

Futcher

My dear Harvey.

With regard to the Lake of the Dismal Swamp trip with W.O. I think that it was made in the Spring of 1900. The Chief, Jacobs and I went down to Old Point Comfort to spend the Easter Vacation at the Chamberlain Hotel. On Saturday all three of us made a trip by boat to ^{Mobiack Bay} West River in Virginia. We got on intimate terms with the Captain and the latter played a practical joke on W.O. by having the steward ^{serve} one oyster to him at luncheon. The rest of us had six but when the oysters were served to the Chief there was one huge Pivolar on his plate, but it was the largest one I ever saw. He reproached W.O. for severing it into several pieces and said that the etiquette of eating oysters was that they should be swallowed whole no matter what their size may be. This would have seemed like swallowing a young infant!

On ~~Sunday~~ ^{Easter} night I made the famous "rescue" of Cissie Loftus - according to the Chief's account W.O. had always been fascinated by Tom Moore's poem "The Lake of the Dismal Swamp" and had always wanted to visit the lake. Accordingly, he planned the trip for Easter Monday. We (The Chief and I only) left by boat early for Portsmouth, Va, where we hired a conveyance and drove about 5 miles across country to the Albemarle Canal. After purchasing some cheese, crackers and some fruit at a little country store, we hired the gasoline launch of the Contractor of the Canal (the Canal was then under construction) for the day. We went along the Canal for about two hours and arrived at the "feeder" of the Canal which is the big outlet of the lake. This is a deep ditch about 10-15 to 20 feet wide and two or three miles long. The banks are 8 to 10 feet high and made up of a rich vegetable humus some old. Just before the lake is reached, there is a small lock which raises us up to the level of the water in the lake. Passing along this stream, for a few hundred yards, we finally reached the lake, which has no visible banks, the waters of the lake seeming to merge with the ^{trees} woods ~~woods~~ ^{side} of the Swamp surrounding it. The weird cyprus trees, with their

numerous roots rising out of the water and merging to form the trunk several feet above the water's level, extending far out into the lake produce the illusion that the lake has no shores. We motored about the lake in the launch for about an hour and then started on our return trip. On our way back, and while we were eating our frugal lunch, the Chief wrote a most imaginative account ^{of our experiences} of his excursion on the banks of the lake in the book of Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy, which he had brought along with him. In this he described how our boat passed between the roots of the Cypress trees; how brilliant-headed ducks had dropped into our boat ~~as we~~ from the limbs of the trees as we passed under them; how we had met a man with a "vertical eye"; and ~~how we had met~~ ^{also} a negro who had not yet heard of the Emancipation. General was tried to persuade W.O. to publish this wonderful account in "St Nicholas" but he never did.

We got back that night in time to ^{join Jacobs and} take the Old Bay Line boat to Baltimore, after having had had one of the most delightful experiences I have ever had.

You were right in associating Stewart Paton's name with this trip. It was only an indirect association, however. The previous summer Paton had occupied for the summer a beautiful Colonial house on West River, ^{one of the arms of Hollick Bay} and had talked much about the place. I remember that there was much talking between J. W.O. and Jacobs concerning Paton's riparian rights with regard to sea food, etc.

I have just run up Jacobs to see if he could remember the exact year. He thinks that it was 1900 but is not sure. My recollection is that the trip was made during my tenure as Resident, which was from ^{OCT 1,} 1898, to Oct 1, 1901. You joined Jacobs and me in Nov. or Dec. 1901 and I am quite sure that it was before that. It is possible that the date may be at the head of the account written by W.O. in his copy of Burton's Anatomy of M., and Lady O. might be able to

get it for you if you were to write her

I think it was on this trip that the Chief first met Mabel
 Tremaine (Mrs R. B.). I think she was taken ill while we were stopping
 at the hotel and that W. O. was called in by the Post doctor who
 had her in charge.

Despite Mabel's statement things have not quieted down here. There
 is not much on the surface but the Trustees have heard the other
 side and I wouldn't be surprised if they assert themselves in
 the no distant future. There is great dissatisfaction among many of
 them, especially on the part of Brent Kaysen, President of the Board of
 University Trustees. Barker's "elevation" to the position of Emeritus Prof.
 was not half matters either.

Best wishes in sending love to Kate and the kiddies.

Ever yours

T. B. Fletcher