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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK STEP BY STEP; OR, TIDY'S WAY TO FREEDOM ***

STEP BY STEP
OR
TIDY'S WAY TO FREEDOM.

*"Woe to all who grind
Their brethren of a common Father down!
To all who plunder from the immortal mind
Its bright and glorious crown!"*
-WHITTIER.

[colophon omitted]

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Transcriber's Note: I have removed page numbers; all italics are emphasis only. I have omitted running heads and have closed contractions, e.g. "she 's" becoming "she's"; in addition, on page 180, stanza 3, line 1, I have changed the single quotation mark at the beginning of the line to a double quotation mark.

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STEP BY STEP.

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STEP BY STEP.

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION.

MY DEAR CHILDREN,—All of you who read this little book have doubtless heard more or less of slavery. You know it is the system by which a portion of our people hold their fellow-creatures as property, and doom them to perpetual servitude. It is a hateful and accursed institution, which God can not look upon but with abhorrence, and which no one of his children should for a moment tolerate. It is opposed to every thing Christian and humane, and full of all meanness and cruelty. It treats a fellow-being, only because his skin is not so fair as our own, as though he were a dumb animal or a piece of furniture. It allows him no expression of choice about any thing, and no liberty of action. It recognizes and employs all the instincts of the lower, but ignores and tramples down all the faculties of his higher, nature. Can there be a greater wrong?

It is said by some, in extenuation of this wrong, that the slaves are well fed and clothed, and are kindly, even affectionately, looked after. This is true, in some cases,—with the house-servants, particularly,—but, as a general thing, their food and clothing are coarse and insufficient. But supposing it was otherwise; supposing they were provided for with as much liberality as are the working classes at the North, what is that when put into the balance with all the ills they suffer? What comfort is it, when a wife is torn from her husband, or a mother from her children, to know that each is to have enough to eat? None at all. The most generous provision for the body can not satisfy the longings of the heart, or compensate for its bereavements.

They suffer, also, a constant dread and fear of change, which is not the least of their torturing troubles. A kind owner may be taken away by death, and the new one be harsh and cruel; or necessity may compel him to sell his slaves, and thus they may be thrown into most unhappy situations. So they live with a heavy cloud of sorrow always before them, which their eyes can not look through or beyond. There is no hope—no EARTHLY hope—for this poor, oppressed race.

Their minds, too, are starved. No education, not even the least, is allowed. It is a criminal offense in some of the States to teach a slave to read. Now, if they could be made to exist without any consciousness of

intellectual capacity, it would not be so bad. But this is impossible. They think and reason and wonder about things which they see and hear; and, in many cases, feel an eager desire to be instructed. This desire can not be gratified, because it would unfit them for their servile condition; therefore all teaching is rigidly denied them. The treasures of knowledge are bolted and barred to their approach, and they are kept in the utmost darkness and ignorance. Oh, to starve the mind!—Is it not far worse than to starve the body?

There is yet another process of famishing to which the slaves are subjected. They are not, as a general thing, taught by their masters about God, the salvation of Jesus Christ or the way to heaven. The SOUL is starved. To be sure, they pick up, here and there, a few crumbs of religious truth, and make the most of their scanty supply. Many of them truly love the Lord; and his unseen presence and joyful anticipations of heaven make them submissive to their hardships, and cheerful and faithful in their duties. But they can not thank their masters for what religious light and knowledge they get.

And who are these that hold their fellow-creatures in such cruel bondage, starving body, mind, and soul with such indifference and inhumanity? We blush to tell you. Many of them are of the number of those who profess to love the Lord their God with all the heart, and their neighbor as themselves. Can it be possible that God's own children can participate in such a wickedness; can buy and sell, beat and kill, their fellow-creatures? Can those who have humbly repented of sin, and by faith accepted of the salvation of Jesus Christ, turn from his holy cross to abuse others who are redeemed by the same precious blood, and are heirs to the same glorious immortality? CAN such be Christians?

And, children, you probably all understand that slavery is the sole cause of the sad war which is now ravaging our beloved country; and Christian people are praying, not only that the war may cease, but that the sin which has caused it may cease also. We believe that God is overruling all things to bring about this happy result, and before this little story shall meet your eyes, there may be no more slaves within our borders. Still we shall not have written it in vain, if it help you to realize, more clearly than you have done, the sufferings and degradation to which this unfortunate class have been subjected, and to labor with zeal in the work which will then devolve upon us of educating and elevating them.

My story is not one of UNUSUAL interest. Thousands and ten of thousands equally affecting might be told, and many far more romantic and thrilling. What a day will that be, when the recorded history of every slave-life shall be read before an assembled universe! What a long catalogue of martyrs and heroes will then be revealed! What complicated tales of wrongs and woes! What crowns and palms of victory will then be awarded! What treasures of wrath heaped up against the day of wrath will then be poured in fiery indignation upon deserving heads! Truly, then, will come to pass the saying of the Lord Jesus, "The first shall be last and the last first."

Then, too, will appear most gloriously the loving kindness and tender mercy of God, who loves to stoop to the poor and humble, and to care for those who are friendless and alone. It seems as if our Heavenly Father took special delight in revealing the truths of salvation to this untutored people, in a mysterious way leading them into gospel light and liberty; so that though men take pains to keep them in ignorance, multitudes of them give evidence of piety, and find consolation for their miseries in the sweet love of God.

It is the dealings of God in guiding one of these to a knowledge of himself, that I wish to relate to you in the following chapters.

CHAPTER II. THE BABY.

IN a snug corner of a meager slave-cabin, on a low cot, lies a little babe asleep. A scarlet honeysuckle of wild and luxuriant growth shades the uncurtained and unsashed window; and the humming-birds, flitting among its brilliant blossoms, murmur a constant, gentle lullaby for the infant sleeper. See, its skin is not so dark but that we may clearly trace the blue veins underlying it; the lips, half parted, are lovely as a rosebud; and the soft, silky curls are dewy as the flowers on this June morning. A dimpled arm and one naked foot have escaped from the gay patch-work quilt, which some fond hand has closely tucked about the little form; and the breath comes and goes quickly, as if the folded eyes were feasting on visions of beauty and delight. Dear little one!

*"We should see the spirits ringing
Round thee, were the clouds away;
'Tis the child-heart draws them, singing
In the silent-seeming clay."*

Though that child-heart beats beneath a despised skin, though it has its resting-place in a hovel, the angels may be there. Their loving, pitying natures shrink not from poverty, but stoop with heavenly sympathy to the mean abodes of suffering and misery.

A soft step steals in through the half-opened door, across the room, and a fervent kiss is laid on the little velvet cheek.

Who is the intruder? Ah, who cares to watch and smile over a sleeping infant, save its mother? Here, in this rude cabin, is a mother's heart,—tender with its holy affections, and all aglow with delight, as she gazes on the beautiful vision before her.

We must call the mother Annie. She had but one name, for she was a slave. Like the horse or the dog, she must have some appellation by which, as an individual, she might be designated; a sort of appendage on which to hang, as it were, the commands, threats, and severities that from time to time might be administered; but farther than that, for her own personal uses, why did she need a name? She was not a person, only a thing,—a piece of property belonging to the Carroll estate.

But for all that, she was a woman and a mother. God had sealed her such, and who could obliterate his

impress, or rob her of the crown he had placed about her head,—a crown of thorns though it were? Her heart was as full of all sweet motherly instincts as if she had been born in a more favored condition; and the swarthy complexion of her child made it no less dear or lovely in her sight; while a consciousness of its degradation and sad future served only to deepen and intensify her love. She knew what her child was born to suffer; but affection thrust far away the evil day, that she might not lose the happiness of the present. The babe was hers,—her own,—and for long years yet would be her joy and comfort.

Annie had other children, but they were wild, romping boys, grown out of their babyhood, and so very naturally left to run and take care of themselves. She had not ceased to love them, however, and would have manifested it more, but for the idol, the little girl baby, which had now for nearly a year nestled in her arms, and completely possessed her heart. When they were hungry, they came like chickens about her cabin-door, and being mistress of the kitchen, she always had plenty of good, substantial crumbs for them; and when they were sick, she nursed them with pitying care; but this was about all the attention they received.

The baby engrossed every leisure moment she could command. Many times a day she would pause in her work to caress it. She would seat it upon the floor, amid a perfect bed of honeysuckle blossoms, and bring the bright orange gourds that grew around the door for its amusement. Sometimes a broken toy or a shining trinket, which she had picked up in the house, or a smooth pebble from the yard, would be added to the treasures of the little one. Then she would come with food, the soft-boiled rice, or the sweet corn gruel, she knew so well how to prepare; and often, often she would steal in, as now, out of pure fondness, to watch its peaceful slumbers.

"Named the pickaninny yet?" asked the master one day, as he passed the cabin, and carelessly looked in upon the mother and child amusing themselves within. "'Tis time you did; 'most time to turn her off now, you see."

"Oh, Massa, don't say dat word," answered the woman, imploringly. "'Pears I couldn't b'ar to turn her off yet,—couldn't live without her, no ways. Reckon I'll call her Tidy; dat ar's my sister's name, and she's got dat same sweet look 'bout de eyes,—don't you think so, Massa? Poor Tidy! she's"—and Annie stopped, and a deep sigh, instead of words, filled up the sentence, and tears dropped down upon the baby's forehead. Memory traveled back to that dreadful night when this only sister had been dragged from her bed, chained with a slave-gang, and driven off to the dreaded South, never more to be heard from.

WE talk of the "sunny South;"—to the slave, the South is cold, dark, and cheerless; the land of untold horrors, the grave of hope and joy.

"'Pears as if my poor old mudder," said Annie, brushing away the tears, "never got up right smart after Tidy went away. She'd had six children sold from her afore, and she set stores by her and me, 'cause we was girls, and we was all she had left, too. Tidy was pooty as a flower; and dat's just what your fadder, Massa Carroll, sold her for. My poor mudder—how she cried and took on! but then she grew more settled like. She said she'd gi'n her up for de good Lord to take care on. She said, if he could take care of de posies in de woods, he certain sure would look after her, and so she left off groaning like; but she's never got over that sad look in her face. 'Oh,' says she to me, says she, 'Annie, do call dat leetle cretur's name Tidy,—mebbe 'twill make my poor, sore heart heal up;' and so I will."

"So I would, Annie; yes, so I would," said the Master soothingly. "So I would, if 'twill be any comfort to poor old Marcia,—clever old soul she is. She was my mammy, and I was always fond of her. She has trotted me on her knee, and toted me about on her back, many an hour. I must go down to the quarters this very day, and see if she has things comfortable. She's getting old, and we must do well by her in her old age. And you, Annie, you mustn't mind those other things. We mustn't borrow trouble. And we can't help it, you know; and we mustn't cry and fret for what we can't help. What's the use? It don't do any good, you see, and only makes a bad matter worse. Must take things as they come, in this world of ours, Annie;" and the Master thought thus to assuage the tide of bitter recollection in the breast of his down-trodden bond-woman, and divert her mind from the painful future before her and her darling child. In vain. The tears still fell over the brow of the baby, flowing from the deep fountain of sorrow and tenderness that springs forth only from a mother's heart.

"Oh, Massa," she ventured timidly to say amid her sobs, "please don't never part baby and me."

"Be a good girl, Annie," said he, "and mind your work, and don't be borrowing trouble. We'll take good care of you. You've got a nice baby, that's a fact,—the smartest little thing on the whole plantation; see how well you can raise her now."

The fond heart of the trembling mother leaped back again to its happiness at the praise bestowed upon her baby; and taking up the little blossom, she laid it with pride upon her bosom, murmuring, "Years of good times we'll have, sweetie, afore sich dark days come,—mebbe they'll never come to you and me."

Alas, vain hope! Scarcely a single year had passed, when one day she came to the cot to look at the little sleeper, and lo, her treasure was gone! The master had found it convenient, in making a sale of some field hands, to THROW IN this infant, by way of closing a satisfactory bargain.

None can tell, but those who have gone through the trying experience, how hard it is for a mother to part with her child when God calls it away by death. But oh, how much harder it must be to have a babe torn away from the maternal arms by the stern hand of oppression, and flung out on the cruel tide of selfishness and passion! Let us weep, dear children, for the poor slave mothers who have to endure such wrongs.

I will not undertake to describe the distress of this poor woman when the knowledge of her loss burst upon her. It was as when the tall tree is shivered by the lightning's blast. Her strong frame shook and trembled beneath the shock; her eye rolled and burned in tearless anguish, and her voice failed her in the intensity of her grief. For hours she was unable to move. Alone, uncomforted, she lay upon the earth, crushed beneath the weight of this unexpected calamity.

"Leave her alone," said the master, "and let her grieve it out. The cat will mew when her kittens are taken away. She'll get over it before long, and come up again all right."

"Ye mus' b'ar it, chile," said Annie's poor, old mother, drawing from her own experience the only comfort which could be of any avail. "De bressed Lord will help ye; nobody else can. I's so sorry for ye, honey; but yer

poor, old mudder can't do noffin. 'Tis de yoke de Heavenly Massa puts on yer neck, and ye can't take it off nohow till he ondoes it hissef wid his own hand. Ye mus' b'ar it, and say, De will ob de bressed Lord be done."

But, trying as this separation was, it proved to be the first link in that chain of loving-kindnesses by which this little slave-child was to be drawn towards God. Do you remember this verse in the Bible: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee."

CHAPTER III. SUNSHINE.

IF ever there was a sunshiny corner of slavery, it was that into which a kind Providence dropped this little, helpless babe, now but a little more than two years old.

It was a pleasant day in early spring when Colonel Lee alighted from his gig before the family mansion at Rosevale, and laid the child, as a present, at the feet of his daughter Matilda.

Miss Matilda Lee was about thirty years of age,—as active and thrifty a little woman as could be found any where within the domains of this cruel system of oppression. Slavery is like a two-edged knife, cutting both ways. It not only destroys the black, but demoralizes and ruins the white race. Those who hold slaves are usually indolent, proud, and inefficient. They think it a disgrace to work by the side of the negro, and therefore will allow things to be left in a very careless, untidy way, rather than put forth their energy to alter or improve them. And as it is impossible for slaves, untaught and degraded as they are, to give a neat and thrifty appearance to their homes, we, who have been brought up at the North, accustomed to work ourselves, assisted by well-trained domestics, can scarcely realize the many discomforts often to be experienced in Southern houses. But Miss Lee was unusually energetic and helpful, desirous of having every thing about her neat and tasteful, and not afraid to do something towards it with her own hands.

Being the eldest daughter, the entire charge of the family had devolved upon her since the death of her mother, which had occurred about ten years before. Within this time, her brothers and sisters had been married, and now she and her father were all that were left at the old homestead.

Their servants, too, had dwindled away. Some had been given to the sons and daughters when they left the parental roof; some had died, and others had been sold to pay debts and furnish the means of living. Old Rosa, the cook, Nancy, the waiting-maid, and Methuselah, the ancient gardener, were all the house-servants that remained. So they lived in a very quiet and frugal way; and Miss Matilda's activities, not being entirely engrossed with family cares, found employment in the nurture of flowers and pets.

The grounds in front of the old-fashioned mansion had been laid out originally in very elaborate style; and, though of late years they had been greatly neglected, they still retained traces of their former splendor. The rose-vines on the inside of the enclosure had grown over the low, brick wall, to meet and mingle with the trees and bushes outside, till together they formed a solid and luxuriant mass of verdure. White and crimson roses shone amid the dark, glossy foliage of the mountain-laurel, which held up with sturdy stem its own rich clusters of fluted cups, that seemed to assert equality with the queen of flowers, and would not be eclipsed by the fragrant loveliness of their beautiful dependents. The borders of box, which had once been trimmed and trained into fanciful points and tufts and convolutions of verdure, had grown into misshapen clumps; and the white, pebbly walks no longer sparkled in the sunlight.

