revenue from it had been paltry and the election issue was clearly drawn on this situation. I promised the voters that, if I were elected, a system would be inaugurated by which the taxpayers of the County would get the benefit of the revenue collected. I presented this as a 'civil right.'"

"How did you go about all this?" I asked.

"Well, in those days when a political campaign was on," he replied, "the supporters of a particular candidate would organize what was known as a drum corps. This consisted of a fife, a drum and a kettle drum. Now and then a fellow who played a Jew's harp would be added to the group; all marching ahead while the children came trailing along behind in a cloud of dust. The procession stirred up the countryside for miles around. Everybody gathered along the line of march. Our people were good listeners and, after they had been attracted to a particular spot by the drum corps, they would stand attentively any length of time while the candidate or one of his supporters told them why they ought to vote this or that ticket, and warned them not to sell their ballots.

"I think the book should tell more about that," I said.

"All right, he replied, I'll tell you, how our soap-box campaign was conducted. I would often speak at a cross-road store or sometimes we would gather by the side of the sandy road. Frequently we candidates would have a

spirited exchange of opinions shouting from buggy to buggy. That always took with a rural crowd. Occasionally, I would stand on an ox cart to make a speech.

"Although they were denied the ballot, the women would come out from everywhere to hear us, realizing perhaps what the election of the best candidate would mean to them and to their children and maybe hoping to influence their husbands and sons at home afterwards. It was always a moral crusade.

"The first time I ran for County Commissioner I won the election by just a small majority--forty or so. But as soon as I got into office I took charge of that wharf property, as I had promised to do, and turned in something like \$1,800 or \$2,000 a year and, by so doing, reduced the County taxes. That made a hit, of course.

"The second time I ran for this office the party line split up. Some colored people voted the Democratic ticket while some of the "First Families of Virginia" voted for me. This time I was elected by an overwhelming majority. Since then I have held minor political offices from time to time for special social ends. Politics has always been part of betterment work, as an occasional necessary tool.

"One of my first political efforts was made at a Republican Convention in Tappahannock for the purpose of nominating a candidate for Congress. No Republican had ever been elected to Congress from this District. However, in the course of my speech, I predicted that the party that had so long held power, the Democratic, would be defeated on election day by a political earthquake and that the Republican candidate for the Congress from the First District would defeat his opponent by such an overwhelming majority that not

even the trumpet of Gabriel would ^{not} be able to resurrect him. My election prediction came true and Accomac County made history by sending a Republican to sit in Congress.

"Didn't the opposition try to buy you off?" I asked.

"Did they?" he answered, "On many occasions, approaches have been made to me to accept graft and bribes. I have been offered a hundred dollars at a time if I would change candidates or speak for or against certain political deals. Anonymous letters have been sent me through the mail telling me--" Here Lawyer Walker dropped his voice to a stealthy whisper--"to see Mr. So-and-so at the corner of such and such a fence at such a time and he would "slip me a hundred dollars." Or someone would sidle up to me at election time and say, "I'm a Democrat and such a candidate is a Democrat. If you work for me, here is a hundred dollars. What difference does it make to you whom you work for as long as you get the money?"

"Every time a crooked proposition was made to me, it yielded me so much valuable information that I was in a better position than before to preach clean politics and to warn young Negroes to be on their guard when working for the public good.

"Years ago ballots were printed with the different names and offices. One person would stand near the polls with the ballots of one candidate in his hands and another would hold those of the opposing party. When a person came to the polls to vote, both of these men would sandwich him in and try to make him take his ballot saying, "Take my ballot, my man is the one to vote for," and slide out a bill with it.

"A few of the more unscrupulous even offered my father bribes in an attempt to get him to influence me one way or the other. They would say to him,

"There ain't no reason why Tom should go on the way he's going. We will give you a hundred dollars if you will hold tickets for us at the poll next week." Perhaps they imagined that if they gave him such an inducement I, too, could be swung to a dishonest course by them, but they lost out on us both. We used to exchange experiences and laugh together over that.

"In the old days, some of us, including my wife, attached great importance to women's getting the vote but, as a matter of fact, Negro women were not then very much interested in politics. The manipulation of public affairs by the dominant party of the State has had the same effect upon the Negro women as upon the Negro men since every means has been used to keep the Negro from voting at all.

"Sentiment for our disfranchisement grew rapidly at the turn of the century. On April 1, 1900, the Richmond Dispatch wrote editorially, "It's almost unanimous sentiment of Virginia Democrats that the time has come to revise our Constitution or to frame a new one for the Commonwealth. For thirty years we have endured the Underwood Constitution framed, not by real Virginians, but foisted upon the State by the black-and-tan convention and framed with a view to multiplication of offers to be held out as rewards for partisan service." So was fired the opening gun, to silence those "free bells."

"On the seventeenth of that same month the editor of the Richmond Times wrote, "The Negro as a factor in Virginia politics is necessarily and inevitably a disturbing factor. Under whatever conditions he should hold the balance of power, he would make a great disturbance among the whites. There would be discord and bloodshed. We believe that in the interest of peace, pure government and honest politics, it is necessary that the great body of Negro voters should be disfranchised and to that end we are heartily

in favor of the constitutional convention." That was the convention that actually did disfranchise the Negro--actually did it.

"Some protest on the part of the Negro citizenry followed but, since few of the Negroes were allowed really to participate in the government's affairs anyway, they felt hopeless of getting their rights. The convention voted against them and the Negro was then and there denied exercise of even the rights guaranteed him under the Constitution of the United States!

"The method used to bring this about was this: by writing into the Constitution the "Disfranchisement Act" under which name the so-called "Grandfather" and Educational Clauses are known in Virginia. The "Grandfather Clause" has been adopted by some of the other Southern states as well. It exempts from both property and literacy restrictions all descendants of men who voted before the Civil War. This automatically and neatly excludes Negroes.

"What it amounts to is that a white man whose grandfather voted prior to 1861 is allowed to vote whether or not he is able to read and write and he is not required to pay any poll tax. But the Negro, not only must pay a specified poll tax, but he must submit to a very arbitrary literacy test. Indeed, there was a time when even educated Negroes were not allowed to register for voting but an action was brought into Circuit Court which resulted in the Court overruling this particular prohibition. Both white and Negro lawyers took part in these discussions. However, the ballot law has been so changed that it is left to the individual registrar to determine whether or not a would-be voter can qualify. It actually came down to that."

"Tell me just how that was done," I said, "it's an interesting point."

"Well, a Negro applying for registration must, himself, fill out the

regular application blank, Following that, the registrar has the right to examine would-be voters on the Constitution, either of the United States or of Virginia. The registrar is usually an ignorant white man tutored by the wrong leaders in his party and given a list of questions to ask Negroes which may be so technical that only a specialist in governmental law could answer them. I have heard a Negro asked, "What is the Ex post facto law?" Another question that is likely to be given us is, "Explain the Shipping Bill of the United States." Or, the registrar may say, "What about the act that brought into existence the Corporation Commission of Virginia?" Registrars will still sometimes ask these questions but if we take them to the Circuit Court that Court will rule against them.

"One day I was in a registration room when a Harvard graduate, a Negro, appeared before the Board. He was asked to give the origin of the Constitution of the United States and the duties and responsibilities of the United States Court. Because he could not do this precisely he was refused registration. I was present another time when a Negro school teacher was refused registration because he could not answer similar questions. Following the teacher was a white man who could neither read nor write. After the registrar had filled out the blank for him, instead of making him fill it out himself as part of the literacy test, he was asked this question, "In Virginia can white and colored children go to school together?" The man, of course, said "No," whereupon he was registered as "qualified." This obviously unjust educational test, so-called, discriminates against the Negro merely because he is a Negro. It is one type of segregation."

"What," I asked in surprise, "are the qualifications for members of these Registration Boards?"

"They are low and unscrupulous people that get in," he replied. "Yet just such white people are repeatedly hunted out by white leaders to serve on Boards of Education and on juries that are given the authority to decide cases involving race relations. In the old days it wasn't as it is now: except in very isolated instances, Negroes were not called upon for jury duty even when the cases to be heard involve Negroes alone. Yet all Negroes pay the same rate of taxes as do the white people. Responsibility for justice rests upon them too.

"Some of the leading Democrats of the South and of the State of Virginia have admitted that the evasion of the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution is "sacred" with them because they don't intend the Negro shall participate in governmental affairs in the white South. Years ago Senator Glass, in one of his speeches, admitted, "Yes, the Fifteenth Amendment is nullified. We do not intend that the Negro shall vote." And that sentiment is not out of date now in some sections of the South.

"But there is a great difference in the attitudes of white people towards Negro rights. One day a member of Congress from Virginia was making a speech in Gloucester Court House about free trade and protection. I asked him the pertinent but rather searching question from the floor as to why he voted as he did on a certain matter affecting Negroes. He looked at me with an expression of utter contempt and said, "I voted as I did in Congress so that I could have my action on record there and pinned to my coat sleeve for little dogs like you to bark at."

"Many white people as well as Negroes resented this reply right then and there. However, I did not consider it worth more than a feeling of amusement. I knew so many white people who would be ashamed of him.

"An effort was made, at one time, in Gloucester to organize a Ku Klux Klan but it never succeeded in being effective against us. Though carefully planned, the best element of the white people together with a conservative group of colored people created such adverse sentiment that it could not succeed in Gloucester County at any rate. But in primitive counties it is still rampant as a recent case I had in one of them certainly proves.

"An attempt has been made for some years past to develop a "Lily white" Republican Party in Virginia for the purpose of eliminating negro voters. Previously, Negroes had participated to some extent in all conventions and in general management of the party. Indeed, they were elected to all county, district, and state conventions and, in many instances, were consulted and invited to conferences out of which grew the local, district and state policies of the Republican Party. To carry out the new "Lily white" scheme and to prevent Negroes from attending, these conventions were held in white hotels. This has gone on until, at the present time, a Negro delegate is seldom seen at any political convention.

"The last State Convention that I myself attended was held in Norfolk. There were only two Negro delegates from my district which is the first. The white Republicans objected to having Negroes sit with them. However, a few of the old-line Republicans refused to accept segregation and demanded that I address the State Convention. This I did in no spirit of bitterness but I gave them to understand that such "Lily white" action as they had adopted would finally culminate in eliminating the Negro vote from the Republican "Lily white" Party. I said, "Since only one Negro delegate has been sent from Virginia to the National Convention in more than twelve years, this

"Lily White" action will drive many thoughtful Negroes straight into the Democratic Party."

"At the close of my speech I got a great ovation but it had little effect upon the determination to eliminate Negroes from the Convention. Many of the "Lily White" delegates again expressed their opposition to Negroes by saying that "Negroes are Negroes and their general participation will prevent growth of the Republican organization because white Republicans may thereafter shun the party."

"The Democrats, in most sections of Virginia, set up no barriers to the Negro's participation in their party activities and encouraged them to vote in the primaries. In fact, Democratic candidates have commonly gone after the Negro vote. In one election for mayor of the city of Richmond, although I do not live in Richmond, one of the Democratic candidates sought to get my support by giving me a number of his handbills for circulation among Negro voters. I had to laugh!

"In a subsequent election I supported the sheriff of my County who was a Democrat. The contest promised to be a close one. I threw my influence into the fight for his election because I thought he would be fairer to the Negro than the opposing candidate for the office. I organized the Negro vote and we elected our own man.

"Once, when the term of office for the Clerk of the Circuit Court expired we had to hold an election. The Democratic ring in the County was opposed to his return. On account of this man's efficiency and his fair treatment of both groups, I "took the stump" for him and put my car at

the disposal of negro voters who would otherwise have had no means of transportation to the polls. The result of this was that every "qualified" Negro voter in the County, with only three exceptions, was taken to the polls and helped to elect a man who had demonstrated his usefulness as a public servant. That same clerk is still in office, supported by a large proportion of the Negro voters.

"The Negro must not be surprised if he gets a bad turn at the hands of the law and in the courts as long as he is denied full use of the ballot and does not help contest that denial. I never could agree with Booker T. Washington when he advised us to leave politics alone and put our attention on Negro business enterprises with especial emphasis on farm ownership. Certainly no one is more interested than I in every kind of legitimate business activity by Negroes and emphatically in their owning their farms and homes but it has been demonstrated again and again that neither fair business competition nor property rights can be effectively maintained unless the Negro also has full and free control of his own ballot. And the white politicians know that well!

"It should be clear to everybody that any disfranchised people in a democracy is a liability and constitutes a progressively poverty-stricken group since it is unable to stand up for its inherent right as members of the human family. In members of such a group the would-be exploiters find easy prey. Disfranchised people are more easily led, less self-respecting, more diseased and shiftless than the enfranchised members of the community in which they live. In fact, they will be all ^{that} the vicious humiliation of disfranchisement and segregation can make them for the two go together although they often exist apart.

Granted that universal suffrage has its disadvantages to a community when applied to people who are still in the primitive stages of development for citizenship, and let us not overlook the fact that hundreds of our newly naturalized white citizens exhibit the same disadvantages. Young Negroes ask why the white people do not make distinctions between citizenship rights according to the mental and social development of white as well as Negro people when they see, in some parts of our country, the Negro who has attained high standing in an accredited University denied his vote while white people, whatever their academic status, have full citizenship privileges. However, some bettering of this condition ^{is} taking place.

"Naturally enough, the disfranchisement of the Negro has focussed his attention on his political future. Too often this has led him to forget, and so to neglect, the fact that his political freedom will be worth nothing to him if he has not the moral character and ethical stamina to make intelligent use of it. There are enough bad white politicians in the world without adding bad Negroes to that number. An inter-racial political machine can be even more dangerous to family life and progress of every kind than all-white political bossism. Such a combination has already been made in some parts of our country. I admit--be sure to put this in the book!-- that the colored people have too often shown inertia by neglecting even such limited exercise of their voting rights as they already have. To get his full citizenship rights a Negro ought first to show that he has acquired a certain amount of working knowledge and that he is interested in the development of his community and in bettering the educational opportunities of his children. I have found that the best way to develop a political conscience in my people is through getting them to cooperate in community

projects that are so concrete and graphic in social results for them and their families that when they see such projects are affected by the kind of people who hold political office, they begin to take an interest to their vote.

"When they get socially minded, and try to promote projects for the welfare of the community, they come up against political allegiances and combinations that appear in greater and greater complexity all the way to the White House. Community projects, like modern school buildings, playgrounds, sanitation and institutional provision for special classes, sooner or later--usually sooner--find themselves balked by some political tie-up. My conviction is, therefore, that an educated electorate must get its political attitudes through the education inherent in an all-round constructive program involving school, church and home.

"It has often puzzled me that our citizens of both races do not realize that constitutionally the Negro has been recognized as having political rights and that the trouble lies solely in the fact that white obstructionists prevent him from legitimate use of them. I say: It isn't "legitimate" for the Negro not to exercise his legally imposed responsibilities as a citizen. With further awakening of our race it is one that will be increasingly realized and will bear beneficent results if, at the same time, we stress moral as well as literacy tests."

"How can anybody disagree with that!" I put in.

"Criminals are now disqualified," he continued, "no matter to what race they belong. Honesty and politics should never be separated in the mind of any voter. I appreciate the right of the State to make laws for the purpose of regulating police operation but I contend, along with a few Southern Senators,

that the Federal Government has the power, under the Federal Constitution, to enact a law that would give to every American citizen, without limitation, an equal right to the ballot.

"Negroes are citizens by birth, not by adoption. This the public should remember. Furthermore, history shows that they have always been loyal to their country; never having betrayed its flag or in any wise played into the hands of its enemies, at home or abroad.

"The Constitution of the United States guarantees political equality to all and not just to those who happen to live up North. I have heard white people explain their opposition to our exercising our political rights by saying that we are "a child race," not mentally of age. Others call us just "second class citizens." I remind them that sometimes children grow up and attain maturity in a few short years and even belong in first class brackets. I might add that the old planters could not work a feeble-minded slave and wanted to buy only the bright ones but that, in spite of this, they objected to our growing brains along with cotton. There is increasing likelihood however, that Negroes will so develop intellectual, moral and political strategy that they will brush such opposition aside in the interests of a true democracy."

"In this connection," continued Lawyer Walker, "it might be well to put in the book a quotation from a letter written by President Lincoln to Michael Hahn, dated Washington, March 13, 1864. I wrote it down and here it is: "...Now you are about to have a convention which, among other things, will probably define the elective franchise, I barely suggest for your private consideration, whether some of the colored people may not be let in--as, for instance, the very intelligent and especially those who have

fought gallantly in our ranks. They would probably help, in some trying time to come, to keep the jewel of liberty within the family of freedom." How's that?

"Apt as can be for the book," I approved.

"I am of the opinion that the "trying time" foreseen by President Lincoln is right--now!" he went on.

"Close observation and common sense will bear me out in my contention that the Southern Negro may well consider taking advantage of every opportunity to join whichever party seems, after scrutiny, to be really offering the best hope for the welfare of the entire community--the white man included. In other words, independent voting holds the means for making all parties qualify, as it were, for our support. We should keep both parties guessing how our vote will be cast so they will put in genuinely helpful candidates.

"Property qualifications, literacy tests, unjust laws, "Grandfather" Clauses and intimidations have all been used to prevent the Negro from voting. Therefore, in spite of the almost insurmountable injustices and obstacles put in our way, the effective use of the ballot is one of the first goals we must reach to be good citizens.

"Can you believe it? Only as recently as the spring of 1951 a three-judge tribunal in Federal Court upheld the validity of the Virginia poll tax as a prerequisite to voting, so we are not yet fully emancipated in my home State.

"So things go--shuttling back and forth--sometimes backwards but, I believe, more often forward. The important thing today is to make our young voters put their attention on genuine advancement of politics to the stage where even a Major Bland would urge them to help steer the ship of State to the right ports."

CHAPTER XIII CHAPTER XIV"GLOUCESTER LAW" AND LYNCHING BEES

"Do you know what I dreaded most when I started practicing law?"

"Sending clients bills for hard-won cases, I suspect," I answered.

"I didn't like to do that, of course, but when I began to practice law, what I dreaded most was that I would have to defend a Negro against the traditional crime of the South--which is rape. I prayed that such a case would never fall into my hands. But one of my first cases was that of a Negro accused by a white woman of just that crime.

"Such an accusation always struck terror to the heart of every Negro in the community. Whenever one was made we had to work with feverish haste because as soon as the news spread, frenzied mobs, inflamed with the lynching madness, formed with unbelievable rapidity exactly like a flash fire.

"It happened that I was in Washington at the time. My wife instantly wired me to come back. This I certainly did! I knew the man upon whom suspicion was cast and very much doubted that he was guilty. But innocence would not hold back a lynching bee once it started. The mob doesn't wait to find out.

"The man who was supposed to be guilty had disappeared in a swamp, the Negro's traditional place of refuge. To make the long story of the hunt short, I'll just say that we finally managed to locate him and get him safely to jail only the day before he was to have a hearing. There he was held without bail while highly excited men milled around outside. So menacing was this constantly enlarging group that I organized some Negroes into so-called "protectors of the law." Armed with shot-guns

they barricaded themselves in the house opposite the jail to prevent any sudden move for jail delivery and a lynching bee. Not many Negroes in Gloucester slept that night!

"The accusing white woman was the principal witness at the trial. She was in a hysterical state. Fully convinced, as I was of the man's innocence from a thorough knowledge of the man's ^{his} character and ways, I kept her under cross-examination for about three hours, until she broke down and confessed that the man was innocent of the crime of which she had accused him. So the prisoner was acquitted but for days every Negro in Gloucester was tensely on guard. Such is the contagion of the lynching spirit. Again I was thankful for my legal training for the protection of my people.

"Another time I had to organize an emergency group of Negro citizens to guard the jail for thirty days and nights preceding the trial of a young fellow accused of molesting a white girl on a certain highway. He claimed he not only had no contact with her but he had not ^{even} known she was on the highway. There was no evidence to support the frenzied claims of the girl's family. Twice there was a hung jury and, in the South, as you probably know, a hung jury in such a case implies unquestioned innocence of the accused. In spite of all this the Commonwealth attorney said we would better impose a sentence of six months to a year in jail on the boy.

"This was where I came in with all the force that was in me. I knew the accusation was false and that it was just a baseless expression of race antagonism. Everyone felt that the highly charged atmosphere might explode into a race riot if the boy were not found guilty and yet, with all of us expecting that the worst would happen next, the jury unexpectedly returned a verdict of "not guilty." You have no idea what that meant to us Negroes in Gloucester.

"I have always wished I could know who were the brave white souls, or soul maybe, who certainly under heavy pressure, had yet held out to the end and saved this innocent Negro boy."

"Can't you tell another story about Gloucester justice for the book?" I begged.

"There are so many!" He thought a moment and then started on again. "Well, one day a Negro went into a country store in Gloucester to get some beer. The store was kept by a white man and he and the Negro got into an argument. It got so hot that there was a pitched battle. The Negro shot and killed the white man and escaped. Two little Negro girls were leaving the store just when the man entered it. They heard the shot, turned to look back and saw the Negro running away.

"This word spread like wildfire and a crowd of angry white men quickly formed; some running on foot, others dashing up in buggies, until hundreds of them were shrieking, "Lynch him! Lynch him!"

"Quickly the news reached me. I rushed to the spot, as did the sheriff. The one idea of both of us was to prevent a lynching; for no community ever quite gets back its nerve or good reputation after a lynching takes place and Gloucester had to be saved from such demoralization and disgrace.

