

# The Colored American

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

A NATIONAL NEGRO NEWSPAPER

VOL. 9 NO. 2.

WASHINGTON, D. C., SATURDAY, APRIL 13, 1901.

PRICE FIVE CENTS.

## A COLORED LIBRARIAN.

Governor White of West Virginia Appoints the First Afro American to a State Office—Prof. Starks a Representative Man—His Career.

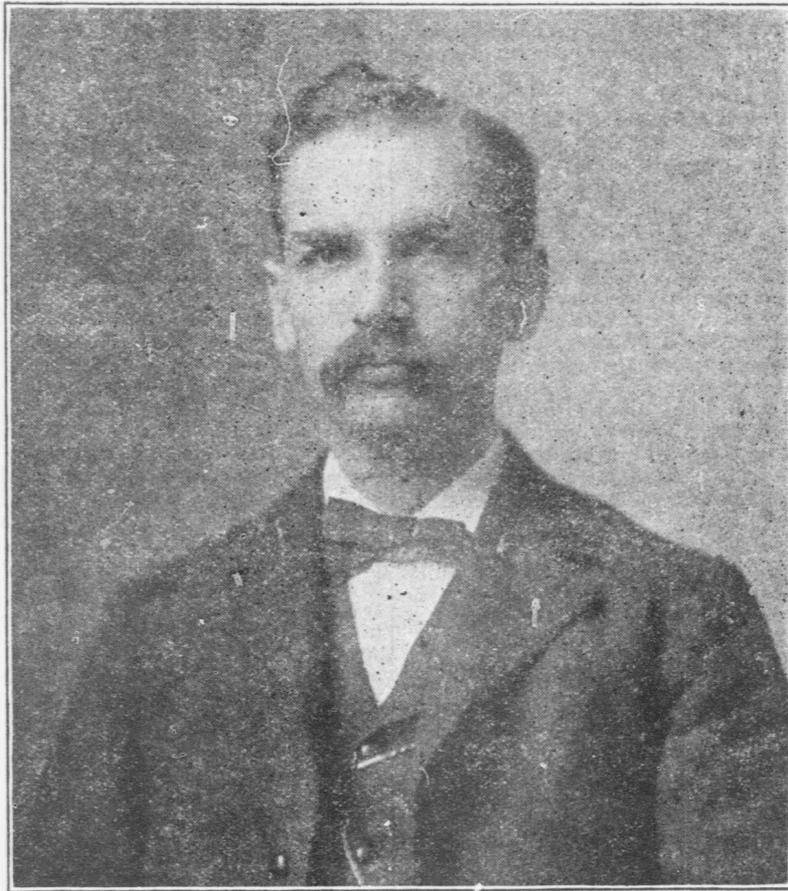
In these days of disfranchisement, and when every method is resorted to for the suppression of Negro manhood and citizenship, it is truly gratifying to see among us a young man possessing the essential qualifications of leadership to press his way to the front, and it is equally as gratifying to find a man of the dominant race fair, upright, honest and broad enough to recognize and reward such leadership when it is found. Both of these are to be found in the appointment of S. W. Starks to the position of State Librarian of the State of West Virginia, by his Excellency Governor A. B. White. Mr. Starks belongs to that class of leaders of whom the race need have no fear; and Governor White has proven himself to be a broad, unprejudiced man, far in advance of many of his fellow statesmen of the present day.

Since this is another triumph won for the race by Mr. Starks, it may be an inspiration to some other young man struggling in life, to know from whence he came. S. W. Starks was born at Charleston, W. Va., March 11, 1866. He attended the public schools of that city, working in the cooper shop during vacation, until he had completed the course. At the age of sixteen years he entered the service of the Kanawha & Ohio Railroad, as messenger boy, and by earnest, indefatigable industry, worked his way up to the place of chief telegraph operator in the general office of the company, a position never before or since held by any colored man in the State. He remained with the above named company until 1890, when it was united with the T & O. C. Road, at which time the headquarters at Charleston were abolished, and he was offered a position as operator in the general office at Toledo, O., but refused it to take a course in the Bryant & Stratton Business College of Chicago, Ill.

While attending this institution he was offered a position as cashier in a large establishment in Denver, Colo., which he accepted in the spring of 1891 and held until the fall of the same, when on account of failing health he resigned, and returned to Ohio, accepted a position as telegraph operator for the T. & O. C. Railroad at Corning, where he remained for 18 months, when he was called by the Capitol City Co-operative Company, a very strong organization of colored men doing business in Charleston, W. Va., to accept the position of manager of the concern. This company dissolving in 1894, he opened a large grocery store, together with an ice cream parlor on Capitol street of the city of Charleston, and did an excellent business, and is well respected as a thorough business man of the place.

HE IS A SUPREME CHANCELLOR OF THE KNIGHTS OF PYTHIAS.

