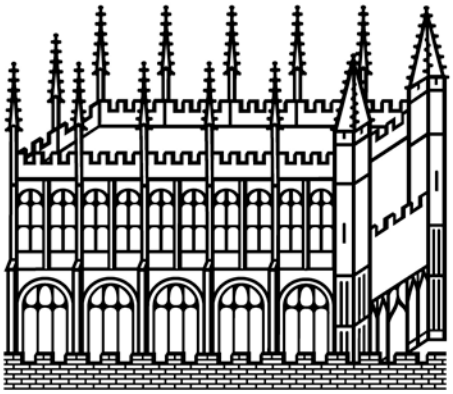

A Race for Freedom

Harriet Beecher Stowe


1708


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Books within Books

Edited by RICHARD WILSON, D.LITT.

A RACE FOR FREEDOM

No. 21

"Dreams, Books,
are each a World;
and Books, we know,
are a Substantial World,
both Pure and Good"

W. Wordsworth

London Edinburgh
Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd

A RACE FOR FREEDOM

Taken from the Story
entitled
"UNCLE TOM'S CABIN"
by
Harriet Beecher Stowe

LONDON EDINBURGH
THOMAS NELSON AND SONS LTD

A RACE FOR FREEDOM

CHAPTER I

LATE in the afternoon of a chilly day in February two gentlemen were sitting alone over their wine in a well-furnished dining-parlour in the town of P——, in Kentucky. There were no servants present, and the gentlemen, with chairs closely approaching, seemed to be discussing some subject with great earnestness.

For convenience' sake we have said, hitherto, two *gentlemen*. One of the parties, however, when critically examined, did not seem, strictly speaking, to come under the species. He was a short, thick-set man, with coarse, commonplace features; much over-dressed, in a gaudy vest of many colours, a blue neckerchief, bedropped gaily with yellow spots, and arranged with a flaunting tie, quite in keeping with the general air of the man. His hands, large and coarse, were plentifully bedecked with rings; and he wore a heavy gold watch-chain, with a bundle of seals of portentous size and a great variety of colours attached to it, which, in the ardour of conversation, he was in the habit of flourishing and jingling with evident satisfaction.

His companion, Mr. Shelby, had the appearance of a gentleman; and the arrangements of the house and the general air of the housekeeping indicated easy and even opulent circumstances. As we before stated, the two were in the midst of an earnest conversation.

"That is the way I should arrange the matter," said Mr. Shelby.

"I can't make trade that way—I positively can't, Mr. Shelby," said the other, holding up a glass of wine between his eye and the light.

"Why, the fact is, Haley, Tom is an uncommon fellow; he is certainly worth that sum anywhere—steady, honest, capable; manages my whole farm like a clock."

"You mean honest, as niggers go," said Haley.

"No; I mean, really, Tom is a good, steady, sensible, pious fellow. He got religion at a camp-meeting four years ago, and I believe he really *did* get it. I've trusted him since then with everything I have—money, house, horses—and let him come and go round the country; and I always found him true and square in everything."

"Some folks don't believe there is pious niggers, Shelby," said Haley, with a candid flourish of his hand, "but *I do*. I had a fellow, now, in this yer last lot I took to Orleans—'twas as good as a meetin', now, really, to hear that critter pray; and he was quite gentle and quiet like. He fetched me a good sum too; for I bought him cheap of a man that was 'bliged to sell out, so I realized six hundred on him. Yes, I consider religion a valeyable thing in a nigger, when it's the genuine article, and no mistake."

"Well, Tom's got the real article, if ever a fellow had," rejoined the other. "Why, last fall I let him go to Cincinnati alone, to do business for me, and bring home five hundred dollars. 'Tom,' says I to him, 'I trust you, because I think you're a Christian—I know you wouldn't cheat.' Tom comes back, sure enough; I knew he would. Some low fellows, they say, said to him, 'Tom, why don't you make tracks for Canada?'—'Ah, master trusted me, and I couldn't.' They told me about it. I am sorry to part with Tom, I must say.

You ought to let him cover the whole balance of the debt; and you would, Haley, if you had any conscience."

"Well, I've got just as much conscience as any man in business can afford to keep—just a little, you know, to swear by, as 'twere," said the trader jocularly; "and, then, I'm ready to do anything in reason to 'blige friends; but this yer, you see, is a leetle too hard on a fellow—a leetle too hard." The trader sighed contemplatively, and poured out some more brandy.

"Well, then, Haley, how will you trade?" said Mr. Shelby, after an uneasy interval of silence.

"Well, haven't you a boy or gal that you could throw in with Tom?"

"Hum!—none that I could well spare. To tell the truth, it's only hard necessity makes me willing to sell at all. I don't like parting with any of my hands, that's a fact."

Here the door opened, and a small quadroon boy, between four and five years of age, entered the room. There was something in his appearance remarkably beautiful and engaging. His black hair, fine as floss silk, hung in glossy curls about his round, dimpled face, while a pair of large, dark eyes, full of fire and softness, looked out from beneath the rich, long lashes, as he peered curiously into the apartment. A gay robe of scarlet and yellow plaid, carefully made and neatly fitted, set off to advantage the dark and rich style of his beauty; and a certain comic air of assurance, blended with bashfulness, showed that he had been not unused to being petted and noticed by his master.

"Hulloa, Jim Crow!" said Mr. Shelby, whistling, and snapping a bunch of raisins towards him; "pick that up now."

The child scampered, with all his little strength, after the prize, while his master laughed.

"Come here, Jim Crow," said he. The child came

up, and the master patted the curly head, and chucked him under the chin.

" Now, Jim, show this gentleman how you can dance and sing." The boy commenced one of those wild, grotesque songs common among the negroes, in a rich, clear voice, accompanying his singing with many comic evolutions of the hands, feet, and whole body, all in perfect time to the music.

" Bravo ! " said Haley, throwing him a quarter of an orange.

" Now, Jim, walk like old Uncle Cudjoe, when he has the rheumatism," said his master.

Instantly the flexible limbs of the child assumed the appearance of deformity and distortion, as, with his back humped up, and his master's stick in his hand, he hobbled about the room, his childish face drawn into a doleful pucker, and spitting from right to left, in imitation of an old man.

Both gentlemen laughed uproariously.

" Now, Jim," said his master, " show us how old Elder Robbins leads the psalm." The boy drew his chubby face down to a formidable length, and commenced toning a psalm tune through his nose, with imperturbable gravity.

" Hurrah ! bravo ! what a young un ! " said Haley. " That chap's a case, I'll promise. Tell you what," said he, suddenly clapping his hand on Mr. Shelby's shoulder, " fling in that chap, and I'll settle the business—I will. Come, now, if that ain't doing the thing up about the rightest ! "

At this moment the door was pushed gently open, and a young quadroon woman, apparently about twenty-five, entered the room.

There needed only a glance from the child to her to identify her as its mother. There was the same rich, full, dark eye, with its long lashes, the same ripples of silky black hair. The brown of her complexion gave

way on the cheek to a perceptible flush, which deepened as she saw the gaze of the strange man fixed upon her in bold and undisguised admiration. Her dress was of the neatest possible fit, and set off to advantage her finely moulded shape. A delicately formed hand and a trim foot and ankle were items of appearance that did not escape the quick eye of the trader.

"Well, Eliza?" said her master, as she stopped and looked hesitatingly at him.

"I was looking for Harry, please, sir." And the boy bounded towards her, showing his spoils, which he had gathered in the skirt of his robe.

"Well, take him away then," said Mr. Shelby; and hastily she withdrew, carrying the child on her arm.

"By Jupiter!" said the trader, turning to him in admiration, "there's an article now! You might make your fortune on that ar gal in Orleans, any day. I've seen over a thousand, in my day, paid down for gals not a bit handsomer."

"I don't want to make my fortune on her," said Mr. Shelby dryly; and, seeking to turn the conversation, he uncorked a bottle of fresh wine, and asked his companion's opinion of it.

"Capital, sir—first chop!" said the trader; then turning, and slapping his hand familiarly on Shelby's shoulder, he added, "Come, how will you trade about the gal? What shall I say for her? What'll you take?"

"Mr. Haley, she is not to be sold," said Shelby. "My wife would not part with her for her weight in gold."

"Ay, ay, women always say such things, 'cause they ha'n't no sort of calculation. Just show 'em how many watches, feathers, and trinkets one's weight in gold would buy, and that alters the case, *I* reckon."

"I tell you, Haley, this must not be spoken of. I say no, and I mean no," said Shelby decidedly.

" Well, you'll let me have the boy, though," said the trader. " You must own I've come down pretty handsomely for him."

" What on earth can you want with the child ? " said Shelby.

" Why, I've got a friend that's going into this yer branch of the business—wants to buy up handsome boys to raise for the market—fancy articles entirely—sell for waiters, and so on, to rich uns that can pay for handsome uns. It sets off one of yer great places—a real handsome boy to open door, wait, and tend. They fetch a good sum ; and this little devil is such a comical, musical concern, he's just the article."

" I would rather not sell him," said Mr. Shelby thoughtfully. " The fact is, sir, I'm a humane man, and I hate to take the boy from his mother, sir."

" Oh, you do ? La ! yes, something of that ar natur. I understand perfectly. It is mighty onpleasant getting on with women sometimes. I al'ays hates these yer screechin', screamin' times. They are *mighty* onpleasant ; but, as I manages business, I generally avoids 'em, sir. Now, what if you get the girl off for a day, or a week, or so ? Then the thing's done quietly—all over before she comes home. Your wife might get her some ear-rings, or a new gown, or some such truck, to make up with her."

" I'm afraid not."

" Lor bless ye, yes ! These critters an't like white folks, you know ; they gets over things, only manage right. Now, they say," said Haley, assuming a candid and confidential air, " that this kind o' trade is hardening to the feelings ; but I never found it so. Fact is, I never could do things up the way some fellers manage the business. I've seen 'em as would pull a woman's child out of her arms, and set him up to sell, and she screechin' like mad all the time. Very bad policy—damages the article—makes 'em quite unfit for service sometimes. I knew a real handsome gal once, in Orleans,

as was entirely ruined by this sort o' handling. The fellow that was trading for her didn't want her baby, and she was one of your real high sort when her blood was up. I tell you, she squeezed up her child in her arms, and talked, and went on real awful. It kinder makes my blood run cold to think on't. And when they carried off the child, and locked her up, she jest went ravin' mad, and died in a week. Clear waste, sir, of a thousand dollars, just for want of management—there's where 'tis. It's always best to do the humane thing, sir ; that's been *my* experience." And the trader leaned back in his chair, and folded his arms, with an air of virtuous decision, apparently considering himself a second Wilberforce.

The subject appeared to interest the gentleman deeply ; for while Mr. Shelby was thoughtfully peeling an orange, Haley broke out afresh, with becoming diffidence, but as if actually driven by the force of truth to say a few words more.

" It don't look well, now, for a feller to be praisin' himself, but I say it jest because it's the truth. I believe I'm reckoned to bring in about the finest droves of niggers that is brought in—at least, I've been told so ; if I have once, I reckon I have a hundred times—all in good case, fat and likely ; and I lose as few as any man in the business. And I lays it all to my management, sir ; and humanity, sir, I may say, is the great pillar of *my* management."

Mr. Shelby did not know what to say, and so he said, " Indeed ! "

" Now, I've been laughed at for my notions, sir, and I've been talked to. They an't pop'lar, and they an't common ; but I stuck to 'em, sir ; I've stuck to 'em, and realized well on 'em ; yes, sir, they have paid their passage, I may say." And the trader laughed at his joke.

There was something so piquant and original in these elucidations of humanity that Mr. Shelby could not help laughing in company. Perhaps you laugh too, dear

reader; but you know humanity comes out in a variety of strange forms nowadays, and there is no end to the odd things that humane people will say and do.

Mr. Shelby's laugh encouraged the trader to proceed.

"It's strange, now, but I never could beat this into people's heads. Now, there was Tom Loker, my old partner, down in Natchez; he was a clever fellow, Tom was, only the very devil with niggers—on principle 'twas, you see, for a better-hearted feller never broke bread; 'twas his *system*, sir. I used to talk to Tom. 'Why, Tom,' I used to say, 'when your gals takes on and cry, what's the use o' crackin' on 'em over the head, and knockin' on 'em round? It's ridiculous,' says I, 'and don't do no sort o' good. Besides, Tom,' says I, 'it jest spiles your gals; they get sickly, and down in the mouth; and sometimes they gets ugly—particular yallow gals do—and it's the devil and all gettin' on 'em broke in. Now,' says I, 'why can't you kinder coax 'em up, and speak 'em fair? Depend on it, Tom, a little humanity, thrown in along, goes a heap further than all your jawin' and crackin', and it pays better,' says I, 'depend on't.' But Tom couldn't get the hang on't; and he spiled so many for me that I had to break off with him, though he was a good-hearted fellow, and as fair a business hand as is goin'."

"And do you find your ways of managing do the business better than Tom's?" said Mr. Shelby.

"Why, yes, sir, I may say so. You see, when I any ways can, I takes a leetle care about the onpleasant parts, like selling young uns and that—get the gals out of the way—out of sight, out of mind, you know—and when it's clean done, and can't be helped, they naturally gets used to it. 'Tan't, you know, as if it was white folks, that's brought up in the way of 'spectin' to keep their children and wives, and all that. Niggers, you know, that's fetched up properly, ha'n't no kind of 'spectations of no kind; so all these things comes easier."

" I'm afraid mine are not properly brought up, then," said Mr. Shelby.

" S'pose not ; you Kentucky folks spile your niggers. You mean well by 'em, but 'tan't no real kindness, arter all. Now, a nigger, you see, what's got to be hacked and tumbled round the world, and sold to Tom, and Dick, and the Lord knows who, 'tan't no kindness to be givin' on him notions and expectations, and bringin' on him up too well, for the rough and tumble comes all the harder on him arter. Now, I venture to say, your niggers would be quite chopfallen in a place where some of your plantation niggers would be singing and whooping like all possessed. Every man, you know, Mr. Shelby, naturally thinks well of his own ways ; and I think I treat niggers just about as well as it's ever worth while to treat 'em."

" It's a happy thing to be satisfied," said Mr. Shelby, with a slight shrug, and some perceptible feelings of a disagreeable nature.

" Well," said Haley, after they had both silently picked their nuts for a season, " what do you say ? "

" I'll think the matter over, and talk with my wife," said Mr. Shelby. " Meantime, Haley, if you want the matter carried on in the quiet way you speak of, you'd best not let your business in this neighbourhood be known. It will get out among my boys, and it will not be a particularly quiet business getting away any of my fellows, if they know it, I'll promise you."

" Oh, certainly, by all means—mum, of course. But, I'll tell you, I'm in a devil of a hurry, and shall want to know, as soon as possible, what I may depend on," said he, rising and putting on his overcoat.

" Well, call up this evening between six and seven, and you shall have my answer," said Mr. Shelby ; and the trader bowed himself out of the apartment.

" I'd like to have been able to kick the fellow down the steps," said he to himself, as he saw the door fairly closed, " with his impudent assurance ; but he knows

how much he has me at advantage. If anybody had ever said to me that I should sell Tom down south to one of those rascally traders, I should have said, 'Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?' And now it must come, for aught I see. And Eliza's child, too! I know that I shall have some fuss with my wife about that; and, for that matter, about Tom too. So much for being in debt—heigh-ho! The fellow sees his advantage, and means to push it."

Now, it had so happened that, in approaching the door, Eliza had caught enough of the conversation to know that the trader was making offers to her master for somebody.

She would gladly have stopped at the door to listen as she came out, but her mistress just then calling, she was obliged to hasten away. Still she thought she heard the trader make an offer for her boy. Could she be mistaken? Her heart swelled and throbbed, and she involuntarily strained him so tight that the little fellow looked up into her face in astonishment.

"Eliza, girl, what ails you to-day?" said her mistress, when Eliza had upset the wash-pitcher, knocked down the work-stand, and finally was abstractedly offering her mistress a long night-gown in place of the silk dress she had ordered her to bring from the wardrobe.

Eliza started. "O missis!" she said, raising her eyes; then, bursting into tears, she sat down in a chair and began sobbing.

"Why, Eliza, child! what ails you?" said her mistress.

"O missis, missis!" said Eliza, "there's been a trader talking with master in the parlour! I heard him."

"Well, silly child, suppose there has."

"O missis, *do* you suppose mas'r would sell my Harry?" And the poor creature threw herself into a chair and sobbed convulsively.

"Sell him! No, you foolish girl! You know your

master never deals with these southern traders, and never means to sell any of his servants, as long as they behave well. Why, you silly child, who do you think would want to buy your Harry? Do you think all the world are set on him as you are, you goosie? Come, cheer up, and hook my dress. There now, put my back hair up in that pretty braid you learned the other day, and don't go listening at doors any more."

"Well, but, missis, *you* never would give your consent to—to——"

"Nonsense, child! To be sure I shouldn't. What do you talk so for? I would as soon have one of my own children sold. But really, Eliza, you are getting altogether too proud of that little fellow. A man can't put his nose into the door but you think he must be coming to buy him."

Reassured by her mistress's confident tone, Eliza proceeded nimbly and adroitly with her toilet, laughing at her own fears as she proceeded.

CHAPTER II

ELIZA had been brought up by her mistress from girlhood as a petted and indulged favourite. She had been married to a bright and talented young mulatto man, who was a slave on a neighbouring estate, and bore the name of George Harris.

This young man had been hired out by his master to work in a bagging factory, where his adroitness and ingenuity caused him to be considered the first hand in the place. He had invented a machine for the cleaning of the hemp, which, considering the education and circumstances of the inventor, displayed quite as much mechanical genius as Whitney's cotton-gin.*

He was possessed of a handsome person and pleasing manners, and was a general favourite in the factory. Nevertheless, as this young man was in the eye of the law not a man but a thing, all these superior qualifications were subject to the control of a vulgar, narrow-minded, tyrannical master. This same gentleman, having heard of the fame of George's invention, took a ride over to the factory, to see what this intelligent chattel had been about. He was received with great enthusiasm by the employer, who congratulated him on possessing so valuable a slave.

He was waited upon over the factory, shown the

* A machine of this description was really the invention of a young coloured man in Kentucky.

machinery by George, who, in high spirits, talked so fluently, held himself so erect, looked so handsome and manly, that his master began to feel an uneasy consciousness of inferiority. What business had his slave to be marching round the country inventing machines, and holding up his head among gentlemen? He'd soon put a stop to it. He'd take him back, and put him to hoeing and digging, and "see if he'd step about so smart." Accordingly the manufacturer and all hands concerned were astounded when he suddenly demanded George's wages, and announced his intention of taking him home.

"But, Mr. Harris," remonstrated the manufacturer, "isn't this rather sudden?"

"What if it is? Isn't the man *mine*?"

"We would be willing, sir, to increase the rate of compensation."

"No object at all, sir. I don't need to hire any of my hands out, unless I've a mind to."

"But, sir, he seems peculiarly adapted to this business."

"Daresay he may be. Never was much adapted to anything that I set him about, I'll be bound."

"But only think of his inventing this machine!" interposed one of the workmen, rather unluckily.

"Oh yes!—a machine for saving work, is it? He'd invent that, I'll be bound. Let a nigger alone for that, any time. They are all labour-saving machines themselves, every one of 'em. No, he shall tramp."

George had stood like one transfixed at hearing his doom thus suddenly pronounced by a power that he knew was irresistible. He folded his arms, tightly pressed in his lips; but a whole volcano of bitter feelings burned in his bosom, and sent streams of fire through his veins. He breathed short, and his large dark eyes flashed like live coals; and he might have broken out into some dangerous ebullition had not the kindly manufacturer touched him on the arm, and said, in a

low tone, "Give way, George; go with him for the present. We'll try to help you yet."

The tyrant observed the whisper, and conjectured its import, though he could not hear what was said; and he inwardly strengthened himself in his determination to keep the power he possessed over his victim.

George was taken home, and put to the meanest drudgery of the farm. He had been able to repress every disrespectful word; but the flashing eye, the gloomy and troubled brow, were part of a natural language that could not be repressed—indubitable signs which showed too plainly that the man could not become a thing.

It was during the happy period of his employment in the factory that George had seen and married his wife. For a year or two Eliza saw her husband frequently, and there was nothing to interrupt their happiness except the loss of two infant children, to whom she was passionately attached, and whom she mourned with a grief so intense as to call for gentle remonstrance from her mistress, who sought, with maternal anxiety, to direct her naturally passionate feelings within the bounds of reason and religion.

After the birth of little Harry, however, she had gradually become tranquillized and settled; and every bleeding tie and throbbing nerve, once more entwined with that little life, seemed to become sound and healthful, and Eliza was a happy woman up to the time that her husband was rudely torn from his kind employer and brought under the iron sway of his legal owner.

