

The Old and New Year.

No pause, no rest, no visual line
Between the years that come and go;
For some too fast, for some too slow!
Time never stops to sleep or dine;
But on and on with steady flight
He keeps, untired, by day, by night;
And boys and girls, ere yet aware,
Fine threads of silver in the hair,
Their love of quiet growing stronger;
And haply by these tokens know
What kind friends told them long ago,
That they are boys and girls no longer.

Still on—as silent as a ghost!
Seems but a score of days, all told.
Or but a month or two at most.
Since our last New Year's song we
troiled,

And lo! that New Year now is old,
And here we stand to say "Good-bye!"
Brief words—and yet we scarce know why
They bring a moisture to the eye,
And to the heart some quakes and
aches;

We speak them very tenderly,
With half a sob and half a sigh—
"Old Year, good-bye! Old Year, good-
bye!"

For what it brought, for what it takes,
We love it, and for loved one's sakes;
Prized for its hours of happiness,
Nor for its sacred sorrows less:
For all it gave through toll and strife
Of new significance to life—
New breadths, new depths, new heights
sublime,

And haply kingship over time!
Accept our thanks, Old Year, for these
And for all precious memories
Of love, of grief, of toil, of pain,
Whose ministry was not in vain,

And so we sadly lay, Old Year,
Our love wreath or the snowy bier,
Our love wreath, moistened by a tear;
And, turning from our brief adieu,
With kindly welcome hail the New;
True to the ruling power we sing;
"The king is dead! Long live the king!"
—Selected.

I Kicks Ag'in it, Sah!

BY REV. A. J. JORDON, D. D.

Such was the vehement exclamation of Brother Moses, as I met him one day in front of an aristocratic mansion where he was busily at work dusting carpets, trimming the lawn, etc.,

But before I rehearse his side-walk discourse, I must tell my reader something about this ebony sage, whom I have known now for more than twenty-five years. Like the singer in Canticles, he is "black but comely." Not that he has any natural beauty; but when he becomes animated upon spiritual themes, the listener forgets his dark visage and thick features, and the "beauty of the Lord" seems to shine out in his face.

My first acquaintance with Moses began thus:

Soon after the close of the war, when a considerable influx of freedmen had set in toward the North, a Unitarian neighbor said to me one day: "I wish you would call in and see my colored man who has recently come to me from the South. I assure you he is a character. He seems to take a great interest in the welfare of my soul, and as he is of your persuasion I would like you to make his acquaintance. By all means get him to tell you of his experience."

I called one morning according to request, and found Moses busy in the stable polishing the harnesses and bequilling his labors with the weird stains of an old plantation melody.

After a pleasant introduction and some interchange of Christian fellowship, I said:

"Brother Moses, I wish you would tell me your Christian experience, if you can spare time for it."

"I alters has time enough for dat, sah," he replied, "and allers shall till I puts off dis clay tabernacle, and then I'll hab all 'ternity to tell it in"—and then a shine came into his dusky visage more brilliant than that which he was imparting to his master's leather.

"It was on de sixth day of October, 1853," he continued, "at three o'clock in de morning, in massa's cornfield, in ole Virginy, that de Lord spoke peace to my soul. You see I had been a mournin' for weeks, yet all de while more or less confidential in myself, and settin' store by de heaps of good works and prayers and repentins I'd done. But at last dese deceitful refuges begun to gib way, and de foundations of de great deep broke up in my soul, and for three days and nights I could neither eat nor drink nor sleep, a-mournin' and a-wailin' for my sins. At last, nigh sunrise in de third day, out in de cornfield, I says, 'Lord, you must save dis despairin sinner, or he'll die. I knows I's wicked and vile and rebellious, but, den, you's all merciful and forgivin. Dat's your reputation, Lord, and I begs you for de sake of your great name to show mercy and not judgment.' And so I cried and pleaded dare on de ground. Den de Lord 'peared to me in de visions of de morning, and reached out his hand to me. But he didn't reach it out flat-ways, as though he had any bread of life to give my hungry soul. Time hadn't come yet for dat. But he reached out his hand p'dge ways

