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Chapter First.

PRELUDE. — DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.



GREAT differences of opinion exist relative to the subject of slavery in its various aspects; but, whatever we may think of its justice or injustice, we must still admit that, as an existing institution extending over nearly half the Union, it presents a field of national manners, which, while it is comparatively fresh, should be interesting to those who prize real-life sketches in distinction from highly-wrought, improbable romance. As such, we propose to occupy it in the following pages.

We have thrown but a transparent gauze of fiction over a series of facts that occurred about fifteen years since. Most of the persons are yet alive who acted parts in the drama. The places described still retain the features that we have endeavored to transfer to these pages. A change of locality, with fictitious names and a little twisting of events to bring them together—that is all we have done.

One word of caution, necessary in these

days of partizanship. The earnest reader, if any such there be, will look through this sketch in vain for any expression of our opinion as to slavery itself. The subject, politically and philanthropically considered, is too weighty for our pen. To display its rights and its wrongs, forms, we think, no part of our "mission."

And yet our humble life has not been so exclusively cast upon either side of Mason & Dixon's line as to render us very liable either to the enthusiasm of the *pros* or the skepticism of the *cons*. We find, upon a mental summing up, that the days of the years of our pilgrimage have been divided, with uncommon exactness, between the slave States and the free.

Perhaps there is a touch of boasting in the conclusion to which that reflection brings us, that we are thereby better enabled to view 'the peculiar institution' without prejudice, and to describe its operation without partiality. We shall see.

That feature in slave character which most surprises the attentive stranger is the profound attachment, the spaniel-like devotion which so many of the Southern slaves display toward their masters' interests. This

will be found in its highest perfection among the house servants, and those in general in whom the greatest trusts are reposed by their owners. But it is, on the whole, a feature characteristic of the Southern slave. Many illustrations of it will be given to the traveler, as he sits with his host and hostess, and enjoys his summer evening pipe in the cool area between the two cabins that constitute a Southern dwelling.

We would ask—why are not these traditional fragments gathered up and preserved? They are national, therefore they are historically important. Does this assertion bring out a smile? Then, we inquire, what is there holier than this in the touching devotedness of the feudal serf which makes up the story of *Ivanhoe*? What higher motive than this actuates the private soldier or sailor? What principle more potent than this warms and enlivens the sketches of Dickens?

Will the reader listen while one of these incidents is rehearsed, in which the author bore a part, and to the general truthfulness of which he hereby offers his personal guarantee.

"Well, go 'long, Uncle Gabe, if you want to. Alf and I will feed the mules to-night, if you want to go. We can do it as well as you can. Go 'long and kill some squirrels."

These words are addressed by a stout, hearty-looking boy, nine years old, to the plantation-hostler, Gabriel. The speaker is John Anson Enloe, eldest son of my old friend, Robert Enloe, Esq., whose cotton plantation it is that stretches out so broadly before us as we walk from the family mansion through the white gate toward the stables.

The lad who has spoken carries but few outward marks of authority, for he is both bare-footed and bare-headed. There is indeed but scanty room for distinction, in the way of raiment, between him, the first-born son of this estate, and the gray-haired slave he is addressing.

But for all that, he wears that indescribable air of command to which they are born who are born masters of their fellow-men. His words, kind and friendly as they are intended to be, have a sound of authority which smacks strongly of the quarter-deck and the

parade-ground; and, young as he is, they are received with that entire deference which in old Gabriel's case is the habit of sixty years' servitude.

"Go 'long, then, Uncle Gabe, if you want to," is John's kind response to a hint of the old negro that he would like to go down to the "new ground" corn, and kill a mess of squirrels for his supper. "Pa will be glad for you to thin them out a little, for they're mighty bad on the corn. And you can look round the field for the gap where the hogs got in last night."

"And, O, Uncle Gabe!" is the demand of another hearty-looking fellow, two years younger, who rejoices in the abbreviation of Alf, and a still greater abbreviation of shirt and trousers; "bring me some hazle-nuts, Uncle Gabe; there's a heap of 'em in the hazle-patch below the field, but ma's afraid I'll get snake-bit."

Gabriel smilingly undertakes the various commissions of the lads, and enjoining upon them sundry precepts of stable lore, such as—"Don't shook down more'n free bundles a-piece for de mewels, Marser Johnny; and mind, put de poles 'tween em, else dey'll fight like Samson; you'll see it!" he shuffles away with the peculiar motion of his class toward the negro "quarters"; thence, after securing his gun, through "the cotton-patch" to "the new ground," as the place where the rich corn harvest has drawn together a perfect grand lodge of squirrels.

The boys mount to the stable-loft in frolicsome spirit, "to shook down de fodder for de mewels," as directed. This being done, it is suggested by the elder, behind whose merry eye there dwells a mint of fun, that they go on and "founder the stranger's horse."

"The stranger," no other than myself, honored reader, called an hour back to spend the night with his old friend, Enloe. He has consigned his favorite horse, Pompey, to the hands of the experienced hostler, Gabriel, and as he walks down the long lane, past the stables, he little imagines the trick these juveniles are about to play on him by over-feeding his greedy brute even to a "founder." But so it is.

The merry chaps have their jest. Pompey, in the gratitude of his heart, eats all

that is set before him, though the sum total be sixty ears of corn and a corresponding amount of fodder.

The penalty of this shocking gluttony follows. He is seized with an acute colic, equal in torture to a whole Inquisition. He is up with a "a founder" which detains his master, and likens himself in stiffness to the wooden horse of Troy, for the next four days.

"Uncle Gabe," as the veteran slave is familiarly denominated, shuffles along through the cotton-patch, and crosses the heavy ten-rail fence that separates it from the county road. Pausing awhile to rest himself—for fifty-five years' hard labor have not improved his power of locomotion—his attention is attracted to one of those sights which more than all others awaken tenderest sympathies in the human breast.

It is that of a beautiful girl leaning fondly upon the arm of her lover, and listening intently to his words; so intently, indeed, that the noisy mocking-bird, which shakes the oak-branch above her head, cannot find a note in all his store that will win her ear as she moves slowly on.

Caroline Enloe is only seventeen; but seventeen under the sun of Mississippi is more than equivalent to twenty passed in the less grateful clime of Massachusetts.

In person, graceful and womanly but not slender; in features, sunny-fair but all healthful; in speech, plain but without any of that grossness too often the result of rural associations; in movement, light but firm, this sweet young lady is an acceptable type of the country belles of her land.

There might possibly be detected a shade of timidity in that manner—of timidity which the sparkling creatures of Saratoga or Newport would indignantly repudiate—but there was no clownishness.

Her words may not be marked with an Italian or French accent, but they are such words as Shakespeare and Sheridan used, such words as her father's old Bible taught her, and the pronunciation is such English as Webster himself would have approved.

She leans, O! how trustingly, with what a guileless faith she leans upon her lover's arm. Is there not in this very act, this feminine yielding to a stronger frame, and a more determined will, an indication of the Creator's

design that the woman should be subject to man? How can we avoid the conclusion when we look upon such a scene as this?

At times she glances up into his face—it is the very heaven of her hopes—and ever is the hue on those soft cheeks made deeper as she withdraws her eye and fixes it again, but all abstractedly, upon the ground.

The old hostler, resting upon the fallen tree, his gun lying neglected at his feet, observes the act, and brushes something from his bleared eyes, while he mutters a few words to himself, tenderly and softly.

Her companion has numbered about thirty years of life. Could we examine him with the eyes of Caroline Enloe, we should doubtless see a well-formed figure, fully developed, strongly knit together, and somewhat above the medium size. We should doubtless admire the chestnut hair so exuberantly massed above his forehead, and the small, graceful hand that presses hers, while both are sparkling with the jeweled rings of their betrothal. We should certainly be thrilled with the music of his voice, clear and sweet, almost emulating the middle tones of the flute. Altogether, we should acknowledge that in Oliver Colston are comprised all the manly graces that conspire to win gentlest hearts.

But if we lay aside such partial judgment as hers, we could not avoid noticing that his eye, bent so fondly down upon her, has yet an uneasy cast; we observe it most strikingly when it first falls upon the old negro; then, in its impulse of surprise, it flashes up like a meteor, and in the curl of his lip there seems to us a sensual expression, undefined, yet deeply impressed, and we cannot but feel that his sweet, flute-like voice is artificially tuned.

May we not admit, however, without discrediting our own manhood, that, in spite of ourselves, there exists within our breasts a kind of jealousy of our own sex when we see one of them so happily situated?

If this confession be an honest one, then our judgment is not less partial than Caroline's, and the defects we have noticed are but beams in our own eyes.

They come slowly on, this loving pair, basking in the spring-time of life, and the old negro rises to greet them.

Mr. Colston, whose uneasiness of look, if there were any, has quite vanished now, ac-



"IT IS CLEAR THAT THERE IS NO FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN THESE TWO MEN."

knowledges his courtesy with a word or two, and urges his companion forward. It is clear that there is no friendship between these two men.

But Caroline resists her lover's hand, until she can ask the old negro a few pleasant questions, not designed to be answered, and offer him some merry advice relative to his squirrel-hunt, not designed to be followed, and demand a share in the prospective fruits, not designed to be obeyed. And then, with a laugh at his awkward attempts to answer a dozen thoughts at once, and with a pleasant blow upon her lover's arm, which has been all the time endeavoring to draw her forward, this vision of life and youth moves on.

Is that a tear-drop which rolls down the withered cheek of old Gabriel? Is that a sigh which comes from his laboring breast? Does that cruel expression, "d—d rascal,"

which he indulges in, apply to the polished gentleman with the chestnut hair and flute-like voice, who has just left him?

The latter inquiry is unexpectedly propounded to Uncle Gabriel by a queerly-clothed individual, who catches the expletive as he steps into the road from a small school-path that meets it at the precise point where the negro had sat down to rest.

"What, what, Uncle Gabe!" he observes, in a quick, nervous voice, that reminds one of a frog; "swearing at Mr. Colston, eh? What do you think brother Leever will say to that at the next class-meeting? Crying, too! Why, old man, what's got into you?"

"Ah, Marser Blote," sadly responds the veteran, "is dat you? Sorry I said sich a word. Never knew what I was sayin', to be sure. Was holy and soly distracted, to be sure. Didn't mean nuffin desrespekful to

Misty Colston. But to think of his d—d—Thar 'tis agin. Can't talk of Miss Carline marryin' that no-count feller, but what it swars, whether or no. Rather die than have her. You'll see it."

"O, tut, tut, Gabriel, that's all very wrong," mildly responds the old schoolmaster—for such he is, if ink, pens, and paper are any sign of one; "that's all a notion you've got into your old head. Everything will come right. Mr. Colston loves your young mistress dearly, as you can see, and he will make her a good husband."

But the prophecy so confidently advanced by Mr. Blote is contradicted, as well in the uneasy glance he casts after the happy pair as in the shake of the old negro's head.

"Never'll come to no good, Marser Blote. You'll see it. All he's arter is old Marser's money. You'll see it. Dat sort of men's no count, no how. You'll see it."

With this sad prognostic upon his tongue, and in his face, and in the vibration of his gray head, the negro continued his journey, while Mr. Blote crossed the fence to join the trio consisting of the overseer, Mr. Allansby, Mr. Enloe, and myself, who are in warm discussion as to the probabilities of the present cotton crop. Interesting subject, which that very hour was probably agitating an hundred thousand merchants, from Texas to Maine, as many in Europe, and all the manufacturers who twirl a thread or weave a warp in the wide world. Our sketch may follow the motions of old Gabriel.

A few hundred yards brings him opposite the last clearing, styled in plantation parlance "the new ground." This is a tract of thirty acres, cleared and fenced the winter before, and planted in corn. Having its forest moisture and mould still remaining, it is better adapted to that product than the older soil of the cotton-fields. Being contiguous to the uncleared woods, it affords a favorite resort for bird and beast, of which tribes the partridge (quail), raccoon, and squirrel are the most extravagant depredators. At the corner of "the new ground patch" Gabriel meets another person, who (as we intend to introduce our leading characters in this chapter) must claim the reader's attention.

It is a negro girl, probably fourteen years old, but as no record is kept of a slave's birth,

we can only judge of the fact by her general appearance as she comes toward us. She is pure African in blood, with only a portion of that superfluity of nose and lip, however, that is so deforming in the majority of her race. Her figure is graceful and small, even to slenderness, though a skillful eye may detect evidences of maternal fullness scarcely to be expected in one of her age, did we not know that many of her people become mothers even earlier in life.

She wears no bonnet or head-dress of any kind, though the evening sun is still hot enough to crimp the corn-blades which the noontide rays have curled so tightly up. But as the polished ebony of her countenance gleams like a mirror under her closely-knotted hair, we feel that she needs none. Her only ornament is a string of red coral beads about her neck. She is barefoot. Her dress is a closely-fitting frock of home-made stuff, covering the single garment beneath.

On her head is a large tub filled to the brim with water, and balanced with a skill surpassing that which travelers attribute to the Egyptian women. It does not deviate in the least from its level, though its bearer walks as rapidly and confidently forward as though she were totally disencumbered. In each hand there is a bucket filled with the same.

The person we are describing is Loogy, only child of Gabriel, the hostler, and like himself a slave of Mr. Enloe. She is by office a waiting-maid of Caroline's, and a great favorite of the whole family. Her mother died a few months before the commencement of this sketch.

As they meet, she sets down her various burdens, and a conversation commences between them which is carried on in a low tone of voice.

"Are you sure, gal, that 'twas him you seed?"

"Yes, daddy, right sartin sure. I seed him hangin' round de place all Sunday mornin', when de folks to de house thought he was gwine to meetin'. And arter you'd left yis-terday, he come all along here and looked round for your tracks. What he's arter I don't know, but 'tain't no good, sure."

"'Tain't no good that Misty Colston wants, no how. You'll see it, gal, and Miss Car-

line'll see it some day, too. I mus tote de money off 'fore he fines it. To-morrow I'll hunt up a good place. Is old Missis done g'n you dat picayune yet?"

"Here 'is, daddy. She giv it to me las night, and she ax me how much money you had now. Misty Colston was in de room and heern her ax it. When I telled old Missis how much, I seed him look right keen at me. O, he's a no-'count somebody."

"I tell you, gal, he's good for nuffin 't all. You'll see it. But it's time to go 'long to de house. Old Missis will be waitin' for de water. And mind, gal, don't you say nerry word 'bout de money to nobody, no matter who ax you. It's dangerous, gal. You'll see it."

With this caution, the negroes separated; Loogy resuming her heavy burdens as if they were but empty vessels, her father pursuing the errand, whatever it was, which had brought him from the house. Our story shall still embrace his personal movements.

At the further corner of "the new ground patch" Gabriel leaves the road, first carefully looking round him lest he might be watched, and then darts into the hazle-thicket with more activity than his acquaintances, in general, give him credit for. When fairly concealed amongst the dense bushes, he searches for a small gully whose channel is entirely arched over with the thicket. This he pursues for a quarter of a mile or more, until by the accession of many others like itself it forms a ravine large enough to conceal a full grown man.

At a certain point in this dark place he pauses, crawls cautiously out to take another survey, returns to the hollow, and at a place where a large flat rock protrudes edgewise from the bank, he commences digging with his hands. He does not suffer a crumb of the dirt to fall into the ravine. The earth is so soft that he soon makes a cavity large enough to thrust his arm under the rock, and then he brings to light what appears to be an old woolen cap filled with some heavy metal. Fumbling in his pocket, he draws out a few dimes, the gifts of the many visitors at his master's house, and drops them into the sack, together with the smaller piece his daughter had handed him. To judge from the coins that compose the upper stratum, the whole

amount must have consisted of such mites as these.

Carefully re-tying the precious cap, he lays it down and takes out three others of like size and appearance. It does not appear that any miserly disposition to gaze upon his hoard prompts this examination. But from the anxious look he wears while he is weighing the bags in his hands, and examining their fastenings, one would suppose that he suspected some unlawful visitor had preceded him there.

Reassured, however, he replaced them one by one in the cavity, and carefully erasing all marks of his visit, even to the prints of his feet, he strikes down the ravine, which soon enters the bed of a considerable stream, and returning another way to "the new ground," proceeds to fulfill the request of little Alf, by gathering a pocketful of the hazle-nuts that swing in big clusters through all the thicket. Then, as the feeding hour of the squirrels has arrived, he commences the work of slaughter. While he is killing his intended half-dozen, we will conclude the chapter by explaining the meaning of this out-of-the-way money deposit.

Old Gabriel had been remarkable from his youth for a burning desire for freedom. When first arrived at manhood, he several times ran away, and endeavored by every plan that his limited information but large native shrewdness could supply, to reach a non-slaveholding State. Being baffled and retaken in every instance, he finally changed his mind, gave up the effort to escape as impracticable, and then for twelve years applied himself with wonderful assiduity to raise a fund and *purchase his freedom*.

His master, pleased at so great an improvement in a slave whose equal for honesty and ability was nowhere on his plantation, seconded this laudable scheme in various ways, and put a price upon Gabriel considerably lower than the current rate, that he might have good courage in his undertaking.

Gabriel had nearly made up the amount, eight hundred and fifty dollars, when his wife, who was a slave on an adjoining plantation, was, for some trifling fault, removed by her master to a distant State, and sold.

Being attached to the mother of his child by the warmest ties, this cruel divorce drove

Gabriel to frenzy. He ceased to care anything more for his freedom. He squandered away all his money. He became dissipated, idle, and quarrelsome, and upon receiving a whipping for his misconduct, ran away to the cane-brake.

During an entire twelvemonth he remained in the woods, in spite of every effort to capture him. He sent messages to his master, from time to time, through his fellow-servants, declaring that unless his wife was brought back to the neighborhood he would never work again, and if they caught him, he would commit suicide.

At last Mr. Enloe, wearied out by his obstinacy, and unwilling to lose so valuable a slave, sent an agent all the way to Texas, bought the woman at a high price, and gave Gabriel word to come home.

Home he came forthwith, and never after that was there occasion for a blow or a harsh word. He again became animated with the desire to buy his freedom, laid up all the money that came to his hand, and at the time our sketch begins has a deposit of more than eight hundred dollars under the flat rock.

With true African cunning, he has selected his own hiding-place, rejecting repeated propositions to borrow it even at an interest of ten per cent. His daughter, Loogy, is the only person who shares the secret of its locality, nor has he permitted her ever to visit the spot since the first day he pointed it out to her.

The history of old Gabriel's attempt to buy himself is that of many of a similar effort on the part of Southern slaves to become their own purchasers. Where they have kind and liberal masters, it is much easier than it might appear.

There are many situations in which an active negro man may earn for himself two hundred dollars per annum, in the intervals of labor due to his owner. There are but few places, especially in a cotton, tobacco, or corn-growing region, where, by burning charcoal, manufacturing baskets, and cultivating "truck-patches," seventy or eighty dollars a year cannot be earned, while all that a slave gains in this manner is his own money, without contest.

There is one incident connected with Gabriel's affair which is interesting. Since he

has come to a knowledge of his daughter's approaching maternity, he has determined to expend six hundred dollars, the price that Mr. Enloe has set upon her, and to buy her first, so that her child may be born free! It is true that at his age and with his growing infirmities there is but little hope that he can ever replenish the vault and liberate himself. This is a painful thought, for he has lived twenty years on the expectation, and he would fain die free.

But his daughter is younger. Her price now is much less than his, and much less than it will be six months hence. So, after consulting with Mr. Blote, he has decided on this course, and next week will propose to his master the purchase.

Chapter Second.

NIGHT ON A PLANTATION.—SERIOUS DISASTER.



PROFOUND darkness has curtains the plantation, and the cold dews of a September night are sprinkled upon the snow-white cotton-fields that lie before my window.

All is still except the foundered horse, unhappy Pompey, whose sepulchral groan occasionally arouses my pity; and a score of those vile fowls, kept for eggs and noise, whose name denotes them to be countrymen to the negroes. These, as they occupy the orchard trees, sustain a stream of melody, so to speak, from dark to daylight. At joyful intervals their chorus subsides into a quartette, or even a trio, and my nervous head experiences a momentary relief.

O, how grateful is the change! Swiftly I advance into the first degree of a good sleep. I commence a series of blessed visions fresh from "the chamber of imagery." An agreeable promise hovers around my bed, that the feeble resident shall have new strength for the morrow. But then an evil-hearted dog, down at "the quarters," either astonished at the cessation of sound in the orchard, or haunted by some conscience of his own, or prompted by a hankering to be heard while there is opportunity, breaks out into a cracked

howl, each Guinea fowl starts up into life again, and that excruciating sawing of their throats commences. Bright visions fly my couch, scared afar off by the discord. Sleep leaves me to my own unhappy companionship. The poor brain resumes its throbbing, and I feel to envy Pompey, colic, founder, and all so that I but possessed his obtuseness of ear.

The houses of my hospitable entertainer, Mr. Enloe, are so scattered as to occupy a considerable space of ground. There is no one of them, however, more than a story high. "The ground site" here is nothing in point of value. The great heat of the summer so penetrates the thin roofs that but little use could be made of upper apartments, if we had them. Therefore, though there may be more than a score of rooms occupied by the various members of the family, they are all on the ground floor.

The plan of constructing dwelling-houses is tolerably uniform throughout the South, being made with reference both to the exigencies of the climate and the nature of the materials most easily procured. Two square rooms, usually eighteen feet on a side, are set three or four yards apart, and a long roof drawn over the whole. The space between, being floored on a level with the houses, constitutes what in sixteen States is termed "the passage." The chimneys are at the ends, and *outside the houses*. Other rooms are then constructed, two on a side, by extending the roof in the direction of its slopes; those are termed "shed-rooms." If more cover is needed, another set of apartments is commenced a short distance off, and if architectural taste inclines that way, a broad shelter is extended over the whole. More commonly, however, when family necessities demand more than six or eight rooms, the others are detached and occupied by the men and boys.

The "negro quarters" are usually a collection of detached cabins, each some twelve or fifteen feet square, and having its own chimney, the whole group being at some distance from the owner's mansion.

In the present instance, my bed is made in one of the disconnected rooms, about twenty steps from the main house, which is occupied by Mr. Enloe and his family.

The night is overclouded, with a prospect of rain. Here I lie, hour after hour, hoping,

longing, praying for sleep. Sound after sound has died away in "the quarters," the mansion, and the gin-house. The overseer, with his loud voice, has ceased to issue his mandates, and taken his late supper, hours after everybody else, and has gone to bed in the adjoining room. I can distinctly hear the voice of his slumber, as if mocking the ghost of mine.

The two lovers, whose seat has been at the parlor window, not so far from me but what I can occasionally hear their voices, have at last yielded to the necessity of sleep, and with many a tender word parted to their respective rooms.

So has object after object settled into its place for the night, and nothing is left for me but the discords of the orchard and this weary whirl of my own thoughts. O! how inexpressibly sweet comes the word of the Psalmist to my recollection—"He giveth his beloved sleep," and how my soul longs to rank among "his beloved," that I may have sleep.

Midnight comes, and with the stroke of its coming, one, two, three, ring successively upon the clock-wire in the parlor, and to my weary ears they sound in the distance like a death-watch ticking out my doom.

Suddenly I am aroused by some strange noise, I know not what. I rise up hastily, glad of any excuse to leave my bed, and seat myself by the window, and welcome the cold morning air upon my open bosom and burning head.

The fowls become noisier than ever, all hopes of quiet in that quarter being entirely at an end.

The house-dogs, too, are aroused, perhaps by the same object that startled me, and they commence barking with all their might.

From the stables, poor Pompey sends out his solemn groan, that denotes not a shadow of relief.

The parlor clock signals to me once more. It is four, and another hour is day. As the cheering thought couples itself with the Divine promise, "Joy cometh with the morning," and my mind expands under the hope, I am startled by the figure of a person rushing from the direction of the house, and passing under my window almost within my reach, toward the "quarters." I am certain that I recognize it as the girl *Loogy*, and as

she passes me she gives utterance to a deep, convulsive sob.

The dogs continue their noise, now taken up by those belonging to all the plantations around. The Guineas fly from their roost, and awaken the other fowls. One aspiring chanticleer trumpets forth his own misfortune and the rest emulate his spirit.

The overseer, who has been uneasy for several hours lest he should sleep too late, rises, lights the gin-house lantern, and, examining his watch, announces the result by blowing the plantation horn until all rings again.

In an instant, everything is aroused. The negro men, who do not ordinarily divest themselves of their garments to sleep, are at once on their way to the stables to feed the stock. The women light up their fires for breakfast, and so the plantation day begins.

With the cold, frosty air, and the departure of night, my nerves gain more composure. I become gradually oblivious, not interrupted until the breakfast-bell awakens me into life.

At the table I inquire for *Loogy*, intending to question her as to the occurrence of the night before, but she is absent, her young mistress says, upon some household duty.

The care of the foundered Pompey occupies my thoughts for an hour or two. My host has to make a trip to town to pay into the county treasury a large sum of money he has collected, and will not return till dinner-time. Mr. Blote takes the two little boys, heavy with geography and grammar, to his school-room, from whence they will not emerge much before owl-time. The lovers occupy the entire parlor, nor would they have room for me in it were it ten times as big. The good dame, amidst her kitchen and garden cares, cannot brook any interruption.

All these things conspire to throw me upon my own resources for amusement. So, when I am done with the groaning glutton at the stable, I walk through the garden, audibly admiring its arrangements and the abundance of its contents, early or late, thereby advancing myself a grade in the favor of Mrs. E.; take a flying visit to the cotton-gin, where the loud buzz denotes a rapid transfer of the great Southern staple to an early market; make a call upon the pickers in the field, who are filling their large baskets; and complete my circuit with Pompey again.

In the midst of the fourth round, I catch sight of Mr. Enloe returning home at full gallop, the dusty lane filling up behind him with clouds.

Is there a slave insurrection? Have the Murrell developments really come to a head?

Knowing the staidness of my friend's character, I am instantly persuaded there is something serious, and return swiftly to the house.

Caroline is standing in the front window, anxiously watching her father's approach, while Mr. Colston leans on a chair a step back. I am struck with his death-like paleness—such a contrast to the usual bloom of his cheeks—and can but remark that while he grasps the top of the chair in his hands, his knees knock together as though unable to bear his weight.

Some misunderstanding has doubtless arisen between them. How silly are we to permit such trifles to unman us!

As our host alights at the gate, we observe that he does not stop to fasten his panting horse, which hurries off with dangling rein to the water-trough. He runs rather than walks toward us, and springs up the three steps into the passage with a single leap.

Ordering Caroline to summon her mother from the garden, he goes into his private apartment, where he is joined, a minute after, by the two women. Then the door is closed, and Mr. Colston and myself, who are listening with the greatest anxiety, can hear the sound of their feet hurrying to and fro, then the moving of heavy furniture, and after a while a smothered scream and the voices of the two women broken with sobs.

What mystery is this? My agitation increases. I can with difficulty restrain myself from intruding upon my old friend, if only to share in the family grief. But as I pace the room in my uneasiness, I cannot avoid seeing that my companion has become more composed, his joints more strengthened, while his native color has returned to his cheeks.

Half an hour passes; it seems to my anxious friendship much longer, when Mr. Enloe calls me with faint voice into his room. He shuts the door carefully behind me, that he may not be overheard, but, seated where I am, I feel confident that Mr. Colston has stealthily followed me, and that I see the shadow of his feet in the passage.

Mr. Enloe has become strangely altered. He seems years older than he was at the breakfast-table. His wife is reclining upon the sofa, her face hidden in a handkerchief. Her daughter, pale but not so entirely abandoned to grief, is speaking affectionate words to arouse her. What mystery is in all this?

My friend explains.

"My dear sir, I have met with a dreadful loss. Last night I had twenty thousand dollars in my pocket-book, money belonging to the State, and placed it securely, as I thought, under my pillow. My business at town this morning was to pay it to the county treasurer, for whom I had collected it; but when I entered his office there was nothing in the pocket-book but a roll of waste paper! I am ruined."

As soon as I can get words, under this stunning blow, I inform Mr. Enloe of what I had witnessed the night before, and suggest that one of his servants, probably Loogy, has committed the robbery.

"Impossible!" starts up my sweet young friend, in a warm defence. "utterly impossible! Loogy will not steal. If it was done by any of our negroes, it was not Loogy. I would as soon think I had robbed pa myself."

We agree with the innocent-hearted girl, that Loogy would not be likely to take it of her own accord, but then she might have been put up to it by a second person. Such things are frequently done. But no, Loogy is innocent! Loogy would die before she would steal! Has she not raised Loogy under her own eye, and would not the poor creature do anything to exhibit her affection for her? And then she reminds her parents how Loogy saved her life the year before, when attacked by a rabid dog, and ends her passionate defence of the waiting-maid by proposing to bring her in at once and let her establish her own innocence.

This is agreed to, and, pending her arrival, I return to Mr. Colston, whom I find standing quietly by the chimney, and inform him that a serious accident has befallen the family, which at present cannot be made public, and suggest that under the present circumstances he had better retire until evening.

He adopts my plan with unexpected cordiality, and starts off at a quick pace.

As he goes through the gate, he meets Car-

oline, and in the whispered conference between them, I have no doubt the dear girl tells him the whole.

Loogy is next brought into the passage, where we have now seated ourselves. But Caroline's prediction concerning her is sadly falsified, as her own disappointed look evinces. For instead of the gay, light-hearted manner so natural to the house-maid, she was found crying, so her young mistress admits, and for a while positively refused to come to the conference. Her fellow-servants testify that she has been in tears ever since daylight, and would not touch a morsel of breakfast. All this has a suspicious look.

She comes before us trembling like a leaf. She sinks down before us, her matronly promise being plainer than before. She clasps Mr. Enloe's feet tightly, and screams—

"O, Marses! O, Marses! I didn't tetch de money—'twarn't I, 'deed 'twarn't!"

This is very bad indeed. No one has said a word to her concerning the loss, yet she is already cognizant of the fact. What now avail all her wild declarations? How can even her young mistress, with all her maidenly faith, believe her denial?

"O, Miss Carline, Miss Carline, 'twarn't I. I didn't tetch it, 'deed I didn't. You doesn't b'leeve I'd steal, Miss Carline, does you?"

How can the weeping girl reply, save by advising her to make a full confession, and tell her master where she has put the money?

