

## SIGNS OF PROSPERITY.

Where spades grow bright,  
And idle swords grow dull;  
Where gaols are empty,  
And where barns are full;  
Where field paths are  
With frequent feet outworn,  
Law Court yards weedy,  
Silent and forlorn;  
Where doctors foot it,  
And where farmers ride;  
Where age abounds,  
And youth is multiplied;  
Where poisonous drinks  
Are chased from every place;  
Where opium's curse  
No longer leaves a trace;  
Where these signs are  
They clearly indicate  
A happy people,  
And a well-ruled State.

## AUNT SUKY'S "CHIS."

(Concluded.)

"It's a deep-water Babbis', honey. Dat's de real high, ole church, ef yer believe me. But what does de good Book say! Dar ain't none good, no not one. I prays de Lord ter keep me in a state of salvation, but it's mighty slippery-fying work bein' a Christian. De debil grease you up so slick dat you kain't ketch hold er yerself, and fust ting you know dar you is hanging by a bramble-bush over de bottomless pit, swellin' in de sulphur of yer own wickedness, and den dar ain't nothin' to do but trus' de Lord and look up."

The old woman nodded her head emphatically as she spoke, with earnest simplicity.

"Ria, she is a Peskypalian; she say dere ain't no style 'bout de deep-water Babbisses, and she done jined a church, where dey've got a organ, and is always jawin' back at de preacher. I 'clare it's sinful, yes, sinful! 'Ria's mighty festiveous dis morning. She say she goin' to a big ball, and she's goin' to help recede de company. Dere ain't nobody but cooks, and nusses and house servants goin' to be dere. En all de young gentlemen is waiters at de Peyton House most. Dey don't 'low no washerwoman to come, 'Ria says; dey is so topholitical. Sez she to me: 'Mammaw, I tink I'll wear a simple white dress wid a rose in my hair. Et 'ull be so ellygint.' And I was kinder cross, cause I hate all dat foolishness, so I speak up my mind and I say: 'Alligators look better in de mud dan in de parlor. I don't want to see roses in none no yer wool!' Ye oughter seen 'Ria, she jes raised! I've been a washerwoman, and dere ain't no drien snow whiter en my clocs. De diffunce is, I was brought up to do eberyting; and dey don't know how to do nothin'. Jes like poor white trash, goin' aroun' beggin' and stealin', fur a livin'! But dere, chile, why don't you keep quiet! Dat ole coon sure to say it's my fault, and I done tole you 'bout it, but yer will talk."

That day Mrs. Hawkins got by express a box, which, being opened, was found to contain some delicacies for her, and a black silk dress, of the cheap and very shiny description for Aunt Suky, from Mr. Hawkins, with a message expressing his gratitude for her care of his wife. Great was the rapture of the honest old soul.

"I ain't had a black silk sence old master died. De family's gone down in de world now, and I don't get presents like I used to. Well, I declare! I'se mighty poor, but I'se got my feelins, and dis is a quality gif, sho nuff, and I certainly am proud. I wonder what dat 'Ria u'll say! Tell de gentleman dat I'se mighty tanks-full. I gwine be buried in it. Dis is goin' in de chis, certain."

"What do you mean, Aunt Suky?" said Mrs. Hawkins, watching her, as she folded and gloated over her new possession.

"De cedar-chis what ole misteas left me. It say in de will: 'To my faithful Suky to remember me by.' Yes, chile, I'se allus been trus' by de fambly, allus. En dis 'ull come in mighty useful, kase I ain't got no clocs."

Aunt Suky's face, as she made this statement, was a study. First she chuckled convulsively, then looked up at Mrs. Hawkins and became suddenly preternaturally solemn, chuckled again, and said:

"Nice present like dis kinder raises my sperits, I'se so berry poor. Hi! dat 'Ria 'ull stick to me like tar, now, and be slobberin' over me from mornin' till night."

