



**DR. J. O. SPENCER (White)**

President John Oakley Spencer comes of fine old New England stock. On his father's side he is descended directly from the Lyman's famous in the earliest history of that section, while through his mother he is connected with a Scotch Klan that runs far back into the records of Scotland, some of whom early in the Seventeenth Century came to America and settled partly in Vermont, partly in northern New York.

President Spencer was born July 11, 1857, at Lemon, Wyoming County, Pennsylvania. He attended the public schools of that section, and when ready entered Wyoming Seminary, an institution noted at that time for the superior training it gave to the youth who entered it. After completing his course there he taught in the public schools of northern Pennsylvania and New York for some time. He was Principal of Sherbourne Academy and was the organizer of the high school at Kingston, Pa.

After a college career at Illinois Wesleyan University he went to Japan, where for 15 years he had distinguished success as the Dean of the Anglo-Japanese College at Tokio. He then returned to America to engage in special study at Columbia University and rounded out his university life with the doctorate from Illinois Wesleyan University. His intention to return to Japan was overruled by the great loss sustained in the death of his wife and one of his sons.

Dr. Spencer then became the Headmaster of the Hudson River Academy from which position he was called in 1902 to the Presidency of Morgan College. For the last 23 years he has guided the course of this institution, and in that time has seen it go from its crowded quarters on Fulton and Edmondson Avenues, and an enrollment that was very meagre, into a spacious and beautiful suburban location of more than sixty acres, and into a student body that is limited now only by the capacity of its present equipment. He has seen it become recognized as a first class college, whose graduates are admitted at the best of American Universities for advanced study. He has seen the sentiment of this community change from one of indifference and incredulity to one that gives it position and prestige among its patrons such as is held by institutions of similar high grade in their several communities.

To the accomplishment of these results President Spencer has given the best of his life and thought and consecrated purpose. Despite criticism from both sides of the color line occasional questioning of his sincerity and at times open hostility he has gone straight ahead until now he is loved and respected by all citizens of this community who believe that the fullest and highest opportunities for the development of the intellectual powers of all men must be provided. In all these endeavors he has been nobly aided by Mrs. Spencer, whom he married in 1907, and who has been a remarkable influence in widening his vision and deepening his resolve to give all that he had to the promotion of an institution of higher learning for the negro, until there shall not be a better one anywhere in this country.