On hearing this, the negro rises at once from her abject posture, loses all her fear, and gazes almost angrily upon Caroline. From this, she glances around to each one of us in turn—never did the sublimity of innocence so light up human face before—casts her eyes upward as if appealing to that God who knoweth the truth, however it may be hidden from human knowledge, and then falls heavily forward in a fit.

The attack lasts through the whole day. Physician after physician is summoned from the neighboring settlements, but with all their skill it is night before Loogy is able to recognize her young mistress, who had hardly once withdrawn that white arm from under her neck all the while.

As soon as she can speak, she begs to be left alone with Miss Caroline, but this cannot be permitted.



"O, MARSER! O, MARSER! I DIDN'T TETCH DE MONEY—'TWARNT I, 'DEED 'TWARNT."

Officers have come from town by this time, to inquire why so large an amount of public money, due this day, is delayed. And when the startling intelligence is communicated to them that it cannot be found, they insist that no means shall be left untried to draw the secret from the reputed robber.

The inquisition, during Loogy's swoon, has only brought two facts to light; that the tracks, which are still visible under my window, are undoubtedly hers, and that the string of coral beads which she has worn from childhood has been found hanging upon a limb in the orchard, torn off, beyond a doubt, in her hasty flight from the house.

The grief of old Gabriel, when informed of the robbery and the suspicion that rests on his daughter, although very sincere, is not equal to his confidence in her innocence.

That confidence is really heart-touching. It is useless to point out to him the damning circumstances. He knew that Loogy *wouldn't* steal; and had the money been found in her hand, he could not be made to believe that she took it.

At length his master becomes wearied with his noisy demonstrations of grief, and orders him out of the yard.

It is past midnight before the examination is closed. Every means of intimidating the negro girl and inducing her to make a confession has been resorted to, except force. That is reserved for the last.

Loogy is excessively weak, for she has eaten nothing for twenty-four hours. Her mind has been shaken by the severity of the attack, and this stormy scene quite takes away her little remaining sense. She cannot weep;

she cannot answer the questions so frequently and sternly put to her; she can only say, with a monotonous repetition, but with a voice low and mournful as that of a wind-harp—

"'Twarn't I, Miss Carline. I never tetch'd it. O. Miss Carline, 'deed 'twarn't I!"

My opinion relative to her guilt has undergone a partial change. At first, it seemed certain that Loogy was the thief. But that sublime look—it haunts me yet—which the unsophisticated African girl cast to Heaven when she discovered that even Caroline believed her guilty, had shaken me. It was truly a great mystery.

As I walked by starlight with the old teacher, Mr. Blote, we revolved together every solution, probable or improbable, that occurred to our minds.

Mr. Blote is one of those old-fashioned New Englanders, whom we all recollect to have known from our boyhood, who seem to have been sent into this world expressly to keep school.

The species appears to be always old, but never older; and do not die or weary in their vocation.

We know of a score of such who helped teach us our elements and combinations and will be as ready to handle the tools of the trade when our grandchildren shoulder the satchel, as they were in 1825.

Of this sort, Mr. Blote is a burning and shining light. His own joy is in study, but his great aim in study is that he may impart knowledge. There is no science that he will not undertake, if there is a fraction of a probability of any one calling upon him for it.

As a proof of this, I know he studied thorough-base after he was turned of sixty, because a pupil, who seemed to have a musical gift, desired to acquire that lively branch.

I know, also, that he conquered the Arabic and Syriac tongues from the same motives, and, being called upon to instruct a young half-breed of the Choctaw tribe, he devoted a twelvemonth's leisure to acquiring Choctaw, at the imminent hazard of bronchitis, or something worse, that he might have a more direct way to young Yockinypatauffy's mind.

His Saturdays and vacations go to Botany and Geology, specimens in which encumber all his rooms. Serpents are his bosom

friends, lizards his pets. His thermometer is formed of spiders, his barometer of toads. In short, he indulges in all the ludibria of science.

Such is Mr. Blote's erudition. His native shrewdness, not to be smothered in all this nonsense, is so generally prized by his neighbors that the greater part of those petty disputes which constitute the seeds of the minor lawsuits of a community are committed to his judgment by the parties disputant, and what is more remarkable, his decisions are received with general approbation.

Walking together, as I have said, under the midnight sky, we reconsider every aspect in which this mysterious affair has been turned toward us. That the girl was aware of the robbery before it came to our knowledge cannot be doubted, but neither of us believe that she was the principal agent in the affair, though the facts even at that make against her. She certainly knew who the thief was, and ought to be compelled to confess it.

I have neglected to say that Loogy's husband, Tom, a slave upon the adjoining plantation, was taken up immediately upon discovering the loss of Mr. Enloe's money, it being reasonably supposed that the girl had entrusted him with it.

No information, however, has been gained from him, and he is now confined, until further orders, in one of the apartments of his owner's house.

To my surprise, Mr. Blote, after a brief digression upon the probable distance of the dog-star, advances the idea of *somnambulism*.

"If it could be ascertained," he says, "that Mr. Enloe or his wife has ever been accustomed to sleep-walking, what is there incredible in the notion of his removing the money to some other place? Many such *memorabilia* are upon record. Were such the case, it would be proper to keep a watch over him for several nights, in hopes that he would return to the place of deposit."

"But how should Loogy have known of it?" I ask, in my perplexity.

However, we get the overseer's advice on this head, and, receiving his approbation—though, it must be admitted, rather coolly, for Mr. Allansby had no idea of anything more effectual than the lash—we set a watch upon my friend's apartment.

I may as well dispose of this topic by adding here that this guard was maintained, by the assistance of gentlemen from the vicinity, for a week, but no one moved in his sleep further than from one side of the bed to the other, and this notable scheme died without fruit.

I should have said before that Mr. Colston returned to Mr. Enloe's in time for supper. I scarcely know why I watched him so closely, but I was sure there was something weighty on his mind. The uneasy manner of his eye, which I observed before, seemed to have increased. Sometimes a gayety, as artificial as could be manufactured, would buoy him up for a few minutes; then he relapsed entirely into silence. Could it be that he was mentally calculating the *value* of his betrothed, now that her fortune was gone at a single blow? It was too bad to believe.

He took much interest in the examination of Loogy, and, like the rest of us, asked her many questions. I was standing close to her when he commenced this, and was struck with her peculiar manner of receiving it.

She had been lying on a blanket in the parlor, her eyes closed, and seemingly unconscious of all that was said to her. At intervals, those monotonous words of denial—"O, Miss Carline, 'deed 'twarn't I, Miss Carline! I never tetch'd it, 'deed I didn't," could be heard, but rather as the result of her own thoughts, than in response to our interrogatories.

But when Mr. Colston first spoke to her, she opened her eyes, stared at him a moment, then at her young mistress, who was holding her cold hands, and raised herself up as if about to speak. The rest of us leaned eagerly forward to catch her words. But then, to our disappointment, she changed her intention, whatever it had been, sunk back upon the blanket, and only reiterated those listless words.

After midnight we separated, with the understanding that nothing more could be done for the present. Mr. Enloe returned to town

with the officers to take legal advice. The money which had been so mysteriously abstracted from under his pillow was secured to government by responsible endorsers, so that not only was his own fortune involved, so far as it would reach, but much of the property of his friends would be sacrificed to supply the deficiency.

It may appear strange to some that this large plantation, and the gang of slaves that worked it, should not be able to cover a deficit of twenty thousand dollars. But the fact is, few planters in Mississippi, fifteen years ago, were really worth half the property in their hands. The late bank inflations, which had given an unhealthy impetus to all kinds of monetary enterprises, placed much in men's hands only to take it away again, with large interest.

Mr. Enloe had dabbled in various speculations, like the other gentlemen of his standing, and lost much property. That which remained in his possession was largely encumbered, and sold at the point of law would not leave him more than twelve thousand dollars to pay this debt of twenty.

This was bad enough, but there was another thing which weighed heavily upon his mind that night.

Mr. Enloe was a stern partisan. None had been more prone to attribute evil motives to his opponents than himself. None had more unscrupulously employed the filthy means too often employed by political hacks. He was even now a candidate for the Legislature, and the strife was unprecedented in violence, even in that fervid land. How his enemies would revenge themselves in his present misfortune! How they would gail his sensitive spirit! And when it was charged upon him, as it certainly would be, that instead of being robbed by others, he had in reality defrauded the government out of this large sum to pay his own liabilities, how much worse than a gun-shot would the missiles of slander wound his heart!

Chapter Third.

MYSTERIOUS ROBBERY.—EXAMINATION UNDER THE LASH.



JUST let the reader accompany us in fancy to the corner of "the new ground," a little before sunrise, the day after the discovery of the robbery. The cool air and the night-dews have brought relief to the vegetation parched under yesterday's sun, and there is now a deep green upon the dense corn that reminds us of early spring.

The last racecoon has left the enticing field, and takes his place for the day in some hollow tree, his snug abode. The birds are calling to one another from the thickets, the earliest of them already upon the wing.

Looking up the lane toward Mr. Enloe's mansion, we see the form of old Gabriel shuffling along in his heavy, awkward way toward us. He has got permission from the stern overseer to absent himself to-day from plantation labor.

As the bands of pickers pass him, their baskets lightly poised upon their heads, on their way to the cotton-patch, they can easily see that the old hostler is weeping. His distress at his daughter's situation has moved even the severe heart of Mr. Allansby, hence this unaccustomed favor.

Gabriel walks this morning with a staff. Has the sorrow of a single day thus unnerved him?

Who can lightly speak of the feelings of this degraded race, when we see in them such evidences of holy grief?

As he approaches us, we can hear him, in the usual manner of an African slave, talking to himself about his troubles. In the intervals of his sobs, he utters such broken words as these:—

"Never did it. Sooner'd b'leeve I did it myself. Loogy'll die 'fore she'll own it. You'll see it. Poor gal! De lash will kill her. You'll see it. Dead already, I reckon."

In this slow, unhappy way he came down to the spot where he had left the road on a former occasion. But, instead of taking the same precautions to guard against espionage, he appeared utterly careless as to who might see him.

He turned slowly into the thicket, nervous-

ly twitched at a vine that had drawn itself before him, then angrily drew out his knife and cut it in two.

In the same way he severed the branches and briars that came in his way, until his path was so marked that a blind man could well nigh trace it up.

The old negro indeed seemed to be partially deranged. His hat fell off, but he would not stoop to pick it up, yet he delayed long enough upon his way to fill his pockets with hazle-nuts. He lost his knife, but regarded it not. He muttered to himself with closed eyes, and repeated the words, which express the burden of his grief:—

"Poor gal! Tort she'd be free next week. De lash will kill 'em both. You'll see it."

Thus delaying, and sobbing, and muttering, it is a good while before he reaches the place of his deposit. Can he believe his own eyes? Is he dreaming? What new evil is this? *The stone lies flat in the bottom of the ravine, and the money is gone!*

The aged African staggers breathlessly against the bank, and well nigh loses his senses. Recovered a little, he takes a second glimpse, and then such a scream, such an unearthly cry as his lungs give forth, how shall it be conveyed to the reader's knowledge?

Again he reclines against the bank, for he feels as if his heart would never resume its beating. Nor does it, until several minutes elapse, and he has exercised a powerful effort of his will to preserve himself from a swoon. Already weakened by a whole night's emotion, he finds it necessary to leave the fatal spot, and totters down the ravine to the creek. Here he bathes his whole head for a long time in the refreshing waters, shuddering to see himself looking so wild and fierce.

He returns to the cavity more resigned, with better eyesight and recovered strength. Perhaps, after all, some animal has broken down the flat stone—the stock often wander up these gullies in search of salted earth, to which their appetite greatly inclines them—and the money may, after all, be hidden under the loose soil that has fallen to the bottom.

So he goes back with a little hope. But a single glance dashes down the hope, and rising erect, with something fluttering in his hand, he screams even more wildly than before.

It is a handkerchief, one of the coarse, red bandannas so much fancied by the black women, and the old man recognizes it as *the one worn by his daughter!*

Unhappy Gabriel! what means that gesture—those wild blows upon your throat—those eager glances around you, as though you were seeking for a weapon of death? Fortunately for your soul's peace hereafter, the knife which was in your hand this morning has been dropped in the thicket, and you cannot commit suicide.

No, old man, you cannot die yet. But you can reach the divine ear with those agonized screams. You can excite the sympathy of invisible watchers by those distracted gestures. You can be there, groaning on that damp earth, and although no man marks your distress, the eye of God marks it.

All becomes quiet again, at least outwardly, for Gabriel has no room for further surprise. No, although the marks of naked feet in the earth are *hers*, though the imprint of fingers upon the bank are *hers*, he can suffer no greater grief now, but seeks his staff, and hiding the handkerchief in his bosom, drags himself away from the spot—cruel, ungrateful daughter, how have you fixed that spot in his memory!—nor once halts nor looks back until he reaches the quarters.

At the risk of confusing the reader's mind with the order of events, I add here that the room in which Tom, Loogy's husband, is confined, was broken open the subsequent night, and it is found that both Gabriel and Tom have run away. Every effort was made, as we shall see in a future chapter, to recover them. A professional negro-catcher was employed, who exhausted the whole instinct of his dogs in vain. Rewards to the amount of one hundred and fifty dollars each were blazoned forth in all the journals of the vicinity. Offers of full pardon were sent them through their fellow servants, for it is considered that the absence of Tom, at least, is connected with the robbery.

But all is in vain. The means were exhausted, and as it is quite an impossibility for a runaway negro to reach a free State from so distant a region, it was finally concluded that the pair had been drowned in attempting to cross some water-course.

Let us return to Mr. Enloe's house.

The proprietor, with the county sheriff and a large party of his political friends, has come back from town about nine o'clock to resume the inquisition into the robbery. There is that in Mr. Enloe's look which speaks of despair. He whispers aside to me, while his companions are fastening their horses to the rack, that he apprehends the worst.

Again Loogy is brought forward for examination, but this time the affair is in sterner hands than Mr. Enloe's.

The gentle Caroline, who has attended her anxiously through the night, and induced her both to eat and to sleep, is forbidden now to remain with her.

When she protests against this cruelty, the sheriff, a large, ill-favored man, softening his voice before her as though she were his own dear daughter, assures her that her father's honor and the honor of his family depend upon this morning's work, and he must go through it his own way without interruption. So she retires, weeping, in the company of her mother, to a distant apartment.

The negro girl is permitted to sit with us on a chair in the parlor, while the examination goes on. Every one speaks kindly to her (such is the plan laid down to us in private by the sheriff), and a glass of sweetened spirits administered before any questions are asked her. The stimulus brings new light to her eyes, while the kindness of the company, so forcibly contrasted with the severity of their language yesterday, gives her much courage.

But a change has taken place in the appearance of the poor girl. Her firm breasts, that had given such healthful indications of approaching maternity, seemed flaccid beneath their scanty covering, and her general condition is greatly advanced. Unfortunate creature! The experience of years has passed over her in a single night. The light-hearted girl is suddenly transformed into a suffering woman, with, worse than a woman's lot.

When the experienced sheriff observes from her eye that the stimulus has taken effect, he begins the examination by asking her a few unimportant questions relative to her ordinary work—how she likes to weave—how many knots a day she can spin, and the like.

Turning with considerable ingenuity to the

subject of the robbery, he goes on to inform her that Mr. Enloe has lost a great deal of money lately, and will have to sell his negroes unless he can find it again.

Loogy sits smiling under the influence of the spirits, and at the end of each sentence nods her head in token of assent.

The officer observes that everybody knows how full of jokes she, Loogy, is, and that they have had a good laugh together to think that she should go into her master's room when he was asleep, and take his money away, just to have some fun with it.

At this, the negro grows somewhat nervous, but when the whole company of us burst into a preconcerted laugh, she relaxes her gravity, smiles, and again nods her head.

The sheriff goes a little further, and says that Mr. Enloe is afraid the money may be lost if she keeps it any longer; and he tells her an amusing story of how a rat once carried off his pocket-book and gnawed it at one end, and to convince her of the fact, he holds it up before her, and shows her that it is really injured, as he says.

No signs of intelligence follow, but there is a slight air of anxiety on her face at the entrance of Mr. Colston, who has just arrived.

"Tell us, then, my good girl," asked the sheriff, coaxingly, "is your master's money put away where the rats can get it?"

But Loogy answers not.

"Tom has-n't got it, has he?" imprudently inquires that individual's master, who is with us.

"O, no, no, no!" stammered the girl. "Tom didn't tetch it, sir; 'deed he didn't."

The sheriff takes a large chew of tobacco, glances at Mr. Enloe with a half-smile, as much as to say—we shall come to it presently, if you'll all be patient, and then draws from his saddle-bags a splendid pattern of Alpaca. He opens it, so as to show the colors, and laying it in Loogy's lap, says, in his kindest manner—

"Here is a dress I've bought for you, Loogy. See how pretty the flowers are!"

With a true feminine love for ornament, the negro holds up the piece, gazes delightedly upon the figures, and wraps it around her, as if mentally calculating the quantity and the effect.

"And here," continued the officer, archly smiling, and speaking now in a half-whisper, as though he did not wish for us to hear him, "here is something for the baby."

And then he draws out a necklace, made of the large gold beads coveted more than any other ornament by the blacks.

It is really a magnificent present, for it has been bought that morning for the purpose, at a cost of thirty dollars, while the Alpaca was valued at more than two dollars a yard. So important does he think it to propitiate the girl's will.

"Something for the baby, Loogy," whispers the sheriff, and lays the glittering necklace upon the splendid cloth. "Your baby will have the finest necklace in all the land."

How touching is the expression of that young face, lit up by the prophetic impulses of a mother's love! She gathers up the gold beads in her hand so as to conceal them, and turns her face away as though the subject were too tender for speech.

"And, now, Loogy," continues the sheriff, "you must go with your master and hand him back his money before the rats gnaw it. Come, Loogy, get up and go. Your master is ready to go with you."

But Loogy sits still, looks earnestly around her, and answers not a word.

"O, you needn't be afraid of the overseer," dextrously suggests the sheriff. "He shall never know where you put it, at all. And he shall never strike you a single blow for what you have done. You won't whip Loogy, Mr. Allansby, will you?"

Mr. Allansby declares, with as much amenity as he can throw into his face at short notice, that such a joke as hiding that money is too good for a whipping. He pledges his word to her, confirming the promise by throwing his whip out of the window, and giving her several pieces of money, that he will never strike her a blow on account of it.

The rest of us imitate his example, make her presents of money, laugh uproariously at the excellent joke, praise her costly presents, and promise that we won't follow her.

"Come, now, Loogy; go with your master and get the money."

Mr. Enloe rose, walked to the door, looked smilingly back, and invited her to follow him.

But the act called up to her mind all the

realities of her situation. The smile fled from her face and the light from her eye. She dropped the splendid fabric upon the floor; her hands opening, set free the necklace and the money we had given her. She falls on her knees, and with a loud, terrified voice repeats the declaration so often made before—

"I didn't tetch it, Marser; 'deed I didn't."

The disappointment is general and severe.

The sheriff breaks out into a fierce oath, even in spite of himself, and the overseer echoes it fervently.

An expression of anger goes around the circle as Mr. Enloe returns to his seat.

After a hurried consultation, carried on in whispers between himself and the officer, he takes the lead in the second scheme that had been proposed to win the grand secret.

He approaches the girl, now weeping and sobbing as though her heart would break, takes her chilly hand in his, and begs her—the master condescending to the humblest supplications before his slave—he begs her for God's sake to give him back his money. He tells her, with the most solemn appeals, that the loss of it will utterly ruin him—will force him to sell his plantation, to sell his servants, one and all, who will be sent off to the sugar-plantations, and scattered far apart, never to see each other any more—that the money her father has been saving up to buy her freedom will not be half enough now—that his loss will oblige him to take his little boys from school and put them to the hoe-handle—will oblige her dear young mistress to leave home and go out to work for a living—will cause him, her master, who has raised her and always been kind to her, and is now so willing to make her free and make her happy, to be looked upon in his old age as a thief, and driven out of good society, and die a miserable man!

He promises her everything calculated to win a negro's heart—her freedom, the freedom of her husband, Tom, a handsome cabin, with good furniture all to herself. Nothing that occurred to his experienced mind, in the way of lure, was forgotten.

It was utterly useless; all this humiliation and profusion of promise were as nothing.

Loogy wept. Loogy sobbed. Loogy fell on her knees as before, and embraced his

feet. But she could not be tempted to make any other response to his earnest entreaties than the words—

"'Deed, Marser I didn't tetch it, 'deed I didn't."

Then exclaims the sheriff, his ill-favored face glaring up with the same look that had inflamed it when he joined the year before in a death-grapple with one of Murrell's stoutest desperadoes, then says the furious officer—

"Take her to the whipping-post! The money shall come, or she shall die under the lash!"

Will the reader pardon me a short digression here, even though it may appear to be apologetic. I have utterly failed in making myself understood, if I have not cleared up these two points—that the negro girl knows what disposition has been made of this immense booty, even if she is not the real robber, and that the whole fortune and the social standing of Mr. Enloe depend upon its recovery.

Not one in the room, at least it appears so to me, has the shadow of a doubt but what Loogy took the money and handed it to some second person. No clue has yet been gained as to who that second person is.

The man Tom (a very honest, pious negro, by the way) has been again interrogated since daylight, and his whereabouts during the whole night of the robbery so accurately traced up, that although he is still kept in durance, it is only to hinder him from communicating with his fellow-servants until the examination of Loogy is ended, and not that any one believes him guilty either before or after the fact.

Now the question with those deeply-interested individuals is, shall this stubborn girl be permitted to remain silent when so much depends on her testimony? If she did not take the money, who did? If she has not concealed it, who has? To these reasonable inquiries the prisoner has given no reply.

The sheriff himself is a surety upon Mr. Enloe's bonds for several thousand dollars; nearly every other man in the room is peculiarly involved in this affair. Is it a matter of surprise, then, that extreme measures suggest themselves to their minds? Let the reader divest himself of prejudice, and reply.

There is another circumstance which adds



"THE BLOW FALLS, CUTTING LIKE A KNIFE-BLADE THROUGH HER FLIMSY CHEMISE."

interest to this examination. It is but a short time since the horrid developments of the Murrell conspiracy came to light, which are doubtless familiar to my readers. Every community in Mississippi has its fears upon this head, for several attempts at insurrection among the servile population have been checked in the bud, and others are yet tremblingly anticipated.

The old sheriff has been actively engaged for several months in ferreting those things out. Some mysterious robberies have occurred recently in his own county, and he believes them to have been committed by the Murrell band, whose ramifications are supposed to pervade every class of society.

Under this state of excitement, and considering the mysterious nature of the present affair, he has naturally associated it with the others.

The whipping-post, which is the smooth

trunk of a cherry-tree, selected for the occasion, has received its victim, and the overseer stands with his heavy whip ready to strike.

My heart sinks within me. I would fain fly, but stand still, fascinated, as it were, hoping yet doubtfully that the girl will make a confession before the lash should fall.

The sheriff has put on an air of determination that brooks no farther gentleness or delay.

The plantation physician has held a consultation with Mr. Enloe. The conclusion which he expresses, as he turns to the gate, unwilling to witness the scene, may be inferred from his words, which barely reach my ears—

"Not more than ten or twelve, Mr. Enloe, and I can't answer for that."

Poor Loogy! How well for you had you carried your little burden, yet unborn, to an

earlier grave. As she raises her head from its drooping posture and glances appealingly toward the apartment to which the ladies have retired, there is a shadow on it that agonizes my heart to behold. Heaven grant she may yet confess.

"And now, you cursed thief!" hisses the overseer, in his most repulsive manner, "tell me where's the money—quick, or I'll cut your back into slivers! Where is it?"

"I hain't got it, sir, 'deed I hain't! O, tell Miss Carline to come to me!"

"You'll never see your Miss Caroline again if you don't tell me where's that money. I'll cut you all to pieces, and then sell you to the nigger-trader. Where's the money?"

"'Deed, sir, I don't know, 'deed I don't!"

The blow falls, cutting like a knife-blade through the flimsy chemise, which for decency's sake has been left upon her back.

She screams, until the woods ring again. An answering scream is heard from the ladies.

The negroes in the cotton-patch—we can distinctly see them from where we stand—stop their work, raise themselves up, and look toward us; then the women toss their arms wildly above their heads.

"Where is it?" again demands the overseer. "Tell me, you d—d thief, before I strike again!"

"Do you know who took it?" interrupts the sheriff, observing how earnestly she watches the upraised lash.

"Yes, yes, Marser, but I didn't tetch it!" is the reply, extorted, beyond doubt, by the extremity of her pain. "I didn't tetch it, 'deed I didn't!"

Down comes the lash a second time, and again the thin cotton fabric is cut in two and tinged with blood. Her piteous cries are answered as before, and then the door of the ladies' apartment flies violently open, and Caroline, tearing herself from her mother's hands, runs to us.

There has been an earnest strife between them, the one to restrain, the other to escape. The daughter has gained her desire, and is with us in an instant. She answers Loogy's welcoming words. She throws those lovely arms around her neck and kisses her affectionately as though she were her own sister.

And when the overseer takes her hand to lead her away, she vows that they may strike her, but they shall not again touch poor Loogy. No, no! She promises that to the writhing, bleeding creature, and she will perform it.

The scene has become too affecting. My heart is sick. I cannot bear to remain a spectator any longer, and walk rapidly away.

Chapter Fourth.

THE NEGRO-CATCHER AND HIS DOGS.—SALE OF THE SLAVE.—BREAKING UP.



O precarious was the situation of my horse, Pompey, that even though I had not believed my presence very welcome at Mr. Enloe's house at this time of distress, I should have tarried yet another day.

His stomach is distressingly thin; he is not able yet to walk to the water-trough without support, and stands all day long a striking and pitiful monument of the sad effects of gormandizing. It is to be hoped he will never forget his sufferings, or be guilty of a similar offence.

When I return to the house, after the painful scene described in the last chapter, I am informed that Loogy was released at the prayer of Caroline, and a last effort made (and made under the clear understanding that unless she acknowledges her share of the fatal secret she should be sold to the negro-trader) to conquer her obstinacy.

But the pleadings of her young mistress were as fruitless as the persuasions of the others. She would do no more than admit that she knew who stole the money, but couldn't say where it was now, and would confess nothing.

The party returned late to town, and if the general expression of their countenances was a fair criterion of their thoughts, they had resigned themselves to the severe necessity of paying the heavy debt.

On the next morning the discovery is made of the escape of Gabriel and Tom, rationally supposed to have run away in each other's company.

This circumstance affords an apparent clue to the tangled skein, for no other motive

can be assigned for their departure just at this crisis, except that they have an interest in the concealment of the money.

Old Gabriel had not informed any person except Tom of his own loss, and it is supposed that he took his deposit with him. So, after an early breakfast, the whole settlement starts out in pursuit.

I have notified my readers in the last chapter that this pursuit was unsuccessful, but the sketch of a *slave hunt* may be interesting; sufficiently so, at least, for an episode.

After the first superficial search, embracing the out-houses and neighboring woods, to which escaped slaves often direct their steps, a messenger is sent for Obin Sanford, the negro-catcher, and his dogs.

Obin is a lank, unhealthy-looking creature, of the grayhound stock, who lives in a small hut by the cane-brake, and pursues this rather disreputable calling for a support. His domestic life, smothered in a cloud of miasma, and half the time surrounded by the bay-on-water, accounts for his sallow hue, while the flavor from his lungs explains the scarlatina of his nose.

Obin is laboring at this present under a chronic attack of chills and fever, but fortunately it is a tertian, and he has two good days to go upon. His dogs, five in number, really seem to be what no recorded dogs ever were before, ashamed of good company. They hang their long, bony heads as low as a serpent trails his. They crouch around Obin's feet, nor by any inducement can they be persuaded to eat a morsel on the plantation.

This latter peculiarity Obin explicates by saying that he never allows them to touch a bite from any man's hand but his own. Would he add, *nor from his own, neither*, it would better account for their excessive thinness in the region of the stomach.

This Obin Sanford is the famous "nigger-catcher," who, for five dollars a head, guarantees to find any runaway, if he can have notice within two days of his departure.

Obin's first demand is of course for something alcoholic to drink; his second is for articles of clothing belonging to the deserters.

Those of Tom's are easily found, for Loogy has them all safely locked up in her little red chest; but old Gabriel is too experienced a hand to leave a rag behind *him*. He knows

too well with what certainty a negro dog can catch a trail, and he has burnt all his wardrobe to ashes except the articles taken with him, even to his last winter's shoes. However, the *hoe* that he ordinarily used in the garden will answer the same purpose, after all. It is found and placed before the dogs, and great interest it seems to excite among them.

They sniff at it long and delightedly, as though it were perfumed with the very cologne of Farina. Then they hold a conference on one side, the old white hound presiding, until they harmonize in sentiment as to the particular flavor represented in it.

This being satisfactorily settled, the bundle from the little red chest is next brought forward, containing Tom's shoes, coat, and other garments, and their opinion requested on that.

A similar conference begins, but does not, however, lead to a similar result.

The dogs appear to be puzzled. They return again and again, sometimes one by himself, sometimes two or three together, but somehow they cannot harmonize. The old white hound made up her opinion at the first sniff, and she stands to it, like one conscientious jurymen among eleven hungry ones. She lies down behind the horse-block, declaring, most positively, that she will not change her views on any consideration whatever.

The bystanders call upon Obin Sanford for an explanation. This gentleman has been redeeming the time by eating some water-melons that the lads had gathered and brought in from the patch, and he really seems to be the only disinterested man in the party.

When informed of the difficulty his canine friends labor under, he draws his long jack-knife of a body straight out, and, looking at the pile of clothes, suggests that possibly somebody's else has got mixed with them.

Sure enough, his idea, compounded as it is of whisky and water-melons, is correct. The clothes had been tied up in Loogy's own handkerchief, as old Pink, the white hound, informs us, and upon the removal of that she readily consents, the other dogs concurring, to open the hunt. So, taking a parting sniff at the hoe-handle to freshen their memories, the whole pack follow their master to "the quarters," and begin forthwith upon Gabriel's track.



"THE DOGS APPEAR TO BE PUZZLED."

This leads, as had been anticipated, to the dwelling of the neighboring planter, Tom's master, and directly under the room in which Tom had been confined. There the dogs recognize Tom's flavor, open a series of gratified howls, and dash off at full speed in pursuit.

