

## Woman's Confession Gives Man Liberty

### WOMAN'S PERJURY IMPRISONS NEGRO THIRTEEN YEARS

Fearing to Face Death with Perjured Soul White Woman Confesses Her Lie Imprisoned Innocent Man

#### BESS NOT GUILTY OF ASSAULT

Governor Richards Liberates Prisoner Once Property Owner But Now Penniless; Newspaper Raising Fund

Columbia, S. C., May 29—Conscience and justice have set Ben Bess, Florence county Negro, free—after 13 years behind the bars an innocent man.

The woman whose testimony sent Bess to prison on charges of assault for a 30-year term has filed an affidavit, part of which reads:

"Since I have not much longer to live, I hereby desire as much as possible to undo the great wrong I have done this Negro, Ben Bess, and I hereby declare my testimony upon the trial of this case to be untrue."

Justice acted when Governor Richards gave Bess a full pardon.

When Bess went to the penitentiary he had some property. He lost this and when he was given his freedom he was destitute. Governor Richards sought to have financial aid given the man from the state contingent fund, but was told that no legal means of doing so existed. The governor then expressed the hope that the South Carolina legislature at its next session would take steps to right the grave injustice done this Negro.

A Columbia newspaper has started a fund for Bess and this has reached \$364.

The woman who caused Bess to be sent to prison and who is white, failed to give any reason for her false testimony in her affidavit.

#### Bess Case Deeply Stirrs South

Columbia, S. C. — (ANP) — The case of Ben Bess, who served 13 years of a life sentence for criminally assaulting a white woman and who was liberated recently when the woman declared that he was innocent, has caused quite a stir in this state and citizens here and elsewhere are seeking some way to compensate Bess for the years which he has spent in prison.

#### Suggests Purchase of Home

One white woman, who did not sign her name, wrote to the South Carolina State, a white daily, suggesting that the state purchase a home and farm for Bess. Her letter is as follows:

"Being a woman, I am much interested in the case of Ben Bess, who was betrayed and falsely accused by a woman—shame on her! I should think a nice little house on a few acres of land would be very little for the state to give this poor innocent man for the loss of the thirteen best years of his life and the shame of being a criminal. Implements to cultivate a crop, a good mule, and supplies for a year—not much, but it would make him so independent and happy. The home would be a monument to justice."

#### What If He Had Been Hanged?

Another white woman raised the question as to what the state would do if Bess had been hanged as suggested by the prosecution. She pointed out this phase of the case as an argument against capital punishment, pointing out:

"That is the outstanding weakness of capital punishment: there is no opportunity to correct the errors of human beings proverbially addicted to error. It is, of course, proper that Bess should have been pardoned. It is also proper that, so far as possible, restitution should be made to him for the injury which he suffered."

Answering the query as to what provision could be made in such a case, the attorney general declared that there was no legal way in which the state might make a gift of any kind to Bess, as the case was without precedent.

The governor, however, stated that if no way was found, he would appoint a committee to receive free will

### SOUTHERN EDITOR GETS PULITZER AWARD

New York City—(ANP)—According to announcement made by Columbia university recently, the Pulitzer award for the best editorial writing was given to Grover C. Hall of the Montgomery Advertiser, because of his articles against flogging and racial and religious intolerance. The award was \$500.

### COLORED YOUTH WINS CARTOONIST PRIZE IN CONTEST

Twenty-two Year Old Elmer Campbell Awarded First Prize in Annual Post Dispatch Drawing Exhibition

#### FIRST HONORS PREVIOUSLY

St. Louis, Mo.—Elmer Campbell, a former student of Sumner High school of St. Louis, was awarded the first prize of \$250 as a cartoonist, recently in the annual Post Dispatch Black and White drawing competition of St. Louis artists.

Campbell's prize cartoon, a tornado scene in black crayon, portrays the rescue of a tornado victim. Several persons are carrying a stricken victim from a storm wrecked building.

The award was voted the young cartoonist by a jury of three white commercial artists, following an inspection of competitive exhibition at the Artists Guild, Union Boulevard and Enright avenue.

One hundred black and white studies were entered in crayon and ink, or oils. It was the fourth annual competition and attracted the largest number of entries, most white persons. The award jury was made up of Fayerweather Babcock, James Cody, Ewell and Otto J. Schneider of Chicago.

