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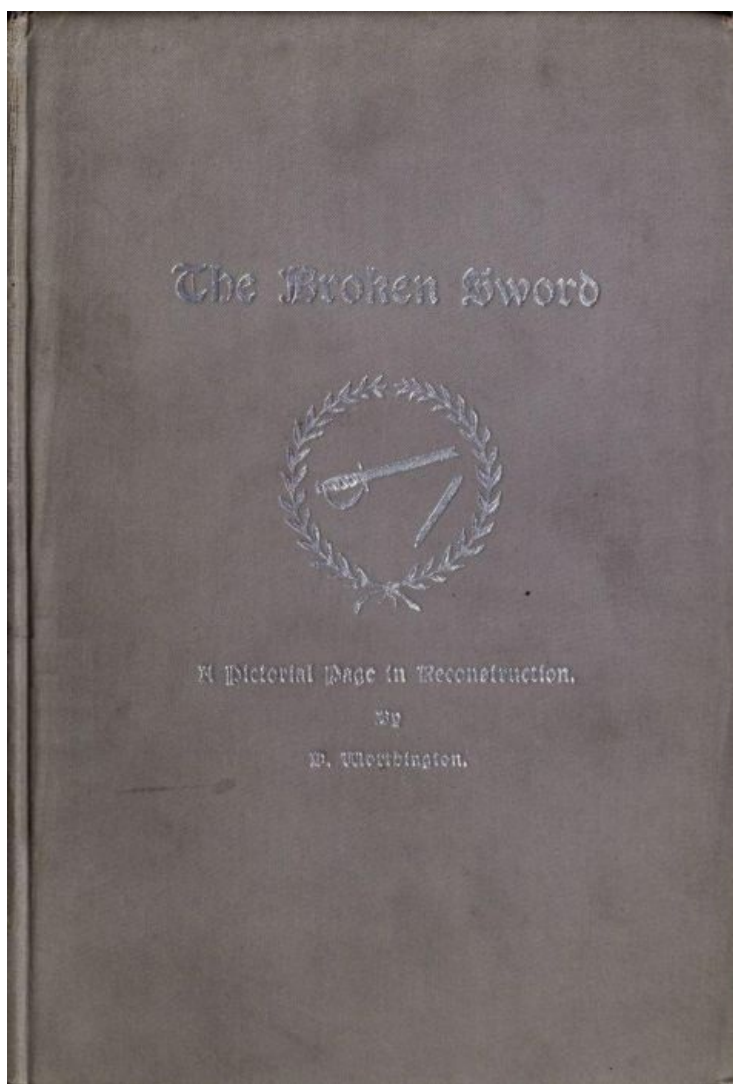
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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE BROKEN SWORD; OR, A PICTORIAL PAGE IN RECONSTRUCTION ***





Alice Seymour

THE BROKEN SWORD

—OR—

A PICTORIAL PAGE IN RECONSTRUCTION

—BY—

D. WORTHINGTON.

WILSON, N. C.:
P. D. GOLD & SONS,
1901.

This work is respectfully inscribed to the
Daughters of the Confederacy
By the Author,
Who followed, as their fathers did, the "Southern
Cross."

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ILLUSTRATED BY JAMES DEMPSEY BULLOCK

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INTRODUCTION.

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"I have considered the oppressions that are done under the sun, and on the side of the

oppressor there is power."

In the enforcement of the policy of Reconstruction in the South, the evidences were from day to day becoming so cumulative and decisive, that nothing but the discipline of an enraged party, coupled with the "spoils" principle, prevented the whole mass of the community from a universal expression of its desire to have it abandoned. Reasoning men everywhere felt that it must continue to multiply its mischiefs. "But," said its authors, "treason must be made odious, and the late insurrectionary States must feel that there is a higher law than that promulgated by their ordinances of secession."

The Spanish inquisition, now the abhorrence of all enlightened minds, was long sustained in many centuries by the tyrants' plea of necessity. In the burning of a thousand heretics the religious zealot saw the hand of God; in the destruction of a thousand sorcerers, the fanatic discerned the commonweal of the people; so in the whiplashes with which the people of the South were so mercilessly scourged, there was found an antiseptic for the gangrenous wounds inflicted by the civil war. All these cruelties were legalized, while bleeding humanity was sinking under the burden of oppression. In the collision of exasperated passions, it is the temper of aggression that always strikes the first blow. The government of the South by carpet-baggers was essentially oppressive and inquisitorial. It was, in its practical operation, a pure and unadulterated despotism, superseding the protection guaranteed by the Federal Constitution to each and every State. It was under the dominion of an organized anarchy, with legislatures and courts of justice, subordinated to a lawless assemblage of unprincipled men calling themselves the representatives and judges of the people. Among its necessarily implied powers was that of confiscation; and numbered in its enumeration of brutalities, was a nameless crime that shocked the moral sense of mankind. Reconstruction came upon the South with fearful impulse.

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Perhaps the "hour is on the wing," when a worthier hand will write the history of the institutional age that was sandwiched between the slavery civilization ante-dating the sixties, and that which minimized the pernicious power of manhood suffrage at the close of the century; or perhaps when that remnant that still survives in the weakness of age to

"Weep o'er their wounds, o'er tales of sorrow done.
Shoulder their crutch and show how fields are won."

shall have "passed over the river;" when the threnody of the "olden days" which to us is like the music of Carrol along the hills of Slimora, "pleasant, but mournful to the soul," shall be forgotten, some ambitious youth will uplift the veil; will take a glance of the whole horizon, and the south will unbosom her griefs that have been so long concealed. It will not do for a hand that drew the sword to guide the pen. By a law of our nature all passive impressions impair our moral sensibilities. Contact with misery renders us callous to those experiences; a constant view of vice lessens its deformity. If any expression in this humble narrative shall appear ill-tempered, let me say in the language of Themistocles at the battle of Salamis, "Strike, but hear me." The whole country has long since repudiated the dogma that "all men are born free and equal" and endowed with certain imprescriptible and inalienable rights. This heresy of course found its highest expression in the post-bellum amendments to the constitution, and the remedial statutes which made their efficiency complete. The war was the logical fulfillment of prophecies that had their forecast in the public councils before the nullification doctrine was forced upon the Senate by Mr. Calhoun. It sprang without extraneous aid from uninterpretable expressions in the organic law, which were finally explained away in the effusion of blood. Reconstruction, in the conception of men who provided the sinews of war, was the prolific aftermath; and in this harvest field, the gleaners plied their vocation with merciless activity, reinforced in their villainies by the freedmen, who, in an experimental way, were publicly evincing their unfitness for citizenship. The Civil war gendered this brood that filled the South with horror, and their disorders and tumults precipitated a crisis that plunged the Southland into a paroxysm from the Potomac to the Rio Grande. There was no refuge from an evil that was all-pervasive. The great war with its pageants and sacrifices, its banners and generals, its storming soldiery and reservoirs of human blood was almost thrust out of the memory as the patriots of the sixties stood face to face to the all-encompassing perils of reconstruction. They saw the flag of the Union—the almost lifeless emblem of the genius of their liberties—frown feebly at the promulgation of a law that disfranchised 300,000 American citizens. The old banner seemed to turn her eye to the eagle at her staff-head and ask him to lend her his wide-spreading pinions, that she might bend the wing and fly away from the polluted spot—from the embodied forms of evil and ruin. Almost every utterance of the complaining tongue that was syllabled into speech, was to this effect: "Will our country—our civilization—withstand the shock?" Our Southern characters had been enriched by an assemblage of all the treasures which refined intellect could accumulate; we had wisely built upon foundations of public virtue; our institutions had the permanency of age and respectability, and exhibited everywhere the fullest maturity of athletic vigor. The paroles of Southern soldiers annstied them from arrest for past military offences, but the clothing which their poverty obliged them to wear marked the target at which the lawless and vicious shot at their will. Personal and State rights were abridged until nothing was left of the sovereignty of the barren commonwealths or the enthralled individual. There were no juries of the vicinage but negroes; and daily the broken-hearted people were unwittingly aggrandizing rapacious officials. To the most depraved of the negroes the carpet-baggers were constantly appealing with arguments that stirred their blood. This narrative will not in an historical sense deal with the subject of reconstruction; from its want of compactness and continuity it would prove inefficient as a lesson or a guide. We present, however, imperfect portraits of a few men and women who were

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unfortunately in the pathway of the storm that stripped the husbandman of the fruits of his labor, the Southron of his liberty, stifled the cries of the distressed, and rendered the tenures of property unstable and insecure. In no conjuncture in which this paroxysm of politics placed the former masters of slaves, did they abate their care and zeal for their betterment. Monuments of brass and sculptured stone are not sufficiently enduring to memorialize the virtues of the negroes of the old plantations of the South, who watched and waited for the avenging arm of Providence to right the wrongs of old master. May God's mercy rest and abide upon this scattered remnant, that, like autumn's leaves in the forest, have been blown hither and thither by the wraith of the tempest.

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THE BROKEN SWORD.

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CHAPTER I.

LOOKING BACKWARD.

I have surrendered at discretion to vagrant thoughts. Just as the idle school-boy will pause beside the limpid stream to watch its eddying waters as they go on and on, "never hastening, never resting," so I sit to-night in the haze of the years that are dead, with the mind sadly reminiscent, and I watch the shadows as they seem to sketch upon the memory the familiar faces of our loved and lost, and I hear their laughter and songs—grateful echoes from the realm of the long ago. I am gazing again upon the sepulchre of the old South, after the plowshare of war and reconstruction had run the last furrow. In the garnering of the red harvest did our men and women of the sixties maintain themselves with a proper decorum? Were they less patriotic, less self-sacrificing, less ready with heart and hand to divert the destructive revolution of principle than their fathers of '76, who in the upbuilding of republican institutions wavered not in their purpose; when the terror and ignominy of the scaffold were before them; when they knew their blood must cement the foundations of the structure they were rearing, and they themselves become the first sacrifice in the temple of liberty, which they were dedicating? In that epoch and since we have been making the grand experiment of self-government; not as Rome made it, when liberty there was only a name for licentiousness; not as Greece made it, when a demagogue swayed the deluded masses and lacked only a throne to make him a king; but with a constitution that should deserve the encomium of the people, for the unutterable blessings it should bestow; a constitution impervious to unjust exactions and unpatriotic suggestions, we hoped for a policy dictated in a spirit of compromise; but as I look back upon the eventful past, the first adventure of Gil Blas occurs to me. He had been furnished by his uncle with a sorry mule and thirty or forty pistoles, and sent forth to seek his fortune. He set out accordingly, but had not proceeded far from home, when, sitting on his beast counting his pistoles with much satisfaction, into his hat, the mule suddenly raised its head and pricked up its ears. Gil Blas looked around to see the cause of its alarm, and perceived an old hat upon the ground in the middle of the road, with a rosary of very large beads in it. At the same time he heard a voice addressing him in a very pathetic tone, "Good traveler, in the name of the merciful God, and of all the saints, do drop a few pistoles in the hat." Looking in the direction from which these words proceeded, he saw to his dismay the muzzle of a blunderbuss projecting through the hedge, and pointing directly at his head. Gil Blas, not much pleased with the looks of the pious mendicant, dropped a few pistoles in the hat and scampered away as fast as he could. This slight narrative presents to the mind of the writer the most perfect emblem of the pacific remedy of reconstruction in its beginning.

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To the contemplative mind there is a melancholy pleasure in looking backward; as shadows will enter unbidden into the camera obscura, though every portal appears securely guarded; so memories will flit fantastically into the imagination when every approach seems closed against intrusion. I am looking backward, as it were, through a smoked glass, for a great sunburst is within the radius of vision, a sunburst that cheered our tired eyes with its thousand scintillant gleams in the hot days of August A. D. Nineteen Hundred.

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Looking backward upon a picturesque civilization—upon the old homesteads and plantations of the South, with their hallowed associations and ideals—with their impedimenta not of human chattels, but of compact masses of freed slaves, the underpinning of that civilization in its concrete form.

I have asked the historian, the essayist, the chronicler, the clairvoyant, to aid me in the retrospection, but they answer dubiously. There is no trodden path that I may pursue. No friendly hand that I may clasp as I stride across fens and brakes, and morasses: even the echoes of receding footsteps, like the laughter of happy voices are hushed and dead "lang syne." There are

faded letters however that I may read; broken swords and battered shields hanging upon decaying walls; moth eaten uniforms in garret and closet, that will guide me backward. The line of vision is traversed by unwieldy throngs of dilapidated men, in tattered gray clothes, without a federal head, without intelligent momentum, breaking up and dissolving like icebergs drifting southward; they are coming back home where there is neither grain for the sickle, nor hope for the husbandman: coming back to little cottages where lights in the windows kept burning for dear papa flickered and spumed, then died down into the rustic candlesticks, when the little watchful eyes so tired and weary, closed upon the moonlight that shimmered within the humble chamber.

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Looking back over grave yards, where we reverently laid away our jewels to be placed by the Great Lapidary in His Crown by and by, when we shall all rise from our sleep and shine in His emitted glory. Looking backward over a strange realm, without boundaries or capitals, where there are no soldiers and no battle fields, and where every thing is so fragrant and ethereal. Here we may fashion pictures and weave around them gossamer draperies as insubstantial as this golden twilight.

Hard-hitting, rough-riding moss-troopers rode over the subjugated domains of the bewildered South, with swords that flashed and turned every way like Alaric's; rode hither to obliterate the past, its monuments, its shrines, its traditions; to scarify the old south with harrows and bayonets; its altars, its homes, its civilization, and to fetter with chains a great warlike people, with a purpose as fatuous as ever animated the swart maid of Philistia. Against this senseless vengeance, the South rebelled again with the same old defiance, the same old manhood. You may prod the wounded lion with pikes and sabres, but you cannot tread upon it with iron heels without hearing its roar and feeling its fangs. To these marauders, the old South was but a moor fowl to be plucked and eaten. To us she was dynastic, like Hapsburg, Plantagenet or Hohenzollern. To them the South was a huge incubator, out of which was hatched "Stratagems and treasons:" To us she was a Queen, still wearing the purple, still grasping the sceptre, as in past evolutions and crises. She was Our Queen when a full century ago, and before there was a cabin upon her plantations she pleaded for the emancipation of slaves and was insultingly asked to withdraw her petition by the Merchant Marine of Massachusetts. She was Our Queen when envenomed abolitionists were gathering the aftermath of the "Higher law proclamation;" she was Our Queen when Ossawatimie Brown unleashed his bloodhounds upon a fresher trail at Harper's Ferry; she was Our Queen when Sumpter ran up a flag that had never before fluttered in a gale, never before greeted a young nation with its maiden blushes, followed by the hopes, the prayers, the aspirations, faith and loyalty of ten million men, women and children; Our Queen when "old Traveler" was stripped of his dust covered housings and led ever so weary back into Old Mars. Bob's stables; Our Queen when the last cavalier wiped the blood from his sabre and scabbarded it forever. God grant she may always be Our Queen that we may be her liegemen, leal and right trusty in all catastrophes! Hence we go back to think of her, to write of her, though a widow bereaved of her husband, and a mother who has buried her first born. There is no sword now to gleam like a flash of light over the plumes of charging squadrons: there is no guidon to mark the line of direction through defile and mountain pass: no call of the bugle "to saddle and away," no thanksgiving like that of Jackson; "God crowned our arms with Victory at McDowell yesterday;" No smile like that of Lee as the Army of the Potomac with trailing banners was double quickening back to Washington. Ah! no, but the old South through her blinding tears is smiling still; her dear old face re-lighted by a fresher inspiration.

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A trifling dash of time between 1860 and 1870, but events have been packed away within that decade, that would overlap the four corners of any other century in the calendar. Within those years were compounded somewhere in laboratories all the combustible elements of war and pillage; the casting the projectiles that would destroy a hemisphere. Broken hearts—crushed hopes—desolated homes, an enslaved country, wrongs, indignities, outrages, oppressions, all, all wrought by the cruel instrumentalities of great masters of tragedy. Here is an old mansion with turrets and esplanades and terraces long neglected and sadly out of repair. Here are great oaks of a century's growth planted and pruned by hands that have long since forgotten their cunning. Here are lapping waters singing in low sweet octaves as they did when poured out of the hollow of His Hand. Here is the old rookery out of which are ricochetting birds almost of every voice and plume. Here are cattle, red and dappled, cropping the meadow grass. Here are vast expanses clad in the refreshing drapery of nature, upheaving their grassy billows. Here are the crumbling cabins of the old slaves, in silent platoons that flank the old mansion, the earmarks of a picturesque civilization abused and denounced. Slaves, many of whom like the paintings of Titian and Murillo and Correggio in the great mullioned halls have come down from former generations. In yonder clump of souging pines stood the little meeting house of the "cullud folks" on "Old Marsa's plantation." Here for decades they worshipped. In the little brook that glides along so cheerily singing as it goes, they had baptized adult "bredrin and sisterin." Here many of them had felt the touch of the Master upon the emancipated souls, and heard His voice in their spiritual uplifting, tenderly calling, and there when the gnarled and knotted hands had ceased their toil "Ole Marsa and Ole Misses" had laid them crosswise upon rigid, lifeless bosoms, that heaved not again with the pangs of suffering; and out yonder under the maples, hard by the little babbling brook, reverent and tender hands white and black had lowered the rude coffin and covered it up in "God's acre," and here around the little altar ole Marster, and Miss Alice and Mars Harry worshipped with them. No master, no mistress, no slave in this consecrated ground; no black, no white, in the invisible Presence; no hard times to come again; no tithing men, nor tax gatherers; no snarling, snapping wolf to snatch the gnawed bone from the hungry wife and her starving child. If the larder were empty the "great house" had an exhaustless supply. If clothes were rent

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there was "allus stuff in de loom;" If the clouds gathered for snow "ole marsa" would put on his great coat and knock at the doors and ask, "Boys, have you got plenty of good wood for the storm?" If Joshua had the "rheumatics" or Melinda the "shaking ager," or little Jeff the hives, there were ointments and liquids, pills and lotions; and what physician was so kind; whose hands so soft and tender, whose voice so comforting and sympathetic as "ole missis's and young missis's?" There was the garden from which the negroes would market their vegetables; there was the little "water million" patch where little Jeff and Susan Ann would run out at midday, and thump and thump and thump and would as often run back with their mouths wide-open like a rift in a black cloud, "Mammy, oh! Mammy, dat great big water million is mo'est ripe—be ripe by Sunday sho," and their little black feet would knock off a jig on the bare floor; then there was the pig sty where Sukey the "sassy poker," in its sleekness and fatness, would grunt and frisk and cavort all the day long. Then there was "Ole Boatswain," the coon dog, lazily napping in the door—barking at the treed coon in his sleep; then there were the "tater ridges" and the pumpkins and the cotton patches; then there were the cackling hens and the pullets, the ducks and geese and guinea-fowls; the eggs that Hannah and Clarissa and Melinda had counted a score of times, and knew to a four pence a' penny how much they would fetch in the town; and "dere was de wagin wid ole Bob an' ole Pete wid pinted yeares, chawin' de bit same as it were fodder, ready to dash off fore dey was ready;" and there were the inventoried assets in trade, "free forfs Hanna's and two forfs Melinda's and seben forfs Clarissy's," all tumbled in disorder, live stock and dead stock. And then "dere was Melinda and Judy a settin' a middle ships into de wagin, all agwine to de town." And when the heavy wheels would rattle with its human freight over the hard ground of Ingleside, as the moon was dipping its nether horn below the line of vision, and Clara Bell and Melinda "a singin' de ole ship of Zion," "ole Marster an' Missis an' Miss Alice would run outen de great house jes to see if Ned had fotched us all back safe an' sound. An' den when Christmas would come, de ole turkey gobbler would be turnin' an' twistin' roun' and roun' fore de fire drappin' gravy in de dish, and de barbeku would be brownin' and de lasses a stewin out de taters in great big ubbens, fo de flambergasted cookin' stobes cum about to pester folkes. And den dere would be ole Cæsar a shufflin' towards ole Marser's room, and little Jeff a sneakin' on tip-toe to ketch ole Marser's Christmas gift fore he seed em, an' Mary an' Polly creepin' like cats in Miss Alice's chamber, to get their stockins that Santy Claus had stuffed from top to toe; and den de clatter in de great dinin' room, when wid bowls of cream, and flagons of mellow ole rye, Clarissa and Melindv would be makin' egg-nog fur de fokeses, white and cullud, on de plantation."

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Oh! this golden prime!

There were no black soldiers in greasy uniforms a hep, hep, hepping about the plantation; no firing of guns by riotous negroes on the roadside; no drunken, revelling wretches to slash and deface portraits, walls and corridors; no lecherous villains to accost and abuse defenceless and inoffensive women; no vigils to keep for fear of murders, burglaries and conflagrations; no angry forces and energies to quicken and compound; no wife to say to her husband, "Have you fotched any wittles back from the conwenshun? 'Fore God de chillun haint had narry moufful o' nuffin to eat dis blessed day, nor me nuther."

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Ah, no! the blessing that was vouchsafed unto Israel, despite its rebellion, was all bountiful in this land. "I will give thee peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and there shall be none to make thee afraid."

Then war came with its unutterable horrors and tumults. The old tallow candles were snuffed out, and there were fears and alarms in the mansion and the cabin; the thoroughbred was brought out of the stable with yellow housings on, like the gelding of a knight errant, and the young soldier, dressed all in gray with buff revers, rushed out of the house and vaulted into the saddle. There were kisses and good byes—lost echoes now—as the cavalier, young and happy and handsome, rode away. Yes, rode away in the descending shadows, over the hills, through the glades, to Manassas and to death. Yes, rode away to the death wrestle—to where the guns were spitting fire.

"Bress yo souls, fokeses," said Uncle Ned one day, as he leaned upon his staff like a sheik of the desert, "I looks back now und den, und peers lak I kin see ole missis way back yander in de war times, when de kannon was a plowin' froo de trees ober at Manassy, same as a sho nuff harrykin, und killin' a million of our federick soldiers at wun time. I seed her und Miss Alice cum outen de grate house, a fairly toting Mars Harry dat rainy day he rid off to de war, und Mars Harry he looked same as a general in all dem stripes und fedders, und Nelly she wuz jest a chompin' de bit und er pawin' de yurth lak she wuz moes afeerd de war want er gwine to hole out twell she und Mars Harry got dar; und den ole missis looked up in Mars Harry's face, und I seed her laf, do she wuz crying tu, und den I heerd hur say, 'My brave boy, how kin I ever giv yu up! Will yer git er furlow and cum home arter de battle? Und den Mars Harry he larfed too, und den I heerd him say, 'Oh mother don't be childish, I'm jest er gwine off fer my helth. I'm gwine to bring yer a yankee sord when we whups em and drives um tuther side o' de Pokomuc river.' Und den ole missis she put her pendance in every word Mars Harry tole her, kase when he rid off I heerd her tell Miss Alice dat her boy want agwine to be gone long, and dat de yankeys was agwine to give up fore dey fit ary battle; but bimeby, when ole missus seed dat Mars Harry mout not git a furlow, she jest gin herself up to die. All de day long pore old missis would walk up und down de piazzzy a peekin' froo de trees und axin' me ef I spishioned he was gwine to git kilt, und den when she heerd dat our fokeses had fit de battle of Manassy, me und ole missis sot up all night long, jes a watchin' fer Mars Harry to ride back lak he rid off; but no Mars Harry neber didn't come back twell one rainy, grizzly night me und ole missis heerd a clatter down de road, und den we heerd somebody say, 'Wo! und den a passel ov soldiers cum up to missis easy like, and axed her if Mr.

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Seymo' lived dere; und when ole missis heerd dat word und seed de kivered wagin, she jes drapped down into de road dead. Pore ole missis! De soldiers took her up in dere arms und toted her into de 'grate house,' und dere was her and pore Miss Alice in hysteriks, and ole marser not a sayin' ary wurd but a chokin 'mos to def; und den de soldiers went back to de kivered wagin', and I heered 'em a draggin' outen it a great big box, and I seed dem totin it to de 'grate house' jes as easy and slow, wid dere milinterry hats offen dere heds in de rain, und den I node it was Mars Harry. When ole missis cum to, she made de soldiers take de led offen de coffin, und dere was Mars Harry a lycin' dere wid his eyes shot right tight, a smilin de butifullest all to hissef. Ole missis sot dere all dat nite lak a grate big statu, a runnin her fingers fru his hair an' a talkin' to him jes de same as if Mars Harry had rid back frum de war lak he rid off. An' den ole marsa he cum in und looked at Mars Harry a smilin' to hissef, an' I could see ole marsa shake an' shake, but he didn't say narry a wurd, an' he tuck Mars Harry's sord out of de coffin; den bimeby I heerd him say he was agwine to venge his death. Ole missis soon pined erway, cause Mars Harry was her eyeballs. I tells ye fokeses, dat was de most solemcholly site I ever seed in my born days. Poor ole missis didn't stay long arter Mars Harry died; she dun gon home too, an' I specks Mars Harry dun tole ole missis all erbout de battle of Manassy, an' how he fit an' how he got kilt; und erbout dat yankey sord he nebber didn't fotch back."

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To a paternal ancestor of Colonel John Walter Seymour has been ascribed this prayer in battle, "Oh Lord, thou knowest how busy I must be this day. If I forget Thee, do not Thou forget me." Then rising, he gave the command, "Forward, march! On, my lads!"

At eight o'clock on the morning of the 23rd of October, King Charles was riding along the ridge of Edgehill, and looking down into the valley of the Red Horse, a beautiful meadow, broken here and there by hedges and copses, he could see with his glasses the parliamentary army as they marched out of the town of Kleinton and aligned their forces in battle array.

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"I never saw the rebels in a body before," said the king. "I will give them battle here." There were hot words around the royal standard. Rupert, a dashing young general, who had seen the swift, fiery charges of the fierce troopers in the thirty years war, was backed up by Patrick Lord Ruthven and Sir Walter Seymour, among the many Scots who had won renown under the great Augustus Adolphus and opposed fiercely by Lord Lindsey, an old comrade of the Earl of Essex, commander-in-chief of the rebel forces, who swore by all the saints in the calendar that he would not serve again in an army under a boy, referring to Prince Rupert, who was assigned by the king to command the army at Edge Hill that day.

It was to this circumstance that the country was indebted for the prayer aforesaid. The brave soldier, unyielding in his loyalty to the king, resigned his command as a general to command his company, and in so doing gave affront to Lord Lindsay and the king; but subsequently, at Scone, the king said to him, "You shall accompany me to London as a privy counsellor."

It was from this doughty ancestor of blessed memory that John Walter Seymour lineally descended. I have seen the old corselets, shackbolts, shields and trefoils of that chivalric era that belonged to the old baronet. Colonel Seymour had interested himself greatly in the literature of that institutional era that had so close a connection with the pomp and power of the Feudal system. He spoke learnedly too of the ideal purity of the social and moral code of the age.

The Colonel himself was no ignoble scion of so noble an ancestor. He had won his spurs and stars at Malvern Hill, and at the disbanding of the army he had covered the faded stars upon his collar with his pocket handkerchief until unobserved he could pluck them one by one and trample them underfoot. His haughty spirit could not brook the shame that overlaid him like a shroud when his sword passed out of his hands hilt foremost at Appomattox. He had taken the beautiful Alice Glendower from a neighboring estate as his wife twenty-six years ago, and now in the year 186-, though a shadow darkening and deepening lay athwart heart and home, the old man was still muttering curses long, loud and deep. He had fully assimilated the indignant spirit of Coriolanus. "I would they were barbarians (as they are though in Rome littered), not Romans as they are not though calved in the porch of the capitol." His only surviving child Alice was now in her twenty-third year. Harry, a princely fellow, a young lieutenant of cavalry, had fallen at the battle of Manassas and ever since that day the mother had steadily declined until now the end had almost come. The likeness of the dead boy was photographed vividly upon her heart and every tender chord was ceaselessly vibrating from the presence of a grief, that recreated fancies and memories that brought back to her the vanished idol. God's peace had settled upon the old home and its hearth stones, one beautiful Sabbath morning, as the Colonel, his daughter and old Clarissa had assembled in Mrs. Seymours's bed chamber. The light of the morning sun shimmered through open windows, and the shadows of the tree boughs like imprisoned fairies danced in cotilion upon the polished floor. "The birds are singing so sweetly to-day," observed the sick lady.

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"Yes indeed, they are," replied her husband.

"My dear," she said as she turned her face to him, "I have been greatly troubled by a horrid dream."

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"Land sakes alive ole missis," interrupted Clarissa, "don't yu pester yourself to def erbout dreams these outlandish times. Dey is bad enuff goodness nose widout dreaming dreams. Ned he jumped clean outen de bed tother nite hollering for his ole muskit lak he was agwine to war—his eyes fairly a sot in his head lak a craw-fish and a tarryfyng me to def and hollering 'fire! fire!' and a foaming at the mouf lak a mad dog, und duz yu know what I dun ole missis? when dat drotted nigger hollered fire! fire! I jes retched ober de table an' got de pale of water an' I put out dat fire fore Ned skovered whay hit war. Dat fool nigger walks perpendikler, now yu hears my racket."

She laughed again and again as she continued: "And Ned he wanted to fight; he was most drowned."

There was little of sentiment and less of diplomacy in the character of Colonel Seymour; though he was exceedingly tolerant toward Clarissa with her little vagaries and superstitions. What the dream of the good lady was has never been known—the narrative was rudely broken off by the interruption of Clarissa.

Would you know sweet Alice more intimately? I cannot portray her as she deserves; her heart was like so many little cells into which were unceasingly dropping the honey of blue thistle blossoms of charity. In every den of wretchedness; in every hovel where squalor and disease disputed all other dominions, she was a beam of sunshine, giving warmth and cheer and joy. The little star-eyed daisies in the meadow would turn up their tiny faces to greet her with smiles as she would pass them day after day with the little basket upon her arm; God had put her here among these poor people—among the deluded negroes as his missionary, and I am quite sure He was pleased with her work. I cannot describe her beauty and grace of person better than in the natural and characteristic language of Clarissa "Miss Alice," she would say, "Yu is the most butifullest white gal I ever seed in de wurrel; yer cheek is jes lak mellow wine-sop apples, und yer eyes is blu und bright lak agate marbles, und yer teeth as white as de dribben snow, und when yer laffs, pen pon it, even de birds in de trees stops to lisen; und yu is jes as suple und spry as de clown in de show."

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Golden tresses like a nimbus of glory adorned her queenly head. Eyes of blue graduated to the softest tint; cheeks that transferred the deep blush from tender spring blossoms. Something in her there was that set you to thinking of those "strange back-grounds of Raphael—that hectic and deep brief twilight in which Southern suns fall asleep." With Alice in her presence, Clarissa felt no evil; when the storm came with blinding fire, its fierce thunders, her refuge was by her side. She was her inspiration, her providence. The gentle hand upon the hot brow and there came relief; an old fashioned lullaby from her sweet lips and the fevered pickaninny in the cradle would turn upon his side and fall into a grateful slumber. A prayer spoken out of a heart touched by pity or sorrow, and instantly another heart would be uplifted in thanksgiving. She exercised too a power over the freed slaves that made captive to her will almost all the stubborn and rebellious negroes. Old Ned would have plucked out his eyes for her and cast them at her feet; so would Clarissa, so would Clarabel; so would old Caesar and Hannah and Joshua. Only these rebelled against her influence, to wit: Aleck, Miles and Ephraim. Clarissa would say to her young mistress so inquisitively, "Miss Alice, why don't yu git married? Peers like child yer is too sweet and pretty to live allus by yer lone, lorn self. Yer aint allers gwine to be 'tacin an butiful like yer is now. By and by de crow's foot is agwine to cum into yer lubly face and dere is gwine to be kurlikus and frowns in yo eyes jes lak yo mammy's; she used to be pretty und lubly jes' lak you, and whar is she now? De boys aint gwine to brak their necks over you when yer gets ole an' ugly, nuther. Now dey is lak a passel ov yallow jackets a swarmin' a-roun my house, and axin me dis ting an' tuther ting about dare sweetheart, and bress yo dear life I has to keep a patchin' up de fence whar dey climbs ober to keep de horgs an' cattle beastes out o de crap. Dey is afraid to cum to de 'grate house;' skeert of yu an' ole marser. Ole Mars John aint gwine to be here allus, nuther; see how cranksided he is gettin' an' so ill an' contrawy that we das'nt projec' wid him no mo; an' whar wud yu be chile in dis grate, big house und dis grate big plantashun wid de cussed niggers a marchin' an' a beatin' drums an' a shootin' guns lak ole Sherman's army, treadin' down de corn an' 'taters und a momickin' up de chickins und de sheepses und de cattle beastes? 'Taint agwine to do nohow. Dat it aint. I kin count fourteen portly yung 'uns dat wud jump clean akross de crick fer yer any hour God sends."

