

SKETCHES
IN
EBONY AND GOLD

By

Mary Cochran Thurman



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MARY COCHRAN THURMAN.

SKETCHES

IN

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Sketches in Ebony and Gold.

MY FATHER.

TO THE MEMORY OF ONE WHO TAUGHT MY MIND TO
READ THE GOOD OF LIFE, MY HEART TO HELP
IT ON, I, IN LOVE AND ADMIRATION DEDI-
CATE THIS HUMBLE TRIBUTE.

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SKETCHES IN EBONY AND GOLD.

I.

“ONE I love, Two I love, Three I love, I say: Four I love with all my heart and Five I cast away,” sang one of earth’s sweetest voices.

Not a voice of much pathos to be sure, for the “Five I cast away” was repeated with almost an exultant little thrill. The voice of a care-free maiden, it seemed to be, a voice whose every note danced with joy and rang out as clear as a bell, while the minor chords of sympathy were only hinted at.

For why should dirges be sung while the world was full of sunshine? So thought

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the happy owner, and surely it would have been an ill accompaniment to the picture she then made, as down the wooded path she gayly tripped, swinging a spray of dew-bespangled wild roses in one fair hand, while with the other she daintily caught up her "Dolly Varden" skirts.

A study, one might have called her, in pink and gold as her little ruffled sun-bonnet of pink fell back, disclosing a wealth of sun-kissed hair, while the pink and white roses in her hand were reflected on her cheeks.

Golden buckles, on high curved insteps, gleamed through the lace meshes of her petticoat.

A picture she made in truth, a picture that an artist would come far to sketch, a lover still farther to possess.

Soon the singing ceased and the voice

called out clearly but softly, "Mammy, mammy, where are you, *anyway?*" and the answer came back in full, melodious tones:

"Here I is, honey, shellin' peas under de ole hick'ry tree. Ef you wants me ter, little missus, I'll kum ter once."

"No, you needn't, mammy, for I am coming right there myself," said Madeline Douglass, as she pulled back the honeysuckle vines from across her path and burst upon the scene like a ray of sunshine.

"I've a great secret to tell you, mammy," she continued, as the old darky hustled around to dust off a corner of the long bench, on which she had been sitting, for her mistress, declaring all the time that "It warn't fittin' for my pet to res' upon."

"Oh, never mind that," laughed the young girl. "I'll excuse it this time, because I am in a hurry to tell you my secret."

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The old colored woman's ebony countenance fairly gleamed at the promise of a mystery, but she shook her head ominously, and said:

"You'se too young, honey, fur secruts. What's wuth knowin' you should shere wid oders, and what ain't, you shouldn't persess. But go 'long, chile, yo' ole mammy is allays ready ter hear."

"I knew you would be," replied Madeline with a smile. "Well, what would you think, mammy, if I were to tell you that I was going to be married?"

"Gwine ter get married," repeated the old negress half incredulously. "I'd say, sugar, that you warn't half as smart as some young gemmun must be. But law, honey, 'tis yo' proper callin', an' 'tain't fur me to be argufyin' agin matrimony wid *nobody*, me as has had three ole men already, and de Lord

knows as how I'll have anudder ef Isaac pegs out afore I does, soon as eber de mournin' time be ober. Now, tell me, honey, who it am you'se thinkin' ob givin' yo' pretty self to? Mister Dudley, I hopes, ef anybody, fur den you kin stay rite at home, and I'd feel easy in givin' you into his hands, 'cos he am a good man cert'ny, and lubs you ter distracshun. Enny fool kin see dat in dose dark, solemn eyes ob his'n."

"Oh, mammy," interrupted her young mistress, "you are such an old goose about Mr. Dudley. Of course, he is a nice man, but don't you know that I never would do for a minister's wife? I am much too frivolous and spoilt. The poor man would spend all his time preaching his sermons at me, and I would spend all mine crying over them. In fact we both would be miserable. No, no, I can't marry Mr. Dudley, not even

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to please you. Besides," she continued with a merry twinkle in her eyes, "how do you know that he has ever asked me to?"

"How does I know?" was the quick reply. "How does I know dat de sun am riz terday? 'Cos, I done seen it. An' cayrn't I see how dat po' young preacher am a-wear-in' his tongue an' his heart strings out er askin' you? Pshaw, chile, I'se too ole an' 'sperienced ter git fooled on co'tin' signs. Dey's plain as de tail on er peacock, anyway."

"Well," broke in Madeline again, "suppose he has, and suppose I told him No, that I loved Mr. Allen better, and was going to marry him, what would you say then?"

"I'd say," Mammy 'Liza solemnly replied, "dat you ain't done cut yo' wisdom teeth yit. 'An' honey, you mustn't git riled ef I talks plain-like, fur God knows I don't mean

no offence. I'se de only mudder you'se ebber knowed since you was a tiny, weansy baby, when yo' own angel mudder crossed de ribber an' lef' you in my kere. Ter be sho', massa done his best by you, fur he lubed you better'n he lubed his life, but den he was in fur spilin' you, sho', 'cos he wouldn't cross you in nuffin'. He just say he couldn't scole you, fur it would feel like scoldin' missus herself, an' *dat* he'd sooner cut out his tongue dan do. 'As fur Mister Allen, he am a likely 'nuff young gemmun, but not de kind fur you. What you needs am a good stron' religionist ter keep you in de rite track, an' Mister Allen jes' got 'nuff 'ligi'n fur hisself, no more ter spare dan a dancin' 'Piscopalean, an' he'd 'low you ter do as you please widout any advisement whatsomever. 'Tain't his fault, honey, 'tis de raisin' he's had. An' you wouldn't help

him no mor'n he'd help you. You'd just drif' inter his ways, an' his ways am his people's ways, an' dere ways is to do as dey please, make all de money dey kin an' let dere po' souls lookout fer demselves. Dey thinks de Lord owes dem a good time, an' dey don't owe Him nothin'. Cayrn't I tell dat by de way he do about goin' to church? He wouldn't go 'tall ef it warn't fur keepin' de odder gemmuns off of you, an' when he gits dere, instead ob payin' 'tention ter de prayers an' singing, he jes' gawps and bats his eyes 'round all de time. He do well 'nuff fur courtin' days, little missus, but when de road 'ill get rocky, 'twon't be him as can comfort you, 'cos he hain't got no balm of Gilead in his soul. What dat you say about his lubbin' you 'nuff ter make up fur dat? Chile, der ain't nuffin' dat kin take its place on dis earth! 'Cos he lubs you, honey, but

do de honey-bee desurve credit fur lubbin' de rose? An' his lub ain't a sarcumstance to Mister Dudley's, fur he lubs you wid his soul, same as his mind an' body, while Mister Allen ain't so sure he got a soul. An', honey, *soul-lub* is de only kind dat kin stand rubbin'. Ter-be-sho, he kin send you 'nuff candy ter kill, an' flowers ter smudder you under, but what am dat when his daddy pays de bills? Doan't count as much as de little wild flowers in yer han' what Mister Dudley riz 'arly in de mornin' ter git fur you, while de dew-drops was on 'em. Hear me talkin', chile, 'tis powerful easy ter fling 'round dollars when de ole folks do all de gatherin' ob dem, but 'tain't so easy ter rise wid de sun allays. I ain't 'ere sayin' Mister Allen wouldn't lub you same as Mister Dudley ef he knowed how, but he *doan't* know how, an' *you* can't nebber teach

him. Listen ter yo' ole black mammy, honey, an' take de man as has his foot planted on de Rock ob Ages, an' when de clouds git black an' de waves do beat, he'll jes' fold you in his strong arms and wipe de tears away. But, laws hab mercy, while I'se rattlin' on here, you is gwine ter sleep, an' all my dinner is spilin'. Go 'long, chile, an' res' yo' pretty head afore de beaux begin ter come ter call, an' jist remember dis, dat no matter who you marries, I'se gwine ter bake de finest cake in de country fur de weddin' supper, so dar now!"

II.

A NIGHT in June.

The air was redolent with the perfume of rose and honeysuckle, moonbeams danced athwart the lawn and played "hide and seek" among the trees.

Within the dense foliage of some massive oak, a nightingale was singing love songs to her mate.

Through the long vista of elms and maples the home of Colonel Douglass rose like some fairy castle, a blaze of sparkling lights.

Servants in velvet jackets and knee breeches were noiselessly hurrying hither and thither, while before the open portals

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a pair of well-fed, well-groomed horses stood restlessly champing their bits and pawing the ground, harnessed to a high-swung family coach.

Flowers were strewn everywhere! And wedding bells pealed through the air, for to-night "My Lady of Broad Oaks" was to become Mistress Allen!

Picturesque Grace Church, about a mile distant, stood ready for the ceremony.

Into a veritable bower of roses it had been transformed, whose every niche was filled with waiting, anxious friends.

The organist, to quiet their eagerness, was playing some sweet, almost plaintive strains which set the dear old ladies in silken gowns and lace caps, to romancing, while old men shut their eyes to dream over again their honeymoon days.

Suddenly, "Hush!" fell upon the au-

dience. Old people straightened up and held their breath. Young people craned their necks, but held *not* their tongues, for here and there could be caught the whispered:

“Here she comes.”

“Isn’t her dress pretty?”

“My, but she looks frightened.”

“Oh, but she’s a beauty,” etc., etc.

Then the organ gave a broken sigh, and began to peal the joyful wedding march, while the bridal procession slowly filed up the aisle.

First came little boys, in silk knickerbockers and silver buckles, holding the ribbons, followed by dainty little maidens, who scattered daisies and lilies of the valley for high-heeled shoes to crush.

Then came groomsmen and bridesmaids, the latter wearing sheer white muslins, and

carrying garlands of flowers, while last, but by no means least, came the radiant bride, clad in exquisite robes of misty white, orange blossoms in her hair and a single spray of white wild roses in her hand, leaning on the arm of her stately father. Never had Madeline Douglass looked more lovely, and every inch she seemed a queen.

As she left the door of the church, Mamma 'Liza, in white 'kerchief and a black silk dress, "one ob ole missus' very bes'," smoothed out her train, saying as she did so:

"Now, honey, doan't look to de right nor yet to de lef", but keep in de middle ob de road."

Then she hastily brushed aside a stray tear, and hurried off to a corner of the church especially reserved for the servants where, amongst others, sat little Julius

Cæsar Hopkins, her grandson, with eyes big as saucers, and his coal black face fairly shining from the soap and scrubbing it had received for the occasion.

“Uncle” Isaac’s rhine-stone shirt stud seemed really jealous of “the flash” it gave.

The groom was at the altar ready to receive the bride. A handsome man he was, and so faultlessly attired that even Mammy ’Liza admitted she was proud of his “qualifications.”

But the minister, an important personage on all such occasions, seemed of unusual interest to the congregation, as he stood waiting the bride in his long, white robes. A giant he appeared in stature, with dark, piercing eyes and brow of marble white, from which long raven locks were carelessly brushed. A striking looking man he certainly was.

Over in a corner someone was heard to whisper: "Presiding at his own funeral," and the town joker replied: "Well, he's marrying her, anyhow;" but if any thoughts were racking the brain or any emotions stirring the heart of the young divine, not a muscle of his face betrayed them. There were strongly drawn lines there, but immovable they seemed in the rigidly pale countenance.

Miss Mehitabel Baezly, the village gossip, declared she heard a dry, broken sob as he pronounced the couple "man and wife," but all the fair young bride saw was a smile of wondrous sweetness, and heard the words "God bless you both forever" as he held her hand in parting benediction.

Mammy 'Liza found him afterwards in the vestry room, where she ran to control

her emotions before returning to "de deception up at de house," with his head buried in his arms and from the edge of his closed Bible, one little wild rosebud was peeping.

III.

JUNE of another year; but the town air seemed stifling, and the scene had shifted from Southern romance to Western bustle.

