

V.

COLORED MEN AS PROFESSORS IN COLORED INSTITUTIONS.

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The institutions to which I especially refer under the above head are those founded for the benefit of the colored race, but which have been mainly or exclusively under the control and direction of our white friends. These may be divided into three classes; First, those in which colored men are represented neither in the faculty nor the Trustee Board. Second, those in which they are represented in both. Third, those in which they are represented in one or the other alone. I take it for granted, in entering upon this discussion, that the object in founding these institutions was to secure the largest and best results to the black race. As such they are helpful in two particulars; (1) By affording opportunities of instruction to colored men and women; thus increasing the general intelligence, and swelling the number of those who are to go forth to labor among the masses; (2) by affording opportunities for colored men to exercise their gifts as instructors in the higher departments of learning,—which has an important bearing upon the progress of the race; First, in that it affords time and leisure to members of the race for a broader, deeper culture, and for a larger self-development. In this way these institutions will become not only the soil in which will be grown the men and women who are to labor among the masses, but in which an exceptional scholarship will be fostered, where the men who are to take rank among the great scholars of the land will be grown. Second, in that it accustoms the students to see men of their own race in high and responsible positions, the effect of which is to foster race pride and to engender a feeling of mutual respect. Unfortunately, as a race, we are sadly deficient in this element of respect for each other,—due largely to the influence of slavery. There is no better place in which to educate our people out of this than in these institutions, where are gathered those who are to become its leaders. And there is no better way of effecting this than by the presence of able representatives of their own race as instructors. As many of these schools are at present conducted this feeling is encouraged rather than discouraged. The intellects of our young people are being educated at the expense of their manhood. In the class-room they see only white professors. Vacancies occur, but they are filled only by white men; the effect of which is unconsciously to lead

them to associate these places and the idea of fitness for them only with white men. I was especially impressed with this fact, some time ago, in a conversation which I had with some of the students of one of these institutions, where colored men are represented neither in the faculty nor the Trustee Board. I took the opportunity of suggesting to them that, in my judgment, the time had come for a change, but was surprised, and I confess somewhat annoyed, to find that they were not prepared for such a step,—although this was just what was to be expected in view of their environments. In the third place, the employment of colored professors is helpful in its stimulating effect upon the students in a most laudable direction. Let our colored young men who are being educated in these institutions see colored men filling professorships: let them understand that these positions are open to them, as soon as they are fitted for them, and the effect is to stir their ambition, to give a new direction to their thoughts, to throw open before them the illimitable fields of scholarship and research. Under such incentives we may expect to find the development of scholarly taste, scholarly aspirations, and scholarly attainments. This incentive to high scholarship colored institutions may afford and should afford to the representatives of that race for the benefit of which they were founded. Lastly, the employment of colored professors, would have a beneficial effect upon an adverse public sentiment. Senator Hoar, in a letter commending Prof. Wiley Lane in connection with the application for the professorship of Greek in Howard University, said, among other things: "I think the interest of the colored race will be much promoted as its members take places of honor requiring capacity in other pursuits than that of politics." Yes, the interest of the colored race will be much promoted as colored men of ability come to the front, as they are placed in high and responsible positions where they can have the opportunity of demonstrating their capacity from an eminence, from which they can be more widely seen and known. This is a fact which it would be well for our white friends who have the management and control of colored institutions to remember. In confining their professorships to white men, in shutting their doors against colored men, they are losing one of the grandest opportunities, are failing to use one of the most effective means in their power, of helping on this race. In nothing, perhaps, was the greatness of soul of Gen. O. O. Howard, his wisdom, his profound interest in the welfare of the colored race, his desire to further their interests in every possible way, more strikingly manifested than in this respect. He did not use his position to advance his own interests or those of his friends or relatives,—as is so often done in these institutions. No, it was the good of the black race that he had in view in the founding of Howard University, and he was determined to make it tell in every possible way in furthering that end. Hence, recognizing the important fact set forth by Senator Hoar, among the first things that he did was to associate with himself, in the government and instruction of the