Had not the runaways been directed by one familiar with all the tricks of woodcraft, they could not have baffled that pursuit for an hour. For the dogs, with noses breast high, raced through the cotton-patch and through the hazle-thicket with as much ease and almost as much speed as a locomotive upon its iron path. But Gabriel remembered his experience of younger days, and most severely did he put their canine skill to the test.

At the first creek which the fugitives had crossed, the dogs lost several hours regaining the scent; for the old hostler had only gone over so as to touch the opposite bank and confuse the trail, then, returning, had swung

by a long vine to the hither side and followed its course for a great distance.

A small lake, dotted here and there with hammocks, that the runaways had used for steps, cost the pursuers another tedious delay. Passing this, the negroes had found a flock of sheep in the woods, and, driving these before them, they were enabled by this means to disguise their scent so effectually that it was the second day before the dogs got through that difficulty.

By this time the foot-marks were getting very indistinct, even to the instinct of old Pink. She became low-spirited and sullen, as well she might be, for never had her powers been so mocked before; and that day yielded no discoveries.

Upon the next, Obin took his tertian, slightly aggravated, perhaps, by the two or three water-melons he had indulged in at every house, and then the party who had accompanied him returned home discouraged.

There are so many means in the possession of a runaway, that it is wonderful how they suffer themselves to be so readily taken. Those employed by Gabriel are amongst the simplest on record. I have known an expert negro to "lie out" for a twelvemonth, in sight of his master's plantation, fed daily by his master's slaves, clothed comfortably from his master's stock, and thoroughly hunted at least once a week by the enraged overseer, who well knew that the slave was lurking about, but couldn't find a hiding-place. In such a case, there is no secrecy in the world so complete as that of the fellow-servants toward one another. Such a thing as treachery is unprecedented.

Let us return to Mr. Enloe.

Other conferences have been held, both at his house and at the county town. The question as to the legal responsibility has been settled by the highest authority in the State, and it only remains for my friend, like an honorable man as he is, to resign his property into the hands of the civil officers. There is an abundance of sympathy offered him by those who know his stern integrity, and who pity him for his misfortunes, and, to the credit of humanity be it said, not a few offers of aid.

The latter, however, consist principally in endorsements of credit, in case he should think proper to commence a mercantile business; for it was a time of great monetary embarrassments, and few of his friends were able at the time to meet their own current demands.

But sympathy is precious in a season of distress, and so Mr. Enloe felt it. The other proffers he declined, declaring that he had injured his friends sufficiently already, and would henceforth rely solely upon his own efforts.

But a severe blow was in reserve for him. Our worst anticipations relative to the use his political enemies would make of his misfortunes were realized. The newspapers of the opposite party went so far in the excitement of the campaign as to accuse him of dishonesty, and to call him a rogue.

Being at the time a candidate for the State Legislature, he was charged upon the stump with an attempt to defraud the government, and although he triumphantly refuted the

slander by proving that he had assigned over every dollar of his property, yet the very charge broke him down. It cost him his election, and took away that elasticity of mind which had buoyed him up thus far.

I grieve to add, that for a little while the strong man lost all hope, and, taking to dissipation, remained for a week stupidly drunk, to the great grief of his family, and the scandal of his friends. This cost him an expulsion from his church.

As ashamed of this, and perhaps won over by the two affectionate women whose hearts were like his heart, he swore with hand upon the Book of Books to do so no more, and he kept his vow.

A faithful friend, formerly his partner in some mercantile transactions, came to his relief at this crisis, and secured for him a land agency, which, besides yielding a liberal salary, afforded him that which most of all he needed, mental and physical employment.

All these occurrences, the reader must understand, were compressed within a month of the time of the robbery.

But we are getting on too fast.

The first act of the drama of breaking up was the sale of Loogy. This, the reader will admit, was but an act of retributive justice. The legal title to the girl was really vested in Caroline, but, upon understanding her father's condition, that excellent young woman unhesitatingly offered up, not only her waiting-maid, but three other slaves that had been presented to her as successive New Years' gifts, and he had accepted them to save the honor of the family.

The reader must not suppose that any means of persuasion or intimidation, save the lash, had been untried to win the secret from the girl. Caroline had scarcely ceased to importune her night or day, but always with the same want of success. The secret seemed destined to die with her.

I happened to be at Mr. Enloe's house on the morning the trader came to remove Loogy, and as I have not spared the reader any of the melancholy scenes of this history, I will also describe this.

Mr. Derrick's, the "nigger-trader," as his class is technically styled, is quite a different man in outward show to what a person would suppose from his calling. It has been his

annual task for twenty years to visit Virginia, purchase a company of twenty or thirty slaves of different sizes and sexes, and conduct them to Mississippi for sale.

The difference in price between the two localities is so considerable, and Mr. Derrick's eye so critical in the selection of his merchandise, that his profits have made him rich—as rich, folks say, as he ought to be. Perhaps his opinion upon this coincides with theirs about as nearly as could be expected. Nevertheless, he continues to take his fall trip to the North, more from habit, he declares, than anything else; still brings his well-chosen company to his own plantation first, whence, after feeding and clothing them for a month, to their manifest improvement, he disposes of them amongst his various customers, and still adds a few annual thousands to his cash in bank.

It is this man, who so well knows the market value of a negro girl in Loogy's situation, to whom she has been sold, with the special proviso, however, that she is to go to the sugar-plantations in Louisiana.

The sugar-plantations!—that threat pregnant with all that is dreadful to the mind of the slave!—that term suggestive of driving labor, scanty food, restricted society, deprivation of Sabbath privileges, and early death!—that idea which to the negro brings separation from his friends, a long, hard journey under the most cruel of drivers, and a change of occupation under the severest of taskmasters!

Unfortunate negro! what a change to her! But two weeks before she had been rejoicing over the expectation of personal freedom, a home of her own, and a *freeborn* child.

This pampered house-maid (for such she was) was to leave her gentle mistress, her light and easy tasks, her old companions, her father and husband, and all hopes of freedom, to pine away in the cane-fields of a sugar-plantation.

Nothing definite upon this subject has been said to her, until the very arrival of the trader. It is true, that the whole series of threats with which she has been so liberally plied terminated in the phrase, *sugar-plantations*; but this is so common an expression in an overseer's mouth that she has not realized it as a fact until this very moment.

She is called out of the house by Mr. Al-

lansby, who still has charge of the plantation, and ordered, in his harshest manner, to get her things together and be off to the sugar-plantation, for that yonder is the "nigger-trader" come for her.

Her look of affright is indescribable. I had never seen such a look but once in all my life before. It was on the countenance of a convict, who was waked up one morning in his cell and told to come out and prepare to die.

This paralysis lasts for an instant, during which she stands as if affixed to the ground; then, as a child to its mother's protection, she flies to Caroline. She clings convulsively to her feet, and declares that the "nigger-trader" shall not take her away. O, she will do anything!—this is her pathetic appeal—she will do anything not to leave her young mistress. She will wait on her all the day, watch over her all the night, work for her, die for her, but never can she leave her—never, never!

My presence, as I have said, is accidental. I would not have remained a spectator to such a painful scene, except at Mrs. Enloe's urgent request; and it is now at her desire that I endeavor to untwine the girl's arm from Caroline. But it is like tearing off the stout ivy from the gray old oak, nor with all my strength can I effect it.

While the overseer is approaching to assist me in this ungrateful task, a thought occurs to me to advise Caroline to offer the girl her liberty if she will yet point out the person who stole the money.

I have become so much excited with the scene, that at this moment I have determined to pay the purchase-money myself, and set her free, if she will only show marks of reformation and give us some clue to trace out the guilty person.

Caroline catches at the hint, which I whisper in her ear, and, addressing herself to Loogy, says—

"My poor girl, there is only one way that I can serve you. Father has sold you to the trader, and he has come to carry you off to the sugar-plantations. You can never come back to us as long as you live. But now tell us who stole father's money, and the trader sha'n't have you."

Loogy rises eagerly up and declares she

will! This is the first encouragement of the sort she has ever given us. The pain of the whipping, the continued prayers of her young mistress, the efforts of the good preacher, Mr. Leever, to whose church Loogy and her father belong, and all the promises that have been lavished upon her for two weeks, have not influenced her mind like this close reality of being parted from Miss Caroline. She rises up, shudders at the sight of the overseer, who is cracking his whip carelessly in the yard, or at that of the trader, whose light carriage is waiting to bear her away, and begs that her old mistress may be sent for, and she will tell us all about it.

Charmed at the prospect, I hurry in search of Mrs. Enloe, who has retired to avoid seeing Loogy's departure, and bring her in an instant to the spot.

Caroline has seated herself upon the sofa, and placed her attached servant at her side. As we enter, we can see that she has been whispering to Loogy of something that brings the deep scarlet to her own lovely cheeks, and hear her concluding words—

"Soon as I am married, dear Loogy!"

But these words, so suggestive of the tender declaration that has preceded them, seem to work in the mind of the slave an effect the very reverse of what Caroline anticipated.

Up to that moment Loogy had seemed to be determined to make a full confession.

When I left the room, she had asked me to be quick as possible, so that she might begin, and I had comforted Mrs. Enloe out of her tears by the assurance that now the cloud was about to be cleared up.

There was even a cheerful smile on Loogy's face, so long unmoved by smiles, and she had answered the kind looks of her young mistress with affectionate fervor. But as the word "marriage" strikes her ear, she drops her eyes to the floor, relaxes her grasp upon Caroline's arm, and, to our unbounded disappointment and chagrin, repeats the declaration of the last two weeks—

"I didn't tetch it, Miss Carline, 'deed I didn't!"

And therein has she pronounced her own sentence, for who can believe her against such testimony as we have had, or where is the mercy in lavishing tenderness upon one who is so cruel to others?

Loogy is delivered over to the trader, and taken away. Happily for the poor wretch, she is in a state of insensibility, and no sound comes from her lips to interrupt the thoughtless whistle of the negro boy who drives off the vehicle in which we have laid her.

The drama, so far as *her* part is concerned, seems to be wound up. She has made her own bed and occupies it. If this separation is harsh, if the poor girl's lot is more than she can well bear, whom has she to blame but herself? She has sown the wind, and why should she not reap the whirlwind? Verily, her sin has wrought great evil to this excellent family.

Let me enumerate its fearful consequences. Here is a kind master driven from the needed quiet of his latter years to battle the world anew, with resources dried up, character stained, energies crippled. Here is a devoted mistress with her spring-time darkened by the consequences of this crime. Her own father and husband are vagabonds in the cane-brake. Her companions, happily congregated, and long bound together, even from childhood, under a gentle bondage, will soon be scattered abroad, husband from wife, child from parent.

All this Loogy knows as well as we know it. And she knows that much of this may be remedied, and that the only remedy lies with her. Yet from some inexplicable cause she withholds that remedy, and the ruin is now complete.

It has been agreed upon between the District Attorney and the trustees, in whose hands Mr. Enloe lodged his estate, that he shall occupy the houses for the remainder of the year as a residence for his family, and that Mr. Allansby shall manage the plantation until the crop is gathered.

The very day after the removal of Loogy I was appointed general agent to superintend the sale of the stock, land, and crop. This was quite against my own wishes, the reader may be assured, and I was only persuaded to accept the appointment by an earnest expression from Mr. Enloe himself. It is true that it gave me more opportunities to extend such courtesies to the distressed family as lay in my power, but this fact scarcely balanced the unpleasantness of the charge. I saw, day after day, my dear young friend, Caroline,

Chapter Fifth.

A SITUATION OF DANGER.—THE RELEASE.



DID I mention Mr. Colston, in my last chapter, at all? I believe not. The subject has been unpleasant to me from the first, as the reader will bear me witness.

My very earliest meeting with him, when he had every motive to appear well, aroused unconquerable feelings of dislike. That peculiar wildness of the eye, which strikes me every time I see him, reminds me of various persons with whom I have met in my busy life, and not one of them is a reputable man.

Mr. Colston's behavior since the robbery has had no influence to remove my prejudice. For the first few days, and especially while the active search was going on for the runaways, he had seemed to have some unaccountable weight upon his mind. Nor am I the only person that observed it. The sheriff, in his suspicious manner, eyed him frequently, and once I observed that he stepped aside and examined some printed notes, as if comparing him with a public description of some sort, but he came to no conclusion; only scrutinized him more closely than before.

After Loogy was sold and transported southward, his spirits had become much lighter, and he made unusual advances to me in the way of conversation. But then, almost instantaneously, there came over him another change; all his former stiffness was resumed, and he even put on an appearance of indifference towards his betrothed Caroline.

No cause for disagreement had yet occurred between them. Indeed, no disagreement *had* occurred, so the young lady declared in confidence to me, but those long conferences in the parlor window were intermitted, and they rarely walked together as formerly.

A painful suspicion crept over me, in spite of myself—I repeat it, in spite of myself, for my prejudice against the young man could not have carried me thus far. I coupled his abstractedness of mind on the morning of the robbery with his present coldness, and for the life of me, I could not avoid the conclusion (the same to which Mr. Blote and the overseer had already arrived, as I learned after-

studying up her plain and ornamental accomplishments that she might commence teaching a school, already engaged, for the next year.

I saw Mrs. Enloe, a lady of delicate constitution, and one who had never known the violence of a storm before, arranging the family wardrobe to a rigid standard of economy, that, to have known it, would have made her wealthy ancestors move in their tomb with surprise.

I saw the stout-hearted little boys, whose playfulness had taught poor Pompey so valuable a lesson, studying day and night this session, that next year they might help pa and ma work, *as good boys ought to*.

Everything about the family reminded me of a vessel, storm-beaten and injured, but in an active way of refitting aloof and aloft for another voyage.

I commenced my work as general agent by disposing of the negroes, one by one, to be delivered and paid for on the next New Year's day.

Poor creatures! Only one more Christmas week, that bright oasis in the long desert of a twelvemonth, would they ever enjoy together before their separation.

I have said that I disposed of them *one by one*. It would have been nearer the truth to have said that, in all cases where practicable, I strove to keep families together, and in no instance would I permit a mother and her young child to be separated. In cases where one of the women had a husband upon an adjoining plantation, or one of the men a wife, my first proposals for selling were to the owner of that slave, so that the couple might be brought together; and when I could not accomplish that, I endeavored to get a purchaser within a short distance. In no instance did I dispose of one to the traders, if a buyer could be got in the county.

The cotton as fast as picked out was wagoned to the nearest mart, and the proceeds deposited in the public treasury. The land was rented for the coming year, in hopes that that species of property would rise from its present depreciated rates.

Arrangements were made for a public vendue, for the disposal of the farming stock and utensils, and so the dispersion of my friend's possessions was complete.

ward-) that her change of circumstances had cooled the ardor of his love, and he would fain sever the engagement.

It was hard thus to judge my fellow-man. If the suspicion was groundless, it deserved to be repented of, yea, in the very dust; yet it haunted me as a phantom, and I could not shake it off.

Caroline observed the change in his manner—how could she avoid seeing it?—and with the genuine spirit of a woman she met it with equal coolness. But this was too unlike the sunny warmth of her character. Suddenly she changed her scheme, if scheme it may be called which was the prompting of a pure, earnest heart, anxious to win back its beloved; and, dropping all hauteur, she redoubled her endearments, and seemed resolved to conquer him with very tenderness.

This succeeded no better than the other. His distance of manner increased day by day, and whereas formerly he was her constant visitor, he now rarely made his appearance at her father's house.

I saw that a speedy rupture between the betrothed pair was inevitable. In the friendship of my own heart I ventured, one day, to remonstrate with Mr. Colston upon his conduct, and asked him his motives for it; but I was repelled with such rudeness, and answered with such insulting, unmanly words, that I resolved it should be the last time I would ever speak to him on the subject.

Caroline's parents had not failed to observe what was passing, but left it to their daughter's discretion, believing that she was competent to the charge of her own heart.

It is time that the reader should understand who this coquettish gentleman was.

Oliver Colston had been introduced to Caroline only a few months before, while on a visit to some relatives in a neighboring State. The family which she was visiting seemed to take an extraordinary interest in him, and exerted themselves to clear his way to her favor. His family connexions were said to be as respectable as any in the country, and although he had no settled property of his own, yet he had always passed among them for the owner of considerable wealth. He, at least, gave no evidences of want, but sported the finest horse, wore the most costly clothing and jewelry, and was the acknowl-

edged leader of the fashion among his acquaintances.

It was not long before an attachment sprung up in Caroline's breast, heretofore unoccupied by love, and in all the parties and social amusements got up in her honor, she accepted Mr. Colston as her favored attendant. He offered to accompany her upon her return to her father's, but by this time she had discovered the secret of her own heart, and, shrinking from any engagement without her parents' consent, she declined his escort, and set out with no other company than the servants of the family.

That day, however, she was attacked by a ruffian, masked and otherwise disguised, who, after robbing her of her money, made insulting advances, and was putting her in great terror, when Mr. Colston rode up most opportunely and assumed her championship. The combat was very short, the highwayman being driven from the ground severely wounded by two pistol-balls at point blank distance.

No further objections could Caroline offer to his company. On the contrary, it was as eagerly accepted as tendered, and the pair, arriving at her father's house, commenced those intimacies so full of danger to her guileless heart.

After a few weeks, Mr. Colston made her an offer of marriage in due form. Mr. Enloe made very strict inquiries respecting him, and received the favorable statements I have already given.

His education at the Virginia University was said to be complete; his property respectable; his course in the law-school thorough; his private character had no apparent stain. Yet, despite of all this, neither of the parents could become attached to the young man. There was somehow a repulsiveness, an undefined manner, that barred his intimacy with any but Caroline.

I need not add, that the more these things were whispered to her, the more closely she drew to her lover, and when her parents discovered that the intercourse could not be broken off except at the cost of her peace, they gave a reluctant consent, and the parties were betrothed.

The two little boys disliked Mr. Colston, as they said, *like poison*. They openly avowed, in their exaggerated style of talk, "that

they'd shoot him dead if he took sister off! leastways, they'd kill him when they grew up!"

Mr. Blote, who spent much of his time at Mr. Enloe's, and was one of the most sociable men in my acquaintance, as ready to impart knowledge as he was earnest in the pursuit of it, scarcely recognized Mr. Colston's acquaintance.

The overseer, a well-bred man, and, despite his unpromising exterior, liberal and sociable, entertained the same inhospitable feelings towards Mr. Colston.

The negroes, one and all, hated him. It was a standing prophecy amongst them, originating probably with old Gabriel, that their young mistress would come to no good by marrying him; but when they saw how these things pained her loving heart, they ceased to express their opinion before her, and restricted them to their own circle.

It was really strange, as a matter of personal feeling, that there was not one individual on the plantation who confessed to an ordinary liking for this young man, except Caroline.

And the more those signs of unfriendliness became visible in the family, the more freely did Caroline cast in her lot with her betrothed and declare herself his forever.

How far opposition will carry a woman into dangers, losses, and sufferings, who can tell? To say the least of it, it was not the best policy for those who had her interests in charge to give such room for the plea of "persecution," as Mr. Colston used it. For then, very gratitude demanded that she should encounter pains and reproaches for his sake who was so ready to encounter them for hers.

My reader will now have an opportunity to see the end of this ill-matched engagement.

It is about a month subsequent to the mysterious robbery, so often mentioned, Loogy has arrived at her destined home, and Mr. Derrieks, who returned this morning, declares that she commenced the hard labor of the sugar plantation with more resignation than he had anticipated. Her only message is to her young mistress, and it amounts to nothing more than this, "that she hopes Miss Caroline will be a happy wife, and find somebody to wait on her who will love her as well as Loogy did."

The eight hundred and forty dollars which she brought to Mr. Derriek's hand has gone to swell the sum total of his bank-account, and that worthy but rather obtuse gentleman, in the plenitude of his gratitude, has offered Caroline a twenty-dollar shawl, bought in New-Orleans, as part of the sale money of the slave.

Caroline has refused the gift with horror, and insulted the old gentleman by a passionate declaration that she would die before she would use money thus acquired.

The "nigger-trader" has gone away offended, and is now at the house of Mr. Girard, three plantations down the creek, whose embarrassments require him to sell a boy or two to straighten out his affairs.

Mr. Enloe is out examining a large tract of land, bought recently by the company for which he is agent, and contriving, by the aid of several surveyors, how best to lay off the city, locate the railroad, designate the mill-site, and sell the lots.

My duty has called me down to the cotton-patch, to consult with Mr. Allansby about the weight of the last ten bales ginned, and I have hitched old Pompey, now quite recovered his wind and limb, to the further corner of the "new ground" patch.

As I sit here with the rough old overseer upon the ten-rail fence, I have a bird's-eye view of the whole plantation.

Would the reader like to witness one? It is well worth the sight. The two hundred acres of cotton, worth this year sixty dollars per acre, lie directly between us and the house. The season has been propitious; the overseer is first among his equals for industry and skill; and those broad acres, hidden beneath the swelled cotton-bolls, seem to be covered with snow-drifts. The last week's frosts have destroyed every green leaf among them, and there is nothing visible upon the surface of the field, save the cotton in its virgin white.

The family dwellings, and the group of cabins that constitute the negro quarters, lie like a village upon a beautiful rise at the further end of the plantation.

To the left of the quarters are the buzzing gin and press, whose voices, though half a mile distant, speak audibly to us even here.

On the right of the family mansion is the

bountiful fruit-orchard, containing more than a thousand trees, presenting, in their low, trim, squabby appearance, a marked contrast with the tall, independent forms of the forest beyond. How it must grieve their proprietor to give them up to strangers!

In front of the dwelling, and on either side of the painted gate, there rise up, straight toward heaven, a pair of Lombardy poplars, with that foreign, minaret appearance which two hundred years of naturalization has not been able to overcome.

The long train of cattle returning from the low grounds, where they have fed through the day, are following one another, Indian fashion, up the lane, the mothers giving occasionally a thoughtful low as if contemplating the enjoyment in reserve for them when they shall meet with their young.

It has been ordered that plantation labor to-day shall close an hour or two earlier than usual, that the servants may have an opportunity to perform such domestic duties as washing and the like.

This important charge, which in a northern latitude is thrown into the *early* part of the week, is placed, further South, for Saturday; and upon a well-ordered plantation, like Mr. Enloe's, some portion of daylight is given to the slaves for this purpose, instead of requiring them, as is too often the case, to do it altogether in the night.

So; as we sit, the cotton-pickers pass us, each with a large basket crammed with the day's picking, upon his head.

How any arrangement of human muscle can be strengthened to buoy up such loads of seed-cotton, it is hard to say; but here are women of twenty, boys of ten, and veterans of fifty, walking erect, straight as arrows, under loads some of which will bear down the scales at one hundred and fifty pounds, nor stopping to rest till they deposit them on the platform at the gin-house, half a mile off.

This procession having gone by (there was no person in all the immense train at the obsequies of Alexander the Great who carried an object more suggestive of national wealth), we are saluted by the two little boys, John and Alfred, who, the snakes being now all in their holes, are permitted by their anxious mamma to range the woods with a light fowling-piece and *ply hunt*. These young

sprouts of a vigorous tree are a joy to behold. Their tread is that of a hero. The bold swing of their limbs, scarcely restrained by their loose, home-made coats, and the extravagant waste of atmosphere in their loud way of talking, bespeak for the State a couple of worthy citizens for home edifying or for home defence.

Although the consent of the timid mamma only extends to a *fanciful* hunt with that light gun, yet there is *real* powder in that horn, and *real* hard shot in that pouch, as the fated squirrels shall discover before the sun goes down. Altogether, the twain are as fine specimens of country growth as we shall find any where in the whole thirty-one.

In answer to my inquiry why they are not at school to-day, they tell me that Mr. Blote has gone out on a botanical excursion, and given three days' vacation.

It seems there is something or other, with an unpronounceable name, grows in the adjoining county below, and the eager old naturalist desiderates it for his herbarium before the heavier frosts cut it entirely down. Besides that, a friend at the east has written him for various packets of snails and things, and he is killing that bird with the same stone. But daylight is precious to the young Nimrods, and they pass on at a run.

The next moving objects within the scope of our vision are not so pleasing to contemplate. Caroline and her lover are treading the grassy path as in their old-time walks, and as they draw near the spot where we are sitting, both of us with a simultaneous movement dismount from the fence and walk through the cotton-patch to the house, leaving Pompey to be brought up by a messenger.

Mr. Colston has to-day conceived some new project. His smile is certainly brighter, his words are softer than they have appeared to Caroline for many a day. Perhaps that ugly, sensual curl on his lip is more distinctly marked; but the affectionate girl would not see it were it a thousand times plainer. Their old seat in the parlor window has been occupied all the day.

To her exceeding delight, her lover resumes the subject of marriage, so long unnamed, and presses the blushing maid to set an early day for his happiness. Caroline consents, and in the low, tender communion

which follows, that man dares to speak to her of a long lifetime of devotion, of home joys, of the smiles and voices of children, of every dear thought which makes a green spot in the long vista of wedded hopes.

Thus the day passes brightly away, the last of that ill-matched betrothal. As evening comes on, they are mutually reminded of the happy walks by the hazle-thicket, in which their engagement commenced.

At a hint from her lover, Caroline runs (did Camilla more lightly skim across the fancy of the classic poet?) to bring her bonnet, and then the pair pass between the tall poplars, and through the white gate, and down the long lane, to their ancient trysting-place.

It is a small area, not larger than the floor of a lady's chamber, surrounded by a dense copse of hazle, through which only one path, a narrow and a winding one, and difficult to find, has been made. There is a small mound in the centre, one of the most diminutive of those which are scattered here and there over the continent, to point out that the nation's dead are yet honored, though the very name of that nation has passed away.

The biting frosts of the past week have changed the green dye of the grass into a yellowish hue, but the low mound is soft with the dying herbage, and there, passing through that narrow path, the betrothed pair enter and seat themselves.

There is no eye to see them, there is no ear to catch the words that pass between them. Could any behold that eager gaze, which is now all licentiously fixed upon the unsuspecting girl—could any hear the words so skillfully ordered to shake a maiden's resolution, what fortune to the trusting Caroline! But she is all alone. Alone, with her fond heart all his; her endearments lavishly bestowed upon him in reward for his rekindled affection; her soft hand in his; her arm wound around his neck; her cheek pressing upon his bosom. What guardian hand shall snatch the tender bird from the beguiling serpent?

Need we ask—is there not in the very guilelessness of such a woman's character, is there not a defence more potent than all that prepared resistance could yield? Be that as it may, the fluttering bird, though very nigh the serpent's jaw, is yet saved.

Her healthy frame, weakened by no folly of dress, but braced up with the habits of a country life and the joy of a country air, countervail for a time all the seducer's efforts, even after her astonished heart has been made to understand all the seducer's intentions.

Her screams reach us as we walk through the painted gate, and call us back, at the top of our speed, to her aid. Her resistance, so unexpected by the villain, delays the execution of his foul project, and when, with torn dress, and hair all wildly floating around her neck, she is about to swoon, she hears, crashing through the hazles, the footsteps of a friend.

It is but a boy, but O, what daring dwells on that brow! what resolution is on that tongue, as the brave little fellow springs into the area, and shouts aloud—

"Caroline, don't be afraid! He shan't hurt you! Let go my sister, Mr. Colston!"

It is but a word and a blow; for as the monster turns a step toward him, still clasping the girl firmly to his side, the boy levels his fowling-piece right at his head, and fires.

Wonderful providence that has saved her honor in this moment of danger! The small squirrel-shot enter his neck and shoulder, and although the broad flesh-wound will hardly be fatal, yet the pain is excessive, and now the bad man turns coward at the sight of his own blood, drops his prey as the eagle would release the lamb, and flies, dastard as he is, to the road.

Glancing hastily around, he sees Pompey tied where I left him, at the corner of the "new ground" patch, and without an instant's hesitation springs upon his back and flies.

Beloved Caroline! how tenderly those little brothers sustain her head, as she reclines upon that grassy mound.

The overseer and myself run with the energy of despair, to save her ere the mischief be done. We pass through the dense copse, not knowing the secret of the little path. We are much too late to have done her any service.

We find Alf pouring cool water upon her face, from his hat, while the hero of the fowling-piece is talking bold words to give her and himself courage. "He has loaded his gun again," he says; "he has put in a double



"LET GO MY SISTER, MR. COLSTON!"

load this time: may be 'twill burst the gun; but he doesn't care a bit for that; he means to aim right 'point blank at Mr. Colston's breast next time; he would have done it then, only sister's arm was there, and he was afraid of hurting her!"

And all the time big tears are running down his own face, as if to mock his assumption of manhood.

Stripling of promise! Is there anything he would not attempt for her whom we all love so well!

And now we group around her, and the mound, beneath which rest the bones of a chieftain, becomes witness to an episode in the white man's life, rarely beheld.

The brave boys are perfectly wild with their triumph. The hero, whose steady eye and bold heart have saved his sister from a fate, O! how much worse than death, now proposes to get father's horse, the big wild one that nobody has dared to ride for a year,

and pursue the villain to the ends of the earth! He declares his readiness to go *alone*, if necessary, and he will never turn back, though it should be a hundred miles!

The overseer, having reached the place a minute before me, claims the post of honor, and it is upon his shoulder that her drooping head is reclining.

He has taken off his fustian coat and concealed those budding breasts exposed by the monster's hands. He has tied up her flowing hair in his big handkerchief, not artistically, it is true, but with a modest hand. And he is saying such words and dropping such tears as never came from that hard-featured man before.

Caroline, though pale, is strong. I cannot consent, even to arouse my readers' sympathy, to forego the truth. Broken hearts are sad things. They may form appropriate pictures in the panorama of a romance, but they are too morbid for my truthful sketch.

Caroline's education, under the eye of her mother, has imparted an air of resolution to her character (we have observed it displayed more than once already in this sketch) that more than balances any shock of the heart. The immense, the never-to-be-forgotten insult she has received from Oliver Colston saved her; when, had he merely deserted her, or had he been suddenly snatched from her by death, the consequences might have been more serious.

Those who would require me, in a spirit of romance, to close such a scene with a lingering life, and an early death, have none of my sympathy in their disappointment. Caroline, though pale, though sad, though cruelly shaken, is yet strong; and were the vile attack now to be renewed by the ruffian, who is several miles distant, her physical powers would probably be greater than before.

She has, of course, but little to say; but little is needed. We can read the whole attempt in her torn dress and hair—we can read its failure in her high brow and steady breathing. But when, by the refreshment from little Alfred's hat, and the kind words of the whole group, she declares her ability to walk home, she says to me, but in a whisper, so that the overseer may not hear it—

"Don't pursue him, sir! I would rather he was not pursued, if you please!"