In the heart of the city there stood a handsome residence; brilliantly lighted it was, but not for sounds of revelry, for ropes were stretched and gloomy silence hung o'er all.

Grim death was knocking at the door, and weary watchers were faintly begging for one moment more.

Within the palatial walls, a chapter from "Life's Book" was closing. The heroine's race was run. Panting, she lay upon her silken couch, for even death's chill could

neither cool that raging fever nor calm those wild, frightened eyes.

At the bedside her husband knelt, holding one poor little emaciated hand in his, knelt, as if at the shrine of some beautiful idol, but helpless and hopeless. Between the sighing and sobbing, he heard those ever repeated words, pleading and imploring:

“Can no one show me the way? Please, please take my hand. Oh, where, where is the road? It used to run by the little church, but I haven’t been to church for so long, and I’ve forgotten what the minister said. There! there! why am I talking of ministers and churches? Everybody out here says they are stupid, and I am going to the play to-night instead. Dancing and singing! Dancing and singing! Oh, how gay it all is. But,” and the sufferer struggled to rise in her terror. “Look! Look!

the players are grinning skeletons and all they sing is 'Lost! Lost!' Oh, take me back! Take me back to the light!" she screamed, clutching the very air for help.

"For God's sake, doctor," cried her husband, springing to his feet, "can nothing ease her brain?"

The old doctor sadly shook his head, saying as he turned aside, "All has been done, but the struggle will not be long."

"Madeline," implored the young man, sinking once more to her side, "speak to me, darling. Don't you know me now? Say 'I love you' just once more."

"I love, I love," came from the thin lips, "what do I love? Oh, yes, let me look at you," she said, fixing her beautiful wild eyes upon his face. "I used to know you, long ago. We started out together, didn't we? And the road was pleasant, but you said

you knew another prettier one, and I went with you, but it's getting dark, so dark, and I hear the river roaring. Do you know where heaven is? Your friends said there was no such place, and I began to believe them, but now I know there is. I feel it and you do, too, don't you, dear? Of course you do," she continued, putting out her arms to him, "for you—you are my husband."

But before she heard his eager answer, the wild look came once more into those beautiful eyes, and the poor, tired brain again began its struggle for freedom.

Outside in the hall, Benjamin, the punctilious butler, was making a dignified effort to prevent a strange looking figure from entering the house of mourning.

In answer to continued raps on the massive portals, he had found standing on the doorsteps an old negro woman, clad in neat,

clean, homespun gown, long, white apron, black silk sunbonnet, and a red bandanna 'kerchief crossed upon her bosom.

In her hand she carried a bright colored carpetbag.

"Mornin', sah," she said, making Benjamin a curtsey. "Wouldn't hab pestered you, but couldn't fin' no kitch'n do' sabe my soul. Am dis where Miss Mad'lin libs?"

"Miss Madeline who?" asked Benjamin in a superior manner, edging the carpetbag from the door with the tip of his shoe.

"Miss Mad'lin Douglass, in co'se. Laws hab mercy, chile, 'pears like you city folks am powerful ignorant. Eb'rybody in Scottesville knows who Miss Mad'lin is, wid-out any splainin'."

"This," interrupted Benjamin, preparing to close the door, "is the residence of Mrs. Gordon Allen."

“Well,” exclaimed his visitor, “she am de bery same, an’ I wants ter see her.”

“Impossible,” was the reply, “Mrs. Allen is very ill.”

“Doan’t I knows dat she am sick? ‘Ain’t dat fur what I’s come all dese miles ’hind a turrible engine? Lemme in, son, I’s no time ter was’. Dar, dar,” she excitedly whispered, as Madeline’s delirious voice rose upon the air, “dar’s my chile er callin’. Lemme me pass, critter! Doan’ yer tech me wid yo’ han’s,” she fiercely added, as Benjamin, in sheer desperation, tried to push her from the door, and before he could recover from his consternation, she had followed the raving voice down the corridor, and was entering her mistress’s room.

The watchers started to their feet, but she heeded them not.

Swiftly passing to the bedside of the now thoroughly delirious Madeline, she gently drew the raving form upon her bosom, smoothed the golden curls from off the marble brow, and softly murmured:

“Hush, honey, doan’t worry so. Here’s yo’ ole Mammy done come to ’tend ter you. Black Liza ’ill show yer de way. Doan’t yer see de honeysuckle vines and de paf where de wil’ roses bloom? Dere’s de little stream er tricklin’ down de hill an’ de birds is singin’ ’bout Par’dise ter cum. Go ter sleep, baby, an’ I’ll tell yer de res’ when yo’se awake.”

The wild eyes gazed wistfully into the black face, two little tears stole down the burning cheeks, and with “Mammy, take me home” upon her lips—the tired brain was at rest.

IV.

THROUGH the city's crowded thoroughfare, an old black woman was hurrying her way, gazing eagerly into the faces of the passers-by and mumbling to herself "Boun' I'll fin' a preacher somewheres. Think I'se goin' ter let dat lam' die widout prayers and consolashun? Dar's dose po' fools er po'in' medicine down her when what she needs am de rod ob faith. What would ole massa an' missus say, beens dey erlive, ter see der chile dyin' in er strange lan' 'mongst heathens, fur dat's what dey is, no more ner less."

By this time her soliloquy was finished.

Mammy 'Liza had reached the depot which she had only recently left.

A swarm of incoming passengers almost ran over her as she stood hesitating as to what further step to take.

Bewildered she turned, and in that sudden movement ran headlong into the tall figure of one of the passengers.

“'Scuse me, marsa,” she said.

Then looking up, she almost shrieked in her joy:

“Fo' de Lawd sake, ef 'taint Mister Dudley; 'cuse me, marsa, but de Lawd done answered my prayer better'n I knowed fur.”

“Why, 'Aunt Eliza,” exclaimed the young man, recovering from his first shock of surprise, “how under Heaven did you get so far from Virginia? I thought you were never going to leave Old Albemarle.”

“Dis am de fust time,” replied the old

woman solemnly, "an' praise Gawd, it'll be de las'. But come along, marsa, doan't stan' here, fur po' little missus is awaitin' fur you ter row her 'cross de ribber."

"What," was the startled exclamation of Preston Dudley, as his cheeks suddenly grew ashy white, he realizing full well the darky's metaphor. "Is your little mistress ill and in trouble? I pray God not. Here, get into this carriage and as we drive along you can tell me the whole story," he continued, as he ordered the driver to take them to the Allen home as rapidly as possible.

In a few simple words mammy had told him the story of her young mistress's illness.

"I cayrn't help er thinkin', marsa," she added, "dat it am de heart-ache dat am a-killin' de po' little lam'. De folks in dis

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here country ain't like her own people. I 'lowed, do', she thought she were happy wid dem an' liked der ways 'till trials and tribulashuns done kum an' den der warn't a one ob de pleasure seekin' folks as could get her no consolashun. How could dey tell her how ter die when dey doan't know how ter live demselves? I knows, young marsa, dat I am er speakin' powerful plainlike, an' may Gawd Almighty furgive me fur jedgin' ob my feller man, but it do rile me ter see people as what calls demselves quality doin' what only po' white trash an' niggers am 'scusable fur doin', such as spendin' de Lawd's Day er drivin' roun' de kentry, 'stead ob prayin' an' singin', an' er goin' ter de shows an' de like ob sich. An' would yer believe it, de young ladies laffs when yer tells dem 'bout hell an' de debbil, an' says as how dere ain't no sich place. Jis'

wait 'till dey sees de horns an' de pitch fork an' den maybe dey will berlieve what wiser heads already knows."

Just in the midst of mammy's discourse, a small boy's voice was heard on a corner of the street, "Posies for sale. Fresh from the country, and only five cents a bunch."

Preston Dudley glanced carelessly in his direction. Then, as if suddenly seized by some uncontrollable impulse, called to the driver to stop, and hastily springing to the sidewalk threw a quarter to the street urchin and returned to the carriage with a fragrant bunch of wild roses in his hand.

V.

ONCE more the scene opened in the sick room.

The same beautiful woman lay on the brink of the life to come, and still the pitiful ravings kept on.

“Tired, oh, yes, so very tired,” she was repeating, “but I can’t find the way home. Why doesn’t father come to lead me back? It’s been so long since I have seen him and no one tells me of mother now. Oh, but that water is cold and the river is black,” she suddenly broke in, hiding her golden head in the pillow. “I thought I saw the

roses, but they are all gone, all gone again. Can't somebody pray? Just one little prayer—I used to know, 'Now I lay me,' but I have forgotten it now."

"Madeline, darling," her husband whispered, returning from the door where he had hastily tipped, "would you like to see an old friend, an old Virginia friend,—Preston Dudley?"

"An old friend," his dying wife repeated. "Yes! yes! old friends are best; but Dudley, Dudley—I can't remember, dear. Let me see his face," she eagerly added, as Mammy 'Liza led a tall, grave faced man into the room.

Madeline Allen gazed long into the dark, sympathetic eyes of her old lover and childhood's friend, then passed her little hand slowly over her perplexed brow as if to brush some passing clouds away and, as

Preston Dudley knelt by her side and laid a bunch of wild roses on the covers, breathing aloud some simple prayer, a glad smile broke over her troubled face, and with a sob of joy, she cried:

“I know now. You will show me the way. Gordon tried to, but he couldn’t. Poor boy, poor boy,” she added, laying her hand caressingly on her husband’s head. “He lost the path too. We were both silly children, but you will show him the right way, won’t you, Mr. Dudley? Oh, just sing for me as you used to do, about the ‘Kindly light,’ please.”

The young minister rose to his feet, hesitated one moment to steady his voice, and then began in tones which, though soft and mellow, seemed to rise from the depths of some long pent up soul:

*“Lead, kindly light, amid the encircling
gloom,
Lead thou me on;
The night is dark, and I am far from home,
Lead thou me on,”*

and then, as the last lines of the hymn broke the stillness of the death chamber :

*“And through the gloom those angel faces
smile,
Which I have loved long since and lost
awhile.”*

A look of infinite calm settled upon the face of his long-lost sweetheart.

“Yes,” she murmured, “the river is all bright and mother and father are coming over for me. How beautiful it is.” And then taking her husband’s hand she laid it in that of her friend’s, falling asleep as she repeated, “Show him the way, too.”

Three days later Madeline Allen crossed the river as she lay in old Mammy 'Liza's arms listening to her sing "Sweet and low."

They laid her baby boy on her breast to waken her, but she was past all earthly calls. As they closed her beautiful eyes for the last time Preston Dudley sang in clear, firm tones:

*"The strife is o'er, the battle done!
The victory of life is won;
The song of triumph has begun,
Alleluia!"*

VI.

FIVE years have passed.

An old negro Mammy sits before her cabin door in "Ole Virginny," shelling peas and singing:

*"One mo' ribber, an' dat one ribber am
Jordan,
One mo' ribber, der's one mo' ribber ter
cross."*

A little golden haired boy comes running up with his mouth screwed into a pucker.

Mammy sees him, and emptying her lap, calls out: "What's de matter? Come here, honey, ter yo' ole black mammy an' tell her what ails yer."

"I'se stumped my toe," the little fellow answers, climbing into her ample lap, "but, mammy, I didn't chy a little bit, 'tause Chiram says if I chys, dar won't be any chears lef' in heben for little dirls, and little dirls does love so to chy. But my toe was hurted, hurted real bad," he added, shaking his golden curls in serious emphasis, "but I weckon it'll be all wight if you tisses it, an' waps it up."

"Dat I'll do, my honey," the old woman says, preparing to doctor the foot. "An' how kum yer ter git it hurt, chile? I 'lows dat good fer nothin' nigger, Hiram, done hed yer where yer oughtn't ter be."

