

SOJOURNER TRUTH.

"WHY, chile, bless your heart, I'se jess' glad to see you. I'se come here for a messenger, an' I guess I'se de oldest messenger in de world. I'se been here a good while, chile. It seems, when I t'ink on it, like as if I'd been in de world ever since de world begun."

Such were the words of Sojourner Truth, the Lybian Sibyl, as she grasped the hand of a *Herald* reporter, who had called to see her, and she fixed upon him her great, luminous black eyes, in which there seemed to smoulder the gloomy mysticism of all the ages of the dusky East. When the visitor entered, she was surrounded by three or four Quaker ladies, with whom she was chatting about her long experience of life. She rose with a sprightly movement, like a maid of sixteen. Her presence impressed one with the true gentility of her character, in spite of her ebon complexion and her servile origin. There are authentic records which prove that her age is at least one hundred and two years; yet, far from being shriveled and haggard in appearance, her skin is as soft and smooth as that of the merest child. The doctors declare that her pulse is that of a young woman. While her face is distinctively of the Nubian cast, her features are not gross, and her eyes are capable of the most intense expression, varying from pathos and love to wrath and abhorrence. Her dialect differs essentially from that of the Southern Negroes. It is founded upon her early knowledge of the Low Dutch, which was her only language until she was twelve or thirteen years old.

THE FIRST STEAMBOAT.

After telling Sojourner that he had heard of her ever since his boyhood, and had come to satisfy himself that she was not altogether a myth, the reporter asked if she could tell her exact age.

She replied: "I spec you's heerd of ole Sojourner dis many an' many a year. But I can't tell how old I is, cos I don't reckon as I lived at all afore de 'manicipation. Whar was I born, honey? Well, I was a slave forty year. I growed up among de Low Dutch along de Hudson. Fac' is, I dunno as ever I was born at all. I foun' myself in de world such a long, long time ago. Why, honey, I 'members the fust steamboat. Dem days I was jes' every bit as big as I am now. I was a-livin' on de shore den. Yes, yes, bless your heart, chile, I saw it. Why, it made noise enough, I tell ye, an' it threw the water up a'most as high as this here house."

RECOLLECTIONS OF LAFAYETTE.

"Did you ever see Washington, Sojourner?"

"No, I never did see Washington; but I lived when he did," and this she said with a great brightening of her face and an accent of reverential pride. "When he died I rec'lect de noospapers was in mournin' and dere was a great time o' sorrow. Years arterward I saw Lafayette. He was on de steamboat, a-comin' up de river wi' de cadets. He took dinner across de river, on de Dutchess County side. Dere dey roasted a whole ox for him. Den I saw him anoder time when he went up de North River; but I never was very near him. He was on de deck den, an' I was on de land. I rec'lect hearin' tell a great deal 'bout Napoleon Bonaparte, too."

"What was your name in those days?"

"I had different names—first one name and den anoder name. I changed dem wid every change of my masters. First it was Bell Ardenburg, den Bell Nealy, den it was Bell Scrivers, den it was Bell Dumont, and den it was Bell Van Wagner. But, bless de Lord, chile, he has redeemed me out of all dose names. My chilern is called arter de names of de marsters dat dey were born under. But I'se got a new name. Bless de Lord, I'se seen' good times now, an' de Lord he have raised up dis here young man here to write it all down what I say. I want de edterers an' de reporters to know dat I 'preciate de work dat dey does in puttin' me in de papera. I know it's hard, 'cause I never has any stops when I talks, and I 'preciate it. Dere was Greeley, bless him!"—and the old lady's emphasis was affectionate and fervid—"he always sent his reporters to my meetin's; an' it did a sight o' good. Yes, 'deed it did; de Lord bless 'im."

THE ORIGIN OF HER NAME.

"How came you to be called Sojourner Truth? Were you called that in the days of slavery?"

"No, no, chile. Bless your soul, do you s'pose dose slaveholders could speak o' de truth?" replied Sojourner, with immense energy and a voice that sounded like a trumpet of wrath. "Well, I'se goin' to tell you 'bout dat; and dis is more dan I'se ever tole to any reporter. Ye see, I was boun' a slave in de State of New York an' Ulster County. I was sole five times, an' I used to pray to God to make my marster and misterness good. But dey didn't get good; an' when marster wouldn't set me free, when he promised he would, I left him and went to Long Island. Dere wan't no city den—only a few houses on de Brooklyn Hights. When on de oder side I had started out two miles, I stopped to get somethin' to eat; an' a Quaker lady, she dat give it to me, asked me my name. It had come to me, as I was a-walkin' an' a-thinkin', dat I was to have a new name. It had come to me dat it would be 'Journey.' So I tole her; an' I said de

Lord give it to me. She 'sisted dat I must have some other name; an' den, as I walked along de sand fo' two miles furder, I kep' a-sayin' to myself, 'O Lord, give me a name wid a handle to it,' sayin' it to myself as I went along. An' all at once dere came to me dese words: 'Sojourner Truth.' 'Dat's a good name, Lord,' I said. 'Dat's a good name; and I tank you, Lord.'

HER RELIGIOUS ENTHUSIASM.

Sojourner touched upon her experience with the Second Adventists in Connecticut. This was a time of great religious excitement. In the year 1849 she had a last interview with her old master, Mr. Dumont; and he gladdened her heart by confessing that he had lived to realize the evil of slavery. In the same year she joined the Northampton Association. She had previously been a moderate disciple of Matthias, the false prophet; and had also listened to the preaching of Miller, who prophesied the end of the world. Her peculiar and remarkable talents becoming widely known, she naturally became an apostle of the anti-slavery cause, and her eloquence was quite as potent as that of more learned and more profound advocates. Her imagination is weird and grotesque, while her mind is clear and strong, and her sympathetic influence is as wonderful as it is intense. She has sat before the multitude in the company of most of the distinguished reformers of this country.

HER INTERVIEW WITH LINCOLN.

"When de lecturer on slavery burst up, I went down to take care of de freedmen in Wash'n'ton durin' de war." Then she repeated the discourse that she had had with Lincoln, when she visited him. She told him that the first time she had heard of him was after he had become President; and he replied that he had heard of her many times before that. She said: "I thought you was like Daniel, an' one time it 'peared 'most like de lions would eat you up. Mr. Lincoln was standin' an' lookin' down at me an' smilin'; an' he said, 'Well, Sojourner, you see dey hasn't done it yet, don't you?'"

Sojourner then described, in a most poetic manner, a Bible which was shown her by Lincoln, and which had been presented to him by the colored people of Baltimore.

The reporter, when he was about to take his leave, uttered the wish that Sojourner might live a hundred years longer; and she quickly rejoined:

"I'se goin' to. God has molded me over anew an' he has put new flesh on to my ole bones."

Then she took off her cap and showed a head that is covered with curly and silken hair, almost entirely black. There is a narrow streak across the middle and over her left temple which is as white as driven snow. "Twenty-seven years ago," said she, "my h'ar was white as dat paper; but arter I was sick it began turnin' black agin. Ain't it wonderful? Mebby I shall have new teeth too. I think de Lord has made me all over again, to be a testimony to de nation."
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