

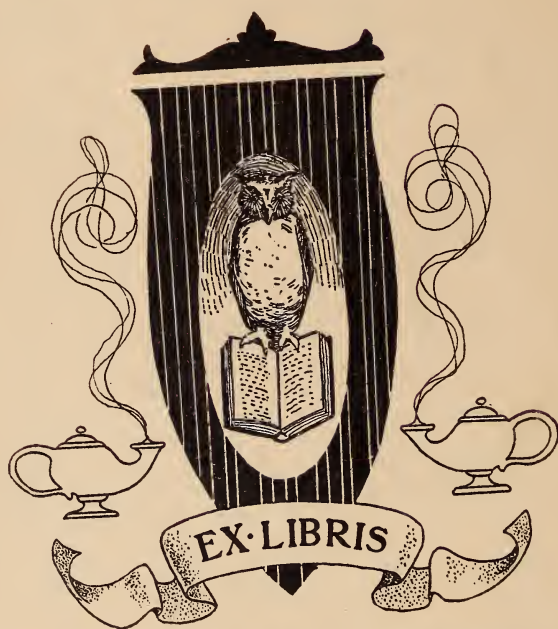
BOND AND FREE



HOWARD

Miss Maria S Byard

October 15 1887



S. G. and E. L. ELBERT



Yours Respect-
J. W. Howard

BOND AND FREE;

A TRUE TALE OF SLAVE TIMES.

— BY —

JAS. H. W. HOWARD,
Late Editor of the State Journal.

HARRISBURG:
EDWIN K. MEYERS, PRINTER AND BINDER.
1886.

Copyrighted by
JAS. H. W. HOWARD,
1886.

Electrotyped by EDWIN K. MEYERS.

CONTENTS.

I. THE MAXWELL FAMILY,	5
II. ANOTHER FAMILY,	15
III. THE BARGAIN,	28
IV. THE WEDDING,	47
V. A BAD START,	52
VI. THE ESCAPE,	61
VII. ATTACKED,	73
VIII. TWO HAPPY FATHERS,	84
IX. A NOVEL STAKE,	95
X. THE WIFE'S RETURN,	104
XI. THE SEPARATION,	111
XII. ANOTHER CLASS OF SLAVES,	124
XIII. THE FUGITIVES,	134
XIV. PUPIL AND TEACHER,	146
XV. THE JUDGE'S SISTER,	171
XVI. A MOTHER'S SACRIFICE,	200
XVII. THE TEACHER AND PUPIL CROSS THE LINE,	221
XVIII. WILLIAM'S STRIKE FOR FREEDOM,	240
XIX. UNITED IN FREEDOM,	265



PREFACE.

In presenting this, my first book, to the public, I crave indulgence for whatever errors it may contain. The incidents related are true, while the adventures of the fugitives, in their escape from slavery, are actual facts related by persons well known to me, some of them closely related, and for whose veracity I can safely vouch. Many of the events of this tale will recall to the minds of not a few some of their own experiences, or the experience of relatives or friends as often rehearsed to them. I have no desire to create or revive any animosity on the part of those who have survived the cruelties of slavery, but as one of that race, now struggling for a position in the Nation which once refused to recognize their manhood, I trust I shall not be harshly censured for depicting a few of the milder forms of treatment to which the negro was subjected while enslaved.

In commenting upon the cruelties of slavery, I have endeavored to suppress all rancorous feeling which would naturally arise in the bosom of one so closely identified with the race, remembering that this

book is for the reading public, and not intended to offend any one. Should I, therefore, at any time, appear hypercritical, attribute it to the over-powering sympathy which might possibly have guided my pen.

Hoping that you may be amply compensated for the moments spent in perusing these lines,

I remain, yours gratefully,

The AUTHOR.

BOND AND FREE.

A TRUE TALE OF SLAVE DAYS.

CHAPTER I.

THE MAXWELL FAMILY.

Harwood Maxwell was one of that class of men common in his day, but perhaps differing, in many essential particulars, from his surrounding neighbors. There was not a better known man in county ——, Virginia, than Harwood Maxwell. To say that he was eccentric, would, perhaps, be taking too great a liberty with the acquaintance I had with him; but to say he was not peculiar, would not give an accurate or truthful description of him. His peculiarities, however, were not of a disagreeable nature, but were those of a man who saw fit to differ in many respects from a long line of antecedents. Harwood Maxwell was a true Virginian in every sense of the word; his grandfather was among its earliest settlers, and was one of those who infused much of the spirit of independence into the colonies, and battled so strongly against the iron rule of his mother-country. Notwithstanding the principles of his forefathers, Harwood Maxwell soon became distinguished for his favoritism to King

George. Nor did the fact of his settlement in this, one among the first colonies to oppose the tyrannical rule of His Majesty, and to sever all allegiance to the crown, interfere in the least with his love for his sovereign.

This colony is dear to the American heart because of having rendered so invaluable a service in the cause of American Independence, through its illustrious son. When I assert that Harwood Maxwell was a true Virginian, perhaps I ought to make an exception upon this one point, but having already said that he was peculiar, let his peculiarities answer for any apparent inconsistencies his nature may have betrayed. The name of Maxwell was an old one, and great pride was taken in this fact. Harwood's father had possessed a large estate, which had been transmitted to his son, not without some incumbrance nor with as many acres as when it came into the father's possession, for as generation followed generation, so followed a decrease in the vast acres. This, of course, primarily depreciated the value of the estate as it was handed from father to son. The sons evidently were not as successful in their management as were their fathers; nevertheless, the estate still abounded in good stock, consisting of men, women, and other beasts of burden; and the acres that were left were fertile and well cultivated. Mr. Maxwell was married several years before he had an heir. Fortune at last favored him with a son on whom he lavished all the attention a kind, indulgent, and wealthy father could lavish

upon his only offspring. His son, Jonathan, grew to be a bright, intelligent man, such a man as a father could feel justly proud of, such a son as Harwood Maxwell wished for, hoped for, and prayed for.

At last, the impartial sickle of death came along and relentlessly removed Harwood Maxwell from this mundane sphere, and Jonathan became sole possessor of all the Maxwell estate, including men, women, and all other goods and chattels. Jonathan was a man, in many respects, similar to his father; he had been fondly indulged, always having numerous servants to attend his every wish, and as he sat and reflected upon what he must do in the future, his fine, handsome face was lighted up with a smile of satisfaction, for he realized that he had under his entire control hundreds of acres of richly cultivated soil, a great number of human beings, whose sweat and labor, as well as their blood, had been the means of enriching the very soil which he now possessed. He was imbued with all of those ideas characteristic of the true Southern gentlemen, whose education taught them that labor was degrading, and who did not believe in that part of his country's law which declared "all men were born free and equal." He had married into one of those aristocratic Southern families more noted for their family respectability than their wealth, and who, being the possessors of a small estate with only a few human beings as subjects, made life a veritable hell for those few, and extracted from them all the labor they were capable of performing. A

man reared as Jonathan Maxwell, being the worthy son of a sire noted for his peculiarities, while he possessed some of the same traits of his father, was strong in his own individuality. He had reached an age when liberty of thought took a wide range with him, and the points in his character were clearly displayed. He believed that all men had distinctive relations; that inordinate principles decreed that white was born to rule and black to be ruled. He believed that his betters were unborn and his equals were few. Having been over-indulged, he was, of course, greatly spoiled. So assertive was he in his views that he almost denied himself that contact with the world, which draws men out. He was almost absolutely wrapped up in himself, being entirely unanimous upon the infallibility of his own conceptions. He hated the world because concession was not generally given to his haughty ideas, and because he realized his inability to flog the world into agreement; he never hesitated to crack the whip of authority over the heads and upon the backs of those around him. His society was much sought for because it was exclusive, and it afforded him great pleasure when he beheld his fellow-man writhing in the throes of distress. Some people said that he was a cruel master; others said that he was very exacting, but not cruel.

His wife was one of those handsome Southern beauties, indolent to a fault, and whose ideas regarding our unfortunate race were strictly in accord with those of her husband, and yet, if anything, far worse. Jona-

than had one thing in his nature that none of the long line of Maxwells was ever known to possess; that was an inordinate desire to increase his possessions. He was a man with few scruples, consequently, nothing stood in the way of his acquiring more wealth. His plantations were all in good condition, his human cattle fat and sleek. The latter, though worked hard, were well quartered and well fed. This, of course, made them prolific, and, in fact, many of them were kept upon the estate on account of their breeding qualities.

Things worked along upon the Maxwell estate with an evenness never before known; but the master became more and more exacting, and the poor subjects more and more depressed. The field hands, of course, felt none of this hard grinding, because their lot was unchanged. Bill Lewis, the overseer, still held his position under his new master, and, as he was evidently a reader of human nature, assisted, no doubt, by his long service with the Maxwells, he knew that no matter how hard he drove nor how severely he whipped, his employer would be satisfied, so long as good returns were the result. Over the house servants Lewis had no control, but he had often compelled many of them to submit to his hellish and brutish designs, and the features of several pick-innies about the plantation bore a striking resemblance to his low, ill-bred countenance.

Among Jonathan Maxwell's house servants was a woman who, had she not have had the traces of Afri-

can blood in her veins, and had she been reared with half the care with which Mrs. Maxwell, her mistress, had, would have been an ornament to any society, and put to blush many so-called Southern beauties. She was a woman about two or three and twenty years of age, beautiful in form, her features were as delicate and chaste as a lady bred in luxury and refinement; her long black tresses were of silken glossiness; her carriage and bearing were characterized by both dignity and grace. This woman, possessed of all the attractiveness which nature could bestow, was what? No more than a mere thing, a piece of goods, a mere chattel, with a price upon her head, a commodity that could be bought or sold, with no protection for her virtue, and whose beauty only made her the more valuable in the eyes of some brute whose lust urged him to bid a higher price for her possession. This woman by nature, whatever else by law, bore a marked resemblance to Jonathan Maxwell. He knew it; his wife did not fail to notice it, and Purcey, for such was the name she bore, also recognized the likeness herself. She not only resembled her young master in countenance, but there were many things about her which showed unmistakable evidence of Maxwell blood, Maxwell pride, and Maxwell cleverness.

Before the death of Harwood Maxwell, Purcey had enjoyed many liberties denied the other servants. She was petted, cajoled, well dressed, even richly so at times, and, except addressing her master as "massa" and her mistress as "missa," she hardly realized her ig-

nomious position. By some means, she had hoarded up quite a little sum of money, and had been shrewd enough to pick up a smattering of learning from hearing Jonathan going over his lessons with his tutor. She increased her little savings of money, and improved her learning, all of which she concealed from every one. Purcey's mother was, and had been for years, the cook of the Maxwell family. She was a woman with traces of Indian blood in her veins, but how she became a slave, history does not record. History does record, however, how Harwood Maxwell bought a very beautiful negress at a sale while on a trip to the New Orleans slave market, brought her home to his invalid wife, and how, in a short time, this beautiful slave woman gave birth to a child which was more beautiful than the mother. Owing to its fair complexion and its close resemblance to Mars Harwood, there was no room to doubt nor was it difficult to trace the father. There was an unusual amount of human feeling evinced by Harwood Maxwell for this woman and child. He was unlike thousands of his kind, who ill-treated and sold their flesh and blood—a sin he did not have to answer for. He neither abused, nor allowed to be abused, the mother or the daughter. This is why Purcey grew up into womanhood with all of the spirit of one born a free being.

Whenever Jonathan's mother, for years an invalid, demanded her husband to sell or dispose in some way of this child and its mother, an eye-sore to her, she was met with such a response from him as invariably brought

on convulsions, her request never being complied with.

Before her death, she called her son to her bedside and taught him to hate Elva and her daughter, Purcey, without revealing to him his father's perfidy. Jonathan had not forgotten his mother's death-bed instructions, though he had given her no intimation that he would follow them. In fact, while he could consistently hate his half-sister, nothing could induce him to dispose of his property, except the prospect of pecuniary gain. Elva was also the mother of four other children, two boys and two girls. They were of a type entirely different from Purcey, their father being a full-blooded Negro. Consequently, their features bore all the marks of the race. Elo, whom I will hereafter describe, was the youngest of the four. Emeline was of a brown-skin hue, with thick lips, stubborn hair, and very coarse features. The boys were both sturdy, manly fellows, each worth fifteen hundred dollars to his master. With that feeling born of slavery, Emeline cordially hated Purcey; first, because, as she termed it, "she was half white and stuck up;" second, because of the natural animosity borne by all field hands toward all house servants. Jonathan Maxwell did not want to sell Purcey, as she was his wife's maid, and that lady, with that attachment a mistress has for a pet dog, or bird, did not want her removed. Purcey's beauty never made her foolish. She had a natural pride, but never forgot her duty to her mistress. Ever

ready and willing to obey the slightest command, yet her sensitive nature secretly resisted imposition. Mrs. Maxwell had exceedingly aggravating ways, and, on one occasion, her overbearing manner incurred open resentment from Purcey, which that lady never forgot.

Mrs. Maxwell had, in this instance, upon going out for a ride, directed Purcey to perform some duties in her absence. Upon her return, being much fatigued with her exercise, she seated herself in an easy chair. Looking about the room, she discovered that the work left for Purcey had not been properly attended to. Immediately there was a display of passion, and she directed her husband to ring the maid's bell. Purcey was somewhat slow in obeying the summons, as she was dressing to go riding herself, a privilege she had always enjoyed. When she entered the room, her mistress was almost struck dumb by her appearance. She was robed in a purple silk riding-habit; her riding hat sat jauntily upon her shapely head; while at her well formed throat was fastened a bunch of violets, which made a happy contrast with her beautiful face; her petite feet were encased in the daintiest of boots, and could just be seen as they peeped out beneath the bottom of her skirts. Mrs. Maxwell flew into a rage, sprang from her chair, and raised her riding whip, which she still held in her hand, and exclaimed:

“How dare you, you wench, enter my presence in this manner?”

Purcey drew herself up proudly, and said: “Missa, don't strike me with that whip, or I'll die for you.”

Mrs. Maxwell was a handsome woman, and she had no cause to fear any rival, but where on earth did one woman who was handsome, and knew it, ever meet another handsomer than herself that the seeds of jealousy did not take root? There was a wide chasm between Mrs. Maxwell and her servant, but Purcey appearing in such a costume at such a time, was really exasperating and outrageous to her bias views of the duty of an underling, and she had determined to stop it at once. But meeting so defiant an air from her intended victim, she wisely concluded, though still angry, to adopt a less summary mode of punishment. Her hand fell to her side, and, dropping into her easy chair, she said, imperatively: "Disrobe me." Purcey immediately obeyed with that submissiveness characteristic of her race. Mrs. Maxwell never again attempted to administer corporal punishment to her.

CHAPTER II.

ANOTHER FAMILY.

The adjoining plantation to Jonathan Maxwell's belonged to Abraham Biggers. Mr. Biggers was a characteristic Southerner, the owner of a plantation of over five hundred acres, upon which he had fifty or a hundred human beings, besides other stock. The latter received better treatment and better care than the former. Among this goodly number of Mr. Biggers' goods and chattels, was a family of McCullars, consisting of father, mother, and a prolific offspring of some twenty odd children. John McCullar was a man about sixty years of age, and was a freeman, while his wife was the alleged property of Mr. Biggers, as were all of the children who bore the name of McCullar. For in those halcyon days of traffic in human stock, if the husband and father was born a freeman, bought his freedom, or was set free, by marrying a woman in bondage, all of his offspring became the property of the woman's master.

It will at once be seen that, as John McCullar was a freeman, and could not be bought, to secure one of his boys upon a plantation and marry him to a healthy woman, or turn him loose—if of a licentious nature—would be a profitable investment for any man possessing such ideas as those possessed by Jonathan

Maxwell. A marriage between one of Biggers' boys of the McCullar breed to Purcey would be to him a continual source of profit. Well may it be said that the ways of Providence are beyond understanding. Here was a man who had no master, who was what was called a free man, yet deprived of the full enjoyment of all the privileges belonging to other freemen because his skin was black. This man, in his ignorance, connects himself to a woman in bondage, and adds fuel to the already burning flame of slavery. Poor, deluded creature! What did he know of the wrong he was doing his race? What did he know of the untold suffering which awaited every child of which he was the father? And this was only a single instance of how this blot upon a nation's honor was fed, was kept alive, and prospered. Better had John McCullar died in embryo than to have been born, to be the means of bringing into the world so many human beings to become the common property of a soulless huckster in humanity.

Among the McCullar boys was William, a fellow of good address, who could follow a cradle in a harvest field from sunrise until sunset, walk five miles to a neighboring plantation, dance all night, and hold his own the following day without a crack from the overseer's whip. He had frequently been hired by Jonathan Maxwell from his master, and had attracted the attention of everybody about the place by his steadiness and his pride. William had considerable pride for a slave; he was entirely oblivious of his own

situation, but appeared fully to realize that the most despicable thing to come in contact with was a black man. He was not white himself, being of a dark-brown complexion, with lips slightly inclined to thickness, a high intelligent forehead, and with a speech quite free from the "dis" and "dat" of the plantation hands. A distinguishable feature about William was the use of words of which he seldom knew the meaning, but, by some unaccountable manner, succeeded in getting them in the proper place. The fact of his using language in advance of himself made him the beau ideal of all the females for miles around. This superior recognition led him to look with contempt upon his fellow male-associates.

Now there were plenty of female servants upon Mr. Biggers' plantation, healthy, buxom women, and of a varied assortment of complexions, from the whiteness of an Anglo-Saxon to the deepest black; but there is an open secret which existed in the accursed days of slavery, and which exists among the race to-day. That secret is, that a real black man is generally extremely partial to very light women. William was no exception to this rule, as will be readily perceived, and when at one of those regular plantation midnight gatherings, where an old uncle sat up in the corner of the room with his legs crossed, a banjo resting upon his knee, head thrown back, keeping time with his foot, and calling figures to the time of the music, music which seemed to inspire every living thing, music unwritten and unsung, music which to those

untutored minds was as sweet as the music of a Strauss or a Verdi to the most cultivated, everybody was dancing, feet were shuffling in regular order, the ladies moving with all the imaginable grace they could assume, while the gents were as gallant as the most attentive chevalier, he noticed among the throng of amusement seekers a beautiful, sylph-like form, whose grace of motion, lovely countenance, and evident superiority over her more unfortunate sisters completely captivated him.

Her every movement was closely watched by him, and there were few of his associates who did not perceive a radical change in his manner. He did not enter into the enjoyment of the dance with the same zest as on other occasions. In fact, William's mind was wholly engrossed with this unknown beauty. It was known that he was of a taciturn disposition, and the fact of his not entering fully into the enjoyments of the evening did not attract the attention of those present so much as his actions, whenever this particular female came near him. He would gaze after her intently and longingly. He seemed to have no words for anybody, but glutted and feasted his eyes upon the beautiful form of the woman who moved so gracefully from place to place.

Those unfamiliar with slavery, and unaccustomed to seeing men and women so fair in their complexions as to raise doubts whether they were white or black, would have thought the woman who so attracted William's attention was out of her ele-

ment, it being a difficult matter to discover evidences of negro blood in her. William could no longer restrain his admiration, and prevailed upon a friend for an introduction. He was presented to her, and met for the first time the woman who afterwards became his wife. William's brilliant conversational powers and gentlemanly deportment favorably impressed Purcey.

There are various kinds of dancing indulged in by persons who enjoy that amusing pastime, but for original, amusing, and active dancing one should see a select gathering of negro house-servants on a plantation as they glide through a regular old Virginia reel, with their aptness for copying after the style and grace of their mistresses, combined with an admixture of original jigging, not of a vulgar, but of a quiet, decent character. There is a very great difference between an old Virginia break-down, as indulged in by the field hands, or what they commonly called "common niggers," and a select dance, as indulged in by the house-servants, or "upper crust darkeys." In the latter, there is an entire absence of the coarse, vulgar, noisy break-downs and jigs which were so common in the former. When the servants who lived in the "big house" held their social gatherings, the lines of social distinction were closely drawn. Even among these poor unfortunates, all deprived of their liberty alike, there existed those social ties which both bind and separate the coarse and vulgar from the more refined and genteel.

Purcey's beauty and lady-like bearing could not help but command considerable attention from the colored beaux. Every young man in the county knew her, and every young man in the county would have sacrificed his eye teeth, or committed some other bodily infliction, to have had the pleasure of basking in the sunshine of Miss Purcey's smiles. Several had made strenuous efforts to gain favor from her, but in vain. Her dignified, yet lady-like, bearing proved too great a barrier for any continued advances on their part. She became commonly and mutually respected, if not almost revered, by all the young men without being bored by any of them. She was called the beauty of the county, and, whenever present at any kind of a gathering, was the queen of the hour. It need not be said that a vague suspicion existed among these sons of bondage that Purcey thought herself too good for many of them, and the suspicion was well founded.

Among the most determined of Purcey's suitors, was a young man who was the property of a once very wealthy widow lady, who kept about her only a few servants of her own, hiring whatever other help she needed to work her plantation. James Seabury was the young man in question, and he was the Widow Dean's favorite servant. He was given much liberty, managed the other servants, and was trusted beyond limit. He was commonly called the "Widow Dean's Jim." Jim was of a copper-colored complexion, with straight hair, clear cut fea-

tures, and a fine physique. He dressed with great taste and neatness, and sported a handsome gold watch—a gift of his mistress, who took great pride in him. Jim was naturally quick withal, and possessed a splendid mind which only needed cultivation. Here, however, was the level upon which he stood with the most stunted and ignorant field hand. With all his natural acquirements, without freedom, without the letter, his condition was a regretful one, and his excellent qualities were stunted by a cruel, unjust oppression. Jim had vainly struggled to force his attentions upon Purcey; he spared neither money nor wit to win her affection, and while, at times, his soul was delighted by a few hours in her society, yet all of his advances were met with a dignified but positive check. He was, of course, without those traits of winsomeness so common to men of a more intellectual mind, and had to content himself with his simple knowledge of wooing, as he had been taught by Uncle Oscar.

Every plantation had some old uncle or aunty who set up business as instructor in love affairs. Their stock of information was very limited, and partook much of a sameness, but to the poor, untutored minds of those who received instructions from them, they were regarded as prophetic, and great confidence was placed in them. The instructions in love-making, as imparted by Uncle Oscar, were of that character of information which makes a man better off without it. He could get so far and

no farther ; then the pupil was left to talk for himself. Jim had called on Uncle Oscar for instructions as to how to make love, and had been addressed something like this :

“ Now, chile, when yer heart is set on a young lady, and you wants ter 'splain to her de amors affecshun of yer heart, you goes in. She says, ‘ Hab a seat ? ’ You says, ‘ Don’t car if do. ’ She says, ‘ Rest yer hat ? ’ You says, ‘ Don’t car if I do. ’ Den, when you’s seated, you cross yer legs, puts yer hand up in yer serspender, dis way, fro back yer head, and say : ‘ Miss, dar has been sumpfin’ on my mind dat I hab sought prebious opportunites befor the present ‘cassion to give unlimited scope to my ‘spressions. Should dar be no ‘jections, I desire to ‘splain what hab been to me de unhappy moments when I’s absent from yer presence. ’ After yer hab said dis, den wait for ‘fect. ”

This is as far as Uncle Oscar’s instructions extended. What was to be done after the effect, James was left to decide for himself. With this meager information, arrant knight never went forth to meet his lady fair with more boldness than the Widow Dean’s Jim. As he sallied forth to call upon Miss Purcey, over and over in his mind did he turn the words of his tutor, until he could repeat them almost verbatim. Having reached the presence of his fair Dulcina, being invited to a seat, Jim, without any further conversation, began to recite Uncle Oscar’s love piece. When he came to the end of his speech

he stopped, as a matter of course, and waited for the effect. Purcey waited for him to proceed until the pause became embarrassing, when she said, "Proceed, Mr. Seabury." Jim looked at her in a dazed sort of manner, appearing completely puzzled. That word was more than he could digest. He did not know whether it meant to go or remain, whether it was encouraging or discouraging; consequently, Jim did the most natural thing imaginable: he looked straight at Purcey with a puzzled air and grinned.

This ended the love-making, but did not dampen Jim's ardor, for he continued to press his attentions upon Purcey to such an extent that the girl grew alarmed at his dogged determination. He began to grow desperate, and finding that he could not summon sufficient manly courage to declare his love, he decided to fill his bosom with the stuff that cheers, and which is supposed to urge men to deeds of valor as well as crime. Opportunity soon presented itself—a camp-meeting was to be held a few miles from the village, and, as was the custom when camp-meetings were held, everybody for miles around attended them.

Jim selected one of the widow's best horses, and provided himself with plenty of spending money. Dressed with his usual neatness, his gold watch-fob dangling from his pocket, he set out for the camp, intending to seek Purcey, whom he knew would be there. Now had Jim been possessed with the courage or the forethought of the average young man, he would have engaged his lover's company for the

entire journey, and thus shut out the possibility of any rival out-generalizing him. But not attending to these details, he was doomed to a disappointment and humiliation that day which ended forever his affections for Purcey, and shook his confidence in the encouraging influence of the wine when it is red, or corn-juice after it is distilled.

The camp-meeting was a large one, conducted by Brother Uncle Belden, of Baptist faith. Brother Belden was a gifted man; he was blessed or gifted with a stentorian pair of lungs, a very active and original imagination, and could read the Bible with the lids closed, with as much satisfaction to himself as he could when open, because Brother Belden could not read at all. He had, however, been called to preach, and with an ever-ready obedience shown by those only who have received the call, he responded. Uncle Belden was one of that vast army of called laborers in the vineyard of the Lord, who have never stopped to measure their fitness. Fitness was considered hardly necessary as a qualification to their labor. So nearly on an equality were the preacher and the hearer, that he who announced that he had been called by the Lord to labor in His moral vineyard was looked upon with holy reverence. They were all equally deprived, both the called and the uncalled. The privilege of obtaining any better knowledge of the Word of God was denied them, except through the medium of such men as Uncle Belden.

In him they confided; him they honored; in him they saw the messenger of the Lord bearing the only consolation which was like balm to their hearts in their deepest sufferings. From this source they learned, after all the sufferings of this life, that a brighter and more peaceful one awaited them in the life to come.

It was the true camp-meeting of ye olden times, when the people were inspired with the earnestness of their work, and worshiped beneath the green trees and the bright heavens, the sweet songsters of nature responding to their earnestness. The soft, green turf upon which they kneeled and poured forth prayers, such as only their simple souls could give utterance to, was quite in place, and far superior to their houses of worship. The hymns they sang were original and quaint, the music was unwritten and inimitable, the pathos exciting them to high but earnest demonstration. What a contrast between ye camp-meeting of ye good old slave-days and the Sabbath-breaking, speculative gatherings of to-day! It was one of these camps Jim attended, and as he had expected, met Purcey. Upon discovering her, he carried out with avidity his determination to bolster up his courage with the stuff that cheers. From the well-filled bottle with which he had provided himself, he took frequent potations, until his courage was up to the point of boldness sufficient to approach her. Purcey, dressed in the riding habit which had so incensed her mistress, resting against a tree,

and deeply engrossed with Brother Belden's dissertation upon the unknown future, looked the picture of beauty.

Jim approached her, touching her gently on the arm. Purcey turned suddenly, and discovered from his dilating eyes and the unpleasant aroma which emanated from his mouth that he had been drinking. Her first impulse was to reprimand him then and there, but fearing to attract attention, she said :

“Well, Mr. Seabury, you here?”

Jim said, “Yes, Miss Purcey, will you walk with me?”

This invitation, coming from a young man in his cups, would doubtless have been refused by most young women, but Purcey, knowing Jim's sticking qualities, assented. The two left the vicinity of the pulpit, which was a rude structure erected out of rough boards and set upon four logs, and proceeded a short distance toward the open road. When they had gone, as Purcey thought, far enough, she stopped, and, in a very polite manner, asked her escort what he desired. By this time, Jim had become pretty well confused, and had been lost in a maze of thought as to what to say to Purcey; now that they were alone, after a moment's silence, having apparently collected his scattered thoughts, he said :

“Miss Purcey, I love you, 'deed I do, and, if your master will let me, I want to marry you. Will you have me?” At this, he fell on his knees and seized her hand with both of his, covering it with kisses.

Purcey was almost dying with laughter, for, from amidst the crowded camp, she saw William McCullar looking uneasily around, and knew that it was she whom he sought. He finally caught a glimpse of her standing in the road, a man upon his knees before her, and she struggling to free her hand from his grasp. With a sudden bound, almost like a flash, he was at her side; taking in the situation at a glance, he saw no harm was meant Purcey; so he gently released Jim's grasp, and, taking Purcey by the arm, stood between the girl and his arduous rival. With a graceful sweep of his arm and a look of contempt, William said, "Young man, you's entirely too previous," when he quietly led her away. Poor Jim, finding himself alone in the road and his rich black broadcloth pants covered with dust, arose shyly, sought his horse, returned home, and banished all love for Purcey from his bosom.

CHAPTER III.

THE BARGAIN.

Jonathan Maxwell was anxious that Purcey should marry one of the McCullar breed, which one, he did not care. So he betook himself to the Biggers plantation for the purpose of bringing about the desired union. Jonathan was always a welcome visitor at the Biggers mansion, and, when announced, Mr. Biggers was just turning over in his mind the project of "putting a few niggers into his pocket," as he always termed the bartering away of human flesh and blood. For some time Mr. Biggers had been growing financially embarrassed; he had parted with a number of his slaves to the traders, and others had parted from him for fear of being sold South. Two or three of his slaves had made successful attempts in escaping, which had only aroused the rancorous feeling in the man, and, one day, he called them all up and informed them that the next time a d—m nigger ran away from the plantation, he would sell all the rest and put them into his pocket, where he was sure they would be safe.

Mr. Biggers said, "Don't I clothe you? don't I feed you? don't I give you a holiday every Christmas? Well, if I do this, why don't you be obedient to your master, and be contented with your lot?" After giv-

ing them this lecture, he bought two keen-scented blood-hounds, discharged his overseer, and brought up another from an Alabama plantation, a man who he said could flay a nigger alive, and was up to all their tricks. Notwithstanding all of these precautions, it was not long before another runaway was reported, and as Mr. Biggers sat counting up his losses from runaways—for every runaway slave represented the loss of so many dollars and cents, which naturally decreased Mr. Biggers' wealth—and, further, realizing the pressing demands for money. Jonathan Maxwell's visit, just at this time, on business of the nature upon which he came, was not only opportunity, but a great oasis in Mr. Biggers' financial desert.

It would, perhaps, be well to contrast the two men as we have them before us. Jonathan Maxwell we know as a proud, unscrupulous, designing man, stopping at nothing to make a dollar, yet he was not a cruel master, unless all men who deprived their fellow-man of his liberty were cruel. Abraham Biggers was a man of an entirely different type, being short in stature, heavily built, stub-feet, stub-hands, and stub-nose. His head was round and his neck short and thick. He looked out of two very restless and small eyes, overhung with large shaggy eyebrows while all over his countenance could be discerned, low cunning, cruelty, and utter meanness.

Having welcomed Jonathan, he led the way into a comfortable sitting-room, inviting his visitor to a seat. Opening a drawer with a key which he selected from

a large bunch he had taken from his pocket, he produced a box of cigars, pushed them toward Jonathan, who took one and lighted it. Mr. Biggers did likewise. He waited for Jonathan to open up the conversation, for it was a rule with him to talk but little and listen much. Jonathan was rather impatient to hurry through with his business, for he had little liking for the man he had to deal with. It is doubtful whether, under circumstances other than his pecuniary interest, he would have condescended to pay a visit to a man of Mr. Biggers' stamp. Without much ceremony, he made known the object of his visit. He removed his cigar from his mouth, and said:

"Biggers, do you know my girl Purcey?"

Biggers looked up thoughtfully, tapped his red forehead with one of his stubby fingers, bent his little round body forward, and said:

"Do you mean that devilish pretty yaller gal whom you have spoiled?"

"Well, if that's the way you put it, yes."

"What of her?" said Mr. Biggers.

"I should like to match her with one of your niggers—remember, she is a fine girl, and I don't care about matching her with any on my place, so I thought if I could get your consent, we would mate her with one of the McCullar niggers."

Mr. Biggers sat bolt upright, removed the cigar from his mouth, which he had been chewing more than smoking, and before answering, wondered what object,

other than the one stated, Jonathan could have in desiring this union. He knew that whatever children they had would become Maxwell's, and he (Biggers) would gain nothing by the match in that respect. He also feared that Purcey, proud as he knew she was—her blood being so mixed with that of the Anglo-Saxon—might put the devil in her husband's head and induce him to run away. He did not, however, give utterance to any of these thoughts, but looked steadily at Maxwell, as he said slowly,

“Jonathan, what will you take for that gal?”

“I don't want to sell her; I want to mate her.”

“Why not sell her? Let me have her, and I'll make you a present of the first born—and it won't be a nigger, either.”

Jonathan Maxwell did not know whether Biggers was in earnest or in jest, for Biggers kept smiling all the time and looking straight at him. So speaking rather impatiently, he said, “Biggers, I mean business, and you have gone to jesting.”

“Never was more serious in my life. You sell me the gal or buy the boy, otherwise we can't drive a bargain.”

Jonathan knew that when Biggers came to a conclusion there was no moving him. He had not thought of making a purchase, but he now saw that if he wanted to mate Purcey to one of the McCullars, he must buy one of them. So he said, “Which one will you sell?”

“Any one of them you want. A nigger's only

so much cash to me, and I would just as lief sell one as another; all I want is the price."

"Well," said Jonathan, "the one I hire from you occasionally is a good worker, apparently sound, healthy, and active. What is your price for him?"

"That's a devilish good boy you have selected, and I would not part with him for a cent less than two thousand dollars," was Mr. Biggers' reply, as he brought his fist down upon the table. And his little eyes twinkled.

"Then you had better keep him; he is worth more to you than he is to me. There isn't a nigger on my place I would ask you that much for."

"Will you take two thousand dollars for the gal?"

"Yes, give me the money, and she is yours."

Mr. Abraham Biggers was taken somewhat aback by this offer, for with all his talk about buying the girl, he had no such intention, and if he had, all his ready resources were so intricately tied up that he could not have made the purchase had his desire been ever so great. So he began to change his mode of attack.

"Now look here, Maxwell, two thousand dollars ain't a big price for that 'ere boy, for he's worth every dollar of it, and if he is anything like that old black father of his, he will make five times the money for you in less than ten years. Besides, as a hand about the place, I haven't got his equal; never growls, ain't vicious, and only needs lashing once in a while to keep him in mind of his place." This was

one of Mr. Biggers' customs, which he invariably carried out, no matter how faithful a slave was, how attentive to work, or true to his master. With that ingratitude of the dog that snaps at the hand which feeds him, this cruel and heartless master found some pretext to ply the lash, often remarking that niggers would forget themselves.

Jonathan Maxwell was quick to take advantage of Mr. Biggers' pecuniary condition; he well knew and fully understood the close quarters his neighbor was in. He knew the man, and he at once commenced to display an air of indifference.

"Now, Biggers, I ain't particular about Bill, any of the other boys will suit me just as well. The reason I selected him is, because the girl appears to take to him, and I don't believe there would be any trouble about mating them, if I had him on the place."

Mr. Biggers rubbed his stubby hands together, as though greatly tickled with the last remarks of Jonathan.

"Ha! ha! Maxwell," he replied, "that's it exactly, that's it; the gal takes to him, no trouble to make the match, two thousand dollars and he is yours; cheap, sir, cheap as bull-beef at a penny a pound," and lying back in his chair, he laughed heartily at his own cleverness.

"But," said Jonathan, "I protest! Two thousand dollars is too much; I can buy two niggers for that."

Mr. Biggers formed the opinion in his own mind

that he was very clever. So pleased was he with his own humor that he invariably laughed when, as he thought, he was about to say, or had said, a clever thing. He did not intend to lose the chance of making a sale, and his object for holding out so long before coming down to his selling-price was to see how anxious Jonathan was to make the purchase. Jonathan's indifference made him somewhat afraid to dally too long, and he spoke now like a man anxious to take hold, but unwilling to let go.

"So you could, sir, so you could. But the two wouldn't be the one you want, ha! ha! How is that, Maxwell? Ha! ha!"

Jonathan looked at his neighbor, and a sarcastic smile overspread his face. He was growing tired of Mr. Biggers, for he felt satisfied that that gentleman had not put the price he meant to sell at on the man, Bill. He was as anxious to buy as Biggers was to sell, but he used every effort to conceal his anxiety.

"Tell you what I will do. If you have any other niggers to sell, I will take one of them; I wouldn't pay two thousand dollars for any one you have on the place."

"That shows you don't know the place, and what it is capable of producing, Maxey, ha! ha! (Jonathan's lip curled with scorn at being thus familiarly addressed, but said nothing.) "Make me an offer," said Mr. Biggers, "but be liberal, Maxey, be liberal."

"Make you a liberal offer?" said Jonathan, with a

smile. "I shall be liberal; I will give you one thousand and five hundred cash."

Mr. Biggers stretched out his short legs to their full length, lay back in his chair, tossing to one side his little bullet head, while his little pea-like eyes closed alternately, his stubby hands went down into his pockets, and, in the absence of any cash, rattled a bunch of keys. His thin blue lips were pursed up, and he uttered a long, low whistle which ended by him saying, "Not by a d—m sight!"

"All right," said Maxwell, as he arose and took his hat and gloves from the table. "Then that settles it, the boy is yours, the girl is mine, and so is the cash."

Mr. Biggers, without changing his position, with his eyes still performing the grand change, said, "Add another hundred." Jonathan paused, with his hand upon the door-knob, eyed his neighbor closely, and, without a word, returned to the table, took his check-book from the inner pocket of his coat, and filled up a blank for sixteen hundred dollars. This he handed over to Mr. Biggers, who examined it closely again and again, folded it up, and in a very bad hand wrote out a receipt, transferring the same to Jonathan, and with as polite a bow as his coarse manners permitted, said,

"Shall I send the boy with you?"