"No, he didn't, mammy," her little master replied, "'tause I wented away all by myself to look for the baby fishes in the cheek, and one bad little one twied to bite my foots, and when I runned away I stumped my toe

on a great big wock, dat's what I did! Does you reckon there is any wocks in heben, mammy? Chiram says the ribbers is made out of milk and honey, and I don't see how the little angel boys ever learns how to swim. I weckon dere mammies just lets them eat all day long, don't you? Chiram says angel boys don't never have the stom-ickache. Oh, dear, I wish Dod would give me a angel stomick, and you would let me eat just as many gween apples as Chiram does, now wouldn't you, mammy?" he cried, giving her a big hug, as she gave the final affectionate pat to his foot.

"Go 'long, chile," the old woman smilingly answered. "I sees yer only jes' wants one ob yo' mammy's big apples, now, an' yer kin hab it, too. Yo' mudder afo' you warn't nebber defused nothin', an' you has jes' her persuashun ways as well as favorin' her

in looks. Poor little missus," she soliloquized, "gone dese five years, an' it seems as do' I could see her now. I ketches myself time an' agin lookin' up dat path fur her ter kum down, laughin' an' singin' like her little heart would bust wid joy an' gladness, an' den ter tink it war sorrow dat broke it at las'. Howsomeber, she must be happy now, sittin' in glory wid ole marsa an' missus, an' seein' all de good Marsa Allen am a-doin' on earth, fur de Lawd knows dere ain't a better gemmun libin' dan he has been since little missus died, a-workin' out his own salvashun wid tears an' 'pentance. Brought little missus home an' hain't neber lef' her side since. Took Mr. Dudley ter lib wid him an' de baby in de ole house, an' tergedder dey does mo' good dan sibinteen camp-meetin's. Eberybody in de country knows an' lubs 'em—from poor, cripple

Jake ter Hallelujah Jane. 'An' bless yer soul, dey ain't nebber forgit little missus; allays er walkin' by her grave, an' jis' dis mawnin' I seen Marse Allen a-smoothin' down der grass as he war passin'. Seems like he won't hab a pebble or sich nowhar near it, an' while he war kneelin' dar Mister Dudley walk a little way off an' kum back pretty soon wid er bunch ob wild roses in his han', an' when he han' dem to Marse Allen I heerd him say, 'Perhaps she would like these, Allen,' an' Marse Allen, he jis' grab his han' an' hold it tight fur one minute 'fo' he put de flowers ober little missus's breast. But, Lawd hab mercy, here I am a-talkin' away, while my dinner is a-spilin', an' my po' little baby has a-fallin' asleep hold'n fas' ter his apple. Hiram, Hiram," she called, looking vainly up and down the

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road, "kum here, yer good fur nothin' young African. How much time yer want fur triflin' when de cream am er waitin' ter freeze?"

GEORGE WASHINGTON, JR.

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I.

VIRGINIA.

It was July time in ole Virginny.—Dear old Virginia with her battle scarred face and blessed memories!

Conquered, she had been—oh, yes! But not humiliated. For out of the graves of her buried hopes, and from the ashes of glory now past her proud spirit still rose triumphant. No grim remorse reproached her, for she had nobly struggled for what she thought was right, and then only when she felt the struggle inevitable.

But now the chapter was closed. The tear-stained leaves were turned. Over the bloody chasm the North and the South had once more clasped hands, and Dixie Land had started out on a new era of prosperity, an era which will some day be crowned with glorious success.

Slow the journey was at first, for bandaged feet and lean purses make but poor traveling companions. Prosperity, however, beckoned on, and Nature, the South's own godmother, was tenderly soothing the wounds that Fate's blows had struck.

Humming birds were sipping nectar from honeysuckle cups. Bees were drowsily crooning their love songs to the jessamine vines. Rose petals and luscious fruit lay scattered over the ground; and down by the shimmering, bubbling brook the ubiquitous small boy could be seen pursuing the fra-

grant "June apple." As he swiftly scaled a tree, and swung from limb to limb with squirrel-like agility, one could almost believe in the mortifying theory of evolution, *provided* one was not born a Virginian!

For, while others may debate over the exits and entrances of their ancestors, a *Virginian* has no doubt on earth of his! Or, if he had a misgiving on that score, he would also have too much pride to speak of it.

No monkeys or tadpoles chatter or grin from his family tree!

But we have digressed! Let us return to our scene.

On a hillside overhanging the brook was a little log cabin, picturesquely covered by an ivy vine.

Two or three sunflowers raised their bold, bright faces and peered in at the open front

window, while on the opposite side of the little steps a row of hollyhocks had only recently held proud sway, decked in their gorgeous robes of many colors.

At the door of the cabin there presently appeared the ample figure of an old negro "mammy." Over her calico dress hung a large checked apron. A white kerchief encircled her neck, and lay in folds over her motherly bosom, while on her head a red silk bandanna was twisted in turban fashion.

This latter was her special pride, for had not "that ole Roman gemmum when he war a-vis'tin' narsa given it to her with a box of snuff, sayin' as he did: 'Mammy, you mus' take this an' Gawd bless you, fur you puts me in 'membrance ob de ole nuss I onct had in Lynchburg afore I was tooken to der Buckeye State.' Dem's his denticle words;

and den I made him a curt'sy low, an' says perlite an' 'spectabul like: 'Thankee, massa, thankee! I'se proud ter ha' knowed you; an' I hopes when Gabriel blows his trumpet dis po' ole nigger will find you a-marchin' in de fro' ranks, keepin' step wid de qual'ty, where you belongs.' ”

In speaking of herself “Mammy” was at times apparently very humble and took the privilege of using the word “nigger,” but woe unto him who should ever usurp that right! For it was a term of ignominy only allowed within the family circle!

In spite of the prized bandanna, however, on this July day her chocolate countenance wore a worried look. It was evident she was searching for some one, for, after gazing up and down the road and calling louder and louder:

“George Washington! George Washington! Wher’ is you, you young fool?”

George made no more reply than would the “Father of his country” have done at the same juncture.

Mammy hastily grabbed up her skirts with both hands, and waddled her way through the tall grasses down towards an old orchard (for she knew her “young hopeful’s” failing), saying to herself as she went:

“I nebber seed sich a triflin’ nigger as dat boy am!—Unless it war his daddy, fur Abe didn’t sweat *his* brow fur nobody! How as likely a gal as I war ebber married sich a lazy coon as he war am beyond my comprehenshun!” (Mammy was very proud of her vocabulary.) “Dem quilting bees wer’ cert’ny ter blame, for Lawd hab

mercy! How po' Abe could play de jews-harp, while we gals war a-sewin'!"

Then, either at the thought of his noble talent now perished, or else to illustrate the inconsistency of her sex, Mammy Jinnie shed two tears to the memory of the deceased Abraham Isaac.

Just then a low, moaning sound brought her soliloquy to an abrupt close, and parental fears almost made her heart cease beating, for surely that moan came from George Washington. But only for an instant was she in doubt as to his trouble, for soon she heard the following words:

"What's de use ob livin', nohow? Wish I mout die!" Another groan. "Water millyon crap er failure. Sweet pertater vines a dried up. Lordy! Lordy! Lordy!" And taking a mouth-harp from his pocket George Washington began to play:

*“I would not live away,
I ask not to stay,”*

which plaintive strain was suddenly interrupted by the form of his mother appearing in wrathful indignation. At the sight of her the young Ethiopian's lantern jaw swung open—his eye balls rolled in their sockets until only the whites were visible, making a marked contrast to his mahogany complexion.

In very early life George Washington, Jr., (his mother had named him “Junior,” by the way, to “pervent his gittin' confounded wid de gemmun he war named arter”) had once had fits, and now whenever he felt that well-deserved punishment was swiftly following on his heels, he simulated those fits as nearly as possible, knowing his mother would rather see a rattlesnake than a genu-

ine spasm. But this time she was not to be fooled.

“You needn’t be a-rollin’ yo’ orbits at me! You lazy young puppy!” she exclaimed, giving him a ringing box on his ears. “I’s cotched you at las’ in yo’ triflin’, good fer nothin’ ways! I’ll teach you ter mind yo’ betters instid ob layin’ in de shade a-thinkin’ ob vittals all day long! Here, I’s bin a-waitin’ fur de water ter bile wid, fur de Lord knows how long!—while you is possessin’ yo’ soul in patience under de apple-trees! An’ you knowed I p’intedly wanted ter go ter Bro’ Hezekiah Hopkins’ interments at three o’clock. Ain’t bin ter a funeral fer nigh onto a month, an’ ter-day I war ter be chief mourner, fur Hezy didn’t hab no kin, an’ I war de las’ pusson as laid eyes on him a-fore de light’nin’ struck! Lord! Lord! It do ’pear like chilluns dese

days doan't kere 'bout dere parients habin' no pleasure at all! You'se a disgrace ter yo' po' ole mudder! An' you'll lan' in de pentensherry or po' house afore you die! Doan't I see yo' fadder's ways stickin' out all ober you now? I'se a great min' ter tan yo' hide fer you! Hick'ry ile am what you needs, anyway! Come home wid me ter onct!"

Seizing her dutiful son by the collar the old woman marched him homeward.

All this time George, Jr., had remained apparently perfectly dumb, for, like his father, he knew when "silence was golden" and preserved it.

He did wriggle a little in mortification on his journey back when he saw Tirzah Ann's bushy head peeping over the fence, and a gleam of white teeth told only too plainly that she took in the whole situation.

Tirzah Ann was George Washington's "tender plant," as he delicately called her, and he couldn't bear for her to see him in undignified positions. Then and there he decided on a plan over which he had been cogitating all day—to leave home and maternal rule and seek fame and glory in foreign fields; but he would wait until his mother had spent all her present righteous wrath before broaching the subject. So he meekly went home, brought the water with a surprising show of energy, promised to take care of Mary Jane's twins (Mary Jane was his oldest sister—he had been blessed with seven) and make himself generally useful, while his mother was absent.

As he saw her disappear up the road with her funeral expression and Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes on, he turned to look at his charges, the twins, Snow Flake and Dew

Drop, who in turn, set up such a howl that George, Jr.'s, heart sank within his boots, and he wondered why it was that some people drowned kittens when they had "too many ter onct," and didn't do the same with babies! In fact, George, at that moment, was inclined to think that the kittens were entitled to preference, for "dey doan't make so much fuss, an' can take ker' ob dem-selves."

Now, this young heathen philosopher had been regularly sent to Sunday school, but, alas! He often fell by the wayside, and as yet his morals were rather crude.

Be it said to his credit, however, that he tried every known and gentle means to quiet his nephews, until at last patience reached its limit, and he began to upbraid them roundly for what he considered base ingratitude.

“You, Snow Flake an’ Dew Drap!” he cried, “you kin jes’ split yo’ gizzard strings afo’ I’d take you up agin. Here I’s been a-tendin’ you all ebenin’ instid ob gwine a-fishin’; an’ all you does is ter screch like night owls! Wish ter Gawd I hed er green persimmon an’ den I’d git yo’ moufs closed up, fur sho’!”

But reproof made no impression on the twins, and George Washington was in despair until a brilliant thought struck him. Placing the bronzed cherubs in a tub, which stood near by, large and empty, he put them out on the hillside, where they could do no damage, and he could get a bird’s-eye view of them (which was all he cared to have) from a neighboring apple-tree.

He then stuffed his ears with cotton, and hied him to the tree, where he could eat green apples and watch Tirzah Ann to his

heart's content. But his "tender plant" only flaunted herself around on the other side of the fence in apparent indifference to all his frantic signs.

