

S. G. and E. L. ELBERT

WILLIAMS



WILLIAMS

Presented by ELLA SMITH ELBERT 188

In Memoriam

No

KATHARINE E. COMAN



JAMES S. WILLIAMS.

NARRATIVE
OF
JAMES WILLIAMS,
AN
AMERICAN SLAVE,

WHO WAS FOR SEVERAL YEARS A DRIVER ON A COTTON
PLANTATION IN ALABAMA

"Oh the slave, who toils from the rising sun to sundown—who labors in the cultivation of a crop whose fruits he may never reap—who comes home at nightfall weary, faint, and sick of heart, to find in his hut creatures that are to run in the same career with himself,—will you not tell him of a period when his toil shall be at an end? Will you not give him a hope for his children?"

Speech of O'Connell. London, 1833.

NEW YORK:
PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY,
NO. 143 NASSAU STREET.

BOSTON:
ISAAC KNAPP, 25 CORNHILL.

1838.

STEREOTYPED AT GEO. A. & J. CURTIS'S
TYPE & STEREOTYPE FOUNDRY.—BOSTON.

P R E F A C E .

“ AMERICAN SLAVERY,” said the celebrated John Wesley, “ is the *vilest* beneath the sun ! ” Of the truth of this emphatic remark no other proof is required than an examination of the statute books of the American slave states. Tested by its own laws, in all that facilitates and protects the hateful process of converting a man into a “ *chattel personal* ;” in all that stamps the law-maker and law-upholder with meanness and hypocrisy, it certainly has no present rival of its “ bad eminence ;” and we may search in vain the history of a world’s despotism for a parallel. The civil code of Justinian never acknowledged, with that our democratic despotisms, the essential equality of man. The dreamer in the gardens of Epicurus recognised neither in himself, nor in the slave who ministered to his luxury, the immortality of the spiritual nature. Neither Solon nor Lycurgus taught the inalienability of human rights.

The Barons of the Feudal System, whose maxim was emphatically that of Wordsworth's robber,

“That he should take who had the power,
And he should keep who can,”

while trampling on the necks of their vassals, and counting the life of a man as of less value than that of a wild beast, never appealed to God for the sincerity of their belief that all men were created equal. It was reserved for American slave-holders to present to the world the hideous anomaly of a code of laws, beginning with the emphatic declaration of the inalienable rights of all men to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and closing with a deliberate and systematic denial of those rights, in respect to a large portion of their countrymen; engrossing on the same parchment the antagonist laws of liberty and tyranny. The very nature of this unnatural combination has rendered it necessary that American slavery, in law and in practice, should exceed every other in severity and cool atrocity. The masters of Greece and Rome permitted their slaves to read and write, and worship the gods of paganism in peace and security, for there was nothing in the laws, literature, or religion of the

age to awaken in the soul of the bondman a just sense of his rights as a man. But the American slaye-holder cannot be thus lenient. In the excess of his benevolence, as a political propagandist, he has kindled a fire for the oppressed of the old world to gaze at with hope, and for crowned heads and dynasties to tremble at; but a due regard to the safety of his "peculiar institution" compels him to put out the eyes of his own people, lest they too should see it. Calling on all the world to shake off the fetters of oppression, and wade through the blood of tyrants to freedom, he has been compelled to smother in darkness and silence the minds of his own bondmen, lest they too should hear and obey the summons, by putting the knife to his own throat. Proclaiming the truths of Divine Revelation, and sending the Scriptures to the four quarters of the earth, he has found it necessary to maintain heathenism at home by special enactments, and to make the second offence of teaching his slaves the message of salvation punishable with *death*!

What marvel then that American slavery, even on the *statute book*, assumes the right to transform

moral beings into brutes;*—that it legalizes man's usurpation of Divine authority: the substitution of the will of the master for the moral government of God;—that it annihilates the rights of conscience; debars from the enjoyment of religious rights and privileges by specific enactments; and enjoins disobedience to the Divine Lawgiver;—that it discourages purity and chastity, encourages crime, legalizes concubinage; and, while it places the slave entirely in the hands of his master, provides no real protection for his life or his person.

But it may be said, that these laws afford no certain evidence of the actual condition of the slaves: that, in judging the system by its code, no allowance is made for the humanity of individual masters. It was a just remark of the celebrated Priestley, that "*no people ever were found to be better than their laws, though many have been known to be worse.*" All history and common experience confirm this. Besides, admitting that the legal severity of a system may be soften-

* The *cardinal principle* of slavery, that a slave is not to be ranked among sentient beings, but among things, as an article of property, a chattel personal, obtains as undoubted law, in all the slave states. (Judge Stroud's sketch of Slave Laws, p. 22.)

ed in the practice of the humane, may it not also be aggravated by that of the avaricious and cruel?

But what are the testimony and admissions of slave-holders themselves on this point? In an Essay published in Charleston, S. C., in 1822, and entitled "A Refutation of the Calumnies circulated against the Southern and Western States," by the late Edwin C. Holland, Esq., it is stated, that "all slave-holders have laid down non-resistance, and perfect and uniform *obedience* to their orders, as fundamental principles in the government of their slaves;" that this is "a *necessary* result of the relation," and "*unavoidable*." Robert J. Turnbull, Esq., of South Carolina, in remarking upon the management of slaves, says, "The only principle upon which any authority over them (the slaves) can be maintained is *fear*, and he who denies this has little knowledge of them." To this may be added the testimony of Judge Ruffin, of North Carolina, as quoted in Wheeler's Law of Slavery, p. 247. "The slave, to remain a slave, must feel that there is *no appeal from his master*. No man can anticipate the provocations which the slave would give, nor the consequent wrath of the master, prompting him .

to BLOODY VENGEANCE on the turbulent traitor, a vengeance *generally* practised with impunity by reason of its *privacy*."

In an Essay on the "improvement of negroes on plantations," by Rev. Thomas S. Clay, a slave-holder of Bryan County, Georgia, and printed at the request of the Georgia Presbytery, in 1833, we are told, "that the present economy of the slave system is *to get all you can from the slave, and give him in return as little as will barely support him in a working condition!*" Here, in a few words, the whole enormity of slavery is exposed to view: "to *get all you can from the slave*"—by means of whips, and stocks and irons—by every device for torturing the body, without destroying its capability of labor; and in return give him as little of his coarse fare as will keep him, like a mere beast of burden, in a "*working condition*." This is slavery, as explained by the slave-holder himself.

Mr. Clay further says: "*Offences against the master* are more severely punished than violations of the law of God, a fault which affects the slave's personal character a good deal. As examples we may notice, that *running away* is more

severely punished than adultery." "He (the slave) only knows his master as lawgiver and executioner, and the *sole object of punishment* held up to his view, is to make him *a more obedient and profitable slave.*"

Hon. W. B. Seabrook, in an address before the Agricultural Society of St. Johns, Colleton, published by order of the Society, at Charleston, in 1834, after stating that, "as Slavery exists in South Carolina, the action of the citizens should rigidly conform to that state of things," and that "no *abstract opinions of the rights of man* should be allowed in any instance to modify the *police system of a plantation,*" proceeds as follows: "He (the slave) *should be practically treated as a slave,* and thoroughly taught the true cardinal principle on which our peculiar institutions are founded, viz., that to his owner he is bound by the law of God and man; and that no human authority can sever the link which unites them. The great aim of the slave-holder, then, should be to keep his people in strict *subordination.* In this, it may in truth be said, lies his *entire duty.*" Again, in speaking of the punishments of slaves, he remarks: "If to our army the disuse of THE LASH has been

prejudicial, to the slave-holder it would operate to deprive him of the MAIN SUPPORT of his authority. For the first class of offences, I consider imprisonment in THE STOCKS* at night, with or without hard labor by day, as a powerful auxiliary in the cause of *good government*." " *Experience* has convinced me that there is no punishment to which the slave looks with more horror, than that upon which I am now commenting, (the stocks,) and none which has been attended with happier results."

There is yet another class of testimony quite as pertinent as the foregoing, which may at any

* Of the nature of this punishment in the stocks, something may be learned by the following extract of a letter from a gentleman in Tallahassee, Florida, to the editor of the Ohio Atlas, dated June 9, 1835: "A planter, a professor of religion, in conversing upon the universality of whipping, remarked, that a planter in G_____, who had whipped a great deal, at length got tired of it, and invented the following *excellent* method of punishment, which I saw practised while I was paying him a visit. The negro was placed in a sitting position, with his hands made fast above his head, and his feet in the stocks, so that he could not move any part of the body. The master retired, intending to leave him till morning, but we were awakened in the night by the groans of the negro, which were so doleful that we feared he was dying. We went to him, and found him covered with a cold sweat, and almost gone. He could not have lived an hour longer. Mr. _____ found the 'stocks' such an effective punishment, that it almost superseded the whip."

time be gleaned from the newspapers of the slave states—the advertisements of masters for their runaway slaves, and casual paragraphs, coldly relating cruelties, which would disgrace a land of Heathenism. Let the following suffice for a specimen :

To the Editors of the Constitutional.

AIKEN, S. C., Dec. 20, 1836.

I have just returned from an inquest I held over the dead body of a negro man, a runaway, that was shot near the South Edisto, in this District, (Barnwell,) on Saturday morning last. He came to his death by his own recklessness. He refused to be taken alive ; and said that other attempts to take him had been made, and he was determined that he would not be taken. When taken, he was nearly naked—had a large dirk or knife, and a heavy club. He was, at first, (when those who were in pursuit of him found it absolutely necessary,) shot at with small-shot, with the intention of merely crippling him. He was shot at several times, and at last he was so disabled as to be compelled to surrender. He kept in the run of a creek in a very dense swamp all the time that the neighbors were in pursuit of him. As soon as the negro was taken, the best medical aid was procured, but he died on the same evening. One of the witnesses at the inquisition stated that the negro boy said that he was from Mississippi, and belonged to so many persons he did not know who his master was : but again he said his master's name was *Brown*. He said his own name was *Sam* ; and when asked by another witness who his master was, he muttered something like *Augusta* or *Augustine*. The boy was apparently above 35 or 40 years of age—about six feet high—slightly yellow in the face—very long beard or whiskers—and very stout built, and a stern countenance ; and appeared to have been run away a long time.

WILLIAM H. PRITCHARD,

Coroner, (ex officio,) Barnwell Dist., S. C.

 The Mississippi and other papers will please copy the above.—*Georgia Constitutional.*

\$100 REWARD.—Ran away from the subscriber, living on Herring Bay, Anne Arundel Co., Md.; on Saturday, 28th January, negro man Elijah, who calls himself Elijah Cook; is about 21 years of age, well made, of a very dark complexion, has an impediment in his speech, and a scar on his left cheek bone, apparently occasioned by a shot.

J. SCRIVENER.

[Annapolis (Md.) Rep.; Feb. 1837.]

\$40 REWARD.—Ran away from my residence, near Mobile, two negro men, Isaac and Tim. Isaac is from 25 to 30 years old, dark complexion, scar on the right side of the head, and also one on the right side of the body, occasioned by BUCK SHOT. Tim is 22 years old, dark complexion, scar on the right cheek, as also another on the back of the neck. Captains and owners of steamboats, vessels, and water crafts of every description, are cautioned against taking them on board, under the penalty of the law, and all other persons against harboring or in any manner favoring the escape of said negroes, under like penalty.

SARAH WALSH.

Mobile, Sept. 1.

[Montgomery (Ala.) Advertiser, Sept. 29, 1837.]

\$200 REWARD.—Ran away from the subscriber, about three years ago, a certain negro man named Ben, (commonly known by the name of Ben Fox.) He is about 5 feet 5 or 6 inches high, chunky made, yellow complexion, and has but one eye. Also, one other negro by the name of Rigdon, who ran away on the 8th of this month. He is stout made, tall, and very black, with large lips.

I will give the reward of one hundred dollars for each of the above negroes, to be delivered to me or confined in the jail of Lenoir or Jones County, or for the killing of them so that I can see them. Masters of vessels, and all others, are cautioned against harboring, employing, or carrying them away, under the penalty of the law.

W. D. COBB.

Lenoir Co., N. C., November 12, 1836.

BROUGHT TO JAIL.—In Irwinton, Wilkinson County, (Ga.) 16th Nov. 1837, a negro man by the name of JACOB, who says he belongs to Heritan Middleton, in Henry County, Alabama. He says he was hired

to John Webb, near West Point, in this State. He is about 6 feet high, dark complexion, and slow in speaking. There are no marks discoverable, *only* he is **VERY BADLY SHOT in the right side and right hand.** The owner or owners are requested to come forward, prove property, pay charges, and take him away.

S. B. MURPHEY, Jailer.

Milledgville, Jan. 2, 1838. [Georgia Journal.]

[From the Clinton (Miss.) Gazette, July 23, 1836.]

WAS COMMITTED to the jail of Covington County, on the 26th day of June, 1836, by G. D. Gere, Esq., a negro man, who says his name is **JOSIAH**, and says he belongs to John Martin, an Irishman, living in the State of Louisiana, on the west side of the Mississippi river, twenty miles below Natchez. Josiah is 5 feet 8 inches high, heavy built, copper color, his back *very much scarred* with the *whip*, and **BRANDED** on the thigh and hips in *three or four* places, thus, (I. M.) or (J. M.); the M. is very plain, but the I. or J. is not plain: the rim of his right ear has been bit or cut off. He is about 31 years of age, had on, when committed, pantaloons made of bed ticking, cotton coat, and an old fur hat very much worn. The owner of the above described negro is requested to comply with the requisitions of the law in such cases made and provided.

J. L. JOLLEY, Sheriff, C. C.

Williamsburgh, June 28, 1836.

WAS COMMITTED to jail, a negro man, who says that his name is **HARRY**. Said boy is about 30 years old, light complexion and bald head; has a scar on his left knee; also, one on his forehead, and one on his right hand; *he is very much marked with the whip.* The owner, &c. B. W. HATCH, Jailer.

[Port Gibson (Mi.,) Correspondent, Sept. 16, 1837.]

\$50 REWARD.—Ran away from the subscriber, a negro fellow named Dick, about 21 or 22 years of age, dark mulatto, has many scars on his back from being *whipped*: The boy was purchased by me from Thomas L. Arnold, and absconded about the time the purchase was made. JAMES NOE.

[Sentinel and Expositor, Vicksburg, (Mi.,) Oct. 10, 1837.]

[From the New Orleans Bee, Oct. 28, 1837.]

\$10 REWARD.—Ran away, on the 9th of October, CAROLINE, aged about 38 years; had a collar on with one prong turned down. T. CUGGY,

Gallatin st., between Hospital and Barracks.

\$25 REWARD.—For the black woman, Betsey, who left my house in the Faubourg, McDonnough, about the 12th inst., when she had on her neck an iron collar; has a mark on her neck and is about 20 years of age.

CHARLES KERNIN.

[New Orleans paper, March, 1837.]

\$50 REWARD.—Ran away from Murot's Plantation, near Baton Rouge, about two months ago, the negro man Manuel. Description—black, 5 feet 4 inches high, about 30 years old, one scar on the forehead, and *much marked with irons*.

[New Orleans Bee, May 27, 1837.]

COMMITTED to the jail of Pike County, a man about twenty-three or four years old, who calls his name John. The said negro has a clog of iron on his right foot which will weigh 4 or 5 pounds. The owner is requested, &c. B. W. HODGES, Jailer.

[Montgomery (Alabama) Advertiser; Sept. 29, 1837.]

\$100 REWARD.—Ran away from the subscriber, six weeks ago, two negro men, one a tall fellow, stoops considerably in walking; when spoken to fiercely, looks as if he would sink into the earth. The other is a short stumpy fellow, of a very black or almost blue color, large cheeks, has a scar over one eye; also, *one on his leg from the bite of a dog*, and a burn on his body from a piece of hot iron; in the shape of a T!

JOHN A. DILLAHUNTY.

[New Orleans Bee, Feb. 8, 1837.]

“A negro who had absconded from his master, and for whom a reward was offered of \$100, has been apprehended and committed to prison in Savannah, Georgia. The editor who states the

fact, adds, with as much coolness as though there were no barbarity in the matter, that he did not surrender until he was considerably *maimed by the dogs** that had been set on him,—desperately fighting them, one of which he cut badly with a sword."

New York Commercial Advertiser, June 8, 1827.

From the foregoing evidence on the part of slave-holders themselves, we gather the following facts:

1. That perfect obedience is required of the slave—that he is made to feel that there is no appeal from his master.
2. That the authority of the master is only maintained by fear—a "*reign of terror.*"

* In regard to the use of bloodhounds, for the recapture of runaway slaves, we insert the following from the New York Evangelist, being an extract of a letter from Natchez, (Miss.) under date of January 31, 1835: "An instance was related to me in Clairborne County, in Mississippi. A runaway was heard about the house in the night. The hound was put upon his track, and in the morning was found watching the dead body of the negro. The dogs are trained to this service when young. A negro is directed to go into the woods and secure himself upon a tree. When sufficient time has elapsed for doing this, the hound is put upon his track. The blacks are compelled to worry them until they make them their implacable enemies; and it is common to meet with dogs which will take no notice of whites, though entire strangers, but will suffer no blacks beside the house servants to enter the yard."

3. That “the economy of slavery is to *get all you can* from the slave, and give him in return as little as will barely support him in a working condition.”
4. That runaway slaves may be shot down with impunity by any white person.
5. That masters offer rewards for “*killing*” their slaves, “*so that they may see them!*”
6. That slaves are branded with hot irons; and very much scarred with the whip.
7. That *iron collars*, with projecting prongs, rendering it almost impossible for the wearer to lie down, are fastened upon the *necks of women*.
8. That the *LASH* is the *MAIN SUPPORT* of the slave-holder’s authority; but, that the *stocks* are “a powerful auxiliary” to his government.
9. That runaway slaves are chased with dogs —men hunted like beasts of prey.

Such is American Slavery in practice.

The testimony thus far adduced is only that of the slave-holder and wrong-doer himself: the admission of men who have a direct interest in keeping ought of sight the horrors of their system. It is, besides, no voluntary admission. Having “framed iniquity by law,” it is out of

their power to hide it. For the recovery of their runaway property, they are compelled to advertise in the public journals, and, that it may be identified, they are under the necessity of describing the marks of the whip on the backs of women, the iron collars about the neck, the gun-shot wounds, and the traces of the branding-iron. Such testimony must, in the nature of things, be partial and incomplete. But for a full revelation of the secrets of the prison-house, we must look to the slave himself. The Inquisitors of Goa and Madrid never disclosed the peculiar atrocities of their "hall of horrors." It was the escaping heretic, with his swollen and disjointed limbs, and bearing about him the scars of rack and fire, who exposed them to the gaze and abhorrence of Christendom.

The following pages contain the simple and unvarnished story of an AMERICAN SLAVE,—of one whose situation, in the first place, as a favorite servant in an aristocratic family in Virginia, and afterwards as the sole and confidential driver on a large plantation in Alabama, afforded him rare and peculiar advantages for accurate observation of the practical workings of the sys-

tem. His intelligence, evident candor, and grateful remembrance of those kindnesses which in a land of slavery made his cup of suffering less bitter; the perfect accordance of his statements (made at different times and to different individuals*) one with another, as well as those statements themselves, all afford strong confirmation of the truth and accuracy of his story. There seems to have been no effort, on his part, to make his picture of slavery one of entire darkness—he details every thing of a mitigating character which fell under his observation; and even the cruel deception of his master has not rendered him unmindful of his early kindness.

The Editor is fully aware that he has not been able to present this affecting narrative in the simplicity and vivid freshness with which it fell from the lips of the narrator. He has, however, as

*.The reader is referred to JOHN G. WHITTIER, of Amesbury; Mass., or to the following gentlemen, who have heard the whole or a part of his story from his own lips: Emmor Kimber, of Kimberton, Pa., Lindley Coates, of Lancaster Co., do.; James Mott, of Philadelphia, Lewis Tappan, Elizur Wright, Jun., Rev. Dr. Follen, and James G. Birney, of New York. The latter gentleman, who was a few years ago a citizen of Alabama, assures us that the statements made to him by James Williams were such as he had every reason to believe, from his own knowledge of slavery in that State.

closely as possible, copied his manner, and in many instances his precise language. THE SLAVE HAS SPOKEN FOR HIMSELF. Acting merely as his amanuensis, he has carefully abstained from comments of his own.*

The picture here presented to the people of the free states is, in many respects, a novel one. We all know something of Virginia and Kentucky slavery. We have heard of the internal slave trade—the pangs of separation—the slave ship with its “cargo of despair,” bound for the New Orleans market—and the weary journey of the chained Coffle to the cotton country. But here, in a great measure, we have lost sight of the victims of avarice and lust. We have not studied the dreadful economy of the cotton plantation, and know but little of the secrets of its unlimited despotism.

But in this narrative the scenes of the plantation rise before us, with a distinctness which approaches reality. We hear the sound of the horn at daybreak, calling the sick and the weary to

* As the narrator was unable to read or write, it is quite possible that the orthography of some of the names of individuals mentioned in this story may not be entirely correct. For instance, the name of his master may have been either Larrimer or Larrimore.

toil unrequited. Woman, in her appealing delicacy and suffering, about to become a mother, is fainting under the lash, or sinking exhausted beside her cotton row. We hear the prayer for mercy answered with sneers and curses. We look on the instruments of torture, and the corpses of murdered men. We see the dogs, reeking hot from the chace, with their jaws foul with human blood. We see the meek and aged Christian, scarred with the lash, and bowed down with toil, offering the supplication of a broken heart to his Father in Heaven for the forgiveness of his brutal enemy. We hear, and from our inmost hearts repeat, the affecting interrogatory of the aged slave, "*How long, Oh Lord! how long!*"

The Editor has written out the details of this painful narrative with feelings of sorrow. If there be any who feel a morbid satisfaction in dwelling upon the history of outrage and cruelty, he at least is not one of them. His taste and habits incline him rather to look to the pure and beautiful in our nature—the sunniest side of humanity—its kindly sympathies—its holy affections—its charities and its love. But it is because he has seen that all which is thus beautiful

and excellent in mind and heart perishes in the atmosphere of slavery; it is because humanity in the slave sinks down to a level with the brute, and in the master gives place to the attributes of a fiend—that he has not felt at liberty to decline the task. He cannot sympathize with that abstract and delicate philanthropy which hesitates to bring itself in contact with the sufferer, and which shrinks from the effort of searching out the extent of his afflictions. The emblem of Practical Philanthropy is the Samaritan stooping over the wounded Jew. It must be no fastidious hand which administers the oil and the wine, and binds up the unsightly gashes.