Still Miss Matilda, by the aid of Methuselah, in appearance almost as ancient as we may suppose his namesake to have been, found great pleasure in cultivating her flower-beds; and every year, her crocuses and hyacinths, crown-imperials and tulips, pinks, lilies, and roses, none the less beautiful because they are so commonly enjoyed, gave a cheerful aspect to the place.

Her numerous pets made the house equally bright and pleasant. There was Sir Walter Raleigh, the dog, and Mrs. Felina, the great, splendid, Maltese mother of three beautiful blue kittens; Jack and Gill, the gentle, soft-toned Java sparrows; and Ruby, the unwearied canary singer, always in loud and uninterpretable conversation with San Rosa, the mocking-bird. The birds hung in the broad, deep window of the sitting-room, in the shade of the jasmine and honeysuckle vines that embowered it and filled the air with delicious perfume. The dog and cat, when not inclined to active enjoyments, were accommodated with comfortable beds in the adjoining apartment, which was the sleeping-room of their mistress.

The new household pet became an occupant of this same room.

"Laws, now, Miss Tilda, ye a'n't gwine to put de chile in ther wid all de dogs and cats, now. 'Pears ye might have company enough o' nights widout takin' in a cryin' baby. She'll cry sure widout her mammy, and what ye gwine to do thin?" and old Rosa stoutly protested against the arrangement.

"Never mind, Aunt Rosa, don't worry now; I'll manage to take good care of the little creature. I know what you're after,—you want her yourself."

"Ho, ho ho! Laws, now, Miss Tilda, you dun know noffing 'bout babies; takes an old mammy like me to fotch 'em up. Come here, child; what's yer name?"

The frightened little one, whose tongue had not yet learned to utter many words, made no attempt to answer, but stood timidly looking from one to another of the surrounding group.

"She ha'n't got no name, 'ta'n't likely," suggested Nance.

"We must christen her, then," said Miss Lee.

"Carroll called her Tidy," remarked the old gentleman, entering the room at that moment.

"DAT'S a name of 'spectability," said Rosa, with a satisfied air. "'Tis my 'pinion chillen should allus have 'spectable names, else they're 'posed on in dis yer world. Nudd's Tidy, now, dere's a spec'men for yer. Never was no more 'complished 'fectioner dan she. She knowed how to cook all de earth, she did. Hi! couldn't she barbecue a heifer, or brile a cock's comb, jest as 'spertly as Miss Tilda here broiders a ruffle. Right smart

cretur she wor. And so YE'RE a gwine to be, honey,—your old mammy sees it in de tips ob yer fingers;" and Rosa caught up the child, and well-nigh smothered it with all sorts of maternal fondnesses.

"Now Nance," continued the old negress, turning with an air of authority to the tall, loose-jointed, reed-like maid, "Now Nance, ye mind yer doin's in dese yer premises. Don't ye go for to kick de young un round like as ef she cost noffin'. Ef ye do, look out;" and she shook her turbaned head, and doubled her fist in very threatening manner before the girl. "Now we've got a baby in dis yer house, we'll see how de tings is gwine for to go."

A baby in the Lee mansion did indeed inaugurate a new order of things in the family. So young a servant they had not had for many a day on the estate; and Rosa felt at once the responsibility of her position, and played the mother to her heart's content. All the care of the child's education seemed from that moment to devolve upon her, notwithstanding Miss Lee's repeated assertions that SHE designed to bring up the little one after her own heart, and that Tidy should never wait upon any one but herself.

Between them both, Tidy had things pretty much her own way. Such an infant of course could not be expected to comprehend the fact that she was a slave, and born to be ruled over, and trodden under foot. Like any other little one, she enjoyed existence, and was as happy as could be all the day long. Every thing around her,—the chickens and turkeys in the yard, the flowers in the garden, the kittens and birds in the sitting-room, and the goodies in the kitchen,—added to her pleasure. She frisked and gamboled about the house and grounds as free and joyous as the squirrels in the woods, and without a thought or suspicion that any thing but happiness was in store for her. She not only slept at night in the room of her mistress, but when the daily meals were served, the child, seated on a low bench beside Miss Lee, was fed from her own dish. So that, in respect to her animal nature, she fared as well as any child need to; but this was all. Not a word of instruction of any kind did she receive.

As she grew older, and her active mind, observing and wondering at the many objects of interest in nature, burst out into childish questions, "What is this for?" and "Who made that?" her mistress would answer carelessly, "I don't know," or "You'll find out by and by." Her thirst for knowledge was never satisfied; for while Miss Lee was good-natured and gentle in her ways toward the child, she took no pains to impart information of any kind. Why should she? Tidy was only a slave.

Here, my little readers, you may see the difference between her condition and your own. You are carefully taught every thing that will be of use to you. Even before you ask questions, they are answered; and father and mother, older brothers and sisters, aunties, teachers, and friends are ready and anxious to explain to you all the curious and interesting things that come under your notice. Indeed, so desirous are they to cultivate your intellectual nature, that they seek to stimulate your appetite for knowledge, by drawing your attention to many things which otherwise you would overlook. At the same time, they point you to the great and all-wise Creator, that you may admire and love him who has made every thing for our highest happiness and good.

But slavery depends for its existence and growth upon the ignorance of its miserable victims. If Tidy's questions had been answered, and her curiosity satisfied, she would have gone on in her investigations; and from studying objects in nature, she would have come to study books, and perhaps would have read the Bible, and thus found out a great deal which it is not considered proper for a slave to know.

"We couldn't keep our servants, if we were to instruct them," says the slaveholder; and therefore he makes the law which constitutes it a criminal offense to teach a slave to read.

But Tidy was taught to WORK. That is just what slaves are made for,—to work, and so save their owners the trouble of working themselves. Slaveholders do not recognize the fact that God designed us all to work, and has so arranged matters, that true comfort and happiness can only be reached through the gateway of labor. It is no blessing to be idle, and let others wait upon us; and in this respect the slaves certainly have the advantage of their masters.

Tidy was an apt learner, and at eight years of age she could do up Miss Matilda's ruffles, clean the great brass andirons and fender in the sitting-room, and set a room to rights as neatly as any person in the house.

CHAPTER IV. SEVERAL EVENTS.

SHALL I pause here in my narrative to tell you what became of Annie and some of the other persons who have been mentioned in the preceding chapters?

Tidy often saw her mother. Miss Lee used to visit Mr. Carroll's family, and never went without taking Tidy, that the child and her mother might have a good time together. And good times indeed they were.

When Annie learned that her baby had been taken to Rosevale, that she was so well cared for, and that they would be able sometimes to see one another, her grief was very much abated, and she began to think in what new ways she could show her love for her little one. She saved all the money she could get; and, as she had opportunity, she would buy a bit of gay calico, to make the child a frock or an apron. Mothers, you perceive, are all alike, from the days of Hannah, who made a "little coat" for her son Samuel, and "brought it to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to the yearly sacrifice," down to the present time. Nothing pleases them more than to provide things useful and pretty for their little ones. Even this slave-mother, with her scanty means, felt this same longing. It did her heart good to be doing something for her child; and so she was constantly planning and preparing for these visits, that she might never be without something new and gratifying to give her. In the warm days of summer, she would take her down to Sweet-Brier Pond, a pretty pool of water right in the heart of a sweet pine grove, a little way from the house, and Tidy would have a good splashing frolic in the water, and come out looking as bright and shining as a newly-polished piece of mahogany. Her mother would press the water from her dripping locks, and turn the soft, glossy hair in short, smooth curls over her fingers, put on the new frock, and then set her out before her

admiring eyes, and exclaim in her fond motherly pride,—

"You's a purty cretur, honey. You dun know noffin how yer mudder lubs ye."

Tidy remembers to this day the delightful afternoon thus spent the very last time she went to see her mother, though neither of them then thought it was to be the last. Mr. Carroll, Annie's master, was very close in all his business transactions, never allowing, as he remarked, his left hand to know what his right hand did. He stole Tidy away, as we have already told you, from her mother; and this was the way he usually managed in parting his slaves, especially any that were much valued. He said it was "a part of his religion to deal TENDERLY with his people!"

"'Tis a great deal better," said he, "to avoid a row. They would moan and wail and make such a fuss, if they knew they were to change quarters."

Humane man, wasn't he?

Mr. Carroll got into debt, and an opportunity occurring, he sold Annie and her four boys. The bargain was made without the knowledge of any one on the estate; and in the night they were transferred to their new master. Nobody ever knew to what part of the country they were carried.

When the news reached the ear of Marcia, Annie's mother, it proved to be more than she could bear. Her very last comfort was thus torn from her. When she was told of it, the poor, decrepit old woman fell from her chair upon the floor of her cabin insensible. The people lifted her up and laid her upon the bed, but she never came to consciousness. She lay without sense or motion until the next day, when she died. The slaves said, "Old Marcia's heart broke."

Thus little Tidy was left alone in the world, without a single relative to love her. Didn't she care much about it? That happened thirty years ago, and she can not speak of it even now without tears. But she comforts herself by saying, "I shall meet them in heaven." Annie may not yet have arrived at that blessed home; but Marcia has rejoiced all these years in the presence of the Lord she loved, and has found, by a glad experience, that the happiness of heaven can compensate for all the trials of earth.

*"For God has marked each sorrowing day,
And numbered every secret tear;
And heaven's long age of bliss shall pay
For all his children suffer here."*

And now I must tell you of another death which occurred about this same time. It was that of Colonel Lee. He had been a rich and a proud man, and it would seem, that, like the rich man in the parable, he had had all his good things in this life; and now that he had come to the gates of death, he found himself in a sadly destitute and lamentable condition. He was afraid to die; and when he came to the very last, his shrieks of terror and distress were fearful. His mind was wandering, and he fancied some strong being was binding him with chains and shackles. He screamed for help, and even called for Rosa, his faithful old servant, to come and help him.

"Take off those hand-cuffs," he cried; "take them off. I can not bear them. Don't let them put on those chains. Oh, I can't move! They'll drag me away! Stop them; help me! save me!"

But, alas! no one could save him. The man who had all his life been loading his fellow-creatures with chains and fetters was now in the grasp of One mightier than he, who was "delivering him over into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto the judgment."

How dreadful was such an end!

"I would rather be a slave with all my sorrows," said Tidy, when she related this sad story, "and wait for comfort until I get to heaven, than to have all the riches of all the slaveholders in the world, gained by injustice and oppression; for I could only carry them as far as the grave, and there they would be an awful weight to drag me down into torments for ever."

CHAPTER V. A NEW HOME.

AFTER Colonel Lee's death, which happened when Tidy was about ten years old, the plantation and all the slaves were sold, and Miss Matilda, with Tidy, who was her own personal property, found a home with her brother. Mr. Richard Lee owned an estate about twenty miles from Rosevale. His lands had once been well cultivated, but now received very little attention, for medicinal springs had been discovered there a few years before, and it was expected that these springs, by being made a resort for invalids and fashionable people, would bring to the family all the income they could desire.

Mr. and Mrs. Lee were not very pleasant people. They were selfish and penurious, and hard-hearted and severe towards their servants. They no doubt were happy to have their sister take up her abode with them; but there is reason to believe she was chiefly welcome on account of the valuable little piece of property she brought with her. Tidy was just exactly what Mrs. Lee wanted to fill a place in her family, which she had never before been able to supply to her satisfaction. She needed her as an under-nurse, and waiter-and-tender in general upon her four children. Amelia, the eldest, was just Tidy's age, and Susan was two years younger. Then came Lemuel, a boy of three, and George, the baby.

Mammy Grace was the family nurse, but as she was growing old and somewhat infirm, she required a pair of young, sprightly feet to run after little Lemmy to keep him out of mischief, and to carry the teething, worrying baby about. Tidy was just the child for her.

The morning after her arrival, Mrs. Lee instructed her in her duties thus:—

"You are to do what Mammy Grace and the children tell you to. See that Lemmy doesn't stuff things into his ears and nose; mind you don't let the baby fall, and behave yourself."

She wasn't told what would be the consequence if she did not "behave herself," but Tidy felt that she had something to fear from that flashing eye and heavy brow. Miss Matilda had protected her, as far as she was able, though without the child's knowledge, by saying to her sister that she was willing her little servant should be employed in the family, but that she was never to be whipped.

"You're mighty saving of your little piece of flesh and blood," said her sister-in-law. "I find it doesn't work well to be too tender; they need a little cuffing now and then to keep them straight."

"Tidy is a good child," replied Miss Matilda. "She always does as she is told, and I have never had occasion to punish her in my life; and I can not consent to her being treated severely."

"We shall see," said Mrs. Lee; "but, I tell you, I take no impudence from my hands."

Miss Matilda's stipulation and her constant presence in the family no doubt screened Tidy from much that was unpleasant from her new mistress; for if children or servants are ever so well inclined, an ugly and easily excited temper in a superior will provoke evil dispositions in them, and MAKE occasions of punishment. But in this case the mistress was evidently held in check. A knock on the head sometimes, a kick or a cross word, was the greatest severity she ventured to inflict; so that, upon the whole, the new home was a pleasant and happy one.

The services Tidy was required to render were a perfect delight to her. Like all children, she liked to be associated with those of her own age, and, though called a slave, to all intents and purposes she was received as the playmate and companion of Amelia and Susan. They were good-natured, agreeable little girls, and it was a pleasure rather than a task to walk to and from school, and carry their books and dinner-basket for them. And to go into the play-house, and have the handling of the dolls, the tea-sets, and toys, was employment as charming as it was new.

The nursery was in the cabin of Mammy Grace, which was situated a few steps from the family mansion, and was distinguished from the log-huts of the other slaves, by having brick walls and two rooms. The inner room contained the baby's cradle, a crib for the little one who had not yet outgrown his noon-day nap, her own bed, and now a cot for Tidy. In the outer stood the spinning-wheel,—at which the old nurse wrought when not occupied with the children,—a small table, an old chest of drawers, and a few rude chairs. Some old carpets which had been discarded from the house were laid over the floors, and gave an air of comfort to the place. One shelf by the side of the fireplace held all the china and plate they had to use; for, you must know, little readers, that slave cabins contain very few of the conveniences which are so familiar to you. To assert, as some people do, that the negroes do not need them, is simply to say that they have never been used to the common comforts of life, and so do not know their worth.

Nevertheless, the place with all its scantiness of furniture was a happy abode for Tidy, who found in Mammy Grace even a better mother than old Rosa had been to her; for, besides being kind and cheerful, she was pious, and from her lips it was that Tidy first heard the name of God. Would you believe it? Tidy had lived to be ten years old in this Christian land, and had never heard of the God who made her. Miss Lee, with all her kindness, was not a Christian, and never read the Bible, offered prayer, or went to church; so that the poor child had grown up thus far as ignorant of religious truth as a heathen.

We may well consider then the providence of God which brought her under the care of Mammy Grace, the negro nurse, as another link in that golden chain of love which was to draw her up out of the shame and misery of her abject condition to the knowledge and service of her Heavenly Father.

CHAPTER VI. BEGINNINGS OF KNOWLEDGE.

THE first day of the new service was over. The two babies had been carried to the house and put to bed as usual at sunset, and Mammy Grace had mixed the corn-pone for supper, and laid it to bake beneath the hot ashes.

Tidy stretched herself at full length near the open door of the cabin, and resting her head upon her hand looked out. All was still save the hum of voices from the house, and now and then the plaintive song of the whippoorwill in the meadow. The new moon was just hiding its silvery crescent behind Tulip Mountain, and the shadows were growing every moment darker among the flower-laden trees that covered its sides. It was just the hour for thinking; and as the weary child lay there, watching the stars that, one by one, stepped with such strange, noiseless grace out upon the clear, blue sky, soothed by the calm influence that breathed through the beautiful twilight, she soon forgot herself and her surroundings, and was lost in the mazes of speculation and wonder. What were these bright spots that kept coming thicker and faster over her head, winking and blinking at her, as if with a conscious and friendly intelligence? Who made them? what were they doing? where did they hide in the daytime? If she could climb up yonder mountain, and then get to the top of those tall tulip-trees, she was sure she could reach them, or, at least, see better what they were. Were they candles, that some unseen hand had lighted and thrust out there, that the night might not be wholly dark? That could not be, for then the wind, which was fanning the trees, would blow them out. How the little mind longed to fathom the mystery! Once she had ventured to ask Miss Matilda what those bright specks up in the sky were, and she answered, in an indifferent sort of way, "Stars, you little silly goose,—why, don't you know? They are stars." And then she was just about as wise and as satisfied as she had been before.

