# Scarborough, William Sanders *First Lessons in Greek* p 187 Pb Bolchazy-Carducci 9780865168633 £18.93

This book is a reissued facsimile of an 1881 Classical Greek course for beginners published in New York and Chicago. This would perhaps be unremarkable, just another old grammar book, except for the fact that William Sanders Scarborough was African American, born into slavery in 1852. At a time when Classics as a subject finds itself subject to questioning over its mindset and acceptance of minorities, just to open this book raises many questions about the status of Classics and who exactly it is open to. Its actual existence is remarkable in itself since, as Michele Valerie Ronnick makes clear in the introduction, it was questioned in the nineteenth century whether a black person could ever learn Greek at all. Ronnick’s introduction gives us the personal history of Scarborough who was born in Macon, Georgia, studied at Oberlin and was for many years professor at Wilberforce University in Ohio. It also outlines the history of Greek and Latin textbooks in nineteenth century America and how Scarborough’s course fits into that history. The text itself is reproduced in exact facsimile of the original page layout, which is grammar/translation in its purest form. Users of the book would have needed Goodwin’s Greek Grammar (or Hadley’s) to refer to constantly as they worked through the examples and sentences for translation both into English and Greek. The learning curve is steep and after 130 pages the learner is on to passages of Xenophon’s *Anabasis* with minimal notes. The devotion of Professor Scarborough and his students as they must have worked methodically through these exercises can be felt as the reader turns the pages. Anyone interested in the history of Classics teaching should look at this book, as should anyone else who thinks about the present state of Classics and its appeal and relevance to learners from backgrounds which are different to the traditional ones.