

shevism. But here again the reason is racial. Since they suffer racially from the world as at present organized by the white race, some of their ablest hold that it is "good play" to encourage and give aid to every subversive movement within that white world which makes for its destruction "as it is." For by its subversion they have much to gain and nothing to lose. But they build on their own foundations. Parallel with the dogma of Class-Consciousness they run the dogma of Race-Consciousness. And they dig deeper. For the roots of Class-consciousness inhere in a temporary economic order; whereas the roots of Race-consciousness must of necessity survive any and all changes in the economic order. Accepting biology as a fact, their view is the more fundamental. At any rate, it is that view with which the white world will have to deal.



28. "The Women of Our Race," *New Negro* 4 (October 1919): 6-7; reprinted in *When Africa Awakes*, 89-91.

In the October 1919 *New Negro*, Harrison wrote about Black women, and praised their "native grace," "greater beauty," "fire and passion," and "charm." Though the tone is one of laudatory "esthetic appreciation," the article appears to be addressed primarily to men. At times Harrison accepted a double standard—viewing, studying, thinking, and writing being viewed as men's work and home responsibilities and beauty as women's concerns.¹⁹

America owes much to the foreigner and the Negro in America owes even more. For it was the white foreigner who first proclaimed that the only music which America had produced that was worthy of the name was Negro music. It naturally took some time for this truth to sink in, and, in the meantime, the younger element of Negroes, in their weird worship of everything that was white, neglected and despised their own race-music. More than one college class has walked out, highly insulted, when their white teachers had asked them to sing "Swing Low Sweet Chariot" and "My Lord, What a Morning." It is to be hoped that they now know better.

But the real subject of this editorial is not Negro music, but Negro women. If any foreigner should come here from Europe, Asia or Africa and be privileged to pass in review the various kinds of women who live in our America he would pick out as the superior of them all—the Negro woman. It seems a great pity that it should be left to the foreigner to "discover" the Negro-American woman. For her own mankind has been seeing her for centuries. And yet, outside of the vague rhetoric of the brethren in church and lodge when they want her to turn their functions into financial successes, and outside of Paul Dunbar and perhaps two other poets, no proper amount of esthetic appreciation of her has been forthcoming from their side.

Consider the facts of the case. The white women of America are charming to look at—in the upper social classes. But even the Negro laundress, cook or elevator girl far surpasses her mistress in the matter of feminine charms. No white woman has a color as

beautiful as the dark browns, light-browns, peach browns, or gold and bronze of the Negro girl. These are some of the things which make a walk through any Negro section of New York or Washington such a feast of delight.

Then, there is the matter of form. The bodies and limbs of our Negro women are, on the whole, better built and better shaped than those of any other women on earth — except perhaps, the Egyptian women's. And their gait and movement would require an artist to properly describe. The grace of their carriage is inimitable.

But their most striking characteristic is a feature which even the crude mind of mere man can appreciate. It is [*to quote "Gunga Din," added in reprint*] "the way in which they carry their clothes." They dress well — not merely in the sense that their clothing is costly and good to look at; but in that higher sense in which the Parisian woman is the best dressed woman in Europe. From shoes and stockings to shirtwaists and hats, they choose their clothes with fine taste and show them off to the best advantage when they put them on. That is why a man may walk down the avenue with a Negro cook or factory girl without anyone's being able to guess that she has to work for a living.

And, finally, in the matter of that indefinable something which, for want of a better word, we call simply "charm" — the Negro women are far ahead of all others in America. They have more native grace, more winsomeness, greater beauty and more fire and passion. These facts have already begun to attract attention, here and elsewhere, and, eventually, the Negro woman will come into her own.

What say you, brothers? Shall we not love her while she is among us? Shall we not bend the knee in worship and thank high heaven for the great good fortune which has given us such sisters and sweethearts, mothers and wives?



29. "In the Melting Pot (re Herodotus)," *New Negro* 4 (October 1919): 14–15.

In his October 1919 *New Negro* column "In the Melting Pot," written under the pseudonym "The Taster," Harrison offered some thoughts after rereading Herodotus (c. 484–c. 425 B.C.), the wide-traveling Greek scholar known as "The Father of History." Harrison argues that an accurate knowledge of Egypt's contributions to civilization would benefit Black youth and, as a step in this direction, he advocates a reprint of Herodotus's works at popular prices.

A recent re-reading of Herodotus, the "Father of History," has brought to the mind of The Taster a favorite ambition of his earlier years. It was the issuing of a series of reprints dealing with the history of Negro lands and lands in which Negroes are interested, from the works of those great writers of the past whose works are no longer "protected by copyright." This could be done at a price to suit the pocket of the average man, woman or child — say at 25 and 50 cents. A good beginning could be made with the sec-