toward me; and if dat hand had been a sharp two-edged sword, it couldn't cut me open quicker'n it did, separatin' de jints and de marrier and layin' bare de corruption of my heart. I never dreamed what a heap of blackness dar was in dat heart till dat mornin'. But just den I heerd a mighty noise, which made me tremble from head to foot; and I says, 'Lord, what's dat rumblin'?' And he says, 'Dat's your sins a-fallin' into hell.' Den, quicker'n I can tell, he reached out his hand ag'in, so kinder soft and tender, and closed me up, and didn't leave a rent or a scare or a sore place in my heart, and he says to me, 'Son, dy sins which is many, is forgiven dee. Den I know'd I'd been born'd again' dat old things was passed away, and all things become new. Hapified was I? From de rising ob de sun, to de going down ob de same dat day, it 'peared like I was in beben, a-standin' on de sea ob glass, wid de harp ob God in my hand and golden slippers on my feet, singin' de song ob Moses and de Lamb.

"From dat day I's been good dea surer I's born'd again, dan I am that I was born'd de first time; for I can't nowise remember my first birth, but de second I'll remember for all eternity, and never cease to praise de Lamb dat redeemed me.

"Dat's my experience. Some folks don't believe it, but I knows, it, for its what I's tasted and seen."

Now I dare say that my readers having listened to this extraordinary story, will conclude that one capable of such highly wrought enthusiasm as this would have very little sober sense or solid judgment for the affairs of the church of Christ. On the contrary, Moses, becoming a deacon in a colored church, not long after my first acquaintance with him, has used the office so well, and gained for himself such a good degree that by general consent he is now regarded as a very pillar and stay among his brethren. His good judgment in managing the affairs of God's house has constantly surprised me; even more have I been impressed with his fine discernment of evangelical truth, and his deep insight into the problems of Christian life and experience. Certainly he must have been profoundly taught of the Spirit; and I can say sincerely that I am always spiritually refreshed by my wayside conversations with him, and that if I should ever be in great affliction or darkness of mind, I can think of no one to whom I should more readily turn for consolation than to black Moses.

But now to the sidewalk discourse: "Have you any special religious interest in your church?" I asked Moses, after his words of hearty greeting on the occasion referred to.

"No room for any interest," he replied. "De church is so lumbered up wid fairs and festivals and selfifications, dat de Spirit's got no change to work among us. Leastwise dat's my solemn 'pinion, dough some says I's heady and s'fuf.

But I's sick of it, sah! I goes to church Sunday, after prayin' to be in de Spirit on de Lord's day, and de fast thing de minister gets up and reads a long programme of de worldly doins and goins for de week—de music and de supper and de grammatic readin' and 'what not,' twenty-five cents admission, and all must come. I tell ye, I kicks ag'in it, sah, and will, long I hab b'ref in my body."

"What do you mean by saying that you kick ag'in it?" I asked.

"I rebukes it, sah, in de name of de Lord. Last Sunday, I spoke out in meetin' and said, 'Bredren, what's ye been redeemed for, and brought into de church? Didn't de Lord tell you dat you's to be de light ob de world, and de salt ob de earth? Well! when I sees how much time some of you gibs to fairs and festivals, and den you can't come to de prayer-meeting 'cause you's so busy, I says, 'If you ever was de Lord's true salt, you've lost your flavor, and if you don't look out, you'll be cast out and trodden under foot of men.'"

"But, Brother Moses," I asked, wishing to draw out further wisdom from this deep fountain, don't you think these things are necessary for making the church attractive to the masses, and inviting to the young?"

"No sah!" he replied with great warant; "no, sah, Christians is de salt of de world, and dey is put into de world to preserve it from corruption. But some's got de ide dat you must bring de corruption into de church so's to preserve de salt; as dough de gospel is going to die out unless it's eugared and seasoned wid carnal 'musements. Dats de pop'lar notion. But I kicks ag'in it, sah."

"Yes; but people say there is no harm in a social gathering, and a plain supper, and a little music and reading for entertaining the people," I continued.