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Alice could only silently hearken to the force of such plain, matter-of-fact reasoning, but poor girl, there was not a single niche in her heart into which she could lift an idol. Within the shrine there were nothing but soulless effigies, so faded and old and lifeless that they recalled only battle-fields and sepulchres. "Will her prince never come, into whose eyes she can see mirrored her own self, her soul in its beauty, love and happiness?" Do you ask? There is a medallion that hangs by a golden chain across her fair bosom. "How long had she worn it there," think you? Ever since

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"She was a child and he was a child,
In his kingdom by the sea;
When she loved with a love that was more than love,
Alice and Arthur McRae."

CHAPTER II.

OUR SCOTCH-IRISH.

A person on entering the library in an old-fashioned mansion, situated in the heart of a country that was very beautiful in the landscaping of nature, at eleven a. m. of the 12th of November, would have observed a venerable gentleman reclining upon an antique sofa, plainly upholstered in morocco. The gentleman was reading from a book entitled, "The Life and Speeches of Daniel Webster." The stranger might have further observed, that the right hand of the old gentleman would now and again move with some energy of expression, as if he were punctuating a particular paragraph by an emphatic dissent. If the reader had been asked for an opinion as to

the character and ability of the illustrious commoner, whose views were so logically expressed in the memoir, he would have said without hesitation, that "He possessed the acumen of the wisest of statesmen, but that his opinions as a strict constructionist were extra hazardous, indeed out of harmony with the true theory of a republican form of government—a government of co-ordinate states that had entered voluntarily into a compact for a more perfect union. But (he may have continued) against the doctrine of nullification, indeed against the ordinances of secession, the irony of fate, through this great man, projected an argument whose logic was irrefutable in its last analysis. Foreshadowed events put into the mouth of Mr. Webster a menace, whose uninterpretable meaning in 1833 was clearly understood when the baleful power of the storm swept from the high seas the last privateer with its letter of marque, disbanded the last armed scout south of the breakwater of the Delaware, and broke the heart of the greatest warrior since Charlemagne; a chieftain more honored in defeat than Hannibal, or Napoleon, or Sobieski, or the great Frederick. This master craftsman in the construction corps of the Republic; whose resourceful intellect engrafted a principle as fixed and inviolable into the Constitution as fate, propelled against the equity of 'peaceful separation' the weight of an overmastering influence. This menace to the South marked the tumultuous heart-beats of the commercial North, when it contemplated the separation of indestructible states. It made of the Republic a huge camp of instruction, into which the nations of the earth were perpetually dumping their refuse populations; it girdled the South with a cincture of embattled mercenaries; it imparted to the Constitution a disciplinary vigor; it gave to partisan legislation an inspiration; it gave to centralized power an omnipotent reserve that unnerved every arm, paralyzed every tongue, and rendered organized effort abortive in the crucial struggle for Southern independence. But, sir, (and the eyes of the old man would gleam as with the light of an overpowering genius), a government created by the States, amendable by the States, preserved by the States, may be annihilated by the States."

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It was one of those leaky, bleak November days, when the weather, out of temper with itself, is continually making wry faces at the rain and the forest and the cattle, that a gentleman lately arrived from the auld town of Edinboro, shook the glistening rain-drops from his shaggy talma in the great hall of Ingleside, as he observed to the host with a smile, "Thot it was a wee bit scrowie, but the weether wad be fayre in its ain gude time." It was indeed one of those leaden days that occasionally comes in the Southland with the November chills, pinching the herds that are out upon the glades and meadows, when the winds sang in the tree boughs with a strange and melancholy rhythm. A sailor passing up the forward ladder from the forecastle to observe the weather would say, with a shudder, that it was a "greasy day," and that the sky and shrouds and storm-sails were leaky. Col. Seymour, upon ordinary occasions, was a gentleman of discrimination, and his judgment of character was fairly correct. Like the true Scotch Southron, as he was, he had his own ideals, his own loves and his own idiosyncrasies. He loved Scotland and her people, her memories, her history, her renown, her trossachs, her lakes, her mountains; they were his people, and Scotland was the "ain love of his fayther and mither." He had not forgotten the language of her beautiful hills and vales, though he was a boy when, with his parents, he bade adieu to his bonny country to find a home across the water in the Old North State, so prodigal and impartial in the distribution of honors and riches to all who came with clean hands and stout hearts. So when the neat and genteel Scotchman gave his name as Hugh McAden, the old man's heart impulsively warmed towards his guest, for he knew of a verity that a McAden everywhere was a man of honor—the name, an open sesame to the hearts and homes of Scotch Americans.

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"I will make you very comfortable to-day, sir," he observed, as he escorted Mr. McAden to his library. There were great hickory logs, half consumed, resting upon the antiquated brass andirons in the fire-place, giving warmth and cheer to the whole room. The stranger, rubbing his hands vigorously, for they were very cold and stiff, observed interrogatively, "You do not let the chill ond weet coom into the hoose?"

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"No indeed," replied the Colonel with a broad smile, "these inflictions are for other folks, whose liberty is upon the highways and in the forests in such weather."

"Ah, for ither fauk; maybe the naygurs," laughingly suggested the Scotchman.

"Yes, you can hear the guns in the woods, where they are hunting cattle not their own. You can see drunken squads marching upon the roads upon such a day."

"Ah!" he exclaimed, "ond do ye call this free America? May-be ye hae no goovernment as ye haed lang syne, ond no law ither."

The Colonel assured the gentleman that public affairs were at sixes and sevens, and the negroes now held the mastery over their former owners, and their discipline was not over indulgent.

"Ond do the naygurs make the laws for sic as you?" he enquired in a startled way.

"Oh yes," replied the Colonel, quite seriously.

"Alack-a-day!" exclaimed the astonished man. "The deil take sic a goovernment, ond the deil tak sic a coontry, ond the deil tak the naygurs! Coom to Edinboro, mon, where there is not o'ermuch siller, but where ivery mon is his ain laird, ond his hoose is his ain hame. Ye ken fine that I am a stranger hereaboot. Ond will the naygurs harm a poor mishanalled mon like me?" he enquired in alarm. The Colonel, with an effort to conceal his mirth, reassured his friend that no harm would come to him.

"Ond wad ye say," the Scotchman interrupted, "that amang the naygurs ond sic a government, that a puir body wad hae the protection o' his ain queen?" he again asked, with his fears still

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unsubdued. The amiable host, shaking from an effort at self-control, again remarked that the carpet-bag government had made no attempt at personal violence upon strangers, and that he was as safe here as in his own city of Edinboro; and the Scotchman laughed away his fears.

"Sic an auld fule!" he exclaimed in great glee. "I am hardly masel in these lowlands," the Scotchman continued, as the conversation changed into more agreeable channels. "Ye hae na moontains ond bonnie hills hereabout," he continued, as he looked from the window upon the low-lying fields and meadows.

"But, my friend," replied the Colonel, "if you will abide with me for awhile you will quite forget your mountains, for there is a charm and freshness in the landscape here when you become familiar with it."

"I am sure of thot," quickly answered the guest; "but ye ken fine that a puir body must abide in his ain hame. What wad a man do in th' Soothland wi' his beezeness in Edinboro?" And the Scotchman smiled as he asked the unanswerable question. "Ah, well," the Colonel replied with an assumed dignity, "you would do as we do."

"Ond what is thot?" asked the Scotchman.

"Swear and vapor from early morn to dewy eve."

"Ah! thot wad na do, thot wad na do," he replied, horrified at such a suggestion, "The meenister in holy kirk wad discipline a puir body, ond the deil wad be to play. I guess I'll gang hame agen ond do as ilka fauk do in th' auld toon."

The Colonel had not been so happy in many a day as with the plain, matter-of-fact Scotchman, in a sense, a type and representative of his own people, and a man who could speak so eloquently of the fadeless glory of old Scotland.

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"Hae ye nae gude wife ond bairns?" he enquired.

"Yes, an invalid wife and an only child, sir," said the Colonel, as tears began to gather in his eyes. "My only son, sir, was slain in battle some years ago."

"Ond was it for sic a goovernment as ye hae noo, that ye gaed up your bonnie lad to dee?" he asked quite innocently.

The old man bowed his head in silent grief. He could not answer, and he walked across the room and looked out upon the murky sky—a funereal coverlid, it appeared, laid over the grave of poor Harry.

"Puir lad," uttered Mr. McAden, half aside, as he drew his handkerchief across his face and gazed abstractedly into the blazing fire. It was quite an interval before the Colonel was able to subdue this paroxysm of grief that had quite overcome him, and, availing himself of the earliest opportunity to excuse himself, withdrew from the room. To Mr. McAden the moment was fraught with sincere sorrow. He had unwittingly opened the sluice-way at the veteran's heart, and great tides, crimsoned, as it seemed, with the blood of poor Harry, were pouring into it. He could find no surcease only in the oft-repeated exclamation of reproach.

"Sic an auld fule! Sic an auld fule! But I thocht the mon was o'er happy in the love of his gude wife ond the bairn. Haed I thocht thot the lad had deed in battle, I wad na gaed him sic a sair thrust in his auld heart."

The Colonel retired to his own chamber to repair the injury that had been done to his feelings, and presently he returned with a smiling face, accompanied by his daughter, and he said, introducing her.

"This sir, is my daughter, Alice."

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"Ah!" exclaimed Mr. McAden, rising with extended hand, "The lassie is like the sire, Coonel. I can see the fayther in her een."

"And the counterpart of her mither in all except the een," replied her father.

"You ond the gude wife ond the lassie must coom to Edinboro, Coonel; ye ken fine thot her rooyal men ond weemen are i' th' groond noo, ond there are memorials here ond there in the auld kirk-yards where their puir bodies are laid, but our men ond weemen still are vera fayre ond gentle, ond we niver put our een upon a naygur. Ond, now thot I can abide nae langer wi' ye, will ye nae tell me a wee bit o' the history o' our ain fauk in the Soothland, for ye ken fine thot the auld anes wad be askin about this ane ond thot ane, in fine all about the Scotch in your ain coontry, when I gae hame to Edinboro."

The subject referred to by the Scotchman was full of a picturesque interest, and no man in the Southland took a higher delight in imparting such information as he could command, than Colonel Seymour. Turning his old arm-chair so that he could observe his guest more closely, he began:

"The characteristics of these people are ineffaceably impressed upon our civilization. Indeed they are as deeply grounded into the religious and social soil of North Carolina, as though they had taken root like the rhododendron under the rocks and in the fissures of our hills and mountains. The Scotch-Irish American, with gigantic strides, has at last sat himself down upon the loftiest pinnacle of our 19th century civilization. He has never yielded to oppression; he has never compounded with evil. These brave people, bringing hither the virtues of their fathers as well as their own, have given North Carolina its most luminous page. They made the earliest industry of the Cape Fear—the industry of colonization. It was an industry that sought to provide homes for

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the people, and to dignify labor and life in the midst of surroundings that taxed every resource of action, and the ultimate verge of human daring; an industry that employed the plainest instruments—the axe to hew down the forest, and the plow to turn the furrow. Their primitive sires in these early settlements did not control those powerful auxiliaries that now multiply the skill of man; nor did they enjoy the aristocracy of the recognized power of wealth. They cared nothing for mammonism, that some philosophical crank has defined to be a physical force that makes men invertebrates. Here was life with the struggle of pioneers; a struggle for place rather than for position; for homes rather than castles, that prepared the intellect for a higher development, and man for ultimate power. The victory of the axe and plow were the pre-ordained antecedents to the victory of the forum and pulpit, and the triumph over the crude obstructions of nature was the divine prophecy of undisciplined toil. Out of the ruggedness of such an epoch came forth a condition of virtue and integrity; of honest and honorable convictions; of sincere patriotism; of a race of men who looked to themselves only, and originated within this scant domain the literature of economic life. It was here that the domestic sentiment displayed its captivating charm. Nowhere on earth was there a more generous love for children, and whenever this attribute of the heart appears, the prophetic benediction of Christ, as childhood lay in His hallowed arms, is fulfilled. Here was social life, too, in its freedom, picturesqueness and animation, without demoralizing conditions. Away northward and southward, bays and rivers stretched their wedded waves, hills holding in their dead grasp the secrets of centuries; the ancient miracles of fire and water where chaos had been transfixed in its primeval heavings; all these were here subject to the mighty mastery that men should eventually exert, and side by side with humble homes, arose schools and churches—emblems of the power and purity of the people. Here the ambassadors of Christ were persuasive with tongue, fervent in spirit; they felt that their religion was more ancient than government, higher than any influence; more sacred than any trust; a religion that was benevolence in its gentlest mood, courage in its boldest daring, affection in its intensest power; philanthropy in its widest reach; patriotism in its most impassioned vigor; reason in its broadest display; the mighty heart that throbbed through every artery; fed every muscle; sped the hidden springs of an electric current through every nerve. Such were and are "oor ain fauk in th' Soothland."

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"Ah, I ken fine," replied the Scotchman with enthusiasm, "that your forebears came from the hielands, and yoor knowledge of the gude fauk in yoor ain coontry quite surprises me. Did ye not say that yoor fayther ond mither came from Edinboro?" he inquired with animation.

"Yes," replied the Colonel, "in the good old days; and they lie buried side by side in the little cemetery over the hill yonder, where I shall rest after a wee bit."

"These are bonnie lands hereaboot, but there is mony a glade in auld Scotland where a puir body may sleep as tranquilly," said the Scotchman with feeling, "ond when I dee my sepulchre shall be near the auld hame where there are no naygurs ond no sic a goovernment, in th' shadow o' th' auld kirk o' my fayther ond mither."

CHAPTER III.

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THE ASSASSINS OF THE PEACE OF THE SOUTH.

To the people of the South the infliction of the carpet-bag government was an outrage that "smelled to heaven." The changed character—the degradation of the South was a deplorable consequence—it was the inoculating of a virus into the circulation of the body politic that it will take a century to cleanse.

The power of attainting and confiscating, forbidden by the law from a full knowledge of its lamentable use by the factious parliaments of Great Britain, was shamelessly exercised by local jurisdictions of the South until nothing was left to the most virtuous of patriots but their name, their character, and the fragrance of their great and illustrious actions, to go down to posterity. A stranger coming to any legislature would have taken it at one time for a disorderly club-room, where ignorant and vicious partisans, white and black, were assembled to lay plans for their own aggrandizement and the prostration of the country. At another time he would suppose it to be a hustings for the delivery of electioneering harangues; at another, an areopagus for the condemnation of all virtuous men; then a theatre, for the entertainment of a most diverted auditory; always a laboratory for the compounding of alarms, conspiracies and panics. In the deliberations of the members there was no check to the license of debate, or the prodigal expenditure of money; no voice to control their judgments of outlawry and sequestration. Radamanthus himself, in some stage of his infernal process, would at least listen to his victim; "First he punisheth, then he listeneth, and lastly he compelleth to confess." The inventors of mythology could not conceive of a Tartarus so regardless of the forms of justice as not to allow the souls of the condemned to speak for themselves; but reconstruction, trampling upon all laws, denied to the long-suffering people of the South the right to plead their innocence in the face of the concentrated accumulation of frightful accusations, all founded upon the "baseless fabric of a vision."

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Centuries ago the last saurian died in the ooze of the bad lands in Kansas, but by an unnatural law of reproduction the carpet bagger and scalawag, with the same destructive instincts, with the same malodorous presence, found its bed of slime in the heart of the South and disported with a

devilish energy. Monsters of malice, spawning evil gendering fanaticism, focussed their evil eye upon the millions of freedmen, whose destiny and happiness were closely interwoven with their old masters; with masters who had yielded their swords but not their honor; who were "discouraged, yet erect; perplexed, yet not unto despair; pursued, yet not forsaken; smitten down, yet not conquered." The poor negro, under the seductive charms of these human serpents, languished, and languishing, did die.

The carpet-baggers preached to the negroes an anti-slavery God, from the gospel of hate, of revenge. Slavery was the tempest of their poor souls, and revenge must assuage the swollen floods. "The thronged cities—the marks of Southern prosperity and the monuments of Southern civilization," said they, "are yours, yours to enjoy, to alienate, to transmit to posterity. Your empire is established indestructibly throughout the new South. This land shall not be permitted to remain as a lair for the wild beasts that have clutched at the throat of this republic to destroy it. We have heard the cries of our Israel in bondage, and we have come to give you the land that flows with milk and honey." Poor black souls! What a delusion! The day will surely come when the curtain shall be drawn and the deceivers, active and dormant, in this dark tragedy, shall be dragged before the footlights to receive the curse of an indignant reprobation. Poor negro! He is starving for bread and they give him the elective franchise. He begs to be emancipated from hunger, and they decree that he shall be a freedman.

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Who will dare assert that the pride, the patriotism, the spirit of the South was not alarmingly compromised by the issues of the Civil War?—a war that was the exercise of both violence and discipline by sovereign authority. We are told that wars are an evil, come when they may; they are just or unjust, moral or immoral, civilized or savage, as the ingredients of violated rights—demand of reparation and refusal—shall be observed, neglected or abused. Perhaps the prostrated South should have been advertent to this fact before she delivered the first blow. But whether right or wrong, when the armies were disbanded, when it yielded its organic being—its sovereignty—to overwhelming resources and numbers, the law of nations laid upon the paramount sovereignty obligations which have never been performed, either in letter or spirit. The government that re-instated its authority was bound by a circle of morals, including the obligations of justice and mercy, reciprocally acting and reacting.

The emancipation of five million slaves was a supplemental act of war; a renewed declaration that the tramp of embattled armies should echo and re-echo from the Potomac to the Rio Grande, until the foot of a slave should not press its "polluted" soil. Their enfranchisement was neither an act of war or of exasperation, but an act of diplomacy, extra-hazardous as results have shown, with the effect of humiliating the conquered South. It introduced throughout the South a sacrilegious arm against the fairest superstructure of Christian manhood the world has ever known; stamped the history of the nation with dishonor, and betrayed the proudest experiment in favor of the rights of man. It taught the freedmen, through the vicious counsel of intriguing, designing demagogues, that their liberty was still insecure; that to accomplish it in its ultimate triumph and blessing, the savage axe must be laid at the root of the social institutions; that they must lay violent hands upon the men, women and children who had made their emancipation an accomplished fact. Hence a war whose horrors should be accentuated by the lighted torch was inaugurated, and an inglorious campaign of reprisals by placable tools, whose zeal to preserve what they now purposed in their blind fanaticism to destroy, was a few years before as ardent and persevering.

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Poor, pitiable, deluded human beings, who as chattels real—impedimenta of Southern plantations—had guarded the peace of the home, and many of whom were faithful unto death!

Reconstruction superimposed an artificial citizenship—a citizenship essentially lacking in every resource of intellectual strength—it was without ideals or examples for the government of the freedmen of the proud Southern commonwealths. The allegiance of the negroes was as friable as a rope of sand; they were without a definite conception of the responsibilities of sovereignty—without a fixed principle to guide them in governmental policy—with impulses of brutish suggestion, and under masters more inexorable, more exacting than those they had deserted upon the abandoned plantations. How painful was such a crisis that split up the old South into disgraced and bleeding fragments!

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We come to speak for a moment of the microbes that ate their way into the hearts of the seceded commonwealths, while the ruins of southern homes were still smoking; and before the blood of chivalrous southrons had dried upon our battle-fields. I commend the chalice to the lips of those who will deny the truth of what is herein written and desire that such a man might realize a bare modicum of what was suffered and endured. The elective franchise was the panacea for every evil; an antispasmodic, when there were occasional exacerbations in the public mind; our fathers valued the elective franchise because in its patriotic expression was the covenant of freemen.

When our hopes were feeblest, and our horizon darkest, the scalawag fled like a hound to the sheltering woods whence he sallied forth like an outlaw. The reddened disc of the sun that went down at Appomattox gave him an inspiration for his hellish work, and he went out in the gloom of the starless night, declaring with a more vicious temper than did Henry of Agincourt "the fewer the men the greater the honor" or in its appropriate paraphrase "the deeper the pockets the greater the spoil." His philanthropy and selfish interests never clash. He claimed always to be rigidly righteous, and was seen in the camp-meeting and the church sanctified and demure to a proverb. He spoke of the poor negro in paroxysms of charity—a most rare benevolence which employed its means in theft and crime; a charity which performs its vows and gives its alms with money plundered from the freedmen. The scalawag like other unclassified vermin was without respectable antecedents; with an acute sense of smell like the "lap-heavy" scout of the Andes, he

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sought his prey when there was no fear of the approach of man. As an Irish barrister once wrote upon the door of a plebians' carriage, "Why do you laugh?" so the humorist of the sixties could have written upon the shirt-front of the scalawag "Why do people hold their noses?" He was never mentioned by naturalists, unless under some other name he was paired off with the vulture. In reconstruction days the transformation of this abortion of nature from vulture to serpent was made without the break of a feather or the splitting of a talon. With a seductive grimace he whispered into the open ear of the freedmen "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt not surely die." He was as much an augury of evil as the brood of ravens that once alighted upon Vespasian's pillar. Had he been seen plying his vocation in the first empire Napoleon would have said to Fouche, "Shoot the accursed beast on the spot." The carpet bagger when not fighting the pestiferous vermin in the Chickahominy swamps was pilfering. He went into the army conscripted like a gentleman; he came out of the army at night when the back of the sentry was turned and without a furlough, like a patriot. These twain were the autocrats of the new south, which had its christening in the blood of heroes; they were the furies that rode the red harlot around the circle, when her flanks were still wet with human slaughter, and her speed was increased by the jeering negroes. When Sister Charity in an occasional fit would fall unconsciously into the receptive bosom of her black lover in the prayer-meeting, with the wild exclamation "Bress Gord I sees de hosses und de charyut er cumin!" they would clap their hands in joy and shout, "Persevere in the good cause my sister." When old deacon Johnson upon some happy suggestion from the "sliding elder" would turn up the white of one eye, they would turn up the whites of the others; and when deacon Thompson came around for alms for the heathen, they would slip under the pennies a brass-button and inwardly thank God they were not like the poor publican or the hypocritical pharisee. Their first meeting with the freedmen was flattering and agreeable; it was an expression of frail vows of love, sweet but not permanent, which bore but the perfume and dalliance of a moment; it was the fusing of units of power for the purpose of spoil, and plunder. Sambo had prayed ardently for this revelation, and it had come. The scalawag, carpet-bagger, and freedman were parties of the first part, second part and third part in the tripartite agreement, until the negro became the party of no part or the worst part, and he began to mutter to himself in vulgar doggerel:

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"Ort is er ort und figger is er figger,
All fur de white man und none fur de nigger."

When Sambo stole from the store to increase the joint stock-in-trade, the plunder was checked off in the invoice and Sambo was checked off in the penitentiary; if the firm went into liquidation it was because its active and suffering partner went into jail. If the poor negro died with assets the carpet-bagger "sot upon de state" like a carrion-crow upon a putrid body. These human harpies were natural sons of the commune.

The dirty co-partners opened up business in the south, as soon as Sherman's army had crossed the border, under the attractive firm name and style of "The Devil broke loose in Dixie." The iron-hoof of war had so cruelly scathed the bosom of the south that it was like an overripe carbuncle; it required a little scarifying and savage hands might squeeze and sponge at will.

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Credit was prostrate; society was disorganized, treasuries empty; debt like a huge fragment of ice slipping away from the glacier upon the mountain, was gathering volume and momentum as it rolled on and on, and the poor old tottering, reeling country was still struggling on like a bewildered traveller, followed by wolves, and overshadowed by vultures. Corruption and ignorance were the only passports to power. No modern instance of wrong and oppression can approach this Fructidor of the sixties in the South. Human ghouls not so black as these vomited out, the Carbonari of Italy, the Free Companions of France and the Moss Troopers of England.

This condition of things, we dare assert, is without a parallel in the history of any people, in any civilization. Even when Rome was swayed by the keenest lust for conquest and dominion, their legions conquered the barbaric states, not to degrade or destroy, but to attach them to her invincible arms. Savage vengeance never went so far as to place the slave above the master by way of retribution. This was the exciting cause that brought into fullest display the natural law of reprisals and retaliations upon the part of the Southern people.

The first prominent cause of public disturbance of which the carpet-baggers were the authors was a most thorough and secret organization of the negroes in all the counties into Loyal Leagues; in many instances armed and adopting all the formula of signs, pass-words and grips of an oath bound secret organization. When the negro is asked why he votes the Republican ticket his simple answer always is, "Why Lor bress your soul Marsa, we swo to do dat in de League." That simple answer by this new suffragist, this new automaton of the ballot, is a full explanation of the political solidity of the negro vote: With such an element to work upon, ignorant and degraded, the carpet-baggers, fierce and rapacious, have found themselves in Mahomet's seventh heaven in the South.

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It is a subject of interest and maybe of admonition to the people North and South, how political institutions, in an age of the highest civilization and under the most explicit constitutional forms, may be changed or abolished by a process of partisan policy, when inaugurated in a spirit of hate, revenge or avarice. Pseudo-philanthropists may talk never so eloquently about an "equality before the law" when equality is not found in the great natural law of race ordained by the Creator. That cannot be changed by statute which has been irrevocably fixed by the fiat of the

Almighty. The result of this mongrel combination of carpet-bagger, scalawag and negro; this composition of vice and ignorance and rapacity, was plainly seen everywhere. Robbery and public plunder were rampant in the State capital. The expenses of government were at once increased five hundred per cent. Verily the pregnant suggestion of the carpet-bagger that the only way to bring down the white people of the South to the level of the negro was to tax them down, was carried out with a sweeping vengeance. These thieves and robbers, who had fastened themselves like vampires upon the public treasury, and unlike the leach, did not let go their hold when full, were still gorging themselves by new methods of plunder. No such rate of taxation upon the same basis of property valuation has ever occurred in the history of the world. A tithe of this rate of taxation lost to the crown of England her thirteen American colonies. All the county auditors, county treasurers, trial justices in the courts of record were utterly incompetent and utterly corrupt. The juries in the courts of records were mostly negroes, summoned by negro sheriffs, and the pardoning power in the hands of venal and truculent governors was shamefully prostituted. The most unblushing villainies and crimes were either officially condoned or remitted and forgiven.

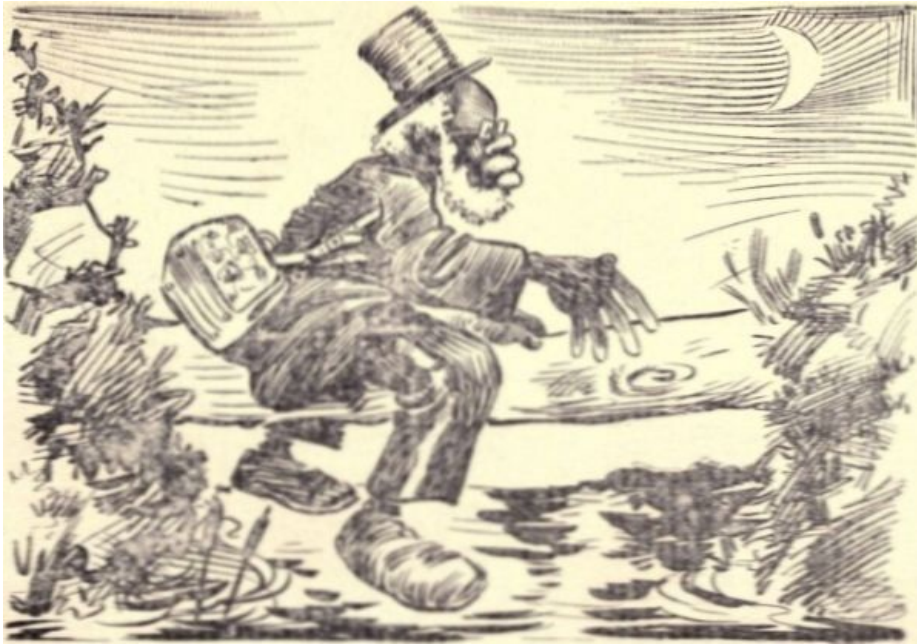
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The people were taxed by millions; millions were paid out, and no vouchers were ever taken or found.

In the face of such universal misrule, speculation and tyranny, there could be no greater misrepresentation of the truth than is contained in the oft-reiterated accusation, that the white people of the South are fierce, aggressive and defiant in their conduct towards those placed in authority over them by the Federal or State law. Aggressive and defiant! How vain and worse than useless would such conduct be against the overwhelming power of the tyrants who oppose them. It is against all the instincts of life, when despair has taken the place of hope.

Defiant? Does the poor unresisting hare, when trembling with frenzied apprehension under the feet and wide open jaws of the hound exhibit much defiance, or much hope of victory in a death struggle with its cruel and merciless foe? It makes no resistance—no motion or attitude of battle for life except that involuntary and spasmodic action produced by pain and suffering.

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CHAPTER IV.

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TYPES AND SHADOWS.

The development of the negro, educationally, has been embarrassed by natural causes that he has been unable to overcome. In a great variety of instances he has failed to be actuated by an intellectual or benevolent reason. In the evolution of the negro from a savage to a slave, from a slave to a freedman, and from a freedman to a citizen, only in exceptional instances has he been able to originate a theory or experiment that has been profitable to himself or others. No high state of civilization has ever originated from them. History teaches us that a nation may pass through an ascending or descending career. It may, by long-continued discipline, exhibit a general, mental advance; or it may go through other demoralizing processes, until it descends to the very bottom of animal existence.

Man is distributed throughout the earth in various conditions: in temperate zones he presents the civilization of Europe and America; in torrid zones the ignorance and nakedness of the African. It was out of the stewpan of the equator that the negro was fished—with all the features and instincts of a barbarism, from which he is slowly emerging—by cruel and irresponsible traders. The religious ideals of the negro are vague and indeterminate. They are intensely superstitious, and believe, as their ancestors before them, in sorcery and witchcraft. Although their powers of

origination are inefficient, they readily imitate the manners, customs and idiosyncracies of their masters, and frequently exhibit a superficial polish. They are emotional rather than practical in their religion. They are not naturally revengeful or vindictive, and they have shown a sentiment of gratitude that greatly endeared them to their owners. When war was flagrant, and they felt that it was waged for their emancipation—that the institution of slavery was menaced by Federal arms, in unnumbered instances they held in sacred trust millions of dollars worth of property and the lives of thousands of defenseless human beings, who held over them, without challenge, the rod of domestic government.

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Under all exasperating causes up to and during the war, hundreds of slaves remained loyal to the interests and authority of their masters.

