

above all things the important truth that the best help for the Negro is self-help. Scarcely a single Negro family or individual in or near Tuskegee did not contribute something in money or in kind, often at great sacrifice, towards the founding of the institute.

The only place that he could get to start his school was a dilapidated shanty near the coloured Methodist church, together with the church itself as a sort of assembly-room. Both the church and the shanty were in about as bad condition as was possible.

"I recall," he writes, "that during the first months of school that I taught in this building it was in such poor repair that, whenever it rained, one of the older students would very kindly leave his lessons and hold an umbrella over me while I heard the recitations of the others. I remember, also, that on more than one occasion my landlady held an umbrella over me while I ate breakfast."

The unthrift of the Negroes was almost incredible. They planted nothing but cotton, and bought corn and bacon at the highest price at the store. Sewing machines were bought on instalments for sixty dollars, showy clocks for fourteen, although not one person in ten could read the time. In one cabin there was only one fork among five people, and a cabinet organ which cost sixty dollars. But very seldom did a family eat together. The father would take his hunk of bread and meat and start to the field, eating as he walked; the mother took her breakfast from the skillet in the corner; the children would eat theirs running round the yard like so many puppies. Every child that was big enough to carry a hoe was sent to the cotton field, while the baby was left at the end of the row to receive maternal attention at intervals. On Saturday the whole family went to town—ostensibly to shop, but one

person in ten minutes could buy all that their money could pay for. The women sat around smoking or dipping snuff. The land and most of the crops were mortgaged.

The schools, of course, were wretched affairs. In one of these Mr. Washington found five pupils studying from one book. Many of the parents were born in slavery. He asked one



BOOKER STARTING FOR HAMPTON INSTITUTE.

man how many were sold at the same time with himself. He said, "There were five of us: myself and brother and the three mules." The teachers in these schools had very exalted ideas of book learning. The bigger the book and the longer the name of the subject, the prouder they felt of their accomplishment. Some had studied Latin, one or two Greek.