#### Winner Only 22

Campbell is only 22 years old, son of the late Mrs. Elizabeth Campbell, a former teacher in the St. Louis public schools. He early showed a deft aptitude for cartoon work, although tenderly discouraged by his mother. While a student in the St. Louis High school, he pursued a special correspondence course in a cartooning school in Minneapolis, Minn. At the latter school exhibit at the Minnesota state fair, he won third prize for his comic cartoon. At the age of 16 Campbell had won the highest distinction ever accorded a Negro boy in this line. A number of Campbell's cartoons have appeared in the Chicago Bee.

Previous to his graduation, Campbell was awarded first honors by the University of Wisconsin in a national contest for serious cartoons among high school students. The title of the cartoon was "Four Years of Peace," picturing an American soldier with bowed head resting his crossed hands holding a shovel, and kneeling over the grave of a comrade while on the wooden cross which marks his final resting place, hangs his trench hat. From the heavens above the noble spirit of the dead hero looks down upon his sorrowing friend and soothes and sustains him with, "We've won, Buddy!"

Campbell received his advanced training at the Chicago university and the Art Institute of that city. He is now engaged as a commercial artist with the Triad art studios.

### MEHARRY CELEBRATES 52ND ANNIVERSARY

Nashville, Tenn. — (ANP) — Dr. John J. Mullowney, president of Meharry Medical college, announced recently that the 52nd anniversary of Meharry Medical college was celebrated from Sunday, May 20, when the baccalaureate sermon was delivered to Thursday, May 30, which was commencement day.

Mr. C. H. Hicks, who has been confined to his home by illness for the past three weeks, is much improved and able to be out and return to his work.

contributions for the purpose of making some restitution to the unfortunate man.

## EDITORIAL

The confession of a conscience-stricken woman has brought freedom to a Negro, Ben Bess, who has served thirteen years of a thirty year sentence imposed upon him for alleged criminal assault upon the woman, white, of course, who now with death imminent, makes affidavit that she swore falsely when she charged Ben with a heinous crime. Bess, evidently an industrious and thrifty man, for he was a property owner at the time of his conviction, has spent thirteen of the best years of his life behind prison bars for a crime he never committed. Branded as a felon, who can picture the hell through which he has passed? Conscious of his own innocence, despite the condemnation of men and the contumely thrown upon his race, he had the consolation which comes from integrity and yet he passed through a veritable Gethsemane. Penniless, he starts life anew. People of the State of South Carolina are anxious to make what reparation they may for the injustice done this man.

The unhappy woman, who will be happier now since she has unburdened her soul, so far as the press advises, has given no reason for her perjury. Let us be charitable and not seek to pry further into the secrets of a human soul which seeks absolution from the sin of perjury which wrought such injury to another human soul even though the encasement of that soul was an ebony skin. What other sin or sins were hers which caused her to perjure her soul it is ours not to inquire into. Suffice it that she seeks to make whatever reparation she may, even at this late day. If, however, this case will direct the attention of white America, South and North, to the fact that scores of hapless black men have been done to death by mobs and COURTS upon the wilful and deliberate lies of weak and erring white women, and will cause America to be a little less hasty in taking snap judgment concerning the alleged crimes of Negroes against women, which the country is so quick to believe, Ben Bess's suffering will not have been in vain.

There are numerous cases in which to shield themselves and their paramours, white in most instances, the cry of "criminal assault by a Negro" has been raised. This is true not only of the South, where it is alleged it is more frequent, but of the North. Duluth, Minn., is not forgotten; nor Coffeyville, Kan.; nor Columbia, Mo.; nor even Omaha, whose taxpayers and citizens are still paying the price in taxes and loss of commercial prestige.

That there are bad men of all races, and women, too, cannot be denied. The Negro race has its proportion, but not the undue proportion of criminally inclined popular white opinion credits it with. Nor must it be forgotten that many a Negro has suffered for crimes committed by white-skinned men with blackened faces.

Perhaps the case of Ben Bess may make America a little less impulsive in concluding that every Negro accused of crime and especially of crimes against white women is guilty. Perhaps it may awaken the conscience of the country to the evils of mob violence. Perhaps it may make America a little more charitable in her judgment of her Negro citizens.

If this be true, we feel sure that Ben Bess will not regret the price he had to pay vicariously for this result.