"Well, dats de question," replied Moses. "I takes de Scriptures for my stand-pint of faith and practice, and I have searched in vain to find where de 'postles and elders ever got up suppers of turkey and chickens and sandwiches and co'd tongue and den invite de bredren to come

to church and eat 'em, at twenty-five cents a head. No, brudder, musements in de church is unsanctifyin, howsomever folks may think 'bout it. We had a festival in our meetin'-house, two weeks back. I looks in a few minutes and sees de crowd dere, and de doin's. Fast de pianny and de fiddel strikes up, and den all de young folk's feet begin to shuffle and scape under de seats, like de unthinkin' horse rushin' into battle. And, sez I, 'take off de 'straint, and how long for dis whole company'd be a dancin' and a waltzin' in de house ob God?' Den dey had de guess-cake, and de waffles and waffled off a calico-quit to de one dat drewed de prize; and sez I 'what's dis but eddication' people to gamblin' and lotteries?' Den de grammatic reader comes on, all dressed up wid ribbons an' furbelows an' when I seed her roollin' her eyes an' pintin' her fingers, sez I, ag'in, 'what dis but jus' nussin' our young 'uns for de stage and de theater?' I tell you, I kicks ag'in it, sah, and allers shall."

"Well, next night was prayer-meetin'; only twenty out and all as mum as if de Lord had never opened dere mouths, and when I warns 'em 'bout it dey says, 'Brudder Moses, de Spirit didn't move us.' And sez I, 'de spirit moved ye fas' 'nough last evenin' ob de festival,' but Ise 'fraid t'was de spirit dat works in de children ob disobedience.' Brudder, I reads it, dat dey dats de goin' to wear de crown must bear de cross; but what's we doin' in dese days but 'bolishing' de cross and puttin' eatin' and drinkin' and 'musement and 'dulgence in de place ob it. And what's it goin' to end?"

Here Moses pointed furtively to the residence in front of which we were standing and in a confidential tone said: "De folks dat liba here was once 'fessors of religion, but I reckon dey's back-slid, for dey don't had no prayers in de family now, and dey's all taken up wid theaters and card-playing and balls and parties. Oh, brudder, I has great sorter an' travail of soul, when I sees how de debil prouls round and steals de Lord's sheep right out ob his fold."

"Don't you think, Moses," I asked that the devil works harder to lead Christians astray, then he does to destroy the people of the world?"

"Don't I thinks? I knows it, sah. Why d'ye spouse I works, and tugs, and sweats, beatin' dese carpets and doin' dese chores? T'aint de dollar dats in my pocket dat I's workin' for. I's got dat already. It's de dollar dats in my employers pocket dat I's workin' for. So if de Lord has a real shure 'nuff saint, one dats plain stamped with de image and s'cription of de King, and shines like a new silber dollar, de debil he'll rise up early and sit up late to get hold ob dat one. But your 'bandoned sinners, and your high-steppin' ones dats all taken up wid dere moralisms and self-righteousness, he doesn't trouble himself 'bout—he knows he got dem already."

Here our report of the sidewalk discourse might properly end, but I would be an injustice to Moses to leave the impression that he is only a sour and censorious critic, who takes satisfaction in pointing out the faults of Christians. On the contrary, with an indescribable pathos and tenderness, he thus concluded his talk: "Well, brudder, Ise praying bout it night and day. It's cause de Lord's childrens don't think, dat dey does so. You remember how he says, 'My people don't consider.' Well, I'se on de way now, nigh onto forty years, and it's been my 'perience dat a day's considerin's worth more than a year's workin'. 'Cause when we takes a day for considerin' now and then, we gets 'quainted wid de Lord and finds out his secrets, and de Lord tells us jus' what he's doin', and what he's goin' to do. And, brudder, he tells me in my soul I's a goin' to see a great out-pourin' of de Spirit afor I die. Den when Christians gets dere tongues a-fire as dey did on de day of Pentecost, how our dross will be burned up and what a cracklin' der'll be in de hay, wood and stubble we're buildin' into our churches in dese days! But brudder, 'twon't easy. We'se got to get low before de Lord, and be of one 'cord, and in one place. Trouble is now, dat ebery one ob a different 'cord; one wants one thing, and 'nother wants 'nother. But when we gets where we all wants de same thing so we's satisfied to lib all our days on a crust of bread, if he can hab de Lord and de fullness of his Spirit, den he'll come down like rein on de mown grass; and dat day's a comin', brudder!"