Conditions, however, highly inflammatory, developed passions that made them brutish, dishonest and cruel. Their emotional religion and their prejudices acted concurrently. The carpet-bagger found these unlighted fagots distributed everywhere throughout the South; he had only to entice them by delusive promises; he had only to say to them, "Will you be slaves, or freedmen?"—to put into their hands a new commission, and into their hearts a new faith, differentiated from the old in order to kindle the fires of hate and revenge.

The Freedman's Bureau in the South was the nineteenth century Apocalypse—a revelation truly to the poor negroes, who had devoutly longed for its coming. The event, they thought, would be distinguished by their sudden enrichment; its huge commissariat would leak from every pore with the oil of fatness; officials, patient and sympathetic, would stand at its portals to distribute pensions and subsistence, and the star-spangled banner waving from the masthead would bow its welcome to all who came. Something for nothing was their great law of reciprocity. Four million slaves fastened themselves like barnacles upon this odious institution, an extremely partisan agency, deadly and inimical—hostile to the peace of the South and the interests of her people. These slaves, maddened by their misery, looked back upon the ruined plantations, and laughed when they felt that the whirlwind of retribution had swept over the land.

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Aleck, a former slave of Colonel Seymour, but whose rebellion to the slightest authority had latterly been shown by expressions cruel and insulting, and who affected a social equality with the carpet-baggers, halloed over the picket fence in the small hours of the night, to Johua, who was now eighty years of age:

"Hay, dar, yu franksized woter! hez yu heerd de news, ur is yu pine plank ceaseded? Hay, dar, Joshaway! De bero man is dun und riv wid de munny, und he lows dat he is ergwine ter penshun off de ole isshu niggers fust."

"Aye, aye!" exclaimed Joshua, almost mechanically, as he aroused himself with an effort, and rubbed the sleep out of his dimmed eyes, "Don't you heer dat, Hanner?" he asked his old wife. "Ergwine to penshun off de ole isshu niggers fust! Grate Jarryko! Who dat er woicin' dat hebbenly pocklermashun outen dar in de shank o' de night? Haint dat yu, brudder Wiggins?"

"Yaw," Aleck replied, "dis is me, sho. De bero man hez dun und sont me to norate dis pocklermashun to you und Ned."

"Grate Jarryko!" exclaimed Joshua, again excitedly. "Hanner," he continued, "ef yu ever seed a cricket hop spry 'pon de hath, jess watch dis heer ole isshu jump inter his gyarments."

As the negro was groping about in the dark for his ragged clothes he said half parenthetically, "Dat dare voice fetches to my membrunce de scriptur agen, whay hit says "Fling yo bred into de warter und hit is ergwine to cum out a ho cake." Yu is er shoutin', sliding-baccurd mefodis Hanner und don't pin yo fafe to providence but to grace, und grace is ergwine to keep you perpendikkler in Filadelfy meeting-house, but hit haint ergwine to fetch no horg meat nur taters nudder, dis side of de crick. Hit wur providence dat fotched dat bero man into de souf-land wid de munny to de ole lams of de flock. Don't yu see?"

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"I sez ole lams," snapped Hannah; "ef day wuz de onliest wuns gwine to be penshunned off, yu'd be stark nekked as er buzzard, kase yu is dun un backslewed wusser dan a scaly horg."

"Grate Jarryko!" ejaculated Joshua, "How's a mishunnary ergwine to back slew, tell me dat? Kase you jined Filadelfy church, you haint got all de liggion in de world. Dare's Zion und dare's Massedony und dare's de baptizin crick und den dares fafe und providence. Don't you see Hannah? I'm ergwine to ax yu enudder pint rite dare," continued Joshua. "Who dat way back yander in the dissart, dat de good Lord fed wid ravens, when de rashuns gin out? Pend upon it, dat woice out yander imitates de woice of the proffit Heckerlijer, dat flung his leg outen jint, er tusselling wid de harkangel."

"Twant Heckerlijer" answered Hannah sharply, as she threw a splinter of lightwood upon the embers. "Yu's allus a mysterfying de scriptures when yu's er spashiatin erbout dem proffets; yu haint never heerd no such a passage as dat from de circus rider, nur de slidin elder nudder; ef dat cum outer de scriptur, hits by und 'twixt de misshunaries, und day is fell frum grace same as yu."

"Now yu's acting scornful agen de misshunarys" replied Joshua contemptuously, "Ef you ever gits to hebben, let me pete dat ergin; I sez, ef you ever gets to hebben yu's ergwine to hole a argyment wid de possel Joner, und den yu's ergwine to be flung outen de gate."

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"Whay did yu get dat possell frum?" asked Hannah with irritation. "Whicherway is de sebben starrs Joshua?" She asked as she changed the subject.

"Day is skew-west over yander," said Joshua as he went to the door to look out into the night;

"Und bress de Lord" he continued, "peers lak day is a nussing de bero man und de munny er standin' disserway purpundikkler, fo und aft?"

"Is yu ergwine to de town und hit pitch dark?" enquired Hannah. "How in de name of Gord is yu gwine to get to de tuther eend of de crick, und yu bline ez a sand mole flung outer de ground?"

"Now yu's er flingin' a damper on my ambishun ergin. How's I ergwine to fetch de munny back epseps I gits to the tuther eend?" asked Joshua crustily. "Duz yu speck me to slew frum wun eend to the tuther lak a skeeter hork? Tell me dat."

"Lors a massy" he cried out in pain, as he danced around the room on one foot, "fur de hebbins sake fling dat ole free-legged cheer outer dis house into de mash. Grate Jarryko! de debble has sho got hisself tangled up wid de harrydatterments of dis house. Yu mouter knowed dat pizened cussed impelment was ergwine to cum in contact wid sum of my jints."

"Yu jess nuss dat ole hoof of yourn in boff hands lak dat," said Hannah provokingly "twell I strikes a lite und den I'm ergwine to clap fur yu to dance er misshunery reel."

"Don't tanterlize me no mo Hanner wid dem reels und me in all dis rack und missury! Grate Jarryko! Dis heer ole happy sack haint ergwine to hole all dat munny," observed Joshua, after a moment and still groaning with pain.

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"Den you mout take de bofat, und de blu chiss, und den dare's de wheel borrar und de steer kyart. Fetch all yu kin Joshaway, fur me und yu is ergwine to need hit every bit und grane. Dat ole beaver of yourn wid de tip eend er flipperty-flopity disserway und datterway, same ez a kyte in de gale is jamby gin out, und den dares de lan, und de grate house, und de hosses und de kerrige, und de peanny forty, und de kalliker kote, und de snuff, und—und—"

"Don't fling no mo unds—unds—at me," interrupted Joshua in disgust, "epsep yu aims fur me to drap rite back into de bed, whay I wur wen de proklermashun issshued."

Hannah made no answer to this effusion of temper, but going slyly to an old chest in the corner, she took from it a bottle containing a gill or more of ardent spirits and giving it to the old negro, said, "Anint dat ole jint wid dis good truck, Joshaway, hit will swage de missury."

Joshua looked up with a countenance beaming like the full moon coming out of a black cloud, and playfully said to his old wife, "Honey I kin swage de missury mo better disser way;" drank it down and then exclaimed, "Bress God, dat sarchin pain is dun und gon."

"Dont you forget honey," said Joshua again, patronizingly as he was about stepping out of the door with his stick and haversack, "dat nex Saddy, arter dis Saddy cummin, dem dare high steppers dats gwine to cum home wid me dis arternoon is ergwine to raise a harry kane 'twixt dis house und de federick sammyterry whay old Semo und dat secesh gubberner is ergwine to preach de funeral of ole Ginurul Bellion, lately ceased, und when me und yu gits into de kerrige, great Jarryko! I'm ergwine to hole dem rones disserway, und whern day gits 'twixt de flatform und ole glory, I'm ergwine to histe 'em up on dare hine legs, jess so, see!"

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Old Hannah clapped her hands with joy and laughed again and again "Bress Gord" she exclaimed with excitement; "yu is same ez a yurling colt yoself Joshaway, I'm ergwine to give yu a moufful of fodder and shet yu up wid de steer, kase de way yu's a histing up yo rare legs und er chompin' de bit, yu's ergwine to eat up de gyarden sass same as de steer."

Joshua looked scornfully at his wife and observed with a fierce scowl, "Day haint no passifyin' wun of dese backslewed mefodiss epseps yu's er totin every bit of de strane yoself, fo I gits back wid de kerrige und de hosses," he continued quite earnestly "Yu mout move all de harry detaments outen de house, ready fur de grate house, und yu mont rent dis house to ole Semo pervidin' he pays de rent, und you mout turn de munny over to de darters of de sammytary siety."

"Ugh! Ugh! I heers yu; fetch dem nales und de snuff Joshaway!" Hannah halloed as Joshua now in a good humor limped away in the darkness singing merily;

"When I was ergrwine down de field,
De blacksake bit me on de heel;
Und ez I riz to fire my best
I run ergin a yaller jacket's nest.

"Yaller jackets indeed" echoed Hannah as she proudly tossed her aged head, "when Joshua fetches dem rones und kerrige, dare haint ergwine to be no yaller jackets on me ur him udder."

The village was thronged with the black wards of the government, when Joshua arrived wearied and hungry. Allured by expectations that had been most wantonly excited, the negroes flocked into the town with trunks, valises, travelling bags, some of them of the most primitive description, within which to put their pensions. Flattering expressions came from truly loyal hearts, when the agent of the freedman's bureau ascended the court house steps to address the freedmen. His very presence was like the sunlight over the darkened land, but alas; he was the man who was to pass out to each and all of the misguided negroes the cup of disappointment and bitterness, and they in their nakedness and stupidity would drink its lees with the desperate resoluteness of fanatics.

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Joshua stood with his old skinny hands clasped upon his bosom, looking up in an attitude of reverence.

"Grate Jarryko!" he said to himself; "Ef dis bellion hadn't upriz de ole isshu nigger mouter been way back yander a totin' de grubbin hoe fur Jeff Davis, de secesh, und de ole bull whup er natally

cryin fur de po niggers meat. Ef Hanner seed dis site, she'd jine de mishunary's, kase she mouter node dat providence had sont dat bero man und hit is mo better dan grace."

The old negro saw the diamonds glittering upon the enameled shirt bosom of the agent and he said again in rapture.

"Day is same ez de starrs in de hellyments."

He saw a huge chain dangling from his neck, and he exclaimed.

"Grate Jarryko! ef de ole ship of Zion wur to git shipracked in Galilee, yu mout grapple her wid dat dare chain und hit mout hole twell de harrykin swaged."

The old negro was lost in wonder, and at last overpowered by fatigue, and the press of the throng, he dropped out of line and fell asleep upon an empty crate. How long he slept does not enter into the chronicle. There were mischievous boys then as there are now, and whilst he slept they collected from old bureau drawers one hundred dollars of brand new confederate treasury notes of the issue of 1864, and placed them loosely in his beaver and covered it over with his red pocket handkerchief. Upon awaking, Joshua rubbed his eyes, and then his knees and his elbows; looked around dazedly, and exclaimed.

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"Consound my buttons, ef de bero man haint dun und penshuned off de niggers, und gon; und dis heer nigger a drapped back to sleep, lak a idgeot, wid nary cent of de penshun. Grate Jarryko! I knows what Hanner is ergwine to say; she's ergwine to ax me erbout de hosses, und den she's ergwine to aggravate me wid providence dis, und grace dat, und mishunary heer, und meferdis dare. Ef yu'd pervided yoself wid sum of dat grace down at Filadelfy meetin' house Joshaway, she's ergwine to say, you mouter fothed de rones und de kerrige too. Grate Jarryko! hit peers lak provedense hez dun und flung de fat in de fire arter all."

Taking up his old hat, the confederate money went scurrying here and there; the old negro looked around him suspiciously, and exclaimed in an excited way.

"Grate Jarryko! whicherway did all dis munny cum from? hit wur provedense dat time und no mistake; now yu sees Hanner which wun of dem meeting houses is got de under holt; Yu's dun und hilt to grace, und me runs wid fafe, und whicherwun is got de munny? Tell me dat?"

Whilst Joshua was sleeping, Hannah was busy hammering and packing the scant furniture for its removal to the great house, and at high noon everything was out of doors. The squealing pig was fettered like a convict, and old Boatswain, the coon dog, was tied and howling like a catamount. Joshua placed the money into his haversack, with the nails and snuff, looked up at the setting sun, and said to himself.

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"I mout let Hanner pick out dem hosses, und de kerrige, kase she mout not like de rones."

The old negro struck a bee-line for home with the further observation.

"Grate Jarryko! ef hit warnt fur Ganderbilt, I specks dis ole nigger mout be de richest man on de top side of de yurth."

He paused for a moment and said.

"I dun und forgit; I'm mo'est sho Hanner is ergwine to ax fer sperrets fur her griping missury."

And he stepped into the nearest groggery and purchased a pint or more with the money an old friend had given him.

"Now den ole town, I bids yu farwell twell yu sees me und Hanner in de kerrige."

As Joshua was going on toward home his mind became speculative. Great schemes in a crude way were thought of, and he said to himself.

"Now dat de munny is dun un riv, ef I ketches Hanner wun mo time wid a hoe in her hands, I'm ergwine to git a vorcement. She mout take lessons on de peanny-forty from dat white gal in de grate house und play de hopperatticks arternoons arter me und her hez driv over de plantushun und seed to de craps. When I gits home I'm ergwine to berry dis munny under de tater hill und I haint ergwine to let Hanner spishun whay I keeps hit, kase she'll buy all de hosses in de Newnited States und finely hit will all be gone. I'm ergwine to fling de whup und pull de ribbuns myself, und ole Semo de secesh jess got to git outen de grate house. Lemme see how dese sperrets tastes," he said. And he reached in his ole haversack, got the flask and put it to his mouth. "Gurgle, gurgle, gurgle; umph," he said, smacking his lips, "dat is sho good truck. Is yu got gumpshun nuff ter count dis munny, specks it oversizes your judgment, ole hoss," and he began to count upon his fingers, "five hundred, hundred fousand, hundred million. Great king! what am I gwine ter do wid dis munny; ef ole Mars Linkun cud see Joshaway now, wid his freedom und de grate house und de plantashun und de hosses, he wud larf und larf frum wun eend of his mouf to the tother. You see's now Mr. Bellyun what yu is dun und dun fur yosef crackin de whup ober de po nigger."

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A distance of two miles had been placed between the old negro and the village and he had two more miles to go. One mile ahead ran with a swift current the black waters of Chowattuck, but there was a substantial foot log thrown across it, and it was ordinarily safe. Joshua had gone but a little farther when he wanted to sample "dem dar sperrets agin," "Pen upon it, I nattally feels dat ar truck er oozin outen my toe nails." The "tikler" was turned up again, and gurgle, gurgle, gurgle sang the fiery spirits. The money now had greatly multiplied; the trees upon the roadside were somersaulting, and the road itself, like a serpent, was twisting in and out about his tangled legs. Joshua stopped in sight of the water with the observation.

"Hole on dar ole hoss, what is yu ergwine ter do, dis munny aint ergwine to tote yu ober dis crick; ole glory back yander aint gwine ter heer yu hollow, what is yer gwine to do?"

He put his hands upon his old knees, and rubbed them down, brought his coat sleeves with a fierce swing across his cavernous mouth, fetched a grunt or two, then planted his feet upon the foot-log.

"Studdy yosef ole hoss, studdy yosef, ef yu draps inter dis heer crick und gits drouned, it's ergwine to bust up ebery scalyhorg in der souf."

Three times he tried to walk the log and as often fell off before reaching the water.

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"Konsoun de crick," he muttered, "hit hadn't orter be heer no how, er pesterrin fokses er cummin und er gwine; pears lak now de bellion is dun und fell dere is a dratted crick at ebery crook in de rode; blame my hide ef I aint gwine ercross ef I has ter crawl lak a santypede; I kin straddle de dratted fing un I kin git ercross arter a fashun, but what is I gwine ter do wid de happy-sak und de munny? I is bleegeed ter use bof hands ter hold on to de dratted log when I slips und slides, und I kaint tote de happy-sak in my mouf, kase I haint got but one ole snag in my hed, and hit is in de furder eend; consound it, whay it hadn't orter be no how. I kin tie de happy-sak to de kote keerts, und den ole hoss, yu und me kin land on de tother side of de crick lak a kildee. Ef I was ergwine tother way dar wud be a passel ob kaarts cummin dis way; dey is allus gwine de rong way at de rong time." So argued Joshua as he fastened the haversack to the only button on the back of his coat.

"Now den ole buttun, ef yu was ter brake loose, un drap yu wud werk bigger strucshun dan a yeth-shake, dat yu wud. Provedense is ergwine to do hits part ef Hanner is dun und dun hern."

Slipping and sliding, the old negro was approaching the other end of the foot log; his heavily weighted coat skirts thumping against his shanks, when he was sliding along under an overhanging cypress bush about midway of the deep channel, "kerchunk" some heavy object dropped into the water.

"Grate Jarryko!" exclaimed the old negro alarmed, "what a tremenjous mockisun snake dat was a drapping off dat dar bush; I'm ergwine ter git erway frum dis crick, sho yo born."

Slipping and sliding he finally got to the end, and with the observation "Peers lak I feels mity lightsum in de hine parts," he put his hand behind him to feel for his haversack, and found it gone.

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The loss of the treasure for the moment confused the old negro, then he began to cry and swear, until his grief at last found expression in the exclamation:

"Grate Jarryko! Dem passages o' scriptur erbout fafe und erbout grace und erbout proverdense got twisted und tangled togedder into a loblolly, und bress de Lawd, dis heer happuning is de eend of it all."

He then looked back upon the raging flood, utterly forlorn, and plaintively addressed himself to his situation:

"Now, whot's Hanner gwine ter do erbout dem hosses und de kerrige und de grate house, und dey kivered up in dat sloshy graveyard—drouned to def in de turkle hole? Dat ole button dun und broke loose und drapped in de werry wustest place on de top side o' de yeth. Now Hanner she's ergwine ter say hit wuz de sperrets. Well, den, how did de sperrets git inter de button? Dat's de pint. She mout say ergen dat ef dem sperrets hadn't got mixed up wid de ankle jints dat dis nigger mouter slewed ter disser eend und hilt on ter de munny. Well, den, how cum de drotted crick in de middle o' de rode? Dat's er nudder pint. Dis heer missury dun und cum erbout twixt Hanner und de debbil; dats de how. She er drapped back yander, er singin',

'Hold de fort, fer I'm er coming'

und er spectin' de hosses und de kerrige, und bress de Lawd she dun und flung de fat in de fiar her own sef. How's I ergwine ter hole de fort wid de amynishun in de dratted crick? I haint ergwine ter put de blame on de sperrits, kase hit hadn't orter go dare. She mout er node dat ole buttun warnt ergwine to tote dat strane, und dat hit wuz ergwine ter brake loose und drap fust er las. How wuz I er gwine ter git ter dis eend epseps I had fafe in de button? Now she mout say ergin dat I hed orter slewed across fust und den slewed back und fotched de munny. Bress de Lawd, how wuz I ergwine ter know de munny wuz gwine to stay at de tuther eend und I at disser eend? Tell me dat. Twixt de scalyhorgs und dat Mefodis meetin house, dare's ergwine ter cum a slycoon in dis lan' yit."

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As Joshua approached his cabin he looked up and saw his old wife sitting in a dilapidated rocking chair, surrounded by the scant furniture, and singing:

"Tis grace hez fotched me safe dis fur.
Und grace gwine take me home."

He stopped abruptly and began to groan and mutter.

"Grate Jarryko!" he exclaimed, as he vigorously rubbed one foot against the other, "Ef yu's spectin' dem rones to tote yu in de kerrige to Filadelfy meetin' house, hits ergwine ter be by und twixt mo better grace dan yu's got, ur me udder."

The old negro looked up again over the broken rim of his beaver, and he began to mutter again, "Grate Jarryko! Ef dat fool nigger haint dun und gone und turned de house inside outtards! De

debbil hez sho broke loose in de middle ships o' dis ole plantashun, und dem evil sperrets is in cohoot wid won ernudder."

At this point Hannah observed Joshua zigzagging across the field without horses or carriage, and her wrath was exceeding fierce.

"Pend upon it," she exclaimed, "dat ar ole nigger fool de werry eyeballs outen yo hed. Gwine ter fetch de rones und de kerrige! Grate king! Ef de good Lawd spares me twell den, when de jedge cums er roun' ter de kote, I'm ergwine ter git me er vorcement. Mont ez well go inter cohootnership wid a billy gote, widout ary moufful o' fodder ez dat ole black idgeot."

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When Joshua came within hailing distance, Hannah halloed to him; "Whay hez yu been all dis nite Joshaway? Here I'se sot und sot ever sense daylite down, in de jam of de chimney und every now und den hit peeerd lak I heerd dem rones er plumpudy plump down de rode, er cummin same ez a sho nuff harrykin, und bress Gord heer yu cums ergin wid de drunken reels lak er ole hoss, wid de bline staggers, mommucked up wusser dan a kadnipper; Look at dat ole bever hat, er layin' dare pine plank lak a turkle trap sot bottom uppards."

Joshua heaved one or more sighs as he blurted out in a drowsy way; "Dem dare hosses yu heerd down de rode, er blickerty blick, dun und got drowned to def in de crick last nite."

"Grate king!" exclaimed Hannah wrathfully; "ef de good Lord spares me twell den, when de jedge gits to de kote, I'm gwine to git me a vorcement."

"Und me too;" ejaculated Joshua as he stretched himself upon a plank for a nap.

CHAPTER V.

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PATRIOTIC MEN DELIBERATING.

At the hour of 3 p. m., in the early autumn of 186—, several representative gentlemen met by previous agreement in the library of Colonel Seymour. This congress of Southern leaders of the old school, after the interchange of the usual courtesies, resolved themselves into "A Committee of the Whole upon the state of the Union," with Judge Bonham in the chair, and was addressed at length by Governor Ainsworth. This gentleman had honored his state as one of its Senators in the Federal Congress; again as Secretary of the Navy, and had filled by successive elections the office of Governor for three terms. He had reached that mellow age when the intellect becomes largely retrospective. The manner of this distinguished statesman was singularly individual. In early life strongly inclined to the contemplation of perplexing political questions, he possessed a graphic, nervous force—a kind of untamed vigor—a raciness of flavor in speech that belonged only to the individual who thought for himself. There were few men more richly endowed; his intellect was of the highest order—clear, rapid and comprehensive—combined with an extraordinary facility of expressing and illustrating his ideas, both in conversation and debate. He possessed a rich imagination, a rare and delicate taste, a gentle and sportive wit, and an uninterrupted flow of humor, that made him the delight of every circle. Nor were his moral qualities less deserving of respect and admiration. He was generous, brave, patriotic and independent. He was the slave of no ambitious or selfish policy; the hunter of no factitious or delusive popularity; he spoke the language of truth, justice and wisdom. A "throb of gratitude beat in the hearts of the people," and the sentiment of an affectionate respect glowed in their bosoms for the "old man eloquent." His speeches, too, were essentially characteristic, abounding in keen satire, humor, and frequently in the most direct and idiomatic language. Given to intense conviction rather than to subtle discernment, and devoting his unusual ability to studied effort, he could, whenever he felt so inclined, "strip the mask from the hypocrite, and the cowl from the bigot."

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This was the man toward whom the patriotic sentiment of the country was directed; the man who might, by possibility, lash the raging Hellespont into submission. "But what avail," said he as he leaned heavily upon his staff, "are arguments and protests? Can we charm the serpent into harmlessness by the feeble chirping of the wren? Can we tranquilize the country by indignant declamation?" Then with an effort he assumed a poise still more dignified and serious, as he continued:

"Gentlemen, when the seas are lashed into a rage, no matter who are the mad spirits of the storm, they cannot say to their tumultuous waters, 'thus far shalt thou go, and no farther, and here shalt thy proud waves be stayed.' There are other powers in motion beneath its surface, which they wist not of, and whose might they can neither direct or control. I have stood upon the shores of the mighty ocean, and observed the forerunners of the coming storm. I have heard the moan of its restless waters in the caverns of the great deep, and have seen the upheaving of the billows, which rose, and raged and tossed as foam from their bosoms, the wild spirits that gendered the tempest. I envy not the triumph of those who have troubled the waters; who have laid waste the South, who have beggared her proud people. I had rather stand with my countrymen powerless, but brave and unyielding, than to wield the thunderbolts of Jove, if I must employ their power and resource in wrong and oppression. When the last spark of Roman liberty was extinguished; when no voice but that of Augustus was heard, and no power but that of Augustus was felt, his venal flatterers vied with each other in deifying their god, and degrading those firm, defiant spirits who stood for their country and its tranquility. Cæsar had subjugated

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the world, all but the dark unbending soul of Cato. In a catastrophe, such as this, let that band of patriots to which it is my pride to belong, share in the spirit of the last of the Romans; that spirit which scorns to bow before any earthly power, save that of their beleaguered country.

The reconstruction government has purposely demoralized the economic conditions which contributed to the prosperity of the South. Full well it knew that the wealth of the people depended upon their labor. There was a time when plunder was the great resource of the nations of the earth. The first kingdom was sustained by pillage and conquest, and great Babylon, the glory of the Chaldean empire, was adorned by the spoils of all Asia; the Assyrian was plundered by the Persian, the Persian by the Macedonian, and it at last devoured by the Roman power. The wolf which nursed its founder, gave a hunger for prey insatiable to the whole world. There was not a temple nor a shrine between the Euphrates and the salted sea that was not pillaged by these marauders. The tide of ages, century after century, had rolled over the last fragment of Roman power; the light of science had broken upon the world, before mankind seemed to realize that our Creator, dead aeons ago had said: 'By the sweat of his brow man should eat his bread all the days of his life.'

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Wealth is power, and the wealth of a nation is its labor, its abundant control of all the great agencies of nature employed in production. The products of human labor, its food and clothing, like the fruits of the earth are annual, and God in his wisdom has adjusted human wants to their power of production. Like the bread from heaven the dews of every night produce the crops, and the labors of every day gather the harvest. What, but an almost boundless power of consumption and reproduction has given to the South its athletic vigor, and yet the enfranchisement of the negroes has been a fatal blow to every industrial interest. It has left our plows to rot in the furrow, and our plantations to grow up in briars and brambles.

That liberty, which ranks in our organic law next to life, is subjected to the caprice of those who happen in the ever varying conditions of human affairs to be placed over us as masters. The South believed that the theory of the government derived its chiefest captivation from its regard to the equal rights of all its citizens and from its pledge to maintain and preserve those rights. It assumed to proclaim the happiness of the people to have been the object of its institution, and to guarantee to each and to all without limitation the enjoyment of life, liberty, and property.

It has been reserved for the power of oppression, in its active and diffused state, to give effect to the unhallowed innovation upon the rights of the South.

Reconstruction is the Gethsemane of southern life. God's law is higher than man's law. Man's feeble statutes cannot annul the immutable ordinances of the Almighty. Those whom God has put asunder, let no man join together.

Who could have foreseen that in the first century of our existence African freedmen would rule sovereign commonwealths, and become the judges of the rights and property of a race who had ruled the destinies of the world since governments—patriarchal, monarchical or constitutional—was known to man?

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The true, sincere and rational humanitarian looks with sorrow upon the future state of the misguided negroes; for when this institutional age shall have passed away, he sees the exodus or extirpation of this disturbing element in the social and political conditions of the more powerful sovereign race. The authors of the infamous policy have written their *hic jacet* against our civilization.

No where can there be found in the history of any country where the civil and military policy have been so basely prostituted, or where the safeguards of liberty, life and property were ever entrusted to freed slaves—human chattels; slaves who never for a moment have been in a state of pupilage. It is an epoch that marks the decadence of the manhood and civilization of a great nation—homogeneous, prosperous, enlightened and happy. The nearest approximation to this era of ruin—of social degradation—was when the slaves in Rome were enfranchised by order of the emperor, and conditions there were totally dissimilar. Whilst they enjoyed certain rights and prerogatives of manumission, they were still held to duties of obedience and gratitude. Whatever were the fruits of their toil and industry, their patrons shared or inherited the third part, or even the whole of their acquisitions. In the decline of this great empire, the proud mistress of the world, we are told that hereditary distinctions were gradually abolished, and the reason or instinct of Justinian completed the simple form of an absolute monarchy. In the eye of the law all Romans were equal and all subjects were citizens. The inestimable character was degraded to an obsolete and empty name. The voice of a Roman could no longer enact laws or create the annual ministers of his power.

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"It may take many generations perhaps, for moral changes are slow, to put out all our lights of knowledge that are now beaming from every cottage in the South; but one after another they will be extinguished, and with them the beacon torch of liberty. When the white men of the South shall come to see how things are, and to realize the downward tendency, physical, intellectual manhood will make a throe to regain the height it has lost, and if it fails, a storm will arise from the elements they are compounding, that will break somewhere and spend itself with desolating fury. They cannot degrade a people who have been enlightened and free, prosperous and happy, without igniting a mass which they can no more control, than they can the central fires of Vesuvius.

"Up to the commencement of hostilities between the North and the South, there were in the South millions of people employed directly or indirectly in the honest and wholesome avocation of agriculture, and by its great encouraging system, sustained in a condition of existence, both

moral and physical, equally as prosperous and independent as any other agricultural people in any other region of the earth. They were white men who piece by piece built up the whole superstructure, and thereby reinforced the country with so much labor and skill; furnished so much mutual employment for that skill and labor, aided as they were by so many instrumentalities of toil and agents of production. What a country it was—supplied by this system from the labor of our own hands and workshops, with all the machinery, fruits of the earth, and all the needful fabrics of human skill. This great system comprehended every class and every source of material wealth. Under this system our people prospered. The white population of the South came by descent from a parent stock, that from the foundation of society had governed in wisdom and moderation the most enlightened countries of the world; who had written every constitution, fought every battle, endowed every charity, established every government, introduced every reform that has given to the world its christian development and progress.

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"When these extra-hazardous reconstruction acts were submitted to the Legislature of the South, they refused to "chop logic" with the Reconstruction party. It would have been contrary to the experience of mankind, and an exception to all the teachings of history, if in the high excitement then prevailing—the exasperation of the people—the outrages threatened and inflicted, the South had yielded one jot or tittle or swerved from its honest, patriotic convictions. The transition was from a state in which the integrity and intelligence of the white race, ennobled by centuries of meritorious service, had ruled; to a government by a black race that less than five generations before had been hunted like wild beasts in the jungles of the dark continent; who were handcuffed and decoyed into slave ships, and who had been slaves until the proclamation of President Lincoln emancipated them in the territory protected by the U. S. Army. The transition was to a condition of things in which white men to the number of three hundred thousand were disfranchised and deprived of the right to vote and to hold office, and the enfranchisement of more than a corresponding number of benighted negroes with the right to vote and hold office. The transition of the slave, was too sudden—too alarming—too degrading. No people who were proud of their traditions, their institutions, could have looked upon such a change with complacency; nor seen their local government pass into the hands of their slaves—irresponsible, illiterate, brutish, rapacious, without being goaded into violent resistance.

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"It has been remarked 'Oh Liberty, what crimes are committed in thy name.' If the gift of the elective franchise enabled the negro to protect himself in his rights of person and property, the denial of it to the white man took away from him that protection and that right. They went even to lower depths, and by the election and registration laws basely surrendered into the hands of the carpet-baggers all power. The judiciary, the last refuge of the unfortunate and oppressed is stricken down and stripped of both ermine and respectability. The ballot box—the sanctuary of freedom—the ballot box—the only secure refuge of liberty—the ballot box, the armory where freedom's weapons are wont to terrify tyrants, is made the charnel house in which the assassinated liberties of a defenceless, prostrated people are buried; is made the dice box in which are staked and played for by the freedmen of the South the revenues of plundered commonwealths. What wonder in this lust for power men should become strangers to the people they govern, outlaws to honesty and patriotism.