She was so busy with her thoughts, that she did not perceive Mammy Grace, as she drew the old, broken-backed rocking-chair up to the door, and sitting down, with her elbows on her knees and her head upon her hands, leaned forward, to discover, if possible, what the child was so intently gazing at. She could discern no object in the deep twilight; but, struck herself with the still beauty of the scene, she exclaimed,—

"Pooty night, a'n't it? How de stars of heaben do shine!"

The voice disturbed Tidy in her reverie. Her first impulse was to get up and walk away, that she might

finish out her thinking in some other place, where she could be alone. But the thought flashed through her mind, that perhaps the kind-looking old nurse at her side might be able to tell her some of the many things she was so perplexed about; and, almost before she knew she was speaking, she blurted out,—

"What's them things up thar?"

"Dem bright little shiny tings, honey, in de firm'ment? Laws, don' ye know? Whar's ye lived all yer days, if ye don' know de stars when ye sees 'em?"

"Who owns 'em? and what they stuck up ther for?" asked the child, somewhat encouraged.

"Who owns 'em? Hi! dey's de property ob de Lord ob heaben, chile, I reckons; and dey's put dar to gib us light o'nights. Jest see 'em shine! and what a sight of 'em dar is, too; nobody can't count 'em noway. And de Lord he hold 'em all in de holler ob his hand," said the old negress, shaping her great black palm to suit the idea; "and he knows 'em all by name, too. Specs 'tis wonderful; but ebery one ob dem leetle, teenty tings has got a name, and de great Lord he 'members 'em ebery one."

Tidy's wonder was not at all diminished by what she heard; and the questions she wanted to ask came up so fast in her mind, she hardly knew which to utter first. What they were made out of, how they came and went, what they meant by twinkling so, were things she had long desired to know; but for the moment these were forgotten in the burning, eager curiosity she had, now that she had heard the name of their Maker, to know more of him, and where he was to be found. Half rising from her former position, and looking earnestly in the face of her humble instructor, which was beaming with her own admiration of the glorious works and power of the Lord, she exclaimed vehemently,—

"That Lord,—who's him? I's never heerd of him afore."

"Laws, honey, don' ye know? He's de great Lord of heaben and earf, dat made you and me and ebery body else. He made all de tings ye sees,—de trees, de green grass, de birds, de pigs,—dere's noffin dat he didn't make. Oh, he's de mighty Lord, I tells ye, chile! Didn't ye neber hear 'bout him afore?"

Tidy shook her head; she could hardly speak.

"Tell me some more," she said at last.

"Well, chile, dis great Lord he lib up in de heaben of heabens, way up ober dat blue sky, and he sits all de time on a great trone, and he sees ebery ting dat goes on down har in dis yer world. Ef ye does any ting bad, he puts it down in a great book he's got, and byme-by he'll punish de wicked folks right orful."

"Whip?" questioned Tidy.

"Whip! no; burn in de hot fire and brimstone for eber and for eber. 'Tis orful to be wicked, and hab de great Lord punish."

"I ha'n't done noffin," cried out Tidy, fairly trembling with terror.

"Laws, no,—course not, chile; ye's noffin but a chile, ye know; but some folks does orful tings. But ye needn't be afeard, honey; he's a good Lord, and lubs us all; and ef ye tries to be good, and 'beys missus, and neber lies, nor steals, nor swars, he'll be a good friend to ye. He'll make de sun to shine on yer, and de rain to fall; and when ye dies, he'll take yer right up dar, to lib wid him allus. There now, jest hark,—dat's old Si comin' up de lane. Don' ye h'ar him singin'? He lubs de Lord, he does, and he's allus a-singin'. Hark, now! a'n't it pooty? Guess de pone's done by dis time;" and she shuffled to the fireplace, to look after her cake.

Tidy, almost overwhelmed with the weight of knowledge that had been poured in upon her inquiring spirit, and hardly knowing whether what she had heard should make her glad or sorry, leaned back against the door-post, and carelessly listened to the voice, as it came nearer and nearer. In a minute the words fell with pleasing distinctness upon the ear.

*"Dear sister, didn't you promise me
To help me shout and praise him?
Den come and jine your voice to mine,
And sing his lub amazin'.
I tink I hear de trumpet sound,
About de break of day;
Good Lord, we'll rise in de mornin',
And fly, and fly away,
On de mornin's wings, to Canaan's land,
To heaben, our happy home,
Bright angels shall convey our souls
To de new Jerusalem."*

"Hallelujah, amen, bress de Lord. How is ye dis night, Mammy Grace?" said a cheerful voice at the cabin-door.

"Ho! go 'long, Simon,—I knowed ye was comin'. Ye allus blows yer trumpet 'fore yer gits here. Come in, help yerse'f to a cha'r. Here, chile," addressing Tidy, "here's yer supper,—eat it now; and don' ye neber let what I's telled ye slip out of yer 'membrance."

Which Tidy was not at all likely to do. She picked up the bread which was thrown to her, and, munching it as she went along, walked away to the pump to get a drink of water.

Children, when you rise in the morning and come down stairs to the cheerful breakfast, or when you are called at noon and night, to join the family circle again around a neatly-spread table, did you ever think what a refining influence this single custom has upon your life? The savage eats his meanly-prepared food from the vessel in which it is cooked, each member of his household dipping with his fingers, or some rude utensil, into the one dish. He is scarcely raised above the cattle that eat their fodder at the crib, or the dog that gnaws the bone thrown to him upon the ground. And are the slaves any better off? They are neither allowed time, convenience, or inducements to enjoy a practice, which is so common with us, that we fail to number it among our privileges, or to recognize its elevating tendency; and yet they are stigmatized as a debased and brutish class. Can we expect them to be otherwise? Who is accountable for this degradation? By what system have they become so reduced? and have any suitable efforts ever been made for their elevation?

Since I wrote this chapter, I have learned some things with regard to the freed men at Port Royal, where so

many fugitive slaves have taken refuge during the war, and are now employed by Government, and being educated by Christian teachers, which will make what I have just said more apparent. Dr. French, who has labored among this people, in a public address, drew a pleasing picture of the improvements introduced into the home-life of the negroes,—how, as they began to feel free, and earn an independent subsistence, their cabins were whitewashed, swept clean, kept in order, and pictures and maps, cut from illustrated newspapers, were pasted up on the walls by the women as a decoration. He spoke of the rivalry in neatness thus produced, and of the general elevating and refining effect. On his representation, the commanding officers and the society by whom he is employed permitted him to introduce into some twenty-five of the cabins, on twenty-five different plantations, what had never been known before,—a window with panes of glass. To this luxury were added tables, good, strong, tin wash-basins, and soap, stout bed-ticks, and a small looking-glass. The effect of the father of the family, sitting at the head of his new table, while his sable wife and children gathered around it, and asking a blessing on the simple fare, was very touching. Hitherto they had boiled their hominy in a common skillet, and eaten it out of oyster-shells, when and wherever they could, some in-doors and some outside, in every variety of attitude. He said, also, that the ludicrous pranks of both old and young, on eying themselves for the first time in the mirror, were quite amusing.

CHAPTER VII. FRANCES.

QUITE a number of children were gathered in the vicinity of the pump, performing their usual antics, under the direction and leadership of a girl larger and older than the rest,—a genuine, coal-black, woolly-headed, thick-lipped young negro. This was the daughter of Venus, the cook, and her appointment of service was the kitchen. Full of fun, and nimble as an eel in every joint, her various pranks and feats of skill were perfectly amazing, and were received with boisterous applause by the rest of the group.

As she saw Tidy advancing, however, she ceased her evolutions, and, turning to the others with a comic grimace, she bade them hold off, while she held discourse with the new-comer.

"Her comes yer white nigger," she said, in a loud whisper, "and I's boun' to gaffer de las' news;" and putting on a demure face, she accosted the neatly-appareled child.

"Specs ye're a stranger in dese yer parts. What's yer name?"

"Tidy;—what's yourn?" was the ready response.

"Dey calls me France. Dey don't stop to place fandangles on to names here. Specs dey'll call YOU Ti."

"I doesn't care; I's willin'," replied Tidy, good-naturedly.

"What's de matter wid yer? Been sick?" proceeded France, with a roguish twinkle of the eye. "Specs you's had measles or 'sumption,—yer's pale as deaf; and yer hair,—laws, sakes, it'll a'most stan' alone! de kind's all done gone out of it."

"Never had much," said Tidy, laughing. "It's most straight, see;" and she pulled one of the short ringlets out with her fingers. "And I isn't sick, neither; 'tis my 'plexion."

"'Plexion!" repeated Frances, with a tone of derision; "'tis white folks has 'plexion; niggers don't hab none. Don't grow white skins in dese yer parts."

"White's as good as black, I s'pose, a'n't it?" answered Tidy, diverted by the droll manners of her new acquaintance. "I don't see no odds nohow."

"'Ta'n't 'spectable, dat's all. Brack's de fashion here on dis yer plantation. 'Tis tough, b'ars whippin's and hard knocks. Whew! Hi! Ke! Missus'll cut ye all up to slivers fust time."

"Does missus whip?"

"Reckon she does jest dat ting. Reckons you'll feel it right smart 'fore you're much older. Hi! she whips like a driver,—cuts de skin all off de knuckles in little less dan no time at all. Yer'll see; make yer curl all up."

It was not a very pleasant prospect for Tidy, to be sure; but, more amused than frightened, she went on with her inquiries.

"What does she whip ye for?"

"Laws, sake, for noffin at all; jest when she takes a notion; jest for ex'cise, like. Owes me one, now," said the girl. "I brokeed de pitcher dis mornin', and, ho, ho, ho! how missus flied! I runned and 'scaped her, though."

"She'll catch ye some time."

"No, she don't, not for dat score. Specs I'll dodge till she's got suffin' else to tink about. Dat's de way dis chile fix it. Shouldn't hab no skin leff, ef I didn't. Laws, now, ye ought to seen toder day, when I's done stept on missus' toe. Didn't do it a purpose, sartain true, ef ye do laugh," said she, shaking her head at the tittering tribe at her heels. "Dat are leetle Luce pushed, and missus jest had her hand up to gib Luce an old-fashioned crack on the head wid dat big brack key of hern. Hi! didn't she fly roun', and forgot all 'bout Luce, a tryin' to hit dis nig—and dis nig scooted and runned, and when missus' hand come down wid de big key, thar warn't no nigger's head at all thar—and missus was gwine to lay it on so drefful hard, dat she falled ober hersef right down into de kitchen, and by de time she picked hersef up, bof de nigs war done gone. Ho, ho, ho! I tells ye she was mad enough ter eat 'em. 'Pears as ef sparks comed right out of dem brack eyes."

The girl's loud voice, as she grew animated in telling her exploits, and the boisterous glee of her hearers, might have drawn the mistress with whip in hand from the house, to inflict with double severity the evaded punishment of the morning, but for the timely interference of Venus, who, with her clean white apron and turbaned head, majestically emerged from the kitchen, warning the young rebel and her associates to clear the premises.

"Along wid yer, and keep yer tongue tween yer teeth, chile, or you'll cotch it."

So Frances, drawing Tidy along with her, and followed by the whole troop, turned into the lane that led down to the negro quarters, and as they saunter along, I will tell you about her.

She was a fair specimen of slave children, full of the merry humor, the love of fun and frolic peculiar to her race, with not a little admixture of art and cunning. She was wild, rough, and boisterous, one of the sort always getting into disgrace. She couldn't step without stumbling, nor hold anything in her hand without spilling. She never had on a whole frock, except when it was new, and her bare feet were seldom without a bandage. She considered herself one of the most unfortunate of creatures, because she met with so many accidents, and had, in consequence, to suffer so much punishment; and it was of no use to try to do differently, she declared, for she "couldn't help it, nohow."

I have seen just such children who were not slaves, haven't you? And I think I understand the cause of their misfortunes. Shall I give you an inkling of it? It is because they are so heedless and headlong in their ways, racing and romping about with perfect recklessness. Don't you think now that I am right, little reader, you who cried this very day, because you were always getting into trouble, and getting scolded and punished for it? You who are always tearing your frock and soiling your nice white apron, spilling ink on your copy-book, and misplacing your geography, forgetting your pencil and losing your sponge, and so getting reproof upon reproof until you are heart-sick and discouraged? I know what Jessie Smith's father told HER the other day. "You wouldn't meet with so many mishaps, Jessie, if you didn't RUSH so." Jessie tried, after that, to move round more gently and carefully, and I think she got on better.

Frances was just one of these "rushing" children, but she was good-natured, and Tidy was quite fascinated with her. It was so new to have an associate of her own age too; and so it came to pass that almost immediately they were fast friends. Now, as they strolled along in the starlight, under the great spreading pines which stood as sentinels here and there along their path, Tidy drank in eagerly all her companion said, and in a little while had gathered all the interesting points of information concerning the place and the people. Frances told her how hard and mean the master and mistress were, and how poorly the slaves fared down at the quarters. Up at the house they made out very well, she said; but not half so well as she and her mother did when they lived out east on Mr. Blackstone's plantation. Then she described the busy summer season, when hundreds of people came there to board and drink the water of the springs. Mr. Lee had built two long rows of little brick houses, she said, down by the springs, where the people lived while they were here, and there was a great dining cabin with long tables and seats, and a barbecue hall, where they had barbecues, and then danced all night long, and had gay times. And there was plenty of money going at such times, for the people had quantities of money and gave it to the slaves.

The negro quarters consisted of six log cabins, which had once been whitewashed, but now were extremely wretched in appearance, both without and within. It is customary on the plantations of the South to have the houses of the negroes a little removed, perhaps a quarter of a mile, from the family mansion. Thus, with the exception of the house servants, who must be within call, the slave portion of the family live by themselves, and generally in a most uncivilized and miserable way. In some cases their houses are quite neatly built and kept; but it was not so on Mr. Lee's estate.

In front of these old huts was a spring, the water bubbling up and running through a dilapidated, moss-covered spout, into a tub half sunk in the earth, which in the daytime served as a drinking trough for the animals, and a bathing-pool for the babies. Brushwood and logs were lying around in all directions, and here and there a fire was burning, at which the negroes were cooking their supper. Dogs and a few stray babies were roaming about, seeming lonely for want of the pigs and chickens which kept company with them all day, but had now gone to rest. Boys and girls of larger growth were rollicking and careering over the place, dancing and singing and entertaining themselves and the whole settlement with their jollities and noise.

Is it surprising, we must stop to ask, that the colored people are a degraded class, when we consider the way in which the children live from their very infancy. No work for them to do, nothing to learn, nobody to care for them,—they are just left to grow and fatten like swine, till they are in condition to be sold or to be broken in to their tasks in the field. Utterly neglected, they contract, of necessity, lazy and vicious habits, and it is no wonder they have to be whipped and broken in to work as animals to the yoke or harness; and no wonder that under such treatment for successive generations, the race should become so reduced in mental and moral ability, as to be thought by many incapable of ever reclaiming a position among the enlightened nations of the earth. Oh, what a weight of guilt have the people of our country incurred in allowing four millions of those poor people to be so trodden down in the very midst of us!

When the children reached home again they found Mammy Grace's cabin quite full of men and women, shouting, singing, and talking in a way quite unintelligible to our little stranger. After she had dropped upon her cot for the night, she lifted her head and ventured to ask what those people had been about.