"Dashing, as I did, into that infuriated white mob was quite the riskiest thing I had yet done, for no Negro's life is worth much when the lynching spirit takes hold. However, when I got to the edge of the crowd, I shouted at the top of my voice; "I can help you to find the murderer if you'll tell me about it!"

"This got the attention of the leader nearest me. The one thing they wanted was to catch the murderer and string him up without delay. Then the sheriff did a clever thing. He had an inkling of the direction in which

the man had fled so, pointing his revolver in the opposite direction, he fired into the air.

"At this the mob dashed away pell-mell and a most curious circumstance helped to keep it going in the wrong direction. To this day I have wondered how it happened. But evidently some animal--probably a dog--had hurt its foot and had left a trail of blood drops along the road. To the frenzied mob this was convincing proof that the sheriff had put them on the right track.

"How^{ever,} the mad rush got the mob nowhere and it surged back more violent than ever. But, by this time, the criminal had sought refuge in the house of another Negro who, to prevent a lynching, took him in and hid him.

"A little later, this man, in whose home the murderer was hidden, strolled quietly into the Court House and whispered to the clerk that he knew where the man was hiding and would tell him provided safe conduct for him to the jail could be guaranteed. Otherwise there would be a quick lynching.

"No one had yet thought of searching the house of the respectable law-abiding Negro where the man was in hiding but it was certain the mob soon would, so the clerk managed to pass on the information to the sheriff who, taking advantage of the few split seconds when the mob had left the road that led to the house where the murderer was concealed and, by quickly planned team work, had arrested the man and was already on the way with him to Richmond!

"His reason for going to Richmond was that, in a rural community like ours, the mob could easily have overpowered the sheriff and his few deputies but there was less chance of the lynching in a city because of police protection.

"However, news of the crime swept into Richmond about the same time as the sheriff arrived with his prisoner and another mob did quickly form at the jail door. It was another tense moment. The new mob was threatening a forced delivery if the prisoner was not handed over to them without delay. The situation was a desperate one.

"Fortunately for us, a judge with high standards of honor was on the bench. Hearing the menacing noise outside, he walked with determination to the jail door and opening it stood there until he got the mob's attention. Then in commanding tones, "Stand back!" he ordered. "If you touch this prisoner, you touch me!"

"And so he continued to stand there in full control of the situation, until, little by little, the crowd shamefacedly dispersed.

"In due season this case came to trial, the two little girls identifying the man who was found guilty and he was given the full penalty of the law. A moral disgrace had been prevented by that white judge's courageous stand in defence of principle. Our gratitude to him was unbounded.

"Another near-lynching in Gloucester had a very different setting. I think it is of special interest for the book because of the wonderful way it was handled in the face of extreme danger. A young Negro shot and killed a white merchant and then robbed him. Mob violence and lynching seemed inevitable as a group of unprincipled white men started to foment a lynching bee. Word reached me in a round-about way as to where they were meeting. I drove right down to the spot where the mob was forming.

"Long before this I had learned, by personal experience, that while hatred is a very real force to deal with it is always a cowardly passion. I reminded myself of this as I got out of my buggy and tried to identify the

lynching leaders whose faces were distorted with hate and desire for revenge. What I did was to move quietly about among them, speaking in a friendly way with those I knew, and obviously trying to get the truth about the crime in my capacity as a lawyer. They all knew who I was because of that. I listened intently to what was being said and none of them seemed to mind my hearing the plot. Then, I drove away.

"The clerk of the Court was a fair-minded white man. To him I went with my burden of information about the lynching bee that ^{was} to take place. It was, I told him, already organized. This clerk was just as jealous of maintaining our racial adjustments as I was so by caution and joint action we managed to get the young criminal into jail unnoticed by the approaching mob.

"Both of us felt that if the trial took place in Gloucester anything at all might happen. I even went before a committee imploring that it be held in some other County. I said that no fair jury nor just trial could be assured here in Gloucester. The feeling among both races had run too high. It was dynamite and I was deeply alarmed at the plans made and knew whereof I spoke.

"As a last resort I went to the Judge with my plea. But he contradicted me saying: "The Commonwealth of Virginia must establish a precedent for fair trials. We can and will have a fair and just one right here in Gloucester where the trouble started!"

"But, your Honor," I protested, "I have heard the leaders of the mob swear to kill that boy on sight--whether he is, in the custody of the law or not!"

"It will be very unfortunate for any person or persons to lay hands on that boy under any circumstances," said the Judge with dignity, "for I shall

certainly prosecute anyone making such an attempt and to the full extent of the law."

"With such decision I could not further protest but I awaited developments with the greatest apprehension as did the whole Negro population of Gloucester. As we feared, attempt after attempt was made by the mob to carry out its threats. The most dramatic of these occurred on the morning of the trial. Threatening white men crowded together at the door of the jail ready to act when the prisoner appeared. Farther off stood a group of tense and silent colored men watching the white mob like hawks.

"Then the door swung slowly open and every eye was rivited on it. Hands moved up to the hips. But, instead of the prisoner, handcuffed to an officer of the law, there appeared on the doorstep, erect and with flashing eye, Judge Jones. Silently he stood there until the threatening crowd-murmurs were quieted and then he spoke. His tones were unemotional and positive. I shall never never forget how they cut through the sudden silence of that crowded place.

"Stand back, gentlemen!" he ordered. "Stand back! Give us room!"

"And the crowd obeyed.

"Then the Judge stepped slowly out into the yard. Behind him came four officers carefully guarding the prisoner with their own bodies! Judge Jones walked in front of the youth but so close to him that to have shot the prisoner would have necessitated killing the Judge, himself, first. Then an orderly march to the Court House began.

"As the little group passed me I found my eyes were wet. Another hurdle in the course of law enforcement, regardless of race, had been won that day in Gloucester by the personal moral courage of a white Judge!"

"It is such cases as these, and particularly the last one related, that mark, I think, the turning point in lynching, not only in Gloucester, but in the whole State of Virginia. It is one thing to argue a case in court or with one man alone but a lynching bee is an entirely different proposition. Nobody who has not experienced it and its tensions of hysteria and hatred can know the sheer white heat of passion that inflames such a situation. It is, beyond description, terrifying.

"Public sentiment has so changed in Gloucester that today you would find officers of the law shooting right into a mob like that, if necessary, in order to prevent a lynching. Indeed, settlement of cases, that precipitated the lynching spirit, by recourse to due process of law, instead of to mob violence, has come to be known as the "Gloucester way" and I have heard it so termed in other Counties.

"One of the most dramatic situations in my long period of law practice was not a near-lynching case in physical terms nor was it due to tensions between whites and Negroes but, strangely enough, to an outbreak of antagonisms between Jews and Gentiles.

"The daughter of a respected white family married a Jewish druggist. On the day they were to return from their honeymoon, their newly built home was burned to the ground.

"Although no clues to the incendiary had been found, a man I interviewed dropped this significant remark: "Since somebody has to be punished, Fanny Corbin seemed to be as good a scape-goat as any. You see, if they can't prove she did it neither can they prove she didn't."

"So, Fanny Corbin, a self-respecting Negro, who happened to live nearer the burned house than anyone else, was arrested in the middle of the night.

Clad only in her night clothes she was hurried off to jail through a storm of sleet and rain. Here, she was charged with the crime and locked in a cell where she attempted suicide.

"These facts, together with the knowledge that Mrs. Corbin was too poor to employ counsel, and that any one provided by the State would be white and possibly dominated by race prejudice stirred into flames by the rumors spread about the case, led me to volunteer my services in her behalf. Her indictment by the Grand Jury followed.

"Now, unless I am fairly sure that a miscarriage of justice threatens I rarely champion a cause or person but, after a long interview with Fanny Corbin, I was completely convinced of her innocence. She had no anti-Semitic prejudices, no motive for such a crime but, on the other hand, an obvious motivation due to sentiments of anti-Semitism and white prejudice against Negroes was involved. Whose outburst was it? That I determined to discover.

"Plenty of money was being spent on the case. Three detectives, one white and two colored, came from Richmond to establish Fanny Corbin's guilt. I surmised, from the whole look of things, that this was done to protect someone else who was now very much afraid of getting caught. I saw it as a brazen frame-up involving Jew and Gentile, Negro and white, panic-stricken prisoner and apprehensive Judge, in a situation that was nothing short of explosive, full of only slightly suppressed lynching spirit.

"Fanny Corbin was near collapse when the trial began. I nodded to her reassuringly from time to time and with sincerity, because I became certain that this was one of those trials where, if the cowardly accusers were given enough rope, they would hang themselves without my troubling to do it. The

cleverly fabricated circumstantial evidence wore thinner and thinner as the case progressed although the prosecution seemed confidently to expect it would build up to a climax in their favor. It was apparently assumed that in Gloucester race-prejudice would be used, as sometimes was done elsewhere, like a wall that we would not dare to climb over.

"Tension mounted in everybody but me. One thing I certainly had learned while practicing law in Gloucester County. This was that no Gloucester Judge would run the risk of a race riot or lynching bee that was obviously influenced by racial bias and by a decision unsupported by sound legal evidence.

"The prosecution was given opportunity for its full say and then, at last, I spoke up for Fanny Corbin. I wasted no time on fancy rhetoric or sentiment but got right down to the undisputed fact that Fanny Corbin was a respected member of our community, that no motive for her commission of the crime had been established and no evidence against her had been produced. I gave it as my legal opinion that conviction of Fanny Corbin for this crime would lead to consequences that the prosecution would regret. Without fail, if this should happen, the real perpetrator of the crime would be run down and punished to the full extent of the law. I then made a motion that the so-called "evidence" be stricken from the record.

"Intense, alarmed silence followed this motion. Every eye was on the Judge. He fixed his gaze analytically on the honest, work-worn face of Fanny Corbin and then he looked long and steadily at each one of those who had testified against her.

"The Court sustains the motion," he said quietly. "The case is dismissed."

"I have always believed that race attitudes can be changed from antagonism to those of friendly understanding and I have taken every opportunity to bring

this about both in my law practice and out of it.

"I made an interesting try-out of this conviction once when the sheriff appealed to me to find out which of the local white boys had gone about Hallowe'en night throwing rocks and stones at Negro homes in the town but doing no harm to those of white people. He said they had broken windows and one brick had struck a Negro woman as she lay in her bed. Also, they had thrown trash into yards and done all the harm they could; but only to Negroes. The authorities wanted information so those guilty could be brought to justice.

"Everybody knew I liked to straighten things out without criminal action, if possible, and maybe it was that reputation which led the young son of a prominent white citizen to come to me with the whole story. He had doubtless heard that I had been asked to spot the ring-leaders. He said he wanted me to know that he and two other boys were the only ones who had thrown the stones and bricks although plenty of others had made a lot of noise. He didn't want to be brought in guilty yet certain circumstances had convinced him there was no way of concealing his guilt.

"At my request he brought the other two to me and we had a serious talk. I told them that an unjustified race hatred had already made criminals out of them, whether or not they got into jail for their act, and if they did not get straightened out on the rights of Negroes and their equal claim, with whites, to legal protection they would end up deservedly as jail-birds.

"When I saw they were really impressed by the facts in their case and thinking hard about it, and taking a different attitude towards Negroes and their rights, I said that if they came to realize and admitted they had been misguided by prejudice, and after they had gone personally and said so to the Negro home-owners who had suffered at their hands, and made

restitution for the harm they had done, I would see that no warrants were issued for their arrest. But, I told them, they had to act quickly. This they agreed to do promising that they would personally pay the full cost of repairs and would remove with their own hands the rubbish they had piled on the porches of Negro homes and in their yards and gardens.

"After they had actually done this, I assured them no warrants were going to be issued for their arrest. I told them also that their changed attitudes towards respectable Negroes must no longer apply only to those whom they had harmed, but to Negroes as a race, recognizing them as fellow-citizens with equal rights. These boys later became as well-behaved as any in the County and they seemed to forget that I, myself, was black.

"This experience, together with many others of like kind, deepened my conviction that further improvement in other delicate matters involving racial tensions is entirely possible if it is mutually decided by both races to work them out through temperate, intelligent and persistent application of good-will."

"If only everybody believed good-will is such a power," I said, "what couldn't we together do with this old world!"

"Here's something else you may want to put in the book," he said.

"A number of years ago we were drawn into such a low, serious crime wave that it mounted to a crest among our young people of both races. Some interested white people joined with aroused colored people to discuss means of stopping it before something terrible happened. As President of the Sunday-School Convention of Negro Churches, I took steps to organize within it a movement called The Association for the Prevention of Crime. It seemed the proper auspices to help our people.

"What we did was to get hold of some of the actual instigators of trouble, those who were the top leaders of racial troubles and make them officers of the Association in Gloucester County. It worked beautifully! They felt their new responsibility, took hold well and cooperated with the other community forces of good. A conspicuous decrease in crime among the Negroes of Gloucester County soon followed. During the next ten or fifteen years there were so few Negroes in our jail, as compared with other sections of Virginia for the same period, that in my trips up and down the State I have many times offered our jail for rent to anybody looking for a place to start a tobacco factory or whatnot.

"I attribute the success of this effort to a certain mutual respect for fair play that had come to be taken for granted from both races in Gloucester County and to the fact that so many of our white people are from "the first families of Virginia."

"Can you tell me what the word 'lynch' came from?" I put in. "Was it from something that happened in Lynchburg?"

"I'm glad you asked about that," he said. "The so-called "Lynch Law" has strange roots. I regret to say that it originated in my own State of Virginia. It is not generally known but it was actually sanctioned as so-called "orderly and legal procedure" by the Virginia General Assembly as early as 1782 and by white men against white men.

"The founder of Lynchburg, Colonel Charles Lynch, organized a company of volunteers, or what is now called a "lynching bee", to catch and punish Virginia Tories who were harassing Continental patriots. When such a mob caught a Tory it flogged or imprisoned him, or strung him up to the nearest tree and left him hanging there as a warning.

"It was in later times that such action was taken almost exclusively, but not entirely, against Negroes suspected of raping white women. Of course, when white men were guilty of such a crime against Negro women it went unnoticed - the slaver's prerogative handed down.

"One conspicuous - or maybe I should say inconspicuous - consequence of this license accorded white men has been that Negroes who have so much white blood in them that white people do not notice it, often become 'passers'. Many of them who can trace their dilemma to white license feel a special sense of social injustice that adds one more pitiful factor to their ambiguous racial status.

"Of course, in the South, there is always the fear of white people of the races mixing if segregation is abolished. This is the main cause of Jim Crow rigidity. But the horse was stolen during slavery times even while the barn door was supposedly shut. The facts are on the records of the slave owners. Indeed, how else can such a rarity as a full-blooded Negro, like myself, be accounted for? It was all too common, in slave days, for a master to be the father, and therefore the richer owner, of some little mulattos born to his girl slaves. And when this was repeated for several generations the slave children of white fathers became lighter and lighter in color until some were white enough to pass.

"Those who talk and think hysterically about guarding the purity of the white race should acquaint themselves with the extent of the tragedy created by their own members who violated the purity of our Negro race that was without defense. Every child born of one of his slaves was just that much more capital for the white owner, regardless of the white blood. They were saleable in the market.

15

greater
"Not many white people seem to realize the complexity of the struggle that near-whites face in every aspect of life and wage-earning than others who are definitely classed as Negro. They are really white-Negroes or, just as correctly, colored-whites belonging to neither race or to both, which is the truest way to put it. I know hundreds of them and their endless perplexities. Sometimes they stay in Negro groups and identify themselves with racial issues. More often they penetrate some white group where their mixed origin is unknown and where, to seek better opportunities for earning, they 'pass'. From intimate contacts with such persons I can testify that the sufferings and lonesomeness of such unfortunates are beyond the comprehension of racially secure people. Passers are usually abnormally nervous about the effect of possible discovery on those who want to be their friends or with whom they are thrown in offices and businesses. X

"Naturally, girls who pass long, more than others, for the protection of a home but are afraid of the consequences of marriage into a white family. And should a passer marry a white girl he lives in constant dread that a child will be born showing its Negro ancestry. Speaking personally, and in general, I don't approve mixed marriages - contrary to the strongly held beliefs of Southern whites that all Negroes desire them. I have been surprised to learn that few white people would credit the fact that a full-blooded Negro may be as proud of it as a white person may be of his own race.

"Can you give an instance?" I asked. "Then maybe they will be convinced."

"Oh, I could give you several instances, that come to mind right now, of light-complexioned Negro girls who have been proud to marry pure Africans. I remember especially the case of one almost white girl who announced her

engagement by saying: 'I can't wait for you to meet the man I am going to marry. He is so black I don't believe he has a drop of white blood in his body!'" She was an unusually pretty girl and highly educated. She could have married a light Negro if she had wanted to. She was not light enough to pass, however."

"I've heard how much Negro blood classifies a person," I said, "but I've forgotten."

"Oh, it changes from time to time. It used to be that one-sixteenth of Negro blood barred him from being considered white. That was the definition adopted by our General Assembly because so many Negroes were passing. Then, in 1930 we were told that legally everybody in whom it could be ascertained that there was any Negro blood at all was a 'colored person'." Lawyer Walker shook his head wearily as if there was just no use arguing about passers.

"I could tell you a great deal more than I'm going to about blood bans. But its enough to say that passers are looked down upon by both races. They are always afraid of discovery. Their social instability is apt to make them furtive and self-conscious, maybe hardened and bold and associates of undesirable people, low mixed groups. I know some passers whose one relief from self-torture, especially if white men have featured in their heritage, if their shame is due to marital infidelity of their parents, is an understanding white person to whom they can confide their haunting secret and gain advice. Anyone with a heart in him can appreciate what their feelings must be if they are compelled to identify themselves with the race they have learned to fear, in order to earn an honest living.

"Terrible conflicts rage in the souls of young passers. If one or both of their parents are dark-skinned, or if they have Negroid brothers or sisters, they must cut off all contacts with them -- even in sickness and adversity."

"A Negro leader told me," I said, "about seeing in a crowded railway terminal a Negro girl he had not met for some years. . She was evidently passing because she was with white friends. He didn't show he recognized her at all although

their eyes met. But she knew it, and she didn't show it either at the time. A little later she separated from her associates and came over to say how grateful she was to him for his consideration and to tell him that she was successfully passing and was secretary to an important New York executive who wouldn't keep her an hour if he knew the truth."

"Yes," said Lawyer Walker, "Negroes detect passers when white people can't. But when we do we do not betray the fact by any change of expression or greeting. I have seen passer's faces show relief when they find they can trust another Negro to protect them, from sympathy with their tragedy, by pretended non-recognition.

"They 'pass'."

CHAPTER XV

PIOWAKING UP THE STATE

"Lawyer Walker," I said, as we settled down so I could extract another chapter, "When you told about getting those boys out of Old Bottom Jail without any law you said it got you into involvements that affected all the rest of your life. I've been wondering ever since if you couldn't tell just what happenings you referred to. I have the idea that they belong in the book."

"Well," he said, suddenly sitting up very straight and speaking with decision, "what I meant was that I decided not to wait any longer for a law that would cover, not only such boys as those dependent ones I found at Old Bottom but also the work Mis' Ellen and I had been doing for so many hundreds of others!"

"Did that mean," I asked, "that you wanted to wind up your work with the children?"

"Wind it up? No!" he answered protestingly. "It was the same idea I had when I got those boys out of Old Bottom but I couldn't get a law through to prevent that sort of thing until I had some better system to suggest. And before suggesting any I had to make a demonstration of the family foster home plan--not for all types of children, of course, but for those fitted for it, who were being sent to almshouses and jails. I was always finding normal children in those terrible places."

"As a lawyer I knew we had done enough rescue work with them to make

a case and I looked about for some white person, who understood our problems, who could get the right kind of bill through the Legislature. Mis' Ellen and I wanted the case of neglected children to be argued before that court of last appeal in a democracy like ours, public opinion.

"In the first place, there was no end to the stream of children needing such help as we were giving to a few. Also, some of them needed special care we were not equipped to render. Some were defective mentally and we had several boys who had dangerous traits and who should have been handled by a Juvenile Court."

"Did any of them actually go beserk?" I asked.

"I think perhaps the first one Mis' Ellen took care of gave her the most trouble--caused both of us the most worry. That was little lame Charlie. It was cases like Charlie and others as dangerous that led us to see we must do what we could--to wake up the State."

Here a mixed expression of amusement and fierce determination crossed Lawyer Walker's face.

"Before you tell me about waking it up," I put in, "can't you give more about Charlie? What did he do?"

"Charlie? He was a natural born dictator. Everything had to go according to his commands. We never knew how far he would go or what he would do if he couldn't get his own way. He bossed Mis' Ellen and wouldn't let her manage him."

"Can't you remember an instance?" I said laughing.

"Well, one day he went so far that he was too much for Mis' Ellen's sense of humor. When she happened to call to me from the doorway he came

limping hurriedly to her side and laid down the law! "Mis Ellen," he scolded, 'don' ever call Mr. Walker when he's busy. He don' like to be called by us."

"Since I am Mrs. Walker, Charlie," she said, "I have a right to interrupt him but you haven't."

"For once Charlie was humbled, "Oh, all right then go ahead!" he ordered and never again challenged her authority. We did all we could for him. When his lameness got worse we sent him up to Johns Hopkins Hospital for treatment but it didn't help much so we brought him home again. He got more and more restless and one morning he was gone. No one saw him go." x w

"That sounds like an interesting story!" I said encouragingly.