"They know no law but that of force, and no God but Mammon. They ply their theft upon every citizen, enthrall him with taxation, deny him the right to be seen or heard or felt at the ballot box or before the court. In the train of these outrages and indignities came a flood of unwholesome oppressive laws, creating new offices, increasing the salaries of incompetent and truculent officials, multiplying the cost and expenditures of government, and correspondingly increasing the burdens of taxation. Then came martial law, militia campaigns, loyal leagues, murders, arsons, burglaries, rapes, and a reign of terror and intimidation to make the way for the easy perpetration of the most monstrous and unparalleled wrongs, frauds and outrages that ever cursed the earth. The South, like a beautiful captive, was turned over to be deflowered and defiled. She could only cry in her desperation—"I am within your brutal power, and gagged and pinioned must submit."

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"Our elective judiciary has contributed immeasurably to the vicious, demoralizing spirit of the age." The intelligent and upright judge is the representative of the law in its simplicity, sufficiency and learning. He is the living exponent of its justice. Whatever the law is will appear in him, and whatever it does will be done through him. The different departments of industrial activity center in him. The plowman in the field, the smith at his anvil, the miner in the earth, the operative in the factory, the banker at his desk, are all a vital part of his being. He is the foremost agent of providence in keeping up the natural distinction of race and position. His creed is that men are not to be antagonists, but friends. Differ they must in usages and institutions, in habits and pursuits; but in his opinion they differ, not that they may be separated, but for a truer sympathy and a compacter union. Mountains and seas insulate, language and religion differentiate men, but the law in its economical administration corrects these things into the elements of a genuine brotherhood. The fortunes of the world, so far as they are delegated to human care, are in his hands. The peaceful progress of society is blended with his personal integrity. Commonwealths, corporations and individuals vest their wealth, their reputation, their security in him, and if any one man more than another is under the most sacred of earthly obligations to be an example of the highest integrity, the most exact justice, the noblest virtue of thought, word and action, it is the judge of our courts of record. No feudal baron—no courtly knight—ever had the power that may now be exercised by him.

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"Our civilization pledges us to the sway of moral principles; its rule is imperative, because we have assumed the title of men, domesticated our hearts, and accepted the religion of Jesus

Christ. Judicial life, by the earnestness with which it has acted in the past crisis of our state and national history, by the patriotic devotion and interpretation of the constitution and the laws made in pursuance thereof, by its conservative temper in resisting fanaticism, vice, corruption and fraud has shown itself a watchful guardian of the momentous trusts confided to its keeping. The honest, learned judge has pledged himself for the faith of contracts and treaties; he has jealously guarded the institutions of the country and bravely upheld them as the embodiment of our doctrines and our hopes. The traditions, laws and customs of the country have been committed to him, and with the ever active jealousy of encroachment, he has not disguised his fears of centralization or oppression. Hitherto, irrespective of all party relations, the judicial system was slowly but surely working out the great problems of domestic prosperity. Times have changed, however, and we have changed with them. Our present elective judiciary is indeed the black vomit of reconstruction.

"It may be seriously questioned whether under any circumstances the elective system is adequate for the purpose designed. All classes, high and low, sooner or later come before the tribunal of justice. Its judgments and decrees affect the humblest, as well as the most powerful individual and control the strongest combinations of men. We know that it is utterly impossible to keep the nomination and election clear of mere political influences and those of the worst kind. It is said that revolutions never go backward; nevertheless in the teeth of the adage I confess that I can see no better way of selecting judges than the mode pointed out by the unamended constitutions and the laws and by the general good sense of mankind. I believe that this method is wise and conservative, in harmony with our institutions and sufficiently democratic to satisfy the people. All the rest is faction, demagogism and cabal. The judge should represent no interest, no party, only the law; he is an umpire between man and man, between the individual and the body social.

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"What is required in the judge is ability, learning, integrity. In public station it is as necessary to be thought honest as to be so, and the moment the popular mind once takes in the true position of the elective judge, the moment that it perceives the magistrate to be possessed of neither true power nor real dignity, and exposed perpetually to temptation, that moment the influence and usefulness of the judge will be destroyed. Their judgments in such cases will be received without respect and obeyed only so far as they can be enforced, and if the people shall ever break down and trample under foot the defences of unpopular power; the Judiciary will be scouted from their seats, their filthy and tattered ermine will be torn from their backs, and they will be driven out into hopeless ignominy as the meanest of sycophants, and the most truculent of demagogues.... A hundred and eighty years ago the English parliament, sick of the miseries resulting from a corrupt judiciary, changed the tenure of the office, abolished their dependence on the sovereign and made the tenure of their existence dependent on their good behavior alone. From that time to this the English judiciary has risen in character and influence. With us the system is elective. The judicial candidate, like a fish monger, goes with his wares into a market overt. He advertises his opinions—his promises, he makes his pledges, he puts a premium upon the ballot, he weighs to a nicety the purchasable value of negro electors. The rival candidate does the same, and hence the office is purchasable at the price of manhood, integrity, learning and capacity. Thus the whole machinery of the courts is run with an eye single to making political capital for the radical party and intensifying their hatred toward the South.

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"And now gentlemen," the governor said in conclusion, "our meeting here to-day will be without its influence upon a power that can 'kill and make alive.'"

At the conclusion of the speech of the governor, it was resolved that messengers should be sent to the president with full power to enter into any treaty or compact for the maintenance of peace and order, and that Governor Ainsworth and Colonel Seymour shall be charged with the execution of the mission.

CHAPTER VI.

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THE MILLS ARE GRINDING.

It was the hour of high noon that a gentleman and lady alighted from a carriage at the foot of the mansion of Colonel Seymour without previous announcement. The gentleman was a person of attractive presence and perhaps forty-five years of age. The lady was not attractive, a little patronizing in her manners, and perhaps thirty-five years of age. Their *patois* was that of English people; to an artistic ear, however, this may have appeared feigned. Their manner in the presence of the host was unconstrained; indeed they expressed themselves with unusual freedom. The gentleman gave his name as Mr. Jamieson, and the lady as his niece, Miss Harcourt, both of them lately arrived from London. He had interested himself, he said, in scientific researches for the past few years, and was now pursuing an inquiry that he hoped would be of practical use to the South. The "London Society," whose agent he was, was seeking from all available sources the most exhaustive information about the negro in his gradations from the savage to the citizen; and he took occasion to say that his principals had been greatly astonished because of the alarming strides the negro had made in a country that, less than a century ago, made the British power tremble in its very strong-holds. He would be pleased to ask if this sudden transition from slavery to freedom had not reversed the orderly procedure of the government in respect to its administration in the South. To this inquiry Colonel Seymour replied, quite epigrammatically, "that the world had no precedent for the revolutionary measures which

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were being enforced in the South."

The stranger continuing, observed that he had desired this interview before exploiting a field untried and perhaps dangerous; and he would be greatly obliged if his host would be as frank and communicative as possible.

In the course of this interview, the arguments employed by the stranger disarmed the old man's suspicions, and in a confidential way the Colonel told Mr. Jamieson that he would communicate his knowledge of the matters as far as he could, but feared it would not be of much value, as he was under suspicion by the Federal authorities; having fought under Lee in the many battles of the South, he was still vehemently protesting against the invasion of his own country by the carpet bag government.

"You were, then, a Confederate soldier?" inquired the stranger.

"Yes, and was paroled at Appomattox," sententiously rejoined the veteran.

"Now, my dear sir, you greatly interest me; may I inquire your rank in the Confederate army?"

"I was a Colonel of cavalry, sir."

"Were you at Gettysburg, sir?"

"Yes, and was wounded as we were falling back to the Potomac."

"Gettysburg! Ah, yes!" the stranger observed reflectively; "this battle was quite disastrous to the South, I believe, and was claimed by the North as a great victory."

"And what upon the face of the earth have they not claimed?" excitedly replied the veteran.

"Ah yes, they are a boastful people," said Mr. Jamieson. "I doubt not they claimed victories they never won. You of course are still of the opinion that the South was right?"

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"No opinion about it. I know she was right. We never resorted to hostilities until our institutions were assailed."

"I am sure your statement is correct, sir," said the Englishman. "While our government, then in the control of a radical ministry, was officiously unfriendly to the South, your government had a great army of sympathizers in England who deplored its downfall; indeed, the president of our society was an active sympathizer with your country, and the bank in which he was a director, upon his private account emitted bills of credit that were used by the agents of the Confederate government in the purchase of materials of war. I presume, sir," continued the Englishman, "you would have no hesitation in going to war again if the same casus-belli existed?"

"No indeed, sir."

"And you are of opinion that it would not be treasonable to oppose the policy of the government in respect to its acts of reconstruction?"

"If armed with adequate power, I should not hesitate in respect to my duty in the premises," replied the veteran with a show of temper.

"I am very glad, sir, that you have been entirely frank with me," said the stranger, "and I fully appreciate your feelings. I suspect that you do not think that a strongly centralized government in any contingency is the least oppressive form of government?"

"Assuredly not, sir. Nature has established a diversity of climates, interests and habits in the extensive territories embraced by the Federal government. We cannot assimilate these differences by legislation. We cannot conquer nature. Other differences have been introduced by human laws and adventitious circumstances, very difficult, if not impossible to be adjusted by Federal legislation, hence the necessity of local legislatures with adequate powers, and a general government with its appropriate powers."

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"I presume, sir," said the stranger, "that you cannot conscientiously support the reconstruction measures of Congress and the president?"

"I cannot and will not, sir," responded Colonel Seymour with emphasis; "and if you were advertant to that point of time in the history of our late war when, from sheer exhaustion, the South laid down its arms, you would not ask the question. There were hundreds of thousands of patriotic men in the North, who, upon the question of the emancipation of the negro, concurred in its propriety, yea, its necessity, but who denounced those reactionary measures that were crystalized and enforced with cruelty against the South. In our judgment these measures were not only extra-hazardous, but inherently oppressive. It would have been a pernicious power in the hands of an intelligent, conservative, law-abiding people, but most deadly in the hands of ignorant, unscrupulous and truculent officials. You must remember that the South, in a metaphorical sense, was an immense area sown in grain ready to be harvested, with its hedges trampled under foot and destroyed, and inviting cattle and swine to enter and devour. The herds came greedily through every gap, and like the wild beasts upon our western prairies, depastured and consumed almost the whole."

"How wonderfully recuperative have been the energies of your people sir," interrupted the stranger.

"Yes, but will you allow me to proceed?" replied the Colonel; "We believed that when the war ended, the people of the South relying upon the pledges made by the union generals in the field before the armies were disbanded; on the negotiations preceding the surrender; on the proclamation of President Lincoln; and the publications of the press; as well as upon the terms

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actually agreed on between Grant and Lee, and Johnson and Sherman, at the time of the capitulation of the Confederate armies; that when resistance to federal authority ceased, and the supremacy of the constitution of the United States was acknowledged; and especially after the ordinances of secession were repealed, and an amendment to the constitution, abolishing slavery wherever it existed, was ratified by the legislatures of the insurrectionary states; that a full and complete restoration of the southern states to their former position of equal states would at once take place; and after the exhaustion of such a war they hailed the return of peace with satisfaction; they acknowledged defeat; accepted the situation, and went to work to rebuild their waste places and to cultivate their crops. The men who composed the union armies, found on their return home, a healthy, prosperous, peaceable and well organized society; while the government with a prodigal hand freely distributed pay, pensions, and bounties. It was not so in the south; society here was disorganized; the strain upon the people to supply the armies in the fields had exhausted their resources; labor was absolutely demoralized; the negroes being freed, in their ignorance and delusion were not slow to understand their changed condition, and became aggressive, riotous and lawless. Under such circumstances it was impossible to restore harmony in the civil government without the utmost confusion; yet so earnestly did our people struggle to return to their allegiance and thus entitle them to the protection which had been promised, that from the day of the surrender of the Confederate army, not a gun has been fired; no hostile hand has been uplifted against the authority of the United States, but before breathing time even was allowed, a set of harpies, many of whom had shirked the dangers of the battle field, pounced down upon our people to ravage, plunder, and destroy. All remonstrances, entreaties, resistances were stifled by the cry of treason and disloyalty and by the hollow pretence that the plunderers were persecuted because of their loyalty to the Union. A system has grown up in the South with obstinacy, whereby great protected monopolies are fostered at the expense of its agricultural labor; then follow the series of offensive measures known as the reconstruction acts; but one further observation sir, and I have done. The English people had no just conception of the oppressions want only inflicted upon the South; of the insolence and rapacity of the carpet-baggers and freedmen who were made our masters."

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There was quite an interval before the stranger replied.

"Your address sir has been a revelation indeed; it is a lesson of great educational value and I sincerely hope I may hear you again. Would you care to present your views in writing?"

The Colonel without any suggestion of evil said to the stranger. That possibly at some future day he might find the leisure to do so.

"And now you must allow me to thank you, before leaving, for the courtesy you have shown. I shall take pleasure in reporting this interview."

Colonel Seymour upon entering his wife's chamber remarked to her "I have found a friend in need; an Englishman who was delightfully entertaining and who represents certain humanitarian interests. I expect to hear something very flattering to the South when he submits a report to his principal."

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Mrs. Seymour who had passed that period in life, when she could look hopefully upon anything, observed quite sadly. "I hope it is so, my dear husband; I hope the future has very much happiness in store for you; but I am suspicious of strangers who seem to have no other business with you, than to obtain your views upon the unhappy events that are girdling our home as it were with a zone of fire." "Ah," exclaimed the husband, "you do not understand, perhaps your opinion will change in a few days."

"I hope so" the sick lady replied feebly.

We pretermitt events more or less irritating to follow the urbane Englishman. The reader has perhaps surmised that he was an agent of the secret service bureau. This was true, as Colonel Seymour learned to his sorrow, within forty eight hours after the man and the lady dropped out of the wide open arms of the old mansion. But how could a southern gentleman withhold knowledge when sought under such a disguise. He spoke as he felt; and if the weapons that he used to punctuate his expressions were boomerangs that impaled him on its points, he could not help it. Anywhere, everywhere, he would have spoken his convictions without concealment, without equivocation. Laflin came to Ingleside; came to foreclose a poor man's liberty, without a day of redemption. The old man saw the offensive carpet-bagger approaching the mansion and met him sternly with the interrogatory. "What is your business?"

"Ah!" sneeringly answered the carpet-bagger, "that is a fine question to ask a gentleman. Do you recognize that seal sir" he continued, handing the old man an official requisition bearing the broad seal of the department of justice upon it "you will perhaps conclude, sir, that it will be compatible with your safety to return with me; I promise you a safe conduct to Washington."

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"I will go with you" replied the old man with all the suavity possible, "but you will allow me to prepare for the journey."

"Certainly sir," said Laflin, "but I must see that you do not provide yourself with arms."

"I do not want my house polluted by your presence," cried the old man in the vehemence of his feelings.

"Then you shall go as you are," gruffly replied the carpet-bagger.

Alice had but little to say to the man, knowing that entreaty or expostulation would be unavailing, and Clarissa slunk away from him as if he were the forerunner of the plague. When the Colonel arrived in the village he saw the white-haired governor with his overcoat upon his arms, and his

valise and umbrella upon a chair beside him. He knew intuitively that their missions were the same, that their destination was Washington.

"What are you doing here governor?" asked Colonel Seymour.

The dejected man replied deliberately, "I am going to Washington sir. May I ask your destination as I observe you are traveling too?"

"You see my guide, do you not," answered the Colonel with a frigid smile.

"Yes and I am informed he is mine also; so we shall not get lost on the route shall we?" answered the governor lugubriously. "I presume we shall have a suite of rooms at the old capital," asked the Colonel provokingly.

"Perhaps so, if the President doesn't invite us to the executive mansion. I hope he will do this as I have no bank account North, and but little currency in my pocket," replied the Governor in irony. "By the way Colonel," continued the Governor, "did you have an elegant gentleman and his niece to call upon you a few days ago? Quite an interesting man was he not? I hope we shall have a good report from him when he returns home."

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"And were you confidential toward this man?" asked Colonel Seymour.

"Why yes, quite so," replied the Governor innocently. "I found him so agreeable and so intelligent withal, that I told him all that I knew and I am expecting great things when I hear from him."

"Do you think, Governor," asked the Colonel quizzically, "that the Englishman has given us free transportation to Washington to be examined and punished as suspects?"

"Why my dear sir" replied the old Governor, "you alarm me. Is it possible we are the dupes of a government spy so clever and intelligent?"

"That is my opinion, sir," replied the Colonel.

"Is it possible? My, my, my!" he ejaculated, and sank back in the upholstered seat, and after awhile fell asleep.

These were men who had made the wager of battle for eleven proud commonwealths and lost; men coming now with their patriotism repudiated, to be told that their traditions were treasonable, their principles insurrectionary; to be badgered into compliance; to be scourged into submission; men who believed with a living faith that they had given American reasons for convictions that ought not to be challenged, coming now heroically to receive their doom.

The Governor, on entering the great judgment hall with Colonel Seymour, was surprised to see in the person of the chairman a highly honored colleague upon the committee of ways and means in the congress of 1858. The recognition was mutual, and the distinguished chairman descending from the dais, demonstratively grasped the old Governor's hand, exclaiming, "My dear sir, what has brought you here?" The excess of joy experienced by the Governor quite overcame him, and for a moment he did not answer, but he replied after awhile as coherently as he could, that he had never been informed of the charge against him.

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"Ah!" replied the chairman sympathetically, "That is indeed regrettable, but the discipline of this court does not contain within itself the germ of an arbitrary prerogative. No man, however bitter may be his opinions shall be condemned unheard." The Englishman, under the alias of Mr. Jamieson appeared as a witness in the person of Jonathan Hawkins.

It is unnecessary to go through the trial that followed. "You are at liberty," said the chairman, at its conclusion, "to go wheresoever you will. You shall be safeguarded while you remain in the city, and we shall exert our utmost to protect you and your interests at home. Mr. Laflin," he continued, "you will procure passports for these gentlemen whom you have brought here without a pretext of reason."

Our old friends, taking up their hats and canes, returned their grateful thanks to the honorable commission, whose judicial fairness was so praise-worthy; and turned their faces homeward; the Governor exclaiming through his clenched teeth, "The infamous, villainous Englishman!"

"Why, bless my soul, Governor," exclaimed the Colonel in a startled tone, "What an opportune moment to have carried out the wishes of our meeting!"

"What meeting do you refer to sir?" asked the Governor in surprise.

"Why, my dear sir, had you forgotten that we were deputized to visit the authorities in Washington at the meeting presided over by Judge Bonham?"

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"Well, well, well!" ejaculated the Governor, "I verily believe, sir, if peace is not speedily restored to the country that I will become a driveling idiot."

The Colonel adroitly changed the subject by observing, "It has occurred to me that if the practical operation of the reconstruction acts was directly in the control of the authorities in Washington, we should see that they are our friends; I am sure that the sentiment of the Northern people is in favor of the restoration of the South, and would counteract the vicious primary mischief resulting from a criminal abuse of power—I mean that power that is centralized in the Southern States."

"I am looking for conservative measures myself from the wise men who are in charge of the government," replied the Governor. "The infernal spoils system in the South, if not checkmated, will destroy the country. This same spoils principle has been the cause of more wretchedness and guilt, individual and national, than any other in the history of human suffering. It is the incentive alike to the burglar who breaks and enters your house at night and the highwayman who waylays

your path and takes your life; that, rising from individuals to multitudes, it is the impelling motive to all the plunderings and desolations of military conquests; it forces the gates of cities; plunders temples of religion; the great despoiler of private rights and national independence. It was the spoils system that united the barbarians of the North and finally overthrew the vast fabric of Roman policy law and civilization; and it is this principle, worse than war, that has shaken to their foundation our free and happy institutions.

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Perhaps we shall meet at the cemetery to-morrow, if there are no English spies around," suggested the Governor.

"Yes, yes; and adieu until then," replied the Colonel, as they alighted from the cars.



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**Dare goes joshaway, now, wid Ole Glory strowed
er roun' him, steppin lak a rare-hoss over de
tater ridges.**

CHAPTER VII.

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A POLITICIAN OF THE NEW SCHOOL.

Uncle Joshua was the color guard in a volunteer company of negroes, whose muster roll, like a thermometer, ran up into the nineties. As he shook out the folds of the scarlet-veined banner of the free one morning in his cabin, he observed to his old wife, "Hit peers lak dat dare wus ernudder wun o' dem possels, ef my membrunce sarves me rite, dat toted de flag fur Ginrul Farryo when he wus er heppin disserway und datterway froo de dessart; but I moest furgit dat gemman's name. Twant Absurdam, I'm moest sho, und hit twant Jack-in-de-bed, nudder. Duz yu reckermember dat possel, Hanner? Yu und de locus preacher is erquainted wid all dem aintshunts."

"Umph!" grunted Hanna, "yu's gwine fur back fur sumbody to tote de flag. Ef yu hez gin out why don't you fling hit over to Efrum? Ur is yu aiming ter immertate dat aintshunt?"

"Grate Jarryko!" exclaimed Joshua, irritated by such a question. "Duz yu see dat fodder foot, und duz yu see dat shuck foot? Well, den, when de leftenant sez 'hep, hep, hep, hep, hep—fodder foot, shuck foot!' I'm ergwine ter fling dem footsies out disserway—see? Und I'm ergwine ter tote ole glory fo und aft, jess so, twell I gits ter be de ginrul, und den I'm ergwine ter fling dem identikle footses in de saddle, disserway, und uprare de rone on his hine shanks, jess lak dat."

"Umph!" grunted ole Hannah, "To be sho yu's jess rivved out o' de babboon show! Yu's er sho nuff limber Jack—jest ez suple ez a yurling gote, ebery bit und grane!"

"Now, den," continued Joshua, without heeding the ridiculous interruption, "I wuz studdin up dat possel, when you flung yo mouf inter de argyment." [Pg 86]

"Wuz dat gemman a Mefodis ur Mishunary?" inquired Hannah, provokingly.

"Grate Jarryko! How's I ergwine to know dis fur back? Kin I skiver er humans clean clar ercross de dissart, und retch back ter de eend o' de yeth, wid dese wun-eyed specks? Ef he hilt on to grace, he wur a shoutin Mefodis; und ef he run wid Proverdense, he wur a Mishunary; und ef he hilt on ter sumfin wusser, he wur a harrystick. Dat's ez fur ez I'm gwine, doubt I node fur sartin. I'm moest sho, do, he wur a Mishunary, kase he didn't drap back when he cum in contact wid de water."

"Grate king!" snapped Hannah, as she kindled into a passion. "Wuz yu dare? Yu talks lak dare warnt no Mefodis mixed up wid dem harryticks; gwine on wid yer warter in de bilin dissart! Better git de Zion bushup to larn yu de scriptur."

"Oh, my sole!" groaned Joshua. "Ef hit warnt fer de Mishunarys in dis Soufland, dare mout be a wusser war dan ole Jeff Davis de secesh's. I'm ergwine ter ax yer wun pint mo, und den me und Ole Glory is ergwine ter hit de grit fur de conwenshun. Which wun o' dem slidin elders o' yourn hilt a confurence in dat dissart whey dare warnt no warter, und no chickens nudder, und whay de po parished up Mishunary hed to furrige er roun fer dare dinner? Now den!"

There were shops and bazaars scattered here and there about the public streets of the shire town within the recesses of which sat colored women selling their merchandise; now and then accentuating some passing pageant by the clapping of hands and other noisy demonstrations. There were disorderly, ruffianly negroes, in greasy uniforms, neither brigaded or disciplined, patrolling the country, discharging their muskets at random; and about the premises of Colonel Seymour there was a squad, more or less menacing, marching and counter-marching in the carriage way near the mansion, and the old man in his desperation cried out "Oh that I could gird the sword upon my thigh, like the man Barak, and could smite these devils to the earth." [Pg 87]

"Mars Jon," interrupted Clarissa, "yer mout as well let dese devilis niggers lone; de Lord is agwine to slam dem to de yearth fore dey knows it; he is agwine to vour dem up lak hoppergrasses; day a ransakin all ober creashun fur franksized niggers to wote de yaller ticket in de conwenshun; mout as well hab so many billy goats a wotin fur ole Abrum Laffin, de meanest, low downest scalyhorg in de wurrel. Yander goes ole Joshaway now, wid ole glory strode er roun him, steppin lak a rare-hoss ober de tater ridges agwine to de town." And she pointed to a group of four crossing the field from Joshua's cabin, marching under the stars and stripes, that swung lifelessly over old Joshua's right shoulder. We had just as well go with Joshua and witness the proceedings. The first observation the old negro made as he came up was this, "How much is de boss agwine to gib fur wotin fur him to go to de legislatur?"

"Agwine to giv yer, yer axes," replied a partisan of Laflin. "Yer dun und got freedom, haint yer? yer dun und jined de military cumpny, haint yer? Yer is de most selfishes nigger dat I ebber seed. Is yer aimin to git de whole kommisary flung in? What mo dos yer speck?" continued the black partisan. Freedom haint nebber made de pot bile at my house nary time, und it haint nebber fotched no sweetenin dar, und it haint put no sperrets in de jimmyjon, und it haint nebber sot out no taters nudder, und wid all dis lustration in de land, it haint agwine too, nudder. Jess as well be a naked snow-bird wid nary whing as wun ob dese franksized niggers. Too much freedom in de lan now, und not nuff horgs and catfishes. I'se been a wotin und a wotin eber since de belyun fell—a trasping to de town bakkards und furruds, und I haint nebber got nuffin but freedom yit—not eben de rappins ob my little finger; und I has been hep, hep, hep, heppin in de military cumpny ober tater ridges and fru de brier patches und de skeeters, und de cap'in haint nebber said nary time, Joshaway, I'm agwine to put yaller upperlips on yer jacket, und I'm agwine ter gib yer a sord wid a wheel. Nary time hab de boss axed me how much meal I had in de gum, ur how much taters I hab in de hill; und I haint nebber had but wun little speck ob munny sense freedom cum in de lan, und den it wus Federick munny. Ef I dont git nuffin bettern dat I has got, und dat mity quick, dis po nigger is agwine to drap outer de ranks into de sametary. Dis here war has turned loose a passel ob niggers all ober de kentry wid dere freedum und muskets, und bress Gord dere aint nary turkle in de swamp, nur catfish nudder, yu mout say; und eben de sparrers when dey sees a nigger a cummin shakes his tail, und sais 'ugh, ugh; I'm agwine erway frum here.' Ole mars Jon had rudder de hoppergrasses wud kivver de hole lan, und de tarypin bugs too. Eber time de boss gits lected he ups and sez, sez he, 'Josh, de nex time I runs I'm agwine to make yer er magistreet, so yer kin sot on white fokses, und bress de Lord, dat time haint nebber cum yit.'" [Pg 88]

"Shut dat big mouf ob yourn," sharply commanded Laflin's constituent.

"I haint agwine to do dat, nudder," saucily replied the old negro. "Ef de boss don't gib me er dram, ur sumfing when I gits to town, I'm agwine to wote fur tuther man. De ole ooman tole me to ax de boss fur a kaliker kote; sed how dat she wus jam nigh as ragged as a skeer-crow. Hanner is a gitten monstus tired ob freedom, und dese franksized niggers—yer hears my racket. Aye! aye," he exclaimed patriotically, "dars ole glory now a shinin froo de trees," and with that the bandy shanked negro cut a pigeon wing in the middle of the road; and sure enough, the banner of the free, displaying its broad stripes and bright stars was nodding its welcome to its African heroes, who had worked out their emancipation with ploughshares and scythe blades. [Pg 89]

"I knows," the negro continued in rapture, "when I sees dat butifullest flag er wavin und see-sawin dat dere is bound to be a stummic full ob good whittles sumwheres, but I's monstrous skeert hits agwine to gib out fore hit gits to me." And just now the faintest tintinnabulation of an

asthmatic brass band broke upon old Joshua's ear like the sound of a dinner horn, on a long, dry summer day. Joshua braced up for the home stretch and began to take long slouchy strides, as if he were on the old parade ground again. Calling out to his comrades "Forrud, march to de town; hep, hep, hep, hep, hep, eyes to de front, charge, bagonets!" As he approached the rallying ground of the Laflin hosts, a recruiting agent from Laflin's opponent, took him by the arm and said patronizingly, "Let me put a bug in your ear, ole man."

Joshua jerked away with the startled cry "No sar, no sar, don't do dat white man, kase I kaint heer good no how, und ef yer puts dat ar bug in my yeer, how in de name ob Gord is I ebber agwine to git him outen dere eny more, and hit mout be a horned bug ur a stingin bug. I'll fite eny man dat puts a bug in my yeer, dat I will; stan back, white man; dont cum nigh me wid nun ob dem creeturs."

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"You don't understand me, my friend" replied the scalawag, "our side are home folks, bred and born right here, and we know what we can do for our colored friends when we get to the legislature, and we are going to buy plantations for our men, and we are going to make our old friends like you sheriffs."

"Dats a mity heep ob promisin, white man," replied the negro suspiciously, "How menny shurrufs is yer agwine to hab in dis county?"

"Forty seven," replied the Scalawag.

"How menny jail houses is yer agwine to hab," asked the negro.

"We are going to do away with the jails," said he.

"Is?" exclaimed Joshua in surprise. "Ugh, Ugh! forty-leven shurrufs in dis county und all clecting taxes at wun time, Grate Jarryko, dar wont be nary tater, nur nary horg, nur nary ole settin hin— nur nary nigger in sebenteen fousan miles ob dis place. Saks a live, white man, dos yer aim to massercree fokes fo und aft? Whar wus yer when dey fit de war enny how?"

"Oh, I was at home raising breadstuffs for the poor," he answered.

"Raisin which fur de po, boss?" enquired Joshua.

"Breadstuffs," he replied.

"Und did de po git dey share?" asked Joshua.

"Yes, indeed," the scalawag answered.

"Und wus yer in de pennytenshun when yer raised dat truck?" further enquired Joshua.

"No, indeed," he said.

Joshua gazed comically into the face of the politician as he said; "Lemme look at yu rite good wid boff eyes, wid dese ole specks on, disserway; dare. Haint I seed yu afore?"

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"Perhaps so; I cant say" replied the scalawag furtively.

"Ugh! Ugh!" exclaimed Joshua.

"Haint I seed yu at Zion's meeting house wun time, at de stracted meetin? Dat time sister Cloe drapped back into er concushun und yu wuz de yarb doctor dat fotched her too, und yu tuck yo pay outen de munny dat wuz gwine to de orfins?"

"No, no, you are thinking of some one else I am sure."

"Und hit warnt yu nudder dat drunk up de sakryment de dekons stode away under de mussy seat?"

"No, indeed! why do you ask such a question?"

"Kase," replied Joshua quite saucily, "dem dare too eyes of yourn puts me in membrance of dat scalyhorg in de scriptur whay wuz drug outer de kote house ded, him und Sofy Mariah, too, kase day made er mis hit erbout dat lan."

"Oh Jerusalem!" retorted the scalawag "Lets get back to the subject."

"Jess so! Jess so!" exclaimed Joshua, laughing, "yu sees yu's dun und kotched, und yu aims to drap back in de convenshun agen."

"We pay one dollar in gold and a jug of whisky to every Laflin man that votes with us. Do you hear?" observed the scalawag.

"Now yer is er a gettin down to de pint," exclaimed the negro smiling. "Is yer man agwine to git lected?"