"'Pears ter me you'se puttin' on mighty high-flutin' airs dis eb'nin'," he muttered to himself, "an' jis' 'cos you 'lowed I was gwine ter git a-lickin' dis mornin'! Nebber min'! I'll make you turn yo' glances in dis terrect-shun—see if I doan't!" with which threat George Washington Junior began to sing at the top of his voice:

*"I'se got a girl in Baltimore,
Street cayrs run right by her do'."*

It was enough! The green-eyed monster, jealousy, stopped Tirzah Ann in her disdainful career. She at once began to cast sheep's eye glances towards the apple-tree,

and then taking courage, she boldly called out:

“Ef you’ll jis’ stop makin’ dat noise, George Washington, I’ll come ober an’ tell you summin’ I hearyd ter-day.”

Her Romeo, either from the cotton in his ears, or because he saw a suspicious cloud of dust coming down the road, was then deaf to all entreaties. He hastily “skinned-the-cat” out of the tree, seized the twins, who were now sleeping from sheer exhaustion, placed them tenderly in their crib, and when his mother and Mary Jane opened the door he was sitting beside them with a look of resignation and patience on his face beautiful to behold!

Seeing that his behavior had scored a point in his favor, George, Jr., determined the much cherished secret to divulge while times were auspicious.

"Mammy," he said, after the supper things were cleared away, "I'se got summin' on my min'!"

"Well," replied the old woman quietly, "doan't let it set dar till it hatch goose eggs."

"No'am, I ain't," continued the undaunted young man, "'cos I'se gwine away purty soon now."

"Huh!" exclaimed his maternal parent contemptuously, "I'd like ter know whar you's gwine to!"

"Norf," replied the hopeful, "Norf ter 'x'cise my liburty."

"Excise lib'ty, 'deed! What you want is ter linger whar you is, an' 'xcise yo' muscle," was the discouraging retort; "you'se gittin' pow'ful sot up since you'se bin gwine ter school. Now I knows what ole miss meant when she said 'a little larnin' war

daing'rous.' Go to bed, George Washington Junior! You'se been fool 'nuff for one day!"

"But mudder," pleaded the irrepressible George, "my books didn't larn me nuffin'." (And there was more truth than poetry in that statement, for George, Jr., rarely got beyond the covers.) "Mister Cheapshanks, he done said as how I could make my fortun' if I go Norf wid him."

At the mention of that worthy's name all the wrath, indignation and contempt of Mammy Jinnie's soul seemed to reach a culminating point. Casting one withering glance of scorn at her young olive branch, she gave vent to her feelings in language more forcible than polite.

"An' so you'se bin keepin' com'ny wid dat po' white trash! Mister Cheappants, indeed! I 'lowed as how he had summin'

ter do wid all yo' devilment. I ain't nebber liked dat critter since he fust come a-spark-in' roun' little missus! Couldn't I see he wouldn't make no suitable orn'ment fur our parlors." (Darkies of the old school always considered themselves as joint partners in all their "ole marse's" belongings.) "Tarleton Alexander done tole me so, hisself, an' what de 'kurnel' doan't know 'bout fust class goods ain't wurth knownin'! He nebber war no cornfield nigger. All his life he war 'sociated wid de bes' ladies an' gemmuns ob de lan'. Linden Hall war allays circumlocuted wid dem, an' de number ob genruls, presidents an' gubnors dat 'Bro' Alexander' entertained at his ole marsa's war a sight to behol'. An' he allays done his marsa proud; moreover, de ole gemmun sot great store by de genrul—Tarleton war sometimes called by dat titul, 'cos

when he fust jined de army as body sarvent ter his young Marsa John, he war 'Genrul,' but den he got his permoshun, an' he left arter de war was ober as 'Kurnel.' No wonder folks say Tarleton had a 'stinguished look an' han'some manners—he war intituled ter bof! An' den he conversed in sich butiful language! But, as I sot out ter say, ole marsa, too, knowed dat Mister Cheapshanks didn't b'long ter fust quality time he sot his eyes on him. He didn't say much, but he sniffed de air like a thoroughbred do when he see a common plug cum on de race-trac'. Howsomeber, dat sleek Yankee didn't keer, he knowed his bizness an' he lay low bidin' his time. Purty soon he seed little missus interustin' herself in him; a-listenin' ter his soft speeches an' 'miratin' ober his sto' clos', and den he knowed his game was won! Po' little Miss Alice! She

were no mor'n er chile. An innocent lam' fur dat sheepskin wolf! An' she calc'lated as how she mus' be in love; so she tole her pa--ole marsa. He spoke his min' purty plainlike, but it war no use. Little missus only fired up an' said he war prejudiced 'cos Cheapshanks war a Yankee. Ole marsa 'lowed as dat war not de truf, an' he said as how der war plenty ob honorary gemmuns in de Norf dat he had profoun' dispect for, but dat mongrel cur was not ob de number. Den he argumented frum oder sides ob de case; how Miss Alice was too young ter 'pinionate on 'er husban's qualificashuns, an' all de like ob dat, but laws ob mercy! What's de good ob wastin' yo' bref in argu-fyin' an' sputifyin' wid young fools when dey thinks dey's in lub? It's jes' like gettin' horses outer a burnin' barn; de more you tries to help 'em out de furder dey runs

back in de flame! Well, when de nex' mornin' break, cool an' pleasant like, little missus war gone! Gone frum de roof what had sheltered an' protect her—gone frum de arms dat had nussed an' soothed her—broken de hearts dat still lubbed her!”

Here poor mammy's voice failed, and taking one corner of her apron she wiped a stray tear away.

George Washington, Jr., too, gave a snifle of sympathy, but more because he didn't know what else to do than from any other reason—while his mother, encouraged by the impression she was making, immediately took up the thread of her narrative:

“Yes—gone. An' all fur dat low-lived scoundrel! Marsa, he didn't say nuffin', but jes' shet his lips tight-like, an' takin' de little tear splashed note she had lef', he went in ter break de news to her mudder. ‘Sweet-

heart,' he says, as he bent ober ter kiss her gentle-like, 'we is alone now, an' mus' be all in all ter one anudder. I thought de cup was drened, but it seems de dregs remain.' His voice war kinder husky, an' I seen his han' tremble as he gabe ole missus de little note, for I done followed him, an' stood a-waitin' at de do', skeered ter def, 'cos I feared po' missus mought hab er faintin' spell, but she didn't. She knowed marsa had all he could bear. She only put out her han', seem as if ter clutch summin' what had lef' her, an' dough her face was as white as de lace at her froat, she look up at marsa an' tried ter smile. 'Perhaps, dear,' she whispered low, 'it is not as bad as we fear.' Den what should yo' ole mudder do?—big fool dat I war—but break rite down an' commence ter bellow like a calf! Dat night as I pass de liberry do', I seen ole marsa

standin' afore de pictur' ob Miss Alice—
de one wid de white dress on an' all de
roses aroun', an' I heard him say slow an'
solemn: 'I'd ruther hab' buried you, little
one, but the Lord's will be done.' Arter dat
he nebber let nobody say a word agin'
Cheapshanks. He 'lowed as he war his
darter's husban' an' on dat account he war
entitle ter some dispect; so nobody said
nothin'. We did hear dat he had a leetle
blue blood in his veins, which war some
cons'lashun, fur blood boun' ter crop out
some day, an' he claims, he did, dat one
ob he's gran'daddies war a king. Well, I
hope if he spoke de truf, it war one ob dem
as got der heads chopped off, fur Gawd
knows he deserve it, fur habin' sich er
gran'chile. 'Sides, I nebber seed any good
tree wid sich rotten limbs befo'. Hear

me talk. Dar war summin' wrong—clear wrong."

Just then the twins set up a dismal howl, and mammy stopped long enough to put both across her knees, flat on their little stomachs, while she beat a sort of tattoo with her feet and patted their backs.

Mary Jane having gone out to a meeting of the "Darters ob Rebecka," George Washington took advantage of the brief interval to shuffle towards the door, for the evening winds were wafting him sweet sounds of Tirzah Ann's "meliflous" voice warbling:

*"I lub my lub in the mornin',
I lub my lub at night,"—*

but before he could make his goal his mother began again. When she "got the floor" she usually held it, and poor George didn't dare interrupt.

“As I was gwine ter remark,” commenced the speaker of the house, “ole miss nebber were berry pert-like, an’ arter de perloperment she jes’ seem ter pine an’ pine away, until one day she call me inter her room an’ says: ‘Mammy Jinnie, I’s soon goin’ home ter res’ an’ I wants you ter promise ter take good kehr ob yo’ marsa until he can follow, too,—an’—an’—if yo’ little missus should ebber come bac’ agin you mus’ be berry kind ter her fur my sake. I knows de po’ chile is sorry!’ In coas’ she war sorry. Ebberybody else war sorry, too, but dat ole Cheapshanks, who had de ’surance ter write marsa ’bout onct er mont’ dat he would like ter hab a leetle more money ter keep ‘dear Alice’ respectfully on, (an’ den de war had hardly lef’ a shirt tail to our backs!). But laws! Marsa would go widout bread befo’ Miss Alice

should want ice cream, an' so he sont money an' sont money, 'cos I heard him tell ole miss so when dey didn't know I war aroun'. Well, as I war a-tellin' you, arter po' ole missus done gib me her disjunctions she had a sinkin' spell, an' she kep' a-callin' fur her baby. Marsa didn't waste no time sendin' fur her, but ole Cheapshanks sont word bac' dat she was too poorly ter travel. Den po' marsa war nigh crazy! He went in ter tell missus, but de anguls was a-callin' her den. She jes' stretch out her han's ter say 'good-bye', an' fell bac' in marsa's arms dead wid a smile ob glory on her face.

“We laid her ter rest in 'de vi'let bed under de lilac bushes, an' ebbery day you see how ole marsa takes er bunch ob flowers an' de good book in his han' an' goes ter read ter hisself by her grave.

“When de obsequies war ober, marsa hurried on ter see ’bout little missus, for he done hear she war mighty sick in a New York hospital. Lord! It do seem as if city folks cayrn’t take kehr ob dere own sick dese days, but has ter hurry dem off ter some place wher’ strange han’ smooths de pillows. Like who would want ter git well when it looks as if dere own kin had desarted dem! Well, I ’most filled marsa’s bag an’ pockets wid gingercakes, pop corn an’ shiny red apples, fur I knowed how little missus han’s would clap when she saw ’em! Marsa seemed sort dazed-like all de time he war a-preparin’ ter go, but he went straight on, an’ luck it were he did, fur he jis’ got der in time ter see his pet. She ’most went wild when she sot eyes on him. ‘Oh, daddy, daddy,’ she say, (like she used ter call him when she

wanted candy), 'I'se so glad you'se come! An' you'll take me home, won't you, daddy, dear?' But afore he could hardly answer, de anguls done already took her home to her mudder!"

By this time mammy was fairly sobbing, and even George Washington's face was getting a much needed washing in salt water.

"What were lef' ob his darlin'," Mammy Jinnie continued, between her sobs, "mar-sa brought home in a bu'ful white coffin, all lined wid silk. When I look in at her she seem jes' as peaceful, like she'd drapped off ter sleep, but her po' little han's had done got so thin it seem as if dey mought break by techin' dem! We buried her side ob ole missus, an' her grave war mos' full ob lilies-ob-de-valley an ebbery kind ob white flowers befo' dey let her down gentle-like

in it. De preacher read some soothin' words, an' prayed we mought all meet beyond de ribber, an' Miss Marg'ret Lewis, her wid de sweet voice, sang a gran' hymn what keeps sayin':

*“I'm nearer home ter-day, ter-day,
Than e'er I've been befo'”*

an' all de time de tear draps war chasin' demselves down her sof' cheeks. Truf is, we all war a-cryin' easy-like, so as not ter break marsa down. He jes' stood dere wid his eyes fixed on de coffin like he war made outer marble, but when de fus' clod struck he look same as if a knife had done gone clear through his heart.