Believing, as he does, that this narrative is one of truth; that it presents an unexaggerated picture of slavery as it exists on the cotton plantations of the South and West, he would particularly invite to its perusal those individuals, and especially those professing Christians at the North, who have ventured to claim for such a system the sanction and approval of the religion of Jesus Christ. In view of the facts here presented, let these men seriously inquire of themselves, whether, in advancing such a claim, they are not utter-

ing a higher and more audacious blasphemy than any which ever fell from the pens of Voltaire and Paine. As if to cover them with confusion, and leave them utterly without excuse for thus libelling the character of a just God, these developments are making, and the veil rising, which for long years of sinful apathy has rested upon the abominations of American Slavery. Light is breaking into its dungeons, disclosing the wreck of buried intellect—of hearts broken—of human affections outraged—of souls ruined. The world will see it as God has always seen it; and when He shall at length make inquisition for blood, and His vengeance kindle over the habitations of cruelty, with a destruction more terrible than that of Sodom and Gomorrah, His righteous dealing will be justified of man, and His name glorified among the nations, and there will be a voice of rejoicing in Earth and in Heaven. **ALLELUIA!—THE PROMISE IS FULFILLED!—FOR THE SIGHING OF THE POOR AND THE OPPRESSION OF THE NEEDY, GOD HATH RISEN!**

It is the earnest desire of the Editor that this narrative may be the means, under God, of awakening in the hearts of all who read it a sympa-

thy for the oppressed which shall manifest itself in immediate, active, self-sacrificing exertions for their deliverance; and, while it excites abhorrence of his crimes, call forth pity for the oppressor. May it have the effect to prevent the avowed, and associated friends of the slave from giving such an undue importance to their own trials and grievances, as to forget in a great measure the sorrows of the slave. Let its cry of wo; coming up from the plantations of the South, suppress every feeling of selfishness in our hearts. Let our regret and indignation at the denial of the right of petition be felt, only because we are thereby prevented from pleading in the halls of Congress for the "suffering and the dumb." And let the fact, that we are shut out from half the territory of our country, be lamented, only because it prevents us from bearing personally to the land of slavery the messages of hope for the slave, and of rebuke and warning for the oppressor.

New York, 24th 1st. mo., 1838.

NARRATIVE.

I WAS born in Powhatan County, Virginia, on the plantation of George Larrimore, sen., at a place called Mount Pleasant, on the 16th of May, 1805. My father was the slave of an orphan family whose name I have forgotten, and was under the care of a Mr. Brooks, guardian of the family. He was a native of Africa, and was brought over when a mere child, with his mother. My mother was the slave of George Larrimore, sen. She was nearly white, and is well known to have been the daughter of Mr. Larrimore himself. She died when myself and my twin brother Meshech were five years of age. I can scarcely remember her. She had in all eight children, of whom only five are now living. One, a brother, belongs to the heirs of the late Mr. Brockenbrough, of Charlottesville; of whom he hires his time, and pays annually \$120 for it. He is a member of the Baptist church, and used to preach occasionally. His wife is a free woman

from Philadelphia, and being able to read and write, taught her husband. The whites do not know that he can write, and have often wondered that he could preach so well without learning. It is the practice when a church is crowded to turn the blacks out of their seats. My brother did not like this, and on one occasion preached a sermon from a text, showing that all are of one blood. Some of the whites who heard it said that such preaching would raise an insurrection among the negroes. Two of them told him that if he would prove his doctrine by Scripture, they would let him go, but if he did not, he should have nine and thirty lashes. He accordingly preached another sermon, and spoke with a great deal of boldness. The two men who were in favor of having him whipped left before the sermon was over; those who remained acknowledged that he had proved his doctrine, and preached a good sermon, and many of them came up and shook hands with him. The two opposers, Scott and Brockley, forbid my brother, after this, to come upon their estates. They were both Baptists, and my brother had before preached to their people. During the cholera at Richmond,

my brother preached a sermon, in which he compared the pestilence to the plagues which afflict the Egyptian slave-holders; because they would not let the people go. After the sermon some of the whites threatened to whip him. Mr. Valentine, a merchant on Shocko Hill, prevented them; and a young lawyer named Brooks said it was wrong to threaten a man for preaching the truth. Since the insurrection of Nat. Turner he has not been allowed to preach at all.

My twin brother was for some time the property of Mr. John Griggs, of Richmond, who sold him, about three years since, to an Alabama cotton planter, with whom he staid one year, and then ran away; and in all probability escaped into the free states or Canada, as he was seen near the Maryland line. My other brother lives in Fredericksburg, and belongs to a Mr. Scott, a merchant, formerly of Richmond. He was sold from Mr. Larrimore's plantation because his wife was a slave of Mr. Scott. My only sister is the slave of John Smith, of King William. Her husband was the slave of Mr. Smith, when the latter lived in Powhatan County, and when he removed to King William she was taken with her husband.

My old master, George Larrimore, married Jane Roane, the sister of a gentleman named John Roane, one of the most distinguished men in Virginia, who in turn married a sister of my master. One of his sisters married a Judge Scott, and another married Mr. Brockenbrough, of Charlottesville. Mr. Larrimore had three children; George, Jane, and Elizabeth. The former was just ten days older than myself; and I was his playmate and constant associate in childhood. I used to go with him to his school, and carry his books for him as far as the door, and meet him there when the school was dismissed. We were very fond of each other, and frequently slept together. He taught me the letters of the alphabet, and I should soon have acquired a knowledge of reading, had not George's mother discovered her son in the act of teaching me. She took him aside and severely reprimanded him. When I asked him, not long after, to tell me more of what he had learned at school, he said that his mother had forbidden him to do so any more, as her father had a slave who was instructed in reading and writing, and on that account proved very troublesome. He could imitate the hand-writing of all the neighboring planters, and used to write

passes and certificates of freedom for the slaves, and finally wrote one for himself, and went off to Philadelphia, from whence her father received from him a saucy letter, thanking him for his education.

The early years of my life went by pleasantly. The bitterness of my lot I had not yet realized. Comfortably clothed and fed, kindly treated by my old master and mistress and the young ladies, and the playmate and confidant of my young master, I did not dream of the dark reality of evil before me.

When he was fourteen years of age, master George went to his uncle Brockenbrough's, at Charlottesville, as a student of the University. After his return from college, he went to Paris and other parts of Europe, and spent three or four years in study and travelling. In the mean time I was a waiter in the house, dining-room servant, &c. My old master visited and received visits from a great number of the principal families in Virginia. Each summer, with his family, he visited the sulphur springs and the mountains. While George was absent, I went with him to New Orleans, in the winter season, on account of his failing health. We spent three days in

Charleston, at Mr. McDuffie's, with whom my master was on intimate terms. Mr. McDuffie spent several days on one occasion at Mt. Pleasant. He took a fancy to me, and offered my master the servant whom he brought with him, and \$500 beside, for me. My master considered it almost an insult, and said, after he was gone, that Mr. McDuffie needed money, to say the least, as much as he did.

He had a fine house in Richmond, and used to spend his winters there with his family, taking me with him. He was not there much at other times, except when the Convention of 1829, for amending the State Constitution, was held in that city. He had a quarrel with Mr. Neal, of Richmond Co., in consequence of some remarks upon the subject of slavery. It came near terminating in a duel. I recollect that during the sitting of the Convention my master asked me, before several other gentlemen, if I wished to be free and go back to my own country. I looked at him with surprise, and inquired what country.

“Africa, to be sure,” said he, laughing.

I told him that was not my country—that I was born in Virginia.

“Oh yes,” said he, “but your father was born

in Africa." He then said that there was a place on the African coast called Liberia, where a great many free blacks were going; and asked me to tell him honestly whether I would prefer to be set free on condition of going to Africa, or live with him and remain a slave. I replied that I had rather be as I was.

I have frequently heard him speak against slavery to his visitors. I heard him say on one occasion, when some gentlemen were arguing in favor of sending the free colored people to Africa, that this was as really the black man's country as the white's, and that it would be as humane to knock the free negroes, at once, on the head, as to send them to Liberia. He was a kind man to his slaves. He was proud of them, and of the reputation he enjoyed of feeding and clothing them well. They were, as near as I can judge, about 300 in number. He never to my knowledge sold a slave, unless to go with a wife or husband, and at the slave's own request. But all except the very wealthiest planters in his neighborhood sold them frequently. John Smoot, of Powhatan Co., has sold a great number. Bacon Tait* used to be one of the principal purchasers.

* Bacon Tait's advertisement of "new and commodious buildings" for the keeping of negroes, situated at

He had a jail at Richmond where he kept them. There were many others who made a business of buying and selling slaves. I saw on one occasion, while travelling with my master, a gang of nearly two hundred men fastened to a single chain. The women followed unchained and the children in wagons. It was a sorrowful sight. Some were praying, some crying, and they all had a look of extreme wretchedness. It is an awful thing to a Virginia slave to be sold for the Alabama and Mississippi country. I have known some of them to die of grief, and others to commit suicide, on account of it. Sometimes, when slaves are to be sold, they go to the rich planters in their vicinity and beseech them to purchase them. It is no uncommon thing for those planters to whom they thus apply, to give orders for their concealment somewhere on the plantation, and, after they are advertised as runaways, to offer to buy them, and run the risk of finding them. In this way they get them for a fourth part of their value. After the bargain is made, the slaves come back to their old masters, ask pardon for running away, and are turned over to their new owners. Mr. Larrimore employed his overseer

the corner of 15th and Carey streets, appears in the Richmond Whig of Sept. 1835.—EDITOR.

in obtaining six slaves in this way, of Stephen Ransdell, of Caroline County.

In my seventeenth year, I was married to a girl named Harriet, belonging to John Gatewood, a planter, living about four miles from Mt. Pleasant. She was about a year younger than myself—was a tailoress, and used to cut out clothes for the hands.

We were married by a white clergyman named Jones; and were allowed two or three weeks to ourselves, which we spent in visiting and other amusements.

The field hands are seldom married by a clergyman. They simply invite their friends together, and have a wedding party.

Our two eldest children died in their infancy; two are now living. The youngest was only two months old when I saw him for the last time. I used to visit my wife on Saturday and Sunday evenings.

My young master came back from Europe in delicate health. He was advised by his physicians to spend the winter in New Orleans, whither he accordingly went, taking me with him. Here he became acquainted with a French lady of one

of the first families in the city. The next winter he also spent in New Orleans, and on his third visit, three years after his return from Europe, he was married to the lady above mentioned. In May he returned to Mt. Pleasant, and found the elder Larrimore on his sick bed, from which he never rose again. He died on the 14th of July. There was a great and splendid funeral, as his relatives and friends were numerous.

His large property was left principally in the hands of his widow until her decease, after which it was to be divided among the three children. In February, Mrs. Larrimore also died. The administrators upon the estate were John Green, Esq., and Benjamin Temple.

My young mistresses, Jane and Elizabeth, were very kind to the servants. They seemed to feel under obligations to afford them every comfort and gratification, consistent with the dreadful relation of ownership which they sustained towards them. Whipping was scarcely known on the estate; and, whenever it did take place, it was invariably against the wishes of the young ladies.

But the wife of master George was of a disposition entirely the reverse. Feeble, languid, and

inert, sitting motionless for hours at her window, or moving her small fingers over the strings of her guitar, to some soft and languishing air, she would have seemed to a stranger incapable of rousing herself from that indolent repose, in which mind as well as body participated. But, the slightest disregard of her commands, and sometimes even the neglect to anticipate her wishes, on the part of the servants, was sufficient to awake her. The inanimate and delicate beauty then changed into a stormy virago. Her black eyes glowed and sparkled with a snaky fierceness, her full lips compressed, and her brows bent and darkened. Her very voice, soft and sweet when speaking to her husband, and exquisitely fine and melodious when accompanying her guitar, was at such times shrill, keen, and loud. She would order the servants of my young mistresses upon her errands, and if they pleaded their prior duty to obey the calls of another would demand that they should be forthwith whipped for their insolence. If the young ladies remonstrated with her, she met them with a perfect torrent of invective and abuse. In these paroxysms of fury she always spoke in French, with a vehemence and volubility which strongly contrasted with the

calmness and firmness of the young ladies. She would boast of what she had done in New Orleans, and of the excellent discipline of her father's slaves. She said she had gone down in the night to the cell under her father's house, and whipped the slaves confined there with her own hands. I had heard the same thing from her father's servants at New Orleans when I was there with my master. She brought with her from New Orleans a girl named Frances. I have seen her take her by the ear, lead her up to the side of the room, and beat her head against it. At other times she would snatch off her slipper and strike the girl on her face and head with it.

She seldom manifested her evil temper before master George. When she did, he was greatly troubled, and he used to speak to his sisters about it. Her manner towards him was invariably that of extreme fondness. She was dark complexioned, but very beautiful; and the smile of welcome with which she used to meet him was peculiarly fascinating. I did not marvel that *he* loved her; while at the same time, in common with all the house servants, I regarded her as a being possessed with an evil spirit,—half woman, and half fiend.

Soon after the settlement of the estate, I heard

my master speak of going out to Alabama. His wife had 1500 acres of wild land in Greene County, in that State, and he had been negotiating for 500 more. Early in the summer of 1833, he commenced making preparations for removing to that place a sufficient number of hands to cultivate it. He took great pains to buy up the wives and husbands of those of his own slaves who had married out of the estate, in order, as he said, that his hands might be contented in Alabama, and not need chaining together while on their journey. It is always found necessary by the regular slave-traders, in travelling with their slaves to the far South, to handcuff and chain their wretched victims, who have been bought up as the interest of the trader and the luxury or necessities of the planter may chance to require, without regard to the ties sundered or the affections made desolate by these infernal bargains. About the 1st of September, after the slaves destined for Alabama had taken a final farewell of their old home, and of the friends they were leaving behind, our party started on their long journey. There were in all 214 slaves, men, women, and children. The men and women travelled on foot—the small children in the wagons,

containing the baggage, &c. Previous to my departure, I visited my wife and children, at Mr. Gatewood's. I took leave of them with the belief that I should return with my master, as soon as he had seen his hands established on his new plantation. I took my children in my arms and embraced them; my wife, who was a member of the Methodist church, implored the blessing of God upon me during my absence, and I turned away to follow my master.

Our journey was a long and tedious one; especially to those who were compelled to walk the whole distance. My master rode in a sulky, and I, as his body servant, on horseback. When we crossed over the Roanoke, and were entering upon North Carolina, I remember with what sorrowful countenances and language the poor slaves looked back for the last time upon the land of their nativity. It was their last farewell to Old Virginia. We passed through Georgia, and, crossing the Chattahooche, entered Alabama. Our way for many days was through a sandy tract of country, covered with pine woods, with here and there the plantation of an Indian or a half-breed. After crossing what is called Line Creek, we found large

plantations along the road, at intervals of four or five miles. The aspect of the whole country was wild and forbidding, save to the eye of a cotton planter. The clearings were all new, and the houses rudely constructed of logs. The cotton fields were skirted with an enormous growth of oak, pine, and bass wood. Charred stumps stood thickly in the clearings, with here and there a large tree girdled by the axe and left to decay. We reached at last the place of our destination. It was a fine tract of land, with a deep rich soil. We halted on a small knoll, where the tents were pitched, and the wagons unladen. I spent the night with my master at a neighboring plantation, which was under the care of an overseer named Flincher.

The next morning my master received a visit from a man named Huckstep, who had undertaken the management of his plantation as an overseer. He had been an overseer on cotton plantations many years in Georgia and North Carolina. He was apparently about forty years of age, with a sunburnt and sallow countenance. His thick shock of black hair was marked in several places with streaks of white, occasioned, as he afterwards told

me, by blows received from slaves whom he was chastising.

After remaining in the vicinity for about a week, my master took me aside one morning, told me he was going to Selma, in Dallas County, and wished me to be in readiness, on his return the next day, to start for Virginia. This was to me cheering news. I spent that day and the next among my old fellow-servants who had lived with me in Virginia. Some of them had messages to send by me to their friends and acquaintances. In the afternoon of the second day after my master's departure, I distributed among them all the money which I had about me, viz., fifteen dollars. I noticed that the overseer Huckstep laughed at this and called me a fool; and that whenever I spoke of going home with my master, his countenance indicated something between a smile and a sneer.

Night came; but, contrary to his promise, my master did not come. I still, however, expected him the next day. But another night came, and he had not returned. I grew uneasy, and inquired of Huckstep where he thought my master was.

"On his way to old Virginia," said he, with a malicious laugh.

"But," said I, "master George told me that he should come back and take me with him to Virginia."

"Well, boy," said the overseer, "I'll now tell ye what master George, as you call him, told me. You are to stay here and act as driver of the field hands. That was the order. So you may as well submit to it at once."

I stood silent and horror-struck. Could it be that the man whom I had served faithfully from our mutual boyhood, whose slightest wish had been my law, to serve whom I would have laid down my life, while I had confidence in his integrity—could it be that he had so cruelly and wickedly deceived me? I looked at the overseer. He stood laughing at me in my agony.

"Master George gave you no such orders," I exclaimed, maddened by the overseer's look and manner.

The overseer looked at me with a fiendish grin. "None of your insolence," said he, with a dreadful oath. "I never saw a Virginia nigger that I couldn't manage, proud as they are. Your master has left you in my hands, and you must obey my orders. If you don't, why, I shall have to make

you '*hug the widow there*,'" pointing to a tree, to which I afterwards found the slaves were tied when they were whipped.

That night was one of sleepless agony. Virginia, the hills and the streams of my birth-place; the kind and hospitable home; the gentle-hearted sisters, sweetening with their sympathy the sorrows of the slave; my wife, my children—all that had thus far made up my happiness, rose in contrast with my present condition. Deeply as he has wronged me, may my master himself never endure such a night of misery!

At daybreak, Huckstep told me to dress myself and attend to his directions. I rose, subdued and wretched, and at his orders handed the horn to the headman of the gang, who summoned the hands to the field. They were employed in clearing land for cultivation, cutting trees, and burning. I was with them through the day, and at night returned once more to my lodgings to be laughed at by the overseer. He told me that I should do well, he did not doubt, by and by, but that a Virginia driver generally had to be whipped a few times himself before he could be learned to do justice to the slaves under his charge. They were not equal to

those raised in North Carolina, for keeping the lazy hell-hounds, as he called the slaves, at work.

And this was my condition ! a driver set over more than one hundred and sixty of my kindred and friends, with orders to apply the whip unsparingly to every one, whether man or woman, who faltered in the task, or was careless in the execution of it, myself subject at any moment to feel the accursed lash upon my own back, if feelings of humanity should perchance overcome the selfishness of misery, and induce me to spare and pity.

I lived in the same house with Huckstep ; a large log house, roughly finished, where we were waited upon by an old woman, whom we used to call aunt Polly. Huckstep was, I soon found, inordinately fond of peach brandy ; and once or twice in the course of a month he had a drunken debauch, which usually lasted from two to four days. He was then full of talk, laughed immoderately at his own nonsense, and would keep me up until late at night listening to him. He was at these periods terribly severe to his hands, and would order me to use up the cracker of my whip every day upon the poor creatures who were toiling in the field ; and in order to satisfy him, I used

to tear it off when returning home at night. He would then praise me for a good fellow, and invite me to drink with him. He used to tell me at such times that if I would only drink as he did I should be worth a thousand dollars more for it. He would sit for hours with his peach brandy, cursing and swearing, laughing and telling stories full of obscenity and blasphemy. He would sometimes start up, take my whip, and rush out to the slave quarters, flourish it about and frighten their inmates, and often cruelly beat them. He would order the women to pull up their clothes, in Alabama style, as he called it, and then whip them for not complying. He would then come back roaring and shouting to the house, and tell me what he had done ; if I did not laugh with him, he would get angry and demand what the matter was. Oh ! how often have I laughed, at such times, when my heart ached within me ; and how often, when permitted to retire to my bed, I found relief in tears !

He had no wife, but kept a colored mistress in a house situated on a gore of land between the plantation and that of Mr. Goldsby's. He brought her with him from North Carolina, and had three children by her.

Sometimes, in his fits of intoxication, he would come riding into the field, swinging his whip, and crying out to the hands to strip off their shirts and be ready to take a whipping ; and this too when they were all busily at work. At another time, he would gather the hands around him and fall to cursing and swearing about the neighboring overseers. They were, he said, cruel to their hands, whipped them unmercifully ; and in addition starved them. As for himself, he was the kindest and best fellow within forty miles ; and the hands ought to be thankful that they had such a good man for their overseer.

He would frequently be very familiar with me, and call me his child ; he would tell me that our people were going to get Texas, a fine cotton country, and that he meant to go out there and have a plantation of his own, and I should go with him and be his overseer.

The houses in the "*negro quarters*" were constructed of logs, and from twelve to fifteen feet square ; they had no glass, but there were holes to let in the light and air. The furniture consisted of a table, a few stools, and dishes made of wood, and an iron pot, and some other cooking utensils. The houses were placed about three or four rods

apart, with a piece of ground attached to each of them for a garden, where the occupant could raise a few vegetables. The "quarters" were about three hundred yards from the dwelling of the overseer.

The hands were occupied in clearing land and burning brush, and in construeting their houses, through the winter. In March we commenced ploughing, and on the first of April began planting seed for cotton. The hoeing season commenced about the last of May. At the earliest dawn of day, and frequently before that time, the laborers were roused from their sleep by the blowing of the horn. It was blown by the headman of the gang, who led the rest in the work and acted under my direction, as my assistant.

Previous to the blowing of the horn the hands generally rose and eat what was called the "morning's bit," consisting of ham and bread. If exhaustion and fatigue prevented their rising before the dreaded sound of the horn broke upon their slumbers, they had no time to snatch a mouthful, but were hurried out at once.

It was my business to give over to each of the hands his or her appropriate implement of labor, from the tool-house, where they were deposited at night. After all had been supplied, they were

taken to the field, and set at work as soon as it was sufficiently light to distinguish the plants from the grass and weeds. I was employed in passing from row to row, in order to see that the work was well done, and to urge forward the laborers. At 12 o'clock the horn was blown from the overseer's house, calling the hands to dinner, each to his own cabin. The intermission of labor was one hour and a half to hoers and pickers, and two hours to the ploughmen. At the expiration of this interval the horn again summoned them to their labor. They were kept in the field until dark, when they were called home to supper.

There was little leisure for any of the hands on the plantation. In the evenings, after it was too dark for work in the field, the men were frequently employed in burning brush, and in other labors, until late at night. The women, after toiling in the field by day, were compelled to card, spin, and weave cotton for their clothing, in the evening. Even on Sundays there was little or no respite from toil. Those who had not been able to work out all their task during the week were allowed by the overseer to finish it on the Sabbath, and thus save themselves from a whipping on Monday.

morning. Those whose tasks were finished frequently employed most of that day in cultivating their gardens.

