

school early to-morrow afternoon and start for the chopping-bee.' So we came to school next day with the axes, all of us that could get them; we were all excited and eager for that chopping bee, and we were all discussing what it would be like, because we had never been to one before. So in the afternoon Mr. Washington said it was time for that chopping bee, so he put his ax over his shoulder and led us to the woods and put us to work cutting the trees and clearing the land. He went right in and worked harder and faster and handled his ax better than any of us. After a while we found that a chopping bee, as he called it, was no different from just plain cutting down trees and clearing land. There wasn't anything new about that—we all had had all we wanted of it. Some of the boys said they didn't come to school to cut down trees and clear land, but they couldn't say they were too good for that kind of work when Mr. Washington himself was at it harder than any of them. So he kept at us for some days, till everybody had his idea. He then went off to do some thing more important.

"Now in those days he used to go off every Saturday morning, and he wouldn't come back till Monday morning. He'd travel all around the county drumming up students for the school and telling the people to send their children. And on Sunday he'd get the preachers to let him get up in their pulpits and tell the people about the school after they had finished preaching. And even the preachers who were warning their people against him and his school because they said it wasn't Methodist, and it wasn't Baptist, and it wasn't Presbyterian, and it wasn't Episcopalian, and it wasn't Christian, would let him speak from their pulpits. They had told the people to keep their children away from that godless man and his school, but when he came along and asked to speak to the people they had to leave him, just as everybody always did—let him do just what he wanted to do. And when they heard him—the people—they didn't pay any attention to the preachers; they just sent their children as fast as they could contrive it.

"Now in those days Mr. Washington didn't have a horse, nor a mule, nor a wagon, and he wanted to cover more country on those trips than he could afoot, so he'd just go out in the middle of the road and when some old black man would come along driving his mule wagon he'd stop him and talk with him, and tell him about the school and what it was going to do for the black folks, and then he'd say: 'Now, uncle, you can help by bringing your wagon and mule for me to go offround the country telling the peoples about the school. Now, remember, Uncle Jake, please be here promptly at nine.' And the old man would say, 'Yes, boss, I sure will be here.' That was how he did it—when he needed anything he'd go out and put his hand on it. First, he could put his hand on anything he wanted round the town; then he could put his hand on anything he wanted all over the county; then he could put his hand on anything he wanted all over the state; and at last, they tell me, he could put his hand on anything he wanted away up to New York.

"In those days, after we came to live here on the 'plantation,' I used to take the wheelbarrow and go round to the office when Mr. Washington opened the mail in the morning, and if there was money in the mail in the morning then I could go 'long to the town with the wheelbarrow and get provisions, and if there was no money then there was no occasion to go to town. We'd just eat what we had left. Most of the white storekeepers wouldn't give us credit, and they didn't want a 'nigger school' here, anyhow. Times have changed. Now those storekeepers get a large proportion of their trade here at the Institppte, and if there should be any talk of moving they'd just get up and fight to the last to keep us here and keep our trade.

"And in those days the Negro preachers, or the most of them, and the white folks, or the most of them, were always trying to dispute with Mr. Washington and quarrel with him, but he just kept his mouth shut and went ahead. He kept pleasant, and he wouldn't dispute with them nor argue with them nor quarrel with them. When the white folks would come round and tell him he was 'spoiling good niggers by education,' he would just ask them to wait patiently and give him time to show them what the right kind of education would do. And when the

colored preachers would come round and tell him he was no Christian and his school had no religion, he would ask them to just wait and see if the boys and girls were any less Christian because of the education they were getting. But, whoever came along and whatever happened, Mr. Washington just kept his mouth shut and went ahead.

"After two years of school I went out and rented some land and planted cotton, and just about time to harvest my crop Mr. Washington sent for me one Sunday and said: 'I need you. I want you to come back and work for the school on the farm. I want you to start in Monday morning.' When I told him about my cotton crop, just ready to be picked, he said: 'Can't help that, we need you. You'll have to arrange with your neighbors to harvest your crop for you.'

To the inquiry, 'Well, did you come?' the old man replied: 'Of course I did.' When Mr. Washington said come, I came, same as everybody did when he told them. I got a neighbor to harvest my crop and I lost money on it, but I came to work that Monday morning more than thirty years ago, and I've been here ever since." The idea of not doing what Mr. Washington wanted him to do, or even arguing the matter, was evidently inconceivable to this old man. He obeyed, and had always obeyed, Mr. Washington, just as he had obeyed the laws of nature by sleeping and eating. That is the kind of control which Booker Washington always exercised over his fellow-workers. He accepted their implicit obedience as naturally and simply as they gave it.

Just as Samuel Armstrong was perhaps the most receptive of Mark Hopkin's pupils, so Booker Washington became the most receptive pupil of Samuel Armstrong.

