



**Smithsonian Institution**

*National Museum of African American History and Culture*

## **Abbott's Monthly Vol. II No. 5**

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FROM the District of Columbia comes several of our best. A very remarkable sculptress, May Howard Jackson, James A. Porter and Frank J. Dillon, painters. May Howard Jackson whose bust of "Kelly Miller" and "Head of a Negro Child" won for her the Harmon Bronze Award in 1926 is considered an outstanding sculptress of the times. Her work is genuinely superb in quality and technique and delicate in execution. She has great ability in bringing out a likeness of her sitter. Critics in Washington and New York comment very favorably on her work.

James A. Porter whose character studies are so gently handled in color, composition and technique is also a teacher of Art at Howard University. He is a good draftsman.

The still life paintings of Frank J. Dillon are excellent, naturalistic and colorful, showing unusual ability in the execution of that subject.

The portraiture and figure paintings of John W. Hardwick of Indianapolis, Indiana, shows the work of a man painting freely and with an unlabored technique, representing the artist at his best. Hale Woodruff is also of Indiana, a painter of landscape treats his subjects in a very broad and masterful manner, and have a conquest of atmospheric illusion.

LAURA WHEELER WARING and Nancy Elizabeth Prophet are two of our women artists of great ability. The former is very gifted in revealing with paint, the likeness and character of her subjects, and the latter equally as well gifted in doing the same in clay or plaster, but chiefly pearwood.

Allen R. Freelon's landscapes and coast scenes are highly colorful, with handling quite unusual. He seems to penetrate the feeling of the out-of-doors. His, show the work of a painter who derives great pleasure from his work.

Henry B. Jones, another of the Philadelphia artists whose work may be classed among the realist type of painters, handles his portraits and landscapes in a very delicate manner. He possesses the ability to put character and life-like expression in his modest portraits, making his technique conform to the character of his sitter, thereby making a fine likeness. Lines of poetry may be read in his landscapes. He is a painter from whom we may expect much.

Considering the works of our artists, we might say that their art as a whole compares very favorably with the contemporary artists of other races. Very few of them are swayed by the modernists; none by the futurists or cubists idea; rather they have continued to carry out the ideas of the older masters, or at least have adhered very strictly to the ideas and teachings of the schools. Very few, if any, show a tendency towards their African ancestors, easily accounted for when we remember that they have, for a number of years, been separated from their native home, and a very few, if any, have any first hand knowledge of the arts of those people except that which has come directly from the slaves.

The fact that an increasing number each year make their way into the annual American exhibition throughout the country, is ample proof of the



gradual improvement of the individual artist, and the group as a whole. From the group has arisen several who have become well-known in the field of mural painting, so much so that their work can be found in many of our schools and other public buildings throughout the country. Through a prominent architect in Chicago, Aaron Douglas of New York was recommended to do several large mural decorations for one of Chicago's leading hotels. Laura Wheeler Waring is a portrait painter of much ability, having executed several of her best recently. Illustrators among the black race are numerous and some have large clienteles. Others have painted landscape which have found their places in good collections everywhere.

Born with talent as many of these artists are, they will surely climb the ladder of fame and make their place in the art history of America.

As art is such a long drawn out process filled with many disappointments, drudgery and hard work, a small number of artists, like artists of other groups, support themselves by their art. There are, however, some art teachers, lecturers and museum men. Others are employed in dealers' galleries and gift shops, while others are letter-carriers, elevator operators, business men and social workers.

It is the belief of the writer that many of these artists have longed for a privilege to show their works to the public. Many have, no doubt, wished for someone who

(Continued on page 85)

[[image]]

[[caption]]

OCTOROON GIRL by Archibald J. Motley, Jr., of Chicago, who is now taking advanced studies in France under the Guggenheim Fellowship. Some of his work recently exhibited in Sweden.

[/caption]]

55

A Pair of KINGS

How a Clever Hoax Was "Put Over" African Royalty by Two Shrewd New Yorkers

By Henry B. Jones

Illustrated by Ray St. John

[[image]] Ray St. John

[[caption]]

"Twenty miles we marched today. Tomorrow we must go more--"

[/caption]]

UP in the Harlem Cafe, on 135th Street, you may meet any person you have ever known, seen, read about or owed money to if your time is ample and your stomach is heroic. I've been in so many peculiar places on this little earth that the rare and startling seem like the morning newspaper, usual but new. So when I dropped into the Harlem one May evening and was hailed by Bert McDonald I was rather pleased. A gathering with Mac always insures more or less excitement. No, Mac

has no Scotch in him--not since Volstead has been Boss of the Noble Experiment.

Mac has a complexion the color of dripped coffee, and hails from some hinterland of the Black Belt, stands six feet two in his moochers and has unbounded respect for Bert McDonald and the famous, healthy and popular American dollar. His big hooked nose and the chilly topaz eyes, hard as a landlady's heart, mean a lot, too. These, together with a bouncing bass voice, made him a captain in the late local unrest in Europe. They won him a couple of gold stripes and a medal or two. I was sure glad to see old Mac.

"John Atwood, the M. P. curse," he called. "Come over here and meet a living curiosity, King Chaka of Zulu Land. Chaka, this is another good friend, John Atwood, a jigwark of parts!"

We all shook hands long and thorough. The king was almost Mac's double, except his eyes were a shade darker. They were certainly two life-sized men, fine buddies for a barbecue or a battle. Mac turned to me as he sipped a ginger ale with a gas attack like hair tonic.

"The last time we saw each other was twelve fast years back, in Brest. Have you collected much hard cash since then?"

That's McDonald all over.

"Well, now and then I see the wolf lurking in the woods, but he keeps away from my door. How is your current currency?"

"Convalescing," answered Mac.

The king talked as I ate. He had been in the good old U.S.A. since 1918, and he was real dippy about the place. Right now he was finishing some domehead stuff at Columbia University. It seemed that way back about a century ago, two impis, or regiments, of this king's great, great, great grand uncle Chaka had left Zulu Land with their families and settled farther north in an immense valley. This Zulu colony was surrounded by steep mountains, with deserts, swamps and thick forests beyond them. There was one road, one pass through the mountains to this land. The descendants of these old Grays and Buffaloes were right peaceful--considering. Now and then they made a few cattle raids or had gang fights with Swazi, Masai, or Matabele tribesmen. The British and Portuguese left these New Zulus alone, as they sort of acted like state police around their neighborhood. I got real interested listening to that king. By this time something in that ginger ale loosened up Chaka's

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