

PRESIDENT ARTHUR AND THE JUBILEE SINGERS.

There are experiences in jubilee life which stand out in bold relief, between which the contrast is so vivid and marked that an observer would be led to think that they belong to different ages of the world, and are the experiences of people of widely different grades of society. To-day the guests of Gladstone, John Bright, Baron Von Bunsen, Whittier, Longfellow and ex-President Hayes; to-morrow refused admission to hotels or boarding houses because they are black. Those who read the newspapers are familiar with the story of their experiences at the National Capital, less than a year ago. They went from the room where Garfield received his fatal wound, at midnight into the streets. There they wandered until by diligent search, which extended over more than eight hours, before some public place could be found willing to shelter the dark-skinned American citizens from the night air, cold and chill, and receive in return the price demanded.

How unlike facts these statements seem in our boasted free Republic. Still stranger do they appear, when placed beside the experience of two days later. Experience, which the proudest Caucasian artist might well envy.

The Rev. Dr. Rankin, who had assisted in the search for shelter, was present when the Singers called to pay their respects to President Arthur. In a sermon on "Melody in the Heart," preached on the following Sabbath, the Jubilee Singers being present, he thus describes the scene: "Seldom have I been so moved," said President Arthur, as yesterday the Jubilees sang in his presence, 'Steal Away to Jesus' and 'The Lord's Prayer.' What moved him! What made that great-hearted man, who heard them for the first time, and who, when he accepted their proposal to sing in his presence, as they had sung in presence of his late three predecessors, little knew that the depths of his spiritual nature were to be so searched, what made this son of a Christian minister tremble about the mouth, then dash away the tears with his fingers, and then finally take out his handkerchief and cover his eyes? 'Seldom have I been so moved!' 'Oh! was the reply of the gentleman to whom he turned with this remark: "One reason why the people so much honor you, is because such things move you!"

The trouble with us much of the melody made on earth is this: It is not melody in the heart. It does not spring from melody made in the heart to the Lord. It is lip melody. It is made to reach the ear of man, and not the ear of God. These singers have their Christian altar, where they daily read the Word of God and unite in prayer. These singers depend upon the Spirit of God to help them in sacred song. They may wander homeless in the streets of the Capital of their native land. They may not have a place where to lay their heads. They may be ostracised by the tyranny of that white valor, which has fought so many battles of freedom—for the Anglo-Saxon! by the tyranny of that type of so-called Christianity that finds the image of God in the outward tint and not in the inward nature; but, at that Christian altar of daily prayer, they learn again to say, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors!" and when they remember they are redeemed, they are again ready to make melody in the heart unto the Lord.

It is the province of these Jubilee Singers to go everywhere preaching the Gospel, in these Christian melodies, which God's Spirit taught their race in the days of bondage. If sometimes they meet with inhospitable treatment, it may only remind them that the old spirit which made slavery with all its abominations possible, is not yet dead in the heart of man; it may attune their hearts to sweeter melodies to the Lord, who inspires them. The instrument whose strings are tightened seems to complain. But it is only for a moment. Thus only can it be fitted for the melodies that are lodged within it. These singers know the blessedness of which the Master spoke, when He said, "Blessed are you when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely,

for my name's sake." And it is this knowledge which isolates them to God, and to God's work, in the office of sacred song. They will sing the more sweetly for having waited those hours of weariness and homelessness last Wednesday night, in the presence where President Garfield's first drops of life-blood were shed; ay, for coming out under the midnight sky, not knowing where they should lay their heads. There must be this spiritual attuning to the melody of Christ's suffering love, or else we all fall away from the pitch. There is no pure gold which does not come from the fire of sorrow. And only those which come up out of great tribulation, are the shining ones of God. Go forth again, dear brethren and sisters in the Lord! And may His banner over you be love; and may you always make melody in your hearts to the Lord!

A STRANGE EXPERIENCE.

THE HON. ALEXANDER H. STEPHENS AND THE JUBILEE SINGERS.

The following is an extract from a letter printed in the *Republican Democrat*, written by one of the Singers after visiting Alex. H. Stephens, Vice-President of the late Southern Confederacy, in his parlor in the National Hotel, Washington, D. C.:

We have had many rare and strange experiences, have sung before many of the most renowned people of the present age, from the Emperor upon his throne, to the more than two thousand paupers assembled in the drill halls of Edinburgh and Glasgow, to receive their Sunday morning breakfast at the hands of the Christian philanthropists.