University, representative colored men. When he came to organize the Law Department he sought out a representative colored man, in the person of the Hon. John Mercer Langston, and placed him at the head of it. When the Theological Department was to be organized, the able and scholarly Dr. J. B. Reeve, of Philadelphia, was called to its head. The same is true of the Medical Department; the skilful and accomplished surgeon, now at the head of the Freedman's Hospital, Dr. C. B. Purvis, and Dr. Augusta, for many years lecturer on anatomy, early became associated with it. Such was the spirit that pervaded this institution, and continued to preside over it during General Howard's administration. Such is the spirit that should pervade all our colored institutions. Everything should be made subservient to the best interests of the race for which they were founded. The most for the colored man, should be the motto inscribed upon them all, and the principle that should guide in their administration. This, unfortunately, has not been the case. These institutions have not been so conducted as to yield the largest and best results to the colored race. They have been helpful mainly in a single direction,—in affording us the opportunity of receiving an education. The help which comes from the opportunity of exercising our gifts as instructors in the higher departments of learning; which comes from the opportunity of securing time and leisure for a broader, deeper culture, for a larger self-development; which comes from the opportunity of demonstrating our capacity in a way and manner such as to influence public sentiment in our favor, our white friends have, in nearly all of these institutions, reserved for themselves. They are willing to have us profit by them so far as instruction is concerned, so far as we can be helped in the capacity of students, but in no other way. And if we venture to suggest that this is not the limit of the power of these institutions to help us, and put ourselves in the way of receiving further benefits, we are discouraged or are arrogantly repelled as presumptuous and immodest. It is just here that I take issue with our white friends, and where I think they are doing us a wrong, and allowing themselves to be influenced by other considerations than the good of the race, in depriving us of opportunities which we much need, and which have an important bearing upon our progress and development. The exclusion of colored men at first from these institutions may have been a matter of necessity, owing to a lack of opportunity for preparation. But, however true this may have been in the past, it is not true to-day. Twenty years of freedom have wrought a great change in our intellectual condition. From scores of colored institutions a steady stream of graduates has flowed into all parts of our country; while on the list of graduates from our leading white institutions,—Harvard, Yale, Dartmouth, Amherst, Brown, Oberlin,—are to be found representatives of our race. The progress has been great, marvelous indeed. Assuming then that we have men who are fitted by training and ability to share the responsibility of instruction in these institutions, the question naturally arises, why are

they not admitted, why are they still excluded from many of them, or when applying for a professorship, why are their applications always looked upon with disfavor, and met with decided opposition?

The explanation is to be found in race prejudice on the one side, and selfishness on the other. In the first place, we are shut out, notwithstanding our qualifications, under the operation of the principle of selfishness, which prompts men to look out for themselves and theirs first. We all, more or less, have friends and relatives out of employment, needing something to do, some way of earning a livelihood. It is so natural to think of these, when vacancies occur in these institutions, and desire to see them provided for. In this way the faculties of many of these institutions are built up. One man gets in, and straightway he thinks of an old friend or classmate, and this old friend thinks of some one else, and by and by the uncle thinks of the nephew and the father of the son. As white men usually make up the faculties and trustee boards, only white men are drawn in, under the operation of this principle. I am not finding fault with this exhibition of selfishness on the part of our white friends. I am not saying that it is not perfectly natural, or that colored men, similarly situated, would not do precisely the same thing, but simply directing attention to the fact that, whether natural or unnatural, by it we are effectually excluded from participation in the instruction in many of these institutions.

In the second place, we are excluded because of caste prejudice. I say this in the full knowledge of the fact, that in these institutions there are those who profess to be our friends; who were, many of them, identified with the anti-slavery movement, who bear the name of Christ, and are under ordination vows as ministers of the gospel. All this is true, and yet this accursed prejudice exists. Abolition simply meant freedom for the slave as a man. Christianity, as interpreted by the actions of the great majority of white professors in this country, means recognition of the negro, but in his place,—as an inferior. The election of a colored man as professor in these institutions, means something more than was contemplated in the abolition movement, or is conceded by a spurious, but popular Christianity; it means equality; it means social recognition. This, our white brethren who make up the faculties of colored institutions are not ready for, and are determined not to have, if they can possibly prevent it. In conversation with the financial secretary of one of these institutions,—in which there is not now, and never has been during its history, a colored professor or member of the trustee board,—he frankly confessed that it was not because they did not believe the negro intellectually and mentally qualified to fill such positions. "Then why are they not admitted?" I asked. "Because," said he, "we do not consider it a wise thing to do." He then explained that, having been a foreign missionary for many years, and coming almost exclusively in daily contact with people of another race, he did not feel so himself;—thereby showing that the underlying cause, which he skilfully concealed under the term

