



William Adams

WILLIAM ADAMS, 93, was born in slavery, with no opportunity for an education, except three months in a public school. He has taught himself to read and to write. His lifelong ambition has been to become master of the supernatural powers which he believes to exist. He is now well-known among Southwestern Negroes for his faith in the occult.

"Yous want to know and talk about de power de people tells you I has. Well, sit down here, right there in dat chair, befo' we'uns starts. I gits some ice water and den we'uns can discuss de subject. I wants to 'splain it clearly, so yous can understand.

"I's born a slave, 93 years ago, so of course I 'members de war period. Like all de other slaves I has no chance for edumacation. Three months am de total time I's spent going to school. I taught myself to read and write. I's anxious to larn to read so I could study and find out about many things. Dat, I has done.

"There am lots of folks, and edumacated ones, too, what says we'uns believes in superstition. Well, its 'cause dey don't understand. 'Member de Lawd, in some of His ways, can be mysterious. De Bible says so. There am some things de Lawd wants all folks to know, some things jus' de chosen few to know, and some things no one should know. Now, jus' 'cause yous don't know 'bout some of de Lawd's laws, 'taint superstition if some other person understands and believes in sich.

"There is some born to sing, some born to preach, and some born to know de signs. There is some born under de power of de devil[Pg 5] and have de power to put injury and misery on people, and some born

under de power of de Lawd for to do good and overcome de evil power. Now, dat produces two forces, like fire and water. De evil forces starts de fire and I has de water force to put de fire out.

"How I larnt sich? Well, I's done larn it. It come to me. When de Lawd gives sich power to a person, it jus' comes to 'em. It am 40 years ago now when I's fust fully realize' dat I has de power. However, I's allus int'rested in de workin's of de signs. When I's a little piccaninny, my mammy and other folks used to talk about de signs. I hears dem talk about what happens to folks 'cause a spell was put on 'em. De old folks in dem days knows more about de signs dat de Lawd uses to reveal His laws den de folks of today. It am also true of de cullud folks in Africa, dey native land. Some of de folks laughs at their beliefs and says it am superstition, but it am knowin' how de Lawd reveals His laws.

"Now, let me tell yous of something I's seen. What am seen, can't be doubted. It happens when I's a young man and befo' I's realize' dat I's one dat am chosen for to show de power. A mule had cut his leg so bad dat him am bleedin' to death and dey couldn't stop it. An old cullud man live near there dat dey turns to. He comes over and passes his hand over de cut. Befo' long de bleedin' stop and dat's de power of de Lawd workin' through dat nigger, dat's all it am.

"I knows about a woman dat had lost her mind. De doctor say it was caused from a tumor in de head. Dey took an ex-ray picture, but dere's no tumor. Dey gives up and says its a peculiar case. Dat woman was took to one with de power of de good spirit and he say its a peculiar case for dem dat don't understand. Dis am a case of de evil spell. Two days after, de [Pg 6] woman have her mind back.

"Dey's lots of dose kind of cases de ord'nary person never hear about. Yous hear of de case de doctors can't understand, nor will dey 'spond to treatment. Dat am 'cause of de evil spell dat am on de persons.

"'Bout special persons bein' chosen for to show de power, read yous Bible. It says in de book of Mark, third chapter, 'and He ordained twelve, dat dey should be with Him, dat He might send them forth to preach and to have de power to heal de sick and to cast out devils.' If it wasn't no evil in people, why does de Lawd say, 'cast out sich?' And in de fifth chapter of James, it further say, 'If any am sick, let him call de elders. Let dem pray over him. De prayers of faith shall save him.' There 'tis again, Faith, dat am what counts.

"When I tells dat I seen many persons given up to die, and den a man with de power comes and saves sich person, den its not for people to say it am superstition to believe in de power.

"Don't forgit—de agents of de devil have de power of evil. Dey can put misery of every kind on people. Dey can make trouble with de work and with de business, with de fam'ly and with de health. So folks mus' be on de watch all de time. Folks has business trouble 'cause de evil power have control of 'em. Dey has de evil power cast out and save de business. There am a man in Waco dat come to see me 'bout dat. He say to me everything he try to do in de las' six months turned out wrong. It starts with him losin' his pocketbook with \$50.00 in it. He buys a carload of hay and it catch fire and he los' all of it. He spends [Pg 7] \$200.00 advertisin' de three-day sale and it begin to rain, so he los' money. It sho' am de evil power.

"'Well,' he say, 'Dat am de way it go, so I comes to you.'

"I says to him, 'Its de evil power dat have you control and we'uns shall cause it to be cast out.' Its done and he has no more trouble.

"You wants to know if persons with de power for good can be successful in castin' out devils in all cases? Well, I answers dat, yes and no. Dey can in every case if de affected person have de faith. If de party not have enough faith, den it am a failure.

"Wearin' de coin for protection 'gainst de evil power? Dat am simple. Lots of folks wears sich and dey uses mixtures dat am sprinkled in de house, and sich. Dat am a question of faith. If dey has de true faith in sich, it works. Otherwise, it won't.

"Some folks won't think for a minute of goin' without lodestone or de salt and pepper mixture in de little sack, tied round dey neck. Some wears de silver coin tied round dey neck. All sich am for to keep away de effect of de evil power. When one have de faith in sich and dey acc'dently lose de charm, dey sho' am miserable.

"An old darky dat has faith in lodestone for de charm told me de 'sperience he has in Atlanta once. He carryin' de hod and de fust thing he does am drop some brick on he foot. De next thing, he foot slip as him starts up de ladder and him and de bricks drap to de ground. It am lucky for him it wasn't far. Jus' a sprain ankle and de boss sends him home for de day. He am 'cited and gits on de street car and when de conductor call for de fare, Rufus reaches for he money[Pg 8] but he los' it or fergits it at home. De conductor say he let him pay nex' time and asks where he live. Rufus tells him and he say, 'Why, nigger, you is on de wrong car.' Dat cause Rufus to walk further with de lame foot dan if he started walkin' in de fust place. He thinks there mus' be something wrong with he charm, and he look for it and it gone! Sho' 'nough, it am los'. He think, 'Here I sits all day, and I won't make another move till I gits de lodestone. When de chillen comes from school I sends dem to de drugstore for some of de stone and gits fixed.'

"Now, now, I's been waitin' for dat one 'bout de black cat crossin' de road, and, sho' 'nough, it come. Let me ask you one. How many people can yous find dat likes to have de black cat cross in front of 'em? Dat's right, no one likes dat. Let dis old cullud person inform yous dat it am sho' de bad luck sign. It is sign of bad luck ahead, so turn back. Stop what yous doin'.

"I's tellin' yous of two of many cases of failure to took warnin' from de black cat. I knows a man call' Miller. His wife and him am takin' an auto ride and de black cat cross de road and he cussed a little and goes on. Den it's not long till he turns de corner and his wife falls out of de car durin' de turn. When he goes back and picks her up, she am dead.

"Another fellow, call' Brown, was a-ridin' hossback and a black cat cross de path, but he drives on. Well, its not long till him hoss stumble and throw him off. De fall breaks his leg, so take a warnin' — don't overlook de black cat. Dat am a warnin'. [Pg 9]