And her wish is gratified.

Chapter Sixth.

CAMP OF RUNAWAY NEGROES.—LOST IN THE CANEBRAKE.



RETURN we to the two runaways, Gabriel and Tom. The reader has seen their ingenuity successfully displayed in baffling the utmost skill of the hounds and their master, the professional negro-catcher. The severe effort recorded in the fourth chapter was but the commencement of a series of attempts made by Obin Sandford to retake slaves so valuable as these.

Working upon the principle of insurance (no catch, no pay), and feeling a professional pride in sustaining the character of his dogs, that gentleman was stimulated to make the "despatest splurges," in his own language, for their capture. For nearly a month, barring

each third day, in which he indulged his tertian, he pursued this one object with untiring assiduity. The perfume on the hoo-handles was fairly sniffed off by the hounds, in his daily endeavor to sharpen their scent and enlighten their instinct. But for once, Obin and the canines were completely baffled. With character tainted, garments in tatters, and despair in his heart, he returned to his cabin, bearing a jug of whisky, the only thing he had got for his month's work, and when he was visited, a day or two after, upon business, he was found dead upon a pile of buckskins that had ordinarily constituted his bed. His dogs lay around him, thinner than ever, quite conscious that some unwonted evil had befallen their master; and old Pink, the whitest hound, leader of the band, had her long, pointed head upon the head of the corpse. The jug was empty, the task of the old negro-catcher done.

A single look revealed the dismal scene to the beholder, and caused him to fly with dismay. Returning next day, with several others, to bury the dead, the little cabin was found empty, three of the dogs were lying dead in the yard, the other two dreadfully torn, as by the claws of a bear. The body had disappeared, and could never afterwards be found.

Gabriel and Tom had established themselves in a place well known to the hostler, years before, about two days' travel from Mr. Enloe's plantation. The hiding-place selected was an island, of an acre or two, in the very heart of the canebrake.

To reach it, in the warm season, the visitor must wade a hundred yards or more, breast deep, through a bayou occupied by all manner of reptiles common to that latitude. At the high stages of water in the Mississippi, it was entirely inaccessible for weeks and sometimes months together.

Many a such place have I visited in the more active days of my life, and the jungles of India have nothing more striking.

It is there that "the water-moccasin" takes its noontide excursions to and fro, winding over the surface of the shining pool as though it were a quicksilver sea, and displaying its livid hues to the best advantage.

It is there that the mortiferous "cotton-mouth" lives and breeds its horrid family,

and coils itself by day or night on the margin, ready at the slightest sound to swim to the moving object, and attack it; while above it, twining swiftly through the sarsaparilla vines, the tree-serpents seek for the young birds as their prey.

It is there that the large turtle, with frame more powerful in leverage than any machine made by man's hands, stalks over the muddy bottom, and seeks its carrion food, or burrows its nest in the sand.

It is there that the alligator upraises its knobbed back, a bank of mud, when the warm weather calls it out from its hybernation, to fight its fellows through the long summer days, or build mounds in the canebrake for the reception of its eggs. And by day or night, summer or winter, there comes up from the pest-hole of corruption such a deadly steam, such a charnel-house vapor, and upon its wings such clouds of insects, that humanity must yield its delicacy of lungs and well-balanced powers of life ere it be able to exist there.

Yet in such an abode have the runaways established themselves. Running all hazards for the sake of liberty, they had waded the bayou, as Gabriel had done more than once in former days, had found the little island, unvisited since the creation, save by himself, and established themselves in some sort of comfort.

The thoughtfulness of the elder had secured a hatchet, several fish-hooks and lines, blankets, clothing, and various trifles highly useful in their sequestered home.

It was no trouble for them to erect a cabin of poles, to roof it tightly in, with broad strips from the slippery elm, to daub it with the stiff bayou mud, and even to make a sort of door for their protection from the wild beasts that might be disposed to trouble them.

Fish of a large size, the perch and catfish, were abundant on every side of them, and easily caught. A pen, constructed upon the simple model used throughout the South and West, enabled them to add a fat turkey to their larder whenever they chose, and although Gabriel had never made the attempt, yet he had no doubt but what he could contrive to kill a deer or even a bear, if pressed for provisions. Birds and rabbits were so tame they would come to the very door. Hazle, pecan,

hickory, and black-walnuts fell down in showers at every breeze. The nut of the Indian bean (*Nebumbo nucifera*) was ripening in the swamp.

What more desirable place for mere animal comforts could be found than that? It was a situation of absolute security.

Their pursuers never could trace them there; for, even if a pack of dogs were to follow their footsteps to the bayou, they dare not swim it at the risk of their lives. Before a hound could get half way to the little island, a dozen alligators would be battling over his remains.

On the morning that Gabriel left his place of deposit, stripped of its contents by his own daughter's hand, his feelings underwent a change. The great purpose of his life being thus a second time frustrated, he had nothing further to live for, and could he have laid hands upon his knife at the instant of the discovery, his bones had bleached at the bottom of that ravine. But existence is too sacred a thing to be thus lightly cast off.

With his returning calmness, a sort of feeling came over him to fly to the woods, to baffle all pursuit, to laugh in scorn at all the white man's efforts to recapture him, and, establishing himself in some secure place (he knew of many such), to spend the remnant of his days a free man.

He would not upbraid his daughter; poor Loogy, she had enough on her mind now; but he would see her no more.

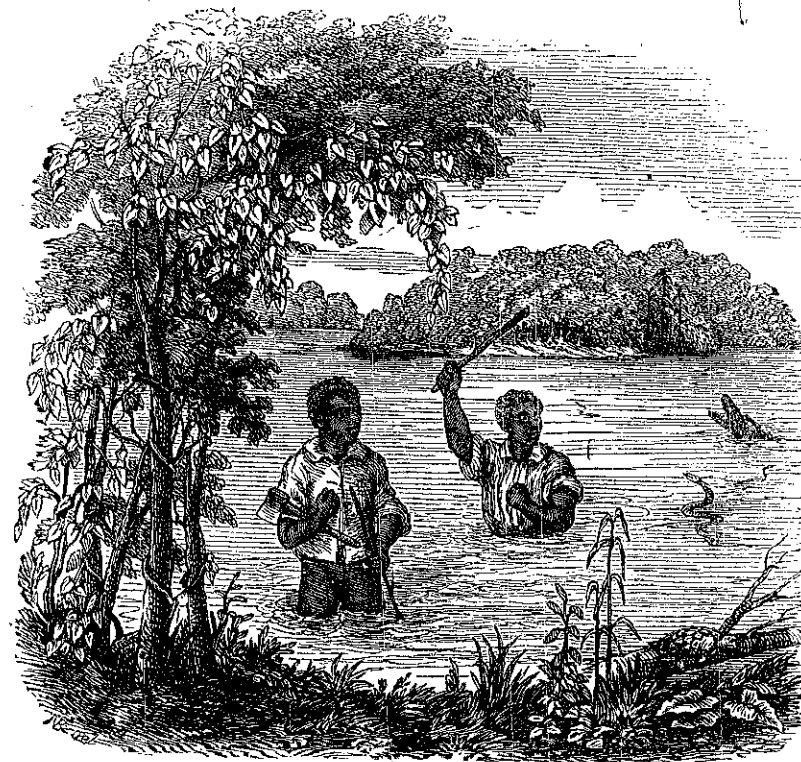
Over this scheme he brooded all that day, and when night came, made his preparations for a stealthy departure.

He gathered up a pack of necessities, as we have seen, burnt to ashes everything that he could not carry away, and, with his daughter's screams still ringing in his ears, left the "quarters," as he hoped, forever.

He called upon Tom in the place of his imprisonment, and, by informing him of Loogy's faults, and holding up before him the prospect of a severe flogging on the one hand, and liberty on the other, readily gained his consent to accompany him.

This was a matter of importance to Gabriel, for he dreaded being taken sick and starving to death in his solitude.

He easily released Tom from his durance by raising up the floor of the room in which



"RUNNING ALL HAZARDS FOR THE SAKE OF LIBERTY, GABRIEL AND TOM HAD WADED THE BAYOU."

he was confined, and the pair fled, as before related.

But after a few quiet weeks had passed, and the runaways had settled themselves down in their new life, Gabriel, reviewing all the circumstances connected with the two robberies, strange to say, came to a conclusion different from any that had occurred to our minds. It was that Mr. Colston was somehow connected with them, if not the actual robber!

It will be recollected that this old man, in common with all the slaves on Mr. Enloe's plantation, had imbibed a bitter prejudice against the lover of his young mistress. The words placed in Gabriel's mouth when speaking to his daughter, in my first chapter, show that he had even then suspected him of an attempt to spy out his secret hoard; and it was in his heart, that very morning of the discovery, to remove the money to a safer spot.

It must be admitted, however, that the handkerchief, and the mark of hands and feet in the ravine, will scarcely justify Gabriel's suspicions; but with the obstinacy of his race, and, we may add, the parental devotion which belongs to the African character, he settled his mind firmly upon it, that *Loogy was innocent and Mr. Colston guilty*. He intimated this change of sentiment to his companion, Tom, and brought him partially around to the same views.

This was about a month after their escape from the plantation. Gabriel did not say that he should leave the island in consequence of it, nor did he offer any plan of communicating it to his late master.

He only said, in his peculiar dialect—
"D—d racskall, Misty Colston! Knew da gal nebber got de money. 'Twill all come out, himeby. You'll see it!"

Mr. Colston, after his unsuccessful attempt upon the honor of Caroline, rode off as though Tarleton's legion were at his heels. Only the day before had he resolved to close his intercourse with her, and, like the villain he was, he deliberately planned to leave this ruin behind him. He had certainly not anticipated so vigorous a resistance, if any, for he made no preparation for flight, and it was only the accidental discovery of Pompey that gave him the means.

In no previous part of his licentious life, whether at the University, or in the Law School, or in any part of his extended travels, had he been so baffled. The severe wound upon his neck pained him almost beyond endurance; but it may be doubted whether his mental agony, not at his wicked effort, but his cowardly failure, were not greater pain.

He rode at full speed, passing several plantations, but meeting no person, until he had followed the main road more than five miles, stopping but once, and that only for a moment, to draw out of a hollow tree some small but heavy sacks, that he had previously deposited there.

At a private way, he turned off, and until the darkness became too great to travel, ceased not to urge Pompey forward in the same headlong manner. Alighting only when it was impracticable to proceed farther, he hobbled his horse's feet in a manner that proved him to be an old campaigner, and turned him out to graze. Then wrapping the saddle-blanket around himself, and heaping a pile of dry leaves for a pillow, he laid down and slept soundly until morning.

Conscience had long finished her work with him, and had fled to a more tractable subject. He had been divinely "given over to hardness of heart."

By this time his wound had become less irritable. The blood, which at first had poured down his breast to his very feet, had ceased to flow, and, could he get the small pellets extracted, it would soon heal up.

The seducer then sought the nearest water-course, and washed his body and clothes clear of the fatal stains.

Dressing again, he mounted, sought a neighboring plantation, readily found, even at a distance, by observing where the removal of the forest trees had opened a thin spot in the

landscape, and refreshed himself and horse with food.

Baffling the curiosity of his entertainers, he remounted, pursued his way in the manner of a man who knows every step of it, and drew not his rein again until he approached the edge of the canebrake.

The place to which he had been directing his course lay exactly beyond the cane, and he had come thus far by means of a dim bridle-path, which, leaving it on the right, wound, for a dozen miles, around it.

It was not half that distance in a direct course, however, and he seemed disposed to try the nearer way. He paused, compared the sun's height with his watch, calculated the hours of daylight which remained to him, and then, though reluctantly, and as if oppressed with doubt, he entered the brake.

Well might he hesitate long before taking such a step.

To those who have never seen that display of nature's bounty, a canebrake, or having seen one, perchance, on a rapid journey down the Mississippi, have not penetrated its depths, the incidents that I am about to relate will appear romantic. The reader will be surprised to learn that the oldest hunters, the best woodsmen, doubt their own capacity to thread the mazes of an untried canebrake! He will scarcely credit my assertion, that animal instinct not unfrequently fails here; nevertheless, it is so. If he has not seen one, let him imagine a thicket of cane-stalks, the same that are exported for fishing-poles, standing, in general, so densely that they touch each other, like needles in a case, and rising to the height of twenty-five feet, so as to shut out all the brighter rays, and turn the sunniest day into a gloomy twilight. Consider this body of vegetation as extending over a space two hundred miles in length and from three to thirty miles in breadth. Let it be intersected in various directions with small paths, made by the hogs and wilder animals (if, indeed, there be a wilder animal than the wild-woods hog), these paths running in no particular direction, but interlacing with each other in inextricable confusion. Weave festoons of grape-vines and ivy and the tough green-briar from tree to tree, wherever a thin spot enables the sun to reach them—and such is the great Mississippi canebrake.

The wildest, the most improbable legends are related of this dreary spot, of which those which seem to the stranger most improbable are most strictly true. Men have been lost in that wilderness, and they have wandered and hungered and died, within gunshot sound of their own dwellings. Bewildered travelers, catching a glimpse of the blessed sun, after several hours' burial in the thicket, have refused to credit their own eyes as to its direction in the heavens, and have struck back again into the thickets, to wander on and to die. Children, after struggling a few hours in the mazes of this labyrinth, have lost their reason, and, when found, have forgotten their own names and the faces of their friends.

Oliver Colston, strong in the confidence of his skill in woodcraft, or urged forward by some great necessity that justified the risk, entered the canebrake as the sun came down within two hours of the horizon. At first, he moved slowly, and felt every step of his way. When a stray vine presented itself across his breast, as if to forbid his passage, he carefully cut it in two, keeping his horse's head all the time in the original direction. The openings in the canebrake, and the small paths that would have seemed tempting to an inexperienced traveler, were disregarded by him; but he pushed right onward with his eye upon the sun. This, for the first half mile, was not so difficult. An occasional glimpse of that luminary could be got, and his course directed accordingly. But as he penetrated deeper and deeper, his solar guide became more and more obscure. It was with much difficulty that he caught it now at all; and as he pushed aside the leafy barrier of a clump, more dense than usual, he lost it altogether, and could not regain it. For a mile or more he continued, by ranging along the few trunks that came in his way, to preserve the direction, for he had not greatly overrated his own skill at forest-craft; but then a large bush struck his face, his horse turned suddenly aside to avoid a deep gully that was before him, and henceforth it was all random work. Hither and thither he wandered, at first only partly conscious of his error, but as his horse came back, again and again, to the same gully, and he saw that the bewildered brute, as much at fault as himself, was really *traveling in a circle*, the full conviction flashed over his mind

that he had got himself inextricably lost in the canebrake!

O, how he cursed his folly in leaving the beaten path! With what frantic gestures he beat his forehead! How strangely it sounded, his blasphemy of the great name of God, there in the awful solitude!

Night came swiftly on, an hour sooner than it should have done by the watch, and the traveler was well nigh deranged.

Pompey had now taken control of his own movements, and strove nobly to make headway; now snorting upon the edge of some deep hole, now plunging into a copse so dense that a wounded bear could not have turned around in it, now avoiding a festoon of the sharp green-brier, now galloping cheerfully forward, as some thin spot or transient path came under his notice. But still, whether slow or swift, thoughtful or dull, his best efforts and instinct only brought him back again to that enchanted spot!

All that night, then, the seducer, fully shaken now, with his head bare, and his clothes nearly stripped from his limbs, lay crouched down to his saddle-bow, and trusted to the sagacity of the horse. It was such a night of horrors as he had never realized before.

Once, he saw a pair of flaming eyes fixed upon him, from the lower limbs of an oak, and heard such a wail as the mother makes over her dead babe. Once, a tall, black object rose up before him, and held out its shaggy arms, as if to welcome him to the penetralia of the brake. Large white fowls, that seemed to feel safe wherever darkness was, flitted at times near his face, so near that he could have struck them if he had had courage; and when, by very low swoops, they came to understand that the intruder was one of those murderous beings which their traveled comrades had described to them, they flew into the higher trees, and by loud and scornful hoots gave him a forest defiance!

Holy day came at last, bringing release from these annoyances. Panthers, bears, and owls retired to their hiding-places. But neither day, nor the glimpse of the sun which he caught by climbing a tree, nor all his forest skill, could extricate him from the brake.

Still Pompey pushed stoutly forward, and still he but described a larger circle, for, as if

by fascination, the unhappy rider was brought back, against his will, against reason, instinct, and knowledge, to the same spot where he had paused an hour, or two hours, or three hours before. And so the day passed by, leaving the noble horse almost exhausted by his labor, and the rider nigh fainting for water, food, and rest.

Gabriel and Tom sat at the door of their little hut and ate heartily of their store. The remains of a noble turkey gave token of what their previous meal had been. A large fish was spread before them, and several others hung in the smoke above, and it was not hard to see that the runaways were doing well. Both of them, however, were greatly altered in appearance during the four weeks they had spent upon the island. In the midst of all their advantages, their freedom, and their well-filled larder, they could not but feel at times some loneliness. They talked but little to each other. At first, Tom had spent much time singing the religious hymns common to his class, but now he seemed to have lost the taste for them, and rarely started one. Sleep, that great indulgence to the laboring black, began to pall upon their appetites. Their food was not so sweet as at first, for they needed their accustomed exercise to make it palatable. The wild kind of life they were leading was fast impressing their faces with the peculiar look so difficult to describe, which may be equally observed upon a runaway slave or an uncivilized Indian. It is the shadow of the wild woods! In short, comfortable as they seemed to be, it would have taken a good eye to recognize in these smoke-begrimmed, forest-marked negroes the old hostler and his son-in-law, to whom the reader was introduced a month back.

After eating their fill, they threw themselves carelessly back upon the side of the hut, and seemed lost in thought.

Suddenly Tom, who had quick ears, sprang up, and declared that he heard a man's voice!

It is impossible. It is nothing but a panther. Nobody can get through that bottom, unless he knows the secret of it. But yet, there it is again. It is surely a man's voice, a man lost in the canebrake!

Gabriel raised himself erect and listened.

"It is a man's voice," he says. "It is no doubt a *lost* man, and unless somebody believes him, he will soon starve."

And with this ominous expression on his lips, the old hostler quietly resumes his seat, and falls off into another doze!

So plain a token of his intention is not lost upon Tom, but he will not take the matter so coolly.

Tom is a member of the church. He has claimed and believed himself for several years to possess an interest in religion. It is true, he ran away, and is determined to remain all his life away from servitude, if he can, but this has nothing to do with his religion.

He will not bear a fellow-creature to perish within hail, when food is so plenty; he declares he will not. He wakes up the old man and tells him so.

After a vain effort to dissuade him from relieving the wanderer, on the plea that he may be a spy, and, at all events, will put their pursuers on the track to capture them, he consents to accompany him, if only to keep him from betraying their hiding-place.

They walk softly to the edge of the island, and there they can distinctly hear the trampling of a horse on the opposite shore. He has found water, and it seems to be no small relief to him.

Presently the rider gives another call, but feeble, and indicative of great exhaustion.

Gabriel put his hand hastily on Tom's mouth and whispered, while every joint in his body trembled as with an ague—

"It's Misty Colston, sure's there's a God! you'll see it!"

Back they hasten to the fire again, and consult upon what they shall do.

Whatever the errand that has brought this man to the very heart of the canebrake, Gabriel feels that he is now in their power. How shall they exercise that power? Shall they rush upon him, examine his person for Gabriel's money, and, if found, throw him, without mercy, into the bayou? Or shall they let him wander about, following him at a short distance, until he starves to death?

The former plan, approved by Tom, is adopted. Deliberately as they would go to work to butcher an ox, they agree to overpower him, and, if guilty, drown him, like any other villain.

They go down to the ford, where the water is shallow, both well armed, one with the hatchet, the other with a strong cudgel, in

case of serious defence from the traveler, or offence from the reptiles. They cross over to the opposite side, a short distance from the spot where the horse is yet standing, too weary to move away. He whinnies to them with a voice almost human, and comes forward, as rapidly as his great fatigue will permit, to meet them.

They see that it is Pompey, but with little of that elasticity or fire for which he has been noted all his days.

His rider, who lies in the sand where he has flung himself, after taking a deep draught of the slimy bayou water, is Mr. Colston.

The negroes have brought a coal of fire from the island, and it is but short work for them to light up a torch, made upon the spot from the loose strips of hickory bark.

They approach the traveler cautiously, for his stillness and silence may be only a blind to betray them into his power; but their torch-light gleams upon no metal. They start back, but it is only with surprise.

Mr. Colston has scarcely a rag of clothing upon him, for the briars and the sharp cane-leaves and rough hickory-trunks have uncovered him piece by piece. They have not only uncovered him, but have carried away so many patches of his skin that he is both naked and flayed. And, more horrible still, the mosquitoes, those pests of the canebrake, have so poisoned him with their darts that his shape is scarcely human. O, it is horrible!

For even now, as he lies there in that solemn glare of the torch-light, looked upon by men and brute, his fine chestnut hair almost buried in the soft sand, the insects cover him with a black cloud, and pierce his flesh, and fill themselves with his blood, though it be so thin withal as scarcely to satisfy their ravening.

What a contrast between this loathsome object, helpless before the runaways, and the fashionable young man who had so long led the social circle of his county!

After the first silence, broken only by the anxious whinneying of the poor, bewildered horse, Gabriel muttered to himself a few words expressive of the opinion, to which Tom had already arrived—

"'Tis a judgment of old marsers in heaven! you'll see it!"

Pity springs up in their hearts. The man

whom they came prepared to put to death they are now anxious to save. Strange contradiction of human nature!

They unite their strength to lift him upon the horse, though he is altogether unconscious of their kindness, and walking through the bayou, one upon each side of him, they soon get him upon the island and before the fire.

They lay him tenderly down upon a pallet made of their clothing, where the green-wood smoke drives away the mosquitoes. They bathe him in the cool water which they bring in turtle-shells from the bayou. Then they rub his whole body with grease. A kind of stew, or thick soup, made of the remains of the turkey, is speedily prepared, and by the time he is sufficiently revived to sit up, it is placed before him. He eats it ravenously, as may well be supposed, and again falling back, goes into a sound sleep, from which he does not awake until afternoon on the next day.

Pompey has been divested of his saddle, and turned loose to satisfy his appetite upon the cane-leaves, still unfrosted in that dense forest. Having done this, he approaches the fire and stands half-smothered in the smoke, for the relief he can get from the mosquitoes.

This is the scene that meets Mr. Colston's eyes upon awaking.

A short explanation suffices to convey it all to his mind, from the moment of his dismounting.

Gabriel, satisfied that he cannot recognize him, boldly avows that they, too, are runaways, and he expresses his hope that the gentleman will not betray them.

The traveler, grateful for the preservation of his life, pledges his honor not to reveal the place of their concealment, or even the fact of his having met them, then promises them a reward if they will lend him a suit of their clothes and escort him through the canebrake. He tells them of a certain cabin in a deserted clearing, at the edge of the bottom, at which cabin he must positively be before midnight.

Gabriel recognizes the place by his description, and gives it the name of *Dead Man's House*!

After consulting with Tom, he agrees to escort the gentleman into the little path which he had left two days before, and which leads directly past that place.

By a liberal division from the wardrobe of

the runaways, a full suit of clothing is made out for him, and before three o'clock the party had recrossed the ford and set out.

The easy means which Gabriel had discovered to pass in and out from the island, were, to follow the edge of the bayou, leaving it on the right hand, until it headed in a deep quagmire of "cypress-knees." There a small stream of water entered, which being pursued to its head spring, brought the party into the bridle-path they were seeking. And here ended the escort of the negroes.

Chapter Seventh.

DEAD MAN'S HOUSE.—THE MIDNIGHT RENDEZVOUS.



COLSTON and the two runaways we left in the bridle-path, at the spring. After a most refreshing draught from its pure waters, he bade adieu to his escort, first promising them a bundle of tobacco, the only thing they greatly desired, to be shortly delivered and placed in a certain hollow tree, designated for that purpose.

With many a thankful acknowledgment for life saved and hospitality rendered—why should we not believe them to have been honestly meant?—he grasped their hands and departed, leaving them still seated at the spring.

As he rode off, old Gabriel looked doubtfully after him, shook his head, and muttered, in his indistinct way—

"D—d raeskal! He'll bring the dogs here, sure's shootin'! You'll see it!"

Tom looked uneasy, but said nothing.

The conclusion to which the old hostler had come, some time before, respecting Mr. Colston, had not been in the least shaken. It is true, that the bags of money which Gabriel had looked for could not be found upon his person, but there was the same uneasy expression in his swollen face which has been so often adverted to. And there was something in the few dreamy words of his slumber which spoke of a great crime committed, of what character Gabriel could only surmise.

And this strange desire of his to arrive at the deserted cabin that night, there was something in this which made the negroes willing to run a great risk to discover.

Upon the whole, Gabriel could only shake his gray head, and repeat, in his characteristic way—"You'll see it!" Which implied that the speaker himself was in the profoundest caves of obscurity.

But fortune, tired of persecuting the old man, sent him an adviser just at the time when he so greatly needed one.

Mr. Blote, who had completed his examination of the plant with the unpronounceable name, and sketched it, root, stem, branches, leaves, and fruit (it was a *Lemnoscerogautha sploborallingereii*), who had also collected a stack or two of other plants, besides stones and shells for ballast, was returning, in his slow way, across the hills, one eye fixed on his pocket-compass, the other searching for curiosities, and came into the bridle-path at the very point where sat the puzzled negroes.

Great was his astonishment to see a couple of wild-looking men, grasping hatchet and cudgel, seemingly on the look-out for booty. He did not recognize them, but commenced fumbling in his pocket, as if there might, by some mistake, be a dime there. But they shouted his name simultaneously, and quite pulled him off his horse (a slow one) in the joy of their recognition. It is but right to add that the joy was mutual.

Mr. Blote has greatly regretted the absence of Gabriel ever since his departure. There is more than an ordinary friendship existing between the two old men, different as they are in pursuits and mental condition, and the former has frequently hinted to such of the negroes as would be likely to communicate with the runaways, that if Gabriel would return, all should be forgiven, he himself acting as mediator for that purpose.

Now that such an unexpected meeting has occurred, he begins forthwith to speak of their return.

But that subject is soon forgotten when the negro, interrupting him without ceremony, informs him of the events of last night; and how Colston had been wounded in the neck with a charge of shot; and how he is riding the horse Pompey; and how anxious he is to reach Dead Man's House before midnight.

Mr. Blote agrees with him that the subject demands explanation.

Then Gabriel tells him how much reason he has to suspect Colston of stealing his hard-

earned money from the ravine, because Loogy had seen him hanging round the place for days before. The mysterious visit to Dead Man's House may explain this.

Then the negro goes farther, and broaches the astounding idea that Colston is the real robber of the twenty thousand dollars, and that his daughter, poor Loogy, who, the schoolmaster informs him, is far away on the sugar plantation, is innocent!

It startles Mr. Blote to think of it. But if true, how could Loogy have known that the money was stolen, and why would she suffer so much rather than confess it?

Gabriel admits that, with his present light, this circumstance is inexplicable, but suggests that this midnight visit to Dead Man's House may clear it up.

So every other thought becomes merged into this meeting at Dead Man's House.

At a hint from the sharp-eared Tom, who imagines that he hears some person approaching, the party left the spring and went a little ways into the thicket.

It was well they did; for they had scarcely concealed themselves there when a couple of horsemen rode up the path in the direction of the solitary cabin, aiming, no doubt, at the same rendezvous.

This was strong confirmation of their suspicions, and they set themselves to making preparations to follow the horsemen, regardless of other matters.

Science suffered, as science generally does, when tumult is the word.

Mr. Blote's horse fed uninterrupted upon his own load of botany, and destroyed an herbarium at every mouthful. The pencil-sketches taken of the unpronounceable plant (the *Lemnoscerogautha sploborallingereii*), were ruthlessly used to load the fowling-piece. Three quarts of helixes, the finest of the season, gathered for the British Museum itself, were poured upon the ground as things of no value. Even a lovely *Unio* (a new species, Mr. Blote is almost willing to affirm, a new variety, beyond all controversy) is carelessly dropped and irrevocably crushed.

While these portentous preparations are on the tapis, night comes on and offers them that shelter for which they have tarried.

They promptly enter the little path, and move forward toward Dead Man's House.

Presently a hasty step is heard behind them, at which they again withdraw into the thicket.

Then comes along a white horse, bearing a large, savage-looking person, with immense whiskers. The horse snorts, in recognition of their proximity, whereat the rider, with a cocked pistol in each hand—they can hear the click of the locks as they are drawn back—stops, looks around, and seems anxious to shoot something. But he makes no discovery, and passes on.

The party follow him at a safe distance, keeping their attention awake to front and rear, and presently come in sight of the old cabin.

It is that of a family who had moved in from one of the Carolinas, and made a clearing, five years before, with the intention of settling. While camped out, under their wagon-shelter, they had built this cabin and covered it in, and got it nearly ready for use, when the whole family, parents, children, and three slaves, were taken down by that mysterious disease, "Milk-sickness." Having no neighbors for several miles, their situation did not become known until every member of the household, except the infant, was dead.

This circumstance had given the place such a character that no one would occupy it, although the heaviest labor of a new settlement was accomplished. It therefore grew up with the thick underbrush which always springs up upon the girthing of the forest trees, and received the familiar title of Dead Man's House.

There is a good deal of superstition on the frontiers, and somehow the story got into circulation, especially amongst the negroes, that the place was haunted, and that whoever passed by there in the night would see ghosts.

As a reasonable consequence, these charges were ruinous to the character of the place, even though the danger of that awful and mysterious affliction, "Milk-sickness," were not in the way.

Here, then, is the rendezvous of the party, whose character and profession are shortly to be exposed. Now we shall be able to trace out some of the mystery which has kept our minds upon the rack so long. It is odds yet if I do not prove the title of my sketch a just one.

From the moment the party set out, Mr.

Blote has taken the lead. How true it is, that whenever head-work is proposed, the lighter-hued of the two races instinctively go forward!

He directs Gabriel to watch, lest any other persons approach; orders Tom to stand by his back, cudgel in hand, to defend him if attacked; and all the preliminaries being thus laid, he boldly approaches that side of the house originally intended for the window. I say originally, basing my judgment upon the appearance of an opening, two feet square, cut out of the logs for the admission of light.