Many of the female hands were delicate young women, who in Virginia had never been accustomed to field labor. They suffered greatly from the extreme heat and the severity of the toil. Oh! how often have I seen them dragging their weary limbs from the cotton field at nightfall, faint and exhausted. The overseer used to laugh at their sufferings. They were, he said, Virginia ladies, and altogether too delicate for Alabama use; but they must be made to do their tasks notwithstanding. The recollection of these things even now is dreadful. I used to tell the poor creatures, when compelled by the overseer to urge them forward with the whip, that I would much rather take their places and endure the stripes than inflict them.

When but three months old, the children born on the estate were given up to the care of the old women who were not able to work out of doors. Their mothers were kept at work in the field.

It was the object of the overseer to separate me in feeling and interest as widely as possible from my suffering brethren and sisters. I had relations

among the field hands, and used to call them my cousins. He forbid my doing so, and told me if I acknowledged relationship with any of the hands I should be flogged for it. He used to speak of them as devils and hell-hounds, and ridicule them in every possible way; and endeavored to make me speak of them and regard them in the same manner. He would tell long stories about hunting and shooting "runaway niggers," and detail with great apparent satisfaction the cruel and horrid punishments which he had inflicted. One thing he said troubled him. He had once whipped a slave so severely that he died in consequence of it, and it was soon after ascertained that he was wholly innocent of the offence charged against him. That slave, he said, had haunted him ever since.

Soon after we commenced weeding our cotton, some of the hands, who were threatened with a whipping for not finishing their tasks, ran away. The overseer and myself went out after them, taking with us five bloodhounds, which were kept on the estate for the sole purpose of catching runaways. There were no other hounds in the vicinity, and the overseers of the neighboring plantations used to borrow them to hunt their runaways. A

Mr. Crop, who lived about ten miles distant, had two packs, and made it his sole business to catch slaves with them. We used to set the dogs upon the track of the fugitives, and they would follow them until, to save themselves from being torn in pieces, they would climb into a tree, where the dogs kept them until we came up and secured them.

These hounds, when young, are taught to run after the negro boys; and being always kept confined except when let out in pursuit of runaways, they seldom fail of overtaking the fugitive, and seem to enjoy the sport of hunting men as much as other dogs do that of chasing a fox or a deer. My master gave the sum of \$500 for his five dogs, a slut and her four puppies.

While going over our cotton picking for the last time, one of our hands, named Little John, ran away. The next evening the dogs were started on his track. We followed them awhile, until we knew by their ceasing to bark that they had found him. We soon met the dogs returning. Their jaws, heads, and feet, were bloody. The overseer looked at them and said "he was afraid the dogs had killed the nigger." It being dark, we could

not find him that night. Early the next morning we started off with our neighbors, Sturtivant and Flincher ; and after searching about for some time, we found the body of Little John lying in the midst of a thicket of cane. It was nearly naked, and dreadfully mangled and gashed by the teeth of the dogs. They had evidently dragged it some yards through the thicket: blood, tatters of clothes, and even the entrails of the unfortunate man, were clinging to the stubs of the old and broken cane. Huckstep stooped over his saddle, looked at the body, and muttered an oath. Sturtivant swore it was no more than the fellow deserved. We dug a hole in the cane-brake, where he lay, buried him, and returned home.

The murdered young man had a mother and two sisters on the plantation, by whom he was dearly loved. When I told the old woman of what had befallen her son, she only said that it was better for poor John than to live in slavery.

Late in the fall of this year, a young man, who had already run away several times, was missing from his task. It was four days before we found him. The dogs drove him at last up a tree, where he was caught, and brought home. He was then

fastened down to the ground by means of forked sticks of wood selected for the purpose, the longest fork being driven into the ground until the other closed down upon the neck, ankles, and wrists. The overseer then sent for two large cats belonging to the house. These he placed upon the naked shoulders of his victim, and dragged them suddenly by their tails downward. At first they did not scratch deeply. He then ordered me to strike them with a small stick after he had placed them once more upon the back of the sufferer. I did so; and the enraged animals extended their claws, and tore his back deeply and cruelly as they were dragged along it. He was then whipped and placed in the stocks, where he was kept three days. On the third morning, as I passed the stocks, I stopped to look at him. His head hung down over the chain which supported his neck. I spoke, but he did not answer. *He was dead in the stocks!* The overseer on seeing him seemed surprised, and, I thought, manifested some remorse. Four of the field hands took him out of the stocks and buried him; and every thing went on as usual.

It is not in my power to give a narrative of the daily occurrences on the plantation. The history

of one day was that of all. The gloomy monotony of our slavery was only broken by the overseer's periodical fits of drunkenness, at which times neither life nor limb on the estate were secure from his caprice or violence.

In the spring of 1835, the overseer brought me a letter from my wife, written for her by her young mistress, Mr. Gatewood's daughter. He read it to me. It stated that herself and children were well—spoke of her sad and heavy disappointment in consequence of my not returning with my master, and of her having been told by him that I should come back the next fall.

Hope for a moment lightened my heart, and I indulged the idea of once more returning to the bosom of my family. But I recollect that my master had already cruelly deceived me, and despair again took hold on me.

Among our hands was one whom we used to call Big Harry. He was a stout, athletic man, very intelligent, and an excellent workman; but he was of a high and proud spirit, which the weary and crushing weight of a life of slavery had not been able to subdue. On almost every plantation at the South you may find one or more individuals whose look and air show that they

have preserved their self-respect as *men* ;—that with them the power of the tyrant ends with the coercion of the body—that the soul is free, and the inner man retaining the original uprightness of the image of God. You may know them by the stern sobriety of their countenances, and the contempt with which they regard the jests and pastimes of their miserable and degraded companions, who, like Samson, make sport for the keepers of their prison-house. These men are always feared as well as hated by their task-masters. Harry had never been whipped, and had always said that he would die rather than submit to it. He made no secret of his detestation of the overseer. While most of the slaves took off their hats, with cowering submission, in his presence, Harry always refused to do so. He never spoke to him except in a brief answer to his questions. Master George, who knew and dreaded the indomitable spirit of the man, told the overseer, before he left the plantation, to beware how he attempted to punish him. But the habits of tyranny in which Huckstep had so long indulged had accustomed him to abject submission on the part of his subjects, and he could not endure this upright and unbroken manliness. He used frequently to curse

and swear about him, and devise plans for punishing him on account of his impudence, as he called it.

A pretext was at last afforded him. Some time in August of this year there was a large quantity of yellow unpicked cotton lying in the gin house. Harry was employed at night in removing the cotton seed, which had been thrown out by the gin. The rest of the male hands were engaged during the day in weeding the cotton for the last time, and in the night in burning brush on the new lands clearing for the next year's crop. Harry was told one evening to go with the others and assist in burning the brush. He accordingly went; and the next night a double quantity of seed had accumulated in the gin house; and, although he worked until nearly two o'clock in the morning, he could not remove it all.

The next morning the overseer came into the field, and demanded of me why I had not whipped Harry for not removing all the cotton seed. He then called aloud to Harry to come forward and be whipped. Harry answered somewhat sternly that he would neither be struck by overseer nor driver; that he had worked nearly all night, and had scarcely fallen asleep when the horn blew to

summon him to his toil in the field. The overseer raved and threatened, but Harry paid no farther attention to him. He then turned to me and asked me for my pistols, with a pair of which he had furnished me. I told him they were not with me. He growled an oath, threw himself on his horse, and left us. In the evening I found him half drunk and raving like a madman. He said he would no longer bear with that nigger's insolence; but would whip him if it cost him his life. He at length fixed upon a plan for seizing him, and told me that he would go out in the morning, ride along by the side of Harry and talk pleasantly to him, and then, while Harry was attending to him, I was to steal upon him and knock him down, by a blow on the head from the loaded and heavy handle of my whip. I was compelled to promise to obey his directions.

The next morning, when we got to the field, I told Harry of the overseer's plan, and advised him by all means to be on his guard and watch my motions. His eye glistened with gratitude. "Thank you, James," said he; "I'll take care that you don't touch me."

Huckstep came into the field about ten o'clock. He rode along by the side of Harry, talking and

laughing. I was walking on the other side. When I saw that Harry's eye was upon me, I aimed a blow at him, intending, however, to miss him. He evaded the blow and turned fiercely round with his hoe uplifted, threatening to cut down any one who again attempted to strike him. Huckstep cursed my awkwardness, and told Harry to put down his hoe and come to him. He refused to do so, and swore he would kill the first man who tried to lay hands on him. The cowardly tyrant shrunk away from his enraged bondman, and for two weeks Harry was not again molested.

About the first of September the overseer had one of his drunken fits. He made the house literally an earthly hell. He urged me to drink, quarrelled and swore at me for declining, and chased the old woman round the house with his bottle of peach brandy. He then told me that Harry had forgotten the attempt to seize him, and that in the morning we must try our old game over again.

On the following morning, as I was handing to each of the hands their hoes from the tool-house, I caught Harry's eye. "Look out," said I to him; "Huckstep will be after you again to-day." He

uttered a deep curse against the overseer and passed on to his work. After breakfast Huckstep came riding out to the cotton field. He tied his horse to a tree and came towards us. His sallow and haggard countenance was flushed, and his step unsteady. He came up by the side of Harry and began talking about the crops and the weather. I came at the same time on the other side, and in striking at him beat off his hat. He sprang aside and stepped backwards. Huckstep, with a dreadful oath, commanded him to stop, saying that he had determined to whip him, and neither earth nor hell should prevent him. Harry defied him, and said he had always done the work allotted to him, and that was enough; he would sooner die than have the accursed lash touch him. The overseer staggered to his horse, mounted him and rode furiously to the house, and soon made his appearance, returning, with his gun in his hand.

“Yonder comes the devil!” said one of the women whose row was near Harry’s.

“Yes,” said another, “he’s trying to scare Harry with his gun.”

“Let him try as he pleases,” said Harry, in his low, deep, determined tones. “He may shoot me, but he can’t whip me.”

Huckstep came swearing on. When within a few yards of Harry he stopped, looked at him with a stare of mingled rage and drunken imbecility, and bid him throw down his hoe and come forward. The undaunted slave refused to comply, and, continuing his work, told the drunken demon to shoot if he pleased. Huckstep advanced within a few steps of him, when Harry raised his hoe and told him to stand back. He stepped back a few paces, levelled his gun, and fired. Harry received the charge in his breast, and fell instantly across a cotton row. He threw up his hands wildly and groaned, "Oh, Lord!"

The hands instantly dropped their hoes. The women shrieked aloud. For my own part, I stood silent with horror. The cries of the women enraged the overseer. He dropped his gun, and snatching the whip from my hand, with horrid oaths and imprecations, fell to whipping them, laying about him like a maniac. Upon Harry's sister he bestowed his blows without mercy, commanding her to quit her screaming and go to work. The poor girl, whose brother had thus been murdered before her eyes, could not wrestle down the awful agony of her feelings, and the

brutal tormentor left her without effecting his object. He then, without going to look of his victim, told four of the hands to carry him to the house, and, taking up his gun, left the field. When we got to the poor fellow, he was alive, and groaning faintly. The hands took him up, but before they reached the house he was dead. Hucks-step came out and looked at him, and, finding him dead, ordered the hands to bury him. The burial of a slave in Alabama is that of a brute: no coffin, no decent shroud, no prayer. A hole is dug, and the body thrown in without further ceremony.

From this time the overseer was regarded by the whole gang with detestation and fear—as a being to whose rage and cruelty there were no limits. Yet he was constantly telling us that he was the kindest of overseers—that he was formerly somewhat severe in managing his hands, but that now he was, if any thing, too indulgent. Indeed he had the reputation of being a good overseer and an excellent manager when sober. The slaves on some of the neighboring plantations were certainly worse clothed and fed; and more frequently and cruelly whipped, than ours. Whenever we saw them they complained of over-

working and short feeding. One of Flincher's and one of Sturtivant's hands ran away while I was in Alabama, and, after remaining in the woods awhile, and despairing of being able to effect their escape, resolved to put an end to their existence and their slavery together. Each twisted himself a vine of the muscadine grape, and fastened one end around the limb of an oak, and made a noose in the other. Jacob, Flincher's man, swung himself off first, and expired after a long struggle. The other, horrified by the contortions and agony of his comrade, dropped his noose, and was retaken. When discovered, two or three days afterwards, the body of Jacob was dreadfully torn and mangled by the obscene buzzards, those winged hyenas and goules of the Southwest.

Among the slaves who were brought from Virginia, were two young and bright mulatto women, who were always understood throughout the plantation to have been the daughters of the elder Laramore, by one of his slaves. One was named Sarah and the other Hannah. Sarah, being in a state of pregnancy, failed of executing her daily allotted task of hoeing cotton. I was ordered to whip her, and on my remonstrating with the over-

seer, and representing the condition of the woman, I was told that my business was to obey orders, and that if I was told "to whip a dead nigger I must do it." I accordingly gave her fifty lashes. This was on Thursday evening. On Friday she also failed through weakness; and was compelled to lie down in the field. That night the overseer himself whipped her. On Saturday the wretched woman dragged herself once more to the cotton field. In the burning sun, and in a situation which would have called forth pity in the bosom of any one save a cotton-growing overseer, she struggled to finish her task. She failed—nature could do no more—and sick and despairing, she sought her cabin. There the overseer met her and inflicted fifty more lashes upon her already lacerated back.

The next morning was the Sabbath. It brought no joy to that suffering woman. Instead of the tones of the church bell summoning to the house of prayer, she heard the dreadful sound of the lash falling upon the backs of her brethren and sisters in bondage. For the voice of prayer she heard curses; for the songs of Zion obscene and hateful blasphemies. No Bible was there with its consolations for the sick of heart. Faint and fevered,

scarred and smarting from the effects of her cruel punishment, she lay upon her pallet of moss, dreading the coming of her relentless persecutor, who, in the madness of one of his periodical fits of drunkenness, was now swearing and cursing through the quarters,—the demon of that Sabbathless hell.

Some of the poor woman's friends on the evening before had attempted to relieve her of the task which had been assigned her, but exhausted nature and the selfishness induced by their own miserable situation did not permit them to finish it; and the overseer, on examination, found that the week's work of the woman was still deficient. After breakfast, he ordered her to be tied up to the limb of a tree, by means of a rope fastened round her wrists, so as to leave her feet about six inches from the ground. She begged him to let her down, for she was very sick.

“Very well!” he exclaimed, with a sneer and a laugh; “I shall bleed you then, and take out some of your Virginia blood. You are too proud a miss for Alabama.”

He struck her a few blows. Swinging thus by her arms, she succeeded in placing one of her feet

against the body of the tree, and thus partly supported herself, and relieved in some degree the painful weight upon her wrists. He threw down his whip, took a rail from the garden fence, ordered her feet to be tied together, and thrust the rail between them. He then ordered one of the hands to sit upon it. Her back at this time was bare, but the strings of the only garment which she wore passed over her shoulders and prevented the full force of the whip from acting on her flesh. These he cut off with his penknife, and thus left her entirely naked. He struck her only two blows, for the second one cut open her side and abdomen with a frightful gash. Unable to look on any longer in silence, I entreated him to stop, as I feared he had killed her. The overseer looked at the wound, dropped his whip, and ordered her to be untied. She was carried into the house in a state of insensibility, and died in three days after.

During the whole season of picking cotton, the whip was frequently and severely plied. In his seasons of intoxication, the overseer made no distinction between the stout man and the feeble and delicate woman—the sick and the well. Women in a far advanced state of pregnancy were driven

out to the cotton field. At other times he seemed to have some consideration, and to manifest something like humanity. Our hands did not suffer for food—they had a good supply of ham and corn-meal; while on Flincher's plantation the slaves had meat but once a year, at Christmas.

Near the commencement of the weeding season of 1835, I was ordered to whip a young woman, a light mustee, for not performing her task. I told the overseer that she was sick. He said he did not care for that; she should be made to work. A day or two afterwards, I found him in the house half intoxicated. He demanded of me why I had not whipped the girl; and I gave the same reason as before. He flew into a dreadful rage, but his miserable situation made him an object of contempt rather than fear. He sat shaking his fist at me and swearing for nearly half an hour. He said he would teach the Virginia lady to sham sickness; and that the only reason I did not whip her was that she was a white woman, and I did not like to cut up her delicate skin. Some time after I was ordered to give two of our women, named Hannah and Big Sarah, 150 lashes each, for not performing their tasks. The overseer stood by until he

saw Hannah whipped, and until Sarah had been tied up to the tree. As soon as his back was turned I struck the tree instead of the woman, who, understanding my object, shrieked as if the whip at every blow was cutting into her flesh. The overseer heard the blows and the woman's cries, and, supposing that all was going on according to his mind, left the field. Unfortunately the husband of Hannah stood looking on, and, indignant that his wife should be whipped and Sarah spared, determined to revenge himself by informing against me.

Next morning Huckstep demanded of me whether I had whipped Sarah the day before; I replied in the affirmative. Upon this he called Sarah forward and made her show her back, which bore no traces of recent whipping. He then turned upon me and told me that the blows intended for Sarah should be laid on my back. That night the overseer, with the help of three of the hands, tied me up to a large tree—my arms and legs being clasped round it, and my body drawn up hard against it by two men pulling at my arms, and one pushing against my back. The agony occasioned by this alone was almost intolerable. I felt a sense of

painful suffocation, and could scarcely catch my breath.

A moment after I felt the first blow of the overseer's whip across my shoulders. It seemed to cut into my very heart. I felt the blood gush and run down my back. I fainted at length under the torture, and on being taken down my shoes were filled with the blood which ran from the gashes in my back. The skin was worn off from my breast, arms, and thighs, against the rough bark of the tree. I was sick and feverish, and in great pain, for three weeks afterwards; most of which time I was obliged to lie with my face downwards, in consequence of the extreme soreness of my sides and back. Huckstep himself seemed concerned about me, and would come frequently to see me, and tell me that he should not have touched me had it not been for "the cursed peach brandy."

Almost the first person that I was compelled to whip, after I recovered, was the man who pushed at my back when I was tied up to the tree. The hands who were looking on at that time all thought he pushed me much harder than was necessary; and they expected that I would retaliate upon him the injury I had received. After he was tied up,

the overseer told me to give him a severe flogging, and left me. I struck the tree instead of the man. His wife, who was looking on, almost overwhelmed me with her gratitude.

At length one morning, late in the fall of 1835, I saw Huckstep and a gentleman ride out to the field. As they approached, I saw the latter was my master. The hands all ceased their labor, and crowded around him, inquiring about old Virginia. For my own part, I could not hasten to greet him. He had too cruelly deceived me. He at length came towards me, and seemed somewhat embarrassed. "Well, James," said he, "how do you stand it here?" "Badly enough," I replied. "I had no thought that you could be so cruel as to go away and leave me as you did." "Well, well, it was too bad, but it could not be helped; you must blame Huckstep for it." "But," said I, "I was not his servant; I belonged to you, and you could do as you pleased." "Well," said he, "we will talk about that by and by." He then inquired of Huckstep where Big Sarah was. "She was sick and died," was the answer. He looked round among the slaves again, and inquired for Harry. The overseer told him that Harry undertook to

kill him, and that, to save his life, he was obliged to fire upon him, and that he died of the wound. After some further inquiries, he requested me to go into the house with him. He then asked me to tell him how things had been managed during his absence. I gave him a full account of the overseer's cruelty. When he heard of the manner of Harry's death, he seemed much affected and shed tears. He was a favorite servant of his father's. I showed him the deep scars on my back occasioned by the whipping I had received. He was, or professed to be, highly indignant with Huckstep ; and said he would see to it that he did not lay hands on me again. He told me he should be glad to take me with him to Virginia, but he did not know where he should find a driver who would be so kind to the hands as I was. If I would stay ten years, he would then give me a thousand dollars, and a piece of land to plant on my own account. "But," said I, "my wife and children." "Well," said he, "I will do my best to purchase them, and send them on to you." I now saw that my destiny was fixed, and that I was to spend my days in Alabama, and I retired to my bed that evening with a heavy heart.

My master staid only three or four days on the plantation. Before he left, he cautioned Huckstep to be careful and not strike me again, as he would on no account permit it. He told him to give the hands food enough, and not over-work them, and, having thus satisfied his conscience, left us to our fate.

Out of the two hundred and fourteen slaves who were brought out from Virginia, at least one-third of them were members of the Methodist and Baptist churches in that State. Of this number five or six could read. They had been torn away from the care and discipline of their respective churches, and from the means of instruction, but they retained their love for the exercises of religion, and felt a mournful pleasure in speaking of the privileges and spiritual blessings which they enjoyed in Old Virginia. Three of them had been preachers, or exhorters, viz. Solomon, usually called uncle Solomon, Richard, and David. Uncle Solomon was a grave, elderly man, mild and forgiving in his temper, and greatly esteemed among the more serious portion of our hands. He used to snatch every occasion to talk to the lewd and vicious about the concerns of their souls,

and advise them to fix their minds upon the Savior, as their only helper. Some I have heard curse and swear in answer, and others would say that they could not keep their minds upon God and the devil (meaning Huckstep) at the same time : that it was of no use to try to be religious—they had no time—that the overseer wouldn't let them meet to pray—and that even uncle Solomon, when he prayed, had to keep one eye open all the time, to see if Huckstep was coming. Uncle Solomon could both read and write, and had brought out with him from Virginia a Bible, a hymn-book, and some other religious books, which he carefully concealed from the overseer. Huckstep was himself an open infidel as well as blasphemer. He used to tell the hands that there was no hell hereafter for white people, but that they had their punishment on earth in being obliged to take care of the negroes. As for the blacks, he was sure there was a hell for them. He used frequently to sit with his bottle by his side, and his Bible in his hand, and read passages and comment on them, and pronounce them lies. Anything like religious feeling among the slaves irritated him. He said that so much praying and sing-

ing prevented the people from doing their tasks, as it kept them up nights, when they should be asleep. He used to mock, and in every possible way interrupt the poor slaves, who, after the toil of the day, knelt in their lowly cabins to offer their prayers and supplications to Him whose ear is open to the sorrowful sighing of the prisoner, and who hath promised in his own time to come down and deliver. In his drunken seasons he would make excursions at night through the slave-quarters, enter the cabins, and frighten the inmates, especially if engaged in prayer or psalm-singing. On one of these occasions he came back rubbing his hands and laughing. He said he had found uncle Solomon in his garden, down on his knees, praying like an old owl, and had tipped him over and frightened him half out of his wits. At another time he found uncle David sitting on his stool with his face thrust up the chimney, in order that his voice might not be heard by his brutal persecutor. He was praying, giving utterance to these words, probably in reference to his bondage: —“*How long, oh Lord, how long?*” “As long as my whip!” cried the overseer, who had stolen

behind him, giving him a blow. It was the sport of a demon.

