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## CHAPTER XLVI.

*The Three Spiritual Leaders of the American Negro—President William S. Scarborough of Wilberforce University, the Dean of Negro Scholars; Rev. Francis J. Grimke, D.D., of Washington, D. C., the Dean of Negro Preachers and Theologians, and Hon. Archibald H. Grimke, the Dean of Negro Orators and Writers.*

Now we come to three men whose influence upon the intellectual and moral life of the American Negro during the past thirty years has been so powerful that they have the prestige and standing that comes from long and glorious achievement. In 1887, when Rev. William J. Simmons wrote his "Men of Mark," President Scarborough was only thirty-three and Doctor Grimke only thirty-seven, yet President Scarborough had written his "First Lesson in Greek," "The Birds of Aristophanes," and "The Thematic Vowel in the Greek Verb," and Dr. Grimke had made an enviable reputation as a preacher and theologian. Their careers, then published in "The Men of Mark," attracted considerable attention. That was twenty-six years ago. In 1894, at the age of forty-five, Hon. Archibald H. Grimke was appointed United States Minister to San Domingo and became a national figure. Since then, each of the three gentlemen has not only sustained the reputation won and the prestige and standing acquired at that early age, but has added to it.

These gentlemen not only have the rich, intellectual equipment which has enabled them to face critical and cultured white audiences, challenging admiration, but the high character which commands universal respect and esteem, so that we can regard them as the three deans of Negro scholarship and theology. Now, to briefly recapitulate the careers of these three gentlemen.

PRESIDENT WILLIAM SANDERS SCARBOROUGH, M.A., LL.D., PH.D.,  
THE DEAN OF AMERICAN SCHOLARS.

In this age, when the industrial training of the Negro has the right of way, we are tempted to ignore the value of the work of

the intellectual pioneers of the colored race. But during the half century in which the slavery question was dominant in American politics and during the first quarter of a century after the emancipation of the Negro, the intellectual and moral capacity of the Negro was the bone of contention.

Calhoun eloquently voiced this sentiment when he said that if anyone could show him a Negro who could master a Greek grammar, conjugate a Greek verb and solve the problem of Greek roots, he would regard him as a man. As neither he nor the world knew of the achievements of the Negro in other lands, he did not know and the world did not know that one Negro, Juan Latino, was a professor in the chair of grammar in the University of Granada in the sixteenth century, that Amo had written two books on philosophy, and Capitein and Francis Williams elegies in Latin, a century before Calhoun made that remarkable statement. Consequently we can imagine the surprise which burst upon an astonished world when the news was flashed over the wires in 1881, eighteen years after the Emancipation Proclamation was signed, that a Negro professor, not thirty years of age, had written a book entitled "First Lessons in Greek." He sent a copy of his book to John F. Slater of Norwich, Conn., who gave a million dollars to educate the colored race, and received the following reply:

NORWICH, CONNECTICUT, June 28, 1882.

PROFESSOR WILLIAM S. SCARBOROUGH.

*Dear Sir:*—Your book, entitled "First Lessons in Greek," has been duly received by me. If I may hope that what I have tried to do for the promulgation of education among your race should result in any more such publications, I shall feel that my efforts have been amply rewarded.

Very truly yours,

JOHN F. SLATER.

Twenty-five years ago, when I was in my first year in the Hillhouse High School of New Haven, Conn., the names of four colored men were ringing over the country as exponents of the capacity of the colored race for intellectual and practical achievements. Toussaint L'Ouverture, the Haytien soldier and statesman; Blyden, the Arabic scholar and authority upon

FOOT NOTE.—Professor Chamberlain says that Latino was professor in the University of Seville.

Mohammedanism; Frederick Douglass, the orator, and Professor Scarborough, the Greek scholar.

It has been the fortune of some colored men like Bridgetower, the English violinist, Samuel Ringo Ward and R. Brown Elliott, the orators, to rise to the height of fame, then gradually drop out of sight and die in comparative obscurity. But not so with President Scarborough. He followed up his first brilliant achievement with other glorious achievements. He wrote another Greek book, read papers upon classical subjects before learned societies; and so impressed the world of scholarship by his intellectual ability, his character as a man, his dignified manners and genial personality, that he was admitted to the membership of nearly a dozen learned societies.

Meanwhile he was impressing his worth as a man and scholar upon Wilberforce University, until he was finally elected president. And as president, he has lifted the intellectual and moral tone of the university, successfully managed its finances, and ably represented it at the Ecumenical Conference in Edinburgh and the Universal Race Congress in London.

The *African Times and Orient Review* of August, 1912, contained the following account of President Scarborough's life:

William Sanders Scarborough, president of Wilberforce University, Wilberforce, Ohio, U. S. A., was born February 16, 1854, in Macon, Bibb County, Ga. He received his early education in his native city before and during the Civil War. In 1869, he entered Atlanta University, where he spent two years in preparation for Yale University, but entered Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio, instead, in 1871, and was graduated from the Department of Philosophy and the Arts with the degree of A.B. in 1875. Later he received from his alma mater the degree of M.A. He has since been honored by various colleges with the degrees of Ph.D. and LL.D. He spent a part of the year following graduation from Oberlin Theological Seminary in special study of the Semitic languages and Hellenistic Greek.

