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NARRATIVE

OF

DIMMOCK CHARLTON,

A BRITISH SUBJECT,

Taken from the Brig "Peacock" by the U. S. Sloop "Hornet,"

ENSLAVED WHILE A PRISONER OF WAR,

AND RETAINED

FORTY-FIVE YEARS IN BONDAGE.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY 1822

DIMMOCK CHARLTON.

A DEFENCE.

In the *Anti-Slavery Standard* of Nov. 27th, 1858, a tissue of charges of the most severe and crushing character appeared, entitled "a caution," respecting a colored man, a native African, styled John Bull. This name was given him by his British captors of the Peacock, in 1812, who took the Spanish slaver into which he was thrust, when first kidnapped from Sierra Leone, his native home. In the engagement with the Hornet, he became a prisoner of the United States, and was fraudulently retained as a slave, when demanded in the exchange of British prisoners, and with wilful falsehood reported dead of a fever. A series of gross injustice baffled every effort for freedom, and continued his slavery from youth to grey hairs; and he has but recently recovered his liberty, after 45 years of bondage in its most aggravated forms. Soon after the publication of the above named "caution," a *most respectful appeal* was made to the Editors of the *Anti-Slavery Standard,* requesting them to re-examine the source of these charges. A minute account was also given of the CAUSES of the misrepresentation, and with the assurance that there was no intention on the part of his friends to screen him, if they should be found true. But, if on a fair review of the whole subject the charges proved to be without just foundation, his friends united with him in claiming an honorable acquittal, so far as the same press can produce it, which has been made the organ of injury to his character. Such expressions as these, "being wanting in principle," "unwilling to work," "collecting money in Philadelphia *under various false pretences,*" &c. Certainly his appeal for the emancipation of his wife, a free woman of Nassau,* in the British Isle of Providence, West Indies, and her four children and grandchildren, now in slavery, were *not* "false pretences," but facts fully confirmed During his residence in this city since October last, he has applied to the friends of humanity for aid and employment, to assist him in obtaining his earnest wish, the freedom of his family in the South—ten persons in all—one grandchild, brought to New York by those holding her as a slave, has been liberated there by legal measures. Her freedom being established, he removed her to Canada, to prevent what he feared, her re-capture. This he accomplished with written as well as verbal authority, from two of the most respectable Attorneys in New York, John Jay and Charles E. Whitehead, they giving him the full assurance that he had the *sole right* to dispose of her. He had steadfastly de-

*Is there no method by which this fact, which can be well established, may be made to give freedom to herself and her descendants, now in bondage? LEGAL justice would cause their fetters to fall.

clined to bind his little girl to one of the members of the Anti-Slavery Society, who had been interested in her emancipation, and this decision, and his removal of her to Canada, his eminent lawyer, John Jay, declares he believes to be the only charge they have against him. Can we wonder, after such sad experience, at his unwillingness to put any chain upon her newly enfranchised form and soul? They say he threatened to shoot a colored man sent to prevent his removing her—if he dared to lay a hand upon her. This he freely acknowledges, as prompted by his agony, and which he does not defend as right. He says, "I am sorry, but I was provoked;" he might have said, tortured at the thought of her being again in bonds.

It will be only necessary here to add that his course in Philadelphia has been under strict observance of those make this appeal and defence. They are willing to show any inquirers who wish an honest explanation, the grounds of this attempt to vindicate his claim to sympathy and respeet. His statements in this city, so far from being "*various false pretences,*" are substantiated by respectable authority, and his character given by a gentleman who says, "I have known him for 30 years, ever since I was a boy, and I never knew a man more injured by being deprived of his liberty and the fruits of his toil, after the contracts for his freedom were, on his part, faithfully fulfilled. He was always sober, industrious, peaceable and polite." This is briefly his warm and sympathetic language, given to us personally.

No response being given by the Anti-Slavery Editors, the injured man feels compelled to make this statement in contradiction to their "caution," in which they say they were requested "by his Philadelphia friends to denounce him." We have no idea that such measures would be endorsed by the noble-minded friends of freedom in the Anti-Slavery Society, if they were acquainted with the particulars which "his friends in Philadelphia" have sought to place before them. There is one individual—the only one known to them who could have made such a request, whose statement in his own hand-writing, is, with other documents, retained as testimony that he threatened thus to publish him, and this, nothwithstanding the kindest remonstrance and explanation on his part, previously given in the presence of his friends, who used their efforts also, and took all the blame from the accused, showing where the offence originated, and that no injury was done or intended.

The charge against the accused was that he was going about injuring his character, and retaining a paper of recommendation from him of which he demanded the return. Of both these charges he was entirely innocent. An Anti-Slavery lady, of England, thought proper to call upon this person, whose name we omit, to expostulate with him on account of the charge he had made for board and washing for the accused. This was entirely her own act of kindness, not only unprompted, but without the knowledge of his other friends or himself. She had received the information in reply to her interrogatories of his expenses and the means of his support, without a word or look of complaint.

