Gender importance in mary seacole's experiences

People

Mary Seacole or Mary Jane Grant in her maiden name was a half-blooded Jamaican and a half-blooded Scottish born in the small island of Jamaica named Kingston in 1805. She identified herself a Creole with a duskier color than the brunettes and was really proud of it despite of having a racialdiscriminationover blacks and black women during her time. Being a soldier, Mary’s father unintentionally persuaded his daughter Mary to become a great lover of camp and camp-like attitude such as traveling, adventure, and the sense of being in a mission.

Also, her mother who was once called a doctress being inclined in the art of medicine, specifically the Creole medicine which every Creole woman is expert, influenced Mary to follow her footsteps, that even at a very young age, Mary was fond of playing like adoctorand nurse her doll, giving it medicines to cure its illnesses. Little did she know that it was destined to let her preferences in herchildhoodmaterialized in the future, and be valued not only in her country but in the neighboring continents as well. It happened when Mary accepted the calling of fate after her husband Edwin Horatio Hamilton Seacole died.

On her adventure from in and out of many places and phases of life as she narrates in her autobiographical book, she described and illustrated different lifestyle a woman could have while doing medical missions. There she said she experienced meeting women of no distress whose affection with gold-seekers and gold itself in a potentially gold mining in Panama are elicited from worldly things. She also encountered typical women such as a weeping widow that are victimized by war and hostilities in Crimea.

She also remembered how women are treated slaves by white race such as Americans who’s claiming that they are no other than the superior ones. Her description of seeing women fighting forequality, empowerment and freedom was also remarkable. She also gave a first-hand account of her own experience in defending herself physically from terrible incidents, which made clear how a woman can be strong and tough in the midst of crisis. Moreover, she provided the readers how mothers, wives and nurses gave their wholehearted self in taking care on thehealthof those children, husbands, soldiers, patients, wounded and sick during the epidemic and chaos.

Like in any other institution in mid-nineteenth century, rivalries, insecurities and/or racial discrimination existed even on medical missions. Florence Nightingale and hernursinggroup refused to accept Mary Seacole’s willingness to be a part of their team in the Crimean war. Being rejected by a group of fellow medical white-skinned people, Mary felt insulted. However, the incident was never a hindrance to her. Instead, she traveled alone at her own expense and established her own niche healing the wounded and curing epidemics like yellow fever, dysentery, cholera, and diarrhea with the use of her own expertise in healing –herbal and the Creole medicine.

Mary Seacole as the author of her autobiographical book relished the idea of properly recounting her blow by blow details in medicalcareerwithout knowing that she was uplifting the image of blacks and black women in general. More so, she was not purposely pinpointing races, regions or gender to put in an awkward representation in boosting the morale of the blacks and female gender. One could analyze how Mary Seacole

gaverespectto the Englishmen especially to the members of army that are very dear to her, which some of them look up to her as a mother and called her “ Mother Seacole”.

She would never given the same respect should Mary did not touch the lives of these fellow men. A dignified journalist writer William Howard Russell generously stated words like this: “ I trust that England will not forget one who nursed her sick, who sought out her wounded to aid and succor them, and who performed the last offices for some of her illustrious dead”, which was included in Seacole’s book as its preface.

As a final point, Mary could say that she triumphantly established a well-respected role of women in the society as she convinced the readers with this statement:

“ I tell you, reader, I have seen many a bold fellow's eyes moisten at such a season, when a woman's voice and a woman's care have brought to their minds recollections of those happy English homes which some of them never saw again; but many did, who will remember their woman-comrade upon the bleak and barren heights before Sebastopol. Then their calling me " mother" was not, I think, altogether unmeaning. I used to fancy that there was something homely in the word; and, reader, you cannot think how dear to them was the smallest thing that reminded them of home.” (Seacole, M. Wonderful Adventures of Mary Seacole in Many Lands. Chapter XIII: My Work in the Crimea.)

References

- Antonwu, E. (2006). About Mary Seacole. Retrieved November 22, 2007, from TWU:
- Gabriel, D. (2004). Great Jamaicans: Mary Seacole 1805 - 1881. Retrieved November22, 2007, from Jamaica Primetime Web site: http://www. jamaicans. com/articles/maryseac. shtml
- Kleeberg, K. G. (2007). Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands. RetrievedNovermber 21, 2007
- Seacole, M. (1857). Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands. London: James Blackwood Paternoster Row.
- Seaton, H. J. (2002). Another Florence Nightingale? The Rediscovery of Mary Seacole.
- Retrieved Novem 21, 2007, from The Victorian Web: Literature, History ; Culturein the Age of Victoria Website: http://www. victorianweb. org/history/crimea/seacole. html