

# LITERATURE

## THE BUILDING OF CHARACTER:

By Booker T. Washington

THE book consists of a number of short informal essays that were originally given as Sunday evening "talks" to the students of the Tuskegee Institute.

They are not remarkable for grace or literary finish, but are practical, exceedingly practical, dealing as they do with the vital questions of every-day routine and of how a man or woman may make the most out of life. They give evidence of independent and vigorous thought, and are rich in the stimulus which inspires with high resolve.

Booker Washington, a mulatto, is one of the first orators in America, and is alive to the needs and characteristics of the world of men, particularly to those that relate to the education, elevation, and betterment of his own race.

We marked paragraphs for quotations as we read his book, and when we came to the end we found about half the book had been so marked. We are persuaded it will be widely read—at least, it deserves to be.

*William Briggs, Toronto.*

## STILLMAN GOTT: By Edwin Day Sibley.

STILLMAN GOTT is not a copy of *David Harum*, as some have said, although more of the latter would not be unacceptable, but a distinct character. The type does not die out, but is constantly reappearing. It is a type that makes the reader imitate *Oliver Twist*, and ask for more.

Stillman Gott is a New England farmer-fisherman, quick-witted, shrewd, and overflowing with dry humor and bonhomie. He is a sure cure for the blues. Nurture had not done much for him, but Nature turned him out a true, hale-hearted gentleman. He is a wholesome,

out-of-doors character—a make-up of oak and rock, but also of vine and flower.

The author knows the types, and what is more, he can draw them. He is a keenly sympathetic observer of life. His people are not dummies whereon to hang the manners and quaint speeches of the villagers, but each is very much alive with his or her own individuality.

The story, which is uncommonly readable strikes a strong, healthy, buoyant note, and it would be impossible in a review to convey its charm, its spontaneity and vitality. The author carries through from the first the thread of a charming love-story, woven with such delicacy as to give the book its crowning interest.

Perhaps the best chapter is the thirteenth, in which Stillman Gott is put on trial on a charge of incendiarism and elects to act as his own counsel. *Rhoderick Friend*, the plaintiff, is well sketched, and those of us who have lived in smaller towns are familiar with the type—a hard-as-nails curmudgeon, a mangy moneylender who lives solely on the life-blood of the poor. He is what Cecil Rhodes calls "a safe key in breeches."

Stillman Gott had the right idea of how to get on in life. Speaking to an ambitious young man, he said: "Go up to Boston and try yer luck, an' when I say ter try yer luck, I don't mean ter sit down waitin' fer good luck ter hunt yer up. Doin' that is a good deal like settin' down in a fifty-acre lot waitin' fer er cow ter back up ter yer ter get milked. She won't do it, and while yer waitin' some other feller hez hunted her up and filled his pail."

Stillman had a record piece of ground on his farm. The description of it would fit Muskoka. "There's er piece uv land up back uv my house where I hev ter whittle pertaters down to er sharp p'int