"Don' ye know, chile? We's had a praisin'-meetin'. We has 'em eb'ry week, one week it's here, and one week it's ober to General Doolittle's, ober de hill yonder. Ef ye's a good chile, honey, ye shall go wid yer old mammy some time, ye shall."

"What do you do?" asked Tidy.

"We praises, chile,—praises de Lord, and den we prays too."

"What's that?"

"Laws, chile, ye don't know noffin. Whar's ye been fotched up all yer days? Why, when we wants any ting we can't git ourself, nohow, we ask de Lord to gib it to us—dat's what it is."

That first day and evening in Tidy's new home was a memorable day in her experience. It seemed as if she had been lifted up two or three degrees in existence, so much had she heard and learned. She had enough to think about as she lay down to rest, for the first time away from Miss Matilda's sheltering presence.

CHAPTER VIII. PRAYER.

As Tidy grew in stature she grew in favor also with those around her. Spry but gentle in her movements, obedient, obliging, and apt to learn, she secured the good-will of her master and mistress, and the visitors that thronged to the place. If any little service was to be performed which required more than usual care or expedition, she was the one to be called upon to do it. It was no easy task to please a person so fretful and impatient in spirit as Mrs. Lee, yet Tidy, by her promptness and docility, succeeded admirably. Still, with all her well-doing she was not able entirely to avoid her harshness and cruelty.

One day, when she had been several months in Mrs. Lee's family, she was set to find a ball of yarn which had become detached from her mistress's knitting-work. Diligently she hunted for it every-where,—in Mammy Grace's cabin, on the veranda, in the drawing-room, dining-room, and kitchen, up-stairs, down-stairs, and in the lady's chamber, but no ball was to be found. The mistress grew impatient, and the child searched again. The mistress became unreasonable and threatened, and the child really began to tremble for fear of undeserved chastisement. What could she do?

What do you think she did? I will tell you?

Ever since that first night with Mammy Grace, when Tidy had asked her what it was to pray, and had been told, "When we wants any ting we can't git oursefs, nohow, we asks de Lord to gib it to us," these words had been treasured in her memory; but as yet she had never had an opportunity to put them to a practical use; for up to this time she had not really wanted any thing. Her necessities were all supplied even better than she had reason to expect; for in addition to the plain but sufficient fare that was allowed her in the cabin, she was never a day without luxuries from the table of the family. Fruits, tarts, and many a choice bit of cake, found their way through the children's hands to their little favorite, so that she had nothing to wish for in the eating line. Her services with the children were so much in accordance with her taste as to be almost pastime, and the old nurse was as kind and good as a mother could be. Never until this day had she been brought into a real strait; and it was in this emergency that she thought to put Mammy Grace's suggestion to the test. She had attended the weekly prayer or "praisin'-meetin's" as they were called, and observed that when the men and women prayed, they seemed to talk in a familiar way with this invisible Lord; and she determined to do the same. As she went out for the third time from the presence of her mistress, downcast and unhappy, she thought that if she only had such eyes as the Lord had, which Mammy Grace repeatedly told her were in every place, considering every little thing in the earth, she would know just where to go to find the missing ball. At that thought something seemed to whisper, "Pray."

She darted out of the door, ran across the yard, making her way as speedily as possible to the only retired spot she knew of. This was a deep gully at the back of the house, through which a tiny stream of water crept, just moistening the roots of the wild cherry and alder bushes which grew there in great abundance, and keeping the grass fresh and green all the summer long. No one ever came to this spot excepting now and then the laundress with a piece of linen to bleach, or the children to play hide-and-seek of a moonlight evening. Here she fell upon her knees, and lifting up her hands as she had seen others do, she said,—

"Blessed Lord, I want to find missus' ball of yarn, and I can't. You know whar 'tis. Show me, so I sha'n't get cracks over my head with the big key. Hallelujah, amen."

She didn't know, innocent child, what this "Hallelujah, amen," meant; but she remembered that Uncle Simon always ended in that way, and she supposed it had something important to do with the prayer. So she uttered it with a feeling of great satisfaction, as though that capped the climax of her duty, and put the seal of acceptance on her petition; and then she got up and walked away, as sure as could be that the ball would be forthcoming. I dare say she expected to see it rolling out before her from some unthought-of corner as she went along.

Do not laugh at the poor little slave girl, children, or ridicule the idea of her taking such a small thing to the Lord. If you, and older people too, were in the habit of carrying all your little troubles to the throne of grace, I am sure you would find help that you little dream of. If the Lord in his greatness regards the little sparrows, so that not one of them shall fall to the ground without his notice, and if he numbers the hairs of our heads, surely there is nothing that can give us uneasiness of mind or sorrow of heart too small to commend to his notice. I wish we might all follow Tidy's example, and I have no doubt that our heavenly Father, who is quite willing to have his words and his love tested, would answer us as he did her.

She went directly to the house, carefully looking this way and that, as if expecting, as I said, that the ball would suddenly appear before her,—of course it did not,—and passing across the veranda, entered the hall. A great, old-fashioned, eight-day clock, like the pendulum that hung in the farmer's kitchen so long, and got tired of ticking, I imagine, stood in one corner. Just at the foot of this, Tidy saw a white string protruding. She forgot for the moment what she was hunting after, and stooped to pick up the string. She pulled at it, but it seemed to catch in something and slipped through her fingers. She pulled again, when lo and behold! out came the ball of yarn. Didn't her eyes sparkle? Didn't her hands twitch with excitement, as she picked it up and carried it to her mistress? So much for praying, said she to herself; I shall know what to do the next time I get into trouble.

The next time the affair proved a more serious one. It was no less than a search for Frances, who had again been guilty of some misdemeanor, and had hidden herself away to escape punishment. On the second day of her absence, Mrs. Lee called Tidy, and instructed her to search for the girl, with the assurance that if she didn't find her, she herself should get the whipping. It was no very pleasant prospect for Tidy, but she set to her task earnestly. A half-day she spent going over the premises,—the house, the out-buildings, the quarters, and the pine-woods opposite; but the girl was not to be found.

Afraid to come and report her want of success, for a while she was quite in despair; until again she bethought herself of prayer, and out she ran to the gully. There she cried,—

"Lord, I's very anxious to find France. I'll thank you to show me whar she is, and make missus merciful, so she sha'n't lash neither one of us. Oh, if I could only find France. Blessed Lord, you can help me find her"——

She was pleading very earnestly when a voice suddenly interrupted her, and there, at her side, stood the girl.

"Who's dat ar you's conbersin wid 'bout me, little goose?" asked Frances.

"Oh, France," cried Tidy in delight, "whar was you? Missus set me lookin' for yer, and she said she'd whip all the skin off me, if I didn't find yer. Whar's you been?"

"Laws, you nummy, ye don't specs now I's gwine to let all dis yer plantation know dat secret. Ho, ho, ho! If I telled, I couldn't go dar 'gin no way. I's comed here for my dinner, caus specs dis chile can't starve nohow. See, my mudder knows whar to put de bones for dis yer chile," and pushing aside the bushes, she displayed an ample supply of eatables, which she fell to devouring greedily. Tidy had to reason long and stoutly with the refractory girl before she could persuade her to return to the house; and when she accomplished her purpose, she was probably not aware of the real motive that wrought in that dark, stupid negro mind. It was not the fear of an increased punishment, if she remained longer absent,—it was not the faint hope that Tidy held up, that if she humbly asked her mistress's pardon, she might be forgiven,—but the thought that if she did not at once return, Tidy must suffer in her stead, was too much for her. She was, notwithstanding her black skin and rude nature, too generous to allow that.

So the two wended their way to the kitchen in great trepidation, and Tidy, stepping round to the sitting-room, timidly informed her mistress of the arrival, adding in most beseeching manner, "Please, Missus, don't whip her, 'caus she's so sorry."

"You mind your own business, little sauce-box, or you'll catch it too. When I want your advice, I'll come for it," and seizing her whip which she kept on a shelf close by, she proceeded to the kitchen. Miss Matilda followed, determined to see that justice was done to one at least.

The poor frightened girl fell on her knees.

"Oh, Missus," she cried, "dear Missus, do 'scuse me. I'll neber do dat ting over 'gin! I'll neber run away 'gin! I'll neber do noffin! Oh, Missus, please don't, oh, dear,"—as notwithstanding the appeal, the angry blow fell. Before another could descend, Miss Matilda laid her hand upon her sister's arm.

"Excuse the girl, Susan," she said, gently, "excuse her just this once, and give her a trial. See if she won't do better."

It was very hard, for it was contrary to her nature, for Mrs. Lee to show mercy. However, she did yield, and after a very severe reprimand to the culprit, and a very unreasonable, angry speech to Tidy, who, to to [sic] her thinking, had become implicated in Frances' guilt, she dismissed them both from her presence,—the one chuckling over her fortunate escape, and the other querying in her mind, whether or no this unhopd-for mercy was another answer to prayer. Miss Matilda made a remark as they retired, which Tidy heard, whether it was designed for her ear or not.

"I always have designed to give that child her liberty when she is old enough; and if any thing prevents my doing so, I hope she will take it herself."

Take her liberty! What did that mean? Tidy laid up the saying, and pondered it in her heart.

Does any one of our little readers ask why Miss Matilda did not free the child then? Tidy's services paid her owner's board at her brother's house, and she couldn't afford to give away her very subsistence; COULD SHE?

CHAPTER IX. THE FIRST LESSON.

THE walk to school was a very delightful one, and as the trio trudged over the road from day to day, chattering like magpies, laughing, singing, shouting, and dancing in the exuberance of childish glee, all seemed equally light-hearted and joyous. Even the little slave who carried the books which she was unable to read, and the basket of dinner of which she could not by right partake, with a keen eye for the beautiful, and a sensitive heart to appreciate nature, could not apparently have been more happy, if her condition had been reversed, and she had been made the served instead of the servant.

The way for half a mile lay through a dense pine-wood,—the tall trees rising like stately pillars in some vast temple filled with balsamic incense, and floored with a clean, elastic fabric, smooth as polished marble, over which the little feet lightly and gayly tripped. In the central depths where the sun's rays never penetrated, and the fallen leaves lay so thickly on the ground, no flowers could grow, but on the outer edges spring lavished her treasures. The trailing arbutus added new fragrance to the perfumed air, frail anemones trembled in the wind, and violets flourished in the shade. The blood-root lifted its lily-white blossoms to the light, and the cream-tinted, fragile bells of the uvularia nestled by its side. Passing the wood and its embroidered flowery border, a brook ran across the road. The rippling waters were almost hidden by the bushes which grew upon its banks, where the wild honeysuckle and touch-me-not, laurels and eglantine, mingled their beautiful blossoms, and wooed the bee and humming-bird to their gay bowers. Over this stream a narrow bridge led directly to the school-house; but the homeward side was so attractive, that the children always tarried there until they saw the teacher on the step, or heard the little bell tinkling from the door. Tidy remained with them till the last minute, and there her bright face might invariably be seen when school was dismissed in the afternoon. A large flat rock between the woods and the flowery edges of Pine Run was the place of rendezvous.

One summer's morning they were earlier than usual, and emerging from the woods, warm and weary with their long walk, they threw themselves down upon the rock over which in the early day, the shadows of the trees refreshingly fell. Amelia turned her face toward the Run, and lulled by the gentle murmuring of the water, and the humming of the insects, was soon quietly asleep; Susie, with an apron full of burs, was making

furniture for the play-house which they were arranging in a cleft of the rock; and Tidy, who carried the books, was busily turning over the leaves and amusing herself with the pictures.

"My sakes!" she exclaimed presently, "what a funny creature! See that great lump on his back!" and she pointed with her finger to the picture of a camel. "Miss Susie! what IS that? Is it a lame horse?"

"Why no, Tidy, that's a camel; 'tisn't a horse at all. I was reading that very place yesterday,—let me see," and taking the book she read very intelligently a brief account of the wonderful animal.

"How queer!" said Tidy, deeply interested. "And is there something in this book about all the pictures?"

"Yes," answered Susie, "if you could only read now, you would know about every one. See here, on the next page is an elephant; see his great tusks and his monstrous long trunk," and the child read to her attentive listener of another of the wonders of creation.

[illustration omitted]

"How I wish I could read,—why can't I?" asked Tidy; and the little colored face was turned up full of animation. "I don't believe but I could learn as well as you."

"Why of course you could," answered Amelia, who had risen quite refreshed by her short nap. "I don't see why not. You can't go to school you know, because mother wants you to work; but I could teach you just as well as not."

"Oh, could you? will you?—do begin!" cried the eager child. "Oh, Miss Mely, if you only would, I'd do any thing for you."

"Look here," said Amelia, seizing the book from her sister's hands, and by virtue of superior age, constituting herself the teacher; "do you see those lines?" and she pointed to the columns of letters on the first page.

"Yes," said the ready pupil, all attention.

"Well, those are letters,—the alphabet, they call it. Every one of them has got a name, and when you have learned to know them all perfectly, so that you can call them all right wherever you see 'em, why, then you can read any thing."

"Any thing?" asked Tidy in amazement.

"Yes, any thing,—all kinds of books and papers and the Bible and every thing."

"I can learn THEM, I'm sure I can," said Tidy. "Let's begin now."

"Well, you see that first one,—that's A. You see how it's made,—two lines go right up to a point, and then a straight one across. Now say, what is it?"

"A."

"Yes; and now the next one,—that's B. There's a straight line down and two curves on the front. What's that?"

"B."

"Now you must remember those two,—I sha'n't tell you any more this morning, and I shall make you do just as Miss Agnes used to make me. Miss Agnes was our governess at home before we came here to school. She made me take a newspaper,—see, here's a piece,—and prick the letters on it with a pin. Now you take this piece of paper, and prick every A and every B that you can find on it, and to-morrow I'll show you some more."

Just then the bell sounded from the schoolhouse, and Amelia and Susan went to their duties, but not with half so glad a heart as Tidy set herself to hers. Down she squatted on the rock, and did not leave the place till her first task was successfully accomplished, and the precious piece of perforated paper safely stowed away for Amelia's inspection.

Day after day this process was repeated, until all the letters great and small had been learned; and now for the more difficult work of putting them together. There seemed to be but one step between Tidy and perfect happiness. If she could only have a hymn-book and know how to read it, she would ask nothing more. She didn't care so much about the Bible. If she had known, as you do, children, that it is God's word, no doubt she would have been anxious to learn what it contained. But this truth she had never heard, and therefore all her desires were centered in the hymn-book, in which were stored so many of those precious and beautiful hymns which she loved so much to hear Uncle Simon repeat and sing. Would she ever be so happy as to be able to sing them from her own book?

CHAPTER X. LONY'S PETITION.

BUT, ah! this is a world of disappointment, and it almost always happens that if we attain any real good, we have to toil for it. Tidy's path was not to continue as smooth and pleasant as it had been.

Mr. and Mrs. Lee, by some untoward accident, found out what was going on, and at once expounded the law and the necessities of the case to their children, forbidding them in the most peremptory manner, and on penalty of the severest chastisement, ever to attempt again to give Tidy or any other slave a lesson. What the punishment was with which they were threatened she never knew, for the little girls never dared even to speak upon the subject; but she knew it must be something very dreadful, and though this was a most cruel blow to her expectations, she loved them too well to bring them into the slightest danger on her own account. So she never afterwards alluded to the subject.

Her first impulse was to give up all for lost, and to sit down and weep despairingly over her disappointment; but she was of too hopeful a disposition to do so.

"I knows the letters," said she to herself, "and I specs I can learn myself. I can SCRAMBLE ALONG, some way."

Scrambling indeed! I wonder if any of you, little folks, would be willing to undertake it.

In her trouble she did not forget the strong hold to which she had learned to resort in trouble. She PRAYED about it every day, morning, noon, and night. Indeed the words "Lord, help me learn to read," were seldom out of her heart. Even when she did not dare to utter them with her lips, they were mentally ejaculated. Hers was indeed an unceasing prayer.