"We were very worried--he had been in such a resentful state of mind. So that evening, with a friend, I went out to look for him. We discovered him on a wharf where I suspected he might have gone to catch a boat for Baltimore. Suddenly, as we hurried towards him, he whipped out a revolver, waved it in my face, then pointed it straight at me, and warned me in no uncertain tones that if I came one step nearer he would fire. Had he actually shot I would certainly have been killed. I couldn't imagine where he got the revolver and thinking it might be loaded I pretended to let him go." x w

"That night we laid a trap for him and he limped straight into it. I told a white friend, who lived near the wharf, that I would wait in a certain house, about a mile down the road, and for him to blow his fish-horn if the boy turned up. Sure enough about nine o'clock Charlie knocked on his door and begged for something to eat. My friend caught hold of him

and tied him. Then he blew the fish-horn and I hastened up and finally persuaded him to go home with me. His resentment seemed to fade and he became almost repentent over the fright he had given me and Mis' Ellen. We kept Charlie in our home for several years after that and he turned out to be one of the best boys I ever handled.

"But it took a good deal of time and many readjustments to work out a future for Charlie. He finally settled down to learn the trade of shoe-repairing taught him by a graduate of one of our industrial schools. He now has his own shop, is married, and doing well.

"Boys stayed with us for a day, a month, or even a year and longer. I remember times when we had as many as ten restless, undisciplined little fellows all at once. We had to face the fact that there was real danger in having certain children 'on the loose' as it it were. But we learned a strange fact. Even in an obstreperous group there would always be one boy to whom we could appeal and who would help manage the others. Once I took home another group of boys from a Virginia jail--six of them. They were especially dirty, ill-mannered, and rebellious, but Mis' Ellen, who had not known they were coming, met the situation just as I knew she would and quieted them down by treating them in her usual motherly way.

"Two of them, oddly enough, were not interested in outdoor activities: they wanted to learn how to clean and cook. This attitude interested me very much. It wasn't the natural attitude of the run of boys. I couldn't understand it until I realized that they had never had homes and had never heard anyone speak disparagingly of boys doing housework. A year of home life with us turned both these domestically inclined little fellows into really excellent cooks and house-keepers.

"Sometimes those officially responsible for the custody of needy children imposed strict conditions upon me when they asked me for help. For instance, the Mayor of Portsmouth wrote me about several boys who were in the jail there. So I went to see him at his office. There we had a lengthy, indeed a stormy, session discussing what ought to be done with them. He tried to bargain with me as if I were somehow maneuvering for a personal advantage. Finally, he magnanimously agreed to let me take them home with me on condition that I would not put them on an oyster boat.

"I was so anxious to get them out of jail that I said: "I am a farmer and I am going to place these boys out with farmers. I can promise you that they will not even see an oyster boat!"

"One of the boys in Portsmouth was convicted of stealing copper from a boat. In his heart there was such hate and jealous rage against his father and step-mother, for what he considered their neglect of him that, for years he had cherished the resolution that, when he was a man, he would return and kill them both. To keep him out of jail we took him for a while to get him quieted down. When he expressed his determination to commit murder we just ignored it. Instead, Miss Ellen and I took the position that through kindness, individual interest, and good physical care he might receive what his life had hitherto lacked; what he felt he had been so unfairly denied.

"When almost a man, he went back to his former home, it was to take his place as a responsible eldest son and he became a respected citizen of his home town. Now who would have looked for that?

"Mis' Ellen and I felt more and more that it was not right to keep problem children," he said. "Conditions became more complex with no law to help us out. My responsibility was a double one: I not only had the responsibility for finding out every child's traits before placing him out but I also had the responsibility for knowing all about the home into which he would fit."

I shook my head. "It was altogether too much responsibility for any private citizen to have to carry," I remarked. "Enough to keep you awake nights."

"As I look back on it, with present child-caring procedures in mind, our home really served as an informal clinic. And, further, we had to prepare the children for placement, as well as we could, in a busy farm household where I had centered most of my legal work too. Mis' Ellen and I realized how hard it was for the children to go into a strange family and make good there."

"Getting children ready to be placed out is a task in itself," I commented. "How could Mis' Ellen manage to get them ready--clothes, and shoes for travelling and all that? Surely the unpaid foster families didn't do it."

Lawyer Walker glanced at me commiseratingly. "They had hearts like the Thorpe's," he remarked with a quiet smile. "We all did the best we could. Of course it was to be expected that families would be more critical of the children than if they had been paid for taking them in. That was where I had to be a pastor again once in a while--develop gratitude in them for having a chance to help children who hadn't ever had a good home before. I used to warn them ahead that to take in such children called for an unflinching

Christian spirit and love for unfortunate boys of our race. I certainly can testify that not one of all the families that cooperated with me on this basis was attracted by any other considerations. There weren't any. Often it meant only trouble and sacrifice. I could give you an example of what some foster parents went through sometimes.

"Tell me about it," I said. "Maybe it will illustrate just what we want to show -- how being a lawyer helped out."

"Oh yes, my foster families often needed legal help as in adoptions and other matters concerning placed-out children and couldn't have kept on if I hadn't been "The Children's Lawyer," as they called me. "As to the court case I mentioned I came across it just in time. It didn't happen in Gloucester County but in a place where an excellent ^{Negro} family had taken in a nine year old Negro orphan and had already started proceedings to adopt him as a son. They loved him dearly.

"Then suddenly, a county worker came and said: "I shall have to take the child away because a white family wants him."

"The foster mother knew what this meant and objected. "He is not old enough to work," she said, "anyhow, we are going to adopt him."

"But the County worker would not listen. She said it was impossible; the child needed to learn to work and the white man would teach him."

"One of my daughters, who was doing some social work in that county, heard of this and sent for me. I found that the case had several dangerous angles so I had to move with extreme care in getting my evidence. The county was one of the few counties ⁱⁿ Virginia where tensions ran high and in which a number of unaccountable deaths had occurred over differences of racial attitudes. The county worker had already taken the child and he had been indentured to the white farmer until majority. It looked as if I were too late.

"However, I had assistance from both white and Negro citizens who disapproved the lax and even unscrupulous methods of certain county workers, and the exploitation of children that they saw going on around them. I found out that the child had not been sent to school or church since he had been taken by the white farmer. In fact, he had not been allowed off the place except on some errands. When I had all the necessary facts I went to headquarters to inquire.

"It seems inconceivable but I was given the same refusal as the foster family, that this young child had to learn how to work. This was, of course, in open defiance of the law. I told the worker so. I said: "That is not your prerogative. What is your prerogative is to protect children from such exploitation in your area."

"So both the county department and the farmer who had the little boy were called into court. They and their lawyer appeared to be perfectly confident of winning the case because I was the first Negro lawyer who had ever appeared in that court or in that section of Virginia either. And, as I have said, Negroes thereabouts seemed to have no legal status so far as practice went. And democracy was on trial at the color line. The Ku Klux Klan was very active in that county too.

"The court room was crowded with both racial groups and tension was so high that at one point I thought it would snap. As the trial proceeded and I got more and more determined to win, until the judge ordered me to sit down.

"As the law was on my side, and everybody knew it was, I said: "Your Honor, I refuse to sit down! I intend to argue this case according to the law and the evidence. The law is on my side."

"Because of the laugh that followed this retort the judge threatened to clear the court room. Yet he didn't. Too many Negroes were present to make it safe to do that. But he defied the law by turning the boy over to the farmer to stay until he was twenty-one years old.

"At this bare exploitation I took the case to the Circuit Court where the judge sustained my appeal and the boy was sent back to his devoted foster parents. The reaction of this race ridden community was one of satisfaction that law had prevailed. This I took pains to determine. I was thankful myself because the outcome meant not only enforced legal protection of one small American but education of both races in the possibility of legal justice even to the Negroes in that hate ridden county where justice stopped at the color line."

"From this case I realized still more the necessity for the State's bearing the responsibility for such inhuman practices wherever they might be found. Protection of all children was needed in every corner by law.

"I didn't have any law back of me for getting the Old Bottom Jail boys out nor for taking neglected children into our home. We felt we couldn't keep on taking the responsibility for them without legal backing and without having the right things done for the homes from which they came. We decided it was time to wake up the State."

"I never knew just how you got that started," I said. "But I know it must have had a pioneer sort of send-off. And of course I knew you were at the bottom of ^{it} everybody told me so."

"It had to be started by a white person. I couldn't do it alone because of my race," he said simply, disregarding my remark. "And it had to be a white person with a heart in him as big as the Thorpe's--who took in those

terrible looking children from Old Bottom. I was in a hurry to keep that sort of thing from happening again.

"So I hunted up Doctor Joseph T. Mastin, one of our greatest Virginians who was loved and respected by everybody and who knew the problems of both races from the ground up. He was one of those people who was so human that the minute you told him anything he saw right through to the cause. Now he really was a pioneer--and a pioneer on horse-back a great deal of the time too because he was circuit rider through the Blue Ridge Mountains for the Methodist Church. He had sympathy, wisdom, common sense and humor--the saving grace in successful pioneering with folks."

"It was he who first told me about you!" I said. "Indeed, I knew him well. He and his wife have visited us here and the last time he took me to see the worst sections of Richmond we met a visiting nurse going into a run-down shack with her bag. Doctor Mastin watched her until she was out of sight and then he said: 'There goes ^{the} Church running around outside of itself!' I never forgot it."

"Ah, that was Doctor Mastin all over," echoed Lawyer Walker. "He saw what had to be done for the children was work for the Church just as much as preaching--maybe more important because sick and hungry people in extreme poverty and trouble don't listen to sermons. Something has to be done for them first.

"He was a genuine pioneer too, wasn't he?" I said, a ^{worker} social_λ on horse-back. He took three of us once over part of his circuit in the mountains where there were not only no roads but no trails. He said just to trust our mounts without using the reins and we'd get somewhere by night; the single-foots knew the way."

Lawyer Walker's eyes shone. "Yes!" he said, "That was the way he did—he made ~~t~~ fails without stopping to look for old roundabout roads to places he had to get to. And it was that quality in him that I believed would lead him to some solution for our neglected children.

"I told him that taking in an endless procession of needy children had been one of the most rewarding experiences of our lives, ~~he replied~~, but there was a limit to what we were in position to do for them. I said not only the children but their families needed official attention with records. I told him how I had spent long hours hunting up birth certificates of drafted Negro boys and how I could get no information at all for those boys from Old Bottom Jail. I said Miss Ellen and I were not legally responsible for the boys we took in and so, because there was no guardianship of them, we wanted to register all these children with a State controlled agency. We wanted a law back of us. We wanted such children as we had taken to be recognized as wards of the State, we wanted a Juvenile Court and we wanted some place for Negro children who were mentally defective and such action couldn't come too soon."

"I told him I had reached the conclusion that what we had done, through force of circumstances and because there were no provisions for little Negro children as there were for whites, ought to be made illegal."

"Surely you don't mean that!" I exclaimed. "Don't you want me to say 'legalized'?"

"No!" he said. "I told him it ought to be illegal for anyone to act as a guardian without any legal appointment. I am a lawyer. What

we were doing wasn't illegal but it ought to have been! Suppose some unscrupulous person got hold of unprotected children and bound them out with no one knowing about it? I had come so near to missing that little indentured boy I told you about!

"Doctor Mastin said that he had been thinking about that same problem for a long time. Indeed, he had come across many such children while on his Circuit Work among the mountain whites.

"As we discussed the matter further, I said that the only way I knew to get a good Juvenile Law was to find out the best that other places had enacted so as to profit by their experience. Then when such a law had been drawn up it must be given wide publicity so as to gain public support. We would both have to campaign for it."

"I know you both so well I can say just what you did next," I put in. "You got right to work."

"Yes, indeed we did," he answered. Doctor Mastin said he would get the information we needed because my lack of contact with white leaders was a handicap. In those days, the race problems seemed like a wilderness without any opening I could get through."

"Doctor Mastin started right off. He went North to different cities, studied the whole question, and with the help of some northern leaders in children's work, we drafted a bill that would fit Virginia. Then we organized speaking tours. He went to white churches, schools, clubs-- and I went out to develop sentiment in my own race--wherever I could get an audience, urging adoption of the new program."

"I heard all about it!" I said. "I remembered the card they put at your place at your Special Class supper when you were graduated from Hampton. Do repeat it."

Lawyer Walker laughed heartily. "Oh yes, I began young. I never found out who wrote it but it said:

"When we want a man to mount the stump
We look for a great talker.
Perhaps of all assembled here
The best is Thomas Walker!"

That was back in 1883 and I'm at it yet. I talked all over Virginia for that bill--protecting children of both races just as Doctor Mastin was doing and between us, and a few earnest friends of Doctor Mastin's we got it through the Legislature!

"The minute I heard this great news I told Mis' Ellen who was unspeakably relieved because the new law indirectly legalized the work we were doing and also forbade sentencing minors, under eighteen, to jails and prisons unless the crime was very heinous. It was, in fact, just what would have prevented those boys, who started me out in child-placing, from getting into Old Bottom Jail in the first place. So you see how some incident, small in itself, can start a preventive movement."

"And then?" I asked.

"Yes, it wasn't long after that, was it, that Doctor Mastin was in charge of the enforcement of this legislation as Secretary of what is now called the Virginia State Board of Public Welfare representing a Board of active white and colored men and women of which I was made a member.

"That was one of the fruits of the hardest kind of hard work," I said, "considering the racial difficulties."

"Well," said Lawyer Walker reluctantly, "The fruit wasn't all ripe. No funds were provided to help us carry the load. Doctor Mastin didn't want to take charge of it until he was convinced that it, too, was 'the church running around outside of itself' - just as much as if he got on his horse again and went circuit riding in the Blue Ridge. When he did decide it was right for him to do it he would take only a minimum salary and, when a raise was given to him later, he returned the check. That is the kind of dedicated man Doctor Mastin was.

"The Board made me one of its regular agents - volunteer, of course. It made the necessary investigations. Whenever a Negro child got into trouble I was sent for but the State Board was back of me and I reported to it. All the records of children we have taken into our home are now on file at the State Headquarters."

"About how many children who had been in your home were there for you to register?" I asked, expecting him to name a few hundreds.

"Oh," he answered easily, "about three quarters of the nearly fifteen hundred Negro children whom I registered with the Board in the first ten years of its existence I had personally dealt with in one way or another. Most of them passed through our home, staying for a day or several days, sometimes for months or even for years. By actual count I had placed some two thousand of them in Negro unpaid foster homes."

"I hope it paid all the carrying charges!" I exclaimed.

Lawyer Walker smiled wryly. "How could it?" he said indulgently. "Doctor Mastin was not allotted enough funds to pay more than a fraction of necessary expenses in getting the dependent children to their new homes. It did provide care for the other classes. So we all plunged in

to raise money for such things--some from churches, white and colored. I got voluntary contributions of a nickel here, a dime, or quarter there, handed me at times by some Negro on the road, or maybe the contents of a collection plate. The foster homes, themselves, were usually the main contributors in outfitting the children so they could travel to them. Of course now the white children had to be looked after too. We were thankful for that. The white people took hold when those children came under the new law. It was wonderful. Both races did a lot of charity work for the children listed as State wards.

"I never heard anything like such a number in all my experience!" I said, almost dazed by these figures. "But to register them you must have had records. How could you possibly have kept records with all the goings-on of farm, law-practice, travelling about walking or driving and hunting up foster homes too? And names! Did they have names or did you have to supply them too?"

Lawyer Walker paused to sum up the situation. "Of course we couldn't keep anything like the kind of records real agencies keep now-a-days," he said. "And only the court cases--of which there were a good many--had anything like complete ones about the children's homes and parents, but.." and here he smiled and added: "Didn't you ever think what wonderful memories folks have in small places and rural regions about their neighbors? I can find out almost anything I want to by asking around. I think I spoke before, about making what is now called "the neighborhood test" in connection with my court work. And I was always travelling over the County anyhow. I certainly always got wind of it when any of my foster homes needed a check-up. That's the way I kept track of the Old

Bottom boys. But of course we had nobody to put it down systematically. That was what I wanted the State to do."

"Didn't you ever get bad reports from foster-parents," I asked. "No runaways? No parents suddenly turning up to claim their youngsters when they got to legal working age?"

"We had our failures, of course, but we didn't stop befriending homeless children after they became recognized as wards of the State. Whenever I went to any area I would ask about my placed-out boys and many of them came back to see Mis' Ellen. The foster parents always notified me of any news about the children and neighbors checked on the foster families. So there was not the risk there would be in a city or among people I did not know as well as I did mine.

"But in Richmond and elsewhere it could not have worked as safely as it did in Gloucester where I could see the boys often. Many of them became citizens in good standing, home owners and church leaders. Everywhere I go they come up and speak to me.

"But it was still the habit of both races to refer needy Negro boys to me. They never seemed to realize that I was a lawyer and farmer and only a volunteer when it came to helping needy children.

"To show you how impossible it was for Mis' Ellen and me to stop: One day the State Board sent me word of a three year old Negro boy who was found in an almshouse. The superintendent, for some reason, objected to my taking him but I insisted that the State Board had authorized it. When I started off with him I discovered he didn't have enough clothing to cover him and I couldn't keep him warm on the boat. But there are always kind people around in this world and the stewardess, seeing him shivering,

brought him a little coat from the unclaimed lost articles and I got him safely to Mrs. Walker. I found a home where he was well cared for by his foster parents. They thought everything of that poor little child.

"On another occasion when I visited a penitentiary full of adult prisoners I found a beautiful little Negro girl, about three years old. She had never been outside that dreadful building ⁱⁿ her whole life. I begged to take her home with me then but was refused. When I reported the case to Dr. Mastin he said the State Board could get the child out provided I first found a good home for her. So in a few weeks I went back and said: 'I have come to get that child. I now have the right home for her.' He gave me a written order, that had the law back of it this time, and I carried the child away in my arms as she was too little to walk much. Mrs. Walker cared for her for a few days and fixed her up so I could take her to her new parents who had no children of their own. Soon they adopted her.

"Do you know, the eagerness of my people to help me by taking in these children, about whom they usually knew little or nothing beforehand, led me to an extraordinary conclusion."

I waited with poised pencil for Lawyer Walker to conclude this interesting statement. It was as if he was still astonished at some observation he had made years ago.

"My conclusion was," he finally explained, "that their eagerness to undertake such difficult, financially unrewarding work, was due to their own need for some opportunity of real service to others!

"Slowly but surely the State got control of the various situations. The more it handled the problems of dependent, delinquent, and defective

children, the clearer it became that the parents must be dealt with directly for neglect, non-support, and failure to send their children to school. Few of the neglected children had any school records at all. There was no institutional provision for those who were mentally defective, and who needed custodial care."

"Tell me," I said, "how did the foster parents feel about taking wards of the State?"

"I had wondered myself what effect all this would have on the foster parents and how future foster parents would take it," he replied. "My wife and I were both apprehensive that they would get a wrong idea and think of the State as a big policeman of limitless powers. But folks don't always react the way you think they're going to. Much to my surprise, I noticed a sudden change for the better in their attitude.

"My bringing children to them had been an act of charity at both ends but when children arrived as wards of the State of Virginia it seemed equal, in their minds, to a distinguished service medal. I learned a great deal about some inner frustrations of my people by studying this reaction.

"Inadequate as our resources still were to meet the individual need of each child, still, one who knew conditions previous to the functioning of the State Board would see what an advance had been made since it started.

"When they were faced with the State Board's requirements, such as maintenance of right home conditions, and attendance of the wards regularly at school, although the State paid them nothing at all for their work, they assumed an attitude of dignity and pride. Had they not been investigated and considered fit and proper guardians of State wards? When had Negroes ever been so honored? Oh! They were delighted!"

CHAPTER XVI

COOPERATING WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

So far digging for the book had gone well. Then a mysterious obstacle stopped further progress on it. It seemed to be impossible for Lawyer Walker to talk or write about the adventures he must inevitably have had in the new responsibilities he had undertaken for the federal government. In the depth of the great depression of 1934 he had been appointed Adviser and Consultant on Negro Affairs for the Virginia Emergency and Relief Administration with headquarters in Richmond.

As the first Negro ever to hold such a position in the State we, as practical social workers, knew that every ounce of his extraordinary resourcefulness would be called out in meeting the human problems confronting him. It was instances of such adventures that belonged in the book. He sent us clippings, from time to time, and also his official reports, but as to individual adventures he continued to be silent beyond mention of some of the projects undertaken and official findings.

Naturally, he was so busy that there was no opportunity for resumption of the easy back-and-forth conversations that would have overcome the road-block existing somewhere in his consciousness. Even after his five years of work for the Government had closed and the special department he had directed was liquidated, he could not give us the story. He was seventy-two years old when he took up the federal work and could not keep up his old pace much longer.

However, the book could not be finished without including at least some of his personal ventures in attempting to solve the endless human dilemmas of applicants who came to him for help. So, at last, it occurred to us to appeal to Mrs. Walker who was enthusiastic about the book and cooperative at every juncture. 'Mrs. Walker,' I wrote, 'can you tell us why Mr. Walker seems unable to give us accounts of his personal experiences in the Federal work? He seems to try to tell and then not to be able to go on. We want to finish the book as soon as possible. Can you explain the trouble?'