Jonathan answered, "No, send him to me." By this transaction, William McCullar became the property of Jonathan Maxwell, and was to be installed

upon the very plantation where the woman he loved resided. He was, in fact, to enjoy bondage under a new master, where his eyes would daily behold all that was dear to him in life.

Was it possible for this piece of goods and chattel to have within his breast affection? Could that affection spring from the same source as that of a white man? Was it born of the same material, possessing the same tendency? Was it, or could it be, formed into a love pure and true, a love such as poets have sung of, and mankind is subject to? Could this being, deprived of everything except the five senses given him by God, either by instinct or reason, reach that higher attitude of affection? Such, dear readers, was the case. His ardor reached the fullest, the highest, the purest, the holiest of love. This was the affection which William McCullar, a slave, who had nothing but his soul to call his own, bore Purcey. And when his master summoned him and handed him an unsealed note, directing him to deliver it at the Maxwell plantation, his innocent heart bounded with joy—not that he knew the contents of the note, for had it been written in letters ten times as large, they would have conveyed to his mind no greater significance than do the characters on Chinese tea chest to the average man. William's heart bounded because he knew that in going to the Maxwell plantation he would see Purcey; because he could go to the house where she resided, in open daylight without fear of molestation, and feast his

eyes upon her beauty. There was but one thing that puzzled him. He could not understand why his master had selected him as a bearer of a message to Jonathan Maxwell. House-servants were usually employed as messengers, and he was a teamster. Another thought struck him. Was the note he had to deliver a pass that he could use upon his return, as he realized that it would be well into the night before he could return? This gave him cause for alarm. He feared that, returning in the night, he might be captured by the patrol, and he well knew what that meant, to be caught off his master's plantation without a pass.

The patrol were a dread to all slaves. They were men employed by the master to arrest all slaves found, after a certain hour at night, away from home without a permit. When they caught a slave, his back usually got nine and thirty. They consisted of a poor class of whites, who found pleasure in such employment, often indulging in it for mere sport. They frequently, out of pure cussedness, attacked the slaves when assembled together, or having such pleasures as they found to indulge in. The patrol, consisting of half a dozen ruffians, would surround a resort for slaves, and make a raid upon it; the negroes would scatter in every direction, and those unfortunate enough to be captured were whipped for the fun of it. These ruffians did not always succeed in getting away without injury, for a broken head caused by a stray missile hurled by some slave was not an unusual occurrence.

William did not spend much time in considering these questions, although very important to him. He had been directed by his master to go to the Maxwell plantation, and the prospect of seeing Purcey, he thought, was worth a race with the patrol. They had to catch him before they whipped him, and he consoled himself with the confidence he had in his legs. He now set out to deliver the message of his master, perfectly innocent of his purchase by Jonathan. So eager was he to reach his destination that he arrived there in an incredibly short time. Little did he think what a doom—a pleasant doom—was in store for him.

How like many of his fellow-men was William! His position, his surroundings were not given a moment's thought. Now, all his thoughts were concentrated on the one object, His one hope, his one thought was of the woman he loved; and any pretext or opportunity that carried him into the presence of her to whom he was devoted was only too eagerly sought or accepted. The note was duly delivered to Jonathan Maxwell, who, after glancing over its contents, said to William, "I have bought you. You are to remain upon my place." Had a thunderbolt struck at his feet and buried itself in the earth without injuring him, William could not have been more amazed. He was stricken completely dumb, and stood with bowed and uncovered head in that attitude of submissiveness so characteristic of the slave, his heart struggling within his bosom as if

it would burst forth from its confines; Jonathan directed him to go to the kitchen and remain there until sent for. William moved mechanically, but swiftly, making an effort to conceal from his new master his happiness. Entering the kitchen, he found Purcey's mother in charge of the culinary department, busy in preparing the midday meal.

Every, or nearly every Southern kitchen seemed to be incomplete without the customary black cook, generally an old aunty, coal black, her head encased in a bandanna handkerchief, and with a knowledge of cooking that fitted her to cook a meal to please a king. The Maxwell house had one of this kind of *chefs* with the exception of the blackness. Elva, the mother of Purcey, was not an ordinary woman. On the contrary, she was a most extraordinary woman, taking into consideration her condition. She was endowed with quick perception and much intelligence. She was of tall stature, with high, intelligent forehead, and large, black, lustrous eyes, which, when fixed upon one, seemed to rivet him to the spot, or burn their way almost into the very heart. Over these eyes, she had complete control. Her daughter Purcey fully understood their every motion, Elva could ask or answer a question, without moving her lips, by the expression of her eyes. She could spread beams of love, or darts of awe. Neither her mistress nor master cared to withstand their gaze. Jonathan was never known to invade that part of

the house allotted to Elva, except when his cook was in the most amiable mood.

When William entered the kitchen, Elva, though busily engaged at her work, appeared much engrossed in thought. We have said that she was an extraordinary woman, and so she was for one in her position. Her intelligence was remarkable, and she possessed all of those qualities peculiar to her sex. Perhaps the admixture of Indian and Anglo-Saxon blood in her veins answered for the possession of these qualities. But making such an admission as this strengthens a theory which was quite prevalent in the days of slavery, and, perhaps, exists among a few negro-haters to-day—that a negro is incapable of any deep thought. Nevertheless, Elva was thinking and rolling out dough at the same time.

She was the mother of five children, as we know. Her husband had been sold from her immediately following the birth of the fifth and last child. After he was sold, she determined never to marry again; she would never again be guilty of adding fuel to the fire of slavery. This was a vow she took and she kept it, notwithstanding the importunities of numerous suitors. She had taken another vow, and that was that her children should be free—at least those who desired freedom—and it was this subject which so deeply interested her that, when William entered the room, she failed to notice his presence. Plans had already been effected for the escape of her two sons, and she was now engaged in studying out the

course she was to pursue in assisting in the contemplated escape. She knew nothing of William's presence until she heard him mention her name. Turning suddenly with the rolling-pin in her hands, she beheld William, his face wreathed in smiles, bowing and scraping in an excited manner. His presence at such an hour at the Maxwell house, looking unusually tidy and acting so strangely, rather surprised her. It was not William's custom or privilege to visit Purcey in the day-time. He usually came at night, and was always in fear of being captured by the patrol before he could return home; it was also a very unusual thing for one of Mr. Biggers' negroes to be off on a holiday. William would often stop at the Maxwell house, when passing with his six-horse team, and had been made the recipient of many a square meal. But here he was, at an hour in the day when all able-bodied negroes were earning bread for their masters. She looked at him with those beautiful black eyes, which seemed to ask the question her lips finally propounded. William had just come from a hard and severe master, who worked his slaves hard and fed them poorly, and this change of masters gave him so much pleasure that he could hardly realize it.

Mr. Biggers had very strict rules about his place, especially applying to his slaves. None of them were allowed off of the place; and if they went to church, or attended any of the festivities on neighboring plantations, to be found out was to receive a sure and

severe lashing. Abraham Biggers' negroes, as it was known for miles around, never got more than half enough to eat. For six days in the week, they worked from sunrise until sunset, upon rations issued to them daily, and on the seventh day they fared the best they could, rations never being issued on the Sabbath. His idea was, that when a nigger didn't work he didn't need to be fed. It will then be seen that all of his slaves were left to shift for themselves upon this particular day. The result was, that neighboring hen-roosts, as well as smoke-houses and corn-fields, were frequently visited. Many were the complaints to Mr. Biggers about his thieving negroes, but to them he only turned a deaf ear. The reader might, perhaps, think that the hen-roosts of Mr. Biggers suffered with the rest, but such was not the case. There was not a slave upon his place that dared to steal from this man; they could steal from anywhere else, or steal anything they could lay hands upon, but it was worth a negro's life to steal from Abraham Biggers.

There were many things in the character of Mr. Abraham Biggers showing that he was a man without principle, avaricious, conniving, and not only a cruel master, but that he was in fact mean. He bore the unenviable reputation of acquiring the property of his neighbors without paying a proper equivalent, and through very questionable means.

It was a custom to allow to all slaves from three to four weeks during the Christmas holi-

days. • Their time was exclusively their own. After the first of the year, many of them who were hired out by their masters exchanged places. The Christmas season was a general gala time among them, and for weeks before its approach, they began to lay by their little earnings for a good time. Some masters allowed them whatever they could earn for two or three weeks; others granted their slaves the privilege of raising a hog, or poultry, which they could dispose of at will, and apply the proceeds of such a sale to their enjoyment. Those who had masters who granted none of these privileges secured their spending money by stealing whatever they could, and converting their stealings into money. Many slaves who were employed to thresh grain would fill their pockets with it, whenever opportunity offered, and by this means would get bags full, and sell wherever they could. Such was the business that Mr. Biggers indulged in. He would buy anything brought to him. He was known to have bought as high as ten bags of clover-seed stolen from his neighbor's granary by the servants. To his mind, this was profitable business; the hogs in his pens, the poultry in his barn-yard, and the sheep in his pasture, as well as the grain in his granary, were all well mixed with the pilfered property of his neighbors. Still this man worked and drove his servants on barely sufficient rations to sustain life, and no complaints were ever tolerated.

His servants were never allowed to eat at the table,

but were compelled to eat standing. In harvest, but half an hour was given for meals, and they were driven under the whip of a cruel overseer from sunrise until sun set. Abraham Biggers had never been married; no woman had ever as yet been won by any of Mr. Biggers' personal charms; so far he had been left alone to enjoy his meanness and vent his spleen upon his goods and chattels, in place of upon a companion of his bosom. You must not think, dear reader, that this man, capable of doing anything mean, contemptible, or base, hesitated to satisfy his passions with the poor unfortunate creatures who were forced to call him master. It was his custom to live with those of his female slaves whom his base desires choose. By one of them, he had been known to have three children, selling mother and children to the traders. It was a very ordinary thing for Mr. Biggers to engage in this sort of business. He was once known to purchase a very handsome woman called Jane, to whose quarters he would go regularly at night and remain. The woman finally gave birth to a child, and was, in a few weeks, sold to the traders. As negro traders never bought women with nursing children at their breast, and as the child's whereabouts was never discovered, rumors flew thick and fast that only God and Abraham Biggers knew its fate. This was the man from whom William McCullar was purchased by Jonathan Maxwell, and the man had many reasons to rejoice at the change of mastership.

When Elva looked at William, she said, "Well, William, what brings you here?"

"Oh, Aunt Elva, what you think?"

"I don't know, honey, but I bin thinking good bit of late. What's the matter?"

"Why, Mars Maxwell has done bought me, and I am to live here."

Elva was quite surprised to hear this announcement, and said: "Well, one thing's sure, child, you'll have a better master and more to eat. I suppose you and Purcey will both be happy. But, child, take my advice and don't marry to bring children into the world to become slaves." William hardly heard this last remark, for entering the room from a door directly before him, was Purcey, with her hands full of dishes; and in her plain calico wrapper and neat apron, her hair tucked carefully away under a pretty little turban, she cut a simple but beautiful figure. She bowed to William, deposited the dishes upon the table, extended her hand, and invited him to a seat, a courtesy her mother had entirely forgotten to extend, owing to her astonishment. Purcey said, "Why, Mr. McCullar, what brings you here this time of day?"

"I have come here to stay."

"Come here to stay! What do you mean?"

"Mars Maxwell bought me to-day, and I am to stay here."

It must not be supposed that Purcey had no love for William, for she had; she loved him dearly, sin-

cerely, but with becoming modesty. So when she heard that William had been bought by her master, she could scarcely conceal her ecstasy. She could hardly realize that he whom she loved so dearly was to be her every-day companion, or, at least, be so near to her that she would see him almost constantly. In a very calm manner, she congratulated him, and hoped he would be pleased and contented with his new home. William was soon settled in his new quarters, and the course of love ran smooth between him and Purcey, for unlike other people of the world, although enjoying freedom, there was nothing to roughen the course of these two hearts. Bound in love and bound in bondage, they entwined and encircled themselves around each other, and sought that happiness known only to the unsophisticated.

CHAPTER IV.

THE WEDDING.

Purcey and William found much happiness, as was to be expected, from this very agreeable change. Jonathan allowed them to indulge in their affection toward each other without interruption. They were allowed every imaginable freedom. Purcey was permitted on Sundays, accompanied by William, to use her mistress' riding horse, while William was given the same liberty with his master's stable. Purcey was an accomplished horsewoman, and when she would set out to have a spurt with her lover, dressed as she was in a neat riding-habit made by her own hands from cast-off clothing of her mistress, her beautiful black tresses floating in the breeze, and the bright red glow of youth coloring to a beautiful pink tint her delicate complexion, Jonathan Maxwell himself felt proud of being the owner of so beautiful a woman. Mrs. Maxwell, though woman like, could not help but inject a little envy into her remarks when speaking of the girl. William was envied by many of the young men. He accompanied Purcey to all the parties, to camp-meeting, and wherever she appeared in public. They grew, if anything, more attached to each other, until the warmest passions of love ruled supreme in their bosoms. They would ride for miles and miles together, and Purcey would make

the woods ring with her joyous laughter whenever William pleased her by saying something clever.

I have said that the course of love ran smooth for these two children of bondage, and so it did. Their happiness was of that sort where perfect contentment existed, where the mind is oblivious to the uncertainties of life. William had none of those responsibilities before him that would cause a freeman to think and consider of the future. He lived only in the present, he thought only of the present; and enraptured with the surroundings and the change in his situation, his mind never embraced such an idea as an end to all things. He did not have upon his shoulders any of the responsibilities of life: every provision was made for him. He was before the law an irresponsible being, simply a machine built in human form, capable of thought, but restrained from action. His master filled a dual part for him, as the masters of all slaves did. It is true that William's chief wish and thought was to have Purcey for his wife, for he loved her. The only thing now necessary was to obtain his master's consent. The warning Elva had given was entirely lost upon him; he had neither thought nor care for the future; he cared only for the present, his future was his master's. Purcey lived as much in the present as her lover. She had already consented to become his wife; such a union to her would be the consummation of her highest hope. Notwithstanding her mother's attempt to discourage her from any desire to wed while a

slave, the advice, wholesome as it was, had taken wings at the touch of Cupid, and was no longer to be felt. So much in the present did she live that she thought not of a possible separation; she thought not of the hundreds of wives and husbands as devoted, as faithful, as happy as herself, whom she had seen separated, sold—one taken by one driver, and the other by another, rent ruthlessly asunder. The holy ties of wedlock were thus severed by the whim or will of a heartless man. She had seen mother torn from daughter, father from son, wife from husband. How many had she seen placed upon the block, how many had she heard of being quietly spirited away, perhaps never to be seen again by those they loved most dear! So entirely was she enraptured, so devoted was she to this bondman-lover, that if she had a thought of these things, it was brushed aside to give place to that sweeter thought, her present happiness.

It was not an unusual custom for some masters to give their slaves an elegant wedding when they married, especially among the better class of Southerners, and as Jonathan Maxwell belonged to one of the best of Southern families, he followed the custom closely, allowing the widest freedom of the house to Purcey and her friends. Preparations on a grand scale were made. A select *coterie* of house-servants were invited from neighboring plantations, many of the females being attired in their mistresses' silks and satins. Here and there a favorite servant could be

seen, resplendent in the jewelry of her mistress, while a few of the males were arrayed in their masters' dress suits, in some instances worn with the knowledge of the master, but in most without it. The ceremony was performed with great *eclat* by Rev. Meredith, pastor of the church to which Jonathan Maxwell belonged (for it must not pass unnoticed that Jonathan was a member in high standing in the church). The bride was richly attired, as Mrs. Maxwell took great pains, at the solicitation of her husband, in preparing Purcey for the great event. She stood there with the blushes of virtue upon her handsome face, her hand resting gently upon William's arm, while the long black eye-lashes drooped over her beautiful black eyes, which were cast upon the floor. The words of the minister sounded distinctly as he said, "What God has joined together let no man put asunder." What a hollow mockery were those words, uttered by a man of the Gospel, in the presence of hundreds who did not realize their meaning, and many who had no regard for their sacredness! Many of the whites were present at the ceremony, and took great pride in pointing out their servants, commenting on their value and appearance. For two days the Maxwell house was kept open, the servants came and went, danced and ate to their hearts' content. Nothing was spared to make the event a pleasant one. There was many a one who danced at Purcey's wedding who lived to see the words of the minister

set at naught, and the holiest of all earthly ties severed by the capricious will of a heartless master.

The few privileges that slaves were allowed to enjoy were taken the greatest advantage of by them. These privileges followed in the wake of all their misery, degradation, and suffering. In the midst of it all, they found that enjoyment that a people find who cannot elevate themselves above their surroundings; they extracted pleasure out of misery, and found happiness in servitude, because they realized no other condition in life; they married and were given in marriage, and so lived until their masters saw fit to separate them; they knew nothing of home influence, because there were no home ties; they assumed no responsibility as parents, for their children were only raised to increase their masters' coffers. Could they but have realized this, a blow would have been struck at the heart of slavery that would have caused it to decay from within. The wedding now over, Purcey was William's wife, and both of them still the common property of Jonathan Maxwell.

CHAPTER V.

A BAD START.

The two sons of Elva, Henry and Joseph, had for some time contemplated making their escape from slavery. Their mother earnestly seconded them, and gave them every encouragement in carrying out their design. They had long since concluded that they were as much value to themselves as to their master, and they saw no reason why they should not be free men. They longed for freedom, and had now determined to obtain it. They had seen their father sold from them and their mother, and they had seen children sold from their parents. The horrors of slavery had deeply impressed them, and they grew to detest it in all of its forms. Joseph was a brave, manly, intelligent boy, who brought his master three or four hundred dollars yearly by his hire. Henry was his senior by a few years, and about equally as valuable to his master. Freedom to them was a boon much wished for, but, as yet, their idea as to what hardships they must suffer before obtaining it had not developed into any definite form. They knew that many had made successful escapes, while others, who had attempted escape, had been returned and sold to the traders, taken South, there to end their existence upon some cotton plantation, or in some Georgia rice swamp, with a cruel overseer to scourge them, and

where the constant baying of the blood hound froze the very blood in their veins from fear. With all of the dangers imminent from an attempt to escape, they remained undaunted and determined. Freedom was what they craved for, and in order to obtain it, everything must be surmounted that stood between them and that for which they so earnestly longed. Implicit confidence was placed in Elva's sagacity and foresight, her advice frequently sought, and closely adhered to.

Besides Henry and Joseph, there were five others to accompany them. The arrangements were all completed, and, by agreement, they all assembled at one of the slave cabins on the Maxwell place, preparatory to starting. A fixed resolution to meet death, rather than be recaptured, was in the mind of every man.

Elva pointed out to them the North star, telling them this was the guide to all runaways, and that by following it they would eventually reach the North, and a free land. She instructed them to keep together, and if molested, to fight to the death. It was certainly a picture to see these seven human beings, a throbbing heart within the bosom of each one, that beat and longed for freedom. They were fleeing from a servitude which robbed them of manhood, and deprived them of liberty. Had it not been for their natural endowments, they would have been reckoned on a level with the brute creation.

Standing there, with uncovered heads, listening to

the directions of this woman, who, like an angel, was directing them to a land of freedom, was a picture, a striking picture, and some day the brush of an artist, or the pen of a writer, a descendant of this race, will do justice to one of many such scenes which have so often occurred.

Elva closed her instructions by invoking the blessings of God upon them, and saying, "Whatever you do, honeys, pray constantly and trust in God."

In the stillness of the night, with no sound except the soft rustling of the leaves as they were fanned by the spring breeze, the chirping of the crickets, and the croak of the frog, this little band of heroes set out upon their search for freedom. Joe was selected as the leader, as he was the most intelligent of the band, while Henry, his brother, acted as a kind of lieutenant. Usually, when men start out upon an expedition fraught with danger and unknown perils, they go prepared to meet any difficulty, well armed and well prepared. But how illy prepared was this band of runaways! All the weapons they had for protection were a stout hickory club, carried in the hand of each man, and only one fire-arm, Joe being in charge of it. The latter was of an old pattern, not guaranteed to kill at a dozen yards. They sallied forth, however, feeling that they were protected by an overruling Providence, and strong in their determination to escape, counting upon their numerical strength at close quarters. Legs were used to good effect, and when daylight began to dawn, Joe, the

leader, said, "Boys, daylight's coming and we had better lay by." The entire party left the road and concealed themselves in a corn-field.

Dick Cramp was detailed to make a reconnoissance. He made the circuit of the field in which they were concealed. Reaching a little hill, he looked out over the broad expanse of corn, and saw at some distance a white bull grazing. He looked again, and shaded his eyes with his hand, thinking he was mistaken; but there grazed the white bull, oblivious to the fact that he was an object of great interest. Dick did not stop to look again, but rushed back to the hiding-place of the others, and called Joe. The noise he made running through the corn brought every man to his feet, club in hand, and the excited man was plied with questions as to what was the matter.

Dick was one of Mr. Biggers' slaves, and had joined the band of heroes determined upon seeking freedom. He was as finely built a specimen of humanity as the eye ever rested upon, black as a coal, with close-cropped hair, and well developed muscles. Just why a white bull should so startle him would not be strange when we consider how superstitious negroes were; but there was a great deal more of reality than superstition about this particular bull.

Mr. Biggers owned a white bull of very fine breed, and it was the only one of the kind known for miles, in that neighborhood. When Dick saw this white bull, he knew that it was his master's, and when he

had recovered himself sufficiently to answer the many questions with which he was plied, he said:

“Fore de Lord, boys! I saw Mars Biggers’ white bull grazen over yonder on de hill.”

Joe replied: “Dick, you’s a fool; what’s Biggers’ bull doin’ grazen round here, when we’s miles from home? Ain’t we been travelin’ all night?”

“Can’t help it, child, dat’s Mars Biggers’ bull. Go look for yoursels.”

Biggers’ white bull was as familiar to Joe and all the rest of them as it was to Dick. To allay Dick’s fears, Joe went to the fence, mounted it, and looking in the direction indicated by Dick, beheld the identical white bull. Joe discovered more, upon a careful investigation; he discovered that they were in Mr. Biggers’ corn-field, and quickly concluded that they had lost their way, having simply been circling around their starting-point. Returning to the others, he said:

“Boys, we’s in a pretty fix; here we been trabin’ all night, and ain’t out of sight of de old plantation.”

“What we gwine to do,” some one asked.

“Why, we’ll all go home and go to work, meet here to-night, and start agin,” said Joe.

As it was hardly daylight, it was not probable that any of them had been missed from their homes, few of their fellow-slaves knowing of their intention to escape. This secrecy was always necessary, for so many of the slaves were untrustworthy about anything concerning affairs about the plantation, deeming it their duty to tell their masters anything about

one another they knew. In view of the fact of the contemplated escape not being generally known, Joe's suggestion was a wise one. All their things were hid in the corn-field; each one betook himself to his respective abode, and went about his work as though nothing unusual had happened. Joe did not make his home with the Maxwells, being hired out by his master. He had some distance to travel to reach the place where he was hired. Being much fatigued, upon reaching his home, he proceeded to his room in the loft of the house, and had just thrown himself upon his apology for a bed, which occupied a very narrow space in the corner of the room, when his master's voice summoned him to perform his daily chores.

Joe arose with aching head and throbbing heart, wondering whether the news of his attempted escape had reached his master's ears. The escape had been attempted Saturday night, so that they would have the whole of Sunday for a start, all the boys, excepting Joe, having sought permission from their masters to be absent on Sunday. It will be perceived by this that they would have had a full night and a day's start before being missed. It being Sunday, Joe soon performed his chores, and put out for the Maxwell homestead to see his mother. When he entered the kitchen, Elva was engaged at her usual occupation. Upon seeing him, she at once dropped everything, and stood there gazing at her son as though he were an apparition. Elva had spent nearly

all of the night, upon her knees, praying for the successful escape of her sons. She had believed them to be, at that time, a safe distance from the old plantation. She did not utter a word, but her eyes conveyed her astonishment. Joe broke the silence by asking if she had seen Henry.

“Seen Henry!” Elva replied, “No, honey, what does this mean?”

He, thereupon, told her of their traveling all night, to find themselves, the next morning, in Biggers’ corn-field. Elva bent her head in silence, and, looking up after a few seconds’ meditation, rested her large black eyes upon Joe, saying,

“Son, this must be all for the best. God had something to do with this. The next time you’ll get away. Go home now, keep this to yourself, and start again next Saturday night.”

“Why,” said Joe, “we was goin’ to start agin to-night.”

“No,” said Elva, “you would be missed in the morning, and they would soon be upon your track, and, perhaps, take you before you crossed the river. Wait until next Saturday.”

Whether it was fanaticism or superstition, Elva was possessed with great confidence in the efficacy of prayer. She had also reached a point in religious fervor which, was termed among her friends, sanctification; she felt that she was sanctified, and that God revealed to her many things to which the unholy were entirely blind. This religious fervor, or fanati-

cism, brought her into prominence among her people. When Sister, or Aunt, Elva bowed down in prayer, everything was hushed in silence. She prayed constantly and persistently for the abolition of slavery. She knew not how it would come, or when it would come, but she contended that just as sure as the children of Israel were led out of bondage, just so sure would her people be free—a prediction which poor Elva lived not to see fulfilled. Yet it has come.

It seems almost incredible that this woman of bondage should have had so intelligent an understanding, so appreciative a sense of the over-ruling power of Providence, of the faithfulness with which His divine predictions are carried out. But faith in God, confidence in His mercy, and trust in His power, are all that kept up these poor creatures under the terrible sufferings through which they passed. Ignorant as they were of all other things, deprived of all light to lead their simple minds to a more complete knowledge of the creation of all men free and equal, robbed of all their manhood and womanhood, they yet hoped, trusted, and prayed.

Elva was one of those creatures, as we have said, possessed of splendid natural endowments, in which predominated the holy spirit. Such prayers as she uttered were simply marvelous; the language with which she expressed herself, and the easy manner in which it flowed from her lips, would have done credit to many of our divines of to-day. Often she would be found upon her knees in the midst of her

work, sending up one of her fervent petitions to Heaven, nor was Joe surprised when his mother seized his hand and bade him kneel by her side. She clasped her hands together, and her lips moved for some moments. At last she arose, Joe saying, "Amen!" and hastening away.

He went to the village of M——, and there met several of the party of the previous night. He communicated to them that the start would not be made until later in the week, and that they were, in the meantime, to arm themselves better and keep their counsel.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ESCAPE.

The point from which Joe and his companions had made their unsuccessful attempt at escape was situated some fifteen miles from the Potomac river, and seven miles from the town of D———. The intention was to reach the river before daylight, and, by the aid of a guide, who, they understood, would be at the river, they would be assisted across into the State of Maryland through which they would have but a short distance to travel to get into Pennsylvania, when they would be in a free State at least. Runaway slaves had been assisted across the Potomac at various points, and directed by agents of what was known as the Underground Railroad to freedom. Numbers of them had also been betrayed by members of their own race on both the Virginia and Maryland sides of the Potomac. At the point where Joe and his companions were to cross, they had engaged the services of a man by the name of Charles Johnson. Johnson belonged to a Mr. Kerwin, who owned the only ferry-boat that crossed the river within twenty miles of the place which they wanted to reach. Mr. Kerwin possessed but a very small quota of the large number of human beings held in bondage. Charles and a girl about sixteen years of age were all he owned. He drove, however, a thriving

business in catching runaway negroes and returning them to their masters.

He had a very shrewd, but paying, way of conducting this nefarious business—capturing runaways and concealing them until a large reward was offered, when he would produce them and demand the reward. By this means, he had laid aside quite a competency, but being of a very miserly disposition, carried on his negro-catching and ferrying, taking passengers over at two cents a head. Instead of investing his money in negroes, whom he feared might run away from him, he hoarded up all the wealth he could secure without making any investments. He had owned Charles for some time, and had trained him in betraying and catching negroes much as a shepherd trains his dog to catch runaway sheep. Charles, whenever opportunity presented, got into the secrets of all the slaves he could; and, under pretense of assisting and guiding them safely over the river, would betray them into the hands of “nigger-catchers”

This is the man with whom arrangements had been made to conduct Joe and his party across the river on the night of their unsuccessful attempt to escape. Johnson had informed his master that several runaways were to cross the river under his direction, and Mr. Kerwin, with his usual readiness, had secured the services of several men who loaned or hired themselves out as “nigger-catchers.” But, by the guidance of some power unknown to themselves even, Joe and

his companions, as we know, were kept from walking into the lion's jaws. After traveling all night, in place of being in the hands of "nigger catchers," they found themselves standing in Biggers' corn-field gazing at a white bull.

When Sam Lowrie, who formed one of the party, related this to Joe, he was, with his friends, quite overcome with joy. Then he thought of the narrow escape from capture they had made and of his mother's words. Perhaps Elva's prayers for protection had been answered, perhaps not; but the result speaks for itself.

The *personnel* of the little band of heroes, since a week ago, when they attempted to escape, is considerably changed. Some had refused to make another effort, thinking they would be captured; while others thought their lucky escape from Johnson, the betrayer, and Mr. Kerwin, the ferry man, was ominous, and, being naturally superstitious, declined all overtures to make another attempt. The only ones of the original band were Joe and his brother, Henry. The number had been reduced to five. The change of men was also decidedly in their favor, as every man was a fighting man, and one in particular, Ben Myers, was noted throughout the neighborhood for his wonderful strength. Myers was quite a character, being in stature a modern Goliath, with exceedingly large feet, large hands, and very large lips, the latter so much so that they interfered greatly with his articulation. His speech was thick, his language bad, and, being

fond of whisky, he was a bad customer to come in contact with at this particular time. The time having arrived for the start, Joe bade farewell to his mother and sisters. Accompanied by his friends, he set out upon his perilous journey. They traveled along the road for several miles unmolested, and when within about five miles of the ferry, they saw at a distance, approaching them, a single horseman.

As Mr. Johnson had come near betraying them before, the services of that worthy had not been engaged; indeed, every precaution had been taken to conceal all knowledge of their departure. The intention was to capture the ferry-boat and ferry themselves across, knowing that no one but Johnson and his master, who resided some half-mile from the ferry, would be likely to interfere with them. In case of such interference, either one or both of those gentlemen would be easily disposed of. When this lone horseman was discovered, Joe gave the order, "Over the fence, boys!" They all obeyed, leaving Joe in the road. As the horseman approached, Joe discovered that it was no less a person than the identical Charles Johnson, the negro betrayer. He quietly awaited Johnson's approach. When Johnson had reached him, he stepped out in front of the horse, and commanded the rider to halt.

Mr. Johnson did not know who Joe was, and was thus at a disadvantage; as he had no idea of any violence being meant him, he drew up his horse in obedience to the command. Joe ordered him to dis-

mount, which command he was somewhat slow in obeying. Joe, seeing that he hesitated, drew from his pocket one of those long-barrelled pistols, which he presented at Johnson's head, and again commanded him to dismount. Johnson looked down the barrel of the pistol, then looked at Joe, and seeing nothing but a very wicked and determined look in his eye, concluded he had better dismount, or this determined-looking man might make a target of him, a thing he had no desire for, as he was on his way to see his best girl. Arriving speedily at this conclusion, he quickly dismounted. Having alighted from his horse, he began to wonder whether the man who stood before him meant to steal his master's horse, or whether he was playing him a joke. His mind was soon relieved.

Joe gave a low whistle. Over the fence leaped four as stalwart and burly negroes as ever his eye beheld, and whose combined value would have made the heart of any "nigger-catcher" bound with joy. Joe said, as the men made their appearance :

"Boys, this is Kerwin's Johnson, and he will take us across the river."

Johnson looked somewhat amazed at this remark, as well he might, so positively and coolly was it made. He began, however, to set his wits to work at once. Suspecting these men to be runaway slaves, he knew that if he could but devise some plan to get away from them and secure assistance, they could all be captured.

Assuming the guise of a friend, he said : "Boys, you lay by in de field until I go on to town on dis errand Mars Kerwin has sent me, and when I come back, I'll take you across all safe."

Johnson's intention was too evident to Joe, who quickly said,

"No, no, my boy, you can't mount dis hoss again, and you can't go to town until you take us across de river. I'se going to ride dis hoss myself, and you will move right down to de river."

At this, he jumped into the saddle, and turned the horse around. Johnson was placed in front of the party, and in this order the procession moved in the direction of the river.

Having reached the river, Johnson was asked how he was going to get them across. They agreed to give him a half dollar for each man. He saw he was entrapped, but he again resorted to strategy.

He said that there was no boat that could be secured, unless they would go down to where the ferry was.

Whereupon, Joe asked how far away was the ferry.

"'Bout half-mile," said Johnson.

"Now look here, Johnson," said Joe, shaking his finger at the man in a warning manner, "you have got to git us across dis river, and we want to cross right here, so you just go git a boat and bring it here."

Johnson was again frustrated, so he said : "I doesn't know but one place to git a boat, and dat's just above

here; but de man has two dogs and I'se afraid we might git caught. Howsomever, if you say so, I'll try and git the boat."

"All right," said Joe, "I'll trust you to go for de boat, but mind you, no fooling."

Johnson started for the boat. The men stared at Joe, much surprised that Johnson was allowed to go alone. They were directed to conceal themselves among the rocks. Nothing had been said to Johnson to lead him to suspect that they knew he was a betrayer, and this seeming confidence partially disarmed him. While he would have liked to have been instrumental in their capture, he unhesitatingly went and secured a boat, breaking it from its moorings.

In a short time, the men heard the barking of the dogs, and Joe said: "Boys, he's there."

One of them suggested that, perhaps, he was returning with the dogs to capture them. Joe replied that neither him nor the dogs would return alive if that was the case. Soon there was heard the splash of oars in the water; they looked out from their place of concealment, and discovered Johnson in the boat alone. He whistled, and they picked their way down the bank and entered the boat.

There was but one man in the whole party who had ever seen a boat, and he was the Widow Dean's Jim. Jim, having traveled considerably with his mistress, had seen many things which none of the rest had. Some of my readers might just here want

to know why a man, having the privileges of Jim, should want to leave a mistress so kind and indulgent as the Widow Dean, and go out into the world to assume responsibilities of which, by remaining in slavery, he need never have known. He left a good home, a generous-hearted mistress. He knew no care; every day to him was the same. He had never been whipped, it is true, and so far as his life had gone, it had been a pleasant one; but Jim, nevertheless, realized that, with all these advantages so superior to hundreds whom he knew, he was but a slave and could be sold at any time, and doubtless would be sold as a part of the estate when his good mistress should die. So he thought he would risk all the perils of running away to be a free man. Oh, freedom, what a boon!

Under Jim's direction, they were safely conveyed over the river. As they stepped upon the Maryland shore, they breathed more easily, although they were far from being in a free land.

Johnson was paid the promised fee of fifty cents a man, which he greedily pocketed. He had ascertained, while crossing the river, that the runaways did not know what direction to take. This he suspected from the start. Upon arriving on the Maryland side, he conceived the brilliant idea in his woolly head that he would have ample chance of carrying out his evil design of betraying his unfortunate brethern. He had done the same thing before, and he was confident that he could do it again. This is what made

him go so submissively and get the boat, without arousing the owner; it was that which made him so civil and so talkative while crossing the river. The brilliant, but not new, idea which struck Mr. Johnson was, to land his party safely on the Maryland shore, and send them in the direction of a tavern kept by a Mr. Nagle, who attached to his business of caring for travelers, both man and beast, the prolific business of capturing runaway slaves. Many a runaway slave had been captured by Mr. Nagle (and his coterie of loafers who always hung about his place), and returned to their masters, then sold South.

Johnson felt perfectly secure in the belief that his civility had thrown Joe and his party off their guard, and thought it would be an easy matter to direct them in the course which he desired. The party having landed, Joe said :

“Now, boys, what road shall we take?”

Without waiting for any one else to answer, Johnson said,

“Why, I can tell you just what way to go. See dat road dat leads up yonder? Well, just foller it until you’s come to de Cross-Keys tavern, den you’s take de road dat turns to de left, and you’ll reach de mountain.”

Now, this was literally true, as it was the most direct course to the mountain. But there was as little show for these men to pass the Cross Keys tavern without being molested as it is possible for the performance of miracles by mortal man. Johnson knew

this very well, and repeated his instructions over again, evidently fearing they might not be heeded. Joe assured him that they were very grateful for his advice, and, in rather a persuasive manner, suggested that he had better take his boat and start for home. The latter said that he did not intend to return the boat to its owner, but, upon reaching his home, would set it adrift.

The men began to grow impatient at the delay caused by Joe and Johnson's conversation, and insisted upon moving on. Joe did not comply with their request, for he was determined to see Johnson well out in the river before he made any attempt to leave the bank. He had already decided to take a different direction from the one indicated by Johnson, but he desired to leave that worthy under the impression that implicit confidence was placed in his word. Ben Myers, to whom we have had occasion to refer before, was impatiently walking up and down the river bank growling like a caged beast. That portion of Mr. Myers' body which rested on the ground was encased in a very dilapidated pair of brogans, which were unfastened, while on his arm he carried a very large and heavy pair of new boots. His inseparable whisky bottle was beginning to grow empty, and he was much afraid that he would be taken with a dry spell before they reached the tavern. He took off the dilapidated straw hat which covered his head, raised his bottle to his lips, and drained the last drop of its contents down his throat. Smacking his lips with evident sat-

isfaction and drawing the back of his hand across his mouth, he was then in an excellent disposition to growl.

So he said, in his thick speech :

“Look har, Joe, if you gwine to trabel any fudder, why don't you come on? You'se worse den a fly 'round lasses.” “Myers,” said Joe, “dem old shoes and dat whisky bottle will git you into trouble yet.”

