

*The BOOKER T. WASHINGTON Papers*

as in learning how to work. Labour with him was a badge of degradation. The white man was held up before him as the highest type of civilisation, but the Negro noted that this highest type of civilisation himself did little labour with the hand. Hence he argued that, the less work he did, the more nearly he would be like the white man. Then, in addition to these influences, the slave system discouraged labour-saving machinery. To use labour-saving machinery, intelligence was required; and intelligence and slavery were not on friendly terms. Hence the Negro always associated labour with toil, drudgery, something to be escaped. When the Negro first became free, his idea of education was that it was something that would soon put him in the same position as regards work that his recent master had occupied. Out of these conditions grew the habit of putting off till to-morrow and the day after the duty that should be done promptly to-day. The leaky house was not repaired while the sun shone, for then the rain did not come through. While the rain was falling, no one cared to expose himself to stop the rain. The plough, on the same principle, was left where the last furrow was run, to rot and rust in the field during the winter. There was no need to repair the wooden chimney that was exposed to the fire, because water could be thrown on it when it was on fire. There was no need to trouble about the payment of a debt to-day, because it could be paid as well next week or next year. Besides these conditions, the whole South at the close of the war was without proper food, clothing, and shelter, — was in need of habits of thrift and economy and of something laid up for a rainy day.

To me it seemed perfectly plain that here was a condition of things that could not be met by the ordinary process of education. At Tuskegee we became convinced that the thing to do was to make a careful, systematic study of the condition and needs of the South, especially the Black Belt, and to bend our efforts in the direction of meeting these needs, whether we were following a well-beaten track or were hewing out a new path to meet conditions probably without a parallel in the world. After eighteen years of experience and observation, what is the result? Gradually, but surely, we find that all through the South the disposition to look upon labour as a disgrace is on the wane; and the parents who themselves sought to escape work are so anxious to give their children training in intelligent labour that every institution which gives