"Come chile," said Mammy Grace, one evening in the cool, frosty autumn, as Tidy was hovering over the embers, eating her corn-bread, "put on de ole shawl, and we'll tote ober de hills to Massa Bertram's. De meetin's dare dis yer night, and Si's gwine to go. Come, honey, 'tis chill dis ebening, and de walk'll put the warmf right smart inter ye;" and they started off at a quick pace, over the hills, through the woods, down the lanes, and across little brooks, the pale, cold moonlight streaming across their path, and the warm sunlight of divine peace and favor enlivening their hearts as they went on, making nothing at all of a walk of three miles to sing and pray in company with Christian friends. Would WE take as much pains to attend a prayer-meeting?

It was not the customary place of meeting, and the people for the most part were strangers. One party had come by special invitation, to see a new PIECE OF PROPERTY which had just arrived upon the place,—a piece of property that thought, and felt, and moved, and walked, like a thing of life; that loved and feared the Lord, and sung and prayed like any Christian. What wonderful qualities slaveholders' chattels possess!

The woman, whose name was Apollonia, familiarly called Lony, was a tall, gaunt, square-built negress, with a skin so black and shining, and her limbs so rigid, that she might almost have been mistaken for one of those massive statues we sometimes see carved out of the solid anthracite. A bright yellow turban on her head rose in shape like an Egyptian pyramid, adding to her extraordinary hight, and strangely contrasting with her black, thick, African features. Altogether her appearance would have been formidable and repelling, but for a look in her eye like the clear shining after rain, and a tranquil, peaceful expression which had over-spread her hard visage. Tidy was overawed and fascinated by the gigantic figure, and when, after a few minutes of sacred silence, the new comer, who seemed accepted as the presiding spirit of the occasion, commenced singing, she was more than usually interested and attentive. The words were not familiar to the company, so that none could join, and the deep monotone of the woman, at first low, and by degrees becoming louder and more animated, made every word distinct and impressive.

*"I was but a youth when first I was called on,
To think of my soul and the state I was in;
I saw myself standing from God a great distance,
And betwixt me and him was a mountain of Sin.*

*"Old Satan declared that I had been converted,
Old Satan persuaded me I was too young;
And before my days ended that I would grow tired,
And I'd wish that I'd never so early begun."*

"But, praise de Lord," exclaimed the woman, stopping short in her hymn, and rising suddenly to her feet, "I habn't growed tired yet, and I's been walkin in de ways of goodness forty years and more. De Lord, he is good,—I knows he is, for I's tried him and found him out, and I's neber tired o' praisin him. Bress de Lord! He's new to me ebery mornin, and fresh as de coolin waters ebery ebening. Praise de Lord! Hallelujah! When I was a chile, I use to make massa's boys mad so's to hear 'em swar. It pleased dis wicked cretur to hear de fierce swarrin'. One day I went to de garden behind de house to git de water-melons for dinner, and I heerd a voice. 'Pears 'twas like a leetle, soft voice, but I couldn't see nobody nowhar dat spoke, and it said, 'Lony, Lony, don't yer make dem boys swar no more, ef ye do, ye'll lose yer soul.' I looked all roun and roun, for I was skeered a'most to deff, but I couldn't see nobody, and den I know'd 'twas a voice from heaben, for I'd heerd o' sich, and I says, 'No, Lord, no, I won't.' I didn't know den what de SOUL was, or what a drefful ting 'twas to lose it; but I knowd it mus mean suffin orful. So I began to consider all de time 'bout de soul. By-me-by a Baptis' min'ster comed to de place, and massa and missus was converted. Den dey let us hab meetin's and de clersh'-man he comed and talked to us. I didn't comperhend much he said, 'caus I was young and foolish; but he telled a good many times 'bout dat ef we want to save our souls we mus be baptize and git under de Lord's table. Says I to my own sef, 'Specs now ef poor Lony could only find de table of de bressed Lord, 'twould all be well, and she'd be perfected foreber.' So I prayed and prayed, and one night de good Lord comed hissef, and bringd his great, splendid table, and all de fair angels dressed in white and gold and settin roun it, and I got under, and I ate de crumbs dat fell down, and den 'pears I begun to live. Oh, 'twas sich a peace dat came all ober me, and I wanted to sing and shout all of de time. And dat's jess whar I been eber sence, my friends, and I neber wants to come away till I dies; and den de good Lord'll take me up to de great heabenly mansion, and gib me de gold robes, and den I shall set up wid de rest and be like 'em all. And I's willin to wait, 'caus I lubs de Lord and praises him ebery day. He is de good Lord, and he lubs me and hearkens ebery time I speaks to him; and I ha'n't 'bleeged to holler loud, nuther, for he's neber far away, but he keeps close by dis poor soul so he can hear ebery word and cry. And he'll hear all yer cries, my friends, when ye prays for yerself or for yer chillen, or yer bredren and sisters. Le's pray, now."

Then kneeling down, this representative of a despised and untutored race, with a faith that triumphed gloriously over her abject surroundings, poured forth her supplications, talking with the Lord as a man talks with his friend, as it were face to face.

"O bressed Lord, dat's in de heaben and de earf and ebery whar; you's heerd all de tings dat we's asked for. And you knows all dat dese yer poor chillen wants dat dey hasn't axed for; and if dere's any ob 'em here, dat doesn't dare to speak out loud, and tell what dey does want, you can hear it jess as well, ef it is way down deep buried up in de heart; and oh, bressed Lord, do gib 'em de desires of de heart, 'less it's suffin dat'll hurt 'em, and den Lord don't gib it to 'em at all."

This was enough for our little Tidy. Her heart swelled, and the great tears ran down her cheeks, as she thought instantly of the one dear, cherished petition that she dared not utter, but which was uppermost in her

heart continually; and as the woman pleaded with the Lord to hear and answer the desires of every soul present, she held that want of hers up before Him as a cup to be filled, and the Lord verily did fill it up to the brim. A quiet, restful feeling took the place of the burning, eager anxiety she had hitherto felt, and from that moment she was sure, yes, SURE that she would have her wish, and some day be able to read. Nothing had ever encouraged and strengthened her so much as the earnest words and prayers of this Christian woman. How thankful she always felt that she had been brought to the prayer-meeting at Massa Bertram's that night.

CHAPTER XI. ROUGH PLACES.

To obtain possession of the hymn-book she desired, was not so very difficult in Tidy's estimation. The numerous visitors at the house, pleased with her bright face, her gentle manners, and ready attentions, often dropped a coin into her hand, and these little moneys were carefully treasured for the accomplishment of her purpose. She calculated that by Christmas-time she should have enough money to buy it, and Uncle Simon she knew would procure it for her. Her greatest anxiety now was to be ready to use it.

But how could she make herself ready? How was she to learn without a teacher or a book?

There had been an old primer for some time tossing about the play-room—its scarlet cover looking more gorgeous and tempting in Tidy's eyes, as they fell upon it day after day, than any trinket or gewgaw she could have seen; yet she dared not touch it. She was too honest to appropriate it to herself without leave, and she was afraid to allude to the forbidden lessons by asking Amelia or Susan for it. Several times she tried to draw their attention to the neglected book, and to give them some hint of her own longing for it,—but all to no avail. One day, however, she had orders from the children to clear up the room thoroughly.

"Make every thing neat as a pin," said Amelia, "while we go down to dinner, for we are going to have company this afternoon; and if it looks right nice, I'll give you an orange."

"What shall I do with dis yer book, then, Miss Mely?" hastily asked Tidy, as she stooped to pick up the book, and felt herself trembling all over that she had dared to put her fingers upon it.

"That? Oh, that's no good; throw it away,—we never use it now,—or keep it yourself, if you want to," said she, after a second thought.

It was done. The book was quickly deposited in a safe place, and the clearing up proceeded rapidly. The orange was a small consideration; for had she not got a book, her heart's desire, and now she could learn to read.

She could learn all alone; she would be her own teacher. If she got into a very narrow place she would get Uncle Simon to help her out. No one else on the estate knew how to read, and he didn't know much, but no doubt he could be of some assistance. Such was Tidy's inward plan.

After this, the little girl might have been seen every evening stretched at full length on the cabin floor, her head towards the fireplace, where the choicest pine knots were kindled into a cheerful blaze, with her spelling-book open before her. She was "clambering" up the rough way of knowledge.

Did she accomplish her purpose? To be sure she did. Little reader, did you ever make up your mind to do any thing and fail? There's an old proverb that says, "Where there's a will there's a way;" and this is true. Resolution and energy, patience and perseverance, will achieve nearly every thing you set about. Try it. Try it when you have hard lessons to do, puzzling examples in arithmetic to solve, that long stint in sewing to do, that distasteful music to practice, those bad habits to conquer. Try it faithfully, and when you grow up, you'll be able to say, from your own experience, "Where there's a will there's a way."

You must not expect, however, that Tidy learned very rapidly or very perfectly under such discouragements. Think how it would be with yourself, if you only knew your letters. You might read quite easily m-a-n, but how do you think you could find out that those letters spelled man?

Tidy advanced much more expeditiously after she had obtained possession of her hymn-book. Some of the hymns were quite familiar to her from her having heard them sung so often at the meetings, and she determined to study these first; and you may well imagine how proud she felt,—not sinfully, but innocently proud,—when she seated herself one afternoon by Mammy Grace's side, and pulling her hymn-book out of her bosom, asked if she might read a hymn.

"Yes, chile, 'deed ye may, ef ye can. Specs 'twill do yer ole mammy's heart good to hear ye read de books like de white folks."

And the child opened the book, and in a clear, pleasant, happy voice she read slowly, but correctly,—

*"My God, the spring of all my joys,
The life of my delights,
The glory of my brightest days,
And comfort of my nights.*

*"In darkest shades if he appear,
My dawning is begun;
He is my soul's sweet morning star,
And he my rising sun."*

"Look dar, chile," cried the old nurse, springing to her feet, "Massa George's jess a'most out ob de door. Ef he SHOULD fall and break his neck, what WOULD 'come of us. Dis yer chile 'd neber hab no more peace all de days of her life. Yer reads raal pooty, honey; but ye mus'n't neglect duty for de books, 'caus ef ye do, ye isn't worthy of de prevelege."

So Tidy had to forego her hymns till the children were put to bed.

After this, in the long winter evenings, in Mammy Grace's snug cabin, what harvests of enjoyment were

gathered from that precious book. Uncle Simon was the favored guest on such occasions, and always "bringed his welcome wid hissef," he said, in the shape of pitch-pine fagots, the richest to be found, by the light of which they read and sung the songs of Zion, which they dearly loved; the pious old slave in the mean time commending, congratulating, and encouraging Tidy in her wonderful intellectual achievements.

CHAPTER XII. A GREAT UNDERTAKING.

PERSONS of will and energy generally have some distinct object before them which they are striving to reach,—something of importance to be gained or done. As fast as one thing is attained, another plan is projected; and so they go on, mounting up from one achievement to another all through life. And this enterprising spirit begins to be developed at a very early age in children.

Tidy was one of these active little beings, full of business, never unhappy for want of something to do; and besides the ordinary and more trivial occupations of the outer life, her spirit or inner life had ever a dear, cherished object before it, which engrossed her thoughts, taxed her capabilities, and raised her above the degraded level of her companions in servitude.

Now that she had attained one grand point in learning to read, she ventured on another and far more difficult enterprise. What do you think it was? Why, nothing more or less than to GET HER LIBERTY.

She had heard Miss Matilda say in the kitchen, "If I don't give the child her liberty, I hope she will take it." This was her warrant. She perceived, by Miss Matilda's words and manner, in the first place, that liberty was desirable, and, in the second, that she COULD take it. But, ignorant child as she was, she little knew the difficulties that stood in the way.

She had now lived several years in Mr. Lee's family, and had grown wiser in many respects. She began to realize more fully what it was to be a slave, and what her probable prospects were, if she did not escape. She learned that there was a place, not a great way from her Virginian home, where people did not hold her race in bondage; where she could go and come as she pleased, choose her own employers and occupation, be paid for her labor, provide for herself, and perhaps some day have a home of her own, with husband and children whom she could hold and enjoy. Do you think it strange that such a condition seemed attractive, and that she was willing to make great efforts and run fearful risks to reach it?

She kept her intentions profoundly secret. Even Mammy Grace and Uncle Simon, her best friends, were not in her confidence. But she prayed about it constantly, and sought information from every possible source with regard to this free land,—where it was, and how it could be reached,—and at last formed her plan, which she determined to carry out during the coming summer.

She knew she must have money, if she was going to travel, and for a long time she had been carefully saving up all she could command. She constantly endeavored to make herself useful in various ways in order to get it. The summer-time was her money harvest; and this season she was delighted to find visitors thronging to the Springs in greater numbers than she had ever seen before. She knew if there was plenty of company, there would be plenty of business, and consequently a plenty of money; for the class of people who came there were for the most part wealthy, and were quite willing to pay for the attentions they received. The little brick houses in which they lodged were under the care of the slave girls. Each one had two of these cabins, as they were called, in charge, and were required to keep them in order, to wait upon the ladies and children, and serve them at the table. Tidy was unwearied in her efforts to please. She answered promptly to every call, and kept her rooms in the neatest manner; and for her pains she received many a bright coin, which was providently stored away in a little bag, and concealed beneath her mattress. Perhaps these conscientious people would not have bestowed money so freely on their favorite young maid, if they had known the purpose to which it was to be applied. For they say that slavery is a Christian institution, a sort of missionary enterprise, which has been divinely appointed for the good of the colored race; and of course to get away from it is to run away from God and the privileges and blessings he is so kind as to give.

Tidy, however, thought differently, as the slaves generally do; and as she had made up her mind that she should gain greater advantages in a state of freedom, she determined to persevere in her attempt. Her accumulations finally became so large, that she thought she might venture to start on her journey.

She knew, too, that she must have clothes quite different from those she usually wore. And how was she to get these? Ah, she had had an eye for a long while to this. She and Amelia were not only of the same age, but of the same size. Tidy had grown in the last two years very rapidly, and had now reached a womanly height and figure. She had watched the growth of Amelia with the keenest interest. So far, it had corresponded with her own so exactly that she could easily wear the clothes made for her young mistress. In fact, Amelia often dressed Tidy up in her own garments that she might get a better idea of how they looked upon herself. This season, Amelia, for the first time, had a traveling suit complete, for she was going a journey with her father; and when it was finished, she was so pleased that she sent for Tidy at once to participate in her joy, and insisted that she should immediately put it on, that she might see how it fitted, and if every thing about it was as it should be. The dress was a dark green merino, made with a very long pelerine cape, which was the very pink of the fashion, and was the especial admiration of all the children. Tidy arrayed herself in these, and, putting the little jaunty cap of the same color on her head, stood before the glass and surveyed herself with as perfect satisfaction as the owner of the becoming costume herself experienced. Indeed she could hardly keep her eye from telling tales of the joy within, as she inwardly said, "There's many a slip twixt the cup and the lip, and may be, Miss Amelia, I shall go traveling in this before you do." She felt that nothing could have been provided more suitable or timely than this charming suit.

Are you shocked, little reader, that Tidy, the good, exemplary, conscientious Tidy, should have thought of appropriating Amelia's wardrobe to herself? I must stop a moment here to explain to you the slaves' code of

morals. They are so ignorant that we must not expect them to have so high or correct a standard of conduct as we have, or to be able to make such nice distinctions in questions of right and wrong.

Ever since Mammy Grace had made to her young pupil the first imperfect revelation of God's character and government, declaring that he would punish with eternal fire those who should lie, swear, or steal, the child had held these sins in the greatest abhorrence, and was scrupulously careful to avoid them. She would not have taken from the baby-house a trinket, or an article of food from the kitchen, without leave, on any account. At the same time, she had learned the slave theory that as they are never paid for their labor, they have a right to any thing which their labor has purchased, OF WHICH THEY HAVE NEED. Consequently if a slave is not provided with food sufficient for his wants, he supplies himself. The pigs and chickens, vegetables and fruits, or any thing else which he can handily obtain, he helps himself to, as though they were his own, and never burdens his conscience with the sin of stealing. A slave, who had obtained his freedom, once remarked in a public meeting, that when he was a boy, he was OBLIGED to steal, or TAKE food, as he called it, in order to live, because so little was provided for him. "But now," said he, while his face shone with a consciousness of honesty and honor, "I wouldn't take a cent's worth from any man; no, not for my right hand."