Back came the answer. "It is those tramps! There was a terrible tragedy connected with his work for them. He felt personally responsible although it was in no way his fault. When he gets to thinking of his federal work he remembers that part of it and feels so sad that he can not go on. But I have led him back over the whole event, little by little, and now he feels better about it and I think he can tell it all. Try again!"

"Blessings on Mrs. Walker!" we said.

And so it was arranged that Lawyer Walker would continue his story at a quiet sea-side resort where he was comfortably housed at the local Colored Young Men's Association, coming to us for uninterrupted narrations of his personal experiences in pioneering for the Government. With a note-taker out of sight and I busy with some knitting, we hoped the tramp episode, whatever it was, would flow through the accounts without further stoppage or special inquiry.

"Lawyer Walker," I began, as we sat down together, "what were your headquarters like in Richmond? Somehow we can't picture the situation as it must have been."

He burst out laughing. "Oh," he said, "you ought to have seen them! They were in an office building along with the other branches of the relief organization. My office was the only one used by Negroes and to it came every type under the sun, from long before we opened up until after closing time. I used to try my best to get ahead of these applicants for relief by going earlier and earlier but some of them were always ahead of me. Sometimes whole families came together, babies in arms and toddlers hanging onto their mother's skirts. They used to overflow my office and even clogged up the hall, waiting their turn."

"Were they allowed to use the same elevators as the white people?" I asked, remembering his experience at our own apartment house.

"Oh yes! The white people were very nice about it too. There were so many applicants that if it hadn't been for a competent staff of assistants, both white and colored, some on salary and some who were volunteers, very little of permanent value could have been accomplished.

"As in all the Works Projects my assignment was not giving relief money but the cutting down of recipients to the irreducible minimum -- and as quickly as possible. To do this it was necessary to find work that would make the applicants self-supporting. My task was made all the harder by wild rumors in the Negro press and elsewhere about federal hand-outs. This led to some serious misunderstandings and accusations that required time to explain away. I had to travel all over the State, giving lectures

to set things right. Many of the applicants did not want to work or, if I found openings, they had to be trained to fill them."

"I was told," I said, "that before the Board of Public Welfare was started the relief records in Richmond were kept in four books -- the wood book,^{the} meal book, the shoe book, and the coffin book, and that 'if an applicant wasn't in need of just those things he was out of luck.' Rather different from the responsibility laid upon you, right in the middle of the depression when jobs were fewest."

"It taxed all the wits any of us had!" he went on. "There were some eleven thousand Negroes needing relief in Virginia when I took office. Only seven of them were from Gloucester County though."

"Due to pioneering!" I volunteered.

He went on without noticing my remark. "When I wound up my five year's work the number on relief had dropped to between eight and nine hundred," he said.

"That's a wonderful record!" I could not help exclaiming. "But scattered as the applicants were, all over Virginia, how did they get to your office?"

"My best answer to that question," he said, warming to his subject, "is to tell you a story. It's about a little place where we wanted to start a Center to which applicants could come. This we had to do all over the State, getting local people to take charge of them under our supervision. Distance was one of our very biggest problems because personal interviews with the applicants were necessary if they were to be fitted into jobs they could do. But our scheme didn't work in this little place.

The investigator reported to me that there was no place where a Center could be located and, anyhow, there wasn't a single available job in the whole area.

"The report was so altogether bad that I went down to look over such an extraordinary situation myself. We had to do something for the unemployed there; maybe something different from what we had done in other places--but find something, we must.

"After being escorted over the whole town, I was almost convinced my investigator was right when I happened to see such a ramshackle old house that I couldn't take my eyes off it. It was about the worst excuse for a house that I had ever beheld and, as you know, that is saying a good deal. The doors were sagging off their hinges and every window was broken. Rags were stuffed in some of them while others were just holes through which trash had been thrown. And all around it was rubbish of all sorts.

"As I stood staring in disgust at such civic neglect an idea struck me. Why not make a work project out of salvaging it with the unemployed and then use it for our Center? The worse it looked the better it was for our purpose. I began to see it in my mind's eye as exactly what we needed and had been looking for!

"The next step was to find out if we could get what now appeared to me as a real treasure. So I immediately tested out the idea on the local people who were escorting me and they became so enthusiastic that they hurried me right off to see some members of the Town Council and they fell for it too, giving me permission to begin work at any time.

"There was something about this heartening change from despair to

hope that started some ^{of the} local white women to raising funds to supplement what could be supplied by the Town Council and Federal allotment. Adding up, there was enough to buy material to put the place into shape. All the workmen were drawn from the ranks of the unemployed and one of the resident Negroes was named to run the project under the supervision of our department. I went back to Richmond telling myself again that I must never give up on a betterment project until I had really tried every way to work it out--sometimes from nothing."

"Well!" I said, feeling as if I had been running after a bus from excitement over this exploit, "did it actually come true?"

"True! The last time I was down there I found not only a greatly needed employment office for relief applicants, but a Center where inter-racial efforts were being made for community progress. Certainly a new era of uplift had been inaugurated to the benefit of my people there."

"Now that's exactly what we want for the book!" I said. "It shows how the races will cooperate once they get roused about a common objective. Have you something you can tell about your educated applicants especially?"

"There was much talent among the educated Negro applicants, just needing a chance for expression," he replied. "Some of these I was able to place with the Negro section that was added to the Federal Writers' Project in Virginia in 1936. They were under the supervision of Roscoe E. Lewis, a staff member of Hampton Institute which sponsored it. Approximately one-fifth of the personnel of the Virginia Writers' Project were Negroes. It was a great satisfaction to me to help in planning this Negro book project, written by Negroes about their own State, and giving some applicants to my department opportunity for important and dignified contribution to Negro

literature. It was called: "The Negro in Virginia from 1619 to the Present Day." But I sent you a copy, didn't I?"

"I've read and reread it," I said. "I wish everybody else had one. It's just what is needed to clear us up."

"Our own section of the Writers' Project went out of existence before the manuscript was finished," he continued, "but the administration of the general Writers' Project for Virginia completed it. However, many sections of it were written entirely by our Negro staff. That is why, when I handed it to Governor Price at a special meeting, I called his attention to its inter-racial significance saying that both white and Negro research workers--clerks, typists, and editors, had worked on it in friendly cooperation.

"As I see it, this fact should be stressed along with the value of the book itself. Its presentation to the Governor was quite a significant and impressive little ceremony attended by about fifty leading white and Negro citizens."

"Let's hope it was just the first of many such testimonies," I said. "If we keep on doing such things we shall have a joint cultural heritage in literature as we now have in musical compositions. How else did the white people help out in the federal work?"

"It was just here and there," he said. "Certain liberal white young people succeeded in getting some of my applicants into buildings where Negroes had never been employed before as elevator operators. Every little helped. And I was especially gratified when some young white men--several of them college students--came to me asking for information about the "Negro question," as they termed it.

8

"Now, as I have already told you," he went on, "some of the Negroes who were the worst hit by the depression were highly educated; a number of them professional people stranded until the coming of better times. I brought these two groups in touch with each other. Working together, cooperative groups were formed for the purpose of discussion of problems and their solution in a way that would be of mutual value. What's more, you will be interested to hear that it was not only the Negro question that was talked about in their meetings but they had not gotten far before it was the white problem too. It all led to cooperative efforts for the common good."

"Won't it be wonderful," I exclaimed, "when tax-payers will take part in such discussions as tax-payers, and citizens as citizens, without stopping to think of Negro or white?"

"And when the word 'inter-racial' drops out of common usage!" he completed.

"Weren't there any other openings you could find for well-educated Negroes?" I asked, rather overwhelmed at the pathos of the situation he pictured with such restraint.

"A number of men and women were sufficiently educated to be placed in the social service departments as case workers," he answered. "Norfolk had the largest number of such workers. Some were teachers whom we put in charge of classes of all sorts. Others were wives whose husbands had been thrown out of employment by the depression. All these were seeking work instead of hand-outs.

"The members of my staff did individual work all the time. But," he added, shaking with laughter, "some of the projects I personally pushed

got me in so wrong with my fellow-workers, the press, and even some of my friends, that I, as an individual, got the punishment. They boomeranged."

"It wasn't at all smooth sailing, I'm sure," I said. "You must have struck many unexpected difficulties as well as expected ones. How about it?"

"Well," he said, thinking hard, "maybe the story of the Negro musicians will show some of the unexpected obstacles I ran into. It illustrates some new points, perhaps. It was a particularly difficult situation in which I was thought, by some white social workers, to be favoring my own race when, as a matter of fact, I would have put up exactly the same fight if the applicants had been white."

"It was a matter of principle for which you were standing?" I said.

"Yes," he replied. "And the social workers conscientiously claimed that they were simply abiding by the rules that had been laid down and that they felt obliged to follow."

"I have known such situations," I remarked. "Right on both sides but different points of view."

"Yes, it was this;" he went on. "Some professional Negro musicians applied for relief and were turned down by a white social worker because they still had something they could sell for food--their instruments. It was one of the rules that no applicant should be given relief if he had in his possession some article that was not absolutely necessary for family living and by the sale of which he could get much needed money.

"This brought me into the picture in a hurry because I saw the situation as one that was likely to become permanent if not handled as an emergency. It was because we had reached the depth of the depression that ^{these} men had

lost their usual clientele but the depression was surely not to last forever. These men had earned their living by musical entertainments through band and orchestra concerts that they were forced to give up because of hard times.

"Were they or were they not entitled to relief--taking all the facts, even relatively long range facts, into consideration? They asked for out and out help although they did own musical instruments with which they expected to make livings again when the tide turned. They loved their work!

"I understood their attitude and the white social worker's position too," he went on. "She was carrying out the regulations but I figured that sale of the instruments would not bring in enough to tide over the emergency while, if they kept them they would have them for money earning, later on. Otherwise they would have no capital with which to buy them back, and would have to remain on the relief list."

"Remember, these men have no other skill, they are musicians," I said.

"The opposition to my stand revealed some ideas that were entirely new to me," he added. "The higher-ups supported the social worker by classifying music and musical education as luxuries! They reiterated that no funds had been appropriated for luxuries and there was just no use in talking about it anymore."

"But," and here Lawyer Walker shook his head slowly and smiled as if his thoughts were unanswerable, "I wouldn't give up because, as all the world knows, you can't separate a Negro from music! Music is the natural expression of the highest aspirations of his race. Music has always been the great outlet and comfort for my people in their sufferings during slavery

days and in the miseries of the Reconstruction Period. Furthermore, I affirmed that music is not a luxury to us. It is a necessity.

"Negroes have an innate sense of rhythm and marked musical gifts and aptitudes as everybody recognizes," he continued, "If it was said that these men had been employed in cheap commercial interests and in some undesirable places, I maintained that it was not their fault as long as Negroes were given no chance, such as white people had, for the kind of musical education that would enable talented singers and actors among them to emerge and have an opportunity to develop the dignified, elevating careers that are open to white people.

"I said further," he added, "that I had long felt that even a partial solution of our educational problems in this direction could never be reached until we had tried out the musical field by some serious experiment with our masses as well as with individuals who had to earn their living at what they could get even while they needed better preparation.

"So I held that the instruments these men owned should be considered as tools and not as luxuries and I would look out for wage-earning opportunities for use of them as soon as the market revived. My Department did not insist on other workmen selling their tools before being put on relief.

"I didn't mean to be over-insistent but, in such a case, I considered it my duty as Federal Administrator to make the plea.

"Finally the opposition was removed," he continued, "and, later on, it became my happy task to get engagements for these musicians from both white and colored sources. A year of follow-up work put some of them in position to be self-supporting and, what seems to me even more important,

they kept their self respect by having their own tools with which to do it.

"In talking with these men," he went on, "I realized that to ask them to give up their instruments would be like asking me to give up my home. They loved them. To give a demonstration of this, let me tell you that one of these young men stopped me on the street, later, to say he was master of a navy band in an important institution and member of a commercially successful quartet. He maintained that it was what our office had done for him that had enabled him to get this work and to support his family by it."

"Individual work again!" I said, "but how could you do it with such crowds of applicants?"

"Conscientious and able assistants," he said quickly. "They were having experiences of their own of course, all along the line. I am only telling you a few of my own because that's what you are digging out of me. But don't forget my assistants, both races, paid and volunteer. My own individual pioneering I often had to do after office hours, of course. I worked on the same principle I used and demonstrated at Old Poplar's School: that success in any betterment work can come only by hard work and strengthening the characters of those you try to help.

"By pioneering!" I said.

"Yes, by pioneering with individuals," he maintained. "That is, by building up substantial qualities in those who are trying to get on their feet--otherwise you may be helping them to step down. For instance, a desperate, city-bred young Negro came to me asking how he could earn enough to feed his family without having to get on the bread line to do it.

The depression had hit him hard. We, at the office, were at our wits' end ourselves, to find jobs for other applicants and did not know what to suggest until I remembered a tract of about two acres of land on the outskirts of Richmond that was growing up to weeds.

"I told him I thought I might get him the use of this land if he would be willing to try his hand at raising vegetables. His response was that he was willing to do any work in the world that was honest but that he didn't know the first thing about truck gardens or farming, how to start, nor what to plant. I could see how disappointed he was.

"I said: 'If you will undertake to raise a garden for food on the plot, provided I can get it for you, I will contribute my experience as a farmer, help you plan and teach you how to take care of it.' So we shook hands on it and I got him the use of the land.

"But even two acres were too much for him to cultivate by hand. However, I happened to know a man with a team of mules he was not working and it occurred to me he might be glad to loan them in exchange for their care because he was too busy on another project to look after them himself. This I was able to arrange. Then I taught the new farmer how to harness and drive them; also how to use some crude farming implements that had come with the team."

"What else did you do?" I asked.

"I, myself, was so eager to have him gain confidence in being successful--he felt so timid about it--that, since you ask, I worked with him after hours. The federal government wasn't paying me to spend my time teaching an applicant how to drive mules! My regular hours were crowded with a thousand things all of which seemed to come first.

"But to go on with the story: finally, I was delighted to see that fear of failure, fear that he would have to get on the relief rolls if his family was not to starve, faded out of the picture. The garden prospered, particularly his field of corn, so that he got enough out of it to feed his family. Then, little by little, his financial condition improved. He was an industrious and self-respecting man.

"Now my point is this," here Lawyer Walker again put the tips of his fingers together and I knew he was digging through his working philosophy. "Suppose I had put him on relief--feeling as he did. Suppose he hadn't had to do manual labor--it's hard, sometimes, for city trained boys to take to farming when they expect to earn their living at city jobs later on. Suppose he hadn't had to struggle to gain financial independence in spite of the depression--why, he and his family would not have benefited by the initiative he developed and he would have lost that fine spirit of self-respect. It would have been my fault. That, I think, is one way of giving genuine help to my race."

"I agree with you one hundred per cent," I exclaimed.

"Much as I value the training given in the many schools of social work," he continued, "and I wish I had had it myself, it would not have taught me to harness mules. I mean that my federal work called out of me, of individual cases that were so worth while, what no social worker's schools possibly could have taught me. Not only common sense but practical experience--all we could get--went into the hopper to get our applicants off the relief rolls or to keep them from getting on." v for

"I'm not under-estimating the immense importance of what could be attended to in office hours," I said. "The big community movements that were

widened so as to include your own people, those are in that splendid report you turned in. But can't you tell some more instances of pioneering with individuals?"

Lawyer Walker sat back and looked at me shaking his head. "It was all for the federal and state governments," he said at last. "I don't want to give the impression that I was doing anything as an individual when I dealt personally with applicants in hours or out of hours but I do want to stress the fact that work with individuals is the only way to help build a foundation for the mass so the helping will end in good citizenship. I don't add people who are in trouble up in statistics like those I had to put into the official report!

"It was part of our routine work to provide all kinds of classes to fit our applicants for wage-getting positions. But a few of them didn't fit into classes or into any usual type of job because the women were too frail to do much of anything physically. They needed, I saw, easy work and under kindly supervision. If it could be found it would save their self respect. Certain of them were very sensitive too and eager to earn what they had to have, instead of staying idle and on the relief rolls.

"I couldn't think of anything we could give them to do. One day I happened to think of the Bird and Wild Flower Sanctuary and of a public park on the outskirts of Norfolk. The white women already employed there agreed to cooperate with us in assigning these delicate women to many simple chores that were not beyond their strength. They were very considerate of them."

"I only mention this to prove that useful work can be found for almost

everybody," he added, "if you only take enough trouble to hunt it up or, in the most difficult situations, decide to create it. But I do not mean to say that there were not some applicants for relief that nobody in this round world could do anything with."

Lawyer Walker paused with a strange twist to his mouth and then shook his head as if some such people he had dealt with were passing across his field of vision. Could it be that he was at last going to tell about the tramps?

"Wouldn't what you're thinking about be what we want for the book?" I suggested cautiously.

"I was thinking of what we got into when we tried to fit some of our untrained Negro girls into domestic service!" he said, throwing back his head and laughing so infectiously that I laughed too. "There were many applicants for work and many white housewives making applications for domestic servants. I certainly had some unusual experiences in my efforts to bring the two together!

"The trouble was that so few of them were fitted to do the work," he continued. "They had not been taught how neither did they have any standards. The housewives all wanted experienced servants with references. But I did have the cooperation of certain white people who undertook to employ and teach a few of the ignorant girls. Some of the girls got along well but others were so lazy and lacking in ambition that, even in a carefully selected white family, they could not be trained and had to be discharged.

"I think of one such instance that I personally engineered," he said laughing. "When the hopelessly incompetent girl had been discharged and was going out the door, she turned to her friendly and long-suffering

mistress saying: "I'm sorry you won' lemme stay. I did so enjoy your cooking!"

"Will it do if I tell you some more about domestic science," he said inquiringly, "because domestic science involved me in some of my hottest controversies--and from both races!"

"What would we do without controversies," I responded, "especially when you come along to smooth them out as you did in the one about your musicians!"

"Well," he said with a rueful expression, "I couldn't smooth this one out. I guess nobody ever will. It's the difference between domestic science and domestic service. Where one begins and the other ends I won't undertake to decide. But why unemployed, untrained women should think there is a social stigma attached to learning in wage-earning service instead of in a school while on public relief, I don't yet see. Any number of our applicants were totally untrained and various unhappy experiences I had after I had placed them out in white homes convinced me that here was something to which I must give more study.

"So we organized domestic science classes to fit them for positions in selected white homes. Some of the students attended three afternoons, others a period of two hours, four nights a week, over six months. Out of three such classes in Richmond two had colored supervisors. The girls were taught how to cook, serve, care for rooms, and attend to children. We laid great stress on tidiness and personal appearance. One of the best white housewives in Richmond told me, one day, that she had found the difference between the competency of girls who had taken our course, and those who had not, was so marked that none of our graduates would have any trouble in finding good places at good wages."

"How could so successful a venture as that involve you in another controversy?" I asked.

"Well, it did," he replied, "but it wasn't put up by the white folks this time, it was my own people! Some of them criticized me bitterly, long and loud. When I told parents about the domestic science classes that were being offered, most of them were delighted but some of them said defiantly that they did not wish their daughters trained to be servants; that I surely was one "old time Negro" if I thought they would be willing to have them so. They wanted them to be ladies, not have to spend their time cooking and scrubbing.

"Because of my attitude towards domestic service they called me a "white man's Negro,"^{too} although I was desperately seeking work opportunities for those of my people who could do nothing else and did not even know how to do that well enough to be paid for it. They were the future parents of the coming generations, future managers of their own homes, so when white people of kindly attitudes were willing to employ them and make them self-supporting, I was only too glad to take advantage of such openings.

"Had I not done menial chores for Major Bland? It was as a volunteer, to be sure, but I felt no degradation at being seen doing them and later didn't he give me my law training and even become openly associated with me in Court as did General Taliaferro who later on took me in as his partner?

"I have never been able to see as some of my people did about occupational prestige between the races," he continued, "any more than I have been able to understand why cooperation in community taxpayer affairs constitutes social equality. This seems to me to parry the true questions involved and to be harmful forms of snobbishness.

"Indeed, I have found where there existed a spirit of good-will on both sides that a better understanding was built up between the races. I have in mind one instance where a Negro girl's first glimmering that members of her own race had produced some great art and literature came while she was employed in a white home of broad culture. If a family with active race antagonism employs a Negro servant, that is another matter. Bitterness of the girl towards white people results from such a combination. I am always aware I must not expose any young woman to that if I can prevent it.

"But it wasn't only domestic science classes that we had. There was all kinds of teaching going on to fit our applicants to take wage-earning jobs," he went on. "We had sewing classes for women, garden projects to interest men in growing food for their families, and canning classes to show their wives how to preserve what their husbands had raised.

"These various classes, recreation centers and so forth, helped us to give work to some of our better educated people. Then, to make it possible for the mothers to attend these classes or to go to work, we even had recreation centers for children and day nurseries for their little ones," he said with a gleaming smile.

"I must tell you about the experience I had with one woman for whom I had found work! It warmed my heart. I think it deserves a place in history.

"A hard working mother, able to earn little more than enough to pay for the family food, came to me one day with a shining face. She said that since her children had been able to attend the day nursery provided by the Administration they had shown such improvement, and in so many ways, she wanted to make a contribution to the Government in appreciation of its help.

And then she handed me a small sum--but a large one for her--indeed, a vital part of what she was earning from the work we had found for her.