“Arter all war ober, we niggers what had lubbed po' little Miss Alice ebber since she war born, commenced ter sing, ‘Home, Sweet Home,’ as de white robed min'ster

gabe marsa his arm an' led him away. Coas' ole Cheapshanks war dere, too, but nobody paid much 'tention ter him. I reckon marsa gabe him 'nuff money to get bac' Norf so as ter shet ob him soon. 'An' now you says he am bac' here again, tryin' ter bring mo' sorrow an' tribulation on de place! Doan't you nebber let me hear you breve his name agin! It will bring a plague on you. Cert'n as sunrise."

"But, mudder," expostulated George, Jr., forgetting everything told him that afternoon in his one desire to "exercise his liberty," "he do say as how I kin make big money beens I go Norf wid him."

"Huh!" scornfully ejaculated his mother. "It wouldn't be him as would be de gibber, den, fur wheneber he gets his han' on a dollar, he squeezes it so tight it makes de eagle holler! 'Sides, what on Gawd's

earth would dem Yankee folks make outer yo' nigger ways? Better stay wher' you'se comprehended, an' if you doan't git rich, ole marsa will see you nebber starve."

George Washington subsided into the silence of defeat for a while, but just as his mother was dozing off over her pipe, he broke forth in one final appeal:

"Mammy, oh, mammy! But de water-millyon crap am failed an' I wants ter go whar' I ken disremember!"

"Shet yo' mouf! You young fool! be-fo' I lam'baste de hide off you fur doin' like you'se had no raisin'!" was all the appreciation he obtained from his doting parent.

The next morning when Mammy Jinnie climbed the loft steps and looked under the "log-cabin quilt" for George Washington's nappy head, she found that her threats,

warnings and arguments had all been in vain, for the bird had evidently flown during the night.

Her suspicions were confirmed when she discovered that the bright red and green carpetbag, a family heirloom, had also taken to itself wings, and pinned on the bedspread was a yellow piece of wrapping paper bearing evidence of George, Jr.'s advanced "edication."

Mammy's "book larnin'" was sufficient to convince her that this must be a note, so she loudly called for Mary Jane to "come here ter onct, an' see ef you kin make dis out. George Washington Jr., done runned away from his po' ole mudder, an' dis am all de cons'lashun he done lef'."

After much labor and many drops of perspiration Mary Jane managed to decipher this much:

“Good by to my lubbed mudder an’ kine
frens and relashuns. I is goin Norf to
xcis my liburti, an’ will kum bac’ ridin’
behind six horses. Take good ker of yoselfs
an’ doan’t fergit yo deer sun an brudder,

“GEORG WASH. JUNIOR.

“P. S.—An mammy I tuk yo’ \$5.00 as I
knowed yo’ wood want me ter travil like
quality. GEORG.”

That evening all mammy’s friends rose
up to comfort her. The “Darters ob Re-
becka” appeared in a body, for Mammy
Jinnie was a pillar of the order. Each
wore a long face and each had some word
of condolence.

Aunt Polydora Jackson was the first to
speak. She “’lowed as how dey was pow’ful
sorry an’ discommoded to hear tell on Mam-
my Jinnie’s tribulation, but to trus’ in de

Lord an' He would pull her fro' de fiery furnace."

At which mammy groaned her appreciation, and all the sisters said amen.

"Yes," piped up Sukey Jane Schanks, "don't you pester yo' soul, Sister Johnsing, for chickens will allays come home to roost. George Washington knows wher' his bread is butter'd," which sage remark made all the elder members of the order look around in admiration and wonder at such a display of wordly wisdom on Sukey's part, for she was considered frivolous and giddy—a weak sister, in fact, but they little knew that resentment had sharpened Sukey Jane's wits, for had she not overheard the wayward George telling Tirzah Ann one day that "dat dere Sukey Jane Schanks war as jimber-jawed as er cat fish, an' her tongue went like a mill clapper"?

“Yes,” groaned Mammy Jinnie again, “an’ I thanks yer all fur yo’ conforcashuns. De Lord knows bes’, but think dat arter as good er mudder as I’s e been, George Washington should hab abluted wid dat five dollars I’d bin a-savin’ fur er luck piece ebber since Mary Jane were a baby!”

II.

IT was just one month after George Washington, Jr.'s, departure. The birds were carolling as joyfully as ever, and the watermelon patch had turned over a new leaf, and was not a failure after all. Every now and then you could see a kinky little black head bobbing up amongst the green leaves, and hear a chorus of voices melodiously singing (for the children of Ham all have some music in their composition) :

*“White folks mus’ be foolish, or’ else dey’s
got no sense,
To leave dar melon smilin’ on de vine,” etc.*

On Mammy Jinnie's doorstep Snow Flake and his contemporary were sprawling, but fleetingly contented, one with a sugar rag and the other sucking a chicken bone.

Their grandmother was dolefully chanting at her washtub:

*“Dis time anudder year I may be gone,
Buried in de grave yard. Oh, Lord! How
long!”*

Tirzah Ann was hanging out clothes on the other side of the fence, but no song broke from that dusky damsel's lips, for Tirzah Ann was “seekin’.” Ever since George Washington had deserted his post and left his native heath, his “Tender Plant” had not felt it in her heart to warble, wrap her hair or cross her feet, so she came to the conclusion that it was a fitting time “ter git religion,” and every night at

the Mt. Zion revival she sat on the "mourner's bench" while those who had already "come through" sang for her edification:

*"Baptist bred and Baptist born!
'An' when I'se dead I'm Baptist gone."*

Suddenly Mammy Jinnie heard a barking and scuffling sound, and looking up the road she saw a whirlpool of dust, out of which there first emerged Fido with a sample of hastily plucked pants in his mouth, and then a plaintive voice calling:

"Mammy! Mammy! Doan't yo' know yo' lubbin' chile?"

For there stood poor George Washington, Jr.! A bundle of humiliated rags! So dirty, so tired, and so dejected that mammy's heart immediately melted and she ran out to clasp the prodigal to her heart,

while even Fido turned aside to shed a tear!

After the first greetings were over (and George, Jr., did not forget to give the twins a generous and feeling hug apiece, declaring he "Nebber agin would go so fur frum dem dat he couldn't hear 'em call"), George rolled his eyes around the room and mildly suggested that if his mother would first give him a little cornbread and butter-milk he would then feel equal to relating his travels. "But fust tell me," he added, "'bout old marsa. Is he bery mad wid my triffin' ways? Las' night I dreamed he war a-callin' me, an' I thought I couldn't run ter him fas' 'nuff. Jes' as soon as I gits a leetle sleeked up I'se gwine ober ter see him —him an' Tirzah!"

This latter was said in a very low voice and sheepish way, so mammy did not catch

it, but she told him all about "marsa," as she bustled around to lay "the fatted calf" before her long lost son. George did not confine himself to corn pone and buttermilk, but did ample justice also to the fat bacon and "roas'in' ears," and when his mother put half of a luscious green and red watermelon before him, tears of overflowing joy ran down his cheeks.

"Laws ob Mercy," was all he could say. "Ain't I glad I'se home agin."

Later he went "up ter de house ter say 'Howdy' ter massa." The old gentleman gave him a kindly welcome, sound lecture and good outfit of clothes.

Tirzah Ann had most mysteriously disappeared, for though he hunted high and low George Washington could find no trace of her; so he returned to the cabin where

the neighbors were fast congregating, having heard the news of his arrival.

George meekly shook hands all around, but when he found he was something of a hero, evidently, in the eyes of his "breth'-ren" he began to swell out with pride and watermelon, but it was the "pride that cometh before a fall," for just as there was a lull in the pow-wowing Sukey Jane's voice could be heard, clear as a bell:

"George, what did you do wid dem six horses you war gwine ter ride home behin'?"

George suddenly thought he "heered de twins a-cryin'," and ran in to quiet them.

When he returned all the guests were seated around on benches, grass and fence, waiting to hear how George Washington, Jr., "had done ex'cised his liburty in de Yankee lan'."

“Well,” commenced George, looking in vain for his “Tender Plant” amongst the audience, “it war de like ob dis. I ’lowed when I lef’ here I’d go Norf wid Mister Cheapshanks, be his vally, see de city sights an’ cut a swell. But when I gets der, Mister Cheapshanks says ter me as how he didn’t need no vally, but he would git me a fine place wid big money at a frien’ ob his’n what kep’ boarders; an’ dar’s wher’ he lef’ me. I ain’t nebber laid eyes on him sence, an’ I hope ter Gawd I nebber will. Dat frien’ of his’n said I were jes’ de kind he wanted, but he couldn’t pay me much at fust, as Mister Cheapshanks’ ’mission hed ter be taken outer my wages. I tole him as how if I had ter pay missionaries I’d like dem ob my own choosin’. He jes’ laff at dat an’ say I didn’t comprehend his meanin’, but I would arter I’d bin dere a

while. I thot ter myself as how I warn't gwine ter spen' my life larnin' his language, but I lay low and helt my tongue, cos' I didn't warn't ter be sassy. 'Well, in de fus' place,' he says, 'I 'spect you ter begin work at five o'clock in de mornin', sharp. 'An' be ready ter do whatsomebber I see fit ter call on you ter do, an' yo' kin' hab ebbery Sunday ebenin' off.' I didn't think as dat look like I could see de city much, an' befo' I knowed it I says: 'Am dat all?' 'Dat all?' he perplied, 'sprised like. 'Does you want de erf? We Norvenors knows de value ob time, an' you must learn our ways.' So I sot to work ter larn. Dere war a Chi-neeman a-workin' in de same 'stablishment an' he taught me er powerful sight! Ebbery time he look at me he laff fit ter kill, an' say he 'reckee I were made in de darkee'—'en he say: 'Likee see a trickee?' Wid

dat he take a nickel, put it up one sleebe, an' would you b'leeve it? come outer de udder sleebe a dime! I thinks ter myself, 'Dis am a chance ter git rich,' so I tak's all I had lef' in my pocket, an' axed him ter 'do de same wid dat.' Well, he put it in one sleebe, but may light'nin' strike me dead, if ebber I seed anythin' come outer de udder! He 'lowed as how de bad witches hed done carry it off, an' say if I look fur it dey would hurt me shure! Arter a while Sunday ebenin' come along, an' I war mighty glad, for I war gittin' sorter tired an' lonesome. I were afeared ob dat witch besot, punkin-skinned Chineeman's compan's, an' I says ter myself: 'Jes' as soon as ebber I goes out I'll git 'quainted an' keep movin' in de bes' sassiety until dey is boun' to reco'nize me as a blue blood.' So dat ebenin' I sot out ter perambulate

towards er church. Purty soon I heered some one say, 'An' how does you do, Johnnie?' I look up an' seed a dandy nigger wid a stove pipe hat on an' a flashlight in his busom. 'You hab made a mistook,' says I. 'My name am George Washington, Jr., ob Virginny, but I'se pleased ter meet you.' 'Oh, dat's all right,' says he, 'I knowed yo' name warn't Johnnie. I war jis' a-foolin'; but, come on, let's promenade tergedder, Mr. Washington.' 'Doan't keer ef I do,' says I, an' wid dat we perceed on our way. Arter a while I seed some ob de nicest, yallowest apples a-sittin' on a table on a street corner! 'Laws ob mercy,' said I, 'ef dar ain't some Albermarle pippins.' 'Help yerself!' says de dandy nigger.' 'I tole 'em you was a-comin', Mister Washington, an' dey put 'em out ter please you. Jes' help yerself.' An' I warn't wastin' no time

a-doin' it, when all on er sudden dere jump from behin' dat stan' de baddest lookin' Dago you ebber sot yo' eyes on, an' he yell like de debbil had him. Den er fellow from udder side grab me an' say, 'Jes' walk dis way, my frien'.' I look fur dat dandy nigger to 'splain de situwashun, but all I could see war his coat tails a-sailin' roun' de corner. Den I tried ter demonstrate ter de gemmun in brass buttons dat I would like ter 'comp'ny him, but I war gwine ter church an' arter dat I had my work ter do at home. 'Oh,' says he, 'maybe ef you'd gone ter church earlier you wouldn't hab got in trubble, but don't worry about yo' work; we'll give you plenty ob dat ter do at de City Hotel.' 'I'm obliged,' said I, 'fur I'd like ter change my boardin' house'— But, would you b'lieve it, dat City Hotel war nuffin' more or less dan a city jail, an' de fine

