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"The Greatest Play of the South"

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"THE GREATEST PLAY OF THE SOUTH"

BY DURANT DA PONTE

Few people today remember his name. It is not to be found in such general and specialized works of reference as the current *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, *The Dictionary of American Biography*, *The Literary History of the United States*, or the volumes of Van Wyck Brooks. With the exception of Ernest E. Leisy, who devotes little more than a paragraph to him in *The American Historical Novel*, the other standard historians of American fiction give him only passing mention or ignore him altogether. And yet fifty years ago he was one of the most controversial figures on the American literary and social scene. Lawyer, politician, preacher, novelist, playwright, lecturer, actor, pamphleteer, rabble-rouser, and demagogue, he agitated troubled waters both North and South as have few men before his day or since. His name was Thomas Dixon.

A North Carolinian by birth, he had a brief legal and political career before entering the Baptist ministry in 1886 at the age of twenty-two.<sup>1</sup> In the late eighties and in the nineties he was one of New York City's most popular preachers, and his sermons were syndicated in newspapers throughout the country. He gave up the pulpit in 1899 to take to the lecture platform and to continue writing magazine articles. His subject was always the same--the problem of the Negro in America. A strenuous advocate of white supremacy, he opposed all efforts to give the colored race any sort of equal rights and recommended, among other things, colonization of the Negro in Liberia.

In an effort to reach a wider audience, he turned to novel writing, embarking upon a spectacularly successful career in 1902 with the publication of *The Leopard's Spots*. In 1905, a sequel, *The Clansman*, appeared. Two years later, *The Traitor* completed his trilogy of Southern life during the Reconstruction period. Although they enjoyed tremendous sales, these novels drew generally harsh criticism from the literary journals, being described by and large as crude, sensational, melodramatic, vulgar, and artistically worthless. No one reading them today would quarrel with these judgments.

Shortly after the appearance of the second novel of his trilogy, Dixon turned to the writing of plays, fashioning a drama from material contained in both *The Leopard's Spots* and *The Clansman*. It apparently represented an effort on its author's part to reach an even wider (or at least different) audience from that to which his novels appealed. In 1915, he found the supreme medium for spread-

ing his doctrine—the cinema. It was he who supplied the script for what many consider the greatest and most sensational motion picture ever produced in this country, *The Birth of a Nation*.

But it is neither with the novels (there were several others in addition to the aforementioned trilogy) nor with the motion picture that we are concerned here. It is with his first play, which he also entitled *The Clansman*. It was never printed; the work is extant, however, in two typescript copies, one in the Harvard Library and one in the Rare Book Collection of the Library of Congress, where it may be read by the curious.

A brief look at the play, which is in four acts, discloses that its construction is crude, its characters stock, its dialogue stilted, and its situations exaggerated. All the devices of the old-fashioned melodrama are here (including bombastic rhetoric, narrow escapes, and last-minute rescues) so that the ultimate impression is that we are reading a parody. The setting is Piedmont, South Carolina; the time covered is six months during the years 1867-68. The main characters include the Cameron family: the father, a gentleman of the old South who is weathering the storm of Reconstruction as best he can; his son Ben, who has fought in the Confederate army and been imprisoned in the North; and a thirteen-year-old daughter named Flora, whose literary lineage extends straight back to Mrs. Stowe's Little Eva. The Cameron slaves, now free, serve a dual purpose: some provide comic relief, some function as villains. The comic tone is established as one slave, glorying in his new freedom, announces haughtily when called a "nigger": "I ain't er nigger, I'se a dark-skinned white pusson." Both conflict and romance are provided by the Northern contingent: Austin Stoneman, commander of the Black League; his daughter Elsie, who, having nursed young Ben Cameron when he lay wounded in a Yankee prison, is now romantically involved with him; and Lynch, Stoneman's Negro protégé, who is soon to be elected lieutenant governor and who is imbued with Stoneman's equalitarian doctrines. Lynch is the villain of the play and is by all odds the most interesting character. He is intended to illustrate, presumably, the vicious evil wrought by those would-be do-gooders who strive to elevate the Negro out of his place. Stoneman encourages him: "Come, lift up your head! Have I showed you the pathway to the stars for nothing? Stand erect in the presence of every white man! God Almighty can do nothing for a coward!" And yet at the climax of the drama, when Lynch announces that he is in love with a white girl, Stoneman backs down—for the girl is his daughter Elsie. Lynch's impassioned apologia is worth quoting: "What have you done for me? Trained my eyes to see, ears to hear, heart to feel, that you might deny every cry of my body and soul. . . . You've stripped the rags

