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## A SOUTHERN LEGAL LIGHT.

Prof. Hoffman Pays a Tribute to J. Douglas Wetmore - The Leading Afro-American Attorney in Florida's Metropolis—Success the Reward of Industry, Perseverance and General Worth.

Many years ago a famous writer and author told that "some men are born great, some attain greatness and some have greatness thrust upon them." Such was the case when those words were written and such sentiment could easily be applied to that age.

But now "to be born great is a condition so uncertain that it has been circumscribed to the narrow limits of royalty, and since our present civilization is so fast outgrowing the spirit of monarchy there is scarcely any significance attached to great births. That some have greatness thrust upon them is regarded, too, with little appreciation and with equal uncertainty, because it's purely accidental and it depends largely upon the merits and determination of the individual whether it will last long enough to yield any substantial results.

But to "attain greatness" has become the motto of this age, and it is only through indomitable penalty, strenuous efforts and struggle that it can be realized by the individual recognized by others or made permanently in itself. Great men, like great events, must develop through opposition. In passing from youth to manhood there are certain tests which they must meet, and certain ordeals through which they must pass before they can become worthy of note. Hardships and trials are necessary conditions. Tests and ordeals are the principal stepping stones to the heights of greatness.

And to see what signal achievements result from such conditions obtaining in real life we need only to study the career of the Hon. J. Douglas Wetmore, one of the leading lawyers of Jacksonville, Fla.

Col. Wetmore has a remarkable and interesting history. Those who believe in destiny will find that he was from his youth one of her most legitimate children; those who believe in fortune favoring the brave or stability growing out of adversity will find him a true and bright example.

Hon. J. Douglas Wetmore first saw the light of day in Tallahassee, Fla., September 24, 1870. From this "beautiful garden" he was carried by his parents to Savannah, Ga., but fate decreed that he should flourish best in his native soil, and consequently, in 1876, the time of great political upheaval, he returned with his parents to Jacksonville where they have lived ever since.

He entered Cookman Institute, where he made quite a brilliant record as a student, and graduated in the class of '87 at the tender age of 16 years, being the youngest to wear that distinction up to date. But the training which he received in Cookman Institute only increased his desire for more knowledge, and characteristic of the human mind

he began to plan the realization of that ambition, knowing that money was the prime necessity, and filled with the usual spirit of adventure and independence of youth, he left home for New York, where he worked to secure the necessary means. Returning South he entered Atlanta University, but about this time his father went into business and needed help, which young Wetmore was prepared to give. He therefore entered his father's business as bookkeeper and advertising agent. But the young man's calling was not in keeping books as much as in using them for higher purposes, and therefore in 1889 he began teaching school. Dissatisfied with that he determined to more thoroughly prepare himself to meet the requirements of professional life.

To do so he needed a higher education and more money. He therefore began to work for the latter, to secure the former. He returned to Jacksonville, where he became a reporter on the staff of the daily American (a colored journal), but that enterprise was quite shortlived and his prospects in journalism were blasted. But as a means to an end he turned his attention to politics, and in 1895 became president of the Young Men's Republi-

can Club, elected delegate to several state conventions, and figured prominently in deposing the leading elements of "Bossism," then controlling the political machinery; believing in pure politics, he joined and supported the independent party, which is now in control. But one has truly said, "there's a divinity that shapes and ends, rough-hew them how we will." Especially was this true in the subject of our sketch, for he had thought very little of the hand of destiny in his many changes of fortune. He soon realized the fact, however, when the Hon. J. N. C. Stockton, the leader of the independent party, so appreciated his political activity, as well as other sterling qualities, and became so interested in his future that he offered him a scholarship in any school of law which he might choose. He chose the University of Michigan, where he completed his course; returning home, and in 1898 was admitted to the bar.

The following professional career appeared in the Times-Union and Citizen of that date: "Mr. Wetmore has submitted in the severest test of any applicant who was ever admitted to this bar and passed a most creditable ex-



J. DOUGLAS WETMORE, ESQ.,

A Leading Member of the Bar, Jacksonville, Fla.

## IN HONOR OF PROF. KELLY MILLER.

The Social and Intellectual Forces of Washington Gathered at the Festal Board and Testify Their Earnest Appreciation of the Talented and Scholarly Scientist, Statistician and Philosopher - Prof. Richards Toastmaster.

The largest and unquestionably the most notable banquet ever spread in the City of Magnificent Distances was that given on Wednesday evening of last week in the spacious Odd Fellows' Hall in honor of Prof. Kelly Miller, professor of mathematics at Howard University, and recognized everywhere as one of the best-posted thinkers along social and economic lines that the country has today, regardless of color or race. Prof. Miller has written quite a number of able articles and pamphlets bearing upon the status of the Negro as a citizen, upon problems of education, higher and elementary, upon the political future of a people environed as we are, upon the likelihood of a solution of the American puzzle in the Philippines and other insular possessions, where racial conflict may be expected—and in fact, the scholarly gentleman has practically covered the field of advanced thought in the discussion of the issues that interest the people of this generation. The dinner in question was, perhaps, more directly influenced by Professor's recent defense of the Negro before the National Academy of Social Science, relying to and totally extinguishing one Mr. Stetson, who would contend that the black race could hope for little in the stern competition of the times. Prof. Miller has also just closed a successful term as president of Bethel Literary and Historical Association, the history of which stands out in bold relief upon the intellectual horizon of the race. In a commendable spirit of encouragement of the efforts of so capable and so useful a man as Prof. Miller has shown himself to be, about one hundred and twenty-five of Washington, and the Nation's most potential factors, assembled at the festal board on the date mentioned above. Every phase of activity was represented. It is probable that at no time in the annals of Washington's social life has such an aggregation of intellect, wealth, culture and utility been brought together in this manner to honor an individual or to inspire a cause. The presence of ladies was an innovation so pleasant that the experiment may be repeated.

The speeches were in good taste and were prepared. The speakers were all experienced men of affairs, and their opinions carried the weight of authority. Prof. William H. Richards, the able and popular instructor in international law at Howard University, acted as toastmaster, and he acquitted himself with great credit. Always calm, thoughtful, dignified and affable, these qualities were particularly reflected on this occasion, garnished by a delicate but incisive humor that added a keener zest that the broad

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