gemmun war a perliceman? Lawd! I war dat skeered you could hab heered my teef clatterin' er mile away! But I drew mysel' up an' says, says I: 'I doan't comp'rend dese sarcumstances, sah; ef you thinks I stole dem apples you'se under a belushion. 'Dat's all right,' says der perliceman. 'Jis' res' here ter-night an' ter-morrow you kin do yo' talkin'.' Well, de nex' mornin' dey took me inter court. De Jedge axed me my name an' when I says, 'George Washington, Jr., ob Virginny,' de fellows all aroun' commence ter snicker, but de Jedge, he jis' say solemn-like, 'I'se afeered you am an unworthy namesake ob yo' country's father.' I 'lowed he war favorin' me wid a compliment, so I says, 'Yes, thankee, marsa, I'se proud ter say I is.' 'At dat all dem blamed fools aroun' commence ter laff agin, but de Jedge frowned hissself an' call

out, 'Order.' Den he said, 'George Washington, Jr., what has you ter say? Is you guilty or not guilty?' 'I doan't understan' yo' phrasiology, yer Honor,' says I. 'Well, did you take dem apples or not?' 'splained he. 'Of coase, I took dem,' says I, 'but I 'lowed dey war mine, cos' dat dandy nigger'— but befo' I could 'clude my discos' de Jedge up an' said, 'Nebber min' yo' 'polagies, Mister Washington. Ten days in jail will gib you time ter write 'em up.'

"As soon as I got outer dem walls," continued George, skipping hastily over those humiliating ten days, "I axed de bery fus' man I seed wher' de road ter Virginny war, an' here I is. Praise Gawd! nebber ter leave agin."

Just then there was a commotion in the little gathering, for Tirzah Ann appeared with arms extended, eyes twice their nor-

mal size, and shouting at the top of her voice:

“Done foun’ ’ligion! Blessed Jesus! Done seed my Lord a-comin’ down de stairs.”

At which joyful news some of the old “sisters” began to shout and sing, while the “breth’ren” loudly called “Amen! amen!”

Tirzah Ann wildly threw her arms around each person, laughing and crying at the same time. As she reached George Washington she seemed almost exhausted, for she hung on his neck unusually long, while George silently prayed she “mout git ’ligion ebbery day.”

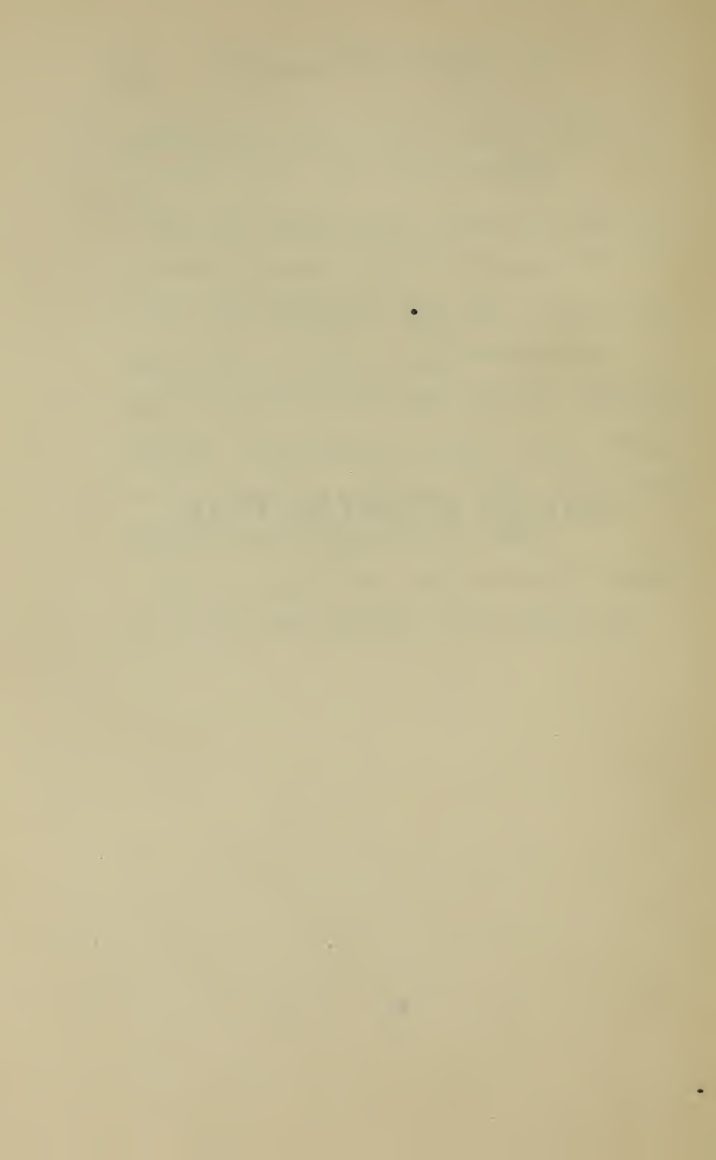
In the midst of it all “Ole Marsa” made his appearance. Having heard the noise he came to find out the cause of so much com-

motion, and when told he said, while a respectful silence fell on all around :

“My old and young colored friends and faithful servants, I greatly rejoice with you in the glad tidings of this day. To-morrow night there will be a watermelon feast and cakewalk held in the big barn to celebrate George Washington’s return and Tirzah Ann’s finding religion. You and your friends are all expected to come.”

And so ended the most eventful chapter in George Washington, Jr.’s, short life.

RAGGED MOUNTAIN PETE.



RAGGED MOUNTAIN PETE.

I.

PETE.

RAGGED mountains they are called, presumably so from the condition of their inhabitants' wardrobe, but in reality from their being the rough and ragged foothills of the picturesque Blue Ridge. As to how Happy Hollow derived its nickname no one just knew; some said 'twas because its denizens were unusually happy, while others avowed that it was rather because they knew so little of happiness that they never felt its loss.

So much for my introduction.

Slowly along the rough reservoir road an aged figure was wending its way.

“Father Time,” you might have called him, as you involuntarily turned to look for his scythe only to find an empty bean bucket and an ancient wicker egg basket, from which stuck at various angles some store purchases or “trades.”

Though his beard and hair were flowing white, the old man’s form was erect, while his eye was surprisingly bright.

Suddenly across a pine snake fence a pair of broad shoulders, surmounted by a sandy head, appeared, and a cheery “Good mornin’, Daddy Shiflett,” was heard.

“Mornin’, Pete,” came the response, as the first figure put his basket down to lean on the knotty fence. “’Pears like you’ve got a pert-looking patch of corn thar. You must sure be a Jacob wrestler to have ’suaded

them rocks to leave ye. Sartain. Thar ain't nothing growed on that are site since I was a boy, lessin it be locust an' wild honey. I'm proud to know ye, Pete. I'm proud ter know ye."

"That bein' the case, daddy," was the good-natured, pleased rejoinder, "I'll jes' drop in arter camp meeting comin' Sunday, and if Mother Shiflett has an extry chicken leg to spar' I'm yo' man. My, but thar's a sight of religion gettin' up here, whar ther' warn't nothin' but rabbit meetin's befo'. Did you hear any uncommon news in town, daddy?"

"Nothin' of special sarcumstance, 'cepn' a power of good luck I run across. Would ye believe it, boy? A quality lady insisted on givin' me t'opence a quart for my blackberries, cause'n I'd walked ten miles befo' her breakfus' ter bring 'em, an', Pete, she

bought ten quarts for presarves! I'm only feared she die in the po'house, 'cause 'tis writ that a fool and his money soon parts. Peace to her soul. Wall, I must be a-movin' on," the old man said, slowly picking up his tools o' trade; "but befo' I go I mout as well tell ye, Pete, that I had a thought ter-day, another thought fur sure! You see, I heerd in town that the Legislatur war still a-sittin', an' it 'peared ter me, Pete, that it done sot so long it must be hatchin' goose eggs. Leastwise they ain't done nothin' that I can see 'bout this pesky reservoir dam, tho' I did hear one man say as how they was allays 'spectoratin' on some dam question. What you sayin', Pete? This dam ain't none o' thar consarn. Why, man, you talk like a fool. Ef this bizness once busted 'twould be thar consarn ter swim outer Richmond! But, lad, fer Gawd's sake don't

let Yankee Jim up in Raccoon Hollow know what I says! He mout 'low I was traitorizing my country, talkin' side of them as is in authority! Wall, good-bye ag'in, son. I'll tell the ole woman you'll be thar Sunday—likewise 'Mandy."

"Be sure 'bout 'Mandy," Pete broke in with a broad grin.

But the last remark was lost on the old man, for gazing up the road, he suddenly exclaimed:

"Wall, I'll be gosh donged, if there ain't that youngun a-comin' now. Whar you goin', gal' this time o' day? Why, it's nigh 'leven o'clock. You surely ain't goin' to settlement?"

"Yes, I am, pap," the girl in the sunbonnet replied, "'cause ma done forgit ter tell you 'bout a spool o' cotton, an' she boun' ter finish that sewin' this week."

“In course,” interrupted the quick-witted Pete, “this are the most convanientest time. Ain’t I jes’ fixin’ to cotch that mule fer town? Boun’ ter go this minute on ’portant business, and ’Mandy can ride be-hin’, the mule bein’ willin’, otherwise I’ll walk ’long sides.”

“Suitin’ me, suitin’ yourselves,” Daddy Shiflett ejaculated, starting up the road alone.

II.

THE RIDE.₁

A ROPE bridle, a sheep-skin saddle and a little "moral 'suasion" was all the preparation Rock of Ages, the mule, needed. (Pete had so named his steed in reverential awe after a week's possession, "'cause he was allays standin' firm.")

Over a-straddle Pete swung first, then 'Mandy mounted "like a lady" behind (the mule behavin' likewise).

Down "Devil's Featherbed" they trotted, their teeth chattering as they jogged along in silence.

But as the road grew smoother Pete

cleared his throat and exclaimed without changing position :

“Look mighty purty ter-day, 'Mandy.”

“Jes' like I did yesterday, Peter Sykes,” was the stoical reply.

“Maybe you be right, 'Mandy, but I warn't thar ter see,” came from the ever ready swain.

“Wall,” was the mountain coquette's retort, “I don't see how you kin do so much jedgin' of ter-day, seein' you ain't looked me square in the face since we started.”

“Amanda,” was the dejected but dignified reply, “I don't pose fur no many headed beast with eyes befo' and aft, but I 'low I kin make the best o' sarcumstances,”—and Rock of Ages took his stand!

Once more the ride was resumed amidst longer silences than ever, then Pete again cleared his throat, this time thrice.

“’Mandy,” he said, “yo’ pa is gettin’ most too old ter work, ain’t he?”

“Yes, Pete,” was the slow reply, “an’ dad are an *uncommon* man. ’Pears like every day he has a thought, some kind or other; ef he jes’ had a little mo’ book larnin’ he could write a 100 page or mo’, I’ll be boun’! But ma, she don’t lay no store by his reason-in’s; she says as how such argufyings don’t never git butter outen milk or flour into bread, so thar’s the end! But then ma do get pretty tuckered out, Pete. She have worked a long spell in her day, an’ somehow things don’t get no easier fur her now —’pears like they don’t.”

“No, I reckon not,” answered Pete, sympathetically, “seein’ as how she ain’t got no son ter lean on. Don’t you reckon, ’Mandy, ef me an’ you pulled together we would ease her up a bit?”

