

## Developing a Dream

By M. A. PEASE.

### The True Story of a Woman Who Has Amassed a Fortune Through Her Own Efforts.

The richest negress in New York is Mrs. C. J. Walker, who by virtue of her remarkable foresight and business acumen has created and developed one of the most unusual business enterprises known to the colored race.

Mrs. Walker's early history reads like a Penny Dreadful. She was left an orphan at seven, and was so cruelly treated by those who had undertaken to care for her that she married at fourteen to escape what was worse than slavery. She was left a widow at twenty, absolutely penniless, with a little daughter to support.

As may be imagined, Mrs. Walker had known very little schooling in her life, but she was industrious, and she toiled early and late at the washtub that her daughter might have an education. Laundry work is an order of toil that makes greater demands on the body than on the mind, and as this ambitious mother bent over her tub, her mind persistently followed one train of thought: "I must improve my position in life. How am I going to do it?"

#### The Dream.

Strangely enough this question was answered through what seemed to be an overwhelming catastrophe. Mrs. Walker began to lose her hair, and was threatened with baldness. The hair of the colored people develops on the corkscrew plan, and is consequently very difficult to treat. After trying all sorts of so-called remedies without success, the afflicted woman took her troubles to the Lord in prayer, and claims to have had a direct answer. In a dream a big black man appeared to her and told her that if she would mix together certain ingredients, one of which was a herb grown only in Africa, the brew when applied would abolish all her hair troubles. With child-like faith, she obtained the ingredients, mixed and applied them, and her hair grew and multiplied, and—joy of joys—became less curly. She gave some of the mixture to her friends, who were most enthusiastic about it, and as each friend had a friend, it dawned upon her that at last she had found a way to fortune.

At first, of course, her output and returns were small, but Mrs. Walker proved to be an excellent business woman, and soon realized that it pays to advertise. She has spent enormous sums of money in bringing before the public through the medium of the press, the wonders of her wares.

When Mrs. Walker was thoroughly convinced that she had found a Boon for Baldheads, she went to Indianapolis, where she established a factory. The work up to the present has all been done by hand, but electrical machinery is now being installed, and the quaint old mammies, with their fantastic head-dresses, dexterously mixing the "Grower," will soon be superseded by the buzz and whirr of machinery. This factory is a most shiningly clean place. The rooms in it seem to be arranged on a rising scale according to the order in which the work is carried out. In the first room are a lot of old mammies plying wooden paddles vigorously on what looks like apple-green soft butter. Another lot are at work mixing up masses of putty-colored shampoo. The next rooms, two steps higher, are where the different preparations are boxed. Two more steps up and the shipping rooms are reached. On the next floor are the offices, presided over by most haughty colored ladies with luxuriant tresses. All the latest office equipment is employed to make the business run smoothly. The manager of the business in Indianapolis is a colored law-

yer, who has proved himself to be a most efficient major domo.

#### The Secret of Success.

"Madam" Walker is convinced that successful people differ from those who are unsuccessful chiefly in the activity of their minds, and she keeps her brains working continually on her business, notwithstanding the fact that she has already amassed a large fortune. Her income from her "Dream-mixture" is said to be nearly a quarter of a million a year. In addition to this she owns much property and has made some very careful and shrewd speculations.

#### Mrs. Walker's Home.

Mrs. Walker has just completed the purchase of a beautiful property in Irvington-on-the-Hudson, at a cost of over a quarter of a million dollars. There has been no expense spared in the furnishings of the house which are most luxurious and represent the styles of various of the French and Italian periods. A player organ of vast proportions, several Victrolas, a harp and a grand piano are evidences of the musical tastes of the owner. There are wonderful conservatories, libraries, and, in fact, all the things that go to make perfect the House Palatial. An Italian gardener has been imported to make the gardens a feast to the eye, and if the lawns could speak as they roll, they might not be understood, for even they are said to come from foreign fields. The garage boasts four motor cars for "madam's" personal use, and these are in charge of a very good-looking "white" chauffeur.

#### Philanthropies Are Not Forgotten.

Mrs. C. J. Walker.

Although she is the richest negress in New York, Mrs. Walker has never forgotten her early days of struggle, and does not devote her income to riotous living. She is constantly studying how best she can advance her race, and every year sets aside a certain percentage of her income for the maintenance of an Industrial Missionary School which she has established on the Continent of Africa, and for the many scholarships which she maintains at Tuskegee and other institutions. She has devoted thousands of dollars to the colored Y.M.C.A. of Indianapolis, and her gifts to the poor are many and varied, especially at Christmas time. Her greatest regret in life is that she did not have an education when young, but she has a tutor now, and is working hard to make up for lack of previous opportunity.

Mrs. Walker insists that her preparation is not put upon the market for the purpose of straightening the kink in the hair of the colored folk, but as a remedy for scalp troubles of every kind. The preparation being of a greasy order, does straighten the hair, however, and it is this feature of the cure that appeals most strongly to the kinky-haired. One of the men in the shipping room of Madam Walker's establishment told the writer that until he had used the "Grower" he had never been able to part his hair, but had always been obliged to shave a parting. Now he is a most fashionable person with straight shining hair brushed smoothly back from his dusky forehead, and even boasts a "widow's peak."

As may be imagined, there are many other preparations on the market which claim to be quite as beneficial as the one which Mrs. Walker has concocted, but she seems to be the Queen in this particular hive of industry, perhaps because she was one of the first to make the use of the "comb" possible to her race.



The difference Gold Dust makes!

#### One picture:

A big stack of dishes to wash. A long face and a sigh of resignation. "Oh dear!—I wish these dishes were all washed and put away in the pantry!"

#### Another picture:

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