With this she folded her dress in a new way, her fingers lingering caressingly among its soft pleats, and then left the room, her very back expressing delight and gratification.

When she came next day the radiance had quite vanished, and she was so evidently disturbed that Mrs. Hawkins finally said:

"You look troubled, Aunt Suky; what's the matter?"

"It's 'bout money, and I is aggraved, dat's certain. I been savin' my money ever since de wah, you see, and 'bout a year ago, Jawn, he come to me and say: 'Mammaw, dey say you've got fifty dollars hide away in dat chis. 'Tain't safe. You gwine be kill for it some night. You give it to me and I'll put it in de bank, and dey'll give you a book and nobody kain't tech it 'ceptin' you, ef dey wuz itchin' ever so bad.' So I onlock de chis, and give Jawn dat money and ain't never seed it sence. I ask Jawn agin and agin about de bank, and he say de bank closed, or de bank warn't paying den, and oder 'scuseses like dat. En yesterday Jawn come in and say: 'Mammaw, de bank's broke!' En I say: 'Whar's de pieces!' I wants de pieces!' and dat husay, 'Ria, laafe and laafe till she's most dead. End dat's all de satisfaction I got."

"What a shame!" put in her listener. "I shall try and find out what bank it was put in, and make them give it back to you again."

Aunt Suky shook her head mournfully. "Tain't no use, chile, dough I am 'bleeged to yer. De truff is dat I don't like ter say it, but Jawn, he was de bank, I'm most shore!"

She was dusting the mantel-shelf, and made a vigorous onslaught with the turkey-tail duster as she spoke on the pictures above. Mrs. Hawkins caught a profile view of her features—the lips thrust out, the eyes rolling, and the feathers quivering in the trembling hand.

"I suspicioned it kinder fur a long while. Jawn ain't done no work for six mont', 'Ria ain't done none fur a year, and dey both of 'em been dressin' and gallivantin' and goin' on like Christmas in de quivertins all de time. De black race is de bes' race de Lord ever made, but deyse powerful weak 'bout some tings. Yes, Jawn was de bank. I'm ashamed to say so, but it's de truff. Whar did 'Ria get dat ten dollar she give for git up dat ball? Say! Yes, I'se mighty ashamed. My skin is black, but my principles is white," said she, turning around with an air of real dignity, her eyes full of tears. "Sence I was dat high" (putting out her hand), it's allus been said, 'Suky can be trus', and it hurts me here" (laying her hand on her breast), "to think that my son is a tief!"

The poor old woman broke down here, and, sinking on the floor, dropped her head on her knees and cried bitterly.

O! Jawn, Jawn, my son! To steal from yer ole mammy, what's work for yer ever sence you wuz bawn, and would gib you her heart's blood! O! Lord, take me out dis world! Take me!" she moaned, as she rocked backwards and forwards, in accents of genuine distress.

Moved by the honest creature's grief, Mrs. Hawkins said all she could to comfort her, and after a long silence, during which nothing was heard but the rich tones of a mocking-bird singing joyously outside, and an occasional moan or long-drawn sigh from Aunt Suky, a pathetic old figure of despair, still crouched on the floor, her arms thrown up over her head and the sunshine streaming over the deeply-lined tear-washed face. She suddenly rose, threw her apron over her head and left the room. This occurred on Saturday, and on Monday morning Mrs. Hawkins, who was sitting by the open window in an invalid chair enjoying the mild, flower-laden air, heard angry voices wrangling in a high key at some distance, and presently Aunt Suky darted around the corner of the house with body erect and flashing eyes that seemed to send out red gleams of intermittent light as she strode past the croquet-ground. It was quite evident that she was in a towering rage, and was talking to herself: "Ef dat nigger don't pay me dat money what he owe me I gwine beat him; ef he don't pay me den, I gwine put de law to him!" she quavered out in shrill tones of excitement as though she was talking of applying a torch or a mustard-plaster.

"You look angry, Aunt Suky, what's gone wrong?" queried Mrs. Hawkins, as she entered the room.

