

Interesting College Life of the Great Satan's Henchman Robeson

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himself a man. Before he had graduated from Rutgers, he had done both.

Eleven or twelve years ago found him reading "Othello," in a class in Shakespeare like every other student. He was writing down in his notebook that the source of the play was a collection of short stories by an Italian named Cinthio; that Othello's tragedy is powerful and uplifting through its passion of grief and love; that Othello is a man simply and grandly built who wins recognition with spontaneous ease; who knows his strength but is not arrogant; and

who has magic in his speech and a force of personality which masters the prejudices of exclusive Venice.

We said that Robey read "Othello" like every other student. Perhaps it, that we have misconceived him.

The truth is that no one thought of his dramatic possibilities in those days. If there were any dreams of the possibility of his playing Othello, they were all carefully guarded in his own mind. Some of his friends thought he'd turn to law; a few urged him to be an educator in his own race. The fellows told him that he ought to make good in the squared ring or at "pro" football. Some even called him a second Harry Wills.

The rumor that he was going to take up boxing after his graduation worried Robey because it wasn't true. "I can't see any credit to Rutgers in a prize-fighting legal failure," he said.

His own ambition was to become a good lawyer. Any yearnings he may have experienced toward the stage were effectively suppressed. Perhaps he thought that his father would disapprove of them. But his father could have no objection to his playing on the football team. So Robey decided to go out for football.

There had never been a black man on a Rutgers eleven. In fact, at that time, very few Negroes had appeared in the lineup of any varsity eleven of any white college. The fact did not worry Robey. On a crisp September morning in 1915, he came trotting over the gridiron toward George Foster Sanford's Scarlet warriors. The fellows looked him over as he reported to the coach.

"He's big," they thought. "Clumsy, probably, but still—"

Rumors had been coming to Sanford about the smilin' kid from Somerville. Most of the rumors said that if Sandy would watch out, the kid was going to make a wow of an end.

"He'll have his chance, all right," Sandy promised.

So Robey lined up with the scrub team against the varsity. The latter was composed of giants of men, all hardened and fast from six weeks in training camp. Every one of them was fighting for his position. Each knew that if any scrub showed promise, he might be awarded his own cherished berth.

So they began to concentrate their plays against the tall black boy. All the first-string men picked on the smilin' kid who had the presumption to think that he was a football player.

They cleaned him up, broke a couple of his ribs, sprained his arm, and smashed his nose. Then, perhaps for spite, but more probably by accident, a member of the varsity team stepped upon his outstretched hands as he lay prostrate on the field, taking away his fingernails by the roots.

That sickened Paul. He almost decided to give up football then and there. It showed him that he was not especially wanted by the team and that the boys meant business. They didn't believe that Robey was man enough to stand the gaff.

But they misjudged the smilin' kid from Somerville. He had come to Rutgers to fight against odds, to prove himself a man. Here was opportunity.

For a week he was forced to stand mournfully around the sidelines, watching the men play. His fingers were bandaged and his face cut up. No one asked him whether he was ready to go back in. They could see he wasn't ready.

One day his brother came up to him while he was standing on the sidelines. He looked at Paul and said, "What's the matter with you, kid? I didn't know you were yellow."

Robeson got so mad at that that he was all set to pitch into his brother. He controlled himself, however, and went to the coach, telling him that he wanted to play that afternoon against the team. "Nobody can call me 'yellow' and get away with it," he told Sanford.

"You're crazy, Robeson," Sandy said. "You're all smashed up. You'd better wait another week or two before you try again. This next is your last chance."

Robey begged. The coach looked into his eyes and face, and saw the grim determination written there. Finally he waved him onto the field.

Paul decided to make the team or die right out there on the field. Six varsity men had to be carried off, but Robey made it.

The coach said, "I guess I'll have to take you out, Robeson, before you ruin my team."

Robey's first break came soon after the season started. Budge Gar-

rett, the flashy Scarlet end, was disabled. Sanford ordered Robey in to take his place.

Paul was only a freshman, and at best had had only three weeks of practice. But the boys had taken him aside before the game when it was apparent that he might play, and had explained to him all about the history of the Rutgers line—regular football talk—about how nobody had ever broken through that line and now it was up to him. And all Robey kept saying was "Yes, sir!" his face flushed with excitement. But he was taking it all in, and nobody did break through that line while he was there to back it up.

After that first game, Robey was given a permanent berth at left end, a position which allowed him to be everywhere at once. His duties included opening up holes for backs on line plays, providing interference for end runs, going down the field under punts, taking forward passes, supporting the center of the line of defense, plugging up holes from one end of the line to the other, tackling here, there, and everywhere, and diagnosing.

"His greatest accomplishment," said one New York sports writer, "was that of accurately diagnosing—of sizing up plays and getting to the point of danger." He was so rarely at fault that he was at the center of practically every play, and therein lay his truest value, and therein was the truest measure of his all-round ability.