"wise," was no other than caste prejudice. Upon leaving he said, (and I quote his exact language, only omitting the name of the institution, as I do not desire to injure it), This institution "has made no progress in this direction; it does not desire to make any, it has resolved not to." Such, unfortunately, is the spirit which largely prevails in most of these institutions, and will explain, in part, at least, why colored men are excluded from high and responsible positions in them. Upon the character of caste prejudice and selfishness, in themselves considered, I do not desire to enter; but as a colored man, interested in the progress of his race, I have a right to expect our white brethren to so administer the affairs of these institutions as to conserve the best interests of the race, for which they were founded. I have a right to know how they can reconcile their prejudices and their selfishness with their professed interest in us, as a race, and in the objects for which these institutions were founded, when this selfishness and these prejudices operate to exclude us from positions in them which would greatly aid in our development. If our white brethren now holding positions in these institutions are not sufficiently unselfish to forget themselves in their desire for the good of this race, if they are not superior to a petty caste prejudice, which estimates a man by the color of his skin, instead of by his intellectual, moral and spiritual worth, then the only manly thing for them to do is to give way to others who will in a truer, nobler spirit carry on the work. Selfishness and caste prejudice are the two greatest obstacles against which the negro has to contend. By them he is excluded from railroad cars and steamboats, from hotels and restaurants, from trades-unions and other associations, and, alas, is discriminated even in his own institutions, where he has a right to expect better things. It is a sad fact, but nevertheless true. It is just as difficult to get a colored man elected to a professorship in some of our colored institutions as it would be in Harvard or Yale, or in the University of Virginia or South Carolina. When vacancies occur he is never thought of, or if he has the hardihood, the presumption, to imagine himself fitted for a professorship, and dares to put in an application, at once everything is done to defeat him. If he chances to have a letter strongly endorsing him, the president, or some one else in whose hands the letter is placed, sits down at once and calls the writer to account for daring to say such complimentary things of a negro; or writes to know if he really meant what he said; or if he fully understood the import of the language used; or if he was quite sure he did not make a mistake; or if he was not laboring under the impression when he wrote, that, because it was a colored institution, anything was good enough for it. I have known this to be done in at least two instances, in relation to the endorsements of colored candidates, while the testimonials in behalf of white applicants were accepted without question. Such examples show the spirit which prevails in many of these institutions, the determination to shut the black man out at all hazards. In one instance I have seen this

feeling carried so far that, after the colored candidate was fairly elected at a regular meeting,—though there was barely a quorum present, it is true,—a second meeting was called, and the motion boldly made to rescind the action by which he was appointed. I have heard the president of one of these institutions persist in saying that a black candidate was unfit for a professorship, without having any personal knowledge, whatever, of his unfitness, and in the face of the highest testimonials to his ability and proficiency, from distinguished professors under whom he had studied;—so blinded was he by his prejudices, and so determined was he to defeat his election. It is bad enough to be obliged to contend with this spirit of caste prejudice in white institutions, and on the part of our enemies, but to find it existing, and to such a degree, in our own institutions, and on the part of our professed friends, is almost too much for our patience. The time has come, it seems to me, for black men to speak out, and to direct attention to this evil; to let these pseudo friends,—many of whom have allied themselves with negro institutions only for what they can get out of them, under the pretence of being actuated by philanthropic motives, know, that we understand their true character. The time has come for the purging of these institutions from such hypocrites and pretenders, and filling their places with men who are in hearty sympathy with this oppressed and down-trodden race. The lordly manner in which some of these presidents and professors in colored institutions bear themselves, and the contempt with which they treat the aspirations and attainments of colored men, is as shameful as it is exasperating. The evident pleasure which some of them take in belittling colored men,—the very men for whose good they profess to be laboring, bespeaks their own littleness, and deserves the scorn and contempt of all good men. I have heard the president of one of these institutions labor for nearly an hour to belittle a man in every way his superior in all the elements of a true manhood, and in scholarly attainments in his special line, more than his equal. The attainments, the scholarly tastes and aspirations of the colored applicant, instead of filling him with pride and delight, seemed rather to stir within him the bitterest hatred, which carried him so far in his opposition as to lead to him to stoop to a course which can only be characterized as dishonorable. On a recent occasion it was sickening to listen to the character of the remarks made by one of our white brethren respecting the appointment of a colored applicant for a Greek professorship in one of these institutions. One thought it would be too bad to have him leave another institution where he was already laboring,—notwithstanding the reason for his desiring to leave was well understood, and such as would have influenced any man under the circumstances. Another believed in the advancement of colored men to such positions, but was afraid of the bad effect if he should prove a failure; and this in the face of the fact that the applicant had been a successful teacher of Greek for eight years. Another would gladly vote for him if he were the equal of the white man, a fact, however, which

