

THE FIRST NEGRO ELECTED JUDGE

AN EPOCHAL SCENE will presently be enacted in one of the divisions of Chicago's Municipal Court, point out several editors, when there will ascend to its bench Albert Bailey George, the Negro just elected Municipal Judge on the Republican ticket by 470,000 votes. In the past a Negro here and there has been appointed judge, notably Robert H. Terrell of Washington, we are told, but this is the first election of one to a regular judicial office.

At a time when religious and racial hatreds in the United States are at red heat, says Lester Walton in the *New York World*, this marks far more than a victory for the Negro race. It is regarded in Chicago by white and colored voters alike, says he, as a victory for tolerance. The enrolled Negro vote of Chicago, he points out, does not exceed 60,000. Yet George's plurality over his nearest opponent ran up to 78,000. It proves, according to *The World*, that the majority of white voters considered the candidate's eligibility for office "lay in fitness and character—not the color of his skin." It was "a victory for the American spirit of fair play."

The career of the tall, broad-shouldered man of 51, with the "fine high forehead, deep eyes alight with intelligence, and straight hair, gray at the temples," thus brought into the limelight, is etched in by Philip Kinsley of the *Chicago Tribune*, as follows:

"He did not mix in partizan politics in a ward which is the most highly organized, politically, in the city, where the political power of the Negro has won preferment for many of his brothers. But there came political opportunity last spring, when the county central committee of the Republican party sought a man who would arouse no antagonism and who had a record that could not be touched. George accepted their offer."

No superman, even to his own people, as he would be the first to admit, continues this writer, he is of that middle class that is the bulwark and hope of Afro-American life—"a Christian with the motto of service in his heart." Born in Washington, D. C., October 23, 1873, of approximately half-white blood on both sides of his family, we read, George graduated from public school and high school there, from the Northwestern University Law School in Chicago, in 1897, and has since worked hard at the practise of law in his dusty little book-littered office. He has identified himself, says the writer, with the Provident Hospital, the Masons, the Urban League, and every movement for better understanding between the races. He has been superintendent of the Grace Presbyterian Church Sunday School. His candidacy for judge was indorsed by the Bar Association.

That he will probably sit in a court where most of the prisoners will be of his own color, seems to be assumed. The *Negro Louisville News* quotes Chief Justice Harry Olsen of Chicago to the effect that "the colored people of Chicago are entitled to have one of their own number hear their cases."

Judge George's ancestors were slaves in old Virginia. His success, says the *Chicago Tribune*, "has sent a thrill of hope through the black belts—a new incentive to work and decent living." It is considered "a milestone in the journey of the negro race out of the wilderness of slavery, an application of the principles of democracy which may point the way to better things for both races."

The Literary Digest
for
November 29, 1924
~page 12~



TO TRY HIS OWN RACE

Judge Albert B. George thinks his election marks "a day of realization for the colored people."