"I wondered if the Federal Government had received any other such gifts from the thousands for whom it had rendered similar service through its various projects? The increase of faith in lowly members of my race which that ignorant, poverty stricken little mother gave me, compensated for the long hours, fatigue and rebuffs with which my days at the office were filled."

"Do you want to tell any more about your federal work?" I asked, anxiously wondering about the tramps.

"There are a few more stories that illustrate some inter-racial unusual points," he said, just as he was leaving. "I'll give you those tomorrow."

And off he went without mentioning the tramps.

CHAPTER XVIII

AT LAST - THOSE TRAMPS!

"Lawyer Walker", I began, the day after he had told of his duties and the work involved as federal administrator, "With those pioneering instincts of yours you must have had to meet situations that were out of the usual run. You have spoken about the intellectual people who were in need of work and about the classes you organized for others but what about the men and women who just weren't fitted to do anything. It must have taken some pioneering to find work for them." I didn't want to mention the tramps but, of course, they were the ones I had in mind.

"I thought you were going to ask me that," he observed with a broad smile. "As I told you, every skill I had, down to teaching how to harness mules, was drawn out of me by federal work. But there were other occasions where I had to experiment with situations in which nothing I knew would apply - unless it was a little bit of common sense. There just wasn't any precedent for some of the things I had to do."

"These experiments got people of all kinds and both races so down on me that, if I had not been acting on principle instead of compromising with policy, I would have felt apologetic to them. But I don't!"

"Now that," I said emphatically, "is just what we want to hear. What was it that got everybody down on you?"

"Well," he said, with an air of great amusement, "This particular

project, that upset everybody--and still does to a certain extent-- had to do with some hundreds of Negro women down in Norfolk and Portsmouth who were so ignorant and crude that no one in the office could think of a thing they could do that would be worth anybody's paying for. They were poorer than any Negroes I had ever seen before and hungrier. And that's saying a good deal. It was clear they would be permanently dependent on relief unless someone could come up with a plan by which they would be helped to earn their own living. And there was absolutely nothing in sight.

"Everybody had given up on them when my eye happened to light on a newspaper story about the increasing menace, along the waterfronts and wharves in Norfolk and Portsmouth, from rats. They were infesting, not only the big warehouses where food was stored, but had spread throughout the communities--everywhere--they were even in the streets.

"Literally tons of food waiting to be shipped from port to relieve shortages in Europe, following the First World War, were being devoured by rats. The loss already suffered was enormous. The press had printed stories about rats infesting the hospitals and attacking babies in the wards. One account said a baby had actually been killed by a rat and another seriously gnawed.

"Suddenly I got an idea. Maybe those poor women can help to eliminate rats. That's it!" I said. "Surely there isn't a woman on this earth so ignorant she can't be taught to kill rats and we can make a sport of it too! Of course, making it a sport was up to me. Naturally, I expected that this idea would be shared enthusiastically by my office force and

the general public. It was certainly a patriotic idea at a time of pitiful human need at both ends and that alone was enough to float it or so I assumed.

"With these invigorating facts in mind, I did not see how anyone could deny that the employment of these otherwise unemployable women was a public service worthy of being financed by the public funds for which we were responsible.

"But I immediately met serious opposition. The white branch of the federal project was unwilling that any woman, however unfit for anything else, should be assigned to such work as catching rats. I stated that I myself would have hesitated to assign them to such a project if every other conceivable resource had not been exhausted for this particular group. I challenged my detractors to suggest a better plan and promised to consider it. But not one idea was forthcoming, and as something had to be done without further delay if we were to avoid making these women recipients of permanent relief, I took the plunge."

"That certainly was a unique experiment," I said. "What form did the opposition take?"

"Why as soon as my decision was announced both races rose up and condemned me," he replied. "Some high up Negroes held that I was humiliating Negro womanhood. To this I retorted that what my opposers ought to be ashamed of was their letting Negro women live in such degraded conditions and remain so ignorant that they could do nothing better than catch rats. I said these women were destitute and hungry and I was giving them a chance to earn their own livelihood and keep their self respect. I held that no honest work could be humiliating whether it was rat catching or

attacking anything else that had come to be a national loss and a health menace. We certainly had a hot discussion about the rat catching project!"

"Under the circumstance I don't see what else would have been right," I said, "since it was your responsibility to keep people off relief and there was a useful, local work these women could do. Think of the social status of slavery days!" Anyhow, pioneers don't follow beaten paths."

"Well," he said with a sigh. "The opposition couldn't see it that way. But anyhow, the project was launched. The least ignorant women assigned to it were made supervisors and directors of groups of the rest; one group being sent to each area selected for a scene of battle. These directors felt very important immediately and proud of their position. They were told to have the others collect all the terriers and other dogs of rat-catching tastes, that they themselves had or could beg or borrow, and to order each woman to come armed with a good stout stick or broom or both. Why the rats were so bold and plentiful that I told them the chase could begin right in the streets."

Lawyer Walker, at this point had to stop to laugh before he could continue. "I shall never, never forget that winter day when I visited Norfolk and Portsmouth to get the project going! There were several inches of snow on the ground at the time but the women were out in full force, armed with their weapons and accompanied by the greatest mixed crowd of barking dogs I had ever seen in my life! With shouts and yells they charged the leaping rats on those slushy streets. The faces of the older women became set in fixed determination but those of the younger ones showed triumph and glee as the number of their victims mounted.

"What developed, even as I watched them, was first class team work. They cooperated in urging tthe barking dogs on and closing in on their quarries. Their success was so immediate that warehouse owners became interested and asked me if the rat-catchers could help in getting rid of their rats too. This provided still more work and earnings from sources outside our department.

"The war on warehouse rats began on one of the days that I was present. Some of the women pursued the rats in the warehouses and others worked on them in the streets. As the rats escaped from the warehouses into the streets the case became all the more thrilling. Dead rats lying about in all directions gave silent evidence of the practical success of the project. The pride of the women in the results of their hunt helped to take some of the sting out of me from being told I was humiliating negro womanhood."

"I can testify that rat-catching, as expressed by some of these women, continued to be a popular sport along the water-fronts and an exciting way of earning a pay check from the United States Government."

"About how much did they get from Uncle Sam?" I put in.

"Oh, they were paid from eight to nine dollars a week. And when I spoke to them about it, to see how they really reacted, they agreed it was better to be earning in a patriotic rat-catching campaign than to be paid by the Government without doing anything to earn it."

"I admit, it is true," he continued, "that, at the very beginning, some of the women were disgruntled at being assigned to rat-catching. I suppose they had heard some of the talk about it. But eventually they all entered into it with great zest and had a hilariously good time at

it--as I had all along intended they should.

"Because I was under such heavy fire for doing it, I had to make good on it or fail to discharge what I considered my responsibility. But as bitter attacks continued, I tried to get some cold comfort from the thought that the newspaper denunciation of me was at the same time acquainting the public with a dangerous, wasteful, and disease-carrying plague and would eventually force health officials to take some long overdue action themselves.

"Now don't leave out," he said leaning forward anxiously and pointing a long finger at me, "that first and last our office made those women feel they had started and done work that was a genuine public service. And that was true! I told them that it was due to their splendid efforts that tons of food were on their way to the starving peoples of Europe. And there wasn't one of them who didn't know what the pangs of hunger were either. And, what is more, largely because of the publicity given the rat-catching project, the Governor of Virginia, as well as the city authorities, actually planned to continue to exterminate the rat pest."

"Then," I said, "I suppose the wind veered and your opponents swung around and praised the project?"

"Oh no, I never expected that," he replied. "I am to this day sharply criticised by certain members of both races, for having done such an undignified thing from a federal office. It's just another instance of an economic caste system--another slavery block masquerading as righteous indignation; another chance for me to learn how to get on with folks while pioneering in an honorable rat-catching project. I told those women they could be proud of themselves. And I guess no one had

ever told them that before--certainly no representative of the United States government.

We laughed and then there was a long pause. Were we coming to the tramps at last? I felt the situation was so delicate and hazardous that all I said was: "Besides the rat-catchers, and the incompetent domestics, you must have had untold numbers of others who had no skills to sell." Then I waited.

"Of course," he said simply. "There were many educated and gifted applicants, just because of the depression. It was no respecter of persons as I have told you, brilliant men and women like those that got out the book. But there were others who would have asked for relief even if there hadn't been any depression--such as--the tramps."

"I've known a good many tramps myself," I said, "in dealing with the homeless men problem--chiefly wife deserters, but yet I found some real characters among them. Could you succeed in getting any of them to settle down or be of any use at all?"

"I'll tell you," he said. "They kept drifting into our office from all parts of the country until it seemed to me as if there must be a tramp hatchery somewhere that turned out hundreds of loafers a day."

"These men must have had many different backgrounds," I remarked.

"Yes," he replied, "Many of them had escaped from the peonage system of the Deep South. Their stories reminded me of those I used to hear about the slavery days when they fled North by way of the Underground Railways. One man said: 'We prayed long and hard to free ourselves but we didn't get any relief until we prayed as hard with our feet as we did with our tongues.'"

"Some had left their enslavers at night to escape the corrupt mortgage system which prevented their ever getting free from debt. They had travelled to us in constant terror, fearing they would be overtaken, returned and forced to work out the sum their landlord claimed was due him. One man said, "My own father and mother used to be whipped by their task-master. He said to them: 'I will give you nine and thirty stripes every night for six months if you try to make a get-away."

"Of the four prevailing systems of farm labor--day's work, share-cropping, tenantry, and ownership--the lot of the Negro tenant farmer, with the possible exception of the share cropper, was unquestionably the most miserable. When a Negro worked for daily wages he was relieved of responsibilities involved in the other systems. When he contracted to pay a stipulated amount for the use of land he was immediately faced with the problem of getting a horse or mule, as well as other live stock. Then, too, how to get wagons, ploughs, fertilizer and--often lastly, food and clothing for himself and his family? Negroes were sceptical of banks and banks were sceptical of Negroes. The only alternative was to scout around to find someone--usually a village merchant or some white landlord--to agree to 'run' him.

"This share-cropping business meant buying on credit and paying what was called a 'time price' for all purchases, which sometimes ranged as high as fifty per cent above the cash price, depending largely on the attitude of the creditor and often regulated according to the expected yield of the harvest. Of course such a system meant that the tenant would have to crawl out of the small end of the horn and usually badly in debt.

"When these share-croppers got to our unique tramp-farm they lifted up their voices and sang with grateful praise that they had gained refuge at last! You can always count on a Negro to sing.

"My first problem was to find some place where we could put such men and have work for them to do and make them do it, under supervision. About this time a large run down farm in Pittsylvania County was offered to our organization. But we had no funds for its purchase. However we got permission to put up some temporary buildings on it to house the tramps and a field of about a hundred acres, which had grown up mostly to weeds, trees and shrubbery. It was turned over to me too. From this was started our 'work-camp project' for Negro drifters.

"My next problem was getting a sufficiently large supervising staff and guards to direct these men and keep them under control. But we did succeed in doing this--after some effort. This one hundred acre field of woods, briars and all sorts of shrubbery, was the first branch of farming, or the first step in our program, that we tackled.

"Of course, some of these men never wanted to work and made all sorts of efforts to dodge it but, in about six months, we had this hundred acre plot so cleared that it was ready for planting the next spring.

"One man in particular stands out in my memory as worth almost the whole effort we had made to start this difficult project. He announced that his life was completely made over because of the camp. He had been a share-cropper, always in debt in spite of hard work and long hours.

"When there was any daylight," as he expressed it.

"The camp system enabled him to earn and save until he could make a payment on a team of mules and farm implements. He wanted to own a piece of

land, build a cottage, and get married. "I want to be a fixture near here and out of debt!" he said.

"It took him nearly four years to get started but he earned, besides money, such a good reputation that a bank, operated by Negroes, helped him out and my wedding gift was the necessary legal service to complete his various transactions. He always gives credit for his dream coming true to the Administration and he and his wife, to express their gratitude, have helped others onto the open road as the only way they can really "pay back" our office for all they had received. That meant a great deal to me.

Lawyer Walker paused and closed his eyes.

"Like finding a spring of sweet water in your wilderness, I imagine" I said with fervor. "One of those rare discoveries--a real, live compensation!"

We had evidently now struck the occurrence that he had found it impossible to discuss for three long years. After a while I said: "I think that what you have told me justifies the whole project. Of course there were bound to be disappointments in dealing with tramps. There always are."

"Yes," he said, "the number of tramps kept on increasing until some further provision had to be made for them. We rented two large houses for that purpose in Lynchburg. Then--one night--a fire started in one of these buildings. It spread to the other. It was late. Everyone had gone to bed. By the time it was discovered and the alarm given it had gained such headway that most of the men were trapped in the flaming buildings. Some were rescued--but there was a serious loss of life among the others.

Many of them suffered from first-degree burns or smoke. All were in immediate need of hospital care.

Lawyer Walker was breathing hard but I felt the hurdle had been successfully taken. Still, I knitted hard.

"I have never seen Southern white people more eager to help than in the wards to which these poor burned Negroes were taken," he continued. "One tramp, who had escaped from the Deep South said to his white nurse, 'Lady, what but for you--all helpin' to take care of us our lives would 'a been lost. I'll never forget what you white folks done for us. We could never 'a got such care where we come from down in Mississippi. No, Ma'am! We'd all been daid.'"

"Maybe, because it throws light on the deviousness of racial antagonisms, I ought to tell you of ^{an} extraordinary experience I had in connection with this fire. Nearly sixty of these tramps had been burned to death and when the two or three Negro undertakers learned that these men had all been taken to white undertaking establishments there was a Negro uprising of protest. Can you imagine such a thing at such a time?

"Of course I saw the point of their argument but I felt it was not the occasion on which to raise a question of racial discrimination regarding the disposition of the bodies after all the consideration and personal service the white people had shown those poor injured hoboos.

"It seemed to me that I should try to harmonize such a bitter racial conflict. The result was that the Negro and the white undertakers went half and half in the number of tramps they prepared for burial.

"The fire was a tragic occurrence! It affected me deeply and still does.

I did not know how much responsibility for it was mine. But Miss Ellen has helped me see that out of it came a spirit of cooperation between formerly strictly separated groups of white and Negro, including a Young Men's Christian Association, ministers, hospital authorities and others.

"Blessings on Mrs. Walker" I said to myself.

Lawyer Walker continued: "This was another of those almost inexplicable situations which have so confounded me from time to time all my life. Would one naturally expect that white people, who would not sit beside any Negro in a public bus or eat in the same restaurant with him, would quarrel to obtain possession of his corpse? Would one expect that white physicians and white nurses, who feared any trend towards social equality with us, would (as they have) oppose the education and internship of Negro physicians and the training of Negro nurses even in Negro hospitals we wanted to establish and themselves do the most menial tasks for the Negro sick? How is a Negro to understand such tactics? "What is he to think about them. It is such inconsistencies that have produced our greatest perplexities as to how to understand white folks, so we can get on with them and they can get on with us? Sometime even a pioneer gets lost in the wilderness.

"We white people get lost in our own wildernesses too," I said comfortingly. "We'll all have to do as those poor shot-up Negro messengers did in the Rebellion, see each other's handicaps and mistakes and laugh and be friends about them. Tell me," I said, laying down my knitting with a vast sense of relief now that we had finished with the tramps, "How did you ever get any time to rest up from the terrific pressure of human misery in your office?"

"I didn't. As long as our problems never took a vacation how could I?"

CHAPTER XVIII

RACE RELATIONSHIP - A MUTUAL PROBLEM

There was a long delay before work on the book could continue. All types of situations clamored for Lawyer Walker's personal presence which seemed always to bring fresh enthusiasm and vigor into even forlorn hopes. Urgent racial affairs could not be set aside, recurrent cases of land frauds in which the modern representatives of the old carpet-bagging days were cheating his people out of land they legitimately owned. And, as always, there were scheduled speaking engagements in churches and schools, both white and colored.

Such material as he managed to prepare he sent by mail, some of it carefully typed by his wife who, with her observant and retentive mind, was always prepared to supply the facts when her husband's hands overflowed with pressing duties and engagements.

Finally, when he succeeded in detaching himself long enough to take up a new chapter, he appeared, dropped into a chair, threw out his hands with a gesture of despair, and burst out laughing. "What situations there are nowadays!" he exclaimed. "Some that I've had to work on lately remind me of a story Booker Washington told us one night at Hampton when he was trying to convince us boys that education wouldn't help us much unless we had common sense too. To drive home some ideal or lesson in conduct he would often illustrate the point by a yarn. He said there was "a bundle of common sense" called Aunt Betsy. She had been to the cross-roads store and was headed towards

home when she met a white man who was acquainted with her and knew perfectly well where she lived.

He called out: "Aunt Betsy, where are you going?"

She looked up at him and said: "What fo' you ax me whar I gwine? I done been whar I gwine. Whar you gwine?"

"She certainly showed more common sense than most of us," I said. "If we had a clear idea of our goal we would not be in the state we are in now."

"That's why it seems so important to me, as a lawyer, to keep in touch with causes back of the cases that jam our courts. I have always conceived the work of lawyers to be the lessening of crime by first-hand information about whatever contributes to it, just as physicians should be aware of all the conditions that induce sickness and should help to abolish them. I think social workers should increase in numbers and really help solve social problems instead of temporizing with them. And teachers should see that education for wisdom is greater than education for mere knowledge and book-study both in their work with children and older groups. I believe that in every profession the uplifting power of the church should be recognized and the spiritual strength that comes to one who has an abiding faith in God.

"It seems to me that mercy and justice must penetrate every social project. Why leave out us lawyers as a separate caste? I have told of the brave, just, white judges who did not think of their legal duties as separate from the general welfare of Gloucester. With the modern complexities there is increasing need for definite social training for young men and women who intend to practice law. After they begin to practice they

get too busy to study the causes of delinquency.

"For example?" I suggested, afraid he would stop.

"Well," he said thoughtfully, "I have not been able to understand why lawyers are not more humanly interested in jails and prisons. They are obviously breeding places for vice and crime and much of direct legal value is to be learned by familiarizing oneself with them, and with the care given prisoners we have personally been instrumental in sending up. In the old days I took many little children out of jails and almshouses and, while they are no longer put there the number of young offenders is increasing. I couldn't understand the temptations they are going to meet unless I kept in close touch with community movements that ought to help them. Of course it takes time and effort to do that but if I didn't I wouldn't know just what to do to be merciful and just.

"Of course," he said with an amused shake of the head, "that sort of thing isn't chargeable to either contestant and we haven't reached the point of having trained social workers in our rural districts. I don't want to give the impression," he added hastily with an alarmed look on his face, "that I do all my legal work free. I have had to make a living and get my daughters through college. Sometimes I do it free when I mean to and sometimes when I certainly don't.

He smiled reminiscently. "I'll have to tell you about a man who once retained me to defend him after he was accused of stealing a watch. At the trial I contended that, although the circumstantial evidence that he had taken it was strong, it was not strong enough to convict him of the theft because the watch had not been found on him. I wasn't any too sure of his innocence and did not plead it. But after I spoke the jury acquitted him.

"Although he had retained me on a business basis he told me, after the verdict, that he had no money to pay the agreed fee.

"Why didn't you tell me that in the first place?" I said, "I have given a good deal of time to your case and saved you from the penitentiary to which you certainly would have been sent if it hadn't been for me. Haven't you anything at all?"

"His answer was: 'All I've got is that watch.'"

"I haven't many hopes that I could reform such a fellow as that under any conditions but it is possible to help some of the young men who have become delinquent because of our faultily constructed social system and wrong home conditions. The time to appeal to them is before they are discharged. After they get out the old, vicious habits of thought are apt to close in on them again, and they are the best possible hosts for all sorts of subversive movements. The start should be made while they have plenty of time to think - as they have in prison. "

"How do you go about it?" I asked, afraid he was going to change the subject on which he was an authority. "I've had some difficulties myself with reform school girls."

"You wouldn't approve my method, I feel sure!" he continued, "Because I encourage them to grouch, to grouch about everything and especially about what trapped them in the end. Once they get going and see that you are receptive, you get what you have wanted to know about your community. I am very sympathetic, genuinely so. I tell them they have indeed come up against much that needs righting and that, before they get out of prison I will help them plan how to lend a hand in cleaning up what they have described to me for the sake of other fellows like themselves. I say that

5

because they know all about the pitfalls they are best fitted to attack them. Its surprising to see how this idea takes hold of some of them - not all, of course, but a few. And even one is worth while! Once young inmates get to know the human side of you and learn to trust you, they will tell you of conditions you didn't dream existed. I try to point this out when our young people come to consult me about practicing law. I express my conviction that they should take a thorough course in the social sciences before venturing to practice. In the light of my own experience I can say that if legal knowledge is not used to the end of social justice it may cause more trouble than it can correct. In other words, I still conceive one of the most important functions of lawyers to be helping reduce crime by calling attention to, and attacking, its causes."

"I could have become a relatively rich man if I had chosen to depend on crime for a living instead of going around trying to reduce it and so cutting down the amount of work we lawyers can charge for. I haven't so much to live on now that I am past the age for running a productive farm and have spent so much time in extra-legal activities. But when I see the honey-pod trees growing up all around me I realize I have a great deal to live for and so I keep right on. When we find accused men with long lists of arrests and imprisonments we lawyers ought to get busy both in and out of court, Old offenders may be the product of a wrong prison system just as much as young ones are the results of bad homes."

