

MEN OF MARK:

Eminent, Progressive and Rising.

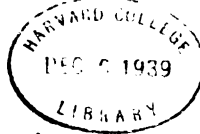
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WITH AN INTRODUCTORY SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR BY REV. HENRY M.
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Illustrated.

CLEVELAND, OHIO:
GEO. M. REWELL & CO.
1887.

US 10796.30
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LXXXV.

REV. FRANK J. GRIMKE, A. B.

Learned and Eloquent Presbyterian Divine—Touching Memorial on Leaving Washington, District of Columbia.

MR. GRIMKE'S parents were named Henry and Nancy Grimke. He was born in Charleston, South Carolina, November 4, 1850. His mother was a slave. On the death of his father, however, a change took place, when he was only a few years old. The children were all left free and placed under the guardian care of his father's oldest son, E. Montague Grimke, who faithfully discharged his duty towards them until Frank was about ten years old, when this guardian undertook to enslave them, which made some complications of course. Although a boy, Frank determined that he would not submit to such an outrage. He ran off and went into the Confederate army as the valet to one of the officers, in which position he continued for about two years. On visiting Charleston one day with the regiment to which he was attached, and which was stationed in Castle Pinckney, a fort in the harbor, he was suddenly arrested just as he was about to step into a boat on his return to the fort, and thrown into jail, or what is known as the work-house in Charleston. Here

he remained for several months, and was taken dangerously ill from exposure and bad treatment, and came very near losing his life. It was only by being finally removed to his mother's house and by very skillful treatment that he recovered from this dangerous illness. Having thus fallen into the hands of this half-brother and guardian, who feared that he would go away again, he sold him, before he was well enabled to go out, to an officer, and again he went back in the army, remaining until the close of the war. Through the influence of Mrs. Pillsbury, who was then in charge of Morris Street school in Charleston, which he attended for awhile, his brother and himself went North for the purpose of being educated. Frank went to Stoneham, Massachusetts, into the family of a Doctor John Brown. With this family he was to remain with a view of studying medicine, but his treatment by them was so different from what he had been led to expect that he left them. During the whole stay with them he was forced to sleep in an open barn in the hayloft, with no other mattress than the hay and no other bedstead than the floor. He very soon found warm friends with Mr. and Mrs. Lyman Dyke, who took him into their shoe factory, where he began to learn the shoe-making business. Soon, however, he was summoned by Mrs. Pillsbury to report at once to Lincoln University, in Chester county, Pennsylvania, where arrangements had been made for the prosecution of his studies. As a student he ranked very high, and received the approbation of the professors and was acknowledged superior among the students. He graduated from the College Department of this institution in 1870 as

valedictorian of his class. Immediately afterwards he began the study of law in the Law Department of the university, which at that time, in 1871, was on the university grounds. The next year he acted as financial agent of the university. The year after, he resumed his legal studies in the same department, which in the meantime had been removed to West Chester, Pennsylvania. The next year he went to Washington, District of Columbia, and entered the Law Department of Howard University. While there he decided to turn his thoughts to the ministry. In the fall of 1875, therefore, he entered the Princeton Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1878, and immediately went to Washington as pastor of the Fifteenth Street Presbyterian church, where he remained until October, 1885. When he was about to leave his flock the following testimonial was adopted:

At a farewell reception tendered by the congregation and friends of the Fifteenth Street Presbyterian church, Tuesday evening, November 2, 1885, in behalf of the congregation, visitors and friends, who, Sunday after Sunday, and from time to time, have listened to the words of wisdom from the lips of Mr. Grimke, pastor of this church, we beg leave to express our deep regret at his departure from our midst. Circumstances over which we cannot exercise control, as well as the voice of his Master, call him to another field of labor and duty. He leaves behind warm hearts and devoted friends, whose affection for him and his helpmate is best known from the true enthusiasm manifested on the morning of his farewell sermon. The language of that occasion being, "May God be with you both, since it has been decreed that for a while we must be parted." The earthly activities of this life are circumscribed by time and space, but the divine and essential genius which informs and inspires that life is boundless in the sweep of its influence and immortal in the energy of its activity. If any fraction of this community may claim the right to do honor and reverence to our friend Mr. Grimke, it is as it should be,

those of us who have profited by the words of wisdom that have fallen from his lips and the influence exerted by contact with him. His services here have been a vast accession to a cause already moving forward with assured success. Remembering his work and the good deeds left behind him, and how he has, by the measure of unselfish devotion taught us, by precept and example, the way to be lifted up and strengthened, we make this feeble attempt to pay reverential respects, and extend the meed and honor of praise and true regard of him whom we shall ever know as our friend and benefactor. In the language of another:

“For seven years, he, with a pulse that felt for human needs,
And eyes that saw among the meanest weeds
Plants that through civilization, yet might bless
The world with flowers and fruit of usefulness,
And all he spake accorded with his deeds.”

We sincerely commend him to those to whom he goes, in the land of flowers and sweet perfumes, of generous and hospitable people. May he find warm hearts, devoted friends and helping hands, to remind him of those to whom he now says, “Good friends, for a while, farewell.”

F. F. SHADD,
President of the Meeting.

As a preacher, Mr. Grimke stands foremost in our country. He is an eloquent divine, and speaks with ease and grace. President James McCosh, of Princeton College, said of him: “I have heard him preach, and I feel as if I could listen to such preaching with profit, from Sabbath to Sabbath; and I rejoice to find that the colored people of Washington have such a man to minister to them.”

Mr. Grimke's reception in Jacksonville, Florida, as the pastor of the Laurel Street Presbyterian church, was commented upon in this wise by the *Southern Leader*, whose editor, J. Willis Menard, is himself scholarly and eminent. He said:

His sermons, always delivered from the manuscript, are models of force, perspicuity and elegant rhetoric; while his deep piety, correct life and earnest devotion to his work, have won for him universal respect and love. The people of Jacksonville, in particular, and the people in the South, in general, are to be congratulated on securing this scholarly and eminent divine. The growth of his influence and usefulness is but a matter of time and opportunity. Recently he was called to Tuskegee, Alabama, where he lectured before a vast audience, and a letter appeared in the *Montgomery Herald*, which said: "The Rev. Mr. Grimke, the most learned and profound thinker of the race arrived here last Saturday morning, one day too late; however he came in time to do inexpressible good. Sunday morning he preached to the school and town friends from the sixth verse of Christ's Sermon on the Mount, 'Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness.' Sunday night a lecture took place in the lecture room. He emphasized the very fact that in order for the race to make itself felt upon other races as a mass, it must have education, morals and wealth. We wish every colored man in this country could hear that able young man and distinguished divine. Mr. Grimke has probably one of the most valuable libraries owned by colored men in the United States, consisting of over one thousand volumes of well selected works on theology, philosophy, history, science, art and general literature, together with quite a number of choice pictures."

We could scarcely write of Mr. Grimke without referring to his distinguished wife, who was before marriage named Miss Charlotte Forten of Philadelphia, who was well known in the literary world. She has been a true minister's wife, and has done much to make his ministerial career successful. Mr. Grimke bids fair to raise the tone of ministerial life in Florida as he has in Washington. The purity of his character and the quietness of his demeanor affect all favorably who come in contact with him. South Carolina has a great reason to be proud of her distinguished son, who has reflected so much credit upon her.