The manufacturer, true to his word, visited Mr. Harris a week or two after George had been taken away, when, as he hoped, the heat of the occasion had passed away, and tried every possible inducement to lead him to restore him to his former employment.

"You needn't trouble yourself to talk any longer," said he doggedly. "I know my own business, sir."

"I did not presume to interfere with it, sir. I only thought that you might think it for your interest to let your man to us on the terms proposed."

"Oh, I understand the matter well enough. I saw your winking and whispering the day I took him out of the factory; but you don't come it over me that way. It's a free country, sir. The man's *mine*, and I do what I please with him—that's it."

And so fell George's last hope—nothing before him but a life of toil and drudgery, rendered more bitter by every little smarting vexation and indignity which tyrannical ingenuity could devise.

A very humane jurist once said, "The worst use you can put a man to is to hang him." No; there is another use that a man can be put to that is WORSE!

CHAPTER III

MRS. SHELBY had gone on her visit, and Eliza stood in the veranda, rather dejectedly looking after the retreating carriage, when a hand was laid on her shoulder. She turned, and a bright smile lighted up her fine eyes.

" George, is it you ? How you frightened me ! Well, I am so glad you's come ! Missis is gone to spend the afternoon ; so come into my little room, and we'll have the time all to ourselves."

Saying this, she drew him into a neat little apartment opening on the veranda, where she generally sat at her sewing, within call of her mistress.

" How glad I am ! Why don't you smile ? And look at Harry—how he grows ! " The boy stood shyly regarding his father through his curls, holding close to the skirts of his mother's dress. " Isn't he beautiful ? " said Eliza, lifting his long curls and kissing him.

" I wish he'd never been born ! " said George bitterly. " I wish I'd never been born myself ! "

Surprised and frightened, Eliza sat down, leaned her head on her husband's shoulder, and burst into tears.

" There now, Eliza, it's too bad for me to make you feel so, poor girl ! " said he fondly ; " it's too bad. Oh, how I wish you never had seen me ! You might have been happy."

" George, George ! how can you talk so ? What dreadful thing has happened, or is going to happen ? I'm sure we've been very happy till lately."

"So we have, dear," said George. Then drawing his child on his knee, he gazed intently on his glorious dark eyes, and passed his hands through his long curls.

"Just like you, Eliza; and you are the handsomest woman I ever saw, and the best one I ever wish to see. But, oh! I wish I'd never seen you, nor you me."

"O George, how can you!"

"Yes, Eliza, it's all misery, misery, misery! My life is bitter as wormwood. The very life is burning out of me. I'm a poor, miserable, forlorn drudge. I shall only drag you down with me, that's all. What's the use of our trying to do anything, trying to know anything, trying to be anything? What's the use of living? I wish I was dead!"

"Oh now, dear George, that is really wicked! I know how you feel about losing your place in the factory, and you have a hard master; but pray be patient, and perhaps something——"

"Patient!" said he, interrupting her. "Haven't I been patient? Did I say a word when he came and took me away, for no earthly reason, from the place where everybody was kind to me? I'd paid him truly every cent of my earnings, and they all say I worked well."

"Well, it *is* dreadful," said Eliza; "but, after all, he is your master, you know."

"My master! And who made him my master? That's what I think of. What right has he to me? I'm a man as much as he is. I'm a better man than he is. I know more about business than he does. I am a better manager than he is. I can read better than he can. I can write a better hand. And I've learned it all myself, and no thanks to him—I've learned it in spite of him; and now what right has he to make a dray-horse of me—to take me from things I can do, and do better than he can, and put me to work that any horse can do? He tries to do it. He says he'll bring

me down and humble me, and he puts me to just the hardest, meanest, and dirtiest work on purpose."

"O George! George! you frighten me! Why, I never heard you talk so! I'm afraid you'll do something dreadful. I don't wonder at your feelings at all; but, oh! do be careful—do, do—for my sake—for Harry's!"

"I have been careful, and I have been patient; but it's growing worse and worse. Flesh and blood can't bear it any longer. Every chance he can get to insult and torment me he takes. I thought I could do my work well, and keep on quiet, and have some time to read and learn out of work hours; but the more he sees I can do, the more he loads on. He says that though I don't say anything, he sees I've got the devil in me, and he means to bring it out; and one of these days it will come out in a way that he won't like, or I'm mistaken!"

"Oh dear! what shall we do?" said Eliza mournfully.

"It was only yesterday," said George, "as I was busy loading stones into a cart, that young Mas'r Tom stood there, slashing his whip so near the horse that the creature was frightened. I asked him to stop, as pleasant as I could; he just kept right on. I begged him again; and then he turned on me, and began striking me. I held his hand; and then he screamed and kicked, and ran to his father and told him that I was fighting him. He came in a rage, and said he'd teach me who was my master; and he tied me to a tree, and cut switches for young master, and told him that he might whip me till he was tired—and he did do it! If I don't make him remember it, some time!" And the brow of the young man grew dark, and his eyes burned with an expression that made his young wife tremble. "Who made this man my master? That's what I want to know?" he said.

"Well," said Eliza mournfully, "I always thought that I must obey my master and mistress, or I couldn't be a Christian."

"There is some sense in it in your case. They have brought you up like a child, fed you, clothed you, indulged you, and taught you, so that you have a good education; that is some reason why they should claim you. But I have been kicked and cuffed and sworn at, and at the best only let alone; and what do I owe? I've paid for all my keeping a hundred times over. I *won't* bear it. No, I *won't*!" he said, clenching his hand with a fierce frown.

"What are you going to do? O George, don't do anything wicked! If you only trust in God, and try to do right, He'll deliver you."

"I an't a Christian like you, Eliza. My heart's full of bitterness; I can't trust in God. Why does He let things be so?"

"O George, we must have faith. Mistress says that when all things go wrong to us, we must believe that God is doing the very best."

"That's easy to say for people that are sitting on their sofas and riding in their carriages; but let 'em be where I am, I guess it would come some harder. I wish I could be good; but my heart burns, and can't be reconciled anyhow. You couldn't, in my place; you can't now, if I tell you all I've got to say. You don't know the whole yet."

"What can be coming now?"

"Well, lately mas'r has been saying that he was a fool to let me marry off the place; that he hates Mr. Shelby and all his tribe, because they are proud, and hold their heads up above him, and that I've got proud notions from you; and he says he won't let me come here any more, and that I shall take a wife and settle down on his place. At first he only scolded and grumbled these things, but yesterday he told me that I should

take Mina for a wife, and settle down in a cabin with her, or he will sell me down river."

"Why—but you were married to *me* by the minister, as much as if you'd been a white man," said Eliza simply.

"Don't you know a slave can't be married? There is no law in this country for that; I can't hold you for my wife if he chooses to part us. That's why I wish I'd never seen you—why I wish I'd never been born; it would have been better for us both—it would have been better for this poor child if he had never been born. All this may happen to him yet."

"Oh, but master is so kind."

"Yes, but who knows? He may die, and then he may be sold to nobody knows who. What pleasure is it that he is handsome, and smart, and bright? I tell you, Eliza, that a sword will pierce through your soul for every good and pleasant thing your child is or has; it will make him worth too much for you to keep."

The words smote heavily on Eliza's heart. The vision of the trader came before her eyes, and, as if some one had struck her a deadly blow, she turned pale and gasped for breath. She looked nervously out on the veranda, where the boy, tired of the grave conversation, had retired, and where he was riding triumphantly up and down on Mr. Shelby's walking-stick. She would have spoken to tell her husband her fears, but checked herself.

"No, no; he has enough to bear, poor fellow!" she thought. "No, I won't tell him; besides, it an't true. Missis never deceives us."

"So, Eliza, my girl," said the husband mournfully, "bear up now; and good-bye, for I'm going."

"Going, George! Going where?"

"To Canada," said he, straightening himself up; "and when I'm there, I'll buy you. That's all the hope that's left us. You have a kind master that won't refuse to sell you. I'll buy you and the boy—God helping me I will."

"Oh, dreadful! If you should be taken?"

"I won't be taken, Eliza; I'll *die* first! I'll be free, or I'll die!"

"You won't kill yourself?"

"No need of that. They will kill me fast enough; they never will get me down the river alive!"

"O George, for my sake, do be careful! Don't do anything wicked; don't lay hands on yourself, or anybody else. You are tempted too much—too much; but don't—go you must—but go carefully, prudently. Pray God to help you!"

"Well, then, Eliza, hear my plan. Mas'r took it into his head to send me right by here, with a note to Mr. Symmes, that lives a mile past. I believe he expected I should come here to tell you what I have. It would please him if he thought it would aggravate 'Shelby's folks,' as he calls 'em. I'm going home quite resigned, you understand, as if all was over. I've got some preparations made, and there are those that will help me; and in the course of a week or so I shall be among the missing some day. Pray for me, Eliza. Perhaps the good Lord will hear *you*."

"Oh, pray yourself, George, and go trusting in Him; then you won't do anything wicked."

"Well, now, *good-bye*," said George, holding Eliza's hands, and gazing into her eyes without moving. They stood silent; then there were last words, and sobs, and bitter weeping—such parting as those may make whose hope to meet again is as the spider's web—and the husband and wife were parted.

CHAPTER IV

MR. and Mrs. Shelby had retired to their apartment for the night. He was lounging in a large easy-chair, looking over some letters that had come in the afternoon mail, and she was standing before her mirror brushing out the complicated braids and curls in which Eliza had arranged her hair; for, noticing her pale cheeks and haggard eyes, she had excused her attendance that night, and ordered her to bed. The employment, naturally enough, suggested her conversation with the girl in the morning; and turning to her husband, she said carelessly:

"By the bye, Arthur, who was that low-bred fellow that you lugged in to our dinner-table to-day?"

"Haley is his name," said Shelby, turning himself rather uneasily in his chair, and continuing with his eyes fixed on a letter.

"Haley! Who is he, and what may be his business here, pray?"

"Well, he's a man that I transacted some business with last time I was at Natchez," said Mr. Shelby.

"And he presumed on it to make himself quite at home, and call and dine here, eh?"

"Why, I invited him; I had some accounts with him," said Shelby.

"Is he a negro-trader?" said Mrs. Shelby, noticing a certain embarrassment in her husband's manner.

"Why, my dear, what put that into your head?" said Shelby, looking up.

"Nothing; only Eliza came in here after dinner in a great worry, crying and taking on, and said you were talking with a trader, and that she heard him make an offer for her boy—the ridiculous little goose!"

"She did, hey?" said Mr. Shelby, returning to his paper, which he seemed for a few moments quite intent upon, not perceiving that he was holding it bottom upwards.

"It will have to come out," said he mentally; "as well now as ever."

"I told Eliza," said Mrs. Shelby, as she continued brushing her hair, "that she was a little fool for her pains, and that you never had anything to do with that sort of persons. Of course I knew you never meant to sell any of our people—least of all to such a fellow."

"Well, Emily," said her husband, "so I have always felt and said; but the fact is that my business lies so that I cannot get on without. I shall have to sell some of my hands."

"To that creature? Impossible! Mr. Shelby, you cannot be serious."

"I'm sorry to say that I am," said Mr. Shelby. "I've agreed to sell Tom."

"What! our Tom! That good, faithful creature—been your faithful servant from a boy! O Mr. Shelby!—and you have promised him his freedom, too—you and I have spoken to him a hundred times of it. Well, I can believe anything now—I can believe *now* that you could sell little Harry, poor Eliza's only child!" said Mrs. Shelby in a tone between grief and indignation.

"Well, since you must know all, it is so. I have agreed to sell Tom and Harry both; and I don't know why I am to be rated as if I were a monster for doing what every one does every day."

"But why, of all others, choose these?" said Mrs. Shelby. "Why sell them, of all on the place, if you must sell at all?"

" Because they will bring the highest sum of any—that's why. I could choose another, if you say so. The fellow made me a high bid on Eliza, if that would suit you any better," said Mr. Shelby.

Mrs. Shelby stood like one stricken. Finally, turning to her toilet, she rested her face in her hands, and gave a sort of groan.

" This is God's curse on slavery !—a bitter, bitter, most accursed thing !—a curse to the master and a curse to the slave ! I was a fool to think I could make anything good out of such a deadly evil. It is a sin to hold a slave under laws like ours—I always felt it was—I always thought so when I was a girl—I thought so still more after I joined the church ; but I thought I could gild it over—I thought, by kindness, and care, and instruction, I could make the condition of mine better than freedom—fool that I was ! "

" I'm sorry, very sorry, Emily," said Mr. Shelby—" I'm sorry this takes hold of you so ; but it will do no good. The fact is, Emily, the thing's done—the bills of sale are already signed and in Haley's hands ; and you must be thankful it is no worse. That man has had it in his power to ruin us all ; and now he is fairly off. If you knew the man as I do, you'd think that we had had a narrow escape."

There was one listener to this conversation whom Mr. and Mrs. Shelby little suspected.

Communicating with their apartment was a large closet, opening by a door into the outer passage. When Mrs. Shelby had dismissed Eliza for the night, her feverish and excited mind had suggested the idea of this closet ; and she had hidden herself there, and, with her ear pressed close against the crack of the door, had lost not a word of the conversation.

When the voices died into silence, she rose and crept stealthily away. Pale, shivering, with rigid features and compressed lips, she looked an entirely altered being

from the soft and timid creature she had been hitherto. She moved cautiously along the entry, paused one moment at her mistress's door, and raised her hands in mute appeal to Heaven, and then turned and glided into her own room. It was a quiet, neat apartment, on the same floor with her mistress's. There was the pleasant sunny window, where she had often sat singing at her sewing ; there was a little case of books, and various little fancy articles ranged by them, the gifts of Christmas holidays ; there was her simple wardrobe in the closet and in the drawers. Here was, in short, her home ; and, on the whole, a happy one it had been to her. But there, on the bed, lay her slumbering boy, his long curls falling negligently around his unconscious face, his rosy mouth half open, his little fat hands thrown out over the bed-clothes, and a smile spread like a sunbeam over his whole face.

" Poor boy ! poor fellow ! " said Eliza ; " they have sold you ! but your mother will save you yet ! "

No tear dropped over that pillow : in such straits as these the heart has no tears to give. It drops only blood, bleeding itself away in silence. She took a piece of paper and a pencil and wrote hastily :

" O missis ! dear missis ! don't think me ungrateful ; don't think hard of me any way. I heard all you and master said to-night. I am going to try to save my boy ; you will not blame me ! God bless and reward you for all your kindness ! "

Hastily folding and directing this, she went to a drawer and made up a little package of clothing for her boy, which she tied with a handkerchief firmly round her waist ; and so fond is a mother's remembrance that, even in the terrors of that hour, she did not forget to put in the little package one or two of his favourite toys, reserving a gaily-painted parrot to amuse him when she should be called on to awaken him. It was some trouble to arouse the little sleeper ; but after some

effort he sat up and was playing with his bird, while his mother was putting on her bonnet and shawl.

"Where are you going, mother?" said he, as she drew near the bed with his little coat and cap.

His mother drew near, and looked so earnestly into his eyes that he at once divined that something unusual was the matter.

"Hush, Harry," she said; "mustn't speak loud, or they will hear us. A wicked man was coming to take little Harry away from his mother and carry him 'way off in the dark. But mother won't let him; she's going to put on her little boy's cap and coat, and run off with him, so the ugly man can't catch him."

Saying these words, she had tied and buttoned on the child's simple outfit, and taking him in her arms, she whispered to him to be very still, and opening a door in her room which led into the outer veranda, she glided noiselessly out.

It was a sparkling, frosty, starlight night, and the mother wrapped the shawl close round the child, as, perfectly quiet with vague terror, he clung round her neck.

Old Bruno, a great Newfoundland, who slept at the end of the porch, rose with a low growl as she came near. She gently spoke his name, and the animal, an old pet and playmate of hers, instantly, wagging his tail, prepared to follow her, though apparently revolving much in his simple dog's head what such an indiscreet midnight promenade might mean. Some dim ideas of imprudence or impropriety in the measure seemed to embarrass him considerably, for he often stopped as Eliza glided forward, and looked wistfully, first at her and then at the house; and then, as if reassured by reflection, he pattered along after her again. A few minutes brought them to the window of Uncle Tom's cottage, and Eliza, stopping, tapped lightly on the window-pane.

A prayer-meeting at Uncle Tom's had been protracted to a very late hour; and as Uncle Tom had indulged himself in a few lengthy solos afterwards, the consequence was that, although it was now between twelve and one o'clock, he and his worthy helpmeet were not yet asleep.

"What's that?" said Aunt Chloe, starting up and hastily drawing the curtain. "My sakes alive, if it an't Lizy! Get on your clothes, old man, quick! There's old Bruno, too, a-pawin' round. What on airth? I'm gwine to open the door."

And suiting the action to the word, the door flew open, and the light of the tallow candle, which Tom had hastily lighted, fell on the haggard face and dark, wild eyes of the fugitive.

"Lord bless you! I'm skeered to look at ye, Lizy! Are ye tuck sick, or what's come over ye?"

"I'm running away, Uncle Tom and Aunt Chloe—carrying off my child; master sold him!"

"Sold him!" echoed both, lifting up their hands in dismay.

"Yes, sold him!" said Eliza firmly. "I crept into the closet by mistress's door to-night, and I heard master tell missis that he had sold my Harry and you, Uncle Tom, both to a trader, and that he was going off this morning on his horse, and that the man was to take possession to-day."

Tom had stood during this speech with his hands raised and his eyes dilated, like a man in a dream. Slowly and gradually, as its meaning came over him, he collapsed, rather than seated himself, on his old chair, and sank his head down upon his knees.

"The good Lord have pity on us!" said Aunt Chloe. "Oh, it don't seem as if it was true! What has he done that mas'r should sell *him*?"

"He hasn't done anything—it isn't for that. Master don't want to sell; and missis—she's always good. I

heard her plead and beg for us; but he told her 'twas no use, that he was in this man's debt, and that this man had got the power over him, and that if he didn't pay him off clear it would end in his having to sell the place and all the people, and move off. Yes, I heard him say there was no choice between selling these two and selling all, the man was driving him so hard. Master said he was sorry; but oh! missis—you ought to have heard her talk! If she an't a Christian and an angel, there never was one. I'm a wicked girl to leave her so; but then I can't help it. She said herself one soul was worth more than the world; and this boy has a soul, and if I let him be carried off, who knows what'll become of it? It must be right; but if it an't right, the Lord forgive me, for I can't help doing it!"

"Well, old man," said Aunt Chloe, "why don't you go too? Will you wait to be toted down river, where they kill niggers with hard work and starving? I'd a heap rather die than go there any day. There's time for ye—be off with Lizy; you've got a pass to come and go any time. Come, bustle up, and I'll get your things together."

Tom slowly raised his head, and looked sorrowfully but quietly around, and said, "No, no; I an't going. Let Eliza go—it's her right. I wouldn't be the one to say no—'tan't in *natur* for her to stay; but you heard what she said! If I must be sold, or all the people on the place and everything go to rack, why, let me be sold. I s'pose I can b'ar it as well as any on 'em," he added, while something like a sob and a sigh shook his broad, rough chest convulsively. "Mas'r always found me on the spot; he always will. I never have broke trust, nor used my pass noways contrary to my word, and I never will. It's better for me alone to go than to break up the place and sell all. Mas'r an't to blame, Chloe, and he'll take care of you and the poor childer."

Here he turned to the rough trundle-bed full of little

woolly heads, and broke fairly down. He leaned over the back of the chair, and covered his face with his large hands.

" And now," said Eliza, as she stood in the door, " I saw my husband only this afternoon, and I little knew then what was to come. They have pushed him to the very last standing-place, and he told me to-day that he was going to run away. Do try, if you can, to get word to him. Tell him how I went, and why I went ; and tell him I'm going to try and find Canada. You must give my love to him, and tell him, if I never see him again——" She turned away, and stood with her back to them for a moment, and then added in a husky voice, " Tell him to be as good as he can, and try and meet me in the kingdom of heaven.

" Call Bruno in there," she added. " Shut the door on him, poor beast ! He mustn't go with me."

A few last words and tears, a few simple adieus and blessings, and clasping her wondering and affrighted child in her arms, she glided noiselessly away.

CHAPTER V

MR. and Mrs. Shelby, after their protracted discussion of the night before, did not readily sink to repose, and, in consequence, slept somewhat later than usual the ensuing morning.

" I wonder what keeps Eliza," said Mrs. Shelby, after giving her bell repeated pulls to no purpose.

Mr. Shelby was standing before his dressing-glass sharpening his razor ; and just then the door opened, and a coloured boy entered with his shaving water.

" Andy," said his mistress, " step to Eliza's door, and tell her I have rung for her three times. Poor thing ! " she added to herself with a sigh.

Andy soon returned with eyes very wide in astonishment.