So, you see, that this principle of appropriating what the labor of her own hands had earned, when necessity demanded it, was that upon which Tidy was to act. She never needed to steal food, nor even luxuries, for she always had enough; nor money, because, for her limited wants, she always had enough of that. But now, when she was going a journey, and wanted to look especially nice, she felt very glad to have the dress prepared so fitting for the occasion; and she did not feel a single misgiving of conscience about taking it when she got ready to use it. Whether this was just right or not, I shall leave an open question for you to decide in your own minds. It will bear thought and discussion, and will be quite a profitable subject for you to consider.

When the preparations were all made, Mammy Grace and old Simon were let into the secret. Whether they said any thing by way of discussion I do not know—at any rate, it did not alter Tidy's determination. I think, however, that she found her two aged friends very useful in aiding her last movements; and when the eventful moment arrived, and Tidy, attired in Miss Amelia's garments, with a traveling-bag in her hand, containing her hymn-book, her money, and a few needed articles, stood at the foot of the walk that led into the public road, Mammy Grace stood with her in the starlight of the early summer's morning, and bade her God-speed.

"Ye looks like a lady for all de world, honey; I 'clare dese yer old eyes neber would a thought 'twas you, in dis yer fine dress—hi, hi, hi! Specs nobody'll tink ye's run away. De old nuss hates to part wid her chile; but ef ye must go, ye must, and de bressed Lord go wid ye, and keep ye safe."

Then giving her a most affectionate hug, she put a paper of eatables in her hand, and helped her to mount the horse before Uncle Simon, who was already in the saddle. Where or how the old man procured the horse and equipments, HE knew—but nobody else did.

The animal was a fast trotter, and brought them speedily five miles to the village, where Tidy was to take the stage-coach to Baltimore. It was before railroads and steam-engines were much talked of in Virginia. Alighting in the outskirts of the town, Simon lifted the young girl to the ground, and hastily commending her to "de bressed Lord of heaben and earf," he bade her good-by, and went back to his bondage and toil. They never saw each other again.

The day was fine, and riding a novel occupation for Tidy, but so full was her trembling heart of anxiety and fear that she could not enjoy it. She was afraid to look out of the window lest she might be recognized by some one; and she dared not look at the two pleasant-faced gentlemen who were in the coach with her, lest they might question her, and find out her true condition. So she cuddled back as closely as possible in the corner, and when they kindly offered her cakes and fruit, she just ventured to say, "No, thank you." Her own food, which the dear old nurse had taken so much pains to put up for her, lay untouched in her lap, for her heart was so absorbed she could not eat.

Night brought her to the hotel in Baltimore. The great city, the large building, and busy servants running hither and thither quite bewildered her, and she had to watch herself very closely lest she should betray herself. The waiters looked at her rather suspiciously; but she behaved with all propriety, called for her room and supper, paid for what she had, and in the morning was ready to take her seat in the northern stage, and no one ventured to molest or question her. How her heart leaped when she found herself safely on her way to Philadelphia. One day more, and she would be in a free city. What she should do when she arrived there, how she was to support herself in future, did not trouble her. That she might stand on free soil, and lift up her eyes to the stars that shone on her liberated body was all she thought of; and to-night this was to be. With every step of the plodding horses, she grew bolder and more assured, and her faith and hope and joyousness rose. But, alas! there was a lion in the way of which she had not dreamed.

"Your pass!" shouted a grim-looking man, as she stepped, bag in hand, with gentle dignity on the boat that was to take her across the stream which divided slave territory from our free States. "Where's your pass? Don't stand there staring at me," said the official, as the frightened girl looked up as if for an explanation.

A pass! She had never once thought of that! No one had mentioned her need of it. What was she to do? She looked confounded and terrified.

"No pass?" inquired the man, sternly. "'Tis easy enough to see what YOU are, then. A runaway!" said he, turning to a man at his right hand, "make her fast."

Frightened and trembling, Tidy tried to run, but it was of no use; a strong hand seized her slender arm, and held her securely. Then her sight seemed to fail her, she grew dizzy, and fell fainting on the deck. A crowd gathered about her. They remarked her light skin and delicate features, her ladylike form and neat dress. Could she be a slave? they asked. Would such a child as she appeared to be attempt to gain her liberty? They dashed water on her head, and, as her consciousness returned, she saw the faces of those two pleasant Scotch gentlemen, who had rode with her the day before all the way from Virginia, looking kindly and pitifully upon her.

"If you had only told us," they said, "we could have helped you."

But there was no friend or helper in that terrible hour, and poor Tidy, weeping and almost heart-broken, was carried back to Baltimore, and thrown into the SLAVE-JAIL.

CHAPTER XIII. A LONG JOURNEY.

IF I pronounce this disastrous event in Tidy's life another link in the chain of loving-kindness by which God was leading her to himself, perhaps you will wonder. But, my dear children, adversities are designed for this very purpose, and are all directed in infinite love and wisdom for our good. Tidy had prayed that she might be free, and the Lord heard, and meant to answer her prayer. He meant not only to give her the liberty she sought, but, more than that, to make her soul free in Christ Jesus; but there were some things she needed to learn first. She was not prepared yet to use her personal liberty rightly, nor did she at all appreciate or desire that other and better freedom. Therefore the Lord disappointed her at this time, and turned the course of her life, as it were, upside down, that by painful experiences and narrow straits she might learn what an all-sufficient Friend he could be to her; that she might learn too the sinfulness of her own heart, and his free grace and mercy for her pardon and salvation.

God "leads the blind in the way they know not." Tidy knew nothing of the method by which he was guiding her, and when she found her hopes crushed, and herself crouching, forlorn and friendless, weary and half-famished, in a prison, she gave up all for lost. She felt indeed cast off and forsaken. For hours she sat and cried despairingly, the pretty dress crumpled and stained with tears, and the hat which had been so much admired trampled under foot. Shame, grief, and fear of what was to come drove her almost to distraction.

At the end of three days, Mr. Lee, acting as her master, who had been apprised of her arrest, arrived at the prison. But what a wretched object had he come to see! He could scarcely believe that the miserable, dejected being before him was the once bright, beautiful Tidy,—such a change had her disappointment and sorrow wrought. He really pitied her, if a slaveholder ever can pity a slave, and yet he reproached her severely. He told her she was a fool to run away; that niggers never knew when they were well off; that if she had had a thimble-full of sense she might have known she couldn't make her escape. He said they had just been offered a thousand dollars for her,—which was then considered an enormous price,—by a gentleman in Virginia, and they had been on the point of selling her.

"I's Miss Matilda's," fiercely cried the poor girl at this, "and SHE wouldn't a sold me; she said she never would."

"Yes, she would, Miss," replied Mr. Lee; "we don't let her throw away such a valuable piece of property for nothing, I can tell you. A thousand dollars in the bank isn't a small thing. It wouldn't find feet to walk off with very soon, that we know."

"Miss Matilda TOLD me to take my liberty," said Tidy, disconsolately.

"Miss Matilda is a fool, like you. But we shall look out she don't cheat herself in such a fashion. Now you can have your choice, little one; you can go home with me, and take a good flogging for an example to the rest, and stay with us till another buyer comes up,—for Mr. Nicholson won't take such an uncertain piece of goods as you have showed yourself to be,—or you can go South. There's a trader here ready to take you right off. I'll give you till tomorrow morning to make up your mind."

"I'll go South," said the poor girl, the next morning. "I can't bear ever to see Miss Tilda again." And she settled herself down to her fate. She knew her life of bondage would be hard there, and she would not have much chance of getting her freedom. But it was better than the mortification of going back.

So she was sold to Mr. Pervis, the slave-trader. Mr. Pervis made about fifty purchases in Baltimore and the vicinity, and then organizing his gang he started for the South. Oh, what a different journey from that which Tidy had intended when she left home. A thousand miles South, into the very heart of slavery's dominions, with a company of coarse, stupid, filthy, wretched creatures, such as she never would have willingly associated with at home, so much more delicately had she been reared. Many of these were field-hands sold to go to the cotton plantations,—sold for "rascality."

Do you know what that means? You think it is ugliness. But no; it is a DISEASE. It is a droll sort of malady, to which a learned Louisiana doctor has given a singular name, which I can't spell, and which you wouldn't know how to pronounce; but the symptoms I can describe. Where a slave is attacked with this disease, he acts in a very stupid and careless manner, and does a great deal of mischief, breaking, abusing, and wasting every thing he can lay his hands on. He tears his clothes, throws away food, cuts up plants in the field, breaks his tools, hurts the horses and cattle, and does a vast amount of injury, and in such a way that it seems as if it was all done on purpose. He will neither work, nor eat the food offered him; quarrels with the other slaves and fights with the drivers, and altogether acts in such an ugly way that the overseer says he is "rascally." If it was really ugliness, he would be whipped; but, of course, whipping won't cure disease; so the masters consider it incurable, and sell the slave to go South to work in the rice-swamps and cotton-fields. They, perhaps, think a change of climate will do more for the patient than any other means. The Southern physicians don't have much success, to tell the truth, in curing this difficulty, for they don't seem to understand it. If they would only consult with some of their profession at the North, I have no doubt they would get some valuable suggestions on the subject. I really believe that the liberty-cure, practised by some judicious money-pathic physician, would effectually cure this "rascality." I wish I could see it tried.

Tidy found herself, therefore, in very undesirable company on this expedition to Georgia, and made up her mind very shortly that there would not be much enjoyment in it. She did not have to drag wearily along on foot all the way; for Mr. Lee was considerate enough to suggest to Mr. Pervis, that, as she had been brought up as a house-servant, and not accustomed to very hard work, she would not be able to walk much, and if she was not allowed to ride, there would be no Tidy left by the time they got to their journey's end, and the

thousand dollars which had just been paid for her would have been thrown away. So Mr. Pervis gave her a permanent place in one of the wagons, and the other women were taken up by turns, whenever the poor creatures could step no longer. The men dragged along, handcuffed in pairs, and their low, brutal, and profane conversation was dreadful to Tidy. Oh, how often she wished she had staid contentedly with Mammy Grace, and not tried to run away. And yet her hope was not utterly gone, for she often caught herself saying, with closed teeth, "Give me a chance, and I'll try it again." Freedom looked too attractive to be entirely relinquished.

The gang halted at night, put up their tents, lighted fires and cooked their mean repast. Then they stretched themselves on the bare ground to sleep. In the morning, after the wretched breakfast was eaten, the tents were struck, the wagons loaded again, and they started for another day's travel,—and so on till the long, wearisome march was over. It took them many weeks before they arrived at their destination.

There Tidy was soon resold, the trader making two hundred dollars by the bargain, and she became the property of Mr. Turner, who took her to Natchez, on the Mississippi River, where she became waiting-maid to Mrs. Turner, his wife.

The poor girl was never the same in appearance after she left her Virginia home. A deep pall seemed to have been thrown over her spirit, and her hopes and happiness lay buried beneath it. Her disposition had lost its buoyancy, and her face wore a sad, pensive look. She tried to do her duty here as before, and her skill and neatness made her a favorite. But there was no one here to care for her and love her as Mammy Grace had done; and she missed the children sadly. Her hymn-book was neglected; for when she opened it such a flood of recollections came over her that the tears blinded her eyes and she could not see a word, and she never now heard a prayer. She was again in an irreligious family, and among an ungodly set of servants, and her faith, hope, and love began to grow dim. A dull, heavy manner, and a careless, reckless state of mind was growing upon her.

It required deeper sorrow than she had yet experienced to wake her up from this sluggish, unhappy condition.

CHAPTER XIV. CRUELTY.

SHE was standing one beautiful evening at the front gate of the house, leaning on the rail, and gazing listlessly up the street. She was thinking, perhaps, of that starry night when first she had heard of the name of God, or that other, when her faith had been so wonderfully built up in listening to the striking experiences and prayer of the memorable Lony. Perhaps she had wandered farther back to the time, when, under old Rosa's protection, she had fed the chickens and watered the flowers at Rosevale with childish content. Whatever it was, the tears would come, and several times she raised her hand and dashed them away. Then she turned her head and gazed the other way.

A large hotel stood nearly opposite the house, and across the narrow street she watched the mingling, busy crowd of black and white, young and old, coming and going, each intent on his own interests, each holding in his heart the secret of his own history. Who are they all? thought Tidy, what business are they all about? I wonder if they are all happy? not one of them knows or cares for poor, unhappy me,—when lo! there suddenly loomed up before her a familiar face. She watched it eagerly as it moved up and down in the throng, for she felt that she had seen it before. But it was some minutes before she could tell exactly where. At last it all came to her. It was Arthur Carroll, the son of the man who had owned her when a baby. She had often seen and played with him in her visits to her mother. Many years had passed since she last beheld him, and he had grown to be a young gentleman; but she was sure it was he. He stepped out of the hotel and came towards the house. She uttered a little, quick cry, "Why, Mass Arthur!" He turned and recognized her, and at once stopped to inquire into her condition and circumstances.

It was almost like a visit to old Virginia to see young Carroll; and as cold water to a thirsty soul was the news he brought her from that far country. Tidy drank in eagerly every word he could tell her of the Lees, and others whom she knew, and they were enjoying an animated conversation when Tidy's master passed that way. He saw his slave engaged in familiar talk with a stranger, and remembering the remark of the trader of whom he had bought her, that she had tried "the running-away game" once, and must be watched lest she should repeat the attempt, without waiting to inquire into the circumstances of the case, he resolved to administer a proper chastisement. Coming up behind, he struck her a violent blow on the side of the head that sent the frail girl reeling to the ground.

For a few minutes Tidy lay stunned upon the earth. When she came to herself, her head was smarting with pain and her heart burned like fire with indignation, and in a perfect frenzy of distress and mortification she rushed out of the gate and flew down the street. Up and down, through the streets and lanes of the city, she ran for hours, not knowing or caring whither she went, until finally, exhausted and bewildered, she dropped down upon the ground. Some one raised the panting girl and took her to the guard-house. There she lay until morning before she could give any distinct thought to what she had done, and what course she was now to pursue.

When she began to think clearly, she felt that she had acted very unwisely. For a slave to resist punishment, if it is ever so undeserved, or to attempt to escape it by running away, is only to provoke severer chastisement. That she well knew, and that there was nothing to be done now, but to walk back to her master's house and meet a fate she could not avoid. She only hoped that, when she acknowledged her fault, and frankly told her master that she did it under a wild and bewildering excitement, he would pardon her and let it pass.

She dragged her weary steps back to her master's house, fainting with fatigue and hunger, and presented

herself before her mistress.

"It's right sorry I runned so," she said, "but I was kind o' scared like, and didn't know jest what I did. I knows I's no business to run away when massa cuffed me."

Her mistress made no reply but an angry look; but nothing was said by any one about what had happened, and Tidy felt that trouble was brewing. What it would be she could not tell, but her heart was heavy within her. Nothing occurred that day, but the next morning she was told to tie up her clothes and be ready to go up the river at ten o'clock. She knew what going up the river meant. Mr. Turner owned a large cotton plantation about twenty miles from Natchez, and the severest punishment dreaded by his servants in the city was to be sent there.

Tom, the coachman, accompanied Tidy, bearing in his pocket a note to the overseer of the plantation. Would you take a peep into it before she, whom it most concerned, learned its contents? It ran thus,—

"NATCHEZ, Wednesday, A. M.

"DIOSSY,—

"Give this wench a hundred lashes with the long whip this afternoon. Wash her down well, and when she is fit to work, put her into the cotton field.

"ABRAM TURNER."

