

He reached at length Hampton School with just fifty cents in his pocket. Unwashed and unkempt and ragged as he was he must have made a very unfavourable impression on the New England lady principal. At length she said he might sweep the recitation room. This was the chance of his life.

"I swept the recitation-room," he says, "three times. Then I got a dusting-cloth and I dusted it four times. When I was though I reported to the principal, she was a 'Yankee' woman who knew just where to look for dirt. When she was unable to find one bit of dirt on the floor, or a particle of dust on any of the furniture, she quietly remarked: 'I guess you will do to enter this institution.'

"I was one of the happiest souls on earth. The sweeping of that room was my college examination, and never did any youth pass an examination for entrance into Harvard or Yale that gave him more genuine satisfaction. I have passed several examinations since then, but I have always felt that this was the best one I ever passed."

He earned his way by rising at four in the morning to make fires, do his chores and prepare his lessons. Only once a week did he get white bread. He used to wash his meagre clothing at night, for he had no change of attire.

Here he heard of his mother's death, which almost broke his heart, but the lessons of truth and honour and industry which she implanted in his soul became the most precious possessions of his life.

So crowded were the dormitories that General Armstrong, the head of the school, called for volunteers to live in tents during the winter. Nearly every student volunteered to go, among them, of course, young Washington. More than once in the bitter cold night the tent was lifted bodily in the wind, and they found themselves in the open air.



LITTLE BOOKER, A FAVOURITE WITH HIS MASTER, IS ALLOWED TO PEEP INTO THE PARLOUR OF THE "BIG HOUSE."

"I have spoken," he says, "of my admiration for General Armstrong, and yet he was but a type of that Christlike body of men and women who went into the Negro schools at the close of the war by the hundreds to assist in lifting up my race. The history of the world fails to show a higher, purer, and more unselfish class of men and women than those who found their way into those Negro schools.

"Life at Hampton was a constant revelation to me; was constantly taking me into a new world. The matter of having meals at regular hours, of eating on a tablecloth, using a napkin, the use of the bath-tub and of the tooth-brush, as well as the use of sheets upon the bed, were all new to me. I sometimes feel that almost the most valuable lesson I got at the Hampton Institute was in the use and value of the bath. I learned there for the first time some of its value, not only in keeping the body healthy, but in inspiring self-respect and promoting virtue."