"I know what you are going to say!" he added quickly. "You are going to speak of economics. Everybody does. But I have never forgotten what General Armstrong taught me at Hampton. Money was so very scarce. I was in despair. But he told me to take God for my capital and I've

been a rich man ever since.

"A white man I knew down in Gloucester asked me, a few years ago, if I had an understudy. He wanted to know who would take over my various projects when I died. I told him they would have to depend on the Lord. And I added: "I've always had to." I suppose he was worrying about the money raising."

"All your greatest Negro leaders had that true appraisal of wealth," I said. "None of them cared to get rich in the material way. They started with nothing - or less than nothing really, if you count the obstacles they faced - for all of them fought incredible odds to get educated themselves so they could help their people. When they raised money it went into much needed schools. But didn't they, incidentally, come to be regarded as first class citizens?"

"In some places and by some people, yes." answered Lawyer Walker with evident reserve. "But even they were always afraid of tripping on the color line even when it wasn't obvious. You can never know what personal experiences people have had ^{that} condition their reactions to Negroes, even Negro leaders. All our Negro leaders found that out even up North. One unhappy experience with a Negro often prejudices a person against the whole race. And attitudes based upon personal experiences are deepest."

"Untouchables," I said.

"I apply this fact to myself. If my attitude is unfriendly I will get unpleasant experiences. If my attitude is friendly it may open the door to a friendship. That is why I warn our young people that they must, first of all, look to their own attitudes before they can expect friendly reactions from other people of either race."

"And what do they say to that?" I inquired, greatly interested.

"If you don't mind my being perfectly frank," he said slowly, "they point out that any initiative in approaching what may be regarded as an inter-racial friendship must be taken by the dominant race."

"There you are!" I said, "If we white people don't recognise the color line in community matters that show we are friendly the Negroes must recognise our sincerity from our acts and not judge us by our complexions. When I said this once to a Southern Negro leader, his reply was that Negroes would never forget I was white. We had been working together on a legislative measure and that remark cut me to the quick."

"In the South - yes," he said, "but in the North there are exceptions. As a lawyer I know that members of all races cheat, steal, and murder, and do everything else that is bad. When white people cheat each other it isn't blamed on them for being white. And when a Negro steals from another Negro he is arrested for stealing and not because of his color. But when a Negro steals from a white man it's apt to be different than when a white man steals from a Negro. Endless land frauds are proving that every day. So, naturally, the Negro is a little on his guard even with white committee members of an inter-racial project."

"Sometimes I have been tempted to be depressed when efforts to help the races work together have laid bare prejudices I had not suspected in fellow white members. At such times I have taken comfort in advising with my own people, who understand the whites, and in the confidence some public-spirited white friends have in me. Even in the heat of difficult controversies at meetings and conventions, when cross-currents threaten to sink the boat, it has happened that some God-fearing person has suddenly stood up and made a suggestion that has smoothed the

troubled waters. Right away members of both races seemed to get a sense of spiritual uplift and to experience that deep, calm joy coming from the presence of God. It has seemed to steal over each one of us and we have left the scene of controversy heartened and with a new faith in one another.

"After that, when we meet again, we are able to take up issues that, only a short time before, had seemed just too involved to be worked out harmoniously. So now, whenever situations snarl up between contending interests, I bring such experiences to mind and remember those occasions when there seemed no peaceful way out but which solved themselves, as it were, by the miracle-spirit of reconciliation. I have faith to believe that, because such miracles have happened before - not just once or twice but many times - that they can happen again. And on this faith I pin my hopes for peace in the darkening future."

Lawyer Walker closed his eyes and sat silent. As I waited for him to speak again I remembered how once, in his home at Gloucester, he had been wrestling with an apparently insoluble problem when sudden help came to him from an unexpected source. He listened with an expression that was almost one of awe. Then he hastily left the room and we heard him running up stairs with those short, decisive steps of his. A door banged. Then, right above our heads, the thump of someone falling heavily on his knees. When he slipped back to the group again, a few moments later, his expression was one of humility and peace. Upon those awaiting his return a sudden silence fell. It was some minutes before he began to speak happily on what had been an apparently hopeless impasse.

"That is exactly the way the Quakers conducted their business meetings," I said, when he seemed ready to go on. "They call that harmony 'The

sense of the meeting'. Its the best way to prevent getting mad."

"You'd never guess, probably," he surprised me by saying, "that the hardest sacrifice I have had to make in connection with my work has been the luxury of getting mad. All my life I have had to deal with people in inter-racial controversies who did not begin by being very friendly and sometimes with those who definitely set out to make me mad. So I made it a rule not to get mad at anybody - even about taxes - or anything. I confess to having rough feelings inside of me sometimes but I decided, when that happened, to take my attention off what was irritating and to put it on myself. If I allow myself to get mad the trouble is with my own soul and, as my soul has no skin, it can't feel the hurts I get because of my color. My recipe for a long life is 'don't get mad'. I expect to live to be more than a hundred.

"Mrs. Walker never got mad. She never felt the way I did sometimes. Through the many years of our married life, even with a house full of unruly little boys from broken homes, I never heard her say an unkind word about anyone. She never complained about anything."

"I have often thought of your family when you have told about all the projects that involved them too," I remarked, "with the law office in your home and the telephone ringing all the time. I shouldn't think any of you could have had much quiet."

"It was Mis' Annie who started me off on rescuing children and bringing them home. When I appeared with those terrible looking boys from Old Bottom Jail she was as interested in them as I was. Of course, if families don't pull together the individual members can't use their homes as bases for social service. But my home has been the center of everything; as a spiritual incentive. A broken home is always a tragedy as we know well.

"What you did so long ago is now recognised by foremost leaders in social work as the most enlightened way of providing for children whose homes are hopelessly broken - placing-out with selected families; not in institutions, if they are normal," I observed.

"The white people had places where white children could be cared for but there weren't any where neglected Negro children could go even for a day - except the jails and almshouses. And we knew conditions in them. There was no segregation there but the white inmates were not of a kind that would give those impressionable young minds decent standards for either race. Although we couldn't do all for the boys that we wanted to we knew we were assuring them the right standards of Christian living both in our home and those in which they were placed for longer or shorter periods or for adoption. I have often wished our white critics could have known what I learned by investigating the home life of our people. They would have changed some of their attitudes."

"The white problem is just as much one of education as the so-called Negro problem," I said. "In one case the need is for education in the humanities, one might say, and in the other it has been hunger for training of the mind. The balance is the right development of both."

"That is exactly what I believe too," he said slowly. "You people have something we need and, if I may venture to say so, my people have something needed by yours - generally speaking of course. If it weren't for the color line always interfering with our having full citizenship I can see how the best informed among us could work together to pull the worst elements of both races out of bad situations they have fallen into because we haven't got on together in mutual, community concerns. To get satisfactory results, of course, the best elements of my race must be the ones to work

with the understanding elements in yours. That has been happening for a long time but to a too limited degree. But what I would like to bring out is that the daily experiences of even the best educated members of my race show that few of them have had the opportunity to know well those white people who are ready, as individuals, to understand their dilemmas. I've never brought myself to the point of asking any white person outright to explain the attitudes of the white race to us," observed Lawyer Walker reflectively. Then he paused with a questioning look at me.

Although he had not put this remark in the form of a question I knew he hoped I would take it to be one. I saw he would be even freer than he had been, about race relations, if I gave him a frank answer. "That is an absolutely fair inquiry," I said. "I wish more Negroes would ask their white friends that. It would go a long way towards straightening things out. A Negro did ask me that once. She was a school girl, daughter of a brilliant mother who was Cherokee on one side and Negro on the other. Fine stock! She was a gifted teacher^{too}. The child said: 'I just asked mother why the white people hate us and she said she did not know and for me to ask you.'"

Lawyer Walker was leaning forward, alert with interest. "May I ask what you told her?" he said eagerly.

"Frankly," I confessed, "I didn't know what to say because I discovered that I didn't have the answer. I hadn't thought it out. I was shocked. I have been in what you call inter-racial work all my life. I had never discussed it with prejudiced people. I was overcome by a stinging sense of shame that a school girl, with such a mother, should be sent me to ask that."

Lawyer Walker looked immensely interested and waited quietly for me to go on. "May I ask what you said ^{to} her?" he enquired timidly.

"Well, I remember that my immediate reaction was to assure her that it wasn't true of all white people or else her mother would not have sent her to me and that it wasn't true of any of my family or friends, not up North. I diverted her, until I could talk with her mother, by asking her why she asked such a question.

"She said she had just come back from a little shopping trip with her mother to Washington - to get supplies for a school that had charge accounts only in the big, white stores. She had looked forward to it for a long time and had saved up her allowance money so they could have some special treat before they came back.

"At lunch time she wanted to go into a cafeteria nearby but her mother said it was only for white people. Then she said, 'lets go into the drug-store for sandwiches and soda at the counter'. But her mother told her that was 'white' too; that they wouldn't even let them take a sundae outside. There were Negro places in other parts of Washington but they were too far off if they were to catch the afternoon train back home. Then she suggested going without luncheon but seeing a movie. There were some right near. But again her mother told her they were not wanted in them because they were Negroes. Those they could go to were in the Negro section where the Negro lunch-rooms were - too far away. 'So I couldn't give mother a treat at all!' she sobbed with her head on my shoulder. 'What have mother and I ever done to be hated!' she exclaimed."

"Was she satisfied with what you said?" hazarded Lawyer Walker.

"No, nor I either, of course. But I decided I'd think it out.

I had long talks with her mother about it, discussing it as a mutual problem which we could help each other solve. Some time after that her mother came North on a money-raising tour during the war. I was with her, one day, in a New York subway at the rush hour. At sight of her a French officer, resplendent with medals strung all the way across his uniform, rose to give her his seat. He did not offer it to me but she tried to make me take it. Of course I refused and, seeing that we were together the officer whispered to me as we swung from the car straps, "Pardon me, Madame, but have I the honor to give my seat to an American Negro?"

"Not only that," I said proudly, "but she represents also one of our finest Indian tribes."

"Upon hearing this he turned again to my friend and made as much of a bow from the hips as was possible in the crowded aisle. Then, turning back to me he whispered in my ear: 'We have several Negroed members in our Chamber of Deputies. I have just been to Washington but I was introduced to no Negroes there.'"

"Lawyer Walker listened to this anecdote with a quizzical expression. "I wonder," he said, "how she reacted to that experience. Of course I know to whom you refer."

"She was furious!" I said. "We had to change trains, soon after that, and she leaned up against one of the posts and burst into angry tears. She rebuked me for letting a white man make fun of her in public; to push her into a seat while a white friend stood. I should have realized the position into which I had put her. Then she asked me to tell her frankly what he had said to me about her and what I had replied."

"When I told her her retort was: 'How do you expect me to believe that? No white man would feel honored at meeting a Negro woman!' I had

the greatest difficulty in making her believe that race relations were different in France and that the high officer was utterly sincere. That was the sceptical reaction of the school-girl's mother." I said.

"I'm glad it was!" said Lawyer Walker with shining face. Considering her life-long experiences such a reaction testified to her self respect and to the respect she felt was due to both her races. I think it was splendid of her!"

"So do I." I echoed.

After quite a pause Lawyer Walker said gently: "I have wondered, sometimes, how you happened to be so concerned about right race relations and my people as individuals."

Again I recognised an unmasked question. "I would have told you long ago if I had thought of it," I said. "My mother was a Yankee, from Maine. All my father's forbears were Southerners, from Kentucky, up through the Carolinas, in Virginia, and when they couldn't stand living in a slave-holding state and so they moved across the line and their new home became an Underground Railway station to help runaway slaves. My father was proud to have been born in an Underground station and used to say that his first job, as a very little boy, was ^{as a waiter,} to take out food and coffee to the slaves hiding in his father's woods-lot. Then, when it was dark, they would help them on to the next Underground."

"May I ask, well, had his forbears ever...?" Lawyer Walker did not complete his question. He did not need to.

"Yes." I said. "But they freed them a good many years before the Rebellion and gave them their land."

"What led them to do that?" he asked with intense interest.

"Some Quakers who moved into the neighborhood." I answered. "Their

beliefs became those of my people, as to the slave system and its growing evils;--as to the spiritual origin and rights of every individual without regard to race, creed, or color. That is my belief too and always has been but it is not the view as yet of some of our Southern relatives. That is why I did not know how to answer that question of the Negro school girl and why I have begged you to write a book."

"My father was a University professor. He was always active in locating qualified Negroes and making it possible for them to enter the University as students. They had fine minds and were earnest and conscientious in carrying out what they once undertook. They used to come to our home to discuss academic matters with my father. Their race was never stressed. You may be interested to hear that my father helped Susan B. Anthony, who did more to get us women the suffrage than perhaps anybody else, raise the money that made it possible for Jennie Dean to have that progressive school you have told about for the book. Aunt Susan, as we called her, was a Quaker too. ^{My}_A father and Stephen Douglass worked together night after night at our home on the articles Stephen Douglass wanted to publish. We recognised Negroes as gifted in ways that we were not."

"And did your mother feel the same way?"

"Exactly. Her parents moved from Maine to the middle West where her father was a professor too. The first home my parents had, after their marriage, was burned to the ground by vindictive carpet-baggers who resented their befriending former slaves. Later they moved East but, wherever they went they worked with individual Negroes - helping them to higher education. The young women members of the Jubilee Singers, who used to come North to raise money for Fisk University, were our honored guests when they gave concerts in our city. My mother used to marvel that they could be so entirely

free from resentment after the humiliations they had suffered from white people. My parents discussed the situation freely with them. Before they left the young men came over and they gave us what they called a "thank you sing" in our home, all of us gathered around our piano. My mother sang too.

"I have often thought, when you were telling about your dear mother, for the book, how much she and my own mother were alike in their attitudes and philosophy. Yet my mother had every educational advantage always and your mother had none. My mother had the kindest feelings towards our Southern relatives - as your mother had towards the whites - although she had bitter personal experiences with them during the Rebellion. Her favorite brother went insane in Andersonville prison after a forced march in winter, fighting to free your people. His relatives fought on the Confederate side. But whether their differences had to do with slavery or Secession they were all sincere people."

"She must have had in her the same three principles that were born in me and raised in me by my mother," said Lawyer Walker very gently indeed, "one was the obligation to maintain a Christian home life, the second was practice of spiritual guidance under all conditions, and then, kindness to everybody - not leaving out the whites."

"While my father had no education and opposed it at first because he did not know it could be applied to practical farming, his promise was a sacred trust - one never to be betrayed. And on matters of principle, in our community struggles, he would not compromise. He told of an ex-slave in Virginia who made an agreement with his master to buy his own freedom. He was to go where he pleased and to work for anyone he wished just as long as he kept up his payments. He left Virginia and was working somewhere in Ohio when freedom was declared. And, although the Emancipation Proclamation

had given him his freedom, he went back to Virginia, hunted up his old master, and paid him the two hundred dollar balance on his contract. My father would have done the same. But educationally he was prejudiced and ignorant."

"My father would have understood him well," I added, "because he himself lived on the Underground Railroad farm as a boy and felt the same way about school until a neighboring Quaker boy told him he wouldn't be much good unless he got an education. After that he walked six miles every Friday evening to the teacher's house to borrow his dictionary over the weekend. There was only one text-book for the whole class, it was what was called 'a blab school'. Then again, both our fathers had the same concern for bringing up their children, didn't they?"

"Its wonderful how people can match pennies when they take their eyes off the color line!" exclaimed Lawyer Walker. And we laughed together over these discovered parallels. "It seems to me wisdom can't be taught in the schools but that we Negroes can't get educated without it. The cost of living has gone up but appreciation of the human soul has gone down. In slave days our bodies were a matter of dollars and cents. Nobody evaluated the spiritual influence of my mother."

"It seems to me," I said, "that our sense of values is changing pretty fast and for the better. Except for the die-hards." I added hastily.

Then Lawyer Walker asked a direct question. "And when Southern white people wanted to know if you stood for social equality because you thought we had a right to attend open lectures along with them I wonder what you said?"

"I'm afraid I laughed." I answered. "What has social equality to do with human and citizenship rights in these United States? What is your own definition of social equality?"

"Here it is." he answered promptly and I saw that he had worked it out

with extreme care. "Social equality is a matter for individual achievement. Every individual has the right to choose his or her associates. No intelligent Negro desires to force himself upon white people socially. He is primarily concerned over his civil rights and wishes freedom to exercise the rights he already has. What he is charged for in the taxes he pays and he should get what he pays for. Citizenship rights are political equality without any social implications. and the Negro cannot function with advantage to the community or to himself without them.

"Where our civic rights are accepted naturally the white people have a definite understanding of our place in the community and in community movements. We know how to treat one another as fellow citizens. Politicians are saying that the key to this country's political future is in the South. Very well. A second class mass of citizens isn't desirable these days. First class citizenship functioning has no connection with social equality. Why are we ^{equally} taxed for teacher's salaries when Negro teachers are not paid as much as white teachers for as hard or harder work?"

"I have always said you people ought to get a rebate on your taxes if you don't get equally good school houses and teacher's salaries." I said. "Taxation without representation isn't sound American principle. To me it is a matter of common honesty not to charge Negroes for what it is intended they shall not have. Every business man knows that and I do not understand why School Boards take an opposite stand so often. That is ^{not} debatable. But when it comes to social equality I cannot take its inconsistencies without a laugh.

"For instance, I was rebuked by a Southern hostess, on a week-end visit for saying both races should co-operate on mutual community projects such as public lectures on education and so on. Then, before Sunday dinner the hostess's son asked me to drive with him to get an Aunt Judy. We drove off

in a smart little trap that had hardly room for two and I wondered where Aunt Judy was to be put. But soon we arrived at a cabin where a dried up little old woman was waiting for us. And without a word my host lifted her in his arms and deposited her in my lap. I had to put my arms around her to keep her from falling off all the way back.

"Then, during dinner, she sat in a rocker by the fire-place listening to everything that was said. She was a former slave of the family and because she "had measles in her eyes" and couldn't see very much the family let her listen in. When I told my hostess, afterward, that such a thing couldn't have happened up North but that we didn't segregate the races at public lectures she was unable to get my point. 'Why, who would mind Aunt Judy?' Intimacy but not political equality seemed to be the difference. A sense of humor was what was needed - imagination to see our inconsistencies as others see them."

"Changes are coming so fast these days," said Lawyer Walker, "that I hope distorted and out-grown race prejudices will give way to a realistic attitude towards us. For the Negro of today is not the Negro of yesterday. Southerners who say they know the Negro don't know the modern Negro. Even up North people are afraid we want social equality."

"That is a fact." I said, wondering if I ought to go on. "The head of a normal school for Negro teachers once asked me if I could possibly get over, to a group of white club women I was to address next day, who were interested in race relations, the uncomplimentary truth that Negro men admired their dark complexioned women more than they did us. He even said that to Negroes we looked anaemic. How could white people imagine that Negroes would want to be taken up socially by groups who considered them second-class citizens?"

"White people often ask me to address their civic organisations and women's clubs," he went on, to say, "and I think the reason is that I always say I shall have to rush off immediately following my talk to keep some urgent appointment. That makes it impossible for me to stay for refreshments."

Lawyer Walker laughed heartily at this. "Any Negro speaker of experience would probably tell you the same thing. I know to whom you refer, an unusually sensitive man, quite a poet. Do you mind if I ask you if you delivered his message?"

"I certainly did!" I answered. "It was received with astonishment and gratitude. Next time he will probably be asked to stay for tea."

"If he is he will doubtless refuse. Those women needed to be freed from worn out chains of caste as we were freed from the slave system. But your friend would know that however the majority of the club membership changed there might be just one protesting person in the group who would make trouble if he dared accept anything like a social invitation. That's why I say your friend would refuse." said Lawyer Walker.

We both laughed. "You speak from bitter experience but so do I when I agree with you," I said. "I was in Syracuse one day when a very black man was put out of a high class restaurant in the shopping district. In befriending him we discovered he was a distinguished poet from India. He took that story back with him to the Indian intelligentsia. That was a clear case of panic at a supposed crossing of the color line."

"That's just our trouble up North," confirmed Lawyer Walker. "We never know when the line is to be drawn taut and when it isn't."

"That is just what one of your leading professors said to me when he

had been telling me some of his experiences with Northern white people and I asked him what he thought I, as an individual, could do to make the North safe for democracy. He had been lecturing in our most conservative white Universities and was living in New York. To my surprise he said: "Let me come to you for advice on particular situations. There are many white people who see the situation as you do but when we assume that others, with whom they are associated, feel the same way we ^{are} apt to fall flat - tripped ^{up} by the color line. It's not knowing, never being sure, that makes it so important for each of us to have frank, white friends." he said: "It's easier to live in the South than here in the North. Down there I know just where the color line is stretched but here we must always be uncertain."

"I've heard many a professionally trained Negro say that," said Lawyer Walker. And," he said with a mischievous look at me, "I've often had such difficulties myself -- as, for instance, when I came into this building to start the book."

"But it isn't all on one side any more," I asserted in self defense, "I went to an evening meeting I saw advertised in a small southern city as a discussion of inter-racial problems. When I got there I was shooed away by a little colored boy posted outside on a step-ladder. He said: 'I guess yo' cyant get in, Missus, they's discussin' de white problem.'"

"Have you any suggestions for a way to make the white people analyse their race prejudices?" asked Lawyer Walker with an air of hopelessness?

