

Not only has Miss Mahoney's good work helped her sisters in the United States, but it has penetrated even the dark, wild jungles of Africa, and the islands far and near. Today we see the spirit of the New Negro woman shining out of the dark jungles. Women are eager and determined to be up and doing; to no longer stand the disgrace of being counted an inferior of her white sister.

God created all men equal, and why should she, because of her dark skin, be brow-beaten? Why should she stand by and see her race looked upon in an attitude little better than one would look upon a snake or an insect? She realizes that merit counts a great deal toward achievement and, why, because of lack of education, should her race suffer? She realizes fully that it is a long and hard fight, but she does not forget the influence she has over those poor unfortunate ones with whom she comes in contact. She sees the life of an individual as it really is, and not as it seems to be, for she often has other problems besides that of helping to heal the diseased body. She often has the economical, spiritual and moral problems of the patient to solve. She has for her studies the many problems that are found at all ages among the different races of people.

I feel confident that there is no nurse in the profession that does not stop and ask herself these questions. First, "How may I become a valuable factor in bringing about a better relation between the two races?" Second, "What are the future prospects of the race?" When recalling how I got my inspiration to become a nurse, I feel that there are more who have received and will receive their inspiration in the same way.

I, like many other country girls, was just passing the time away as best I could in a little town that was surrounded by mountains and filled with non-adventurous people. Oh! how the time dragged, and what was I going to do next? Some suggested going away to study music. Fine! Oh! yes, that was great! Yet, there was something lacking in the suggestion. Music was fine, just grand, yet to me it did not afford enough thrill. I wanted to be something else beside a musi-

cian. What it was I did not know. To make a long story short, our neighbor was taken ill with typhoid fever. She had to have a trained nurse. The nurse arrived, and I shall never forget that gentle, sweet smiling face. She worked day and night so untiringly, moving softly and swiftly about her duties, always ready with a smile, always so immaculate in her white uniform.

I watched her day by day, then ventured to make friends with her. We became good pals and as she told me of her work I realized fully that it was the nursing profession I wanted; to serve others and to be of some value to humanity.

It is not the duties we have to perform that count, it is the way in which we do them that leaves an impression. The respect that the Negro nurse can win for her race through close professional contact is indeed surprising. Here she meets the masses of people; all ages, all races and creeds. It is up to her to leave a good impression on the minds of those with whom she comes in contact. She has for her material hundreds and hundreds of young minds; minds that can be shaped and impressed. It is through these that she must bring about better race relations. What will be the future prospects of the race? Through close professional contact, and through open discussions on race problems with both the higher and lower minds she is able to see clearly into the future.

Through free discussion, she learns that the Negro is, in the white man's mind, much inferior. He doubts his abilities yet, when forced, reluctantly will acknowledge them. He will, although he dislikes the idea, recognize the Negro's aptness and talent. Eventually he will be compelled to take us on our merits rather than on our skins.

We have to educate him. We have to show him wherein he is wrong. To be what we are and what we want to be and not to submit to be what he would like us to be, will exact an immeasurable meed of respect. Thus when we unite and determine to take our place among people, then, and only then, will we be given a fair deal in all professions.

The NEGRO WOMAN in the PROFESSIONS

By ANNA JONES ROBINSON



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Twenty years ago the woman engaged in the practice of a profession was a rare creature. Seventy five per cent of the women graduating from professional schools never actually pursued the practice of their professions, either because discouraged too quickly by the opposition and difficulties of pioneer work or because the duties of marriage made impossible the career for which they had been trained.

The small number of women who persisted in spite of obstacles have had a great measure of success. This has come because of the very real interest in their work, and love for the profession which they have chosen. They have not tried to avoid the drudgery or uninteresting details upon which any real success must be founded. Indeed this attention to small details has helped many women to climb to very responsible positions such as executive in large business enterprises. Women with legal training and real

ability are eagerly sought to prepare briefs and to take charge of certain classes of cases in law firms because of their very careful work and attention to details which are often most lightly passed over by men.

Twenty years ago the professions entered by women were limited. With the exception of teaching, which up to the present has always been regarded as a field for which women were particularly fitted, there was very little representation. Medicine was regarded with most favor, with dentistry a close second. In all three of these professions the woman could still live a more or less secluded life and was not required to go forth into active competition with men engaged in the same work. The woman physician or dentist could count on a certain number of people who would seek her out because of real ability, and because they preferred a woman doctor or dentist.