Myers gazed at Joe in a stupid kind of way, and replied: “Dat's all right, I'se gwine to git dat bottle filled soon's I git to dat tabern, and I wants to git dar soon.”

Johnson had not yet gotten into his boat, and Joe was somewhat at a loss what to do. Seeing that their guide was loath to part with them, he said :

“Johnson, I think, as we are done with you, you had better cross de river. If you dont start soon, day light will catch you, and somebody will see you with dat stolen boat.”

Johnson knew this was true. He had no desire to be caught with a stolen boat, for if he failed to entrap these runaways, he might have difficulty in explaining his absence and the use he had been making of the boat. So telling Joe that he guessed he was right, Mr. Johnson very loathfully parted company with the party, and began to row himself back into slavery, where he would be useful in betraying those of his race, whom he would be fortunate enough to meet while running for freedom.

Joe watched the boat until it was well out into the

river, and turning to his companions, he said, "Boys, we will not pass dat tabern, for if we do, we may all be captured. ' I heard of dat place before."

These remarks brought about a disagreement; Henry, Joe's brother, insisted on going the direction pointed out by Johnson. In this he was ably seconded by Myers, whose desire to reach the tavern and fill his bottle over-reached the little discretion he possessed. Joe finally convinced them of the foolhardiness of such a thing, and consequently carried his point.

CHAPTER VII.

ATTACKED.

The reader cannot help but discover by this time, that, as a leader, Joe was quite a success, using a vast amount of tact and forethought for which the casual observer would never have given him credit. He was probably the most determined one in the whole party upon securing freedom. His brother, Henry, was, on the other hand, timid and shy, lacking the resolution which Joe possessed; but, when awakened to a full realization of what was expected of him, never hesitated to perform his duty.

Mr. Nagle, the keeper of the Cross Keys tavern, kept upon his place, to assist him in tracking and catching runaway slaves, besides a number of loafers ever ready to engage in this nefarious business, two keen-scented and ferocious bloodhounds, and had Joe given way to the importunities of Henry and Myers, every one of the party would have been captured by Mr. Nagle, his loafers, and his bloodhounds. As it was, they took a different direction, and traveled through the State of Maryland without a single exciting incident. Having crossed the Pennsylvania line and after having traveled, perhaps, some thirty-odd miles, they left the road for consultation. Retiring into a woods, they discussed the question of traveling by daylight; they had hitherto been traveling only at

night, and during the day had concealed themselves. It was finally decided to travel by day, as they were in Pennsylvania, which, they understood, was a free State, and the likelihood of being molested did not give them any apprehension.

Now, could these men have had recourse to those great resources of information, the newspapers, or if they could have kept track of the political events of the day, they would have been more apprehensive of their safety in this presumably free State. This is not a record of political events, and we shall not undertake to give any detailed account of the steps which led to the enactment of a law, making every white man of the North a blood hound and negro-hunter for the white men of the South. The Constitution of the country was prostituted for more than a century by the men who favored, supported, and encouraged slavery. Those high in authority, who submitted to the demands of the South, in her vigorous efforts to extend and protect slavery, have long since met with the just condemnation of all honest men. The effort to make the people of the North servants to the people of the South, in aiding them to secure their runaway slaves, was only too successful; and, when the free people of this great country found that the man holding the highest position in the gift of the Nation was an abettor and sympathizer in the extension and protection of slavery, they shed many bitter tears. The Fugitive Slave Act, which permitted a man to prove his property in any

part of the United States and take it, also making the man who refused to aid in this nefarious business a criminal before the law, was now in existence. When the Old World learned of the birth of a New Nation, there was great rejoicing. Its still, small voice was heard to proclaim that "every man was born free and equal," yet it took nearly a century and a bloody civil contest to establish firmly its first *pronunciamento*.

We say, had these fugitives been acquainted with the political events of the country, they would not have been surprised at experiencing their first repulse in free Pennsylvania.

Having already gotten some distance within the borders of the State without molestation, they traveled along in gay spirits, their minds fixed upon gaining liberty. At a considerable distance ahead of them, they saw several men engaged in building a barn. Joe at once directed them to answer any question put to them as to their destination by saying, that they were bound for the springs as waiters. They approached the barn-builders fearlessly, and, upon reaching them, were asked by one of the workmen where they were going. Joe, in reply, answered, "To de springs to wait table, sar."

There were, perhaps, some twenty men engaged at work upon the barn. It was what is called a building-bee—an economical plan farmers had of expediting work. Working bees of all kinds were numerous. Moving-bees, corn-husking, fruit-parings, etc.,

were done by a farmer inviting his neighbors to assist him. When the work was finished, a big dinner was served, and the country lass and lad would help digestion by a good old-fashioned dance. Joe's answer to the question of the workmen appeared to satisfy them.

Among the few privileges enjoyed by some slaves was that of hiring their own time from their masters; in such cases, they were permitted to seek employment at whatever they saw fit to engage. Many of them were employed at the various summer resorts as waiters, and would travel on foot in search of employment. To their masters they paid so much of their earnings as was demanded of them, and the rest was spent, generally, in riotous living, but in a few instances was used to purchase their freedom.

Having passed the barn-builders unmolested, they had proceeded but a short distance when they were overtaken by a man seated upon a gray horse. The individual accosted them with a salutation. He was tall and lank, with a dark complexion, a nose much resembling the beak of a bird, a pair of exceedingly long limbs, which dangled below the body of the horse. His eyes were perfectly gray, while his lip appeared as though drawn up to meet his nose, exposing two very large teeth, and giving him the appearance of a hungry jackal, while his dress was that of a sheep drover. Drawing in the lines which hung on the pommel of his saddle, he inquired where they were going. Joe gave him the same reply he had

given the barn-builders, but did not get rid of him quite so easily.

The rider eyed them closely, as he said: "Ain't you rather early for the springs?"

Joe answered: "Yes, sar, a little early, but we want to be in good time."

"Where are you from?" asked the stranger.

"Philadelphia," replied Joe.

Now, where Joe got his knowledge of Philadelphia, it is hard to say; unless from the fact that he was told that they were on the Philadelphia pike. The geographical knowledge of the entire party could not have located any such place. Henry, who had been standing to one side of the road eyeing the rider's horse, and noticing it to be somewhat lame, came forward, and said:

"Your horse's got a ringbone."

"Yes," said the rider, "and I would give a hundred dollars to have it cured."

"I can cure it," said Henry.

"Then you are the man I am looking for. I will pay your expenses at the next inn, and give you twenty-five dollars in the bargain if you cure him."

Henry had a fair knowledge of horses, and was not making a vain boast when he told the stranger that he could cure the horse.

Joe was a listener to the conversation, and was afraid his brother would stop to accept the offer. He was not altogether pleased with the man's manner, as he had, generally, but little confidence in white men.

He held his peace, however, but concluded not to allow his brother to accept the man's proposition. Joe finally said, after having walked some distance, the rider keeping his horse at a walking pace:

"Ain't you a sheep drover?"

"Yes," said the man. "Why?"

"Oh, nothing, only I thought so from de clothes you wear."

This was not what Joe really thought, for after having closely inspected the man, it came to him like a dream that he had seen him before. He had seen this very man purchasing sheep from a man with whom he once lived, and he knew that in addition to driving sheep he also drove slaves, that he had caught a number of runaway slaves, for which he had been well rewarded.

The man on horse back then said: "Don't you men want to make a little money? You are a little early for the springs, and I want about a half-dozen men to help me to gather some sheep through the country and drive them to market. If you want the job, I will pay each of you fifty cents a day."

Joe knew that the man was only talking to pass the time, as they were fast nearing a little village where, he surmised, it was the intention of the stranger to obtain assistance and endeavor to capture them.

Answering for the party, he said: "No, sar, we want to keep on trabelin', and don't want to stop." Whereupon, the stranger said: "Well, good day," and galloped off at a rapid pace, his legs dangling on

either side of his horse. They saw him stop at some distance ahead of them and engage in conversation with a woman standing at a gate. When the party got within hearing distance of the rider and woman, they heard the stranger say, "Tell them to come on as fast as they can, and meet me at the Lion's Head."

Joe said: "Boys, dar's trouble ahead. We can't leave de road; dar's a town ahead, and we must pass through it, so git ready to fight."

The irascible Mr. Myers, the gentleman of large feet, large hands, and large mouth, with a large love for the ardent, had been discontented and greatly out of humor ever since Joe's refusal to pass Mr. Nagle's hostelrie. His bottle had been emptied for some time, and the desire for something more ardent than water had put him in very bad humor, making him very ugly. He still carried his new boots thrown carelessly over his shoulder, while his stringless, tongueless, and thoroughly dilapidated shoes partly covered his enormous feet.

When Joe said they would have to fight, Myers growled out, "Ise gwine to hab dis bottle filled at dat tabrn, if I has to walk ober de body ob some white man to git it."

Joe again repeated his warning that Myers' bottle and shoes would yet get him in trouble.

"Never mind me, honey," was his reply. "No white man's gwine to weary dese bones widout hearin' dem crack." As Myers said this he took a hitch at his pantaloons, rolled an enormous quid of tobacco to

the other side of his capacious mouth, and, with the swing of a rollicking tar, proceeded rapidly in silence, with but a single thought disturbing his rather stupid mind. That thought was to reach the inn as speedily as possible and get his bottle filled.

The village which the runaways were approaching could hardly be termed such, as it consisted only of a tavern, a blacksmith's shop, and some five or six houses. The Lion's Head inn stood back several feet from the road. In front of it was a watering-trough and a long rail used for hitching horses. At one end was a mounting-stone; and a short distance from this was one of the few houses. The blacksmith shop stood between the Lion's Head and a lane which had to be passed before reaching the inn, coming from the direction in which the runaways were. When they reached the smith's shop, the stranger had left the smith and his helper, having rode on to the inn, where he dismounted, and went inside, engaging in conversation with the inn-keeper. Joe was in the lead and would have kept right on, believing that the stranger, in stopping to speak to the woman and the smith, had concocted a plan for their capture. As he passed the inn door, the stranger who had accosted them on the road stepped to the door and hailed the party, asking them in to take something to drink. None of them, except Joe, needed the second invitation. He remained outside, while the rest entered the inn. The stranger called to him to come in, but he refused, saying that he did not drink.

Mr. Myers' face was wreathed in smiles, as he tossed off several good stiff drinks of old corn-juice. Whisky was cheap then. A man could get three drinks of better liquor for the same amount that he has to pay now for one. Myers did not neglect to fill his bottle, which he stowed away in a pocket of his dilapidated coat. After drinking, they all stood upon the little balcony which surrounded the inn. The stranger who had shown such kindness stepped out upon the balcony and said to Henry: "Now, my young man, show me how to cure that ringbone." Henry walked out to the horse, and began to display his knowledge of curing the ills of dumb animals. Joe walked out into the road, and, as he looked toward the blacksmith's shop, he saw the smith and his assistant armed with stout pieces of iron, while up the road came about a dozen men provided with sticks, clubs, stones, and whatever other implements they could procure.

He shouted, "Boys, look behind you!" Henry glanced over his shoulder, at once dropped the horse's foot, and made a break for the road. Joe took to a field, and the rest of the runaways scattered in different directions. Liquor had so far overcome the senses of Myers that he was grabbed by the affable stranger, the rider of the ringbone horse, who informed him that he was a runaway and he was going to return him to his master. Myers partly opened his eyes, and was rather slow in taking in the situa-

tion. He had, however, retained his hold upon his club, which he grasped more firmly, and said:

“Look, heah, white man, let me go.”

The rider of the ringbone horse said: “Yes, I’ll let you go, you d—d nigger,” and, as if to assure Myers of his attention, tightened his grip on his collar. Myers raised his club and brought it down on the arm of his captor. The rider of the ringbone horse relinquished his hold without being told the second time, and that member of his anatomy dropped limp and lifeless at his side, while he gave utterance to a howl which would have done justice to a cayote. Myers put off at a rapid rate, with stones flying after him, and all the dogs and men in the place close upon his heels. His slipshod shoes and the whisky he had imbibed greatly retarded his progress. He ran very swiftly, however, and, reaching a hill, he attempted to ascend it, but lost his footing and fell. In a moment a half-dozen men were upon him; they quickly secured and bound him with a rope, and marched him back to the inn triumphantly.

He was placed upon a bench at the door, while his captors withdrew to decide how to dispose of him. They knew that a large reward would be offered for him, for he was worth fully fifteen or eighteen hundred of any man’s money. Sam Blythe, a big-boned, double-jointed fellow, had been left to do guard duty over Myers. Blythe walked up and down in front of him, thinking he was so securely bound that he would

not attempt to escape, and depended upon his own ability to prevent him should he make any such attempt. Seeing the captive move about rather uneasily, he walked up to Myers, and said :

“ See here, nigger, none of yer shines around here. If you don't keep quiet, I will thump your head. Do ye hear ? ”

Myers said nothing, but jumped to his feet, with a superhuman effort freed his hands, and dealt Blythe a blow that sent that worthy sprawling into the road, and made him swallow a quid of tobacco that came near choking him to death. With a bound like a deer, Myers made for the nearest field and cleared the fence, having left his much-worn shoes on the hotel porch as a memento for the disappointed “ nigger-catchers. ”

Leaving our band of runaways to proceed on their journey to freedom, after this escapade, separated and divided as they now were, let us return to the Maxwell plantation, and see what changes the fickle goddess of fortune has wrought.

CHAPTER VIII.

TWO HAPPY FATHERS.

Events on the Maxwell plantation now begin to change, as events will in life. Jonathan continued prosperous and successful, the loss of Joe and Henry soured his disposition and aroused a spirit of hatred toward his half-sister, Purcey, whom he believed had aided and abetted in the escape of her brothers. At one time, he had partly made up his mind to sell Purcey, but the prospect of her giving birth to a child at an early period deterred him in his intention. Had he not married her to William McCullar for this very purpose? It was not likely, then, that Jonathan Maxwell would allow his hatred of the girl to exceed his love of increased wealth.

Large rewards had been offered for both Joe and Henry, but in vain, as they had both made good their escape into freedom. Notwithstanding the great value they were to their master, Jonathan never condescended to mention to Purcey or Elva his feelings, but had put them through a most searching investigation as to their knowledge of the runaways. Both so successfully pleaded ignorance as to their whereabouts or any knowledge of the intention of the boys to escape, that he soon gave up the idea of learning anything from them. He, however, as we have said,

offered a handsome reward for their capture, and, in company with Mr. Biggers and the others who were the losers of so many dollars and cents, by the sudden and unceremonious departure of their alleged property, organized a "nigger" hunting party. Accompanied by several blood hounds, they set out in speedy but useless pursuit. The runaways had such a start that they were far out of reach of their pursuers, even before they got under way. The party returned home in a few days, after the unsuccessful effort to capture the runaways, and Jonathan Maxwell settled down to make up for the loss of Joe and Henry as best he could. Mr. Biggers cursed louder and drove his slaves harder, while their meager rations reached almost *ad infinitum*.

William and Purcey enjoyed life, happy in each other's society, indeed, forgetting all about the hardness of their lot, and utterly oblivious of the fact that nothing of them was free except their souls. Their time, their bodies, it seemed their very happiness, belonged to Jonathan Maxwell; and they must act in obedience to his commands whenever he saw fit now to exercise his prerogative as master. He believed within his heart that Purcey, or her mother, had been instrumental in the escape of the two boys, and he concluded that to leave William upon the place subject to such influence would ultimately result in his escape also. Not wishing to sell him just at this time, he resorted to the next most profitable

thing, and hired him out some distance from home to a severe master.

Jake Withers, to whom William was hired, was the rival of Abraham Biggers in meanness and cruelty. He was known to be so conniving and penurious as to have picked up a few grains of wheat found in the field after cutting, and put them into his pocket until he reached the granary. He was known to have kicked a little negro child over a four rail fence, because of its plucking a few flowers out of his garden. He had not as much feeling for a negro as he had for a mule. He allowed those about him no holidays. Over those whom he hired from other masters he had complete control, and those whom he owned belonged to him, in his estimation, body and soul. William was now made to feel, for the first time, what it was to be married and yet have no wife. He was several miles from Purcey, and could only visit her after finishing his work at night, and was compelled to be back at his post before day-break. The first bitter dregs of his cup of woe he began to taste. His wife, night after night, lay awake watching the hours, while he obtained a short rest preparatory to his return to his labors. More than a year had now passed since their marriage, and Providence saw fit to bless, or, in a sense, curse them with a son. William, entirely unmindful of his situation, felt that natural pride experienced by most fathers over their first-born. About the same time, Jonathan Maxwell also became the father of a son; but his happiness, having

wealth and freedom, did not exceed that of William McCullar in poverty and bondage.

Purcey became the nurse of Jonathan's offspring, as custom decreed. No lady of Southern blood ever condescended to raise her own child. On the contrary, it was invariably entrusted to the care of a negro nurse, who suckled it from her breast with all the tenderness of a mother; and she was expected to rear and mature with care the very child that would, perhaps, some day raise its hands to stripe her back, or set a price upon her head, and sell her as it would any other chattel. It might have been among the many providential things for this child of Jonathan Maxwell to have suckled some of the milk of human kindness from the bosom of this black nurse. It seems that nature itself would have engrafted some of the seeds of human love for her who so tenderly nourished it, watched over it, and relieved its mother of all the cares of its early childhood. But this was custom, this was duty: what Purcey did for Jonathan's child Elva had done for Jonathan; and thousands of the most cruel slave-holders have been reared at the breast of those whom they afterward made suffer the tortures of slavery. There have been those in this world who have been called ingrates, but what shall we call those who fed upon the bosom of a human being, suckled themselves into existence, were nursed with tenderness and care, then striped the back which bent so often over them in anxiety?

William McCullar, the slave-father, gave to his child the promise of an inheritance of servitude, of serving a living master, deprived of manhood, deprived of knowledge, with no hope for the present, and in future life, perhaps, to curse bitterly the mother that gave him birth; while Jonathan Maxwell, the free father, gave to his child the inheritance of a rich estate, knowledge, bright hopes for the future, with possibly no care for the past. Such are the circumstances under which these two children enter the world. But an over-ruling Providence guided the footsteps of the one, while an over-ruling *passion* directed those of the other; and their lives were as entirely diversified as was their birth. It will be remembered that Elva had interposed but a single objection to the marriage of Purcey, and when you remember the excellent judgment of the woman, her objection will not be looked upon as unreasonable. Objections are often raised by parents against their daughters' entering into the bonds of matrimony, and often are they well founded; but in few instances are they respected. With Elva it was no vain thought. It was not because she feared an unequal match, but, as she told William when he informed her of his purchase by Jonathan Maxwell, that she detested the idea of such a marriage, because his children would be born slaves. This is why she objected; and from the day it took place, she constantly kept before Purcey the horrifying idea of Master Jonathan's changing disposition, which might lead to his

separating the mother and child by selling one or the other. And well she might, for it was not long before a most unusual change took place in the Maxwell household.

Mrs. Maxwell's health began to fail her after the birth of her son, and the family physician directed that she travel. Purcey was selected to accompany her, and attend young Master Archie. This was the command, and nothing was left her but to obey. Her child, her husband, and her mother—all had to be left that her mistress might find restored health in another clime. All preparations were made for the journey, and bidding farewell to all that was dear to her, Purcey set out upon the journey with her mistress. Mrs. Maxwell's failing health did not improve her disposition, which was none of the sweetest at best, and the many annoyances she gave Purcey caused the girl to shed many a bitter tear. While upon this journey, she determined, upon her return, to make her escape with her husband and child into freedom.

Master Archie grew into a bright-eyed, yellow-haired, spiteful little fellow, developing much of his father's haughtiness and pride, and all of his mother's hatefulness. To his nurse he was impudent, and often, in a passion, struck her with his little fist, an offense for which Purcey dared not correct him, and at which his mother only laughed. They were absent for many months, which seemed to Purcey years, and when Mrs. Maxwell, feeling that her health was

greatly improved, set her face toward home, Purcey's heart leaped for joy. Her long separation from her husband and child made her feel keenly what misery would be hers should either be sold. Consolation came to her, however, under the present circumstances, as a sweetened draught, from the fact that she would soon see them.

During her long absence, she had no communication whatever, from her child or husband. No letters had come to assure her of their health and love, not even a word. For while Purcey could manage to write intelligibly herself, she knew that there was no one at home to read her letters to William. Who can imagine what this feeling must be, separated from those we love most dear, knowing that the means of communication are accessible, but from the want of the knowledge to interpret one's thoughts and feelings, to be comparatively consumed in the fire of desire for a message, but a word, to receive or give, but a single sign of the inward passion! Confine a person in prison where the custom deprives him of intercourse with the outside world, he gradually submits to such restriction; but when left to enjoy the open air, to gaze upon the brightness and the beauty of nature, free to breathe the balmy air of Heaven, yet unable to communicate with those he loves, there is a suffering which words cannot depict. This was one of the few sufferings through which Purcey passed. Strong and proud as she was, it weakened her and brought her to a keener realiza-

tion of her condition. Never a word came from her mistress in the numerous letters she received from home, about husband or child.

How Purcey would hang about her mistress whenever the mail came, and oh! what pangs of pain passed through her heart when Mrs. Maxwell patted Master Archie on the head, and said: "Papa sends a kiss for his little man." But not a word for this human being who stands at her back, ever ready to do her bidding, ever at her beck and call, to whom was entrusted the very life of the child she loved. No word, no sign, no sympathy, not even a look of recognition for this creature—mother, wife, though she knew Purcey to be. Where was Mrs. Maxwell's humanity? Had she any, or did she not consider this creature human? Perhaps a look at the woman's antecedents will mitigate the censure which humanity would probably, at this day, be likely to place upon her.

Mrs. Maxwell was of true Southern blue-blood stock. Her father was a highly educated, highly respected divine of the Presbyterian faith. Rev. Dr. Joseph Partington expounded the Gospel to a large congregation who acquiesced in his views, which views were always expressed to make immovable the bulwark of slavery, and show to his parishioners what a high moral duty they performed in depriving a human being of his liberty. The labors of Rev. Dr. Partington were not confined to his large and wealthy slave-holding congregation alone, but at his express

desire, a partition had been erected in the gallery of his church, through which holes had been made, and the black servants of his own, as well as those of many of the members of his church, assembled, and listened to the glowing words of the great divine. When the audience behind the partition was very large, Rev. Dr. Joseph Partington always addressed a word to them concerning their obedience to their masters. This great moral duty he never failed to impress upon their hearing, and there was no passage of the Scripture that he ever quoted so expressly for their benefit. The owner himself of some ten or fifteen human creatures, whom he took great pains to deprive of the least opportunity to learn a letter or see a book, he held them down to a rigid observance of his orthodox views of religion and slavery. Rev. Joseph believed that the institution of slavery was of and by divine consent. Whether he believed it or not, he preached it and taught it. Believing this, whether honestly or not, he was compelled to put in practice the most stringent rules for its support and advancement. He was not unlike ministers who are never at loss to find a passage of Scripture in support of the most radical of views.

He believed that when a servant disobeyed, that servant should be punished, the punishment to be inflicted according to the judgment of the master. Consequently, whenever Rev. Joseph Partington's servants disobeyed him, or parted from his extremely orthodox views, he never punished them himself.

That would be lowering his ministerial dignity ; it would probably discompose his mind in the composition of a sermon on the sufferings of Christ for mankind, or, "Let godly love fill thy bosom." No! Rev. Joseph never punished any of his servants. The nearest approach to summary punishment he had ever been known to administer, was to hit one of his female servants so hard a blow in the mouth as to cause her teeth to cut through her lip in such a manner as to disfigure her for life ; but this was done in a moment of passion, and was a pardonable offense. No! Rev. Joseph never punished that is, he never performed any such laborious task himself. He, however, approved of it. He believed in the application of the lash to the back of a negro as sincerely as he believed in no "justification without faith," or the Spirit moving from within. So when any of his servants were to be punished, he always sent the recalcitrant to the town jail with a note couched somewhat in these terms :

"Strike bearer on naked back nine and thirty blows."

DR. PARTINGTON.

N. B. Well laid on.

This was the manner by which Rev. Dr. Partington eased his conscience and enforced discipline among his servants. His tender and humane heart could never have suffered to see a human being writhing under the sting of the lash. It would have reminded **him** too much of Him of whom he preached so much, whose untold sufferings for all mankind the Reverend

portrayed with such earnestness and sincerity. Such was the father of Mrs. Maxwell. The woman was raised from childhood to think, to act, to understand, that a negro possessed none of the higher attributes of mankind. Then, let us make whatever allowance we can for her utter disregard of any feeling of anxiety displayed by Purcey.

It seems to be a woman's province to bear up under the greatest sufferings, particularly in the presence of those whom she knows have no sympathy for her. Purcey had been with Mrs. Maxwell long enough to know that there was no sympathy, or a touch of kindness for her in the bosom of her mistress. During the many months they had been absent from home, not once had she ever given the slightest intimation that she knew Purcey had a husband and child, nor would Purcey make any inquiry of her, thinking, perhaps, it was useless, as she did not suppose anything would be said about her loved ones by Jonathan. She controlled herself as best she could, praying constantly that the nights and days might be shortened, and the time speedily come for her to return home. It did come at last, and it seemed that each fleeting hour bade her hasten.

CHAPTER IX.

A NOVEL STAKE.

When Jonathan's wife left home to benefit her health, he, as a true Southern gentleman would do, gave himself up to such pleasures as men find in one another's society. He attended several card parties, indulged in a little of that great American game of draw poker, and passed the time partly with rod and gun, just as it suited his fancy. Jonathan was an excellent horseman, and had taken the brush at many a fox hunt. He had accepted several invitations to stag parties, and had entertained several gentlemen at his own residence. His social circle was confined to a select few, for we know that Jonathan Maxwell was a man who did not condescend to take everybody upon a level with him, or seek social prominence. One of his most particular friends was Judge Jere. Coleman. Judge Coleman was what might be called a man of the world; he was, it is true, of aristocratic birth, and had been possessed of immense wealth. He had traveled extensively through Europe, had represented one of the Virginia districts in Congress, where he made for himself an enviable reputation as a warm defender of the extension of slavery into the Territories. Being a large slave-holder himself, and an able lawyer, his advocacy of spreading the evil of slavery won for him such laurels that, when he re-

turned home to his constituents, there was no position within their gift to which they would not have elevated him.

He however, contented, himself with an appointment to the highest judicial position in the State, which position he filled with credit, until a disposition to travel possessed him, when he resigned his position and set out on an extensive tour through the old countries. While away from home, he spent much of his time and much of his money at the card-table. There was not a place in Europe noted for its gaming attractions that Judge Coleman had not visited and tried his fortune against the uncertainty of cards. Monte Carlo, Brighton, Baden Baden, and all of the famous gaming places of foreign countries were visited by him. He returned home, after a long absence, broken in health and in fortune; but despite this, he had lost none of his Southern chivalry, and his name was still Judge Coleman. So, from his former aristocratic position, and the desire of his friends to respect him for what he had been, he still had access to those exclusive Southern circles in which only gentlemen of honor were recognized. Jonathan had always admired the judge and thought that Judge Coleman admired him. He saw nothing objectionable in selecting a man of this type for a close companion, who had only run through a fortune which his father had made, and was given to those vices so common to men of Judge Coleman's calibre. Judge Coleman still had the name which, at one time, to mention was to make men un-

cover with respect. He was honorable and chivalrous, and, all in all, was a "deuced good fellow," as Jonathan would often remark.

Judge Coleman, Jonathan Maxwell, and a party of friends had withdrawn from the dining-room of the Maxwell homestead to the drawing-room, after a sumptuous dinner, for the purpose of enjoying a smoke and indulging in a social game of draw poker. Southern gentlemen have ever been, and, perhaps, will be (until that particular class of Americans known by this distinctive appellation become extinct) passionately fond of poker. In the flourishing days of slavery, the steamboats, the railroads, the summer resorts, the winter resorts, all furnished retreats for these gentlemen to engage in this favorite pastime. Many black men and women, oftentimes children, have changed masters over the card-table. There was nothing strange about this, a negro being just as good collateral as a Government bond, a horse, or a gold watch. He had his value, was transferable, and was always a ready sale, easily converted into cash. So when a Southern gentleman ran short of cash at the card-table, it was no unusual custom for him to put up his servant as collateral. A person can go and receive money on an old coat, or a watch, or any other thing of value. Why, then, should a man refuse to accept as a bonus a human being that was actually so many dollars and cents? It must not be supposed that a man who had paid so dearly for his experience as Judge Coleman had

was not very clever with the cards. Such a supposition would not only be unjust to the man, but would make false the assertion, "Experience is the best teacher." He was indeed very clever, and before that social game ended, he had won a large amount of money, besides the husband of Purcey, William McCullar, and it happened in this way: The entire party had indulged very freely in wine, both at and after dinner, and when they seated themselves at the table to play a social game, they grew rather reckless as to the stakes. After Jonathan had lost what money he had about his person, he said:

"Judge, I'll play you for any nigger I have on the place, against your winnings."

"It's a go," replied Judge Coleman.

The game was played amidst much merriment, and the judge, of course, won. Jonathan told him to select whatever servant he wanted, and the judge, not to be too particular, selected the negro man who had performed the service of waiting upon them. This man was William, who, having finished his service with the master to whom he had been hired, had been installed waiter in his proper master's house.

Judge Coleman had really no use for a servant, nor had he any intention of keeping one. He had possessed a large number of them at one time, but then he was a large land-owner, and made good use of them. There was but one use he could make of William, and that was to convert him into cash. So he said to Jonathan: "Maxwell, I don't want that nig-

ger, give me a thousand dollars and keep him." If Jonathan Maxwell had not been under the influence of liquor, knowing the man as we do, we should naturally have thought that he would have accepted this offer; but it must also be remembered that a word passed by a Southern gentleman, whether at the card-table or the counting-table, was considered as binding and irrevocable as the word of man could be.

Jonathan Maxwell, under the excitement of a game of cards, had chanced off, in round cash, two thousand dollars. To be sure it was only a poor black slave, a husband and a father, a man with a heart and soul, a being that could feel, could see, could taste, that felt the same cold and the same heat his master did. But what cared this master, what thought had he of a slave possessing such sensibilities! He only knew that he had bought him; the law of the land protected him in his ownership, and made his title as clear to the possession of this human being as it did to his acres of land. And when Judge Coleman offered to return the man, not out of sympathy for him, but because the cash would be more advantageous, not because he did not know that he could obtain that amount in any slave-market, or from any negro trader, but because he thought his host would accept back, after a second consideration, the impulsive wager. Jonathan was obdurate, and insisted, as the judge had fairly won, he should take the man.

William had no knowledge that he had been bar-

tered away to a new master, and perhaps it was all the better he did not, for, having been separated from his wife for months and months, the probability of never seeing her again would have, perhaps, driven the poor fellow frantic. Judge Coleman remained as a guest at the Maxwell house, consequently nothing was said to William about the change which would take place when the judge's visit terminated. A fear that he might attempt to run away was one reason, and as the judge had not bought him in a very business-like manner, he did not like to confine him in the town jail, as was the custom when buying up slaves.

Since the departure of Mrs. Maxwell, Elva had the entire oversight of the house. She was allowed, or took, many privileges that were denied to the other servants, which gave her an opportunity to know much of her master's doings. She presided over the culinary department, where she permitted no intrusion. For some reason, Jonathan had for her a peculiar respect or awe. And why did Jonathan Maxwell have this peculiar feeling? Had not his mother, upon her dying bed, taught him to hate her? Did he not own her as absolutely as any slave upon his place? Was he not fully aware that this woman had given birth to a child of which his father was also the father? Then why should he have this peculiar feeling? Was it because he had nursed at her breast? Was it because, in his childhood days, this slave-woman had humored his whims, nursed him

tenderly, and, when almost at death's door with a dangerous fever he had contracted, she, by tenderness and care, had brought back the flickering flame of life which had at one time almost left him, or was it because he had inherited this awe or respect from his father? There are certain innate qualities which men inherit; whatever other qualities they cultivate, traces of the hereditary are evident.

Jonathan's father was one of a numerous class of Southern slave-holding gentlemen who carried on a criminal and illicit intimacy with his slaves. This brutish desire might have been the incarnation of Satan, or the outcome of a curse, put upon them by an overruling power, that they should bruise and maltreat their own flesh and blood. Whatever it was, we shall give Jonathan's father credit for desisting, as we have said before, from abusing the woman who was both his slave and his mistress. Elva had always held a wonderful influence over the father of Jonathan. He could never withstand the awful gaze of those lustrous black eyes. The secret of the influence which she held over the father died with him; but the son inherited its effect without fully realizing the cause.

Elva made it her business to watch everything that occurred about the Maxwell house, not for her master's benefit, nor to be a tale-bearer to her mistress, but for her own satisfaction. She slept in the house, but had made it a rule for years never to retire until every person in the house had done so. Often,

with her stealthy step, had she stolen through the house and listened at her master's door. More than once had young master Jonathan come home late at night, partly intoxicated, and found her crouched in a corner upon the steps close to his father's door. When questioned as to what she was doing there, she would invariably answer, "Waiting for you, massa Johnnie." The woman seemed scarcely ever to sleep. Come in or go out whatever hour you would, those large, black, speaking eyes could be seen, open, undimmed, and unwearied. What were the temptations that entered the woman's mind, when the man who owned her body and had dishonored her slept in apparent calm repose? Often was she tempted to redden her hands in his blood and attempt to free herself and all of her children from bondage.

But when she thought how useless such a thing would be, that although she might kill her master and no suspicion rest upon her, she decided to use greater discretion; though had Jonathan's father been the hydra-headed monster of slavery, this woman, in her fanaticism, her religious fervor, would have easily been worked up to believe herself the saviour of her race, and would have strangled the monster without a thought of the consequence. Elva never resigned her watchfulness after the death of her old master, but continued it; and had Jonathan Maxwell taken a second thought when he lost William McCullar, his slave, at a game of cards, he might have known that the transaction was seen and heard

by this astute woman. Elva evidently felt it her business to know everything that occurred in that house, and she did. When the gentlemen retired to the drawing-room, Elva knew what it was for. Hurrying through her work, she reached the door in the midst of their merriment, and heard the words which transferred her daughter's husband to another master. She also heard Jonathan refuse to buy him back. Staggering to her feet, almost overcome by what she heard, she returned to the kitchen, fell upon her knees, and prayed for Purcev's return.

CHAPTER X.

THE WIFE'S RETURN.

Elva poured out her soul to the Almighty that her daughter might return before William was taken away. Rising from her knees, she bethought herself as to what was the best to do in the premises. She had no idea when William would be taken away by his new master, or had she the remotest idea when her mistress would return; she knew, however, that something must be done and that at once. She could do but one thing, and that was to urge William to seek freedom. Then she thought that such a course would be next to impossible, as she could never persuade the man to leave without seeing his wife. Their child, under such care as Elva could bestow upon it, had grown into a handsome little mulatto fellow, with straight black hair and eyes that fairly reflected those of his mother. He was kept cleaner and neater in his dress than the other children, and his play-ground was the kitchen, where he was constantly under Elva's eye. She knew that should William leave for a free land without seeing his wife, his chances to see them again would be better than if he remained to be removed away, and, perhaps, sold to a trader and then be taken to the South.

Here were two evils facing her, and she was puz-

zled as to which one to avoid. She had not as yet mentioned a word to William of his dangerous position, but time was flying; and she was still undecided as to which course to pursue. Once more she fell upon her knees and appealed to the Almighty for guidance, and she had scarcely finished her prayer when the bell rang summoning her to the drawing-room. She arose and answered the call. She had just time to wonder what her master wanted, when she reached the drawing-room door. Pushing it open softly, she discovered Jonathan and Judge Coleman engaged in conversation. Standing, almost transfixed, with her hand touching the door, she heard the judge say:

“Maxwell, I think I shall leave you to-morrow.”

Jonathan said: “I am sorry to part with you, old fellow, but if you will go, all right. I shall expect you down during hunting season, when you won't have to be entertained by the host without the hostess.”

“Yes,” said the judge, “I shall come. I want, however, to leave this boy here a few days.”

Jonathan replied,—“No, that won't do. You must take him along. His mistress comes home with his wife, in a few days, and the devil would be to play should they have to be separated.”

This touch of feeling was the first evidence given by Jonathan that he felt any reproach over what he had done.

“Well, as you like it, Maxwell. These creatures

do go on terribly, sometimes, about being separated, just as though they could not take up another and be just as well satisfied."

Elva waited to hear no more. She pushed open the door, entered the room, and stood before her master and his guest.

"Massa, did you ring?" she said.

"Yes, Elva, your mistress and Master Archie will be home day after to-morrow. See that everything is in readiness for them." She made a bow, and left the room.

She went directly and sought William, quickly informing him of everything, and telling him that he must fly, he must run away that night, or, perhaps, he would never have another chance. When William heard the startling news of his transfer, of the intention to remove him the next day, he knew not where, certain that it would be, if anything, to slavery more absolute and binding than that he was now in, his first thought was of his wife whom, perhaps, he was destined never to see again. This was indeed sad to contemplate; but he also thought, sad as it was, that by taking this step, securing freedom, Purcey would be induced to watch her opportunity to break her shackles and one day join him in a free land. Strong and stout-hearted as he was, he quailed before the inevitable separation, and in a choking voice he said:

"Aunt Elva, must I go widout seeing Purcey? Must I leave the child?"

"Yes," said Elva, "You must go to-night, and you must travel fast and cover every track until you reach de river. Don't stop night or day until you are safe in de land of freedom."