" Lor, missis ! Lizy's drawers is all open, and her things all lying every which way ; and I believe she's just done clared out ! "

The truth flashed upon Mr. Shelby and his wife at the same moment. He exclaimed :

" Then she suspected it, and she's off ! "

" The Lord be thanked ! " said Mrs. Shelby ; " I trust she is."

" Wife, you talk like a fool ! Really, it will be something pretty awkward for me if she is. Haley saw that I hesitated about selling this child, and he'll think I connived at it to get him out of the way. It touches my honour ! " And Mr. Shelby left the room hastily.

There was great running and ejaculating, and opening and shutting of doors, and appearance of faces in all shades of colour in different places for about a quarter of an hour. One person only, who might have shed some light on the matter, was entirely silent, and that was the head cook, Aunt Chloe. Silently, and with a heavy cloud settled down over her once joyous face, she proceeded making out her breakfast biscuits, as if she heard and saw nothing of the excitement around her.

Very soon about a dozen young imps were roosting, like so many crows, on the veranda railings, each one determined to be the first one to apprise the strange mas'r of his ill-luck.

" He'll be rael mad, I'll be bound," said Andy.

" *Won't* he swar ! " said little black Jake.

" Yes, for he *does* swar," said woolly-headed Mandy. " I hearn him yesterday at dinner. I hearn all about it then, 'cause I got into the closet where missis keeps the great jugs, and I hearn every word." And Mandy, who had never in her life thought of the meaning of a word she had heard more than a black cat, now took airs of superior wisdom, and strutted about, forgetting to state that, though actually coiled up among the jugs at the time specified, she had been fast asleep all the time.

When at last Haley appeared, booted and spurred, he was saluted with the bad tidings on every hand. The young imps on the veranda were not disappointed in their hope of hearing him " swar," which he did with a fluency and fervency which delighted them all amazingly, as they ducked and dodged hither and thither to be out of the reach of his riding-whip ; and all whooping off together, they tumbled, in a pile of immeasurable giggle, on the withered turf under the veranda, where they kicked up their heels and shouted to their full satisfaction.

" If I had the little devils ! " muttered Haley between his teeth.

" But you ha'n't got 'em though," said Andy, with a triumphant flourish, and making a string of indescribable mouths at the unfortunate trader's back, when he was fairly beyond hearing.

" I say now, Shelby, this yer's a most extr'or'nary business," said Haley as he abruptly entered the parlour. " It seems that gal's off, with her young un."

" Mr. Haley, Mrs. Shelby is present," said Mr. Shelby.

" I beg pardon, ma'am," said Haley, bowing slightly, with a still lowering brow. " But still I say, as I said before, this yer's a sing'lar report. Is it true, sir ? "

" Sir," said Mr. Shelby, " if you wish to communicate with me, you must observe something of the decorum of a gentleman.—Andy, take Mr. Haley's hat and riding-whip.—Take a seat, sir. Yes, sir ; I regret to say that the young woman, excited by overhearing, or having reported to her, something of this business, has taken her child in the night, and made off."

" I did expect fair dealing in this matter, I confess," said Haley.

" Well, sir," said Mr. Shelby, turning sharply round upon him, " what am I to understand by that remark ? If any man calls my honour in question, I have but one answer for him."

The trader cowered at this, and in a somewhat lower tone said that " it was plaguy hard on a fellow that had made a fair bargain to be gulled that way."

" Mr. Haley," said Mr. Shelby, " if I did not think you had some cause for disappointment, I should not have borne from you the rude and unceremonious style of your entrance into my parlour this morning. I say this much, however, since appearances call for it, that I shall allow of no insinuations cast upon me, as if I were at all partner to any unfairness in this matter. Moreover, I shall feel bound to give you every assistance, in the use of horses, servants, etc., in the recovery of your property. So, in short, Haley," said he, suddenly

dropping from the tone of dignified coolness to his ordinary one of easy frankness, " the best way for you is to keep good-natured and eat some breakfast, and we will then see what is to be done."

Mrs. Shelby now rose, and said her engagements would prevent her being at the breakfast-table that morning; and deputing a very respectable mulatto woman to attend to the gentlemen's coffee at the sideboard, she left the room.

" Old lady don't like your humble servant, over and above," said Haley, with an uneasy effort to be very familiar.

" I am not accustomed to hear my wife spoken of with such freedom," said Mr. Shelby dryly.

" Beg pardon; of course only a joke, you know," said Haley, forcing a laugh.

" Some jokes are less agreeable than others," rejoined Shelby.

" Devilish free, now I've signed those papers, curse him ! " muttered Haley to himself. " Quite grand since yesterday ! "

Never did fall of any prime minister at court occasion wider surges of sensation than the report of Tom's fate among his compeers on the place. It was the topic in every mouth everywhere; and nothing was done in the house or in the field but to discuss its probable results. Eliza's flight—an unprecedented event on the place—was also a great accessory in stimulating the general excitement.

Black Sam, as he was commonly called, from his being about three shades blacker than any other son of ebony on the place, was revolving the matter profoundly in all its phases and bearings, with a comprehensiveness of vision and a strict look-out to his own personal well-being that would have done credit to any white patriot in Washington.

" It's an ill wind dat blows nowhar—dat ar a fact,"

said Sam sententiously, giving an additional hoist to his pantaloons, and adroitly substituting a long nail in place of a missing suspender-button, with which effort of mechanical genius he seemed highly delighted.

"Yes, it's an ill wind blows nowhar," he repeated. "Now dar, Tom's down—wal, course der's room for some nigger to be up—and why not dis nigger?—dat's de idee. Tom, a-ridin' round de country—boots blacked—pass in his pocket—all grand as Cuffee—who but he? Now, why shouldn't Sam?—dat's what I want to know."

"Halloo, Sam—O Sam, mas'r wants you to cotch Bill and Jerry," said Andy, cutting short Sam's soliloquy.

"High! what's afoot now, young un?"

"Why, you don't know, I s'pose, that Lizy's cut stick and clared out with her young un?"

"You teach your granny!" said Sam, with infinite contempt. "Knowed it a heap sight sooner than you did. This nigger an't so green now."

"Well, anyhow, mas'r wants Bill and Jerry geared right up, and you and I's to go with Mas'r Haley to look arter her."

"Good, now; dat's de time o' day!" said Sam. "It's Sam dat's called for in dese yer times. He's de nigger. See if I don't cotch her, now; mas'r 'll see what Sam can do."

"Ah, but, Sam," said Andy, "you'd better think twice; for missis don't want her cotched, and she'll be in yer wool."

"High!" said Sam, opening his eyes. "How you know dat?"

"Heard her say so, my own self, dis blessed mornin', when I bring in mas'r's shaving water. She sent me to see why Lizy didn't come to dress her; and when I telled her she was off, she jest ris up, and ses she, 'The Lord be praised!' And mas'r, he seemed rael mad, and ses he, 'Wife, you talk like a fool.' But, Lor! she'll bring him to! I knows well enough how that'll be.

It's allers best to stand missis's side the fence, now I tell yer."

Black Sam, upon this, scratched his woolly pate, which, if it did not contain very profound wisdom, still contained a great deal of a particular species much in demand among politicians of all complexions and countries, and vulgarly denominated "knowing which side the bread is buttered"; so, stopping with grave consideration, he again gave a hitch to his pantaloons, which was his regularly organized method of assisting his mental perplexities.

"Der an't no sayin'—never—'bout no kind o' thing in *dis* yer world," he said at last.

Sam spoke like a philosopher, emphasizing *this*, as if he had had large experience in different sorts of worlds, and therefore had come to his conclusions advisedly.

"Now, sartin I'd 'a said that missis would 'a scoured the varsal world after Lizy," added Sam thoughtfully.

"So she would," said Andy; "but can't ye see through a ladder, ye black nigger? Missis don't want dis yer Mas'r Haley to get Lizy's boy; dat's de go!"

"High!" said Sam, with an indescribable intonation, known only to those who have heard it among the negroes.

"And I'll tell yer more'n all," said Andy—"I specs you'd better be making tracks for dem hosses—mighty sudden too—for I hearn missis 'quirin' arter yer; so you've stood foolin' long enough."

Sam, upon this, began to bestir himself in real earnest; and after a while appeared, bearing down gloriously towards the house, with Bill and Jerry in a full canter, and adroitly throwing himself off before they had any idea of stopping, he brought them up alongside of the horse-post like a tornado. Haley's horse, which was a skittish young colt, winced, and bounced, and pulled hard at his halter.

"Ho, ho!" said Sam; "skeery, are ye?" and his

black visage lighted up with a curious, mischievous gleam. " I'll fix ye now," said he.

There was a large beech tree overshadowing the place, and the small, sharp, triangular beech-nuts lay scattered thickly on the ground. With one of these in his fingers, Sam approached the colt, stroked and patted, and seemed apparently busy in soothing his agitation. On pretence of adjusting the saddle, he adroitly slipped under it the sharp little nut, in such a manner that the least weight brought upon the saddle would annoy the nervous sensibilities of the animal, without leaving any perceptible graze or wound.

" Dar ! " he said, rolling his eyes with an approving grin ; " me fix 'em ! "

At this moment Mrs. Shelby appeared on the balcony, beckoning to him. Sam approached with as good a determination to pay court as did ever suitor after a vacant place at St. James's or Washington.

" Why have you been loitering so, Sam ? I sent Andy to tell you to hurry."

" Lord bless you, missis ! " said Sam, " horses won't be cotched all in a minit ; they'd done clared out 'way down to the south pasture, and the Lord knows whar ! "

" Sam, how often must I tell you not to say, ' Lord bless you,' and ' the Lord knows,' and such things ? It's wicked."

" Oh, Lord bless my soul ! I done forgot, missis. I won't say nothing of de sort no more."

" Why, Sam, you just *have* said it again."

"Did I? O Lord!—I mean, I didn't go fur to say it."

" You must be *careful*, Sam."

" Just let me get my breath, missis, and I'll start fair. I'll be bery careful."

" Well, Sam, you are to go with Mr. Haley, to show him the road and help him. Be careful of the horses, Sam. You know Jerry was a little lame last week. *Don't ride them too fast.*"

Mrs. Shelby spoke the last words with a low voice and strong emphasis.

" Let dis child alone for dat ! " said Sam, rolling up his eyes with a volume of meaning. " Lord knows ! High ! Didn't say dat ! " said he, suddenly catching his breath, with a ludicrous flourish of apprehension which made his mistress laugh in spite of herself. " Yes, missis, I'll look out for de hosses."

" Now, Andy," said Sam, returning to his stand under the beech tree, " you see I wouldn't be 'tall surprised if dat ar gen'leman's critter should gib a fling by-and-by, when he comes to be a-gittin' up. You know, Andy, critters *will* do such things." And therewith Sam poked Andy in the side in a highly suggestive manner.

" High ! " said Andy, with an air of instant appreciation.

" Yes, you see, Andy, missis wants to make time—dat ar's clar to der most or'nary 'bserver. I jist make a little for her. Now, you see, get all dese yer hosses loose, caperin' permiscus round dis yer lot and down to de wood dar, and I spec mas'r won't be off in a hurry."

Andy grinned.

" Yer see," said Sam—" yer see, Andy, if any such thing should happen as that Mas'r Haley's horse *should* begin to act contrary, and cut up, you and I jist lets go of our'n to help him, and *we'll help him*—oh yes ! " And Sam and Andy laid their heads back on their shoulders, and broke into a low immoderate laugh, snapping their fingers and flourishing their heels with exquisite delight.

At this instant Haley appeared on the veranda. Somewhat mollified by certain cups of very good coffee, he came out smiling and talking, in tolerably restored humour. Sam and Andy, clawing for certain fragmentary palm-leaves, which they were in the habit of considering as hats, flew to the horse-posts, to be ready to " help mas'r."

Sam's palm-leaf had been ingeniously disentangled

from all pretensions to braid, as respects its brim; and the slivers starting apart, and standing upright, gave it a blazing air of freedom and defiance, quite equal to that of any Feejee chief; while the whole brim of Andy's being departed bodily, he rapped the crown on his head with a dexterous thump, and looked about well pleased, as if to say, "Who says I haven't got a hat?"

"Well, boys," said Haley, "look alive now; we must lose no time."

"Not a bit of him, mas'r!" said Sam, putting Haley's rein in his hand and holding his stirrup, while Andy was untying the other two horses.

The instant Haley touched the saddle the mettlesome creature bounded from the earth with a sudden spring that threw his master sprawling, some feet off, on the soft, dry turf. Sam, with frantic ejaculations, made a dive at the reins, but only succeeded in brushing the blazing palm-leaf aforenamed into the horse's eyes, which by no means tended to allay the confusion of his nerves. So, with great vehemence, he overturned Sam, and, giving two or three contemptuous snorts, flourished his heels vigorously in the air, and was soon prancing away towards the lower end of the lawn, followed by Bill and Jerry, whom Andy had not failed to let loose, according to contract, speeding them off with various direful ejaculations. And now ensued a miscellaneous scene of confusion. Sam and Andy ran and shouted—dogs barked here and there—and Mike, Mose, Mandy, Fanny, and all the smaller specimens on the place, both male and female, raced, clapped hands, whooped, and shouted, with outrageous officiousness and untiring zeal.

Haley's horse, which was a white one, and very fleet and spirited, appeared to enter into the spirit of the scene with great gusto; and having for his coursing ground a lawn of nearly half a mile in extent, gently sloping down on every side into indefinite woodland, he appeared to take infinite delight in seeing how near he could allow

his pursuers to approach him, and then, when within a hand's-breadth, whisk off with a start and a snort, like a mischievous beast as he was, and career far down into some alley of the wood-lot. Nothing was further from Sam's mind than to have any one of the troop taken until such season as should seem to him most befitting; and the exertions that he made were certainly most heroic. Like the sword of Cœur de Lion, which always blazed in the front and thickest of the battle, Sam's palm-leaf was to be seen everywhere when there was the least danger that a horse could be caught. There he would bear down at full tilt, shouting, "Now for it! cotch him! cotch him!" in a way that would set everything to indiscriminate rout in a moment.

Haley ran up and down, and cursed and swore and stamped miscellaneously; Mr. Shelby in vain tried to shout directions from the balcony; and Mrs. Shelby from her chamber window alternately laughed and wondered—not without some inkling of what lay at the bottom of all this confusion.

At last, about twelve o'clock, Sam appeared triumphant, mounted on Jerry, with Haley's horse by his side, reeking with sweat, but with flashing eyes and dilated nostrils, showing that the spirit of freedom had not yet entirely subsided.

"He's cotched!" he exclaimed triumphantly. "If't hadn't been for me, they might a bust theirselves, all on 'em; but I cotched him!"

"You!" growled Haley, in no amiable mood; "if it hadn't been for you this never would have happened."

"Lord bless us, mas'r," said Sam in a tone of the deepest concern, "and me that has been racin' and chasin' till the sweat jest pours off me!"

"Well, well!" said Haley, "you've lost me near three hours with your cursed nonsense. Now, let's be off, and have no more fooling."

"Why, mas'r," said Sam in a deprecating tone, "I believe you mean to kill us all clar, hosses and all. Here we are all jest ready to drop down, and the critters all in a reek of sweat. Why, mas'r won't think of startin' on now till arter dinner. Mas'r's hoss wants rubbin' down—see how he's splashed hisself; and Jerry limps too. Don't think missis would be willin' to have us start dis yer way, no how. Lord bless you, mas'r, we can ketch up, if we do stop. Lizy never was no great of a walker."

Mrs. Shelby, who, greatly to her amusement, had overheard this conversation from the veranda, now resolved to do her part. She came forward, and courteously expressing her concern for Haley's accident, pressed him to stay to dinner, saying that the cook should bring it on the table immediately.

Thus, all things considered, Haley, with rather an equivocal grace, proceeded to the parlour; while Sam, rolling his eyes after him with unutterable meaning, proceeded gravely with the horses to the stable-yard.

"Did yer see him, Andy? *did* yer see him?" said Sam, when he had got fairly beyond the shelter of the barn and fastened the horse to a post. "O Lor, if it warn't as good as a meetin', now, to see him a-dancin', and kickin', and swarin' at us. Didn't I hear him? Swar away, ole fellow (says I to myself); will yer have yer hoss now, or wait till you cotch him? (says I). Lor', Andy, I think I can see him now." And Sam and Andy leaned up against the barn, and laughed to their hearts' content.

"Yer oughter seen how mad he looked when I brought the hoss up. Lord, he'd a killed me, if he durs' to; and there I was a-standin' as innercent and as humble!"

"Lor, I seed you," said Andy. "An't you an old hoss, Sam?"

"Rather, 'spects I am," said Sam. "Did yer see missis upstars at the winder? I seed her laughin'."

"I am sure, I was racin' so, I didn't see nothing," said Andy.

"Well, yer see," said Sam, proceeding gravely to wash down Haley's pony, "I'se 'quired what yer may call a habit o' *bobservation*, Andy. It's a very 'portant habit, Andy; and I 'commend yer to be cultivatin' it, now yer young. Hist up that hind foot, Andy. Yer see, Andy, it's *bobservation* makes all de difference in niggers. Didn't I see which way the wind blew dis here mornin'? Didn't I see what missis wanted, though she never let on? Dat ar's bobservation, Andy. I 'spects it's what you may call a faculty. Faculties is different in different peoples, but cultivation of 'em goes a great way."

"I guess if I hadn't helped your bobservation dis mornin', yer wouldn't have seen your way so smart," said Andy.

"Andy," said Sam, "you's a promisin' child, der an't no manner o' doubt. I thinks lots of yer, Andy; and I don't feel no ways ashamed to take idees from you. We oughtenter overlook nobody, Andy, 'cause the smartest on us gets tripped up sometimes. And so, Andy, let's go up to the house now. I'll be boun' missis 'll give us an uncommon good bite dis yer time."

CHAPTER VI

It is impossible to conceive of a human creature more wholly desolate and forlorn than Eliza when she turned her footsteps from Uncle Tom's cabin.

Her husband's suffering and dangers, and the danger of her child, all blended in her mind with a confused and stunning sense of the risk she was running in leaving the only home she had ever known, and cutting loose from the protection of a friend whom she loved and revered. Then there was the parting from every familiar object—the place where she had grown up, the trees under which she had played, the groves where she had walked many an evening in happier days by the side of her young husband—everything, as it lay in the clear, frosty starlight, seemed to speak reproachfully to her, and ask her whither could she go from a home like that ?

But stronger than all was maternal love, wrought into a paroxysm of frenzy by the near approach of a fearful danger. Her boy was old enough to have walked by her side, and in an indifferent case she would only have led him by the hand ; but now the bare thought of putting him out of her arms made her shudder, and she strained him to her bosom with a convulsive grasp as she went rapidly forward.

The frosty ground creaked beneath her feet, and she trembled at the sound ; every quaking leaf and fluttering shadow sent the blood backward to her heart and quickened her footsteps. She wondered within herself

at the strength that seemed to be come upon her; for she felt the weight of her boy as if it had been a feather, and every flutter of fear seemed to increase the supernatural power that bore her on, while from her pale lips burst forth, in frequent ejaculations, the prayer to a Friend above—" Lord, help! Lord, save me!"

The child slept. At first the novelty and alarm kept him waking; but his mother so hurriedly repressed every breath or sound, and so assured him that if he were only still she would certainly save him, that he clung quietly round her neck, only asking, as he found himself sinking to sleep:

" Mother, I don't need to keep awake, do I?"

" No, my darling; sleep if you want to."

" But, mother, if I do get asleep, you won't let him get me?"

" No! so may God help me!" said his mother, with a paler cheek and a brighter light in her large dark eyes.

" You're *sure*, an't you, mother?"

" Yes, *sure*!" said the mother in a voice that startled herself, for it seemed to her to come from a spirit within that was no part of her; and the boy dropped his little weary head on her shoulder, and was soon asleep.

The boundaries of the farm, the grove, the wood-lot passed by her dizzily as she walked on; and still she went, leaving one familiar object after another, slacking not, pausing not, till reddening daylight found her many a long mile from all traces of any familiar objects, upon the open highway.

She had often been with her mistress to visit some connections in the little village of T——, not far from the Ohio River, and knew the road well. To go thither, to escape across the Ohio River, were the first hurried outlines of her plan of escape; beyond that she could only hope in God.

When horses and vehicles began to move along the highway, with that alert perception peculiar to a state

of excitement, and which seems to be a sort of inspiration, she became aware that her headlong pace and distracted air might bring on her remark and suspicion. She therefore put the boy on the ground, and, adjusting her dress and bonnet, she walked on at as rapid a pace as she thought consistent with the preservation of appearances. In her little bundle she had provided a store of cakes and apples, which she used as expedients for quickening the speed of the child, rolling the apple some yards before them, when the boy would run with all his might after it; and this ruse, often repeated, carried them over many a half-mile.