"Certainly, certainly, sir."

"Dats all right, den, when dos I git de munny und de sperrits, fore I wotes ur arterwurds?" asked Joshua dubiously.

"We don't pay in advance," replied the scalawag.

"Don't, hey?" exclaimed Joshua.

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"Well Laflin], he do, und I mout wote fore I git de pay, und yer man mout not git lected, den my wote wud be flung away, und de munny und de sperrits too, dats de pint. Yer see, boss," Joshua continued argumentatively, "us franksized woters is bleegeed to make er leetle kalkerlashun und den ef we gits disappointed its kase de white fokses oversizes de niggers. Don't yer see how de cat

is agwine to jump, boss?" he whispered confidentially, "yer mout put de spirits in de jimmyjon now, und I mout take a drap ur too fore I wotes und yer mout hold back de munny twelt yer man is lected; how dos dat do?"

"All right," announced the scalawag. "You come with me." And old Joshua in his "hop, step and go fetchit" way followed the politician until he brought up squarely against one of Laflin's lieutenants, who took him savagely by the limp paper collar.

"Wher's yer agwine lak a struttin turkey gobbler, wid dat white man, yer fool nigger? Don't yer know dat ar white trash will put yer back in slabery?"

The rival candidates were running for the legislature. On one side of the court house square were aligned the adherents of Laflin, the carpet-bagger; on the other side the adherents of Hale the scalawag. Each was haranguing the black sovereigns of the South—men who in other fields had toiled ever so hard for their country, but whose hands were unskilled, and whose minds were untutored in this the grandest of human endeavors—the building up of an immense superstructure that shall stand "four square to all the winds that blow."

Each candidate had his claquers, slipping into rough, horny hands the paper representative of manhood, intellectual, patriotic manhood—manhood compromised by no overt act of treason.

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Every star and every stripe upon that magnificent banner just overhead accentuated the fact that in devious wanderings over blood stained battle fields, fire scathed villages, homes and plantations it had followed manhood suffrage as faithfully as it did the tithing agent throughout the South. Suspended above the heads of the free men, across the street, was this blood-red warning "No man shall vote here who followed Lee and Jackson." Vain delusion; as if there could be treason under that flag; or traitors lurking in its shadows like mad Malays! Stranger still, that the dust of Jackson should re-animate hearts that had been broken in a catastrophe, too terrible to be uttered by patriots. Strangest of all, that living heroes should gather at a banquet where toasts were spoken in frantic curses of the brave by fanatics! To the right were barrels of whiskey on tap; to the left were huge piles of yellow tickets with appropriate devices upon them; and to the front waved over a bloodless conquest the "Star Spangled banner," just as triumphantly as it did at the head of the charging battalions of Lee and Jackson in Mexico, just as proudly as when the Southern cross yielded its sovereignty upon the ill-starred field of Appomattox. Crimsoned to a deeper blush to-day methinks because it is made to dishonor Lee and Jackson, who shall live forever in the pantheon of history—as men worthy of emulation, as heroes whose fame is already written upon amaranthine tablets.

"Who sees them act but envies every deed—
Who hears them groan and does not wish to bleed;
Great men struggling with the storms of state,
And greatly fallen with a falling state."

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"Welcome, my son, here lay him down, my friends,
Full in my sight, that I may view at leisure
The bloody corse and count those glorious wounds.
How beautiful is death when earned by virtue."

About high noon Joshua, with his old beaver caved in on both sides and one skirt of his blue coat torn away, was seen to oscillate, as it were, betwixt the whiskey barrel on the Laflin side and the rum barrel on Hales' side, and doubtless, so far as his vote was concerned, preserving a strict neutrality, that is to say, in the plantation language of the old negro, "Bress de Lawd, I was so flushtrated wid dat meextry o' rum und sperrits dat I flung in six wotes fur de cyarpet-sacker und er eben haf dozen fur de scalyhorg." The result officially declared, made the agreement between Joshua and Hales' manager about the payment of money "arter yo man is dun und lected" a nude pact.

Laflin was nominated, and in his address to his constituents flattered himself that the nomination came unsought and with practical unanimity.

"Our enemies," said he, "shall feel our power, and you will be asked to co-operate in such manner as will place you above them in this government. Can I depend on you?"

"Dat yer kin!" came from a hundred throats. "Hurrah for de boss! He is de ginrul fur dis kentry, und he will lick out de white trash! Yes siree!"

Such were the exclamations that deafened the ear and horrified the sense. Joshua was too drunk to be offensively partisan. He lay in the street waving his old beaver hat and hurraing the best he could for Laflin, as he held on to "de jimmyjon," and singing in a drunken, maudlin way —

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"Dis jug lak a ribber is er flowin,
Und I don't keer how fast it flows on boys, on;
While de korn in de low groun is er growin,
Und dis mouf ketch de stuff as it runs."

When Joshua got home next morning the sun was blazing like a great ball of fire from the mid-heavens. Both skirts of his old blue coat were gone. His old beaver was flopping and hung limp and crownless over his right eye, and his old wife paused in her work in her garden to observe the dilapidated negro as he approached his cabin. She could hear him muttering to himself, "Talk erbout de niggers ergwine ter de conwenshun, und er runnin dis here kentry, und er gittin de

eddykashun und er bossin de white fokeses, ef ennybody is er mint ter gin me wun dollar fer my pribileges, I'm ergwine ter sell out, und I mout tak pay in Federic munny."

"Ergwine ter sell out, is yer!" exclaimed Hannah with a grunt.

Joshua looked up startled, and pushing the broken brim of his old hat from his eyes, he saw it was Hannah who had interrupted his soliloquy, and she continued in ridicule, "Yu is too brash, Joshaway; yer mout git ter be presydent, den yer cud git er cote wid two skurts to hit. Yu keep er wotin und er wotin, und bimeby yu is ergwine ter be wun ob dem Mishunary possels wid whings, same ez er blue herron."

Joshua saw that his wife was making him ridiculous, and he slunk away into the old cabin and fell asleep upon the rickety bed.

CHAPTER VIII.

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MEMORIAL DAY.

The patriotic men of the South who had so valorously insisted upon their rights throughout the deadly passage at arms, felt that now the war was over, that the country should settle down on the great common principle of the constitution—the principle that had triumphed in 1780. They had an intuitive abhorrence to confiding extravagant power in the hands of the corrupt and ignorant. They could not understand how the Union could be preserved by the annexation of eleven conquered provinces, and asked themselves the question, "Will not the light of these eleven pale stars be totally obscured by a central sun blighting and destroying every germ of constitutional liberty?" The Union, said they, was safe in the hands of President Lincoln. Rome was safe when Cincinnatus was called from the plow, but she was torn asunder by the wars of Scylla and Marius, and history is more or less a repetition of itself.

Despite the catastrophe that overlaid the South because of the unhappy issue of the war; the gravity of which enemies, both domestic and foreign, have scandalized by calling it "rebellion," despite the fact that disbanded forces were still prosecuting their conquests, not against disciplined armies in the field, but against men, women and children, in the lawful pursuit of peace and happiness, with a vengeance hourly reinforced by new resources and fresh horrors, and with a terror that mastered our fettered souls; our people felt that there was at least one refuge from the blast of the tornado—still a sheltering rock to which they could flee from the cruel cloud-burst.

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In passing the eye rapidly over the outline of the circumstances in which persecution originated; in reviewing the cause that unsettled the deep foundations of social life, the southern people felt that there were hallowed spots of ground so strongly buttressed in the hearts of the people that the violence of the storm could not rustle a leaf or shake a twig; that these consecrated precincts they could lawfully appropriate, and as to this claim, the carpet-baggers with all their hosts of misrule had the honor, magnanimity and mercy to forget, forgive and forbear. Here at least there could be no intrusion, because the baser passions were fenced upon the outside; and amid this sad continuity of graves the heart would be uplifted in gratitude to God, who in his great mercy had given to the nineteenth century and to the South, such undying examples of patriotism and valor. Here lie the bones of men who dared to say, when the political system of the South was strangely inverted, that it was such a menace to southern institutions that it could not go unchallenged; a palpable violation of the public faith. To what other convulsions and changes are we predestined? they asked. Shall we leave our character, our civilization, our very being to the unresisted assault and prepare such an epitaph for our tombs? Shall we declare ourselves outlawed from the community of nations? "Nay, war rather to the cost of the last dollar, and slaughter of the last man." Such was the sentiment of the men who sleep so peacefully in these graves. Such was the sentiment of the men, women and children, who to-day stand over these graves to honor the brave, and to reproduce a fresh page in history, and lay it reverently by in our southern Valhalla.

Col. Seymour was the orator of the day. "Stonewall Jackson," his old commander, the subject, and his friends, Judge Bonham and the ex-governor honored auditors. The old governor, whitelocked and furrowed, in introducing the orator observed with a proper decorum. "For what Stonewall Jackson and his brave men did, we have no apologies to make here or elsewhere. I had rather wear here," said he, striking his aged breast, "a scar from the victorious field of Manassas, than the jewelled star of St George, or the Victorian Cross."

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I can reproduce in a fragmentary way parts of the patriotic address which I herein give to the reader, to show that there was "life in the old land yet."

"MY COMRADES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

"One year ago to-day, with the reverence of a pilgrim, I stood by the grave of Stonewall Jackson; and I remembered that every battle order he ever wrote, every victory he ever won, was a thank offering to the christian's God.

"I thought, too, of the thousand highways that rayed out from citadels of oppression, barricaded with human bones. I thought of the seas of human slaughter, whose redundant tides flowed on

and on as libations upon the altars of ambition.

"I saw as it were the faded crowns and the crumbling thrones of dead despots, who once girdled the earth with a cincture of fire, and marked its boundaries with the sword, writing again their achievements where mankind might read and wonder.

"I saw again the accusing throngs of pensioned widows from the Moselle, the Rhine, the Danube, the Nile, and wherever else the scarlet standards of fanaticism flaunted their challenge, hastening to record their anguish, where the tyrants had memorialized their deeds.

"I saw everywhere the badges of speculative knavery, of incorrigible wrong; Cossacks all, who knew no law but force, and no patriotism but greed. [Pg 99]

"I thought of the Spaniard, riding to the stirrup-leather in the blood of babes in the Netherlands; of the Hun and his proclamation 'beauty and booty,' and I thought of the angel of God's mercy proclaiming an armistice; giving a refreshing peace to the saturated earth after these monsters were dead, and I bowed with a profounder reverence at this hallowed grave in the valley of Virginia.

"I thought then of Alcibiades at Abydos; of Alexander at Issus; of Scipio at Zama; of Hannibal at Cannae; of Pompey at Pharsalia; of Cæsar at the Rubicon; of Napoleon at Marengo; and I thought, as Vattel thought, that warriors such as these failed to prosecute the rights of their countrymen by force.

"I thought of the keen blade of the assassin that cut in twain the heart of Alcibiades; of the dagger of Brutus; of the murder of Clitus; of the hemlock; of the suicide's sword at Thrapsus; of the assassination at Miletus; of the fifth paragraph in the will of Napoleon; and then I thought of the bleeding earth these warriors had scarified and scourged, until they were drunken with excess of human slaughter; and then I looked back over the tide of centuries for a single example of disinterested patriotism, and I bowed my head once more to hear a protest from principalities in their orphanage, and commonwealths in their sorrow.

"I thought again of Jackson, as he knelt in prayer, when the great guns were signaling the issue of battle, as with hands uplifted to heaven he was supplicating his Father to guide and guard his poor country in her sore hour of travail, and I thought if there were a Pericles somewhere, who from the foot of our American Acropolis would sound his fame, the 'bloody chasm' would be bridged by a single span. [Pg 100]

"A little more than three years ago, by the violation of a plain order, the tears of a nation, magnanimous and patriotic, rained down upon and extinguished almost the last camp fire of Gen. Robert E. Lee. Within that short period events, like chasing shadows, both clouded and glorified the perspective of history. Within a like period of time this great country, by a vigorous discipline, has completely obliterated lines and boundaries that once circumscribed the ambition of men. A trifling order methinks of Jackson, but it cancelled our charter of freedom, it rendered a nude pact our declaration of independence. It was only the nod of the head of an unlettered peasant at Hougomont, but it sent somersaulting into the sunken road of Ohain the steel clad cuirassiers of Napoleon the great; dipped the imperial purple starred with bees, into the silt of the English channel, and paragraphed the capitulation of Paris with the civil death of the great emperor. Such are some of the pivots upon which great crises rotate.

Forty eight years after the Scotch-Greys pierced the uplifted visors of the old guard, there glided down the echoing corridors of time this sententious order; "Shoot down without halting the man who dares to cross the lines to-night."

The catastrophe that rode as a courier upon the flank of this order, hacked the sword, unnerved the arm that was carving out of a heart of fire a civilization whose altars and whose shrines were relumed by the torch of liberty; but the God of battles, amid the carnage, called a halt. It was a night of exasperation, of despair. Ten million people watched, as watchers never watched before, the last flickering of a life that laid down its all, at the altar of love and duty. Those ten million people kept their vigil like vestal virgins, and saw, alas, the frenzied spirit of hate and wrath snuff out the candle and heard the groans of the victim of his own blunder, as he cried out in his delirium, "Let us cross over the river and rest under the shade of the trees." [Pg 101]

There has been now and again an illustrious personage, who appears to us to have been mirrored upon the foreground of events like some titanic silhouette. The irony of fate has dealt with such a man, as the creature of an hour, holding him in thrall in time of peace, to become the storm spirit in some great crisis. When he dies the face of history is saddened and obscured, and a twilight like that observed under Southern skies, falls upon the world. Such a person may be fitly called the courier of fate; or better still, the tragedian of revolution. He cannot be weighed or measured by the definitive judgment of contemporaries. When he dies the stride of conquest is checked; sword blades dripping with human blood are thrust back into scabbards. In war, he is its inspiration; its providence.

I make no allusion just now to that splendid effigy that is yet discerned in the haze that lowers over Vienna, Berlin and Moscow; that incomprehensible tutor of strategic science, who with sword and cannon cut a red swath through the capital cities of Europe; and partitioned the world into two dominions, as if he were only dividing in twain an apple. I speak not of him, whom this man that "embarrassed God," found a waif, and made a giant, whose death hastened to its decline that splendid imperialism that the great Napoleon erected on the ruins of the commune.

The fall of Stonewall Jackson at Chancellorsville thrust betwixt the Confederacy and independence a pall so dense, that it could not be cut asunder with the sword. [Pg 102]

I can compare Stonewall Jackson with no hero, living or dead. He stood in the foreground an unique personality—a phenomenon. With the genius of war he appeared almost supernaturally mated. Whether his unparalleled victories were the result of combinations essentially tactical, of methods logically conceived, or of an intuition that almost without arrangement forced its power upon vast evolutions, will perhaps never be known.

The plain profile of this man reminds one of the hard-hitting, rough-riding Roundhead. His dispatches smacked of the Calvinism of Ireton and Cromwell. "God blessed our arms at McDowell yesterday." Wherever there was a downpour of leaden rain Jackson and the "Ironsides" would have been in accord. His was the spirit that resolved combinations in his favor. His masterly apprehension of issues diminished the carnage by plucking the fruit before it was fully ripe. In war as elsewhere he was absorbed by a fatalism, such as Mohammedans sum up when they say "What is to be, will be." Napoleon, like an astrologer, believed in a star; Jackson, unlike an astrologer, believed in Him who made the star and lighted it in the candelabra of night.

A few years ago an American asked a halting, mutilated soldier of the Old Guard to tell him how Napoleon died? "The great Emperor dead! He will not die," was the sententious answer from the man who had fought under the shadow of his eagles at Wagram and Marengo. It was with something of this vague, indefinable superstition, of this heroic belief in "Old Stonewall" as their providence that one of the "Old Brigade" would hearken dubiously to such a challenge, "Tell us how Stonewall Jackson died?"

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Critics who have judged with more or less asperity have said that his capacity as a commander was limited to the manoeuvres of a corps. Strange fatuity! A score of battle fields prove the opinion false. If such had been the case, the history of Port Republic, Harper's Ferry, Groveton and Winchester would have been written the other way.

I saw this imperturbable man at Cold Harbor. Again he reminded one of the "predestined" leader of the Ironsides. "If the enemy stand at sunset, press them with the bayonet." All commands issuing from him found their climax in this supreme order. The hero of Toulon never caressed the fire throated 12 pounder more ardently than did Jackson. He would have swept every obstruction from the field with a single battery, or failing in this would have "pressed" them with the bayonet. His camp fires are now extinguished. The old army of the Shenandoah is an aggregation of phantoms. Winchester, Port Royal, Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville appear as mirage reminiscences rather, that steal unbidden upon the soul when its depths are full of darkness and shadows.

"We walk to-day listlessly over the great, rough, heroic life of Stonewall Jackson, but on either side of us are monuments and memorials to his renown ever brightening to a higher luster.

It is a stern business, this going to war. Reconciliation is problematical, more frequently impossible. The public pulse in 1861 was intensely excited. One boastingly said upon one side that all the blood that would be spilt, could be wiped up with a silk handkerchief. Another on the other side with equal bravado answered that he would live to call the roll of his slaves from the foot of Bunker Hill, and thus there was boast and badinage until the "Anaconda" turned his many-hued scales to the sun on the 21st of July, 1861.

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The scene from the northern point of view was exceedingly dramatic—a magnificent host all in tinsel—a composite picture of carnival and war. A flash, as of gunpowder; a blazing up as of dry heath; a shout ever so frightful, and half infernal, and the whole universe seemed wrapt in flame and wild tumult. But the fire has died out; tumultuous passion is allayed; the old South with its mountains and glades, rivers and valleys, the stars above its sodden ground beneath, is still there.

"Jackson believed in the southern cause, as if it had been a revelation from God. Cromwell said, 'Let us obey God's will' while he whetted his sword blade to drink the slaughter of women, and nursing babes at Drogheda. Jackson said, 'Let us obey God's will,' whilst bringing to the altar the offering of universal emancipation.

"Jackson believed that the war of invasion was a heartless crusade against mankind and womankind, and the civilization of the South, and the higher law proclamation was the aftermath of the pernicious broadcasting of seed sown by Horace Greely, Gerritt Smith, and Joshua R. Giddings. The old stubble required to be ploughed under, said they; unhappily in seeding the ground they scattered here and there dragons' teeth and forthwith there sprang up armed men.

"Jackson believed that the 'Grand army' in holiday attire, with flaunting banners and careering squadrons, were an aggregation of iconoclasts, fierce destroyers of images, creeds, institutions, traditions, homes, country. So believed he when the 'Anaconda' with panting sides drew back to strike.

"Man to man, bayonet to bayonet, cannon to cannon, bosom to bosom, here was challenged the asserted right of coercion, of frenzy against frenzy, patriotism, anger, vanity, hope, despair; each facing and meeting the other like dark clashing whirlwinds."

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Hither sped Jackson with the swoop of the eagle, down the valley from Gordonsville to fresher carnage, to a bloodier banquet. Hither he came with as high a resolve as ever animated Peter the Hermit, to plant upon the sand dunes of Palestine the fiery cross; whether right or wrong, cannot now be known. The formula by which he may be judged is yet undiscovered.

Eleven o'clock, twelve o'clock, and Jackson with folded arms, occupies the plateau near the "Henry House." Just beyond is a dark confused death wrestle. Forty thousand athletes against eighty thousand athletes; two hundred odd iron throats perpetually vomiting an emetic of death.

Hope within him burns like a freshly lighted fagot. There is a quiver in the hardened nerves; the old sun-scorched cap is in his hand; the lips are slightly parted; the order given, and the 'old Stonewall Brigade' is hurled like an immense projectile upon ranks of human flesh. There is a halt, a recoil; cannon spit out their fire, their hail, their death upon bosoms bared to the shock. 'There stands Jackson like a Stonewall.' Under that name he was baptized with blood at Manassas. Everywhere that faded coat and tarnished stars were the oriflame of battle and the old brigade followed them as if they had been the white plume of Navarre.

This incomparable leader never failed in a single battle from the day when with 2800 men at Kernstown he held in check 20,000 men and covered the retreat of the army from Centreville to Manassas, where he cut their communications and decoyed their columns into the iron jaws of Longstreets reserves. Such achievements were not accidental. No manoeuvre could mislead the clear judgment that presided serenely in that soul of fire. It is not too much to say that the conqueror of Port Republic was an overmatch in strategy and technique of war for his opponents.

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He's in the saddle, now fall in—
Steady! the whole brigade!
Hill's at the ford cut off; he'll win
His way out with ball and blade.

What matter if our shoes are worn—
What matter if our feet are torn—
The foe had better ne'er been born
That gets in Stonewall's way.

There were other attractions there, too; flower girls had brought hither, not the funereal cypress and willow, but bright and beautiful carnations and violets, and streaming about the heads of the throngs were battle flags, torn and tattered—almost shredded by shot and shell—cross-barred with blue, with pale white stars like enameled lilies peeping out of the azure ground. Lifeless eyes and voiceless lips now, had cheered these flags with the same joy that once greeted the eagles of Napoleon. Withered skeleton hands now, had borne them at the head of charging squadrons and battalions, the guidons of victorious armies—the guerdon of a nation's trust and faith. If out of the cold, dead white stars could come again the old gleam of light as it lighted up the line of direction over the mountain passes of Virginia and the valley of the Shenandoah, what a halo of glory would encircle Winchester and Gordonsville and Chantilly! how dramatic the narrative; how truthful the history; how inspiring the reminiscence; how fully and completely vindicated the Old South—the lost cause! But there is no light in the stars, and the broad bands of blue upon the blood-red field are disfiguring scars upon the face of an incident long since closed, and closed forever, full of tragedy and patriotism.

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The old Governor was exceedingly complimentary towards his old friend, Colonel Seymour, "for his patriotic address," and very cordially invited him to visit him at his home.

Alice had formed new acquaintances, and Clarissa too had honored this most interesting occasion with her presence. She had carried a basketful of flowers that had been carefully plucked and assorted by her young mistress, and with very tender hands Alice had placed them in a stone urn at the foot of a grave that seemed to have been more profusely decorated than the others. Indeed, it was the grave of the soldier boy who had been the first to fall in the terrible holocaust of war.

"Miss Alice," Clarissa asked quite feelingly, "Haint yu dun und fotched back to yo membrunce dis here po sojer boy dat fout in de battle of Manassy, und was brung back home to pine away und die? Me und yu seed him arter he got home, und hit made my flesh creep und crawl lak katterpillers when I seed how de yankeys had mommucked up dat po chile. Dare wus wun arm all twisted kattykorned twell you couldn't tell pine-plank whedder it growed wid de fingers pinte disserway or datterway, und den dare wus er hole in de buzzum dat yu cud farely see de daylight on de tother side. Grate king! De yankeys mouter shot dat po chile wid a steer kyart; he wus de wustest lookin' humans I eber seed in my born days, und he wus de onliest chile of his po mammy. Dare's her grabe too. Dare day lay side by side, und de Lord in hebben only knows what day's dun und sed erbout dis here war up yander. I'm ergwine ter v strow dese lillies o' de walley on boff on em. Po fings, I hopes und prays day has dun und gon froo de purly gates whey dare aint no war, nur tribulation of sperrets nudder." And the old negro knelt reverently at the graves and placed the white flowers upon them. As she rose from the solemn service she said feelingly to her young mistress, "Pend upon it, missis, sumbody's bleged to suffer fer all dis gwines on epseps dare aint no troof in proverdense nur grace nudder. Miss Alice, bress yer life, Gord aint ergwine ter suffer his people ter be mommucked up in no sich er fashion. Now dar is dat po 'oman lying out dare; ef de yankeys hadn't kilt her onliest son, she would be right here ergwine erbout spreddin flowers on de grabes o' dese po sojers, und she'd er heerd ole marsers a speechifying to all dese fokeses."

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Alice was not in the humor to indulge Clarissa in further observations. She was thinking of a grave over yonder in old Virginia, and wondering if some fair hand was not arranging the flowers and tenderly placing them upon the grave of her boy lover.

The setting sun was shooting little slivers of gold from its beautiful disc all around the cemetery, and the shadows from magnolias and weeping willows were deepening and darkening all the while, when the Colonel, his daughter and Clarissa drove home in the old barouche, tired out with the fatigue incident to the day and its burdens.

THE BROKEN CRUSE.

The lights were burning with a soft glow one night in the mansion when the announcement was made by Clarissa that a gentleman stood without, desiring an audience with the old master. The gentleman introduced himself as Mr. Summers (half apologetically), a reconstructed rebel. There was a moment's pause in which, by the shimmer of the lighted lamps, Colonel Seymour saw that the visitor was quite an elderly man, without beard and with soft white hair. His address was easy and insinuating. He was neatly clad in black cloth, and impressed Colonel Seymour as being a man of affairs. Together they entered the library, the Colonel observing that he conducted all business transactions in that particular room just now. Considering the unusual hour at which the visitor had arrived, in connection with the unpleasant incidents of a quite eventful day, there was nothing reassuring in the visit: the times were critical, to say the least, and his own situation so entirely defenceless, that he felt as if "vigilance was truly the price of liberty." So he addressed the stranger in a manner quite emphatic—

"May I enquire, sir, to what circumstance I am indebted for the honor of this visit?"

"Why, certainly, sir," replied the bland stranger. "But will you permit me first to ask after your health and that of your family? How are you, sir?"

"My family—that is my wife—is quite unwell, sir. She has been an invalid for many weeks, and I fear there is no possible hope of her recovery," said the Colonel. [Pg 110]

"Ah, that distresses me greatly; perhaps her condition is not so bad as you fear. May I ask after your health, sir?"

The Colonel hesitated for a moment, and then observed, deliberately, "Physically, I am quite well, sir."

"Did I not see you, sir, when we were re-crossing the Potomac on our mad flight from Gettysburg at the lower ford?" enquired the stranger.

"Mad flight!" echoed the veteran with ill-concealed wrath. "Have you such a conception of the orderly retreat of our great army without the loss of a gun and without the capture of a man, as to characterize it as a mad flight? Were you a Confederate soldier, sir, and do you insult my intelligence, my loyalty, yea, my bravery, sir, by this challenged inquiry?"

"My dear sir, if the statement pains you I will recall it instantly. Pray excuse me. I was Major of the 7th Virginia Cavalry, and as the army halted at the ford I saw an officer, a Colonel, who was badly wounded and who with great difficulty sat his horse on that occasion. I now see that the officer whom I then saw is the gentleman I now address, and I heartily crave your pardon for the rash expression."

"Very well, then," replied the Colonel. "We are Confederate soldiers again, and will make our future assaults upon the enemy, if you please, and not upon Lee's army, that whipped the enemy at Gettysburg; yes, sir, whipped them and fell back, sir, because our base of supplies was menaced by the flooding of the Potomac, sir," fairly hissed the old man in great excitement.

"My dear sir, why this excessive warmth?" cried the stranger; "I am sure we understand each other; but, my dear sir, the war is over—why make imaginary assaults upon an imaginary enemy? We are entirely in accord. We entered the army because we then believed we were right, and—" [Pg 111]

"Knew it, sir, knew it, and know it now, sir, know it now, sir," fiercely interrupted the Colonel.

"Will you allow me to ask, my dear sir, do you recall those events with any degree of pleasure?" asked the stranger.

"Yes, and no. When I realize that then and now, the enemy with unbounded resources was eternally casting into the vat of pernicious fermentation every act, thought and suggestion that was doubtful in interpretation, and brewing a concoction as nauseous as the black vomit of the red harlot herself, and eructating it upon us—the recollection is painful; but when I remember that every sword thrust into their vitals was the act of a patriot, I delight to recall events that crowned the old South with undying glory."

"Allow me one other observation, if you please," asked the stranger in a tentative way. "Admittedly the South was right, but, my dear sir, do you think it possible that men like yourself who gallantly fought for a cause they sincerely believed to be just may not impress their individuality upon an era that promises so much for the betterment of our condition as a people?"

"Barely possible, I imagine," replied the Colonel.

"Are you inclined to favor a proposition that has in contemplation the election of negroes to office?"

"No sir; such a proposition, in my opinion, would be so abhorrent to our ideals of sovereignty that I should consider myself a traitor to the South and her people. Should I endorse such a proposition, it would be an act of self degradation."

"But, my dear sir," argued the stranger, "you will pardon me if I should say that every man must look out for his own safety. Patriotism to a great extent, is a matter of sentiment, and a great man [Pg 112]

once said 'It is the last refuge of a scoundrel.' You of course will not yield to such an interpretation, nor would I ask you to do so, but, sir, we must let the dead past bury its dead. We must live in the present, and we must as skilled architects build for future generations a superstructure that shall challenge the admiration of men yet unborn."

"That is to say, if I understand you," interrupted the Colonel, "you propose to inoculate the South with the poison of your infamous reconstruction policy, to engraft upon our institutions a new and dangerous character, and besides other atrocious enormities to establish the spoils principle—its temptation to licentiousness—the watchword to animate your corrupt followers to a savage and unscrupulous warfare, sparing neither sex nor age, practicing every species of fraud and hypocrisy, confounding right and wrong, and robbing the innocent and virtuous of their only treasure, their manhood and womanhood. What is your proposition, sir," he exclaimed vehemently, "but a proclamation to the venal and depraved to rally to the standard of a chief, who, like the leader of an army of bandits, points to our God-forsaken country, and says to your plunderers, 'This shall be the reward of victory.' This is no exaggeration, sir; disguise it as you may, your proposition leads to brigandage and ruin."

"But, my dear sir," replied the stranger, "you have so disarmed me by your arguments that I fear my mission to you will be without avail—will you allow me to proceed, sir? We deplore the fact, sir, that our most virtuous men are still braving the dangers they might, with a little circumspection avoid; still plunging headlong, as it were into great heated furnaces whose doors are open to receive them."

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"How would you advise, sir, that we can protect ourselves, so we will not be utterly consumed, but only roasted here and there" asked the Colonel epigrammatically.

"Ah, you trifle with serious matters" replied the white haired stranger. "There is one way, sir, and one way only—adopt this, sir, and the country will honor you with its blandishments. Take the tide at its flood, and co-operate patriotically with those who are enforcing manhood suffrage without respect to educational or property qualifications, and the suffrages of the adult freemen, white and black, will be cast for you for congress."

"Ah, a tempting bait," exclaimed the Colonel, "but it has a rancid negroish scent, and the hook is too sharp—too sharp sir. Do you intend to do this thing?" continued the Colonel interrogatively.

"Assuredly, sir," the stranger replied, with might and main.

"Then sir," shouted the indignant man, "this interview ends now."

"One more word," pleaded the stranger, "and I have done—please bear with me a moment. The Central Executive Committee, of which I am a member, feeling their great need of your invaluable services have commissioned me to make known to you their earnest desire, that you will accept a nomination, from the party, for Congress upon the reform platform."

"You mean your ultra radical platform," suggested the Colonel.

"No, not exactly that," replied the stranger, "they desire further, if however you will not accept, that you will submit your views upon the perplexing subject of negro or manhood suffrage."

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"And you are sure your committee will act upon suggestions from me?" he asked.

"I am quite sure they will," answered Mr. Summers.

"Then, sir, please ask your committee, as a special request from John W. Seymour, to put the negroes to work upon the farms; and the carpet-baggers out of the state, and hang the scalawags by the neck until they are dead, dead, dead, sir."

"Tut, tut, tut," exclaimed the old man excitedly, "you are beside yourself. Remember, my dear sir, that you are sowing the wind, and by and by strangers will reap the whirlwind. Good night, Colonel Seymour, I hope you will think better of the matter."