To this opening Mr. Blote directs himself, feeling confident that the deep gloom surrounding the cabin, contrasted with the bright light inside, will prevent him from being discovered.

The sight of the party that so strangely occupies Dead Man's House, in spite of its unpromising reputation, is a curious one.

A pile of saddles is heaped up in the middle of the room, and a blanket spread over the top, forming something like a table; at least, it is used for a table, and, as such, contains several bottles of spirits of different colors, a quantity of cold provisions, and a pack of cards. A rousing fire is blazing up in the wooden chimney, and around that—for the night-wind is raw and frosty—four men are sitting upon blocks of wood.

Leaning against the chimney-corner, on the side next the door, sits Mr. Colston.

The raw flesh-wound, opened by the insects, and now festering and feverish, seems like a large blood-stain upon his neck. It occupies the most of his attention, and forms the subject of many an anathema at everything which passes through his mind.

With all his experience of humanity, Mr. Blote is astounded at the facility with which a fashionable gentleman may be transformed into a blasphemous clown!

On the opposite side of the fire is the large man who was riding on the white horse. His ferocious appearance, however, has been laid aside, with the mountain of artificial whiskers, which he has placed on the table, and we see that he is nothing but a stupid, half-witted fellow, after all, who might possibly pick the pockets of an unresisting traveler, but would hardly venture upon such an experiment without foreknowledge.

The other two have all the appearance of desperate men. They show scars in various places, many more than would suffice to make them heroes, had they been gained in honorable strife. Their forms are muscular, and if they can strike with the same determination they speak, they will be ugly customers to meet on the highway of a lonely place.

There are a couple of candles burning upon the table, and various pieces of meat, skewered on sticks, frying over the blaze of the fire.

The conversation, as Mr. Blote approached the window, is too guarded for him to follow its thread. There is much rejoicing to see Colston, whom they call by the slang name of *Simpson*, and a great many questions are asked him as to the cause of his absence for the two previous nights.

These questions, and their rejoicings, are frequently interrupted by attacks upon the provisions, which prove the party to be hard riders, and upon the bottles, which give evidence of their intemperate habits.

As Colston is in great pain, much sympathy is tendered him, regardless of his rude manner of receiving it, and while he takes a short nap before the fire, one of the party bathes his wounds with warm brandy, while the other two take a game of cards.

The meeting seems to be a council of some sort, the result of a previous appointment, and its object, so far as the listener can discover, is to lay out plans for the future.

What profession is to be honored by the operation of these plans, is, perhaps, as well explained by the large display of arms offensive, as in any other way.

Business advances slowly at Dead Man's House. The condition of Colston (*Simpson*, as they style him) throws them out of their ordinary line of thought.

More than once the different members of the conference leave the house to procure wood, and were it not for the intense darkness of the surrounding thicket, which renders it difficult to distinguish a man from a stump, at three paces, the spies would be discovered, to their own imminent hazard and the failure of their plans.

Several hours and a quarter of a cord of wood were all consumed in this unsatisfactory manner; but now, toward midnight, the free use of stimulants seems to arouse the party.



"THE SIGHT OF THE PARTY IS A CURIOUS ONE."

They begin to draw their boots, and some of them throw off their upper garments.

Seeing this, Mr. Blote judges it safe to bring up Gabriel from his post, and then all three gather under the window, to see and to hear.

Colston awakes, the better of his pains, and joins the revelry, like one who needs that relief which nothing but the bottle can give.

His gloomy look, his blasphemous expressions of anger, are cast aside, and he takes a position so as to bear back against the pile of saddles. This brings the top of his head in front of the little window, not more than six feet from where Mr. Blote is standing.

Delighted at the change in his manner, for he begins to talk and jest and lay plans with the liveliest of the party, his comrades shake hands with him cheerfully, and demand his

whole history from the time of their last conference in Dead Man's House.

Colston, taking a large draught of brandy, replies—

"When we parted, three months back, comrades, I told you that I had a love affair on hand, which promised some pleasure to myself, and profit to this honorable company of free-traders. When I became clearly satisfied that none of the Murrell developments had involved me, and that none of the printed descriptions had me down, I came forward and laid siege regularly to my pretty mistress—she was a pretty piece, such another you won't find in the country—and I conquered her in good time."

Here Mr. Blote breathes hard, with anxiety, while a general roar of approbation goes round the circle.

The free-traders understand his remark in a very different sense, however, from what he intended. One of them, the big, sensual ruffian in the corner, delightedly suggests—

"Simpson can conquer the pretty gals, blast my organs if he can't!"

Colston acknowledges this homage with a grin, but puts in a disclaimer—

"No, no, boys, not half so far as that. 'Twas all chips and whetstones so far as that went. She wasn't of that sort. No, no, far enough from that. All I could get for my labor was kisses, and a scanty pattern at that. No, no, but my plan was, so soon as I married her" —

The evil-hearted man here held up the ring of betrothal, still upon his finger—why did not its sparkling light strike him dumb with remorse—while the circle broke into a second, uncontrollable roar. The idea of *his* marrying — of *his* wearing a ring of engagement!

"Yes, just as I said. So soon as the marriage was over, for I was determined to do that or worse, I felt certain that I should be able to handle some of the old gentleman's loose cash, and then I intended to go to head-quarters and take a new start. To tell the truth, my own county is getting too hot for me. That pedlar affair is the topic of the whole population, and came very near compromising me before the coroner. Besides that, I have at least two women there under promise of marriage, and both showing plain enough that they ought to be married.

"Well, I didn't consummate the marriage, fool that I was for my haste, but I did what you'll all think is better—I fingered the cash."

And here the ruffian (for I cannot now appropriate a milder name to him) threw upon the table a roll of bills, which, on being counted aloud, is found to contain twenty thousand dollars.

Mr. Blote feels as though he was dreaming. Can this be the man to whom his favorite pupil, his darling Caroline, had been so nearly married?—this licentious, dishonest, murdering villain, who speaks of his own depravity in such an airy strain!

He looks around upon his companions, but behind the sable mask they wear he can distinguish no expression.

A tremendous cheer breaks from the group as the completion of the count showed them

what an immense booty was before them—a cheer that startles the horses grouped under the trees before the door, and makes the solitary cabin ring again.

Colston goes on—

"There were a few hundred dollars more, that an old negro had buried under a rock, and I should have had that here with the rest, but that I got lost, endeavoring to come through the canebrake, two days ago. I lost the money, and came miserably near forfeiting my life with it."

The hand of old Gabriel presses down upon Mr. Blote's shoulder with crushing force, as he hears this confirmation of his suspicions. He leans forward, as though he would speak, but the schoolmaster restrains him.

Colston pursues his history—

"It was important for my plans with my mistress, to make the impression upon the old negro's mind that his daughter had stolen this money. So I got a handkerchief, belonging to the black wench, and dropped it near the spot where the money was hid. And I made some moulds, as near to the size of her foot and hand as I could guess, and marked the place in such a way as would be certain to fasten suspicion in that quarter!"

Again that crushing weight upon Mr. Blote's shoulder, and now it requires all the strength of his two companions to restrain old Gabriel. His countenance works as in an epilepsy. His mouth foams, his sunken eyes flash with rage. All the ill-treatment he has received is brought forward by this man in such a mocking strain that while the party within is convulsed with laughter, the injured black is wild for vengeance. Wo to the seducer if he touch upon that subject again!

"But you haven't told us yet where you got that ugly gash in your neck, Simpson!"

"Well, I'll make a clean breast of it while I'm about it. And let my evil example be a warning to you, boys, to make sure your game is dead before you pick it up! I felt so sure my pretty little mistress was conquered to my hand, that I took her down to a snug place I had prepared for such an event. But when I proposed to make her happy, blast Miss Modesty and her pretty fingers, she fought me like a panther! It was all I could do to sustain myself, and just as the victory was about to be declared in my favor, her brother, a bold

little pup, not a dozen years old, broke in upon us, and shot me at ten paces, as coolly as you'd drop a squirrel!"

This announcement is received in the same spirit of badinage with which it is made. More than one bottle is emptied, while enjoying the superb joke of Colston's failure with a woman, the only case of the sort on record.

The uproar having subsided, that individual, who by this time is more than half drunk, takes the roll of money in his hand, and continues—

"But I haven't told you where this money came from. You see my good daddy-in-law that was to be is a political man, and had been intrusted by government to collect a large sum of money, and hand it over to the County Treasurer the next day. I helped him collect it, and then saved him the rest of the trouble. For I got it out of his wallet while he was asleep, by that sleight of hand you have all praised so frequently, and put a roll of blank paper in its place. I left him so little cause for suspicion that he went clear to town, next morning, before he discovered the trick. The joke alone was worth twenty thousand dollars to any man, and I intend he shall be informed yet how nicely I took him in. But there's something better yet. I contrived to have the whole blame thrown upon one of the house-girls. Ha! ha! ha! The young trollope got a good lashing, and was sent off to the sugar plantation and sold. Ha! ha! ha!"

This monstrous speech is the last that Oliver Colston ever utters. For now the heart-injured and defrauded father, dashing Mr. Blote and Tom from his side as though they were stubble, and uttering one sound, such as peals from the very thickest of an Indian battle, poises his heavy hatchet over his head, and throws it right into the villain's brain! The blade strikes flush on the exposed portion of his head, and sinks itself, quivering half its breadth, into the mark. The unfortunate man, without a prayer, without a word, without a groan, falls heavily upon one side and rolls upon the floor, dead.

The uproar that follows is tremendous. In the first wild rush for shelter the candles are upset, leaving the party with no other light than the wood-fire, now burning low. A general snatching of pistols follows, and their ominous click is heard by the party outside.

Mr. Blote, horror-struck as he is by Gabriel's rash act, recovers his coolness at once, for he sees the necessity of taking immediate steps for his own safety. An aggressive act now is real prudence. He therefore sends Gabriel with orders to remove all the horses a considerable distance into the canebrake, and, if he should give a signal, to turn them loose. Then he raises his voice in a tone of command, and gives loud orders as to a party of twenty. Some are to guard the door, and suffer none to pass alive; some to stand by the windows, and shoot all who resist; some are to set fire to the cabin and burn up the Murrell gang if they do not surrender.

All this has its effect within. The tumult immediately ceases. The three robbers crouch in the dark, behind and under the saddles, and wait with leveled pistols for the attack. Not one of them will risk the hand of justice; they are determined to fight it out, like tigers.

Mr. Blote had originated his hasty plan merely with a view to gain time. He wished to terrify the ruffians and confine them to the cabin for a while, until himself and companions could mount and escape. But now accident comes to his aid, and throws the victory into his hands.

One of the robbers, the large one of the gray horst, whose hiding-place is directly in front of the chimney, opens his flask of powder to take out a load. In reply to an inquiry as to the amount on hand, the half-drunken fellow takes a brand of fire from the chimney to exhibit its contents. A coal falls into the inflammable substance, and at once the whole defence is at an end. Two of the robbers are killed instantaneously, the third, blown heavily against the side of the cabin, is so severely stunned by the shock that by the time the besieging party reach him, he is too weak to offer resistance.

Thus the midnight rendezvous is broken up.

The hands of Oliver Colston still grasp the roll of money, his finger still sparkles with Caroline's ring; both are secured, to be returned to their owners. The three corpses are next laid decently out upon the floor, and left to the solitude of the woods. The prisoner is tied firmly to a tree, and then the party, whose good fortune has been equal to the justice of their cause, mount the horses and seek the nearest dwelling.

Guided by the old hostler, they are not long in reaching it, and, procuring assistance, they return before sunrise.

The bodies are still there, to add a deeper shade to the superstitious cloud that overshadows Dead Man's House, but the prisoner has escaped. His cords have been cut, and a knife which lay close by, being one that Gabriel has long owned, explains clearly, to Mr. Blote's mind, the mystery of his release.

Chapter Eighth and Last.

A SUGAR-PLANTATION.—DENOUEMENT.



N this wise had the mystery of the robbery been mainly cleared up, and the money recovered.

Mr. Blote found no further difficulty in persuading the two runaways to return home.

The reader has seen that there had been a growing inclination in the minds of both to abandon the woods, evidence of which was visible in Gabriel's willingness to escort Mr. Colston through the thicket, even at the danger of exposing the secret entrance to his hiding-place. That inclination was now merged into a burning desire to restore his poor, injured daughter to her home and friends; and upon the pledge offered by the schoolmaster, that neither of them should be punished for their desertion, they returned with him to their masters.

The coming of the party created an excitement throughout the country unequalled by anything that had occurred since the Murrell developments.

Company came in from all quarters, and upon every possible errand.

The sheriff, and the other securities, together with the district attorney, received the intelligence by a messenger from Mr. Blote, and although it was late at night, and the night was stormy, they immediately mounted their horses, one and all, and rode at full speed to Mr. Enloe's dwelling.

The scene, as I witnessed it that night, was full of life and incident.

The parlor was crowded with the negro women of the plantation, wild with joy that they were not to be sold and sent away. All

discipline for the time seemed to be abandoned.

The overseer, Mr. Allansby, who had somehow forgotten where he laid his whip, and, what is more remarkable, had dropped all his sternness somewhere, had timidly attempted to keep a little order at first, but the influence of such happiness is contagious; he fell headlong into the current, and when old Mammy Betty, an octogenarian, very ugly and offensive, threw her withered arms around his neck and convulsively kissed him, Mr. Allansby submitted to the salute with as good a grace as though it had been Caroline herself. That young lady was well-nigh smothered in the tumult.

I could get an occasional glimpse of her as the centre of a *mêlée* to which the battle of Ivry was child's play. At one instant a stout wench would embrace her as though she were compressing a cotton-bale; at the next, a group of the same would toss her violently toward the ceiling, as the sweet girl had often done with her doll, twelve years before; and then, for variety's sake, they would permit her to sit awhile, that they might kiss her, and chat over the good news.

Mr. Enloe himself was in a woful predicament. If he approached the window, ten stalwart arms were waving there like the long feelers of the polypi to engulf him. To go out into the passage was to be waylaid and devoured, and Mammy Betty followed him about like a shadow, with eager eyes and mouth.

Thus pursued and besieged, he could only feign a headache to give himself an excuse to lie down until the sheriff came; though, sooth to say, his own happiness was not less than that of the others.

But, though more seriousness came in with the town party, there was not less real happiness; and when the sheriff, taking a salute from each of our dear Caroline's cheeks, whispered in her ear—

"A narrow escape, my precious girl! Thank God, he discovered his real character in due season!"

When, I say, the rough old boy touched upon this sensitive topic, and I watched, lest an allusion to it might mar the general happiness, I was delighted to see that no additional paleness came over her countenance, and to hear her hastily respond—"Amen!"

Stout heart! the loss of such a lover is a gain. The wound shall yet heal. That pure breast shall yet find one worthy of its pillow-ing. Months may roll away, and years, before the admiring deity aims his arrows at that bright target again, but you shall not be overlooked in his future work—depend on that.

Daylight broke in upon us before the excitement subsided sufficiently to enable us to snatch an hour's sleep.

Then we met again, and the District Attorney opened his portfolio of papers, and ventured to promise us that all the assignments and sales made on behalf of this great treasury-debt should be nullified, and that Mr. Enloe's property should be restored to him, as nearly as possible, in its original state.

I will add here that the higher authorities, and afterwards the Legislature, ratified his conditional engagement, and so my old friend stood erect as before.

My appointment as General Agent came to an ignominious end. Its emoluments went into the general release without discount to Mr. Enloe. I only trust that when called upon by the great Creditor of humanity to resign this body to the grave, I shall as cheerfully accede as in the case I have mentioned.

Before night, all the visitors had departed, save a few of us, who felt domesticated by the last month's afflictions; and the more delicate portions of the history were then brought forward.

Caroline's ring was returned to her, with many a sigh from the whole circle that one so capable of usefulness and honor had pressed the early grave of his own vices.

That was the last time I ever heard his name mentioned in the family.

It was decided before our separation that, on the second day, such of us as would volunteer for that purpose should commence our journey to Louisiana, to repurchase poor Loogy, for it had been resolved upon, without a dissenting voice, that there should be no stint in our offered prices, "even to the half of the kingdom."

The morning found three of us, to wit, Mr. Blote, Mr. Enloe, and myself, prepared to start.

There is yet one grand point in the mysterious robbery to be solved, and our anxiety, relieved upon every other topic, has concen-

trated upon this: we have not yet learned from what source Loogy derived her knowledge of the robbery.

At the mouth of the lane, we are joined by Mr. Derrieks, the slave-trader, who declares his determination to accompany us to Louisiana.

He has been employed to "run" a couple of rapsallions, who, having been caught in the act of setting fire to a cotton-gin, are thus summarily disposed of, to keep them clear of the law.

He is excessively anxious that Mr. Enloe should engage him—salary and emoluments no object—to trade back the negro girl, and Mr. Enloe at last consents.

Before night, we find ourselves upon one of the monstrous steamers of the Mississippi, downward bound, forming part of a great family that counts by hundreds. A local habitation and a name are given us amongst the rest, and we retire, wearied, to our berths.

The journey, though not much protracted, for the leviathan thundered on her way as though snags and sawyers were things of fancy rather than fact, contained some incidents that will enliven my sketch.

One is the sudden disappearance of Mr. Derrieks, who, on the third day of the journey, could nowhere be found.

He had been remarkably punctual at his meals, standing patiently for half an hour before his plate rather than miss the first table, but to all signals he became suddenly deaf. He was not in his berth; he was not on the hurricane-deck; he was not on the lower-deck with the two rapsallions. The rapsallions themselves were there, *innocent-looking* as ever, but they could give no account of the trader.

One of the passengers suggested that they be searched, and upon performing that operation, a considerable roll of handbills was found.

This was proof positive that they had robbed Mr. Derrieks and thrown him overboard, while together, in some sequestered spot, behind the wheelhouse.

Their hope, as they confessed afterwards, when they stood side by side, on the gallows, was, to land at some wood-yard and give themselves up quietly to the nearest planter. He would send them to the county-jail, where,

after a few months' imprisonment as runaways, who would give no account of their owners, they would be sold for expenses. Having plenty of money, they could easily manage, through some "mean white man," to purchase themselves, and so get to a free State.

But they were brought up with a short turn, for the Captain took them back on his next trip; they were transported to their own county, tried, and a few months afterwards, hung, *first*, as the papers said, for arson, *second*, for murder.

This unpleasant episode threw quite an air of gloom over our party, scarcely lightened, except to the old schoolmaster, by the discovery on board of the world-renowned Professor Ovum, who was returning to Europe from his American tour, with a large shipment of frogs and spiders.

The second incident I have referred to was as follows. It added a link to the chain of facts connected with Oliver Colston:—

The night before we arrived at the end of our journey, one of the stewards brought a message from a sick gentleman, who requested that Mr. Blote should call upon him in his state-room.

He did so, and afterwards imparted the result of the communication to us.

The invalid was no other than the identical man whom the old schoolmaster had tied to the tree, to be released by the knife of Gabriel. His sickness was but feigned, his confinement to the room being merely to avoid recognition from some chance passenger.

How the robber discovered the fact, I cannot say, but he and Mr. Blote belonged to the same secret society, and he was not afraid to trust him.

From him we learned that Colston, *alias* Simpson, had been an active leader in the Murrell affair, and was intrusted by the heads of the band with some of the most confidential business. That upon the developments which led to the disorganization of that company, Colston, whose name, real or assumed, had not come out in the printed expositions, had engaged to close off the affairs of the company in his own section, with the determination, after that event, of removing to a considerable distance. That he could have had no other motive for his engagement with

Caroline save her dishonor. That the attack upon her, in which he came forward as a rescuer, was all a pretence, arranged through one of his comrades. That a spy had been put upon Mr. Enloe's steps from the hour he received the government money, and even had Mr. Colston failed in extracting it from his pocket-book, Mr. Enloe would have been waylaid and robbed, the next morning, on his way to town.

The small village at which we landed could not furnish us with a conveyance to the plantation of Loogy's new master, and, impatient as we were, we determined to walk.

The sound of the grinding was loud and lively. The sugar-mills were all in active blast, dense clouds of smoke issuing from their chimneys, and uniting with the vapor to join the fleecy clouds of an October sky. Negroes were hurrying to and fro, under the supervision of their overseers; some cutting the ripe cane, some bearing it to the rollers, and scarcely finding an hour for refreshment or sleep.

We got directions along the road as we could, and arrived a little before night at the plantation.

It was the property of an enterprising gentleman, who, having spent twenty years in the business of sugar-making as overseer, had been enabled to purchase the greater part of the property of his former employer—a fact that, as clearly as any other, illustrates the distinction between an *active* and a *passive* verb—and was now carrying on the business on his own account.

He was at the mill, where we joined him. Informing him of our errand, he looked at us with as much surprise as the Law Sergeant evinced when Mr. Pickwick insisted on calling on him, and laughed heartily at the idea of our coming, all the way for humanity's sake, to restore an ill-treated negro. He candidly acknowledged that he owned such a slave, and admitted that he would sell her to us at the market-price, under the circumstances; but he was not at all sure that she would live a week, for the "nigger" had been "no account" to him since a short time after he purchased her, and he rather thought she was past curing.

Startled at this intelligence, we asked permission to go to her immediately, and Mr.

Bemus, the sugar-planter, politely offered his escort, but still with a droll sort of look at the idea.

There were more than three hundred slaves on the estate, and "the quarters" necessarily covered a considerable space of ground.

Getting directions from an old woman, who was attending to more than a score of infants, Mr. Bemus led us through the maze of huts, and still calling upon those he saw for guidance, took us at last to one pointed out as the habitation of Loogy.

It was like the rest, a low pen made of small logs, without a chimney or door, and surrounded by a company of naked, noisy children.

We looked in, and saw an object stretched upon a dirty blanket at the further side of the room. It was Loogy, but so emaciated that I should not have known her. She was asleep as we entered, and did not wake, although we stood over her and conversed aloud concerning her pitiful appearance.

There was no need to apologize to one another for the weakness, for all three of us wept. The gentlemanly planter turned aside, too gentlemanly to smile at such weakness, and we felt relieved when we heard him walking off.

Yes, there was the poor girl, still alive, but very sick; how sick, that sallow hue, so unfavorable in the diagnosis of a negro patient, and the hasty manner of her breathing, indicated but too plainly.

Her loose coat was not the neat, homespun dress worn under the eye of her former mistress, but coarse and unshapely.

Still we stood and gazed upon her. On the floor by her side was a small rag of calico—it was but a rag, doled out by some hard charity, which she had partly sewed up in the form of a *baby's dress*, the needle and thread being still in it. She had gone to sleep, it appeared, even while laboring on it. There was something red protruding from one of her hands, and as Mr. Enloe stooped to examine it, how were we touched to discover the same string of coral beads which had formed such a link in the fatal chain of evidence against her.

It seems that Caroline, with some other parting tokens of affection, had returned this to her, and in that feverish slumber she was clasping it tightly to her bosom.

Mr. Blote knelt by her side and whispered Caroline's name in her ear.

She opened her eyes, looked at us delightedly, as we look at the objects of a dream, and smiled.

He again addressed her with words of home, of her father, of her husband, of Caroline.

It was but a vision, she saw that plainly enough; it was only a dream, from which she would presently awake to the solitude of that low hut, or the discords of those howling youth; but, determined to enjoy it as long as she could, she resolutely fixed her attention upon us, and whispered—

"O, Miss Carline, 'deed I love you. I wouldn't take your husband from you, 'deed I wouldn't, Miss Carline!"

And we could only convince her of the reality of our presence by endeavoring to draw the necklace from her hand, at which she arose and recognized us.

The shock which our sudden appearance made upon her mind was not so great as we had feared. There was, indeed, but little mind remaining. Her resolution, after the first few days' experience of the cheerless plantation labor, had given way, and she had become sick, sullen, as her gentlemanly owner called it; homesick, heart-sick, as I should say. Then her loneliness had turned her head, and by the time we discovered her she was nearly deranged.

The gentlemanly planter, in a spirit of hospitality mixed with a fondness for the comic, had her brought to the house, while we waited upon her, and placed in the house-servants' apartments, under care of the physician. It was rather too good a thing, he admitted, and he shouldn't like for the other planters to hear of it, but he frequently went with us to see her, and his wife, a clever lady, fond of a joke like himself, presented her with a suit of clothes.

Loogy remained here for several weeks before we felt it safe to remove her.

By this time Mr. Bemus had become so much attached to Mr. Blote (that secret society again, I presume), that he insisted on accompanying us up the river. Such a joke as his going so far with a sick negro!—and his wife went with him.

When Loogy had sufficiently recovered, we asked her for a full explanation of her myste-

rious conduct, and as we assured her that Mr. Colston was really dead, and his engagement with her young mistress broken up, she consented to give it.

The night of the robbery, Caroline, who was sitting up late with her lover in the parlor, had retired to rest with her chamber-windows opened. Loogy, ever anxious on her account, had discovered this, and as the morning air blew up cold, she left her cabin at "the quarters" and crept softly to the house to close them.

Here she became an involuntary witness to Mr. Colston's movements; how he walked from his bed-room and spoke gently to the dogs, and fed them with some morsels of meat that he had reserved for that purpose; how he went into Mr. Enloe's apartment, and drew his pocket-book from under his head; and how he returned stealthily to his own room; while Loogy flew, horror-stricken and wild with emotion, back through the orchard to her cabin. There she had wept until daylight, and until summoned to appear before the family and answer to the charges made against her. *How could she expose Mr. Colston, and break her young mistress' heart? Here was the clue to the whole after-conduct of the faithful slave: she could not deprive "Miss Caroline" of one whom she loved so well! She could bear to be whipped; she could bear to be sold; she could bear to be sent away; but she could not break up the future happiness of one whom she loved so well.*

Hear it, O ye to whom affection is but a name, and love has never opened his dearest mysteries!

And now I will wind up the drama. Yet let the audience remain seated for a moment, while I dispose of the principals and some of the subordinates.

My friend, Mr. Enloe, until the day of his death, had no further strife with fortune. By rigid economy he contrived to close the big breaches that speculation had made in his affairs, and within six years was free of debt. In due season he was restored to church-membership, and at the very next political census his name was unanimously proposed for the office of Governor. But, to the surprise of his party and the joy of his opponents, he declined the nomination.

As a neighbor, a Christian, and a gentleman

of charity and sympathy, his name stood high, and it stood upon a rock. Few who pass his monument, near the roadside, in the graveyard at C—, and read the eulogistic inscription written by Mr. Blote, but will admit its truth.

The hero of the fowling-piece is now a man of twenty-four. Few in the sunny South better deserve the name. Few have a happier home than he, or a worthier wife, or lovelier babes. The promise of his youth is verified by his virtue, his charity, his sympathy with distress, his regard for truth. The little shotgun which effected so much at that trying moment is still suspended over the mantel-piece in his best apartment.

His little brother Alf has not followed him up into manhood. Wearied with the race of life, the child retired early from the scene, and went to sleep, to commence a higher, holier career in his spirit-land.

Uncle Gabriel took his first holidays to search for his money. By the aid of some good dogs, he traced Colston's path through the canebrake, until he found all the bags except one, and that one was made up by his master. Though the amount was slightly deficient, Mr. Enloe consented to receive it (yet with pretended reluctance, for nothing would have insulted the old hostler so much as to rank him with the "five-hundred-dollar niggers"), with the understanding, however, that the remainder was to be paid over as fast as possible.

And so it was, for about every other day, for six months, Mr. Enloe was compelled to write a receipt for some additional dime or picayune that had been gathered up somehow toward the debt.

As for Loogy, she utterly refused to leave "Miss Carline" on any terms; so she is a slave yet, and her small people (there are ten or fifteen of them) are in a like condition.

Mr. Blote is still teaching school and still collecting specimens.

So falls the curtain over this true tale of Southern life. As it slowly sinks, and scene after scene fades away from the beholders' eyes, let me hastily add—'tis my last opportunity—that although there are some things in it I might, perhaps, have concealed, there are none that I could have altered without a disregard of truth. Farewell!

Dodge's Sketches.

THE THIN ABOLITIONIST

AND

The Caged Madman!

BY FALCONBRIDGE.

ACCIDENTALLY, that incorrigibly mad wag and hypochondria-killing individual, Dodge, whom we so lately put in all the papers, and thus "showed him up" to half of creation, is down upon us again with another load of poles.

A few mornings since, while calmly cogitating upon the instability of all sublunary contraptions, and inwardly debating whether it were best to pitch pens and ink out of the window, buy a monkey and an organ, and go on a tour, or *jine* a fire-company, Dodge popped in upon us, and put to flight all our pious meditations.

"Got five minutes to spare, old boy?" said he.

"More—thirty, at least. Take a seat. Where are you from? What's the news?"

"Thank you, just from Manchester, N. H., which place is going ahead with a grand combined double-action *rush*," said Dodge.

"Good!" said we. "By the way, what have you new—anything rich?"

"Did I ever tell you," said Dodge, "the scrape Covert and I had last spring, coming from Baltimore to Philadelphia?"

"Not a syllable. Let's have it, if particularly rich."

"Well, I'll tell you all about it, my boy. Ha, ha! it was rich—very. You know we—that means Covert & Dodge—went down to the Southward, Washington city, &c. Well, I—but we'll say Dodge, and tell the story in our own words.

Dodge, before leaving Baltimore in the morning, received at the Post-Office various letters, papers, &c., from his Eastern friends, and getting into the cars, he took a remote

seat, put his valise under his feet, and began to overhaul his documents.

The fiery iron horse, so poetically described by our friend, Capt. Cutter, of Kentucky, was *snaking* the cars over the rails, the passengers were chattering and nodding around "the humorous man," Dodge, who heeded them not, but kept on reading his papers and pamphlets, and looking as grave and knowing as an owl in an ivy-bush.

It finally did occur to the comedian that he was a focus upon which the vulgar eyes of his fellow-passengers were dilating to an uncommon and uncomfortable pitch. One individual in particular eyed Dodge, keen as a razor; and as the phrenological developments of this person, in the quick and comprehensive eye of the comedian, proclaimed him an undesirable acquaintance, and just the very last sort of looking person one would like to meet on a dark night and dreary road, our comic friend felt mightily relieved when the fellow got up from his seat and sauntered away into a forward car.