of slavery from a black skin, but what are you going to do with the man? This man with a heart that can ache and break, oh! if I could take the stain from this skin, the kink from this hair, I'd bathe in hell fire!" Stoneman replies: "I have given you the protection of the law—" Lynch interrupts: "Equality is the law! Absolute equality without one lying subterfuge! By God! I demand it!" To which Stoneman can only announce: "Surely, Lynch, you have gone mad!" At this point Ben Cameron and members of the Ku Klux Klan dash in to rescue Elsie, who is being held captive by one of Lynch's henchmen. Lynch is led off to be kicked down the steps of the capitol by Ben, who claims Elsie for his own. Stoneman, the erstwhile "integrationist," completely reverses his stand, and the curtain falls.

The above sketch is only the main line of action. There is a lurid subplot involving the accidental killing of young Flora Cameron by the Negro Gus, a former field hand, and the vengeance of the Klan upon the ex-slave, who is lynched and whose body is dragged through town at the heels of a horse and deposited on the doorstep of the lieutenant governor. The tableau of the hooded Klan members on horseback and the scene of the ceremony of the fiery cross were high points in the staging of the drama, which was advertised as follows: "The Greatest Play of the South. . . . A Daring, Thrilling Romance of the Ku Klux Klan. A Specially Selected Metropolitan Cast—50 People—A Splendid Scenic Production. Two Carloads of Scenery—A Small Army of Supernumeraries, Horses, Etc."

This opus was performed initially in Norfolk, Virginia, on Friday, September 22, 1905. A news report of the opening announced that the play was "enthusiastically received," and was sure to "create a profound sensation both North and South." So bold was it alleged to be that it was declared "hazardous to the peace of whites and blacks."<sup>3</sup> Another commentator predicted that on its Southern tour *The Clansman* would be "like a runaway car loaded with dynamite."<sup>4</sup> When Dixon, who travelled with the company and made a between-the-acts speech, appeared on stage at the end of the third act, "pandemonium broke loose." He said in part:

My object is to teach the north, the young north, what it has never known—the awful suffering of the white man during the dreadful reconstruction period. I believe that Almighty God anointed the white men of the south by their suffering during that time immediately after the Civil war to demonstrate to the world that the white man must and shall be supreme. To every man of color here to-night I want to say that not for one moment would I do him an injury. . . . I have nothing but the best feeling for the negro. . . .<sup>5</sup>

When it played in Richmond three days later, a writer for the *Times-Dispatch* asserted: "Uncontrolled desires, primal passions,



race hatred and race supremacy are the warp of the *Clansman*." It was agreed that no real good would accrue to either race, and an unnamed "gentleman who was a member of the original Ku Klux Klan" was quoted as saying: "It would be . . . better if the play were strangled in its infancy."<sup>6</sup> An editorial in the *Richmond News-Leader* said that the play was about as elevating as a lynching and deplored the author's appeal to the public's love of the morbid. The conclusion was that Dixon had done "a distinct evil."<sup>7</sup> A third *Richmond* paper, *The Journal*, provided a complimentary notice and added: ". . . we have little patience with the squeamish timidity that would shrink from seeing portrayed on the stage conditions that our fathers were men enough to grapple with in their stern reality and to conquer."<sup>8</sup>

In Dixon's home state of North Carolina *The Clansman* played to a packed house in Winston-Salem, where, according to a news account, "men fought madly for choice seats," and special police armed with fire hoses stood by to quell any possible disturbance.<sup>9</sup> In Raleigh the audience was described as "wildly enthusiastic."<sup>10</sup> A critic for the *News and Observer* claimed that the play was "above the necessity for good acting," for "through it all runs the lure of sex, the appeal to the pride of race, the grip of the blood-call that is like a strangle hold."<sup>11</sup> The honorable Robert B. Glenn, governor of the state, publicly endorsed *The Clansman* for its "great historical truth" and for its tendency "to correct the foul misrepresentations done this beloved section."<sup>12</sup>