As the white haired stranger passed out of the door, Clarissa, who was closing it after him, enquired of her old master, "Mars Jon, what nice farderly ole man was dat ole gemmen? he peared lak he wus mity sorrowful. Iseed him put his handkercher to his face lak he mout be weepin; what did yer say to him, ole marser, dat upsot him so bad?"

"Without deigning a reply Col. Seymour enquired of Clarissa what the shouting and halloing at her house last night meant?"

"Did yer heer dat racket Mars Jon? I spected yer wus asleep. Twant nuffin epeeps Ned und Joshaway er cuttin up der shines. Dem niggers been to town und cum bak drunk as horgs in de mash tub und sed how dat dey had jined de milintery cumpny, und was agwine to clur up de po white trash in de kentry, fo und aft; when yer hurd dem dey wus er hollern to Ellik how dat de boss sed dat dey mout go to de town und draw de lan und de mule und de penshun, dat dey wus agwine to git dern nex Saddy. Lans sake, ole Marser, I specks we's agwine to have orful times in dis kentry—de niggers turned loose lak blaten sheepses er shullikin und a pilfern erbout ebery which a way. Ole fokses used to say dat when de tip eend ob de moon wus rite red lak, dat yer mout look out fur wars und yurthshaks too, und I seed dat ur site las nite 'twixt midnite und day und it fotched what de ole fokses sed rite back to my member'nce. I'd hate powerful to see any udder bellion in dis lan, dat I would. Not ef day is ergwine to shoot steerkyarts und wheel-barrers clean froo our federick sojers, lak dey dun de last time. Grate king, Mars Jon, what sorter amynishun did dem dare yankeys shoot outen dare kannons ennyhow? Frum de way our po sojers wuz tore to pieces, dey put me in membrunce of ambylances, und powerful big wuns at dat; Grate king! I natally hears dare po flesh er sizzing dis minnit. Is you sho ole marser dat de

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good Lord is ergwine to fetch all dem arms und legs und heds togedder, eend fur eend at de resurreckshun, so our sojers is ergwine to know pine plank which is dere'n, und dey drifted disserway und datterway in de cornfields of Manassy und Chuckkermorger und de Bulls Run? Grate king!"

Contemporaneously with the coming of the troubles that were well nigh overwhelming the old veteran and his beautiful daughter, the death of the wife and mother came as it were the knell of doom—the giving away of the last arch in the compact fabric of human life, the snapping of the last filament in the web of destiny—the leaking of the last drop of oil from the broken cruse. With her, the heart could be nerved to extraordinary endeavor; with her, ever so many bright colors could be painted upon the angry horizon; with her, the sunset heavens would diffuse a glamour, all radiant and glorious, as if the angels were kissing its banners into crimson and with deft fingers were garnishing the leaky clouds with prismatic hues; with her, the little birds upon sportive pinions would syllable their songs into the dialect of love. But she was passing away—passing away like the shadowy vapor that clings for a moment to the mountain's crest, like the resplendent star that shimmers more beautifully as it is dipping its disc below the western verge, and bids us good night—like the breath of the crushed flower that exhales its aroma for a moment, and is gone. Passing away from a home that is darkened by shadows, passing away from the hearts that are consumed into dead white ashes.

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What black stygian waters were rushing vehemently against the fretted casements of these poor souls. Ties that are sundering here are binding into a glorious sheaf loves and affections up yonder, as imperishable as God's great throne. Passing away from the frigid griefs that are soon to environ old Ingleside, when the blood in its channels is to pause in its circulation, when a negro, vile and savage lacerates the dear, dear face of her beautiful daughter, and her precious blood follows the thorns. Passing away before the proud head of her noble husband is bowed in ignominy, when the shackles of a felon encircle arms—enslave hands that never struck a blow, except for his bleeding country. Passing away to plead in her own glorified person to a merciful Father to speedily unite the three in the realm of joy, where there are no shadows and no griefs.

Poor Alice knew as by revelation that the lifeless form before which she was kneeling and weeping was not her mother. Oh, what a royal welcome, what a banqueting upon love there will be by and by, when the terrors of the horrid reconstruction shall so chill her young blood that it will cease to flow, by and by, beyond the sighing and the weeping.

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Tenderly, yea reverently, the body was placed into the casket and removed to the parlor, just under the portrait of her dear soldier boy who went to heaven from the gory field of Manassas. Friends had gathered into the room and the man of God read from the blessed Book, "I am the resurrection and the life." The solemn discourse was almost concluded when ruffianly booted feet were heard in the verandah, and a loud knock was heard at the door. Armed, uniformed negroes had come—come like an Arctic gale, chilling and freezing heart and soul—with a mandate to snatch the living from the dead.

Laflin himself would not have pursued the poor wretch within the barred precincts of the sepulchre. The infidel powers of the East would have paused when they saw this "truce of God." But there was no order of adjournment in the message which they brought. "Forthwith" was the unequivocal command and "forthwith" was now. They had come to take the broken-hearted man, though he clung to the casket; come to prod him with bayonets if the rigid limbs did not respond quickly to the command, "Quick time—March!"

Once or twice, through sheer faint, the poor old man fell out of line and against a black guard who violently pushed him into line with the imprecation—

"D—n yu, git back inter yer place, er I'll stick my bagonet clar froo yer."

He was arraigned before three white men and four negroes, and in the presence of whom stood the white-haired stranger, Mr. Summers.

The Colonel did not clearly comprehend the character of the accusation against him. He had been informed by no one except in a general way. Perhaps he would learn as he followed Mr. Summers in his address to this tribunal.

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"Gentlemen," said Mr. Summers, continuing his speech, "whilst it was my plain duty to report upon the case of Colonel Seymour, I do so with the hope that he may be given a day to answer; indeed, gentlemen, I pray that you may not deal harshly with this old man, who is now in the sere and yellow leaf. You say that you will require him to turn his back upon the traditions of the past—upon the ancient landmarks; that he shall fraternize with our party, in fact become one of us, or his condition shall be made intolerable and his life burdensome. Spare the rod, gentlemen, for his sake and for the sake of his only child."

"What have you to say for yourself, sir," asked the chairman frigidly, addressing himself to Colonel Seymour.

"Sir, I am an old man. One more turn of your wheel—the tightening of the cord ever so slight—and a life worthless and burdensome will drop at your feet. The standard of truth, virtue and patriotism has bowed its once lofty crest, and is now prostrate in the dust. All that was beautiful and lovely in this land of our fathers is sinking, rotting, dying beneath the blight and mildew of your accursed lust of power. Why should I survive? My life, sir, is behind me. You ask me to be your slave. Sir, your bondage is inexorable—it is the life of an outlaw, a traitor, a felon. You ask me to be your friend, and I should consort with thieves; I should crucify every principle of a man. You ask me to be your candidate—my consent would be an act of stultification. Sir, against your

savage principles I swear an eternal hatred and wage an interminable war."

The feeble old man sank back exhausted into his seat.

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"We intend," exclaimed the chairman with great deliberation, "to scarify the old wounds of the rebels until they bleed afresh. Sixty days, sir, within which to prove your loyalty. You can retire sir."

Thus ran the order, marked with three blood-red stars. * * *



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'Kase de high shurruff he dun und seed what wuz ergwine ter cum arter de bellion fell, und he flopped ober ter de publikins'—'Ole Mars Jon haint ergwine ter flop nowheys,' replied Clarissa.

CHAPTER X.

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FREEDOM IN FLOWER.

Ned, who was now in his seventy-third year, was drinking to intoxication from the cup the carpet-baggers had lifted to his lips.

He sat in the shade of a mulberry tree near his cabin furbishing his musket for the next company inspection, and stopping now and then to observe the sportive pranks of a domesticated raccoon.

He heard the irritable voice of his old master calling him from the verandah of the mansion, and observed with gravity to his wife—

"Jes lissen at dat! Golly! to be sho ole Semo dun und furgit dat dis Soufland is konkered und de niggers sot free. Haint dat a purefied scandle? De werry fust munny I gits outen de bero, arter I pays fur de claybanks und de lan und de grate-house, I'm ergwine to uprare er silum fer dat po stractified creetur way out in de big woods, twixt dis plantashun und de crick, whay he kin call 'Ned, Ned!' und nobody's ergwine ter ansur but de blue herrons. Don't yu heer his gwines on, Clarsy? Jeemes' ribber! don't yu heer dat ofe he's dun und swore! Sposin de surcus rider had er heerd dat cuss wurd he flung at me und yu? Golly! he'd histe him upon de horns o' de haltar twell he rigged same ez er fettered wezul. Dat makes me sez whot I duz erbout dese ole isshu white fokeses. When dare aint no grass in de crap und de smoke house am full o' meat, hits brudder dis und sister dat; but bimeby, when de ole isshu draps inter de trap sot by de scalyhorgs, Jeemes' ribber! 'ligion hez dun und tuck er backsot. Don't yu see? Yu mout sot down whey dat ole man is wid yo teef clinched same ez er hasp in de lock, und he mout be gwine on wid his stractified nonsense, und ef yu didn't spishun nuffin, de fust fing you node hit mout be ole marser dis und ole marser dat, und bimeby yu'd clean clare furgit yosef, dat yu wud, und be totin de grubbin ho

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und er swettin ober de wire grass fur de secesh. Don't yu see? Me und yu's jes bleeched ter walk perpendicularer ur we's gwine ter be kotched agen lak minks."

"Dat's de troof, hit sho is," interrupted Clarissa with emphasis.

"Und den," Ned continued, "me und yu mout be wusser niggers dan in slabery time."

"Pend upon it dat po ole white man has dun und gon plum strakted. I nebber seed sich shines as he is a cuttin up, by his lone lorn sef, in all my born days, nur yu nudder. Dar he now trapesing furwards and baccards wid boff hans ahin his back und histin up his cote skeerts, und a callin, Ned, Ned! jes lac slabery times. Ef de good Lord puts off his wisitation much furder, und don't take him outen his misry, hes gwine to sassinate hissef fore de time kums. 'Ned, Ned; I ses Ned Ned,'" grunted the old freedman mockingly. "Jes as well be callin wun of Joshaway's catfishes outen de crick, ebery bit an grane. Clarsy, don't it mak you sorter solumkolly to see how idjeotick ole mister Semo is a gittin, sens de culled fokes is franksized?"

"It sho do," replied Clarissa with some force of expression.

"Pend erpon it woman, ef we culled genmen don't take holt of dis here plantashun, und de house, und de craps, us is all agwine to suck sorrer, shows you born."

"Dats de Lords truff" exclaimed Clarissa.

"Mr. Semo, he don't look arter nuffin, dat he don't," Ned continued, as he laid his musket on the ground to rub his back against the jamb of the chimney, "De hoppergrasses is avourin de craps, und de cotton is in de gras up to de tip ends, und de dratted, flop-yearred dorgs is jamby et up all de sheepses, und dere is dem hosses in de stable, a whinkering und a whinkering fur a moufful ob fodder, un de cattle beastes is er strayin erway inter de mash, und cum rane er shine, dare is ole Mars Jon asottin dare lak er ole settin turkey hen er callin Ned, Ned; lak dare want no freedum in de lan. Twant fur Miss Alice dat ole man und all tother fokeses on dis here plantashun wud be lak a passel ob gizzard shads, plum run down to nuffin."

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"Now yu is a woicin it Ned," again exclaimed Clarissa, as she stitched the last feather in Ned's military cap.

"Dare aint but one way fur dat ole man to eber sucker hissef outen his misery und be spectable," said Ned.

"Und hows he agwine tu du dat Ned?" interrupted Clarissa.

"Don't hit stan ter reson dat ef ole Marse Jon wud jine de publikins und go erbout de kentry baccards and furrards a speechifyin fur de franksized woters, dat he wud git a offis? I don't blame ole marser fur fitin arter Mars Harry got kilt. I'd fout tu, fur my onliest boy, but whar Mars Jon dun rong wus kase he didn't stop Mars Harry fore he rid off to Manassy. Kase Mars Harry he didn't no no better und ole marster did, don't you see de pint, Clarsy?"

"I sho duz," again exclaimed Clarissa.

"Dere is de shuriff, he fit in de war, jess lak Mars Jon dun, and whars dat man now? de high shuriff! Kase he seed what wus agwine tu kum when de bellum fell, und he flopped ober to de publikins, und de fust fing yu noes, dat man is ergwine tu be de pressiden ob de Newnited States."

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"Haint yu seed fo now" continued Ned argumentatively, "wun of dem dare lorgerhed turkles drap back into de mud, ergwine furder und furder und er setlin down und downer twell he kivers hisself all epseps his two rad eyes, und bimeby heer cums erlong ole Joshaway er probing wid de gig, und bimeby he gits his konfidence, und den he flings him on de back und tells him rite saft lak, 'please stay dar twell he cums back ergin;' well den de skalyhorgs day dun und got deyselves skotched in de offusses jes lak dat ar turkle, und de fust fing yu nose ef ole Mars Jon haint ergwine to flop ur nuffin heer cums erlong ole Jeff Davis, de secesh man, und ole Mars Jon er probin wid dare ole debbil fork, und bimeby day flings dem publekins on de back und tells dem to stay rite dar twell day cums back. Don't yu see; und den de fat is dun und flung in de fire und de bellyun is dun un riz ergin."

"Ole Mars Jon ain't agwine to flop no whers, dat he aint," ejaculated Clarissa.

"Den he aint agwine tu git no offis nudder," rejoined Ned, quite seriously and relapsed into silence.

"Ned, whats yu agwine tu du wid yosef dis arternoon?" she asked.

"Me" asked Ned, "Ise agwine tu scotch mysef on dis here plank fur a nap, dats what."

"Whats yu gwine to do," he asked.

"Me," asked Clarissa, "I'm agwine tu slabe fur er nocount free nigger, lak yu, jess lak I has ben doin fur forty yers, dats what."

"No count free nigger hay! dats a sin to yu Clarsy, who keeps dat ar pot bilin?"

"Bilin" she asked, in disgust, "Sposin yu lift dat ar led often dat pot an see whats a bilin, taint nuffin yu fotched home, I tells yu dat."

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Ned distrustfully advanced to the fire place and lifted the top from the pot and sank back with a groan, into an old bottomless chair.

"What do ail you, Ned?" asked Clarissa, laughingly.

"Lors a massy, I wudn't a had yu projheck wid me dat ar fashun fur a hundred dollars. I wus skert

tu ax yu what yu had in dare, und I kep a studdin and a studdin, und I kep tryin to smel sum yerbs or udder ur snuffin an er snuffin an er snuffin, und I kep listenin fur yu to say 'Ned, lift dat bilin pot offen de farr wid dem yurbs und horg meat; hit ar sho dun by dis time', und Bress de Lord, it haint nuffin ceptin er ole kalliker skeert; dat dar mistake is wurf a hundred dollars. Jess as well flung a hundred dollars outen my pocket into de fire, as to gib me dat ar set back."

"A hundred dollars," mockingly repeated Clarissa, "How much money has yu had sence de belyun dun fell?"

"Me?" asked Ned.

"Yes, you, dats who, how many cents yu had most fo yer sence freedum cum in de lan, und yu is as ragged as a settin pefowell."

"Nebber mind," said Ned, "I'm ergwine to git forty akers ob dis here plantashun, und maby de grate house flung in, und I'm gwine to git de peertest mule on de hill, und when I flings de whoop und pulls de ribbuns, yu is ergwine to see a yerthshake."

"Ugh, Ugh!" ejaculated Clarissa, "I mout, und den agen I moutent. I sees yu a flinging de whoop now, but taint ober nary wun ob ole Mars Jon's mules, dat it taint. I seed a passel ob niggers tother day, jess lak yu, a flingin de whup und a pullin de ribbuns, but twas in de conwic camp jess whar yus agwine to be fo de hoppergrasses wours ole Mar's Jon's crap. Dars yer a stretcht out on dat plank in de brilin sun, lak wun ob dem streked lizzards on de wurm ob de fense, wid nary a moufful ob wittles in de house, high nur lo. Cum here an see who dat is agwine long yander ercross de medder in de hot brilin sun, wid her bonnit skeerts lak de wings ob a white hearon, a floppin backards an furards, haint dat Miss Alice?"

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Ned raised his hand to shield his eyes from the hot glaring sun as he observed, "Tain't nobody else. Ef dat ar white gal don't hab de tarryfyin feber ur de brownskeeters, den I haint no doctor."

"I wunder whar dat ar gal is ergwine to here at twel erclock in de day, und de July flies er farely deefnin de fokeses wid der racket?" asked Clarissa.

"Lordy! Lordy! Clarsy," exclaimed Ned, "ef we uns only hed sum ob dem gud wittles Miss Alice got in dat basket, I wudn't be in narry grane ob a hurry fur dem forty akers ob lan und de mule nudder, wud yu?"

"Mout hab had gud wittles all dis time ef yu hadn't ben sich er flambergastered fule. Yu und Joshaway er tarnally spasheating erbout hopperrattucks und pianny fortys und de freedmun's bero und de conwenshun und de miluntary, und bress de Lord nary wun ob yu's seed a hunk o' meat ur a dust o' flour sense freedum cum in de lan, und boff ob yu luks dis werry minit lak perishin conwicks, ur de sutler's mules turned out to grass. Neber herd dat yungun open her mouf agin enybody in my life, white er black. Ef yu axes her fer enyfyng, she is er smolin de butifulist smile all de bressed time, und ef de cullud fokeses' chillun is er hongry she feeds dem wid lasses and homny und gud truck twell dey is fitten ter pop open; und when dey is sick, she is jes lak er hark angel, und bress Gord, dat ar gal is ergwine tu hab er golen krown, und er harp too, und gole slippers, when her hed is lade low; und ef she goes fust I'm ergwine ter keep her grabe kivered wid de butifulist flowers in ole missus' flower garden." And Clarissa, overburdened with the tumult of her tender soul, began to sob and cry.

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"Hit nachully tares my ole hart strings outen my body to sen her dat wurd; kase yu nose, Ned, dat Miss Alice's hans is tu swete und tender tu cut de wud fur de kitchen und lif dem hebby pots in dis yer bilin sun. Ef I had my chusin I wudn't gib wun stran ob her golen hare fur all de freedum in de lan, und ole Lincum frowed in, dat I wudn't."

Clarissa could maintain her equilibrium whenever Ned expatiated upon matters, persons and events unconnected with her young mistress, but every chord of feeling in her black bosom was instantly vibrant with emotion if anything in disparagement of her was spoken.

Dear, dear child! She was now oblivious to all that was passing in the little cabin.

There she goes, singing a sweet lullaby, on her mission of love, moving along in the sunshine that encircles her as with a magic zone of glory.

The little daisies lift up their heads to laugh as they whisper to each other, "There she goes, our little sweetheart!" And an old woman essaying to free herself from the fetters of the tyrant Death at the other end of the line is whispering, "Here she comes, my darling!" Her great, sympathetic nature, whose capacity was enlarged to embrace all the poor, white and black, made the black cruel heart of Aleck, even, unwittingly to relent after he had torn her fair face with the thorn bush in the meadow.

When the paralytic, Alexander MacLaren, died twelve months ago, he bequeathed a redundancy of squalor and misery to his widow, and now death in slouching strides was coming toward her little hut beyond the meadow; coming as if unwilling to take away the old friend of sweet Alice; coming, not like the swift cruel messenger, but languidly, even dubiously; halting to ask if his commission would permit him to spare her yet a little while for Alice's sake. There was a footfall upon the door block; there was the low voice from within, "Come in, dearie," and Alice and a flood of sunshine entered together.

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"My sweet bairn," the old lady exclaimed, in the language of the highlands, "how you do gladden my auld een! Let me kiss you, my lassie, ond touch your bonnie hair with my auld stiffened fingers. I want to feel your presence ivery minute."

Alice bowed lovingly at the bedside of the poor widow and kissed the pallid cheek, and looking

into the faded eyes asked, with heartfelt sympathy, if she knew who had kissed her?

"Ah, vera well lassie," she answered smilingly. "I ken nae ane in this puir auld world but you; And why should I dearie? Do you think I shall ever cease to love you, Allie, you are sae bright and trustful; your gentle spirit is like the little star that shines just yonner when the twilight deepens into the night, its light ond joy ond comfort are for some ither fauk, for some ither fauk," she repeated with earnestness.

"Oh, I do thank you, Mrs. MacLaren, for such kind, yet undeserved expressions, they are sweet dewdrops that are always leaking from a heart, kind and true," said Alice, as she brought from her little basket such delicacies as she thought would tempt the sick lady.

"Now that you love me so dearly," continued Alice, "will you not take a little nourishment, for my sake?"

"For your sake, dearie," interrogated the old lady, "thot I will, and thank you with an auld ruck of a heart thot has but ane love—all for you, chiel, all for you. If I live it will be to bless you, ond if I dee I will whisper to the angels to love my sweet chiel as I have loved you, Allie."

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The old head was very tired and the eyes that now mirrored another light than that which came through the natural senses were closing as Alice sang so tenderly, so softly her favorite hymn; and it appeared to come fragrant, laden with the aroma of the heather, with the memories of the gude auld days from the glades and trossachs.

"It's here we hae oor trials, ond it is here that He prepares
A' his chosen for the raiment, which the ransomed sinner wears
Ond it is here that he would hear us, mid oor tribulations sing
We'll trust oor God who reigneth in the Palace of the King.

"Though his palace is up yonner, He has kingdoms here below;
Ond we are his ambassadors, wherever we may go;
We've a message to deliver, ond we've lost anes hame to bring
To be leal and loyal hearted, in the Palace of the King.

"Its ivory halls are bonnie, upon which the rainbows shine,
Ond its Eden bowers are trellised with a never fading vine;
Ond the pearly gates of Heaven do a glorious radiance fling,
On the starry floor that shimmers in the Palace of the King.

"Noo nicht shall be in Heaven ond nae desolating sea,
Ond nae tyrant's hoof shall trample in the City of the free;
There is everlasting daylight ond a never-fading Spring,
Where the Lamb is all the glory in the Palace of the King."

The widow lay as though she were dead, so tranquil was the slumber that had kissed down her heavy eyelids, and her crossed hands were laid upon the light coverlid that rested upon her bosom.

"Oh," thought Alice as she looked upon the scarcely animated human body, "if it were not a sin, and if you were not so wearied, how I would envy you, Mrs. MacLaren; you are soon to be so happy. Your tired feet will soon press the 'Starry floor that shimmers in the palace of the King' ond your tired een will soon 'behold the King in his beauty,' ond your tired heart will throb with a divine feeling when He bids you welcome in the 'palace of the King; ond he will gae you the title to your mansion with a smile, ond you ken fine it is your ain hoose, ond after sich sae travail you have coom hame to abide for aye."

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After a while the old lady awoke to find Alice kneeling at her head, to wipe the damp from her brow with her handkerchief.

Alice was the first to speak and she said quite endearingly "How are you now, my dear Mrs. MacLaren? I hope you feel ever so much better."

The old lady with some effort raised her eyes and responded feebly, "Better chiel. Ah my dearie," she said almost hopefully, "may be I'll nae go to my ain hame the day. Just then I was so weary and I had almost forgotten that you were still with me. Ond were you nae singing a wee bit ago dearie? or was I dreaming ond heard the Angels singing, 'We'll trust our God who reigneth in the palace of the King?' It might have been the voice of my auld mither, I dinna ken, I dinna ken," she repeated emotionally.

"If you are not tired, Allie, will you not read a passage from the blessed book, just to make me think of the auld, auld story."

Alice took the Bible from the little deal table and upon opening its pages a five dollar treasury note of the Confederate government, of the issue of eighteen hundred and sixty two, fell upon the floor. It appeared to Alice as a pictorial representation of war, its havoc, its chariot wheels, with great cruel tires and knives, and its heaps of slain. She turned it over and saw this writing, in a neat feminine hand on the back, "It was not for the like of this that my lad was slain at Gettysburg, it was for honor. With the tidings of his death came this note from his hands. 'The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.'"

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Alice placed the note back in the Bible with the thought almost expressed by her tongue, "The liveliest emblems of Heaven are His saints, who in the deep sense of anguish can uplift their

hearts to Him in simple child-like faith."

The old lady again expressed herself as feeling so much better. Poor woman, perhaps it was but a momentary reinforcement of the vital energy, that was preparing her for the last interview with death, when he should come again with shroud and coffin. "And the Spirit and the bride say come," the sweet girl began to read, "and let him that heareth say come, and let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will let him take of the water of life freely."

"The water of life freely, and let him that is athirst say come," echoed the old lady feelingly. "Ond all, all, dearie, we shall hae in ower aboondance in the palace of the King, bye and bye. Ond wud you mind putting up a wee bit prayer for sich an auld rack of a body?"

Alice got down upon her knees and clasping the hands of the sick lady in her own she prayed fervently that the Father of all mercies would watch over her charge who had been faithful through her life; deal lovingly with her, for she is thy child; be with her now and always to comfort her and give her that peace which the world cannot give or take away.

Alice rose from her supplications to kiss the old lady once more before taking her departure, when the invalid, pointing to a little box in beautiful Mosaic upon the mantel, said to her, "You will find there a little siller that I have put by for my beerial chiel, for the gown ond the coffin ond the grave." [Pg 132]

As Alice entered the old mansion at Ingleside with her mind tranquilized by the experience through which she had just passed, she heard her father in quite a loud voice, call one of his old servants, "Ned, Ned, where is that black rascal Ephraim?"

"Don't know, mars Jon, came back the answer, Specks he is dun gone to de baptising in de crick sar."

"Where is my saddle mare?"

"Don't know dat sar, nudder, specks she's dun gone wid Ephraim tu sar."

"Where is my new hat and umbrella?"

"Don't know mars Jon, specks dey is dun took demselves off en wid Ephraim tu sar."

"Who is that banging on Miss Alice's piano?"

"Dey is dem culled ladies sar, Miss Maria und Miss Susan, er playin high opperattucks sar. I seed dem er gwine in dere und spishoned dey wur gwine rong, und I axed dem to play de high opperattucks some wheys else, kase dis grate house was too dimmycratuck fur dem, but dey lowed dat dere daddy had worked fur hit und dey wus hissenn und den I didn't say no mo, kase I wus afearred. Pend erpun hit, mars Jon, de bottom rail has dun got on top now sho nuff."

Reconstruction had come with its mildew. Black cavernous mouths were lapping up the virus and spitting it out everywhere. Retribution in history had come too with the evolution of the negro.

The old master like a besieged baron of mediaeval civilization, was still looking out upon his broad domains and his cattle upon a hundred hills, but there was rust upon the plow shares, tares in the wheat, cockles in the rye, and the high noon bell in its tower hung lifeless and tongueless. No summons thence to the tired hands and feet and backs upon the old plantation. Labor was disorganized—discipline a dead precedent—the negroes, like the swallows and ravens in the old rookery, homeward and townward as they list, were pluming their flight. [Pg 133]

The many-gabled mansion lay fast asleep in the Sabbath nooning. A bee-martin, as it leaped to wing from the neglected meadow, piped a shrill note or two and scurried away after the thieving crow; and the interlacing oaks and elms of a century's growth coquetted with the whispering winds.

Alice felt that she had sustained a mortal shock when she heard the sound of her mother's piano, every chord thrilling with strange dissonance; boisterous, vulgar singing and the shuffling of feet upon the richly carpeted floor.

She started to enter the room when a rude black hand was placed with violence upon her arm, and she was thrust back into the hall, with the remark, "jess git outen here forthwid. Us ladies is musin our selfs er makin dis ole fing farly howl. Daddy ses how dat ef we cullud ladies notices white trash lak yu is eny mo he's ergwine ter whup us an' whup us good," and with this they courtesied toward each other and retired as if they had been princesses of some black realm.

Alice wept out her indignation in her mother's room. Poor Alice! Sowing the wind! By and by what shall the harvest be?

"Ned," called Colonel Seymour, "tell Aleck to come to me." Ned came back in a few minutes concealing a grin with his open hand to his mouth. "Boss," he said, "I seed Ellick, und he tole me how dat I mout tell yu pintedly dat ef yu wants ter see him wusser dan he do yu, yu mout cum ter him er let hit erlone udder. Dem wus his berry wurd." The old man turned away with the wish in his heart that the black vat of reconstruction might be heaped up to the brim with the freedmen who had turned their backs upon their only friends. [Pg 134]

As the evening sun was drawing a watery cloud before its face to shut out, if possible, the degradation of the white people of the South, Ephraim rode up at break-neck speed upon the exhausted mare and as he alighted upon the foot-block he threw the bridle towards his old master with the insulting demand, "unsaddle dat beastis Semo, widout yu wants her tu tote de saddle all her life."

"You insolent scoundrel!" exclaimed the old man in white heat, "has it come to this?"

"Looker heer, po white man, dus yu no who's yu er sassin? Ise er spectable cullud gemman, sar, er franksized woter, sar, und what's yu sar? Po down white trash. Take yer ole mar und yer ole umbrill, und yer ole hat, und go ter de debbil." Thus was slipping away the eventide of the day that God, in his infinite condescension aeons ago, had hallowed and blessed.

In the excitement of these almost tragical events Alice had quite forgotten the sick woman across the meadow, and she was hurrying there as fast as she could, when she was intercepted in her journey by Aleck, who commanded,

"Hole up dar, white 'oman! Whar is yer agwine wid dat baskit und dem wittles?"

The girl was greatly alarmed at the presence of the brutish negro in this solitary place and she spoke as complacently as possible and told him that she was carrying some food to poor Mrs. MacLaren. "Will you not let me go on?" she said; "the poor woman is very ill, and I am sure that I am doing no one any harm."

"Yes yu is fer a fac, the negro replied with anger, pears lak yu an yer yo ole daddy is terminated tu gin de culled genmen all de tribulashun yu kin und we haint ergwine tu stan hit no longer. Boff ob yu is jist got tu git outen de grate house und stop toting wittles tu de po white trash. When we takes holt ob dis plantashun dey haint ergwine ter be nary horg, nur chickin, nur pefowell on de lan und de culled genmen und ladies will be bleegeed to look at tother wuns and suck dey fingers in misery."

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As the negro turned away from the affrighted girl he purposely threw against her fair face, with a deft hand a thorn switch, that tore the flesh and caused the cheek to bleed and then laughed with the gratification of an arch-fiend.

She went on her way in silence but her outraged spirit could hardly contain itself, and this she said to herself with burning anger is reconstruction! A civilization that with whipcords and chains has suspended law and love and benevolence.

When Alice reached the little home of the widow she knew that the death angel had entered before her and was putting his icy finger upon the eye and the heart, and with an almost inaudible exclamation of "poor Allie" she passed away.

With tenderness and love Alice arranged the coverlid over the body and locked the door and went in search of help to prepare the old woman for burial. She saw aunt Charlotte gathering sticks for fuel for the pot that was boiling in her yard, for it was wash day, and told her that poor old Mrs. MacLaren was dead. "Will you not go with me and give such assistance as you can?" "Dat I wont," sharply replied the old negress "Ise dun und got way by any sich drudgery as dat now a days. When wun ob our siety ceases we has grate blowin' ob horns und muskits shooting at de grabe und ebery body is as hapy as er rane frog in de willer tree. Yu sees dem dere bilin cloes in de pot don't yu, and yu sees dat ar sun ergwine down as peert as er race hoss, well den Ise got my orders from Joe und I don't ame tu git a beatin when he cums home ef I kin hep it."

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Alice went on and there were fantastic shadows here and there in the primitive landscaping of nature and timid rays of the setting sun were stealing softly through thorn and bush and bough. She found Mary Perkins and her younger sister Gussie at home and she knew that poverty had not destroyed their kindly natures. She told them with sadness her mission and when the little assemblage gathered reverently in the little glebe the next day and the man of God uncovered his white locks and looked upon the forbidding pall and grave, there was a broken column of white flowers resting over the dead heart of poor Mrs. MacLaren. "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes," is the universal requiem of nature—the proclamation an offended God uttered when he placed sentinel Cherubim with flaming swords in Paradise to guard its portals. It was the voice of the aged ambassador of Christ this day, when there was no responsive sound to come forth from the dark chamber hidden under the clods of the valley.