Not long after my master had left us, the overseer ascertained for the first time that some of the hands could read, and that they had brought books with them from Virginia. He compelled them to give up the keys of their chests, and on searching found several Bibles and hymn-books. Uncle Solomon's chest contained quite a library, which he could read at night by the light of knots of the pitch-pine. These books he collected together, and in the evening called uncle Solomon into the house. After jeering him for some time, he gave him one of the Bibles and told him to name his text and preach him a sermon. The old man was silent. He then made him get upon the table, and ordered him to pray. Uncle Solomon meekly replied that "forced prayer was not good for soul or body." The overseer then knelt down himself, and in a blasphemous manner prayed that the Lord would send his spirit into uncle Solomon, or else let the old man fall from the table and break his neck, and so have an end of "nigger" preaching. On getting up from his knees he went to the cupboard, poured out a glass

of brandy for himself, and brought another to the table. "James," said he, addressing me, "uncle Solomon stands there, for all the world, like a Hickory Quaker. His spirit don't move; I'll see if another spirit won't move it." He compelled the old preacher to swallow the brandy, and then told him to preach and exhort, for the spirit was in him. He set one of the Bibles on fire, and after it was consumed mixed up the ashes of it in a glass of water, and compelled the old man to drink it, telling him that as the spirit and the word were now both in him, there was no longer any excuse for not preaching. After tormenting the wearied old man in this way until nearly midnight, he permitted him to go to his quarters.

The next day I saw uncle Solomon, and talked with him about his treatment. He said it would not always be so—that slavery was to come to an end, for the Bible said so—that there would then be no more whippings and fightings, but the lion and the lamb would lie down together, and all would be love. He said he prayed for Huckstep—that it was not he, but the devil in him, who behaved so. At his request, I found means to get him a Bible and a hymn-book from the overseer's

room, and the old man ever afterwards kept them concealed in the hen-house.

The weeding season of 1836 was marked by repeated acts of cruelty on the part of Huckstep. One of the hands, Priscilla, was, owing to her delicate situation, unable to perform her daily task. He ordered her to be tied up against a tree, in the same manner that I had been. In this situation she was whipped until *she was delivered of a dead infant at the foot of the tree!* Our men took her upon a sheet and carried her to the house, where she lay sick for several months, but finally recovered. I have heard him repeatedly laugh at the circumstance.

Not long after this, we were surprised, one morning about ten o'clock, by hearing the horn blown at the house. Presently aunt Polly came screaming into the field. "What is the matter, Aunty?" I inquired. "Oh Lor!" said she, "old Huckstep 's pitched off his horse and broke his head, and is e'en about dead."

"Thank God!" said Little Simon; "the devil will have him at last."

"God-amighty be praised!" exclaimed half a dozen others.

The hands, with one accord, dropped their hoes,

and crowded round the old woman, asking, questions: "Is he dead?" "Will he die?" "Did you feel of him—was he cold?"

Aunt Polly explained, as well as she could, that Huckstep, in a state of partial intoxication, had attempted to leap his horse over a fence, had fallen and cut a deep gash in his head, and that he was now lying insensible.

It is impossible to describe the effect produced by this news among the hands. Men, women, and children shouted, clapped their hands, and laughed aloud. Some cursed the overseer, and others thanked the Lord for taking him away. Little Simon got down on his knees, and called loudly upon God to finish his work, and never let the overseer again enter a cotton field. "Let him die, Lord," said he, "let him die; he's killed enough of us. Oh, good Lord, let him die and not live."

"Peace, peace! it is a bad spirit," said uncle Solomon; "God himself willeth not the death of a sinner."

I followed the old woman to the house, and found Huckstep at the foot of one of those trees, so common at the South, called the Pride of China. His face was black, and there was a frightful con-

tusion on the side of his head. He was carried into the house, where, on my bleeding him, he revived. He lay in great pain for several days, and it was nearly three weeks before he was able to come out to the cotton fields.

On returning to the field, after Huckstep had revived, I found the hands sadly disappointed to hear that he was still living. Some of them fell to cursing and swearing, and were enraged with me for trying to save his life. Little Simon said I was a fool; if he had bled him he would have done it to some purpose. He would, at least, have so disabled his arm that he would never again try to swing a whip. Uncle Solomon remonstrated with Simon, and told me that I had done right.

The neighboring overseers used frequently to visit Huckstep, and he, in turn, visited them. I was sometimes present during their interviews, and heard them tell each other stories of horse-racing, negro huntin's, &c. Some time during this season, Ludlow, who was overseer of a plantation about eight miles from ours, told of a slave of his, named Thornton, who had twice attempted to escape with his wife and one child. The first time he was caught without much difficulty, chain-

ed to the overseer's horse, and in that way brought back. The poor man, to save his wife from a beating, laid all the blame upon himself, and said that his wife had no wish to escape, and tried to prevent him from attempting it. He was severely whipped ; but soon ran away again, and was again arrested. The overseer, Ludlow, said he was determined to put a stop to the runaway, and accordingly had resort to a somewhat unusual method of punishment.

There is a great scarcity of good water in that section of Alabama ; and you will generally see a large cistern attached to the corners of the houses to catch water for washing, &c. Underneath this cistern is frequently a tank from eight to ten feet deep, into which, when the former is full, the water is permitted to run. From this tank the water is pumped out for use. Into one of these tanks the unfortunate slave was placed, and confined by one of his ankles to the bottom of it, and the water was suffered to flow in from above. He was compelled to pump out the water as fast as it came in, by means of a long rod or handle connected with the pump above ground. He was not allowed to begin until the water had risen to his middle. Any

pause or delay after this, from weakness and exhaustion, would have been fatal, as the water would have risen above his head. In this horrible dungeon, toiling for his life, he was kept for twenty-four hours without any sustenance. Even Huck-step said that this was too bad ; that he had himself formerly punished runaways in that way, but should not do it again.

I rejoice to be able to say that this sufferer has at last escaped, with his wife and child, into a free State. He was assisted by some white men, but I do not know all the particulars of his escape.

Our overseer had not been long able to ride about the plantation, after his accident, before his life was again endangered. He found two of the hands, Little Jarret and Simon, fighting with each other, and attempted to chastise both of them. Jarret bore it patiently, but Simon turned upon him, seized a stake or pin from a cart near by, and felled him to the ground. The overseer got up, went to the house, and told aunt Polly that he had nearly been killed by the "niggers," and requested her to tie up his head, from which the blood was streaming. As soon as this was done, he took down his gun, and went out in pursuit of Simon, who had fled to his cabin, to get some things which he supposed

necessary previous to attempting his escape from the plantation. He was just stepping out of the door when he met the enraged overseer with his gun in his hand. Not a word was spoken by either. Huckstep raised his gun and fired. The man fell without a groan across the door-sill. He rose up twice on his hands and knees, but died in a few minutes. He was dragged off and buried. The overseer told me that there was no other way to deal with such a fellow. It was Alabama law, if a slave resisted, to shoot him at once. He told me of a case which occurred in 1834, on a plantation about ten miles distant, and adjoining that where Crop, the negro hunter, boarded with his hounds. The overseer had bought some slaves at Selma, from a drove or coffle passing through that place. They proved very refractory. He whipped three of them, and undertook to whip a fourth, who was from Maryland. The man raised his hoe in a threatening manner, and the overseer fired upon him. The slave fell, but instantly rose up on his hands and knees, and was beaten down again by the stock of the overseer's gun. The wounded wretch raised himself once more, drew a knife from the waistband of his pantaloons, and, catching hold of the overseer's coat, raised himself

high enough to inflict a fatal wound upon the latter. Both fell together, and died immediately after.

Nothing more of special importance occurred until July, of last year, when one of our men, named John, was whipped three times for not performing his task. On the last day of the month, after his third whipping, he ran away. On the following morning, I found that he was missing at his row. The overseer said we must hunt him up; and he blew the "nigger horn," as it is called, for the dogs. This horn was only used when we went out in pursuit of fugitives. It is a cow's horn, and makes a short, loud sound. We crossed Flincher's and Goldsby's plantations, as the dogs had got upon John's track, and went off barking in that direction, and the two overseers joined us in the chase. The dogs soon caught sight of the runaway, and compelled him to climb a tree. We came up; Huckstep ordered him down, and secured him upon my horse by tying him to my back. On reaching home he was stripped entirely naked and lashed up to a tree. Flincher then volunteered to whip him on one side of his legs and Goldsby on the other. I had, in the mean time, been order-

ed to prepare a wash of salt and pepper, and wash his wounds with it. The poor fellow groaned, and his flesh shrunk and quivered as the burning solution was applied to it. This wash, while it adds to the immediate torment of the sufferer, facilitates the cure of the wounded parts. Huckstep then whipped him from his neck down to his thighs, making the cuts lengthwise of his back. He was very expert with the whip, and could strike, at any time, within an inch of his mark. He then gave the whip to me and told me to strike directly across his back. When I had finished, the miserable sufferer, from his neck to his heels, was covered with blood and bruises. Goldsby and Flincher now turned to Huckstep, and told him that I deserved a whipping as much as John did ; that they had known me frequently disobey his orders, and that I was partial to the "Virginia ladies," and didn't whip them as I did the men. They said if I was a driver of theirs they would know what to do with me. Huckstep agreed with them ; and after directing me to go to the house and prepare more of the wash for John's back, he called after me, with an oath, to see to it that I had some for myself, for he meant to give me, at least,

two hundred and fifty lashes. I returned to the house, and, scarcely conscious of what I was doing, filled an iron vessel with water, put in the salt and pepper, and placed it over the embers.

As I stood by the fire watching the boiling of the mixture, and reflecting upon the dreadful torture to which I was about to be subjected, the thought of *escape* flashed upon my mind. The chance was a desperate one, but I resolved to attempt it. I ran up stairs, tied my shirt in a handkerchief, and stepped out of the back door of the house, telling aunt Polly to take care of the wash at the fire until I returned. The sun was about one hour high, but, luckily for me, the hands, as well as the three overseers, were on the other side of the house. I kept the house between them and myself, and ran as fast as I could for the woods. On reaching them I found myself obliged to proceed slowly, as there was a thick undergrowth of cane and reeds. Night came on ; I straggled forward by a dim starlight, amidst vines and reed-beds. About midnight the horizon began to be overcast, and the darkness increased, until, in the thick forest, I could scarcely see a yard before me. Fearing that I might lose my way and wander

towards the plantation, instead of from it, I resolved to wait until day. I laid down upon a little hillock and fell asleep.

When I awoke it was broad day. The clouds had vanished, and the hot sunshine fell through the trees upon my face. I started up, realizing my situation, and darted onward. My object was to reach the great road by which we had travelled when we came out from Virginia. I had, however, very little hope of escape. I knew that a hot pursuit would be made after me, and what I most dreaded was that the overseer would procure Crop's bloodhounds to follow my track: If only the hounds of our plantation were sent after me, I had hopes of being able to make friends of them, as they were always good-natured and obedient to me. I travelled until, as near as I could judge, about ten o'clock, when a distant sound startled me. I stopped and listened. It was the deep bay of the bloodhound, apparently at a great distance. I hurried on until I came to a creek about fifteen yards wide, skirted by an almost impenetrable growth of reeds and cane. Plunging into it, I swam across and ran down by the side of it a short distance, and, in order to baffle the dogs,

swam back to the other side again. I stopped in the reed-bed and listened. The dogs seemed close at hand, and by the loud barking I felt persuaded that Crop's hounds were with them. I thought of the fate of Little John, who had been torn in pieces by the hounds, and of the scarcely less dreadful condition of those who had escaped the dogs only to fall into the hands of the overseer. The yell of the dogs grew louder. Escape seemed impossible. I ran down to the creek with a determination to drown myself. I plunged into the water and went down to the bottom, but the dreadful strangling sensation compelled me to struggle up to the surface. Again I heard the yell of the bloodhounds, and again desperately plunged down into the water. As I went down I opened my mouth, and, choked and gasping, I found myself once more struggling upward. As I rose to the top of the water and caught a glimpse of the sunshine and the trees, the love of life revived in me. I swam to the other side of the creek, and forced my way through the reeds to a large bass-wood tree, and stood under one of its lowest limbs, ready, in case of necessity, to spring up into it. Here, panting and exhausted, I stood waiting for the dogs.

The woods seemed full of them. I heard a bell tinkle, and, a moment after, our old hound Venus came bounding through the cane, dripping wet from the creek. As the old hound came towards me, I called to her as I used to do when out hunting with her. She stopped suddenly, looked up at me, and then came wagging her tail and fawning around me. A moment after the other dogs came up hot in the chase, and with their noses to the ground. I called to them, but they did not look up, but came yelling on. I was just about to spring into the tree to avoid them, when Venus, the old hound, met them, and stopped them. They then all came fawning and playing and jumping about me. The very creatures whom a moment before I had feared would tear me limb from limb, were now leaping and licking my hands, and rolling on the leaves around me. I listened awhile in the fear of hearing the voices of men following the dogs, but there was no sound in the forest save the gurgling of the sluggish waters of the creek, and the chirp of black squirrels in the trees. I took courage and started onward once more, taking the dogs with me. The bell on the neck of the old dog I feared might betray me, and, unable to get

it off her neck, I twisted some of the long moss of the trees around it, so as to prevent its ringing. At night I halted once more with the dogs by my side. Harassed with fear, and tormented with hunger, I laid down and tried to sleep. But the dogs were uneasy, and would start up and bark at the cries or the footsteps of wild animals, and I was obliged to use my utmost exertions to keep them quiet, fearing that their barking would draw my pursuers upon me. I slept but little, and as soon as daylight started forward again. The next day towards evening I reached a great road, which, I rejoiced to find, was the same which my master and myself had travelled on our way to Greene County. I now thought it best to get rid of the dogs, and accordingly started them in pursuit of a deer. They went off, yelling on the track, and I never saw them again. I remembered that my master told me, near this place, that we were in the Creek country, and that there were some Indian settlements not far distant. In the course of the evening I crossed the road, and, striking into a path through the woods, soon came to a number of Indian cabins. I went into one of them and begged for some food. The Indian women received me with a great deal of kindness, and gave

me a good supper of venison, corn-bread, and stewed pumpkin. I remained with them till the evening of the next day, when I started afresh on my journey. I kept on the road leading to Georgia. In the latter part of the night I entered into a long low bottom, heavily timbered, sometimes called Wolf Valley. It was a dreary and frightful place. As I walked on, I heard on all sides the howling of the wolves, and the quick patter of their feet on the leaves and sticks, as they ran through the woods. At daylight I laid down, but had scarcely closed my eyes when I was roused up by the wolves snarling and howling around me. I started on my feet and saw several of them running by me. I did not again close my eyes during the whole day. In the afternoon, a bear with her two cubs came to a large chestnut tree near where I lay. She crept up the tree, went out on one of the limbs, and broke off several twigs in trying to shake down the nuts. They were not ripe enough to fall, and, after several vain attempts to procure some of them, she crawled down the tree again and went off with her young.

The day was long and tedious. As soon as it was dark I once more resumed my journey; but fatigue and the want of food and sleep rendered

me almost incapable of further effort. It was not long before I fell asleep, while walking, and wandered out of the road. I was wakened by a bunch of moss which hung down from the limb of a tree and met my face. I looked up and saw, as I thought, a large man standing just before me. My first idea was that some one had struck me over the face, and that I had been at last overtaken by Huckstep. Rubbing my eyes once more, I saw the figure before me sink down upon its hands and knees; another glance assured me that it was a bear, and not a man. He passed across the road and disappeared. This adventure kept me awake for the remainder of the night. Towards morning I passed by a plantation, on which was a fine growth of peach-trees, full of ripe fruit. I took as many of them as I could conveniently carry in my hands and pockets, and, retiring a little distance into the woods, laid down and slept till evening, when I again went forward.

Sleeping thus by day and travelling by night, in a direction towards the North star, I entered Georgia. As I only travelled in the night-time, I was unable to recognise rivers and places which I had seen before, until I reached Columbus, where I recollect I had been with my master. From

this place I took the road leading to Washington, and passed directly through that village. On leaving the village, I found myself, contrary to my expectation, in an open country, with no woods in view. I walked on until day broke in the east. At a considerable distance ahead, I saw a group of trees, and hurried on towards it. Large and beautiful plantations were on each side of me, from which I could hear dogs bark, and the driver's horn sounding. On reaching the trees, I found that they afforded but a poor place of concealment; on either hand, through its openings, I could see the men turning out to the cotton fields. I found a place to lie down between two oak stumps, around which the new shoots had sprung up thickly, forming a comparatively close shelter. After eating some peaches, which since leaving the Indian settlement had constituted my sole food, I fell asleep. I was waked by the barking of a dog. Raising my head and looking through the bushes, I found that the dog was barking at a black squirrel who was chattering on a limb almost directly above me. A moment after, I heard a voice speaking to the dog, and soon saw a man, with a gun in his hand, stealing through the wood. He passed close to the stumps, where I lay trembling, with

terror lest he should discover me. He kept his eye, however, upon the tree, and, raising his gun, fired. The squirrel dropped dead close by my side. I saw that any further attempt at concealment would be in vain, and sprang upon my feet. The man started forward on seeing me, struck at me with his gun, and beat my hat off. I leaped into the road, and he followed after, swearing he would shoot me if I didn't stop. Knowing that his gun was not loaded, I paid no attention to him, but ran across the road into a cotton field where there was a great gang of slaves working. The man with the gun followed, and called to the two colored drivers, who were on horseback, to ride after me and stop me. I saw a large piece of woodland at some distance ahead, and directed my course towards it. Just as I reached it, I looked back and saw my pursuer far behind me, and found, to my great joy, that the two drivers had not followed me. I got behind a tree, and soon heard the man enter the woods and pass me. After all had been still for more than an hour, I crept into a low place in the depth of the woods, and laid down amidst a bed of reeds, where I again fell asleep. Towards evening, on awaking, I

found the sky beginning to be cloudy, and before night set in it was completely overcast. Having lost my hat, I tied an old handkerchief over my head, and prepared to resume my journey. It was foggy and very dark, and, involved as I was in the mazes of the forest, I did not know in what direction I was going. I wandered on until I reached a road, which I supposed to be the same one which I had left. The next day the weather was still dark and rainy, and continued so for several days. During this time I slept only by leaning against the body of a tree, as the ground was soaked with rain. On the fifth night after my adventure near Washington, the clouds broke away, and the clear moonlight and the stars shone down upon me.

I looked up to see the North star, which I supposed still before me. But I sought it in vain in all that quarter of the heavens. A dreadful thought came over me that I had been travelling out of my way. I turned round and saw the North star, which had been shining directly upon my back. I then knew that I had been travelling away from freedom, and towards the place of my captivity, ever since I left the woods into which I

had been pursued on the 21st, five days before. Oh, the keen and bitter agony of that moment! I sat down on the decaying trunk of a fallen tree, and wept like a child. Exhausted in mind and body, nature came at last to my relief, and I fell asleep upon the log. When I awoke it was still dark. I rose and nerved myself for another effort for freedom. Taking the North star for my guide, I turned upon my track, and left once more the dreaded frontiers of Alabama behind me. The next night, after crossing a considerable river, I came to a large road crossing the one on which I travelled, and which seemed to lead more directly towards the North. I took this road, and the next night after I came to a large village. Passing through the main street, I saw a large hotel which I at once recollect. I was in Augusta, and this was the hotel at which my master had spent several days when I was with him on one of his southern visits. I heard the guards patrolling the town cry the hour of twelve; and, fearful of being taken up, I turned out of the main street, and got upon the road leading to Petersburg. On reaching the latter place, I swam over the Savannah river into South Carolina, and from thence passed into North Carolina.

Hitherto I had lived mainly upon peaches, which were plenty on almost all the plantations in Alabama and Georgia; but the season was now too far advanced for them, and I was obliged to resort to apples. These I obtained without much difficulty until within two or three days' journey of the Virginia line. At this time I had had nothing to eat but two or three small and sour apples for twenty-four hours, and I waited impatiently for night; in the hope of obtaining fruit from the orchards along the road. I passed by several plantations, but found no apples. After midnight, I passed near a large house, with fruit-trees around it. I searched under and climbed up and shook several of them to no purpose. At last I found a tree on which there were a few apples. On shaking it, half a dozen fell. I got down, and went groping and feeling about for them in the grass, but could find only two; the rest were devoured by several hogs, who were there on the same errand with myself. I pursued my way until day was about breaking, when I passed another house. The feeling of extreme hunger was here so intense, that it required all the resolution I was master of to keep myself from going up to the house and breaking into it in search of food. But the thought

of being again made a slave, and of suffering the horrible punishment of a runaway, restrained me. I lay in the woods all that day without food. The next evening, I soon found a large pile of excellent apples, from which I supplied myself.

The next evening I reached Halifax Court House, and I then knew that I was near Virginia. On the 7th of October, I came to the Roanoke, and crossed it in the midst of a violent storm of rain and thunder. The current ran so furiously that I was carried down with it, and with great difficulty, and in a state of complete exhaustion, reached the opposite shore.

At about 2 o'clock, on the night of the 15th, I approached Richmond; but not daring to go into the city at that hour, on account of the patrols, I lay in the woods near Manchester, until the next evening, when I started in the twilight, in order to enter before the setting of the watch. I passed over the bridge unmolested, although in great fear, as my tattered clothes and naked head were well calculated to excite suspicion; and, being well acquainted with the localities of the city, made my way to the house of a friend. I was received with the utmost kindness, and welcomed as one risen from the dead. Oh, how inexpressibly sweet were

the tones of human sympathy, after the dreadful trials to which I had been subjected, the wrongs and outrages which I witnessed and suffered ! For between two and three months I had not spoken with a human being, and the sound even of my own voice now seemed strange to my ears. During this time, save in two or three instances, I had tasted of no food except peaches and apples. I was supplied with some dried meat and coffee, but the first mouthful occasioned nausea and faintness. I was compelled to take my bed, and lay sick for several days. By the assiduous attention and kindness of my friends, I was supplied with every thing which was necessary during my sickness. I was detained in Richmond nearly a month. As soon as I had sufficiently recovered to be able to proceed on my journey, I bade my kind host and his wife an affectionate farewell, and set forward once more towards a land of freedom. I longed to visit my wife and children in Powhatan County, but the dread of being discovered prevented me from attempting it. I had learned from my friends in Richmond that they were living and in good health, but greatly distressed on my account.

My friends had provided me with a fur cap, and with as much lean ham, cake, and biscuit as I could conveniently carry. I proceeded in the same way as before, travelling by night and lying close and sleeping by day. About the last of November I reached the Shenandoah river. It was very cold ; ice had already formed along the margin, and in swimming the river I was chilled through ; and my clothes froze about me soon after I had reached the opposite side. I passed into Maryland, and on the 5th of December stepped across the line which divided the free state of Pennsylvania from the land of slavery.

