

# Northern Messenger

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PHOEBE ! PHOEBE !

The fields are brown and the skies are gray,  
And the streams are bound in the Frost  
King's sway;

The desolate earth lies bare and cold,  
And the March wind whistles on wood and  
wold.

I wonder how long till the brooks are free  
And the birds come—listen !

'Phoebe ! Phoebe !'

O brave little heart! from the raw, chill wind  
I shiver and shrink, my snug doors behind;  
But you in the leafless branches dwell  
And over and over your name you tell.  
'No matter how dreary the skies may be,  
I wait for the sunshine—

Phoebe ! Phoebe !'

And see! from the gray of the dull March  
skies

A shaft of gold at my window lies;  
And out of the brown earth reaching up,  
The crocus is holding her dainty cup.  
And the catkins swell on the willow-tree—  
True prophet are thou,

Phoebe, Phoebe.

Unclouded blue is the bright March sky;  
The wind has swept all the dark clouds by;  
And there in the copse, where the wee brown  
buds

Are swelling and bursting their glossy hoods,  
A little bird's throat is just splitting with  
glee—

The sunshine has come to

Phoebe, Phoebe.

—May Hastings Nottage in the 'Christian.'

## The Spirit of Service.

(By Rev. Walter B. Vassar, in 'The Standard'.)

How few there are among the people of our churches who know much of a service for the Master, which can by any extension of charity be called a consecrated service. The thought of a grudging service would be repelling, and yet a coming up and laying all on the altar is more than the most of us can boast. And yet such a life is really the only happy one. Nothing which falls short of a consuming love for the Master can afford real and lasting joy. We are grateful to the men who have set us examples of this,

men who have been the inspiration of the church in their consecrated lives.

Our attention has been called to one such, the life of a humble man whose thought of self was so little, his thought of his Master could be great. Uncle John Vassar, a name now gone over the Christian world, lived a life among his fellow-men which illustrates our thought of a service so unreserved, that the word 'consecration' truly fits it. In the introduction which the lamented Dr. A. J. Gordon penned for the volume, 'The Fight of Faith' he says: 'His was a life so absolutely given up to God that I believed it would have been literally impossible for him

to give more. The language of earth, its chatter, its frivolity, its idle speaking, was a foreign speech to him, while the language of heaven was his true mother-tongue.'

And this is the man who has the reputation of leading more souls to Jesus by personal effort than any other since the days of the apostles. He loved his Master so well, that coming out of a church where a prominent pastor had preached, he took the arm of his friend, with tearful eyes, and a quivering lip said, 'Oh, T——, he never mentioned the name of Jesus once !' To see that this was far removed from mere sentiment, let us take a glimpse of this worker whose soul was always aflame.

A young man had appeared several times in a series of revival meetings, whose hand Uncle John had failed to grasp. And so one morning he made a journey of several miles afoot to his home, arriving as the family were about to partake of an early dinner. Invited to join them, Uncle John soon discovered the young man he wished to see was absent, and excusing himself from eating, he began a search through all the farm buildings where a man might hide away. When about to give up the search, he walked to the further end of the corncrib, and there in an old hoghead found the soul he was seeking, and won him; for he leaped over by the trembling sinner's side, and in a few moments it could be said of him as of Saul of Tarsus:—'Behold he prayeth.' And this, too, at a moment, when the runaway was congratulating himself that Uncle John would never find him there. What matters a cold dinner to a man with a warm heart ! When the disciples urged their Master to eat the food they had brought, he said, 'I have meat to eat that ye know not of.' But we shall know of this 'meat,' if we have the spirit of service.

To men of this class opportunities for service are multiplying all the time; and if they should not, they make them to order. Going to assist a pastor in New England whom he had never met, the pastor reports that within five minutes after he had greeted Uncle John at the train, his work began on that field. On the way to the parsonage, mention being made of a blacksmith whose door they were passing, this 'winner of souls' walked right in, and before the astonished pastor's eyes the smith put down the foot of the horse he was shoeing, and went with Uncle John behind the forge to pray. The pastor had failed after years of labor to engage the smith in religious interest. On the alert for work to do are men like this. They are like men with rod or gun looking for game.

And what is our mission in this world ? Surely not to get out of it with all speed, but to get as many to go with us as we can—where we hope to go. The nature of God's kingdom is such that our selfish life unfits us for either entering it or enjoying it. It is a gate so straight that if one desires to come alone he shall not pass it, but if he bring others with him it is open wide.

Who seeks for heaven alone to save his soul,  
May keep the path, but will not reach the  
goal;

While he who walks in love may wander far,  
Yet God will bring him where the blessed  
are.

Passing along the highway, this worker

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