As to the paper it was detained BY THE UNDERSIGNED, to show to some friends as references, the inconsistency of charging the persecuted man with want of truth, and being an imposter as to his family being slaves, when the sole tenor of *this* paper, dated the 19th of October, was to confirm *his* identity, with the individual in the printed documents from the New York *Standard*, and also from his British friends. After sending him with this paper to us, he came himself to

manifest his interest in getting a pamphlet published and money subscribed, and *at the time* he sent it, it was accompanied by his note requesting our efforts in his behalf. A few days, perhaps not more than a week elapsed, till this well meant expostulation of the English lady, changed the whole current of his proceedings. When we expostulated with him as to the date of this paper which he wished to recall before we had made it serve as a reference to vindicate the accused, we asked why did he send him to us as a person worthy of sympathetic aid, if certain letters which he then produced from New York, against him, were then in his possession, and which he now claimed as authority against him. He at first attempted to represent that they were not then received; he afterwards, when the dates were shown him as four and five days previous, said "the truth was because I placed no confidence in the charges they contained." Now these, with further discrepancies, are *only narrated* or retained for the removal of aspersions, which must crush his efforts to support himself, and to liberate his beloved and suffering family. That these particulars are reluctantly given in this form, will be evident to all who may read the statement presented before the close of last year, to the Editors in New York, the pacific tone and forbearing expostulations of which, we think, with the exigencies of the case, demanded a reply, other than silence.

MARY L. & SUSAN H. COX.
S. E. cor. of Race and 7th Sts., opposite Franklin Square.

Philada., 5 mo. 7th, 1859.

N. B.—Robert C. Beatty, Cashier of the Bank of Bristol, Penna., gives his name as a reference. During the temporary residence of his family in this city, thro' the past winter, he had with them an opportunity of knowing the injured man, and *his* name was *one* of *six signatures* appended to the appeal to the Editors in New York. No application was made for more names, or, unquestionably, they might have been obtained, and of equal respectability.

From the New York Times.

The history of Solomon Northrup—a free citizen of New York, who spent many years in Southern Slavery—is fresh in the memory of our readers. We yesterday heard narrated another slave history rivalling it in interest, though in many respects of a very different character. The subject of it is a venerable and intelligent native African, recently arrived here from Savannah, Georgia, where he was known as DIMMOCK CHARLTON, and served more than forty years as the slave of various parties, while he claims to have been a British subject, and entitled to British protection. The man's face is an honest one, and his integrity and reliability are so well vouched for that it would be found difficult to doubt or discredit his story. Indeed, he tells it in so straightforward, frank and simple a manner as to carry conviction with it. Although utterly uneducated, unable even to read or write, he displays a degree of intelligence and an amount of sagacity, sound sense and native shrewdness which would do no discredit to his former masters, however great their opportunities for mental

culture. We propose to give his history as received from his own lips, trusting that it will not only interest the reader, but that it may stimulate efforts among the philanthropic to crown with well deserved happiness the declining years of this dark-skinned hero, by restoring to freedom those of his family who are still held in servitude.

Our subject is now, as near as he can judge, 57 or 58 years of age, a native of Kissee, peopled by a tribe of the same name, settled on one of the great rivers in the interior of Africa—or, as he expresses it, "away up on the fresh water." His name was TALLEN at that time. When 9 or 10 years of age, war was declared against his tribe by the Mandingos, who captured Kissee, and took its inhabitants prisoners of war. TALLEN, with six other boys of about the same age were a mile or so from the town at the time of the battle, but were pursued and taken prisoners. This, as well as he can calculate, was in 1811 or 1812. The prisoners of which there were a large number, were all sent down to the Coast, sold to a slave dealer, and stowed away with hundreds of other unfortunates on board a Spanish slaver. The distance they traveled in reaching the seashore may be estimated from the fact that the journey occupied about four weeks.

The slaver put to sea with its human cargo, who began to suffer the horrors of the middle passage, many of them dying for want of fresh air and exercise during the three weeks they were stowed away in her suffocating "between decks." At the end of this time the slaver was chased and captured by an English war-brig, but TALLEN does not remember the name of either of the vessels. The prize and her cargo were taken to England, where the Africans generally were sent ashore until they could be properly disposed of. TALLEN, however, who had meantime been christened "John Bull" on board the British vessel, was sent to the British brig *Peacock*, to serve as cabin-boy. Several of the captured Spanish sailors were also transferred to that vessel. At this time the war between the United States and Great Britian was in progress, and sometime afterward the *Peacock* was engaged in action by the little American schooner *Hornet*, commanded by the gallant captain LAWRENCE, which, as will be remembered, speedily put her in a sinking condition, and forced his crew to surrender. This was on the 24th of February, 1813.

Subsequently our hero was sent to Savannah, Ga., in charge of Lieut. WM. HENRY HARRISON, from whence the latter was to take him to Washington. Judge CHARLTON, of Savannah, proposed to HARRISON to leave TALLEN, or "John Bull," with him, promising that he would raise him for HARRISON. The latter declined, relating the particulars of his history, and saying that he must take the boy as a prisoner of war to Washington, and let Congress decide what should be done with him, adding, as his own supposition, that he would follow the fortunes of the other prisoners in all respects. Judge CHARLTON then proposed to keep the boy with him until he should be wanted at Washington, promising Lieut. HARRISON that he would send him on whenever he should write for him.

With this understanding, HARRISON left the boy with Judge CHARLTON. Two months afterward, HARRISON sent for "John Bull," and CHARLTON replied that the boy had died—which of course ended the Lieutenant's interest in and care for him. The authority for this statement was Judge CHARLTON's waiting-man or body servant, an old man named ISAAC, of whom John speaks in high

terms. About the time this word was sent to Washington, CHARLTON called all his servants together and forbade them strictly ever to call TALLEN "John Bull" again, but ordered them to call him DIMMOCK CHARLTON, after—himself by which name he has since been known.