I had a few shillings in money, which were given me at Richmond, and after travelling nearly twenty-four hours from the time I crossed the line, I ventured to call at a tavern and buy a dinner. On reaching Carlisle, I inquired of the ostler in a stable if he knew of any one who wished to hire a house-servant or coachman. He said he did not. Some more colored people came in, and, taking me aside, told me that they knew that I was from Virginia, by my pronunciation of certain words—that I was probably a runaway slave—but that I need not be alarmed, as they were friends,

and would do all in their power to protect me. I was taken home by one of them, and treated with the utmost kindness; and at night he took me in a wagon, and carried me some distance on my way to Harrisburg, where he said I should meet with friends.

He told me that I had better go directly to Philadelphia, as there would be less danger of my being discovered and retaken there than in the country, and there were a great many persons there who would exert themselves to secure me from the slave-holders. In parting he cautioned me against conversing or stopping with any man on the road, unless he wore a plain, straight collar on a round coat, and said "thee" and "thou." By following his directions I arrived safely in Philadelphia, having been kindly entertained and assisted on my journey by several benevolent gentlemen and ladies, whose compassion for the wayworn and hunted stranger I shall never forget, and whose names will always be dear to me. On reaching Philadelphia, I was visited by a large number of the Abolitionists, and friends of the colored people, who, after hearing my story, thought it would not be safe for me to remain in any part of the United

States. I remained in Philadelphia a few days, and then a gentleman came on to New York with me, I being considered on board the steam-boat, and in the cars, as his servant. I arrived at New York on the 1st of January. The sympathy and kindness which I have every where met with since leaving the slave states, has been the more grateful to me because it was in a great measure unexpected. The slaves are always told that if they escape into a free state they will be seized and put in prison until their masters send for them. I had heard Huckstep and the other overseers occasionally speak of the Abolitionists, but I did not know or dream that they were the friends of the slave. Oh, if the miserable men and women, now toiling on the plantations of Alabama, could know that thousands in the free states are praying and striving for their deliverance, how would the glad tidings be whispered from cabin to cabin, and how would the slave-mother, as she watches over her infant, bless God, on her knees, for the hope that this child of her day of sorrow might never realize, in stripes, and toil, and grief unspeakable, what it is to be a slave!

NOTE BY THE EDITOR.

THE reader may, perhaps feel a curiosity to know something further of James Williams, and whether he has found a place of security from the hunters of human chattels at the South. He came to New York on the 1st of the 1st mo., 1838. He was taken to the house of a true friend of the oppressed, where he was received and entertained with much sympathy and kindness. While in this city he was visited by a large number of gentlemen, who were deeply interested in his narrative. An accurate and striking sketch of his face was made by an eminent artist, the engraving of which, by PATRICK REASON, a colored young gentleman of this city, is prefixed to this volume. He had, however, been in his asylum but a few days, when information was received that two white men were in pursuit of him, accompanied by a colored man, who knew James, and would be able at once to recognise him. The informant stated that they had been as far as Boston, and

had just returned to this city. After consultation, his friends came to the conclusion that he would not be safe in any part of the United States, and that, in the present unsettled state of the Canadas, it would be best to send him to England. He accordingly sailed for Liverpool, with the best wishes and sympathies of all who had an opportunity of hearing his story.

It is with deep humiliation and sorrow that we are thus compelled to proclaim to the world, that even the nominally free states of America afford no protection to the man of color, escaping from a land of slavery. Even the soil which is yet greener for the blood of the revolutionary sacrifice —the plains of Lexington and Saratoga—may not be trodden in safety by the scarred and toil-worn fugitive from Southern Slavery. Rome had her temples where the slave could flee and be secure, for the master dared not violate his sanctuary. But America has no place too sacred for the profaning presence of slavery. It pervades the whole land,—an active and almost omnipresent despotism. The weary stranger may be plucked away from the domestic fireside, or dragged from the very horns of the altars of religion. The whole

constabulary and municipal force of the country, the entire civil and military authority, are pledged, by the constitution itself, to aid the master in recovering his runaway slaves. Judges, sheriffs, constables, and citizens of the free states, are bound by the constitutional law of the land to hunt men like wild beasts, for no other crime than that of preferring freedom to bondage. Better would it be to forego, at once, this mockery of freedom, and wear the acknowledged chains of slavery ourselves, than thus to stand ready at the beck of our masters to howl in the track of the fugitive, in concert with the trained bloodhounds of the South.

APPENDIX.

IN our prefatory remarks we adduced only the testimony of inveterate and determined advocates of slavery. In corroboration of the facts stated by James Williams, we offer now the testimony of several gentlemen, who are natives of the South, or have been residents in that section of the country.

DISCUSSION IN LANE SEMINARY, 2D Mo., 1834.

A member from Alabama, speaking of the cruelties practised upon the slaves, said—"At our house it is so common to hear their screams from a neighboring plantation, that we think nothing of it. The overseer of this plantation told me one day he laid a young woman over a log, and beat her so severely that she was soon after delivered of a dead child. A bricklayer, a neighbor of ours, owned a very smart young negro man, who ran away, but was caught. When his master got him home, he stripped him naked, tied him up by his hands, in plain sight and hearing of the academy and the public green, so high that his feet could not touch the ground; then tied them together, and put a long board between his legs to keep him steady. After preparing him in this way, he took a paddle, bored it full of holes, and commenced beating him with it. He continued it leisurely all day. At night his flesh was literally pounded to a jelly. It was two weeks before he was able to walk. No one took any notice of it; no one thought any wrong was done."

TESTIMONY OF JOHN RANKIN,

A native of Tennessee, educated there, and for a number of years a preacher in slave states—now pastor of a church in Ripley, Ohio.

“In some parts of Alabama, you may see slaves in the cotton-fields without so much as even a *single rag* upon them, shivering before the chilling blasts of mid-winter. Indeed, in every slave-holding State *many slaves suffer extremely*, both while they labor and while they sleep, *for want of clothing* to keep them warm. Often they are driven through frost and snow without either stocking or shoe, until the path they tread is dyed with the blood that issues from their frost-worn limbs! And when they return to their miserable huts at night, they find not there the means of comfortable rest; but *on the cold ground they must lie without covering, and shiver while they slumber.*

“In connection with their extreme sufferings, occasioned by want of clothing, I shall notice those which arise from the want of food. As the making of grain is the main object of their mancipation, masters will sacrifice as little as possible in giving them food. It often happens that what will *barely keep them alive* is all that a cruel avarice will allow them. Hence, in some instances, their allowance has been reduced to a *single pint of corn each* during the day and night; and some have no better allowance than a small portion of cotton seed!! And in some places the best allowance is a peck of corn each during the week, while perhaps they are not permitted to taste meat so much as once in the course of seven years, except what little they may be able to steal! *Thousands of them are pressed with the gnawings of cruel hunger during their whole lives.*

“Many poor slaves are stripped naked, stretched and tied across barrels or large bags, and tortured with the lash during hours, and even whole days, until their flesh is mangled to the very bones. Others are stripped and hung up by the arms, their feet are tied together, and the end of a heavy piece of timber is put between their legs in order to stretch their bodies, and so prepare them for the torturing lash—and in this situation they are often whipped until their bodies are covered with blood and mangled flesh; and in order to add the greatest keenness

to their sufferings, their wounds are washed with *liquid salt* ! And some of the miserable creatures are permitted to hang in that position until they actually *expire* ; some die under the lash, others linger about for a time, and at length die of their wounds, and many survive, and endure again similar torture. These bloody scenes are *constantly exhibiting in every slave-holding country—thousands of whips are every day stained in African blood* ! Even the poor *females* are not permitted to escape these shocking cruelties."—Rankin's *Letters*, pages 57, 58.

TESTIMONY OF ASA A. STONE,

A Theological Student, who resided near Natchez, Mississippi, when he published the following statement, dated 24th 5th mo., 1835.

"No one here thinks that the slaves are seldom over-driven and under-fed. Every body knows it to be one of the most *common occurrences*. No planter of intelligence and candor denies that slaves are very generally badly treated in this country. *I wish to be understood now at the commencement, that, intending as I do that my statements shall be relied on, and knowing that, should you see fit to publish this communication, they will come to this country, where their correctness may be tested by comparison with real life, I make them with the utmost care and precaution.* But those which I do make are made without the least apprehension of their being controverted. . . . In the first place, with respect to labor. The *time* of labor is first to be noticed. It is a general rule on all regular plantations that the slaves rise in season in the morning to be in the field *as soon as it is light enough for them to see to work*, and remain there until it is *so dark that they cannot see*. This is the case at all seasons of the year ; so that during the summer they are in the field at least *fifteen hours*. This does not include the time spent in going and returning ; that must be done while it is too dark to suffer them to work, even if the field, as is frequently the case, is a mile distant. It is literally true, what one of them remarked to me the other day, that "they never know what it is to sleep till daylight." . . . Their suppers they have to prepare and eat after they return home, which, at this season of the year, takes them until nine o'clock : so that, without leaving a

moment of time for any other purpose, they can have but seven hours' sleep before four in the morning, when they are called. . . . On almost every plantation, the hands suffer more or less from hunger at some seasons of almost every year. On the majority of plantations, the feeding supplies the demands of nature tolerably well, except in the winter, and at some other occasional times. There is always a *good deal of suffering* on them from hunger in the course of the year. On many plantations, and particularly in Louisiana and among the French planters, the slaves are in a condition of *almost utter famishment* during a great portion of the year. Let a man pass through the plantations where they *fare the best*, and see fifty or sixty hands, men and women, sitting down on the furrows where their food-cart happens to overtake them, and making their meal of a bit of corn-bread and water, and he will think it is rather hard fare. This is not unfrequently the case on plantations where they are considered well fed.

"I will now say a few words about treatment and condition in general. That floggings are very common and severe, appears from what has already been said. I must now say that flogging for all offences, including deficiencies in work, are *frightfully common, and most terribly severe.*

"*Rubbing with salt and red pepper is very common after a severe whipping.* The object, they say, is primarily to *make it smart*; but add, that it is the best thing that can be done to prevent mortification and make the *gashes heal.*"

TESTIMONY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN SYNOD OF KENTUCKY,
A large majority of whom are or have been slave-holders.

"This system licenses and produces *great cruelty.*

"Mangling, imprisonment, starvation, every species of torture, may be inflicted upon him, (the slave,) and he has no redress.

"There are now in our whole land two millions of human beings, exposed, defenceless, to every insult, and every injury short of maiming or death, which their fellow-men may choose to inflict. *They suffer all* that can be inflicted by wanton caprice, by grasping avarice, by brutal lust, by malignant spite, and by insane anger. Their happiness is the sport of every whim and the prey

of every passion that may occasionally or habitually infest the master's bosom. If we could calculate the amount of wo endured by the ill-treated slaves, it would overwhelm every compassionate heart—it would move even the obdurate to sympathy. There is also a vast sum of suffering inflicted upon the slave by humane masters, as a punishment for that idleness and misconduct which slavery naturally produces. * * *

"*Brutal stripes*, and all the varied kinds of personal indignities, are not the only species of cruelty which slavery licenses. * * * Brothers and sisters, parents and children, husbands and wives, are torn asunder, and permitted to see each other no more. These acts are daily occurring in the midst of us. The shrieks and the agony often witnessed on such occasions proclaim with a trumpet tongue the iniquity and cruelty of our system. * * * *There is not a neighborhood* where these heart-rending scenes are not displayed. *There is not a village or road* that does not behold the sad procession of manacled outcasts, whose chains and mournful countenances tell that they are exiled by force from all that their hearts hold dear."—*See Address of Synod to Churches, in 1835, page 12.*

TESTIMONY OF THE MARYVILLE (TENNESSEE) INTELLIGENCER, OF THE 4TH OF 10TH MO., 1835.

The Editor, in speaking of the sufferings of the slaves which are taken by the internal trade to the Southwest, says :

"Place yourself in imagination, for a moment, in their condition : with *heavy galling chains* riveted upon your person ; *half-naked, half-starved* ; your back *lacerated* with the '*knotted whip*' ; travelling to a region where your *condition through time will be second only to the wretched creatures in Hell*."

"This depiction is not visionary. Would to God that it was."

TESTIMONY OF COLONEL WILLIAM KEYS,

A native of Rockbridge County, Virginia, where he resided about thirty years—now well known and greatly respected in southern Ohio.

"In that part of Virginia where I resided, (the valley,) so far as relates to food, clothing, and labor, slaves

may be said to be well used, when compared with the *barbary* of their treatment farther south, or wherever they are held in large numbers ; yet, even where I lived, though few slaves comparatively were held, *many acts of atrocious cruelty* were perpetrated. I have seen *aged, gray-headed slaves stripped, tied up, and whipped with a cowhide, forty or fifty lashes, for no fault but absence for a few minutes too long when wanted.* Such things I call *cruelty, but they pass among slave-holders for nothing.*"

Dated Hillsborough, Ohio, 1st of 1st mo., 1835.

A NARRATIVE
OF THE
ADVENTURES AND ESCAPE
OF
MOSES ROPER,
FROM
AMERICAN SLAVERY;
WITH A PREFACE,
BY THE REV. T. PRICE, D. D.

“Slaves cannot breathe in England ; if their lungs
Receive our air, that moment they are free ;
They touch our country, and their shackles fall.
That’s noble ! and bespeaks a nation proud
And jealous of the blessing. Spread it, then,
And let it circulate through ev’ry vein.”

FIRST AMERICAN, FROM THE LONDON EDITION.

PHILADELPHIA :
PRINTED BY MERRIHEW AND GUNN,
No. 7 Carter’s Alley.

.....
1838.

P R E F A C E .

THE following narrative was to have appeared under the auspices of the Rev. Dr. Morison, of Chelsea, whose generous exertions on behalf of Moses Roper have entitled him to the admiration and gratitude of every philanthropist. But the illness of the doctor having prevented him from reading the manuscript, I have been requested to supply his lack of service. To this request I assent reluctantly, as the narrative would have derived a fuller sanction and wider currency, had circumstances permitted the original purpose to be carried out. Moses Roper was introduced to Dr. Morison, by an eminent American abolitionist, in a letter, dated November 9th, 1835, in which honorable testimony is borne to his general character, and the soundness of his religious profession. "He has spent about ten days in my house," says Dr. Morison's correspondent, "I have watched him attentively, and have no doubt that he is an excellent young man—that he possesses uncommon intelligence, sincere piety, and a strong desire to preach the gospel. He can tell you his own story better than any one else, and I believe

that if he should receive an education, he would be able to counteract the false and wicked misrepresentations of American slavery, which are made in your country by our Priests and Levites who visit you."

Dr. Morison, as might have been anticipated from his well-known character, heartily responded to the appeal of his American correspondent. He sent his letter to the Patriot newspaper, remarking, in his own communication to the editor, "I have seen Moses Roper, the fugitive slave. He comes to this country, as you will perceive, well authenticated as to character and religious standing; and my anxiety is, that the means may forthwith be supplied by some of your generous readers, for placing him in some appropriate seminary, for the improvement of his mind, that he may be trained for future usefulness in the church. His thirst for knowledge is great; and he may yet become a most important agent in liberating his country from the curse of slavery."

Moses Roper brought with him to this country several other testimonies, from persons residing in different parts of the States; but it is unnecessary to extend this Preface by quoting them. They all speak the same language, and bear unequivocal witness to his sobriety, intelligence, and honesty.

He is now in the land of freedom, and is earnestly desirous of availing himself of the advantages of his position.

His great ambition is to be qualified for usefulness amongst his own people; and the progress he has already made, justifies the belief, that, if the means of education can be secured for a short time longer, he will be eminently qualified to instruct the children of Africa in the truths of the gospel of Christ. He has drawn up the following narrative, partly with the hope of being assisted in this legitimate object, and partly to engage the sympathies of our countrymen on behalf of his oppressed brethren. I trust, that he will not be disappointed in either of these expectations, but that all the friends of humanity and religion among us will cheerfully render him their aid, by promoting the circulation of his volume. Should this be done to the extent that is quite possible, the difficulties now lying in his way will be removed.

Of the narrative itself, it is not necessary that I should say much. It is his own production, and carries with it internal evidence of truth. Some of its statements will probably startle those readers who are unacquainted with the details of the slave system; but no such feeling will be produced in any who are conversant with the practice of slavery, whether in America or in our own colonies. There is no vice too loathsome—no passion too cruel or remorseless, to be engendered by this horrid system. It brutalizes all who administer it, and seeks to efface the likeness of God, stamped on the brow of its victims. It

makes the former class demons, and reduces the latter to the level of brutes.

I could easily adduce from the records of our own slave system, as well as from those of America, several instances of equal atrocity to any which Moses Roper has recorded. But this is unnecessary, and I shall therefore merely add the unqualified expression of my own confidence in the truth of his narrative, and my strong recommendation of it to the patronage of the British Public.

THOMAS PRICE.

Hackney, July 22d.

INTRODUCTION.

THE determination of laying this little narrative before the public, did not arise from any desire to make myself conspicuous, but with the view of exposing the cruel system of slavery, as will here be laid before my readers; from the urgent calls of nearly all the friends to whom I had related any part of the story, and also from the recommendation of anti-slavery meetings, which I have attended, through the suggestion of many warm friends of the cause of the oppressed.

The general narrative, I am aware, may seem to many of my readers, and especially to those who have not been before put in possession of the actual features of this accursed system, somewhat at variance with the dictates of humanity. But the facts related here, do not come before the reader unsubstantiated by collateral evidence, nor highly colored to the disadvantage of cruel task-masters.

My readers may be put in possession of facts respecting this system which equal in cruelty my own narrative, on an authority which may be investigated with the greatest

satisfaction. Besides which, this little book will not be confined to a small circle of my own friends in London, or even in England. The slaveholder, the colonizationist, and even Mr. Gooch himself, will be able to obtain this document, and be at liberty to draw from it whatever they are honestly able, in order to set me down as the tool of a party. Yea, even friend Breckenridge, a gentleman known at Glasgow, will be able to possess this, and to draw from it all the forcible arguments on his own side, which in his wisdom, honesty, and candor, he may be able to adduce.

The earnest wish to lay this narrative before my friends as an impartial statement of facts, has led me to develope some part of my conduct which I now deeply deplore. The ignorance in which the poor slaves are kept by their masters, precludes almost the possibility of their being alive to any moral duties.

With these remarks, I leave the statement before the public. May this little volume be the instrument of opening the eyes of the ignorant to this system—of convincing the wicked, cruel, and hardened slaveholder—and of befriending generally the cause of oppressed humanity.

MOSES ROPER.

London, June 28, 1837.

ESCAPE, &c.

I WAS born in North Carolina, in Caswell county. I am not able to tell in what year or month. What I shall now relate, is what was told me by my mother and grandmother. A few months before I was born, my father married my mother's young mistress. As soon as my father's wife heard of my birth, she sent one of my mother's sisters to see whether I was white or black, and when my aunt had seen me, she returned back as soon as she could, and told her mistress that I was white, and resembled Mr. Roper very much. Mr. R.'s wife being not pleased with this report, she got a large club stick and knife, and hastened to the place in which my mother was confined. She went into my mother's room with full intention to murder me with her knife and club, but as she was going to stick the knife into me, my grandmother happening to come in, caught the knife and saved my life. But as well as I can recollect from what my mother told me, my father sold her and myself soon after her confinement. I cannot recollect any thing that is worth notice till I was six or seven years old. My mother being half white and my father a white man, I was

at that time very white. Soon after I was six or seven years of age, my mother's old master died, that is my father's wife's father. All his slaves had to be divided among the children.* I have mentioned before of my father disposing of me; I am not sure whether he exchanged me and my mother for another slave or not, but think it very likely he did exchange me with one of his wife's brothers or sisters, because I remember when my mother's old master died, I was living with my father's wife's brother-in-law, whose name was Mr. Durham. My mother was drawn with the other slaves.

The way they divide their slaves is this: they write the names of different slaves on a small piece of paper, and put it into a box and let them all draw. I think that Mr. Durham drew my mother, and Mr. Fowler drew me, so we were separated a considerable distance, I cannot say how far. My resembling my father so very much, and being whiter than the other slaves, caused me to be soon sold to what they call a negro trader, who took me to the Southern States of America, several hundred miles from my mother. As well as I can recollect, I was then about six years old. The trader, Mr. Michael, after travelling several hundred miles, and selling a good

* Slaves are usually a part of the marriage portion, but lent rather than given, to be returned to the estate at the decease of the father, in order that they may be divided equally among his children.

many of his slaves, found he could not sell me very well, (as I was so much whiter than the other slaves were,) for he had been trying several months—left me with a Mr. Sneed, who kept a large boarding house, who took me to wait at table, and sell me if he could. I think I stayed with Mr. Sneed about a year, but he could not sell me. When Mr. Michael had sold his slaves, he went to the North and brought up another drove, and returned to the South with them, and sent his son-in-law into Washington, in Georgia, after me, so he came and took me from Mr. Sneed, and met his father-in-law with me, in a town called Lancaster, with his drove of slaves. We stayed in Lancaster a week, because it was court week, and there were a great many people there, and it was a good opportunity for selling the slaves, and there he was enabled to sell me to a gentleman, Dr. Jones, who was both a doctor and a cotton planter. He took me into his shop to beat up and to mix medicines, which was not a very hard employment, but I did not keep it long, as the doctor soon sent me to his cotton plantation that I might be burnt darker by the sun. He sent for me to be with a tailor to learn the trade, but all the journeymen being white men, Mr. Bryant, the tailor, did not let me work in the shop; I cannot say whether it was the prejudice of his journeymen in not wanting me to sit in the shop with them, or whether Mr. Bryant wanted to keep me about the house to do the

domestic work instead of teaching me the trade. After several months my master came to know how I got on with the trade: I am not able to tell Mr. Bryant's answer, but it was either that I could not learn, or that his journeymen were not willing that I should sit in the shop with them. I was only once in the shop all the time I was there, and then only for an hour or two, before his wife called me out to do some other work. So my master took me home, and as he was going to send a load of cotton to Camden, about forty miles distance, he sent me with the bales of cotton to be sold with it, where I was soon sold to a gentleman named Allen; but Mr. Allen soon exchanged me for a female slave to please his wife. The traders who bought me were named Cooper and Linsey, who took me for sale, but could not sell me, people objecting to my being rather white. They then took me to the city of Fayetteville, North Carolina, where he swapped me for a boy that was blacker than me, to Mr. Smith, who lived several miles off.