Mr. Starks is one of the most prominent secret society men in America. He has been elected to the Grand Chancellorship of the Knights of Pythias, Grand Lodge of West Virginia, by ac-



PROF. S. W. STARKS,  
State Librarian of West Virginia

clamation for eight consecutive terms. He represented his state at the council of Grand Chancellors at Philadelphia in 1894, and in the Supreme Lodge at New Orleans in '93, being the youngest man in the body, and again at St. Louis in 1895, at which session he was elected Supreme Vice Chancellor of the Order, and was re-elected in 1897 at the session held at Columbus, Ohio, which position he held until September 1899 when, at the session of the Supreme Lodge held in Jacksonville, Fla., he was elected to the highest position in the gift of the Order, that of Supreme Chancellor, which position he now holds. As Supreme Chancellor, Mr. Starks exercises superintendance over a membership which now numbers over thirty thousand. During his incumbency he has systematized the work, adjusted many unsettled features, succeeded in doubling the endowment receipts, and generally built up and created renewed interest over his entire jurisdiction. There are now subordinate lodges of the Order all over this country, in every state and territory in the Union, besides lodges in Australia, the West Indies and Central America.

He is a natural born leader and organizer, and has never been known to sulk when the interest of the race was at stake. Last fall when the fair name of West Virginia and the liberty of her colored citizens were threatened by democracy with "Jim Crow cars" and disfranchisement, and when interlop-

ers were being brought into the state to deceive the people, and when it appeared that some of the Negroes were about to be caught in the trap of democracy, he threw himself into the campaign, "body and soul" and with his pen through the "Advocate" and otherwise, so thoroughly demolished the arguments made by the deceivers of the race, that when the 6th of November came, the manner in which the colored men stood up for right, justice and the republican party, was without parallel in the history of elections in the state.

It was his distinguished service in the campaign above mentioned that won for him the honor which he will wear for the next four years. The appreciation in which he is held by the people of his state, may be partly understood when it is known that he secured his appointment over more than a hundred applicants, all of whom were white; and in his fight, he had the support of all the party leaders, including Chairman Dawson and every member of the state central committee, United States Senators Elkins and Scott, every congressman and every Negro leader in the state. Mr. Starks is a young man of strong Christian character, and is possessed of other sterling qualities which have added much to the success of his efforts. His career has been one of that constant steady kind that comes

(Continued on 5th page.)

## THE CRITIC REVEALED.

The Record of the "Rev." W. Hannibal Thomas Reviewed—It Could Hardly be Used in the Sunday Schools.—Pruce Grit Winds up With the Judas of his Race.

The following correspondence will explain itself.

Western Theological Seminary, Allegheny, Pa. April 21, 1901—Dear Sir—W. H. Thomas was a student in this seminary between the years 1865 and 1868, and in the latter year was dismissed because of criminal intercourse with the woman he subsequently married. He first denied the charges, but later confessed their truth and was sent out. I have just written out a transcript from the faculty minutes for a lawyer in New Bedford, Mass. and mailed them to him, Yours sincerely,  
T. H. ROBINSON,  
President of Faculty.

Columbia, S. C., March 1, 1901.  
Dear Sir—Referring to your letter of 21st ult. in regard to Mr. W. H. Thomas, I have you enclosed a letter from Mr. E. W. Screven, who, at my request has looked up Mr. Thomas' record. Hoping that the enclosed letter will furnish you the desired information I am  
Very truly yours,  
Signed E. A. WEBSTER,

P. S. You are liberty to make any use of this letter you think proper.  
Note—Webster is Collector of the Port at Columbia, S. C.

Columbia, S. C. March 1st, 1901.  
Dear Sir—With reference to the career of Mr. W. H. Thomas in South Carolina in the period of 1876 I would say he was elected a member of the state legislature in the fall of 1876, and took his seat in that body when it convened at the Capitol on November 29th of that year. Owing to political complications at that time there were two rival organizations claiming to be the legal House of Representatives and Mr. Thomas gave allegiance to the Mackey House which was shortly after its organization adjudged not to be the legal body by the Supreme Court of the state, and after sitting just twenty-three days adjourned sine die. It never re-assembled.

I find by the reports of the proceedings of this body that Mr. William H. Thomas was chairman of the committee on privileges and elections and that during the twenty-three days, three reports were made by this committee. I find also that Mr. Thomas made one report to the House on behalf of the Judiciary Committee and upon enquiry I learned that he was chairman of that committee.

All this information I got from the files of the News and Courier whose reporter was present daily and gave very full accounts of these proceedings.

I can find no journal of the House in the state library giving any account of the proceedings of the Mackey House, and it is reasonable to assume that the legality of that body never having been recognized no record of its proceedings would be preserved by the state.

While in Newberry County a few days ago at the county seat I took oc-

(Continued on 9th page.)