The very next day after this occurence, CHARLTON sold him to a French tailor of Savannah, named JOHN P. SETZ, who is still living at Augusta, Ga. He was sent down to SETZ's house in the morning, and staid there all day, but at night expressed his intention of "going home." SETZ told him no,—to stay where he was, that he belonged to him now. DIMMOCK, as we shall now call him, replied, asserting that he was a free man and could not be sold. SETZ, in answer, said that CHARLTON bought clothes of him, and gave DIMMOCK in payment, and again ordered him to stay where he was and go to work. The boy attempted to run away, but SETZ caught and brought him back. Being sent down into the kitchen, he slipped out of the back door, went to CHARLTON's and asked if he had sold him. The Judge replied in the negative. Just then SETZ, in pursuit, came into the house, and seized the boy to drag him off. CHARLTON interfered, took SETZ one side, had a short talk with him, and then told DIMMOCK that he wanted him to go and learn the tailor's trade with the Frenchman. Having become alarmed at the proceedings, he positively refused to stir a step, unless dragged away by force.

CHARLTON then told SETZ that he had better take the boy away from the city. This information also was derived from the waiting-man ISAAC. As the Frenchman had a store in Augusta, he took DIMMOCK there. Thirteen months later he sold him to Captain DUBOIS, who was commander of the *Pulaski* at the time of her wreck. At that time he commanded the steamer *Samuel Howard*, but was building *General Washington*, to run between Savannah and Augusta, and bought DIMMOCK to go on board of her as steward. After living with Captain DUBOIS two years, the latter sold him to Captain DAVIDSON, of Savannah, who, in turn, sold him to one WM. ROBINSON, of the same city. DIMMOCK's superior intelligence showed him that by hiring his time of his master, and working for himself, he could save money to purchase back the freedom of which he had been robbed. He formed his plans accordingly, and put them in execution, finding employment as a superintending stevedore, and earning liberal wages in loading cotton for export, at which he seems to have been very successful. He arranged with ROBINSON to purchase himself at the price of $800. This he soon saved by hard work and economy, paid the entire sum in in cash, and was then immediately sent to jail and kept there until his cruel master had found a purchaser to take him off his hands.

His next master proved to be JAMES CARR, then and now employed in the Planters' Bank of Savannah. DIMMOCK ventured to express to CARR the hope that he would not serve him as ROBINSON had, and related how villainously he had been used by him. CARR replied that ROBINSON was a d——d scoundrel, but that *he* would deal justly with him. Thus encouraged, DIMMOCK again hired his time, and proceeded to toil once more for liberty, agreeing with CARR that he should have the privilege of purchasing himself at the price which was paid to ROBINSON, which he supposed was $700. At the time of his purchase by ROBINSON, he carried the latter $300, and four months latter gave him $400 more. Subsequently, he ascertained from ROBINSON that all CARR paid *him* was $450. Thus was the poor fellow again swindled out of the gold for which he had toiled so faithfully.

In the meantime he had married a slave woman [a free woman of Nassau, Providence Isle in the West Indies, enslaved by T. Pratt, senior, who took her and her parents and sisters to Savannah,] by whom he had two daughters. These all belonged to Mr. PRATT, of Savannah, of whom DIMMOCK speaks very gratefully. PRATT finding that he would be compelled to sell his servants told DIMMOCK, and said he would sell them reasonably to enable him to get some one to buy them who would not send them off. Not having yet learned that his master had deceived him, DIMMOCK went to CARR, told him the case, and solicited his aid to buy his wife and children, telling him that he had some little money,—that it would probably cost $2,000 to make the purchase, and that he would soon give him the balance. At this time he had $1,500, earned in stevedoring, hid away dollar by dollar in a tin case buried in the earth. This sum he carried to CARR, who purchased the family.

When he met Mr. PRATT afterwards, DIMMOCK learned that he had sold the woman and children for $600 only, and had received that sum from CARR and no more, supposing that he was giving the difference between it and their actual value, to the husband and father. Upon his asking CARR what he had done with the $900 balance, the later laughed, told DIMMOCK that he had the money in Bank for him, and to say nothing to anybody, that he and his family were all free now, but to keep it to themselves, and live quietly with him. Thinking they were in reality free, and could not be sent off again among strangers at any man's will, which was what they most dreaded, DIMMOCK and his wife remained under CARR's "protection," quite contented for many years. Finally, by representations made to his wife, CARR caused a separation between the parties, and then sold the father to Mr. HUDSON, of Savannah, the wife to Mr. CUMMINGS, and the children,—of whom there were now several,—each to a different purchaser, thus almost hopelessly breaking up the family.

To this time DIMMOCK had carefully concealed from his masters his claim to liberty as a British subject. He foresaw that if it became known to them, they would be likely to sell him off into the interior somewhere, and that then he might bid farewell to all thought of ever regaining his liberty. So long as he could keep in a seaport like Savannah, he knew he could earn and save money, and then his chance of making good his claim to British protection would always be better than if upon an interior plantation isolated from the busy world. But when he found his family broken up, and all of them again in slavery, his heart was crushed, and he became reckless. He had repeatedly sought the protection of the British Consul at Savannah, Mr. MOLYNEAUX, but that functuary refused to interfere in his behalf, apparently fearing to do so, and probably looking upon Slavery as a very satisfactory condiiion for a man with a black skin—a theory which he illustrated by himself holding slaves. When HUDSON bought him, DIMMOCK asserted his right to freedom, and told him his story. HUDSON evidently was satisfied with the truth of his statement, and consequently that he was very insecure property to *hold;* so he sent him to a trader for sale. Mr. DAVIDSON, a liquor dealer near the market in Savannah, became his purchaser. He lived with him two years, when DAVIDSON came to him one day, told him he had heard that he claimed to be a British subject, and asked him what were the facts. He, too, was convinced of the truth of the singular history, and immediately sent him again to a slave-dealer, for sale at a purchaser's risk. Mr. BENJAMIN GARMAN bought him for $550, in order to give

DIMMOCK another opportunity to purchase himself. This was a little more than a year ago, since which time the poor fellow has returned the purchase money, and a few days since came on here in the steamer *Alabama*, lest some new device should be found to deprive him of the liberty he has been forty-five years in pursuit of.