Reader, Moses is a real character and not a myth. He was born in slavery, and if he is able to read, it is only a recent acquirement. But his mind is saturated with the scripture as he has caught its phraseology from the rude preachers of his race. May it not be that he is one of the "babes," to whom the Father has revealed some things which he has "hid from the wise and prudent?"—*The Watchman.*

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The Departing Year.

Happy are we, if these last hours of another year find us in the enjoyment of genuine Christian experience! Whatever may be the occasions of humiliation on account of our many past deficiencies, the knowledge of God's acceptance at the present moment encourages us to turn our faces toward the unknown future with feelings of joy and hope. For we may safely reason that the conscious gift of divine love at any one given point in our earthly pilgrimage is the pledge of God's continued faithfulness, however dark and winding the remainder of the journey.

As the year departs, is it not better to dwell upon the tender mercies of God than to feed a morbid sense of our unworthiness? Personal demerit, on account of sins of omission and commission, every one who has a just understanding of himself must freely acknowledge. But such acknowledgement, much as it becomes us, should only open our eyes to behold the long suffering, the patience, and the tenderness of God. Have we, at any period of the year, fallen away from his love? Have opportunities for usefulness come, only to find us indifferant? Have bereaved hearts, well-nigh crushed beneath earthly woe, turned to us in vain for sympathy? Have hungry, starving souls surrounded us daily without bearing from our lips a single word concerning the bread of life? Have our own steps heavenward been marked at times by unsteadiness, halting by the way, seeking forbidden pleasures, turning from, not toward, the blissful goal? O! let us rather, in reviewing all this, look through our blinding tears, and see the goodness of the Lord.

How kind he has been during all these months! When his love has failed too woo us away from sin, how has he permitted faithful chastening to ensue! When he knew that we needed nothing so much as a deeper knowledge of spiritual truth, how the actual withdrawal of his conscious presence became to us the signal of our distress and want! O, let us recount these mercies; never ceasing to confess our sins, never losing sight of his perfect law, but, in the very same moment, exclaiming: "O, how great is thy goodness!"

Rejoicing in all that God hath done for us, we will be conducted across the threshold into the New Year with a firmer purpose and a braver heart. Great changes await us! Possibly. But gladness "in the Lord" will conquer all. Because of this we will go forth in the coming conflict in the strength of the Lord God.

USE SKODAS DISCOVERY
The Great Blood and Nerve
Remedy.

Calling a Spade a Spade.

Rev. Mark Guy Pearce tells the following story: A member of the church once got drunk. He sought to go back to God and get his peace restored. He could not find the Saviour, so he sought again. His minister called upon him. The minister said to him: "You pray again." They knelt down together. "O God! Thou knowest thy servant in a moment of unwatchfulness was overtaken by sin." "Nonsense!" said the minister: "tell the Lord you got drunk." That was another matter he could not bring that up. He began again: "O Lord! Thou knowest Thy servant in his weakness and frailty was overtaken by a besetment." "Nonsense! tell the Lord you got drunk." At last the poor fellow said: "O God! have mercy upon me; I got drunk. Then very speedily that man was at peace with God again.—Sel.

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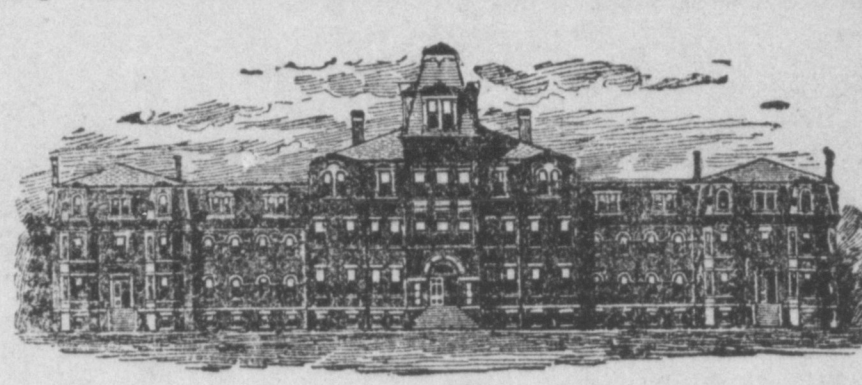
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