Maud Cuney-Hare, Musician, Author, and Playwright, 1874-1936

Raised by educated black parents in post-Civil War Texas, Maud Cuney-Hare learned to resist segregation graciously but firmly. She enrolled in the New England Conservatory—one of only two black students—and graduated to become a concert musician, playwright, and scholar of music. Once she was in a restaurant awaiting her politician father when the cashier approached.

She began the conversation by asking if I was waiting for my husband. To my laughing exclamation that it was my father whom I was with, she said: “Oh, Spanish girls marry so very young, we in the hotel thought you were a little Spanish girl-bride.” When I declared my race, she cried in astonishment: “But you and your father must be Spanish! No? Then Creole—surely you can not be colored.”

Then continued an expression of bewildered, hazy ideas concerning the results of race admixture—texture of hair and shade of complexion, which led to a serious discussion of the Negro problem.

When father came to the table, I told him of the incident. He said; “You did right in declaring your race.” He abhorred above all things the supposedly easier way of “passing for white.”

Maud Cuney-Hare is best known for her groundbreaking book *Negro Musicians and Their Music*.

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