Among the Spanish sailors captured on board the *Peacock*, with DIMMOCK, was one named MINGO. Between these two, a lasting friendship sprang up, and they have managed to work together during all their many years residence in Savannah. A year ago, by advice of a friend, DIMMOCK took MINGO before a lawyer, who prepared the necessary affidavits setting forth the facts, of his capture and his title to recognition as a British subject. To this MINGO made oath in due form. A day or two afterwards, he was arrested upon the charge of drunkenness, and thrown into prison, where he died very suddenly and mysteriously. The proofs however, are deemed ample to establish DIMMOCK's claim; and his purpose is, if possible, to bring suit to recover damages of CARR and others for his long detention in Slavery. Whatever means he can realize from this source, or from the donations of the charitable, he desires to appropriate to the release from Slavery of his wife and children and grandchildren. His oldest child VIRGINIA, is in Savannah with three children. The next, CHRISTIANA, has one child. The third, ELIZABETH, has two. Besides these, he has a son who belongs to lawyer O'BYRNE, of Savannah, who has befriended DIMMOCK in his recent undertakings.

Since his arrival here, DIMMOCK has called upon the Acting-British Consul to make good his title to protection as a British subject, with a view to prosecuting his oppressors. That official sent him to his counsel, Mr. EDWARDS, who discourages him from attempting to do anything because the case has laid so long. If there is a statute of limitations which deprives a subject of redress for wrong, when he has been prevented by force from calling for it sooner, the British Government will probably announce the fact when this case is brought fairly before them. That DIMMOCK CHARLTON is entitled to redress from some quarter is certain—and the question remains for practical decision who is responsible for it. Either the Government of the United States or that of Great Britian is bound by every consideration of humanity and justice to see that he receives some compensation for his life of oppression and cruel wrong.

From the Anti-Slavery Reporter.

WE venture to crave the attention of our friends to the following tale of a slave. It is extracted from the columns of the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, and we will, in due place, complete the history.

"The fact was briefly stated, in last week's *Standard*, of the freedom of a little girl, held as a slave, having been secured under a writ of *Heabas Corpus*, before Judge Robertson, in West Chester county; and a promise was given that the details relating both to the child and its grandfather, who appeared on its behalf, should be given in a future number. We redeem the promise, in the hope that the story may be as interesting and instructive to our readers as it has been to ourselves.

"Several weeks ago a black man called upon us to ask for aid and advice in getting possession of his grandchild, a little girl of five or six years, who, he said, was somewhere in this city, under the care of two ladies, sisters, by the name of Kerr, and who would, he feared, carry the child back to the South and to slavery, whence they had brought her a few months before. On inquiring further into his and her history, we learned that he had recently arrived here from Savannah, having purchased his freedom of his master, Mr. Benjamin Garman; that all his kindred about whom he knew anything, wife, children, and grandchildren, were still slaves, except only this little one, now in New York, in the possession of the Misses Kerr; and that, for his own sake as well as hers, he was desirous of securing the child, and placing her where her freedom should be beyond the reach of either accident or hostile design, and where, by his exertions, he could fulfil to her the duties of a parent, and secure for her liberty, at any rate, and happiness as far as it should lie in his power.

"It is hardly necessary to say that this statement was enough to enlist the sympathies and command the active exertions of any one professing to hold either principle or feeling in regard to slavery; but the appeal was irresistible when we came to hear from the man's own lips the romantic and touching history of his own life. To some of our readers, perhaps, this is already familiar, as it was told, at about the time we allude to, in a morning paper in this city. We have delayed relating it, as the less that was said about it publicly, till the fate of the grandchild was decided, the better; and we wished, moreover, to hear what contradiction or corroboration it might call forth, as undoubtedly it would provoke either one or the other within a short period. The event has justified the delay, and we are enabled now to record the story with more entire confidence than we hardly dared feel when we first heard it, while we have the satisfaction also of rounding off the tale with the successful appeal for the freedom of the child, and her restoration to the arms of her grandparent.

"Dimmock Charlton, for by this name he has been known for most of his life, though he has now re-assumed an earlier one, is a native of Africa. One would hardly doubt this who looks upon his intensely black skin, and listens to his broken English, though it may be easy for him to mispronounce or the hearer to misapprehend the name by which he calls his people. He says, however, that he was born in a country called Kissee, on a great river in the interior of Africa—'away up on the fresh water.' He is, he thinks, about fifty-eight years old, and he remembers vividly the first twelve years of his life, when he was called Tallen, and was a wild, untutored, and happy savage, and had never heard of Christian men or nations. But then a war broke out between his own and a neighboring tribe, and his people were conquered, and among the prisoners who were captured and driven to the coast to be sold to the slavers was Tallen.