Presently, however, this foreboding fellow was again visible to the comedian, in close confab with the conductor of the train, and apparently referring to poor Dodge in his conversation with the carman.

"Blast him!" said Dodge, to himself, "what is he driving at?"

And the comic man began to feel uncomfortably serious; then felt his long goatee, ran his hand over his face, scanned his clothes to see if there was anything about his outward man calculated to elicit such marked attention from a stranger.

The evil genius of the doomed comedian now bore up alongside of him, while, with an instinctive foreboding of something disagreeable in the wind, Dodge quickly folded up his letters and papers, and thrust them into his pockets.

"How're you?" says the evil genius, with a bob of his head, by way of a patronizing salutation.

"Pretty fair—how're you?" said the disgusted comedian.

"Tolerable. You're travelin' North, I s'pose?"

"Kind o' think I am," was the response.

"B'long to the Eastward?" continued the interrogator.

"Seen Boston before now," said Dodge, quietly.

"So I reckoned. Don't like to be too inquisitive, or nothing o' that sort, Mister; but I venture to guess you're in the book business, deal in tracks (tracts)," says the fellow, with great stress and emphasis on the three last words.

"Occasionally," replied the innocent and unsuspecting joker. "In fact, my friend, it is a portion of my ordinary business—*making tracks!*"

"So I reckoned," continued the interrogating fellow; "and I s'pose you do a little shoutin' and singin' 'casionally?"

"Yes, a little in that way, too. I may venture to observe, sir, that *singing* is another part of my business," says Dodge.

"So we s'posed; great likin' for the niggers, too?"

"Niggers?" says the now a little disconcerted comedian.

"Yes," continued his evil genius; "but I s'pose you folks call 'em colored folks, brothers and sisters, may be."

The conversation was getting beyond the depths of Dodge's good-humor. So far, he had tolerated the bore merely to discover the point, to which the fellow was driving; but now the language assumed the shape and tone of premeditated insult, without leading, apparently, any nearer the fellow's object or design, and the comedian felt his dauber rising like bottled yeast; so he uncorked, and opened on a higher key.

"Look here, my friend, it does strike me, forcibly, that, considering our brief acquaintance, your remarks are rather too personal: and if you have no particularly interesting reasons for continuing your observations, I would beg to hear no more of them."

"S'pose you wouldn't," bluffly responded the fellow; "but ef you haven't any pertik-

clar objections, I'd like to see into a few of them papers you've been examinin' so close just now."

"Anything else about me you'd like to see into?" says Dodge.

"May be I'd like to overhaul that *wal-ees* o' yours, thar," said the fellow, riveting his two eyes upon Dodge's valise under the seat.

"I have not the slightest doubt of it," the dumb-founded comedian echoes; "but I calculate, old fellow," says he, "you will find this time and place bad for your business."

"Will I? Then, by thunder, you'll find this neck of woods a sorry place for your business, Mister *track* man, mind I tell you!" says the fellow, pitching into the high notes.

"Can't say I'm sorry about coming down this way," says the comedian; "done very well, considering."

"O, ho! So you acknowledge? Go'n' to own up, eh? Make a clean breast of it, umph?" were exclamations, astounding and clamorous, that saluted the ears of the horrified humorist, coming from several large, savage, and suspicious-looking customers, who had huddled around poor Dodge.

They all seemed to fix their eyes upon the comedian's valise. He, having some *weighty* reasons in it which induced him to keep a sharp eye to it, seized upon the object of such unwarrantable curiosity, and held it as tight as a bear.

This act, on the part of the comedian, to secure his goods and chattels from threatened invasion, seemed to be the "cue" for a simultaneous charge of the evil genius and his confederates; and before Dodge could say "amen," he was seized by the crowd, and his valise snatched out of his hands in the twinkling of an eye.

"Seize him!" "Hold him!" "Tar and feather the scamp!" "Search his pockets!" "Overhaul his *wal-ees!*" were the cries that now resounded about the astonished and writhing comedian.

The conductor came forward and interposed, and Dodge, getting his breath, begged in the name of the seven commandments to know what all this meant.

"Friend," said a benevolent-looking individual present, "friend, they suspect thee of distributing tracts among colored people."

"Why, anybody can see he's one of 'em."



"THE PRIME MOVER IN THE MUSS DOVE HIS FISTS INTO THE OPEN VALISE, AND SEIZED A ROLL OF HANDBILLS."

Nigger-stealer's marked on his countenance!" shouted the excited mover of these proceedings.

"That's it, my friend," said the pacific man; "they take thee for an abolitionist. A gentleman in the forward car has informed this gentleman (the investigator) that thou hadst told him selling and distributing abolition books and tracts was thy errand down to Baltimore. This person has lost some of his colored people lately, and charges thee with being concerned in their escape; but I trust, from thy appearance, that these charges are far from the truth."

"Who told you this outrageous story?" said Dodge, bristling up to his adversary.

"Don't put on any airs here, Mister; 'twon't do, no how," shouted the evil genius of the *done* comedian. "You're found out; they're in your *wal-ees*. Open it, and own up to your dirty business at once."

"Gentlemen," said Dodge, appealing to the lookers-on, "I suppose *somebody* considers this a very good joke."

"Yes, an all-fired pretty joke," somebody responded.

"So I conclude," said the victim; "but I am opposed to its going any further, at my personal expense. Gentlemen, my name is Dodge, professor of vocal music, from Boston, Massachusetts. There is my valise—open, examine it; if you find anything there to excite suspicion as to my identity, fry me in aquafortis, and swallow me straight!"

The prime mover of the muss dove his fists into the open valise, and seized a roll of handbills; jerking them open, he began to read—"Grand Concert."

Here the lookers-on began to settle away into their seats, and before the fellow had got much farther in his investigation, he found his arduous supporters mizzled, and he all alone in his glory!

It was *rather* evident now that there was some mistake. Some laughed in their sleeves, others tittered and haw-haw-ed right out, and the inquisitor left, in rising rage, to find the man that had very apparently been running a

saw on him; but a brief investigation resulted in the discovery that the informer was *non est come-at-ibus*—he had sloped from the cars when they reached Havre de Grace, about the very moment he was wanted.

The conductor of the train inquired of poor Dodge if his friend Covert wasn't the man that had been getting up this trick, and Dodge, smelling a rat, presumed to say he had not the slightest idea of the inventor of the joke. The conductor laughed; everybody laughed; even the victim, Dodge, laughed, and vowed it was really a capital joke. But the evil genius swore in round, unvarnished oaths, as big and weighty as fifty-six's, that if that fellow's hide ever fell under his manipulations, it would not be worth two cents to hold corn-shucks!

Dodge kept dark; couldn't out-chalk him in that way.

He and Covert gave concerts in Wilmington, and then took the steamboat for Philadelphia.

Shortly after the steamboat got out into the Delaware river, and was pawing away for the Quaker City, Dodge, with a face of most melancholy and care-stricken anxiety, sought the Captain.

"Captain," said he, in a voice of deep excitement, "Captain, have you a secure empty room on this boat?"

"A secure empty room?" the Captain responded.

"Have you? And two good stout men—men you can depend upon?"

"Why, in the name of goodness, what's the matter?" quoth the Captain.

"Hush!" said Dodge, shutting one eye, and putting up his finger. "Hush! don't let him hear us—he's stark mad—lost all his fortune in speculating—gone mad, sir—belongs in Baltimore—taking him up to Philadelphia—quite well this morning—but I see the fit is coming on him, and if he is not secure, he'll kill somebody or destroy himself."

The Captain was alarmed; his wife and children were on the boat, with many of his

valued friends; he at once comprehended the extent of the danger—madman loose—pocket-full of pistols and knives, perhaps—something must be done, *well done*, and quickly, too.

Like wildfire the alarm spread over the boat; the women huddled up their children, and the darkies' eyes shone like peeled onions at every suspicious-looking *genus homo* about. Ten mad dogs would not, perhaps, have created more panic than did the peaceable and unconscious ballad-singer, Covert, who stood leaning over a settee in silent musings. But so speedily and perfectly were the details of his capture completed, that the supposed madman found himself in the herculean grasp of two boatmen, his hands tied, and in spite of the most determined resistance, of anathemas, expostulations, and entreaties, the vocalist was dragged forward and ruthlessly thrust into a side room, the door secured, and there he was left to vent his fury in kicks and vociferous threats, until the boat reached the city.

Dodge now stepped up to the Captain, begged him to keep the lunatic *just* until he went up in town, got friends and a carriage to remove the madman! That was about the last the Captain ever saw of Dodge; the boatmen smelt a mice, heard Covert explain the joke, and then let him out of his tight place, and the Captain told the victim to tell that fellow (Dodge), when he next saw him, that if he was ever in those parts again, and would make himself known, he should be presented with a steamboat pass that would be good for five years.

When the two jokers again met it was in their concert-room in New-England, and just as they came to the door together, Dodge slapped his partner jocosely on the shoulder, and good-humoredly exclaimed—

"Well, my boy, how do we stand *now*?"

Covert eyed the long, lank figure of his partner for a moment, and replied—

"Well, I suppose we shall have to call it *square*, but it's a pretty tight trade for me!"

MARRYING 'EM OVER AGAIN:

OR,

A Joker Forestalled.

BY FALCONERIDGE.

SOME time last summer, while canvassing the "down east" States, Dodge (need we particularize *what* Dodge?—Ossian E. Dodge, of course) ran afoul of a young gentleman quite noted for his off-hand, practical jokes; and having heard of Dodge, our amateur joker made up his mind that when and where he met the extensively-known and thorough-bred wag, there would probably be *files* about, and somebody's eye-teeth would be cut.

When Dodge appeared in our amateur wit's diggings, he straightway went to work to introduce himself to the unrivaled humorist.

"I understand, sir," said the amateur, "that you are not to be caught napping. I've read and heard a great deal of your practical joking, and though I don't profess to be very smart that way, yet I've made a bet with some of my friends that in less than six months I will show you a new kink or two—I intend to show you the elephant, sir!"

"Ah, indeed!" said Dodge. "Well, sir, I'm tolerably conversant with that species of quadrupeds, having studied animated nature for some time; but I shall always be pleased to learn something new, although I fear, sir, that the critter you mention would hardly, with my experience, come under the head of novelty with me. However, I don't want to damp your enthusiasm; so you may figure it up, and fetch along your entertainment whenever you feel like it."

The amateur made several small flirts at Dodge during his stay in the amateur's neighborhood, but his efforts scarcely amounted to anything with a good "nub" to it, and hence we shall not take any pains to illustrate them.

Time and Dodge passed along, and by casually meeting each other in other parts of the country, in the vicinity of the city of notions, quite an intimacy sprang up between the two "sawyers," and finally, one day, said the amateur joker—

"Mr. Dodge, I'm going to be married."

"Sho! you're joking," said Dodge, poking

his friend in the side with the butt of that highfalutin cane of his.

"Am I, though?" said the other. "Guess not—it's all arranged—the old man don't like me—the young lady does, and that makes it all right, you know. We're going to New-York to-morrow evening, to be there married the next day, and, if you have nothing serious to prevent you, I wish you to join a small and select party of the young lady's friends and mine, and go along."

"Nothing would give me more pleasure," said Dodge, "than to accompany you, but really, I—I—that is, the notice is somewhat short, the—the—parties, excepting yourself, sir, are a—a—strangers to me, and it would be a little kind of awkward; in short, I must decline your invitation."

O, no, 'twouldn't do; Dodge must go—couldn't get off. So next day, a small party of some four or five ladies and gentlemen met at the Marlboro' Hotel, and a few hours afterward the coach drove them down to the Providence railway depot, where they soon embarked, and next morning, just as the sun began to peep over the eastern part of creation, the bride and bridegroom and their male and female attendants, with our facetious and self-sacrificing friend, Dodge, who was to act as grand master of ceremonies, cicerone, &c., coupled with a young lady, a relative of the bridegroom, found themselves at the pier No. 1, North River, New-York.

"Now, Mr. Dodge," said the amateur joker, "we are all strangers here in New-York, and we put you in command of our affairs, to direct our movements."

"Exactly—that's all right," said Dodge; "leave all to me."

"Say, you! look here!" bawled Dodge to one of the noisy, brawling, pushing, red-faced drivers of one of the hundred and fifty cabs and coaches and trucks usually besetting the steamers landing their passengers at the New-York piers. "You, I mean; we all go to the Irving House—fly around—get the baggage—allow me, Miss —, to assist you to this coach; so—all in—drive off!"

In the course of ten minutes, the bridal party were housed at the Irving, in private parlors, as snug and merry as bees.

Dodge stepped out to get the parson, and arrange the minutiae of the marriage.



"HEAVENS AND EARTH, MR. DODGE! DO TELL ME WHAT ALL THIS MEANS."

At 11 A. M. the parties were spiced; good humor, a few tears and kisses prevailed; and the party, under charge of Dodge, started out to see the lions of Gotham; and thus merrily passed the hours away, until the hour of retiring came round, and the parties separated for the night.

"Mr. ———, a—a—but no matter."

"Did you wish to speak to me, Mr. Dodge?" said the happy bridegroom, turning back as Dodge made the broken call.

"Yes, that is—but no matter; some other time will answer. Good-night; God bless!"

And, as if laboring under some undigested trouble, Dodge disappeared, and took a stroll by himself.

Returning about midnight to the Irving with a mysterious-looking companion, they took seats in the drawing-room, and sent for the landlord. He came, a brief whispering took place, the landlord grinned and grinned,

and finally broke out into something of a laugh, and said—

"Well, I don't care—you're all friends—it's rather a good joke—it will surprise them some—do as you please, sir."

The landlord disappeared; a servant came in and intimated, if the gentleman was ready, he'd "show him up" to No. ———.

Tap, tap, tap, gently went Dodge's knuckles on the door of No. ———.

"Who's there?" said a quick voice.

"Me," said Dodge. "Get up, quick!"

"Is that you, Mr. Dodge?"

"Yes, sir. Get up, quick!"

"Heaven's sake, what's the matter?"

"O, get up, sir, quick! Open your door!"

"The house on fire? Heaven's sake, what's the matter, Mr. Dodge?"

Then was heard a finer-strung voice humbly making the same inquiry, and soon the door was opened, and the outlines of a gen-

tleman *en deshabille* thrusting out his nose and night-cap.

"Heavens and earth, Mr. Dodge! do tell me what all this means!"

"Why, sir, but I—I hope you'll pardon me, I—I confess that—a—a—I was wrong, very wrong, in—a—"

"Well, but, sir," said the excited and impatient husband, "what is it all about? Come, let us know the worst."

"The fact is, sir, I couldn't"—

"Well, well!"

"I couldn't go to sleep. I got up, determined to ask your pardon; you'll never forgive me, but, a—"

"Go on, go on, out with it!"

"Mr. Dodge, are we in danger?" said the fine, small voice of the little bride, her bright eyes and pretty little night-cap appearing faintly in the background.

"Awful! too bad, ma'am; I shall never forgive myself."

And here Dodge actually threw up the whites of those big eyes, and sighed twice!

"What danger—how—where?" said the married couple, in one breath.

"Tell us all, sir!" exclaimed the husband.

"Yes, yes, for mercy's sake, do!" said the wife.

"Then if I must, I must," said Dodge.

"You are not man and wife!"

"What?" said the husband.

"Mr. Dodge!" said the wife.

"Fact, I ought to be hung and quartered—my fault."

"What do you mean, sir? You don't pretend"—

"Yes, I do; it's a fact, sir."

"What's a fact, Mr. Dodge?" inquired the alarmed bride.

"Not married—all a sham—my fault."

"O-o-o! I'm—I'm"—

Here the husband, as he supposed himself, caught his wife, as she supposed she was, just as she was about to swoon.

"Mr. Dodge, this is a shabby business, sir," said the supposed husband.

"I know it," said Dodge. "I confess all. I regret it severely, sir. I could not a—a—I couldn't sleep, sir. I got up, sir, determined to make all the"—

"Misery you could, sir!" said the supposed married man.

"Not at all, sir; I did it as a joke."

"A joke, sir? It's villainous, sir!"

"But I'll repair it, sir. I'll run off to the minister's."

"Don't meddle any more, sir. Take yourself off, sir, and leave us to ourselves. Go!"

The husband was about to shut the door. This brought the lady to. She rushed to the door.

"Go, Mr. Dodge, go—do go and get the minister at once—do, sir!"

"Never mind, now, it's almost morning, my dear; then we'll arrange the matter without his intervention," said the husband.

But the lady was determined—insisted. Dodge desired them to dress and come down into the drawing-room immediately, and he would have the real parson there, and there should be a *prima facie*, *bona fide*, and veritable wedding.

So he left. The discomfited votaries of Hymen had their other friends aroused from their downy couches, and the amazed and vexed parties assembled in the drawing-room, and were soon confronted by Dodge and a new parson, who put them over the ground again in good and substantial shape.

The performances, however, took up the time until daylight began to peep in through the windows at the sombre-looking wedding-party, when Dodge and the parson left.

After breakfast, the entire party being again assembled in the drawing-room, Dodge used his handkerchief about his lips a few times, and with a slight a-hem, addressed the wedded parties:—

"Mr. and Mrs. ———, I've had my joke. I will not be greedy, and enjoy all the fun myself, but share it liberally among you. Mr. ——— threatened some time ago that he would certainly introduce to my especial observation a well-known quadruped in less than six months. There is yet a short time left him to carry out his determination, and I beg leave to say that this wedding has afforded me probably the only opportunity I shall ever have to assure Mr. ——— that the joker who intends traveling with me must rise early in the morning, and be well loaded with saws, in order to show to my vision a new species of the elephant. I regret, Mrs. ———, the inconvenience and alarm I may have caused you, unnecessarily, perhaps; for

the first matrimonial performance was genuine, the last was merely a little bit of my nonsense!"

And with the entire party close upon his heels, the incorrigible joker made his exit.

MAGNETISM TRIUMPHANT:

or,

The way Dodge "Done" the Old Maids.

BY FALCONBRIDGE.

WE have seen some, and heard many, very curious performances and business operations, i. e., dovetailing gammon into the mob by and with that latter-day essential humbug, called Magnetism.

We remember being present, once upon a time, in the library-rooms of New-York, when a Dr. Somebody succeeded, by the aid of a confederate or two, in inveigling Mayor Harper, Judge Matsell, and the whole town Council, a number of the *literati*, and no few of the very cogent cognicenti of the city, into full and efficient belief that humbug wasn't humbug—that is, Mesmerism was an indubitable science!

Of course, we have always been ahead of the age we live in—we have—and had no difficulty to see into the thing at once, and hence laughed in our sleeve at the gullibility of poor human nature, as loud as we could snicker.

Several years have passed, and we still find remnants of the humbug, the same old humbug, about, and a few followers still, who yet dream, sleep, and doze over the imposition which the weakness of their intellect and moral stagnation of the impostors keep in existence, until some new and popular fallacy gives Mesmerism its quietus.

During the rage and fury of Mesmerism, some few years ago, a well-known humorous gentleman, the first letters of whose name are Ossian E. D O D G E, courted a young gal; that is, he walked out semi-occasionally with her, plied her with ice-cream, tender nonsense, etc., here in the moral city of Boston.

It is altogether probable that Dodge "cottoned up" pretty strong to the young lady, and took especial pains to make himself as agreeable and deeply interesting as his personal accomplishments, glib tongue, smooth

face, and suavity of manner gives him ample scope to perform.

We shall take it for granted that such was the case, from the fact that all was progressing smooth as "geese-grease," harmonious as marriage-bells, when poor Dodge discovered that he had (who has not?) a John Jones, in shape of two maiden Cerberuses, whose blood-thirsty purpose it was to make his course of true love run anything but smooth.

The humorous man paused; he had never known a cause without an effect, nor an effect without a remedy; he viewed the entire field, and planned the assault, which gave him victory and flying colors not long afterwards.

The circumstances of the case, we may as well mention, stood thus:—Dodge's Psyche lodged—boarded, as we Yankees say—in a domicile with two maiden spinsters, whose ages, like those of the Pyramids, or Horace Greeley's hat, were hidden from mortal eyes, and whose countenances, despite the well-applied friction of the soaps, powders, and "fumeries" of Bogle, were like the hue and evenness of cane-bottomed chairs, to which neither paint nor putty could possibly give any reasonable surface or consistency.

The fresh, fair, and oft-chanted lovely flowers of their youth had wasted their fragrance on the desert air. No bold Lothario—at least, so they declared—had dared (!) to essay to pluck them. Dried, withered, and antiquated, these venerable maidens had a holy horror of love-matches.

Having long outlived the heyday (as Shakspeare calls it) of love and joyous life, they felt a strong disposition (as all such ladies do) to frown down and brow-beat young and ardent hearts having the temerity to indulge in billing and cooing, and more especially nocturnal rambling; and these two sins Dodge and his lady-love were guilty of in a most alarming (to the old maidens' notions) degree, and the old 'uns determined to veto it, by strong expressions, long-faced denunciations, diabolical hints, and mysterious inuendoes.

Dodge made his evening calls when in the city, and finding the old gals not to be out so, hinted off, nor in any way gotten rid of while he was about, took his lady-love out upon the delightful promenade of the Common, and wiled away the eve so smoothly and

rapidly that the witching time of night frequently arrived before the loving twain reached the domicile of the young lady.

For these late walks, the old 'uns regularly doled out a moral lecture at the next morning's breakfast-table, and ding-donged over it all the livelong day; so that the old catamarans became a brace of decided bores, and as the weather soon proved unfavorable for promenading, Dodge determined to get rid of the pestiferous old maids by stratagem.

The old 'uns were dreadful superstitious and overstocked with moral delusions, as most antiquated maiden ladies are; so one tedious evening Dodge asked the old 'uns if they would not like to be thrown into the mesmeric state.

"Thrown *where*?" asked both, in a breath, and with some alarm.

"Into the mesmeric state," said Dodge.

"Don't you talk about throwing us into another state," said one of the maidens; "you had better not threaten us, young man, no how, or we'll call in the police, so we will; yes, we will, and have you taken up!"

"Excuse me," said Dodge, "you don't understand Mesmerism, I perceive; but I'll explain. Mesmerism, ladies, is a science by which one person may throw another into a somnambule state or torpor; the magnetizer may have complete control of the body by the agency of the sympathetic fluid, in a high rectangular state; he may stick pins, scissors, or carving-knives into the body of the subject, and the subject will not know it!"

"My gracious! is that true?" said the old maids.

"True as preaching!" replied Dodge.

"Ah, yes," said one of the old 'uns, "I recollect Dr. Ipecac told me how they'd found out a new way to cut people up, almost, while they were asleep, and the poor creatures wouldn't know what ailed 'em, more nor nothing."

"Yes, that's it," said Dodge, "and it's a dreadful convenient thing to those that understand it. One day, not long ago, I was in the cars going down to Lowell, so I concluded I'd have some fun. So I sets the fluid to work."

"Do you understand this setting of folks asleep?" said one of the old 'uns, with much earnestness and concern.

"O, yes," said Dodge, "and as I was going to tell you, I concluded I'd set some of the passengers asleep, then stick them full of pins and tacks, and wake them up, and let them see what a fix they were in."

"Well, did you?" cried the old 'uns.

"Didn't I? Well, you'd thought so, if you had seen how they squirmed about and fidgetted and twisted when I commenced on them."

One of the old 'uns just then feeling a nervous twitching in the end of her toes, suspected Dodge of some of his conjuring, and evidently began to mistrust him of dealings with a supposed inhabitant of the infernal regions.

And now was the hour for the funny fellow to crowd on the agony, and he didn't do anything shorter.

"Why, ladies," said he, "I have, by the powers and spells of Magnetism, operated on men and women of the most powerful rectangular systems, and the most diognostiferous nerve, and by a single circulation of my hand, unseen by them, paralyze their whole entire *bunflicum* arteries of the spine!"

"O! O! my gracious! I—I feel a—a curious pain in—in my"—

"And," continued Dodge, paying no attention to the old 'uns, "I have but to explain to you the minutiae of the system, and you could, with perfect ease, operate on others."

"O! O! thank you, thank you, sir; we—we don't wish to learn any dealings with—with the evil *sperrets*!" said the old 'uns, in a breath.

"Useful science, *sometimes*," said Dodge.

"For instance, if you owe anybody a grudge, you could vibrate on their miraculum through your galidiverous duct, the channel through which the mesmeric fluids coagulate and protrude into the fibrous pores of the great toe andickidum, with the muscular tissue of the mascas membrane of the *secundem artem*! So that you could at any time put the fluid vicetera of your Cystosole into their system through the areditorious of their dipthong, and the consequence would be"—

"Eh? what? O! O! gracious! What would it do then?"

"Protrude their pendulums into a back-action slope, ma'am," said Dodge, "and in some cases I have, for my own amusement,



"DON'T, DON'T PASS IT OVER US, IF YOU PLEASE; NO, DON'T, SIR!"

while seated in my chair at a window, passed my hand so"—

"Don't, don't pass it over us, if you please; no, don't, sir!" said the old 'uns.

"At the man or woman on the opposite side of the way, ma'am," continued Dodge, "and paralyzed their *flambuguziptionary* muscles of the leg, or arm, and they would limp or let their arm fall instantly!"

"Becky, get the lamp; let us go to bed—it's getting late!" said one of the old maids, whose nerves began to shiver under the learned *lingur* of the great magnetizer.

"Quite early yet, ladies. Keep your seats, and I'll give you the entire analysis of this wondrous system, by which I can, by my strong mesmeracular power, at any moment bring the most rectangular horizontal person down to the level and quietude of a sleeping infant."

"Becky, Becky, do get the light! Come, let us go!" said one of the horrified spinsters.

But Dodge went on.

"I have taken women sitting in a kneedicular position, facing me in an *ossis frontis colapsum* manner, and operating upon the *doojum* portion of their muscular auxiliaries; it has proved impossible even for a thoroughbred physician to *conipicate* on the *ossiofalligas calculi* of their constitutions for a week after such a prostration of their secular systems! Fact!"

This last brick took full effect. Becky did get the light, and the way the two old maids accelerated on the scratch-gravel principle was highly interesting and useful to the joker and his lady-love.

The moral of this operation was, Dodge was precious seldom afterwards bored by the presence of his annoyers; and, fearing the ill-will of the great mesmeric performer, the old maids were always afterwards as good as pious to Dodge and his Psyche.

"DOING" THE ARTIST:

OR,
The Ups and Downs of a Genius.

BY FALCONBRIDGE.

AT a recent private dinner-party in this city, I met Dodge, and, as usual, the wag had a heap of tart things to amuse and instruct the company with.

One of his yarns I cannot resist the temptation to relate, as I feel certain that it is originally racy, and not to be despised in the history of clever things.

Many years ago, before he took up the singing business, Dodge was lumbering through the upper part of York State, teaching the country gals the art and mysteries of wax-flower making.

He carried a sort of band-box, full of very beautiful wax-flowers, as specimens and patterns, and as the business proved not extremely lucrative, the box of specimens, worth some fifty or sixty dollars, was about the entire stock in trade he possessed, save one solitary five-dollar bill, at the opening of the little transaction which we are about to relate.

Having got over into Pennsylvania, Dodge found himself upon the outside of a very heavily-laden stage, near dark, going down a steep, rugged hill, and but a brief distance from the town of Williamsport; and though he nursed his band-box with the strictest paternal anxiety and care, the stage capsized, spilt everybody, and smashed Dodge's band-box and wax fragilities all into smear-case. Dodge was, in fact, literally and metaphorically busted up!

Grief was of no avail. Our hero gathered up his traps, made for the hotel, took supper, and was about to investigate the prospects of wax-flower business in that town, when, luckily for him, he found out that the wax-flower business was in horrid odor there, inasmuch as a professor of that branch of female accomplishment had been operating in that village for several weeks, then sloped from his hotel and other bills, and, by way of finale, had carried off a man's wife, and somebody's gold watch.

Dodge concluded, at once, that he had better know anything else than wax-flower making there!

The next day came and passed away, as did the next, and Dodge found that he was unquestionably eating his head and horns off, to use an old saying, and, unless some turn took place in the tide of his affairs, he would be dead stuck; yet what to do, or how to do, to extricate himself from his pecuniary dilemma, the poor fellow found himself at a positive loss to determine.

Exigency brings forth genius in full flower, for it is very clear that nothing so sharpens the inventive faculties of man as the buffets of fortune.

Dodge conceived a "dodge" which soon raised the safety-valve of his finances, and sent him on his way rejoicing.

Thus it was:—

It snows occasionally up there about the mountains, and the folks are rather fond of sleighing in them parts.

A great establishment for the manufacture of carriages and sleighs chanced to be in the town of Williamsport, and near the hotel. A large sleigh had just been finished off and set out opposite the shop; the immense dasher in front was ornamented with a great flowing landscape, and attracted no inconsiderable attention from the towns-people.

Dodge went over and viewed it, expressed much approbation of it, and finally inquired of the bystanders who was the artist of the painting.

"Mr. Greysticker, who has his paint-shop up there over his brother's carriage-shop," said a looker-on.

"Thank you," said Dodge, "I'll go see him."

And up Dodge goes to the artist's studio, as the flash folks say, but shop, as we republicans have it; and seeing a man daubing away on a carriage-body, Dodge saluted him—

"Good-morning, sir. Is this Mr. Greysticker?"

"Yaas, dat ish my name," said the Dutch painter.

"I've been looking at a painting of yours," continued Dodge, "upon the dasher of a sleigh out here, which I'm told you executed."

"Yaas," drawled the modern Rubens, "I painted dat."

"Well, it is an excellent landscape; it is an

evidence of your fine talent (!) and genius for landscape-painting," said Dodge. "Allow me to ask you, sir, who you studied (!) under?"

"Studied?" replied the dauber, in some doubt as to the exact import of the phrase.

"Yes," said Dodge, "who was your teacher?"

"Teacher? O, yaas, I never vos teached. I took it all up mit mine own head, by mine-self."

"Indeed!" said Dodge, with apparent amazement. "Is it possible? Never took lessons?"

"Yaas, dat's a fac, I shust larn by mine self," answered the Dutch artist, with awakened pride and self-importance.

"Well, sir," said the wit, "as I observed, you've talent, great talent; genius, sir, plenty of it; and you only want a few easy, simple lessons, to make you one of the very best landscape-painters in this country! In one lesson of two hours, sir, I can make you a perfect master of the art."

"Vot, you pan-ter, too?" exclaimed the glorified Dutchman.