"It's dat triflin' Budder Beverly," she exclaimed, glad to have a listener. "Yer see, long while ago, 'fore Jawn play me dat trick, Budder Beverly come to me and sez, sez he: 'Sister Suky, de Siety is in need of funds, and you is one of de prudent members, won't yer lend de Siety twenty dollars to be paid out de fust abstractions back to yer again?' And I didn't want to lend dat money at all, and I say: 'I don't know as I'se got dat amount,' and he laafe and say, O! Shure Sister Suky, we all knows yer is de most respectable member in de Siety. Dere ain't no risk 'bout it, cause de money u'll be gib back to yer berry soon. I'se de President uv de Siety and I knowse.' Well, chile, I onlock de chis dat time and ontie my stockin' and git him what he ask fur, and what you think he say now! Dat he ain't borrowed it at all, and dat I'se tryin' to cheat de Siety! It's de most outdashed lie dat was ever tole by dat old oily, hypocrite. He can preach de rag off de bush, and all dem fools gwine believe what he say. But my mind done made up. I'se gwine put de law to him!"

The efficacy of the application she never doubted for a moment, and the importance of it almost reconciled her to the loss of the money.

"That seems a wonderful cheat of yours Aunt Suky; how much more money have you got in it? I guess it's full of nice things, isn't it?"

A look of alarm swept over Aunt Suky's face at this, and then she laughed uneasily and said,

"Law, child, yer makin' fun uv Aunt Suky. What a poor ole woman like me got! Dey done got all I had, an' dat ain't de wust. De whole capoodle gwine believe dat ole possum, Budder Beverly, 'ceptin' Sister Mirybel! She say when I tole her dat Budder Beverly lib wid her darter Ann, an' dat he got a new suit of clocs an' a silver-hand stick wid dat money she's jes shore! She 'cuse him of it, too, right to his face, an' she say he looked horryfied fur a minit and den he cast his eyes down and say: 'Hesh, Sister Mirybel. What does de Book say! Don't shall not muzzle de ox dat treadeth out de corn.' And agin: 'De laborer is wuth his hire.' And den when she call him a tief he put her out de Siety, her and me, bof uv us!"

Aunt Suky wept at the idea and went on:

"Dat ain't all my troubles. I'se bein' pick like chicken 'fore camp-meetin'. Saturday night I had dat trouble an' I didn't sleep soun' an' I 'ought sometin' was wonderin' round my bed. Ole master's sperrit maybe, so I croke down in de bed, an' kiver up my head an'

over stir, endurin' de night. Well, next day was Sunday, an' when I git up I look on de peg for my blue dress wid de yaller facin's Miss Anna gib me an' it wasn't dere! 'Dat's Ria, sez I, an' I went roun' to de Presbyterian Church right off dat minit, and dere was 'Ria on her knees 'fore de Lord's Table in my dress, shore enough. And I wait till Ria get back to her place near de door, an' den I say: 'Ria, an' wid dat she flung outer church home and on dress like lightnin', and I jes say: 'Well, at de Lord's Table!' and raise my hands. An' she say as she fling my dress on de bed: 'Dere I take yer ole dress. It's bin turned upside down an' hind part befo'. Got a hole in de back an' done los' its color. Does yer suppose I'se gwine let a dress dat you can hole up to de winder and see daylight through, stan' between me an' glory! De Lord knows 'taint wuth nothin' noways, an' he ain't gwine reckmember it agin me.' Dere I los' my temper, and tole my mind, an' I jes took dat Ria boddashuashly an' turn her out de house!"

Aunt Suky's dramatic gestures and extreme animation of manner, make her description of her domestic differences diverting in the extreme, apart from the ethics of the situation, so that in spite of her efforts to control her risibles Mrs. Hawkins could not suppress a hearty laugh, and the mistress coming in just then with a tray of "goodies" and a lovely basket of fruit and flowers, nothing more was heard of Aunt Suky that day.