After a while they came to a thick patch of woodland, through which murmured a clear brook. As the child complained of hunger and thirst, she climbed over the fence with him; and sitting down behind a large rock, which concealed them from the road, she gave him a breakfast out of her little package. The boy wondered and grieved that she could not eat; and when, putting his arms round her neck, he tried to wedge some of his cake into her mouth, it seemed to her that the rising in her throat would choke her.

"No, no, Harry darling! mother can't eat till you are safe! We must go on—on—till we come to the river!" And she hurried again into the road, and again constrained herself to walk regularly and composedly forward.

She was many miles past any neighbourhood where she was personally known. If she should chance to meet any one who knew her, she reflected that the well-known kindness of the family would be of itself a blind to suspicion, as making it an unlikely supposition that she could be a fugitive. As she was also so white as not to be known as of coloured lineage without a critical survey, and her child was white also, it was much easier for her to pass on unsuspected.

On this presumption she stopped at noon at a neat farmhouse, to rest herself and buy some dinner for her

child and self; for, as the danger decreased with the distance, the supernatural tension of the nervous system lessened, and she found herself both weary and hungry.

The good woman, kindly and gossiping, seemed rather pleased than otherwise with having somebody come in to talk with, and accepted without examination Eliza's statement that she " was going on a little piece, to spend a week with her friends "—all which she hoped in her heart might prove strictly true.

An hour before sunset she entered the village of T——, by the Ohio River, weary and footsore, but still strong in heart. Her first glance was at the river, which lay, like Jordan, between her and the Canaan of liberty on the other side.

It was now early spring, and the river was swollen and turbulent; great cakes of floating ice were swinging heavily to and fro in the turbid waters. Owing to the peculiar form of the shore on the Kentucky side, the land bending far out into the water, the ice had been lodged and detained in great quantities, and the narrow channel which swept round the bend was full of ice, piled one cake over another, thus forming a temporary barrier to the descending ice, which lodged, and formed a great undulating raft, filling up the whole river, and extending almost to the Kentucky shore.

Eliza stood for a moment contemplating this unfavourable aspect of things, which she saw at once must prevent the usual ferry-boat from running, and then turned into a small public-house on the bank to make a few inquiries.

The hostess, who was busy in various fizzing and stewing operations over the fire, preparatory to the evening meal, stopped, with a fork in her hand, as Eliza's sweet and plaintive voice arrested her.

" What is it ? " she said.

" Isn't there any ferry or boat that takes people over to B—— now ? " she said.

"No, indeed," said the woman; "the boats has stopped running."

Eliza's look of dismay and disappointment struck the woman, and she said inquiringly, "Maybe you're wanting to get over? Anybody sick? Ye seem mighty anxious."

"I've got a child that's very dangerous," said Eliza. "I never heard of it till last night, and I've walked quite a piece to-day, in hopes to get to the ferry."

"Well, now, that's onlucky," said the woman, whose motherly sympathies were much aroused; "I'm re'lly consarned for ye.—Solomon!" she called from the window towards a small back building. A man, in leather apron and with very dirty hands, appeared at the door.

"I say, Sol," said the woman, "is that ar man going to tote them bar'ls over to-night?"

"He said he should try, if 'twas any way prudent," said the man.

"There's a man a piece down here that's going over with some truck this evening, if he durs' to. He'll be in here to supper to-night, so you'd better set down and wait.—That's a sweet little fellow," added the woman, offering him a cake.

But the child, wholly exhausted, cried with weariness.

"Poor fellow! He isn't used to walking, and I've hurried him on so," said Eliza.

"Well, take him into this room," said the woman, opening into a small bedroom, where stood a comfortable bed. Eliza laid the weary boy upon it, and held his hands in hers till he was fast asleep. For her there was no rest. As a fire in her bones, the thought of the pursuer urged her on, and she gazed with longing eyes on the sullen, surging waters that lay between her and liberty.

Here we must take our leave of her for the present, to follow the course of her pursuers.

. . . . . .

Though Mrs. Shelby had promised that the dinner should be hurried on table, yet it was soon seen, as the thing has often been seen before, that it required more than one to make a bargain. So, although the order was fairly given out in Haley's hearing, and carried to Aunt Chloe by at least half a dozen juvenile messengers, that dignitary only gave certain very gruff snorts and tosses of her head, and went on with every operation in an unusually leisurely and circumstantial manner.

For some singular reason an impression seemed to reign among the servants generally that missis would not be particularly disobliged by delay, and it was wonderful what a number of counter accidents occurred constantly to retard the course of things. One luckless wight contrived to upset the gravy; and then gravy had to be got up *de novo*, with due care and formality, Aunt Chloe watching and stirring with dogged precision, answering shortly to all suggestions of haste that she "warn't a-going to have raw gravy on the table to help nobody's catchings." One tumbled down with the water, and had to go to the spring for more; and another precipitated the butter into the path of events; and there was from time to time giggling news brought into the kitchen that "Mas'r Haley was mighty oneasy, and that he couldn't sit in his cheer no ways, but was a-walkin' and stalkin' to the winders and through the porch."

"Sarves him right!" said Aunt Chloe indignantly. "He'll get wus nor oneasy, one of these days, if he don't mend his ways. *His* Master'll be sending for him, and then see how he'll look!"

"He'll go to torment, and no mistake," said little Jake.

"He desarves it!" said Aunt Chloe grimly. "He's broke a many, many, many hearts. I tell ye all," she said, stopping, with a fork uplifted in her hands, "it's like what Mas'r George reads in Ravelations—souls a-

callin' under the altar, and a-callin' on the Lord for vengeance on sich! And by-and-by the Lord He'll hear 'em—so He will!"

Aunt Chloe, who was much revered in the kitchen, was listened to with open mouth; and the dinner being now fairly sent in, the whole kitchen was at leisure to gossip with her and to listen to her remarks.

"Sich 'll be burnt up for ever, and no mistake; won't ther?" said Andy.

"I'd be glad to see it, I'll be boun'," said little Jake.

"Chil'en!" said a voice that made them all start. It was Uncle Tom, who had come in, and stood listening to the conversation at the door.

"Chil'en," he said, "I'm afeard you don't know what ye're sayin'. For ever is a *dre'ful* word, chil'en; it's awful to think on't. You oughtenter to wish that ar to any human critter."

"We wouldn't to anybody but the soul-drivers," said Andy; "nobody can help wishing it to them, they's so awful wicked."

"Don't natur herself kinder cry out on 'em?" said Aunt Chloe. "Don't dey tear der suckin' baby right off his mother's breast, and sell him, and der little children as is crying, and holding on by her clothes—don't dey pull 'em off and sells 'em? Don't dey tear wife and husband apart?" said Aunt Chloe, beginning to cry, "when it's jest takin' the very life on 'em? And all the while does they feel one bit? Don't dey drink and smoke, and take it oncommon easy? For, if the devil don't get them, what's he good for?" And Aunt Chloe covered her face with her checked apron, and began to sob in good earnest.

"Pray for them that 'spitefully use you, the good book says," said Tom.

"Pray for 'em!" said Aunt Chloe. "Lor, it's too tough! I can't pray for 'em!"

"It's natur, Chloe, and natur's strong," said Tom,

" but the Lord's grace is stronger ; besides, you oughter think what an awful state a poor critter's soul's in that'll do them ar things—you oughter thank God that you an't *like* him, Chloe. I'm sure I'd rather be sold, ten thousand times over, than to have all that ar poor critter's got to answer for."

" So'd I, a heap," said Jake. " Lor, *shouldn't* we cotch it, Andy ? "

Andy shrugged his shoulders, and gave an acquiescent whistle.

" I'm glad mas'r didn't go off this morning, as he looked to," said Tom ; " that ar hurt me more than sellin', it did. Mebbe it might have been natural for him, but 'twould have come desp't hard on me, as has known him from a baby. But I've seen mas'r, and I begin ter feel sort o' reconciled to the Lord's will now. Mas'r couldn't help hisself ; he did right, but I'm feared things will be kinder goin' to rack when I'm gone. Mas'r can't be 'spected to be a-pryin' round everywhar, as I've done, a-keepin' up all the ends. The boys all means well, but they's powerful car'less. That ar troubles me."

The bell here rang, and Tom was summoned to the parlour.

" Tom," said his master kindly, " I want you to notice that I give this gentleman bonds to forfeit a thousand dollars if you are not on the spot when he wants you ; he's going to-day to look after his other business, and you can have the day to yourself. Go anywhere you like, boy."

" Thank you, mas'r," said Tom.

" And mind yerself," said the trader, " and don't come it over your master with any o' yer nigger tricks ; for I'll take every cent out of him if you an't thar. If he'd hear to me, he wouldn't trust any on ye—slippery as eels ! "

" Mas'r," said Tom—and he stood very straight—" I was jest eight years old when ole missis put you into my

arms, and you wasn't a year old. 'Thar,' says she, 'Tom, that's to be *your* young mas'r; take good care on him,' says she. And now I jest ask you, mas'r, have I ever broke word to you, or gone contrary to you, 'specially since I was a Christian?"

Mr. Shelby was fairly overcome, and the tears rose to his eyes.

"My good boy," said he, "the Lord knows you say but the truth; and if I was able to help it, all the world shouldn't buy you."

"And sure as I am a Christian woman," said Mrs. Shelby, "you shall be redeemed as soon as I can any way bring together means. Sir," she said to Haley, "take good account of whom you sell him to, and let me know."

"Lor, yes, for that matter," said the trader, "I may bring him up in a year, not much the wuss for wear, and trade him back."

"I'll trade with you, then, and make it for your advantage," said Mrs. Shelby.

"Of course," said the trader, "all's equal with me; li'ves trade 'em up as down, so I does a good business. All I want is a livin', you know, ma'am; that's all any on us wants, I s'pose."

Mr. and Mrs. Shelby both felt annoyed and degraded by the familiar impudence of the trader, and yet both saw the absolute necessity of putting a constraint on their feelings. The more hopelessly sordid and insensible he appeared, the greater became Mrs. Shelby's dread of his succeeding in recapturing Eliza and her child, and of course the greater her motive for detaining him by every female artifice. She therefore graciously smiled, assented, chatted familiarly, and did all she could to make time pass imperceptibly.

At two o'clock Sam and Andy brought the horses up to the posts, apparently greatly refreshed and invigorated by the scamper of the morning.

"Your master, I s'pose, don't keep no dogs," said Haley thoughtfully, as he prepared to mount.

"Heaps on 'em," said Sam triumphantly; "thar's Bruno—he's a roarer; and, besides that, 'bout every nigger of us keeps a pup of some natur or uther."

"Poh!" said Haley; and he said something else, too, with regard to the said dogs, at which Sam muttered:

"I don't see no use cussin' on 'em no way."

"But your master don't keep no dogs (I pretty much know he don't) for trackin' out niggers."

Sam knew exactly what he meant, but he kept on a look of earnest and desperate simplicity.

"Our dogs all smells round consid'able sharp. I 'spect they's the kind, though they han't never had no practice. They's *far* dogs, though, at most anything, if you'd get 'em started. Here, Bruno," he called, whistling to the lumbering Newfoundland, who came pitching tumultuously towards them.

"You go hang!" said Haley, getting up. "Come, tumble up now."

Sam tumbled up accordingly, dexterously contriving to tickle Andy as he did so, which occasioned Andy to split out into a laugh, greatly to Haley's indignation, who made a cut at him with his riding-whip.

"I's 'stonished at yer, Andy," said Sam, with awful gravity. "This yer's a seris bisness, Andy. Yer mustn't be a-makin' game. This yer an't no way to help mas'r."

"I shall take the straight road to the river," said Haley decidedly, after they had come to the boundaries of the estate. "I know the way of all of 'em—they makes tracks for the underground."

"Sartin," said Sam, "dat's de idee. Mas'r Haley hits de thing right in de middle. Now, der's two roads to de river—de dirt road and der pike—which mas'r mean to take?"

Andy looked up innocently at Sam, surprised at

hearing this new geographical fact, but instantly confirmed what he said by a vehement reiteration.

"Cause," said Sam, "I'd rather be 'clined to 'magine that Lizy'd take the dirt road, bein' it's the least travelled."

Haley, notwithstanding that he was a very old bird, and naturally inclined to be suspicious of chaff, was rather brought up by this view of the case.

"If yer warn't both on yer such cussed liars now!" he said contemplatively, as he pondered a moment.

The pensive, reflective tone in which this was spoken appeared to amuse Andy prodigiously, and he drew a little behind, and shook so as apparently to run a great risk of falling off his horse, while Sam's face was immovably composed into the most doleful gravity.

"Course," said Sam, "mas'r can do as he'd ruther; go de straight road, if mas'r thinks best—it's all one to us. Now, when I study 'pon it, I think de straight road de best, *deridedly*."

"She would naturally go a lonesome way," said Haley, thinking aloud, and not minding Sam's remark.

"Dar an't no sayin'," said Sam; "gals is pecul'ar; they never does nothin' ye thinks they will; mose gen'lly the contrar. Girls is nat'lly made contrary; and so, if you thinks they've gone one road, it is sartin you'd better go t'other, and then you'll be sure to find 'em. Now, my private 'pinion is, Lizy took der dirt road; so I think we'd better take de straight one."

This profound generic view of the female sex did not seem to dispose Haley particularly to the straight road; and he announced decidedly that he should go the other, and asked Sam when they should come to it.

"A little piece ahead," said Sam, giving a wink to Andy with the eye which was on Andy's side of the head; and he added gravely, "But I've studded on de matter, and I'm quite clar we ought not to go dat ar way. I nebber been over it no way. It's desp't lone-

some, and we might lose our way; whar we'd come to, de Lord only knows."

"Nevertheless," said Haley, "I shall go that way."

"Now I think on't, I think I hearn 'em tell that dat ar road was all fenced up and down by der creek, and thar—an't it, Andy?"

Andy wasn't certain; he'd only "hearn tell" about that road, but never been over it. In short, he was strictly non-committal.

Haley, accustomed to strike the balance of probabilities between lies of greater or lesser magnitude, thought that it lay in favour of the dirt road aforesaid. The mention of the thing he thought he perceived was involuntary on Sam's part at first, and his confused attempts to dissuade him he set down to a desperate lying on second thoughts, as being unwilling to implicate Eliza.

When, therefore, Sam indicated the road, Haley plunged briskly into it, followed by Sam and Andy.

Now, the road, in fact, was an old one, that had formerly been a thoroughfare to the river, but abandoned for many years after the laying of the new pike. It was open for about an hour's ride, and after that it was cut across by various farms and fences. Sam knew this fact perfectly well; indeed, the road had been so long closed up that Andy had never heard of it. He therefore rode along with an air of dutiful submission, only groaning and vociferating occasionally that 'twas "desp't rough, and bad for Jerry's foot."

"Now, I jest give yer warning," said Haley: "I know yer; yer won't get me to turn off this yer road, with all yer fussin', so you shet up!"

"Mas'r will go his own way!" said Sam, with rueful submission, at the same time winking most portentously to Andy, whose delight was now very near the explosive point.

Sam was in wonderful spirits—professed to keep a

very brisk look-out—at one time exclaiming that he saw " a gal's bonnet " on the top of some distant eminence, or calling to Andy " if that thar wasn't ' Lizy ' down in the hollow," always making these exclamations in some rough or craggy part of the road, where the sudden quickening of speed was a special inconvenience to all parties concerned, and thus keeping Haley in a state of constant commotion.

After riding about an hour in this way, the whole party made a precipitate and tumultuous descent into a barn-yard belonging to a large farming establishment. Not a soul was in sight, all the hands being employed in the fields; but as the barn stood conspicuously and plainly square across the road, it was evident that their journey in that direction had reached a decided finale.

" Wan't dat ar what I telled mas'r ? " said Sam, with an air of injured innocence. " How does strange gentleman 'spect to know more about a country dan de natives born and raised ? "

" You rascal ! " said Haley, " you knew all about this."

" Didn't I tell yer I *knowed*, and yer wouldn't believe me ? I telled mas'r 'twas all shet up, and fenced up, and I didn't 'spect we could get through. Andy heard me."

It was all too true to be disputed, and the unlucky man had to pocket his wrath with the best grace he was able, and all three faced to the right about, and took up their line of march for the highway.

In consequence of all the various delays, it was about three-quarters of an hour after Eliza had laid her child to sleep in the village tavern that the party came riding into the same place. Eliza was standing by the window looking out in another direction when Sam's quick eye caught a glimpse of her. Haley and Andy were two yards behind. At this crisis Sam contrived to have his hat blown off, and uttered a loud and characteristic

ejaculation, which started her at once. She drew suddenly back; the whole train swept by the window, round to the front door.

A thousand lives seemed to be concentrated in that one moment to Eliza. Her room opened by a side door to the river. She caught her child, and sprang down the steps towards it. The trader caught a full glimpse of her just as she was disappearing down the bank; and throwing himself from his horse, and calling loudly on Sam and Andy, he was after her like a hound after a deer.

In that dizzy moment her feet to her scarce seemed to touch the ground, and a moment brought her to the water's edge. Right on behind they came; and, nerved with strength such as God gives only to the desperate, with one wild cry and flying leap she vaulted sheer over the turbid current by the shore, on to the raft of ice beyond. It was a desperate leap—impossible to anything but madness and despair; and Haley, Sam, and Andy instinctively cried out, and lifted up their hands as she did it.

The huge green fragment of ice on which she alighted pitched and creaked as her weight came on it, but she stayed there not a moment. With wild cries and desperate energy she leaped to another and still another cake—stumbling—leaping—slipping—springing upwards again! Her shoes are gone, her stockings cut from her feet, while blood marked every step; but she saw nothing, felt nothing, till dimly, as in a dream, she saw the Ohio side, and a man helping her up the bank.

"Yer a brave gal, now, whoever ye are!" said the man, with an oath.

Eliza recognized the voice and face of a man who owned a farm not far from her old home.

"O Mr. Symmes! save me—do save me—do hide me!" said Eliza.

"Why, what's this?" said the man. "Why, if 'tan't Shelby's gal!"

" My child !—this boy !—he'd sold him ! There is his mas'r," said she, pointing to the Kentucky shore. " O Mr. Symmes, you've got a little boy ! "

" So I have," said the man, as he roughly but kindly drew her up the steep bank. " Besides, you're a right brave old gal. I like grit wherever I see it."

When they had gained the top of the bank the man paused.

" I'd be glad to do something for ye," said he ; " but then there's nowhar I could take ye. The best I can do is to tell ye to go *thar*," said he, pointing to a large white house which stood by itself, off the main street of the village. " Go thar ; they're kind folks. Thar's no kind o' danger but they'll help you ; they're up to all that sort o' thing."

" The Lord bless you ! " said Eliza earnestly.

" No 'casion, no 'casion in the world," said the man. " What I've done's of no 'count."

" And oh, surely, sir, you won't tell any one ! "

" Go to thunder, gal ! What do you take a feller for ? In course not," said the man. " Come, now, go along like a likely, sensible gal, as you are. You've arnt your liberty, and you shall have it for all me."

The woman folded her child to her bosom, and walked firmly and swiftly away. The man stood and looked after her.

" Shelby, now, mebbe won't think this yer the most neighbourly thing in the world ; but what's a feller to do ? If he catches one of my gals in the same fix, he's welcome to pay back. Somehow I never could see no kind o' critter a-strivin' and pantin', and trying to clar theirselves, with the dogs arter 'em, and go agin 'em. Besides, I don't see no kind of 'casion for me to be hunter and catcher for other folks, neither."

Haley had stood a perfectly amazed spectator of the scene, till Eliza had disappeared up the bank, when he turned a blank, inquiring look on Sam and Andy.

" That ar was a tol'able fair stroke of business," said Sam.

" The gal's got seven devils in her, I believe ! " said Haley. " How like a wild cat she jumped ! "

" Wal, now," said Sam, scratching his head, " I hope mas'r 'll 'scuse us tryin' dat ar road. Don't think I feel spry enough for dat ar, no way ! " And Sam gave a hoarse chuckle.

" *You* laugh ! " said the trader, with a growl.

" Lord bless you, mas'r, I couldn't help it, now," said Sam, giving way to the long pent-up delight of his soul. " She looked so curis, a-leapin' and springin'—ice a-crackin'—and only to hear her—plump ! ker chunk ! ker splash ! Spring ! Lord ! how she goes it ! " And Sam and Andy laughed till the tears rolled down their cheeks.

" I'll make ye laugh t'other side yer mouths ! " said the trader, laying about their heads with his riding-whip.

Both ducked, and ran shouting up the bank, and were on their horses before he was up.

" Good-evening, mas'r ! " said Sam, with gravity. " I bery much 'spect missis be anxious 'bout Jerry. Mas'r Haley won't want us no longer. Missis wouldn't hear of our ridin' the critters over Lizy's bridge to-night." And with a facetious poke into Andy's ribs, he started off, followed by the latter, at full speed, their shouts of laughter coming faintly on the wind.