I was with Mr. Smith nearly a year. I arrived at the first knowledge of my age when I lived with him. I was then between twelve and thirteen years old; it was when President Jackson was elected the first time, and he has been president eight years, so I must be nearly twenty-one years of age. At this time I was quite a small boy, and was sold to Mr. Hodge, a negro trader. Here I began to enter into

hardships. After travelling several hundred miles, Mr. Hodge sold me to Mr. Gooch the cotton planter, Cashaw county, South Carolina ; he purchased me at a town called Liberty Hill, about three miles from his home. As soon as he had got home, he immediately put me on his cotton plantation to work and put me under overseers, gave me allowance of meat and bread with the other slaves, which was not half enough for me to live upon, and very laborious work ; here my heart was almost broke with grief at leaving my fellow slaves. Mr. Gooch did not mind my grief, for he flogged me nearly every day, and very severely. Mr. Gooch bought me for his son-in-law, Mr. Hammans, about five miles from his residence. This man had but two slaves besides myself ; he treated me very kindly for a week or two, but in summer when cotton was ready to hoe, he gave me task work connected with this department, which I could not get done, not having worked on cotton farms before. When I failed in my task, he commenced flogging me, and set me to work without any shirt, in the field in a very hot sun, in the month of July. In August, Mr. Condell, his overseer, gave me a task of pulling fodder ; having finished my task before night, I left the field ; the rain came on which soaked the fodder ; on discovering this he threatened to flog me for not getting in the fodder before the rain came. This was the first time I attempted to run away, knowing that I should

get a flogging. I was then between thirteen and fourteen years of age, I ran away to the woods half naked; I was caught by a slaveholder, who put me in Lancaster gaol. When they put slaves in gaol they advertise for their masters to own them; but if the master does not claim his slave in six months from the time of imprisonment, the slave is sold for gaol fees. When the slave runs away, the master always adopts a more vigorous system of flogging; this was the case in the present instance. After this, having determined from my youth to gain my freedom, I made several attempts, was caught, and got a severe flogging of 100 lashes each time. Mr. Hammans was a very severe and cruel master, and his wife still worse; she used to tie me up and flog me while naked.

After Mr. Hammans saw that I was determined to die in the woods, and not live with him, he tried to obtain a piece of land from his father-in-law, Mr. Gooch; not having the means of purchasing it, he exchanged me for the land.

As soon as Mr. Gooch had possession of me again, knowing that I was averse to going back to him, he chained me by the neck to his chaise. In this manner he took me to his home at MacDaniel's Ferry, in the county of Chester, a distance of fifteen miles. After which, he put me into a swamp, to cut trees, the heaviest work which men of twenty-five or thirty years of age have to do, I being but

sixteen. Here I was on very short allowance of food, and having heavy work, was too weak to fulfil my tasks. For this I got many severe floggings; and, after I had got my irons off, I made another attempt at running away. He took my irons off in the full anticipation that I could never get across the Catauba river, even when at liberty. On this I procured a small Indian canoe, which was tied to a tree, and ultimately got across the river in it. I then wandered through the wilderness for several days without any food, and but a drop of water to allay my thirst, till I became so starved, that I was obliged to go to a house to beg for something to eat, when I was captured, and again imprisoned.

Mr. Gooch having heard of me through an advertisement, sent his son after me; he tied me up, and took me back to his father. Mr. Gooch then obtained the assistance of another slaveholder, and tied me up in his blacksmith's shop, and gave me fifty lashes with a cow hide. He then put a long chain, weighing twenty-five pounds, round my neck, and sent me into a field, into which he followed me with the cow hide, intending to set his slaves to flog me again. Knowing this, and dreading to suffer again in this way, I gave him the slip, and got out of his sight, he having stopped to speak with the other slaveholder.

I got to a canal on the Catauba river, on the banks of which, and near to a lock, I procured a

stone and a piece of iron, with which I forced the ring off my chain, and got it off, and then crossed the river, and walked about twenty miles, when I fell in with a slaveholder named Ballad, who had married the sister of Mr. Hammans. I knew that he was not so cruel as Mr. Gooch, and, therefore, begged of him to buy me. Mr. Ballad, who was one of the best planters in the neighborhood, said, that he was not able to buy me, and stated that he was obliged to take me back to my master, on account of the heavy fine attaching to a man harboring a slave. Mr. Ballad proceeded to take me back; as we came in sight of Mr. Gooch's, all the treatment that I had met with there came forcibly upon my mind, the powerful influence of which is beyond description. On my knees, with tears in my eyes, with terror in my countenance, and fervency in all my features, I implored Mr. Ballad to buy me, but he again refused, and I was taken back to my dreaded and cruel master. Having reached Mr. Gooch's, he proceeded to punish me. This he did by first tying my wrists together and placing them over the knees, he then put a stick through, under my knees and over my arms, and having thus secured my arms, he proceeded to flog me, and gave me 500 lashes on the bare back! This may appear incredible, but the marks which they left at present remain on my body a standing testimony to the truth of this statement of his severity. He then chained me down in

a log-pen with a forty pound chain, and made me lie on the damp earth all night. In the morning, after his breakfast, he came to me, and without giving me any breakfast, tied me to a large heavy barrow, which is usually drawn by a horse, and made me drag it to the cotton field for the horse to use in the field. Thus, the reader will see, that it was of no possible use to my master to make me drag it to the field and not through it; his cruelty went so far as actually to make me the slave of his horse, and thus to degrade me. He then flogged me again, and set me to work in the corn field the whole of that day, and at night chained me down in the log-pen as before. The next morning, he took me to the cotton field, and gave me a third flogging, and set me to hoe cotton. At this time, I was dreadfully sore and weak with the repeated foggings and harsh treatment I had endured. He put me under a black man, with orders, that if I did not keep my row up in hoeing with this man, he was to flog me. The reader must recollect here, that not being used to this kind of work, having been a domestic slave, it was quite impossible for me to keep up with him, and, therefore, I was repeatedly flogged during the day.

Mr. Gooch had a female slave about eighteen years old, who had also been a domestic slave, and through not being able to fulfil her task, had run away; which slave he was at this time punishing for that offence. On the third day, he chained me to this

female slave with a large chain of forty pounds weight, round the neck. It was most harrowing to my feelings, thus to be chained to a young female slave, for whom I would rather have suffered 100 lashes than she should have been thus treated ; he kept me chained to her during the week, and repeatedly flogged us both while thus chained together, and forced us to keep up with the other slaves, although retarded by the heavy weight of the log chain.

Here again words are insufficient to describe the misery which possessed both body and mind whilst under this treatment, and which was most dreadfully increased by the sympathy which I felt for my poor degraded fellow sufferer. On the Friday morning, I entreated my master to set me free from my chains, and promised him to do the task which was given me, and more, if possible, if he would desist from flogging me. This he refused to do until Saturday night, when he did set me free. This must rather be ascribed to his own interest in preserving me from death, as it was very evident I could no longer have survived under such treatment.

After this, though still determined in my own mind to escape, I stayed with him several months, during which he frequently flogged me, but not so severely as before related. During this time I had opportunity for recovering my health, and using means to heal my wounds. My master's cruelty

was not confined to me, it was his general conduct to all his slaves. I might relate many instances to substantiate this, but will confine myself to one or two. Mr. Gooch, it is proper to observe, was a member of a Baptist church, called Black Jack Meeting House, in Cashaw county, which church I attended for several years, but was never inside. This is accounted for by the fact, that the colored population are not permitted to mix with the white population. Mr. Gooch had a slave named Phil,* who was a member of a Methodist church; this man was between seventy and eighty years of age; he was so feeble that he could not accomplish his tasks, for which his master used to chain him round the neck, and run him down a steep hill; this treatment he never relinquished to the time of his death. Another case, was that of a slave named Peter, who, for not doing his task, he flogged nearly to death, and afterwards pulled out his pistol to shoot him, but his (Mr. Gooch's) daughter snatched the pistol from his hand. Another mode of punishment which this man adopted was, that of using iron horns, with bells, attached to the back of the slave's neck.

This instrument he used to prevent the negroes running away, being a very ponderous machine seven feet in height, and the cross pieces being two feet four, and six feet in length. This custom is

* This is an abbreviation of Phillip.

generally adopted among the slaveholders in South Carolina, and some other slave states. One morning, about an hour before day break, I was going on an errand for my master, having proceeded about a quarter of a mile, I came up to a man named King, (Mr. Sumlin's overseer,) who had caught a young girl that had run away with the above described machine on her. She had proceeded four miles from her station with the intention of getting into the hands of a more humane master. She came up with this overseer, nearly dead, and could get no farther; he immediately secured her, and took her back to her master, a Mr. Johnston.

Having been in the habit of going over many slaves states with my master, I had good opportunities of witnessing the harsh treatment which was adopted by masters towards their slaves. As I have never read nor heard of any thing connected with slavery so cruel as what I have myself witnessed, it will be well to mention a case or two.

A large farmer, Col. M'Quiller, in Cashaw county, South Carolina, was in the habit of driving nails into a hogshead so as to leave the point of the nail just protruding in the inside of the cask; into this he used to put his slaves for punishment, and roll them down a very long and steep hill. I have heard from several slaves (though I had no means of ascertaining the truth of the statement) that in this way he killed six or seven of his slaves. This plan was

first adopted by a Mr. Perry, who lived on the Catauba river, and has since been adopted by several planters. Another was that of a young lad, who had been hired by Mr. Bell, a member of a Methodist church, to hoe three-quarters of an acre of cotton per day. Having been brought up as a domestic slave, he was not able to accomplish the task assigned to him. On the Saturday night, he left three or four rows to do on the Sunday ; on the same night it rained very hard, by which the master could tell that he had done some of the rows on Sunday. On Monday his master took and tied him up to a tree in the field, and kept him there the whole of that day, and flogged him at intervals. At night, when he was taken down he was so weak that he could not get home, having a mile to go. Two white men, who were employed by Mr. Bell, put him on a horse, took him home, and threw him down on the kitchen floor, while they proceeded to their supper. In a little time they heard some deep groans proceeding from the kitchen ; they went to see him die ; he had groaned his last. Thus, Mr. Bell flogged this poor boy even to death ; for what ? For breaking the Sabbath, when he (his master) had set him a task on Saturday which it was not possible for him to do, and which, if he did not do, no mercy would be extended towards him. So much for the regard of this Methodist for the observance of the Sabbath. The general custom in this respect is,

that if a man kills his own slave, no notice is taken of it by the civil functionaries ; but if a man kills a slave belonging to another master, he is compelled to pay the worth of the slave. In this case, a jury met, returned a verdict of "wilful murder" against this man, and ordered him to pay the value. Mr. Bell was unable to do this, but a Mr. Cunningham paid the debt, and took this Mr. Bell, with this recommendation for cruelty, to be his overseer.

It will be observed, that most of the cases here cited are those in respect to males. Many instances, however, in respect to females might be mentioned, but are too disgusting to appear in this narrative. The cases here brought forward are not rare, but the continued feature of slavery. But I must now follow up the narrative as regards myself in particular. I stayed with this master for several months, during which time we went on very well in general. In August, 1831, (this was my first acquaintance with any date,) I happened to hear a man mention this date, and as it excited my curiosity, I asked what it meant ? They told me it was the number of the year from the birth of Christ. On this date, August, 1831, some cows broke into a crib where the corn is kept, and ate a great deal. For this his slaves were tied up and received several floggings ; but myself and another man hearing the groans of those who were being flogged, stayed back in the field, and would not come up. Upon this I thought

to escape punishment. On the Monday morning, however, I heard my master flogging the other man who was in the field ; he could not see me, it being a field of Indian corn, which grows to a great height. Being afraid that he would catch me, and dreading a flogging more than many others, I determined to run for it, and after travelling forty miles I arrived at the estate of Mr. Crawford, in North Carolina, Mecklinburgh county. Having formerly heard people talk about the Free States, I determined upon going thither, and if possible, in my way, to find out my poor mother who was in slavery several hundred miles from Chester ; but the hope of doing the latter was very faint, and even if I did, it was not likely that she would know me, having been separated from her when between five and six years old.

The first night I slept in a barn upon Mr. Crawford's estate, and, having overslept myself, was awoke by Mr. Crawford's overseer, upon which I was dreadfully frightened. He asked me what I was doing there ? I made no reply to him then, and he, making sure that he had secured a run-a-way slave, did not press me for an answer. On my way to his house, however, I made up the following story, which I told him in the presence of his wife :—I said, that I had been bound to a very cruel master when I was a little boy, and that having been treated very badly, I wanted to get home to see my mother.

This statement may appear to some to be a direct lie, but as I understood the word *bound*, I considered it to apply to my case, having been sold to him, and thereby bound to serve him; though still, I did rather hope that he would understand it, that I was bound, when a boy, till twenty-one years of age. Though I was white at that time, he would not believe my story, on account of my hair being curly and woolly, which led him to conclude I was possessed of enslaved blood. The overseer's wife, however, who seemed much interested in me, said she did not think I was of African origin, and that she had seen white men still darker than me; her persuasion prevailed; and after the overseer had given me as much butter-milk as I could drink, and something to eat, which was very acceptable, having had nothing for two days, I set off for Charlotte in North Carolina, the largest town in the county. I went on very quickly the whole of that day, fearful of being pursued. The trees were very thick on each side of the road, and only a few houses at the distance of two or three miles apart: as I proceeded I turned round in all directions to see if I was pursued, and if I caught a glimpse of any one coming along the road, I immediately rushed into the thickest part of the wood to elude the grasp, of what I was afraid might be my master. I went on this way the whole day; at night I came up with two waggons, they had been to market, the regular road

waggons do not generally put up at inns, but encamp in the roads and fields. When I came to them, I told them the same story I had told Mr. Crawford's overseer, with the assurance that the statement would meet the same success. After they had heard me, they gave me something to eat and also a lodging in the camp with them.

I then went on with them about five miles, and they agreed to take me with them as far as they went, if I would assist them. This I promised to do. In the morning, however, I was much frightened by one of the men putting several questions to me—we were then about three miles from Charlotte. When within a mile of that town, we stopped at a brook to water the horses; while stopping here, I saw the men whispering, and fancying I overheard them say they would put me in Charlotte gaol, when they got there, I made my escape into the woods, pretending to be looking after something till I got out of their sight. I then ran on as fast as I could, but did not go through the town of Charlotte as had been my intention; being a large town, I was fearful it might prove fatal to my escape. Here I was at a loss how to get on, as houses were not very distant from each other for near 200 miles.

While thinking what I should do, I observed some waggons before, which I determined to keep behind, and never go nearer to them than a quarter of a mile—in this way I travelled till I got to Salisbury.

If I happened to meet any person on the road, I was afraid they would take me up, I asked them how far the waggons had got on before me, to make them suppose I belonged to the waggons. At night, I slept on the ground in the woods, some little distance from the waggons, but not near enough to be seen by the men belonging to them. All this time I had but little food, principally fruit, which I found on the road. On Thursday night, I got into Salisbury, having left Chester on the Monday morning preceding. After this, being afraid my master was in pursuit of me, I left the usual line of road and took another direction, through Huntsville and Salem, principally through fields and woods ; on my way to Caswell Court House, a distance of nearly 200 miles from Salisbury, I was stopped by a white man, to whom I told my old story, and again succeeded in my escape. I also came up with a small cart, driven by a poor man who had been moving into some of the western territories, and was going back to Virginia to move some more of his luggage. On this, I told him I was going the same way to Hilton, thirteen miles from Caswell Court House ; he took me up in his cart and we went to the Red House, two miles from Hilton, the place where Mr. Mitchell took me from when six years old, to go to the Southern States. This was a very providential circumstance, for it happened that at the time I had to pass through Caswell Court House, a fair or

election was going on, which caused the place to be much crowded with people, and rendered it more dangerous for me to pass through.

At the Red House I left the cart and wandered about a long time, not knowing which way to go to find my mother. After some time, I took the road leading over Ikeo creek. I shortly came up with a little girl about six years old, and asked her where she was going, she said to her mother's, pointing to a house on a hill about half a mile off. She had been to the overseer's house, and was returning to her mother. I then felt some emotions arising in my breast, which I cannot describe, but will be fully explained in the sequel. I told her that I was very thirsty, and would go with her to get something to drink. On our way, I asked her several questions, such as her name, that of her mother; she said hers was Maria, and her mother's Nancy. I inquired if her mother had any more children? she said five besides herself, and that they had been told that one had been sold when a little boy. I then asked the name of this child; she said it was Moses. These answers, as we approached the house, led me nearer and nearer to the finding out the object of my pursuit, and of recognising in the little girl the person of my own sister. At last I got to my mother's house!! my mother was at home, I asked her if she knew me? she said no. Her master was having a house built just by, and the men were digging a

well, she supposed that I was one of the diggers. I told her I knew her very well, and thought that if she looked at me a little she would know me, but this had no effect. I then asked her if she had any sons ? she said yes ; but none so large as me. I then waited a few minutes, and narrated some circumstances to her, attending my being sold into slavery, and how she grieved at my loss. Here the mother's feelings on that dire occasion, and which a mother only can know, rushed to her mind : she saw her own son before her, for whom she had so often wept ; and in an instant we were clasped in each others arms, amidst the ardent interchange of caresses and tears of joy. Ten years had elapsed since I had seen my dear mother. My own feelings, and the circumstances attending my coming home, have often been brought to mind since, on a perusal of the 42nd, 43rd, 44th, and 45th chapters of Genesis. What could picture my feelings so well, as I once more beheld the mother who had brought me into the world and had nourished me, not with the anticipation of my being torn from her maternal care when only six years old, to become the prey of a mercenary and blood-stained slaveholder ; I say, what picture so vivid in description of this part of my tale, as the 7th and 8th verses of the 42nd chapter of Genesis ; " And Joseph saw his brethren and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them. And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not

him." After the first emotion of the mother, on recognising her first born, had somewhat subsided, could the reader not fancy the little one, my sister, as she told her simple tale of meeting with me to her mother, how she would say, while the parent listened with intense interest, "The man asked me straitly of our state and of our kindred, saying, is your father yet alive, and have ye another brother?" Or, when at last, I could no longer refrain from making myself known, I say I was ready to burst into a frenzy of joy. How applicable the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd verses of the 45th chapter: "Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him, and he wept aloud, and said unto his brethren, I am Joseph, doth my father still live?" Then when the mother knew her son, when the brothers and sisters owned their brother; "he kissed all his brethren and wept over them, and after that his brethren talked with him," 15th verse. At night, my mother's husband, a black-smith, belonging to Mr. Jefferson, at the Red House, came home, he was surprised to see me with the family, not knowing who I was. He had been married to my mother when I was a babe, and had always been very fond of me. After the same tale had been told him, and the same emotions filled his soul, he again kissed the object of his early affection. The next morning I wanted to go on my journey, in order to make sure of my escape to the free states. But, as might be expected,

my mother, father, brothers, and sisters, could ill part with their long lost one, and persuaded me to go into the woods in the day time, and at night come home and sleep there. This I did for about a week: on the next Sunday night, I had laid me down to sleep between my two brothers, on a pallet which my mother had prepared for me; about twelve o'clock, I was suddenly awoke, and found my bed surrounded by twelve slaveholders with pistols in hand, who took me away (not allowing me to bid farewell to those I loved so dearly) to the Red House, where they confined me in a room the rest of the night, and in the morning lodged me in the gaol of Caswell Court House.

What was the scene at home, what sorrow possessed their hearts, I am unable to describe, as I never after saw any of them more. I heard, however, that my mother, who was in the family-way when I went home, was soon after confined, and was very long before she recovered the effects of this disaster. I was told afterwards, that some of those men who took me, were professing Christians, but to me they did not seem to live up to what they professed; they did not seem, by their practices, at least, to recognise that God as their God, who hath said, "Thou shalt not deliver unto his master, the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee, he shall dwell with thee, even among you, in that place which he shall choose, in

one of thy gates, where it liketh him best; thou shalt not oppress him."—Deut. xxiii. 15, 16.

I was confined here in a dungeon under ground, the grating of which looked to the door of the gaoler's house. His wife had a great antipathy to me. She was Mr. Roper's wife's cousin. My grandmother used to come to me nearly every day, and bring me something to eat, besides the regular gaol allowance, by which my sufferings were somewhat decreased. Whenever the gaoler went out, which he often did, his wife used to come to my dungeon and shut the wooden door over the grating, by which I was nearly suffocated, the place being very damp and noisome. My master did not hear of my being in gaol for thirty-one days after I had been placed there. He immediately sent his son, and son-in-law, Mr. Anderson, after me. They came in a horse and chaise, took me from the gaol to a blacksmith's shop, and got an iron collar fitted round my neck, with a heavy chain attached, then tied up my hands, and fastened the other end of the chain on another horse, and put me on its back. Just before we started, my grandmother came to bid me farewell; I gave her my hand as well as I could, and she having given me two or three presents, we parted. I had felt enough, far too much, for the weak state I was in; but how shall I describe my feelings upon parting with the *last* relative that I ever saw. The reader must judge by what would be his own

feelings under similar circumstances. We then went on for fifty miles ; I was very weak, and could hardly sit on the horse. Having been in prison so long, I had lost the Southern tan ; and, as the people could not see my hair, having my hat on, they thought I was a white man—a criminal—and asked what crime I had committed. We arrived late at night at the house of Mr. Britton. I shall never forget the journey that night. The thunder was one continued roar, and the lightning blazing all around. I expected every minute that my iron collar would attract it, and I should be knocked off the horse and dragged along the ground. This gentleman, a year or two before, had liberated his slaves, and sent them into Ohio, having joined the Society of Friends, which society does not allow the holding of slaves. I was, therefore, treated very well there, and they gave me a hearty supper, which did me much good in my weak state.