"I am a teacher (!) of landscape-painting," said Dodge. "My style is the Italian (!) style. None of this Yankee humbug, but the real, genuine, old Italian style."

"Dat is goot, de olt Italian shlyle ish goot!" said the Dutchman.

"First-rate, bunkum," said Dodge, "and I'll teach it to you in two hours, complete."

"Vell, I shust like to larn de shlyle. Vot you sharge?"

"Five dollars," said Dodge. "Five dollars is all I ask, and if I do not give you entire satisfaction in two hours, I won't charge you the first red cent."

"Vel, dat ish fair enough, any how; so I tink I take a leshun now."

"Very good, sir," Dodge replied. "I'll just step over to the hotel, and get a small landscape design, and we'll begin at once."

Out went the pseudo teacher of landscape-painting, while the Dutch artist set out his colors and brushes, and got ready a piece of canvas to commence his lesson, in the old Italian style of landscape and scene-painting!

Dodge chanced to have in his valise a steel engraving, torn from a stray number of *Godey's Lady's Book*, representing a view of

the Natural Bridge and adjacent scenery in Virginia. This was the entire collection of the wit's designs, at least in the way of landscapes, but this was all-sufficient for his present designs; so back he came.

"Vell, I got de col-urs all ready. There ish de brushes, and dare ish de canvas," said Greysticker, hinting that Dodge might go ahead.

"Very good, sir," said Dodge; "now you can commence, and"—

"Vell, but you ish to show me de shlyle!"

"O, certainly! but, understand me, I don't teach by the Yankee method, you know; I don't do the painting myself (!) as they do, but make the scholar do it all! O, no! the Yankee style ain't my way! I never touch the work at all. I stand by, give you the proper instruction, the full practical, not mere theoretical, but the full practical benefit of my style! Yes, sir!" said Dodge, with the emphasis and flourish of a veritable virtuoso "in the old Italian."

"Vell, I guess dat ish goot way," said the carriage-artist.

"Certainly," echoed Dodge, "the true and proper way, I find, in my travels in this country."

"Vot ish your counthrey, eh? Italians?"

"No, sir, New-Orleans!" said Dodge.

"Well, sir, I find that the teachers have no difficulty to teach their pupils to paint a very good landscape while they are under instructions; but the moment a teacher is gone, the pupil is at a total loss—can't paint at all, sir! The reason is plain. These Yankee teachers and English teachers take hold of the brushes and do the painting themselves, while the scholar looks on; consequently—don't you see?—the scholar gets no practical teaching."

"Dat's a fac, dat ish thrue," said the Dutchman.

"Of course," said Dodge; "so my system is altogether different. Here is a Venetian scene, (!) the 'Bridge of Sighs.' (!) Now, we'll commence. Now, first and foremost, what would you commence first?"

"Vell, I tink de shky furst," said the scholar.

"There you're right, quite right (!). But what color would you use?" said the teacher, with the air of a regular professor stumping a novice.



"WHILE THE DUTCH PAINTER SKETCHED AWAY, HIS TEACHER PLIED THE SOFT SOAP."

"Plue, mit coorse, light plue for de shky, and dark plue for de clouts."

"There you're wrong, sir," said the teacher; "now, this is not an American (!) sky, but an Italian sky—fewer clouds, and brighter, softer skies than the American skies—you understand?"

"O, yaas, dat ish very thrue; now I understand dat," said the pupil.

"Very well," continued the teacher, who was getting along like bricks with his pupil; "now proceed, and give your arm and wrist free scope."

"Vell, but what col-urs shall I poot on de shky furst?" asked the pupil.

"O! why you can use—use—let me see—use a little chrome, and a little—little a"—

"A little umber," said the pupil, assisting the over-tasked memory of the teacher.

"Yes, that will do, but not too strong a tint, you see; so, now, a little"—

"Ret, and a streak of plue," interrupted the advancing pupil.

"That's right," said the teacher, "that will do—so, very good. I see you get the stylo very quick. I never had a pupil who progressed with such quickness and ease!" said he. "Now, sir, the foreground; begin that—you understand?"

"Vell, vet col-urs ish dat? Yaller and brown?"

"There you're wrong. No yellow, sir, no yellow in Italian ground, but a soft, dark, shadowy brown, a sort of hazy tint, foggy-muddled, shady tint—you understand?" said the teacher.

"Vell, no, I don't understandt dat, de faggled-muggled tinch, I not understandt dem; vot ish dat?" asked the dumb-founded pupil.

"Brown, brownish cast—not too dark, not too light—understand?"

"O, yaas, so, dat ish it, umph?" said the pupil, laying it on as thick as slappers.

"Well, that's right; now the bridge, so, and the water, a little white and light blue; that's it, very fine indeed. So, you do really progress elegantly," said Dodge, flourishing his fingers and the engraving.

While the Dutch painter sketched away, the teacher piled on the "soft soap," and between them, in the course of two or three hours, the landscape "Bridge of Size" (!) was duly and very creditably executed, as Dodge assured the pupil, in the improved style of the old Italian school!

The Dutch artist expressed entire satisfaction of the lesson, and handed over a V to the indefatigable professor (!) with assurances of his many regards and esteem for the Italian system!

"Now, sir," said Dodge, folding up and stowing away the bill, "now, sir, you can greatly benefit me, and make something yourself!"

"Den, by sure, I will ashist you in all dat I can. Shust let me know."

"Get me up twelve scholars, at five dollars each. I will teach them my system (!). You can recommend it highly to them, and I will give you one dollar on each scholar, for your trouble and favor—you understand?"

The Dutch artist went to work, the scholars were soon collected. In three days they were put through a course of landscapes, the professor found fifty-three dollars in his fob, paid his bills, and vamoosed, rejoicing that the darkest hour always turns up morning, and wit was a "monstrous handy thing," if well used!

DODGE'S ASCENT OF MOUNT WASHINGTON.

BY THURLOW W. BROWN.

BOLD-SPOKEN, straight-forward men are scarce to be found, unless they float lazily upon a strong popular current. We have seen this humiliating fact everywhere presented.

Dodge is a man. He is an every-day temperance man. He both sings, talks, and acts out his opinions upon the great subject.

His home is in Boston. Summers he does

not sing, but devotes his time to traveling, sketching, and writing. To those acquainted with the man, we need not say that he wields the pen in a manner peculiar to himself, his writings always sparkling with that quiet vein of wit and humor so characteristic of the man.

After the concert season was over, Dodge one summer left the city of Boston to spend a few weeks among the hills and mountains of New-Hampshire.

An idol with the people of New-England is Dodge. His appearance among them is the signal for a "good time." Such capital is not allowed to remain inactive.

Before Dodge had hardly departed to the land of dreams, the news of his arrival had spread like wildfire. "Dodge has come—now for fun!" was the talk that went round.

Dodge had hardly swallowed his breakfast, before he was surrounded by a swarm of ardent friends. He was the centre of attraction. Seated coolly in his chair, his feet upon the table and a cigar in his mouth, he let off his jokes until he seemed like a nest of rockets exploding harmlessly among the crowd. Every time he withdrew his cigar from his mouth, the act was followed by an ominous silence, only to be broken in upon by a shout as hearty as universal.

Arrangements were soon made for a "time." The party adjourned from the bar-room to the sitting-room, where a table had been spread for the occasion. After they were seated, Dodge among the number, the waiters came in, and wine-glasses were placed upon the table. Wine followed.

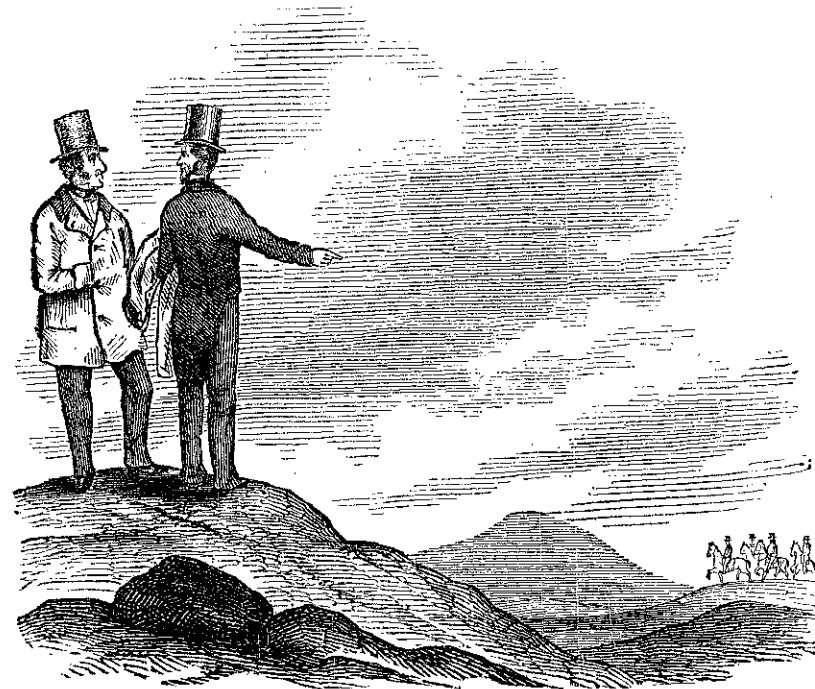
"My friends," said Dodge.

They all ceased speaking, expecting something from the soul of the party. That something came.

"My friends, I thank you for your kindness, but allow me to say that if wine is indispensable to the entertainment, you must do without Dodge!"

That was a glorious speech! Under the circumstances, it was heroic. It fell like a wet blanket upon the crowd, whose mouths were watering for the wine-bottle.

Dodge quietly left the room, and again took his seat in the bar-room, resumed his cigar, and replaced his feet upon the table. No words could alter his determination. Of



"DODGE HAD TRIUMPHED."

course, there was a baulk in the arrangements. But Dodge was soon surrounded again, and the laughter rang out hearty as ever.

A ride was proposed up Mount Washington. The first question asked was—"Will Dodge join the party?"

"No, sir!" said Dodge.

Some disparaging remarks were made about cold-water men. Dodge was one, and he dared not undertake the fatigue of going up the mountain.

After they had said enough about cold-water men, Dodge sprang to his feet.

"Gentleman, I am a cold-water man. Who dare follow me up the mountain to-day?"

"Thought you wasn't a-going?" said one.

"A mistake," said Dodge. "I said I should not ride up. You have had your fun about cold-water men. Now, gentlemen, few men, during such weather as this, can walk to the top of Mount Washington. Who dare follow Dodge up the White Mountains to-day, on

foot? Take the stump, cowards, and back out, you tipplers!"

Ashamed and confounded, it was some moments before a move was made. At last one and another volunteered, until eleven declared themselves ready to follow the comical and cold-water vocalist.

"All ready?" said Dodge.

"Ay, ay!" was the general response.

And in a few moments the daring company of pedestrians (with no guide) were on their upward and perilous march.

After a while, Dodge found himself and one of the eleven alone upon the mountain. He out with his portfolio, and during his ascent took six different sketches, and he and his comrade arrived at the summit of Mount Washington twenty minutes before the cavalcade of mountain ponies, well trained to such excursions—a feat hard to be equalled by the strongest of men.

Dodge had triumphed. The cold-water fellow enjoyed his victory, and turned a mer-

ciless fire of raillery upon his wine-bibbing rivals.

Upon inquiry, the stranger who alone accompanied Dodge up the mountain proved to be another cold-water man. He had watched the strife with interest, and participated in it to see the result.

Few men would have had the boldness and honesty to have taken the stand that Dodge did at the table. Such an exhibition of integrity and consistency is so rarely seen, that it is worthy of a lasting and emphatic record, while he showed himself a prompt fellow to dare his friends to a strife which should test the virtue of wine in sustaining its admirers in the arduous and difficult ascent up Mount Washington.

DODGE'S PRIVATE PERFORMANCE

TO AN
Extremely Select Audience.

BY CURTIS GUILD.

ALMOST every one knows, or ought to know, the celebrated humorist and delineator of comic characters, Ossian E. Dodge; once seen, he is never forgotten, and the numerous rich practical jokes and humorous scenes in which he has been the hero would fill a volume, if published. There is one which came under our own especial notice, which, although it is impossible to portray in print in so vivid a light as it appeared in the original performance, still is worth publication, and too good to be lost.

A certain individual, old Sam B—, well known in the "City of Notions," was, by his own request, introduced to our humorous friend upon a certain occasion; old Sam is naturally a testy fellow, yet he is fond of a good joke and hearty laugh, so that it was not long before he and Dodge were "pretty thick together." Dodge was preparing to give a series of concerts in Boston, and Sam, who had never heard him perform, was anxiously awaiting the evening on which the first was to take place, to arrive. It was on the morning of that eventful day that Dodge "popped in" at Sam's little back counting-room, where he found the said Sam busily engaged in inditing sundry epistles to various individuals.

"I say, Sam," said he, "I have made an ap-

pointment to meet a person in your front counting-room this morning, on business respecting the concert; I suppose you have no objection?"

"Not in the least, my dear fellow," replied Sam; "you know I am never overrun with customers, so make yourself comfortable in the front room—only don't bother me for a short time, for I am very busy."

Dodge passed out into the front counting-room, closing the door after him, but there was a sly and peculiar twinkle in his eye, as he noticed that the two ground-glass windows that separated Sam's sanctum from the outer room were partly pulled down, to allow a free circulation of air, so that Sam could also distinctly hear all that was going on in the outer office, although he could not see who was there, or what was transpiring. He was busily scratching away to his correspondents, when the following dialogue greeted his ear—

"Is Massa Dog in?"

"Heavens!" muttered Sam to himself, "has Dodge made an appointment with a nigger?"

"You mean Dodge, my good fellow," Sam heard the humorist reply.

"O, yas, I s'pose it am; but a gemman gib me dis card at de hotel, D-O-G, Dodge you call 'em, and tole dis chile he'd find you down to ole Sam B.'s office; ah, I knows dat ole Sam, he's one of 'em, he is, yah, ha, yah!"

And here followed an Ethiopian cachination that made Sam almost shake in his boots, but he still scratched on with fierce determination.

"Well, my good man, what is your business with me?"

"Why, you see, Massa Dog—Dodge, I mean—I've invented a new kind ob blackin', and I wants to git your permission to call it de Dodge blackin', becase it am bound to shine."

"Well, sit down a moment, and"—

"I say, old feller," said another voice, fluctuating between the neigh of a young colt and the roar of the north wind—"I say, old feller, how de dew, how are ye? Are yew that 'ere funny chap what's goin' to gin a concert this evening, that them 'ere red and yaller bills tells about that's stuck up all round the streets, hey?"

"My name is Dodge, sir."

"Wall, du tell! I'm nation glad to see yew—am stoppin' up at the same place where yew

be—just arrived here this mornin'—stuck my name right daown under yourn on the books—axed Milliken where yew was—said you'd gone down to old Sam B.'s office, so I streaked right daown here—thought I should like to take a look at yew—s'pose I can dew that without payin', can't I?"

"O, certainly, sir; I'm glad to see you."

"Same to yew; won't yew step out and take a leetle New-England?"

"You must excuse me, sir, I don't drink."

"O! well, I only axed for information."

"Sall I ave ze plaisir to see Monsieur Doge?" said another, evidently a new-comer, and a native of *la belle France*.

"Curse me!" said Sam to himself, "if the fellow is not holding a levee in my counting-room."

"You are addressing Mr. Dodge," was the reply Sam heard to the last query.

"Ah? je suis tres happy to see you, Monsieur Doge. I have come for make one leetle request, vich is dat you vill permit myself to translate de belle songs vich you sing into de langue Francais; and den I sall return to Paris and vill make one grand fortune; ma foi, I vill give ze concert, and I vill sing ze songs. Sare, I vill sing ze *Salut à la France* to you dis moment."

"Not at present, my friend, for here is some one else who wishes to speak to me."

"Och, bad cess to the likes of it, Misther Dodge, why did ye sind the likes of me upon a fool's errand, at all, at all?"

"Another, by all the gods of war!" ejaculated Sam, digging his pen into the inkstand.

"A fool's errand, Dennis; why, what do you mean?"

"Sure, didn't I go as ye dhirected me to the house, and to the gintleman of the house, and axed him as ye tould me? 'I want the small, dark-colored cook,' says I. 'Step down in the kitchen, my jewel,' says he. So down I went, and who did I find there but a big nagur, and when I tould her Mr. Dodge sent me for the dark-colored cook, she bid me begone, for a thirty blackguard that I was."

"Why, you blundering scoundrel, 'twas not the cook I sent you for."

"Shure, 'twas the dark-colored cook."

"Pshaw! 'twas the dark-covered book."

(Here an audible snicker was heard from Sam's apartment.)

"Aw! is Mistah Dodge heah?"

"Sir, I am that gentleman."

"Aw, I had—aw—a slight proposition to make—aw—to you, sah, that is—aw—if you wish to make your concert dem'd fashionable, aw—that is all the rage, why I and my friends will—aw—patronize yah on certain conditions."

"Sir, you are very kind; what are the conditions?"

"Aw, veycey slight; you will—aw—only have to furnish, aw—us with free tickets, and we shall be there, aw—and make it the concert—demme!"

"Sir, I shall be pleased to see you and your friends this evening, but must assure you that before entering the hall the pecuniary consideration of twenty-five cents from each one of you must be deposited with the doorkeeper."

"Aw—not at all—we shan't patronize yah, and I'm sure none but—aw—dem'd vulgar people will be present. Good-mawning, sah."

"Is Mr. Dodge here?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, Mr. Dodge, I've brought that bugle, and if you wish to hear it tried, I'll give you a taste of its quality."

("Gracious Heavens!" said Sam, rising from his chair, "that infernal fellow has got my counting-room filled with a crowd of people, and now he's going to entertain them with a key-bugle.")

"O, yes," he heard Dodge exclaim, "I've no doubt 'twill please my friends here."

The vocalist's guests seemed to acquiesce, for Sam heard the ejaculations of—"Dis chile berry fond of music." "Ah! ze bugel est une grand instrument." "Sthrike up *St. Patrick's Day*, ye divil." "Give us *Hail Columby*, old feller," &c.

Then the bugle, or rather the performer, commenced running over the scale, and finally glided into a popular Ethiopian melody, playing it in the most approved style.

This was too much for Sam. He dashed open the door with a crash, and rushed forth, with dire intent, prepared to sweep a crowd before him, and expecting to find himself in the midst of a dozen motley characters at least, but he started back in astonishment, for, save the imperturbable Dodge, who stood with the big drops of perspiration on his forehead, caused by his exertions, the room was empty.



"SAM DASHED OPEN THE DOOR WITH A CRASH."

"Why, Dodge," ejaculated Sam, "I thought you had some one here."

"Is Massa Dog in?"

Sam stared with astonishment—

"Why, you don't mean," said he, at length, "that you were the imitator of the boot-black?"

"Yes, nothin' else, old feller."

"What, and the Yankee?"

"Oui, Monsieur."

"The Frenchman, too! Lord, what a fool I've been."

"Ye may say that with yer own ugly mouth."

"And the Irishman," said Sam, as he was

convulsed with laughter, while Dodge wiped the perspiration from his forehead, and enjoyed the joke exceedingly.

"Well," said Dodge to Sam, who was still shaking with merriment, and crying "glorious," "capital," "gammoned, by Jupiter," &c.; "well," said he, as the modest individual whose name graces the head of this sketch entered the counting-room, "as my friend Bob has arrived, I will adjourn with him for the present. I'm much obliged to you for the use of the room, and," added he, "I sha'n't charge you anything for the private performance which was given for your especial benefit."

THE WAY DODGE STARTED HIMSELF.

BY CHARLES SHEPPARD.

READER, were you ever hard up, short, rockless, broke, pocket turned wrong side out, and completely skinned of the last red cent?

If so, you can then appreciate the following little gem or incident in the life of Dodge, this dodge of all dodgers, Ossian E. Dodge, one whom every one would suppose could dodge the sharp corners in life, whose fertile genius would always keep some of the one thing needful within reach. And yet 'tis so. Dodge has confessed that he was once "hard up," but the following will show how he made a raise of the "all-healing balm."

'Twas in the year '39, on a cold, wet, drizzly morning in the latter part of October, that Dodge found himself standing upon the steps of a hotel in Philadelphia. Now, no other place in the Union possesses so many of the requisites for making a rainy day perfectly blue and horrible as that same Philadelphia. The rain does not come down in moderate spouts, but in whole squares, and people walk along like spectres wrapped in great coats and broad-brimmed hats.

Well, Dodge was *thar*—he was, and flat broke, with a hotel bill of \$6 to pay, and but \$3 to cash it with. He thought of every imaginable way to raise the wind, of pushing a man off the dock, and jumping in to save his life; of delivering a lecture on the downfall of Poland, and taking up a collection to defray expenses; but, to use an emphatic expression, Dodge was *floored*.

But Dodge's brain was too fertile to remain long on *them* steps; so, drawing his well-brushed beaver close over his eyes, he took a stroll toward the outskirts of the city, and after continuing in this meditative mood for a few blocks, his ever-watchful eye caught the swinging sign of a painter, on the opposite side of the street.

A thought struck him, that he might dispose to a good advantage of some "specimens," but where was he to get 'em? Ah, there was the rub! A lucky idea!

"I have it," says Dodge; "I'll go to the printers. I have always ranked them among

my best friends, and now for the grand experiment."

After having his plans laid, he was not long in carrying them out, as the sequel will show.

Entering a small "Job-Office," he contracted for one hundred posters (of the largest size they could afford for the sum of \$3), to be worked off immediately, and contain the alphabet of seven different varieties, of block, condensed, shaded, and fancy type.

The job was soon completed, and after forking over his last \$3, Dodge, with chunks of fun rolling from each eye, sallied forth with his bundle of posters, to supply the wants of the young learners with some of the best specimens of the old masters.

Entering the first paint-shop he came to, he found the proprietor, a sour-faced Dutchman, engaged in re-lettering an old sign-board, and nearly half a dozen apprentices busily employed in daubing over the different articles about the room.

With that bland and affable manner for which he is so distinguished, Dodge, in his most winning tone, addressed the "boss" of the establishment as follows—

"Can I have the pleasure, good sir, of selling you some splendid specimens, this morning?"

"Speshamuns—vat te tivel is dem?"

"Specimens, sir, specimens of the style of lettering as now practised by Egnorado Z. Naisso, the greatest artist of the Italian school," replied Dodge.

"Atalleon humbug. It ish no petter than ish mine; shust some darn Yankee foolin'," growled the boss.

"It may, sir, be no better than yours in your peculiar style. I admit that yours is vastly superior to anything I have met with in my travels; but now, sir, don't *you* think that that bold, unflinching ground-work of yours would be highly improved by introducing the soft, mellow, voluptuous, and exquisite outline that pervades this of the Italian's?" says Dodge, directing his attention at the same time to a *ten-line pica, double-shaded II* of the condensed form.

The Dutchman condescended to look, and the apprentices gathered around, while Dodge, feeling that the battle was already won, continued to pile on the ammunition—

"Your skill, sir, I admit, is wonderful, and



"THE DUTCHMAN CONDESCENDED TO LOOK, AND THE APPRENTICES GATHERED AROUND."

as a brother in the profession I am proud of having seen you. I am proud of you, sir, for this, but doubly so because that you are a countryman of him I idolize and reverence more than any other man on earth. I shall ever consider it a bright day in my existence when I stood in the presence of one so talented, and he a countryman of Rubens. Our art, sir, is one that we may be proud of. That humble board, when it leaves your hands, will meet the admiring gaze of millions. But it could be highly improved if the *camplie dejetatum* of the shade of that R was only *kros-tickerated* by the incipient rays of this *impe-ribulatory* style. And indeed, noble sir, do you not yourself think that it would be more imaginatively conducive to the satisfaction of the optical vision?"

Dodge paused a moment for the last load to take effect, while the half dozen apprentices, with eyes starting from their sockets, crowded still closer, as the old Dutchman replied—

"Yesh, dat ish goot, I see you understands

te pizziness; vat is the price of dese spesha-muns?"

"Only fifty cents," says Dodge; "cheap as dirt, sir—only fifty cents."

"Val, den, I will take two for mineself, and te poys can take one apiece if dey ish a mines to."

Before Dodge left the shop, he was possessor of one more dollar than the bills cost him, and with a "good-morning, my noble friend," he left the good old Dutchman and his six apprentices trying to study out the philosophy of the double-shaded H.

Feeling encouraged with his beginning, Dodge continued to visit the different shops throughout the city, varying his manner of address as circumstances and men required, and long before the close of day (having disposed at different prices his "splendid collection of specimens") he returned to his hotel with nearly \$40 in cash, and the reputation of being one of the first artists in the country.

He probably on that occasion first imbibed a passion for speculation, as he has, since that

time, in addition to concerting (in which capacity he has gained such an extensive reputation) dealt somewhat largely in real estate and stocks, until he is at present generally supposed to be worth from \$0 to \$100,000.

DODGE'S ELOPEMENT:

OR,

The Captain Outwitted.

BY FALCONBRIDGE.

DODGE, the eccentric and unequaled delineator; or, as the ladies call him, the "incomparably ugly man," appeared "on 'change" again last week, and the next evening after his appearance, Milliken's fashionable saloon—Dodge's head-quarters—was, at an early hour, densely crowded with the "members of the order," to listen to the rib-tickling account of the many incidents ever to be met with in the life of a Concert-Singer.

Many a time and oft have we shaken our sides with uncontrollable laughter, as the tormenting sentences of dry and spontaneous wit fell from the lips of the joker, as unconcerned and as careless as the drops of spray from the over-hanging cliffs at Niagara.

But few, however, of the many rich things related by him, in our presence, have left the laughter in us like the following; but, in order to be fully appreciated, the reader should see Dodge tell the story.

Dodge, some years ago—about the time he quit teaching the art of wax-fruit and flower-making, and, fortunately, took up that of concerting, at which profession he has, according to repute, amassed an independent fortune—made a break across the mountains, and one fine morning found himself in the city of Cincinnati.

Here he took passage in the afterward unlucky steamer, the B—S—, bound down to Memphis, Vicksburg, Natchez, and New-Orleans.

The boat was densely crowded, being stowed full on deck with agricultural implements, horses, cord-wood, Dutch emigrants, and other hard-ware, while the cabin overhead was filled jam up with trunks, band-boxes, carpet-bags, umbrellas, gals and boys, men and women, and sich like plunder.

The boat shoved out, fired her swivel, and away she headed down stream, under full steam, while her old pipes breathed forth a *kook, kook, kook*, which fairly caused the surrounding hills to echo again.

After supper, Dodge, having, by letter of introduction, made the acquaintance of a very useful personage, the Captain of the boat, they arm-in-arm took a peep into the ladies' saloon; it was quite full, and one of the ladies was playing the piano elegantly, while some others, having a greater taste for vocal than instrumental music, were humming over a few of the late fashionable productions of Balfe, Glover, Dempster, and other eminent composers.

The Captain and Dodge stood, for some time, in respectful silence, when the lady at the piano very politely requested aid from one to assist her in that glorious, soul-exhilarating, and never-dying old duet, the *Canadian Boat-Song*.

This was Dodge's cue; he very readily stepped forward, and begged permission to lead off.

"If you please, sir," says the lady, whose angeliferous voice, Dodge vows, nearly took away his breath.

However, our hero pitched into the *Boatman* like a load of coal, and says that, united with the angelic voice of the Mississippian nightingale, he fairly made "Rome howl."

After the *Boatman*, came a few selections from the Operas lately published; and the night being now far advanced, to wind up, Dodge was obliged to favor the ladies with a description of his trip to *Niagara Falls, Ma'm*.

"Egad, old fellow," says the noble Captain, meeting Dodge in the social hall, about midnight, "you got along swimmingly among the ladies! Why, you sing like a bird."

"O, yes, I sing a little," says Dodge.

"And, egad, you thumbed that ladies' guitar into *fits*."

"Well, I ra-ather guess I *did* torture it *some*," replied Dodge; "but tell me, Captain, who the deuce is that lady dressed in black, that sings so like a nightingale, and plays with the finish and perfection of a professor?"

The Captain, being a noted wag, and the terror of all jokers on the Mississippi river, here suddenly conceived the idea of selling the Yankee, with a joke which should count

"high" among the New-Englanders, in ages to come, as a model "sell."

"That lady, my dear fellow, is a—widow."

"You don't say so!" says Dodge.

"Yes, but I *do*, though; and, more than that, she's rich! rich as mud, sir—rich as mud! worth seventy-five thousand dollars! young and beautiful, into the bargain! A grand chance for a Yankee boy just commencing life like you, sir!"

"She's certainly very beautiful," said Dodge.

"Beautiful as an angel!" replied the Captain.

"A very fine musician, too!" said Dodge.

"Unequaled on the river," rejoined the Captain; "why, sir, she sings like a seraph!"

"How long has she been a widow?" inquired Dodge.

"A little over a year now, since her Captain was placed under the sod."

"Ah! then her husband was a Captain, was he?" says Dodge.

"Yes; he *was* a Captain, but he got blowed up, poor fellow! This steamboating is risky business for a man who cares anything about life, sir! risky business; but then, if *you* get the widow—and you can do it, sir, like a *knife*, if you only cotton up strong enough, for she likes you already; I saw it in her eye—you can retire on some large plantation, and spend the rest of your days in indescribable and unbounded luxury."

"Well, Captain, hang me if I ain't a mind to spread myself for the young widow, and try my hand at courting for the first time in my life."

"Go it, my boy, I'll back you with all my influence; if I wasn't already a married man, I'd surely go in for that charming woman; but you'll win—young! good-looking!"

"Don't, don't, if you please, Captain."

"Hang it, Dodge, don't be so modest."

"But, Captain! gas, soap, putty; think of my pheeliaks."

"Then you sing and play like a book; the widow *loves* music, she loves music to distraction, and now, my boy, strike while the iron is hot! Why, sir, if I could sing and handle the guitar equal to you, I'd"—

"Hold on, Captain, hold on; I understand all about *that*, but now tell me all about the young and beautiful widow; give me her name, age, and residence."

"Her name," replied the Captain, "is Aramatha Brouson; age, about twenty-four; residence, New-Orleans; and as we shall probably be about ten days running down, you'll have a fine chance to *exert* yourself; so now take my advice, and make the *best* use of your time."