William McCullar, though a slave, was a noble-hearted man. He was brave and courageous. Had he have thought that there was the least possible chance of remaining and successfully resisting being taken away by his new master, without seeing his wife, he would have fought to the last. He was possessed of sufficient intelligence to know that any attempt at resistance would be utterly useless, when every slave upon the place would be called upon to assist in subduing him, and the law of the land would condone his death should they see fit to administer such a penalty. With all these odds against him, he turned to Elva and said: "Massa Maxwell has sold me; but I'll remain here until Purcey comes back, or be taken away dead."

"Now, honey, there's no use talking that way. You must either run away at once, or be taken to God knows where."

"But," said William, "'sposing I am captured; wouldn't I be sold to the traders anyhow?"

"But you won't be captured," said Elva.

William shook his head doubtfully. They stood in silence for a few moments, when the door opened and William's bright-eyed little son came running in, and, as if by instinct, wrapped his tiny little arms around his father's legs and looked up into his face. The

father bent down, lifted the child up, held it at arm's length, drew it to his bosom, and kissed it. The child threw its tiny arms around its father's neck and laid its head against his face.

"Poor chile," said William, "your poor father must leave you, maybe never to see you agin."

The child hardly realized what its father said, but tightened its arms around his neck. Here was simple, pure affection—this slave-father, pressing to his heart and bestowing what might be a last farewell and blessing upon his own flesh and blood, which by law was the common property of another man. Should we wonder that William questioned the right of another man to separate him from the wife and child of his bosom? He put the child down and the tears almost blinded his eyes.

"No, aunt Elva," he said, "I can't go. I won't go until Purcey comes. I'll go to Mars Jonathan and ask him to let me stay just one day, and then I'll go; but I won't stay, Elva. Dey can take me as far South as dey please, but I'll run away the first chance I git."

"You can go to Mars Jonathan, honey, if you want, but it ain't no use; he says you must go before missus and Purcey comes home."

This discouraging piece of intelligence did not alter William's resolve to appeal to his master. When the dinner hour arrived, he waited on the table, as was his duty, and during the meal Jonathan said to him: "Bill, after dinner you get your things together and

prepare to go with Judge Coleman. I have sold you to him."

William did not show any evidence of surprise at this announcement, but, standing before his master with a server in his hand, he said: "Massa, can't I wait until missus comes home with Purcey? Please don't send me away widout seeing her." And while he spoke, every limb trembled and the dishes on the server shook until there was imminent danger of his letting them fall. Jonathan Maxwell looked at the man without a change in his cold, hard features, and without a thought of what his own feelings would be were he told then that he must leave his own dear wife and son, and go he knew not where after being separated from them for months, and yet within but a few hours of the time that he could fold them to his bosom. This he did not give a thought, and, of course, had no sympathy for the slave's appeal. When William had finished speaking, Jonathan waved his hand and pointed toward the door. William knew what this meant, and, with tears in his eyes nearly blinding him and a great lump in his throat nearly choking him, he passed from the room, entered the kitchen, and fell at Elva's feet exclaiming, "It's no use! it's no use!"

Before Elva could utter a word, the wheels of a carriage were heard upon the gravel driveway. Elva ran to the window and saw, seated by the side of the driver, Purcey, while young master Archie's haughty face was pressed against the window. The carriage

was discovered about the same time by Jonathan, who ran to the door to meet them.

The arrival of Mrs. Maxwell a day earlier than she was expected created, of course, quite an excitement in the household, and everything else for the time was forgotten, so glad was Jonathan to welcome his family home. The cause of Mrs. Maxwell's unexpected return was a very simple one. She had started for home a day earlier than she intended because she did not see that her health would be benefited by slow, tedious travel, when she could take another route which, as will be seen, brought her home a day sooner than expected. As soon as Purcey had attended her mistress, she speedily sought her husband and child. She found the latter playing in the kitchen, as usual, but, in place of a little baby in swaddling clothes, she found a bright-eyed, smiling-faced little youngster walking about without the aid of chairs and table legs. She soon had the child in her arms, bestowing upon it the caresses of a fond mother.

William had been sent out by his master to prepare Judge Coleman's horse for the judge's departure, but horses and master's commands had lost all interest for him; he knew his wife had come, and he felt more reconciled to his fate, now that he could embrace her before leaving. His wife had returned, his heart was lighter, and he wondered whether Elva's and his own prayers had been answered.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SEPARATION.

Purcey was, as might be supposed, highly elated upon her return home. She laughed, she cried, by turns. Her heart was filled with unutterable joy; everything seemed lost to her, for the time being, except her excessive happiness at her return and the sight of those she loved so dearly. There had not been a single circumstance which had conveyed to her a message, a word, as to their existence, during her absence from them. Had she have received one word, one little message, from them, perhaps she might not have been quite so demonstrative now upon meeting them. Let us not think, because she fell upon her husband's bosom and wept like a child, that it was the overflow of passion in which women, as a rule, are apt to indulge. This heart, filled only with the purest of love, inexpressible joy, must soon be rent with the cruelest and bitterest grief. Purcey did not know, as she stood there encircled by her husband's arms, that a cruel and relentless man, her master by the law of the land, had already taken that husband from her by a mere word. She did not know that that embrace would be, perhaps, the last she would ever receive from her husband.

William did not know how to break the sad news

to her. Illiterate though he was, his heart was filled with true, manly love and real, human feeling. The husband and wife thus stood clasped in each other's arms, and it seemed as though no power could separate them. When Purcey recovered herself, she looked into his face with her beautiful black eyes; she saw that that face, black though it was, wore a troubled, anxious look. She said:

"My husband, ain't you glad to see me?"

"Glad?" said William, "glad? More, chile; I can't spress how I feel."

"What makes you look so sad?"

"'Tain't 'cause you'se come home, for that's what I been praying to de Lord for. No, 'tain't that, but you'se come, and—and—" Poor fellow! he could say no more. Something rose in his throat and almost choked him. He reached his hands toward his wife, exclaiming, "It's no use, it's no use, Purcey! I must go."

"Go where? What is it?" said Purcey. She grew greatly excited, but could not divine her husband's meaning. "Speak, William, tell me what you mean." The black eyes looked at him in an imploring manner, but William saw them not, nor did he appear to hear her words. He was now pacing the floor still exclaiming, "Its no use! its no use!" Purcey could bear this no longer. She threw herself upon his neck, exclaiming:

"Tell me all, William. What has happened? What have you done? Why must you go? Where must

you go? Tell me! tell me!" This seemed to call the man's senses back, and when he saw how excited his wife was, he tried to pacify her by telling her that he would come to her again as he had to get Judge Coleman's horse ready for him. Purcey would not listen to this. She insisted upon knowing the cause of his strange actions, and clung to him all the more. William saw that there was no use concealing the truth longer, as it made her almost frantic with excitement. The man's actions were certainly strange. Purcey did not expect to find her husband anything but happy upon her return; she had not given a thought to such a thing as his being separated from her farther than a few miles. Neither had she expected to find him at the Maxwell house, as he was always hired out since the escape of her brothers, and she little knew that had her arrival been a day later, she would never have beheld him again. No wonder, then, she insisted upon knowing the meaning of William's strange words. Could she have guessed their meaning, could she have realized what pain their explanation would cause her, she might not have persisted so. But she must, she would know.

William passed his arm gently around her as he said: "Chile, ain't nobody told you?"

"Told me what? I have had no talk with any one but you, and you talk so strange. What has happened?"

He stood with his arm encircling her shapely form while her head rested against his bosom. She could

feel the quick throbbing of his heart, his bosom rising and falling with agitation. For a moment, all was silence, then he raised his disengaged hand and caressed her tenderly, while a tear stole down his dusky cheek. He spoke with great effort as he said, "Poor chile! Oh, how I have prayed for your return! Now that you'se come, it seems so hard, so hard!"

And with these words, this strong, horny-handed slave broke completely down, and wept like a child. His head fell forward upon his bosom, and the tears fell thick and fast. Yes; he upon whose back the whip of a cruel master had fallen with relentless force; he who had suffered all the cruelty and privations known to slavery and had never winced, but remained as stolid and as indifferent as a Sphinx, now succumbed to the feelings which had overcome him in view of the separation from the companion of his heart. Cruel, cruel man, made in the image of his Maker, yet so unlike Him in love, by what right do you cause your fellow-men to suffer thus? Is there any mitigation for the wrongs done your brother? Is there any forgiveness for your disobedience of that divine principle, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you?"

The woman now stood almost motionless; she had not yet been able to conceive the cause of her husband's agitation. Never before had she seen him so agitated, and respect for his poignant grief compelled her, for a moment, to weep with him in silence. At last, unable to bear the terrible suspense longer, she

broke out in words of burning intensity : “ My loving husband, my own William, pray tell me the cause of this great grief. Would you break my heart with this terrible silence? Let me know the worst. Speak to me, my husband, speak ! ”

The man controlled his feelings as best he could, and, in a trembling voice, said : “ Break your heart? No, chile, de good Lord forbid that. But—” and he drew her near to his bosom, “ I must, I must leave you, leave you to-day. I hab another master.”

“ Why, what of that? You can come and see me as you have always done.”

“ No, chile, I’m going away off: I don’t know where. Mars Jonathan has—has sold me.”

“ What? Sold you! sold you!” exclaimed the woman as she staggered back. “ Sold you! my God, it cannot be!” and with this exclamation she fell to the floor.

William quickly had her in his arms. The loud exclamation and the dull thud of her body as it struck the floor were heard by Elva, who came rushing into the room just as William raised the limp form from the floor. Without asking any questions, she set about restoring her daughter to consciousness. Purcey slowly regained her senses, but only to swoon away again. William was now summoned to bring the horses. He bent over her prostrate form, and brushed back her raven tresses, which had fallen in a mass over her brow, kissing her again and again. It was the last kiss he implanted upon that brow for

many a day. He told Elva to say to her that he was going to run away; he was going to flee to freedom the first chance he got, and he wanted Purcey to take the child and make her escape. With this parting injunction, without another word, he left his unconscious wife and his only child to follow his new master wherever necessary, perhaps to be sold again, but, at all events, with little hope of ever seeing that wife whom he loved so dearly and the child for whom his heart yearned.

William took the horses to the door; Judge Coleman bade Jonathan Maxwell farewell, promising to return during the hunting season, and, with the result of his last successful gambling bet, rode away. Jonathan watched them until well out of sight, when he entered the house and fondly embraced his wife. Seating himself in an easy chair, he took his darling son upon his knee, and asked his wife to tell him all about their long sojourn from home.

Can there be any adequate expression given to the depth of human feeling? or, is there no depth or breadth to the feeling of the human heart? Are we to suppose that Jonathan Maxwell, as he sat there with his son upon his knee and his wife gazing affectionately upon him, had any thought of the man whom he had just separated from a wife whose province it was to love her husband as dearly as any other woman? Can it be supposed that, surrounded as he was by love, by every comfort heart could wish, a single pang of remorse entered his bosom to re-

proach him for this downright, cruel robbery? Did one jot of sympathy dwell within his heart for the woman who, at that moment, was being racked by a raging fever brought on by this sudden announcement of a separation from her husband? Had not the injunction, "whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder," any significance that this man Maxwell could appreciate? If he possessed one spark of feeling, no evidence of it could be discerned upon his countenance. What had he done, the thought of which would make him regretful? What had he done that remorse should haunt his happiness, or disturb his tranquility? Nothing but play away the value of a certain amount of money at the gaming table, and, not seeing fit to pay the obligation in cash, had given substantial collateral in the form of human being—his property by law—instead. What had he done? Nothing but widowed a wife by a means worse than death; nothing but orphaned a child in a manner simply cruel; nothing but break the heart of a woman, now almost a raving maniac. But what signified all this? It was simply a privilege which the law gave a man, to dispose of his own property as he saw fit. Who would censure him—who condemn him for the exercise of that privilege? If there were any thought at all regarding his late transaction, it was that William would soon get over any sorrow that he had for the separation from his wife, and forget it all in finding new companions, perhaps another wife. As for Purcey, he intended,

if any manifestation of grief was displayed more than he thought was necessary, to put a check upon it in any manner that suggested itself to him.

Mrs. Maxwell, reclining in a comfortable chair, described in an interesting manner all the events of her visit, and concluded by referring to her greatly improved health. She then requested Jonathan to ring for Purcey to give Master Archie his bath. Jonathan rang the maid's bell, which was answered by Purcey's sister, Eloise.

"Where is Purcey," said Mrs. Maxwell, "that she did not answer the bell?"

Eloise was very fat, very round, and very ugly, with a face like a butter ball, and eyes that sat in her head like two holes burnt into a blanket. Her hair stood out straight from her head like the quills upon a porcupine. In addition to this, she was black, sly, and considerably younger than her sister, Purcey. One garment covered her person, and her feet were always ready for a jig. She was, however, clever and quite useful; she could do most any work about the house that she could be entrusted with, and could work in the harvest field equal to a man. She had an insatiable desire for mischief, and was as near being uncivilized as a human being can be without being actually so. When Elva, with Eloise's assistance, had got Purcey to her bed, she sent Eloise into the kitchen to attend to the work until she could safely leave her daughter's bedside. She dared not leave Eloise with her sister, for, unless she fully realized

the serious condition Purcey was in, she would likely have committed some indiscretion, which, perhaps, might have ended seriously. Elva instructed her that in case the bell rang to answer it, and see what was wanted. This is why Eloise had answered the bell, and, as she entered the room, she stood balancing herself first on one foot, then on the other, until her mistress repeated the question the second time.

Now there was one thing about Eloise which was very remarkable. She feared neither mistress nor master, nor had she any fear of the lash. Her hide was as tough as the hide of a rhinoceros, and she apparently cared for nothing. There was but one person on earth that she seemed to care for, and that was Purcey. She loved Purcey with a devotion that her nature in no way betrayed, and, when asked why she loved her so, she would say, "Cause she's white and ain't like us common niggers." Purcey was the only one who could control her. She would do whatever Purcey bade her, and would cry like a child when reprimanded by her sister.

What it was that drew this almost uncivilized child toward her sister, it would be hard to tell, unless it was the music of Purcey's voice. Whenever Purcey would sing (she had a sweet voice), Eloise would stand and grin and clap her hands. As soon as she had finished singing, Eloise would rush upon her and almost hug the breath out of her. This was singular, in view of the fact of her far different actions when any one else would sing. It did not matter

whether it was a tune of slow or fast measure, a hymn, or a song, Eloise would attempt to dance it. But just let Purcey raise her voice, and the feet of the little savage were stilled in silence, and her mouth would drop wide open, a broad grin overspread her face, and her little, round, mischievous eyes, glitter like fire-balls. This was the attachment which this untutored child of bondage bore for her sister, and when she saw Purcey lying insensible upon the floor, she could not realize what it meant. She asked her mother, however, what ailed her, and, when told that she had been made sick by the fact that Mars Jonathan had sold her husband, she said: "Mars Jonathan make Purcey sick? What he do dat for?" Her mother gave her some evasive reply, and sent her down into the kitchen. So when Eloise answered the bell, and her mistress asked why Purcey did not respond, Elo, as she was called, replied,—"'Cause she can't."

"Because she can't? What does that mean, Elo?"

"She ded, dats why."

"Dead!" said Jonathan, rising to his feet. "Dead!" said Mrs. Maxwell, placing her bottle of smelling-salts to her nose.

"Yes, ded," said Elo. "She's white as you is, Misses, and me and mamma toted her up-stairs."

Elo knew very well that Purcey was not dead, but so incontrollable was her desire for mischief, that she would pass a joke, or tell a lie, just as quickly over a dead person as a live one.

Jonathan, knowing well Elo's disposition and weakness for prevaricating, while moved by the serious air she assumed at first, upon recovering himself, said: "Elo, tell me the truth, or I'll whip you."

"Truf, truf," said Elo, "dat's de truf. What I care if you whip me? Ain't I a nigger? and aint niggers made to be whipped?"

Mrs. Maxwell said: "Jonathan, don't stop to argue with that imp, but go and see if there is anything the matter."

Now this is just the very thing that Jonathan was trying to avoid. He suspected there was something wrong with Purcey, as he had every reason to suspect; but he had no intention of facing Elva in the kitchen, and have those dreadful eyes of hers looking reproachfully at him. Turning to Elo, who had got herself pretty well balanced on one foot, the other being hid out of sight by the long, gown-like garment she wore, he said: "Go and tell Aunt Elva to come here."

Elo made a bound for the door, turning Master Archie, whom his father had placed upon the floor, head over heels, and left the room.

Jonathan then said to his wife, "I expect that wench is going on because of William."

"William!" said his wife. "Who is that?"

"Her husband."

"Well, what's the matter with him?"

"I sold him to Coleman."

“Why should she go on so about him, dear?” said Mrs. Maxwell.

“Oh, she always had a great fancy for him, and now I expect the devil will be to play.”

“I don’t see why that should be, she will soon get over that. You have plenty as good niggers upon the place as William. She will soon be in love with some of them.” And Mrs. Maxwell laughed.

This is the view Mrs. Maxwell took of it. She could not understand how Purcey, a slave, could have any lasting affection for a husband. She could not understand why such affection could not be as easily transferred from one slave to another, as it never entered that lady’s mind that such a thing as affection existed within the bosom of a black person. They might form attachments, or have a preference for one another, but affection was a thing which only white people were capable of displaying. Mrs. Maxwell knew but very little of her husband’s affairs, or, indeed, did she care much about them, being one of those indolent ladies who occupied her time between dress and French novels. She had no household cares, nor did she seek any. A servant was always at her hand, to attend her wants, and whenever her husband mentioned anything to her about the affairs of the house, she at once showed signs of being bored. She believed that all persons born black were in their proper place when in bondage, and it was the inviolable right of the master to dispose of the slave as he saw fit.

So, as a matter of course, Jonathan met with no reproof from the companion of his life for doing a thing which, were it not that he had steeled himself to, might have pricked his conscience.

CHAPTER XII.

ANOTHER CLASS OF SLAVES.

It was some time before Elva obeyed her master's summons. A desperate struggle passed within the woman's bosom, as she stood there over her daughter, feeling certain that Purcey's illness would be a prolonged one. Purcey's mind was flighty, and constantly wandering, her husband being the subject of her incessant mutterings. It was a blessing that Elva was so good a nurse, for medical experience was hard to obtain, and, besides, that was not often employed to attend slaves. When she had calmed Purcey, and got her into a slight slumber, she went to the drawing-room, where Mr. and Mrs. Maxwell awaited her. Elva entered, addressed her mistress, and said: "Did you send for me, Miss Jinnie?" This was the name by which she had always addressed her mistress before her marriage to Jonathan, and she had never dropped the Miss, since Jennie Partington became Mrs. Maxwell.

"Yes, Elva," said Mrs. Maxwell, "what is the matter with Purcey?"

"Why, de poor chile's taken very sick, and I had to put her to bed."

"What caused her sickness?"

"Don't know zackly, Miss Jinnie. She complained

soon as she got home, and I seed she was not well, and after William bid her good-bye, poor chile, she give right up."

Elva knew that both her mistress and master were anxious to know how Purcey took the separation from her husband, and she was trying to avoid giving them the information they sought. She had told the truth when she said Purcey was unwell, when she returned home, for so she was. The long separation from her husband and child, and the dreadful suspense she endured from day to day, never hearing anything of them, and having no knowledge as to whether they were dead or alive, was a strain upon mind and body that took almost a superhuman effort to stand. Her excessive joy consequent upon her return to them, and then to be told that her husband was to be separated from her, that he had been sold, was indeed enough to have completely unseated her reason. Jonathan then questioned Elva closely, to ascertain the real cause of her illness, but elicited only the information that she had a raging fever, and that it would, perhaps, be many weeks before she would be able to attend to her duties. He finally dismissed her, with instructions to give her such attention as she required and to send one of the other servants to perform the duty of maid for her mistress.

Elva returned to the sick-room of her daughter. Falling upon her knees by the bedside, she prayed for Purcey's safe restoration to health. It was many days after that prayer before Purcey was restored to

health, but, thanks to the skillful nursing of her mother, she was brought back almost from death's door.

When she had sufficiently recovered, Elva told her all that had happened, for it was all like a dream to her, and implored her to give no outward sign of her feelings. She also gave her the message William had left for her. Purcey was greatly changed; she was no longer the bright, vivacious, and sprightly woman as before; she looked years older than she really was. Sickness and sorrow had ploughed wrinkles upon her brow, and her beautiful black hair had all come out. Her step was no longer light and elastic, while the lustre of her handsome black eyes was dimmed. She was at all times thoughtful. She kept close to her own room, so as to be ready to carry out the resolve she had long since made.

Upon her child she bestowed great care and attention. She would sit with him in her arms for hours, and tell him how he had been robbed of his father, and then burst out in a fit of tears exclaiming, "Oh, if they were to take mamma's darling from her, it would kill her!" How she would watch over him, constantly fearing the possibility of his being torn from her in the night! She thought of all the chances she would ever have of seeing her husband again. She wondered, should she flee to Canada or the free States, how he would ever find her. Then she was anxious as to whether he would ever return to her again. Oh, if she only dared approach her master,

and plead for his return! But such a thought was useless, hopeless! She could but follow his parting advice, and make her escape with her child.

Purcey's idea of the world, as we may know, was not extensive. It was, in fact, rather simple. The distance from North to South, from bondage to freedom, while apparently great, did not seem to her simple mind so far as to discourage her in making an attempt to reach the North, and thus, at least, obtain freedom for herself and child. She believed that William would be true to his word, and would, at the very first opportunity, make his escape. But what if Judge Coleman should sell him to the traders and he be taken to the far South? She knew that in this event his chances of escape would be very poor. When she would think of his being thus sold, a thrill of horror would pass over her, and her very heart would sink within her. If she could only have advised him to escape before he was taken out of the State of Virginia, if she had only made him leave when he told her he had been sold! But, perhaps, had he attempted to escape then he would only have been captured, and then certainly sold South. All these thoughts, and many others, passed through the woman's mind, until she became so depressed in spirits that life seemed hardly worth a struggle.

Elva, however, kept constantly advising her to keep up and trust in the good Lord, that He was sufficient for all things. Purcey, while she followed her mother's advice, was inclined often to think that

the Lord had forsaken the poor slaves. When she would think of their sufferings, of their trials and tribulations, she would often find her faith and confidence in the Lord wavering, but when her mother would cite to her instances of the Lord's goodness and mercy, doubt and fear would vanish, and new life, new hope, would spring up in her bosom. She felt for her child's sake that she must obtain freedom. Why should her child be a child of bondage? Why should he be reared and taught to acknowledge another man as his master? Why should he be brought up in ignorance and servitude? Perhaps it was the Anglo-Saxon blood in her veins that lent vigor to these thoughts, or it may have been the promptings of a mind which was only stunted in intelligence from its surroundings, but which, if given an opportunity for development, would have shone as brightly as human minds are wont to shine. She determined, however, to follow her husband's advice, which would be carrying out the resolve she had made while away with her mistress.

She set about making every preparation for her escape. She had amassed quite a little sum of money, which she had made by attention to visitors at the Maxwell house. Her mistress was also very careless at times with her pin-money, and, though it might not have been strictly honest, yet Purcey had often abstracted a quarter and a half-dollar which she added to her little store of wealth. Having but little use for money, her savings amounted to a considerable

sum. She had for a long time entertained the intention of purchasing her freedom previous to her marriage, and this is why she worked so assiduously to obtain the means to carry out her intention.

There were many strange features connected with slavery, and not the least strange or magnanimous of its features was the privilege given by many of the slaveholders to their servants to purchase their freedom. There were many instances where advantage was taken of this magnanimity. Men would purchase their own liberty, and then hiring themselves out, would purchase their wives and children by their earnings. It took years, often, to accomplish this end, but so great was the desire for freedom that time was reckoned only by the cost of liberty. There are many living to-day who, having purchased their own freedom, sold themselves into bondage again, and, with the money thus realized, purchased wife and child. Again and again, have men and women sold themselves to purchase the liberty of some loved one. What a traffic, what a business for man to engage in against man! But this was one of the blessings of slavery. The master who gave such a privilege to his slaves was an angel compared with those who denied it. There were many of this class of negroes in the South, and they were proscribed by master and slave. Notwithstanding this, they were thrifty and ambitious. In many sections, where the prejudice was not too strong, they accumulated comfortable fortunes and engaged in profitable business.

“Free niggers” is what they were termed, and great care was taken to keep as wide a gulf between them and the slave class as possible.

There was also another class of people peculiar to the South, who were far more despicable than a free negro or a slave. They were the poor unfortunate whites, unfortunate from the fact that they did not own any of their fellow-men. They were despised by the master, mistrusted by the slave, and treated with contempt by the free negro. Despised as they were by all classes, they still had many great advantages over the poor slave. They were white; hence, their backs were spared from the lash. They were men before the law, and no cruel master could sever their family ties. Yet they found life a burden, and their circumstances seldom changed. They were left to eke out a miserable existence by stealing, begging, or any other means they might employ. The feeling of hatred which existed between them and the slaves, was both universal and mutual. There was no work that they could not be employed to perform, especially such pleasing employment as negro-catching. They were the human blood hounds of the South, the *baccilli* of the country. They were to be found in the valleys and mountains, and tradition says that they were frequently known to subsist on herbs, barks, and wild roots. There was but one time in the year when they found honest and remunerative, though hard, labor. This was in the harvest season. Many slave-holders would employ them to assist in harvest-

ing, and no slave was worked harder or longer than were these "poor white trash," as the slaves called them. A slave might have a holy reverence for a man who owned a hundred of his brethren, but for a white man who owned none he had not the least regard.

Living in a rude little hut in the mountain, within a few miles of the Maxwell estate, was a family of three, consisting of father, mother, and daughter. They were living and true representatives of the poorer class of whites. William Silvers was a man who had seen some forty hard winters, was of long, lank stature, with thin hair hanging about his head like wax-ends. He was known throughout the neighborhood as "Skinny." His wife was also of tall stature, with a wiry frame, and worked in a harvest field with as much activity as a man. Their daughter was a maid of some seventeen years, who kept the family from starving because she made friends with the slaves about the neighboring plantations, and would receive from them many an apron of corn-meal and pieces of bacon. The Silvers, like nearly all of the poor whites, were very ignorant. Reading and writing were lost arts to them, and the school-house and church were places they never frequented. Sallie Silvers and Purcey had long been friends. This was in itself something very unusual, but when it is considered that Purcey represented one of the more intelligent class of slaves, the ordinary prejudice that existed between the poor whites and the slaves did not enter into her disposition.

Sallie had often been kindly treated by Purcey, and the girl's devotion to her was really remarkable. She had often declared that she longed for the time to prove her friendship for Purcey. During Purcey's illness she frequently called at the house to inquire about her, and evinced much solicitude about her recovery. When Purcey became convalescent, she was often at her bedside, and would sit for hours conversing and sympathizing with her. Sallie Silvers, though seventeen years of age, white and free, could not, as we have said, read or write; and as she sat by Purcey's bedside one day, Purcey said to her:

"Sallie, can you read?"

"No," answered Sallie, "wish I could."

"Why don't you learn?"

"Whose gwine to learn me? Ma and pa can't."

"Why," said Purcey, "I will teach you what little I know, then you can teach yourself; but you mustn't tell anybody."

"No, indeed!" said Sallie, "I wish I could read, den I might be a lady some day."

Then Purcey told her what she had seen while traveling with her mistress; how, in big cities, she could get along so nicely, because she was white, and promised, that if she would hurry and learn to read and write, she would tell her how to become a lady. Purcey then gave her some money, and told her to go to the village and purchase a book. Sallie followed her instructions, and, until Purcey was perfectly well, she and Sallie Silvers were close com-

panions, and no one except Elva and themselves knew why they were so often closeted. Purcey's object in showing so much anxiety about Sallie's acquirement of knowledge was known only to herself.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE FUGITIVES.

When Joe Berry and his companions were attacked near the village of ——, they all separated and ran in different directions. The direction which they were to go was mutually understood, and, although it was several days before they got together again, they at last met near C——, in Pennsylvania, on the banks of the Susquehanna river. Our heroes had all met with various adventures upon the road, but every man had successfully eluded his pursuers, notwithstanding the many difficulties they had to encounter. Even Ben Myers, with his large feet and dilapidated shoes, made his escape and joined his friends. The adventures of some of them are worth relating. Joe, after making his escape from the rider of the ringbone horse, went directly to the mountain; he traveled during the greater portion of the day, and well into the night. Fearing that he might get lost in the mountain, he attempted, in the night, to find a road, and, if possible, get some one to direct him to the town of H——. He came to what he supposed was a path, and which he thought would lead him out of the mountain. After following it for some distance, he felt his feet gradually sinking under him, and began to struggle and clutch violently at the surrounding shrubbery and tufts of

grass, but these afforded him no support, and he kept sinking until his body sank partly below the earth. He then clutched at the soft earth about him, which only crumbled in his hands. Down, down he went, until several feet below the surface, when the earth seemed to cave in and wedge his body in so tight that only his arms were free, which he had been thoughtful enough to keep above his head. Vainly did he struggle to extricate himself. He clutched, he grabbed, he struggled until he became perfectly exhausted. During the night, a terrific rain-storm set in, and the water rushed in upon him until he thought he was doomed to a living grave. For two days and nights did Joseph Berry remain almost entombed in that ditch. He had given up all hope of ever extricating himself, and had resigned himself to suffer a slow, painful death.

The hours seemed like days, and the days months. He had struggled until his strength had become exhausted several times, but, being a resolute as well as a powerful man, on the third night of his imprisonment, after regaining strength, he made an effort to free his feet. By terrific straining, he succeeded. Pressing his elbows against the side of the ditch, he raised his body; the mud and water flowed under his feet, giving him a slight but treacherous foot-hold. He worked his body up this way until his head was above the surface, and, at last, by summoning all of his remaining strength, he threw himself upon the earth. There he lay for several hours, being too

much weakened to move. As soon as he became sufficiently strong to move about, he crawled to a neighboring farm-house' where, fortunately, the people were friendly. They gave him every attention, and in a few days he joined his companions, bearing the evidences of his adventure.

The Widow Dean's Jim also had a very remarkable adventure. After Jim left the widow's bed and board so unceremoniously, without even giving his dear old mistress an affectionate farewell, that kind old lady set a heavy reward upon his head. So desirous was she for his return, that the services of a man was engaged, who never was known to start out for a runaway slave without capturing him. This important personage was well known among the slaves, and as his business required a knowledge of the slaves, there were few whom he did not know. Jim, being rather a conspicuous figure, owing to his natty way of dress and the great liberty he had always enjoyed, was as well known to Si Blackson as an intimate friend, for often had Si, the "nigger-catcher," as he was called, remarked, when seeing Jim pass, "That nigger has as much privilege as a white man."

The Widow Dean sent for this gentleman, supplied him with all the necessary funds, and directed him to follow Jim to the end of the earth, if necessary, to capture him; but in the event of his capture, he was to be returned unharmed, or no reward would be forthcoming. Si Blackson set out

upon his mission, advertising in every town and village, giving a thorough description of the man of whom he was in search. Several times he was close upon Jim's track, but did not succeed in capturing him. Jim became separated from the rest of the party when they were attacked, and made as directly for the point at which they had agreed to meet as he could. He went very cautiously, however, avoiding all towns or main roads. He struck the course of the Susquehanna river, and coming in sight of a small town, thought he would risk getting something to eat. Jim had changed his rich broadcloth for Virginia home-spun; his hair was clipped close; his usual swinging gait was changed to a steady, firm tread, making it difficult to recognize him in his disguise. He walked up to the only inn in the town and asked for something to eat. The landlord of the place said to him:

"Where are you bound for, young man?"

This question put Jim to thinking, so in order to avoid any suspicion, he said:

"I am on the hunt for work, sir."

"Where are you from?"

"York, sir," was the prompt reply.

"Well, I want a stable-boy, and I think you will suit me. What's your name?"

"Dick Davis, sir," replied Jim.

"All right, Dick, go into the kitchen and get something to eat, and then come out to the stable. I shall show you what to do."

Jim had no intention, at first, of stopping at this place to work; but he had been caught so neatly that he concluded to work a few days, then quietly slip away and proceed on his journey, intending, in the meantime, to secure whatever information he could relative to the country he had to travel through. The idea of changing his name occurred to him as soon as the question was put to him by the landlord, for Jim intuitively realized that there was more safety in traveling under an assumed name than under his real name. He knew, also, that he would be advertised, and in the advertisement, a description of him as well as his name would appear.

The fugitives had been informed that they would strike the Underground Railroad in Pennsylvania, and it was understood that a section of it was to be found in the town of H——. This is why they all made for this point, or, it is probable, they might never have met again.

This wonderful institution, which proved the safe conductor of many a child of bondage to freedom, must ever remain dear to the hearts of many a one of the present generation. The prayers that have been sent up to Heaven by the delivered, for the protection and blessing of the noble-hearted men and women who directed it, have been answered on more than one occasion. Many of these noble souls have long since been gathered home to their reward, but, through the intelligence of one of them, a representative of our race, the record of their glorious

work has been preserved, and it will be perused in future years with increased interest.

Dick Davis, or the Widow Dean's Jim, soon became a favorite about the tavern, and picked up many an odd penny by his attention to the quadrupeds and the boots of travelers. He had about made up his mind to leave his new employer, when one morning, shortly after this decision, a stranger rode up to the tavern all bespattered with mud, and his horse covered with foam. He dismounted, threw the bridle rein to Dick, and directed him to take his horse to the stable, feed him, and rub him down well, tossing Dick, at the same time, a silver quarter. Dick walked off to the stable leading the horse, and his heart worked its way up into his very mouth, for he recognized in this stranger no less a person than Mr. Si Blackson. There is a common saying among white people that they cannot tell one negro from another. Never place any confidence in this statement, for when you take a real Southerner, he may have a hundred negroes upon his plantation, yet he will pick any one of them out from among a million every time.

Human nature is human nature, whether it be adorned in white or black.

There are numerous things which men do instinctively, and often by so doing either attract attention unintentionally to or from themselves. It may have been from instinct, or it may have been prompted by a suspicion of mutual recognition that Si Blackson, upon entering the tavern door, turned around, either

to look after his horse, or at the retreating figure of Dick. Dick turned his head at the same time, and their eyes met. If there was any recognition on the part of Si Blackson, he showed no evidence of it, but walked up to the bar of the tavern, gulped down the contents of a glass filled with brandy, and ordered his breakfast. It was one of those beautiful spring mornings, the sun was stealing out from the light, overhanging clouds which appeared to shake themselves out of their folds, after being pinned back to permit the heavier clouds, which had rolled away or vanished into mist, to pass on. Mr. Blackson seated himself upon a bench, and pulled out a varied assortment of colored cards, calculated to attract the eye. Having selected a bright-colored one, he walked out to the stable. There he found Dick grooming his horse. Jim, *alias* Dick, had been haunted by many misgivings from the moment he saw Si Blackson ride up to the tavern door; he knew that Blackson was in search of him, and he also knew it would be inexpedient to try and avoid him. He knew, furthermore, that Si Blackson was only one man, and he had determined that no one man on earth should ever capture him and return him to slavery alive.

He had, by some means, secured a pistol, which he kept well primed and always upon his person. When Blackson entered the stable, Dick continued grooming the horse, apparently not noticing him, but watching him closely out of the corner of his eye.

Blackson also watched him some time in silence, when he said :

“Boy, have you got a box and hammer?”

“Yes, sir,” replied Dick, and he procured those articles for Blackson. That worthy directed him to carry them out into the road, and while Dick held the box, he nailed up against a high fence the following advertisement :

RUNAWAY!—A mulatto boy, age eighteen, about five feet six inches in height, good features, hair rather long and black, speaks very quick, dressed in a full black suit of clothes, and very dandy in appearance. Twelve hundred dollars will be paid for his return to Mrs. W. Dean, P—— B—— county, Virginia. Five hundred dollars for any information leading to his capture. N. B.—Said runaway answers to the name of *Jim*. *No harm must be done him.*

Fifteen hundred dollars was the real reward offered by the Widow Dean, but Mr. Blackson withheld three hundred for himself. This is the card which was tacked up, and James Seabury, *alias* Dick Davis, stood there and innocently held the box for Blackson to advertise a price upon his head. Dick did not know what the card read, but he suspected what it was, and while Blackson was at breakfast, Dick got one of the kitchen maids to read it for him. He now found himself in a predicament. Flight was next to impossible, for that would only invite immediate pursuit and certain capture. There was no one to

whom he could appeal for advice, as he feared to trust anybody about the tavern, notwithstanding they had been so kind to him. He finally determined to watch Mr. Blackson closely, and, immediately upon that gentleman's departure, to take his own to a more healthful retreat.

Mr. Blackson, having finished his breakfast, paid his bill, then ordered his horse. After a few hurried words with the landlord, he proceeded on his journey.

Dick's mind was greatly relieved when he saw him depart. But what had he said to the landlord? Was he the subject of their conversation? He had no means of ascertaining this, but in order not to attract attention, he kept at his work apparently as disinterested in the arrival and departure of the astute Mr. Blackson, as he had been in the hundreds of other travelers who frequented the tavern. The advertisement attracted a great deal of attention, and was the subject of much comment by the loiterers about the tavern. It was not an unusual thing, however, in that locality, or perhaps he might have been apprehended at once.

Nearly all runaways were published in this or some other way, and their pursuers would often carry them into the courts of a State, if necessary to prove their property. In all the vast territory of this great country, the poor, hunted, fugitive slave had no protection. "Prove your property and take it" was the decree of the Government, and he who aided or abetted the escape of his fellow-man from bondage to

freedom was a criminal before the law. No part of this great country was held sacred from the tread of the negro-hunter, and none of the statutes of its law threw around the fugitive a single mantle of protection. The deepest-dyed villain, committing a crime in one State, could flee to another, necessitating the carrying out of important forms of law before his return. But these creatures, guilty of no greater crime than trying to obtain that for which hundreds of noble men have suffered death, were hunted like beasts of the forest, and, when found, returned to abject servitude. What a travesty on justice! There is a land, however, which proved an asylum for them, and no man who sought to deprive another of his liberty dared set foot upon its soil for that purpose. It was to this asylum that thousands fled, and found refuge and protection.