They secured me in the night by locking me to the post of the bed on which they slept. The next morning we went on to Salisbury. At that place we stopped to water the horses ; they chained me to a tree in the yard, by the side of their chaise. On my horse they had put the saddle bags which contained the provisions. As I was in the yard, a black man came and asked me what I had been doing ; I told him I had run away from my master, after which he told me several tales about the slaves, and

among them, he mentioned the case of a Quaker, who was then in prison, waiting to be hung, for giving a free pass to a slave. I had been considering all the way how I could escape from my horse, and once had an idea of cutting his head off, but thought it too cruel, and at last thought of trying to get a rasp and cut the chain by which I was fastened to the horse. As they often let me get on nearly a quarter of a mile before them, I thought I should have a good opportunity of doing this without being seen. The black man procured me a rasp, and I put it into the saddle bags which contained the provisions. We then went on our journey, and one of the sons asked me if I wanted any thing to eat; I answered no, though very hungry at the time, as I was afraid of their going to the bags and discovering the rasp. However, they had not had their own meal at the inn, as I supposed, and went to the bags to supply themselves, where they discovered the rasp. Upon this, they fastened my horse beside the horse in their chaise, and kept a stricter watch over me. Nothing remarkable occurred till we got within eight miles of Mr. Gooch's, where we stopped a short time; and taking advantage of their absence, I broke a switch from some boughs above my head, lashed my horse, and set off at full speed. I had got about a quarter of a mile before they could get their horse loose from the chaise, one then rode the horse, and the other ran as fast as he could after

me. When I caught sight of them, I turned off the main road into the woods, hoping to escape their sight; their horse, however, being much swifter than mine, they soon got within a short distance of me. I then came to a rail fence, which I found it very difficult to get over, but breaking several rails away, I effected my object. They then called upon me so stop, more than three times, and I not doing so, they fired after me, but the pistol only snapped. This is according to law; after three calls they may shoot a runaway slave. Soon after, the one on the horse came up with me, and catching hold of the bridle of my horse, pushed the pistol to my side, the other soon came up, and breaking off several stout branches from the trees, they gave me about 100 blows. They did this very near to a planter's house, the gentleman was not at home, but his wife came out, and begged them not to *kill* me *so near the house*; they took no notice of this, but kept on beating me. They then fastened me to the axle-tree of their chaise, one of them got into the chaise, the other took my horse, and they run me all the eight miles as fast as they could, the one on my horse going behind to guard me. In this way we came to my old master, Mr. Gooch. The first person I saw was himself, he unchained me from the chaise, and and, at first, seemed to treat me very gently, asking me where I had been, &c. The first thing the sons did, was to show the rasp which I had got to cut

my chain. My master gave me a hearty dinner, the best he ever did give me, but it was to keep me from dying before he had given me all the flogging he intended. After dinner he took me to a log-house, stripped me quite naked, fastened a rail up very high, tied my hands to the rail, fastened my feet together, put a rail between my feet and stood on one end of it to hold it down, the two sons then gave me fifty lashes each, the eldest another fifty, and Mr. Gooch himself, fifty more. While doing this, his wife came out and begged him not to kill me, the first act of sympathy I ever noticed in her. When I called for water, they brought a pail full, and threw it over my back, ploughed up by the lashes. After this, they took me to the blacksmith's shop, got two large bars of iron, which they bent round my feet, each bar weighing twenty pounds, and put a heavy log-chain on my neck. This was on Saturday. On the Monday he chained me to the same female slave as before. As he had to go out that day, he did not give me the punishment which he intended to give me every day, but at night when he came home, he made us walk round his estate, and by all the houses of his slaves, for them to taunt us; when we came home he told us we must be up very early in the morning, and go to the fields before the other slaves. We were up at day break, but we could not get on fast, on account of the heavy irons on my feet. We walked about a

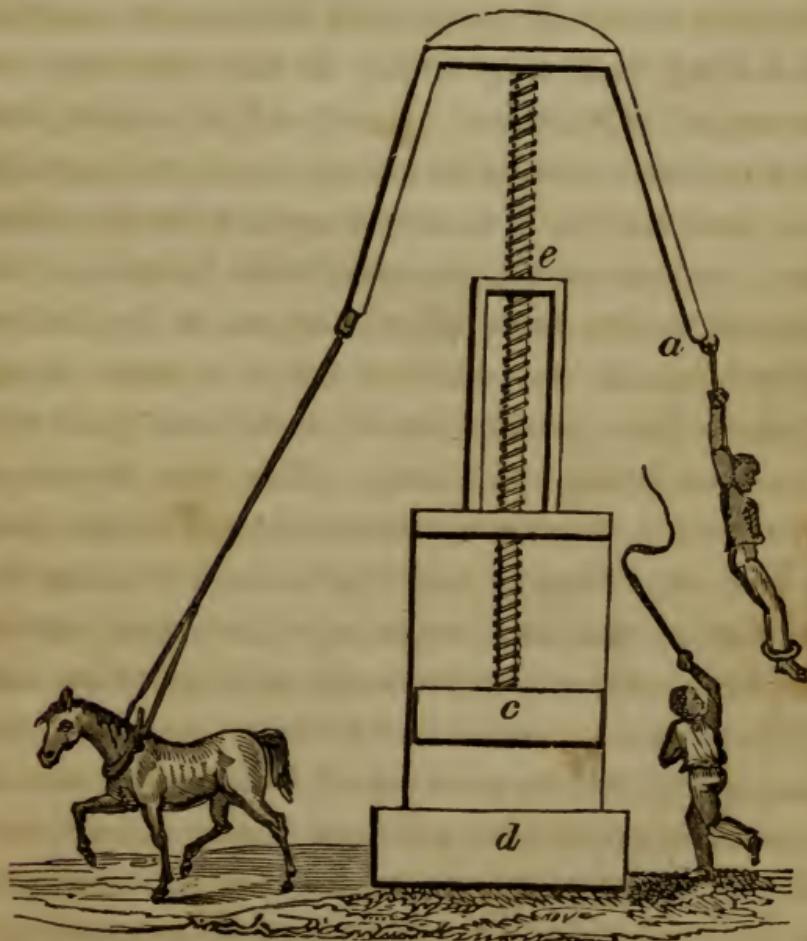
mile in two hours, but knowing the punishment he was going to inflict on us, we made up our minds to escape into the woods, and secrete ourselves. This we did, and he not being able to find us, sent all his slaves, about forty, and his sons, to find us, which they could not do, and about twelve o'clock, when we thought they would give up looking for us at that time, we went on and came to the banks of the Catauba. Here I got a stone, and prized the ring off the chain on her neck, and got it off, and as the chain round my neck was only passed through a ring, as soon as I had got hers off I slipped the chain through my ring and got it off my own neck. We then went on by the banks of the river for some distance, and found a little canoe about two feet wide. I managed to get in, although the irons on my feet made it very dangerous, for if I had upset the canoe I could not swim. The female got in after me, and gave me the paddles, by which we got some distance down the river. The current being very strong, it drove us against a small island; we paddled round the island to the other side, and then made towards the opposite bank. Here again we were stopped by the current, and made up to a large rock in the river, between the island and the opposite shore. As the weather was very rough, we landed on the rock and secured the canoe, as it was not possible to get back to the island. It was a very dark night, and rained tremendously, and as the

water was rising rapidly towards the top of the rock, we gave all up for lost, and sometimes hoped, and sometimes feared to hope, that we should never see the morning. But Providence was moving in our favor; the rain ceased, the water reached the edge of the rock, then receded, and we were out of danger from this cause. We remained all night upon the rock, and in the morning reached the opposite shore, and then made our way through the woods till we came to a field of Indian corn, where we plucked some of the green ears and eat them, having had nothing for two days and nights. We came to the estate of ——, where we met with a colored man who knew me, and, having run away himself from a bad master, he gave us some food, and told us we might sleep in the barn that night. Being very fatigued we over-slept ourselves; the proprietor came to the barn, but as I was in one corner under some Indian corn tops, and she in another, he did not perceive us, and we did not leave the barn before night, (Wednesday.) We then went out, got something to eat, and stayed about the estate till Sunday. On that day I met with some men, one of whom had had irons on his feet the same as me; he told me that his master was going out to see his friends, and that he would try and get my feet loose; for this purpose I parted with this female, fearing that if she were caught with me, she would be forced to tell who took my irons off. The man tried some time without

effect; he then gave me a file, and I tried myself, but was disappointed, on account of their thickness.

On the Monday I went on towards Lancaster, and got within three miles of it that night, and went towards the plantation of Mr. Crockett, as I knew some of his slaves, and hoped to get some food given me. When I got there, however, the dogs smelt me out and barked; upon which Mr. Crockett came out, followed me with his rifle and came up with me. He put me on a horse's back, which put me to extreme pain, from the great weight hanging from my feet. We reached Lancaster gaol that night, and he lodged me there. I was placed in the next dungeon to a man who was going to be hung. I shall never forget his cries and groans, as he prayed all night for the mercy of God. Mr. Gooch did not hear of me for several weeks: when he did, he sent his son-in-law, Mr. Anderson, after me. Mr. Gooch, himself, came within a mile of Lancaster, and waited until Mr. Anderson brought me. At this time I had but one of the irons on my feet, having got so thin round my ankles that I had slipped one off while in gaol. His son-in-law tied my hands, and made me walk along till we came to Mr. Gooch. As soon as we arrived at M'Daniel's Ford, two miles above the Ferry, on the Catauba River, they made me wade across, themselves going on horseback. The water was very deep, and having irons on one foot, and round my neck, I could not keep a footing. They dragged me along by my chain, floating on the

top of the water. It was as much as they could do to hold me by the chain, the current being very strong. They then took me home, flogged me, put extra irons on my neck and feet, and put me under the driver, with more work than ever I had before. He did not flog me so severely as before, but continued it every day. Among the instruments of torture employed, I here describe one:—



This is a machine used for packing and pressing cotton. By it he hung me up by the hands at letter *a*, a horse moving round the screw *e*, and carrying

it up and down, and pressing the block *c* into the box *d*, into which the cotton is put. At this time he hung me up for a quarter of an hour. I was carried up ten feet from the ground, when Mr. Gooch asked me if I was tired. He then let me rest for five minutes, then carried me round again, after which he let me down and put me into the box *d*, and shut me down in it for about ten minutes. After this torture, I stayed with him several months, and did my work very well. It was about the beginning of 1832, when he took off my irons, and being in dread of him, he having threatened me with more punishment, I attempted again to escape from him. At this time, I got into North Carolina; but a reward having been offered for me, a Mr. Robinson caught me, and chained me to a chair, upon which he sat up with me all night, and next day proceeded home with me. This was Saturday. Mr. Gooch had gone to church, several miles from his house. When he came back, the first thing he did, was to pour some tar on my head, then rubbed it all over my face, took a torch, with pitch on, and set it on fire; he put it out before it did me very great injury, but the pain which I endured was most excruciating, nearly all my hair having been burnt off. On Monday, he put irons on me again, weighing nearly fifty pounds. He threatened me again on the Sunday with another flogging: and on the Monday morning, before day break, I got away again,

with my irons on, and was about three hours going a distance of two miles. I had gone a good distance, when I met with a colored man, who got some wedges and took my irons off. However, I was caught again, and put into prison in Charlotte, where Mr. Gooch came, and took me back to Chester. He asked me how I got my irons off? They having been got off by a slave, I would not answer his question, for fear of getting the man punished. Upon this he put the fingers of my left hand into a vice, and squeezed all my nails off. He then had my feet put on an anvil, and ordered a man to beat my toes, till he smashed some of my nails off. The marks of this treatment still remain upon me, my nails never having grown perfect since. He inflicted this punishment in order to get out of me how I got my irons off, but never succeeded. After this, he hardly knew what to do with me ; the whole stock of his cruelties seemed to be exhausted. He chained me down in the log house. Soon after this, he sent a female slave to see if I was safe. Mr. Gooch had not secured me as he thought ; but had only run my chain through the ring without locking it. This I observed ; and while the slave was coming, I was employed in loosening the chain with the hand that was not wounded. As soon as I observed her coming, I drew the chain up tight, and she observing that I seemed fast, went away and told her master, who was in the field ordering the slaves. When

she was gone, I drew the chain through the ring, escaped under the flooring of the log house, and went on under his house, till I came out at the other side, and ran on ; but, being sore and weak, I had not got a mile before I was caught, and again carried back. He tied me up to a tree in the woods at night, and made his slaves flog me. I cannot say how many lashes I received ; but it was the worst flogging I ever had, and the last which Mr. Gooch ever gave me.

There are several circumstances which occurred on this estate while I was there, relative to other slaves, which it may be interesting to mention. Hardly a day ever passed without some one being flogged. To one of his female slaves he had given a dose of castor oil and salts, together, as much as she could take ; he then got a box, about six feet by two and a half, and one and a half feet deep ; he put this slave under the box, and made the men fetch as many stones as they could get, and put them on the top of it : under this, she was made to stay all night. I believe that if he had given this slave one, he had given her three thousand lashes. Mr. Gooch was a member of a Baptist church. His slaves thinking him a very bad sample of what a professing Christian ought to be, would not join the connexion he belonged to, thinking they must be a very bad set of people : there were many of them members of the Methodist church. On Sunday, the slaves can only go to church at the will of their

master, when he gives them a pass for the time they are to be out. If they are found by the patrol after the time to which their pass extends, they are severely flogged.

On Sunday nights, a slave, named Allen, used to come to Mr. Gooch's estate for the purpose of exhorting and praying with his brother slaves, by whose instrumentality many of them had been converted. One evening, Mr. Gooch caught them all in a room, turned Allen out, and threatened his slaves with one hundred lashes each if they ever brought him there again. At one time, Mr. Gooch was ill and confined to his room; if any of the slaves had done anything, which he thought deserving a flogging, he would have them brought into his bedroom and flogged before his eyes.

With respect to food, he used to allow us one peck of Indian meal each, per week, which, after being sifted and the bran taken from it, would not be much more than half a peck. Meat we did not get for sometimes several weeks together; however, he was proverbial for giving his slaves more food than any other slaveholder. I stayed with Mr. Gooch a year and a half. During that time, the scenes of cruelty I witnessed and experienced, are not at all fitted for these pages. There is much to excite disgust in what has been narrated, but hundreds of other cases might be mentioned. After this, Mr. Gooch, seeing that I was determined to get away from him, chained me, and sent me with another

female slave, whom he had treated very cruelly, to Mr. Britton, son of the before-mentioned, a slave dealer. We were to have gone to Georgia to be sold; but a bargain was struck before we arrived there. Mr. Britton had put chains on me to please Mr. Gooch; but having gone some little distance, we came up with a white man, who begged Mr. Britton to unchain me; he then took off my handcuffs. We then went on to Union Court House, where we met a drove of slaves; the driver came to me, and ultimately bought me, and sent me to his drove; the girl was sold to a planter in the neighborhood, as bad as Mr. Gooch. In court week, the negro traders and slaves encamp a little way out of the town. The traders here will often sleep with the best looking female slaves among them, and they will often have many children in the year, which are said to be slaveholder's children, by which means, through his villany, he will make an immense profit of this intercourse, by selling the babe with its mother. They often keep an immense stock of slaves on hand. Many of them, will be with the trader a year or more, before they are sold. Mr. Marcus Rowland, the drover who bought me, then returned with his slaves to his brother's house (Mr. John Rowland,) where he kept his drove, on his way to Virginia. He kept me as a kind of servant. I had to grease the faces of the blacks every morning with sweet oil, to make them shine before they are put up to sell. After he had been round several

weeks and sold many slaves, he left me and some more at his brother's house, while he went on to Washington, about 600 miles, to buy some more slaves, the drove having got very small. We were treated very well while there, having plenty to eat, and little work to do, in order to make us fat. I was brought up more as a domestic slave, as they generally prefer slaves of my color for that purpose. When Mr. Rowland came back, having been absent about five months, he found all the slaves well, except one female, who had been grieving very much at being parted from her parents, and at last died of grief. He dressed us very nicely, and went on again. I travelled with him for a year, and had to look over the slaves, and see that they were dressed well, had plenty of food, and to oil their faces. During this time, we stopped once at White House church, a Baptist association; a protracted camp meeting was holding there, on the plan of the revival meetings in this country. We got there at the time of the meeting, and sold two female slaves on the Sunday morning, at the time the meeting broke up, to a gentleman who had been attending the meeting the whole of the week. While I was with Mr. Rowland, we were at many such meetings, and the members of the churches are by this means so well influenced towards their fellow creatures, at these meetings for the worship of God, that it becomes a fruitful season for the drover, who carries on immense traffic with the attendants at these places.

This is common to Baptists and Methodists. At the end of the year, he exchanged me to a farmer, Mr. David Goodley, for a female slave, in Greenville, about fourteen miles from Greenville Court House. The gentleman was going to Missouri to settle, and on his way had to pass through Ohio, a free state. But, having learnt, after he bought me, that I had before tried to get away to the free states, he was afraid to take me with him, and I was again exchanged to a Mr. Marvel Louis. He was in the habit of travelling a great deal, and took me as a domestic slave to wait on him. Mr. Louis boarded at the house of Mr. Clevelin, a very rich planter at Greenville, South Carolina. Mr. L. was paying his addresses to the daughter of this gentleman, but was surprised and routed in his approaches, by a Colonel Dorkin, of Union Court House, who ultimately carried her off in triumph. After this, Mr. Louis took to drinking, to drown his recollection of disappointed love. One day he went to Pendleton Races, and I waited on the road for him ; returning intoxicated, he was thrown from his horse into a brook, and was picked up by a gentleman, and taken to an inn, and I went there to take care of him. Next day he went on to Punkintown with Mr. Warren R. Davis, a member of Congress ; I went with him. This was at the time of the agitation of the Union and Nullifying party, which was expected to end in a general war. The Nullifying party had a grand dinner on the occasion, after which,

they gave their slaves all the refuse, for the purpose of bribing them to fight on the side of their party. The scene on this occasion was most humorous, all the slaves scrambling after bare bones and crumbs, as if they had had nothing for months. When Mr. Louis had got over this fit of drunkenness, we returned to Greenville, where I had little to do, except in the warehouse. There was preaching in the court house on the Sunday ; but scarcely had the sweet savor of the worship of God passed away, when, on Monday, a public auction was held for the sale of slaves, cattle, sugar, iron, &c., by Z. Davis, the high constable, and others.

On these days, I was generally very busy in handing out the different articles for inspection, and was employed in this way for several months ; after which, Mr. Louis left this place for Pendleton ; but his health getting worse, and fast approaching consumption, he determined to travel. I went with him over Georgia to the Indian springs, and from there to Columbus ; here he left me with Lawyer Kemp, a member of the State Assembly, to take care of his horses and carriage till he came back from Cuba, where he went for the benefit of his health. I travelled round with Mr. Kemp, waiting until my master came back. I soon after heard that Mr. Louis had died at Appalachicola, and had been buried at Tennessee Bluff. I was very much attached to the neighborhood of Pendleton and Greenville, and feared, from Mr. Louis's death, I should not get back there.

As soon as this information arrived, Mr. Kemp put me, the carriage and horses, a gold watch, and cigars, up to auction, on which I was much frightened, knowing there would be some very cruel masters at the sale, and fearing I should again be disappointed in my attempt to escape from bondage. Mr. Beveridge, a Scotchman, from Appalachicola, bought me, the horses, and cigars. He was not a cruel master; he had been in America eighteen years, and I believe I was the first slave he ever bought. Mr. Kemp had no right to sell me, which he did before he had written to Mr. Louis's brother.

Shortly after this, Mr. Kemp having some altercation with General Woodsfork, it ended in a duel, in which Mr. W. was killed. A few weeks after, as Mr. Kemp was passing down a street, he was suddenly shot dead by Mr. Milton, a rival lawyer. When I heard this, I considered it a visitation of God on Mr. Kemp for having sold me unjustly, as I did not belong to him. This was soon discovered by me, Mr. Louis's brother having called at Mackintosh Hotel, Columbus, to claim me, but which he could not effect. After this, I travelled with Mr. Beveridge through Georgia, to the warm springs, and then came back to Columbus, going on to Marianna, his summer house in Florida. Here I met with better treatment than I had ever experienced before; we travelled on the whole summer; at the fall, Mr. Beveridge went to Appalachicola on business. Mr. Beveridge was contractor for the mail from Columbus to Appala-

chicola, and owner of three steamboats, the Versailles, Andrew Jackson, and Van Buren. He made me steward on board the Versailles the whole winter. The river then got so low that the boats could not run. At this time, Mr. Beveridge went to Mount Vernon. On our way we had to pass through the Indian nation. We arrived at Columbus, where I was taken dangerously ill of a fever. After I got well, Mr. Beveridge returned to Marianna, through the Indian nation. Having gone about twelve miles he was taken very ill. I took him out of the carriage to a brook, and washed his hands and feet until he got better, when I got him into the carriage again, and drove off till we came to General Irving's, where he stopped several days, on account of his health. While there, I observed on the floor of the kitchen several children, one about three months old, without any body to take care of her; I asked where her mother was, and was told that Mrs. Irving had given her a very hard task to do at washing, in a brook about a quarter of a mile distant. We heard after, that not being able to get it done she had got some cords, tied them round her neck, climbed up a tree, swung off, and hung herself. Being missed, persons were sent after her, who observed several buzzards flying about a particular spot, to which they directed their steps, and found the poor woman nearly eaten up.

After this, we travelled several months without any thing remarkable taking place.

In the year 1834, Mr. Beveridge, who was now residing in Appalachicola, a town in West Florida, became a bankrupt, when all his property was sold, and I fell into the hands of a very cruel master, Mr. Register, a planter in the same state; of whom, knowing his savage character, I always had a dread. Previously to his purchasing me, he had frequently taunted me, by saying, "You have been a gentleman long enough, and, whatever may be the consequences, I intend to buy you." To which I remarked, that I would, on no account, live with him if I could help it. Nevertheless, intent upon his purpose, in the month of July, 1834, he bought me, after which, I was so exasperated that I cared not whether I lived or died; in fact, whilst I was on my passage from Appalachicola, I procured a quart bottle of whiskey, for the purpose of so intoxicating myself, that I might be able, either to plunge myself into the river, or so to enrage my master, that he should dispatch me forthwith. I was however, by a kind Providence, prevented from committing this horrid deed by an old slave on board, who knowing my intention, secretly took the bottle from me; after which, my hands were tied, and I was led into the town of Ochesa, to a warehouse, where my master was asked by the proprietor of the place, the reason for his confining my hands; in answer to which, Mr. Register said, that he had purchased me. The proprietor, however, persuaded him to untie me; after which, my master being excessively drunk, asked

for a cow hide, intending to flog me, from which the proprietor dissuaded him, saying that he had known me for some time, and he was sure that I did not require to be flogged. From this place, we proceeded about mid-day on our way, he placing me on the bare back of a half starved old horse, which he had purchased, and upon which sharp *surface* he kindly intended, I should ride about eighty miles, the distance we were then from his home. In this unpleasant situation, I could not help reflecting upon the prospects before me, not forgetting that I had heard that my new master had been in the habit of stealing cattle and other property, and among other things, a slave woman, and that I had said, as it afterwards turned out, in the hearing of some one who communicated the saying to my master, that I had been accustomed to live with a gentleman and not with a rogue ; and, finding that he had been informed of this, I had the additional dread of a few hundred lashes for it, on my arrival at my destination.

