

## OTHER PAPERS SAY

### FLORENCE MILLS

[New York Herald-Tribune]

We have come a long way from Uncle Remus. Since the loquacious tales of Joel Chandler Harris there has arisen what is known as the New Negro—or is it the Negro with more accurate interpretation? Florence Mills, dead at 32, as famous in Europe as she is in America, will be buried today. Since her body has lain in state, thousands, black and white, have passed. Police reserves have been called to keep the lines in order. This is in the Negro tradition. It was much the same for Battling Siki, the child of the jungle who was found murdered in a Hell's Kitchen gutter. The race is proud of its own. And Florence Mills, on evenings when she had finished with showing her talents on Park Ave., went to Harlem and played until dawn with her own people.

But there is more to the death of Florence Mills than the passing of a clever Negro dancer and diseuse. Time was when one knew Negroes by the memory of Peter Jackson, the great prize fighter; by Jack Johnson, the Emperor Jones from the Galveston docks whose fists beat down Jeffries; by Booker T. Washington, who was born a slave and lived to be honored, and by the occasional players who brought condescending applause from the Nordics. Times have changed. Jack Johnson, though still vigorous, is as lost in the mists of history as Uncle Remus. It is doubtful if even Paris, long the haven of the black man, could afford the Negro a better opportunity than New York now offers. The Negro section of Harlem, spreading block by block in the last half dozen years, has created a tremendous colony. Has it, in the face of wretched housing conditions, created a new crime problem? Crime news, and crime statistics, combine to prove that it has not. Has it created one of those ominous "social problems"? It has not; an excuse for race clashes is more far-fetched today than it ever was. Indeed, for the first time, the Negro has a chance to show what he can do as a person and not as a Negro. Time was, even in New York, when this would have been impossible.

Today we know the Negro by Roland Hayes, Charles Gilpin, Paul Robeson, Walter White, James Weldon Johnson, Rosamound Johnson, Paul Dunbar, Countee Cullen, Earl Dancer, Ethel Waters and Florence Mills.

Florence Mills, as an artist and as a genuine person, did a real service to her race. Her career has advanced the whole cause of the Negro. She did not have to apologize for her color; she did not have to smirk and flatter to get recognition for her talents; she did not have to "show off for white folks." She simply, in the language of Broadway, did her stuff—and it was good stuff. There was no conceit; even her vulgarity was artistic, sound, of honest worth. It is said that she left a fortune of \$250,000; she started work at \$9 a week and ended at \$2,000. This fact doubtless led to gaudy trappings at the funeral. But don't "white folks" sometimes measure worth and achievement by money? The thing to be remembered is that Negro actors, writers, artists and even ordinary Negro citizens can find their long and often tragic path eased by the solid ability of Miss Mills.