Dick worked in a state of agony and suspense all day. Often was he tempted to tear down that placard, but dared not. He concluded that, under the cover of night, and before the sun rose the next day, he must put as many miles as possible between him and that place; and when the shadows of night closed in upon that little wayside inn, when the inmates were wrapped in sweet slumber, this being, not yet a man by the law of the land, stole softly from the place where he had sought refuge for several days.

He went directly to the river. Finding a boat moored there, he rowed himself across and set the boat adrift, never stopping for rest or refreshment

until he reached the town of H——. Here, he learned that his companions had taken the Underground Railroad for Canada, only a couple of days before. In a day or two, Si Blackson returned to the tavern where he had left Dick. He was now upon his return home, having thoroughly placarded the country with descriptions and rewards for the apprehension of the runaway. Upon reaching the tavern, he was struck by the absence of the urbane stable-boy, and made inquiries as to his whereabouts. When informed that Dick had rather unceremoniously taken his leave, Mr. Blackson began to have suspicions, and finally the conviction dawned upon him like the effulgence of a noon-day sun, that the very man who had held the box for him to stand upon, two days before, was the identical James Seabury, for whom he was in quest. Mr. Blackson made the air blue with his curses; he raved and tore about the place like a madman, and as no one could give him any information as to what direction Dick had taken, he turned his horse's head in the same direction whence he had just come, going in precisely a contrary direction to that which Dick had taken.

The Widow Dean never recovered her lost property, but Mr. Blackson charged her well for his useless advertising and his exhaustive but fruitless hunt for the fugitive.

Joe Berry, his brother, Henry, and the rest of the party, upon coming within a few miles of the town of H——, were met in the mountain by a con-

ductor of the Underground Railroad, who conducted them, under cover of night, to the residence of a friend in the town. Although they were not entirely out of danger, the air seemed lighter, the heavens looked brighter, their step was more elastic, and their spirits more buoyant. They were quartered in the house of this friend until the train was made up, when they were dispatched through to Canada, by the way of E——, Pennsylvania, across the lake into freedom. When the Canadian shore heaved in sight, this band of fugitives bowed their heads in prayer. And such a prayer as went up from those untutored hearts! They stepped upon the shores of Canada, happy that they were at last free. Free! Ah, what a word! They had never realized its meaning before. Free to roam all over those shores, free to go, free to come, free from the cruel sting of the lash, free from the hot scorching sun of the corn-field and the tobacco plantation, free from massa, free from missa! No wonder they sang with soul-inspired strains:

Sing praises to Jehovah we are free,

Safe on the shores of Canada.

Let us unite in heart and hand,

And shout for joy in the freedmen's land.

CHAPTER XIV.

PUPIL AND TEACHER.

The anxiety on the part of Sallie Silvers to learn to read and write, as the necessary accomplishments to become a lady, was so very great that she soon mastered these obstacles in her way. She improved the little opportunity she had, and, assisted by the little knowledge of Purcey, became, in a short time, quite conversant with general topics from whatever papers she could secure. There being no restrictions against her purchasing books and papers, she procured many of these useful articles with the money supplied her by Purcey. Together they learned rapidly, and Purcey took every advantage of the pre-arranged plans agreed upon between her and her mother. All the rich and costly dresses given her by her mistress were cut and fitted to Sallie. Purcey's inability to attend her mistress had been stretched to the fullest limit, and both she and her mother feared that, unless she soon took her departure, something might intervene to prevent it. Her mother contributed quite a little sum of money to that which Purcey had, and she was now ready to start.

All arrangements being completed, she and her mother took Sallie into their confidence. The scheme proposed for Purcey's contemplated escape was care-

fully and skillfully arranged by Elva. They had the utmost confidence in Sallie, whose desire to travel and become a lady was so great that she hesitated not a moment to enter into the suggestions presented to her by Purcey. Her mountain home, with its poverty and hardships, grew inferior and distasteful to her, as rare pictures of a life of ease and comfort were displayed to her.

She had now learned something of the world, and urged by that ambition so prevalent in youth, she yearned for an opportunity to better her condition in life. She never realized what slavery was, as she had seen it only from a point where its terrors had not impressed her with any objection to the evil, and never until Purcey related to her her cruel separation from her husband did she realize its horrors. She became, then, an earnest sympathizer with the people who were made to suffer in bondage, as well as a fit subject to aid in carrying out the projected plans of Purcey and her mother. Sallie was now informed that she was to travel as the mistress of Purcey, and under this guise was to go North into a free country. She must go and inform her parents that she had found employment which would keep her from home for some time. This would prevent them from making any inquiries as to her whereabouts, or suspecting her connection with Purcey's escape.

So enthusiastic was Sallie when she thought of the elegant dresses she was to wear, and how, for the first time in her life, she was to assume the *rôle* of a

wealthy lady, she fairly danced for joy, and grew impatient for the hour to start.

Much difficulty was experienced in packing their things, as the greatest caution had to be used. Then some one must be found to conduct them safely to the river. This was delegated to Elva, who succeeded in securing Uncle Joshua, one of Mr. Biggers' seductive and most trusty servants. Uncle Josh had, for a long time, been trying to pay his "'dresses," as he called it, to Elva. The shining orb of all his hopes was Sister Elva; he thought of her by day and dreamed of her by night. She was the one being needful to his happiness, and when favored by her company, though on the shady side of sixty, he assumed the activity of one in the prime of life. For Elva, he would have taken nine and thirty on his bare back—he had taken it more than once for things far less valuable. For her, he would have risked stealing one of his master's young shoats; she was the "charm of his heart" and the "apple of his eye," and when Elva approached him on the question of appropriating a horse and wagon of his master's to convey a friend of hers to the river, Uncle Josh's black face broke up into a broad grin, as he said:

"Sartinly, Sister Elva; I'd go anywhar for you. I'd tote dem on my back to 'blige you."

"Do you think you could git back in time and not be caught? 'cause I wouldn't want you to git in any trouble," and Elva gave him one of her sweetest smiles.

Uncle Josh was lifted to the seventh heaven of hope when he saw that smile. He replied, with an air of confidence and bravado: "'Scoveded, chile? trouble? Don't you weep for me, for by de help of de good Lord, I'll be back and hab dat critter in de field 'fore Mars Biggers turn ober for de secon' nap."

This having been satisfactorily arranged, Uncle Josh arrived on time with the wagon. The things were stowed away, and Purcey bade farewell to her mother, and with her child and Sallie Silvers, dressed in one of Mrs. Maxwell's fine silks, set her face toward freedom. There was not a soul upon the Maxwell place, excepting Elva, who knew of Purcey's flight, and the parting between mother and daughter was very affecting. They remained for a moment embraced in each other's arms, while tears flowed down from their eyes, and prayers poured forth from their hearts. The parting was, indeed, a sad one, as it was the last embrace the mother ever received from the daughter, or the daughter from the mother.

The one was leaving her who had given her birth, to find liberty; while the other consigned herself to hopeless servitude to protect the life and make secure the flight of her child. Elva had all of that love and affection which abounds in the heart of a loving mother, but over this particular child, she displayed greater solicitude than for Emiline or Elo. If there be any such thing as being fated, such was the case,

Elva thought, of these two. They were, in common with many other slaves, satisfied with their lot. Nor did they ever express a desire for liberty, or display any disposition to be other than contented under every and all circumstances. But how often had her heart been caused to bleed for Purcey when she looked upon her beauty, her natural endowments, her tastes, though uncultivated, yet so refined! She asked herself the question, 'why should this, her child, apparently endowed with all the higher attributes of womanhood—why should she remain a slave? as fair as her mistress, as beautiful as any woman could be, why should she not be free?' Then she knew that as long as Purcey was held in bondage, she would be a victim to the lust of those who might be disposed to possess themselves of her. Like all slaves, in her master's eye, a price was upon her head, and who could tell the day, the hour, when she might be transferred from Jonathan Maxwell to a master with less regard for virtue?

At last they parted, and when Uncle Josh drove away, Elva entered the house a changed woman. She determined that, at the risk of her own life, Jonathan Maxwell should never pursue her child. Life had no more charms for her; she felt that she had nothing more to live for, but to make secure the escape to freedom of her child. She was, doubtless, actuated in this belief by a sense that God had spared her to be a medium which must stand between Purcey's escape and the possibility of her recapture. She would not hesi-

tate now to dye her hands in her master's blood, if needs be, to save her child. When she entered the house, she fell upon her knees and asked for guidance, for strength, for intelligence, that she might be able to act. When she arose, Elva Berry was a changed woman. Her beautiful black eyes glowed with a new, but dangerous, light; her lips were bloodless, her teeth were tightly clenched, while her hands worked convulsively. She felt as though she possessed the strength of a lion, and she was now ready to throw herself between the fleeing daughter and any power that dared obstruct her in her flight.

Uncle Josh plied the whip to his master's horse, and, without a single stop during that long ride, succeeded in landing the whole party safely at the ferry. They had taken the precaution to unload their baggage and send Uncle Josh off before they aroused the ferryman. That worthy came forth rubbing his eyes, and, after being induced by a liberal reward, took them safely across the river to a point where tickets were purchased by Sallie. These tickets sufficed to carry them some distance, but they left the road many miles from the place intended, and obtained tickets in an entirely different direction.

When Uncle Josh turned his master's horse toward home, he chuckled to himself as he felt the four silver half-dollars in his pocket, which Purcey had given him. The horse was pretty tired, and he allowed him to jog quietly along, while he gave himself up to thoughts about Sister Elva and the silver

half-dollars. He had been thus ruminating for some time, when his horse came to a full stop. Uncle Josh was of a very superstitious nature, like the most of slaves; he had all kinds of beliefs. He was looked upon as possessing certain mysterious powers himself. He had voodooed, or conjured, it was said, quite a number of enemies, having been known to boil nails in a pot over a slow fire while he went through a peculiar incantation, his victim, in the meantime, writhing in pain and crawling upon all fours. He was never found without a rabbit's foot in his pocket, or a piece of opossum skin tied around his left wrist. In addition to this, he possessed a bag of lizard dust. He was held in awe and reverence by all the negroes who knew him. For to incur Uncle Josh's displeasure was to meet some day with some terrible misfortune.

Like many others of his race, who laid claim to the possession of these mysterious powers, he was very cunning. It was not the deep, designing cunning, or craftiness, of a more intelligent mind, but that low cunning born of instinct, such as a fox is noted for, or such as is unaccompanied by perfect reason. He succeeded, however, in keeping those around him in perfect fear of his hidden powers, while at the same time he did not possess enough to keep his back from being well scarred by Mr. Biggers' overseer.

He was not unlike all others of his class in league with unseen powers, or the imps of darkness. They all failed to practice any of their arts upon their masters, and this is why so many doubt the efficacy of

their work. It may be that a white man was not susceptible to their charms, or it may be they feared to practice upon that race. Nevertheless, it is a fact that no voodoo doctor, conjurer, or enchanter was ever known to make his master pine away, imitate a quadruped, or endure any of the other various sufferings which these sons of the hidden arts were said to cause.

When Uncle Josh's horse stopped, he backed in the shafts, staggered, and fell, snapping one in twain. Uncle Josh sprang to the ground with the agility of a youth; he looked up and down the road, for he believed something had appeared before the horse, causing him to stumble and fall. Uncle Josh always claimed that if a horse stopped still in the road, pricked up his ears, and refused to go, all one had to do was to look between his ears, and he could see the cause of the horse's fright. The horse was now in such a position that he could not well see between his ears, for the animal was lying upon the ground quite still, and his body beginning to assume the proportions of a bloated herring. The old man did all in his power to coax the horse upon his feet; he pleaded to him, he raised his head, he unfastened the harness and pushed the wagon away from his heels.

Walking around his body, he set up one of his peculiar incantations, but all to no avail. He took from his pocket a bag made of rabbit skin, which contained some kind of pulverized roots. The contents he scattered around—this being to keep away anything evil-

disposed. After spending much time in a useless attempt to get his horse upon his feet, the old man looked up at the heavens, and discovered the gray dawn of morning stealing from over the eastern hills. He knew well what his back would have to take should he be missed by the overseer, and to be caught with his master's horse and wagon would be worse yet. Then they might, perhaps, force him to tell what he was doing out all night with the horse and wagon. This he determined never to reveal, let come what would.

When Uncle Josh saw morning approaching so closely, his efforts to get the horse upon his feet became more and more frantic and ludicrous. He tugged at his tail, he raised his head and tried to get that part of the horse's anatomy upon his back, murmuring to himself, "You'se got to go home before daylight, if I has to tote you." Looking up the road, he saw a man approaching him, who was just about to turn off of the main road and enter a lane. Uncle Josh discovered that he was a slave just returning from a night's revel. He hailed the man:

"See har, come har, honey, and help me git dis hoss on my back; he's got to go home, for it's dead nigger or dead hoss, anyways."

The man came forward, and when he looked at the ludicrous situation, he laughed loudly and said:

"What's de matter, Uncle?"

"Lors, honey, I'se got to git dis hoss home 'fore

daylight, and he's done gone laid down on me and won't move."

The man happened to have some knowledge of horse-flesh, and after a careful examination, said :

"You've drove him hard, Uncle, but guess we can bring him about."

He went to work, and in a short time had the animal upon his feet. The horse was hitched to the wagon, and Uncle Josh, profuse with thanks, mounted his seat and soon reached home. He had just time to turn the horse into the field, when the overseer's horn blew for all hands to turn out. Mr. Biggers was minus, from this escapade, the use of one of his best horses, for the one Uncle Josh drove so hard that night was hopelessly foundered, and the slaves accounted for it by declaring that the witches had ridden the animal to death.

The superstition, which was so prevalent among the slaves, was not confined to them alone, for it affected the masters as well. There was not a Southern slaveholder, cruel to his slaves, who was not as abject a prey to superstitious fears as the most ignorant of his negroes. Our knowledge of the character of Abraham Biggers would place him among this class. When he heard of one of his best horses being hopelessly foundered over night, instead of seeking the true cause, sought solace in brandy and water, and attributed his loss to unknown ill luck.

Purcey and Sallie were speeding along, placing as great a distance between them and the old home

as the great iron monster could make with each revolution of the great driving-wheels. The two women did not occupy the same car, for that was not custom. The alleged mistress and her servant were separated during the entire distance they traveled on the railroad. Each was left alone to meditate and allow her thoughts to indulge in whatever caprice she saw fit. The thoughts of Purcey were freighted with fear; although there was much noise in the car, made by a number of rough, coarse men, who made the air dense with smoke from their pipes and cigars and almost blue with their curses, yet she seemingly saw not nor heard a thing that was said or done. She was the object of many insulting and brutal remarks, for it was in the men's car she rode. Many comments were passed upon her appearance and value.

The girl had employed every art she knew to make herself look simple and plain, but her efforts in this direction seemed to have made her, on the contrary, all the more beautiful and attractive. She had concealed her luxurious black hair, now grown again since her recovery, under a neat little cap, which nicely displayed the beautiful outlines of her face. Her child, asleep upon her lap, caused her much anxiety; she knew that a heavy reward would be offered by her master for her capture, and she feared that she would be detected through the child. Its hair was long and black like the mother's. It had been Purcey's delight and pride to do it up in curls, which hung gracefully about its shapely head. As she sat

there and gazed upon the sleeping infant, she concluded that those curls must be cut off. Purcey was of very fair complexion, and the child was but a shade or two darker than the mother. How she wished for the power to change its complexion as easily as she could cut off those locks, knowing as she did how accurate would be the description given by her master! Having decided to cut off the child's hair, she produced from her pocket a pair of shears and began the work of despoliation. As she took up each one of those shining black curls and severed it with the sharp shears, it seemed that each clip sent a thrill of pain to her heart. She had to perform the work quietly, so as not to attract the attention of those around her, and when she had finished she gathered the ringlets in her hand and pressed them to her lips. Quietly raising the car window, she threw them out, keeping but a single curl which she pressed to her bosom, then to her lips, and then concealed it in her pocket-book.

The money with which Purcey had supplied herself was worn in a canvas belt, placed about her waist. Being in coin, it was a terrible weight for her to carry. It must have tired her greatly, yet she heeded not the excessive physical strain upon her; she thought only of the time which seemed to lengthen itself out. How slow the cars seemed to travel! How she longed and wished for the hour when she should place her foot upon free soil! She could not sleep, she could not eat, yet she felt strong. She would close her eyes

and count the seconds; they seemed to her like minutes. Her hand was kept upon her sleeping child, as though she feared that some of the coarse, brutal men who occupied the car would wrest it from her.

While sitting with her hand clasping the little hands of her child, with her eyes closed, and her mind wandering back to her mother and her husband, who had been so ruthlessly taken from her, she felt a rough hand grasp her shoulder. In a second she was upon her feet, her hand sought her pocket, and she stared, without a quiver of the lip or the twinkle of an eye, into the face of the man who had so roughly accosted her.

The man who stood before her was one of that type of Southern gentlemen, from whose appearance it was easy to detect that he was a "nigger trader." He looked at Purcey with his bleared eyes, and said:

"Gal, where you travelin' to?"

"I am traveling with my mistress," said Purcey.

"That ain't what I asked you. Whar you going?"

Purcey, divining the man's object in asking the question, as well as discovering that he had no suspicion about her, replied: "I don't know where my mistress is going, as she never tells me her business."

"Well, whar you from?"

"Richmond," said Purcey.

"Air you and your mistress travelin' alone?"

"We are."

"How would you like me for a master?" And, as

he said this, he puffed a volume of tobacco smoke from his corn-cob pipe full in her face.

"I don't know," said the girl, turning her head to avoid the smoke.

"Wal, I think I'll see your mistress; by G—d, I would like to own a gal like you; I'll give a thousand down."

As he said this, the child, which had been lying upon the seat, awoke, and began to cry. Purcey turned toward it and sat it up, giving it a large glass ball to play with.

"Wal," said the trader, "that's a likely-looking brat. So you and your mistress are travelin', and she 'lows you to take that brat along? D—m good mistress. I'll go and see if I can strike a bargain with her."

When he had turned his back, Purcey smiled, and settled down into her seat. The trader retired to one end of the car, where a group of his companions had a board placed upon their knees, and were deeply engaged in a game of draw-poker.

"Say, Jamison," said the trader, as he approached the party, "I am going to buy that wench over thar with the brat."

"Well, go buy her, then," said Mr. Jamison. "Don't bother me about it; she ain't mine."

"Wal," said Mr. Sledger, "I know she ain't, but I want you to drive the bargain for me."

"Who does she belong to? Two cards!" said Mr.

Jamison, as he threw a five dollar gold piece on the board, and laid down two cards.

“To a young woman in the other car. I can’t talk to women, and I want you to go and talk the business.”

Mr. Jamison was, in appearance, as well as in speech, far more genteel than Mr. Sledger. Jamison was a man of gentlemanly deportment, but fond of sport; and he gained a rather precarious existence as a pettifog lawyer. His garments were of the shabby-genteel order, and his silk tile, though of rather an ancient pattern, was brushed to a glossiness that told of much labor having been spent upon it. He was smooth of speech, and an instrument in the hands of men of unsavory character in their dealings with the business world. In fact, he earned a living, in finding loop-holes in the law for the escape of criminals, and fixing doubtful papers to catch and hold runaway slaves. He appeared not to like the interruption of his sport. Being in luck, he raked in the contents of the pot on a *king full*, and jumped up from the game several dollars ahead, remarking that he must attend to some business for his friend.

Mr. Sledger was very unlike the rather slick-looking Jamison, being a heavily built man, with coarse, vulgar features. A frowsy beard of terra cotta hue, made so by frequent expectorations of tobacco juice, covered his chin. His shirt front was far from being immaculate, having upon it the traces of tobacco juice and evidence of long wear. His large, unshapely head

was adorned with a wide-brimmed slouch hat, under which was a matted mass of shaggy hair. To say the least, he was rather repulsive, and was, as he admitted, not calculated to approach any woman, especially a Southern lady, on a subject of purchasing a likely-looking slave woman. Jamison was given to understand that he was to seek the mistress of Purcey, and ascertain whether she was for sale. In case she was not, he was to offer some inducement to effect a purchase.

"How am I to find the mistress?" said Jamison.

"Go ask the gal which car she's in."

Mr. Jamison pulled himself together, looked down at his boots, the toes of which were turned up much like the little pug nose that adorned his weazen little face. He approached Purcey unnoticed by her, as she was intently gazing out of the window. Having reached the seat where the girl was, Mr. Jamison removed from his narrow, little mouth the remnants of a cigar, which he had held between his teeth since the commencement of that little game of poker. Lifting his hat with mock civility, he said:

"Ah, young woman, in which car would I likely find your mistress?"

Purcey, turning her head in the direction of the speaker, said: "In the other car, sir," without indicating which of the other cars she meant.

"Ah, ah, the other car! First car rear or second?"

"I don't know, sir," she quietly replied.

“Don’t know? Ah, well, how should I be likely to know her?”

“By making her acquaintance through an introduction, sir.”

Mr. Jamison stepped back as though he had been struck. He had never heard such clever language used by a slave. He looked at the girl, who had again turned her face toward the window, with a puzzled air, and remarked, as he shuffled off: “Clever, ah, very clever. I will seek an introduction through some one else, if I can—myself, if I cannot.”

Mr. Jamison determined to trust to his luck and his astute powers in discovering the mistress, if she was on the train. Entering the ladies’ car, he sauntered through it, having deposited the unlighted stump of his cigar in his coat pocket. When he got nearly to the end of the car, he observed a lady sitting alone rather richly attired, and reclining at ease, using a very heavy shawl as a pillow. In her lap lay a newspaper and a novel. She was young, not at all unprepossessing, and apparently asleep, or in a deep study.

Jamison scrutinized her as closely as he could in walking by. He walked to the end of the car, retraced his steps, and, as he reached the seat, raised his hat very high, bowed very low, and said: “Ah, ah, miss, do the negro woman and child in the other car belong to you?”

“They do;” and Sallie Silvers, for it was she,

grew somewhat excited as she asked eagerly: "Why, sir, has anything happened them?"

"Ah! ah! no. They are all right. Only I have been much attracted by them, and if they are for sale, I should like to purchase them. I am a planter, and assure you she would be well cared for and be in good hands."

Sallie, to be sure, did not have a very extensive knowledge of men; her little education and experience had not advanced her quite that far, but she had that natural cleverness of a woman which led her to the conclusion that Mr. Jamison was rather a poor specimen of a Southern planter.

Having reached this conclusion, she thought that she had better give him to understand at once that he could not make a purchase. Assuming all the dignity she could, she said:

"The woman and child are not for sale, sir, and I do not see what right you have to approach me upon any such subject."

Mr. Jamison was a very cunning man, or we might say, villain. This reply, under any other circumstances, would never have daunted him; but he had approached a lone lady, a complete stranger to him, in a railway car, and had asked an impertinent question. Should he insist upon further conversation, he feared she might appeal to some gentleman for protection, or, perhaps, she might have friends in the car who would not hesitate to handle him roughly. He bowed politely, stepping back as he said:

“Ah! beg pardon. No offense meant, none whatever, I assure you.”

He, thereupon, quickly left the car. Joining Mr. Sledger in the smoking-car, he informed that gentleman that it was no use, for money would not buy the woman. Mr. Sledger was much incensed, and replied :

“Then by G—— I will steal her.”

“What!” said Jamison, springing up as though he had sat upon the business end of a tack. “Steal her! What in the devil will you do with the brat?”

“Yes, steal her and the brat, too. No trouble about the young one.”

This novel idea had struck Mr. Sledger the moment he learned that the girl could not be bought. He intended to learn their destination, follow them, and, at the first opportunity, kidnap the girl and carry her off. Circumstances alter cases sometimes, and Mr. Sledger was brought to a full realization of this fact in a manner he had not anticipated.

Through tickets had been purchased by Sallie for a certain point under Purcey's instructions, but after having traveled a considerable distance from home, Purcey concluded that, in order to elude her pursuers, they had better get off at some small station, and cross the country to some other point. It was now growing dark, and, under the cover of darkness, they could leave the train at the next station without attracting attention.

Arriving at this conclusion, she took her child, en-

tered the car where Sallie was, and communicated her plan, which was, of course, agreed to by Sallie. As Purcey left the seat which she had occupied in the smoking-car, Mr. Sledger went in search of the conductor to ascertain the destination of the lady who had the negro nurse and child. The conductor informed him that they had through tickets for one of the large Northern cities, and they would have to change cars at B—— to take another road. Sledger thought this his chance; he would wait until they reached B——, then he would try his hand at kidnapping the girl.

Darkness had now enveloped within its folds the surrounding country. The night was not only dark, but dismal. The clang of the bell of the locomotive, and the shrill whistle which denotes the approach to a station, sounded upon the night air. The speed of the train was slackened as the trainman shouted the name of a small station. Purcey and Sallie gathered up their packages, and quietly, almost unnoticed, stole from the train. They did not alight upon the side on which was the building used as a station, but upon the opposite side. The wind now began to howl frightfully, while rain poured down in torrents. The women and child stood closely huddled together. Shortly, the bell of the locomotive rang again, the whistle tooted, the attendant shouted "All aboard!" and the train slowly pulled away, leaving them standing in front of the lonely little building. A dilapidated stage-coach could be dimly discerned through

the darkness from the light of a lantern that hung inside. They approached the coach just as the driver mounted his seat and drew up the lines, preparatory to starting for the little village located some five miles distant.

A solitary passenger occupied the coach. When the driver discovered the two women and the child approaching him, he was somewhat surprised, as he did not see them alight from the train. Dropping the lines, he got down from his seat and opened the door for them. Sallie informed him that they desired to go to the village, and would thank him to take them to a stopping-place less public than the village inn. They entered the coach; the driver mounted his seat, cracked his whip, and started off.

Their entrance disturbed the solitude of the only occupant, a little old man with a very florid, but smooth, face. A rim of silver-gray hair could be discerned, although his hat was pulled over his eyes. The old-fashioned jack-lantern which hung in the center of the stage bumped from side to side with every lurch the vehicle made, as it rolled slowly over the rather rough road. The occupant of the coach had evidently intended to make himself as comfortable as the circumstances would permit, thinking, perhaps, that he would be the only passenger for the few miles he had to journey. He had stretched his feet across the seats, tucked his hands into his pockets, with his hat well down over his eyes to keep out the sickly glare of the old jack-lantern. He was, con-

sequently, not in a very good humor by being disturbed, and had to give up the solid comfort he had intended to enjoy. He felt annoyed when the women entered the coach, nor did the fact that his traveling companions were to be females appear to smooth his temper. Purcey and Sallie were also disappointed when they found that they would have to ride in company with a stranger. They dared not exchange a word or look for fear of being discovered. How to get rid of this unwelcome and unsolicited companion was a puzzle.

Women are remarkable creatures in any emergency ; they always have recourse to something. It must be a very tight place where a woman of ordinary tact and ability cannot squeeze through. Purcey had conveyed to Sallie, without uttering a word, that the little man must be gotten upon the outside of the coach, and that she must do it. Sallie understood that unless this was done, they would be unable to mature their plans before reaching the village.

The little man with the rim of gray hair, having been forced to withdraw his feet from their comfortable position, sat with his knees drawn nearly up to his chin ; and, from the occasional grunt which came from the corner of the coach he occupied, the women judged that he was either very much out of humor with himself or with them. Purcey had made a pallet for her child in a corner of the very seat upon which the little old man sat. The child, entirely unconscious of its rudeness, was stretching and kicking

out its feet so violently that the little man would have gotten off the seat had there been any other to occupy. He kept crowding closer to the corner, while with each gentle pinch given the child's leg by Purcey, the old man was made more uncomfortable.

Sallie, seeing that it was now time for her to speak, said, addressing Purcey :

"Perhaps you annoy the gentleman. You had better take the child and sit outside."

There are but few men of Southern birth who are not chivalrous and gallant. A genuine Southern gentleman is ever ready to display his gallantry ; but such gallantry was displayed for those of their own color only. A black person was never entitled to any recognition in this direction. Consequently, to find a man in a Southern country who had any regard or feeling for a black woman, under any circumstances, was to find a most uncommon man. Such did the occupant of the coach, who was now well wedged up in the corner of the stage, prove to be. He may have been actuated by a sense of the unpleasantness of the situation, or, possibly, by a desire to display his gallantry to Sallie. Whatever the cause, the women were none the less successful in their little piece of strategy, for without speaking a word to them, he pushed open the door, commanded the driver to stop, alighted from the coach, and took a seat outside with the driver, leaving them to make whatever arrangements they saw fit.

The train which left Sallie and Purcey at the little

way station went on its course to the town of B——. Mr. Sledger, noticing that Purcey did not return, had made a tour of inspection through the train. Failing, of course, in finding her, he came back hurriedly and informed Mr. Jamison. That gentleman had been indulging in a series of cat naps, and rather lazily rubbed his eyes, slowly taking in the excited manner of his friend, who was prancing about the car like a man without his wits.

“Ah! Sledger, old boy, what in the deuce is the matter?”

“Matter! Matter enough,” said the irate Mr. Sledger; “why, that d—— woman with the brat has given me the slip.”

“Ah! guess not, me boy; she’s in the other car with her mistress.”

“No, she ain’t. I’ve been through the whole d—— train, and can’t find her anywhere.”

By this time Mr Jamison had succeeded in rubbing his eyes open, and was becoming interested in the conversation.

“Ah! better ask the conductor. She must have gotten off somewhere.”

The conductor was sought, but nothing could be learned of that official. Some two or three stations had been stopped at, but he had not seen the lady with the negro nurse and child alight at any of them. This rather indefinite information did not bring much solace to the ruffled bosom of Mr. Sledger, and he consoled himself by consigning Mr. Jamison, Pur-

cey, the entire train and all on board to a place where overcoats are superfluous and fans at a premium. Mr. Sledger was so very anxious to get possession of the woman with the brat, as he expressed it, that he would have returned, had he known where to go. As it was, he missed making the rich speculation he had intended, and did not have the pleasure of kidnapping the girl.

Purcey and her companion were now the sole occupants of the interior of the coach, and their plans as to their next move on reaching the village were quietly discussed. They were driven to the house of a respectable widow lady, where they found lodgings for the night.

CHAPTER XV.

THE JUDGE'S SISTER.

Judge Coleman had gone a number of miles, followed by his recent acquisition to his fortune, when he turned the head of his horse into one of those long and beautiful lanes common in the Southern country. Upon either side of this lane were planted many tall poplar trees, which stood stately and erect like silent sentinels. Up this beautiful avenue they rode until the end was reached, when they came in sight of one of those old but substantial stone houses, partly concealed by the thick foliage of creeping vines that grew around it. The judge rode around the house to the rear, where numerous out-houses and stables built of the same substantial material were located. Having reached the gate which separated the stable-yard from a garden laid out in beautiful flower plots, where the poppy and chrysanthemum grew in profusion, he dismounted from his horse, bade William follow his example, and directed him to remain there with the horses. He then walked up to the rear door of the mansion, and, without so much as lifting the large brass knocker which hung upon the panel of the door, entered. He was met, upon entering the house, by a matronly-looking lady dressed in cap and gown, and who addressed him as Jere.

The reception accorded him was not a warm one. The lady bowed somewhat stiffly, as she inquired, in rather a surprised air: "Why, Jere, what brings you here?"

The judge did not appear to like the inquisitiveness of the lady, and, without answering her question, said: "Send a servant to show my man where to put the horses."

"Your man, Jere! What man?"

"My black man. You don't suppose I am such a beggar that I cannot afford a servant, do you?"

To this rather discourteous remark, the lady made no reply, but rang the bell, summoning a servant, and directed him to attend to the judge's orders.

The lady who had just received the judge, in a manner evincing that she had no great affection for him, was the Widow Dean, whose acquaintance the reader will now have an opportunity to form more closely. The Widow Dean was Judge Coleman's only surviving relative, his sister. She was the relict of Colonel Woodson Dean, who won distinction and shoulder-straps in the Mexican war. Returning home, he applied himself to the cultivation of tobacco and the enthrallment of his fellow-man. After spending a life in extravagance and debauchery, he died, leaving a widow almost penniless, but who remained faithful to his memory. The Widow Dean had never admired her brother's reckless manner of living; besides, he had so imposed upon her generosity as almost to impoverish her. He had obtained a considerable amount

of money, which he never returned her. While Judge Coleman's sister always extended the hospitality of her home to her vagabond brother, she never could meet him without reproving him, or lecturing him upon his extravagant ways. The judge, in view of this fact, was not a frequent visitor at his sister's house, but being now burdened with a kind of white elephant, in the form of a slave, for whom he had no use, except to convert into money, he determined, upon hearing of the runaway of the widow's Jim, to present her with another trusty servant, providing a few hundred dollars were paid in cash, a balance of a few hundred more forthcoming when needed.

The Widow Dean entered the large and comfortable parlor, closely followed by her brother. She seated herself before one of those old-fashioned fireplaces in which a bright fire was burning. The room and the furniture were in keeping with the exterior appearance of the house; every piece of furniture was arranged with the utmost care, the pictures, the ornaments, everything about the room showed evidence of the taste and refinement of its owner. There was a striking contrast between the brother and sister as they sat in their respective positions. The Widow Dean was a very independent woman; having been left almost penniless by her late husband, she grasped the management of her affairs like a woman of mettle, and out of a much encumbered estate, after clearing off mortgages, she improved, repaired, and generally increased the value of everything left her. It is true

she had enjoyed a small income from the estate of her father, but her brother, who had been executor, being her senior by several years, had not taken the pains or care to protect either his sister's or his own interest, but yielding to his political ambition, he had sacrificed that which was his own, as well as that which he held in trust, to satiate a desire of which, after experiencing, he soon grew weary.

The Widow Dean's countenance bore the traces of beauty and refinement. Her early days had been spent in luxury. Her beauty had brought to her feet many admirers who worshipped her as a goddess. She was naturally haughty, but her quick and intelligent mind saved her from being termed austere. Unlike most Southern women, she had a heart overflowing with sympathy and kindness. She owned but very few slaves, and these few were indulged to an extent that made their lot not an unpleasant one. She never allowed any of her servants to be whipped, and when they were recalcitrant, she would call them in to her, and gently reprimand them. She was never known to sell or buy a servant. Jim, who so unceremoniously left her for greater freedom, had been left to her by her late husband, and she had raised him almost from the cradle. This is why she parted with him with such reluctance, and offered so heavy a reward for his return. Had Jim been captured and returned to her, she would simply have reprimanded him, and trusted him as implicitly as she had formerly.

Her views upon the right of one human being to own another possessed the peculiarly strange likeness to certain charitable Christians, "whose cloak of charity stretches so far that it becomes rather thin." She may not have believed that slavery was right and just; she may have thought it cruel and wicked to treat humanity like dumb brutes, but then this humanity was black, and the law of the land, as well as precedent, decreed that white should rule and black be ruled. So, with the same kindly feeling that a good master has for his dog, did the Widow Dean care for her servants. They were well fed, well dressed, and generally well treated. When Jim left her, she thought him very ungrateful, and felt certain that he would never be able to get along. She gave but little thought as to his motive for leaving a home so good and a mistress so kind, and attributed his running away to the influence of evil companions. When her brother came to her at this time, she had not thought of adding to her household by the purchase of another servant, for she was too much chagrined at Jim's running away. The judge had often prevailed upon her to increase the number of servants about the place, but she had persistently refused to listen to, or heed, his advice, which seemed to her to be followed at all times by misfortune. She had never taken her brother's advice that it did not prove abortive; consequently, she had schooled herself so in business that she managed her own affairs quite ably.

The judge, as we have said, was not a frequent visitor at his sister's house; and his business here at this time was to leave the man whom he had won from his friend, and take his value in cash, this being far more serviceable and less troublesome to him than having a slave traveling around the country with him. He always avoided a controversy with his sister when he could, for he disliked her to discourse upon the evil of his ways, for which ways he considered himself alone responsible. He did not like any interference with the manner in which he saw fit to pass his life. He knew well the disposition of his sister; he knew her weaknesses and the bent of her sympathy; and he knew that, if he wanted to win his object, he must play the penitent, whether in earnest or not—not that this would be anything new for him to play. He had often resorted to the same expedient, to obtain loan after loan and favor upon favor from his sister.

Far be it from my intention, dear reader, to lead you to the impression that Judge Jere Coleman was a dependent upon his sister's bounty. He was too proud a man for that; his noble and proud spirit would not permit him to do anything so unmanly and base. But it must be remembered that the judge was a politician, and could view matters in a light far different from other men. Favors bestowed were often considered in the light of honors. While the judge scorned the idea of being a dependent, he found

no inconsistency in accepting a bounty which was only compensated for in promises.

They were now sitting facing one another, the widow in a large, roomy chair, with her face shaded from the sun, which penetrated the rich damask curtains that adorned the window. The soft light fell upon her well-modeled face, and brightened the silver locks of hair, which hung in crisp curls from beneath the rich, old lace cap she wore. The judge sat near the fire-place, occupying the chair which his deceased brother-in-law had always used, and which always stood in that particular spot. He began the conversation by saying:

“Matilda, it has been some time since I visited you, and I think you could afford to treat me with a little more civility.” He arose from his seat and walked over to her. With an attempt at affection, he placed his arms around her and continued: “Why, my dear sister, I believe you would give your negro, Jim, a more hearty welcome, should he enter the door there, than you have me, your own dear brother.”

“Perhaps I would,” said his sister, “considering that Jim, being my slave instead of my brother, has given me far less worriment than you have.”

“Well,” said the judge with a sigh, “I shall not worry you any more. I have just one favor to ask; if it be granted, when we part this time, it will, perhaps, be forever. I am of the opinion that my continued absence will be pleasing to you. But to the

point: I want to leave with you the man that I have. He is a good servant, and useful at anything you may see fit to put him."

