

comfort the earnest negro boy and teach him heavenly truths.

After that, whatever happened, it was always sunshine with Johnson; and his one idea was to make his brother-slaves as happy as himself.

In Canada he and his wife lived in a little cabin near some great houses, and one of the neighbours narrowly observed the old man, attracted by his extreme old age and great energy of spirit.

To this gentleman we are indebted for the following curious anecdotes:

‘He seemed very happy one day, and I asked him what he had been doing. “Meditatin’, massa,” he said, “about my Lord Jesus bein’ a carpenter, and so He knows all about the mansions in heaven, and He can make one for me.” And then he cried aloud to his Lord, in the most earnest tones, to keep one for him.

‘Once I heard him praying and singing at midnight while a thunderstorm was going on, and when I asked him about it next day, he answered, “Massa, I couldn’t lie still like a great animal when de Lord was shaking the earth, so I just wakes my wife and says, ‘Ellen, rouse up. Here’s a message from Home coming.’”’

‘One morning, hearing his voice raised in some long prayer—as it seemed—I looked in at the door of the hut. He was seated at the table, his hands clasped, his untasted breakfast before him. “Massa,” he explained, “I began to say grace, but seems as if I never could get done, de Lord He is so good.”’

‘Though poor, and dependent upon the exertions of his wife—many years younger than himself—he was never the least anxious or cast down. The Lord always helped them, he declared, they never wanted for anything.

‘His voice was so strong that when he prayed aloud (as is often the habit of the aged) he was heard to a great distance, and while some complained of old Johnson’s zeal disturbing their rest at night, more than one wrong-doer has since confessed that he has felt protected in the darkness by the old fellow’s prayers.

‘Johnson always rose early; on Sunday mornings specially early. When asked why he did so, he answered, “De Lord get up early dat day. De earlier I get up de more I sees of Jesus.”’

For the last seventy years this old man had abstained entirely from food on Fridays. Few in those days observed fast-days at all, even in the smallest degree, so this custom often created some surprise, and when asked ‘if he did not feel very weak at night,’ he replied, ‘Yes, but I must have de body keep he place. Dese are de days I spread de big tings before de Lord and pray.’ So his fasting and prayer went on. ‘I feed de soul to-day,’ he would say.

The death of his wife two years before his own departure was a great sorrow to the old man, but his faith never failed him. She had gone to occupy one of those heavenly mansions he saw so plainly, and he would be called soon, too. ‘Hold on a little longer, Johnson,’ were words, he used to say, he heard something speak within him.

‘Dat chariot will come again,’ he affirmed confidently; and it did come, but so silently, in the dead of night, that no one heard the wheels but the old black servant. He was ready, however—watching and waiting, we doubt not.

How he will enjoy the harping and the new songs of heaven we cannot but reverently think, remembering how dearly he loved our poor earth’s melodies.