Alice returned from the burial in a spirit of resignation, clad in a coat of mail figuratively speaking, strong and riveted in every joint. "What sore need for the upbuilding of character in this degenerate age; when evil is personified; when courage is so sadly needed," said the girl, "I will try ever so hard to be pure in heart."

She joined her father in the verandah for a few moments, and she saw at a glance that the old man was battling with conflicting emotions.

He said at last very disconsolately, as he stroked her golden tresses. "I had hoped my darling child to go to my grave in a green old age, but if it please God to take me and my child I should not murmur. God knows I am drinking the lees from a cup full of bitterness. The reconstructionists say that they are making treason odious and are scouring the land for distinguished examples."

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"Let us not despair, dear father" said Alice as she threw her arms around the old man's neck. "You still own dear old Ingleside. Let us sell what we have and flee ere the whirlwind shall overwhelm us with evil, I will work for you father and we may be happy again some day, somewhere. The good Lord will stay the hands of our oppressors but let us not wait for that, let us go hence as quickly as we can."

"You almost unnerve me my dear child with your eloquence and tears, but that will not do. I—I can clean the rust from my old sword and I am sure it will cut as red a swath now as it did in '63. Our Scotch-Irish blood is thicker than water. Never shall it be said by the craven hearted enemy that John Seymour has ever defiled the proud lineage of his people. Let us dismiss these unhappy thoughts and pray at least for our disenthralment."

Monday came and the shadows began to deepen. The patriarchal oaks and elms were still bowing gracefully each to its vis a vis. There was no cook in the old mansion, no stable boy to feed the horses, and old Jupiter like the old sexton among the graves was groping hither and thither abstractedly, perhaps in quest of memories.

Clarissa the old standby had rebelled, rebelled against the sovereignty that had been too indulgent and too patriarchal perhaps; rebelled against a mistress and a master who condoned every failing of her nature; rebelled against a destiny made up of the comforts of life, without its sacrifices.

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You will come back home some fair day Clarissa and there will be tears in your eyes, there will be sorrow in your old black heart, and penitence syllabled upon your tongue. You will come back to tell your dear young mistress something of the delusions that made you swerve from interest and duty and you will see the light of forgiveness in the pretty blue eyes of Alice.

The message came as it were wrapped up in cactus leaves. "Tell Miss Alice dat she needn't speck culled ladies is ergwine to mommick up dey sevs no mo, cooking wittles fur de white trash. Ned is ergwine tu git er organ und hosses und kerridge und she wus ergwine tu split de rode rate wide open er cummin und ergwine. He's dun und jined de milintery company und sakes er live dat genmen does hab de butifullist feathers and buttons und muskit tu be sho!" Poor Alice in her heart "felt like one who treads alone, some banquet hall deserted; whose lights had fled, whose garlands dead and all but her departed."

CHAPTER XI.

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THE MAJESTY OF THE LAW.

Another morning came and there was a cook perseveringly tasking herself with a round of slavish duties in the kitchen; but she did not come from Ned's cabin.

Old Jupiter, the pet hound, looked up into her fair face as if to say, "You will not forget me when breakfast is ready will you?" As quietly as possible she went about; there was no rattling of cups and plates, for the new cook said as she came softly out of her chamber "my dear father must not be disturbed this morning." She went resignedly to her toil. There was a blister or two upon her soft white hands, "but father will kiss the fire out of them when he comes to breakfast; and then we will give thanks to God for His bounty and in our home it may be that we shall be happy."

As her father entered the room, Alice ran to kiss him, observing that she would not ask for a compliment this morning, as it seemed that Clarissa had communicated her mad spirit to all the appurtenances of the kitchen; the fire would not burn and the kettle had gone off upon a rampage, perhaps as Clarissa's carriage would go when driven upon the corduroy roads of reconstruction; and then again she had prodded her hand unnecessarily with the sharp tines of a fork with which she was marking points in the biscuits.

Her father laughed at her little deficiencies as he relaxed his stern old face to kiss her and said to her approvingly "perhaps you will yet be a CHEF in this responsible department my daughter."

Together they sat down to their meal; together their hearts were uplifted unto Him who had made for them such ample provision.

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"And now my daughter," said the colonel smilingly as he was leaving the room "what are your prognostications for to-day. Shall we have peace and rest, or surprises and?" he had not concluded the enquiry when a rude knocking came from the hall door. A frown instantly shadowed the veteran's face. The hour for inquisitorial visits or interruptions was unseasonable, "what could it mean?" he queried.

"Is yo name Semo?" asked a ruffianly negro in uniform, as the old soldier opened the door "It is," replied the colonel restraining his wrath.

"Yu is summons to kote sar forthwid."

"Why such a requisition, will you please explain," demanded the colonel.

"Don't ax fool questions white man; cum rite erlong, dis heer rit bleeges me to tak yu ded er live."

The colonel went to the stable to saddle Nelly and she was gone, Sweetheart was also gone, and so were the other horses.

He came back with the information; the negro laughed savagely in his face, and told him "dat de milintery company was er drillin in de town und he seed his hosses ergwine to de drill-ground wid de sargent und de corprul und de flagman."

The colonel looked into the face of the negro as he asked despairingly: "How am I to obey the order? I have no way of getting to your court."

"You has got ter go ded er live, I'm er gwine to gib yu one hour to git ter kote und den I'm agwine ter fetch yu wid de possum common taters," and the negro gave his horse the whip and cantered away.

Sixty-five years had stiffened the joints of the old man; his muscles and sinews were relaxed and gouty, but the order must be obeyed; no temporizing with the policy of reconstruction, no

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annulling an order when issued from a court.

The old gentleman halting from sheer weakness ascended the rickety stairway of the court room and he saw the power of the law, its learning, its dignity prostituted to ignoble purposes.

He saw the power of reconstruction, its ignorance, its venality accentuated to a degree that provoked his abhorrence.

He saw as he entered the house the American flag drooping in graceful folds over the bench, and he felt that judicial authority was reinforced by the strength and dominion that overpowered the South.

A stupid negro as black as the hinges of midnight sat upon the judgment seat; sat there as a representative of the law that had for its substantial underpinning in all the bygone ages, honesty, capacity, promptitude, justice; sat there under a commission to checkmate evil.

There were but two white men in this revolting presence, beside the veteran, whose face was now marked by fatigue and despair, and who dropped exhausted upon a rude bench.

They were not there from choice but because the law of the bewildered land had brought them there.

Judge Blackstock's black face looked out of a canopy as of carded wool; beetling eyebrows of snowy whiteness would rise and fall automatically like the crest of a kingfisher; the contour of his face was made ridiculously picturesque by great brass rimmed spectacles that sat reposefully below the bridge of his nose.

A spring tide one day washed him out of a fisherman's hut into the office of a justice of the peace, where he was dipping out of his Dutch nets a larger fry.

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The old negro was not vicious or malignant, only ignorant, fanatical and superstitious, with a religious vein that ran in eccentric curves and sharp lines through his stupid nature.

Laflin was his apotheosis, his providence, his inspiration. It was Laflin he believed who had placed in the mid-heavens the great luminary of freedom; who had written upon amaranthine leaves the proclamation of emancipation; and who had erected within his reach the huge commissariat dripping all the while with fatness.

It was to Laflin that he carried his docket every morning to be paragraphed by stars and asterisks against the names of particular offenders; and it was to Laflin that he read the judgments of the court whenever rebels were indicted.

If "Ilderim" the sheik could have seen the old negro with his mace of office presiding in his court he would have recognized his maternal uncle.

The black judge retained his office rather by sufferance than popularity. He was guided by convictions that were illogical and foolish; slavery he believed to have been the whips of an offended God with which he smote his chosen people the negroes hip and thigh. This man was one of the judges who was caricaturing reconstruction; inditing as it were a pictorial commentary of the law of crimes and misdemeanors in misfitting cartoons.

"Make de pocklermashun, officer" he said to the negro constable as he placed in his right cheek a huge quid of tobacco.

"Oh yes," shouted the constable "dis kote is open fur de suppresshun ob jestis; walk light."

The judge adjusting his spectacles with a judicial temper, read aloud a warrant. "De state agin Edward Sanders."

"Stand up dar prisner; is yu guilty ob dis high depredashun ob de law ur is yu not guilty?"

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"Not guilty," replied Mr. Sanders.

"What maks yu say dat white man?" asked his honor.

"Because I am not in the habit of lying," replied the offended man. "Look a heer white man I aint agwine ter hab no bigity in dis kote," said the judge as he pointed his long bony finger with a savage frown at the prisoner, "yer 'nose dis heer kote is agwin ter mak itself ojeous und a pine plank scandile und stinch to dem dat goes agin de law. Don't dis heer warrant sez how dat yu dun und dun dis heer depredashun und now yu ups und sez how dat yu didn't. The jedge ob dis kote aint agwine agin his own affidavy und yu is foun guilty upon de hipsy dixsy ob dis heer warrant."

"But I beg that I may be allowed to introduce witnesses who would prove me innocent," exclaimed the prisoner.

"How in de name ob God is dey gwine to prube yu innercent when de warrant hab dun und foun yu guilty? tell me dat" asked the judge argumentively.

"Do you mean to convict a man in your court who has not been judicially tried," asked Mr. Sanders.

"Say dat ober agin" commanded the judge as he leaned forward using his open hand as a ear trumpet; "dis kote don't comprehen de fassinashun ob de question," and the prisoner repeated the question with emphasis.

"Eggzackly so," exclaimed the judge, "I sees de pint; you is perseeding to put dis kote in contempt wid your obstropuous language; dis kote is gwine to rite its judgment so de boss can read it widout his specks. Hit has heerd de state pro und con und hit has measured out its ekality

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in golden stillyurds, and upon de hole kase und de aggrawashuns dareof yu is foun one hundred dollars und recognized fur your good behavens fur a year und a day. Officer," he continued addressing the negro, "size up dat white man's pile und tak out er hundred dollars fur de fine fore yu turns him loose."

"Next case" he exclaimed, "dare is dat Betsy Collins agin; er witness fur de state agin Mr. Thomson" he continued deprecatingly, "allus a gittin up a great flustration agin de po house; a runnin to dis kote wid arrant lies lak hit was agwine ter trude itself on brudder Thomson's feelins."

"What is you doin heer Betsy Collins wid your rad eye a bunged up lak yu had been a salting a yellow jackets nest? I'm agwine to pospond dis kase twell brudder Tompson arrivs in kote und terrygates de complaint."

"De next case am a forsible stenshion kase I'm gwine ter let it go by too."

"Grate King" he exclaimed with an unjudicial gravity, as he bent his spectacled face to peruse a name upon his docket, "dat ar name retches from de Rappydan to de Jeemes rubber; Willyum Abender Dolbery Bowzer Indian Ginrul Mackintosh. Haint dat name dun und fling yo back outen jint? I'm ergwine to split hit rite wide open, und den I'm gwine to wide hit up agin. Mouter node yu wur er wagrant ur a secesh nigger toting dat secesh name und all dem Federick gyarments lak yu wuz de rare eend ob de bellion."

"Whose horg's dat yu bin gitting yo rashuns offer?" the judge asked with a fearful grin, and the negro prisoner was for a moment confused, reassuring himself however he pleaded "not guilty" to the warrant and asked that his case might be continued until his old master could be subpoenaed.

The judge looked toward the prisoner with a scowl as he observed, "What's dat white man's name?" [Pg 145]

"Ole Marsers named arter me," the prisoner humbly replied.

"Ugh! Ugh!" said the judge "Dats a sarcumstance agin you. I'm ergwine to put yu whey dere haint ergwine to be no mo sturbance betwixt yu and de horgs. Dis heer jedgment is ergwine to run agin yu twell dat ar horg is fotched into de kote; und hit is ergwine to run in de name of de state."

"Grate Jarryko!" exclaimed Joshua excitedly from among the bystanders, "dat dere jedgment ez same ez er surcle in de warter, hit haint got no eend, Grate King! dat secesh nigger hez dun und got hissef shot up forever und all dun and dun, by und twixt him und a piney woods rooter that is dun and woured up fo de bellion fell."

"Dis kote is gwine to rejourne till to morrow mornin. Make de pocklemashun, officer."

As the old negro judge by the aid of his staff was shuffling out of the court house the Colonel was prompted to ask him why he had been rudely taken from his home and brought as a prisoner before him. The old negro looked at the Colonel in a furtive way as he replied irritatingly. "De kote had to bate de trap wid one warmint ter catch anudder one." And thus the mountebanks and harlequins of these outrageous times were compounding dynamite in their laboratories that would ere long explode under their feet.

CHAPTER XII.

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HOME AGAIN.

Alice felt that in the afflictive dispensations that were from day to day scourging the poor south, that in her own personal trials there was an inscrutable Providence enacting its ordinances, and by and by the "end would justify the means." Great and simple was the faith of this beautiful child of the sunny south, great and simple her faith in the unfailing source of truth, love, and Divine equity. Great was her faith in the possibilities and recuperative power of a country that had been scathed so remorselessly by the great storms of war. She had thrown around her life a great bulkhead of faith, and she could suffer almost uncomplainingly, for there was solace in tears and prayers when her spiritual discernment brought her face to face with Him who said, "I'll never leave thee nor forsake thee."

After the arrest of her father she retired to her chamber for a short communion with her Savior, to whom she had yielded without reserve a heart soon to be cast again into the heated furnace of affliction. She came out of her room to respond to a feeble knock at the back door, and she opened it to admit Clarissa. Alice saw instantly that something had gone wrong with the negro, for there were great tears standing in her liquid eyes and her speech was broken and emotional.

"Miss Alice," she exclaimed, amid her sobs with her black face buried in her apron, "Ole Clarisy is so sorry, deed she is dat she trod on your feelins, but Ned he suaded me clare outen my senses, deed he did Missis, und I declares fore my Maker in heaben, dat when dat fool nigger spaciated erbout dem hosses und kerriges, und horg und horminy pyannys he was agwine ter fetch home, und de silk umbrells und de whoop skeerts und sich lak, I jes drapped back into dat nigger busum und didn't see wun bressed fing but kerriges und hosses er cummin und ergwine; und bress yo sole, Miss Alice, all dat nite long Ned was gwine on bout dem hosses und pianny fortes und now und den he wud drap orf to sleep, und den I heerd him hollow to Joshaway 'Git outen de way wid de rones, dese heer clay banks is ergwine to tak dis rode, Glang Shurmans! Glang Laflin!' und fo

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de Lord wun time dat stractified nigger pearched hissef pon de tip eend ob de bedsted und hilt on to de postes same ez a poll-parrot hollering 'wo! wo! wo!' und him plum fast asleep; und when de fust lite of day cum I heerd him er coaxin ole Saltpeter, dats our ole steer, wid a moufful of fodder, und den he hollered to me to fetch de blue chiss to put de munny in und me und him got into de steer kyart und dat ole Saltpeter jess turned hissef loose down dat rode same as mars Jon's bay filly; but I haint neber seed no munny yet, nor de claybanks nudder; und Ned he lowed how dat de bero man dun an sed dat de man dat was fetchin' de hosses to de souf, hed done und tucked de rong rode, und mout not git heer in time to pitch de crap, but dat he was gwine to cum sho, und I axed Ned ef he pinned his fafe to dat man und de hosses, und day er straying disserway und datterway twixt de norf and de souf und he lowed dat 'nobody cud hit de rite rode all de time kase de bellion hed dun und flung all de rodes outen jint.' Den I ups and sez, 'I nose wun rode dat haint flung outen jint und dis heer foot passenger is agwine to take hit rite back to de grate house;' und heer I is Miss Alice; und den I got er studdin erbout ole Marser und young Missis und it peared lak I was stobbing dem to de hart wid a pitchfork, und I sez to mysef sez I 'Clarisy is yu ergwine ter leave dem po critters in de grate house wid de cussed niggers er pirooting froo de land?' I dun cum back now Miss Alice to slave fur yu und ole Marser twell I die; twell de ark angel stretches out his whings and taks me ter rest in his busum. I know I was a stracted fool when I drapped the kitchen key under de do, but bress your hart Miss Alice dar is sich a flustrashun all ober de land, de niggers lak ragged ruffins ergwine to de town und cummin back agin, er gallipin hosses und er blowin great big horns pine blank lak dam yaller mornin glories, dat I is so pestered dat I don't know de fo eend ob de grate house frum de hind eend." "Is you been in de kitchen dis mornin Miss Alice?"

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"Oh yes," replied Alice, "and everything is tidy and clean."

"Is!" ejaculated Clarissa. "Well I'm ergwine in dar und cook ole marsa sum good wittles fur I knows he ergwine ter be most perished when he comes. Po ole marsa; it do pear lak he is suckin sorrow all de bressed time; to be sho dis wurrull is turned rong side outards; ef er ark angel was ter pearch upon de tip eend ef de chimney und see de ruinashun of dis po souf he wud'nt flop his whings but wun time fo he wud be clean outen site, dat he wud'n't."

The coming back of the truant servant was a bright page in the life history of Alice. She had been so sad, so lonely, so forsaken. She had looked into the arching sky and saw nothing there but frowning clouds; she had introspected her poor heart and there was nothing there but the pictures of the dead; she thought of her friends and saw only grinning phantoms. Still sowing the wind and sowing, sowing, came back the echo.

She went into the parlor and seating herself at the piano thrummed its neglected chords, and was ever music or song so enrapturing. Surely an invisible choir supplemented her sweet voice. She arose from the piano and knelt at the little altar to pray for her father, who was at that moment in the hands of these merciless people; who like Huns and Vandals were riding rough shod over the south arresting arbitrarily the aged men whose learning, experience and virtue had illustrated its civilization and given impulse and direction to its grandeur and glory. She was pleading with Him who had permitted his chosen people to be scourged by the lashes of the Egyptian task-masters; pleading not for her life but for another life, that like the wasted candle would flicker a little longer and go out. Alice then went to the kitchen and found Clarissa burnishing the tea service.

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"Bress yor hart, young missis," Clarissa said "you allus cums lak a streak o' sunshine. Ef de clouds was a drapping rain all de time I cud see de bressed sun er shinin when yu'se erbout."

"I thank you Clarissa, but I don't deserve your compliments," Alice replied. "I don't feel as if I could cheer any one or make one human heart light or happy. What will they do with father Clarissa?" she continued.

"De good Lord in heaben only knows, missis. Pears lak dey ez wouring dat po man up wid leetle mouffuls at de time, and he so innosen too."

"Poor father," she said to herself. "I have been made very strong by a refreshing influence. If you could only place your burdens upon me until I became wearied like yourself, I would be so happy."

At twilight the old man, foot sore and exhausted, tottered into the verandah very much in the spirit of Cataline "nursing wrath and breathing mischief." "How uniform in all ages," he vehemently exclaimed, "are the workings of tyranny; how plausible its pretexts; how detestable its purposes! I have thought of death and felt no fear when I invited him to come and to come quickly; but I beseech the great God now that he will spare me to behold my people rising in their majesty, with a constitutional exercise of their power, to expel these barbarians from the country; to preserve our laws, our peace, our humanity; and to sustain the liberties of the people against the imminent perils to which they stand exposed."

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He knew that he was powerless against that oppression that lacked every resource of intellectual vigor; he knew that whatever indignities were offered to person or property were condoned or excused; he knew that the manhood of the South was suffering a social attain.

He told his daughter as best he could his humiliating experiences with interjections and volleys of wrath; how that when he was confronted by a black savage in the court he was told with fiendish laughter that the officer "had fotched the rong man," "dat de state had no charge agin him, but it mout hab fore he lef de town." Scarcely had the clear sun begun to overlook the trees the next morning when the negro officer again presented himself at the door with a requisition for Mr. Seymour.

"Yu is ordered ter kote ergin," the negro demanded. "The jedge sed how dat he made er mistake yestiddy und sent de rong man ter jail."

"Let me see your warrant," Colonel Seymour sternly asked.

"If yu fetches a witnis I'll read de warrant," the ignorant brute replied.

Clarissa who was dusting the furniture in the hall, overhearing an animated conversation between her old master and the negro officer, peeped out of the door when the negro saw her and commanded her to come to him. [Pg 151]

To go or to run, that was the question with Clarissa, but she made a virtue of necessity and timidly obeyed the order.

"Hold up your right hand, yu po nigger trash," the negro exclaimed.

"Oh Lordy, Mr. jedge, what has I dun und dun?" cried Clarissa; "Ergwine to de jail house fur nuffin in dis wurrul, me und ole marsa; und what is ergwine ter cum ob miss Alice?"

"Hole your old mouf, I haint ergwine ter hurt yu. Stand rite dar as de witnis und den you is deescharged," and with that he took from his pocket a dirty yellow paper and began to spell out its contents.

The officer patronizingly remarked to Colonel Seymour as he was seating himself in the buggy, "I can gib yu er ride to de kote ef yu will except of my sability." The Colonel thanked him, for his gouty joints were rebelling. By a cruel inexorable law of gravitation the old man was sinking from the level of a man to the condition of a slave. Alighting at the court house he was mortified to see a white man and a negro handcuffed together walking in the court room, in the custody of another negro officer. As he walked toward the black judge, a score of brutish negroes cried out "Yander is dat ole secesh, he'e ergwine to git jestis now."

"Fetch Mr. Seymour fore me, sar," commanded the judge; "whar is squire Wiggins und his affidavy?"

"Mr. Seymour, yu is scused of interruptin de squire heer in de joyment ob his social pribileges, and dis kote has found yu guilty. Let dis prisner be found er hundred dollars und ef yu haint got dat much munny handy, de kote will change de judgment und send yu ter jail."

The Colonel had no difficulty in finding a friend who advanced for him the amount of the fine and he sought the carpet bagger Laflin to ask his protection against future indignities. The name Laflin stank in the nostrils of an outraged people. This free rover of reconstruction was shameless and conscienceless; the marplot of every conservative sentiment conceived for the betterment of the people; a human ogre with but one eye that fixed its stare upon the dollar whether enveloped in a tattered rag or a silken purse. The Colonel saw this man as he was coming out of a low groggery arm in arm with negroes. "Can I speak to you sir?" he replied. [Pg 152]

Laflin turned fiercely upon him with the interrogatory.

"Who are you sir, and what is your business?"

"I am Mr. Seymour, and my business is to ask your protection."

"Ah indeed, you are the rebel who has been giving our people so much trouble." the brute replied.

"I am sure you do not wish to annoy an old man who is trying to live peaceably at home."

"Yes. I do sir, and I will hear nothing more from an infamous villain like you."

"My people white and black have my authority to do as they will; to insult and assault rebels and to make reprisals whenever they think proper."

Thus day by day the uncrowned satraps were collecting material for the coming carnival of vice and crime.

CHAPTER XIII.

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A KNIGHT OF THE WHITE CAMELIA.

At early dawn in the language of the excited servant, "Dere is sich a flustration agwine on outen old misses flower gyarden as I never seed in my born days."

With this exclamation her young mistress was aroused from her slumber by the old negro as she knocked violently at the door of her bed chamber in a state of great perturbation.

"Fur de land sake! Miss Alice if yu wants to see a sho nuff harricane run outen here as peart as yer ken. De stracted niggers big und leetle has finely tuck de plantashun. Oh my sole, de heabens and de yearth has cum togedder!"

Alice rushed to the window and was horrified at the sight before her. She heard a jargon of boisterous defiant noises graduated from inarticulate sounds to higher and varying keys with occasional snatches of a disgusting song in falsetto.

"We de bosses is er gwine to be,

Kase ole Lincum dun set us free,
In de year of Jubilo."

She saw to her disgust and mortification a score or two of negro children romping like cattle through her sainted mother's flower garden. They were plucking the dahlias and roses and other varieties of flowers with ruthless hands, and blowing their petals hither and thither with their vile breath into the air. Such desecration was never dreamed of by Alice and she spoke angrily to the disgusting little vagrants and attempted to drive them from the premises.

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"Yer jes shet yer ole mouf, dats what, ole po white trash. Us yung uns haint eben er studdin you. Is us Maria?"

"Dat us aint," pertly responded Maria. "Yers ole po white trash, dats what my farder and my mudder ses you is, and us cullud ladies haint ergwine to mess wid you nary bit und grane. Us is agwine to pull all dese ole flowers und fling em on de groun, und us aint er skert of nary ole skeer-crow lak yer is nudder."

And with these sundry and divers exclamations, Maria and Susan joined hands and danced a break-down upon the flower beds, while the other negro children big and little clapped hands and sang in shrill piping notes another stanza of the song.

"De bellion it is dun und fell,
Und ole Marsa is gon to—well,
In de year of Jubilo."

Alice attempted again to drive them away with her father's cane, when they aligned themselves in positions of attack, and with brick-bats, fragments of slate and glass and other weapons of improvised battle challenged in angry volleys.

"We's jes dars yu to put yer ole foot outen dat do und we'll mash yer hed wid er brick," and with that one of the missiles went crashing through the imported plate glass of the front door, when the wicked vermin scampered away with the warning cry.

"Dey is er cummin, Dey is er cummin, looker dare, looker dare," and hid around chimney corners and among the brick underpinning.

Clarissa had viewed proceedings from the window of the kitchen with as much interest as though it were a battle of real blood and thunder, and running out of a door around a corner where she saw the kinky head of "Sofy Ann" peeping, she seized her by her hair and soused her over head and ears, in a hogshead filled with rain water that stood near the kitchen "Fo Gord!" she exclaimed, "I don't know whedder to drown yer outen out ur to baptize yer hed fomost. I'm gwine to wash offen yer sins ef I nebber duz no mo," and she kept ducking the little nigger until she was "moest drowned sho nuff." "Dar, now, I'm agwine to turn yer loose dis time, yer imp of Satun; jest let me ketch yer wun mo time in ole missis flower garden lak er hoss wid de blind staggers, und yer fokes will hab to sen fur de crowner. Take yersef clean clear outen my site, yer pizened varmint." The little negro, blubbering, spitting, coughing and bellowing, sneaked away toward the office looking back with savage glances, with eyes that stood out like a lobster's.

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At this point of time the sound of wheels was heard down the roadway and going to the door Alice saw a lady of uncertain age with a very keen aspect, smartly dressed, alighting from a road cart. As she was approaching the door Alice at once recognized her as the lady who accompanied Mr. Jamieson, the Englishman, to the mansion only a short time before and whom that gentleman had addressed as his niece.

"Will you give me the key to the office, Miss?" she asked pertly addressing Alice.

"Now, dearies," she called to the negro children who had gathered suspiciously around her, "Just go to the schoolroom; I will be with you directly."

"Will you give me the key to the office Miss?" she asked this time with much emphasis.

"Indeed, I have no control over the office, it is my father's, madam, and he has his books and papers in it and doesn't wish them disturbed." "My father is not in the house just now. Perhaps you had better wait until he returns."

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"Oh, indeed, miss, I carn't, I am a bit late just now, and I must be prompt, miss, or I shall lose my position. It doesn't matter about your father's books and papers, miss, that is a trifle; I guess I can find a place for the books and papers if you do not choose to remove them yourself. Get a move on you, Miss, if you please, as I remarked, I am a bit late this forenoon."

"I do not wish to give you the key, madam," again replied the girl, "What is your business upon my father's premises unbidden?"

"Ah, indeed, what impudence! Did I ever, I guess you will find out quickly, miss! Will you give me the key miss, or shall I drive home again and report you to Mr. Laflin?" The name Laflin was, figuratively speaking, the burglar's tool that unlocked every door in this populous county. With many wicked thoughts Alice delivered the key to the schoolmistress and with her arms around the necks of two negro girls she trooped off to the office; the door was opened and into the room the mistress and pupils entered.

"Oh, dear, dear, dear! exclaimed the school marm piteously. Whatever shall I do with all this rubbish? Come here, dear gyurls and boys, be a bit lively and remove these disgusting old things. Take them to the lady of the house; I guess she will know what to do with them. We carn't have thes trifles in the school room; no indeed we carn't" and pell-mell, helter skelter, topsy turvey,

books, periodicals and papers were thrust out of doors into boxes, barrels, anything, anywhere as if they were so many burglars "taken in the act."

Poor Alice cried and sobbed; but a new regime was fast crowding out the memory of the olden days, it was the welding of an intermediate link between the waning and the waxing—the disappearing and the appearing civilizations.

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"Now, dear gyurls and boys," said the mistress. "Take your seats. I guess we will begin. Charlie, come here, dear. You are a sweet little boy and I guess your mamma thinks so, too. How old are you, dear?"

"Seben, agwine in leben," answered the little black urchin quickly.

"Who made you, Charlie?"

"Who made me?" repeated the little negro saucily.

"Yes, who made you?"

"Oh I dunno, dat dere boy dere sez ole satan made me und him too."

"Oh, the precious little heathen," exclaimed the school marm, discouragingly, "Did you ever hear of God?" she asked again.

"Yes mum, I dun und seed him wun time, when me und Jake wus a rabbit huntin."

"Oh dear, dear, dear! Where did you see God? And what was he like?" she asked.

"Seed him down de crick," answered the negro smartly.

"What was he like?"

"What wus he lak?" echoed Charlie, digging into his pockets with both hands and standing upon one barefoot. "Lak a jacker lantern cum outen de groun."

"What became of him?" asked the lady.

"What cum of him?" asked Charlie "He flewed clean erway," answered Charlie as smartly as before.

"Oh my dear, dear, child, what is to become of you!" she exclaimed disparagingly. "Susan, come here, my pretty gyurl," called the lady. "Oh! how pretty are your sparkling jetty eyes," she exclaimed as she turned up the little negro's face to kiss her. "Now dear, how old are you?"

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"Me!" asked the girl, "I's furteen gwine in foteen."

"And now tell me who made you?"

"Who made me!" echoed the child. "Oh, I fort yu axed dat ar boy who made him," she answered with a broad smile.

"So I did; now I wish to know who made you?"

"I aint no kin to dat ar boy, kase his daddy aint got but wun eye und my daddy has got too eyes."

"Who made you, child?"

"Ho, I furgot," replied Susan "Gord made me."

"That is correct," answered the teacher, "Now what did God make you out of?"

"Outen?" again replied Susan, "Oh, outen lasses candy. My mudder says kase I's so sweet."

"Dear, dear, dear, shall I give entirely up?" exclaimed the discomfited lady. "Shall I try again? yes, perhaps I shall find a little leaven directly." "Come here Willie; I can see from your bright face that you are a smart little boy. Now tell me did you ever hear of the rebellion?"

"Belliu?" echoed Willie as he thrust his fingers into his mouth and out again with a pop that made the children titter. "Neber heerd ob nuffin else epseps de belliu."

"What is a traitor, dear boy?"

"Tater?" "What sort er tater, sweet tator ur Orish tater?" enquired Willie.

"Perhaps I may teach the little heathen to understand," said the school marm, suggestively. "Willie," she asked "What do you call that gentleman who lives in that fine house over the way?"

"Calls him!" again repeated Willie, "I calls him po white trash; what dos yer call him?"

"Oh dear, dear, dear," screamed the teacher utterly bewildered. One more time she exclaimed "James, come here," and another little negro as black as tar with one eye closed by a great knot upon it came forward. "What is the matter, James, with your face?"

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"Umph!" grunted James, "Specks if yer seed whar I been you'd know 'dout axin. Dat ar boy has been scrougin me lak I wus a trabbal."

"James, if you are a bad boy do you know where you will go when you die?" asked the lady.