"Where do you intend to go, Jere, and why do you suppose I shall be pleased at your departure? Is not my door always open to you? Are you not always welcome here—yes, welcome to remain here with your servant as long as you will? Oh! if you would but stop this roving about from place to place," and the tears began to steal down her cheeks.

"At it again," thought the judge, but he did not lose patience; he continued to speak kindly,—“Matilda, I could not be so dependent upon you; I could never permit myself to accept such kindness as you offer, without making you some adequate return. No; I should rather you would accept from your brother the gift of this boy, as a slight return for the many favors you have done me.”

“I do not want the man; I do not want any more servants about the place, especially any strange ones. He might put all sorts of mischief into the others heads, and give me much trouble I do not care to have. If you will remain and take the responsibility of him yourself, I shall be ever so happy to have you; but, Jere, my dear brother, where did you get this man?”

Judge Coleman looked at his sister with an inquiring glance. He had expected this question, yet he was not prepared with an answer; nor did he deem it either prudent or advisable to tell her just where the man

came from, yet he knew that if he did not, there was a possibility of the man's enlightening her himself. "What does it matter, Sis (this appellation was used by the judge when falling on familiar terms with his sister), whence he came? He is mine. I bought him, and paid for him, and if you won't accept him, then let me leave him with you until I make arrangements elsewhere."

Mrs. Dean was determined not to have any strange servants mingled with hers. She did not doubt that her brother was truthful in his statements, but she could not understand how he came in possession of the means to spend upon such a luxury as a servant. She knew that his small income did not admit of it, nor did his former inclinations. She was puzzled to know his real object in being so very desirous to leave the man with her, so she remained obdurate; and her unyielding disposition caused her brother to lose patience and temper.

"Then you will not accept him as a gift, nor permit him to remain here on the place unless I consent to remain? That I do not see fit to do, and to-morrow, my dear, kind sister," said the judge sarcastically, "I shall bid you farewell."

"As you will, Jere. You know you always did have your own way," and Mrs. Dean arose from her seat, and walked toward the window which opened into the garden; she stopped, and, turning, faced her brother, who saw tears standing in her eyes. She exclaimed,—
"Oh, Jere, why do you give me so much pain! Why

“speak so heartlessly! Remain here with me, but send the man away. We don't need him, and we can live so happy, and be so contented.”

The judge's face lost much of its austerity at these words, and a smile played around the corners of his mouth. The suggestion of his sister was the very thing—why *not* remain with her? He could sell William, get twelve or fifteen hundred dollars for him, and give himself up to ease and comfort under the hospitality of his sister's roof. “As you insist upon my remaining, I shall do so. I do this, Sis, because of my love for you. You have been a kind, indulgent sister, and I appreciate your kindness. I will send the man away the first opportunity I have, and devote my time to your happiness.”

“Oh, thank you, thank you, Jere! This makes me, indeed, happy; and now that you so cheerfully give up your desire to rove about, I feel that you do love me.”

While this conversation was taking place in the great house, William had put the horses away, and had been shown to the servants' quarters. Being a stranger upon the place, he soon had quite an audience about him, relating his recent separation from his wife and child. Not a moment or a second since the cruel separation had they escaped his thoughts. Imagine that father's feelings, that husband's feelings!

If we could suppose that those men and women of bondage, when separated from those they so dearly loved, became, in a short time, entirely indifferent to,

and forgetful of those left behind, we could very readily form the same conclusion that Jonathan Maxwell and his wife formed. But can this be supposed? Is the human heart, whether within the bosom of a bondman or a freeman, senseless to those pulsations of nature, susceptible to love or hatred, misery or happiness? Has nature provided humanity with such control over its forces that we can dismiss at will, regardless of all our surroundings, the things upon which our hopes, our very existence seems to depend? Can we, because of a forced change in circumstances and surroundings, put aside and consign to oblivion the cherished hopes of life? More likely is the human heart to dwell, to linger, to cling with pertinacity and obstinacy to that which it is compelled to relinquish. The more painful the separation, the harder is it to forget. The very heart-strings of William had been torn asunder by this separation from his wife and child.

We have spoken of his devotion to them, of the pride he took in his only child; and when he followed his new master, as he believed, into a deeper and more relentless servitude, the bitterest and most acute pains shot through his bosom. There was no change, no treatment, however good, that could mitigate the cruelty of this separation; and as he told those around him, with tears streaming from his eyes, of the beautiful wife and the loving child he had been taken from, perhaps for ever, he was indeed an object of commiseration. The motley group of hearers

that surrounded him could do nothing but listen with saddened hearts, and extend their sympathies. What an excellent balm to heal the wounds of a bleeding heart!

William was assigned to duty about the house, and he went at his work with a drooping head and heavy heart. The Widow Dean was perfectly familiar with the habits of her servants, for she was an unusually kind mistress, and made it an express duty to inquire into the habits of those about her. The judge had now been absent some time, attending a hunt, and while she sat alone at the table, noticed that William did not move about with that alacrity she was accustomed to see in her servants. She said to him one day: "William, you never seem to be in a pleasant humor. Don't you like your new home?"

William's breast began to heave with emotion; he choked down a sob, and answered: "Yes, missa; I am pleased with my new home, and you are very kind."

"What, then, gives you so sad an appearance? You must brighten up and move about with more spirit."

"Yes, missa; I'll try," and as he said this, he turned from the widow and brushed a tear from his dark brown cheek. Mrs. Dean noticed this, and was somewhat surprised. She had not intended to say any more, but seeing the man's emotion, she questioned him further. William talked with much reluctance, as he was under the impression that Judge Coleman had bought him expressly for his sister, and

judging all white people to be alike as far as their servants were concerned, he was afraid of adding to his distress by finding fault with his position. Besides, he had no idea, when Mrs. Dean asked him the questions she did, that it was done because of any sympathy she may have had for him. Like many other slaves, he did not believe that white people ever sympathized with them in their woes, or, indeed, thought they had any woes. In place, then, of being candid and out-spoken with Mrs. Dean, he endeavored to conceal the true cause of his trouble and evade giving her the information she sought.

When in great distress and sorrow, the heart seeks consolation in whatever way it is possible to be found. It is truly a relief to pour out its inmost feelings to one in whom confidence may be placed, and from whom may be gained a word of comfort. William's heart was overflowing with the bitterest of sorrow, and could he have entertained the slightest hope of receiving a *scintilla* of sympathy from his mistress, he would have, without hesitancy, told her all. He would have entreated her to return him to his wife and child—yes, he would have appealed to her womanly heart in behalf of those who were as dear to him as his own life. He would have asked that he might be permitted to see them once more, to enfold them in his arms and press them to his bosom. But, alas! he feared that any appeal to this woman would be useless; he thought that Mrs. Dean was now his mistress and owner, and he knew, or thought

he knew, that to tell her he had been ruthlessly and cruelly separated from his wife and child would but tend to place him under close *surveillance*, thereby preventing his intended escape.

In ninety cases out of a hundred, this would have been the result had he dared to present such a proposition to his mistress or master; but could William have understood that the mistress to whom he now owed obedience differed materially from the average Southern woman, he would have made his appeal. He would have thrown into it all of the eloquence possible for him to summon; he would have endeavored to touch some chord of sympathy, thus securing a kind word or a promise. But no; he refrained from giving expression to his thoughts, and Mrs. Dean, who would have commanded her brother to return the man to his master, was left to think that William was taciturn and sullen, and, consequently, not a fit one to be about her good-natured servants. Immediately upon her brother's return, she approached him concerning William, insisting that he should be taken away from the place.

The judge had some reluctance about selling William to the traders, and yet he realized that some disposition must be made of him, profitable, of course, to himself. Finding that his sister not only objected to advancing him any money on the man, but positively insisted on his removal, he decided to sell him to the first "nigger-trader" that came along.

This species of *genus homo* was very numerous, as

a matter of course, throughout the South, negro-trading being far more profitable than dealing in horses and cattle. The two were, however, closely allied in many cases, for a trader would often come from the far South with a herd of cattle, and return with a goodly supply of negroes, consisting of men, women, and children. These traders were adepts at the business, and knew just what kind of negroes the market required. They attended all the slave-markets and private sales, and bought wherever they could get a bargain, realizing on their investments just as a man does in any ordinary business transaction. In addition to their business of buying and selling these slaves, they indulged in stealing and kidnapping free negroes. This was a little risky, but very remunerative, and, consequently, popular. The negro-trader was not looked upon as the best type of a citizen; he was not quite so highly regarded as a wealthy planter, who owned several hundred slaves, and who bought, traded, or sold at will. He was viewed rather with suspicion and mistrust, and thought capable of doing many things that a respectable man would scorn. Usually, he commanded large sums of money, had a great fondness for whisky, tobacco, and poker. He could be seen upon steamboats, at hotels, around jails, and at slave-pens, being easily distinguished from other men by his broad-rimmed hat, soiled shirt, scrubby beard, swaggering gait, and the bull-whip invariably under his arm. His keen eye took in at a glance every defect

about the man or the woman he wished to purchase. In order to test the abilities and qualities of an intended purchase, a male was compelled to bend his body, jump, show his teeth, and bring his muscles generally into play. A female was subjected to much the same, undergoing many cruel indignities, utterly regardless of her sex.

Being a class apparently created without a grain of human feeling, they (the traders) would take a mother from her babe, a husband from a wife, or *vice versa*. Tears never appealed to their sympathies, for they were devoid of any. All appeals were answered by the crack of the whip. They would go through the country and purchase as many slaves as their funds would permit, and after depositing them safely in jail, would collect them and start them in droves for the far South, where good prices were given by the owners of large rice and cotton plantations for good, able-bodied men and women. While making these long excursions, women and children were placed in wagons and the men were shackled together and driven from sunrise to sunset. From three to four white men generally drove herds of a hundred or more, and, at night, when they encamped, one or two watched while the others slept. These poor creatures, over whom they watched, were as completely cowed by the presence of one or two men as they would have been by an army. They might have rebelled, it is true, but such an uprising would have amounted comparatively to nothing; for

there was the strong arm of the law, a sure and ready protection for all whites and a constant menace to these abused people, making them powerless, no matter what their number, to ameliorate their forlorn condition.

A better representative of the Southern "nigger-trader" than Jasson Lillie could not be found. He made periodical visits through the section of country in which the Widow Dean resided. He had grown up from youth in the business, and as he entered into manhood, had divested himself of conscience, honor, and respectability; so Jass Lillie was minus none of the qualities or knowledge requisite for a most successful "nigger-trader." He had probably reached his fortieth year, but looked much older, his hair being grizzly. His low forehead, broad mouth, and bull-like neck bespoke the man. He could round off an oath and deal cards with an avidity that gave him an enviable reputation among his companions, while his judgment as to the value, soundness, and salable qualities of a negro was unerring. He never took any risks when once he put his money in a man or woman, and from the time he bought until he sold, security and vigilance were his watch words. Merciless and brutal in the extreme, he thought no more of throwing his big bull-whip upon the back of a negro man or woman, than upon the back of a steer.

When he made his periodical trip, he spent but little time on a bargain, for time was money to Mr.

Lillie. He was sure at all times to get the best of a bargain. Jass Lillie's time for passing through certain sections of the country was as well known to the slaves as to the masters, and every slave in that particular vicinity would grow restless and frightened when the time approached for his appearance. Many of them would conceal themselves, fearing that Lillie would see them and offer to purchase them from their masters. To the slaves he was a dreaded and unwelcome visitor; while to many of the masters he was ever welcome. It had been some six months since Jass Lillie had visited the section of country where the Widow Dean lived, and it had been more than that many years since he had stopped within her domains, at which time he was given to understand by the Widow Dean that there was no opening for his business upon her premises. Mr. Lillie rounded off a few selected oaths at the time lost, and never lost any more by stopping there.

He was now daily expected, and the only slaves for miles that were not disturbed by this piece of intelligence were the Widow Dean's. Her brother shared in the general expectation proceeding Lillie's arrival; for he had decided to dispose of William, and Jass Lillie was the man to whom he would sell him. The judge and Jass were not strangers to each other, as they had met before on similar business—the former having disposed of much of his own property to this speculator in human beings, and he knew just how to drive a bargain with him.

The sun crept up from over the eastern hills, and bathed the rich verdure in its softest rays. The dew upon the grass and the flowers seemed to sparkle and laugh with joy as it was kissed with the golden flood of light. The hyacinths and pinks looked particularly bright this morning, as they hung in profusion about the Widow Dean's manor-house. The ivy and creeping smilax glistened in the sunshine, creeping up and entwining themselves in and out of the crevices of the old stone walls. It was one of those beautiful spring mornings when all nature seemed happy, bright, and smiling. The water in the little brooklet dashed along as though keeping time to the music of the birds that flitted from tree to tree with their merry chirping; and it moved on in its course, only intercepted by some huge, moss-covered rock, which would break it into a thousand little sparkling jets, glistening and shining in the sunlight like bright crystal gems. The horn of the overseer, as he summoned the field-hands to work, sounded upon the still, clear air, then died away and lost itself in the thick foliage of the mountain. Every living thing seemed to catch new life and inspiration from the sweet morning air. The old slave, turning out from his quarters, walked with unusual suppleness and agility, while the little pickaninnies, with nappy hair and rolling eyes, sprang out from the little whitewashed cabins and gamboled about in the dewy grass in lieu of a bath.

Judge Coleman arose long before his accustomed

hour, stalked out into the stable, and ordered a horse saddled. The order being obeyed, he mounted his spirited animal and wound his way through the long line of stately poplars, whose boughs and leaves bent and bowed to the gentle breeze, as if in salute to the early rider. He rode directly to the town of E——, stopped his horse in front of the inn, and inquired if Jass Lillie had arrived. He was informed that that individual was a guest at the hostelry, and if the gentleman would dismount, his horse would be attended to and Mr. Lillie informed of his presence. So important a Southern gentleman as Judge Coleman was, of course, widely known, and as Mr. Kurtzman, the landlord of the Black Horse tavern, made the remark, he hailed a negro servant girl, addressing her by the euphonious cognomen of Alanthe.

“Tell the gentleman in the room, first floor front, that Judge Coleman, ex-member of Congress, wishes to see him.”

The servant girl, who might have been taken for a boy from the scarcity of hair on her head, and the coat-like garment she wore reaching down to her knees, exposing a pair of very black and very thin legs, very large feet whose toes stood apart with perfect individuality, disappeared from the bar-room and office, and in an incredibly short time, returned, saying:

“Glass bitters. Gemmen says gemmen come up.”

The glass of bitters was ordered by Mr. Lillie, who had not yet arisen, as an eye-opener. The order was

filled, and the judge directed to follow Alanthe. Leading the way, the servant entered the room and deposited the liquor on a small stand, which answered the dual purpose of washstand and center-table, and immediately disappeared, closing the door with a bang.

“Well-er, well-er, how are yer, Coleman?” said Mr. Lillie, as he raised himself up in bed; “d— that nigger! why didn’t she give me that drink?”

“How are you, Jass?” said the judge, paying no attention to the latter remark. “I didn’t know you received gentlemen before you made your toilet.”

“Well-er, saves time, Coleman, yer know; talk while dressin’; done dressin’, know yer business, ready to bargain. Have a drink?” and as he said this, he sprang out of bed, took the glass from the table, and drained it of its contents at one gulp. He then proceeded to perform his toilet, which did not take long, as his coat and boots were about the only articles he had divested himself of.

Mr. Lillie, as we have said, was great on saving time. He saved time on everything. He was economical even in the use of words, endeavoring to express himself in as few words as possible, which he cut to suit his style. This is why his sentences were so jerky. Judge Coleman watched the man as he performed the lightning task of arranging his toilet.

“Well-er, what’s up, Coleman? Hain’t seen you long time. Any niggers, men, women, old, young? Want good stock, er no sale. How’s wider? Clever

lady, give me devil once. Never stop now. No use, only time lost." Lillie continued to jerk out his sentences in this way until his toilet was finished. Starting toward the door, he said to the judge: "Been to breakfast? Late this morning; join me." The judge thanked him, but declined the invitation, remarking that he would accompany him to the breakfast table, which he did.

Lillie, *to save time*, had ordered his breakfast, which was set before him in a very short time after he was seated at the table. Judge Coleman seated himself at his side, and while Lillie shoveled the food into his mouth, employing both hands and knife and fork, the judge informed him that he had a negro man he wanted to sell, and asked Lillie whether he wanted to buy him.

With his mouth full of food, Lillie replied: "Buy him, buy him, course. Sound? Healthy? Under forty? Ten hundred, sight unseen. Any defects, no sale."

"But ten hundred ain't enough, Lillie; I paid fifteen for him."

"Can't help it. Market slow, demand poor, expense clear to Georgia. Bring him up, may do better. Be back in ten days. Nigger, git my horse."

The last remark was addressed to the servant of all work, Alanthe, who was now lazily engaged, with a large paper brush, in keeping the flies off the table.

"Yes, sah!" was the reply, as she bounded from

the room, turning a somersault through the window, and landing on the portico.

"All right," said the judge, "I shall arrange so as to meet you here. Good day!"

"Good day! good day!" said Mr. Lillie "More'n one, bring 'long. Any good-looking gals? Pay good price. Want take down good drove. Business dull, must push it. Market slow, demand poor."

They separated at the tavern door. The judge mounted his horse and rode home. In a short time, Lillie mounted his horse and rode in direction of the B—— market, where a large drove of cattle, in charge of two drivers, had preceded him. Here he intended to make his first purchase of negroes preparatory to his return trip.

Judge Coleman reached home in time for the morning meal, with his appetite well sharpened by his early morning ride. The meal was eaten in silence, as the judge said nothing to his sister about his adventure.

William McCullar was one of a great number of slaves that was very religious. He had been persistently praying for his wife and child's protection, little thinking that they were, even at that moment, fleeing to freedom. He had been taught to place his trust in Providence, and a way would be shown him out of his suffering condition. This was the only hope that buoyed him up; he clung to it as a dying man to a straw. Everything around him seemed dark and foreboding. Liberty seemed to be farther

and farther away from his reach. The hope of again seeing his beloved wife was not lost entirely, but it appeared like a delusion, though he still prayed, trusted, and believed a way would open up to him that would lead him out of bondage. His religious zeal made him too reliant. He waited upon some manifestation of the power of Providence, and became entirely passive as to what was required of him. He lost sight of that great truth, "God helps those who help themselves," and continued to wait for an evidence of Godly help. He was courageous and manly, and never abandoned his intention to escape, but his lack of resolution and confidence in himself proved a fatal blunder, and resulted in his being taken still farther from a free land. He had no knowledge, or, in fact, did he think for a moment, that the wife he loved so dearly was bravely struggling on toward freedom. Had William McCullar been in possession of this information, he would have risked his life to reach her; the fetters of slavery would have been burst asunder, and he would have made a desperate effort for freedom. As it was, being entirely in ignorance of their escape, and partly in doubt of the advisability of attempting to escape, himself, he hesitated too long, and, as I have said, was borne farther away from wife and child and liberty.

William had finished serving the breakfast for his new mistress and master, and had seated himself at a table in the kitchen to eat his own. The break-

fast before him remained untouched, his mind being engrossed with other things, and his gaze seemingly riveted upon the beautiful landscape, as viewed from the window before which he sat. The cattle on the hills were lazily browsing away, the perfume of the rich scented clover was driven by a gentle breeze through the open window, and spread itself through the house like fragrant incense.

William sat there motionless, with his eyes fixed upon nothing but the great space that intervened between the cloudless skies and the green carpeted earth. His mind was with his wife and child, and all the beauty of nature, as it lay stretched out before him, was as nothing. He did not hear the heavy tread of Judge Coleman, as he entered the kitchen, nor did he hear himself addressed until the judge laid his hand upon his shoulder, and said :

“ William, when you have finished your breakfast, I want you to go with Uncle Dick to the Black Horse tavern, and meet me there.”

“ Yes sar; I'm ready now,” said William, rising from the table.

Uncle Dick had already received his orders, and had the carriage in waiting, as well as the judge's horse. The master mounted and set out for the tavern, and was soon followed by Uncle Dick and William.

Uncle Dick was one of the oldest servants upon the Dean estate, and by virtue of his fidelity to his mistress's interest, he was installed the overseer or

driver. There were not many negroes upon the place, as we have said, and the few who were there were, as far as their mistress was concerned, well treated, and it was a most fortunate thing for them, with such a driver as Uncle Dick, that they had so kind a mistress. The average Southern overseer was specially and carefully selected for his cruelty and brutality. He required the reputation of a hard driver as a recommendation to entitle him to employment by a large planter; he had to have combined the instincts of a blood hound and a perfect knowledge of "niggers"; it was necessary for him to know how to obtain plenty of work from half-fed mortals, and to look upon a slave, not as a human creature, but as a thing to be driven by the crack of the whip, and worked until quite exhausted.

They were selected from among the poorest of poor whites; and the exalted position of overseer and their hatred and prejudice of a black man, made them fit subjects for such positions. An exception was made by some slave-holders, who were far-sighted, by selecting from among their negroes an overseer. Wherever this was the case, the slaves were made to suffer, if possible, greater persecution than under a white man. The authority given them over their brethren, and their great anxiety to retain it by pleasing their masters, led them to extremes in their treatment. They had better opportunities to know the habits of those under them; they knew whenever a man or woman was off on a frolic, and if one lagged

behind while working in the field next day, no mercy was shown, nor was the lash spared. White men were hard drivers and cruel overseers, but black men exceeded them, besides being very deceptive and treacherous. They would pry into the secrets of the poor slaves, and then expose them to their masters.

Uncle Dick was one of this class, but could not exercise his punishing powers, as the Widow Dean drew the line at this point. But he made his fellow-slaves suffer every hardship he could inflict, and took great pleasure in watching them and conveying news to his mistress. He had been instructed to conduct William safely to the Black Horse, and not inform him of the object. The commission could not have been delegated to one more faithful. He drove the horses and kept a close eye on William, while a broad smile occasionally overspread his face. He knew the object of taking William to the tavern, as the time for Jass Lillie's return had arrived.

When the tavern was reached, several men, women, and children were seen in various attitudes of ease, within a kind of inclosure similar to a cattle stockade, while two men of rather unprepossessing appearance performed guard duty over them.

On the front porch of the tavern, Lillie stood with his hands hid away in the pockets of his trousers, rolling a large quid of tobacco from one side of his somewhat capacious mouth to the other, watching William as he sprang lightly from the carriage. Upon alighting, William walked up to his master who was stand-

ing by Lillie's side, politely touched his hat, and awaited orders.

"Well-er, that's the nigger?" said Lillie, nodding his head toward William.

"That's he," replied the judge, "and a better one never broke bread." This was said in a very low voice, as if not intended for William's ears.

"Boy, boy, come here. Open yer mouth," said Lillie.

William obeyed, and Lillie poked his dirty fingers into the man's mouth, feeling his upper and lower jaw teeth. "Bend over. Touch the ground. Jump," and as he said this, he dexterously swung his bull-whip over his head, and made it crack like a pistol shot.

William sprang some two feet into the air, and came down lightly upon his toes. Lillie walked to him, roughly felt his limbs, and watched the development of his muscles as he worked them. Then turning to the judge said:

"Twelve hundred. Aint worth d—— cent more."

"No, sir," said the judge; "fifteen, or home he goes."

"Fifteen!" said Lillie, eyeing the judge closely, "Can't stand it; great risk; market slow; demand poor; expense great; no time to dicker; thirteen and half—no more. Mitchell, git them ar niggers ready. Move on." The last remark was addressed to one of the drivers, who at once proceeded to arouse the group of slaves by kicking and thumping them, and afterwards telling them to get up.

“He is yours,” said the judge, turning and entering the tavern. Lillie called up one of his men, and said: “Put that ar nigger in the drove; buckle him good; don’t take any foolishness off him.” He then followed Judge Coleman into the tavern, counted out thirteen hundred and fifty dollars, handed it to the judge, taking a receipt something like the following:

E—, May —, 18—.

JASSON LILLIE TO JUDGE J. COLEMAN, *Dr.*

To one negro man, called William, five feet two inches; dark-brown color; good features; compactly built. Sound health guaranteed.

\$1,350

Received Payment,

J. COLEMAN.

Lillie spelled the receipt over, placed it in his wallet, and said:

“Any more like him, Coleman, bring ’em along. Market slow; demand poor; but buy anyhow.”

The drivers now busied themselves in getting the women and children into the wagons and hand-cuffing the men together in pairs, running a chain along between them. William was hand-cuffed to a burly, black fellow. The front part of the chain was attached to the wagon, the drivers mounted their horses, the whips cracked, and the cavalcade started southward. William McCullar’s heart throbbed with pain as he now realized that each step bore him farther from his wife and child and liberty.

CHAPTER XVI.

A MOTHER'S SACRIFICE.

It was well into the night when Uncle Joshua drove away from the Maxwell estate with Purcey and Sallie Silvers in Mr. Biggers' wagon. After watching them until the darkness hid them from view, the mother returned to the house. Elva had no superstitious fears, notwithstanding her great confidence in the power to which she invariably appealed for assistance. Her belief that Providence had selected her to aid in the escape of her fellow-creatures from bondage to freedom was as honest as any belief ever entertained in human bosom. This idea was strengthened from the fact that none whom she had assisted to escape had ever been captured or returned. Now that her own child had gone—she whom she loved with the tenderest affection of a mother—she felt that no sacrifice, however great, would be too much to make for her protection. She was now to act a part which must, eventually, end in detection; and would, in all probability, lead to a terrible punishment—she alone to be the sufferer. Her mistress and master must be kept in ignorance of Purcey's departure for several days, or, at least, until she had a fair opportunity to escape into a free land. Everything now rested with her; she summoned all of her determination and courage

and put in operation her full powers of deception. Usually thoughtful and collected, in her changed manner she seemed somewhat inclined to impulsiveness.

Entering the house, she carefully fastened the door, and crept softly through the rooms and halls, until the door of her master's room was reached. Everything was clothed in inky darkness; not a sound disturbed the death-like stillness, except the regular breathing of the sleepers within their rooms.

Through all of that great house, from kitchen to the bed-room of her master, situated in the extreme east wing of the house, she had crept, without coming in contact with a single piece of furniture or making a misstep. She listened at the door for a moment, her breath coming thick and fast. Within her bosom a fearful conflict was passing. She placed her hand upon the door-knob, and withdrew it suddenly, as if something had stung her; she thrust her hand into her bosom and drew forth a leather sheath, and drawing out the shining blade of a knife, she again approached the door, but hesitated. Should she enter? Could she not, with one stroke of that weapon, rid herself of the man that held her and her children in bondage? Yet this would not release the fetters from their limbs. But then Purcey would be safe, and what would it then matter though the law hold her?

She did not fear death, she did not fear the cruelest punishment. If she plunged that dagger to the hilt

into her master's bosom, he would only sleep on, never to awake, never to be called master again. Then she thought: "Oh! what wickedness this, to send that soul to judgment unprepared, so unfit. What would be her final punishment beyond this vale of tears? No; this must not be! Sleep on, Jonathan Maxwell, for 'vengeance is mine,' saith the Lord!" The dark and wicked thoughts which had entered her heart vanished, and light and better judgment prevailed. Her limbs now began to quiver as she turned from the door; she felt a weakness come over her. Her eyes, having become accustomed to the darkness about, now grew dim, her head grew dizzy, she tottered as she attempted to make her way back to her room, and as she reached the broad staircase which led to the large open hallway below, she reeled and fell. How long she lay there she did not know, but she was awakened by a cry coming from the nursery. Raising herself with a terrible effort, half dazed, and suffering from weakness caused by the recent excitement, she slowly, and with faltering step, groped her way back along the passage to the nursery door. Opening it she entered.

This was Master Archie's domain, who, being accustomed to have some one in the room with him, and upon awakening, not seeing Emeline, his present nurse, on the pallet she usually occupied, cried out. Elva went to the child; and at sight of her, he shrunk back upon the bed apparently much frightened, covering his head with the coverlets. For her he had al-

ways entertained a fear. He had good reasons at that time to be frightened.

While Elva was greatly changed in mind, she was even more so in appearance, due to the excitement of the last hour or so. Her hair now hung in a disheveled mass about her shoulders; her face was pale and haggard, while her eyes wore a wild and restless expression. Her lips were thin and bloodless, and a nervous twitching appeared about the corners of her mouth. The child did not know whether this was an apparition or not, so unseasonable was the hour for Elva to be there.

She hurriedly and noiselessly left the room, went down to the kitchen, crossed the yard, and entered one of the many cabins. Approaching a heap of straw huddled in one corner of the room, she gently shook the sleeping form of a girl, and bending her head close to the girl's ear she whispered, in sepulchral tones: "Em, Em, get up." The girl, upon recognizing the voice, arose hastily, donned the one garment that composed her wearing apparel, and, obeying a sign from Elva, followed her into the yard. She instructed Emeline to go to the nursery and remain. Em had stolen away from the nursery to enjoy a night's rest, free from Master Archie's annoyance. She reluctantly obeyed her mother, who now returned to her own room, threw herself upon the bed, and tried to find solace in sleep. But no sleep came to her eyes. She tossed uneasily upon the bed for several hours, until the morning came and the

hour arrived for the commencement of her daily labors. She arose, by no means refreshed by the night's experience, and went mechanically about her work, with her mind divided between thoughts of her fleeing daughter and her own anticipated predicament, resulting from eventual discovery of the escape. In this condition, she performed her labors, hardly knowing what she was doing, and before she had fully made up her mind what to say or do, in case Mrs. Maxwell insisted upon Purcey's return to work, Emeline entered the kitchen and informed her that she was wanted in the library.

The library of the Maxwell house was one of those cosy apartments fitted in all of its appointments to answer as an office and sitting-room. In this apartment, Jonathan transacted all of his business. It contained a secretary, a large walnut desk, three or four comfortable arm-chairs, and a number of family souvenirs. A choice collection of plants occupied considerable space in an alcove, and this gave a cheerful appearance to the room. A sweet odor pervaded the room, emitted by the heliotropes which were half hidden by the long, rich, lace curtains that stretched their snowy folds from the high ceiling to the floor. It was here that Mrs. Maxwell passed many hours of her rather indolent life in reading novels and annoying her husband with petty complaints upon the cares of life. They were seated in this cosy little library for some time, Jonathan poring over some book accounts, and Mrs. Maxwell

reading for awhile, then sleeping, and at times complaining. The question of Purcey's continued absence from her duties became the subject of Mrs. Maxwell's complaints.

During Purcey's illness, it had been the custom of Jonathan Maxwell and his wife to make inquiries daily regarding her health. These inquiries were made invariably of Elva, who permitted no one but herself to enter the sick room or answer these inquiries. This precaution had been adopted by her in order to assume all responsibility of the escape, and to allow as much time as possible to elapse before Purcey's escape could be discovered.

The irrepressible Elo had been very inquisitive, and her mother found great difficulty in keeping her from Purcey's room. Had the room been located in any other part of the house, it would undoubtedly have been invaded by Elo; but it was directly over the kitchen, being reached by a flight of stairs from the kitchen only. The approach was, consequently, ever under watch of the mother, who had to cajole Elo in every imaginable manner. Never had the child eaten so many good things in her life, as in the brief time pending the discovery of Purcey's escape. She came bounding into the house one day when Elva was absent from the kitchen. She looked around, and not seeing any one, stole softly to the steps. Listening, she could hear nothing. Then creeping softly up the steps, she reached the door of the room where Purcey had been sick, and peered through the key-

hole, but could see nothing. She gently turned the knob of the door, but being locked, she could not gain an entrance. For some moments, she stood deliberating what to do next, and finally determined to see Purcey, if in the room. Placing her ear close to the key-hole, and not hearing any sound, she next applied her mouth and called.

“Honey, honey, is you 'sleep?” Not receiving any response, she repeated the words again, but with no better result. She remarked: “Dat's funny; wonder whar she is. I'll ask mamma.” She crept down the steps again, and just as she had reached the bottom of the steps, Elva entered the kitchen from the dining-room. She glared fiercely at the child for a moment, then advancing toward her, seized her arm with a vise-like grip, and shook her until her teeth rattled, and the child cried out from pain. Her eyes were still fixed in a wild stare upon the child, and she fairly shrieked: “What you doin' up there? Didn't I tell you to keep down from dat room?”

“Oh, mamma!” screamed the child. “I only want to see honey; I ain't goin' up dar no more.”

“Come here,” she said, and she dragged the frightened child across the room. “Listen; if you ever go up dem steps again, I'll be de death of you. Do you hear?” and she shook her again.

“Yes, mamma; I won't go dar agin, only let me go.”

Leading her to the door, Elva said to her: “If you love your sister, if you love me, stay out of de house,

unless I send for you. Now go," and she pushed her out of the door.

Elo looked at her black arm, where the prints of her mother's fingers still remained, and, rubbing that member, she exclaimed :

" Golly ! didn't mamma look wild, and didn't she hurt dis darkey's arm ! "

The ordeal now came at last. Emeline had summoned Elva to her mistress, and she fully realized that she must now face the inevitable. The leniency of her mistress, of late, surprised her. For several days Mrs. Maxwell had, contrary to her custom, submitted to many inconveniences on account of the alleged illness of one of her servants. Had she made a peremptory demand for Purcey's presence, she would have been less surprised, though disheartened ; for then Purcey would not have had the long start she now enjoyed.

Mrs. Maxwell was reclining in an easy chair, her feet resting upon a velvet-covered divan. A book lay in her lap, the pages of which she had been carelessly perusing. A rich robe of pink silk hung in graceful folds about her, and a simple knot of white lace encircled her beautiful throat. She was a handsome woman, and, as she sat in her morning-gown, free from all adornments, displaying only that beauty which nature had so lavishly bestowed upon her, her husband could not help but yield to her every request. Her long, rich, brown hair hung in profusion about her shoulders, her skin was as delicate and

transparent as pearl, her lips were of a rosy hue, disclosing teeth as white as snow. She looked more like a goddess of love and beauty than the unfeeling woman that she was. Jonathan had for some time been endeavoring to straighten some accounts, but, owing to the frequent interruptions of his wife, had not completed his task. Mrs. Maxwell tapped her shapely foot upon the divan upon which it rested. Inclining her head lazily to one side, she said, with a half petulant air :

“Jonathan, I do wish you would put up those books. I have been talking to you all this time, and you have not paid me any attention whatever.”

He ceased writing, pushed his chair back from the desk, and looked admiringly at his wife.

“Now, pet,” said he, coaxingly, “don’t say that. I have heard every word you uttered, in fact, I have written some of them in the ledger.”

“It’s nothing but books and accounts,” she continued, “whenever I want to talk with you. I wish all the books and all the accounts were at the bottom of the sea.”

Mrs. Maxwell, being naturally indolent and accustomed to being petted, was like the average Southern lady. She did not know what it was to help herself. A servant was always at her command, and work of any sort was absolutely abhorred by her. She had been greatly worried, since Purcey’s illness, by the other servants, who were either too stupid to understand her ways, or too impudent for her ;

then, Jonathan had not shown any disposition to regard her appeals to have Purcey sent back to her post. But she was a determined woman; and when she entered the library in search of her husband, it was with the settled purpose to carry her point, and that point was to demand, without further delay, Purcey's presence. Jonathan had never been able to resist the blandishments of his wife, and she knew it, and the reason that he had not yielded to her request and demanded Elva to send Purcey to her, was not that he regarded her illness as anything serious, or, in fact, that he had any regard for her illness at all, but he wanted to be relieved of her presence about any part of the house where he would see her.

It must not be presumed that Jonathan had any trouble with his conscience as having been the cause of the woman's illness, or had he any doubt about her being ill. He did, perhaps, think she was stretching it out rather far to remain away from her duties so long, but, as he had no desire to come in contact with her, he was rather inclined to indulge her. The value of this indulgence to Purcey can readily be seen.

Mrs. Maxwell, having made up her mind that she would no longer suffer inconvenience, came at once to the point as soon as Jonathan turned his attention to her, after closing his book.

Jonathan said: "I am afraid, were your wish carried out, that the world would find it a difficult matter to get along without books or accounts. But I am at

your service now, and await patiently your commands."

Mrs. Maxwell changed her position, so as to bring herself directly facing her husband. "Jonathan, dear," she began, "I cannot get along without Purcey. I have so much trouble and worry with these other stupid servants, and Archie, dear little fellow, is constantly complaining. Em left him the other night, and the child says something came into the room and frightened him nearly to death. Of course, that was only imagination, but to think of the annoyance by having to listen to the child's nonsense. Besides, it is wrong to so indulge that girl in this way—the very idea of a nigger acting like a lady!"

Jonathan laughed at his wife's petulance, replying:

"Pet, you shall not be annoyed any longer, you shall have your maid. But, to tell the truth, I had intended to hire her out since her husband has gone. I am afraid she will grow devilish."

"Afraid!" exclaimed Mrs. Maxwell, affecting indignation. "Don't you own her? Can't you cut the devil out of her? I am not afraid of her; I want her to attend me, and she shall do it. Send for her at once. I would not be surprised if she has not grown lazy; for you know what a little indulgence does for these creatures."

"Elva informed me this morning that she would be able to attend her duties to-morrow, and, perhaps, we had better wait. Nevertheless, if you insist, why, I shall send for her," said Jonathan, rising and walk-

ing toward the bell, which was in easy reach of Mrs. Maxwell. For her to tap it, though, would require too much exertion.

"I do insist," she said, lying back upon the cushions of the soft chair; "I want her at once, and will not accept of any of Elva's excuses. I don't believe a word she says, as she only tells us of her relapses to shield her in her indolence. If she is able to attend to her duties to-morrow, she is able now."

