in the same breath in which she defined the ideal “New Negro Woman” as one whose foremost
task was taking care of her home and being a perfect mother, Tayleur wrote that white women
would guide them on the right path.

In the face of these continued associations with African American women as “mammies”
in white women’s homes (moreover, in Tayleur’s snide, grotesquely racist portrayal, not
sufficiently competent at that task), along with their supposed failure to properly take care of
their own homes and children, writers in African American publications continued to affirm their
belief in African American women’s ability to do it all and uplift their whole race. Fannie Barrier
Williams drew on the aspirational image to solidify her painting of the figure in a 1904 article,
declaring: “The Negro woman is really the new woman of the times.” In arguing for the role
Black women should play in businesses, she lauded the talent of Black women:

There need be no fear that because of her larger participation in the business affairs of
life, that the colored woman will lose her power and influence as a wife and home maker.
A woman has a large degree of adaptability and hence is capable of doing almost
everything that a man can do besides doing what is strictly a woman’s work.  

In order to achieve strides for the economic success of African Americans, Williams insisted that
women could do business work and maintain the home with no deleterious impact on results in
either arena. Supporters of both the “New Woman” and the “New Negro Woman” ideals needed
to affirm that women would be perfect mothers while also doing productive work outside the
home to allay fears but for Black women this role was much more linked to the success of
African Americans in overcoming the system of white supremacy. White women knew that the
only way their white supremacy could be threatened was if they failed at being mothers. Black
women knew that their families and the future economic and social status of African Americans
could be threatened if they failed at either.

1 Mrs. Fannie Barrier Williams, “The Woman’s Part in a Man’s Business,” The Voice of the Negro, Vol. 1, No. 11, November 1904, 546.