



# The NEW BERN

# MIRROR

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Yesterday was when strange things were happening at the Centenary Methodist parsonage here. Moses, a pet cat, had shown signs of turning Baptist, and there didn't seem to be much that the Rev. John A. Russell and his family could do about it.

Not that the good parson was particularly disturbed. His reputation for tolerance was exceeded only by his knack for getting churches built, while holding earlier pastorates at Roxboro, Four Oaks, Snow Hill, Durham and Wilson.

While at Dunn he didn't get a new church erected, but the old one was thoroughly done over. At Hamlet the church debt was paid off and the mortgage burned, and at Centenary he promoted a new educational building.

But let's leave the subject of the Rev. Mr. Russell, and get back to Moses. Having filled up and filled out on choice Methodist vittles, the carefree cat was determined to hibernate in the parsonage's upstairs bath tub.

Freely flowing faucets fascinated the fatted feline, and a fish couldn't have been happier as long as there was enough water to tide him over. But for the minister's 12 year old granddaughter, Miriam Duncan, a switch of denominations would have already occurred. Moses adored her.

Long before the cat became a star boarder at the parsonage, Miriam had her heart set on acquiring a kitten. The rest of the family took a dim view when her desire was announced, but the hankering persisted.

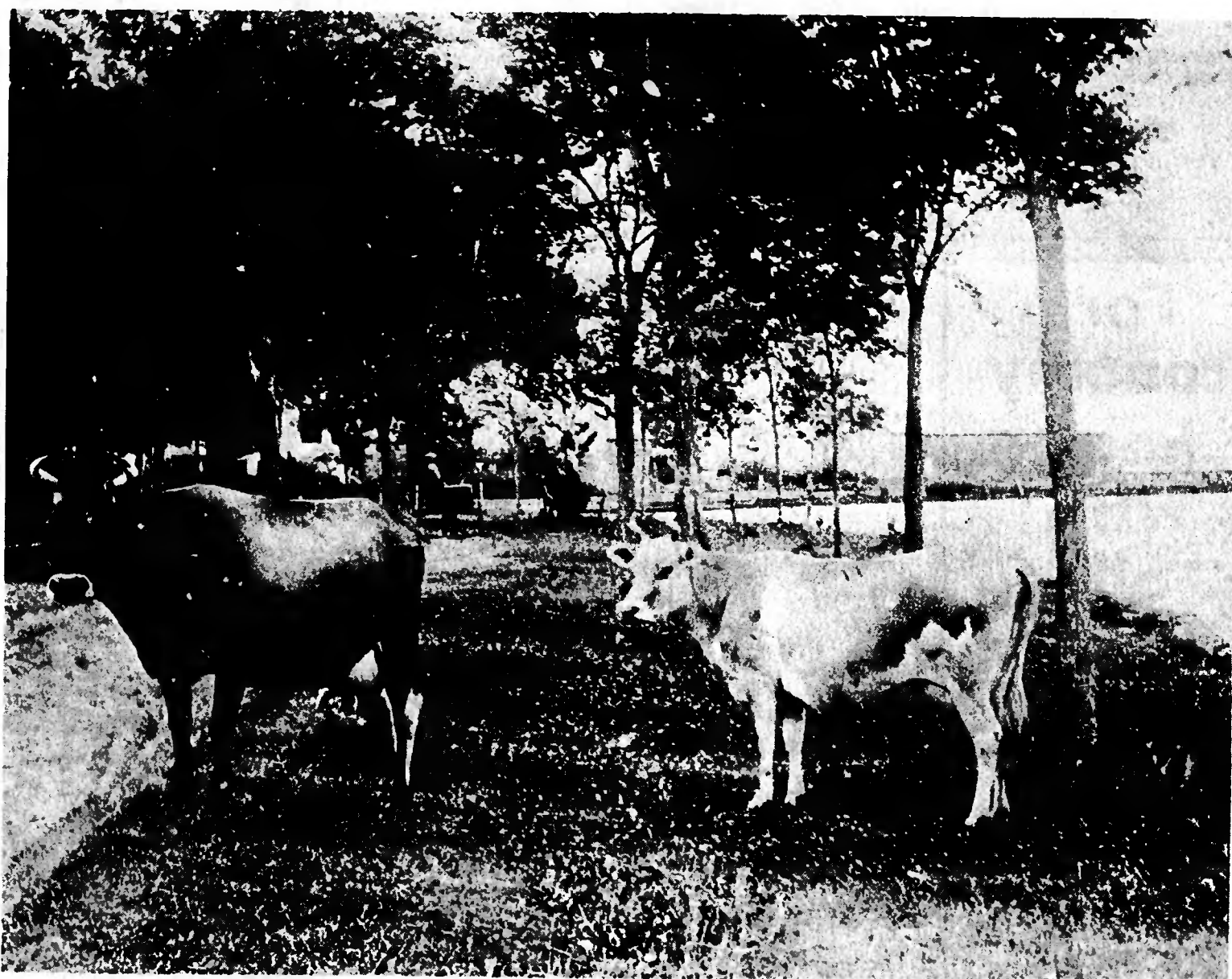
Fate stepped in, and brought things to a climax. One day Miriam accompanied her grandfather when he took the family laundry to a wash woman who lived across Trent River, in James City. There, in bull rushes near the little house, she found the kitten she had dreamed about and begged for.

In the Bible, another Miriam found a Moses in bull rushes too, so when the Miriam in our story carted her cat home to the parsonage, it was unanimously agreed that just one name would fit him.

Moses was purr-fectly happy in his new surroundings. If he disliked being a Methodist, he certainly didn't make an issue of it. He grew like a weed in a flower garden, and soon took charge of the household.

The following December another cat, a scrawny stray, became acquainted with Moses, while the two were meandering in neighborhood backyards. Moses invited the stranger to come live at the parsonage, and it looked as if another Methodist had been added to Centenary's roster of 1,500 members.

Since there was no mistaking the close friendship between Moses and the newcomer, it was decided to name him Joshua. Unlike Moses, Joshua quickly got fed up with living in a Methodist parsonage. When last seen he was headed for St. Paul's Catholic rectory across



New Bern's East Front Street At The Turn Of The Century.

—Photos From Albert D. Brooks Collection.