In his autobiography, "Up from Slavery," Mr. Washington thus describes General Armstrong's influence upon him: "It has been my fortune to meet personally many of what are called great characters, both in Europe and America, but I do not hesitate to say that I never met any man who, in my estimation, was the equal of General Armstrong.

"One might have removed from Hampton all the buildings, class-rooms, teachers, and industries, and given the men and women there the opportunity of coming into daily contact with General Armstrong, and that alone would have been a liberal education. The older I grow, the more I am convinced that there is no education which one can get from books and costly apparatus that is equal to that which can be gotten from contact with great men and women. Instead of studying books so constantly, how I wish that our schools and colleges might learn to study men and things!"

When the young man imbued with these ideas and fresh from these influences found himself responsible for the destinies of a studentless, teacherless, buildingless, and landless school, it is significant how he went to work to supply these manifold deficiencies. First he found a place in which to open the school—a dilapidated shanty church, the A. M. E. Zion Church for Negroes, in the town of Tuskegee. Next he went about the surrounding countryside, found out exactly under what conditions the people were living and what their needs were, and advertised the school among the class of people whom he wanted to have attend it.

By experience and through acquaintance with the actual conditions under which his people were living he became more convinced than ever that little could be done for them by mere book-learning. Agricultural training must be the basis of their education, just as agriculture was the basis of their livelihood. In order to give such training he must have land. About that time an old plantation near the town came onto the market. Borrowing personally the \$250 required as a cash first payment, he bought it and moved the school onto it.

And as soon as they were established in their new quarters he organized the 'chopping bee' already described, and cleared some of the land so that it could be used for crops. He did not clear and plant this land to give his students vocational training. He did it for the purpose that all land was originally cleared and planted—to go food. He, of course realized that the educational content of this work was greater—greater than any possible text-book exercises in the classroom. He then and there began the

long and difficult task of teaching his people that physical work, and particularly farm work, if rightly done, was educational, and that education was work. To secure the acceptance of this truth by a race only recently emancipated from over two hundred years of unrequited toil—a race that had always regarded freedom from the necessity for work as an indication of superiority—was not a hopeful task. To them education was the antithesis of work. It was the magic elixir which emancipated all those fortunate enough to drink of it from the necessity of work.

He also began to emphasize at this time his familiar dictum that learning to do the common things of life in an uncommon way was an essential part of real education. Probably the reverse of this dictum—namely, learning to do the uncommon things of life in a common way—would have more nearly corresponded to the popular conception of education among most Negroes and many whites.

After the land was secured the next most pressing necessity was a boarding department so that the students might be influenced throughout the twenty-four hours of the day—so that they might be taught the manners, customs, and amenities of decent and orderly living.

As Mr. Washington says in "Up from Slavery," "We had nothing but the students and their appetites with which to begin a boarding department." As soon as this boarding department was established each student was required to have and to use a tooth-brush. Mr. Washington later observed that, in his opinion, the tooth-brush is the most potent single instrument of civilization. Then, too, it was possible for him to begin to enforce this injunction taken from one of his now well known Sunday night talks: "Make a study of the preparation of food. See to it that a certain ceremony, a certain importance, be attached to the partaking of the food." This exhortation sounds so commonplace as to be scarcely noticed by the average reader, but just put yourself in the place of these boys or girls who came from a one-room cabin, and realize what a profoundly revolutionary, even sensational injunction it is! To the boy or girl who had snatched a morsel of food here and there when prompted by the gnawings of hunger, who had never sat down to a regular meal, who had never partaken of a meal placed upon a table with or without ceremony—imagine what it meant to such a boy or girl "to see to it that a certain ceremony, a certain importance, be attached to the partaking of the food"—not on special occasions but at each one of the three meals of each day!

Finally, it came about that this school which had started with a paltry \$2,000 a year, a great need, and with invincible determination of one man, came to have land, buildings, teachers, students, and even a boarding department. But in Mr. Washington's view there was still a great fundamental lack in their work. They were doing nothing directly to help those less fortunate than themselves—those about them who could not come and enjoy the advantages of the school. Mr. Washington held that as soon as an individual got hold of anything as useful and desirable as an education he should take immediate means to hand it on to the greatest possible number of those who needed it. He had no patience with those persons who would climb the tree of knowledge and then pull the ladder up after them.

He and his teachers then began to go out on Sundays and give the people homely talks on how to improve their living conditions. They encouraged the farmers to come to the school farm and learn how to grow a variety of crops to supplement the cotton crop, which was their sole reliance. They relieved the distress of individual families. Mrs. Washington gathered together in an old loft the farmers' wives and daughters who were in the habit of loafing about the village of Tuskegee on Saturday afternoons and formed them into a woman's club for the improvement of the living conditions in their homes and communities. Mr. Washington and his teachers went right onto the farms and into the homes, and into the churches and the schools, and everywhere showed, for the most part by concrete object-lessons, how the Negroes could make their farms more productive, their homes more comfortable, their schools more useful, and their church services more inspiring.