



# A LITTLE LIGHT ALONG THE WAY Random THOUGHTS BY NAHUM DANIEL BRASCHER

**ROBERT SENGSTACKE ABBOTT GROWS WITH TRAN-  
SITION.** To have known him cordially, I regard as one  
of life's great privileges. To have talked with him infor-  
mally on numerous occasions across the years leaves mem-  
ories I shall ever cherish.

The Chicago Defender first came  
to the office of The Cleveland Journal  
in Cleveland, Ohio, during 1905.  
I was editor of that Ohio publica-  
tion. I have made it a definite point  
during my newspaper career to al-  
ways read all exchanges, large and  
small. The six column, four page  
Defender had a tone of a spirit from  
the beginning that was different.  
The eight page Chicago Conservator,  
clean cut and clean appearing,  
founded by F. L. Barnett, father of  
Albert Barnett, was then oftenest  
spoken of in Chicago. Then there  
was the Turner Illinois Idea, and the  
Taylor Broadaxe. In a few years  
The Chicago Defender passed all  
others in this city, and in time sur-  
passed all others in America.

The Indianapolis Freeman and  
the New York Age with the dimin-  
ishing Colored American of Wash-  
ington, founded by E. E. Cooper—  
also founder of The Indianapolis  
Freeman, later going to the Knox  
family—were most talked of na-  
tional in the early days of the twen-  
tieth century.

Charles W. Chestnutt, the author,  
asked me in Cleveland what I  
hoped to do in life. I said, twenty-  
one: "I wish to be a journalist." Mr.  
Chestnutt laughed good naturedly  
and replied: "It's a good field, but  
there's no money in it." Robert S.  
Abbott was the pioneer in showing  
the world there IS money in your  
journalism.

### Met Abbott In Public

My first meeting with Mr. Abbott  
was in a Chicago gathering while I  
yet resided in Cleveland. He was in  
tuxedo, and I went up to him and  
made myself known. Mr. Abbott  
was always most gracious in meet-  
ing people. I remember his cordial  
manner that night. The last time I  
saw Mr. Abbott was in his room at  
his home, late in the afternoon, Sat-  
urday, December 2, 1939. More of  
this later.

All that is being said of Mr. Ab-  
bott at this time deals, for the most  
part with his rise and pre-eminence  
success; with his great contribution  
to the progress of our America, with  
employment of men and women, and  
the mighty institution he leaves to  
continue the DEFENDING AND IN-  
SPIRATIONAL service to all of  
us. That Robert Abbott raised the  
standard of our newspapers from  
the small sheet to the respected  
journals, none can deny. He  
pioneered in channels that others  
followed.

Hence, the time is passed when  
talented young men and women  
hesitate to choose newspaper work  
as a profession. Today in America  
some of the best prepared men and  
women in our country are in the  
field; men who formerly looked  
with condescension on our field are

eager to take part in production. If  
we do not ask them, they ask us.

### Remarkable Co-incidence

That indeed was a remarkable co-  
incidence; the Thursday morning  
passing of Mr. Abbott and on the  
same morning the open meeting of  
a nation-wide gathering of Negro  
Publishers under the initiative and  
general direction of Mr. Abbott's  
nephew, John H. Sengstacke, now  
general manager of The Chicago  
Defender. The late publisher said  
to me once, riding in his car, when  
John was a Hampton student: "This  
is my nephew, a student in Hamp-  
ton; I am preparing him to some  
day take over The Defender."

The first session adjourned out of  
respect to Mr. Abbott. A later  
meeting heard Arnett Murphy of  
the Afro-American—whose father  
founded that publication, and whom  
I knew well—paid tribute to Mr.  
Abbott and Mr. Sengstacke, and  
wished for the latter godspeed.

Chester Franklin, of the Kansas  
City Call said: "This is the greatest  
gathering of Negro publishers I have  
ever seen." Why were they in Chi-  
cago? To bring closer relationships  
between all our newspapers. To  
get over to the National Advertiser's  
of America that our newspapers  
with a field of 15,000,000 people  
must get more advertising copy for  
the respective and collective news-  
papers that represent an annual  
turnover of more than \$2,000,000,000  
—two billion dollars per year! Is  
that not a worthy motive at a  
worthy time? The answer is "yes,"  
by fifteen millions of us—and we  
say it long and loud.

With more and generous adver-  
tising we can make the national—  
and local—advertisers more money,  
and in consequence, our newspapers  
can go on to higher standards, which

we VERY MUST in this changing  
national and international periods  
of economic development.

**WE MUST STAND UP; AND WE  
MUST BE HEARD**—and we must  
have co-operation all along the line,  
**AMERICA!**

### Dr. Bradley Visits

The last time I saw the "Boss"—  
I always fondly called him that and  
he liked it—(albeit I was never on  
the Defender payroll as such,  
though always working in harmony  
with its purposes, even when editor-  
in-chief of The Associated Negro  
Press)—the last time was that De-  
cember Saturday. Arrangements  
had been made through his personal  
secretary, Miss Westbrooks, and  
Mrs. Abbott, to visit the publisher's  
sick room with Dr. Preston Bradley,  
of the Peoples Church, and his se-  
cretary, Mrs. May Harrison.

Mr. Abbott was cheerful and cor-  
dial. Dr. Bradley and Mr. Abbott  
were pleasant friends. Mr. Abbott  
told how he had been cheered by  
the great liberal preacher's radio  
services; and how, at last, he could  
not listen, but was told what took  
place by Mrs. Abbott.

The "Boss" was always witty  
when we would have these informal  
meets. He and Dr. Bradley talked  
for 15 minutes. He asked us to visit  
his den, and we each said a cheerful  
"Good-bye." Abbott lives on!