Oh, let us weep, dear children, for the poor girl, who, for no crime at all, not even a misdeed, was made to bare her tender skin to such shameless cruelty. No friend was there to help her, to plead for her, to deliver her from the relentless, violent hand of the wicked oppressor. She was left all alone to her terrible suffering. Can we wonder that she felt that even the Lord had forgotten her?

That night there was scarcely an inch of flesh from her neck to her feet that was not torn, raw, and bleeding. The salt brine, which is used to heal the wounds, although when first applied it seems to aggravate the torture, was poured pitilessly over her, and writhing with agony, fainting, and almost dead, she was borne to a wretched hut, and laid on a hard pallet. Three weeks she lay there, sick and helpless; but she cried unto the Lord in her distress, and he heard her, and prepared to deliver her, though the time of her deliverance was not yet fully come. She had been brought low, but her eyes were not yet opened to her true needs, and she had not yet learned the prayer God would have her offer, "Be merciful to me, a SINNER."

Children, when you pray, do not be discouraged, if God does not answer you INSTANTLY. His way is not as our way; and though he hears us, and means to answer us, he may see that we are not yet ready to receive and appreciate the blessing we seek. Besides, there is no TIME with God as we count time. WE reckon by days and weeks, by months and years, but with him all is "one, eternal NOW;" and he goes steadily on, executing his purposes of love and mercy, without regard to those points and measures of time which seem so important to us. We must remember, too, that it takes longer to do some things than others. A praying woman whose faith was greatly tried, once asked her minister what this verse meant,—Luke xviii. 8: "I tell you that he will avenge them SPEEDILY." He replied, "If you make a loaf of bread in ten minutes, you think you have done your work speedily. Supposing a steam-engine is to be built. The pattern must be drafted, the iron brought, the parts cast, fitted, polished, tried,—it will take months to complete it, and then you may consider it SPEEDILY executed. So, when we ask God to do something for us, he may see a good deal of preparation to be necessary,—obstacles are to be removed, stepping-stones to be laid,—in the words of the Bible, the rough places are to be made plain, and the crooked ways straight, before the way of the Lord is prepared, and he can come directly with the thing we have asked."

It was thus with Tidy. She kept praying all the time to be free, but the Lord, who meant to give her a larger and better freedom than she asked, led her through such rough and crooked paths that she was quite discouraged, and nearly gave up all for lost.

This was her painful condition when she was driven, for the first time in her life, with a gang of men and women to work in the cotton-field.

CHAPTER XV. COTTON.

LET us look into a cotton-field; we will take this one of a hundred acres. The cotton is planted in rows, and requires incessant tillage to secure a good crop. The weeds and long grass grow so rankly in this warm climate that great watchfulness and care are required to keep them down. If there should be much rain during the season, they will spread so rapidly as perhaps quite to outgrow and ruin the crop.

Two gangs of laborers work in the field. The plough-gang go first through the rows, turning up the soil, and are followed by the hoe-gang, who break out the weeds, and lay the soil carefully around the roots of the young plants. This operation has to be repeated again and again; and so important is it to have it done seasonably that the workers are urged on, early and late, until the field is in a flourishing condition. Hot or cold, wet or dry, day and night, sometimes, the poor creatures have to toil through this busy season. Then there is a little intermission of the severe labor until the picking time, when again they are obliged to work incessantly.

Most of the hoers are women and boys, some of whom do the whole allotted task; others only a quarter, half, or three quarters, according to their ability. When the children are first put into the field, they are only put to quarter tasks, and some of the women are unable to do more. The bell is rung for them at early dawn, when they rise, prepare and eat their breakfast, and move down to the field. Clad in coarse, filthy, and scanty clothing, they drag sullenly along, and use their implements of labor with a slow, reluctant motion, that says very plainly, "This work is not for ME. My toil will do ME no good." Oh, how would freedom, kindness, and good wages spur up those unwilling toilers! How would the bright faces, the cheerful words and songs of

independent, self-interested, intelligent laborers, make those fields to rejoice, almost imparting vigor and growth to the cotton itself! But, alas! it is a sad place, a valley of sighs and groans and tears and blood, a realm of hate and malice, of imprecation and wrath, and every fierce and wicked passion.

A "water-toter" follows each gang with a pail and calabash; and the negro-driver stands among them with a long whip in his hand, which he snaps over their heads continually, and lets the lash fall, with more or less severity, on one and another, shouting and yelling meanwhile in a furious and brutal manner, as a boisterous teamster would do to his unruly oxen.

If the season is wet, the danger to the crop being greater, there is more necessity for constant toil, and the poor slaves are whipped, pushed, and driven to the very utmost, and allowed no time to rest. It is no matter if the old are over-worked, or the young too hardly pressed, or the feeble women faint under their burdens. So that a good crop is produced, and the planter can enjoy his luxuries, it is no consideration that tools are worn out, mules are destroyed, or the slaves die; more can be bought for next year, and the slaveholder says it pays to force a crop, though it be at the expense of life among the hands.

At noon, the dinner is brought to each gang in a cart. The hoers stop work only long enough to eat their poor fare standing,—and poor fare indeed it is. The corn that is made into bread is so filled with husks and ground so poorly that it is scarcely better than the fodder given to the cattle; and the bacon, if they have any, is badly cured and cooked. But they must eat that or starve; there is no chance of getting any thing better. The ploughmen take their dinners in the sheds where the mules are allowed to rest; and since two hours is usually given these animals, for rest and foddering, they, of course, must take the same.

At sunset they leave off work, and, tired and hungry, they have to prepare their own supper; and after hastily eating it, at nine o'clock the bell is rung for them to go to bed. Sundays they are not usually required to work, and some planters give their slaves a portion of Saturday, in the more leisure season; and this intermission of field labor is all the opportunity they have to wash and mend their clothes, or for any enjoyment. What a sorry life! sixteen hours out of the twenty-four, with a hoe in the hand, or a heavy cotton sack or basket tied about the neck, toiling on under the curses and lash of the driver and the overseer.

Tidy dreaded it. Brought up as she had been, accustomed to comparatively neat clothing, good food, cheerful associates, and light work, how could she live here? She felt that she could not long endure it. Her strength would fail, her task be unfinished, then she must be punished, and before long, through hard fare, unwearied toil, and ill usage, she felt that she should die. But there was no help. Once she had ventured to send an entreaty to her master to take her back to house service. But he was hardhearted and unrelenting, and declared with an oath that made her ears tingle that she should never leave the cotton-field till she died, and there was no power in heaven or earth that could make him change his determination. So she hopelessly plodded on, day after day, scorched beneath the hot sun, and drenched with the pouring rain, weak, faint, and thirsty, trembling before the coarse shouts, and shrinking from the tormenting lash of the pitiless driver, sure that her fate was sealed.

[illustration omitted]

Was there no eye to pity, and no arm to rescue? Yes, the unseen God, whose name is love, was leading her still. Through all the dark, rough places of her life, his kind, invisible hand was laying link to link in that wondrous chain which was finally to bring her safe and happy into his own bosom.

CHAPTER XVI. RESCUE.

THE slaves on Mr. Turner's plantation had no SABBATH. To be sure, they were not driven to the field on Sunday, because it was considered an economic provision to let man and beast rest one day out of the seven. But they had no church to attend, and never had any meetings among themselves. Indeed there were no pious ones among them. The men took the day for sport; the women washed and ironed, sewed and cooked, and did various necessary chores for themselves and children, for which they were allowed no other opportunity; and spent the rest of the day in rude singing, dancing, and boisterous merriment.

Tidy could not live as the rest did. She could not forget the instructions and habits of the past. She preferred to sit up later on Saturday evening to do the work which others did on Sunday, and when that day came, she never entered into their coarse gayety and mirth. She had no heart for it, and did not care though she was reviled and scoffed at for her particular, pious ways.

One Sunday afternoon, weary with the noise and rioting at the quarters, homesick and sad, she wandered away from her hovel, and strolling down the path which led to the cotton-field, she kept on through bush and brake and wood until she reached the bank of the river. Here, where the great Mississippi, the Father of Waters, seemed to have broken his way through tangled and interminable forests, she stood and looked out upon the broad stream. It lay like a vast mirror reflecting the sunlight, its surface only now and then disturbed by a passing boat or prowling king-fisher. Up and down the bank, with folded arms and pensive countenance, the toil-worn, weary girl walked, her soul in unison with the solitude and silence of the place. Recollections of the past, which continually haunted her, but which she had of late striven with all her might to banish from her mind, now rushed like a mighty tide over her. She could not help thinking of the pleasant Sabbath days in old Virginia, when she and Mammy Grace were always permitted to go to church; and of those sunset hours, when, seated in the door of the neat cabin, she had joined with the old nurse and Uncle Simon in singing those beautiful hymns they loved so well. How long it was since she had tried to sing one! Before she was aware, she was humming, in a low voice, the once familiar words:—

*"Oh, when shall I see Jesus,
And reign with him above?
And from that flowing fountain
Drink everlasting love?"*

Then, suddenly jumping over all the intervening verses, as if she, a poor shipwrecked soul, were springing to the cable suddenly thrown out before her, she burst out in a loud strain,—

*"Whene'er you meet with trouble
And trials on your way,
Oh, cast your care on Jesus,
And don't forget to pray."*

With what unction Uncle Simon used to pour forth that verse. It was to him the grand cure-all, the panacea for every heart-trouble; and over and over again he would sing it, always winding up in his own peculiar fashion with a quick, jerked-out "Hallelujah! Amen."

His image rose vividly before Tidy at that moment, and, as the tears began to roll down her cheeks, she clasped her hands over her face, and cried, "Oh, I has forgot that. I has forgot to pray." Then, falling on her knees, she poured forth such an earnest prayer as had never before, perhaps, been heard in that vast solitude. Her heart was relieved by this outpouring of her griefs to God, and she wondered that she had allowed herself, notwithstanding her sufferings and discouragements, to neglect such a privilege. It is so sometimes; grief is so overwhelming that it seems to shut us away from God; but we can never find comfort or relief until we have pierced through the clouds, and got near to his loving ear and heart again. Tidy found this true. "And now," she said to herself, "I WILL keep on praying until he hears me, and comes to help me,—I am determined I will."

But perhaps, thought she, I haven't prayed the right prayer; perhaps there's something about me that's wrong; and she cried with a loud voice, that was echoed back again from those forest depths, "O Lord, tell me just how to pray, that I mayn't make no mistake."

No sooner had she uttered this petition than she thought she heard a voice, and these were its words: "Say, 'O Lord, pluck me out of the fiery brands, and take my feet out of the miry pit, and make me stand on the everlasting rock; and, O Lord, save my soul.'" Tidy had heard a great many of her people tell about dreams and visions and voices, but she had never before had any such experiences. But this came to her with a reality she could not doubt or resist. It seemed like a voice from heaven, and she remarked that great stress was laid upon the last words, "O Lord, SAVE MY SOUL." Hitherto she had only sought temporal deliverance. She had never been fully awakened to her condition as a sinner, and had, therefore, never asked for the salvation of her soul. Now it was strongly impressed upon her mind that there was something more to be delivered from than the horrors of the cotton-field. She was a sinner, was not in favor with God, and if she should die in her present condition, she would go down to those everlasting burnings which she had always feared. All this was conveyed to her mind by a sudden impression, in much shorter time than I can relate it; and at once she accepted it, and earnestly resolved that she would offer that twofold prayer every day and hour, till the Lord should be pleased to come for her help.

Perhaps some of my readers would like to ask if I believe she really heard a voice. No, I do not. I think it was the Holy Spirit of God that brought to her mind some of the Scripture expressions she had formerly heard, and applied them to her heart with power. This is the peculiar work of the Holy Spirit. When Christ was bidding farewell to his disciples, he told them he should send the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, who should teach them all things, and BRING ALL THINGS TO THEIR REMEMBRANCE. I think that God, in his tender love and pity for Tidy, sent the Holy Ghost to bring to her remembrance those things which had long been buried in her heart; and at that tranquil hour, in that still, lonely spot, when her spirit was tender with sorrow, she was just in the condition to receive his influences, and give attention to the thoughts he had stirred up within her. And coming to her perception quickly, like a flash of light, as truth often does, it seemed to her excited imagination like an audible voice, and the words had all the effect upon her of a direct revelation from heaven.

This striking experience refreshed the poor girl, and nerved her anew for her toils and trials. She felt hope again dawning within her; and though she could see no way, she had faith to believe that the Lord would appear for her rescue. She prayed the new prayer constantly. It was her first thought in the morning, and her last at night, and during every moment of the livelong day was in her heart or on her lips.

One forenoon, as she was drawing her weary length along with the accustomed gang, picking the ripe, bursting cotton-bolls, a messenger arrived to say that she was wanted by the master. She almost fainted at the summons. What could he want her for? Surely it was not for good. Was he going to inflict cruelty again as unmerited as it had before been? She threw off her cotton-sack from her neck, to obey the summons; but she trembled so that she could scarcely walk. Her knees smote one against another, her heart throbbed, and her tongue cleaved to the roof of her mouth in her excitement and fright. As she drew near to the house, she perceived her master with haughty strides walking up and down the veranda, his hands behind him and his head thrown back, his whole appearance bearing witness to the proud, imperious spirit within. A gentleman of milder aspect was seated on a chair, intently eying Tidy as she approached, and she heard him say,—

"Can you recommend her, Turner? Do you really think she is capable of filling the place?"

"Capable!" said the master. "Take off that bag, and dress her, and you'll see. TOO smart, that's her fault. YOU'LL see."

"I like her looks; I'll try her," was the reply; and this was all the intimation Tidy had that she had been transferred to another master. Her heart leaped within her at what she heard; but when peremptorily told to get ready to follow Mr. Meesham, she hesitated. What for, do you think? Her first impulse was to throw herself at her master's feet, and ask what had induced him to sell her. But she dared not. He cast upon her a glance of such spurning contempt that she cringed before him. But she made up her mind that God only could have moved that stern, proud man to change a purpose which he had declared to be inflexible. She was right. God, who controls all hearts, and can turn them withersoever he pleases, in answer to prayer, had moved that stubborn heart.

Thus the first part of Tidy's new prayer was answered.

CHAPTER XVII. TRUE LIBERTY.

THE new home of Mr. Meesham was in Mobile. The master was an unmarried man, who wanted a capable superintendent for his domestic concerns, a neat, lady-like servant to wait upon his table, a trustworthy keeper of his keys, a leader and director of his household slaves. All this he found in Tidy, and when she was promoted to the head of the establishment, dressed in becoming apparel, with plenty of food at her command, pleasant, easy work to do, and leisure enough for rest and enjoyment, perhaps you think she was happy.

Ah, she was still a slave, and every day she was painfully reminded of it. She could not exercise her own judgment, nor act according to her own sense of right. She must walk in the way her master pointed out, and do his bidding. Whatever comforts she could pick up as she went along, she was welcome to; but she must have no choice or will of her own.

Perhaps you think her gratitude to God for his great deliverance would make her happy. So it did for a time, and then she forgot her deliverer, and the still greater blessing she needed to ask of him. How many there are just like her, who cry to God for help in adversity, and forget him when the help comes. How many who promise God, when they are in trouble and danger, that if they are spared they will serve him, and, when the danger is past, entirely forget their vows.

Thus it was with Tidy. She had been brought out of the cotton-field, and the misery that curtained it all round, into circumstances of plenty and comparative ease; and, rejoicing that the first part of her prayer was answered, she forgot all about the second and most important petition, "O Lord, save my soul."

But God was too faithful to forget it. He allowed her to go on in her own course a few years longer, and then he laid his hand upon her again. He prostrated her upon a bed of sickness, and brought her to look death in the face. Then the Holy Spirit began to deal powerfully with her. She realized that she was a great sinner. It seemed that she was standing on the brink of a horrible precipice, and her sins, like so many tormenting spirits, were ready to cast her headlong into the abyss of destruction. Whither could she flee for safety?

