

children, we are free." Soon came the chance to young Booker—which was all the name he had, he chose Washington himself—to go to school. To do this, the boy worked from four o'clock in the morning till nine, and after school hours. He early learned that most important lesson, faithful, honest toil.

He was sent to work in a coal mine, his mother hired some one to teach him to read at night, and he took his book to the mine and tried to read by the little lamp which hung on his hat.

Till he was a big boy he had never worn a hat, when his mother



LITTLE BOOKER AND HIS MOTHER
PRAYING TO BE DELIVERED
FROM SLAVERY.

made one of two pieces of homespun jean.

He afterwards hired out to a Mrs. Ruffner, a New England woman, and was so faithful in the discharge of his duty that before he left her service she trusted him with anything in her possession. He writes:

"The lessons that I learned in her home were as valuable to me as any education I have ever gotten anywhere since. Even to this day I never see bits of paper scattered around a house or in the street that I do not want to pick them up at once. I never see a filthy yard that I do

not want to clean it, a paling off a fence that I do not want to put it on, an unpainted or unwhitewashed house that I do not want to paint or whitewash it, or a button off one's clothes, or a grease-spot on them or on a floor, that I do not want to call attention to it."

One day amid his toil he heard of a school where black boys and girls could work their way if they had not money to pay for schooling. It was many scores of miles away, but he started out on foot to find it. For his outfit the old coloured people, born in slavery and utterly unlettered, gave him some a nickel, others a quarter or a handkerchief. His mother was in broken health, and he scarce expected to see her again. He was refused shelter in a village inn, and kept warm only by walking about through the night. This was his first experience of finding what the colour of his skin meant.

He reached Richmond, Va., hungry, tired and dirty, and wandered round the streets till midnight because he had nowhere to go. As half-starved he passed the food-stands "he would have promised," he said, "all he expected to possess in the future to have gotten hold of one of the chicken legs or pies which were exposed," but he crept under the sidewalk, and lay all night upon the ground without a bite to eat. Next morning he earned enough by helping unload pig iron from a vessel to buy a breakfast, which seemed to him the best breakfast he ever had. He continued to work a number of days, still sleeping under the sidewalk. Many years afterwards he was tendered a reception in Richmond at which two thousand persons were present to do him honour. The hall was not far from the place where he had sought shelter beneath the planks. He could not help reverting in thought to his painful experience.