

INTRODUCTION.

It is worthy of note as well as of congratulation that colored women are making great advancement in literary ventures.

In the year 1892 three books were given the world by this class of writers, well worthy of high consideration: Mrs. A. J. Cooper, "A Voice from the South by a Black Woman of the South;" Mrs. F. E. W. Harper, "Iola; or, Shadows Uplifted;" and Mrs. W. A. Dove, "The Life and Sermons of Rev. W. A. Dove."

Mrs. Mossell has continued this interesting list with **THE WORK OF THE AFRO-AMERICAN WOMAN.** When the women of any race become intelligent and active in literary pursuits, that race has acquired the greatest guarantee of success. This book will not only have that influence upon the world which comes from the consideration mentioned above, but, being thoughtfully prepared with a view to impressing a growing race with the importance of a correct life and independent thought, it must add largely to the educative cause of that race.

Mrs. Mossell has had large experience in the school room and in writing for the public press; hence has dealt largely with popular questions and studied closely the subjects treated in this book.

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the reforms of the hour. Mrs. Harper is the author of two volumes of poems, "Forest Leaves" and "Moses." A novel, "Iola Leroy, or, The Shadows Uplifted," from the pen of this gifted woman, has just been placed upon the market. As superintendent of the colored work in the "Woman's Christian Temperance Union" she has labored for years with great success. A member of the "National Council of Women," of the "Association for the Advancement of Women," of the "Colored Authors and Educators Association," she has at various meetings of these societies furnished valuable papers; "Dependent Races" and "Enlightened Motherhood" being especially worthy of mention. The N. Y. Independent, A. M. E. Review, and other high grade journals receive contributions from her pen. Mrs. Anna J. Cooper, author of "A Voice from the South by a Black Woman of the South," has given to the world one of the finest contributions yet made toward the solution of the Negro problem. Mrs. Josephine Heard is the author of "Morning Glories," a charming little volume of verse. Mrs. M. A. Dove, the widow of Rev. W. A. Dove, is the author of a biographical sketch of her late husband that has received unstinted praise. "Poor Ben," a biographical sketch of the life of Benjamin F. Arnett, D. D., by Lucretia Coleman, and a volume of poems by Mrs. Frankie Wassoms, continues our list of

the youth of the race. Each had its effect of gaining the hearts of their enemy, winning respect and admiration, thus strengthening the bands of a common humanity. Simple and unadorned, these writings have a force and eloquence all their own that hold our hearts, gain our sympathies, fill us with admiration for the writers, for their persevering energy, their strong love of freedom, the impartiality of their reasoning. With what sincerity they bear testimony to the good they find even in their enemies. With what clear judgment they state the difficulties that surround their path. With what firm faith they look ever to the Ruler of all nations to guide this one to justice. Yes, this race is making history, making literature: he who would know the Afro-American of this present day must read the books written by this people to know what message they bear to the race and to the nation.

Of volumes of a later date all are more or less familiar. But we cannot forbear in closing to say a word of three recent race publications: "Iola, or The Shadows Uplifted," by Mrs. F. E. W. Harper, and "A Voice from the South, by a Black Woman of the South" (Mrs. A. J. Cooper). "Iola, or The Shadows Uplifted," is in Mrs. Harper's happiest vein. The scene is laid in the South, and carries us through the various stages of race history from slavery to this present

day. All of the open and settled questions of the so-called Negro problem are brought out in this little volume. In the opening and closing of many chapters Mrs. Harper has risen to a height of eloquent pleading for the right that must win for the race many strong friends. Mrs. A. J. Cooper has done for her people a great service in collecting her various essays into book form. Together they make one of the strongest pleas for the race and sex of the writer that has ever appeared. In this little volume she proves that few of the race have sung because they could but sing, but because they must teach a truth; because of the circumstances that environed them they have always been, not primarily makers of literature, but preachers of righteousness.

The third volume, "Aunt Lindy," by (Victoria Earle) Mrs. W. E. Matthews, the last to appear, is a beautiful little story and is deserving of careful study, emanating as it does from the pen of a representative of the race, and giving a vivid and truthful aspect of one phase of Negro character. It shows most conclusively the need of the race to produce its own delineators of Negro life.

The scene is laid in Georgia. A Cotton Exchange has taken fire, the flames spreading to a neighboring hotel, many of the inmates are wrapped in the flames of the dread tyrant. One, a silver-haired stranger, with