### CAST WHICH WILL GIVE THE OPERETTA "THE PENNANT" WEDNESDAY NIGHT AT BRANDEIS THEATRE



Reading from left to right: Herbert Lewis, Burns Scott, Bert Fowler, Roy Nelson, Buster Phillips, Gordon Hopkins, Elaine Smith, Dorothy Allen, Madeline Shipman, Virginia Jackson, Gerald Edwards, Florentine Pinkston, Consuelia Cross, Forrester Scott, Carrie Harrison, Helen Hunigan, Mae Marshall, Willa Hayes, Ware Shaw, John Fegg, Adrian Johnson, O. C. Wynn, Thomas Dooley, Claretta Biddis, Arthur McCaw, Jean Dorsey, Hazel Myers, Florence Myers, Valvin Whitesides, Marjorie Bolden, Susie Whitesides, Orden Maxwell, Frances Trusty, Constance Singleton, Julia Brannon, Grace Brannon, Elizabeth Allen, Margaret Dallas, Aline Burnette, and Fellen Robinson. Catherine Williams, Woodrow Macklin and Charles Wilson are not in the picture.

### CARL DITON, FAMOUS PIANIST AND ORGANIST, GIVES RECITAL THURSDAY

Carl Diton, famous composer, pianist and organist, whom Omahans are to have the pleasure of hearing in piano and pipe organ recital at Pilgrim Baptist church, Thursday night, under the auspices of St. Philip's Episcopal church, is a native of Philadelphia, and a product, musically and academically, of the University of Pennsylvania. He studied at Munich, Germany, as a protegee of the late Madam E. Azalia Hackley. He was the first composer to employ a Negro spiritual as thematic for an organ composition and was awarded first prize in the 1914 National Negro Composition contest sponsored by John Wanamaker. This is Mr. Diton's second transcontinental tour, upon the completion of which he is leaving for a European concert tour.

Miss Marjorie Hall is ill at her home, 2211 Ohio street.

### PROMINENT WOMAN DELIVERS ADDRESS AT M. E. CONFERENCE

Kansas City, Mo.—(ANP) — The work of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs was reviewed recently before the general conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in session here, by Mrs. Mary McLeod Bethune, president of the Bethune-Cookman college, and of said association and a member of the general conference.

Mrs. Bethune thanked God "for what Methodism has done for the womanhood of the Negro race of the United States. You have awakened us. You have given us the opportunity of finding ourselves. We are steadily going forward awakening the masses, that the masses might find themselves and be lifted to that platform of real Christian service."

Such an impression was made by Mrs. Bethune that the assembly unanimously adopted a resolution commending the work of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs.

### K. U. GIRL ELECTED TO SOCIOLOGY FRAT.

Wawrence, Kas.—Miss Willie A. Strong, senior in the college, was elected to the Alpha chapter of Alpha Kappa Delta, national honorary sociological fraternity. She was initiated Wednesday, May 16. Miss Strong is an Oklahoma girl, and a member of the Delta Sigma Theta sorority. She is a sociology major and will receive her A. B. degree in June.

### AFRICAN METHODISTS ELECT FOUR BISHOPS; EXCITEMENT

Financial Secretary Is Re-Elected by Acclamation. Few Changes Made in General Officers.

#### NEBRASKA GETS BISHOP GREGG

Chicago, Ill.—(ANP)—After one of the most hectic and interesting elections ever held in a general conference, three additional bishops were elected here recently.

Following closely on the heels of Dr. R. A. Grant's election, Thursday, which was effected on the third ballot, was the election of the Rev. S. L. Greene of Arkansas and the Rev. G. B. Young of Texas. The fifth ballot witnessed the withdrawal of Dr. R. R. Wright, jr., from the race and the election of Dr. W. H. Davis of Maryland, with a vote of 580, which is said to have broken a record which had stood a century.

The election was a scene of continual balloting extending over a period of some 38 hours, and it was a tired group when the fourth and last bishop was elected.

Choose Hawkins by Acclamation John R. Hawkins, Washington, D. C., was re-elected financial secretary Saturday afternoon by acclamation.

The election of general officers resulted in all the old officers being successful, the one exception being the election of J. H. Wilson of California to the editorship of the Western Christian Recorder, to succeed Rev. J. D. Barksdale of Topeka. Among the others elected were Dr. D. M. Baxter, manager of the Book Concern; Dr. R. R. Wright, editor of the Christian Recorder; Dr. E. H. Coit, secretary of the Department of Missions; Dr. S. J. Johnson, secretary of the Extension Department; and Dr. A. S. Johnson, commissioner of education.