About two hours after we started, it began to rain very heavily, and continued to do so until we arrived at Marianna, about twelve at night, where we were to rest till morning. My master here questioned me, as to whether I intended to run away or not ; and I, not then knowing the sin of lying, at once told him that I would not. He then gave me his clothes to dry ; I took them to the kitchen for that purpose, and he retired to bed, taking a bag of clothes belonging to me with him, as a kind of security, I presume, for

my safety. In an hour or two afterwards, I took his clothes to him dried, and found him fast asleep. I placed them by his side, and said that I would then take my own to dry too, taking care to speak loud enough to ascertain whether he was asleep or not, knowing that he had a dirk and pistol by his side, which he would not have hesitated using against me, if I had attempted secretly to have procured them. I was glad to find, that the effects of his drinking the day before had caused his sleeping very soundly, and I immediately resolved on making my escape; and without loss of time, started with my few clothes into the woods, which were in the immediate neighborhood; and, after running many miles, I came to the river Chapoli, which is very deep, and so beset with alligators, that I dared not attempt to swim across. I paced up and down this river, with the hope of finding a conveyance across, for a whole day, the succeeding night, and till noon the following day, which was Saturday. About twelve o'clock on that day I discovered an Indian canoe, which had not, from all appearance, been used for some time; this, of course, I used to convey myself across, and after being obliged to go a little way down the river, by means of a piece of wood I providentially found in the boat, I landed on the opposite side. Here I found myself surrounded by planters looking for me, in consequence of which I hid myself in the bushes until night, when I again travelled several miles, to the farm of a Mr. Robinson, a large sugar planter,

where I rested till morning in a field. Afterwards I set out, working my way through the woods about twenty miles towards the east; this I knew by my knowledge of the position of the sun at its rising. Having reached the Chattahoochee river, which divides Florida from Georgia, I was again puzzled to know how to cross; it was three o'clock in the day, when a number of persons were fishing; having walked for some hours along the banks, I at last, after dark, procured a ferry boat, which not being able, from the swiftness of the river, to steer direct across, I was carried many miles down the river, landing on the Georgian side, from whence I proceeded on through the woods two or three miles, and came to a little farm house about twelve at night; at a short distance from the house, I found an old slave hut, into which I went, and informed the old man, who appeared seventy or eighty years old, that I had had a very bad master, from whom I had run away; and asked him if he could give me something to eat; having had no suitable food for three or four days; he told me he had nothing but a piece of dry Indian bread, which he cheerfully gave me; having eaten it, I went on a short distance from the hut, and laid down in the wood to rest for an hour or two. All the following day (Monday) I continued travelling through the woods; I was greatly distressed for want of water to quench my thirst, it being a very dry country, till I came to Spring creek, which is a wide,

deep stream, and with some of which I gladly quenched my thirst. I then proceeded to cross the same by a bridge close by, and continued my way till dusk. I came to a gentleman's house in the woods, where I inquired how far it was to the next house, taking care to watch an opportunity to ask some individual whom I could master, and get away from, if any interruption to my progress was attempted. I went on for some time, it being a very fine moonlight night, and was presently alarmed by the howling of a wolf very near me, which I concluded was calling other wolves to join him in attacking me, having understood that they always assemble in numbers for such a purpose ; the howling increased, and I was still pursued, and the numbers were evidently increasing fast ; but I was happily rescued from my dreadful fright, by coming to some cattle, which attracted the wolves, and saved my life ; for I could not get up the trees for safety, they being very tall pines, the lowest branches of which were at least forty or fifty feet from the ground, and the trunks very large and smooth.

About two o'clock, I came to the house of a Mr. Cherry, on the borders of the Flint river; I went up to the house, and called them up to beg something to eat; but having nothing cooked, they kindly allowed me to lie down in the porch, where they made me a bed. In conversation with this Mr. Cherry, I discovered that I had known him before, having been in a steam boat, the Versailles, some month previous,

which sunk very near his house, but which I did not at first discern to be the same. I then thought that it would not be prudent for me to stop there, and therefore told them I was in a hurry to get on, and must start very early again, he having no idea who I was ; and I gave his son six cents to take me across the river, which he did when the sun was about half an hour high, and unfortunately landed me where there was a man building a boat, who knew me very well, and my former master too,—he calling me by name, asked me where I was going.

I was very much frightened at being discovered, but summoned up courage, and said, that my master had gone on to Tallahasse by the coach, and that there was not room for me, and I had to walk round to meet him. I then asked the man to put me into the best road to get there, which, however, I knew as well as he did, having travelled there before ; he directed me the best way, but I of course took the contrary direction, wanting to get on to Savannah. By this hasty and wicked deception, I saved myself from going to Bainbridge prison, which was close by, and to which I should surely have been taken, had it been known that I was making my escape.

Leaving Bainbridge, I proceeded about forty miles, travelling all day under a scorching sun through the woods, in which I saw many deer and serpents, until I reached Thomas Town in the evening. I there inquired the way to Augusta of a man whom I met, and also asked where I could obtain lodgings

and was told that there was a poor minister about a mile from the place, who would give me lodgings. I accordingly went and found them in a little log house, where, having awakened the family, I found them all lying on the bare boards, where I joined them for the remainder of the night.

In the morning, the old gentleman prayed for me that I might be preserved on my journey; he had previously asked me where I was going, and I knowing, that if I told him the right place, any that inquired of him for me would be able to find me, asked the way to Augusta instead of Savannah, my real destination. I also told him, that I was partly Indian and partly white, but I am also partly African, but this I omitted to tell him, knowing if I did, I should be apprehended. After I had left this hut, I again inquired for Augusta, for the purpose of misleading my pursuers, but I afterwards took my course through the woods, and came into a road, called the Coffee road, which General Jackson cut down for his troops at the time of the war, between the Americans and Spaniards, in Florida; in which road there are but few houses, and which I preferred for the purpose of avoiding detection.

After several days I left this road and took a more direct way to Savannah, where I had to wade through two rivers before I came to the Alatamah, which I crossed in a ferry boat, about a mile below the place where the rivers Oconee and Ocmulgee run together into one river, called the Alatamah. I here met

with some cattle drovers, who were collecting cattle to drive to Savannah. On walking on before them, I began to consider in what way I could obtain a passport for Savannah, and determined on the following plan:—

I called at a cottage, and after I had talked sometime with the wife, who began to feel greatly for me, in consequence of my telling her a little of my history, (her husband being out hunting) I pretended to show her my passport, feeling for it every where about my coat and hat, and not finding it, I went back a little way pretending to look for it, but came back saying, I was very sorry, but I did not know where it was. At last the man came home, carrying a deer upon his shoulders, which he brought into the yard and began to dress it. The wife then went out to tell him my situation, and after long persuasion he said he could not write, but that if I could tell his son what was in my passport he should write me one, and knowing that I should not be able to pass Savannah without one, and having heard several free colored men read theirs, I thought I could tell the lad what to write. The lad sat down and wrote what I told him, nearly filling a large sheet of paper for the passport, and another sheet with recommendations. These being completed, I was invited to partake of some of the fresh venison, which the woman of the house had prepared for dinner, and having done so, and feeling grateful for their kindness, I proceeded on my way. Going

along, I took my papers out of my pocket, and looking at them, although I could not read a word, I perceived that the boy's writing was very unlike other writing that I had seen, and was greatly blotted besides; consequently, I was afraid that these documents would not answer my purpose, and began to consider what other plan I could pursue to obtain another pass.

I had now to wade through another river to which I came, and which I had great difficulty in crossing in consequence of the water overflowing the banks of several rivers to the extent of upwards of twenty miles. In the midst of the water, I passed one night upon a small island, and the next day I went through the remainder of the water. On many occasions I was obliged to walk upon my toes, and consequently found the advantage of being six feet two inches high, and at other times was obliged to swim. In the middle of this extremity, I felt it would be imprudent for me to return; for if my master was in pursuit of me, my safest place from him was in the water, if I could keep my head above the surface. I was, however, most dreadfully frightened, and most earnestly prayed that I might be kept from a watery grave, and resolved that, if again I landed, I would spend my life in the service of God.

Having through mercy again started on my journey, I met with the drovers, and having, whilst in the waters, taken the pass out of my hat, and so dipped it in the water as to spoil it, I showed it to

the men, and asked them where I could get another. They told me that in the neighborhood there lived a rich cotton merchant, who would write me one. They took me to him, and gave their word that they saw the passport before it was wet, (for I had previously showed it to them,) upon which the cotton planter wrote a free pass and a recommendation, to which the cow drovers affixed their marks.

The recommendation was as follows :

“ John Roper, a very interesting young lad, whom I have seen and travelled with for eighty or ninety miles on his road from Florida, is a free man, descended from Indian and White. I trust he will be allowed to pass on without interruption, being convinced from what I have seen that he is free, and though dark, is not an African. I had seen his papers before they were wetted.”

These cow drovers, who procured me the passport and recommendation from the cotton planter, could not read; and they were intoxicated when they went with me to him. I am part African, as well as Indian and White, my father being a white man, Henry Roper, Esq., Caswell county, North Carolina, U. S., a very wealthy slaveholder, who sold me when quite a child, for the strong resemblance I bore to him. My mother is part Indian, part African; but I dared not disclose that, or I should have been taken up. I then had eleven miles to go to Savannah, one of the greatest slaveholding cities in America, and where they are always looking out

for runaway slaves. When at this city, I had travelled about five hundred miles.* It required great courage to pass through this place. I went through the main street with apparent confidence, though much alarmed; did not stop at any house in the city, but went down immediately to the dock, and inquired for a berth, as a steward to a vessel to New York. I had been in this capacity before on the Appalachicola river. The person whom I asked to procure me a berth was steward of one of the New York packets; he knew Captain Deckay, of the schooner Fox, and got me a situation on board that vessel, in five minutes after I had been at the docks. The schooner Fox was a very old vessel, twenty-seven years old, laden with lumber and cattle for New York; she was rotten and could not be insured. The sailors were afraid of her; but I ventured on board, and five minutes after we dropped from the docks into the river. My spirits then began to revive, and I thought I should get to a free country directly. We cast anchor in the stream, to keep the sailors on, as they were so dissatisfied with the vessel, and lay there four days; during which time I had to go into the city several times, which exposed me to great danger, as my master was after me, and I dreaded meeting with him in the city.

* The distance between these places is much less than two hundred miles; but I was obliged to travel round about, in order to avoid being caught.

Fearing the Fox would not sail before I should be seized, I deserted her, and went on board a brig sailing to Providence, that was towed out by a steam-boat, and got thirty miles from Savannah. During this time I endeavored to persuade the steward to take me as an assistant, and hoped to have accomplished my purpose; but the captain had observed me attentively, and thought I was a slave, he therefore ordered me, when the steamboat was sent back, to go on board her to Savannah, as the fine for taking a slave from that city to any of the free states is five hundred dollars. I reluctantly went back to Savannah, among slaveholders and slaves. My mind was in a sad state; and I was under strong temptation to throw myself into the river. I had deserted the schooner Fox, and knew that the captain might put me into prison till the vessel was ready to sail; if this had happened, and my master had come to the jail in search of me, I must have gone back to slavery. But when I reached the docks at Savannah, the first person I met was the captain of the Fox, looking for another steward in my place. He was a very kind man, belonging to the free states, and inquired if I would go back to his vessel. This usage was very different to what I expected, and I gladly accepted his offer. This captain did not know that I was a slave. In about two days we sailed from Savannah for New York.

I am (August, 1834) unable to express the joy I

now felt. I never was at sea before, and, after I had been out about an hour, was taken with sea-sickness, which continued five days. I was scarcely able to stand up, and one of the sailors was obliged to take my place. The captain was very kind to me all this time; but even after I recovered, I was not sufficiently well to do my duty properly, and could not give satisfaction to the sailors, who swore at me, and asked me why I shipped, as I was not used to the sea. We had a very quick passage; and in six days, after leaving Savannah, we were in the harbor at Staten Island, where the vessel was quarantined for two days, six miles from New York. The captain went to the city, but left me aboard with the sailors, who had most of them been brought up in the slaveholding states, and were very cruel men. One of the sailors was particularly angry with me because he had to perform the duties of my place; and while the captain was in the city, the sailors called me to the fore-hatch, where they said they would treat me. I went, and while I was talking, they threw a rope round my neck and nearly choked me. The blood streamed from my nose profusely. They also took up ropes with large knots, and knocked me over the head. They said I was a negro; they despised me; and I expected they would have thrown me into the water. When we arrived at the city these men, who had so ill treated me, ran away that they might escape the punishment which would otherwise have been inflicted on

them. When I arrived in the city of New York, I thought I was free; but learned I was not, and could be taken there. I went out into the country several miles, and tried to get employment, but failed, as I had no recommendation. I then returned to New York; but finding the same difficulty there to get work, as in the country, I went back to the vessel, which was to sail eighty miles up the Hudson River, to Poughkeepsie. When I arrived, I obtained employment at an inn, and after I had been there about two days, was seized with the cholera, which was at that place. The complaint was, without doubt, brought on by my having subsisted on fruit only, for several days, while I was in the slave states. The landlord of the inn came to me when I was in bed, suffering violently from cholera, and told me he knew I had that complaint, and as it had never been in his house, I could not stop there any longer. No one would enter my room, except a young lady, who appeared very pious and amiable, and had visited persons with the cholera. She immediately procured me some medicine at her own expense and administered it herself; and, whilst I was groaning with agony, the landlord came up and ordered me out of the house directly. Most of the persons in Poughkeepsie had retired for the night, and I lay under a shed on some cotton bales. The medicine relieved me, having been given so promptly, and next morning I went from the shed and laid on the banks of the river below the city. Towards evening,

I felt much better, and went on in a steamboat to the city of Albany, about eighty miles. When I reached there, I went into the country, and tried for three or four days to procure employment, but failed.

At that time, I had scarcely any money, and lived upon fruit, so I returned to Albany, where I could get no work, as I could not show the recommendations I possessed, which were only from slave states, and I did not wish any one to know I came from them. After a time, I went up the western canal as steward in one of the boats. When I had gone about 350 miles up the canal, I found I was going too much towards the slave states, in consequence of which, I returned to Albany, and went up the northern canal, into one of the New England states—Vermont. The distance I had travelled, including the 350 miles I had to return from the west, and the 100 to Vermont, was 2,300 miles. When I reached Vermont, I found the people very hospitable and kind; they seemed opposed to slavery, so I told them, I was a run-away slave. I hired myself to a firm in Sudbury.* After I had been in Sudbury

* During my stay in this town, I thought of the vow I made in the water, (page 58,) and I became more thoughtful about the salvation of my soul. I attended the Methodist chapel, where a Mr. Benton preached, and there I began to feel that I was a great sinner. During the latter part of my stay here, I became more anxious about salvation, and I entertained the absurd notion that

some time, the neighboring farmers told me that I had hired myself for much less money than I ought. I mentioned it to my employers, who were very angry about it; I was advised to leave by some of the people round, who thought the gentlemen I was with would write to my former master, informing him where I was, and obtain the reward fixed upon me. Fearing I should be taken, I immediately left and went into the town of Ludlow, where I met with a kind friend, Mr. —,* who sent me to school for several weeks. At this time, I was advertised in the papers and was obliged to leave; I went a little way out of Ludlow to a retired place, and lived two weeks with a Mr. —, deacon of a church at Ludlow; at this place, I could have obtained education, had it been safe to have remained.†

religion would come to me in some extraordinary way. With this impression I used to go into the woods two hours before day-light to pray, and expected something would take place, and I should become religious.

* It would not be proper to mention any names, as a person in any of the States in America found harboring a slave, would have to pay a very heavy fine.

† Whilst in this neighborhood, I attended the Baptist meeting, and trust the preaching of the gospel was much blessed to my soul. As this was the first time I was ever favored with any education, I was very intent upon learning to read the Bible, and in a few weeks I was able, from my own reading, to repeat by heart the whole of the last chapter of Matthew. I also attended the prayer and inquiry meetings, where the attendants used to relate their experience, and I was requested to do the same. I found these

From there I went to New Hampshire, where I was not safe, so went to Boston, Massachusetts, with the hope of returning to Ludlow, to which place I was much attached. At Boston, I met with a friend who kept a shop, and took me to assist him for several weeks. Here I did not consider myself safe, as persons from all parts of the country were continually coming to the shop, and I feared some might come who knew me. I now had my head shaved and bought a wig, and engaged myself to a Mr. Perkins of Brookline, three miles from Boston, where I remained about a month. Some of the family discovered that I wore a wig, and said that I was a run-away slave, but the neighbors all round thought I was a white, to prove which, I have a document in my possession to call me to military duty. The law is, that no slave or colored person performs this, but every other person in America of the age of twenty-one is called upon to perform military duty, once or twice in the year, or pay a fine.

COPY OF THE DOCUMENT.

“ Mr. Moses Roper,

“ You being duly enrolled as a soldier in the company, under the command of Captain Benjamin Bradley, are hereby notified and ordered to appear

meetings a great blessing, and they were the means, under God, of communicating to my mind a more clear and distinct knowledge of the way of salvation by Jesus Christ.

at the Town House in Brookline, on Friday, 28th instant, at 3 o'clock P. M., for the purpose of filling the vacancy in said Company, occasioned by the promotion of Lieut. Nathaniel M. Weeks, and of filling any other vacancy which may then and there occur in said Company, and there wait further orders.

“By order of the Captain,

E. P. WENTWORTH, Clerk.”

“*Brookline, Aug. 14th, 1835.*”*

I then returned to the city of Boston, to the shop where I was before.† Several weeks after I had returned to my situation two colored men informed me that a gentleman had been inquiring for a person whom, from the description, I knew to be myself, and offered them a considerable sum if they would disclose my place of abode; but they being much opposed to slavery, came and told me, upon which

*Being very tall, I was taken to be twenty-one, but my correct age, as far as I can tell, is stated in page 12.

†During the first part of my abode in this city, I attended at the colored church in Bellnap street; and I hope I found both profit and pleasure in attending the means of divine grace. I now saw the wicked part I had taken in using so much deception in making my escape. After a time, I found slave-owners were in the habit of going to this colored chapel to look for runaway slaves. I became alarmed, and afterwards attended the preaching of the Rev. Dr. Sharp. I waited upon the Doctor to request he would baptize me and admit me a member of his church; and after hearing my experience, he wished me to call again. This I did, but he was gone into the country, and I saw him no more.

information I secreted myself till I could get off. I went into the Green mountains for several weeks, from thence to the city of New York, and remained in secret several days, till I heard of a ship, the Napoleon, sailing to England, and on the 11th of November, 1835, I sailed, taking with me letters of recommendation to the Rev. Drs. Morison and Raffles, and the Rev. Alex. Fletcher. The time I first started from slavery was in July, 1834, so that I was nearly sixteen months in making my escape.

On the 29th of November, 1835, I reached Liverpool, and my feelings when I first touched the shores of Britain were indescribable, and can only be properly understood by those who have escaped from the cruel bondage of slavery.

“Tis liberty alone that gives the flower
Of fleeting life its lustre and perfume,
And we are weeds without it.”

“Slaves cannot breathe in England;
If there lungs receive our air, that moment they are free.
They touch our country and their shackles fall.”—*Cowper.*

When I reached Liverpool, I proceeded to Dr. Raffles, and handed my letters of recommendation to him. He received me very kindly, and introduced me to a member of his church, with whom I stayed the night. Here I met with the greatest attention and kindness. The next day, I went on to Manchester, where I met with many kind friends, among others Mr. Adshead, a hosier of that town, to whom I desire, through this medium, to return my

most sincere thanks for the many great services which he rendered me, adding both to my spiritual and temporal comfort. I would not, however, forget to remember here, Mr. Leese, Mr. Childs, Mr. Crewdson, and Mr. Clare, the latter of whom gave me a letter to Mr. Scoble, the Secretary of the Anti-Slavery Society. I remained here several days, and then proceeded to London, December 12th, 1835, and immediately called on Mr. Scoble, to whom I delivered my letter; this gentleman procured me a lodging. I then lost no time in delivering my letters to Dr. Morison and the Rev. Alexander Fletcher, who received me with the greatest kindness, and shortly after this Dr. Morison sent my letter from New York, with another from himself, to the *Patriot* newspaper, in which he kindly implored the sympathy of the public in my behalf. The appeal was read by Mr. Christopherson, a member of Dr. Morison's church, of which gentleman I express but little of my feelings and gratitude, when I say that throughout he has been towards me a parent, and for whose tenderness and sympathy I desire ever to feel that attachment which I do not know how to express.

I stayed at his house several weeks, being treated as one of the family. The appeal in the *Patriot*, referred to getting a suitable academy for me, which the Rev. Dr. Cox recommended at Hackney, where I remained half a year, going through the rudiments of an English education. At this time, I attended

the ministry of Dr. Cox, which I enjoyed very much, and to which I ascribe the attainment of clearer views of divine grace than I had before. I had attended here several months, when I expressed my wish to Dr. Cox to become a member of his church; I was proposed, and after stating my experience was admitted, March 31st, 1836. Here I feel it a duty to present my tribute of thankfulness, however feebly expressed, to the affectionate and devoted attention of the Rev. Doctor, from whom, under God, I received very much indeed of spiritual advice and consolation, as well as a plentiful administration to my temporal necessities. I would not forget also to mention the kindness of his church generally, by whom I was received with Christian love and charity. Never, I trust, will be effaced from my memory, the parental care of the Rev. Dr. Morrison, from whom I can strictly say I received the greatest kindness I ever met with, and to whom, as long as God gives me lips to utter, or mind to reflect, I desire to attribute the comfort which I have experienced since I set my foot upon the happy shores of England.

Here it is necessary that I should draw this narrative to a close; not that my materials are exhausted, but that I am unwilling to extend it to a size which might preclude many well wishers from the possession of it.

But I must remark, that my feelings of happiness, at having escaped from cruel bondage, are not un-

mixed with sorrow of a very touching kind. “*The land of the free*” still contains the mother, the brothers and the sisters of Moses Roper, not enjoying liberty, not the possessors of like feelings with me, not having even a distant glimpse of advancing towards freedom, but still slaves! This is a weight which hangs heavy on me. As circumstances at present stand, there is not much prospect of ever again seeing those dear ones—that dear mother, from whom, on the Sunday night, I was torn away by armed slaveholders, and carried into cruel bondage.* And nothing would contribute so much to my entire happiness, if the kindness of a gracious Providence should ever place me in such favorable circumstances, as to be able to purchase the freedom of so beloved a parent. But I desire to express my entire resignation to the will of God. Should that Divine Being, who made of one flesh all the kindreds of the earth, see fit that I should again clasp them to my breast, and see in them the reality of free men and free women, how shall I, a poor mortal, be enabled to sing a strain of praise sufficiently appropriate to such a boon from heaven.

But if the All-wise Disposer of all things should see fit to keep them still in suffering and bondage, it is a mercy to know that he orders all things well, that he is still the Judge of all the earth, and that under such dispensations of his providence, he is

* See Page 30.

working out that which shall be most for the advantage of his creatures.

Whatever I may have experienced in America, at the hands of cruel task-masters, yet I am unwilling to speak in any but respectful terms of the land of my birth. It is far from my wish to attempt to degrade America in the eyes of Britons. I love her institutions in the free states, her zeal for Christ; I bear no enmity even to the slaveholders, but regret their delusions; many, I am aware, are deeply sensible of the fault, but some, I regret to say, are not, and I could wish to open their eyes to their sin; may the period come when God shall wipe off this deep stain from her Constitution, and may America soon be *indeed* the land of the free.

In conclusion, I thank my dear friends in England for their affectionate attentions, and may God help me to show, by my future walk in life, that I am not wanting in my acknowledgements of their kindness. But above all, to the God of all grace, I desire here, before his people, to acknowledge that all the way in which he has led me has been the right way, and as in his mercy and wisdom he has led me to this country, where I am allowed to go free, may all my actions tend to lead me on, through the mercy of God in Christ, in the right way, to a city of habitation.