"They were about thirty days on this journey from Kissee to the sea coast; but once there, and they were huddled by hundreds, some from the tribe of Kissee and some from other tribes equally wretched, on board a Spanish vessel waiting for her cargo. Then came a voyage of three weeks—three weeks of horror. The little savage from the great 'fresh water' of Central Africa, who had never heard of civilization, and had never been taught to believe in any other God than Fetish, took now his first step in that great scheme whereby, our Doctors of Divinity teach us, the Heavenly Father is to lead his race to the blessed knowledge of Christian light and life. He met the horrors of the 'Middle Passage.' He listened, day and night, to the groans of the dying; he suffered the agonies of thirst and suffocation; he saw his fellow sufferers taken up to be thrown into the sea, and might have envied them the early and easier martyrdom which was accepted as their share in the sacrifice for the redemption of their race. At the end of three weeks, however, the Spaniard was captured by a British cruiser, and she and what was left of her human cargo were taken to England. Unfortunately Tallen cannot recall, if he ever knew, the names of either of these vessels.

"On his arrival in England a pleasant prospect seemed, for a little while, to open

before him. On the dispersion of the Africans, it fell to his lot to be put on board the British brig *Peacock* as a cabin boy, and that vessel soon after sailed on a cruise. The Dr. Southsides, perhaps, will think that it was only returning him into the true path of providential redemption that this happened to be the cruise in which the *Peacock* fell in with the American schooner *Hornet*, and in the memorable naval battle which followed that encounter she struck her flag to Captain Lawrence. Tallen or, as he was now called, John Bull, a second time in his short career a prisoner of war, was brought to this country.

"Here he fell in charge of Lieut. (afterwards President) William Henry Harrison, and for some unexplained reason, was taken to Savannah, Ga. In that city he was left with Judge Charlton, until he should be ordered to Washington, to be disposed of with the other prisoners, the crew of the *Peacock*. Judge Charlton proposed to Lieut. Harrison that he should leave the boy with him to be brought up, but this the Lieutenant declined, as being a prisoner he was not within his control. Two months subsequently he sent to the Judge for his charge, and received for answer that the boy had died of the fever. Such was the statement made to John Bull by an old servant of Judge Charlton, named Isaac, and subsequent events seem to verify it.

"The Lieutenant, John Bull never saw or heard from, again; but at about the time that he must, if the statement be true, have been sent for to go to Washington, and when the Judge returned him as dead of fever, he—the Judge—called together his servants, and announced to them that it was his pleasure that hereafter the boy should no longer be known as 'John Bull,' but thenceforward be called by that name which belonged to himself; and he incited them to remember his orders by that incentive which slaveholders usually supply to their slaves—the threat of the cowhide. Thereafter 'John Bull' was known only as Dimmock Charlton, and by that name he has gone ever since.

"As Judge Charlton was, during his lifetime, a very well known person, a man of high standing and great respectability, a lawyer of some eminence, an author of one or two law books, and one against whom we, at least, never heard any thing worse than that he published a volume of most dreary rhymes, it may seem incredible that he could be guilty of so despicable a crime as is here laid to his charge.* But we must remember that the act is to be measured by the code of slaveholding morality, and not by that which obtains in more civilized communities. It might, indeed, be argued that men who steal men from themselves—the original owners—would not be very scrupulous in stealing from each other, were it not that the universal principle of 'honor among thieves' would operate as a sufficient restraint in a state of society where its infringement would lead to the wildest confusion. But in the case of this 'John Bull' there need enter no such consideration. He, according to the code which prevails among our Southern brethren, belonged to nobody—was a mere waif and estray which the fortunes of war had landed upon our shores, from the coast of Africa, and anybody might pick it up who would be at the trouble. Some consideration, perhaps, might be due to Lieutenant Harrison, but he had no claim upon the property, as property, but simply upon the man as a prisoner. If discharged of his duty to him, in that regard, he had nothing further to do with him; and if persuaded of the truth of that convenient fiction, that the boy was dead, all remonstrance from him would be avoided; Judge Charlton would, in an easy way, be so much the richer, to the value of this particular piece of goods: nobody would lose anything except the Government, whose loss of a prisoner, who might be a burthen, would be a gain, and the poor boy himself would have somebody to take care of him. So, perhaps, reasoned the Judge; so, at least, only could he reason to any sort of self-justification. At any rate, he took care of the poor African by giving him his own name, and selling him the next day to a Frenchman.

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*Judge Charlton was very intemperate.

"The Frenchman's name was John P. Setz, and he is still living in Augusta, Ga. Dimmock, when told that he belonged to him, protested, as was natural enough in an untutored and heathen African, not yet made acquainted by any Savannah divine with the good things God had in store for his native land, nor what his particular share was to be in that great scheme of Christianization, that he was nobody's slave, but a freeman. Setz, on the other hand, condescending to reason on the subject, asserted that the Judge, Dimmock's late master, owed him — Setz was a tailor — for a bill of clothes, and that the boy was transferred for the value thereof. An appeal was made to the Judge. He denied to Dimmock that he had sold him, but had a talk aside with the tailor. The result Dimmock soon learned; for the particulars he was indebted to his friend Isaac, the Judge's body servant. He was taken by Setz, in accordance with the Judge's advice, to Augusta, where, about a year after, he sold him to a Mr. Dubois, a steamboat captain. With him he lived two years, and was then sold, successively, to a Captain Davidson, and then to one Mr. Robinson, of Savannah.