#### Bishop Gregg Assigned Here

Chicago, Ill.—Bishop John A. Gregg, formerly of the South African district, has been assigned to the fifth Episcopal district, embracing Nebraska, Missouri, Kansas and Colorado.

### OMAHA WOMAN'S BROTHER ELECTED A. M. E. ZION BISHOP

Doctor Jacobs, Prominent Physician and Minister of Brooklyn, Elected by Acclamation at Conference

#### EQUAL LAY REPRESENTATION

St. Louis, Mo.—The twenty-eighth quadrennial session of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church formally closed here Monday, May 21st. Sunday saw the consecration of the two newly elected bishops, F. M. Jacobs and W. W. Matthews, who were chosen the previous week. The ceremony was held in the Metropolitan church. Bishop J. W. Woods preached the sermon.

Prior to his elevation to the bishopric, Dr. Jacobs had served his denomination as general secretary. He was educated at Howard university, Wesleyan university and Long Island Hospital Medical school. A native of Camden, S. C., he has been engaged in the practice of medicine in Brooklyn, N. Y., for 27 years. He was elected bishop by acclamation.

Dr. Matthews is a native of Mississippi and was educated at Branch Normal college, Pine Bluff, Ark., and New Orleans university, New Orleans, La. He came into the general conference of his denomination when he

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### RACE ACHIEVEMENTS WIN COMMENDATION FROM NOTED DIVINE

President of the Federal Council of Churches in America Answers Query Covering Negro's Contribution

#### CUTURAL GIFTS THE GREATEST

Music, Literature and Art Enriched by His Contribution as Well as Industry, Trade and Commerce

New York, N. Y.—In the syndicated columns conducted by the Rev. Dr. S. Parkes Cadman, president of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, there recently appeared the following question, "What, in your opinion, are the chief contributions made by the race to the social life of this country?" Dr. Cadman's reply, carried in newspapers throughout the nation, was as follows:

"The Negro is remarkably rich in his emotional nature. His contributions to music through the Fisk Jubilee Singers and similar organizations, Roland Hayes and other well-known vocalists of his race, and the haunting Negro melodies and folk songs which Dvorak used as the basis of his new world symphony, have benefited the most neglected art among the American people.

"Nor is the Negro without isolated painters and poets, actors and writers who show their capacities in fields which many supposed closed to them. The ministry of the Negro preacher to his people deserves emphatic and honorable mention. Despite tremendous handicaps it has conserved the spiritual forces which largely account for their amazing material progress since the civil war.

#### Both Races Need Moral Direction

"Their physical labors have made the cotton belt of the south possible and remunerative. The first 20 years of the Negro's emancipation increased his industrial productivity in this one commodity to a financial amount sufficient to purchase his freedom. Moreover, since 1865 he has acquired \$2,000,000,000 worth of personal property.

"Negro and white folks alike require moral direction. The race which began here in bondage has remained incorrigibly religious. Its members readily respond to good example. They maintain their faith in the God of all life. Surrounding cynicism and doubt do not dent their simple trust in unseen realities. An unselfish, sympathetic study of their needs in our social readjustments can rely upon their support.

"Leaders of their own race, rightly trained and given the opportunity, can achieve, aided by intelligent white co-operation, the solution of problems which so baffle us. Loyalty to his friends is the Negro's characteristic. Notwithstanding his hard usage by mistaken or tyrannical individuals, he has never been a traitor to the flag. His Americanism is confiding and enthusiastic. It must be attached to the best ideals. Men like Dr. Proctor (Rev. Hugh Henry Proctor of the Congregational church), of my own neighborhood in Brooklyn, are rendering yeoman service in this respect, but they need white assistance, which should not be too long delayed at a crucial moment."

### THREE GRADUATE FROM UNIVERSITY OF OMAHA

Among the graduates from the University of Omaha who will receive diplomas and degrees next Thursday night are three colored students, Miss Ruth Seay, Miss Thelma Norris and Miss Goldie Mitchell. Miss Seay has had experience as a teacher in the public schools of St. Joseph, Mo., but decided to study for her degree, B. A., and so has been attending the university. Miss Thelma Norris, while attending the university has taught for two terms in the night school conducted at the North Side "Y". The Monitor extends sincere congratulations.