"Why yes!" I answered with vigor. "By asking them the same question that Negro school-girl asked me and helping them to be ruthlessly honest with themselves in finding the answer. Now what suggestion have you?"

"Talking it out, as we have been doing," he said. Then he hesitated and seemed uncertain as how to continue. "But," he added at last, "the embarrassing part of it, for us, is the fact that because of the situation the professor described Negroes cannot safely take the initiative. But when both races work together on mutual community activities inter-racial contacts often lead to individual friendships. But even if they don't, members of both races become objective about their citizenship interests and learn that human nature respects no color line. We all have the same faults and the same virtues, the same needs but - not the same freedoms.

"Since those early days of the Reconstruction Period, and on through the years, as practicing attorney and social worker, in all sorts of racial conflicts, I have had to deal with the same faults and foibles in my people and yours. Because we haven't conquered them they are now pulling down others like us all over the world. On a big scale it's the same kind of problem I've found on a small scale in Gloucester.

"I find that nowadays many people want to put off on God or psychology, economics and sociology -- anything but themselves -- the responsibility for all that is wrong.

"Do you think the time will ever come when we will have faith in goodwill and can shout: 'Free Bells Done Ring!' as my old grandmother did when she heard of the Emancipation Proclamation? I'd rather help do that than than anything else in this world!"

CHAPTER XIX"DE OLE SHEEP DONE KNOW DE ROAD"

"Now see here, Lawyer Walker," I said reprovngly, the next time we met to discuss the book. "What about these clippings somebody has sent me telling about an Appreciation Meeting given for you in Richmond so all the leaders of religious, educational, and social welfare movements in the State could thank you for doing the things that had to be dug out of you for the book? You never wrote one word about it."

"Well," he said laughing, as he relaxed into the big chair, "why should I? It was about a lot of things I had already told and I didn't have a thing to do with it myself. It was one of our outstanding women leaders, Mrs. Ora B. Stokes, who got it up. She deserves a great deal of credit herself for what she has done for our people. All of those there, almost, I could identify with some betterment movement. As I looked over that sea of white and colored faces I began to realize how many God-fearing, self-sacrificing men and women had helped us over obstacles we could not possibly have surmounted except for them. I was embarrassed to have attention focussed on me and what I had tried to do."

"I wish I had been there!" I exclaimed, "It seems to have summed up all you have told for the book in the most extraordinary kind of recognition I have ever heard of anybody's getting while he was still launching new projects and planning new examples of inter-racial co-operation. The clippings say that the big Ebenezer Church was jam packed and people were turned away. They say everybody had a wonderful time."

"That was what surprised me. I admit that the work, over the years, 1941 40

had been so disheartening and seemed so hopeless, I had forgotten there were any laughs in it. Invitations had been sent out and many letters from those who couldn't come were read from the pulpit. All expressed appreciation and encouragement for what we had done and were trying to do for my people. But most of them were there - officials of State welfare agencies, educators, church leaders, and some, from both races, whom I had not known before cared about our getting on."

"What made them laugh so much?" I put in.

"Well, at one time it got so much like a memorial meeting for me that I stood up and reminded them that I wasn't dead yet and that I didn't intend to die while there was still so much to do. So then they got to telling about some of the situations they had been mixed up in with me, of some of my mistakes and racial complications. They didn't spare me any, I can assure you! People got to popping up all over the place to tell comical incidents and kept setting each other off with one anecdote after another until the whole place was in an uproar of laughter - including me myself. Many of the incidents I had completely forgotten but they came back to me when they were described. We had a great time."

"The clippings say that representatives of the Barber's union were there too and told what you had done for them with free legal service and backing."

"Yes, that's true. They turned what seemed like a memorial meeting into sort of a birthday party by presenting me with a fine travelling bag. I was deeply touched by that and by other organisations, church and school, who did the same kind of thing. They didn't need to make sacrifices for me."

"Tell just one instance of what surprised you most." I urged. Something that isn't in the clippings."

"I think my biggest surprise came when people got to telling stories about my temperance campaigning and the lively fights with the liquor men. I was living through it all over again when a quite youthful looking speaker stood up and claimed he had known me for more than forty years. He then explained that our acquaintance dated from the time when, as a small child, he heard his father, Doctor Arthur James, a Methodist minister, tell about that meeting in Northern Neck, to which he and three other distinguished white men, escorted me on horseback to stop the bullets, so the liquor men would have to shoot them first. It was a genuine risk they took.

"I was dumbfounded at the accuracy of his childhood memory and realized what it must have meant to Mrs. James and him to have their father protect me like that. I just had to stand up then and there and express my joy at having a chance, though belated, to confirm the recollection and to speak of my undying gratitude for his father's brave act in risking his life so that I, a Negro, could carry on the liquor fight.

"The whole meeting was informal, like a reunion of old co-workers in a common cause, which is my ideal for racial objectives whether black or white."

"The friend who sent me the clippings," I ventured, "said she heard an old Negro say, after the meeting; 'that man don't so much practice law as he practices what he preaches'."

"I told you I was a preacher on Sundays and an attorney-at-law on Mondays, besides being a farmer and a foster parent. You see, that old fellow uses his religion when he ploughs just as I have always done. I wanted to bring justice and mercy into the church and God's law into the court-room - where it is greatly needed. But to go back to Appreciation Meeting; Because people had such a happy time at the one in Richmond the Gloucester people got one up

in our Bethel Church there, to hear more about our plunges into betterments from the early Reconstruction days. Again, white and colored people came from all parts of the State to sanction and encourage our efforts to work ^{out} our problems right on the spot.

"Among those who came was Doctor R. R. Moton, then head of Tuskegee. He took advantage of being in my home town to tell some of the practical jokes played on me at Hampton. He got everybody laughing at me but I laughed harder than anybody else. We Negroes had a poor start in life and have many grave handicaps still but again, at this local meeting, I was reassured that the Negro's faith in a better world is not unfounded. The Appreciation Meetings strengthened my convictions that miracles do happen when people holding opposing views come together in the right spirit to talk things out. I say this because there were present some white people who hadn't approved some of the things I had done. One white leader, of whose moral support I had never felt too sure, came to the Richmond meeting and went so far as to say that the stories which were told there had 'been productive of good will between the races in Virginia.' Nothing could possibly have pleased me more than that and, from such a source, it was doubly gratifying.

"Now here's what I mean by racial attitudes boomeranging. Such a generous act on this white man's part immediately intensified good-will towards him on ours. Laughing together is a wonderful tonic in helping people to move forward together. The gifts presented to me at the Gloucester meeting I took to be symbols of my people's endorsement of a program that called for active co-operation of church, school, and home.

"Remember my reckless bid for the old almshouse at that auction when I didn't have a dollar of the price? Well, one of the tributes that moved me

most was made by former students of what that unit became - the Gloucester Training School.

"One of the leading white men of the County, Mr. W. Fleet Talliaferro, who encouraged me to study law, got up and spoke of his "boyhood friendship with Tom". With such a give and take as that, the meeting was like a community reunion. Doctor Jackson Davis, of the General Education Board in New York, who had made a survey of our County some years before, came to the meeting to testify to his gratification that we had so many self-owned and well kept Negro homes. I had gone with him while he made this survey and thought it especially gracious of him to come to the meeting for the purpose of helping the home-owning movement along by an expert's appreciation.

"Tell me what they said about you yourself!" I urged.

"Oh, I wasn't handled any more gently than I was at the Richmond meeting. All my faults and mistakes were joked about and brought many a laugh in which I heartily joined. Booker Washington came to Gloucester once to speak at a meeting held just for him. Both white and colored people made up crowds extending far and near. I doubt if we have had as many people in Gloucester since the Rebellion. Some couldn't get within a block of him. He had the reputation of being a forceful and effective speaker. His voice was smooth and pleasant, and he used simple, understandable words that carried the weight of his message even to the most illiterate listeners. No matter how long he spoke they never seemed to tire.

"Booker Washington was a typical looking Negro yet he was introduced to that vast throng as a 'distinguished guest' by an old Confederate soldier, Major J. N. Stubbs, grandson of my mother's owner, an outstanding lawyer and a prominent member of the Virginia legislature. He reviewed some

of my doings down in Gloucester and then - if Booker Washington didn't follow this up and make everybody laugh by saying he knew all about me already because he had taught me in that first Work Class at Hampton, and he said: 'He appeared quite unpromising and any school that can take a boy like Tom Walker, as he was then, and make something of him, has done a good job!'"

"I hope you were willing to take credit for that remark even though you won't take it for anything else." I said with spirit.

"How could I? Booker Washington made me work very hard at Hampton and General Armstrong said it took pressure to bring us out. I certainly had pressure. Even if I hadn't, anyone who had had the inspiration of Hampton and General Armstrong would have done the same - facing the situations that existed when I got back home."

I looked at the vigorous figure and purposeful face in the big chair and remembering what he had said about having "a cast iron constitution", I mentioned it.

"Oh," he said, "strength was given me or I couldn't have kept up such a schedule. Don't give my constitution all the credit."

"Isn't any of the credit yours? Haven't those Appreciation Meetings made you feel you have a right to any for yourself?"

"I have to be true to what I believe." he said simply. "I believe I am just an agency, an instrument with human weaknesses, trying to carry out the will of a Master I accept without being a slave."

I broke the silence that followed this affirmation. "Lawyer Walker, you were just speaking of Hampton. What did I see in the newspapers about your having received the Hampton Institute Award for 'outstanding and meri-

torious work among people and communities'?" I said severaly.

"I didn't say anything about the Award because I didn't feel I was entitled to any. If any Award is ever really due me I shall find it in the Great Beyond."

"And a friend of yours sent me some clippings showing a three-quarters picture of you in oils that was hung at Hampton Institute last Commencement time. You never told me anything about that either. Don't you think it ought to be mentioned in the book?"

"I never thought of it! All the arrangements were made before I knew anything about it. The fact is, I had little or no interest in this matter. I told those responsible for it that I didn't deserve the fuss they were making over it. I felt the same way that I told you I felt about the degree of Doctor of Laws conferred on me a little while ago. I have no interest in portraits or titles. I say to my friends that I don't want the title of Doctor used on me. It isn't right. I don't know as much law now as I knew ten years ago. All I want is a chance to help people along and if the Lord has given me that chance it's all I care about. I want to help my race because it is the neediest but I want to help the white people too. If I expect the white people to eliminate the color line I must first see that there isn't any of it in myself.

Lawyer Walker laughed at a sudden memory. "Some other Negroes feel that way too." he said with one of his unexpected shifts, "Once there was a disagreement between a certain white professor in Richmond and a street car conductor. The conductor insisted upon a second fare although the professor had already dropped his nickel in the box. As the argument became heated a Negro passenger stepped up and said: 'I saw disss gen'lman put his fare in dee box. B'Sides, he's a 'fessor. I ain't nothin'. I'd as soon go to hell

from tdis trolley as from anywhere else. If yo' doan' let tdis gen'lman be I'll get ready to go tdar now, an' I'se gwine take yo' wide me.' There was no further argument."

"Lawyer Walker," I could not help saying, "You are always giving other people credit for things you have done yourself. I've wondered why you do that in the case of this Appreciation Meeting that everybody knew was just for you.yourself."

"I certainly don't want to seem lacking in appreciation myself," he said quickly and with deep sincerity. "But it never seems to me I deserve the credit. I guess I shall have to explain a little where I got that attitude. We older people, who went through the Reconstruction Period with its hardships and hopelessness, always took our troubles to the Lord. We learned to do that from our slave parents. They had no churches and so went direct to Him. And when they felt their prayers were answered they gave to Him their thanks. When they had opportunity to do something for others they did it for Him. They believed in His everlasting love for all his children whatever the color of their skins. Surely you agree with me as to the spiritual source of all that is good in any of us!"

"I am just beginning to understand you," I said humbly, "when we are almost through with the book. This time what you have let me dig out of you is -- a diamond."

"You make me think of someone else who didn't understand me right off either." he said with a quiet smile. "It was when I went to court, once, to defend a poor Negro boy and my entrance into the case was hotly resented by a white attorney.

"Has anyone retained you to defend this prisoner?" he demanded,

"Nobody but the Lord," I told him with a smile I could not repress, "I don't make money out of poor people's troubles."

"Don't misunderstand me!" he exclaimed when he saw I was going to make a remark. "It is just a different concept of what constitutes wealth. I never feel so rich as when I am going along the street and some young fellow steps up to me and says: 'Don't you know me? I'm one of those boys you kept out of jail and took into your own home. I want you to come and see my family! My house has only three rooms but I have a fine wife and two little boys and we're getting along just splendidly!' Why, when something like that happened Mrs. Walker felt richer than if I had handed her a big fee check. We have always thought that how much one has to live for is more important than how much one has to live on. We plant a good all-year garden and aren't afraid."

"That's strong and invigorating doctrine," I commented, "How to educate the young people is a problem for both of our races. How do you adapt your principles for our bewildered young moderns?" "I know you keep in close touch with schools."

"Outside influences are so strong nowadays," he replied, "that I have tried to impress on them the need to educate themselves in such a way that they can make wise use of education. We left Hampton with a clear sense of direction as to our life responsibilities and attitudes towards the white race. We had had years of contact with the best elements of the white people at school -- people who understood our ignorance and gave their own lives to helping us get started on the right roads. Nowadays the sense of direction seems to be lost. Many, even among the teachers, seem to think education belongs only to training of the mind. The Hampton model is training

of head, hand, and heart all together. The school started out with that ideal. Of course that includes industrial training which many intellectuals dislike.

"I don't know how many would agree with my own common, homely definition of education. I have formulated ^{it} to myself as that which implements men and women to take care of themselves and of somebody else. Human relations must be part of one's training not only in industry but in every home. There is a real danger that natural family obligations will be shifted onto social security with increasing vagueness as to what is personally right and what is personally wrong. If people look to social security to carry their human obligations children will come to be regarded, as they often are now, as burdens instead of as precious assets to be brought up with strong ideas of individual responsibilities.

"In Gloucester I myself have tried to have home, church, and school make a unified approach to our young folk but, as a practicing attorney, I must admit that unbalance, everywhere so noticeable, is reflected more and more in young people's confusion between freedom and license.

"It is the same emotional instability I had to struggle with in trying to protect that murderer -- the one I told you about for the book -- from being the victim of mob violence so he could be tried by due process of law. In my legal work I constantly come across cases where people of otherwise good character considered, as justifiable, such use of freedom that they ignored the difference between right and wrong and landed in legal difficulties.

"And then it is something that you have to work out." I observed.

"No, it isn't. And that is the point I try to make them see," was his unexpected reply. "What they need to have done for them does not lie in the province of a lawyer. Too often it is due to neglect of youth by the grown-ups. We have a new type of morals case, classifiable as rape but which does not involve mixing of the races; cases of boys and girls of the same race who are

so untrained as to the rights of others and personal freedom that they have drifted, without awareness of life-long consequences, into license and immorality. In rape cases it was formerly assumed that there was an attacker and a victim. But in modern cases the girl is often just as guilty as the boy - sometimes more so. Yet I have found the old concept of rape may still prevail in the girl's family and, if it does, a tragic conflict may take place between the girl and her parents with disaster to both sides. The existing, wide-spread tolerance towards this state of affairs I regard as a honey-pod tree sheltering a modern slave block that separates child from uplifting influences for which contempt is felt. I could cite case after case to illustrate what I am saying.

"What I want to point out here, to explain my definition of education, is that such situations are of a kind with which no lawyer can fully deal. Obviously the roots are to be found in lack of home training and example. By the time the tragedy occurs it is too late for outside help."

Lawyer Walker spoke with deep earnestness and lively concern. He seemed to be reviewing these saddest of his cases. Then he said: "I can give an illustration of what I am stating by citing the main circumstances of a case that affected both Mrs. Walker and myself very much. None such things need have happened if parents and communities had been alive to their duties.

"The case is this: A young man was arrested on a warrant sworn out by the father of a girl. They came into court with locked arms. While waiting for the case to be called the boy broke down and put his arms around the girl saying: 'I love her. We want to get married today.' The girl turned to her father and begged for his consent.

"The parents of the boy were also in court ready to approve a marriage. The Commonwealth was anxious to co-operate with me as counsel for the young

man. A great deal of time was spent trying to show the girl's father the importance of agreeing with us. The boy said he was ready to die for the girl and there was no doubt in anybody's mind that he meant it. The girl's mother then broke down and said she consented to the marriage but that her husband would not give in. This was the state of affairs when the case was called. The court room was packed to the very doors. The father sat rigid.

"A more solemn inquest I had not seen for a long time. Even the trial judge was deeply moved. We even hoped on, after the verdict was rendered, that the father too would soften towards the devoted young people. If he had then consented the judge would have set aside the verdict. We all stood silent, waiting for some sign of compassion felt so strongly by the rest of us. But no such sign came.

"The atmosphere was so tense, the young couple so imploring, and the judge so sympathetic, that he then did a most unusual thing. He granted the boy bail, even after the verdict. He even allowed ten days' stay for further effort to gain the consent of the father. However, at the end of that time he was still adamant. The boy surrendered himself and the girl followed him to the jail door, asked to go with him, and begged for some opportunity to share his punishment. Here the matter ended - from a legal point of view.

"But what of the social consequences? My opinion, based upon intimate knowledge of the circumstances and character of all concerned, was that the tragedy developed out of parental negligence. I said to the Court that the father - the parents, should be brought to the bar of justice rather than these two misguided children who had meant no wrong.

"Now to pursue my point I must add a word about a similar case. Another

young man was arrested under the same charge as the first^{one}, and I was retained for his defense. The girl's parents were shocked and horrified and at first refused my efforts to gain their consent to a marriage. But after they had become convinced that the young people were in earnest, ~~had complete~~ complete faith in each other, and had been faced with their responsibilities in life, they both consented.

"I have watched carefully the outcome of the treatment given by the parents in both cases. The young people whose parents consented, married, settled down, and maintained a little home, happy though humble. The sincerity of their affection and desire to live right won the sympathy of the community.

"And the other two?" I said.

Lawyer Walker just shook his head. After a pause his expression changed. "We older people don't realize what copycats children and young people are," he said easily. "I first realized it one day when I was teaching school. One of the littlest boys ran to meet me and fell into ~~step~~ step with me. I noticed that he was laboriously turning his feet out just as I did mine.

"What you doing that for?" I asked.

"I'se tryin' to walk jes' like you!" he answered. "You'se splay-footed so I want to be splay-footed too."

That remark of my little black mimic has stayed with me all these years. It made me feel humbled at the time and makes me humble still. I realized that children and young things copy everything we do, without discrimination if the fancy strikes them. Of course I couldn't help being splay-footed after having to put my feet sideways, and balance heavy hods

on those Hampton ladders before I was strong enough. How could my little copyist know splay-footedness was not something it was desirable to acquire? If we intend to make our children's futures safe we must attend to the examples we are showing them consciously and, more often, unconsciously. They cannot see through our eyes. We must study how to see through theirs.

"My hope rests on the fact that young people are naturally idealistic." I said.

"So does mine," he responded, "but today those natural ideals lack vigor. For instance, a young Negro has ideals of democracy, then he gets out into the world and the humiliations and insults he receives destroy such high concepts. If he gets bitter, who can blame him? I'm afraid the responsibility for it must be borne by thoughtless whites. I think none of us realizes, until too late, that childhood and youth are short-time possessions. Those who are fortunate enough to have their souls educated early in life are the most likely to mature properly and to make their contribution to the spiritual life of the community. But one who reaches his prime without normal spiritual development in his childhood or youth can^{not} go back and get it. People are at different stages of development but in childhood and youth Nature is an accurate timer of their needs.

"I wish I could hear you putting that sort of thing over to normal students," I said, "How do you do it?"

"Well, I've just come back from addressing a group of them at their Commencement exercises. I said: 'You have a great task before you. Your success will depend more on what you are, on your character, than on your intellectual attainments. My best advice is to go out into communities with the spirit that actuated the Great Teacher. I myself have found it wise to be connected with some religious organisation. Whether you like the minister, the method and form of worship, or not, go into the Church and Sunday Schools and help cor-

correct what you think is wrong, but do it in the right spirit. The welcoming hand will be extended to you by those who need your help provided your spirit is one of good-will."

Here Lawyer Walker paused and seemed to hesitate. "Go on," I said, "its all just what we need to hear!"

He looked somewhat doubtful but continued swiftly: "Often Negro students are fired with enthusiasm for going out to help their race. But I feel it my duty to warn them that if they start without being aware of the difficulties they are bound to meet they may become needlessly discouraged and pessimistic. I tell them that endless patience is required in getting on with people of either race these days, and that it is an art no psychology classes can teach them.

"I say to them: 'From the depths of my own experience I must tell you that there will be times when your most cherished and reasonable plans will be obstinately, unreasonably opposed because of the jealousy of members of your own races. Some may even go so far as to pull down a life-long hope or try to divert you from the straight-forwardness you have been taught in school.'" They listen with intense alertness when I advise them to be fully awake to such pitfalls but to determine in advance to ignore them. I say: 'Look, without faltering, at your own high ideals, eyes straight ahead. And if you are loyal to what you yourselves know to be honorable your consciences will always be clear because you and God will be together.'