CHAPTER VII

[*Shortly after this temporary defeat, Haley met two brutal slave-catchers, Tom Loker and Marks, with whom he arranged for the recapture of Eliza and her boy—at a price.*]

THE light of the cheerful fire shone on the rug and carpet of a cosy parlour, and glittered on the sides of the tea-cups and well-brightened teapot, as Senator Bird was drawing off his boots, preparatory to inserting his feet in a pair of new handsome slippers, which his wife had been working for him while away on his senatorial tour.

"Yes, yes; I thought I'd just make a run down, spend the night, and have a little comfort at home. I'm tired to death, and my head aches!"

Mrs. Bird cast a glance at a camphor-bottle, which stood in the half-open closet, and appeared to meditate an approach to it, but her husband interposed.

"No, no, Mary—no doctoring! A cup of your good hot tea, and some of our good home living, is what I want. It's a tiresome business this legislating!"

And the senator smiled, as if he rather liked the idea of considering himself a sacrifice to his country.

"Well," said his wife, after the business of the tea-table was getting rather slack, "and what have they been doing in the Senate?"

"Not very much of importance."

"Well; but is it true that they have been passing a

law forbidding people to give meat and drink to those poor coloured folks that come along? I heard they were talking of some such law, but I didn't think any Christian legislature would pass it!"

"Why, Mary, you are getting to be a politician all at once."

"No, nonsense! I wouldn't give a fig for all your politics, generally, but I think this is something downright cruel and unchristian. I hope, my dear, no such law has been passed."

"There has been a law passed forbidding people to help off the slaves that come over from Kentucky, my dear. So much of that thing has been done by these reckless abolitionists that our brethren in Kentucky are very strongly excited, and it seems necessary, and no more than Christian and kind, that something should be done by our state to quiet the excitement."

"And what is the law? It don't forbid us to shelter these poor creatures at night, does it, and to give 'em something comfortable to eat, and a few old clothes, and send them quietly about their business?"

"Why, yes, my dear; that would be aiding and abetting, you know."

Mrs. Bird was a timid, blushing little woman, of about four feet in height, and with mild blue eyes, and a peach-blow complexion, and the gentlest, sweetest voice in the world. As for courage, a moderate-sized cock-turkey had been known to put her to rout at the very first gobble, and a stout house-dog, of moderate capacity, would bring her into subjection merely by a show of his teeth. Her husband and children were her entire world, and in these she ruled more by entreaty and persuasion than by command or argument. There was only one thing that was capable of arousing her, and that provocation came in on the side of her unusually gentle and sympathetic nature—anything in the shape of cruelty would throw her into a passion, which was the more

alarming and inexplicable in proportion to the general softness of her nature. Generally the most indulgent and easy to be entreated of all mothers, still her boys had a very reverent remembrance of a most vehement chastisement she once bestowed on them, because she found them leagued with several graceless boys of the neighbourhood stoning a defenceless kitten.

" I'll tell you what," Master Bill used to say—" I was scared that time. Mother came at me so that I thought she was crazy, and I was whipped and tumbled off to bed, without any supper, before I could get over wondering what had come about ; and after that I heard mother crying outside the door, which made me feel worse than all the rest. I'll tell you what," he'd say—" we boys never stoned another kitten ! "

On the present occasion Mrs. Bird rose quickly, with very red cheeks, which quite improved her general appearance, and walked up to her husband with quite a resolute air, and said in a determined tone :

" Now, John, I want to know if you think such a law as that is right and Christian."

" You won't shoot me, now, Mary, if I say I do ! "

" I never could have thought it of you, John. You didn't vote for it ? "

" Even so, my fair politician."

" You ought to be ashamed, John ! Poor, homeless, houseless creatures ! It's a shameful, wicked, abominable law, and I'll break it, for one, the first time I get a chance, and I hope I *shall* have a chance, I do ! Things have got to a pretty pass, if a woman can't give a warm supper and a bed to poor starving creatures, just because they are slaves, and have been abused and oppressed all their lives, poor things ! "

" But, Mary, just listen to me. Your feelings are all quite right, dear, and interesting, and I love you for them ; but then, dear, we mustn't suffer our feelings to run away with our judgment ; you must consider it's

not a matter of private feeling. There are great public interests involved; there is such a state of public agitation rising that we must put aside our private feelings."

"Now, John, I don't know anything about politics, but I can read my Bible; and there I see that I must feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and comfort the desolate; and that Bible I mean to follow."

"But in cases where your doing so would involve a great public evil——"

"Obeying God never brings on public evils. I know it can't. It's always safest all round to *do as He bids us.*"

"Now, listen to me, Mary, and I can state to you a very clear argument, to show——"

"Oh, nonsense, John! you can talk all night, but you wouldn't do it. I put it to you, John—would *you* now turn away a poor, shivering, hungry creature from your door, because he was a runaway? *Would* you, now?"

Now, if the truth must be told, our senator had the misfortune to be a man who had a particularly humane and accessible nature, and turning away anybody that was in trouble never had been his forte; and what was worse for him in this particular pinch of the argument was that his wife knew it, and, of course, was making an assault on rather an indefensible point. So he had recourse to the usual means of gaining time for such cases made and provided. He said "ahem," and coughed several times, took out his pocket-handkerchief, and began to wipe his glasses. Mrs. Bird, seeing the defenceless condition of the enemy's territory, had no more conscience than to push her advantage.

"I should like to see you doing that, John—I really should! Turning a woman out of doors in a snow-storm, for instance; or maybe you'd take her up and put her in jail, wouldn't you? You would make a great hand at that!"

" Of course it would be a very painful duty," began Mr. Bird in a moderate tone.

" Duty, John ! don't use that word. You know it isn't a duty—it can't be a duty ! If folks want to keep their slaves from running away, let 'em treat 'em well—that's my doctrine. If I had slaves (as I hope I never shall have), I'd risk their wanting to run away from me, or you either, John. I tell you folks don't run away when they are happy ; and when they do run, poor creatures ! they suffer enough with cold and hunger and fear, without everybody's turning against them ; and, law or no law, I never will, so help me God ! "

" Mary ! Mary ! My dear, let me reason with you."

" I hate reasoning, John, especially reasoning on such subjects. There's a way you political folks have of coming round and round a plain right thing ; and you don't believe in it yourselves, when it comes to practice. I know *you* well enough, John. You don't believe it's right any more than I do, and you wouldn't do it any sooner than I."

At this critical juncture, old Cudjoe, the black man-of-all-work, put his head in at the door, and wished " missis would come into the kitchen." And our senator, tolerably relieved, looked after his little wife with a whimsical mixture of amusement and vexation, and, seating himself in the arm-chair, began to read the papers.

After a moment his wife's voice was heard at the door, in a quick, earnest tone—" John, John ! I do wish you'd come here a moment."

He laid down his paper and went into the kitchen, and started, quite amazed at the sight that presented itself. A young and slender woman, with garments torn and frozen, with one shoe gone, and the stocking torn away from the cut and bleeding foot, was laid back in a deadly swoon upon two chairs. There was the impress of the despised race on her face, yet none could help feeling its mournful and pathetic beauty, while its stony

sharpness, its cold, fixed, deathly aspect, struck a solemn chill over him. He drew his breath short, and stood in silence. His wife, and their only coloured domestic, old Aunt Dinah, were busily engaged in restorative measures; while old Cudjoe had got the boy on his knee, and was busy pulling off his shoes and stockings, and chafing his little cold feet.

"Sure, now, if she an't a sight to behold!" said old Dinah compassionately; "'pears like 'twas the heat that made her faint. She was tol'able peart when she cum in, and asked if she couldn't warm herself here a spell; and I was just a-askin' her where she cum from, and she fainted right down. Never done much hard work, guess, by the looks of her hands."

"Poor creature!" said Mrs. Bird compassionately, as the woman slowly unclosed her large dark eyes, and looked vacantly at her. Suddenly an expression of agony crossed her face, and she sprang up, saying, "Oh, my Harry! Have they got him?"

The boy, at this, jumped from Cudjoe's knee, and running to her side, put up his arms. "Oh, he's here! he's here!" she exclaimed.

"O ma'am!" said she wildly to Mrs. Bird, "do protect us! Don't let them get him!"

"Nobody shall hurt you here, poor woman," said Mrs. Bird encouragingly. "You are safe; don't be afraid."

"God bless you!" said the woman, covering her face and sobbing, while the little boy, seeing her crying, tried to get into her lap.

With many gentle and womanly offices, which none knew better how to render than Mrs. Bird, the poor woman was in time rendered more calm. A temporary bed was provided for her on the settle, near the fire; and after a short time she fell into a heavy slumber, with the child, who seemed no less weary, soundly sleeping on her arm; for the mother resisted, with nervous anxiety, the

kindest attempts to take him from her, and even in sleep her arm encircled him with an unrelaxing clasp, as if she could not even then be beguiled of her vigilant hold.

Mr. and Mrs Bird had gone back to the parlour, where, strange as it may appear, no reference was made on either side to the preceding conversation; but Mrs. Bird busied herself with her knitting work, and Mr. Bird pretended to be reading the paper.

"I wonder who and what she is!" said Mr. Bird at last, as he laid it down.

"When she wakes up and feels a little rested, we will see," said Mrs. Bird.

"I say, wife!" said Mr. Bird, after musing in silence over his newspaper.

"Well, dear?"

"She couldn't wear one of your gowns, could she, by any letting down, or such matter? She seems to be rather larger than you are."

A quite perceptible smile glimmered on Mrs. Bird's face, as she answered, "We'll see."

Another pause, and Mr. Bird again broke out:

"I say, wife!"

"Well! what now?"

"Why, there's that old bombazin cloak that you keep on purpose to put over me when I take my afternoon's nap; you might as well give her that—she needs clothes."

At this instant Dinah looked in to say that the woman was awake, and wanted to see missis.

Mr. and Mrs. Bird went into the kitchen, followed by the two eldest boys, the smaller fry having, by this time, been safely disposed of in bed.

The woman was now sitting up on the settle by the fire. She was looking steadily into the blaze, with a calm, heart-broken expression, very different from her former agitated wildness.

"Did you want me?" said Mrs. Bird in gentle tones. "I hope you feel better now, poor woman."

A long-drawn, shivering sigh was the only answer; but she lifted her dark eyes and fixed them on her with such a forlorn and imploring expression that the tears came into the little woman's eyes.

"You needn't be afraid of anything; we are friends here, poor woman. Tell me where you came from, and what you want," said she.

"I came from Kentucky," said the woman.

"When?" said Mr. Bird, taking up the interrogatory.

"To-night."

"How did you come?"

"I crossed on the ice."

"Crossed on the ice!" said every one present.

"Yes," said the woman slowly, "I did. God helping me, I crossed on the ice; for they were behind me, right behind, and there was no other way!"

"Law, missis," said Cudjoe, "the ice is all in broken-up blocks, a-swinging and a-tetering up and down in the water!"

"I know it was—I know it!" said she wildly; "but I did it. I wouldn't have thought I could. I didn't think I should get over, but I didn't care. I could but die if I didn't. The Lord helped me. Nobody knows how much the Lord can help 'em till they try," said the woman with a flashing eye.

"Were you a slave?" said Mr. Bird.

"Yes, sir; I belonged to a man in Kentucky."

"Was he unkind to you?"

"No, sir; he was a good master."

"And was your mistress unkind to you?"

"No, sir, no; my mistress was always good to me."

"What could induce you to leave a good home, then, and run away, and go through such dangers?"

The woman looked up at Mrs. Bird with a keen, scrutinizing glance, and it did not escape her that she was dressed in deep mourning.

"Ma'am," she said suddenly, "have you ever lost a child?"

The question was unexpected, and it was a thrust on a new wound, for it was only a month since a darling child of the family had been laid in the grave.

Mr. Bird turned around and walked to the window, and Mrs. Bird burst into tears; but, recovering her voice, she said, "Why do you ask that? I have lost a little one."

"Then you will feel for me. I have lost two, one after another—left 'em buried there when I came away—and I had only this one left. I never slept a night without him; he was all I had. He was my comfort and pride, day and night; and, ma'am, they were going to take him away from me—to *sell* him—sell him down south, ma'am, to go all alone—a baby that had never been away from his mother in his life! I couldn't stand it, ma'am. I knew I never should be good for anything if they did; and when I knew the papers were signed and he was sold, I took him and came off in the night. And they chased me—the man that bought him, and some of mas'r's folks—and they were coming down right behind me, and I heard 'em. I jumped right on to the ice; and how I got across I don't know, but, first I knew, a man was helping me up the bank."

The woman did not sob nor weep. She had gone to a place where tears are dry; but every one around her was, in some way characteristic of themselves, showing signs of hearty sympathy.

The two little boys, after a desperate rummaging in their pockets, in search of those pocket-handkerchiefs which mothers know are never to be found there, had thrown themselves disconsolately into the skirts of their mother's gown, where they were sobbing and wiping their eyes and noses to their hearts' content. Mrs. Bird had her face fairly hidden in her pocket-handkerchief; and old Dinah, with tears streaming down her black,

honest face, was ejaculating, "Lord, have mercy on us!" with all the fervour of a camp-meeting; while old Cudjoe, rubbing his eyes very hard with his cuffs, and making a most uncommon variety of wry faces, occasionally responded in the same key with great fervour. Our senator was a statesman, and, of course, could not be expected to cry like other mortals; and so he turned his back to the company, and looked out of the window, and seemed particularly busy in clearing his throat and wiping his spectacle-glasses, occasionally blowing his nose in a manner that was calculated to excite suspicion, had any one been in a state to observe critically.

"How came you to tell me you had a kind master?" he suddenly exclaimed, gulping down very resolutely some kind of rising in his throat, and turning suddenly round upon the woman.

"Because he *was* a kind master—I'll say that of him any way—and my mistress was kind; but they couldn't help themselves. They were owing money; and there was some way, I can't tell how, that a man had a hold on them, and they were obliged to give him his will. I listened, and heard him telling mistress that, and she begging and pleading for me; and he told her he couldn't help himself, and that the papers were all drawn. And then it was I took him, and left my home, and came away. I knew 'twas no use of my trying to live if they did it, for't 'pears like this child is all I have."

"Have you no husband?"

"Yes, but he belongs to another man. His master is real hard on him, and won't let him come to see me, hardly ever; and he's grown harder and harder upon us, and he threatens to sell him down south. It's like I'll never see *him* again!"

The quiet tone in which the woman pronounced these words might have led a superficial observer to think that she was entirely apathetic; but there was a calm,

settled depth of anguish in her large, dark eye that spoke of something far otherwise.

"And where do you mean to go, my poor woman?" said Mrs. Bird.

"To Canada, if I only knew where that was. Is it very far off, is Canada?" said she, looking up with a simple, confiding air to Mrs. Bird's face.

"Poor thing!" said Mrs. Bird involuntarily.

"Is't a very great way off, think?" said the woman earnestly.

"Much farther than you think, poor child!" said Mrs. Bird; "but we will try to think what can be done for you.—Here, Dinah, make her up a bed in your own room, close by the kitchen, and I'll think what to do for her in the morning.—Meanwhile, never fear, poor woman; put your trust in God—He will protect you."

Mrs. Bird and her husband re-entered the parlour. She sat down in her little rocking-chair before the fire, swaying thoughtfully to and fro. Mr. Bird strode up and down the room, grumbling to himself, "Pish! pshaw! confounded awkward business!" At length striding up to his wife, he said:

"I say, wife, she'll have to get away from here this very night. That fellow will be down on the scent bright and early to-morrow morning. If 'twas only the woman, she could lie quiet till it was over; but that little chap can't be kept still by a troop of horse and foot, I'll warrant me. He'll bring it all out, popping his head out of some window or door. A pretty kettle of fish it would be for me, too, to be caught with them both here just now! No; they'll have to be got off to-night."

"To-night! How is it possible?—where to?"

"Well, I know pretty well where to," said the senator, beginning to put on his boots, with a reflective air; and stopping when his leg was half in, he embraced his knee with both hands, and seemed to go off in deep meditation.

"It's a confounded, awkward, ugly business," said he at last, beginning to tug at his boot-straps again, "and that's a fact!" After one boot was fairly on, the senator sat with the other in his hand, profoundly studying the figure of the carpet. "It will have to be done, though, for aught I see—hang it all!" And he drew the other boot anxiously on, and looked out of the window.

Now, little Mrs. Bird was a discreet woman—a woman who never in her life said, "I told you so!" and, on the present occasion, though pretty well aware of the shape her husband's meditations were taking, she very prudently forbore to meddle with them—only sat very quietly in her chair, and looked quite ready to hear her liege lord's intentions, when he should think proper to utter them.

"You see," he said, "there's my old client, Van Trompe, has come over from Kentucky, and set all his slaves free; and he has bought a place seven miles up the creek here, back in the woods, where nobody goes, unless they go on purpose; and it's a place that isn't found in a hurry. There she'd be safe enough; but the plague of the thing is, nobody could drive a carriage there to-night but *me*."

"Why not? Cudjoe is an excellent driver."

"Ay, ay; but here it is. The creek has to be crossed twice, and the second crossing is quite dangerous, unless one knows it as I do. I have crossed it a hundred times on horseback, and know exactly the turns to take. And so, you see, there's no help for it. Cudjoe must put in the horses, as quietly as may be, about twelve o'clock, and I'll take her over; and then, to give colour to the matter, he must carry me on to the next tavern, to take the stage for Columbus, that comes by about three or four, and so it will look as if I had had the carriage only for that. I shall get into business bright and early in the morning. But I'm thinking I shall feel rather cheap

there, after all that's been said and done; but, hang it, I can't help it!"

"Your heart is better than your head in this case, John," said the wife, laying her little white hand on his. "Could I ever have loved you, had I not known you better than you know yourself?" And the little woman looked so handsome, with the tears sparkling in her eyes, that the senator thought he must be decidedly a clever fellow to get such a pretty creature into such a passionate admiration of him; and so, what could he do but walk off soberly to see about the carriage. At the door, however, he stopped a moment, and then coming back, he said, with some hesitation:

"Mary, I don't know how you'd feel about it, but there's that drawer full of things—of—of—poor little Henry's." So saying, he turned quickly on his heel, and shut the door after him.

His wife opened the little bedroom door adjoining her room, and, taking the candle, set it down on the top of a bureau there. Then from a small recess she took a key, and put it thoughtfully in the lock of a drawer, and made a sudden pause; while two boys, who, boy like, had followed close on her heels, stood looking, with silent, significant glances, at their mother. And oh! mother that reads this, has there never been in your house a drawer, or a closet, the opening of which has been to you like the opening again of a little grave? Ah! happy mother that you are, if it has not been so.

Mrs. Bird slowly opened the drawer. There were little coats of many a form and pattern, piles of aprons, and rows of small stockings; and even a pair of little shoes, worn and rubbed at the toes, were peeping from the folds of the paper. There was a toy horse and wagon, a top, a ball—memorials gathered with many a tear and many a heart-break! She sat down by the drawer, and leaning her head on her hands over it, wept till the tears fell through her fingers into the

drawer ; then suddenly raising her head, she began, with nervous haste, selecting the plainest and most substantial articles, and gathering them into a bundle.

" Mamma," said one of the boys, gently touching her arm, " are you going to give away *those* things ? "

" My dear boys," she said, softly and earnestly, " if our dear, loving little Henry looks down from heaven, he would be glad to have us do this. I could not find it in my heart to give them away to any common person —to anybody that was happy ; but I give them to a mother more heart-broken and sorrowful than I am, and I hope God will send His blessings with them ! "

There are in this world blessed souls, whose sorrows all spring up into joys for others ; whose earthly hopes, laid in the grave with many tears, are the seed from which spring healing flowers and balm for the desolate and the distressed. Among such was the delicate woman who sits there by the lamp, dropping slow tears, while she prepares the memorials of her own lost one for the outcast wanderer.

After a while, Mrs. Bird opened a wardrobe, and, taking from thence a plain, serviceable dress or two, she sat down busily to her work-table, and, with needle, scissors, and thimble at hand, quietly commenced the " letting down " process which her husband had recommended, and continued busily at it till the old clock in the corner struck twelve, and she heard the low rattling of wheels at the door.

" Mary," said her husband, coming in, with his overcoat in his hand, " you must wake her up now ; we must be off."

Mrs. Bird hastily deposited the various articles she had collected in a small plain trunk, and locking it, desired her husband to see it in the carriage, and then proceeded to call the woman. Soon, arrayed in a cloak, bonnet, and shawl that had belonged to her benefactress, she appeared at the door with her child in her arms.