In mid-October Dixon and his troupe moved into South Carolina, in which state, it will be remembered, *The Clansman* is set. In Columbia he promptly became embroiled in a fracas with the editor of the *State*, who attacked the play as being not only dangerously inflammatory but also "full of inconsistency and historical inaccuracies. . . ."<sup>13</sup> It was upon this latter point that Dixon seized. To the editor of the Columbia newspaper he wrote: "I will refer the issue of historical accuracy between us to a jury of 12 to be appointed by the American Historical Society. If they decide that you are right, I will not only agree to pay \$1,000 for the errors established, but I will . . . withdraw the play from the boards—on condition that if . . . the verdict goes against you, you forfeit \$1,000 and resign as editor of the *State*. I repeat the motif of my play: 'A Lighthouse of Historic Truth Built on the Sands of Reconstruction.'<sup>14</sup> The editor, needless to say, ignored this obvious play to the grandstand. It was in Columbia that spectators in the gallery were reported carrying pistols, and, as one observer noted, had the word been given "the few negroes so unwise as to be present, would have been thrown over the railing."<sup>15</sup> The pastor of the First Baptist Church in Columbia described the play as "simply infernal, both in

its origin and in its fruits."<sup>16</sup> The editor of the *State* declared: "We shall be agreeably surprised if innocent blood is not upon the head of the Reverend Thomas Dixon Junior, before he reaches New Orleans."<sup>17</sup>

On October 19, 1905, *The Clansman* played two performances at the Academy of Music in Charleston and caused, in the words of the editor of the *News and Courier*, "one of the most remarkable exhibitions of hysterics to which we have been treated in many long days."<sup>18</sup> A local drama critic summed up the lesson taught by the ex-minister as "Hate the negro; he is a beast; his intention is to rob and murder and pollute; he should be transported or annihilated."<sup>19</sup>

*The Clansman* began a three-day stand in Atlanta on October 30, where the opening-night audience, which included Governor Terrell, cheered the playwright "for several minutes."<sup>20</sup> The local clergy was hostile. The Reverend Dr. L. G. Broughton, of the Baptist Tabernacle, called the show "a disgrace," and said of Dixon: "To claim that it is necessary . . . for him to go girating about over the south, stirring up such passions of hell, to keep the races apart and thus prevent, what he imagines, an impending amalgamation of the whites and blacks into one race of mixed bloods, is a slander of the white people of the south . . . so vile . . . that I cannot find words sufficiently strong to denounce it . . . for God's sake, the negro's sake, and our sake," he concluded, "give the negro a rest from abuse and incendiarism!"<sup>21</sup>

A similar protest was voiced by a Montgomery critic who saw the play in that city on November 3. "What's the use, Mr. Dixon, what's the use?" he asked.<sup>22</sup> Governor Jelks of Alabama, while admitting that *The Clansman* "was well sustained and even thrilling throughout," nevertheless termed it "a nightmare." "Undertaking to teach Southern white people something of the horrors of social equality," he asserted, "is absolutely useless. They are already taught. The situations and suggestions are disgusting and beyond expression. It is bad, top, bottom and sides, and it hurts."<sup>23</sup> A critic in the *Montgomery Advertiser* echoed these sentiments and added: "It is mere folly for Tom Dixon to pretend that he is performing a public service in producing such a play. He is after dollars and he will get them. What a pity there is no way to suppress 'The Clansman.'<sup>24</sup>

From Alabama the touring company moved into Tennessee. The editor of the *Chattanooga Times* called the play "a riot breeder . . . designed to excite rage and race hatred" and hoped that the city had seen it "for the last time."<sup>25</sup> In Knoxville, there were two performances on Saturday, November 11. The editor of the *Journal and Tribune* refused to attend, but nevertheless attacked the play



on the basis of what he had heard about it. As a matter of fact, his attacks had begun nearly a month before when the play was making headlines in South Carolina. Dixon he called a servant of the devil. "How the mind of a man who preaches love, and peace, and extols the principles embodied in the Golden Rule, could conceive of such a thing as 'The Clansman' seems to be, is beyond ordinary comprehension."<sup>26</sup> He later asserted that "the only charitable conclusion" that could be reached concerning Dixon, who "never was well balanced," was that he had "gone crazy."<sup>27</sup>

On November 17 and 18 *The Clansman* played at the Vendome Theatre in Nashville, where it was reported in the *Banner* that the audience was stirred "to the very depths of their souls." According to the reviewer, the purpose of the play was to preach the lesson that any steps toward social equality between the races could "only end in crime, bloodshed and death." Such a lesson, he went on to say, was not needed in the South but was best suited to the North, where social equality was tolerated. All the showing of the play could accomplish in the South was "to stir to boiling point the already hot blood of a Southerner."<sup>28</sup>