"Further than this I sometimes feel obliged to say that if they succeed in getting on well with the white people then criticisms of other Negroes will be numerous indeed -- another fact I have learned from my own experience. I say: 'That will happen! Take my word for it! But don't mind it. Make it your rule to get on well with everybody. See what has happened to the world because people

haven't been willing to learn that. It's hard but it can be done. It's the one know-how that our people brought out of slavery and it's the least popular self-discipline in the world. To me one of the most thrilling experiences one can have is to get on such genuinely friendly terms with an enemy that one can find out why he got to be one. I tell them the most difficult lessons their people had to learn, after their emancipation, was how to function successfully, how to earn a living, in a hostile world.

"Of course I tell them there has to be good-will in the other fellow before individual friendships can be formed but that is just what we have got to engender by our own attitudes and characters. White people's suspicion of us must be replaced by confidence and they must never forget that, whatever the mass reaction of whites against them in some localities, there are individuals who are not subject to it. Seek them out in citizenship activities! I say that my own conviction has steadily deepened that the only way we can bring about a change for the better is by our own aims and conduct. We must watch our own attitudes first.

"Now don't you go and get like that!" I tell them. "Don't be guilty of race prejudice yourselves. And let me tell you this: the people you must take the greatest pains to get on with will be your detractors -- because there is no other way to stop them!"

"That's splendid!" I exclaimed. "We all need that advice."

"I don't stop there," continued Lawyer Walker, warming to his subject, and gesturing as I knew he must have done when delivering the address he was recalling, "to those who are planning to go into social betterment work I give a special warning. It is this: 'In launching any project or new idea -- especially one that involves the least change in existing arrangements, watch out for un-

expected tensions. Be serene yourself inside and out. Don't let them lead to explosions. If a discussion of ways and means is going on this will amount to nothing if you allow emotions to reach such a pitch that both sides get to talking at once. I say that sometimes the straight-forward, upright young person, starting out from a normal school, dedicated to highest ideals, will be confronted by obstacles the less conscientious graduate doesn't meet. All one can count on, at such times, is principle instead of policy and moral convictions. Dedication to spiritual law is more important than dedication to the social sciences.

"In my opinion, this point is one that is important to stress with deans. They hold key positions, for influencing students in our institutions for higher education. Some very dangerous conditions surround our secular schools and it is the deans whose duty it is to handle questions of ethical and moral standards that are not within the scope of other members of a staff. They deal with the innermost problems of the students. A wise dean can throw open to a bewildered young man or woman higher incentives for service than class-room work can inspire. That is why I call them key-holders of those high elements in the student body that can be guided to build our race into what it must become to ^{create} be a spiritual democracy. In some places little attention is paid to the type of influence applicants for positions will exert on the student body and a wise dean is of paramount importance."

"I've never thought very much about them before," I commented.

"Sometimes deans are the decisive factors in establishing even missionary zeal in students, especially those training to go out to teach their people. I have felt it necessary to talk to them particularly about what they will meet when they actually take up what they plan to make their life work.

"I feel it a duty to call the attention of over-ambitious graduating students to the fact that, in gaining greater economic and political freedom, our race is taking on many under-developed conditions that the white race has not itself worked out or faced. So they must not make a goal of political equality - as they are apt to do. I tell them that mere equality cannot give our race the high standards of personal honor and morality that alone will enable it to exercise the highest type of citizenship, and achieve its manhood height. I shock them, sometimes, when I say I hope the day will come when it will be more difficult to get into educational institutions than it is today because of requirements as to character and ethical standards. And I always stress acquirement of skill in some industrial or trade pursuit for every Negro, whether there is any prospect of using it or not. Our futures are by no means secure. I know from hundreds of frustrated Negroes how necessary it is for every member of our race to have more than one way of earning a living. My Federal work certainly taught me that!

"I'm glad that the best training schools for social workers are letting in our qualified young people. I hope they ^{will} develop a feeling of dedication to real service along with knowledge of the social sciences. To my way of thinking it should be the aim of a community worker to bring into a steady focus the contending influences by a consciously arrived at philosophy of right human relationships.

"Of course, in talking to students, I stress the needs of rural districts. They are different from those of towns and cities and too little attention is given to the opportunities they offer. I believe in rural life for my people, and in an educated agricultural population. The Negro is adapted to country activities and nowadays cultural advantages may be within reach of all rural

dwellers."

"You imply that social workers prefer large centers. Is that because there is more going on?"

"It takes a great deal more personal initiative and more self-reliance and sound judgment. These can't be developed by mere head learning. To me that is one of the finest results of working for social ends in a rural district. You can measure your results. You must work, as I have said, with the highest purposes of home, church, and school.

"Most school principals have no feeling for rural life as an educational calling. We have had experience with teachers who thought of the country only as resort areas. They haven't the slightest idea that agricultural skills and the natural sciences, studied on the spot, are not beneath their dignity. Their ignorance about the scientific side of rural life, intelligently lived, would amaze you. They rarely grasp the fact that our people must be producers as well as consumers in this age. But some of the finest young people I have known have been rural teachers who have socialized their lives. You can see their influence everywhere down in Gloucester. Growth of rural high schools in Virginia should be credited chiefly to the awakened interest of many colored people."

"I didn't know that was still going on," I said.

"Why yes! In many instances they have contributed land on which the schools have been built, and, in others, they furnished all the building materials. They have sometimes turned over to the school authorities Negro money to pay white mechanics to build Negro schools. In some counties they have made themselves responsible for the erection and maintenance of new high schools. And their standard is this: education that doesn't teach students how to live right isn't worth having.

"I tell young teachers they will always come up against parents who won't co-operate with new projects and who say they are financially unable to give their children more opportunities, but to go ahead anyhow with those who see the light. I think it is a mistake to gloss over the necessity for sacrifice in rural or any other kind of teaching. Making sacrifices for better things is the way to progress. It's the price our people paid for all they have. Hampton didn't do our work for us. It taught us how to do our own.

"In talking to academic Negroes I sometimes feel it is necessary to adjust their attitudes to an appreciation of the historic fact that they wouldn't be having their present educational advantages if their own people, who hadn't been allowed any education, had not worked their hands down to the bone to get it for their children. I tell them how Poplar's School got built and about the curriculum of the unlettered Jennie Dean.

"'Those were the people', I say, 'who had deep wisdom but no head training. They were guided by a religious faith and didn't talk about their sacrifices. Some day there will, I hope, be proper recognition of this quality in the black toilers who were your forbears.'

"I want to add that the General Assembly of Virginia did come across with a small appropriation for some kind of memorial to the contribution the Negroes have made to the State. We were going to raise enough more ourselves really to do something worth while but the wars put an end to any such further activities. I hope some day it will be revived and concluded. Young Negroes need to realize this debt to those who made sacrifices without end and left their descendants a spiritual legacy that is precious beyond our comprehension.

"Your mention of 'academic Negroes' makes me wonder what advice you give

young people who ask you about studying law?" Many of them must come to you for that."

"Well, of course," he answered quickly, "if they want to take it up for the money they can get out of it I advise them to specialize in some branch that won't involve them directly in shaping, or unshaping, the lives of their clients. To me, being a lawyer means getting opportunity to right things that are wrong. It has been to me a fundamental necessity in that respect. Being a Negro lawyer means, in ordinary practice, being up against the color line at every turn. Unless he really loves his race I wouldn't recommend it. He might do a lot of harm.

"My hope is that some young Negroes, with natural powers of leadership, will take up law as a means of rendering decisive social service by exercising both justice and mercy. If this is their motive they will soon find they can't avoid dealing with the conditions that lead to crime if they are really serious in stopping it. People today are not as ignorant of the law as they are defiant of it and ignorance of moral laws is, to me, the densest ignorance there is. I tell this to would-be law students when they consult me about their careers. They will have to pass some pretty stiff examinations in the School of Life before they can know how to handle people as clients.

"How do they take to that point of view?" I asked.

Lawyer Walker smiled doubtfully. I could almost see his mind going back from one instance to another that had been a disappointment. Then he said: "When I plant a garden I don't look for sprouts the next day. The situation in which we find ourselves today doesn't condition young people to take that view -- high cost of living and automobiles and all that."

I saw I had asked him a question that was difficult for him to answer.

"I have had the advantage," he said slowly, "of seeing a side of the better element of white people that they have not had opportunity to see. The Negro thinks he knows all about white people from what he is shown at the white movies. Then, too, the older Negroes have personally served the white people from nursery and kitchen, and all menial positions, ever since Colonial times. What influences Negroes at white movies isn't so much due to where they're allowed to sit as what they see, marital infelicities and all types of crime, extravagance and break down of family life. They are apt to want to copy white folks because white folks are on top. Negro movies are influenced in the same way. ^{But} white folks don't come to them."

This comment, with its sensitive reserve, suddenly focussed all he had previously said into a picture of social irresponsibility thoughtlessly thrown before the frustrations of Negro youth.

"It is very difficult to discuss this factor in my disappointments," he said. "Somehow it seems unkind when so many white people have done so much."

"With reversed racial situations showing up all over the world," I hastened to say, "it's high time more is said about how to find inter-racial balances. Didn't one of your own leaders, just back from a tour of India undertaken for his church, report his experiences in finding Jim Crowism 'in reverse'? You have always gone from one daring social experiment to another and it's time to free-lance again so it may not happen here.

"Instances of it have already happened here." was his brief answer.

"If only we can get rid of the double standard of democracy; one set of rights for first class citizens and another for the second class citizens, the Negroes. This is what embitters Negroes everywhere on the globe. This is what they ask about when they come to me for advice."

"After finding themselves always disadvantaged, no matter how hard they work to prepare themselves for good citizenship, it is natural that they become bitter. Or, if that isn't their reaction, they may become lethargic and say: 'What's the use?' When they get like that I sometimes do not know what kind of a shock will break it up. I used to think that induction into the armed forces would do it but it rarely has."

"That sounds as if you were redescribing the conditions you found in Gloucester when you got back from school." I observed.

"Yes. And I think the same incentives are called for; releases for their obstructed ideals of democracy. There are many encouraging changes in the inter-racial pattern but there are many honey-pod trees hiding new slave blocks. Emancipation hasn't worked fast enough to keep up with the requirements of our gifted young people. When they bring their troubles to me and tell about the rising tensions between the races I go back to the lessons such situations have taught me. The new factor is the global uprising against race discriminations in matters of common welfare. The unrest in India and Africa has affected the attitudes of our young people in every corner of our own country. It's human relationships that are wrong. They need readjusting.

"The coming Negro leaders will have to be humanitarians, first of all. Economic gadgets, pressure groups, programs, can't bring the races to balance unless good-will and open-mindedness are established ^{at} the beginning. In these my faith is absolute. Without them our new leaders cannot get a spiritual result which is only another way of saying 'fair play'."

I broke in. "That question of leadership has been all-important in the history of your people ever since the first ante-bellum years, hasn't it?" I said.

"We have many splendid new leaders today," he said, "but they are dedicated more to specific causes and reforms than to the mass, human needs of their people with which our early leaders had to struggle. A new type of leadership is demanded by changes in our stages of development. But it must be based upon the ethical standards of the old leaders. However, instead of having to stress their own race the new leaders must stress general principles that need restating in connection with new situations, such as Jim Crowism in reverse as the dangerous shift in gear has been called.

"Our old leaders taught fundamental morality. Just recently I remembered one of Booker Washington's talks when pressure was brought to bear upon me by a white attorney to sign papers for an appeal when they did not accurately present the testimony. The lie was passed. I told him I'd suffer my right hand to be cut off before I would sign a foul. I said if the record was not one of truth I would sign none even though it might mean the defendant would be sent up. My refusal brought the case to a standstill and upset a good many people who thought I wasn't giving proper protection to the prisoner whom I regarded ^{as} innocent. I knew that with the foul she might get sent up anyway but the reason I refused to sign was not that. I knew if I signed falsely my whole race would be brought into disrepute in that distant, primitive county where the case was tried. I knew, what Booker Washington had taught me, that standing for the truth, under all circumstances, would help every member of my race in the eyes of all those who crowded the court room. They hadn't seen a Negro lawyer in action before. It is hard to make such decisions but our leaders stood for uncompromising integrity and I had to be worthy of them.

"All our first leaders ended their careers within my memory and were personal friends of mine. They were all born in utter poverty and had to fight

every conceivable kind of discouragement and obstacle. But they were strong individualists and had the courage to go ahead alone."

"Leadership is essentially a lonely, individual task." I said, as Lawyer Walker paused to think a little more before continuing. "It seems to me that sometimes it begins with head training and sometimes with impulses from the heart. Didn't all your wonderful, early leaders begin from passionate zeal to help their people before they had a chance to train their heads?"

"They had the missionary zeal born in them!" exclaimed Lawyer Walker with fervor. "They opened the way for the rest of us."

"Real leaders don't follow old, beaten paths, do you think?" I observed. "They go where there doesn't seem to be any opening -- as you did down in Gloucester."

As always, Lawyer Walker disregarded the reference to his own remarkable record as a leader who was recognized as a server of both races.

"Booker Washington and George Washington Carver," he continued, "came to be accepted as individuals where Negroes, as a race, were not. Their personal genius dominated their racial disadvantage. The rest of us remained as caste bound as before. Caste seems to be as catching as segregation which is an expression of it. But both men have raised the level of intelligence and the standing of their people everywhere, and, of course, have done wonders with their students. They demonstrated that nothing can prevent the individual American from finding his true place in the community -- good or bad -- according to his character and aims.

"There is another training our young people of today need as much as specialized education and that is definite training of their souls. The world crisis calls as loudly for that as for technical skills; even more.

The growing academic and materialistic trends are nowhere more easily identified, I myself feel, than in modern so-called music. Jazz is said to have come from our Negro folk songs. I suppose the reference is to our field songs in slavery days. Certainly it doesn't come from our spirituals! Sometimes I try to point out the difference between our Blues and jazz and our spirituals which are outpourings of triumph of spirit over physical bondage. They express joy in sadness, hope in despair. Yet some of our young people are ashamed of the origin of these beautiful melodies. They want to drop them. But white concert-goers demand them. I sometimes wonder how many of them stop to wonder why they want 'spirituals'? They don't demand our field songs."

"The spirituals meet another type of frustration than what your enslaved people experienced I suppose," I said, as Lawyer Walker paused.

"The white people have never suffered in the same way. The only freedom my people had was in their souls, the joy of unswerving faith that the Lord would rescue them. They sang out their faith. And they had a special gift for music. Sometimes, in the South, from rural children coming to school, one hears the untutored plaintiveness of this native music. Even the little ones soon sing parts without effort. They know what struggle is too."

"Do you think there can ever be any more Negro spirituals?" I asked.

"I can answer that only so far as to say that modern Negro musicians do not seem to be producing them. How could they? Without the feeling how could there be the expression? It was the emotional depth of the 'old time Negro' that penetrates the heart so profoundly. Without it the magic of our spirituals is lost. It cannot be taught except by Life itself through deep, inner experience.

"When I hear a spiritual I am carried back into those days about which I have told you a little. They do describe the fresh memories of slavery days

that I heard all through my childhood and youth. And now they come back to me all over again because they describe the bondages of other races everywhere who are seeking freedom."

"From white people?" I asked.

"Not altogether! Some are seeking it from those of their own race who would deprive them of it."

"I wonder," I said, "now that we are finishing the book, if you could summarize what these adventures into betterments, as you rightly call them, have meant to you - the gist of what you want to hand on?"

A long pause followed this inquiry. Obviously Lawyer Walker was, as he once expressed his feelings when we began to dig out the book, 'pressin' out de vintage'.

Then he said, dictating very slowly: "I think one's deepest thoughts should guide his conclusions at the end of every period of his life, and that they should be based upon his faith in God. It is easy to rely upon one's own strength rather than to have faith in the God of one's salvation. To speak of the God of one's salvation is not a heritage of the slave attitude when we thanked God for liberating us. No, not that! We are still slaves to our own weaknesses from which we must free ourselves and to get strength to do that we must have faith in God."

"And which of your other conclusions," I asked, "do you think most important in connection with racial situations today?"

"I think we've got to give up thinking of them as racial and begin to deal with them as human. I believe, as a result of a life-time of trying to help both races to work together, if we take pains with every individual as an individual, whatever his race or color; if we make constructive use

of every opportunity for service as service the race question will answer itself. Character and merit should be the focus of attention. That has been my working philosophy. It seems to me necessary to apply it to the changed conditions of today as I have observed them in courts, schools, and communities with their many kinds of religious and political movements."

There was a significant pause.

"You mean," I said, feeling my way, "that present-day trends are carrying us away from emphasis on character and merit? And that so-called reversed Jim Crowism is a sign of it?"

"What else? I believe each one of us, white or black, should begin writing his own Emancipation Proclamation along with his Will and then make up his mind what a genuine Reconstruction Period ought to take into account. That would come hard to a lot of people but if they do it they'll be glad in the end," he answered. "Maybe some of the experiences I have told for the book will make clear why I think that."

"Exactly! That's why it was so important for you to talk them out," I said.

"We've been at it a good many years, haven't we?" he observed. "I've been so busy! And now I'm over ninety. But I still get around and am just back from arguing another case involving racial adjustments in a distant County. People have to come to me, nowadays, instead of my going to them. So many young people are discouraged about the color line that is always ready to hold them back - although it is slackening here and there. I always tell them it is my experience that there is really only one solvent for problems, one that will work where all else fails, and that is good-will and learning how to get on with all kinds of people of whatever race.

"De Ole Sheep Done Know de Road" but, as the spiritual says, "De Young Lambs Mus' Find de Way".

Tail piece

"DE YOUNG LAMBS MUS' FIND DE WAY!"

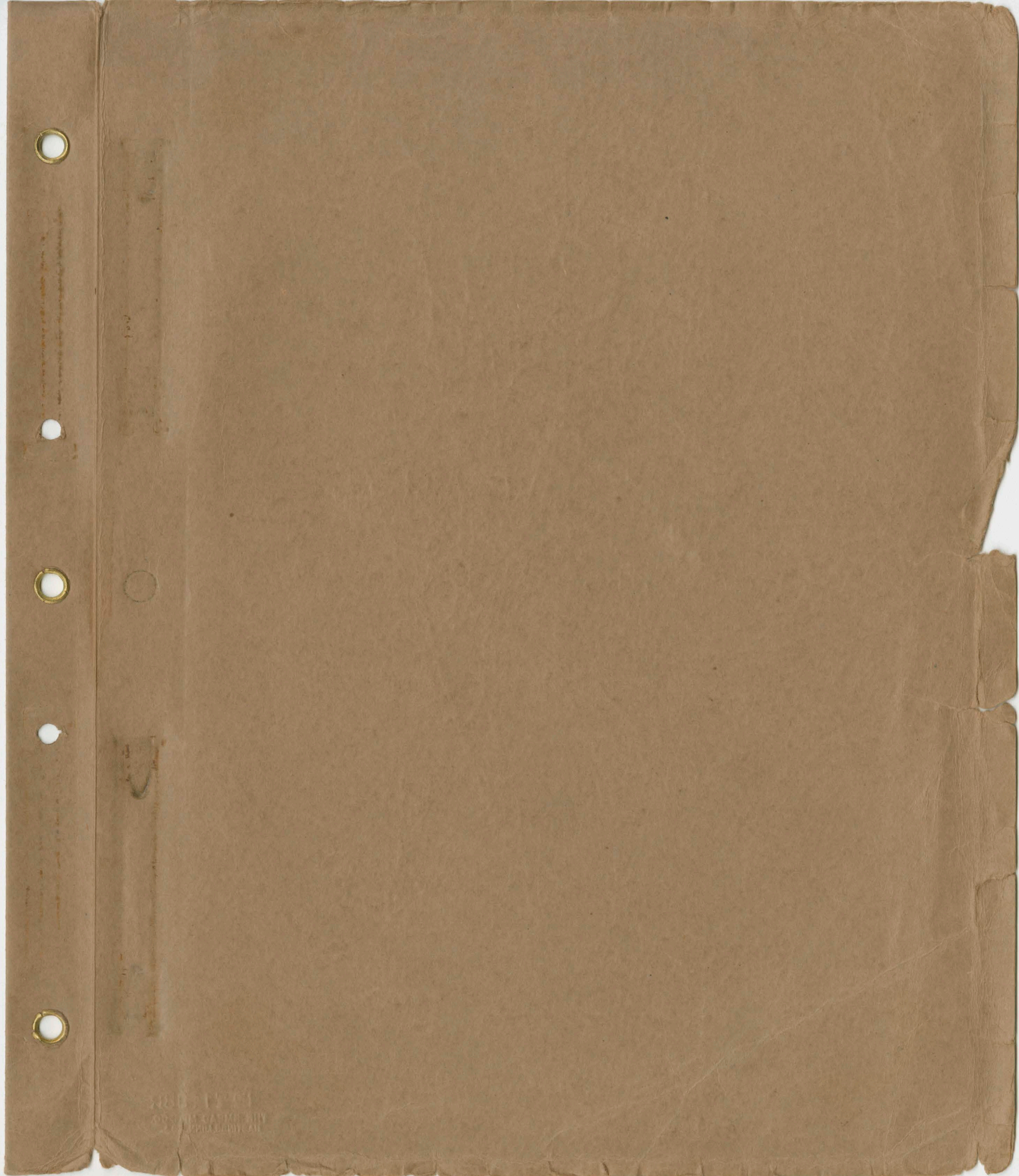
2068/367

2068/367

AG 550/1/2

CREDIT:

CULLEN, NEW YORK, N.Y.



NO. 11 1888
THE SNEAD MFG. CO.
HASTINGS, MINN., U.S.A.