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Born into slavery on a Virginia plantation, Booker T. Washington (1856–1915) educated himself tirelessly in the years after the American Civil War. In 1881, he was appointed head of the Tuskegee Institute, a teacher-training college for African Americans. As a writer, orator and fundraiser, he became one of the leading figures of the black community. Washington argued that the best way of bettering the social position of African Americans was through vocational education, which would make them indispensable and productive members of society. In this 1901 autobiography, he uses his life as an example to illustrate these principles, covering particularly the work of the Tuskegee Institute and his fundraising on behalf of black education. The book also contains the full text of his 1895 Atlanta Exposition speech, which created the model for Southern race relations until Washington's death and the emergence of more overtly assertive African-American civil rights leaders.

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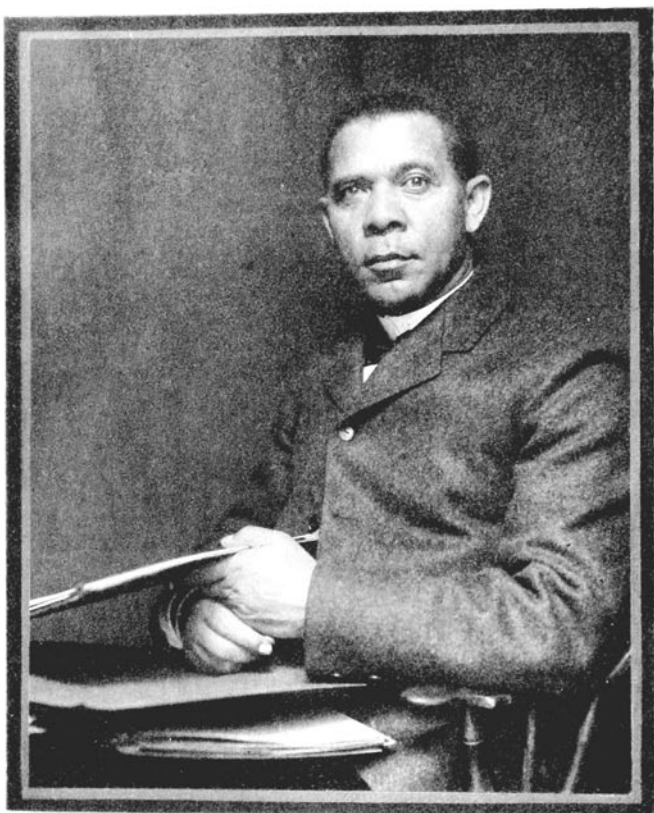
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AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

BY
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This volume is dedicated to my Wife
MRS. MARGARET JAMES WASHINGTON

And to my Brother
MR. JOHN H. WASHINGTON
*Whose patience, fidelity, and hard work have gone far
to make the work at Tuskegee successful*

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PREFACE

THIS volume is the outgrowth of a series of articles, dealing with incidents in my life, which were published consecutively in the *Outlook*. While they were appearing in that magazine I was constantly surprised at the number of requests which came to me from all parts of the country, asking that the articles be permanently preserved in book form. I am most grateful to the *Outlook* for permission to gratify these requests.

I have tried to tell a simple, straightforward story, with no attempt at embellishment. My regret is that what I have attempted to do has been done so imperfectly. The greater part of my time and strength is required for the executive work connected with the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, and in securing the money necessary for the support of the institution. Much of what I have said has been written on board trains, or at hotels or railroad stations while I have been waiting

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PREFACE

for trains, or during the moments that I could spare from my work while at Tuskegee. Without the painstaking and generous assistance of Mr. Max Bennett Thrasher I could not have succeeded in any satisfactory degree.

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