he was unwilling to concede. Every line of argument was only to prepare the way for voting against the black man. This is always the case; the effort is to discover reasons, not why he should be supported, but why he should not. On a similar occasion, I remember but one white man, and he an ex-officer in the confederate army, and an ex-slaveholder, who boldly espoused the cause of the colored applicant, and showed by his earnest words that his heart was in it. In view of such facts it is not surprising that we are sometimes inclined to become discouraged, and yet we should not be. There are some signs of progress. Two years ago, when the case of Professor Wiley Lane came up before the trustees of Howard University the principle was laid down that in colored institutions the preference should be given to competent colored men; which was strongly controverted by the president, who maintained that no consideration whatever was to be accorded to colored men, on account of their color, even in their own institutions. At the last meeting of the board the same principle was again laid down, and met with hearty applause. This is one step of progress. The principle was also advanced that colored institutions were to be conducted in the interest of the colored race; that when vacancies occurred the colored man was first to be thought of, and the white man only when it was impossible to secure competent colored men. "We must decrease in these institutions, but they (*i. e.*, the colored people,) must increase," said a white trustee in addressing his white brethren. What he meant was, that as white men, they were to make way for colored men, as fast as they were fitted to assume the duties and responsibilities of these institutions themselves; that these positions were to be held by white men only provisionally, to be vacated as soon as competent colored men could be found to fill them. At some future time I hope to see this principle also recognized and applauded. It is not at present orthodox, I am sorry to say. The spirit which it embodies is not the spirit which to-day rules in these institutions. The disposition is not to open the door to the colored man and bid him welcome, but to shut him out; not to hold these places provisionally, but absolutely; not with a view of benefiting the colored man, but of benefiting themselves through him. The fact that professorships in all the white institutions in the land, from which we are absolutely excluded, are open to our white brethren, ought to dictate to them the propriety of not putting themselves forward, and of allowing us a chance, at least in our own institutions. But instead of this, the disposition is to challenge our right to hold such positions, even in these; to take advantage of their superior numbers on the trustee boards, to monopolize every important position. If this is philanthropy, then I, for one, think we have had quite enough of it. If this is the treatment we are to continue to receive from our friends, then it is time for us to begin to pray to be delivered from our friends.

To all that has been said, it may be objected that as colored men we have no right to complain, since the money for carrying on

these institutions is furnished by white men. In answer to this I would say, First, the poverty of the colored man is no fault of his. For two hundred and fifty years the white man has been enriched by his toil. Though he may not furnish the money directly, therefore, it does not follow that he is not entitled to it. Second, whether we furnish the money or not, we have a right to insist that these institutions, which are founded for our good, be so administered as to secure to us the largest possible results; to see that we are deprived of no benefits to be derived from them. If we are thus deprived, which is undoubtedly the case in many of these institutions, we have not only the right, but it is our sacred duty to direct attention to the evil with a view to its removal. This I trust we will continue to do until the last vestige of this accursed caste prejudice, and narrow selfishness which so largely prevail in many of these institutions shall be swept away, and the black man be accorded that recognition which he deserves, and which he has a right to expect.

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VI.

EARLY DISCOVERIES IN AFRICA.

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Far back into the dim vistas of time, prior to the historic epochs, into the confines of traditional periods, unwritten history tells of wonderful voyages along the coasts of Africa and into its interior. With but a hint at these semi-historical events, we leave the reader to decipher their details as best he may. It will be a work of curiosity rather than of utility. We will not turn the pages earlier than the time of Herodotus, and in a cursory way trace African travel to the death of Mungo Park.

All Africa along the Mediterranean Sea was well known to the ancients, and formed a part of their political and social system. In this region lay Egypt and Carthage, the one the first organized government, the other for a long time the mistress of the sea, and both the fathers of commerce and civilization. In primeval history stands Egypt with her colossal pillars, and Carthage but a few centuries later the rival of the great Roman power. Though absorbed into the Roman dominion Carthage could be proud of her maritime prowess, and Alexandria boast of her sages and intellectual monuments.

Although Mediterranean Africa stands so prominent in early