Mr. Bird hurried her into the carriage, and Mrs. Bird pressed on after her to the carriage-steps. Eliza leaned out of the carriage, and put out her hand—a hand as soft and beautiful as was given in return. She fixed her large, dark eyes, full of earnest meaning, on Mrs. Bird's face, and seemed going to speak. Her lips moved —she tried once or twice; but there was no sound, and pointing upward, with a look never to be forgotten, she fell back in the seat and covered her face. The door was shut, and the carriage drove on.

What a situation now, for a patriotic senator, that had been all the week before spurring up the legislature of his native state to pass more stringent resolutions against escaping fugitives, their harbourers and abettors!

Our good senator in his native state had not been exceeded by any of his brethren at Washington in the sort of eloquence which has won for them immortal renown! How sublimely he had sat with his hands in his pockets, and scouted all sentimental weakness of those who would put the welfare of a few miserable fugitives before great state interests!

He was as bold as a lion about it, and "mightily convinced," not only himself, but everybody that heard him. But then his idea of a fugitive was only an idea of the letters that spell the word, or, at the most, the image of a little newspaper picture of a man with a stick and bundle, with "Ran away from the subscriber" under it. The magic of the real presence of distress—the imploring human eye, the frail, trembling human hand, the despairing appeal of helpless agony—these he had never tried. He had never thought that a fugitive might be a hapless mother, a defenceless child—like that one which was now wearing his lost boy's little, well-known cap; and so, as our poor senator was not stone or steel—as he was a man, and a downright noble-hearted one too—he was, as everybody must see, in a sad case for his patriotism. And you need not exult

over him, good brother of the Southern States; for we have some inklings that many of you, under similar circumstances, would not do much better. We have reason to know, in Kentucky, as in Mississippi, are noble and generous hearts, to whom never was tale of suffering told in vain. Ah, good brother, is it fair for you to expect of us services which your own brave, honourable heart would not allow you to render, were you in our place?

Be that as it may, if our good senator was a political sinner, he was in a fair way to expiate it by his night's penance. There had been a long continuous period of rainy weather, and the soft, rich earth of Ohio, as every one knows, is admirably suited to the manufacture of mud; and the road was an Ohio railroad of the good old times.

"And pray, what sort of a road may that be?" says some eastern traveller, who has been accustomed to connect no ideas with a railroad but those of smoothness or speed.

Know, then, innocent eastern friend, that in benighted regions of the west, where the mud is of unfathomable and sublime depth, roads are made of round rough logs, arranged transversely side by side, and coated over in their pristine freshness with earth, turf, and whatsoever may come to hand; and then the rejoicing native calleth it a road, and straightway essayeth to ride thereupon. In process of time the rains wash off all the turf and grass aforesaid, move the logs hither and thither, in picturesque positions, up, down, and crosswise, with divers chasms and ruts of black mud intervening.

Over such a road as this our senator went stumbling along, making moral reflections as continuously as under the circumstances could be expected, the carriage proceeding along much as follows: bump! bump! bump! slush! down in the mud!—the senator, woman, and child reversing their positions so suddenly as to come, without any very accurate adjustment, against the

windows of the down-hill side. Carriage sticks fast, while Cudjoe on the outside is heard making a great muster among the horses. After various ineffectual pullings and twitchings, just as the senator is losing all patience, the carriage suddenly rights itself with a bounce; two front wheels go down into another abyss, and senator, woman, and child all tumble promiscuously on to the front seat; senator's hat is jammed over his eyes and nose quite unceremoniously, and he considers himself fairly extinguished; child cries; and Cudjoe on the outside delivers animated addresses to the horses, which are kicking, and floundering, and straining, under repeated cracks of the whip. Carriage springs up with another bounce; down go the hind wheels; senator, woman, and child fly over on to the back seat, his elbows encountering her bonnet, and both her feet being jammed into his hat, which flies off in the concussion. After a few moments the "slough" is passed, and the horses stop, panting. The senator finds his hat, the woman straightens her bonnet and hushes her child, and they brace themselves firmly for what is yet to come.

For a while only the continuous bump! bump! intermingled, just by way of variety, with divers side plunges and compound shakes, and they begin to flatter themselves that they are not so badly off, after all. At last, with a square plunge, which puts all on to their feet and then down into their seats with incredible quickness, the carriage stops, and, after much outside commotion, Cudjoe appears at the door.

"Please, sir, it's powerful bad spot, this yer. I don't know how we's to get clar out. I'm a-thinkin' we'll have to be a-gettin' rails."

The senator despairingly steps out, picking gingerly for some firm foothold. Down goes one foot an immeasurable depth; he tries to pull it up, loses his balance, and tumbles over into the mud, and is fished out, in a very despairing condition, by Cudjoe.

But we forbear, out of sympathy to our readers' bones. Western travellers, who have beguiled the midnight hour in the interesting process of pulling down rail fences, to pry their carriages out of mud holes, will have a respectful and mournful sympathy with our unfortunate hero. We beg them to drop a silent tear, and pass on.

It was full late in the night when the carriage emerged, dripping and bespattered, out of the creek, and stood at the door of a large farmhouse.

It took no inconsiderable perseverance to arouse the inmates; but at last the respectable proprietor appeared, and undid the door. He was a great, tall, bristling Orson of a fellow, full six feet and some inches in his stockings, and arrayed in a red flannel hunting-shirt. A very heavy *mat* of sandy hair, in a decidedly tousled condition, and a beard of some days' growth, gave the worthy man an appearance, to say the least, not particularly prepossessing. He stood for a few minutes holding the candle aloft, and blinking on our travellers with a dismal and mystified expression that was truly ludicrous. It cost some effort of our senator to induce him to comprehend the case fully; and while he is doing his best at that, we shall give him a little introduction to our readers.

Honest old John Van Trompe was once quite a considerable land-holder and slave-owner in the State of Kentucky. Having "nothing of the bear about him but the skin," and being gifted by nature with a great, honest, just heart, quite equal to his gigantic frame, he had been for some years witnessing with repressed uneasiness the workings of a system equally bad for oppressor and oppressed.

At last, one day John's great heart had swelled altogether too big to wear his bonds any longer; so he just took his pocket-book out of his desk, and went over into Ohio, and bought a quarter of a township of good, rich

land, made out free papers for all his people—men, women, and children—packed them up in wagons, and sent them off to settle down; and then honest John turned his face up the creek, and sat quietly down on a snug, retired farm, to enjoy his conscience and his reflections.

"Are you the man that will shelter a poor woman and child from slave-catchers?" said the senator explicitly.

"I rather think I am," said honest John, with some considerable emphasis.

"I thought so," said the senator.

"If there's anybody comes," said the good man, stretching his tall, muscular form upward, "why, here I'm ready for him; and I've got seven sons, each six foot high, and they'll be ready for 'em. Give our respects to 'em," said John; "tell 'em it's no matter how soon they call—make no kinder difference to us," said John, running his fingers through the shock of hair that thatched his head, and bursting out into a great laugh.

Weary, jaded, and spiritless, Eliza dragged herself up to the door, with her child lying in a heavy sleep on her arm. The rough man held the candle to her face, and uttering a kind of compassionate grunt, opened the door of a small bedroom adjoining to the large kitchen where they were standing, and motioned her to go in. He took down a candle, and lighting it, set it upon the table, and then addressed himself to Eliza.

"Now, I say, gal, you needn't be a bit afeard, let who will come here. I'm up to all that sort o' thing," said he, pointing to two or three goodly rifles over the mantelpiece; "and most people that know me know that 'twouldn't be healthy to try to get anybody out o' my house when I'm agin it. So *now* you jest go to sleep now, as quiet as if yer mother was a-rockin' ye," said he, as he shut the door.

"Why, this is an uncommon handsome un," he said

to the senator. "Ah, well; handsome uns has the greatest cause to run, sometimes, if they has any kind o' feelin', such as decent women should. I know all about that."

The senator, in a few words, briefly explained Eliza's history.

"Oh! ou! aw! now, I want to know!" said the good man pitifully; "sho! now sho! That's natur now, poor critter! hunted down now like a deer—hunted down, jest for havin' natural feelin's, and doin' what no kind o' mother could help a-doin'! I tell ye what, these yer things make me come the nighest to swearin', now, o' most anything," said honest John, as he wiped his eyes with the back of a great, freckled, yellow hand. "I tell yer what, stranger, it was years and years before I'd jine the church, 'cause the ministers round in our parts used to preach that the Bible went in for these 'ere cuttings up; and I couldn't be up to 'em with their Greek and Hebrew, and so I took up agin 'em, Bible and all. I never jined the church till I found a minister that was up to 'em all in Greek and all that, and he said right the contrary; and then I took right hold, and jined the church—I did, now, fact," said John, who had been all this time uncorking some very frisky bottled cider, which at this juncture he presented.

"Ye'd better jest put up here, now, till daylight," said John heartily; "and I'll call up the old woman, and have a bed got ready for you in no time."

"Thank you, my good friend," said the senator; "I must be along, to take the night stage for Columbus."

"Ah! well, then, if you must, I'll go a piece with you, and show you a cross-road that will take you there better than the road you came on. That road's mighty bad."

John equipped himself, and, with a lantern in hand, was soon seen guiding the senator's carriage towards a road that ran down in a hollow, back of his dwelling.

When they parted, the senator put into his hand a ten-dollar bill.

" It's for her," he said briefly.

" Ay, ay," said John, with equal conciseness.

They shook hands and parted.

CHAPTER VIII

A QUIET scene now rises before us. A large, roomy, neatly-painted kitchen, its yellow floor glossy and smooth, and without a particle of dust; a neat, well-blacked cooking-stove; rows of shining tin, suggestive of unmentionable good things to the appetite; glossy green wood chairs, old and firm; a small flag-bottomed rocking-chair, with a patchwork cushion in it, neatly contrived out of small pieces of different coloured woollen goods, and a larger-sized one, motherly and old, whose wide arms breathed hospitable invitation, seconded by the solicitation of its feathered cushions—a real comfortable, persuasive old chair, and worth, in the way of honest, homely enjoyment, a dozen of your plush or brochetelle drawing-room gentry; and in the chair, gently swaying back and forward, her eyes bent on some fine sewing, sat our old friend Eliza.

Yes, there she is, paler and thinner than in her Kentucky home, with a world of quiet sorrow lying under the shadow of her long eyelashes, and marking the outline of her gentle mouth. It was plain to see how old and firm the girlish heart was grown under the discipline of heavy sorrow; and when, anon, her large dark eye was raised to follow the gambols of her little Harry, who was sporting, like some tropical butterfly, hither and thither over the floor, she showed a depth of firmness and steady resolve that was never there in her earlier and happier days.

By her side sat a woman with a bright tin pan in her lap, into which she was carefully sorting some dried peaches. She might be fifty-five or sixty, but hers was one of those faces that time seems to touch only to brighten and adorn. The snowy *lisse* crape cap, made after the straight Quaker pattern ; the plain white muslin handkerchief, lying in placid folds across her bosom ; the drab shawl and dress, showed at once the community to which she belonged. Her face was round and rosy, with a healthful downy softness suggestive of a ripe peach. Her hair, partially silvered by age, was parted smoothly back from a high placid forehead, on which time had written no inscription, except peace on earth, good-will to men ; and beneath shone a pair of large, clear, honest, loving brown eyes.

" And so thee still thinks of going to Canada, Eliza ? " she said, as she was quietly looking over her peaches.

" Yes, ma'am," said Eliza firmly. " I must go onward. I dare not stop."

" And what'll thee do when thee gets there ? Thee must think about that, my daughter."

Eliza's hands trembled, and some tears fell on her fine work, but she answered firmly, " I shall do anything I can find. I hope I can find something."

" Thee knows thee can stay here as long as thee pleases," said Rachel.

" Oh, thank you ! " said Eliza ; " but "—she pointed to Harry—" I can't sleep nights ; I can't rest. Last night I dreamed I saw that man coming into the yard," she said, shuddering.

" Poor child ! " said Rachel, wiping her eyes ; " but thee mustn't feel so. The Lord hath ordered it so that never hath a fugitive been stolen from our village. I trust thine will not be the first."

The door here opened, and a little, short, round, pincushiony woman stood at the door, with a cheery, blooming face like a ripe apple. She was dressed, like Rachel,

in sober grey, with the muslin folded neatly across her round, plump, little chest.

" Ruth Stedman ! " said Rachel, coming joyfully forward. " How is thee, Ruth ? " she said heartily, taking both her hands.

" Nicely," said Ruth, taking off her little drab bonnet, and dusting it with her handkerchief, displaying, as she did so, a round little head, on which the Quaker cap sat with a sort of jaunty air, despite all the stroking and patting of the small, fat hands which were busily applied to arranging it. Certain stray locks of decidedly curly hair, too, had escaped here and there, and had to be coaxed and cajoled into their place again ; and then the new-comer, who might have been five-and-twenty, turned from the small looking-glass before which she had been making these arrangements, and looked well pleased, as most people who looked at her might have been, for she was decidedly as wholesome, whole-hearted, chirruping a little woman as ever gladdened man's heart withal.

" Ruth, this friend is Eliza Harris, and this is the little boy I told thee of."

" I'm glad to see thee, Eliza—very," said Ruth, shaking hands, as if Eliza were an old friend she had long been expecting. " And this is thy dear boy. I brought a cake for him," she said, holding out a little heart to the boy, who came up gazing through his curls and accepted it shyly.

Simeon Halliday, a tall, straight, muscular man, in drab coat and pantaloons, and broad-brimmed hat, now entered.

" How is thee, Ruth ? " he said warmly, as he spread his broad open hand for her little fat palm ; " and how is John ? "

" Oh ! John is well, and all the rest of our folks," said Ruth cheerily.

" Any news, father ? " said Rachel, as she was putting her biscuits into the oven.

" Peter Stebbins told me that they should be along to-night, with *friends*," said Simeon significantly, as he was washing his hands at a neat sink in a little back porch.

" Indeed ! " said Rachel, looking thoughtfully, and glancing at Eliza.

" Did thee say thy name was Harris ? " said Simeon to Eliza, as he re-entered.

Rachel glanced quickly at her husband, as Eliza tremulously answered " yes," her fears, ever uppermost, suggesting that possibly there might be advertisements out for her.

" Mother ! " said Simeon, standing in the porch, and calling Rachel out.

" What does thee want, father ? " said Rachel, rubbing her floury hands, as she went into the porch.

" This child's husband is in the settlement, and will be here to-night," said Simeon.

" Now, thee doesn't say that, father ? " said Rachel, all her face radiant with joy.

" It's really true. Peter was down yesterday with the wagon to the other stand, and there he found an old woman and two men ; and one said his name was George Harris, and from what he told of his history, I am certain who he is. He is a bright, likely fellow, too."

" Shall we tell her now ? " said Simeon.

" Let's tell Ruth," said Rachel. " Here, Ruth—come here."

Ruth laid down her knitting-work, and was in the back porch in a moment.

" Ruth, what does thee think ? " said Rachel. " Father says Eliza's husband is in the last company, and will be here to-night."

A burst of joy from the little Quakeress interrupted the speech. She gave such a bound from the floor, as she clapped her little hands, that two stray curls fell from under her Quaker cap and lay brightly on her white neckerchief.

"Hush thee, dear!" said Rachel gently; "hush, Ruth! Tell us, shall we tell her now?"

"Now! To be sure—this very minute. Why, now, suppose 'twas my John, how should I feel? Do tell her right off."

"Thee uses thyself only to learn how to love thy neighbour, Ruth," said Simeon, looking with a beaming face on Ruth.

"To be sure. Isn't it what we are made for? If I didn't love John and the baby, I should not know how to feel for her. Come, now, do tell her—do!" And she laid her hands persuasively on Rachel's arm. "Take her into thy bedroom there, and let me fry the chicken while thee does it."

Rachel came out into the kitchen, where Eliza was sewing, and opening the door of a small bedroom, said gently, "Come in here with me, my daughter; I have news to tell thee."

The blood flushed in Eliza's pale face; she rose, trembling with nervous anxiety, and looked towards her boy.

"No, no," said little Ruth, darting up and seizing her hands. "Never thee fear; it's good news, Eliza. Go in, go in!" And she gently pushed her to the door, which closed after her; and then, turning round, she caught little Harry in her arms, and began kissing him.

"Thee'll see thy father, little one. Does thee know it? Thy father is coming," she said over and over again, as the boy looked wonderingly at her.

Meanwhile, within the door, another scene was going on. Rachel Halliday drew Eliza toward her, and said, "The Lord hath had mercy on thee, daughter; thy husband hath escaped from the house of bondage."

The blood flushed to Eliza's cheek in a sudden glow, and went back to her heart with as sudden a rush. She sat down, pale and faint.

"Have courage, child," said Rachel, laying her hand

on her head. "He is among friends, who will bring him here to-night."

"To-night!" Eliza repeated, "to-night!" The words lost all meaning to her; her head was dreamy and confused; all was mist for a moment.

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When she awoke, she found herself snugly tucked up on the bed, with a blanket over her, and little Ruth rubbing her hands with camphor. She opened her eyes in a state of dreamy, delicious languor such as one has who has long been bearing a heavy load, and now feels it gone, and would rest. The tension of the nerves, which had never ceased a moment since the first hour of her flight, had given way, and a strange feeling of security and rest came over her; and as she lay with her large dark eyes open, she followed, as in a quiet dream, the motions of those about her.

She saw the door open into the other room; saw the supper-table, with its snowy cloth; heard the dreamy murmur of the singing tea-kettle; saw Ruth tripping backward and forward, with plates of cake and saucers of preserves, and ever and anon stopping to put a cake into Harry's hand, or pat his head, or twine his long curls round her snowy fingers. She saw the ample, motherly form of Rachel, as she ever and anon came to the bedside, and smoothed and arranged something about the bedclothes, and gave a tuck here and there, by way of expressing her good-will, and was conscious of a kind of sunshine beaming down upon her from her large, clear, brown eyes.

She saw Ruth's husband come in—saw her fly up to him, and commence whispering very earnestly, ever and anon, with impressive gesture, pointing her little finger toward the room. She saw her, with the baby in her arms, sitting down to tea; she saw them all at table, and little Harry in a high chair, under the shadow of Rachel's ample wing; there were low murmurs of talk,

gentle tinkling of teaspoons, and musical clatter of cups and saucers, and all mingled in a delightful dream of rest; and Eliza slept, as she had not slept before since the fearful midnight hour when she had taken her child and fled through the frosty starlight.

She dreamed of a beautiful country—a land, it seemed to her, of rest—green shores, pleasant islands, and beautifully glittering water; and there, in a house which kind voices told her was a home, she saw her boy playing, a free and happy child. She heard her husband's footsteps; she felt him coming nearer; his arms were around her, his tears falling on her face—and she awoke! It was no dream. The daylight had long faded; her child lay calmly sleeping by her side; a candle was burning dimly on the stand, and her husband was sobbing by her pillow.

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The next morning was a cheerful one at the Quaker house. "Mother" was up betimes, and surrounded by busy boys and girls, whom we had scarce time to introduce to our readers yesterday, and who all moved obediently to Rachel's gentle "Thee had better," or more gentle "Hadn't thee better?" in the work of getting breakfast; for a breakfast in the luxurious valleys of Indiana is a thing complicated and multiform, and, like picking up the rose-leaves and trimming the bushes in Paradise, asking other hands than those of the original mother.

While, therefore, John ran to the spring for fresh water, and Simeon the second sifted meal for corncakes, and Mary ground coffee, Rachel moved gently and quietly about, making biscuits, cutting up chicken, and diffusing a sort of sunny radiance over the whole proceeding generally. If there was any danger of friction or collision from the ill-regulated zeal of so many young operators, her gentle "Come! come!" or "I wouldn't now," was quite sufficient to allay the diffi-

culty. Bards have written of the cestus of Venus, that turned the heads of all the world in successive generations. We had rather, for our part, have the cestus of Rachel Halliday, that kept heads from being turned, and made everything go on harmoniously. We think it is more suited to our modern days, decidedly.

While all other preparations were going on, Simeon the elder stood in his shirt-sleeves before a little looking-glass in the corner, engaged in the anti-patriarchal operation of shaving. Everything went on so sociably, so quietly, so harmoniously, in the great kitchen ; it seemed so pleasant to every one to do just what they were doing ; there was such an atmosphere of mutual confidence and good-fellowship everywhere, even the knives and forks had a social clatter as they went on to the table ; and the chicken and ham had a cheerful and joyous fizzle in the pan, as if they rather enjoyed being cooked than otherwise. And when George and Eliza and little Harry came out, they met such a hearty, rejoicing welcome, no wonder it seemed to them like a dream.

At last they were all seated at breakfast, while Mary stood at the stove, baking griddle-cakes, which, as they gained the true exact golden-brown tint of perfection, were transferred quite handily to the table.

Rachel never looked so truly and benignly happy as at the head of her table. There was so much motherliness and full-heartedness even in the way she passed a plate of cakes, or poured a cup of coffee, that it seemed to put a spirit into the food and drink she offered.