"I *will*," says Dodge, and he didn't do anything else; for, always having an eye open for "fly-traps" and "spring-guns," his suspicions were aroused by the Captain's attempt at flattery, and his seeming disinterested endeavors to bring about a hasty avowal of love for the young, accomplished, and really beautiful lady.

So, setting his wires to work, he lost but little time in discovering that the Captain had been under the delightful chains of Hymen but about two weeks, and the *pseudo* widow was no more nor less than the identical, charming, and idolized wife of the Captain.

"Now, then," says Dodge to himself, "as the Captain has *planned* a joke, he sha'n't be disappointed; I'll only change or slightly alter the plot, and if I don't, in the end, give him a regular 'eye-opener,' then he may ever have the pleasure of informing his friends how he 'done the Yankee brown.'"

Dodge had, something like a week previous, sent on his bills and advertisements to the editors at Natchez, stating that he would be at that stirring little town during the races, and would, at fifty cents a ticket, treat the inhabitants and visitors with a series of mirthful, musical, and *facial* entertainments.

Not letting any person on board know at what place he intended to stop, telling the Captain he would settle his fare when he left the boat, he improved every spare moment with the widow over the music port-folios and piano, until the old steamer came puffing alongside of the levee at Natchez.

Ascertaining from the Captain that the steamer would leave in about three-quarters of an hour, he gave his baggage in charge of a resident in town, who was just about leaving the boat. Then, watching the Captain until he had entered the counting-room of one of the large stores "under the hill," for which he occasionally brought goods from New-Orleans, the vocalist immediately went to the Captain's wife, and very coolly informed her that, through a mismanagement of one of the

agents, the boat would be obliged to remain about twenty-four hours at Natchez, and that her husband had accordingly accepted an invitation of some friends to visit the race-ground, and wished the vocalist to come up, as soon as convenient, in a carriage, with the Captain's wife.

Not dreaming of anything wrong, the lady hastily threw on her shawl and bonnet, and declared herself ready for a start.

Stepping on shore, Dodge hailed a colored coachman, gave him a bright half-eagle, and in a smothered voice, ordered him to drive ten miles in an easterly direction, and then, without a single question, turn around, and slowly return.

Leaving Dodge and his fair companion to enjoy their pleasant drive, after a tedious confinement in a noisy and clattering steamer, we will now return to the Captain, who, at the appointed time, gave the steamer's bell the accustomed number of rings, hauled in the plank, bid a "good-day" to his friends, and shoved out into the muddy river.

After seeing that the additional freight was well balanced, ropes and chains properly stowed away, and everything, in sailor's phrase, "all taut," which occupied nearly an hour, the Captain entered the ladies' saloon, to scrutinize his new passengers, and pass an agreeable half-hour with his sweet and affectionate bride.

Not seeing his lady, he repaired to her state-room, where he found the usual variety of out and inside dresses, night-cap, slippers, stockings, etc., but no wife; whereupon, feeling a little uneasy (the honey-moon not yet being passed), a general search was made, from stem to stern, in the old steamboat, but without the least success.

For a moment the Captain stood like a statue. A thought struck him: where was Dodge?

Some one remarked that he had not been seen since the boat left Natchez.

With the speed of a madman, the Captain rushed to the state-room of the Yankee Singer, when, to his utter astonishment, he found that the baggage had all disappeared, and on the bed lay a letter, directed to Captain ———, of the steamer B—— S——.

The letter was quickly torn open, when, to add still greater fury to his frenzy, his eyes fell on the following:—

"DEAR SIR:—Thinking that you might possibly have the pleasure of relating to your friends how you caught Dodge 'napping,' by persuading him to make a declaration of love to your talented and truly accomplished lady, you tried your utmost, both by misrepresentation and personal influence, to get me in the meshes of your skilfully-woven net; and thinking that when we are among the Romans we are justified in doing as the Romans do, I have by the same method taken possession of your beautiful wife, without either *her own*, or *your consent*.

"Your lady shall receive that attention and kindness that none other better than a Boston man knows how to bestow; and unless you conclude to 'bout ship,' acknowledge the corn, and immediately take possession of the prize (which, between you and myself, I consider the most manly and wisest course), I shall, if it meets *her* approval, take her under my charge in the next steamer bound for the Crescent City.

"Yours for *fun*, let it come at whose expense it may, in a *horn*,

"OSSIAN E. DODGE,

"The Boston Vocalist.

"P. S.—Enclosed you will find the amount of my *fare*, and inasmuch as I have taken possession of *your fair*, it is perfectly *fair* that you should take possession of *my fare*."

In a voice of thunder, the Captain gave orders for the action of the engine to be reversed, and taking possession of the pilot-house himself, he had for a time an excellent opportunity of cooling himself down into something like a state of reflection and reason.

Being naturally of a generous, noble-hearted, and lively turn of mind, he was soon obliged to acknowledge to himself that the "infernal Yankee" outwitted him; and that, after all, if his wife had received that attention promised in the letter, it would be better not to make a fool of himself by a great splurge and show, but handsomely acknowledge that he had been whipped by his own weapons, return the vocalist the amount of his fare, and then present him with a life-ticket for the steamer B—— S——, current at all seasons of the year.

About the time that the Captain was raging the wildest, Dodge was explaining to his fair companion the manner in which her lawful lord had compromised her honor and dignity, by representing her as a widow, and the proper person to receive the addresses of any and all who might by accident or otherwise engage a passage in the same steamer.

Little by little, in his usual shrewd manner,

the vocalist revealed the complicated plot from beginning to end, until the whole conversation, plans, &c., were brought to light, including even the capsheaf of the whole—the vocalist's letter, left in the state-room.

The lady trembled, wept violently for a few moments, and finally wound up with a merry, ringing laugh, exclaiming—

"O, *won't* he be angry for a few minutes! But he's a noble soul, and will, in half an hour afterward, be willing and happy to forgive and forget! But he *shan't* forget, as long as I have a tongue! O, *won't* I hector him? But, Mr. Dodge, hadn't we better have the driver hurry? For the Captain will return immediately, on the receipt of your note, I *know* he will; for O, sir, we are *very* fond of each other—indeed, we are."

Dodge ordered the driver to increase his speed, and if he should discover a steamer coming up the river, to immediately inform them.

"Dah's one comin' now, Massa," immediately replied the driver.

"What's her name?" inquired Dodge.

"I reckon Massa's from de Norf! Don't know, nigga can't read," rejoined the laughing prince of darkness.

Dodge and his fair companion immediately took a view of the distant steamer from the window of the coach, and soon satisfied themselves beyond a doubt that she was none other than the identical B—S—.

"Where does Massa want nigga to drive now?" inquired the wonder-stricken but respectful driver.

"To Natchez, under the hill," replies Dodge, "and govern yourself according to the speed of yonder steamer, as we wish to board her"

"Yas, sah!"

As the bow-line was thrown ashore, Dodge and the *pseudo* widow alighted from the carriage, and walked slowly toward the boat.

The Captain, overcome with joy at the sight of his young and beautiful bride, sprung

from the taffrail, and soon had her clasped in his arms, and after a hug, a kiss, and a few words in private, he turned round to Dodge, who stood looking on, like one convinced he had no right to enjoy the scene, and exclaimed—

"My dear fellow, this *is* happiness, and no mistake; but I'll own up, that I've been *sold*, *completely* sold; and that you're *too* many for me altogether! and now, sir, if you'll promise me that you'll never relate the facts of this case, south of Mason & Dixon's line, you shall receive a ticket which shall entitle you to a cabin passage on my boat from the present time to the fall of 1895."

"I am much obliged to you, Captain, for the offer," replies Dodge, "but should prefer not to accept it, as jokes that are paid for are not, as a general thing, so long remembered or so well enjoyed as those founded on affection for the vidders."

"Hit again, by the great father of rivers!" exclaimed the Captain; "but I'm now behind time, and must hurry off; so God bless you, my dear fellow, but don't, amid the exciting scenes in concertizing, ever forget Captain —, or the steamer B—S—, or your *clopement with another man's wife*."

On his arrival at New-Orleans, the vocalist found a letter in the Post-Office, containing, together with the good-wishes of the Captain and wife, an elaborately-finished and massive gold ring, on which was engraven the Captain's name and residence, and underneath, in very fine lettering, the simple but expressive word—"SOLD."

Dodge showed us the ring, and amid the shouts of the fraternity, exclaimed—

"Boys, I have preserved this ring with great care and attention for a wedding-gift, but haven't as yet found the first woman who had the courage to offer herself; and it's all nonsense for *me* to mention the subject, for they'd insist upon it 'Old Dodge' was coming another of his jokes."

MYSTERIOUS RAPPINGS EX-PLAINED:

Or, An Artful Dodge.

BY BOB LIVELY.

"A, ha, ha!" rang out the laugh from a group of roysterers, who were assembled on the portico of a little tavern in a pleasant country village, in the State of —.

"Ha, ha, ha!" replied the echo, like the voice of some taunting demon amid the tall cliffs that rose dark and silent beneath the mild summer moonlight.

And peal on peal of laughter interrupted the conversation of the group, and judging from the merriment, the topic must have been ludicrous in the extreme. So thought a short, fat, broad-faced individual, who, after laughing heartily three or four times, till his fat sides shook, and the echoes rang again, ventured to say—

"Well, what sort of a looking man is he?"

"Well," said the principal speaker in the group, who, by his recital of what he had lately witnessed, so highly amused them, "well, uncle Zeb, *you* ought to have been at the concert in the vestry to-night; it would have added ten years to your life to have heard Dodge sing the *Unfortunate Man*."

"Humph!" said the old man, "twas a fine night for me to be perspiring and sweating in the vestry, with all the village, to hear a comic singer."

"But, uncle Zeb, don't you believe it would have been as profitable as smoking tobacco and drinking hard cider?"

"Young man, you'll know more when you get older; but who is this fellow that's been making you all laugh yourselves hoarse?"

"Why, it's Dodge, uncle Zeb—Ossian E. Dodge, the renowned joker and singer."

"Humph!" said uncle Zeb, taking a pull at a cider-mug that stood near him; "Dodge, Dodge, ain't he the feller they talk so much of in the papers?"

"Yes, the very same; and one of the funniest chaps in all creation."

"Humph! don't tell me" (the old man felt envious, having been the wit and joker of the village till within a year or so), "don't tell me; I've seen the feller's picture, full length, in my paper, and he's gaunt as a gosling."

"But, then, uncle Zeb, you ought to see him himself; one look at his droll phiz would make you laugh to kill yourself."

"Fudge! do you think there's any real fun in such a lean fellow as that? No, no! it's the fat, round fellows that have the fun in 'em (here uncle Zeb laid his hand upon his capacious waistcoat); it's all gammon with your lean, lank, hungry fellows like this Dodge."

"But," said the other, "this Dodge is one of the greatest and most original practical jokers about, and his jokes are the drollest things I ever read of."

"Practical jokes! well, I wish the feller would try one on me; I'd like nothing better than to show him up," said uncle Zeb, giving his pipe an indignant puff. "Besides," continued he, "I consider him one of the greatest humbugs of the day."

"O, you are too hard on the poor fellow," said another young farmer, "you are too hard. Why, the vestry was crowded; all the village was there, and I saw parson Brown himself laugh till the tears ran down his cheeks."

"If he is one of the humbugs of the day, uncle Zeb, why I suppose the Rochester knockings are another," said a second, with a wink to his companions.

"Well, well, boys, you may poke fun at me for paying a dollar to hear those knockings, when I was in New-York," said the old man, "but I tell you there's something more than humbug in *them*."

"Why, you do not *believe* in it, do you?" said one of the young men, in a tone of astonishment.

"Believe in it?" said the old man, "why, didn't I converse and talk with my Betsey, who's been dead these two years, by means of knocks?"

"Well, I thought she talked enough when living, and threw in the knocks, too," said a young man.

This sally produced a roar of laughter (aunt Betsey having been a desperate scold, when living).

"Well, you may laugh, boys; but the last thing they told me afore I come away was that I should have another conversation with her, here in this village, on some time, by means of those same knocks."

This announcement produced a low whistle of astonishment from one of the unbelievers

in the group. The old man, however, puffed away at his pipe, and, as the smoke rolled forth upon the clear summer air, he raised his eyes toward the bright moon, and muttered again—

"Humph! Dodge; I wish he'd try one of his jokes on me."

All the time this conversation had been going on, an individual who sat but a little distance off, leaning his chair back against one of the pillars of the portico, but turned away from the group of villagers, had been a quiet but attentive listener, while he sat enjoying the cool night-breeze and the beautiful moon-light-scene before him. He now arose and passed into the bar-room of the house. The group were so busy in conversation that they scarcely noticed his presence, and even his movement did not excite their attention. But this quiet individual was no more nor less than the redoubtable Dodge himself, and could the twinkle of his eye and the fan that lurked round the corners of his mouth have been seen, it would have satisfied the gazer that the spirit of mischief was aroused. While lighting his candle, he inquired of the landlord who the individual designated "uncle Zeb" was.

"Why," replied the landlord, "you remember him well: old Zeb Hanson, who used to live down at the foot of Sugar hill."

"What," said Dodge, "he that married Betsey Hopper?"

"The very same," exclaimed the landlord; "and a pretty life she led him of it—sixteen years—why, her tongue wagged night and day, and Zeb had no peace at home; but he was always a fat, jolly fellow, for all his scolding wife, and the best hand at a joke in the village."

"Does he still live at the foot of Sugar hill?"

"No," said the landlord; "Bet died about two years since; Zeb carried on the farm alone till a short time ago; but he was lonesome like, and as he never had any children, and didn't seem to wish to marry again, why, about two weeks ago he sold his farm, and is going to move to York State, where he has a brother."

"He's boarding here at present, then?"

"Yes; he occupies the room directly opposite yours."

"Ah!" said Dodge, as his eyes twinkled merrily again; and taking his leave and a candle, retired to bed.

The night being sultry, nearly all the chamber-doors and windows of the lodgers' rooms were open for a free circulation of air. The rooms were arranged on either side of a long entry, at one end of which was a flight of stairs communicating with a broad entry below.

Dodge was hardly ensconced before he heard the heavy step of "uncle Zeb," who was coming to bed, the party having broken up, and he finished his last pipe. It was not long before the measured breathing and occasional snoring that came from his chamber proclaimed that "uncle Zeb" was in the land of dreams.

Creeping cautiously from his couch, Dodge donned his inexpressibles, and glided softly across the corridor to the room of his opposite neighbor. The moon had now sunk behind the hills, and all was profoundly dark and still. With a careful movement, Dodge inserted himself beneath the sleeping man's couch; then, after listening to see that all was quiet, he reached up between the head of the bed and the wall, and gave three distinct knocks on the head-board.

"Hey! hallo! come in," said uncle Zeb, starting from his sleep.

But all was silent.

"Sure I heard a knock," said Zeb, in a half-frightened tone, as a breeze swept through the old elm in front of his window with a melancholy moan.

Just then, another low but distinct knock was heard, and a shrill, but well-remembered voice, proceeding apparently from the ceiling over his head, exclaimed—

"Zeb, O, Zeb!"

"Lord bless me," exclaimed the old man, trembling with fright, while the promise of the Rochester ladies, that he should, at some future time, converse with aunt Betsey, flashed upon him. "Lord bless me, but it's her voice." Then, in a quaking tone, he asked—

"O, Betsey, is it you?"

"Yes, you sinful creetur," was the reply, "does not the sound of my voice make your flesh creep?" Zeb remembered that it often had when living, and he shuddered. "O, Zeb, you wicked creetur, you, what are you comin' to?"



"AT THE HEAD OF THE STAIRS STOOD DODGE, VIEWING THE SCENE OF DISASTER."

to? to think of your sellin' the farm, and trying to marry another woman."

"As I live," said Zeb, honestly, "I never thought of another."

"You lie, you villain," said the voice, in a shrill tone.

"Hush! hush!" said Zeb, anxiously, "hush! you'll wake some one in the next room."

"O, you wicked being, I'll haunt you for this," sobbed the voice.

"But," said Zeb, beginning in a pitiful tone.

"No such thing, you scoundrel," was the reply; "get up and follow me, and you shall have the proof."

Zeb tremblingly got out of bed and felt his way into the entry, from whence he could now

faintly hear the voice, telling him to "come along, you villain." He had not proceeded far ere he stumbled against a pair of boots that a lodger had placed outside his door.

"Hallo, there!" said the aroused individual.

Zeb said nothing, but proceeded cautiously on, raising his feet very high for fear of encountering another obstacle; and scarce had he proceeded ten steps ere he put his right foot down heavily into a wash-pitcher that had been set outside of another room. His foot had been forced so suddenly through the narrow neck of the pitcher into the broad lower part that in his hurry and confusion he found it impossible to extricate himself. He made two or three stumbling steps forward, tripped at the head of the stairs, and fell down

them with a terrible clatter. How much injury uncle Zeb might have sustained, had he struck upon the hard floor, is not known; but fortunately for him, a huge barrel of home-made apple-sauce stood at the foot of the stairs, and into this the head and shoulders of the unfortunate individual were plunged, the force of the fall bringing it over and completely deluging him with its contents.

Of course, this terrible clatter aroused the whole household—night-caps popped out of the half-opened doors, and men, in a very simple costume, made their appearance to ascertain the cause of the uproar. One individual, with one boot and half his pantaloons on, and a candle in his hand, rushed from a side-door just as Zeb regained his feet, and, with the aforesaid boot, trod boldly and heavily upon Zeb's corns.

Groaning with anguish, Zeb struck a straight forward blow at the fellow, who, however, ducked and avoided it, but the landlord suddenly appearing, Zeb's fist, missing its aim, fell like a sledge-hammer upon his (the landlord's) nose, and the three becoming entangled, and the floor being slippery with apple-sauce, they all went down together.

The lights now approached the scene of disaster, and curses, groans, and shouts of laughter filled the house.

At the head of the stairs, however, stood Dodge, arrayed in a pair of duck trousers, and holding a lamp in his hand, his quizzical face glistening all over with jollity as he joined in the hearty laugh that greeted the group who were rising from the floor. And in truth it was a ludicrous sight.

Zeb, with apple-sauce clinging to his hair and streaming down his face and shoulders, a fragment of the pitcher hanging to his leg, the landlord, with the blood streaming from his nose, and the individual with the boot and pantaloons half on, with the latter article of clothing fearfully torn and covered with the apple-sauce, while a rent divided his under garment from the flap to the collar, and caused him, as well as the rest of the principal actors in the scene, to make a precipitate retreat to their apartments.

The morning after, the company being assembled in the bar-room, the landlord looking ferocious with a swelled proboscis, and "uncle Zeb" with his hair still moist and sticky,

the conversation turned, very naturally, upon the last night's adventure.

Dodge stood composedly at one side of the room, directly beneath the portrait of a matronly-looking old lady, and listened to the conversation.

"Uncle Zeb" told a straight-forward story, although it was evident he was a little mortified at the result.

"Poh! poh!" said one, "uncle Zeb had a dream, got walking in his sleep, and tumbled into the apple-sauce."

"No such thing," said Zeb, turning toward the speaker, who stood in the door-way; "no such thing; I heard my dear Betsey's voice as nat'ral as life; she said, just as she used to when I came home at night"—

"Is that you, Zeb, you villain?" broke in the shrill, never-to-be-forgotten voice, apparently proceeding from the portrait on the wall.

Uncle Zeb started; some of the company laughed, but the landlord, placing his hands on his sides, burst into a most uproarious roar of laughter.

"Gentlemen," said the landlord, after he had in a measure recovered from his fit of merriment, "gentlemen, let me introduce you to Mr. Ossian E. Dodge" (leading that modest individual forward, who now took off his broad straw hat, revealing his face to the company), "he, gentlemen, will explain. Mr. Dodge, Uncle Zeb, Uncle Zeb, Mr. Dodge."

Here the landlord went off in another roar of laughter.

Uncle Zeb looked cautiously at Dodge, and took his outstretched hand, but as he did so, that shrill voice from the roguish mouth of the humorist said—

"O, Zeb, you villain!"

Uncle Zeb dropped the hand as though it were red-hot, and started with astonishment.

A quiet, good-humored smile illuminated the face of Dodge, and the company, to whom the joke was now apparent, made the room ring with their peals of laughter.

Uncle Zeb looked discomfited, but Dodge, who is as good-hearted as humorous, stepped forward in his usual frank and open manner, and holding out his hand to Zeb, said—

"Mr. Hanson, I think the joke has been carried far enough. You were rash enough last night to express a wish that Dodge would play a practical joke upon you; that wish he

has been whimsical enough to gratify, especially when his reputation was at stake, for you know that you thought there could be no fun in a *thin* man; come, Mr. Hanson, don't let us be enemies for a joke, though I'll own it was a severe one."

"Young man," said uncle Zeb, "you have done this business well, and for a *thin* man you are the drollest piece of human nature I ever see; there's my hand, we'll forgive and forget."

"Thank you, Mr. Hanson," said Dodge; "and, landlord," he continued, "put the apple-sauce and broken pitcher in my bill."

"You shall have 'em without charge, Mr. Dodge, and this nose I'll charge to uncle Zeb," said the landlord, laying his hand upon his swollen proboscis.

"O, *blow* your nose," said Zeb, pettishly, as the company began to laugh, "but, gentlemen, I own up beat. *There is some fun in a thin man.*"

DODGING A CROWD:

A Scene in the Chinese Junk.

BY FALCONBRIDGE.

HAVE you ever seen Dodge? Not Parson Dodge, nor Dodge the painter, but that queer, quizzical Dodge, Ossian E. Dodge, the singer, writer, and punster? He is emphatically a "queer guy," and what he don't happen to *know* about setting a table or a fashionable house in a roar, Hamlet's facetious friend Yorick never could have taught him. This Dodge has such a face, giving him fearful odds over your every-day, ordinary joker, and if face ever did conspire against conventional forms in carrying a jolly fellow safe through the world, the physiognomical developments of Dodge will certainly make him a handsome competency. I hope it may, for such jolly gods are far more conducive to the quiet health and general happiness of a community than your army, lancet, or law-book men.

A man with such rare abilities and professional fluency in the art and science of Joe Miller, must inevitably get off no few flashes of merriment and quaint things, by the way-side, as he floats about the country.

It will be remembered by many of the news-

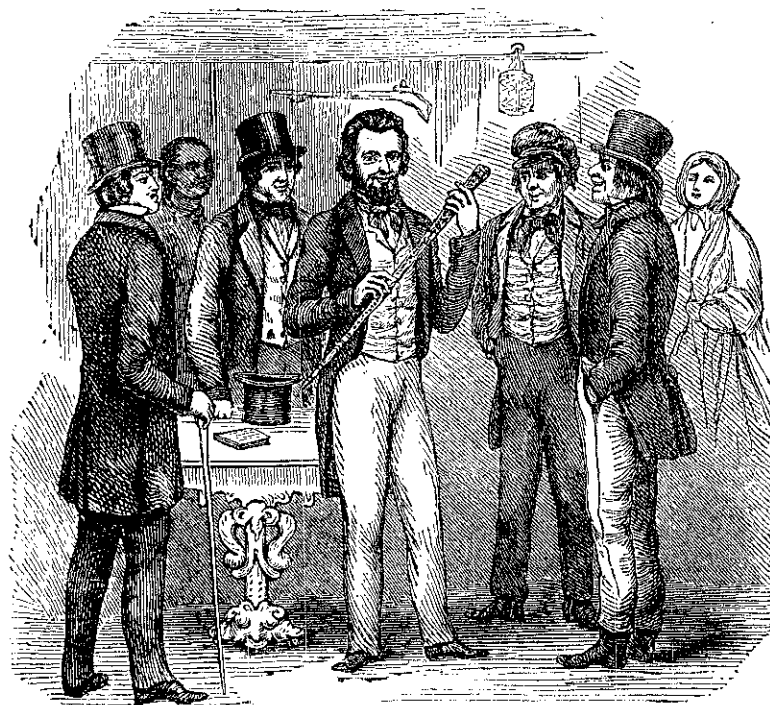
mongers and close observers in general, that the great Chinese Junk, Keying, lay in the harbor of New-York, a few years ago, and everybody, far and near, was splurging down to the Battery, to see the wondrous ark of the Celestials. A meaner, more uncouth old salt-box, mortal man nor beast this side of the Atlantic never did see, if we except the British Steamboats (!) of Nova Scotia and New-Brunswick; they being specimens, par excellence, of marine architecture not to be beat for filth and ugliness by Junks or any other known water-craft of the present century. The interior of the Junk was, or was supposed to be, a *little* more attractive than her outside, hence many of the gay and curious resorted on board to relieve their pent-up wonderment and overflowing purses.

Dodge was there—he was—and the cabin was crowded with that unselect mass of folks generally designated "all sorts of people." Happy land, where we have not yet hardly come to the conclusion that the nob's half dollar is better than that of the snob!

Now, Dodge is not only mentally an odd fellow, but his entire *tout ensemble* is strongly impregnated with the air *distingue*. His chin is tipped with a goatee that a Mussulman might swear by, his face is of vast length, capable of being drawn out to the longitude of a boot-jack, and moulded into forms of piety, sorrow, and dejection enough to prove the meekness of a pilgrim bound to Mecca with a pea in his shoe. Then that *cane*! Yes, there he has everybody: it would be maniacal to hope for a rival to Dodge's cane, the history of which embraces several languages, its component parts having been snatched by various adventures, at divers times, from the wreck of matter and crush of worlds, in every known clime and sea; and, in short, it is an instrument that deliberately floors everybody!

Dodge sauntered up and down, solus, among the queer things and motley crowd, without finding anything particularly rich to fasten his optics on. At length, sitting down by a stand in the middle of the cabin, he placed his cane upon the stand and began scrutinizing a Chinese book, filled with the poetic imagery of sundry inspired celestial literati, doubtless.

"*Jec-roo-salem!*" broke upon the joker's ear, and turning about, he discerned a long,



"BE CALM, KEEP COOL, GENTLEMEN; YOU SHALL ALL BE SATISFIED."

slab-sided genius, whose physique and *patois* clearly denoted him from "the land of pork and beans," and who, with a fellow native, had fastened their eyes upon Dodge's *mace*.

"Ha-a-um, well, neow, that is sleek, any how; ain't it, Gabe?"

"Doos look pootty sleek," the other responded, and he continued, taking Dodge's valued cane into his sacrilegious fists—"Guess, Siah, them spaw-ts (spots) or speckles are seelver, treon; yes, by gosh, they be—and such a head teon to't, Abraham and Jacob!"

"Let's have a nigh look at 'em, Gabe," said Siah, getting at the cane, which had now become an object of considerable speculation among the lookers-on, and Dodge deemed it about time to rescue his property from the rude investigation of the inquisitors.

"Say, yeou," observed one of the "down Easts," as Dodge took possession of his staff, "that yeour 'n, eh?"

"It is not exactly mine," said Dodge, "but it is in my charge."

"O, yes! Yeou b'long teou the show, I reckon?"

"Yes, I'm one of 'em; that is," said Dodge, "I have charge of this instrument."

"Well, s'pose yeou now tell a feller what it's for, and all that, eh?"

"O, certainly, with pleasure. We call it the *chop-chee-stickoo*, or Mandarian mace, and staff of the Emperor's Divan, or *glashopoo*," replied the joker, enjoying the attention of the crowd.

"Want to know ef it is?" inquired both Siah and Gabe, in a breath.

"Fact!" said the imperturbable Dodge.

"Well, cuss the nation, ef 'tain't an all-fired queer-looking consarn, any how. Now what moutn't the cost of sich a stick as that be, yeou?"

"Couldn't say, indeed," said Dodge. "Cost a power of money, though."

"Guess they might be got up down our way pootty cheap," continued Gabe. "I wonder ef I couldn't make one; I made a feedle once,

and cleaned pap's waw-teh nice as anybody could; left out a little wheel or two, didn't hurt the waw-teh the least, though, made it go faster 'n ever, in fact!"

"But, say, yeou," interrogated Siah, who had laid hands on the cane again, and commenced screwing about the ivory head, "doos it come apart? hain't got umbrellers, dirk-knives, fishin'-rods, nor nothin' in it, has it?"

"No," said Dodge, seizing it again, "but it has magical properties. When a tumult or riot takes place in China, the mere waving of this *chop-chee-stickoo* before the eyes of the multitude will disperse them instantly."

"Jee-roo-shy! yeou don't say so," interrupted Siah.

"Fact!" continued Dodge. "And if the wives of the Emperor disobey his commands, or seek other attachments out of his Divan, sweet music issues from the *chop-chee-stickoo*, and the women will be deterred at once from making Judy, that is to say, victims of themselves to the Emperor's wrath."

"Want to know ef it will! Well, then, I swow," said Gabe, "ef I don't know a feller or teow down our way that had better buy that choppen what-ye-may-call it, to keep their wives and gals to hum!"

"Well, yeou," said Siah, "doos it play choons? Kin yeou play on the thing, eh?"

"Sometimes I do," says Dodge, grave as two Mandarins.

"Jee-rooshy!" says Gabe, in excitement. "Well, s'pose yeou gin a choon, any how."

"The instrument is not in very good order now," said Dodge; "the weather here don't

agree with it, and it has been out of tune by people handling it so much. But I'll try if it will go a little this morning."

And here the joker fumbled the top of his curiously-wrought cane, wiped the silver and tortoise-shell sides and spots with his silk handkerchief, blowed in the string-holes where there are some curiously-wrought figures, and otherwise twisted and screwed and spat upon it, and blowed and sneezed and coughed until nearly every one in the Junk, bald-pated, long-queued Chinaman, and all, wedged about the fabled instrument in anticipation of most astonishing results! The two Down Easters were boiling over for *Hail Columbia* and *Nancy Dawson*, while the *élite* requested the gentleman to favor them with *Il Pirata*, or *Marble Halls*, and a blood-thirsty devourer of two-shilling novels wanted the *Pirate's Flag*.

"Be calm; keep cool, gentlemen," said Dodge, "you shall all be satisfied."

And again he screwed, twisted, snorted, and blowed, but nothing came except a delicate trill—Dodge is not only a good singer and mimic, but a good ventriloquist—the faint, fairy-like sounds of which were heard gently oozing from the wondrous instrument. The crowd were breathless. Dodge raised his big eyes, full of melody and fun, toward the open sky-light overhead; a loud shriek and cry—"Child overboard! Help!" was heard upon deck. Everybody rushed up the steps, but no child was there in peril! And, about that time, Dodge and his cane disappeared suddenly and mysteriously.