“I don’t reckon nothin’ ’tall ’bout it, Pete,” was the deliberate and longed-for response—and Rock of Ages took his stand once more.

‘A’ mile further down the road Pete suddenly called out:

“Whoa, you spindle-legged donkey; I’ll be gosh blamed ef I ain’t bar’headed. Well, ’Mandy, my gall, we’ll jes’ turn back a piece an’ travel that blessed road onct more even ef we don’t find no hat, an’ Rocky won’t need no guidin’ this time.”

III.

THE TOWN.

ARRIVING in town Rock of Ages was left standing firm at a convenient distance behind a hay wagon, while 'Mandy went to trade the few remaining eggs which the Featherbed had left intact for a spool of cotton, and Pete to attend to his business; *i. e.*, "swap crap news an' borry a chaw o' ter-backer."

'Mandy's shopping over, she called to her lover, who, taking her hand in his, proceeded to swing arms down the street, "seeing sights" and furnishing a few.

The gaudy posters of the coming circus

were extravagantly admired, Pete declaring that them "bar'back ladies was jes' grand, if they didn't have nothin' but sample collars on."

"'Mandy, I'll take you to that show," he added, "ef it costs me my whole year's crap."

Then, hearing the sound of music, they both turned with eyes, ears and mouth wide open. Pete was the first to show his collection of senses by exclaiming:

"Wall, I'll be blowed to thunder ef that ain't 'chinery talkin'! It must be the fune-graph I heerd Bill Scroggs 'lowin' he done seen on the corner, an' fur onct in his life Bill warn't lyin'. Now, Mandy, ain't it elegant? Ef we only had one fur yo' dad to talk his thoughts into it would save mother, an' he needn't write no book. We could jes' keep yo' pa on tap all our lives like sorghum molasses."

Having spent an hour or more before the phonograph, Pete offered to treat to "sody" on his bottommost nickel."

"Just one?" asked the dapper drug clerk.

"Sartain," replied our mountain gallant; "when you has a good-lookin' gal two straws is all you eber needs, an' while we are a-suckin', sir, I 'low you kin give us the law p'intns on dog tails. You see it was like of this (taking a draw). Sam Thacker 'lowed to me jes' now that my pig bit off his dog's tail, an' I reckon (another draw) that his dog didn't have no bizness arter my pig (draw No. 3), but he come back ag'in at me 'lowing that the pig must have been arter his dog, beenst it was the dog's tail what got bit. Now, what be your understandin' of the sarcumstance, sir? You looks like a lawyer."

IV.

THE HOME-COMING.

THE new moon was just peeping through the trees as our mountain couple slowly turned Cove's Bend.

Mandy was trying to see it over her left shoulder, and Pete was saying:

"Be sure ter wish for a Christmas weddin', gal, 'cause 'lowing fur a crap an' no mo' dam leaking I'll be ready, sure. Ain't I done save nigh onto \$13 'gainst the day already? Ev'ry night I counts it over an' puts it under my pillow."

Suddenly Rock of Ages gave a halt ("fur no reason *we* done give him," Pete

afterwards said). Looking around the donkey's ears the prostrate figure of a man was discovered by Pete.

"Must be Jim Sprouse with too much apple sap on board," was his first comment, but, jumping down, this philosophy gave way to an exclamation of alarmed surprise.

"Why, 'Mandy," he called, "he be a sure-'nuff gemman, an' his face is as white as moonshine. I'm feared he's mortal wounded, tho' maybe it's only a bad sprain, he groans so loud. How en Gawd's earth he got here I can't say. Oh!" catching sight of a camera on the roadside, "now I see, 'Mandy. He am an argunot, an' his flying machine done drapped. Wall, gal, you watch while I goes ter fetch help an' a doctor. Yes, let his head rest in yo' lap, Sugar; 't ain't no time fur mean feelin's on my part in the shadow of death. I'll hurry

to get him to my house, an', Gawd bein' willin', nuss him back to life. He's welcome to all I'se got an' mo', too. But, 'Mandy,' and Pete turned to hide a lip quiver, "thar can't be no weddin' Christmas. That ain't none o' our consarnin' tho', honey; the good Lord sont him our way an' we ain't goin' to pass by on t'other side."

V.

CHRISTMAS EVE IN HAPPY HOLLOW.

CLOSE around Daddy Shiflett's log fire a little group was gathered listening to the winds howl about the cabin windows and talking over the stranger now gone, but who was Pete's guest so long—unconscious most of the time—Pete, poor fellow, was rather silent.

He was thinking of what to-morrow promised to be, and what it was to be.

“Craps no good 'cause thar was nursing inside ter do an' no time fur diggin' an' dammin' outside.”

Not that Pete grudged a minute of his time or a penny of his hard earned money as little by little it slipped from the old stocking to purchase "extras fur the po' sponseless stranger, who couldn't tell whar he was from or whar he was goin'."

No, Pete gave with a cheerful heart, but he was only thinking of his "might-have beens," tho' fervently adding aloud, "The Lord's will be done," when a thundering knock was heard at the door and Dave Dawson came blustering in, followed by great whirls of snow.

"Wall, I calk'lated I'd be savin' time comin' here inste'd of yo' house to find you. You see 'twas like this: I was hangin' roun' the post office ter-day tryin' to swap cattle, when I heard Mr. Postman call out, 'Dave Dawson, do you know aught of a man by the name of Peter Sykes in your neighbor-

hood?' 'Know him?' says I, 'I reckon I knowed him befo' he knowed hisself.' 'See-in' you be so intimate,' sez he, 'I'll ax you to deliver him this letter what has waited his call fur a week or mo'.' So here it be, Pete. I'm feared it means mo' taxes."

Pete's face fell a little, but he could not disguise the fact that a letter was a pleasant novelty from anyone, and, calling 'Mandy to help him "make out the hand-writ," together they studied the envelope fully five minutes for some solution before it occurred to them that the mystery might possibly be solved on the inside. Then, and not till then, did they break the seal. Finding that their correspondent had been considerate enough to use a typewriter, they made better progress, Pete holding the tallow candle while 'Mandy read aloud at his request:

NEW YORK, December 15, 18—.

PETER SYKES, Esq.—*Dear Sir:* Enclosed you will find a check for \$500 as a Christmas gift for yourself and dowry for your bride-to-be, Miss Amanda Shiflett, in memory of the many acts of kindness tendered me by both while I was a stranger and afflicted among you. It is in no sense meant as a vulgar attempt at remuneration, and you need have no hesitancy in accepting this token of esteem, for I have taken the liberty of putting a few of your prospective father-in-law's thoughts, as well as yourselves into print, for which the public has generously rewarded me. Wishing you—"

But Pete had fallen to the floor, sobbing like a child, while 'Mandy was kneeling beside him, calling:

"Don't, Pete, don't, please, kerry on so. To-morrow you kin marry a hero-lady what's in a book."

“LITTLE MISSUS.”

“LITTLE MISSUS.”

You say you nebber knowed her, marsa? But 'cose you ðidn't, case you jes' now 'lowed you nebber bin in lub, an' I knows you ain't no common liar. . . . I kin jes' see her now when I shets my eyes! Gawd Almighty done hissself proud when He made her in his likeness, for she sure was “de lily ob de valley,” “de bright an' mornin' star.” An' her face warn't no purtier den her ways. Eberybody and eberything lubbed her. Even de flowers in ole missus' garden 'peared ter bow an' smile when she went by,

case dey knowed dey warn't no brighter nor sweeter den my little missus. Did she marry? No, sah, she nebber did, but 'twarn't case she couldn't. Lord, no! It all happen like ob dis: You see 'twar in de troublous war times, when yo' ole marsa comed home one day shot all ter pieces. Ole miss had already took to her bed grievin' ober him, frettin' her very life away. An' when little missus seen how her daddy looked, her own heart strings nearly snapped in two, but she didn't even faint. She knowed better den ter faint when der war sommin' else ter do. She jes' sot ter work ter nuss ole marsa back to life, tryin' ter look chirpy all de time fur his sake and her ma's. While she was smoothin' out his pillow one day we heard sech a-chatterin' an' trampin' in the yard dat Hiram, my ole man, speculated as how he'd better look out de front do',

an' when he got dar, hope Gawd might strike me dead, ef he didn't run into twenty sure 'nuff Yankees. Hiram 'lows ter dis day it war de whole army; but den you see I ain't seen dat nigger so skeered in all his life befo', lessin' 'twar de day he war married. His knees shuck so tergedder dat I heard 'em clatter way in de kitchen, but when one ob dem sojers holler out gruff like, "Am yo' master in?" Hiram war ready ter lie his tongue out 'clarin' he ain't nebber seen him since de war begun, but 'twarn't no use, fur all ob er suddin little missus step in der hall, tellin' Hiram ter tek her place while she answer all questions, an' den she took her stan' rite in de front do', lookin' as white an' brave as de aingul Ga'brel hissel. "Yes," says she, "yo' victim am here, mortal wounded, but you cayrn't see him. Couldn't you let us bury our dead in

peace?” Well, sah, some ob dem sojers war fur gwine on in anyhow, 'dough dey knowed it would hab ter be over her dead body. But de gen'rul (I 'lowed he war dat 'count ob his fine close an' looks,) tole 'em all ter “step back, he would guard de pris'ner,” an' den he teched his hat ter little missus, tellin' her he would be 'bliged ter stay roun' 'bout, but dat she need not fear obstrushuns. De po' chile knowed er gemmun when she seed one, so she said she comprehend an' thanked him fur his manners. Arter dat po' marsa kept er wastin' away, an' de gen'rul soon diskivered dot 'dough he'd come ter watch de daddy, 'twar de daughter what he'd got his eyes set on. Lub, you see, don't know no fightin' lines. At fust little missus didn't pay no mo' tenshun ter him den ef he'd been de dead, but when she seed how many circumlocushury he

showed ole marsa she eased up er little bit, an' 'twar de gen'rul what laid po' marsa ter rest at last. Ole missus didn't stay wid us long arter dat. She jes' followed Marsa Tom rite on up ter glory. ('Scuse me, sah, dese here onions does make my ole eyes smart, an' I'se 'bleeged to wipe 'em.) On cose, den de gen'rul had ter git ready ter leab us. He knowed his pris'ner warn't gwine ter rise from his grave fur a whole reg'men' of Yankees den. An' so it happun dat one day he war sayin' good-bye ter little missus, an' tryin' ter make her fergit dat he eber seen de roof, when all ob er suddin de very debbil ran, yellin' fur “Rebel blood an' Yankee traitor.” Gawd Almighty, I thought de Jedg'men' Day done come! But de gen'rul's voice sound like de cannon roar itself when he 'manded them ter “stan' back,” an' stan' back dey did. 'Cep' one po'

drunken debbil who tried ter grab little missus roun' de wais'. Dat war too much. De gen'rul seen it, an' wid one swope ob de arm he sent dat feller er spinnin' roun' de room a-seein' stars sich as he'd nebber seen befo'. But de wust was yet ter come. Dat blow dune struc' de rascal's pistol what he war cary'in' in his han', an' de ball went straight fur de gen'rul's heart. Seem like I cayrn't recollect no mo' arter dat. I war clean outer my head fur two weks. When I cum to, little missus was nussin' me, but lookin' mo' like er ghost aingul den flesh an' blood. De gen'rul war answerin' de las' roll call from de foot ob marsa's grave.

Would you like ter hear de res', marsa? Seems like my ole heart gits de chills when I thinks erbout dat moon-cold night we foun' mammy's baby layin' twix marsa an'

missus wid her head on de gen'rul's grave. De doctor called it heart trouble, same as ef we didn't know dat widout sendin' fur him.

“HALLELUIAH IANE.”

“HALLELUJAH JANE.”

I FIRST saw her standing on a James River wharf waiting with her basket of “snacks” for the down-east passengers.