But nothing gave us greater surprise than to receive an invitation from the venerable statesman of the South, and once exponent of the doctrine that the "Negro has no rights which the white man is bound to respect," to come to his parlor and sing for him. We accepted the invitation. Upon entering the room, the thin, pale, emaciated form of this re-constructed Southern Statesman, seated in a perambulator, met our view. A smile lit up his countenance as he extended his thin, trembling hand and bade us welcome as each was introduced to him. There were present perhaps a half dozen ladies and gentlemen from different Southern States. After a few moments spent in pleasant conversation in which Mr. Stephens expressed his interests in the work of education in which we had been so long engaged, and said he had watched the growth of Fisk University with great satisfaction, we grouped ourselves in front of him and began to sing.

The first piece was the old favorite, "Steal Away to Jesus," followed by the Lord's Prayer, to which so many hundreds of thousands have listened. He appeared to drink it in with a keen relish and bowed his head reverently as we chanted the Lord's Prayer. Then we sang "Go Down Moses, Away down in Egypt land; Tell old Paoarah to let my People go."

Quiet and peculiar as is this song, still it is fraught with deep meaning, and we were led to wonder what his thoughts were as he listened to it. A number of other pieces were sung and his eyes were dimmed with tears, while two of the Southern ladies wept profusely. At intervals Mr. Stephens would turn to his friends with remarks, such as: "Isn't it wonderful," "Did you ever hear anything like it," "I never did."

At the conclusion he said that he forebore to say all he felt, that he was quite familiar with our work and regarded it as the most wonderful of the present age. Then said he, "I shall remember this visit with a great deal of pleasure. I have always been a firm believer in popular education; even before emancipation I advocated it for your race to a certain degree, and I still believe in it as essential to the elevation of not only your race, but of all races. I wish you great success; even greater than that you have had."

Thus ended our visit with Georgia's great Senator, which for many reasons was one of the most impressive experiences of our many years' labor. In the album of one of the Singers he wrote the following: "During my enjoyment and high appreciation of an entertainment given me with a few

friends in my parlor to-day by the Jubilee Singers, I was profoundly impressed with the sentiment of Pope, one of England's best and most philanthropic poets, which has been a motto with me from early youth to advanced age, and is set forth in these lines—

"Honor and shame from no condition rise—
Act well your part—there all the honor lies."

PEN-POINT GEMS.

They carried Chautauqua by storm.—*Chicago Advance*.

There is no chance for adverse criticism on their singing.—*Boston Sunday Herald*.

Pathos, intensity and beauty marked all the singing of the band.—*Daily Review, England*.

Their style of singing reaches the very hearts of their listeners.—*Lincoln Daily News, England*.

They excel in truthness of intonation, exactness of blending and expressive rendering.—*Saginaw Courier, Mich.*

It is very doubtful if there will ever come anybody to take their place when they are gone.—*Evening Express, East Saginaw, Mich.*

The beautiful blending of the voices, the fervor of expression and the power they exercised over the audience was marvelous.—*North Herx's Journal, England*.

The praise of the troupe has been sung in advance of them, but after having once heard them, it is conceded that they have no superiors.—*Columbia Herald, Pa.*

It is no wonder the troupe is popular wherever it goes; it can send forth more real soul stirring music than any other company that has ever visited Chester.—*Chester Daily Times, Pa.*

The quaint "spirituals" with which many people are now so familiar, were given with all the fervor and earnestness which have so often charmed audiences.—*Greenock Telegraph, Scotland*.

Last night's concert was another success—the large audience appeared as if they never could hear enough of the strange, weird melodies of these extraordinary singers.—*Montreal Herald*.

The only thing to be deplored is that the two hours slipped away so quickly, keeping in view the fact that we may never have another opportunity of enjoying such a musical treat.—*Peterhead Sentinel*.

But one opinion was expressed last night concerning the Fisk Jubilee Singers and that was that they were vastly superior to all "Jubilee Singers" (2) who have appeared in this city.—*Pittsburg Evening Chronicle, Pa.*

Never in the musical history of this city has an audience gone home so universally pleased with the entire programme as that which left the Fisk University Jubilee Concert last night.—*East Saginaw Morning Herald, Mich.*

We hope the Jubilee Singers will keep on singing. A University built out of such harmonies must certainly go on without discord and forever be a blessing to the emancipated race.—*Irish Boston Evening Journal, Maine*.

Their audiences need not go with the sense of doing them a favor on account of the mistfortunes of their race; they give the public full return in an entertainment at once, unique, fresh and exhilarating.—*Chicago Daily Times*.

The spirituality, the pathos, the subtle plaintiveness of the fresh pure voices of these singers, invest the commonest words with a beauty and poetry which cannot be understood until one hears the songs.—*Graubarn Journal, England*.

Central Music Hall was filled with one of the most enthusiastic audiences that ever assembled there; its applause was constant, and if it could have had its own way it would have kept the singers singing all night. The quaint, fervid melodies so utterly unlike any other music they sing with a gusto and feeling, white singers can never rival.—*Chicago Daily Tribune*.