

Colored Poet Writes His Biography

By Ella W. Peattie, in Chicago
Tribune.

"In spite of the handicap" is the title which James D. Corrothers, the Colored poet, gives to his autobiography (George H. Doran company). Corrothers was born in southern Michigan and he confronted the problems which are the rather heavy inheritance of the Negro in the north. That they differ from those of the Negro in the south makes them no lighter. Ray Stannard Baker—another Michigan man—says in his preface: "The book throws much light on conditions with which few writers on the race question have dealt; I mean the problems which confront the abler and more intelligent Negroes, the leaders of their race, in their contact with their own people. Mr. Corrothers recognizes that the color line is only part, however important, of the great human situation which the Negro must face. And finally it is a book singularly without rancor; the book of a man who in spite of difficulties has maintained a cheerful and helpful outlook toward life."

Mr. Corrothers certainly is entitled to this tribute. Bitter poverty, race prejudice, the handicap of insufficient education, the jealousy and littleness of his own people, the loss of his wife, the enmity of his bishop—for he became a clergyman—combine to make a story that would be tragic were it not for the many compensations that came to him. Men and women of distinction were good to him, the best magazines printed his poetry, and life itself wore an alluring face because of his appreciation of every opportunity that offered and the essential courage that made him push on to new adventures. This is a bona fide human document of peculiar pathos and interest.

PREJUDICE AMONG COLORED PEOPLE

Last week Chicago furnished an excellent example of prejudice among our own people. The organ of the Independent A. M. E. Church went wrong and the trustees directed their pastor to have it fixed. Rev. L. C. Curtis, the pastor, went to the firm of Sidney T. Nimmo and Son, and asked that a man be sent out. Mr. Nimmo sent his son, but the son could not fix it. The firm then told the minister that they would send out a Colored employee who was an expert and could do the work. The minister replied that he wanted a white man and not a Colored man. Mr. Nimmo had the following to say:

"I was astonished when he said he wanted a white man. I told him that he showed more prejudice against his own race than a white man. I also told him that I always recognized a man by his ability and not by his color. The man I recommended, Walter Pinderhughes, has been in my employ for the past eight years, and is generally regarded as one of the best mechanics in his line in the city, of any race. His services have become indispensable to me and although he has received flattering offers to go elsewhere he has remained loyal. The minister asked me to recommend a white firm, but I refused."

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