"In the course of these and subsequent years, and successive changes of ownership, Dimmock's mind became so far enlightened as, if not to reconcile himself to slavery, to suggest to him the expediency of recognizing it as his inevitable fate, and of finding some other way of escaping from it than merely protesting against it. He hired his time of his master, and being an industrious man, in the course of time made money enough in his business, as a stevedore, to purchase himself of Robinson, for the sum of eight hundred dollars. This man had no sooner received the money than he sent him to jail, and kept him there on sale till a new buyer was found for him. Here again we may think a sense of honor should have restrained this Robinson, as to our Northern sense, it might seem that Judge Charlton overstepped the boundaries of truth and justice; but the slave code distinctly says that a slave can possess nothing, and that all that he has, or can earn, belongs to his master. Strictly speaking, therefore, the eight hundred dollars, which Dimmock hoped would purchase his freedom, belonged to Robinson at any rate. To look at the subject in any other light would have been mere magnanimity and gratuitous generosity in Robinson; and he, probably, is not a man who permits himself to be carried away by such enthusiastic impulses.

"The purchaser this time was James Kerr, of Savannah, who expressed a great deal of indignation when told by Dimmock of the manner in which money had been made out of him by his former master. Encouraged by this sympathy, Dimmock again commenced the accumulation of a fund for a second purchase of his freedom. Kerr agreed to accept as a ransom the sum he had himself paid to Robinson, and Dimmock at length put into his hands seven hundred dollars, which he supposed was that sum. He afterwards learned that he had paid two hundred and fifty dollars too much, but of course he had no redress.

"In the mean time, Dimmock had become a husband and father. A Mr. Pratt was the owner of his wife and children, and he consented to sell them at a moderate price to any one who would hold them for Dimmock till he could redeem them. He had at this time paid the price of himself to Kerr, but was not aware that that gentleman had quietly taken two hundred and fifty dollars more than the stipulated price. He interceded with him to become the purchaser of his wife and two children, with the understanding that it should be on account of the husband and father. Kerr consented, and the purchase was made — Dimmock putting into his hands $1500, which in the course of time he had accumulated from his business, and hoarded away in the earth. The sum he supposed Pratt would ask was $2000, and this he promised to make good to his *kind* master. His kind master accepted the trust, and went, as Dimmock afterwards ascertained, to Pratt and made the purchase for $600. When reproached with this breach of trust, and called to account for the balance of $900, he laughingly said it was safe in the bank, and gave his written obligation for it. This obligation Dimmock put in his trunk, but on one occasion, while he was absent from

home, the trunk was broken open and the paper stolen. That the paper, alone, was the object of the thief was evident from the fact that he did not meddle with fifty dollars which laid beside it.

"For many years Dimmock lived with Kerr, contentedly with his family, persuaded that his and their freedom were secure, and that they could not be again sold or separated from each other. That little money transaction between the man and his master was so entirely in accordance with the man's experience of its being in the usual way of business between white and black folks, that he took no special precaution against further knavery, nor even seemed to be aware that such precaution was possible. He trusted his master as if he had nothing to expect of him but the fairest and most generous dealing. But the time came when he was to be disabused of any such misapprehensions. At length Kerr sold him to one man, his wife to another, and scattered some of the children about among various owners. Then it was that despair seized him, and he returned again to his original assertion, that he was a British subject, and wrongfully held in Slavery—a fact about which he had thought for many years it was wisest and most prudent to keep silence, lest he should be sold into the interior, or to the South, be separated for ever from his family, and lose all chance of ever regaining his liberty. His story seems to have obtained credence. One Hudson, who bought him of Kerr, believed it, and, probably considering that he might have made an unsafe investment, sent him to a trader for sale. A liquor dealer by the name of Davidson then bought him, but, on learning his story, put him again in the market. Lastly, he was bought by Mr. Garman a little more than a year ago, who honestly permitted him to purchase himself, and to leave Savannah a free man when the price was paid.

"So strange a tale, when made public, has not been allowed to pass uncontradicted. The Savannah papers have declared it to be untrue; and a Mr. Fay—a northern man, but a resident of Savannah—has, in a letter to the *New York Times*, avowed his disbelief in some of its essential points. That it would be acknowledged as true, however, was not to be expected. Those most concerned in it have an obvious and direct interest in its disapproval; and these, or some of these persons are undoubtedly responsible for the contradiction of the Savannah papers. The testimony of Mr. Fay may also, possibly, have an interested motive. He is known to have befriended Dimmock in Savannah, and being a Northern man it is, perhaps, best that he should free himself from any suspicion of having been privy to a statement made in a Northern paper so damaging to Southern morality and honor. But all these contradictions, be it observed, identify the man as the person he professes to be—as having been a slave of some, at least, of the persons mentioned, from Judge Charlton down to Mr. Garman; and of having purchased himself of the last-named gentleman. His story is thus corroborated in some very essential particulars, and contradicted only where we can reasonably expect nothing but denial. Miss Kerr, moreover, in her testimony before Judge Robertson, in the case of the child Ellen, said, *she had long known that Dimmock claimed to be a British subject, and to have been taken a prisoner of war in the brig* Peacock, *and she believed it to be true.* And this testimony is the more important that it was made voluntarily, when there was no opportunity for consultation with others who had a direct interest in concealing a fact, not only important in itself, but one from which the subsequent transactions naturally spring. But besides all this there was, according to Dimmock's statement, a Spaniard—long resident in Savannah, Mingo by name—who was a fellow-prisoner with him on board the *Peacock*, and ever after a firm friend. This man was familiar with the whole story, and, by the advice of a friend, he was taken before a magistrate and made affidavit to the

facts within his knowledge. Mingo is dead, but the papers are now, as Dimmock believes, in the hands of a certain lawyer in Savannah. This gentleman has been written to at different times by two different persons, but no reply has been received by either of them. If no such papers are in his hands, why does he not say so. If there were any, even merely negative evidence, that could be produced to disprove a tale inculpating so many Southern persons, and especially showing so conclusively how utterly destructive slavery is of all sense of honor and every dictate of honesty, such evidence, we believe, would be eagerly sought for and instantly produced.