It was the first time that ever George had sat down on equal terms at any white man's table, and he sat down at first with some constraint and awkwardness ; but they all exhaled and went off like fog in the genial morning rays of this simple, overflowing kindness.

This indeed was a home—*home*—a word that George had never yet found a meaning for ; and a belief in

God, and trust in His providence, began to encircle his heart, as, with a golden cloud of protection and confidence, dark, misanthropic, pining, atheistic doubts and fierce despair melted away before the light of a living gospel, breathed in living faces, preached by a thousand unconscious acts of love and good-will, which, like the cup of cold water given in the name of a disciple, shall never lose their reward.

"Father, what if thee should get found out again?" said Simeon second, as he buttered his cake.

"I should pay my fine," said Simeon quietly.

"But what if they put thee in prison?"

"Couldn't thee and mother manage the farm?" said Simeon, smiling.

"Mother can do almost everything," said the boy. "But isn't it a shame to make such laws?"

"Thee mustn't speak evil of thy rulers, Simeon," said his father gravely. "The Lord only gives us our worldly goods that we may do justice and mercy; if our rulers require a price of us for it, we must deliver it up."

"Well, I hate these old slave-holders!" said the boy, who felt as unchristian as became any modern reformer.

"I am surprised at thee, son," said Simeon; "thy mother never taught thee so. I would do even the same for the slave-holder as for the slave, if the Lord brought him to my door in affliction."

Simeon second blushed scarlet; but his mother only smiled, and said, "Simeon is my good boy; he will grow older by-and-by, and then he will be like his father."

"I hope, my good sir, that you are not exposed to any difficulty on our account," said George anxiously.

"Fear nothing, George; for therefore are we sent into the world. If we would not meet trouble for a good cause, we were not worthy of our name."

"But for *me*," said George. "I could not bear it."

"Fear not, then, friend George; it is not for thee but for God and man we do it," said Simeon. "And

now thou must lie by quietly this day, and to-night at ten o'clock Phineas Fletcher will carry thee onward to the next stand—thee and the rest of thy company. The pursuers are hard after thee; we must not delay."

"If that is the case, why wait till evening?" said George.

"Thou art safe here by daylight, for every one in the settlement is a Friend, and all are watching. It has been found safer to travel by night."

CHAPTER IX

THERE was a gentle bustle at the Quaker house as the afternoon drew to a close. Rachel Halliday moved quietly to and fro, collecting from her household stores such needments as could be arranged in the smallest compass for the wanderers who were to go forth that night. The afternoon shadows stretched eastward, and the round red sun stood thoughtfully on the horizon, and his beams shone yellow and calm into the little bedroom where George and his wife were sitting. He was sitting with his child on his knee, and his wife's hand in his. Both looked thoughtful and serious, and traces of tears were on their cheeks.

At this moment voices were heard in the outer apartment in earnest conversation, and very soon a rap was heard on the door. Eliza started, and opened it.

Simeon Halliday was there, and with him a Quaker brother whom he introduced as Phineas Fletcher. Phineas was tall and lathy, red haired, with an expression of great acuteness and shrewdness in his face.

"Our friend Phineas hath discovered something of importance to the interests of thee and thy party, George," said Simeon; "it were well for thee to hear it."

"That I have," said Phineas. "Last night I stopped at a little lone tavern back on the road. I was tired with hard driving, and after my supper I stretched myself down on a pile of bags in the corner, and pulled a buffalo

over me to wait till my bed was ready; and what does I do but get fast asleep."

"With one ear open, Phineas?" said Simeon quietly.

"No, I slept, ears and all, for an hour or two, for I was pretty well tired; but when I came to myself a little I found that there were some men in the room, sitting round a table drinking and talking, and I thought I'd just see what they were up to, especially as I heard them say something about the Quakers. 'So,' says one, 'they are up in the Quaker settlement, no doubt,' says he. Then I listened with both ears, and I found that they were talking about this very party. So I lay and heard them lay off all their plans. This young man, they said, was to be sent back to Kentucky to his master, who was going to make an example of him, to keep all niggers from running away; and his wife two of them were going to run down to New Orleans to sell on their own account, and they calculated to get sixteen or eighteen hundred dollars for her; and the child, they said, was going to a trader who had bought him; and then there were the boy Jim * and his mother—they were to go back to their master in Kentucky. They said that there were two constables, in a town a little piece ahead, who would go in with 'em to get 'em taken up; and the young woman was to be taken before a judge, and one of the fellows, who is small and smooth-spoken, was to swear to her for his property, and get her delivered over to him to take south. They've got a right notion of the track we are going to-night, and they'll be down after us, six or eight strong. So now, what's to be done?"

"I know what *I* shall do," said George, as he stepped into the little room and began examining his pistols.

"Ay, ay," said Phineas, nodding his head to Simeon; "thou seest, Simeon, how it will work."

* A slave who had escaped to Canada, but, hearing that his mother was ill-treated, had come back to fetch her.

" I see," said Simeon, sighing; " I pray it come not to that."

" I don't want to involve any one with or for me," said George. " If you lend me your vehicle and direct me, I will drive alone to the next stand. Jim is a giant in strength, and brave as death and despair, and so am I."

" Ah, well, friend," said Phineas, " but thee'll need a driver for all that. Thee's quite welcome to do all the fighting, thee knows; but I know a thing or two about the road that thee doesn't."

" But I don't want to involve you," said George.

" Involve," said Phineas, with a curious and keen expression of face. " When thee does involve me, please to let me know."

" Phineas is a wise and skilful man," said Simeon. " Thee does well, George, to abide by his judgment; and," he added, laying his hand kindly on George's shoulder and pointing to the pistols, " be not over hasty with these. Young blood is hot."

" I will attack no man," said George. " All I ask of this country is to be let alone, and I will go out peaceably; but "—he paused, and his brow darkened and his face worked—" I've had a sister sold in that New Orleans market. I know what they are sold for; and am I going to stand by and see them take my wife and sell her, when God has given me a pair of strong arms to defend her? No; God help me! I'll fight to the last breath before they shall take my wife and son. Can you blame me? "

" Mortal man cannot blame thee, George. Flesh and blood could not do otherwise," said Simeon. " Woe unto the world because of offences; but woe unto them through whom the offence cometh! "

" Would not even you, sir, do the same in my place? "

" I pray that I be not tried," said Simeon; " the flesh is weak."

" I think my flesh would be pretty tolerable strong in such a case," said Phineas, stretching out a pair of arms

like the sails of a windmill. " I an't sure, friend George, that I shouldn't hold a fellow for thee, if thee had any accounts to settle with him."

" If a man should *ever* resist evil," said Simeon, " then George should feel free to do it now. But the leaders of our people taught a more excellent way, for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God; but it goes sorely against the corrupt will of man, and none can receive it save they to whom it is given. Let us pray the Lord that we be not tempted."

" And so *I* do," said Phineas; " but if we are tempted too much, why, let them look out, that's all."

" It's quite plain thee wasn't born a Friend," said Simeon, smiling. " The old nature hath its way in thee pretty strong as yet."

To tell the truth, Phineas had been a hearty, two-fisted backwoodsman, a vigorous hunter, and a dead shot at a buck, but having wooed a pretty Quakeress, had been moved by the power of her charms to join the society in his neighbourhood; and though he was an honest, sober, and efficient member, and nothing particular could be alleged against him, yet the more spiritual among them could not but discern an exceeding lack of savour in his developments.

" Friend Phineas will ever have ways of his own," said Rachel Halliday, smiling; " but we all think that his heart is in the right place, after all."

" Well," said George, " isn't it best that we hasten our flight? "

" I got up at four o'clock and came on with all speed —full two or three hours ahead of them, if they start at the time they planned. It isn't safe to start till dark, at any rate—for there are some evil persons in the villages ahead that might be disposed to meddle with us if they saw our wagon, and that would delay us more than the waiting—but in two hours I think we may venture. I will go over to Michael Cross and engage

him to come behind on his swift nag, and keep a bright look-out on the road, and warn us if any company of men come on. Michael keeps a horse that can soon get ahead of most other horses, and he could shoot ahead and let us know if there were any danger. I am going out now to warn Jim and the old woman to be in readiness, and to see about the horse. We have a pretty fair start, and stand a good chance to get to the stand before they can come up with us. So have good courage, friend George. This isn't the first ugly scrape that I have been in with thy people," said Phineas, as he closed the door.

" Phineas is pretty shrewd," said Simeon. " He will do the best that can be done for thee, George."

" All I am sorry for," said George, " is the risk to you."

" Thee'll much oblige us, friend George, to say no more about that. What we do we are conscience bound to do ; we can do no other way.—And now, mother," said he, turning to Rachel, " hurry thy preparations for these friends, for we must not send them away fasting."

And while Rachel and her children were busy making corn-cake, and cooking ham and chicken, and hurrying on the *et ceteras* of the evening meal, George and his wife sat in their little room, with their arms folded about each other, in such talk as husband and wife have when they know that a few hours may part them for ever.

" Eliza," said George, " people that have friends, and houses, and lands, and money, and all those things, *can't* love as we do, who have nothing but each other. Till I knew you, Eliza, no creature ever had loved me but my poor, heart-broken mother and sister. I saw poor Emily that morning the trader carried her off. She came to the corner where I was lying asleep, and said, ' Poor George, your last friend is going. What will become of you, poor boy ? ' And I got up and threw my arms round her, and cried, and sobbed, and she cried too ; and those were the last kind words I got for ten long

years, and my heart all withered up and felt as dry as ashes till I met you. And your loving me—why, it was almost like raising one from the dead! I've been a new man ever since! And now, Eliza, I'll give my last drop of blood, but they *shall not* take you from me. Whoever gets you must walk over my dead body."

"O Lord, have mercy!" said Eliza, sobbing. "If He will only let us get out of this country together, that is all we ask."

"Is God on our side?" said George, speaking less to his wife than pouring out his own bitter thoughts. "Does He see all they do? Why does He let such things happen? And they tell us that the Bible is on their side; certainly all the power is. They are rich, and healthy, and happy; they are members of churches, expecting to go to heaven; and they get along so easy in the world, and have it all their own way; and poor, honest, faithful Christians—Christians as good or better than they—are lying in the very dust under their feet. They buy 'em and sell 'em, and make trade of their heart's blood and groans and tears; and God *lets* them."

"Friend George," said Simeon from the kitchen, "listen to this psalm; it may do thee good."

George drew his seat near the door, and Eliza, wiping her tears, came forward also to listen, while Simeon read as follows:

"'But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious of the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. . . . They are not in trouble like other men; neither are they plagued like other men. Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment. Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish. They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily. . . . Therefore his people return hither: and waters

of a full cup are wrung out of them. And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High?"

"Is not that the way thee feels, George?"

"It is so, indeed," said George—"as well as I could have written it myself."

"Then hear," said Simeon: "'When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; until I went unto the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places, thou castedst them down into destruction. . . . As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image. . . . Nevertheless, I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. . . . It is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord God.'"

The words of holy trust, breathed by the friendly old man, stole like sacred music over the harassed and chafed spirit of George; and after he ceased, he sat with a gentle and subdued expression on his fine features.

"If this world were all, George," said Simeon, "thee might indeed ask, Where is the Lord? But it is often those who have least of all in this life whom He chooseth for the kingdom. Put thy trust in Him, and no matter what befalls thee here, He will make all right hereafter."

If these words had been spoken by some easy, self-indulgent exhorter, from whose mouth they might have come merely as pious and rhetorical flourish, proper to be used to people in distress, perhaps they might not have had much effect; but coming from one who daily and calmly risked fine and imprisonment for the cause of God and man, they had a weight that could not but be felt, and both of the poor, desolate fugitives found calmness and strength breathing into them from it.

And now Rachel took Eliza's hand kindly, and led the

way to the supper-table. As they were sitting down, a light tap sounded at the door, and Ruth entered.

" I just ran in," she said, " with these little stockings for the boy—three pair, nice, warm woollen ones. It will be so cold, thee knows, in Canada. Does thee keep up good courage, Eliza ? " she added, tripping round to Eliza's side of the table, and shaking her warmly by the hand, and slipping a seed-cake into Harry's hand. " I brought a parcel of these for him," she said, tugging at her pocket to get out the package. " Children, thee knows, will always be eating."

" Oh, thank you ; you are too kind," said Eliza.

" Come, Ruth, sit down to supper," said Rachel.

" I couldn't, anyway. I left John with the baby, and some biscuits in the oven ; and I can't stay a moment, else John will burn up all the biscuits, and give the baby all the sugar in the bowl. That's the way he does," said the little Quakeress, laughing. " So good-bye, Eliza—good-bye, George. The Lord grant thee a safe journey ! " And with a few tripping steps Ruth was out of the apartment.

A little while after supper a large covered wagon drew up before the door. The night was clear starlight ; and Phineas jumped briskly down from his seat to arrange his passengers. George walked out of the door, with his child on one arm and his wife on the other. His step was firm, his face settled and resolute. Rachel and Simeon came out after them.

" You get out a moment," said Phineas to those inside, " and let me fix the back of the wagon there for the women-folks and the boy."

" Here are the two buffaloes," said Rachel. " Make the seats as comfortable as may be ; it's hard riding all night."

Jim came out first, and carefully assisted out his old mother, who clung to his arm, and looked anxiously about as if she expected the pursuer every moment.

" Jim, are your pistols all in order ? " said George in a low, firm voice.

" Yes, indeed," said Jim.

" And you've no doubt what you shall do if they come ? "

" I rather think I haven't," said Jim, throwing open his broad chest and taking a deep breath. " Do you think I'll let them get mother again ? "

During this brief colloquy, Eliza had been taking her leave of her kind friend, Rachel, and was handed into the carriage by Simeon, and, creeping into the back part with her boy, sat down among the buffalo-skins. The old woman was next handed in and seated, and George and Jim placed on a rough board seat in front of them, and Phineas mounted in front.

" Farewell, my friends ! " said Simeon from without.

" God bless you ! " answered all from within.

And the wagon drove off, rattling and jolting over the frozen road.

There was no opportunity for conversation on account of the roughness of the way and the noise of the wheels. The vehicle, therefore, rumbled on, through long dark stretches of woodland, over wide, dreary plains, up hills and down valleys, and on, on, on they jogged hour after hour. The child soon fell asleep, and lay heavily in his mother's lap ; the poor, frightened old woman at last forgot her fears ; and even Eliza, as the night waned, found all her anxieties insufficient to keep her eyes from closing. Phineas seemed, on the whole, the briskest of the company, and beguiled his long drive with whistling certain very un-Quakerlike songs as he went on.

But about three o'clock George's ear caught the hasty and decided click of a horse's hoof coming behind them at some distance, and jogged Phineas by the elbow. Phineas pulled up his horses and listened.

" That must be Michael," he said ; " I think I know

the sound of his gallop." And he rose up and stretched his head anxiously back over the road.

A man riding in hot haste was now dimly descried at the top of a distant hill.

"There he is, I do believe!" said Phineas. George and Jim both sprang out of the wagon before they knew what they were doing. All stood intensely silent, with their faces turned towards the expected messenger. On he came. Now he went down into a valley, where they could not see him; but they heard the sharp, hasty tramp rising nearer and nearer. At last they saw him emerge on the top of an eminence within hail.

"Yes, that's Michael," said Phineas; and, raising his voice—"Halloa, there, Michael!"

"Phineas, is that thee?"

"Yes; what news?—they coming?"

"Right on behind, eight or ten of them, hot with brandy, swearing, and foaming like so many wolves."

And just as he spoke a breeze brought the faint sound of galloping horsemen towards them.

"In with you—quick, boys, *in*!" said Phineas. "If you must fight, wait till I get you a piece ahead." And, with the word, both jumped in, and Phineas lashed the horses to a run, the horseman keeping close beside them. The wagon rattled, jumped, almost flew over the frozen ground; but plainer, and still plainer, came the noise of pursuing horsemen behind. The women heard it, and, looking anxiously out, saw, far in the rear, on the brow of a distant hill, a party of men looming up against the red-streaked sky of early dawn.

Another hill, and their pursuers had evidently caught sight of their wagon, whose white cloth-covered top made it conspicuous at some distance, and a loud yell of brutal triumph came forward on the wind. Eliza sickened, and strained her child closer to her bosom; the old woman prayed and groaned; and George and Jim clenched their pistols with the grasp of despair. The pursuers gained

on them fast; the carriage made a sudden turn, and brought them near a ledge of a steep, overhanging rock, that rose in an isolated ridge or clump in a large lot, which was, all around it, quite clear and smooth. This isolated pile, or range of rocks, rose up black and heavy against the brightening sky, and seemed to promise shelter and concealment. It was a place well known to Phineas, who had been familiar with the spot in his hunting-days; and it was to gain this point he had been racing his horses.

"Now for it!" said he, suddenly checking his horses, and springing from his seat to the ground. "Out with you, in a twinkling, every one, and up into these rocks with me. Michael, thee tie thy horse to the wagon, and drive ahead to Amariah's, and get him and his boys to come back and talk to these fellows."

In a twinkling they were all out of the carriage.

"There," said Phineas, catching up Harry, "you, each of you, see to the women; and run *now*, if you ever *did* run!"

They needed no exhortation. Quicker than we can say it, the whole party were over the fence, making with all speed for the rocks; while Michael, throwing himself from his horse, and fastening the bridle to the wagon, began driving it rapidly away.

"Come ahead," said Phineas, as they reached the rocks, and saw in the mingled starlight and dawn the traces of a rude but plainly marked footpath leading up among them; "this is one of our old hunting-dens. Come up!"

Phineas went before, springing up the rocks like a goat, with the boy in his arms. Jim came second, bearing his trembling old mother over his shoulder, and George and Eliza brought up the rear. The party of horsemen came up to the fence, and, with mingled shouts and oaths, were dismounting to prepare to follow them.

A few moments' scrambling brought them to the top

of the ledge; the path then passed between a narrow defile where only one could walk at a time, till suddenly they came to a rift or chasm more than a yard in breadth, and beyond which lay a pile of rocks, separate from the rest of the ledge, standing full thirty feet high, with its sides steep and perpendicular as those of a castle. Phineas easily leaped the chasm, and set down the boy on a smooth flat platform of crisp white moss that covered the top of the rock.

"Over with you!" he called; "spring now once for your lives!" said he, as one after another sprang across. Several fragments of loose stone formed a kind of breastwork, which sheltered their position from the observation of those below.

"Well, here we all are," said Phineas, peeping over the stone breastwork to watch the assailants, who were coming tumultuously up under the rocks. "Let 'em get us if they can. Whoever comes here has to walk single file between those two rocks, in fair range of your pistols, boys, d'ye see?"

"I do see," said George; "and now, as this matter is ours, let us take all the risk, and do all the fighting."

"Thee's quite welcome to do the fighting, George," said Phineas, chewing some checkerberry leaves as he spoke; "but I may have the fun of looking on, I suppose. But see, these fellows are kinder debating down there, and looking up, like hens when they are going to fly up on to the roost. Hadn't thee better give 'em a word of advice before they come up, just to tell 'em handsomely they'll be shot if they do?"

The party beneath, now more apparent in the light of the dawn, consisted of our old acquaintances, Tom Loker and Marks, with two constables, and a *posse* consisting of such rowdies at the last tavern as could be engaged by a little brandy to go and help the fun of trapping a set of niggers.

"Well, Tom, yer coons are farly treed," said one.

" Yes, I see 'em go up right here," said Tom ; " and here's a path. I'm for going right up. They can't jump down in a hurry, and it won't take long to ferret 'em out."

" But, Tom, they might fire at us from behind the rocks," said Marks. " That would be ugly, you know."

" Ugh ! " said Tom, with a sneer. " Always for saving your skin, Marks. No danger ; niggers are too plaguy scared."

" I don't know why I *shouldn't* save my skin," said Marks. " It's the best I've got ; and niggers *do* fight like the devil sometimes."

At this moment George appeared at the top of a rock above them, and, speaking in a calm, clear voice, said :

" Gentlemen, who are you down there, and what do you want ? "

" We want a party of runaway niggers," said Tom Loker—" one George Harris, and Eliza Harris, and their son, and Jim Selden, and an old woman. We've got the officers here, and a warrant to take 'em ; and we're going to have 'em too. D'ye hear ? An't you George Harris, that belongs to Mr. Harris, of Shelby County, Kentucky ? "

" I am George Harris. A Mr. Harris of Kentucky did call me his property. But now I'm a free man, standing on God's free soil ; and my wife and my child I claim as mine. Jim and his mother are here. We have arms to defend ourselves, and we mean to do it. You can come up if you like, but the first one of you that comes within the range of our bullets is a dead man, and the next, and the next, and so on till the last."