It didn't take Robey long to win his spurs with the football gang.

Always behind Paul there was the inspiring, wholesome influence of his father. The whole team knew and loved "Robey's father." He was spoken of as a fine, simple, benevolent, and beautiful character—a man whose beneficent influence was a heritage fitted to equip Paul for his struggle with life.

The grizzled little pastor came to see every game, which Paul played. Always he would keep his eyes on his son through every second of play. At home he would talk the game over, and point out Robey's faults, and help him to correct them.

The fellows on the team finally decided that he was a lucky stone. They liked to know that he was watching, and it gave them confidence to see him in the stands.

A varsity man who had played with Robey told me about the steak suppers to which the team used to be treated after every game. "Regular, old-fashioned banquet; they were," he said. "And always, between courses, just before we had coffee, Robey would sing. He was always willing to sing whenever you asked him, and he had a grand crooning bass. I think he worked himself into the gang most of all at this time. He used to sing his own little Negro songs, the college songs, and the popular tunes of the day. He came over to the fraternity often before games and sang."

Robey enjoyed the freedom of all the fraternity houses. He came and went without embarrassment or self-consciousness. He asked no favors because of his color, and granted none.

When Robey was a junior, the last game of the season was with Cupid Black's great team which boasted seven all-Americans. The crucial moment in the fracas came when Robey caught a forward pass with one foot well over the goal line and was stopped in his tracks.

Rutgers claimed a touchdown. The opponents stepped forward to dispute it. The Scarlet did not enter into an argument. That was the way Sandy had trained them.

Robey kept quiet, standing like a great bronze statue with one foot across the line and the pigskin in his arm. The Rutgers captain went up



sprained ankle?

Sloan's Liniment

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at the same time eyeing the beautiful girl who had entered and sat perched on the arm of her father's chair. "I don't think you know exactly who I am, young man, but the sooner you know, the better off you'll be."

"I certainly don't know who you are, and I care less, sir," retorted Theo, whose blood was racing at the insult. "I hold my position because I do my duty, and certainly it is my duty to protect the company by its compliance with the law."

"All right, sir, you might regret your attitude shortly, and it seems to me that the interests of the company would be better off to prevent its junkies from insulting prospective stockholders." Bolton's surer re-echoed the emphy Theo had aroused by his adherence to duty. The large

to the referee and asked whether Robey's touchdown would count or not.

"You had your foot over the line, just like you're standing now?" the referee inquired of Robey.

"Yes, sir," came the quick answer. "Then it's a touchdown," replied the referee in the same quarterback staccato.

There was little wonder that the tall dark boy was named, left end on Walter Camp's all-American team in the years 1917 and 1918. Camp called him "the greatest defensive end who ever trod the gridiron."

Robey played varsity football for four years, and was a star weight man besides, winning his letter on the track.

His father warned him not to forget his lessons at times when he was playing on the teams. "You mustn't forget your studies for your games, son," he stated. "You went to school to study, not to play. I'm glad that you can play, but you mustn't forget the real reason that you went to college."

Paul would grin and show his father his averages, which were usually above ninety-five per cent, and his father would be delighted. At the end of his junior year, Paul was elected into Phi Beta Kappa, national honorary scholastic fraternity, because of the excellence of his grades. This was an exceptional honor, as few are admitted before their senior year, and the majority of students are never admitted into the society at all.

The crowning achievement of Paul's college career, however, was his commencement oration. One of the commencement speakers had been taken suddenly ill a week before the end of the school year. The president, Dr. Demarest, went into conference with

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DUMB A LA 1931

Maids in the olden days may have been dumb, but few could equal the modern domestic who failed to remove a nest of cobwebs because she thought it had something to do with the radio.

diamond ring and stick-pin he wore flashed in ominous silence as he turned toward Clarice with admiring eyes.

Clarice Oliver never appeared more attractive. She was garbed in a smart street suit which enhanced the curves of her splendid figure. Her lemon colored skin was rouged to perfection, and a chick black hat sat jauntily on one side of her head. Her plucked eyebrows and full red lips proclaimed her of a willful, passionate temperament, and she swung her neatly shod foot in a manner that revealed her shapely leg.

Resenting Bolton's words and actions, Theo stepped to his side, but controlled his voice. "If you don't retract that statement, sir, I'll quickly prove to you that I am the best man you ever faced."

"I'll retract the statement simply because a very lovely lady has just come in, and any gentleman would do so under the circumstances. However, I'll see you later."

"Now, gentlemen, I am sorry for this little misunderstanding. I am sure Mr. Bolton, that Mr. Ashton's attitude was in no wise personal. But I want you to meet my daughter, Mr. Bolton, this is Miss Oliver, and Clarice, this is Mr. Terry." Oliver introduced.

Theo walked from the office, but noticed Clarice's gracious acknowledgement of the introduction, and

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