"We come now to Ellen, the grandchild. Dimmock believed that she was in this city when he arrived, and he was informed, as he thought, precisely where, by one who professed to be his friend. It was soon ascertained that the information was incorrect, and the person was sought for from whom it was received. He carefully kept out of the way, however, and evidently avoided both Dimmock and a messenger who went with him. For the purpose, apparently, of getting rid of them both, he gave them another, a second direction, which turned out to be as false as the first. All inquiries were baffled, and it seemed impossible to get any clue to the child.

"So matters stood when Dimmock's story appeared in the *Morning Times*. Whoever had possession of the child would, it was supposed, when thus warned of the presence of the grandfather, be careful to put her beyond his reach. It was afterwards ascertained that the conjecture was well founded, as the Misses Kerr left town the morning after the appearance of the article in the *Times*. Without then knowing this fact, however, but little hope was entertained of the recovery of Ellen.

"But, as it happened, that which it was feared would be a serious obstacle in the way of the search, turned out to be a fortunate incident in aid of it. Information reached us—how, it would not be proper thus publicly to say—but information as complete as authentic, and as direct as we could possibly wish for, in relation to the Misses Kerr, their past movements, their present residence, and their plans for the future. Their intentions, we were led to believe, were good: their only wish was to secure the happiness of the little girl, and to this end they had instituted a subscription for the purpose of raising the sum of 250 dollars, for which amount, it was said, their brother James Kerr, of Savannah, Dimmock's former master, was willing to emancipate her. A portion of this sum had already been raised, but a *quietus* was given to this plan by the publication of the story; for the benevolent individuals who had been disposed to aid in it were no longer willing to contribute to any fund which was to go to Mr. Jas. Kerr, whose gains out of the Dimmock Charlton family were thought to be already rather in advance of his claims. If the money was not raised, however, it was understood that the child was not to be returned to him; and as his sisters were not supposed to be able to pay such a sum for her freedom, however well-disposed they might and were believed to be toward her, the necessity of taking her from their custody was imperative. Mr. John Jay, the District-Attorney for this district, his father and grandfather have been before him, of all held in or threatened with slavery, was consulted, and it was determined that a writ of *habeas corpus* be asked of the Hon. Wm. H. Robertson, Judge of the County of Westchester.

"The writ was issued and the parties sought for at Sing-Sing. They were only found, however, after a diligent search of an entire day, as there were some mistakes of names, which, there is some reason to suppose, where put in the way of any inquiry that might might be made as to the locality of the Misses Kerr and there *protege*, for the purpose of misleading. But they were at last found, and on the 12th inst. a hearing was had before Judge Robertson at Katonah. After the usual preliminary proceedings, Miss Kerr, who declined to appear by counsel, was called as a witness by Mr. Jay, and testified as follows:

"'I reside in Savannah, Georgia; I am the sister of Mr. James Kerr, of Savannah;

he is the trustee for myself and my sister; the child Ellen, now present in Court, is one of a large family of slaves belonging to my brother and sister. I cannot say in whom in particular the title to her is vested; I think in my sister, Eugenia M. Kerr, who is now staying with me at Mr. David A. Griffin's, in the town of Sing Sing. I came on from the South the last Spring, arriving in New York about the 14th of April; my sister Eugenia was already there, having come on last October; I brought Ellen with me with my sister's approval, and Ellen has lived with us ever since, at New York and Sing Sing; my brother knew that Ellen was coming on, and approved it; her mother had been sold by my brother, and her grandmother neglected her, and we took an interest in her on this occount; Ellen was valued at four hundred dollars; *her light complexion increased her value;* slaves of that complexion usally make clever servants; my brother consented to take three hundred and fifty dollars; the child's grandmother has frequently been at the North, and could not be persuaded to remain; the mother of Ellen is the youngest daughter to Dimmock, who calls himself John Bull; Dimmock once belonged to my brother, Mr. James Kerr; Dimmock is now free; he was freed by his last Master, Mr. Benjamin Garman—his price being raised in part by Dimmock himself, and in part by contribution; Ellen is about five years and six months old; I brought her to the North because I did not know what would become of her; I had her entered on our departure from Savannah as my slave or servant; my sister and myself proposed to remain at the north for an indefinite time—for several years—visiting the South occasionally; I have no wish that the child should be returned to slavery, but I did wish to raise the money, that we should not lose her whole value; my brother having thrown off fifty dollars, and being in embarrassed circumstances, could not afford to throw off any more; I am very reluctant to have the child taken away from me; I am attached to her, and wish to keep her with me; I have already commenced to educate her; her grandfather, Dimmock, knows how to read; I long since heard of his having been on board of the *Peacock* when taken by the *Hornet*, and I believe that part of his story is true.'

"Mr. Jay then briefly submitted to the Court that upon the evidence there could be no doubt as to the rights of the child and law of the case, and moved that she be declared to be free. The Judge reviewed the facts and applied the statute, and without hesitation granted the motion. He remanded the child, however, into the care of the constable till Monday, the 17th, as he wished to take time to consider the question of guardianship. A good deal of emotion was shown by Miss Kerr and the child at parting, the former feeling unquestionably a warm interest in one whom she had, we hope, the will, though not the power, to protect from those who might at any moment return her to bondage, while the child only knew in a kind mistress an all-sufficient friend.