" Oh, come, come ! " said a short, puffy man, stepping forward, and blowing his nose as he did so. " Young man, this an't no kind of talk at all for you. You see, we're officers of justice. We've got the law on our side, and the power, and so forth ; so you'd better give up

peaceably, you see, for you'll certainly have to give up at last."

"I know very well that you've got the law on your side, and the power," said George bitterly. "You mean to take my wife to sell in New Orleans, and put my boy like a calf in a trader's pen, and send Jim's old mother to the brute that whipped and abused her before, because he couldn't abuse her son. You want to send Jim and me back to be whipped and tortured, and ground down under the heels of them that you call masters; and your laws *will* bear you out in it—more shame for you and them! But you haven't got us. We don't own your laws; we don't own your country; we stand here as free, under God's sky, as you are; and, by the great God that made us, we'll fight for our liberty till we die!"

George stood out in fair sight on the top of the rock as he made his declaration of independence. The glow of dawn gave a flush to his swarthy cheek, and bitter indignation and despair gave fire to his dark eye; and, as if appealing from man to the justice of God, he raised his hand to heaven as he spoke.

If it had been only a Hungarian youth, now bravely defending in some mountain fastness the retreat of fugitives escaping from Austria into America, this would have been sublime heroism; but as it was a youth of African descent, defending the retreat of fugitives through America into Canada, of course we are too well instructed and patriotic to see any heroism in it; and if any of our readers do, they must do it on their own private responsibility. When despairing Hungarian fugitives make their way, against all the search-warrants and authorities of their lawful government, to America, press and political cabinet ring with applause and welcome. When despairing African fugitives do the same thing, it is—what *is* it?

Be it as it may, it is certain that the attitude, eye, voice, manner of the speaker, for a moment struck the

party below to silence. There is something in boldness and determination that for a time hushes even the rudest nature. Marks was the only one who remained wholly untouched. He was deliberately cocking his pistol, and, in the momentary silence that followed George's speech, he fired at him.

" Ye see, ye get jist as much for him dead as alive in Kentucky," he said coolly, as he wiped his pistol on his coat sleeve.

George sprang backward; Eliza uttered a shriek. The ball had passed close to his hair, had nearly grazed the cheek of his wife, and stuck in the tree above.

" It's nothing, Eliza," said George quickly.

" Thee'd better keep out of sight with thy speechifying," said Phineas; " they're mean scamps."

" Now, Jim," said George, " look that your pistols are all right, and watch that pass with me. The first man that shows himself I fire at; you take the second, and so on. It won't do, you know, to waste two shots on one."

" But what if you don't hit ? "

" I *shall* hit," said George coolly.

" Good, now ! there's stuff in that fellow," muttered Phineas between his teeth.

The party below, after Marks had fired, stood for a moment rather undecided.

" I think you must have hit some on 'em," said one of the men. " I heard a squeal ! "

" I'm going right up for one," said Tom. " I never was afraid of niggers, and I an't going to be now. Who goes after ? " he said, springing up the rocks.

George heard the words distinctly. He drew up his pistol, examined it, pointed it towards that point in the defile where the first man would appear.

One of the most courageous of the party followed Tom, and the way being thus made, the whole party began pushing up the rock—the hindermost pushing the

front ones faster than they would have gone of themselves. On they came, and in a moment the burly form of Tom appeared in sight, almost at the verge of the chasm.

George fired. The shot entered his side; but, though wounded, he would not retreat, but with a yell like that of a mad bull, he was leaping right across the chasm into the party.

"Friend," said Phineas, suddenly stepping to the front, and meeting him with a push from his long arms, "thee isn't wanted here."

Down he fell into the chasm, crackling down among trees, bushes, logs, loose stones, till he lay, bruised and groaning, thirty feet below. The fall might have killed him, had it not been broken and moderated by his clothes catching in the branches of a large tree; but he came down with some force, however—more than was at all agreeable or convenient.

"Lord help us, they are perfect devils!" said Marks, heading the retreat down the rocks with much more of a will than he had joined the ascent, while all the party came tumbling precipitately after him, the fat constable, in particular, blowing and puffing in a very energetic manner.

"I say, fellers," said Marks, "you jist go round and pick up Tom there, while I run and get on to my horse, to go back for help—that's you." And without minding the hootings and jeers of his company, Marks was as good as his word, and was soon seen galloping away.

"Was ever such a sneaking varmint?" said one of the men—"to come on his business, and he clear out and leave us this yer way!"

"Well, we must pick up that feller," said another. "Cuss me, if I much care whether he is dead or alive."

The men, led by the groans of Tom, scrambled and crackled through stumps, logs, and bushes to where that hero lay groaning and swearing with alternate vehemence.

"Ye keep it a-going pretty loud, Tom," said one. "Ye much hurt?"

"Don't know. Get me up, can't ye? Blast that infernal Quaker! If it hadn't been for him, I'd 'a pitched some on 'em down here, to see how they liked it."

With much labour and groaning the fallen hero was assisted to rise, and with one holding him up under each shoulder they got him as far as the horses.

"If you could only get me a mile back to that ar tavern. Give me a handkerchief or something to stuff into this place, and stop this infernal bleeding."

George looked over the rocks, and saw them trying to lift the burly form of Tom into the saddle. After two or three ineffectual attempts, he reeled, and fell heavily to the ground.

"Oh, I hope he isn't killed!" said Eliza, who, with all the party, stood watching the proceeding.

"Why not?" said Phineas; "serves him right."

"Because, after death comes the judgment," said Eliza.

"Yes," said the old woman, who had been groaning and praying, in her Methodist fashion, during all the encounter, "it's an awful case for the poor critter's soul."

"On my word, they're leaving him, I do believe," said Phineas.

It was true; for after some appearance of irresolution and consultation, the whole party got on their horses and rode away. When they were quite out of sight, Phineas began to bestir himself.

"Well, we must go down and walk a piece," he said. "I told Michael to go forward and bring help, and be along back here with the wagon; but we shall have to walk a piece along the road, I reckon, to meet them. The Lord grant he be along soon! It's early in the day; there won't be much travel afoot yet a while. We an't much more than two miles from our stopping-place. If

the road hadn't been so rough last night, we could have outrun 'em entirely."

As the party neared the fence, they discovered in the distance, along the road, their own wagon coming back, accompanied by some men on horseback.

"Well, now, there's Michael, and Stephen, and Amariah," exclaimed Phineas joyfully. "Now we *are* made—as safe as if we'd got there."

"Well, do stop, then," said Eliza, "and do something for that poor man; he's groaning dreadfully."

"It would be no more than Christian," said George. "Let's take him up and carry him on."

"And doctor him up among the Quakers!" said Phineas; "pretty well that! Well, I don't care if we do. Here, let's have a look at him;" and Phineas, who, in the course of his hunting and backwoods life, had acquired some rude experience of surgery, kneeled down by the wounded man and began a careful examination of his condition.

"Marks!" said Tom feebly; "is that you, Marks?"

"No; I reckon 'tan't, friend," said Phineas. "Much Marks cares for thee, if his own skin's safe. He's off long ago."

"I believe I'm done for," said Tom. "The cussed sneaking dog, to leave me to die alone! My poor old mother always told me 'twould be so."

"La sakes! jist hear the poor critter. He's got a mammy, now," said the old negress. "I can't help kinder pityin' on him."

"Softly, softly; don't thee snap and snarl, friend," said Phineas, as Tom winced and pushed his hand away. "Thee has no chance unless I stop the bleeding." And Phineas busied himself with making some off-hand surgical arrangements with his own pocket-handkerchief, and such as could be mustered in the company.

"You pushed me down there," said Tom faintly.

"Well, if I hadn't, thee would have pushed us down,

thee sees," said Phineas, as he stooped to apply his bandage. " There, there, let me fix this bandage. We mean well to thee; we bear no malice. Thee shall be taken to a house where they'll nurse thee first rate—as well as thy own mother could."

Tom groaned, and shut his eyes. In men of his class vigour and resolution are entirely a physical matter, and ooze out with the flowing of the blood; and the gigantic fellow really looked piteous in his helplessness.

The other party now came up. The seats were taken out of the wagon. The buffalo-skins, doubled in fours, were spread all along one side, and four men with great difficulty lifted the heavy form of Tom into it. Before he was got in he fainted entirely. The old negress, in the abundance of her compassion, sat down on the bottom and took his head in her lap. Eliza, George, and Jim bestowed themselves as well as they could in the remaining space, and the whole party set forward.

" What do you think of him ? " said George, who sat by Phineas in front.

" Well, it's only a pretty deep flesh-wound; but, then, tumbling and scratching down that place didn't help him much. It has bled pretty freely—pretty much dreaned him out, courage and all; but he'll get over it, and maybe learn a thing or two by it."

" I'm glad to hear you say so," said George. " It would always be a heavy thought to me if I'd caused his death, even in a just cause."

" Yes," said Phineas; " killing is an ugly operation any way they'll fix it—man or beast. I've been a great hunter in my day, and I tell thee I've seen a buck that was shot down and a-dying look that way on a feller with his eye that it reely 'most made a feller feel wicked for killing on him; and human creatures is a more serious consideration yet, bein', as thy wife says, that the judgment comes to 'em after death. So I don't know as our people's notions on these matters is too

strict; and, considerin' how I was raised, I fell in with them pretty considerably."

"What shall you do with this poor fellow?" said George.

"Oh, carry him along to Amariah's. There's old Grandmam Stephens there—Dorcas they call her—she's most an amazin' nurse. She takes to nursing real natural, and an't never better suited than when she gets a sick body to tend. We may reckon on turning him over to her for a fortnight or so."

A ride of about an hour more brought the party to a neat farmhouse, where the weary travellers were received to an abundant breakfast. Tom Loker was soon carefully deposited in a much cleaner and softer bed than he had ever been in the habit of occupying. His wound was carefully dressed and bandaged, and he lay languidly opening and shutting his eyes on the white window-curtains and gently-gliding figures of his sick room, like a weary child.

CHAPTER X

TOM LOKER we left groaning and tousling in a most immaculately clean Quaker bed, under the motherly supervision of Aunt Dorcas, who found him to the full as tractable a patient as a sick bison.

Imagine a tall, dignified, spiritual woman, whose clean muslin cap shades waves of silvery hair, parted on a broad, clear forehead, which overarches thoughtful grey eyes. A snowy handkerchief of lisse crape is folded neatly across her bosom; her glossy brown silk dress rustles peacefully as she glides up and down the chamber.

"The devil!" says Tom Loker, giving a great throw to the bedclothes.

"I must request thee, Thomas, not to use such language," says Aunt Dorcas, as she quietly rearranged the bed.

"Well, I won't, granny, if I can help it," says Tom; "but it is enough to make a fellow swear—so cursedly hot!"

Dorcas removed a comforter from the bed, straightened the clothes again, and tucked them in till Tom looked something like a chrysalis, remarking as she did so:

"I wish, friend, thee would leave off cursing and swearing, and think upon thy ways."

"What the devil," said Tom, "should I think of *them* for? Last thing ever *I* want to think of—hang it all!" And Tom flounced over, untucking and disarranging everything in a manner frightful to behold.

"That fellow and gal are here, I s'pose," said he sullenly, after a pause.

" They are so," said Dorcas.

" They'd better be off up to the lake," said Tom; " the quicker the better."

" Probably they will do so," said Aunt Dorcas, knitting peacefully.

" And hark ye," said Tom; " we've got correspondents in Sandusky that watch the boats for us. I don't care if I tell now. I hope they *will* get away, just to spite Marks, the cursed puppy !—d—n him ! "

" Thomas ! " said Dorcas.

" I tell you, granny, if you bottle a fellow up too tight, I shall split," said Tom. " But about the gal. Tell 'em to dress her up some way, so's to alter her. Her description's out in Sandusky."

" We will attend to that matter," said Dorcas, with characteristic composure.

As we at this place take leave of Tom Loker, we may as well say that, having lain three weeks at the Quaker dwelling sick with a rheumatic fever which set in, in company with his other afflictions, Tom arose from his bed a somewhat sadder and wiser man, and in place of slave-catching betook himself to life in one of the new settlements, where his talents developed themselves more happily in trapping bears, wolves, and other inhabitants of the forest, in which he made himself quite a name in the land. Tom always spoke reverently of the Quakers. " Nice people," he would say; " wanted to convert me, but couldn't come it exactly. But, tell ye what, stranger, they do fix up a sick fellow first rate, no mistake. Make jist the tallest kind o' broth and knick-knacks."

As Tom had informed them that their party would be looked for in Sandusky, it was thought prudent to divide them. Jim, with his old mother, was forwarded separately, and a night or two after, George and Eliza, with their child, were driven privately into Sandusky, and lodged beneath a hospitable roof, preparatory to taking their last passage on the lake.

Their night was now far spent, and the morning star of liberty rose fair before them. Liberty!—electric word! What is it? Is there anything more in it than a name—a rhetorical flourish? Why, men and women of America, does your hearts' blood thrill at that word, for which your fathers bled, and your braver mothers were willing that their noblest and best should die?

Is there anything in it glorious and dear for a nation that is not also glorious and dear for a man? What is freedom to a nation but freedom to the individuals in it? What is freedom to that young man, who sits there, with his arms folded over his broad chest, the tint of African blood in his cheek, its dark fires in his eyes—what is freedom to George Harris? To your fathers, freedom was the right of a nation to be a nation. To him, it is the right of a man to be a man, and not a brute; the right to call the wife of his bosom his wife, and to protect her from lawless violence; the right to protect and educate his child; the right to have a home of his own, a religion of his own, a character of his own, unsubject to the will of another. All these thoughts were rolling and seething in George's breast, as he was pensively leaning his head on his hand, watching his wife, as she was adapting to her slender and pretty form the articles of man's attire, in which it was deemed safest she should make her escape.

"Now for it," said she, as she stood before the glass and shook down her silky abundance of black curly hair. "I say, George, it's almost a pity, isn't it," she said, as she held up some of it, playfully—"pity it's all got to come off?"

George smiled sadly, and made no answer.

Eliza turned to the glass, and the scissors glittered as one long lock after another was detached from her head.

"There, now—that'll do," she said, taking up a hairbrush; "now for a few fancy touches."

"There, an't I a pretty young fellow?" she said, turning around to her husband, laughing and blushing at the same time.

"You always will be pretty, do what you will," said George.

"What does make you so sober?" said Eliza, kneeling on one knee, and laying her hand on his. "We are only within twenty-four hours of Canada, they say. Only a day and a night on the lake, and then—oh, then——"

"O Eliza!" said George, drawing her towards him, "that is it! Now my fate is all narrowing down to a point. To come so near, to be almost in sight, and then lose all! I should never live under it, Eliza."

"Don't fear," said his wife hopefully. "The good Lord would not have brought us so far, if He didn't mean to carry us through. I seem to feel Him with us, George."

"You are a blessed woman, Eliza!" said George, clasping her with a convulsive grasp. "But—oh, tell me! can this great mercy be for us? Will these years and years of misery come to an end? Shall we be free?"

"I am sure of it, George," said Eliza, looking upward, while tears of hope and enthusiasm shone on her long, dark lashes. "I feel it in me, that God is going to bring us out of bondage this very day."

"I will believe you, Eliza," said George, rising suddenly up. "I will believe. Come, let's be off. Well, indeed," said he, holding her off at arm's-length, and looking admiringly at her, "you *are* a pretty little fellow! That crop of little short curls is quite becoming. Put on your cap—so—a little to one side. I never saw you look quite so pretty. But it's almost time for the carriage. I wonder if Mrs. Smyth has got Harry rigged?"

The door opened, and a respectable, middle-aged woman entered, leading little Harry, dressed in girl's clothes.

"What a pretty girl he makes!" said Eliza, turning

him round. "We call him Harriet, you see. Don't the name come nicely?"

The child stood gravely regarding his mother in her new and strange attire, observing a profound silence, and occasionaly drawing deep sighs, and peeping at her from under his dark curls.

"Does Harry know mamma?" said Eliza, stretching her hands towards him.

The child clung shyly to the woman.

"Come, Eliza, why do you try to coax him, when you know that he has got to be kept away from you?"

"I know it's foolish," said Eliza; "yet I can't bear to have him turn away from me. But come—where's my cloak? Here—how is it men put on cloaks, George?"

"You must wear it so," said her husband, throwing it over his shoulders.

"So, then," said Eliza, imitating the motion; "and I must stamp, and take long steps, and try to look saucy."

"Don't exert yourself," said George. "There is, now and then, a modest young man; and I think it would be easier for you to act that character."

"And these gloves—mercy upon us!" said Eliza; "why, my hands are lost in them."

"I advise you to keep them on pretty strictly," said George. "Your little slender paw might bring us all out. Now, Mrs. Smyth, you are to go under our charge, and be our aunty—you mind."

"I've heard," said Mrs. Smyth, "that there have been men down, warning all the packet captains against a man and woman with a little boy."

"They have!" said George. "Well, if we see any such people we can tell them."

A hack now drove to the door, and the friendly family who had received the fugitives crowded around them with farewell greetings.

The disguises the party had assumed were in accordance with the hints of Tom Loker. Mrs. Smyth, a

respectable woman from the settlement in Canada whither they were fleeing, being fortunately about crossing the lake to return thither, had consented to appear as the aunt of little Harry; and in order to attach him to her, he had been allowed to remain the two last days under her sole charge, and an extra amount of petting, joined to an indefinite amount of seed-cakes and candy, had cemented a very close attachment on the part of the young gentleman.

The hack drove to the wharf. The two young men, as they appeared, walked up the plank into the boat, Eliza gallantly giving her arm to Mrs. Smyth, and George attending to their baggage.

George was standing at the captain's office, settling for his party, when he overheard two men talking by his side.

"I've watched every one that came on board," said one, "and I know they're not on this boat."

The voice was that of the clerk of the boat. The speaker whom he addressed was our sometime friend Marks, who, with that valuable perseverance which characterized him, had come on to Sandusky, seeking whom he might devour.

"You would scarcely know the woman from a white one," said Marks. "The man is a very light mulatto; he has a brand in one of his hands."

The hand with which George was taking the tickets and change trembled a little; but he turned coolly around, fixed an unconcerned glance on the face of the speaker, and walked leisurely toward another part of the boat, where Eliza stood waiting for him.

Mrs. Smyth, with little Harry, sought the seclusion of the ladies' cabin, where the dark beauty of the supposed little girl drew many flattering comments from the passengers.

George had the satisfaction, as the bell rang out its farewell peal, to see Marks walk down the plank to the

shore, and drew a long sigh of relief when the boat had put a returnless distance between them.

It was a superb day. The blue waves of Lake Erie danced, rippling and sparkling in the sunlight. A fresh breeze blew from the shore, and the lordly boat ploughed her way right gallantly onward.

Oh, what an untold world there is in one human heart! Who thought, as George walked calmly up and down the deck of the steamer, with his shy companion at his side, of all that was burning in his bosom? The mighty good that seemed approaching seemed too good, too fair, even to be a reality; and he felt a jealous dread every moment of the day that something would rise to snatch it from him.

But the boat swept on. Hours fleeted; and at last, clear and full, rose the blessed English shores—shores charmed by a mighty spell, with one touch to dissolve every incantation of slavery, no matter in what language pronounced, or by what national power confirmed.

George and his wife stood arm in arm as the boat neared the small town of Amherstberg, in Canada. His breath grew thick and short; a mist gathered before his eyes; he silently pressed the little hand that lay trembling on his arm. The bell rang; the boat stopped. Scarcely seeing what he did, he looked out his baggage, and gathered his little party. The little company were landed on the shore. They stood still till the boat had cleared; and then, with tears and embracings, the husband and wife, with their wondering child in their arms, knelt down and lifted up their hearts to God!

"'Twas something like the burst from death to life,
From the grave's cerements to the robes of heaven,
From sin's dominion and from passion's strife,
To the pure freedom of a soul forgiven—
Where all the bonds of death and hell are riven,
And mortal puts on immortality,
When Mercy's hand hath turned the golden key,
And Mercy's voice hath said, *Rejoice, thy soul is free.*"

The little party were soon guided by Mrs. Smyth to the hospitable abode of a good missionary, whom Christian charity has placed here as a shepherd to the outcast and wandering who are constantly finding an asylum on this shore.

Who can speak the blessedness of that first day of freedom? Is not the *sense* of liberty a higher and a finer one than any of the five? To move, speak, and breathe, go out and come in, unwatched, and free from danger! Who can speak the blessings of that rest which comes down on the free man's pillow, under laws which ensure to him the rights that God has given to man? How fair and precious to that mother was that sleeping child's face, endeared by the memory of a thousand dangers! How impossible was it to sleep, in the exuberant possession of such blessedness! And yet these two had not one acre of ground—not a roof that they could call their own; they had spent their all, to the last dollar. They had nothing more than the birds of the air or the flowers of the field, yet they could not sleep for joy. "O ye who take freedom from man, with what words shall ye answer it to God?"

THE END

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