She found a Bible and tried to read; but it had been so long since she had looked into a book that she had almost forgotten what she once knew. It was impossible for her to read right on as we do; she could only pick out here and there a word and a sentence. One day she opened the book and her eye fell on the word "Come." She knew that word very well. It made her think right away of the hymn, "Come, ye sinners, poor and needy." She thought she would read on just there, and see what it said; and imperfectly, and after long endeavors, she made out this verse, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Then she glanced at a verse above, "Wash ye, make you clean: put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well."

These verses conveyed to her dark, uninstructed mind two very clear ideas. One was that she was to forsake every thing that appeared to her like sin, and to do right in future; and the other, that she was permitted to reason with the Lord about the sins she had committed; both which she at once resolved to do.

Her prayer now was changed. Before she had begged, entreated the Lord to forgive her sins; now she brought arguments. "Am I not a poor slave, Lord," she cried, "that never has known nothing at all. I never heard no preaching, I never had nobody to tell me how to be saved. I have done a good many wicked things, but I didn't know they were wicked then; and I have left undone many things, but I didn't know I ought to be so particular to do them. And, Lord, out of your own goodness and kindness won't you forgive this poor child. You are so full of love, pity me, pity me, O Lord, and save my poor soul. I will try to be good. I will try to do right. I'll never, never dance no more. I'll try to bear all the hard knocks I get, and I won't be hard on them that's beneath me, and I will pray, and try to read the Bible, and I'll talk to the rest of the people; only, Lord, forgive my sins, and take this load off that's breaking my heart, and make me feel safe and happy, so I won't be afraid when I die."

Thus the sick girl prayed with clasped hands upon her bed of pain; but still her mind was dark. There was no one to tell her of the way of salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ. Had she never heard of Jesus? She had heard his name, had sung it in her hymns; but she imagined it to be another name for the Lord, and had never heard of the glorious salvation that blessed Name imparts.

One night, while in this state of distress and perplexity, Tidy dreamed a dream. She thought she saw the Lord, seated on a majestic throne, with thousands and ten thousands of shining angels about him, and she was brought a guilty criminal before him. Convicted of sin, and not knowing what else to do, she again commenced pleading in her own behalf, using every argument she could think of to move the Lord to mercy. There was no answer, but the great Judge to whom she appealed seemed turned aside in earnest conversation with one who stood at his right hand, wearing the human form, but more fair and beautiful than any person she had ever seen. Then the Lord turned again and looked upon her,—and such a look, of pity, of love, of forgiveness and reconciliation! A sweet peace distilled upon her soul, and joy, such as she had never felt, sprang up in her bosom. "I am forgiven, I am accepted!" she cried, "but not for any thing I have said. This stranger has undertaken my case. He has interceded for me. I know not what plea he has used, but it has been successful, and my soul is saved." In this exultation of joy she awoke.

Yes, her soul WAS free. The plan of salvation had been dimly revealed to the weeping sinner in the visions of the night. What strange ways the Lord sometimes takes to reveal his love to his creatures! But his way is not as our way, and he has ALL means at his control. Every soul will have an individual history to tell of the revelation of God's mercy to it.

Thus the second part of Tidy's long-offered prayer was answered. From this time she rejoiced in the Lord, and gloried in her unknown Saviour. Her prayers were changed to praises, and she forgot that she was a slave in the happiness of her new-found soul-liberty.

She kept her Bible at hand, and every now and then picked out some precious verse; but the long, sweet story of Calvary, hidden between its covers, she had not yet read. And her voice found delightful employment in singing the hymns of the olden time, which came to her now with a meaning they had never had before. The Lord sent her health of body, and as she returned to her duties, she tried in all things to be faithful and worthy.

CHAPTER XVIII. CROWNING MERCIES.

THE Lord had not yet exhausted his love towards Tidy, but was designing still greater mercies for her. He was going to deliver her from the thralldom of oppression, and to send her to be further instructed in his truth, and to bear testimony to his loving-kindness in another home.

The master's heart was moved to set her free; and, embarked in a small vessel, with a New England captain, Tidy found herself at twenty years of age sailing away from the land of cruel bondage, to a home where she should know the blessings of freedom. Her emancipation papers were put into the hands of the captain, and money to provide for her comfort, with the assurance that while her master lived she should never want.

At first she was sick and almost broken-hearted at the change in her condition. Much as she longed for freedom, she had formed new ties in her Mobile home, which it was hard for her affectionate nature to break. She was old enough now to look forward to some of the difficulties to be encountered in a land of strangers, seeking employment in unaccustomed ways. But she went to her Bible as usual in her trouble, and the words which the Angel of the Covenant addressed to Jacob, when, exiled from his father's house, he made the stones of Bethel his pillow, came right home refreshingly to her,—“I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest.” The soreness at her heart was at once healed, and she cried out, in deep emotion, “Enough, Lord! Now I have got something to hold on by, and I will never let it go. When I get into trouble, I shall come and say, Lord, you remember what you said to me on board ship, and I know you will keep your promise.”

Thus fortified for her new life, Tidy arrived at New York. The sun was just setting as she planted her foot on the soil of freedom; and as his slanting rays fell upon her, she thought of her toiling, suffering sisters, driven at this hour from labor to misery, and her heart sickened at the thought. “O God,” she cried, “hasten the day when ALL shall be free.”

Tidy's first experience in this wilderness of delights, where was so much to be seen, learned, and enjoyed, was a striking one, and proved how the goodness of God followed her all the days of her life. It was Saturday evening when she landed. The family with whom the captain placed her were pious people, and were glad enough of the opportunity on the morrow of taking an emancipated slave, who had never been inside a church, to the house of God. It was a humble, un-pretending edifice where the colored people worshiped, but to her it was spacious and splendid. How neat and orderly every thing appeared. Men, women, and children, in their Sunday attire, walked quietly through the streets, and reverently seated themselves in the place of worship. The minister ascended the pulpit, and the singers took their places in the choir. It was communion Sunday, and the table within the altar was spread for the holy feast. All these strange and incomprehensible proceedings filled the mind of Tidy with solemnity and awe.

The services began. The prayer and reading of the Scripture seemed to feed her hungry soul as with the bread of life. Then the congregation arose and sang,—

*“Alas, and did my Saviour bleed?
And did my Sovereign die?
Would he devote his sacred head
For such a worm as I?
Oh, the Lamb, the loving Lamb,
The Lamb on Calvary;*

*The Lamb that was slain,
That liveth again,
To intercede for me.”*

All through the hymn she was actually trembling with excitement. Her whole being was thrilled, her eyes overflowed with tears, and she could scarcely hold herself up, as verse after verse, with the swelling chorus, convinced her that they sang the praises of Him whom she had seen in her dream, who stood between her and an offended God, and whom, though she knew him not, she loved and cherished in her inmost soul. Oh, if she could know more about him!

Her wish was to be gratified. As Paul said to the people of Athens, “Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you,” so might the preacher of righteousness have said to this eager listener. He took for his text these words: “He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.” Then followed the whole story of the cross,—the reasons why it was necessary for Jesus to give his life a ransom for many; the divine love that prompted the sacrifice; the all-sufficiency of the atonement; and the completeness of Christ's salvation. He spoke of Jesus as the one accepted Intercessor, Advocate, and Surety above, and urged his hearers to yield themselves with faith and love to this faithful and merciful Saviour.

Tidy sat with her eyes fixed on the speaker, her mouth open with amazement, and her hands clasped tightly over her heart, as if to quiet its feverish throbs; and when he had finished, and one and another in the congregation added an earnest “Amen,” “Hallelujah,” and “Praise the Lord,” she could keep still no longer. “TIS HE,” she cried, raising her hands, “TIS HE; But I never heard his name before.”

The closing hymn fell with sweet acceptance upon her ear, and calmed, in some measure, the tumultuous

rapture of her spirit:—

*"Earth has engrossed my love too long!
'Tis time I lift mine eyes
Upward, dear Father, to thy throne,
And to my native skies.*

*"There the blest Man, my Saviour sits;
The God! how bright he shines!
And scatters infinite delights
On all the happy minds.*

**Seraphs, with elevated strains,
Circle the throne around;
And move and charm the starry plains,
With an immortal sound.*

*"Jesus, the Lord, their harps employs;
Jesus, my love, they sing!
Jesus, the life of all our joys,
Sounds sweet from every string.*

*"Now let me mount and join their song,
And be an angel too;
My heart, my hand, my ear, my tongue,
Here's joyful work for you.*

*"There ye that love my Saviour sit,
There I would fain have place,
Among your thrones, or at your feet,
So I might see his face."*

Is there any thing, dear children, that can penetrate the whole being with such rapturous joy as the love of Christ? If you have never felt it, learn to know him that you may experience those "infinite delights" which he only can pour in upon the soul.

And now we must take leave of Tidy. She lives still, a hearty, humble, trusting Christian. She has been led to her true rest in God, and in him she is secure and happy; "sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

"I have every thing I want," she says, as she sits beside me, "for God is my Father, and his children, you know, Missus, inherits the earth."

"How happens it, then, that you are so poor?" I ask.

"My Father gives me every thing he sees best for me," is her beautiful reply. "It wouldn't be good for me to have a great many things. When I need any thing, I ask him, and he always gives it to me. I AM PERFECTLY SATISFIED."

Dear children, upon this little story-tree two golden apples of instruction hang, which I want you to pluck and enjoy. One is, that if God so loved a humble slave-child, and took such pains to bring her to himself, it is our privilege to feel the same sympathy and love for this poor despised race. And this love will draw us two ways: first, towards God, admiring and praising his infinite goodness and compassion; and, secondly, towards these prostrate, down-trodden people, to do all we can, in God's name, and for his dear sake, for their elevation and instruction. Remember, "Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones, a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple,"—that is, through this feeling of love, of Christian kindness, "he shall in no wise lose his reward."

The other,—if God so loved this humble slave-child, he has the same love towards every one of you. Will you not yield yourselves to his control, and let his various loving-kindnesses draw you too to himself?

OLD DINAH JOHNSON.

ONE day little Henry Wallace came to his mother's side, as she was sitting at her work, and, after standing thoughtfully a few moments, he looked up in her face and said:

"Ma, how many heavens are there?"

"Only one, my child," replied his mother, looking up from her work with surprise at such a question. "What made you ask me that?"

"Isn't there but one?" inquired Henry, with a little sort of trouble in his voice. "Then, will Dinah Johnson go to the same heaven we do?"

"Certainly, my dear; for heaven is one glorious temple, and God is the light of it; and into it will be gathered all those who love the Lord Jesus Christ, to dwell in his presence, in fullness of joy, for ever. But Henry, my darling, why did you ask such a question? Don't you want poor old Dinah to go to the same heaven that we do?"

"Oh, yes, mamma, I love Dinah, and I want her to go to our heaven; but last Sunday papa told me that the angels were every one fair and beautiful, and Jacob Sanders says Dinah is a homely old darkey. Now, how can she change, mamma?"

Henry's mother saw at once where the difficulty lay in her little boy's mind; so, putting aside her work, she took the child up on her knee, and explained the matter to him.

"Henry," said she, "I am sorry to hear that Jacob Sanders calls Dinah a darkey; for those who are so unfortunate as to have a black skin don't like to be called that or any other bad name. They have trouble enough without that, and I hope you will never, never do it. They like best to be called colored persons, and we should always try to please them. We should pity them, and try to relieve their sorrows, and not increase them. Don't you think so?"

"Yes, ma, and I do love Dinah, and I don't care if she isn't white, like you."

"Neither does God, our heavenly Father, care, Henry, about the color of the skin. The Bible says, 'God is no

respector of persons; but in every nation, he that feareth him and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.' God looks at the soul more than at the body. Nothing colors THE SOUL but sin. That stains and blackens it all over, and only the blood of Jesus Christ can wash it pure and white again. But every soul that has been washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb will be welcomed into heaven, with songs of great rejoicing; and all will dwell together in peace and purity, and love and great happiness for ever.

"Poor old Dinah is one of God's dear children. She loves the dear Saviour very much, and tries in every way to please and honor him; and she is looking forward with great pleasure to the time when she shall drop that infirm, old, black body, and be clothed with light as an angel. I shall be glad for her,—sha'n't you, darling?"

"Yes, indeed, mamma,—so glad;" and the little boy's mind was henceforth at rest on that point.

But I must tell my readers who old Dinah Johnson was. Once she was a slave; but when she had become so old that her busy head and hands and feet could do no more service for her master, he had set her free. Of course, she was glad to be free,—to feel that she could go where she liked, and do as she pleased, and keep all the money she could earn for herself. Precious little it was, though, for her sight was growing dim, and her hands and feet were all distorted with rheumatism; and what with pains and poverty and old age, her strength was fast wasting. But she was happy, really happy.

If you could have looked upon her, though, you wouldn't have supposed she had any thing to be happy about. With a skin black as night, hair gray and scanty, her face was as homely as homely could be, and her limbs were weak and tottering. The old, unpainted house she lived in shook and creaked with every blast of the wintry wind, and the snow drifted in at every crack and crevice. Her furniture was very poor, and her food mean. But it is not what we see outside that makes people happy. Oh, no; happiness springs from the inside. The fountain is in the heart, from which the streams of joy and gladness flow.

With all her homeliness and poverty, old Dinah was a jewel in the sight of the Lord. He had graven her upon the palm of his hand, and written her name in the book of life; and she was treasured as a precious child in his loving heart. The name of the Lord was precious to her, also; they were bound together in a covenant of love. Of course, she was happy.

Her heavenly Friend never forgot her. He sent many a one to bring her work and money and fuel and clothes. She was never without her bread and water,—you know the Lord has told his children that their "BREAD and WATER shall be SURE,"—and almost always she had a little tea and sugar in the cupboard. At Thanksgiving time, many a good basket-full of pies and chickens found their way to her humble door; and when she had received them, she would raise her hands and eyes to heaven, and thank the Lord for his goodness, and ask for a blessing upon the kind hearts that sent the gifts. She did not always know who they were, but she was sure she should see them and love them in heaven.

The only thing that seemed to trouble old Dinah was that she couldn't help others; that she couldn't do any thing for her Lord and Saviour. "I am so black and ugly," she would say, "and so old and lame and poor, that I a'n't fit to speak to any body; but I'll pray, I'll pray." She managed to hobble to church; and there, from her high seat in the gallery,—poor colored people must always have the highest seats in the house of God,—she could look all around the congregation. She took especial notice of the young men and women that came into church; and what do you think she did? Why, she would select this one and that one to pray for, that they might be converted. She would find out their names, and something about them; and then she would ask God, a great many times every day, that he would send his Holy Spirit to them, and give them new hearts. They didn't know any thing about her, of course, nor what she was doing. By and by, she would hear the glad news that they had come to Christ. Then she would choose others. These were converted, too; and by and by there was a great revival in the church, and many sinners were saved. After a time, there came a large crowd to join the church, and number themselves among the Lord's people; and poor old Dinah saw twelve young men, and several young women stand up in the aisle that day, and give themselves publicly to God, whom she had picked out and prayed for in this way. Oh, she was so happy, then! Her old eyes overflowed with tears of joy, and she couldn't stop thanking and praising God.

Now this was the good old creature that Henry Wallace thought might have to go to another heaven, because her skin was black. Do YOU think God would need to make another heaven for her? No, indeed. But I'll tell you, dear children, what I think. If there is a place in heaven higher and nearer God than another, that's the place where poor old Dinah will be found at last. I think that those who love God most, whether they are black or white, rich or poor, learned or ignorant, refined or rude, will stand the nearest to him in heaven. I am sure there was such warm love between her and the Saviour, that he will not want her to be far away from him in that bright world. He will call her up close to his side, and look upon her with sweet, affectionate smiles all the time. And many a one will wonder, perhaps, who that can be, so favored, so distinguished. They will never imagine it to be the glorified body of a poor, old, black slave, from such a wretched home,—will they?

If there are TWO heavens, I would like to be admitted to hers,—wouldn't you?

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK STEP BY STEP; OR, TIDY'S WAY TO FREEDOM ***

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