By the time it reached New Orleans, where it played the week of December 17 at the old Tulane Theatre, *The Clansman* was being billed as "the greatest theatrical triumph in the history of the South."<sup>29</sup> An advance news report claimed: "Such a phenomenal success has never before been seen in the theatrical world. The simple truth is that in no city or town has it been possible to find theatres large enough to accommodate crowds that have thronged to see this play."<sup>30</sup> The critic who reviewed the drama sensibly declined to comment upon what he termed "the wisdom or unwisdom of exploiting such themes upon the stage" on the grounds that such judgment was outside the scope of dramatic criticism. The gist of his notice, which was generally moderate, was that the play was absorbing, realistic, and well acted.<sup>31</sup>

What happened to the touring company after the New Orleans engagement is not clear. It apparently moved up into the Middle West, where reports of the presentation of *The Clansman* occur in Rochester, Toledo, Indianapolis, and Des Moines. Dixon, on December 21, was in New York, presumably preparing the way for the opening of a metropolitan company. We find an account of his addressing a group at Columbia University on that date in which he replied sharply to the critics of his books and protested the move on the part of the Colored Citizens Protective League to prevent the opening of *The Clansman*.<sup>32</sup> The publicity attending the approaching opening was enormous. The New York newspapers were filled with articles, pictures, interviews, letters. Dixon was quoted at great length, and his comments grew more exaggerated and bitter

and inflammatory than ever. "The negro is an animal," he said. "Would you permit him to marry your daughter?" "The country is not big enough for the civilized white man and the half-savage negro."<sup>33</sup>

In addition to the organized Negro opposition to the Manhattan showing of *The Clansman*, strong protest came from the Jewish element in the city. The Reverend Dr. Joseph Silverman, rabbi of the Temple Emanu-El, called the play "meretricious and pernicious," the product of "an overwrought imagination born of inherited prejudices and acquired hatred, . . . a libel upon the negro race, . . . a prostitution of the drama." "This is the season of universal good will to mankind," he said. "Shall the new year open with a play that preaches 'hate thy black brother and expel him'? In the name of our common Father, and for the welfare of our common country, I demand that 'The Clansman' be withdrawn from the stage and the book from circulation."<sup>34</sup>

Despite these and similar objections, the play opened at the Liberty Theatre on schedule. It is interesting to note, in passing, that two and a half months before, Shaw's *Mrs. Warren's Profession* had been closed as an offense to public decency. Most of the reviews of *The Clansman* were unfavorable. Opinion ranged from such comments as "noisy" and "commonplace"<sup>35</sup> and "boisterous but harmless"<sup>36</sup> to "obnoxious," "abominable," and vulgarly sensational.<sup>37</sup> In spite of Booker T. Washington's comment that New York would regard the play "in a just and proper light,"<sup>38</sup> it continued to pack the Liberty Theatre nightly, and two touring companies were described as playing to capacity audiences in the hinterland, with a third troupe announced as forming.<sup>39</sup>

The presence of Booker Washington in New York during the period in which the viciously anti-Negro play by Dixon was electrifying audiences is one of those happy coincidences that newspaper men dream about, and the Manhattan press exploited the circumstances to the best of its flamboyant abilities. Washington's purpose in visiting New York at this time was to raise \$1,800,000 for Tuskegee Institute and, incidentally, to celebrate the silver anniversary of the Alabama school of which he was head.<sup>40</sup> In connection with the drive, a meeting was held at Carnegie Hall on January 22, 1906, at which the principal speakers were Washington; Robert C. Ogden, New York philanthropist and president of Tuskegee's board of trustees; Joseph H. Choate, former ambassador to Great Britain; and Mark Twain. At least two thousand people were refused admittance to the hall, in which such prominent citizens occupied boxes as George Foster Peabody, Carl Schurz, Nicholas Murray Butler, Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Mrs. Cleveland Dodge, Mrs. Richard Watson Gilder, and Mrs. C. P. Huntington.<sup>41</sup> As Booker T. Wash-



ington entered the hall, a messenger handed him a note from Dixon in which the writer said he would contribute \$10,000 to Tuskegee if Washington would publicly declare that he did not desire social equality for the Negro and that Tuskegee was opposed to racial amalgamation. Washington's comment was: "I will make no answer whatever. I have nothing to say."<sup>42</sup> Although the stated topic of the Carnegie Hall meeting was the Negro problem and how to solve it and Mark Twain's sentiments were eagerly anticipated, the great humorist totally ignored the matter at hand and spoke on morals and taxes.<sup>43</sup>