About a week later she hobbled in one day, with her arm in a sling, and her whole person wearing a shrunken, miserable air.

"Dear me! Aunt Suky, are you ill! Have you hurt your arm! I hope not," said Mrs. Hawkins. Down went the corners of the old woman's mouth.

"I kain't lif my hand to my head, chile. I'se been Voodooed."

"Voodooed! What do you mean?"

"Konjured, honey. Dat Ria's konjured me. I found two straws out de broom crossed over de door-aill dis morning, and a chicken gizzard under my pillow. I ain't never gwine be well agin 'till I breaks de spell."

"Good gracious! Aunt Suky," cried Mrs. Hawkins indignantly, "is it possible that you can believe such stuff and nonsense as that?"

"Tain't nonsense, it's truff I'm tellin' yer, shore as you are bawn. 'Don't I tell yer I kain't lif my hand to my head?"

"Well, what of that! You've got rheumatism, that's all, and I will give you some liniment for it. Rub it well and you'll be all right in a few days."

"Taint no use chile, thank yer. Yer knows when yer is konjured. I'm studyin' how to break de spell. Dat's de only way to git shut of dis here pain."

Mrs. Hawkins argued and ridiculed eloquently for ten minutes, and showed clearly as she thought, the absurdity and impossibility of being "Voodooed," but Aunt Suky only shook her head and went on with her patching, muttering:

"Neber be well agin till I breaks de spell, nebber. Miss Anna done took Ria as house-maid. I'se got to break it in dis house."

Nothing more was said, but Aunt Suky took no remedies, got no better, and looked more and more wretched every day. Spring had now come. Mrs. Hawkins had more than regained all she had lost, and determined to go home agin before warm weather set in. On the day agreed upon her husband came for her, and was charmed beyond expression to find her looking and feeling so well.

"You're no idea how well and pretty you look! The air here has been magical in its effects," said he. "Aunt Suky pack her things and get her ready. We leave this evening."

"Don't be so 'previous,' Charley. You are not going to whisk me away 'boddashuashly,' until I am ready," whispered his wife.

"What do you mean?" exclaimed the puzzled husband.

"O! I forgot that you were not used to the new and delightful dictionary of terms that I have borrowed from Aunt Suky. I have been wanting some of the words all my life, and never had the sense to invent them, as she has done."

"Won't the 10.30 train to-morrow be best for us to take?"

A discussion of their plans followed, and Mrs. Hawkins' suggestion was accepted and ratified, the interval being very agreeably spent in making acquaintance with the family, on the part of the husband, and reluctant adieux with promises of unlimited correspondence on that of the wife.

Coming down to breakfast next morning in the pleasant dining-room, a late addition of the house with a bow-window jutting out into the garden, they found the mistress, very pleasant and cordial, but either very fearful of the idea of parting from the invalid or suffering from a bad cold.

"Sit down," said she, sneezing as she spoke. They complied and the other members of the family dropped in. One by one, then in twos, threes and entire concert, the company began to follow the mistress' example. Sneezes followed sneezes, with ever-increasing celerity and violence, eyes were wiped and handkerchiefs generally in requisition, until at last they all rose and rushed out into the garden unable to support the stifling atmosphere of the room and its peculiar effect. They all asked each other what it could possibly mean, and on investigation found a wide train of red pepper laid around the dining-room inside and out, with a particularly

liberal supply in the window-seats and door-sills which the fine morning breeze had duly sifted up their nostrils. Ria who was one gigantic sneeze as she stood behind her silver tray ready to serve breakfast, was summoned by the mistress with all the other servants to explain what such an extraordinary state of affairs meant, but could only sneeze out tearful and choky denials of any share in the transaction. All the others denied and disclaimed likewise until Aunt Suky's turn came, who like St. Paul stood out and was bold.