Jonathan had already rung the bell and returned to his seat. He was not pleased with the idea of having Purcey about again, but being an indulgent husband, he yielded to his wife's desires. Had he known how close Elva was when he laid his hand upon the bell, he could have saved himself the trouble, for when he rang, she was right at the door, having been standing there during the entire conversation between her mistress and master.

We cannot commend Elva for being an eaves-dropper, neither can we condemn her, when we consider the character of the teachings she received. Whatever there was despicable in the nature of a slave could be attributed to the master. The first instinct was to conceal everything from the white folks. Candor was crushed out, honesty beaten out, and truth strangled. In view of this, Elva cannot be judged too harshly. She had overheard the conversation between her mistress and master, and she knew that, when she would enter that room, the truth must be told. Summoning all of her courage,

and controlling herself as best she could, she gently pushed open the door and entered. Her head was erect and her step unfaltering, as she advanced to the center of the room, making her accustomed obeisance.

The rich damask curtains permitted a soft ray of sunlight to creep between their folds, and it fell with warm radiance upon the velvet carpet. Mrs. Maxwell had changed her position, so that she saw the form of Elva through the large mirror which stood at one end of the room. She turned her head carelessly, saying :

“Elva, I want you to send Purcey to me at once.”

The woman hung her head and her eyes sought the floor, but she said not a word in response to her mistress's command, nor did she move. Mrs. Maxwell's voice rose to a higher key as she repeated her command. The woman still remained motionless. Turning in her chair, the mistress looked upon Elva and encountered those large black eyes resting fully upon her; their burning intensity caused her to shrink. But it was woman to woman, and she fairly screamed :

“Elva, what do you mean? Did you not hear me? How dare you stand there and not obey? Leave the room, and do as I bid you.”

A sardonic smile played around Elva's mouth. Raising her eyes and looking full at her mistress, she said slowly :

“Miss Jinnie, don't I always 'bey you? Ain't I yours for you to do what you please with? Yes; dat's

true," she said, as though talking to herself. "But when you tell me bring Purce here, I can't. No; can't do dat, Miss Jinnie."

"Woman, are you crazy!" exclaimed Mrs. Maxwell, rising. "Leave the room at once, and send Purcey here. If she can't walk, let her crawl. I won't indulge niggers in their laziness any longer."

Elva walked toward the door, her first intention being to go, and say no more, but at once make her escape. But she quickly reconsidered, for she must stand between her child and her master. If she attempted escape, she would only be captured and punished. If she remained and faced the punishment consequent upon her deception, she would at least feel that she was but the sacrifice for her child's liberty. Death had no terrors for her; she had accomplished all she could, and was ready now to suffer. Upon reaching the door, she turned to her mistress, and said:

"Miss Jinnie, I'm not crazy, but Purcey is beyond your reach, praise God! She is gone; and I hope, by this time, she's safe on de other side."

Jonathan, who had been busily engaged writing letters, had not paid much attention to what had transpired between his wife and Elva, but now that his attention was attracted by the excited manner of his wife, he arose from his seat in time to catch Elva's last remark.

"What is that you say?" he demanded, as he approached the woman. "Where has she gone? You

don't mean that she is dead, do you?" and his voice softened. He thought, perhaps, she was dead from the way Elva spoke, a way that the negroes had of speaking of the dead; as, "having crossed over the chilly waters of Jordan," or "beyond this vale of tears," and many other quaint and original sayings. But when Elva informed him what she really meant, he was, indeed, surprised.

"No, Massa Johnnie, she's not dead, but free, free! I hope safe—"

Before she could utter another word, Jonathan had her by the throat.

"You lie, you hag, you. Tell me the truth or I'll strangle you," he said, between his clinched teeth. "Where has she gone? when did she go? Speak!" and, as he said this, he hurled her from him. She caught her breath and laughed tauntingly at her master.

"No use, Massa Johnnie. You can beat and you can kill, but whar she's gone and when she went you'll never know."

Then, with a laugh that rung in Jonathan's ears until his death, she rushed by him out of the room. Mrs. Maxwell had sunk into a chair from fright, and was really applying her own smelling-salts. Jonathan soon followed Elva, summoning the overseer, and directing him to secure Elva and confine her until further orders. Returning to his wife, he consulted as to what was best to do. She suggested that Elva be punished until she told all she knew. Act-

ing upon this suggestion, he instructed Lewis, the overseer, to punish Elva in whatever manner he saw fit, in order to make her divulge what she knew.

The commission could not have been delegated to one more faithful and willing. It was seldom that any of the house-servants were handed over to be castigated by him, and for the many years he had been upon the Maxwell place, he had never had the opportunity of punishing Elva or any of her children, and when he assured Jonathan that he would bring her about, he meant to do it, or kill her in the attempt.

Jonathan was chagrined and greatly put out at the idea of being so cleverly outwitted by Elva. That she must be sold was a settled thing, but something must be learned from her as to the length of time Purcey had been gone. Pursuit would be foolishness until this could be ascertained. All the negroes about the place were closely questioned, but not one knew of her disappearance, thus forcing him to the conclusion that Elva alone could furnish the desired information.

One of the most important things that slaves were impressed with was that they were subordinate to the will of the master, and any infraction of that will would be visited with terrible consequences. They were taught that the white man was supposed to do their thinking; his word was law, and his will theirs. An example must be made of Elva in order that the other slaves would profit by it. Jonathan would

have liked to have captured Purcey, but as he did not know whether she had been gone a day or a week, he was not very hopeful. When Lewis received instructions to punish Elva, he at once proceeded to carry out his mission. He did not have much trouble in finding her, as she had gone directly to one of the cabins, where, falling upon her knees, she was engaged in an earnest prayer when he entered. Walking up to the woman, he seized her roughly by the arm, and said :

“Git up here, you she-devil; I’ll give you something to pray for,” and he led the way to the corn-crib, which immediately adjoined the barn, and was, at this time, quite empty. He pushed her in, procured a rope, passed it around her wrist, then threw it over a beam and hoisted her body up until her feet just slightly touched the floor. When he had thus secured her, he left her, saying that, when she got ready to talk, she would be taken down.

She was left in this position for several hours, until every sinew in her body had been extended to its utmost tension. Still she remained silent. Finding the woman still stubborn, Lewis decided upon a more severe punishment. He, thereupon, released her and dragged her to the carriage-room. Her hands were placed in a vise and squeezed until the blood spurted from the ends of her fingers. The woman sank to the floor, writhing in pain, but not a word escaped her lips. Leaving her in this condition, with swollen arms and bleeding fingers, he procured an-

other rope, and summoning one of the other men to assist him, raised the prostrate form of the woman and lashed it to an upright post. He then bared her back, and with the end of a heavy leather trace, beat her until his arm became so tired that he could not raise it. Dissolving a quantity of salt in water, he dashed it upon her now lacerated and bleeding back. After releasing her, she sank to the floor, an almost lifeless mass of humanity.

There she was left to wallow in her own blood, and to die the death of a dog. Lewis recognized now that he had gone too far. But what had he to fear? The law would not prosecute him, even in event of her death. He had but to declare that she had raised her hand against him, and he would be vindicated; for it was death by the law for a negro to raise his hand against a white man. The punishment inflicted by Lewis upon Elva was cruel, so much so that we wonder that a human heart could be so brutal as to instigate such suffering. But there was no cruelty, no brutality, that the human mind could conceive, that the negroes were not made to suffer. The very devil himself must have been the originator of some of their cruelties.

Elva was unable to move from the spot where she sank down, and as she lay there writhing and groaning from pain, not a person dared go near her. Elo had been working in the field all day, and did not learn that her mother had been beaten until her return at night. Nobody ever noticed her, and she

only gained the information by hearing others speak of it. When she finally learned where her mother was, she determined upon going to her. Favored by the darkness, she gained an entrance to the carriage-house, and guided by the groans of her mother, she groped her way to her. Placing her hands upon the body, she whispered :

“Mamma, mamma, is dis you?”

Elva's only answer was a groan. Elo's eyes soon became accustomed to the darkness, and when she discovered the pitiable condition of her mother, uncouth, untutored as she was, she broke out in a paroxysm of grief. Leaving her mother, she clambered into the loft and obtained some straw. She then procured bedding and made a rude couch, and after considerable exertion, at the expense of a great deal of pain to her mother, she succeeded in getting her body in a more comfortable position. Having done this, she went and obtained food and water, and, with her mother's head upon her lap, insisted upon her partaking of it. When Elva recognized who it was that was treating her so kindly, she endeavored to place her arm around the child's neck, whispering :

“God bless you, honey, God bless you!”

The child was overcome with joy upon hearing her mother's voice, and, regardless of the pain she caused, she wildly threw her arms about her neck, exclaiming :

“Oh, mamma, you is all right; isn't you?”

“Yes, honey,” replied the mother. “I'se all right,

but I'se goin' to leave you. I hear de music; I'se nearin' de river; give me yo hand, chile."

"Oh, took me wid you, mamma; I don't want to stay har! Whar you gwine?"

Elo did not fully realize her mother's pitiful condition, nor did she understand the meaning of her words. She did not know that, in a few moments, all that was mortal of her mother would be lifeless.

"I can't take you now, chile," said Elva, "but be good and you'll come bye and bye. Look yonder, honey! See de angels! Hark! hear de music. Good-bye, Massa Johnnie, Elva's—free—free at last!"

With these words, her head fell heavily upon the child's bosom. A smile overspread her face, and her eyes were closed in death. Thus died this slave-mother, sacrificing her life that her child might enjoy freedom, a martyr to liberty, and, although denied every opportunity to cultivate a mind undoubtedly possessed of great natural powers, yet her life was a bright luminary among those with whom she dwelt.

Come, Jonathan Maxwell, and view your work! Gaze upon the lifeless form of this woman! See if you cannot realize what you have done—a father sold, a mother and son fleeing for what you enjoy unrestrained, and at your feet a lifeless form, made so by your command! Is the master's will obeyed? Is the brutality of your overseer satiated?

Elo called upon her mother to speak again, but the lips remained motionless. The child had never before been in the presence of death, and, realizing that

something unusual had happened her mother, she set up such a terrible screaming that, in a short time, nearly everybody upon the place was alarmed. When they rushed into the carriage-house, they beheld a sight that almost froze the marrow in their bones. The body was removed and laid away with the ceremony which the other slaves were permitted to bestow, and Brother Beldin discussed her virtues to a weeping and sympathetic audience. The mother-earth closed over Elva's remains, but no stone or other emblem marks her resting-place; and she lives only in the memory of those for whom she sacrificed so much, and in that of Jonathan, who never forgot the last look she gave him.

Uncle Joshua wore crape upon his battered white hat for many long days, and Elo, who never became reconciled to her mother's punishment and death, grew so vicious that whipping had no effect upon her, and she was sold to the traders and taken South.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE TEACHER AND HER PUPIL CROSS THE LINE.

The old stage-coach in which Purcey and Sallie had taken passage rumbled through the narrow street of a small village, and stopped in front of a rather modest and unpretentious-looking dwelling. The driver alighted and informed them that the occupant of the house was a widow lady, who would, perhaps, give them accommodation. Sallie left Purcey and the child in the stage and approached the house. She raised the heavy brass knocker, and the sound, as it fell, seemed to reëcho throughout the house. In response to the knock, the door was opened by a tall, matronly-looking female, with a sad face, the corners of the mouth well drawn down; a pair of eyes of a greenish tint looked over a pair of bowed spectacles, and her gray hair was done up in crisp curls, which could just be seen beneath a black lace cap; a black gown and a black apron adorned the figure, and the rather sombre appearance of the woman was only relieved by a white collar which encircled her neck, protruding about an inch above the black band of the dress.

Sallie made known her wants to this individual, stating that she wanted accommodation for herself,

a servant, and a child. The Widow Thorn informed her that she would accommodate them the best she could, and invited her in. Purcey and the child followed. They were ushered into a small, but neat, parlor, where a cheerful fire was burning in an open fire place. It was still raining, and our travelers were tired and hungry. The widow busied herself in making them comfortable, paying all attention to Sallie, as a matter of course. When she had assisted her in removing her wraps, she said:

“Now, miss, the servant can take the child and go into the kitchen, where she will find a comfortable fire.”

“No,” said Sallie, “I prefer her to remain here with me.”

The widow raised her eyes in surprise, but said nothing. When the meal which Sallie had ordered was prepared, it was announced by a rather diminutive, hungry-looking servant girl, who ambled into the parlor and stared first at Sallie, then at Purcey, finally stating that “missa said de white lady was to come to supper.”

They both, however, followed her into the dining-room, which was small like the parlor, but equally as neat. Sallie looked at the table, and saw that preparations had been made for herself only. She asked for an additional chair for Purcey, which was placed at the table. The widow again looked surprised. While they ate, she carefully scanned the child, concluding that Purcey was the mother. She was some-

what puzzled, as she could not understand how it was that a young white lady, traveling with a servant, permitted that servant to carry about with her a child of which she was evidently the mother. Deeming it impertinent to ask any questions, she decided to control her curiosity until she could consult her adviser.

The Widow Thorm, as she was called throughout the village, was well known to the residents of that quiet little hamlet. She earned rather a respectable living by keeping boarders, and was possessed of all the qualities of the average boarding-house mistress, combining a considerable degree of cleverness with a confiding nature. Her house was liberally patronized during the summer season, by people seeking quiet from the noise and bustle of city life, and its limited quarters were often taxed to the fullest extent.

While the widow had great confidence in herself, yet she entertained much respect for the views and opinions of her friend, Dr. Parloe, a gentleman who compounded medicines and attended the ills of the village sick. This was the adviser whom she intended to consult.

After Sallie and Purcey had finished their meal, they returned to the parlor, where the widow awaited them. As they entered, she addressed Sallie, saying :

“I shall have to place your servant in the room with mine, as I have no other place for her to sleep.”

“Don’t give yourself the least trouble about that,” replied Sallie, “we can both occupy the same room :

in fact, I much prefer it, as I never like to be separated from my servant."

"You don't mean, miss, that you will sleep in the same room with your servant!" said the widow, plainly displaying her astonishment.

"That is just what I mean. My health is not good, and I never sleep without having her in the room with me."

The widow was a lady who believed that there was no level upon which black and white could meet. She had entertained, under her hospitable roof, all classes of people, but never before had she come in contact with a white lady who desired her negro servant to sleep in the same room with her. It was not that she was prejudiced, but it was so contrary to all custom. She was astonished when they ate at the same table; but now, they were to sleep in the same room, and, as she had made no other arrangements, probably in the same bed. She was outdone. Who could this strange couple be? Purcey was fair and handsome, but it was evident that she was of negro descent, for the child clearly betrayed that fact. Sallie was comely, but, to all appearance, a mistress, yet she did not understand their relations.

Like all women, the widow was curious, but she said to Sallie:

"Well, miss, I shall arrange the room, and you can retire whenever you see fit. Of course, if you have no objection to your servant occupying the same

room with you, why, I am sure I have none," and she left the room with a look of disgust.

Sallie laughed, and, turning to Purcey, said:

"She seems quite curious, does she not?"

"Yes," answered Purcey. "I only hope her curiosity will not lead her too far. We are in a strange country, and I so fear some one will suspect us; we must be very cautious so as not to arouse any suspicion. I don't think I can sleep much to-night, although I am very tired."

"I am tired, too," said Sallie, drawing near to Purcey, and speaking in a low voice, "but I shall watch while you sleep, and you can do the same while I sleep."

They did not have time to say anything more, for the diminutive servant of the widow appeared, and announced that their room was ready. They followed her upstairs to a tidy bed room, and, after giving orders to be called in time for the early morning stage, they locked themselves in the room. They both needed rest, so, after having discussed their plans for the next day, Sallie retired while Purcey kept watch.

The Widow Thorm had betaken herself to the little parlor after her guest had retired. Having stirred up the fire, she placed upon a table a tray containing a cup and saucer, and a good-sized silver tea-urn. She smoothed out the wrinkles in her dress, adjusted her cap, and seated herself as though in waiting for some one. She had been seated for some time. her

mind engaged with thoughts of her guest, when the outer door opened, and the footsteps of a man were heard in the hallway. The widow did not appear anyway alarmed, but waited until the man made his appearance. As he entered the room, she arose, approached him, and relieved him of his hat and cane, her face wearing a most benign smile, and her greenish eyes twinkling with delight.

The person who had just entered the widow's domicile in such a familiar manner was Doctor Parloe, the village apothecary and medical adviser, and the Widow Thorm's legal and medical adviser. He was a very frequent, as well as a welcome, visitor. It may have been a late hour for a lone lady to receive a visitor, but then the doctor could not come until after business hours, and if there were any impropriety in the lateness of the hour, the circumstances under which he called made him feel privileged. Doctor Parloe was a man who had seen some fifty odd years. His experience in life had been such as to make him a very practical man, yet there are things in the life of some men, although of fifty years' experience, that are criticised by the world. But the world is cynical at any rate, and if Doctor Parloe had schooled himself to have opinions in which other men refused to concur, why, he simply pronounced all those who differed with him as fools. He was not a misanthropist—that is, in the strict sense—yet he had little regard for mankind, and no respect for their opinions when they differed from his. He was

philosophic, so he thought and so the widow thought. That a man like the doctor should condescend to give his valuable time to a person like the Widow Thorm, would have appeared remarkable, were it not for the fact that, no matter how lofty man soars, he must find some congenial companionship on this mundane sphere. In the widow, the doctor found what he could not find in others—a good listener, a generous soul, a confiding nature, and one who never disputed his opinions. He was, as we have said, a frequent and welcome visitor at the widow's. No matter when he came, a generous supply of cold tea, a favorite beverage of the doctor's, was always on hand. He generally remained until the tea was exhausted and Thorm, as he called her, was weighted down with his logic and would grow disinterested.

In appearance, the doctor was anything but philosophical, being rotund in form and possessing a very broad and very red face, with a rim of whiskers that ran from one ear to the other, under a very fat chin which rested upon his cravat. His head was decorated with a few scattered hairs, which formed a circle around the lower part, leaving the top utterly bare. He had but one eye, but it was a brilliant and fiery orb; its luster seemed never to be dimmed. Seating himself at the table, on which sat the tea urn, he, without ceremony, filled his cup and turned the full effulgence of that single eye upon the widow, who sat opposite him.

The widow invariably permitted the doctor to

open the conversation, her part being to give quiet acquiescence. In fact, the doctor assumed the right to speak before being spoken to, and one of his chief reasons for visiting the widow so often was because she was so good a listener. But to-night she was burning up with curiosity, and she overleaped the bounds of all precedent, and shocked the doctor so severely that it took him some time to recover. The widow broke out almost as soon as he was seated:

“Doctor Parloe, something very remarkable has happened in the house. Pray, what do you think?”

Now, the first remark, notwithstanding the fact that the widow had committed a breach, was all right; but when she asked the doctor what he thought, the arm with which he was conveying the cup of tea to his lips stopped half way, his eye opened wide, his lips parted, and he stared at the woman in such a manner as to forcibly remind her of what she had done. She was about to apologize, when he set the cup down and said, in a slow, deliberate manner:

“I think, I think, Thorm, that you are a fool,” and, raising his cup of tea, he drank it at a draught.

Thorm did not stop for this, but broke in by saying: “But, doctor, this is really important, and I want your opinion.”

“That,” said he, “you shall have, but I hope you will not forget yourself again. Always remember the distance between the philosophic and the unphilosophic mind; always have a due regard for those

who, by their great abilities, are distinctive in their natures. Proceed."

"To-night," began the widow, "there came here a lady with a negro-servant. The servant had a child. When I proposed that she (the servant) eat in the kitchen, the lady objected, and—"

"There!" said the doctor, raising his hand and closing his eye. "You need not go any further, she is an abolitionist."

"But that is not all," continued the widow. "When I informed her I could not give the servant sleeping accommodation unless she slept in the same room with mine, she horrified me by telling me they could both sleep in the same room. Isn't it awful?"

"Not at all," said the doctor, "not at all. That goes to prove my theory more conclusively. She is a black abolitionist, that is my opinion. Now, my advice is, that you devote your time exclusively to your own business, and don't interfere with that of your neighbors; and if a young white woman so far forgets her elevated station as to eat at the same table and sleep in the same room with a black woman, don't you do it."

The widow had, of course, nothing more to say after this opinion and admonition. He was allowed to indulge in his usual evening's talk, the widow sitting a patient listener. The subject of the guest was not touched upon any more, and when the doctor had finished his last cup of tea and the last of the tea, the widow caught herself nodding acquiescence to some-

thing she had not heard. He bade her good-night, with this parting injunction: "Remember, Thorm, all you have to do with the strangers is to collect your bill before they depart, and don't interfere with that which don't concern you."

The former part of this advice was unnecessary, as she rarely, if ever, lost a bill. The widow was not at all satisfied with the doctor's advice or opinion; her curiosity was not appeased, but, placing implicit confidence in his conclusions, she forced herself to accept them in lieu of anything better, and retired for the night.

The next day broke forth with all the beauty and favor that nature could bestow. There was but little more than the usual bustle about the Widow Thorm's hostelry, and at the appointed hour the stage-coach drove up to the door; the widow's rather exorbitant bill was settled by Sallie, and once more Purcey set her face toward freedom. Purcey's object now was to travel, without another stop, direct to Canada. She had selected as short a route as was safe for them to take. Having reached the town of E——, in Pennsylvania, she was at last in sight of the promised land. The long, gray strip of land stretched out before her gaze presented an inviting view; it was the refuge for which she longed—the Canaan of her hopes. Her heart throbbed with joy unutterable as she beheld it, but a wide expanse of water intervened between her and liberty, as well as difficulties not anticipated. She and Sallie could not take a boat and

cross boldly. To do this, she feared, would create suspicion that might lead to inquiries not easily or satisfactorily answered. Sallie had no papers in her possession to show that she was the mistress, nor did she know anything of this requirement. Purcey did, however, and thought of it more than once during their travels. She was confident that Jonathan had advertised her; and the points that, she was certain, would be watched were all Northern places affording passage to Canada.

They had reached the place where they now were at night, and were quartered at a small tavern. They could not leave their present place of concealment in daylight, and Purcey feared to leave it at night, except alone. This necessitated a separation from Sallie. She further realized that she must cross the lake under the care and protection of some one person. Now, where was that person to be found, and who would it be? They were sitting in their room, Sallie engaged in reading, while Purcey's brain was actively engaged in struggling with the above thoughts. Remembering that she had seen a negro boy doing chores about the house, she decided to gain, if possible, some information from him. Perhaps he could guide her across the lake, or direct her to some one who could. Sallie must, however, approach him and procure the necessary information. Having reached this conclusion, she proceeded to disclose to Sallie her plans. She said:

“Sallie, you know that we are now in sight of

Canada, but we cannot cross the lake together. You must go ahead and wait for me."

"Why must I leave you?" said Sallie, raising her eyes from her book with a look of astonishment. "Would you not be safer with me? Cannot both of us cross safely?"

"No," said Purcey, "you have no papers to prove that I am your property, should any one question us. It would be better that you take the boat to-morrow, and I shall follow at night with the child."

"I fear," exclaimed Sallie, who now began to realize the danger her friend was in; "that something might befall you. Why not entrust the child to my care?"

Purcey would not listen to this, but insisted that Sallie should precede her.

"You must do one thing for me before you leave," she said. "You must try and secure some information from the boy who attended us upon our arrival as to how I shall get across the lake."

"I will," said Sallie, "but I do so dislike to leave you. There is great danger in your being alone."

"Don't fear," was Purcey's reply; and she gave a smile of assurance to Sallie that somewhat allayed her fears. "I will reach those shores," and she pointed in direction of Canada, "or die in the attempt." As she gave utterance to these words, her beautiful face colored a crimson hue, and her eyes flashed like fire.

The following day, Sallie got the boy to the room under pretense of having him wait upon her. From

him she ascertained that a station of the Underground Railroad was located within a few miles of the town, and if Purcey could reach that point, she would have no difficulty in getting across the lake.

When Purcey heard this, she was delighted. She knew what the Underground Railroad was, and she felt that she would be safely conducted to freedom through its agency. The boy gave her the necessary instructions how to reach it, and bidding Sallie farewell, directing her to look for her on the following day, Purcey retired to her room with her child. Sallie informed the landlord that she would return for her servant in a few days. Having been duly paid in advance for their board, that worthy gave himself no concern as to whether she returned or not within the specified time.

Purcey retired to the little room lately occupied by her friend, and from the window watched the stage until it disappeared from sight. Turning from the window, she caught a glimpse of a man standing directly under it, peering up in her face. As soon as she discovered the man, a feeling of fear overcame her; she soon recalled to her mind where she had seen that face before. There were the little, ferret-like eyes, the beardless face, the shabby-genteel hat, the threadbare clothing, and the suave smile of Mr. Jamison, whom she had seen on the train.

Jamison recognized her at a glance, and as he did so, he slapped his knee with his hand, saying:

“Well—ah—by Jove! that’s the gal that gave us

the slip. Oh, if Sledger was only here!" But Sledger was not there, he having returned South with some slaves whom he had claimed as his own, proving them by fictitious papers prepared by Jamison, who was now traveling about, earning a penny anywhere and any way he could. He had no thought of ever seeing Purcey again, and was now greatly surprised.

He did not know where Sallie was, not having seen her take her departure, but he could find out something about them by inquiring at the tavern. Entering the tavern, he sought the landlord and learned from him of Sallie's departure and her intention to return in a couple of days, which, of course, left Purcey alone.

Now, Mr. Jamison was not a brave man, but he was a shrewd one, and he quickly concluded that if he could gain possession of Purcey and spirit her away before Sallie's return, he could make a profitable speculation on his own hook. He decided to watch her movements and to take advantage of the first opportunity to kidnap her. He could find ready hands to assist him in this business, and he lost no time in securing them.

Purcey knew the man had recognized her, and she became greatly alarmed; she did not leave her room, but waited patiently for darkness, intending to start for the place to which she had been directed, where she would find assistance in crossing the lake. She thought of employing the negro boy to escort her; then she feared compromising him. The directions

given her led her over an unfrequented path through a lonely woods, but the course was so direct, she felt confident that she would not be lost. Knowing nothing of the country and attempting such a hazardous thing without a guide caused her to hesitate, but she feared that if she remained about the tavern too long, the man whom she had seen might attack her, and, now that Sallie was gone, take her back.

The sun had not buried itself behind the western hills many hours before Purcey, leading her child by the hand, stole quietly from a rear door of the tavern, passed through the stable-yard unnoticed, and made directly for a piece of woods some distance beyond. She had gotten but a short distance, when two men started in pursuit of her. The men did not try to overtake her, but kept her in sight and endeavored to keep from being seen. Reaching the woods, Purcey stopped, fastened her dress up around her waist, lifted her child upon her back, and started off on a brisk trot. She traveled for some distance this way, until she became fatigued. Stopping to rest, she heard the rapid approach of footsteps. The moon was now shining brightly, shedding its pale light over field and forest, and aiding this plucky young woman along her course.

The zephyr-like breeze gently stirred the leaves, and the notes of the katydids and crickets went up clear and distinct in the otherwise silent night. She was not mistaken; rapidly were footsteps approaching. She grasped the child and started again; on, on, she rushed,

over briars and bushes. She had struck the right path, and she followed it without deviation. The bushes would catch her skirts, but she tarried not for this, nor did she stop to look around; for she knew that she was being pursued, and she must elude her pursuers. On she rushed, her heart set upon gaining liberty for herself and child. She did not for a moment stop to think of husbanding her strength in case of being overtaken, but kept madly on. Her limbs soon began to weaken, her gait slacken, and she heard the voices of men. Looking around, she beheld two men approaching her; one of them was Jamison. She saw now it was useless to fly, so she determined to make a fight. Liberty was a precious boon, and if she could not enjoy that, then she preferred death. Placing her child upon the ground, and standing between it and the two men, who were now within a few yards of her, she raised her eyes to heaven and exclaimed: "Oh God, Almighty Father, protect me with Thy strong arm!"

The child clung to her dress, and looked innocently into her face. She stooped and kissed it, and it smiled. The smile gave her courage, for she realized that two lives must be protected, the one even dearer than her own. From her pocket she drew forth her master's silver-mounted pistol, and awaited the approach of the men. Mr. Jamison got within a few feet of her, when she leveled the weapon at him, and commanded him to halt, which he did, falling in the rear of his

companion. Being now in a safer position, he cried out:

“Put that toy away, my dear; you might hurt somebody.”

“That’s my intention,” replied Purcey. “What are you following me for?”

“Well, ah,” said Jamison, “a fellow can’t talk looking down the muzzle of a thing like that.”

“What do you want?” demanded the woman.

Jamison now directed his companion to speak.

“I am a constable, and have authority to arrest you. Put down that pistol, or I will shoot you.” As he said this, he attempted to raise his arm, when Purcey quickly exclaimed:

“Move an inch, and I will blow your brains out.” Continuing, she said: “Gentlemen, I don’t intend to be arrested, and I command you to leave me. I will give you one minute.” She kept her eye upon them, and the pistol in position.

The child had been clinging to her dress. Growing frightened, he began to cry, and, consequently, diverted her attention. Fearing that he would get away from her, she reached for him, and as she did so, Jamison exclaimed:

“At her, Canby!”

Canby sprang forward, and immediately the report of a pistol, mingled with the music of the katydids and crickets and the groans of Canby, sounded upon the still night air. Another report rang out, and the form of Jamison could be seen making a serpentine

winding in and out from behind the trees. He did not stop to see whether his companion was dead or alive. Canby was seriously, but not fatally, wounded, and lay upon the ground perfectly helpless.

Seizing her child again, the woman swung him upon her back, and fairly flew through thicket and brush, over fences, and across ditches. She ran as though pursued by a legion of demons. Not once did she slacken her speed, until she came in sight of a little log hut, whose outlines could be distinctly discerned in the moonlight. She hurriedly gave the signal which had been given her, and presently a man made his appearance at the door, waving a lantern around his head three times. She advanced cautiously toward the house, and, upon reaching it, was conducted inside. Being overcome by the weight of the child and the exciting chase she had had, she sank almost lifeless upon the floor. Kind hands soon brought her back to consciousness, when she expressed a desire to continue her journey at once. A guide conducted her in a circuitous route to the lake, where they embarked in a small boat, and were soon out upon the waters. She felt that she was now almost a free woman.

In a short time, the boat grated upon the Canadian shore; and scarcely waiting for it to be landed upon the dry beach, she seized her child and sprang ashore. Falling upon her knees, she thanked God for her safe delivery. She cried, she prayed. She shouted and sung by turns. Grasping her child in her arms,

she pressed it to her bosom and covered its brow with kisses. Then she prayed for her mother and husband. The one was beyond the reach of her prayers, and the other was almost, at that moment, plunging into a deeper slavery than he had ever yet known.

Sallie was found, and when the two women met, there was a joyful time. Purcey felt under many obligations to her friend, and was profuse in her thanks. Together they set about to perfect arrangements to communicate with Purcey's husband, and, if possible, secure his freedom. It was found a difficult matter to decide what steps to take to obtain this end, as letters would avail nothing, and a visit by Sallie to the old home would probably be attended with great danger. Purcey believed that William would follow her by escaping at the first opportunity, and concluded to trust in Providence and await his coming. Securing for herself and child a home, she settled down in the expectation of seeing him soon. Sallie obtained a profitable situation, and the companionship between them remained fast and firm.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WILLIAM'S STRIKE FOR FREEDOM.

The cavalcade, consisting of horses, wagons, drivers, and negroes, behind which Jass Lillie rode, made rapid progress on its way southward. Lillie viewed with complacency and satisfaction the rich speculation and the magnificent bargains he had made in his purchase. It was his custom to reach a town, if possible, by night, where a jail was located, in order to place his herd safely under lock and key. He had two reasons for doing this: first, entire safety against any of them running away was guaranteed; second, it gave him an opportunity to seek a tavern and indulge in that popular Southern game of draw-poker, undisturbed by thoughts of his herd being quartered in a field and the chances of any of them escaping. He was making as direct for Georgia as he could, and had gotten well down into the southern part of Virginia without any unusual mishap. The drivers were being urged to reach the borders of North Carolina just as rapidly as possible, realizing that the farther South they reached, the less chance was there for any to escape.

The women and children in the wagons got along well enough, so far as being relieved of the hardships of traveling by foot was concerned. The men were

greatly fatigued, wearied, and foot-sore. The manacles about their wrists and the chains to which they were attached had caused their limbs to become swollen and painful. No matter whether the horses went fast or slow, these people, being attached to the wagon, were consequently dragged along over the rough roads. William was accustomed to hardships; he came from a cruel, heartless master; his back attested, by the many marks upon it, that the bull-whip was no new thing to him. He had been struck down like an ox and beaten until he could not stand; but he was now experiencing a hardship to which he was quite unaccustomed. When he was sold by Judge Coleman to Lillie, he was not burdened with an extensive wardrobe. If such had been the case, Lillie would have relieved him, for in that worthy's estimation, one of the most useless things to a negro was a wardrobe. Sufficient clothing to cover nakedness was all he permitted to negroes under his paternal care, whether male or female. The wear and tear upon the clothes of the men had reduced nearly all of them to a state of nudity.

William's shoes had completely parted company with his feet, which were cut, bruised, and swollen; and as he sat with his back against the cold stone wall of the prison, where Lillie had incarcerated them for the night, it took all of the manhood he had to conceal from those around him the tears which tried to force their way from his eyes. His thoughts wandered back to his former home, to the sad separation

from his wife and child. He thought of how he had left her lying prostrate upon the floor, and the last message he left for her, that he would escape the first chance he got. Where were that wife and child now? Were they still in bondage, or had they escaped? While sitting there, fatigued in body, foot-sore, and sick at heart, with the ring of the voices of his fellow-slaves, now released from their chains, singing, patting juba, and dancing, having not a care or a thought of their miserable condition, William fell into a fitful sleep.

When he awoke, he gazed about in a dazed manner, as though he did not realize where he was. He had been dreaming, and in that dream he had seen his wife and child make their escape into freedom. He had seen them pursued by the "nigger-catchers" and bloodhounds, but they seemed to be borne along upon wings, so swiftly did they fly through brush and brier, over rocks and through streams. On they sped, until a great, bright light rose up before them. A cloud sailed through the heavens, then it slowly descended to earth, between them and their pursuers. A land now appeared whose shores seemed tinted with a golden hue. There, standing with outstretched arms, were many familiar faces beaming with smiles, who seemed to await them, and as they stepped upon the golden shores, the air resounded with joyous shouts.

Like most slaves, William placed great confidence in dreams. There was no picture figured in the brain

while in the arms of Morpheus, no matter how fanciful, that was not generally subject to interpretation among the slaves. They had no dream-books, but they had wonderful memories and suggestive imaginations; and every dream, whether induced by an overloaded stomach or restlessness from a severe castigation, had its meaning. People who believe in these unaccountable wanderings of the mind say that dreams are contrary, but it was not so with William. He believed the dream he had was true; he believed his wife and child were either in a free land or were making an effort to reach one. That the dream was a revelation to him from an unseen power, was convincing to his untutored and superstitious mind. It caused him to reflect, and reflection caused him to act.

Every step he now took bore him farther and farther away. The hope of keeping the promise made his wife began to grow more and more faint. There was no time to lose, for if he ever expected to escape, now was his time. He did not know the exact destination of Lillie, but he knew that they were bound for the South, and at the first good slave-market reached, outside the boundaries of Virginia, he was as liable to be sold as any of the rest. That they were in the extreme southern portion of his native State he was aware; he could not, however, correctly judge the exact time when the line would be crossed, but felt that it was near. In this conclusion, he was correct.

A favorable opportunity to escape, as well as an early one, was now his only hope. Why had he not acted long before this—why had he waited until carried miles from his former home into a strange country, of which he knew nothing? William had now reached that point where he found it necessary to help himself. He had appealed to Heaven for assistance, but had made no effort toward putting into operation the means with which nature had provided him. A courageous heart, strong arms, and stout limbs were his; and if he would be free, if he would gaze again upon his loved ones, these must be put to use.

From his present confinement, he could not hope to escape; he must wait until they again encamped in the open air. The sun had scarcely risen in the track of the receding moon, when the drivers entered the jail and began preparations for another hard day's travel. Women and children were tumbled unceremoniously into the wagons, and the men roughly pushed in their places. Lillie's drivers were unusually hilarious, a fact which made them still more brutal, and it was evident to the most casual observer that they had been indulging freely in apple-jack, or something equally as stimulating. Everything now being in readiness, the cavalcade was set in motion. The horses were given the whip, and the wagons rumbled through the streets of the sleepy town, past fields and plantations in which poor slaves were laboring, the sun not yet fully risen. They had

traveled several miles at rather a rapid pace, the horses on a keen jump and the manacled and chained men dragged along behind the wagon with the same speed. The horses were finally allowed to proceed slowly in order that Lillie, who had been left behind, might overtake them. The sun continued to creep higher and higher, until the full effulgence of its rays beat down upon the earth. The hours passed, but still Lillie did not come.

When it came time to feed, a halt was made, and while some of the negro men were released to attend the horses, the drivers regaled themselves from the well-filled bottle with which they were provided. Having waited a considerable length of time, they were now in a quandary what to do, not having received orders before leaving. They concluded that, as they were enjoying their whisky and the shade of some friendly trees, they could wait. The wagons were turned out of the road, a field was taken possession of, and every preparation made to camp for the night. One of the drivers approached William and said:

“Bill, I want you to stand guard to-night and see that none of these niggers git away; I guess I can trust you.”

William saw from the man's actions that he had been imbibing pretty freely, and he quickly guessed the reason why he was selected to do guard duty over his fellow-slaves, for not one of the drivers was

in a fit condition to keep awake an hour, so overcome were they by their indulgence. He replied:

“Yes, massa, I’ll do de best I can, but won’t nobody else help me?”