"On Monday, the 17th, the case again came up on the question of guardianship. Mr. Jay took the ground that the power to appoint a guardian did not lie with a County Court, and the Judge concurring in this view of the case, signed an order for the delivery of the child into the hands of its grandfather. A little scene had again to be gone through with when she parted from her kind friend, Mr. Hoyt, the constable; but she soon forgot her griefs in two happy hours in the family of her counsel, who sent her on her way rejoicing, with more gifts than probably her little hands ever clasped before. And she has been ever since among some new found friends, as contented and as good a child as if she had never known a parting or a change of place.

"We may as well say, now and here, that the intention is to place her in some family, where she will be kindly, judiciously, and carefully brought up. If among our readers there are any who are disposed to take upon themselves such a charge, we shall be glad to hear from them. Ellen is a bright mulatto, very intelligent, very tractable, good tempered and winning. She cannot fail, we think, to well repay the friends who shall be at the trouble of her nurture and education. Any letters in regard to her may be addressed to S. H. Gay, at this office."

John Bull, otherwise Dimmock Charlton, believing himself to be a British subject, or, at any rate, imagining that he had some claim to be considered such, having served on board a British man-of-war, and been taken prisoner whilst in the British service, was anxious to come to England, especially as there lacked an important link in the chain of evidence necessary to establish his identity. He obtained a letter of introduction to Mr. John Cropper of Liverpool from the son of Judge Jay, who rescued John Bull's grandchild from Slavery under the circumstances narrated above, and was referred to us. Fortunately he succeeded, discovering in Greenwich Hospital a pensioner who was serving on board the *Peacock* at the time she was captured. The following is the declaration of this important witness:

"'I, THOMAS TRETHOWAN, aged 61, native of Kenwen, near Truro, in the county of Cornwall, formerly on board the *Peacock*, an English brig of war, and now an inmate of Greenwich Hospital, do solemnly and sincerely declare, that I was serving in the capacity of servant to Captain William Peek, commander of the *Peacock*, an eighteen gun English brig of war, in February, One thousand eight hundred and twelve, when she was attacked off the Spanish Main and sunk, by the *Hornet*, a twenty gun ship, belonging to the United States of America, and commanded by Captain Lawrence; that I was rated as a boy on the ship's books; that there was on board a colored boy, who, to the best of my recollection at this distance of time, came on board at Demerara; that during the engagement he remained in the captain's cabin, which was used as a cockpit; that I remember his uttering several shrieks when our mainmast fell overboard; that I saw that boy again on board the *Hornet*—he having been saved with others of the *Peacock's* crew as she went down; that we were all conveyed as prisoners to New York, except the boy aforesaid, our colored cook (whose name was Gould,) and an American seaman who had been impressed and taken on board the *Peacock*. That I heard, when in prison, that these three perhad been conveyed away South, and that the boy was going to be taken to a place in Georgia they called Savannah; that from the conversations I have had with the colored man, John Bull, otherwise Dimmock Charlton, and from the answers he has returned to the questions I have put to him I firmly believe him to be the same individual who came on board the *Peacock* at Demerara, was on board of her when she was sunk, and was taken to New York, and thence conveyed to Savannah in Georgia. And I make this solemn Declaration, conscientiously believing the same to be true; and by virtue of the provisions of an Act made and passed in the sixth year of the reign of His Majesty King William the Fourth, intituled An Act to repeal an Act of the present session of Parliament, intituled An Act for the more effectual abolition of oaths and affirmations taken and made in various departments of the State, and to substitute declarations in lieu thereof, and for the more entire suppression of voluntary and extra-judicial oaths and affidavits, and to make other provisions for the abolition of unnecessary oaths. "THOMAS TRETHOWAN.

"Declared at the Mansion House, in the City of London, this tenth day of December 1857, before me,

"WILLIAM CUBITT, Alderman."

[The following testimonials are appended in support of Dimmock Charlton's good character. For obvious reasons the signature to the last one is omitted. Many others are in his possessien, voluntarily given by those who had known him in Savannah, Ga., New York, London, Eng., and other places:]

51 Pine Street, New York,
November 17th, 1859.

I have known John Bull, alias Dimmock Charlton, for about eighteen months, and from all I have seen of him, believe him to be an honest, sober man, and that a life of hardships and sufferings, gives him some claim upon the benevolent.

N. Sands.

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20 Nassau Street, N. Y.,
July 15th, 1858.

John Bull—*Dear Sir*—You have a perfect right to take your child where you please, without the consent of any one. There is no one but yourself to have any right over her.

Yours, &c.,

Chas. E. Whitehead.

Philadelphia, January 20th, 1859.

I hereby certify that the bearer, Dimmock Charlton, has been known to me for over twenty-five years, as a slave in the city of Savannah, state of Georgia; has always maintained a good character for honesty and sobriety.

His wife and children are at present in bondage as slaves in the city of Savannah, but can no doubt be ransomed at fair prices, upon proper steps or application being resorted to, or addressed to the respective owners.

——— ———.

Formerly of Savannah, Ga.

P. S.—The wife of Dimmock is owned by G. B. Cumming,
Daughter " " " W. H. May,
Son " " " D. O'Byrne,
Daughter " " " J. M. Tison,
" " " " Some party unknown, but the wife can tell by whom.

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