

THE JUBILEE SINGERS.

AFTER a concert tour in Connecticut, which was a continuous ovation, the Jubilee Singers returned to this city, where they have just concluded the second series of entertainments with success even greater than that which they achieved at their first appearance in the metropolis. They have now taken their departure for Massachusetts and Northern New England, where they have engagements which will occupy them until the first of May.

A good share of the twenty thousand dollars they undertook to raise for the erection of new buildings for Fisk University is already in the bank, and they hope before the close of the season to add something handsome to this figure.

It has fallen to the lot of these young persons to perform a most valuable service for their race. Jubilee Hall, which will stand at Nashville, as the memorial of their success, will represent but a small part of the work they have accomplished. Their best achievement is what they have done to conquer the old prejudice against color, and to win a kinder regard and a more generous sympathy for the people whom they represent. Seven of the nine singers were slaves until the edict of emancipation; and, after passing an evening in their company, the question will probably never again occur to the hardest-headed Conservative whether it is worth while to educate the freedmen. Their modest and decorous behavior and their evident intelligence go further than any argument could go to dissolve the dregs of that old negrophobia which is still part of the religion of some otherwise sensible people.

It has happened to them once or twice to encounter this prejudice. After returning from Connecticut, where they had been the guests of a governor, they went to Newark, New Jersey, where a tavern-keeper turned them out of his hostelry. He had supposed, when lodgings were engaged for them, that they were a company of nigger (not negro) minstrels; and, when he discovered that they were the genuine article, and not the imitation, he promptly drove them into the street. The burnt cork of the harlequin is to this astute publican a much more respectable pigment than that with which the Creator touches the work of his own hands.

At Jersey City also the singers suffered the same insult. After their rooms had been secured at the American House, the proprietor made the same discovery, and caused his clerk to send a note to the rooms of the Society, of which the following is a literal copy:

AMERICAN HOTEL, JERSEY CITY, }
Feb. 29th, 1872. }

Mr. Warner As desired me to say that the Jubilee Singers can not be accommodated at his Hotel at all. JOHN NEWING.

To the American Missionary Association.

If Mr. Warner will send his clerk to school for a short period to any one of these singers, he will be sure to improve in his spelling, and will be likely to gain some other qualifications for his office which his employer does not possess. Somebody ought to teach this patriot to spell "American" a little less violently.

These indignities are, however, exceptional in the experience of the singers. For the most part they have met with kind treatment; and, while such incidents show the reason why Mr. Sumner's Supplementary Civil Rights Bill should be passed, the grand result of the work of these young people will be to render such a bill unnecessary.

If we should say that these singers have done something for music as an art, we suppose that the musical critics who write for the morning papers would wave us aside with silent contempt. Yet here is the fact, which we beg these gentlemen to account for as best they can. Their concerts have been crowded from the beginning to the end of the season by the most cultivated classes of New York and Brooklyn society; while Nilson, and Parepa, and Wachtel, and Santley were dividing among them the honors which belong to the highest musical culture; while the town was revelling at the richest feast which has ever been spread before the patrons of artistic music, these uncultivated singers from the Southern plantations came with their simple melodies, and gained attention and applause equal, at least, to that which has been given to the great artists. We have had excellent opportunities of watching the effect of their music upon the audiences to which they have sung, and we say, without fear of contradiction, that the intent listening, the quick sympathy, the tearful and eloquent silence with which these dark-skinned minstrels have been rewarded for the rendering of their spiritual songs are very rarely vouchsafed to singers of any class. This is doubtless partly owing to the remembrance of their former condition, and partly also to the quaint and exceptional character of their music; but it is also due in part, as we believe, to the fact that the very soul of music, which the florid culture of the time tends to destroy, lives and breathes in these simple songs. If our critics, instead of judging them by operatic standards, would undertake to find out what is the secret of their power, they would honor and magnify their art.