

OCTOBER · 1889

School is with the State. Two of the best lawyers I know agree in this opinion.

Have your advisory Board by all means. And if you ever do anything to change the charter — do it slowly and quietly. I start for Atlanta this noon and shall preach there next Sunday. I rejoice with you on the good start you have made. Yours sincerely

Geo. L. Chaney

ALS Con. 94 BTW Papers DLC.

<sup>1</sup> On Aug. 16, 1889, Chaney wrote BTW thanking him for copies of the Tuskegee Institute acts of incorporation. At BTW's request, Chaney had a lawyer examine the acts to determine precisely where legal control of the school rested. Chaney warned that, though the trustees controlled the property, the state could control the administration. "So long as the State treats the Institution fairly, as it has done thus far, all will be well." (Con. 2, BTW Papers, ATT. Original destroyed.)

## To George Washington Cable

Tuskegee, Ala., Oct 8 1889

Dear Mr. Cable: I am very sorry to be so late answering your letter regarding the operation of the crop lien law in Alabama, but every minute of my time has seemingly been employed since receiving your letter. I am glad you are going to give the subject attention and trust that my information is not too late for use.

Of course when the war ended the colored people had nothing on which to live while the first crop was being made. Thus, in addition to renting the land on which to make the first crop they had to get the local merchant or some one else to supply the food for the family to eat while the first crop was being made. For every dollars worth of provisions so advanced the local merchant charged from 12 to 30 per cent interest. In order to be sure that he secured his principal and interest a mortgage or lien was taken on the crop, in most cases not then planted. Of course the farmers could pay no such interest and the end of the first year found them in debt. The 2nd year they tried again, but there was the old debt and the new interest to pay, and in this way the "mortgage system" has gotten a hold on every thing that