To day, although teaching, medicine and dentistry still hold first places, we find women successfully engaged in professions which require active competition

with men. We have women lawyers, journalists, architects, interior decorators, designers, accountants and women in various other professions which keep them always before the public and require that they match their wits with men who have the advantage of a longer period of experience.

The struggle has not been an easy one. Prejudices of conventional ideas about woman's place in the home have been great hindrances. First among the obstacles to be overcome was the attitude of the professional schools, some of which, even to-day, refuse to admit women to their classes, notably among them, Columbia University Law School, in the City of New York. However, once admitted to the school, the woman has had very little difficulty. Her mentality is unquestioned and indeed the few women in the classes are usually among the best students and sometimes carry off the highest honors. Once graduated, her troubles begin. She must now rub shoulders and match wits with men, some of whom welcome her as a fellow practitioner, ignoring difference in sex, while others refuse to take her seriously, either ignoring her whenever possible or else seeking to hold her up to ridicule when she makes some mistake due to her inexperience. Happily, this class of professional men is in the minority, the majority being willing to treat her as they would any young man just entering upon his professional career. If the woman is big enough to refuse to accept any favors or special consideration just because she is a woman, and is willing to give the best that is in her to her work, there is no reason why she should not be successful.

If success is measured by financial gain, medical women are the most successful professional women, for they, as a whole, are earning more money than women in other professions, and medicine is one of the few professions in which women receive the same remuneration as men. But this may be accounted for by the longer experience which women have had in this science. Ever since Hygieia, the daughter of Aesculapius, was associated with her father and presided over his temple, devoted to the sick at Epidaurus, women have never been wholly debarred from the profession, although in many countries and at various times, much has been done through prejudice to exclude them from the study and practice. Dentistry is a branch of the medical profession in which women have had about seventy years' experience. The proportion of women in the profession is smaller, but each year sees greater numbers taking up the work.

The first woman lawyer in this country graduated from the University of Michigan fifty-one years ago. It has been estimated that there are to-day 1,500 women who have been admitted to practice law in the various states. However, a large number of those who have been admitted and are entitled to practice, do not follow their profession, but do other work in secretarial, executive or business fields, using their

legal training merely as an aid to advance themselves in these fields. It may be safely said that the number of women actually practicing law in the country to-day, is perhaps less than one-half of the number who have been admitted to the bar. The financial returns to the woman lawyer are not always large. A lawyer, man or woman, often begins work with a salary of \$25 or \$30 a week. The rest is entirely dependent upon the individual, but it may be said that very few women have made more than \$6,500 a year and the average earnings are between \$2,000 and \$2,500. On the whole these amounts do not compare unfavorably with the amounts earned by men. A few years ago it was reported that among 15,000 lawyers in New York City, the average earnings were \$1,500. However, women lawyers who have persisted have been able by conscientious and efficient service to their clients, to build up very lucrative practices and to obtain all the work they can handle. Then too, the woman lawyer is compensated for lack of financial success, by the very great opportunity afforded her in the practice of her profession, to render service to the community, to make her influence felt, and to set an example of the very finest type of citizenship.

In this new freedom of woman, the Negro woman is only excelled by her white sister in numbers. In all the large centers of the country where there is a large Negro population can be found the colored professional woman, a credit to her profession and an influence for good in her community.

The Negro woman has always had her share of responsibility, even when confined to the home, and so has carried with her into these new fields a spirit of independence which has prevented her from being guilty of playing on sex when up against competition with men.

Women who have had special training in various lines have always been willing and eager to do service in their community. This is especially true of the Negro woman. In any movement for the social betterment and happiness of her people, the Negro woman of the professions is always among the first, anxious to give her time, services and money to help a worthy cause. Her aid is lent without any selfish motive and her interest in politics is impersonal, and stimulated by an honest desire to improve the social and economic conditions of her people and community.

The opportunities and possibilities open to the Negro woman in the professions for self-development and service to her people are as yet unexplored, and as more of them enter the field with this idea in mind, their influence cannot but be felt and seen in the improved condition of their community. For this reason young women who have the desire and ability should be encouraged and aided in every way possible in their efforts to attain a profession, and the community which encourages its young women, will be well repaid by receiving unselfish and devoted service at all times.

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