"I'se de one Miss Anna. I did sprinkle dat pepper. De Voodoo Priestess tole me dat ef I could get a ring of pepper round Ria and make her sneeze, dat de spell would break what she done konjured me wid. De moment she snore I felt somethin' go crack in my arm, and now it's jes as well as de udder one; but I'se mighty sorry to make de rest of yer so uncomfortable."

The mistress hereupon delivered an address that was excellent in matter, though rather tart as to its temper, which I have no doubt had the effect of confirming Aunt Suky's prejudices, instead of dissipating them, and time pressing, the travellers hurriedly swallowed a cup of coffee and drove to the station, followed by the hearty good wishes of the family and the rather sheepish glances of Aunt Suky, who took up a position at the front gate out of reach of the mistress' eye, and beamed delightedly over the *douceur* Mrs. Hawkins slipped in her hand.

Two years later Mrs. Hawkins got a letter from the mistress in which she said: "You will be sorry I am sure not to get any more of the messages with which Aunt Suky has constantly charged me. She poor, faithful old soul is dead, and since I lost my mother I can recall no event that has distressed me more, severing as it did the last link that bound me to the happy, cloudless past of my childhood. I was away at the time, and it is really a grief to me to feel that the dear old creature's dearest and often expressed wish about the conduct of her funeral should not have been observed. John and Maria behaved in a most unprincipled way the servants tell me. They laid her out in her very oldest and shabbiest clothes, and had her buried with as little ceremony as though she had been a dog, the President of the Benevolent Society with whom she had had some quarrel, refusing to officiate. I have tried to atone for it as far as I could, by having a modest monument put up to her memory—a memory that I shall always cherish with sincere affection."

"I was surprised to learn that she had fifty dollars laid by in the chest my dear mother gave her, beside twenty-seven dresses—unmade—and a quantity of other clothing, and a miscellaneous collection of odds and ends, the carefully hoarded savings of a lifetime. It gave me a pang last Sunday to see Maria flaunting in the black silk you gave Aunt Suky so kindly, and I wonder her ineffable airs and indescribable graces did not effect Aunt Suky's immediate resurrection."

"Yours,

"F. C. BAYLOR."

## POLITENESS IN STREET CARS.

The "Idler" in *Detroit Chaff* has some very sensible remarks on the subject. I often wonder, says he, who is the more impolite, the man who atollidly remains seated in a crowded street-car while ladies are compelled to stand, or the person, supposedly a lady, who will take a seat kindly offered her by the tired man of business, without even so much as a smile of thanks or a nod in recognition of his self-sacrifice and politeness to ladies. It seems to me that there is no better place in the world to distinguish the true gentleman or the true lady from the herd who have only the appearance and dress of ladies and gentlemen, than in the crowded street-car. There all classes of society meet and members from all the different strata from the workingman to the upperst of the upper crust. There are everywhere in the world mean men and nowhere does their meanness protrude more prominently than on the street-car. It always makes my blood boil with indignation to see a lazy lout of a fellow, sprawled over enough seat for two or three ordinary persons, retain his seat and let a lady stand, and yet, there are very many men that will do it and do so continually. Still, there is another side to the story. So settled has become the practice of yielding up a seat to a lady, that many of them have come to think that it belongs to them as a right and entirely forget that it is a custom born of an innate sense of politeness and deference to the weaker sex. Such "ladies" are numerous and they will take the proffered seat with not so much as a cold nod, much less the hearty "thank you" that it merits. Foreigners have often remarked upon the American lack of politeness. We are strictly a business people and attend to business. Still there is always time for those little courtesies of every day life that are the lubricators, as it were, of the wheels of society and many of us often forget them. Surely no one can blame the careworn business man for wishing to retain his seat in a car when by yielding it he would not even gain a gracious word of thanks from the lips of the lady. There is a radical wrong here on the part of members of both sexes which the Idler would be glad to see rectified.

WHEN you see an Irish mother sewing the tears in her boy's pantaloons, you may put her down as being in favor of the "no rent" system.