Not to be outdone by the Carnegie Hall speech making, Dixon mounted the platform (or in this case the pulpit) and gave a rabble-rousing address a week later at the Baptist Church of the Epiphany, where he said in part:

And this thing, half devil and half child, is supposed to be your equal and actually claims that equality. He does not get it now, but fifty years from now 60,000,000 negroes will claim those equal rights and will take them if they are refused.

We must remove the negro or we will have to fight him. He will not continue to submit to the injustice with which we treat him in the North and South. The negro makes a magnificent fighting animal. . . . When the negro smashes into your drawing room some day in the future with a repeating rifle in his hand, his flat nostrils dilated, his yellow eyes and teeth gleaming, you will make good on your protestations of absolute equality or he will know the reason why.<sup>44</sup>

Meanwhile *The Clansman* continued its successful run in New York. Early in March it left Manhattan and played for a week in Washington, where audiences greeted it with "boisterous enthusiasm,"<sup>45</sup> but critics panned it. The *Post* called it a "dramatized nightmare."<sup>46</sup> It played Baltimore next, and Dixon was on hand to supply lengthy interviews for the papers and to make his customary third-act speech. The *Sun* was favorably disposed towards the play and called the hostile criticism of New York and Washington critics the "sheerest prejudice."<sup>47</sup>

By this time the wheel had come full circle. *The Clansman* was almost back where it had started. Whether this troupe continued into the South for a return engagement or whether it was another troupe that played Dixon's home town of Shelby, North Carolina, in 1906, and Decatur, Alabama, later the same year, it is difficult to determine. Nor is it necessary to ascertain. It has been reported authoritatively that *The Clansman* toured the country for five years,<sup>48</sup> during three of which two companies were operating simultaneously,<sup>49</sup> certainly something of a record for its day. By the end of the first six months, however, the fervent emotionalism which attended the showing of the Dixon play in the South had somewhat

abated. Gradually calmness and sanity returned. To be sure, in 1915 the whole cycle started over again when *The Birth of a Nation* (which was based on *The Clansman*) took the country by storm. But that is part of another story. Suffice it to say that by spring of 1906 the initial fever had subsided, and the nation turned its eyes to Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, where Booker T. Washington was providing a healthy antidote to the brand of poison dispensed by Thomas Dixon. There in April occurred the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the famed school. Speakers included Andrew Carnegie, President Charles W. Eliot of Harvard, Lyman Abbott, and Secretary of War William Howard Taft, whose speech was prophetically described as being of presidential caliber.<sup>50</sup> The liberal press of the nation took some satisfaction in the proceedings. A Scranton, Pennsylvania, newspaper, for example, stated: "The splendid success of Tuskegee Institute . . . is the best answer that could possibly be made to the libelous play of 'The Clansman' in which the author, Ex-Rev. Thomas Dixon, insidiously seeks to promote the idea that to educate the Negro is to increase his powers for mischief. . . . The cruel slanders of 'The Clansman' are abundantly refuted in the magnificent achievements of Tuskegee which is the conception of a Negro and has been under Negro management for a quarter of a century."<sup>51</sup>

Poetic justice of some sort was achieved when in May, 1906, Andrew Carnegie, a great man in his own right, made headlines by designating Booker T. Washington as one of the five greatest living men in the world. Who the other four were I have no idea. But I do not think the list included the name of the Reverend Thomas Dixon, Jr., author of *The Clansman*, "The Greatest Play of the South."

NOTES

- (The occasional absence of page numbers and dates in references to sources cited is owing to the fact that certain of the newspaper articles used were found with this information missing in books of clippings contained in the Booker T. Washington manuscript collection in the Library of Congress.)
1. *National Encyclopedia of American Biography* (1906), XIII, 189-190.
  2. *Knoxville Journal and Tribune*, November 5, 1905, p. 5.
  3. *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, September 23, 1905, p. 1.
  4. *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot*, September 23, 1905.
  5. *Ibid.*
  6. *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, September 26, 1905, p. 1.
  7. Date not available.
  8. Reprinted in *Raleigh News and Observer*, October 1, 1905, p. 1.
  9. *Ibid.*, October 3, 1905, p. 1.
  10. *Ibid.*, October 5, 1905, p. 5.
  11. *Ibid.*
  12. Quoted in *Montgomery Advertiser*, October 29, 1905, p. 21.
  13. Quoted in *Charleston News and Courier*, October 18, 1905, p. 3.
  14. Quoted *ibid.*, October 19, 1905, p. 7.
  15. Quoted in *Knoxville Journal and Tribune*, October 20, 1905, p. 4.



