



Smithsonian Institution

National Museum of African American History and Culture

The Crisis, Vol. 5, No. 6

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MEN OF THE MONTH [[image]]

A JUROR.

BEATRICE REAMS BALL, of Seattle, Wash., is the second colored woman to serve as a juror in the State of Washington. Mrs. Ball was educated in the public schools of Denver, Col., and at the Elms, Springfield, Mass. She returned to Denver and was there appointed to a clerkship in the

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MRS. B. R. BALL

recorder's office, a position which she held for three years with credit. She moved to Seattle, Wash., in 1904. In 1910 the constitution of the State of Washington was amended so as to give women the right of suffrage, and since that time women have been serving on juries in all the courts of the State. Not until this month did the most populous county, King, select for jury service a colored woman, and that woman is Mrs. Ball. She is now sitting as juror in the court of Seattle.

THE PASSING OF JAMES EDGAR FRENCH

JAMES EDGAR FRENCH did not distinguish himself to any great degree as a man of letters. Death claimed him just as he was about to enter upon his life work as poet and writer. But manuscripts and writings which he left show that he possessed talent. Mr. French was born at Paris, Ky., in 1876, and died at Chicago, Ill., July 31, 1912. After finishing high school at Paris, he taught school in the rural districts of Kentucky, and in 1901 was a member of the faculty of the State normal school at Frankfort. At his death he was in the government service in Chicago. From his youth he was a close and devoted student of the best literature, particularly poetry. Among his unpublished manuscripts there are essays, poems and a novel upon which he spent several years, and which he was rewriting at the time of his death. An article of some length on the fourth annual meeting of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, setting forth "what it is, what it aims to do, its method, with a few of the things it has accomplished in the three years of its existence," was probably his last single literary effort; for he died just three months after that meeting was held in Chicago last April. We close with a line from "The Winged Ideal": "I would have you observe also that a man's success in life may be measured not

MEN OF THE MONTH

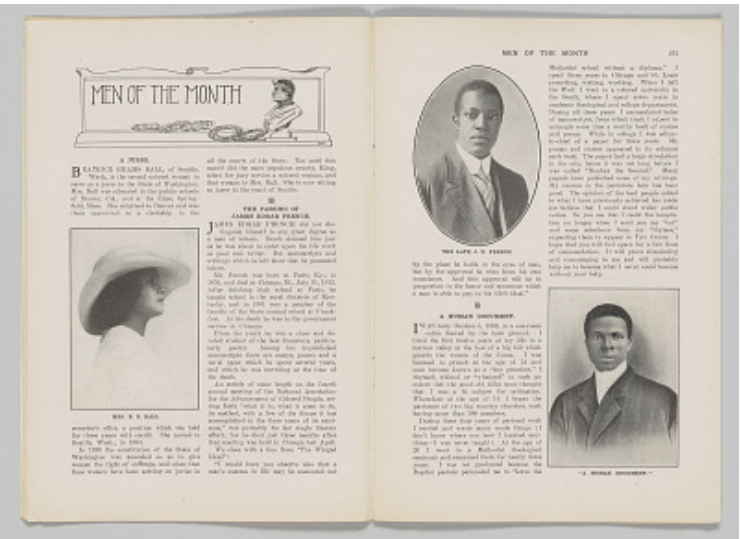
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THE LATE J. E. FRENCH.

by the place he holds in the eyes of men, but by the approval he wins from his own conscience. And this approval will be in proportion to the honor and reverence which a man is able to pay to his life's ideal."

A HUMAN DOCUMENT

I WAS born October 5, 1880, in a one-room cabin floored by the bare ground. I lived the first twelve years of my life in a narrow valley at the



foot of a big hill which guards the waters of the Coosa. I was licensed to preach at the age of 12 and soon became known as a "boy preacher." I rhymed, whined or "whanged" to such an extent that the good old folks soon thought that I was a fit subject for ordination. Wherefore at the age of 16 I began the pastorate of two big country churches, each having more than 300 members.

During these four years of pastoral work I recited and wrote many crude things (I don't know where nor how I learned anything-I was never taught). At the age of 20 I went to a Methodist theological seminary and remained there for nearly three years. I was not graduated because the Baptist pastors persuaded me to "leave the Methodist school without a diploma." I spent three years in Chicago and St. Louis preaching, writing, working. When I left the West I went to a colored university in the South, where I spent seven years in academic theological and college departments. During all these years I accumulated bales of manuscripts, from which trash I expect to untangle some time a worthy book of stories and poems. While in college I was editor-in-chief of a paper for three years. My poems and stories appeared in its columns each week. The paper had a large circulation in the city, hence it was not long before I was called "Dunbar the Second." Many papers have published some of my writings. My success in the pastorate here has been good. The opinion of the best people added to what I have previously achieved has made me believe that I could stand wider public notice. So you see that I resist the temptation no longer when I send you my "cut" and some selections from my "rhymes," expecting them to appear in THE CRISIS. I hope that you will find space for a few lines of commendation. It will prove stimulating and encouraging to me and will probably help me to become what I never could become without your help.

[[image]]
"A HUMAN DOCUMENT."

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