OCR ภาษาไทย

66 THE THREAD THAT RUNS SO TRUE  
  
invest this money in the company. I wouldn’t spend it for an  
automobile too big to make the short turns in a narrow road.  
  
I had made up my mind what I wanted to do the night I  
slept in a church house on my way home. A storm was coming  
up and I was walking along the highway. The lightning flashed  
and the thunder growled across the low, thin-bellied dark  
clouds. Darkness came suddenly. Several homes tured me down  
when I asked if I could spend the night. Then I walked and  
walked through the rain. But in a lightning flash I discovered  
the church house. The door was unlocked. I went inside and the  
lightning flashed until I could see the organ was covered. I took  
the cover from the organ and made myself a bed. While I lay  
on a seat, wrapped in the organ cover, watching the lightning  
flash around this old vine-covered church, I tried to come to  
some definite conclusions about my future. One of my deci-  
sions—one that was definite—was that I wouldn’t teach school.  
I came to the final conclusion that I would return to the Auck-  
land Steel Mills where a job was waiting for me. For America  
was on the boom, and the opportunities for a young ambitious  
man willing to work and to strive were unlimited. I knew this  
by experience.  
  
T had hitchhiked to a small university I’d never heard of  
before, with twenty-nine dollars and thirty cents in my pocket,  
after I had been turned down by two colleges. I thought there  
was someplace that would take me. The college that Abraham  
Lincoln had asked General Howard to establish for “his people”  
accepted me. oo  
  
I had worked my way through college. I had bought my  
books, clothes, paid my tuition, room rent and board on the  
twenty cents an hour that I earned. I had done all sorts of work  
  
at Lincoln Memorial. I had helped dig and lay water lines .  
  
from the side of one mountain and across another; I had cleaned  
manholes and unstopped sewers, had mown grass over every  
foot of the spacious campus many times, had worked on the  
\_ farm and at the dairy barn. I had washed and dried dishes,  
delivered mail, and for one year dried the pots and pans. I  
had my classes arranged so I could work one half of each day.  
And I had worked on the Bull Gang at the limestone quarry,  
  
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where we blasted giant limestone rocks from beneath the roots  
of its cedar groves in Powell’s Valley, broke them with sledge  
hammers (I was an expert with a sledge hammer for I had  
been a striker in the blacksmith-shop at the Auckland Steel  
Mills), then crushed them into slag for the Tennessee Highway  
Department. There was scarcely any kind of work at Lincoln  
Memorial I hadn’t done. There wasn’t any kind of work there  
I couldn’t do. And all the outside financial help I had ever  
received were the two one-dollar bills my mother had sent to  
me. I had left Lincoln Memorial, hitchhiking home, with ten  
dollars in my pocket. I owed the school one hundred dollars. I  
had made better than B average.  
  
Now I was home, surrounded by my people. There was  
rejoicing because I’d finished college. They were proud of me.  
At this time, Greenwood County with an approximate popula-  
tion of twenty-three thousand inhabitants, had less than a half-  
dozen native-born college graduates. Superintendent Larry An-  
derson had done some college work but he didn’t have his  
degree. : .  
  
“Mom, I’ve made up my mind to go back to the Auckland  
Steel Mills,” I said. “I love to teach school. But remember my  
salary at Lonesome Valley?” ;  
  
“Son, with all your education,” my father said, “you can  
get in on the ground floor for something good in Greenwood  
County. You'll make more money now since you're a college  
graduate. Go see Larry about the job he’s holdin’ for you!”  
  
“Yes, go see him at once, Jesse,” Mom approved. “You  
know I don’t want you to go back to the steel mills!”  
  
“First of my people since they left Wytheville, Virginia,  
to get a college education,” my father said. “They left Wythe-  
ville before the Civil War. I don’t know what there was among  
my people before then.”  
  
“First college graduate among my people,” Mom said  
proudly. “And I want you to do what my grandfather, Preston  
Hylton, did. I want you to teach school. I want you to teach  
school,” she repeated. “I’m proud of you, Jesse. You’re goin’  
to amount to something. They'll know you all over this county  
  
before long. Go see Larry Anderson at once. Go tomorrow!”  
  
  
  
by Uncle Engineer