

TUSKEGEE LITERARY SOCIETY SPEECH · 1887

moting students except by some system of marking by daily recitations or by very frequent examinations.

It must however be admitted that the test is far from absolutely reliable. Very truly yours.

E. M. Cravath

ALS Con. 94 BTW Papers DLC.

A Speech before the Literary Society of Tuskegee

[Tuskegee, Ala.] 1887

SOME LESSONS FROM SOCRATES<sup>1</sup>

While Socrates had his short comings and peculiarities it is helpful to look above and beyond them to the great moral and religious truths which he taught and practiced.

Socrates like many other valuable men grew up in poverty, and as in many other cases his poverty enabled him to get near the heart of the common people, while his great wisdom enabled him to be associated with the opulent. It was his desire to *know* the people, to know wherein they were strong and wherein weak, in order that he might know how to benefit them.

His was the philosophy of every day life; and it was all the more interesting and valuable because it bristled with the living thoughts of the people.

He gave his whole life to one object even to the neglect of his personal comfort and the proper provision for his family. His entire energy was given to an effort to right the wrongs in morals, religion and politics in Athens.

What were his methods in teaching? In the first place we find him gifted with an extraordinary amount of common sense — a quality much lacking in these days. He knew how to talk to the most ignorant in a way to interest them and make them understand.

He disclaimed any pretensions to possessing wisdom or being classed among the philosophers of his day, but maintained under all circumstances that he was only a seeker after knowledge.