A tall, quaint, raw-boned figure, bare footed and clad in a short Turkey-red petticoat, with a Dolly Varden overskirt.

A discarded bit of “Meh Lady’s” wardrobe was the latter garment, but never had it covered a prouder form than it did the day Hallelujah Jane donned it for the first time to attend “the big doin’s” at Mt. Zion Church.

And that was two years long ago, the captain of our boat was telling me as he made fast his knotted rope to the stump of an old pine tree while the gangplank (Farmer Harper's old barn door) was being lowered.

"Hello, Jane!" he cried, as the awkward figure came shuffling towards us, balancing her pie tray on top of her "wrapped nigger kinks." "Here is a pow'ful hungry stranger fur you! Jes' show him how them tarts do taste. As for myself, I prefer a leg of my old friend, the rooster, same as I have been a-eatin' for the las' ten years. Ha! ha!" he added, seeing my look of consternation. "'Tain't no place like Virginy fur old friends stickin' by you. Jes' make youself easy, an' take this season's apple pie, colonel. An' Jane, you can tell us whether you've 'found religion' or not."

"Poor fool," he whispered aside to me,

“went clean daft on the subject nigh two years ago at Parson Jones’ revival. Don’t ever smile now ’cept’n’ when the church bells ring.”

At the word “religion” Hallelujah Jane’s hitherto expressionless countenance seemed suddenly fired with animation. Her eyes snapped and rolled, while her lean fingers twitched convulsively.

“Not yit, Cap’n Jim,” she gasped; “not yit. I ain’t cross my feet fur Gawd knows how long, but las’ week I laffed out loud, an’ den I had ter begin all ober again a-seekin’. ’Pears like no matter how much I tries, I cayrn’t git de debbil’s singin’ an’ a-laffin’ outer my soul sometimes, but, nebber min’, Marsa Jim, nebber min’, I’ll see my Lord fo’ nex’ baptism day. Praise Jesus!”

A moment later our boat whistled, and we left the weird looking, pathetic figure

standing alone on the wharf, gazing wistfully over the waters and softly chanting:

"My Lord war walkin' in de garden!

He take me by de han'.

*He say, 'My chile, come wid me er while,
I'll show you de Promise Lan'.'"*

That was in June. The following August I was again at the same landing, and Hallelujah Jane was standing apparently just as I'd left her, but the wharf itself was teeming with life, for a Sunday school picnic was holding its gala day. Children and dogs of all sizes and conditions were scurrying hither and thither, looking for lunch baskets and watermelons. Above the din of the crowd that same soft, melodious voice could be heard rising and falling in smooth cadences:

*“Blessed Jesus! take me as I is!
Jordan’s wide, but wid you beside,
I’se always sure to riz.”*

Suddenly, a mother’s shriek of anguish was carried on high, and we heard those terrible words, “Child overboard!” strike our very hearts cold. We all, with one accord, rushed to the edge of the wharf, but there every man seemed rooted to the spot as a baby’s white face rose above the water. It was only a moment.

“Clear de trac’!” was heard in the rear, and a gaunt figure broke through our ranks.

Springing into the river like some great wild deer, the chubby little hand was grasped as it sank for the last time, and a limp little body was held up towards its mother outstretched aching arms.

“Thank God! ‘Alive!’” we cried—but the

rescuer? Ah! her strength was gone!
And when, at last, a dozen willing arms laid
her tenderly under the shade of the trees.
Hallelujah Jane had "seen her Lord!"

“THE GEN’RAL.”

“THE GENERAL.”

THE following sketch is composed of actual facts from the life of the general, with reminiscences of his, as well as the author's imagination generously thrown in.

To the reader is left the art of discriminating. Be it, in all justice said, however, that in conversation the real general shows (for he still lives at the age of 91) more polish and less dialect than this article would seem to evince.

At the unveiling of Lee's monument several years ago one of the most noticeable certainly, and distinguished apparently, figures in the long procession of veterans was

that of an aged darky, with a lithe, agile form, which years instead of bending, had only lent a respectful incline to a head heavily fringed with long, silky, silvery locks which bushed out at the ends in semblance of a halo—all matched by a flowing mustache and Van Dyke beard—Beauregard in bronze, one might have called him, with his air distingué—" 'cause he done lib wif quality all his life an' knowed how ter kerry hisself. Manners is like measles—pow'ful ketchen."

An old mammy was heard to explain as he passed bowing and musically saluting in exulting, but well modulated tones, the thronging, surging crowds in response to their oft repeated cheers, for it was he—not General "Fitz"—the Colonel thought that the whole Confederacy recognized and honored.

“Didn’t Gen’l Lee specify hisse’f: ‘This am an ole frien’ of de dark days, what I do myse’f proud to shake han’s with!’ For didn’t me an’ Marsa John go fru the whole war gettin’ braver an’ braver till Mister Gen’l Lee thought there warn’t none like us in his ’tire army! Most certain we did! Hy! Aye! An’ how come I was permoted frum gen’ral to kurnel if ’twarn’t ’cause I allays tole our boys to look dem Yankees straight in the eye befo’ they run. Tho’ ’twarn’t good to let an evil eye res’ on you too long! Lawd a’mighty! warn’t dem times to disremember? ’Pears like jus’ the other day our comp’ny gets orders to ’treat down the road double quickstep. Praise Gawd! An’ when Marsa John come to look fer me I was down the hill helpin’ a likely lookin’ widder squeeze some black-berry juice! Well, I managed to climb

the hill an' commence to march, but eider that widder's wine warn't as fresh as I feared it might be, or else 'twas the widder herself, fur my ole legs kep' steppin' backwards 'till Marsa John's great patience done expired, an' grabbin' me by the collar, fur 'suasion, he says: 'Come on! you ole fool! The Yankees will ketch you if you doan't look out.' Then it was I dis-recholected the widder intirely, but somehow my po' legs got weaker an' mo' mixed, so out I yell: 'Shoot me, Marsa John! Shoot me! But for Gawd's sake doan't let them Yankees get me!'"

But to return to our description of the Kurnel! He carried in one hand a stove-pipe hat or beaver, daily polished for a week previously, with an old silk bandanna of Marsa Jimmie's ("same as I seen nex' Pres'dent Roman Thurman use when I

greeted him at the Universary cel’bra-shun”); in the other he held a heavy ivory headed cane—one old marse had left him. His coat was a Confederate gray, the entire front covered with “badges of honor.”

“Ain’t jus’ satisfied in my own mind ’bout this orange an’ blue one,” he explained. “Some young fellers put it on at Charlottesville Junction (when I stopped to see my ole home an’ friends), but they ’lowed it meant ‘vic’try,’ what was all I lacked ’bout de wah. Where did I get my pants? Well, I pleased to tell you how it am. You see I nebber like to show parshal’ties on the boys what I raised, so that’s hōw comes I have on Marsa John’s hat, Marsa Howe’s waistcoat, Marsa Henry’s shoes, Marsa Jimmie’s trousers an’ so on. I reckon you nebber witness placket holes on the side be-fo’. Hi eigh!”

On one end of his watch chain was a quaint looking fob with a seal setting. "*Our* family's seal," he said, with one of his characteristic, courtly bows. For was he not joint partner in all that belonged to ole marsa?

On the other concealed (?) in his vest pocket was a small sized clock the alarm of which had a way of going off in the midst of one of the general's most grandiloquent speeches.

"Jus' brought this pesky thing along 'cause my gold watch was being fixed up first time since the surrender. Jew'ler said it needed a leetle cleanin'." Thus our hero marched along, leaving the file of old veterans for that of the spick and span Monticello guards.

"I was propelled to do the same at General Long's obsequies," he ejaculated.

“Seems like these vet’naries got mighty small ambition ’bout lookin’ proud an’ keepin’ step to music.”

After the processional exercises were over a little group gathered round this quaint, living memory of by-gone days, to offer a drink in exchange for a condensed history of his life.

“Gentlemen,” exclaimed the general, first waving one of his courteous bows, then drawing himself up with all his natural dignity—“Gentlemen, Miss Mary has signed me hon’rable member of the W. C. T. U. (God bless her!) but on excasions like these,” he added, reaching for the “firewater,” “the good Lawd himself might ’scuse me fer cel’bratin’! Here’s to the health of Gen’l Lee! May he live in the min’s of them Yankees forever!” he added, drawing in one draught the very moisture from the bottom

of his cup. "My frien's an' feller country men," he continued, with another stately bow, "more'n than three score years an' ten ole marsa bought your humble servant on the auctioneer block in Staunton for to look after young Marsa John. An' him I'se minded ever since through peace an' wah. May my Heabenly Marsa show the same consumin' pashunce with me in the world to come, for I was a high strung fool if I was as smart as you make 'em!" Here he gave one of his musical chuckles, which can best be described as a laughing trill. "W'y, sahs! I could drive ole marsa's four-in-han' cross the Blue Ridge easy as these here freed niggers can push a wheel barrow! An' as fur waitin' on the table! that devil-at-the-barn-door in New York doan't know a sarcumstance compared to me! Hear me talkin'! When Mister Tom Jef-

ferson wanted to have special circumlocutions at Mont’celler he allays begged ole marsa to lend him that ‘yeller buck’ for a day. Jes’ why he didn’t send fur me when Gen’l Tarleton, what I am namesake for, comes to see him, I doan’t memorize. Maybe ’twas ’fo’ I got to Albemarle. Anywise they say as how he didn’t stay long. You see we allays had comp’ny at Linden Hall—elegant gentlemen and beautiful ladies. One of our guests warn’t out of the gate ’fo’ another was comin’ in the do’, an’ so it went on. I welcome ’em all, too. Onct I got kinder perplexicated when a Paris lady arriv’, but I jus’ made her a grand bow an’ repeat: ‘Parley frances, we no speak,’ an’ she ’peared to feel easy after that. Hi, eigh! An’ didn’t I help en’tain Mister and Mistress Pres’dent Hayes? But that was long after my ole marsa was laid to rest. How-

someber, Marsa John's wife came from Chill-an'-Coffee, Ohio, an' she was 'quainted. So on her 'count I calls to pay my respects. I bow my very best to Marsa Pres'dent, an' said that do' I differentiated from him on pol'tics, I was glad to welcome him as a friend an' fellow cit'zen! Then I present Madam Hayes with the grandest bouquet I could circumvent, while I excited a piece of poetry of my own decomposition, favorin' her to the japonica which grew in the Garden of Eden an' flourish like John the Baptist in yonder banquet hall. I tell you what! she was that proud an' complimented! You see I learned myself 'bout language of flowers when I excorted Marsa John a-courtin' of Miss Mary. In course I com'panied him! He was as han'some an' fine a sure 'nuff gen'man as ever you did see, but if I hadn't kept on 'couragin' him he

would have backed out long ago! He was kinder bashful 'bout courtin' an' Miss Mary was the teasingest, prettiest widder lady that ever you laid eyes on. They say as how every man in Ohio done been on his knees to her one time or another, so she jus' came to Virginny for a change, but I knowed she was fixin' to say 'Yes' to my Marsa John in the end, fer she liked his looks, an' seen what a good son and brother he had been, an' you couldn't fool Miss Mary on husbands. She had already picked two good ones, an' was going to keep on long as the Lawd gave her time! Gawd a'mighty! Here I is expectoratin' on family 'fairs when my train is leavin' for Staunton. I thank you all, gentlemen, for your kind 'tention. If you ever comes to the valley Marsa Jimmie an' me will extenuate the hospitalities of Folly Farm to you, for we

am allays happy to see comp'ny an' curiosities. No, sah! I have no 'jections to one more small drink befo' I go. This is to my Miss Mary's health!"

In speaking of the Confederate reunion at this time, even the far-away French papers specially mentioned our hero,

"GENERAL" TARLETON ALEXANDER.

THE END.

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