In 1877 he was elected head of the classical department in Wilberforce University. In 1881 he published through A. S. Barnes & Co., a Greek text book—"First Lessons in Greek"—the first and only Greek book ever written by a Negro. This book was widely used by both white and colored schools of the country, especially in the North. He has also written a treatise entitled "The Birds of Aristophanes—a Theory of Interpretation," aside from numerous tracts and pamphlets, covering a variety of subjects, classical, archæological, sociological and racial. He has written many papers for various societies to which he belongs, especially the Philological

Society. In 1891 he was transferred to the chair of Hellenistic Greek in Payne Theological Seminary of Wilberforce University upon the opening of this school. In 1897 he was again reelected as professor of Latin and Greek in the university, and was made vice president of the same. In 1908 he was elected president of Wilberforce University, a position which he now holds.

In 1881 he married Sarah C. Bierce, a lady of high literary attainments, and a writer for many magazines.

President Scarborough has long been a contributor to the press in his country, including the leading magazines. He has been for many years the exegetical editor of the A. M. E. Church Sunday School publications. He is a member of a number of learned societies: American Philological, American Dialect, American Social Science, Archæological Institute of America, American Spelling Reform, American Folk-lore, American Modern Language, American Political and Social Science, the Egyptian Exploration Fund Association, National Geographical Society, American Negro Academy, of which he is first vice president. He has several times been one of the invited orators at Lincoln League Banquet of the State of Ohio. At a conference of the Negro leaders in Columbus, Ohio, he was elected president of the Afro-American State League designed to further the interests of the Negro throughout the country. He was appointed by the governor of Ohio a delegate to the National Conference in St. Louis in the interests of Negro education. He is the only Negro representative on the board of the Lincoln Memorial Association of Ohio, which is presided over by the governor.

He has now in press a volume of his works on the race question. He was a delegate to the Ecumenical Methodist Conference held in London in 1901, representing the African Methodist Episcopal Church, and was in attendance upon the Universal Race Congress in London representing Wilberforce University, of which he is president.

ADDRESS OF DR. W. S. SCARBOROUGH AT THE UNVEILING OF THE  
MONUMENT TO DUNBAR, DAYTON, OHIO, JUNE 26, 1909.

To-day we are gathered here for an unusual purpose. It is not that a memorial to a great citizen is an extraordinary occurrence, for this is almost a daily happening. But it is a remarkable thing that such a gathering should be in memory of a man not only of humble birth, but one of the darker race—one with a sable skin, the badge of the servitude and oppression that have been the Negro's lot for so many years.

But to-day, at this hour, race and color are ignored, and this beautiful city, the Gem City of Ohio, is proud to honor its famous son who has helped to give it fame—to honor him because of his worth, his genius, his work.

The old adage that a prophet is not without honor save in his own country is another instance of the falsity of so many popular sayings; for in this beautiful city, where Paul Laurence Dunbar was reared, where

he made his home and gathered to himself friends, here he is most highly honored, and in this memorial to-day we not only do honor to an individual man of color who has lived and wrought so well as to deserve recognition by his fellows, but we do honor to an entire race, and to mankind regardless of race.

As I consider this splendid tribute to the Negro poet, as I dwell upon the meaning of such an expression of appreciation of his greatness, my heart swells with pride and gratitude that in this day and generation such a thing is possible. And I am more and more convinced that, after all, the possibilities of any race are to be finally determined by the heights reached by its men of intellect, of brain, of genius—men of power who are able to touch the hearts and stir the pulses of the world by their marvelous ability for delineation by pen, brush, or chisel—men who rise in the realm of the fine arts and command the world to listen, to gaze, to admire, to respect, to praise their efforts.

It shows us that, after all, greatness is not a matter of race, color, or condition, and that it will win its way forward and upward. These are the ones who will raise a people to higher planes. These are the ones who will give this same people a place among the nations of the earth. These are the ones that we especially praise and honor.

But the Negro race has had such men scattered throughout its history—men of color who have distinguished themselves. We do not need to go back to the centuries when Bagay, or Cugoano, or Vassa lived for such material to declare the Negro's ability. The last century has given the world a proud list from which we may draw examples of Negro greatness in the higher walks of life.

I recall with pleasure the sight of a bronze figure in the Place Malesherbes in Paris which was the work of the great artist and sculptor Doré. It is that of Alexander Dumas's père, France's great Negro historical romancer, who has enchanted the world with his story-telling genius.

Dumas the father and Dumas the son have both carved niches for the race where their names are imperishably written, and France is proud to honor them.

Eighteen years ago Russia did honor to another Negro as we are honoring Dunbar to-day. Then the statue of Alexander Pushkin, acknowledged as Russia's greatest poet, was unveiled in Moscow to an admiring people who celebrated thus the literary achievements of the Negro "poet of the Caucasus." Pushkin's name is immortal in Russian hearts.

Down the list we may come to touch Phyllis Wheatley, whose powers drew a tribute from George Washington; to Banneker, who astounded the world with his scientific astronomical calculations—down to the present, where the names cluster more thickly, because of honors won—Edmonia Lewis, who from Rome made her fame as a sculptress; and Henry Tanner, whose fame as an artist has reached the coveted recognition of the French government. These, with Douglass and Washington and a host of

others, have proved to the world that the souls of black folks differ not from other souls in high impulses, aspirations, and even genius.

Russia and France are proud of their sable writers, each of whom stamped his own personality upon the literature of his nation, and why should not America possess the same pride?