16. Quoted *ibid.*
17. Quoted *ibid.*
18. October 21, 1905.
19. *Ibid.*
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21. Quoted in *Knoxville Journal and Tribune*, November 9, 1905, p. 4.
22. *Montgomery Advertiser*, November 4, 1905, p. 5.
23. Quoted *ibid.*, November 5, 1905.
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26. *Ibid.*, October 20, 1905, p. 4.
27. *Ibid.*, October 31, 1905, p. 4.
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30. *Ibid.*, December 17, 1905, p. 10.
31. *Ibid.*, December 18, 1905, p. 4.
32. *New York Evening Journal*, December 22, 1905.
33. *Ibid.*, December 26, 1905.
34. *New York Daily News*, December 31, 1905.
35. *New York Daily Tribune*, January 18, 1906, p. 7.
36. *New York Herald Tribune*, January 9, 1906, p. 12.
37. *New York Dramatic Mirror*, CV (January 20, 1906), 3.
38. *New York Times*, January 19, 1906.
39. *Cincinnati Enquirer*, January 28, 1906.
40. *New York Mail*, January 23, 1906.
41. *New York Evening Telegram*, January 22, 1906.
42. *Buffalo Commercial*, January 25, 1906.
43. *New York Evening Journal*, January 23, 1906.
44. *New York Press*, January 29, 1906.
45. *Washington Post*, March 6, 1906, p. 3.
46. March 11, 1906.
47. March 13, 1906, p. 12.
48. Milton Mackaye, "The Birth of a Nation," *Scribner's*, CII (November, 1937), 43.
49. Raymond A. Cook, *Thomas Dixon: His Books and His Career* (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Emory University, 1953), pp. 122-123.
50. *Kansas City Post*, April 9, 1906.
51. *Truth*, April 10, 1906.

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## HORATIO GREENOUGH AMONG THE POETS

BY NATHALIA WRIGHT

American artists in the nineteenth century were often inspired by American writers. Washington Allston and John Quidor painted scenes from Irving's satiric history and tales; William Dunlap and Alvan Fisher illustrated Cooper's novels. But the process was rarely reversed; few works of art inspired belletristic compositions. Among those which did, the works of Horatio Greenough are rather conspicuous. At least four of them were the subjects of nine poems, written by eight poets.

Greenough was the first professional American sculptor, on which account alone he enjoyed considerable reputation at home and abroad throughout his lifetime. He was born in Boston in 1805 into a prominent family, educated at Harvard, and instructed in the technicalities of his art in Rome. In 1828 he settled in Florence, where, except for brief excursions, he lived until 1851. In that year he returned to America and the next year he died. His most famous works were two colossal pieces commissioned by the national government for the Capitol in Washington: a seated, semi-nude statue of Washington, intended for the rotunda (now in the Smithsonian Institution), and a group entitled "The Rescue," depicting a pioneer restraining an Indian from massacring the pioneer's wife and child, which stands on one of the blockings of the east front. Like all the sculptors of his generation, Greenough executed a large number of portrait busts, but unlike most of them he was dedicated to the ideal as the highest order of art. He worked generally in the neo-classical tradition, but he took the subjects of a good many works from the Bible and of others from several poets of modern times: Petrarch, Milton, Pope, and Byron.

He had a strong literary bent himself and throughout his life almost as many literary as artistic associations. As a youth he memorized and composed poetry. During his college days he was an intimate in the circle of Washington Allston, where art and literature received equal attention. Allston was a writer as well as a painter, and one of his closest friends was Richard Henry Dana, Sr., the poet and journalist. Not long afterward Greenough reviewed Dana's *Poems* for the *American Quarterly Review*, taking the occasion to enunciate a theory of national literature. In later years he was well acquainted with Bryant, Halleck, Cooper, Willis, Paulding, Henry T. Tuckerman, Richard Henry Wilde (he and Wilde once vied in translating a Florentine epitaph into English