“Help you! What in the h—l do you want with help? Ain’t they all chained? I’ll help you if anything goes wrong. Help you! Ain’t I here? All you got to do is watch them niggers; I’ll look out for the help.”

This was said in a maudlin voice, and he reeled back to where his comrades were stretched out upon the ground, filling the air with ribald songs and drunken laughter.

Afar off in the west could be seen the beautiful crimson tint of the sky, the sun having lowered itself as if to kiss the earth. A gray mist arose in the distance, presenting the appearance of a veil about to conceal from the eye the beauty of a Southern sunset.

William stood by the side of one of the wagons and began to think whether, at last, Providence had not heard his prayers. But where was Lillie? When would he come, and how long would he be left free, at least free from his manacles?

While thus meditating, his attention was attracted by a woman who stepped out of the wagon and beckoned to him. She was a frightful-looking creature, black as a coal, with bleared eyes, long, skinny hands, pinched features, and her head encased in a fiery red

bandanna handkerchief, but she was perfectly upright in form and very tall.

He did not approach her, but she came to him and said abruptly :

“Wah you from?”

William told her without hesitating.

“I’se from dis bery place wah we am now,” said the woman, as she looked in the direction of the drivers. Drawing close to him, she hissed into his ear :

“You’se a fool.”

“What you mean?” said William, drawing back from her suddenly.

“What I mean?” she said, and ejaculated “Umph!”

As she gave utterance to this sound, she displayed all of her teeth. Pointing in the direction of the drivers, who had now fallen into a drunken sleep, she continued.

“See dem? Go, leab : take de wings ob de mornin’, and fly to freedom. What you stay har for? You want to go Souf wah you never git back? Take to de mountains yonder ; day can’t git dogs, nobody knows dem har ; besides, dey ain’t got time to hunt you nowadays.”

William realized the force of the woman’s logic, but he did not understand her interest in him, so he said, with an incredulous air :

“But Mars Lillie, whar is he? Suppose he’d ketch me?”

“Mars Lillie won’t be har to-night ; and if he does cotch you, you won’t be sold no funder Souf. Didn’t I

hear you talkin' in yo' sleep 'bout yo' wife and child? Fool, would you stay har when you kin go take to de mountains? I tells you trust to de Lord, He'll guide you. Go, I tell you, for Judah she's goin' now," and her eyes gleamed for a moment, her teeth glistened, and she glided noiselessly into the fast-gathering gloom.

William stood almost transfixed. He aroused himself from his lethargy. Glancing in the direction of the drivers, he surmised from their heavy and irregular breathing that they were sleeping soundly. But another difficulty confronted him. All of the men over whom he had charge were within sight, and he feared that to start with their knowledge would lead to immediate betrayal. They must be misled. Walking over to them, William said:

"Boys, how is you resting?"

They informed him that they were resting as comfortably as possible under the circumstances.

"I wish," said William, "that I could relieb you. I'se goin' down the road a piece to see what I can find to eat. If I git somethin' good, we'll all have a treat. Keep quiet, and don't waken the bosses."

William had touched them in a tender place, and a promise of something good to eat bought a silence that nothing else could have done. Half starved and greatly fatigued, it will not be wondered at that they bade him God-speed, with pleadings to hurry back. He would have set them all at liberty had he dared, but he feared for his own safety as well as theirs.

Giving them a parting look, he leaped the fence nimbly, and was soon lost to sight in the darkness. He made at once for the mountains as fast as his legs would carry him.

It was a very unusual thing for Jasson Lillie to do anything indiscreet; he was a cool-headed, calculating, business-like "nigger-trader." As we have said, time was money with him, and money was his god. It did not matter to him how he secured it, so that he got it. Speculation was his stronghold, and he would invest wherever he thought there was a reasonable chance to win. With his herd of negroes safely quartered within the hospitable walls of a prison, there was no thought to disturb his prosaic mind, as he took a friendly hand in a game of draw-poker with a number of gentlemen of his profession, at the tavern where he stopped. The game grew interesting, especially to Lillie, as he was playing a winning hand. The hours of the night passed away rapidly, and when the morning approached, it found him still at the card-table. Knowing that his trusty drivers would proceed on their journey, he continued to play until he had successfully broken every one around the table.

Now a man may hate to lose time, and he may have a great love for money; but there are certain laws of nature which are inexorable, and when they lay hold of a victim, he must submit. Lillie had been riding all day, had sat at the card-table all night, and, in the meantime, had absorbed no small quantity of alco-

holic spirits. He had been buoyed up by his good luck and the feeling that he was not only making money, but was losing no time. But when he attempted to start to overtake his cavalcade, he discovered that nature was calling upon him strongly for repose. He submitted, but with his boots on. He reasoned that he could take a few hours' rest, and, with the horse he had, soon overcome the distance they might have gained upon him, believing, also, that their progress would be somewhat retarded by his absence.

Leaving orders to be called in an hour or two, Lillie threw himself upon a bed and slept soundly. By some means, the landlord neglected to call him, and when he awoke, the sun was slowly hiding itself behind the western hills. Springing to his feet, he rubbed his eyes and rushed into the bar-room, which answered, also, as an office; and, after arraigning the landlord in a choice selection of adjectives for his neglect, ordered his horse, and set out to overtake his party. He rode with desperation for several miles, until the trees, hedges, and fences by the road-side could not be discerned, owing to the deep gloom which overspread everything. The moon was at times obscured. Occasionally it would come forth, for a very short time, from behind a great mass of clouds, and relieve the inky darkness in which everything was enveloped. He was familiar with the road, but the darkness compelled him to slacken his speed and keep a sharp look-out for the camp, which, as he

rightly concluded, owing to his absence, would be pitched in some field. He rode thus for several hours, his eyes wandering alternately from one side of the road to the other. His horse was jogging along at a gentle pace, when suddenly there emerged from a piece of woods which skirted the road the tall form of a woman. She crossed the road directly in front of the horse, and waved before his eyes a large, black cloak. Lillie had not seen this seeming apparition in his path, but when his horse reared upon his hind legs, neighing and snorting fiercely, he then caught a glimpse of a figure with gleaming eyes and glittering teeth, standing directly ahead in the darkness.

The sudden and wild plunging of the frightened horse taxed him to keep his seat, though an excellent horseman. He was overcome with fright himself, and, as the animal made a sudden wheel, he lost his balance and fell from the saddle, his spur catching in the stirrup. The horse now started off at a break-neck speed, dragging the body of his unfortunate master over the road to a terrible death. The mangled form of Jasson Lillie was found by the roadside the following day, stiff and stark in death.

The woman who had been the cause of this terrible catastrophe was no less a person than Judah, who had induced William to take his flight. After leaving him, she, by a circuitous route, reached the road, and traveled in the same direction whence they came. She had been raised in the neighborhood, but taken

into the northern part of the State as the property of her young master, who had been married, thus causing her removal. Becoming uncontrollable, she was sold to the traders, and was being taken South with the balance of Lillie's herd.

Her intention was to run away when she left William ; but in order to avoid possible pursuit and capture, she determined to lie in wait for Lillie. Believing that he would be upon the road, and that if she waylaid him and frightened his horse, he, probably giving up to the superstitious fears usually held by men like him, would not make an effort to travel any farther that night, but would retrace his steps to the nearest hospitable roof. How well she succeeded, and the terrible consequence of her success, we know.

William put a great many miles between himself and his unsolicited companions before daylight. Concealing himself in a dense thicket of underbrush, sleep came unbidden to his wearied eyes. The sun was high in the heavens when he awoke, and the excessive strain upon his system began to tell. His limbs were sore and stiff, his feet swollen, and hunger and thirst had besieged him. He dare not move from his place of concealment until after night, and the pain and agony he suffered in those few hours can hardly be described. Those hours were days to him, and when night came at last, and shed its kindly folds over the heavens, he dragged his pain-racked and exhausted body to an open space carpeted with soft, green turf. He looked about, undecided in

what direction to go. Food and drink were the first things to be obtained, but where was he to find them?

In a strange country, not familiar with an inch of the ground, foot-sore and wearied, what should he do? Crawling upon his hands and knees for some distance, he heard voices, which appeared to come from a piece of woods directly in front of him. Elevating his body, he discerned a dim light shining through the trees; the strains of music struck his ear; the merry laugh of a party of night revelers was heard, and he judged that they were slaves enjoying themselves in one of the many cabins in which the country abounded. Creeping nearer, he could hear them singing and dancing to the time of the music; the clapping of hands and shuffling of feet left no doubt in his mind as to the character of the people. A song with the following lines was being loudly sung, while the dancers appeared to be trying their utmost to break through the floor:

“Hannah, walk out in de flor;

Wake up, Miss Liza.

Dance it like you did befor;

Wake up, Miss Liza.

“Watch her cut de pigeon-wing;

Wake up, Miss Liza.

All you darkeys shout and sing;

Wake up, Miss Liza.

“Gents to de right and ladies to de left;

Wake up, Miss Liza.

Everybody do thar best;

Wake up, Miss Liza.”

They continued in this strain for some time, composing line after line as they danced, until every one seemed exhausted. William determined to apply to the occupants for assistance, feeling sure that they would not betray or refuse him. Dragging his body to the door, he rapped softly. In a twinkling, the light went out, and there was a rush made by those inside for the only other exit, the window. He at once surmised that the inmates of the cabin thought they were about to be assailed by the patrol, and cried out:

“Friends, friends, it’s only a poor runaway.”

A nappy head was poked around the corner of the house, and, seeing but a single man at the door, it was followed by the burly form of a coal-black man, who approached the crouching form of William and said:

“Look har, stranger, you come mighty near being squashed, does you know it? What you doing har?”

By this time, the door was opened and a light made, and the frightened revelers were summoned back. William aroused much sympathy by the earnestness with which he appealed to them for food and shelter. The man who had first addressed him said:

“Wal, brudder, dis am a little dangerous procality fur you. We can gib you somethin’ to eat, but you’d better take to de mountins at once, or de traders might kotch you agin.”

William entered the cabin, notwithstanding this

piece of advice, and seated himself in a corner, when plenty of food was given him. The singing and dancing was resumed again as boisterously as before.

It was a curious assembly he looked upon, but like many he had seen before. The women were dressed in fantastic costumes; bare black feet peeped out from beneath silk skirts, and many of them had their heads encased in bandana handkerchiefs. The men wore swallow-tailed and very long frock coats. Several of them were coatless, vestless, and shoeless; their enjoyments, however, were simple, pure, and extremely vigorous, every one being bent upon pleasure, and utterly regardless of the hard day's labor in the fields that awaited them the following day.

Having finished the meal set before him, and stowing away in his bosom the remnants, William was directed to the mountains. Bidding his entertainers farewell, he started northward, taking for his beacon light that luminary which has been the guide to many a runaway—the north star. Guided by this silent conductor, and shielded by the friendly confines of the Blue Ridge mountains, he proceeded on his way. His progress was slow, owing to his crippled condition, but, fired with the desire to gain freedom, everything else seemed subordinated to this thought. The food with which he had provided himself had become exhausted, and he feared to leave the mountain to search for more; and for several days, until he had passed through Maryland and entered Penn-

sylvania, he subsisted almost entirely upon nuts, herbs, berries, and such things as he found in the mountains.

He entered Pennsylvania, although unaware of the fact, but, as if by instinct, he felt that he was out of the slave States; and as he lay concealed during the day, the soil appeared different, the foliage seemed brighter, the song of the birds was more joyous, and everything appeared changed. It was, indeed, a grand transformation scene, and he enjoyed it immeasurably. He could not sleep or keep quiet, so anxious was he to learn where he was. Giving away to his desires, he crept from his concealment, and sought for some place where he could obtain information. As he was surrounded by so much uncertainty, caution was necessarily required, and his movements were attended with the greatest precaution. He had not proceeded far when, almost directly above him, projecting out upon the ledge of a rocky foundation, was one of those Dutch cabins peculiar to Pennsylvania. Two or three children played in dangerous proximity to the brink of the rock, while a buxom female was busily engaged in baking bread in an old Dutch oven. The smell of the fresh baked bread caused William, for a time, to forget that he was a fugitive, and, clambering the rocky incline, he walked boldly toward the woman.

Noticing his approach, she showed no fear, but saluted him cordially, rightly concluding that he was a runaway. She scanned him closely for a moment

before asking him from where he was, first apparently satisfying herself as to her conjecture. When she inquired of him, he hardly knew how to answer, for, to tell the truth, he did not really know where he was from. Notwithstanding the woman was of his own race, he feared to let her know that he was a runaway, so, evading the question, he said:

"I hab lost my way, and am awful hungry. Would you gib me somethin' to eat, and tell me whar to find the turnpike?"

The woman did not press her question, but invited him into the house. Having seated him at the table, she gave him a bountiful supply of food, to which he did ample justice. While he was engaged at eating, the woman said:

"You'se a runaway, ain't you?"

William pretended not to hear her.

"If you is," she continued, "my husband kin show you just whar to go to strike de road for Canada."

He looked up at the woman, and inquired: "Whar's your husband?"

"He'll be here presently," she replied. "Just make yoself at home, chile, cause I know from yo' looks you'se tired, and mighty nigh worn out."

The woman's apparent kindness disarmed him of all suspicion, and he confidingly told her of his escape, and the privations he had suffered in reaching the present point; he also told her of his desire to reach Canada to find his wife and child, whom, he believed, had gone before him. The woman was at-

tentively listening to William's narrative, when a man entered the door. He was a powerfully built specimen of humanity, of a mulatto complexion, straight, black hair, low, receding forehead, eyes of a grayish cast, a wide mouth, drawn down at the corners, as though always sneering, and exposing to view two very large teeth. When William heard footsteps, he looked around. He was not pleased with the appearance of the man who stood between him and the door, with anything but welcome depicted upon his countenance.

William spoke, and the woman said: "Dis is my husband." Turning to the man, she continued: "Hawkins, dis man is on de road to Canada, and I told him dat you was just de one to guide him."

"That's right," said the man, who appeared to be possessed of more than the average intelligence of his race. "I have been in these mountains many a day, and showed many a man and woman the road to freedom. Where you from?" he said, addressing William.

He had confided in the woman, but did not care to enlighten the man. However, he could see no other alternative, and told him that he had run away from the traders, and where he had left them. The man looked greatly surprised when William told him where he was from. Uttering a long, low whistle, he said:

"Why, man, you're many a mile from that place; you're now in Pennsylvania, and I guess they have given up looking for you by this time. I'll help

you to get to Canada; it's only a few miles from here to the turnpike, and to-night I'll put you on the road. You stay here until I return, and then we'll start. Miama," he said, addressing his wife, "give this poor man a pair of old shoes; he is almost bare-footed."

With this instruction, he left the house before William could return thanks for his apparent kindness. The woman procured a pair of shoes, which were, indeed, acceptable to him, although they fitted him rather loosely. Having been frequently informed that there were a great many betrayers of fugitives among his own race, William did not trust Hawkins implicitly. Why had he gone away—why did he want him to await his return? If the man was interested in his escape, surely he would not have left him without giving some reason. Had he gone to procure assistance to capture him, or had he gone for a team to drive to the turnpike? Perhaps his wife could throw some light upon this. The hearty meal he had eaten gave him renewed vigor, and he felt like a new man. Knowing that he was now in a free State, he determined never to return South as a bondman. The woman was busily engaged preparing the children for bed. He said, addressing her rather abruptly:

"Whar's yo' husband gone?"

"I don't know, chile, but he'll be back soon."

"Many folks lib 'bout here?" asked William.

"Not many har in de mountain, but dar's a village

'bout free miles from har, and you hab to pass fru dat on de way to de pike," was the woman's reply.

"Am thar any danger in that?"

"No," said the woman; "not if you goes with Hawkins, 'cause all de white folks 'knows him, and dey kinder 'spects him."

Now, William quickly concluded that if Hawkins was a betrayer, his wife did not know it; and he was right. When the man Hawkins left William, he went directly to the village, and informed several white men that there was a runaway at his house; that he was going to bring him through the village at a certain hour, and they were to make a pretended attack, when he would have the man under the influence of liquor, and he could be easily captured. Hawkins then procured some liquor, and returned home, where he found William awaiting him.

"Now, young man," he said, "git ready, and we'll start; but before we go, you want some of this to brace your nerves," and he produced the bottle of liquor. William waved his hand, saying:

"No, sar; none of that stuff for me. My nerbes will stand braced if this am clear," and he tapped his head with his finger.

"You see," said Hawkins, "we've got to pass through the village down here, and there's always lots of loafers about, and they might attack us; so you had better take a little." Turning the bottle up to his mouth, he took a long draught. Again offer-

ing it to William, "Better take some," he said, with a grin.

"No," said William, "I don't want it. If I'se got to fight, that won't gib me strength, for that not only steals away the strength, but the senses; and if goin' fru that village an the only road to Canada, then I'se goin' fru it by the aid of God and these," and he held out his horny hands.

"That's what I like to see," replied Hawkins "pluck. Come on now, let's go."

They left the house and plunged into the woods, William insisting on Hawkins walking in front. When they had gotten some distance, he turned to William, and inquired if he had any fire-arms.

"No," was the reply.

"Then I have some for you." He walked a short distance ahead to a tree, and, from among some brush, drew forth two pistols, and handed one to William, saying, as he did so: "Now defend yourself."

"I'll do that," answered William; "but does this thing go off?"

"Of course it does; but put it in your pocket, and don't use it if you can help it."

William obeyed, and thought to himself "He don't know I am ten men now in place of one." Hawkins, when he handed him the pistol, did not intend to give him a loaded one, but he did. The pistol he kept for himself was empty, a fact he did not discover for some time after. When they were pretty close to the village, William halted and said:

"See har, my friend, can't we git round this town?"

"We can," said Hawkins, "but it's too far."

"Oh, neber mind that. I don't car for the distance. You needn't go; just tell me. I don't car 'bout goin' fru that town, sumthin' tells me thar's trouble ahead, and trouble ain't what I'se on the sarch fur."

"We'll get through all right; don't be afraid. Come on," and Hawkins started off.

"Hold on thar," said William. "Stranger, you'se been mighty accommodatin', but I won't trouble you fudder. S'pose you return home and let me git round the town alone."

"Oh, no. That won't do," said Hawkins, shaking his head, and beginning to fear that William suspected him. "You don't think I'd fool you, do you?"

"Wall, to tell the truf, that's just what I think," was the laconic reply.

"You do, hey? Then I arrest you as a runaway," and as Hawkins said this, he attempted to draw his pistol, but William was too quick for him. Drawing his quickly, he said:

"No foolin' wid that thing, stranger. Don't draw it, or this will go off."

Hawkins laughed loudly, and replied:

"Why, you fool, that thing ain't loaded."

They were now standing face to face, and William began to back away. Hawkins called upon him to halt, but he only laughed contemptuously.

"Stand, I tell you," said Hawkins. William con-

tinued to move; Hawkins now advanced upon him, drawing his pistol quickly, he leveled it and pulled the trigger, but it only snapped. William snapped his almost at the same instant, but with a very different result. A report rang out upon the night air, a curse and a groan escaped from the lips of Hawkins, and he sank upon the ground. Not waiting to see what damage he had done, he made for the woods, and traveled the balance of the night, never stopping for a moment, until broad daylight the next day. Hawkins was slightly wounded, but so much so that it was some time before he reached the village—too late, however, to organize a searching party.

Like most fugitives, William feared recapture; but knowing that he was in a free State, he determined to seek aid in reaching his family. He had safely eluded Hawkins and his colleagues, but he realized that he must find some one that he could trust. He had successfully procured food by making nocturnal visits to spring-houses as he traveled through the country, but he now determined to enter a town, change his name, seek employment, obtain whatever information he could, and, if possible, earn sufficient means to aid him in his search for his wife and child. He did not know what distance he had to travel to reach Canada. Whether it was a hundred or a thousand miles was a problem that he was unable to solve, but that such a place existed he knew, and that somewhere within the land he would find his family. This he confidently and emphatically believed.

He crossed the Susquehanna river and entered the city of H——, where he found employment in a private family as coachman. He had not been long employed there when he heard of the Fugitive Slave Law. This caused him to become restless, and, as he had confided the fact of his being a fugitive to his employer and some of his own people, he feared betrayal. Not knowing of the tragic death of Lillie, he believed that he would be, and doubtless had been, pursued, and he was not surprised when his employer approached him and told him that it was too dangerous for him to keep him longer employed, as the Fugitive Slave Law subjected every white man to a heavy fine and lengthy imprisonment for harboring a fugitive.

He had also learned that several men about the town, black and white, drove a profitable business in kidnapping and betraying slaves. It mattered but little whether a white man really owned a black man or not; if he swore that he was his property, and the black man could not prove he was not, he was given up by the courts to the alleged master, and returned South. The imminent danger he was in was augmented when a deliberate attempt was made to kidnap and convey him South.

CHAPTER XIX.

UNITED IN FREEDOM.

The country was full of men who accepted the provisions of the Fugitive Slave Act as a means by which to obtain a precarious living, by taking advantage of its defects. The bitter prejudice existing against the negro in every section of the country, aided by a possible pecuniary gain, was, in all probability, sufficient inducement for many white men to engage in the nefarious business of "nigger-catching" and kidnapping. But just what would induce a man of the oppressed race to turn traitor against his brother, and engage in such disreputable business, would be hard to tell, unless it were due to his being so morally depraved as to lose all sense of the ties of kindred feeling and sympathy. Let it be from whatever cause it may, there were men of the negro race who actively engaged in the business of betraying and kidnapping their unfortunate brethren.

The place where William now sought refuge contained a number of these characters, the most prominent among them being a Jefferson Coleman. Coleman was the son of slave parents who had purchased their freedom and moved North, where he was born. He was given a common education under the disadvantages that people of the race secured any learn-

ing whatever ; but, upon entering into manhood, he showed no disposition to improve upon the few advantages he had. He migrated from place to place, earning a livelihood at whatever employment he could find to do, until we find him located in the city of H——, where he had resided some five or eight years, long enough to be well known as a ne'er-do-well, and to gain a reputation for engaging in questionable transactions. Coleman had reached a point when the conscience becomes so hardened as to make one a fitting tool for the carrying out of the deepest villainy that man can engage in. Being a dissolute and reckless person, he fell a ready victim to the designs of the "nigger-catchers." After having engaged in the business as a tool for other men, he became far more dangerous when he took up the dual part of betrayer and kidnapper.

Many were the poor souls whose freedom was sacrificed by this man. It was an easy matter for him to obtain the confidence of persons engaged in the Underground Railroad, and, by this means, instigate the capture of whole families. He was a man of rather pleasing address, his complexion a bright mulatto, hair as black as a raven, slightly inclined to curl. His mouth was rather large, while his lips were more like those of the Anglo-Saxon than the African. He had been made to swallow two of his front teeth by a fugitive slave, whom he had attacked and unsuccessfully attempted to capture. This loss of teeth disfigured his mouth, and, when he smiled, rather

spoiled his otherwise pleasing appearance. A close observer could discern traces of dissipation, which would have shown more clearly upon a man of a less vigorous constitution. Coleman was ever on the alert, and from the time he first discovered William, he selected him as a victim. Notwithstanding the many warnings he had received to beware of traitors, William was too credulous and fell easily into the net which Coleman laid for him. ♀

When informed by his employer that he must find another place, he did not seek immediate employment, but took quarters with a family on the outskirts of the town. He would have gone away at once, but he somehow suspected that he was watched, and he felt that to start, depending upon his own efforts, would be dangerous. He was awaiting an opportunity to find trusty friends to whom he could appeal for aid, when a bold attempt was made by Coleman, assisted by confederates, to capture him. Luckily, however, for him, unexpected assistance prevented his capture and aided him in getting away.

There have been many persons who have sacrificed everything, except their lives, to rescue and aid fugitive slaves. Many a band of noble-hearted men, of both races, was formed in secret, working assiduously in the cause of freedom; and their deeds, while, perhaps, as noble as those of a Garrison or a Phillips, remain unknown to the world. In nearly every State in the North, could be found a few of these people, and, though their deeds remain unsung, the prayers of a

grateful race have been, are now, and ever will be sent heavenward that they may enjoy the rich reward merited.

So many fugitives had been attacked, imprisoned, kidnaped, and returned South from the town of H—— that a few noble-hearted negro men banded together and vowed to protect, at the cost of their lives, their brethren in their efforts to obtain freedom. A large amount of money was subscribed to carry their determination out, and they fought the Southern slave-hunters in the courts, in the prisons, and on the highways. The bloody work done by these organizations, in defense of freedom, will never be known until judgment-day. Many a kidnapper and betrayer was beaten and driven out of the neighborhood by this little band of heroes.

Yet, in their midst, this man, Coleman, existed, and fearlessly carried on his nefarious business. It was often wondered why he did not suffer the penalty others had, but for some reason, he never met the fate he so richly deserved. Coleman learned where William was quartered; he had found a man ready to claim him as his property, and he determined, after fixing the sum he was to receive, to entice William into some place and capture him. If this failed, then an effort would be made to imprison him and use the courts, and make him prove himself a freeman, the latter a difficult thing to do, considering how far a negro's word went against a white man's.

William had now discreetly assumed another

name. Passing along the street shortly after leaving his recent employer, he heard his assumed name called. Upon looking around, he beheld Coleman approaching him. He had no suspicion of the man, as his attention had never been called particularly to him. He stopped, and Coleman advanced, extending his hand. William grasped it, as the fellow said :

“I hear that you are left out of work ; are you looking for a job ?”

“No,” replied William, “but I might take one if I could git it.”

“Then you are the very man I’m looking for. I will be to see you to-night, and take you to a man who will hire you and pay you good wages. Will you go?”

“I won’t promise,” said William, “but you kin come, and I’ll see the man. What’s he want me for ?”

“I couldn’t just say what he wants you to do, but I think he wants a man-servant about his house ; and now that I see you, I think that you would just suit him. What time will you be home?”

“Oh, I’s e at home most any time ; but,” said William, thoughtfully, “I guess you doesn’t need to bring him to see me ; tell me whar to find him, and I’ll go see him to-morrow.”

“That would be a difficult thing to do,” lisped Coleman, “because he’s scarcely ever home in the day. Suppose I see him and come up to-night and let you know when you can call upon him ?”

“That’s it zactly, for I’d rather go see him.” At this they shook hands and separated.

William had no suspicion about Coleman, until the suggestion was made to bring along a white man, then he grew suspicious. He did not want the man to discover that he suspected him, and as he had already consented to a meeting, he would not withdraw his consent. He did not know but that the man whom Coleman proposed to meet was a Southern slave-owner, who, perhaps, might attempt to claim him. Though the man might really mean to obtain for him a situation; and if so, his suspicions were groundless. He concluded to say nothing to any one, but wended his way homeward.

William had been advised by friends to be cautious, as he was in danger of being arrested at any moment. It was pretty generally known that he was a fugitive; and to be a fugitive, at that time and in that place, was to be constantly menaced with danger. He had also been advised to leave the place.

The people with whom he stopped were very kind to him and manifested great interest in him. Martin Derry, the head of the house, was one of the most rabid haters of the institution of slavery. He had never suffered any of its evils, having been born in the North and always free, but his sympathy for his suffering brethren took shape in active measures to aid them to escape wherever and whenever he could. His house had been an asylum for many a fugitive, and his strong arm had barred the door against the

intrusion of more than one slave-hunter ; he was foremost among the little band of men who fought so nobly against these Southern intruders. The prison had stared him in the face more than once for his activity in behalf of fleeing slaves ; but he never allowed his vigilance to relax or his interest to wane. He had sacrificed money, time, and blood, and his zeal was still unabated.

Upon entering the house, William found Mr. Derry engaged in conversation with some friends. It was just about twilight ; the western sky was emblazoned in a bright, crimson tint, and, rising as if from her bed, the moon could be seen peeping above the eastern horizon. As he entered the room, Mr. Derry arose and introduced him to his friends, then offering him a chair, he said :

“ I am glad you have come ; we were just talking about you, and we have a proposition to make. The town is full of slave-hunters, and they are in search of some people whom we have concealed. Several houses have been searched, and some captures made. The parties we have in charge leave here to-night by the Underground Railroad, and, as you believe your wife and child are in Canada, now is your chance to go and find them.”

One of the other men said : “ Yes, they have got some people in jail, but they will never take them from this town, not if we can prevent them. There will be some bloody work before morning ; won't there, Derry ? ”

“There will, indeed!” replied Mr. Derry. “Now, sir,” turning to William, “will you take passage to-night?”

“You’re very kind,” answered William, greatly moved; “I do so want to see my wife and child, but—but—”

“But what?” asked Derry.

“But I ain’t got nuf money, and I thought to go to work ’til I got more,” said the man.

“Now look here, young man,” said Mr. Derry, with a patronizing air, “don’t you think about foolin’ around here to get money. If you do, you’ll be put where you won’t need any. You can do as you please, but I advise you to take advantage of present opportunities and leave.”

If William had any intention of disregarding this advice, the events of the next hour gave him the highest estimation of its utility.

It was as Derry had stated; the town was overrun with slave-hunters. They had assumed every privilege guaranteed them by the law, and had rushed to the Northern States looking for their lost property, and wherever finding it, made claim. Returning South, they took, in many instances, that which was not theirs as well as that which was. The houses of people were ruthlessly invaded and searched from garret to cellar, and wherever a fugitive was concealed and found, the rightful occupants were made to suffer the full penalty of the law.

A prominent citizen, who had in his employ two

negro women, left his home one evening, when his wife was surprised by the appearance of two burly Southerners, accompanied by Coleman, in search of the women. She begged them to call upon her husband's return, and assured them that no women bearing the names they inquired for were in her employ. This was true as to the names, but the women were then in the house. After much persuasion, they left. One of the women then took her flight, while the other was concealed by the sons of the lady in a large cask in the cellar, several tons of coal being thrown over her. Upon the return of the husband, he was informed that the slave-hunters had come to search the house. Being in a prominent position in the party which supported the Fugitive Slave Law, he was greatly in fear of exposure, and wanted to give the poor fugitive up. His wife and children assured him there was no danger, and he finally succumbed.

True to their duty, the slave-hunters called next day and searched the house from garret to cellar, tramping several times upon the very coal pile where the woman was concealed. Their search was unsuccessful, and they left without even so much as apologizing for the annoyance they had caused. The woman was conducted to a place of safety and placed upon a boat by the kind-hearted sons of the lady, thus making her escape.

It was now quite dark, and the men were still sitting in the room. A large log burned slowly in

the old-fashioned fireplace, now and then casting a lurid gleam of light upon their dusky faces. They were awaiting the hour that they were to meet their comrades and lie in wait to recapture the party of slaves who were to be taken South that night. William, notwithstanding his great desire to see his wife and child, expressed a wish to accompany them. He said :

“I ’spect I’ll have to take that boat, as you gentlemen disposes, but I’d like mighty well to have a hand in this thing to-night.”

“But,” said Derry, “you can’t go with us and take the boat, too; you must do one or the other; besides, there would be too much risk in taking you along.”

Derry had scarcely uttered these words, when a rap was heard at the door. He opened it, and in stepped Coleman. Now, here was a man of all others that he hated the very sight of. That he was up to some mischief, he was certain, and he was determined to prevent his further entrance into the house; therefore, when Coleman stepped in, he found himself confronted by Derry, who checked his advance and said rather imperatively :

“What do you want here? Hadn’t you better wait until you’re invited in?”

“I was invited here to-day,” said Coleman. “I came to see the man that stops here with you.”

“Well, you can’t see him, for he ain’t here,” was the reply.

“Ain’t here! That’s strange,” he said, as he tried

to peer over Derry's shoulder into the darkness of the inner room.

"Strange, but true," said Derry, not moving an inch.

"Will he be back soon, do you think?"

"I don't think and I don't know when he will be back. Look here, Jeff Coleman, what is your business with that man?" inquired Derry. And he tried to push him toward the door. "Are you up to some of your dirty tricks?"

Coleman did not answer the last remark, but turning to go, he said: "I believe you are lying, Derry, but I'll see him, for he promised to meet me, and I believe he is in this house, too."

"You can believe whatever you please, you contemptible cur. If you call me a liar in my house I'll break your neck," and as he said this, he assisted Coleman off the door-step with the toe of his boot.

Coleman did not say a word, but hastily disappeared. Derry returned to his companions and asked William if he had made an appointment with the man. He told them that he had, informing them of the promised situation, and that he was to go with Coleman to see a gentleman that night.

"Why didn't you tell me of that before?" said Derry. "We shall have trouble now; they will come here and search the house, and we must leave at once."

Preparations were hastily made, and the men left

the house together. They were well armed, and every man was determined. William summoned all of his courage and determined to make his last effort for freedom. It was to be freedom or death. They had proceeded but a short distance from the house when they discovered that they were followed. Derry was the first to notice a man dogging their foot steps, and he called the attention of his companions to this fact. They did not care so much about it. As they were in a thickly-populated part of the town, they apprehended no danger. Derry suggested that one of them drop back as soon as they reached the far end of the town and "do the spy up." The man delegated to do this left the party upon reaching a corner, and by doing some pretty good running, got around the square, thus getting in the rear of the spy. He slowly crept upon him unawares, and with a short hickory club which he carried, struck the fellow a stunning blow upon the head, felling him to the ground insensible. The other men had no difficulty in reaching the point they had in view.

When Coleman went to Derry's house for William, a plot had been laid by which William was to be induced to go to a certain place and there be captured under pretense of being employed; but as Coleman had been outwitted by Derry's denying that he was in the house, he determined to capture William at all events. When he left Derry's, he directed the man who accompanied him, but whom Derry had not seen, to keep a watch on the house; this is the fel-

low who followed them. Coleman proceeded to the town and procured the assistance of several slave-hunters and loafers to return and search the house. By the time he got his party together, the fellow with the broken head had sought them out and informed them of his misfortune. Coleman knew about where to find them, and, followed by his colleagues, he went almost directly to the place where Derry and his friends were awaiting the arrival of another party.

The slave-hunters were allowed to approach the door, which was opened by one of the party from within. They stated that they were in search of some escaped slaves and that they proposed to search the house. To this, the man who had opened the door objected, and stood there holding the door with one hand and denying their entrance. Derry stepped to the door, saying :

“Gentlemen, we don't know who you are in search of, but there is no one here belonging to you, however, if you insist upon searching the premises, why, we will come out and you can go in.” As he finished speaking, he stepped out of the door, followed by William and the other men. They had not seen Coleman, who now came forward, and, approaching William, attempted to lay his hands upon him saying :

“You're the man we want.” The words were hardly out of his mouth before William struck him fair between the eyes, and he fell to the ground as though kicked by a mule. The Southerners now made a rush for him, but he struck out right and

left, and men fell in all directions. As fast as William knocked them down, his friends proceeded to club them, and did it so effectively that in a short time there was not a man able to make the least effort toward capture. William went directly to the boat, which was to take him farther on, and he was safely stowed away in the hold. Coleman and his companions made themselves scarce as quickly as they recovered consciousness. The beating that they received that night was long remembered by them.

The boat in which William was concealed landed him at a point, whence he was conducted, on another branch of the Underground Railroad, directly to Canada. When his feet touched the shores of that land, he could hardly realize it. Joining hands with those who were with him, with bended knees and bowed head, he sent up thanks to Heaven for his deliverance. Now that he was in a free land, his first thought was of his wife and child. Were they free? or had he left slavery only to be disappointed in not finding them? He would not hesitate to return, were he unsuccessful in his search for them. He had but little idea of the extent of the country he was in, nor did he fully realize how difficult it would be for him to find them, but he determined to exhaust every effort. Poorly equipped as he was, unable to read, with no money, and in a strange land, he set out upon a search for the wife and child, who, for all he knew to the contrary, were, perhaps, still

in slavery. Many were the sleepless nights and weary hours he spent before finding them.

Purcey had now become pretty well acquainted with the customs of the people. She had obtained employment, and herself and child were comfortably provided for. She sent communications throughout the Dominion, which were read in the churches of her people, making inquiries for William and stating where she could be found. She never lost faith in her belief that he would make his escape and come to her. Aided by this confidence, she redoubled her efforts to learn of him.

William sat one evening before a fire in a little log hut, which he had selected as his abode, on the outskirts of a thriving little town. He had been meditating for some moments upon the advisability of changing his quarters. No place presented any attractions to him as he traveled here and there in hope of finding those whom he sought. So short a time did he remain at a place that it was almost impossible for him to learn anything of importance. Entering a town, he would make inquiry for his dear ones, and, receiving no information, sick at heart, and almost discouraged, he would proceed to the next town. He had always been a constant attendant at church, and he possessed much of that reverence and piety common to his race. He had great confidence in the Gospel, and much veneration for the ministry. The next day was Sunday, and he concluded that, perhaps, his sad and heavy heart might be lightened by

hearing a good sermon. The following day he attended divine services in the little village, and after the preacher had preached a fervid sermon, during which there were many cries of "Amen!" and "Hallelujah!" and in which William joined heartily, he made an announcement from the pulpit which caused William to leap up from his seat with joy. This was the notice:

Any person who can give any information regarding William McCullar, of —— Co., Va., owned by Jonathan Maxwell, will confer a blessing and everlasting favor upon his wife and child, now residing in H——.

Address,

PURCEY McCULLAR.

To attempt a description of the man's actions when this was read, would end in simple failure. Leaping over the seats, he rushed up to the minister, crying:

"Read that again! Read that agin!"

When he had finished reading the second time, William rushed upon him, clasped his arms about him, shouting and crying out:

"That's me! that's my wife! Glory! Glory be to the Lord!"

It was not many hours before he had his wife and child clasped within his embrace, and without attempting to describe the heart-touching scene that followed such a reunion of the long separated pair, let us draw the curtain upon the happiness of those once Bond but now Free.

THE END.



Library of

Wellesley



College.

Presented by

ELLA SMITH ELBERT

'88

In Memoriam

No

KATHARINE E. COMAN