"Umph," exclaimed James, "I haint eben a studdin erbout which erway I'm a gwine arter I die. I'm studdin which erway I'm ergwine arter I git outen dat ar do. See dat ar boy a shaking he hed?" "He sez how dat ef I cum by his mudders house agwine to my mudders house he's agwine to scrouge me sum mo, und I'm skeert to go tuther way."

"One other question" (half aside), "James, if you live to be a man what are you going to do for a living?"

"Gwine to do?" said James, "I'm agwine to be a lyer, so I kin set in de kote house und sass de jedge." And thus the farce went on day after day under the shadow of Ingleside.

Clarissa caught a depredating urchin trying to stand upon his head in a half-filled barrel of crushed sugar in the pantry and said to herself "You stays dar twell I get me er plank," and creeping like a cat back again, and taking a fresh purchase on the board, she came down upon "de middle ships of dat dar ar yungun lak er buzzum of struction; pend upon it, Miss Alice, dat ar niggarr is er flying twill yit wid sweetnin nuff to last twell de July flies cum agin."

"This nest of dirt-daubers," as Colonel Seymour fitly described the school, became a nuisance that must be abated by hook or crook. The law was nothing more than a great stalking shadow. "If I could only secure the services of Jake Flowers the regulator, thought the old man, "he and I shall be a law unto ourselves."

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This was the man whom Colonel Seymour desired as his file leader upon the drill ground when the stalking shadow of the law failed to keep time to the music, a law unto himself, whose forum should be "thar or tharabouts" on the Ingleside plantation.

Jake Flowers the regulator had violated a law of the Sabbath by working out some devilish invention, which, he observed with satisfaction, to his wife, would keep the coroner sitting upon corpses until "the craps were smartly out of the grass." The regulator stood in the open door, looking out upon the great sheets of water that were falling from the clouds. As he stood in his muddy boots, with both hands deep down into his pockets, his carrotty hair in great shocks standing out of a crownless hat as if an electric current had just passed through it, he was picturesque in the extreme.

"Sally Ann!" he exclaimed "I am thinking."

"Well, think agen," Sally Ann answered tartly, "That mout fetch back old Nance and the biddies." Sally Ann had been pouting ever since Jake went to jail for the loss of her setting hen and the chicks.

"You haint got no call to go back on me, on the occasion of the old hen and the nigger," said Jake seriously. "Hit wus providence or hit wus the guvement, and twixt the two they has got a mighty prejudy agen a poor man; when hit comes ter shullikin and pilferen they is hard to hender. Weuns haint no more than dandy-lions in the path of the harrycane; leastwise weuns kaint hit back.

"Nor hit haint providence; nor hit haint the guvement, nor hit haint prejudy," Sally Ann replied angrily "Hit are pine blank cussedness. Some folks is onnery Jake, and it is like the swamp-ager, hit is powerful raging when the crap is knee-deep in the grass. I shouldn't wonder nary bit and grain if Andy's crap aint in the yallers same as ourn." This was said very provokingly, and Jake felt the sting of the reproof.

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"Jeminy-cracky!" he exclaimed in a passion, "Harkee Sally, hit is tit fur tat; be ye a pinin fur another fellow?"

"Why I guess maybe—I reckon—I mout assist yu'uns, leastwise I haint a going to stand in yu'unsway." The regulator looked down as by accident into the cradle: there was the sleeping babe, the pledge of a love that had been hedged in all these days by privations, and his heart went out toward his wife with the old time affection.

"Naw Sally Ann" he exclaimed with a husky voice, "Weuns kaint part when there is no one to come betwixt us; weuns kaint say good-bye twell yuuns is on yon side of the river."

The roses had faded out of the cheek of his wife, but there was the old-fashioned sparkle in her eye; there was the old time love in her heart, crossed sometimes by the perverse nature of her lord and master.

"Haint you made your will Jake?" asked Sally-Ann half seriously.

"Naw is you skeert honey?"

"Andy has done and made hissen and fetched it over here to read last Sunday when you wus gone to the mash and hit read like scriptur."

Jake had been envious of Andy Vose for some time. When the need of the country for men good and true had been most urgent, Vose had deserted to the ranks of the enemy, and now he counted his flocks and herds by the score. Jake was also jealous of the attentions the scalawag was from time to time showing his young wife; these visits occurred most frequently in the absence of the regulator, and these intrusions as he felt they were, gave him alarm. After reflection, Jake concealing his suspicions remarked with apparent unconcern, "Read like scriptur, I'll be dorg gone!" "I haint got no call to make a will like Andy, honey. De nigger officer levelled on old Nance and the biddies, and the live stock has run plum out epsepting the babe and it is yourn any way honey."

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This man was a terror to the freedmen. They had a tradition among themselves that the very last seen of the regulator until after the war was over was his ascension in a cloud of fire and smoke into "de elements" holding fast to a dead negro. Jake said that this was "pintedly" true, but that he came down again as his captain was going up who told him when he had fairly lit to "charge bagonets." In the language of the plains this Jake Flowers was an "eye opener." His personal attractions he said had been spoilt by the blamed war. I am not sure that the name of Jake Flowers appears upon the bloody roster of battles lost and won; but for his doings at the Crater fight, so Jake has observed, historians would have reversed the incidents of that bloody day.

He claimed always to be the "Survival of the Fittest" and with the blind faith of the Moslem he

believed that there was a "Providence that shapes our ends, rough hew them as we may."

His favorite posture whenever animated was as follows; he would sit with his right leg crossed over his left, gently swaying his foot, with his bearded chin resting reposefully in the palm of his hand, with the fore and middle finger forming the letter V and pressed to his lips; through which he would now and then expectorate; the man was also spavined in the right knee joint that caused him to walk like a sailor on his "sea legs." Like other men he had his delusions and whether good or evil, they were the rule of action of his life. Jake was the reinforcement vehemently demanded in this conjuncture. "With the regulator armed and equipped, the enemy will flee without taking order as to its line of march," thought the old man.

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"I am utterly bewildered; can you help me Mr. Flowers to drive these vermin from my home?" he asked the regulator.

"Wall, now," drawled the regulator, "I reckon I mout ef I am not pestered ur nuthing; which eend do yer expect me to take holt of?"

Jake gave an extra motion to his spavined leg and looked up quizzically into the rigid face of the old man.

"Clean them out sir, root and branch, if you will, sir!" exclaimed the Colonel.

"Prezactly so," ejaculated the regulator, "Prezactly so," he reiterated. "Does yer mean it pine blank, mister?" he again asked.

"Yes, yes, emphatically I do," responded Colonel Seymour.

"Drat my buttons if the thing haint done and did!" the regulator answered with emphasis and taking his leave observed, "I'll see you later, mister."

"If I kin regulate this kentry as it had orter to be did, there wont be a biggerty nigger twixt here and Filadelfy," and he passed into a little copse of woods that skirted his own humble domain.

The autumn days had come—Nature was preparing a more elaborate toilet in her great boudoir—replenishing her exhausted stock of aromatics to besprinkle the fields and forests, the glades and the hills; painting the leaves with iridescent tints and even the sky with a mellow, refreshing beauty; and in this excess of toil. Alice saw the handiwork of Him who holds in the palm of His hand this great sphere.

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She looked upward to the twinkling stars and it seemed to her as if God had relumed the heavens with a brightly diffused glow of love. God the Creator and man the creature—the Sovereign and the rebel, brought into apposition with each other through the supernal harmonies of His universal realm.

But the child was sad this beautiful October night. The birds were nodding quietly in the old rookery; there was no music in the air, for the winds under a coverlid of emerald and amber and carmine had gone fast to sleep in the trees, and the tintinnabulation of the little bells in the meadows had ceased altogether.

"If I could whisper to the stars what I would like to have them know of my unhappy life they would sympathize and perhaps they would whisper back.

"Poor forlorn child! How we pity you!"

"Tomorrow," she said reflectively, "I shall be twenty-four years of age, and oh, how all encompassing has been the evil. Every picture that glides athwart my heart is broken: every idol that I have fondly loved is nothing more than an effigy. Delusions follow delusions; what is life but a burden? If we look forward there are demons: if we look backward there are coffins."

The poor wearied girl, sad and without hope, fell asleep in her mother's chair as softly as if the angels were rocking the dear old chair and singing the old nursery lullabies; they must have kissed her heavy eyelids down; so profound, so tranquil was her slumber.

When she awoke the little birds were singing as cheerily all around her in the magnolias and oaks as if their little tongues were touched with the spirit of her happy dreams.

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The cloud that overcast her face was gone and she went into the kitchen where Clarissa was absorbed in her duties.

Clarissa exclaimed as she entered the kitchen, "Miss Alice, whar in de name ob commun sense has yer been all dis time? Here I's been a cummun and ergwine, a ransackin dis house high and low fur yer. Didn't yer heer me callin yer, missis? I spishuned yar wus in ole marsers room fast asleep."

Alice was obliged to confess, a little shamefacedly, that she had fallen asleep in the little alcove in the verandah and had slept so soundly that she heard no noises until awakened by the twittering of the birds in the over-arching bower.

"Sakes alive, missis," exclaimed Clarissa "sum ob dese nites a grate big snake is ergwine to drap rate down into yer lap und sting yer moest to def. How dos yer feel missis arter dis toxication?" the negress asked solicitously.

"Quite well, I thank you, Clarissa, my sleep was ever so refreshing," replied Alice smilingly.

"What does yer fink dem pizened yung warmints dud and dun yestiddy? Yu knowed ole Bob Sal, dat ar ole fafeful mousin cat of ourn? Whar yer fink I foun dat po ole cat, missis?"

"I am sure I do not know, Clarissa, I hope the negroes have not hurt him," answered Alice.

"Deed they has too! Drowned to def in de hogshead, wid a brick tied erround him. Dey is de outdaciousest yunguns I ebber seed in my born days. Dere haint no telling what dey has dun und gon und dun to dis heer plantashun, dat dey aint!"

"I am sorry," exclaimed Alice, "Is the cat quite dead, Clarissa?" she asked.

"Ded!" exclaimed Clarissa, "Sakes alive, ef yer wus to see him yer wud fink dat he had been ded all his life, dat yer wud. Has yer seen ole Jube?" Clarissa continued. [Pg 166]

"Yes, he is in the verandah," Alice replied.

"Ugh, Ugh! Glad ob dat. Fust fing Jube knows he'll be hobblin er round on two legs ef he aint kilt rite ded. De outdacious niggers! I wushes dey wus run outen de lan."

Clarissa heard ole Jube bark, and looking out of the kitchen window she saw the regulator shuffling along in his slip-shod way with an old haversack slung over his shoulder coming toward the front verandah and observed with some perturbation.

"Miss Alice, dos yer know de truf. I'm pintedly skeered ob dat speckled face white man. He luks pine blank lak de kommisary ob de debbill hissef. He aint arter no good on dis heer plantashun. De fust fing enybody knows dere is ergwine to be de biggest flustrashun on dis lan yer ever heerd in yer born days und nobody is agwine to know de heds nur tails ov it. Look at dat ar wun eye of his'n farely blazin lak a log-heep in de new ground in de nite time," and Clarissa shuddered as if the clutch of the "kommisary" was already upon her.

"I have heard very strange stories about the man" said Alice very solemnly, as if humoring the ignorant old woman's apprehensions.

"Deed I has too," she replied, "Und if dey is kerrect dat ar creetur haint no human no how," and Clarissa shuddered again even more violently; "Hit natally makes my flesh creep lak santipedes," she exclaimed with fear. "Haint yu dun und heerd how dat Koo-kluck mommucked up brudder Joshaway, Miss Alice?" asked Clarissa. "'Grate King!' How in de name of de hebbens dat ole nigger ever retched dry lan eny mo wid all dat skeer 'pon him, I haint never skivered. He lowed how dat hit wur provedense, but den twixt me and yu Miss Alice und not to go no fudder, Joshaway is allus ergwine wun way und provedense de tuther. Yander he cums now lak wun of dem ole cranksided rare hosses, und I'm ergwine to fetch him sum wittles rite fo yo eyes und den yu mout ax him fur yosesef." [Pg 167]

Joshua came up quite feebly, swathing his black face with his red handkerchief and bowed humbly to his former mistress.

"Now yu mout ax him, Miss Alice, arter he wours up dat last moufful, and I lay hit will fetch de creeps ober yu same as de mash ager."

The old negro seemed very grateful for the appetizing food and in a heartfelt way thanked Alice over and over again.

"Mout I sing er Mishinary hime, yung missis?" he asked deferentially after he had eaten the last morsel.

"Yes, indeed," replied Alice "I will be delighted to hear you." And he sang very plaintively:

"Oh Kanyun, sweet Kanyun when shall I see,
When shall I git dere?"

After he had concluded the song the young lady asked sympathetically,

"I am told that you had quite an unhappy experience at the creek a few nights ago Uncle Joshua? Can you tell me about it?" Joshua groaned and then answered with a display of feeling.

"Twas wusser dan er sperience, yung missis," as he wiped the perspiration from his face, "twas een wusser dan er yuthshake. Grate Jarryko! 'twas een mo wusser dan de war."

"Ugh! Ugh! I tole yu so!" ejaculated Clarissa.

"But den," continued the old negro "Hit mouter been een wusser ef provedense hadn't pinte dese heer foots to de hilands." [Pg 168]

"Grate King!" again exclaimed Clarissa; "How cum yu flounderin erbout in dat dere cole warter dat time of nite, brudder Joshaway?"

"How come I dare?" he replied. "Haint yu heerd ob dem evul sperrets in de Scriptur dat de sliding elder calls de leepers? Well den, dat's how cum I dare. How cum de koo kluck dare? How cum de drowned nigger dare? Yu sees, missis, dis heer bellyun haint made mishunarys und possells outen evybody. Dare's de Mefferdises und de harryticks und de Hardsides, und when dey's all flung togedder in a loblolly, wid dare grace und dare fafe und dare speriences, dat's de werry bestest time dese leepers has fur dare Crismus, er probin disserway und datterway, kase dem dare leepers dey spishuns dat whay dare is sich a mixtry ob de lams ob de flock dare's bleeged ter be now und den er harrytick; dey sees sum ob de lams er runnin wid grace und tuther wuns er graplin onter provedense, und den ergin tuther wuns er seein wishuns in de day time, und dem leepers mout ez soon git tangled up wid er Mishunary ez er harrytick er Hardside; und dat's how I cum ter git kotched. Don't you see missis?"

"Were you thrown into the water by some evil-designing person, Uncle Joshua?" asked Alice with a natural inquisitiveness.

Joshua groaned again; "Ugh-h-h-h!" he shuddered.

"Haint yu ergwine ter tell her de fust und last ob it' Joshaway?" asked Clarissa, impatiently.

"Ef I hed one leetle moufful o' backer hit mout tak de ambishun outen de tale, und den I mout tell hit mo strater. Haint yu got narry crumb missis, dat I mout fling ergin dis ole akefied snag? Dare now; dis backer is sho good! Now den, Sis Clarsy, ef yu ceeses yo mirashuns I'm ergwine ter tell young missis how it all cum erbout frum de werry fust mancement ter de latter eend." [Pg 169]

"Grate Jarryko! hit puts dese here fousan-leg santypedes er rastlin under my westcote when I draps back to dat ar casuality. Ugh-h-h-h!" he shuddered again. "Now den, de tale goes disserway: Dare cum erlong by my house in de shank of de nite dis yer furriger. I calls him a furriger, but I spishuns his rite name is Koo-kluck (I'm monstrous skeert o' dat white man ennyhow)—"

"Ugh-h-h-h!" shuddered Clarissa.

"Und he ups und sez, sez he, 'Joshaway, a voice is ergwine ter cum arter erwhile to yo house, und don't yu go ergin it, und den I'd no whey de munny is.' Dem wuz de werry wurds he spoke, missis, bress yo life. Und den I ups und sez, sez I, How's I ergwine ter tell dat voice frum de tuther wuns? Kase dare is de hoppergrasses und de cattle beastes er woicin simultaneous all de time eroun my house; und den he sez, sez he, 'Hits er cummin frum de hellyments.' Jes so. Well den, sho nuff de voice did cum dat werry nite, pine plank jess lak he sed fur de wurrel, und hit wur er mity solumkolly voice, same ez de whinkering ob Mars Jon's wun-eyed mule down in de mash in de snow wen de fodder is all gin out. Hit called 'Joshaway! Joshaway!' jess lak dat, und Hanner she heerd it, (peers lak she's allus studdin erbout dem rone hosses und de munny, when her mind ain't er runnin on de sliden elder und de love feast down at Filadelfy meetin house), und she ups und sez, sez she, 'Joshaway, is yu gwine? Yu mout git de munny und den ergin yu moutn't.' But I seed dat her mouts wuz mo stronger dan her moutn'ts, und I drug de ole happysack outen de bofat, und den I sez, sez I, yes, I'm ergwine. Und bimeby I gits ter de crick. Well, de moon hit wur rite over yander under de seben storrs und peered lake hit wur er larfin und er larfin ter itself wid er mouf dat retched frum yur to yur und wun eye shot rite tite." [Pg 170]

"Dare wuz de line tide ter de willer tree sho nuff, jess lak hit sed, und hit peered lak hit were er tusselin wid a mity ambishun wid de drownded happysack, er shassain disserway und den ergin datterway, lak yu seed wun o' dese cow-eetch wines fo now er raslin in a mill race; und I sez to myself, sez I, Joshaway, yu's got a sho nuff bite dis time, und hit haint er catfish nudder, nur hit aint er allynipper."

"Oh, my hebbens!" again vociferated Clarissa.

"Und den I drug und drug und drug, und bimeby I seed dat fish's two eyes. Ugh-h-h-h! Und den I drapped back into de crick drownded to def. Ugh-h-h-h!"

"Grate King," shouted Clarissa. "Wuz yu sho nuff drownded to def, brudder Joshaway?"

"Und den when I seed dat niggers too eyes of hissens und—ugh-h-h-h!"

"Hung to de hook!" shrieked Clarissa interrogatively.

"To be sho, to be sho," replied Joshua with irritation; "Duz yu spishun hit wur hung to de gallus? Und ez I drapped missis, ez I drapped," he continued, "I flung out dese too hands jess so missis, und kotched holt of er nudder nigger drownded to def by er sarcumstance dat haint neber been skivvered."

"Und den yer cum too ergin?" queried Clarissa shaking with excitement.

"Naw chile," Joshua answered with gravity, "I haint neber cum too no mo, dat I haint."

Jake had another delusion—that to do your work without makin mistakes "yer must obsarve the consequences."

The old Colonel after he had finished his toilet walked out into the verandah where he observed Jake ambling toward the house and singing in a monotone an old army doggerel of questionable merit, [Pg 171]

"He who fights and runs away,
Will live to fight another day,
But he who is in battle slain:
Will never live to fight again."

The regulator walked up the stone steps into the verandah with a leer in his countenance, satan-like in its expression.

Old Jube slunk away with a sidelong glance at the regulator as if he quite agreed with Clarissa that "He wus not a humans, nohow," and coiled himself up for the nap that had been needlessly interrupted at the other end of the verandah.

"Now then sir, how do you propose to proceed in this business?"

"I aint er going to proceed, the percession cums at the latter eend. Now yer just hold yer breath, mister, twill I fix my curlecoles, and then you can crack your whip and the percession will start to the cemetery with music by the band."

The regulator filled a doubled barrel army canteen full of gunpowder, and attached to it a fuse that would burn half an hour before exploding. After doing this he said to the Colonel,

"When yer sees the Yankee school-marm er coming just call off the cussed niggers, twill I can

plant hit."

Colonel Seymour drew from his pocket a dozen or more pennies as he caught sight of the school marm riding down the road in her dogcart.

"Here, ye varmint!" he cried, and he threw one piece of money at the time in the grass and the negroes scrambled for it like a flock of geese over scattered grains of corn.

Simultaneously with the stroke of the old-fashioned clock, came an explosion that recalled the Crater with all its horrors to the regulator. [Pg 172]

Clarissa ran out of the kitchen screaming, "Murder! Fire! the Yankees is er comin. Great king, mars Jon, de ruf and de chimney on de offis is dun blowed clean erway. In de name of Gord, what wus dat, ole marsa? Grate Jerusalem! which er way did dat harrykin cum from? De road is fairly er workin wid yung niggers widdout arms or legs ergwine er bellerin every which erway. Fo Gord, de last time I seed dat er Yankee wumun she wus er flying fru de medder lak er white herrun!"

After the smoke of battle had cleared the regulator sneaked up to the Colonel with a broad grin upon his face with the enquiry, "Did I do that er job kerrect, mister?"



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**I'm ergwine back lak dat prodigle man dat et up
dem corn cobs way out yander to de tuther eend
o' de yearth.**

CHAPTER XIV.

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THE OATH OF FEALTY.

Since the death of Mrs. Seymour the negroes had been busily plying their offensive vocation filling to the very brim the vat of vicious fermentation. The air at night was laden with ribaldry and the sounds of guns. The old master's labors were greatly multiplied too, since the negroes were all the while in some exasperating way or other celebrating the "Emancipation Proclamation," the dawn of freedom. Their presence had become a serious menace, an ever recurring cause of alarm. His resources, too, were almost gone—the cattle had been slaughtered in the range, the horses appropriated and returned when convenient, and he dared not ask why this spoliation of his property.

Ned would occasionally announce his arrival upon the plantation by furious blasts from a great cracked horn. He would be dressed from head to foot in a blue uniform with bright brass buttons and yellow cords upon the revers and sleeves of his jacket, and a coarse slouched hat with crossed swords in front, a huge yellow cord with tassels around the crown, and it surmounted by a peacock's feather. The old master saw with disgust the foolish negro from the verandah,

marching up and down the carriage way with his bright musket, going through the manual of arms, "Sport Harms! Horder arms! Charge bagonets!" Aleck and Ephraim and Henry were dressed in the same fashion and going through the same evolutions on another part of the plantation. Now and then a discharge from the guns accompanied by demoniacal yells would frighten poor Alice almost to death. In the dead hours of night these brutal negroes to terrify her and her father would drill in the front yard of Ingleside with vulgar and boisterous commands, and before breaking ranks they would discharge their muskets with horrifying screams—"Jess immitatin de brav sojer boys at Fort Piller," they said. Ingleside was virtually a camp of military instruction!

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"Clarissa," Alice exclaimed, "we must go away from here. We will be murdered if we do not get away from these horrid negroes, I shall die with fright if I remain here any longer. They can come at any hour of the day or night and kill us. Father is old and feeble and cannot protect me, and you know, Clarissa, I cannot protect him. Please go to him and tell him we must get away this very day."

"Bress yo deer life, Miss Alice, ef yu seed how dis po ole heart was a flip flappin, fust peert und den slow, lak a yaller hammer beatin ergen er dedded gum, fust on wun side und den on de tuther, yu'd say ter yosef, 'po Clarsy!' Fo de Lawd, I'm skeert mo wusser dan yu is, und ef dis heer flustrashun is ergwine on much fudder de Lawd is gwine ter rane down fire und brimstone on dese niggers lak he dun on dem Mallyskites, und I specks er grate big hunk is ergwine to hit Ned und Joshaway too, rite slam twixt de eyeballs. Dem dare niggers, jamby granddaddies of Methuserlum, lookin lak hants in all dem fethers and brass buttons, er heppin all ober de taters und de korn und de cotton, und bress de Lawd, ef I must tell de truf, dey is as perished up ez a mash hen er settin on turkle eggs. Yu needn't larf lak dat, Miss Alice; de Lawd is gwine ter show dese niggers whos er totin de biggest strane, und when he sez de wurd, dey's ergwine ter be dedder dan last yur's gode wines, und—"

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"Perhaps, Clarissa," interrupted Alice, "these troublous times are but mercies in disguise?"

"Oh, my King!" ejaculated Clarissa in alarm, "Murder's gwine ter rise, yu sez? Oh, my hebbens! Is yu aiming fur dem kallamities tu cum immegiate, missis?"

Alice laughed away the old negress' fears and replied in explanation:

"I said they were mercies—mercies in disguise."

"Dat is mo better, Miss Alice," observed Clarissa, slightly mollified. "Kase I knoed ef dat tuther fing wuz ergwine ter hap'n, me und yu und ole marser mout git kilt fo enybody but de niggers spishuned er resurreckshun. Ole Clarsy's skin is powerful black missis, und dis kinky hed is pided lak dat ole wether's in de medder, but I'm ergwine ter stan by yu und ole marser twell de eend, und when Ole Marser up yander sez de word, I'm ergwine ter ax yu ter berry Clarsy at ole missis' feet; und den ef she heers de trumpet fust she'll call Clarsy, und ef I heers it fust I'm ergwine ter call her, und den me und her will jine hans und fly erway ter glory."

The pathos of this affectionate speech brought tears to the eyes of her young mistress, and the thought came out of her great sympathetic nature:

"Reconstruction so far has been a great smelting furnace—it has separated the pure from the impure, and with its refining heat has grappled with hooks of steel the hearts of mistress and servant. Would that I could dictate a fitting eulogium for the faithful negroes; for those who are groping still amid the shadows of an epoch that seems obedient to no law but of caprice and change."

If I get to Heaven, Clarissa will be at the portal with some such expression upon her tongue as this: "Bress yer hart, missis, I've been waitin right here fur yer ever since I heard yer wus er cummin. Come wid me, young missis, und let me show yer dis beautifullest city in de hole wurrel."

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"Sixty days within which to prove your loyalty!" "Sixty days" were coming upon tireless pinions. Are the mills of the gods still grinding? Is there yet water in the flume to run the heavy wheel? Is there still grist to feed the stones?

"To prove your loyalty" ran the judgment. What badinage to toss into the face of a man who had braved death upon a hundred battle-fields and all for "loyalty!" He had proved it by great scarifications that would have appalled every carpet-bagger in the South. Loyalty is the counterpart of honor—the collaborator with duty, and the old soldier for sixty five years had maintained and performed his part in his particular sphere of life; yea out of the crucible of hell he had rescued his loyalty—his character as pure as the untrodden snow.

Another sunrise shoots its gleams into the cribbed heart of Old Ingleside, and Clarissa has not returned to prepare breakfast; what can be the matter? "Perhaps she is unwell. I am sure she cannot be faithless," argued Alice with herself. "I will go and see." As she entered the door of the cabin she saw Ned rolling and tossing upon the bed in wild delirium and she asked Clarissa what was the matter with her husband.

"Don't know, Miss Alice," replied Clarissa, "epseps he is tuck wurser wid wun ob dem bad spells agin; dey is cummin und agwine ebery now and den, und he gits rite foolish und komikell."

Alice drew her chair closely to the bedside and felt of the old negro's head and it was very hot; she felt his pulse and it was beating like a triphammer. He was groaning, too, as if in great pain, crying out in delirium occasionally "Charge bagonet! Sport harms! hep! hep! hep!" as if drilling and going through the manual of the soldier. Alice saw that something must be done and very

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quickly, and she said to Clarissa.

"I will run for the doctor."

"Lor, missis, yer a gwine a trapesing away over yander fur de doctur by your lone lorn sef? I specks hits er mile ur too ef its ary step."

Within an hour the physician was at the bedside of the sick negro, diagnosing the case and prescribing medicine.

"He is not in immediate danger," observed the physician to Alice, "But he must be watched."

"I want to put him under your care and whatever your charge may be I will pay it."

"Thank you, miss," replied the physician with a smile. "I will see that he does not suffer for the want of medical treatment. By the way, how is your father's health now, Miss Alice?" he asked.

"I think I can see that he is failing, sir," the girl replied sadly.

"I presume he, like every body else, is greatly annoyed by the freedmen."

"Yes, a few of them have given us trouble," she replied.

"Perhaps I shall see you again to-morrow. You will find that the negro will rest very well after his fever abates a little," and the doctor, shaking Alice's hand cordially, bade her good morning.

"Now Clarissa," Alice said after the doctor had gone, "You run over home and prepare breakfast for father, and I will watch by Uncle Ned until you get back."

"Miss Alice," exclaimed Clarissa "sposin dat kommykle nigger gits outen bed what is yer agwine to do den?"

The old negro's expression was so ludicrous that Alice was obliged to laugh as she observed, "I will take care of him; never mind. If he gets out of the bed I will get him back again."

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"Und him a plum stracted idjeot?" ejaculated Clarissa as she passed out of the door.

Alice pursuing the directions of the physician, brought from the spring near by a bucket of very cold water and sat down again at the bedside and very gently, soothingly, bathed the old negro's face and brow. The fever was abating, still the deft fingers dripping with the water pressed the fevered face. Once Ned partially aroused exclaimed deliriously,

"I'se a woting ebery time fur de boss, who's yer a woting fur, Joshaway?"

After quite awhile Ned awoke, at first a little abstracted and asked.

"Is dat yer, Clarsy, wid dem dar shiny eyes?" and again dropped into a restful slumber.

This time there were no exacerbations, no delirium, but he slept as tranquilly as a little child. The fever had passed away. He awoke and saw the dear child whom he had so brutally wronged sitting like a guardian angel by the bed; her white hands cool and refreshing still pressing his forehead, and the old negro covered his wrinkled face with his skinny hands and wept. Wept from a sense of shame, remorse. He remembered that when her need was sorest he had acted the brute—turned his back upon this poor child who with a full knowledge of his manifold acts of cruelty and injustice was nursing him back to life.

"Is dat yer, Miss Alice?" he asked through his blinding tears. "Gord bress yer dear sweet life, young misses, I fort yer wus ur angel. I didn't fink dat my young misses dat I left ober yander in de grate house by her lone sef, to fend fur hersef und de ole marsa, wud do dis urren ob mussy fur a po' outcast nigger lak ole Ned." And the old negro began to cry afresh.

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"Don't cry, Uncle Ned, the good Lord commands us to visit the sick and I am trying to do my duty toward Him and toward you. You are so much better now; don't worry and cry over me. The Lord is chastening us, but it is all for His glory, Uncle Ned."

"When I woke fust time, missis, I didn't know whar I wus," he continued, wiping his eyes, "und den I drapped back to sleep agin und it peared lak de butifullest sperits huvered all erround de bed, and wun ob dem mo butifuller dan tother wuns crep rite easy lak und put her hand on my forhed und I heerd tother wuns call her 'Alice,' und I spishuned it mouter been yer, I knowed it wus yer. Does yer know why dis ole nigger cried jess now, missis?" "Taint my fault dat I turned agin yer und ole marsa—de Lord in Hebben knows it aint. Ef I had minded Clarsy, yer und ole marsa wudn't faulted me no how. I wudn't hurt a har on yer hed for a wurrell ful of freedom—dat I wudn't. De dratted niggers tole me how dat I mout be biggety und play boss-lak, und den I wud git to be leftenant und den I mout be cappen ob de miluntary cump'ny, und wear grate big gold upperlips lak de boss, und ef I wus agwine to die dis minit I clares on my solemnolly ofe dat dem dare biggity white fokses in de town is de meanest passel ob humans in de yurth. Dey is worsern jack-lanterns 'tacin' de culled fokses furder und furder into misery. Missis, ef yer und ole marser will oberlook dese here transgrashuns I'll nebber, nebber gin yer no mo sorrer, dat I won't."

"Uncle Ned," replied Alice with her beautiful eyes radiant through tears, "from the bottom of my heart I forgive you if you have ever given offense to my father or to me. I think I can see that great good is to come out of it all. Don't you know how the children of Israel suffered in Egypt, and in their journeyings through the desert land, when the dry parched lands yielded no corn and the Lord fed his people and led them safely into Canaan?"

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"Yes, marm, dat I duz, und He is ergwine ter leed us outen dese lowgrounds, too, missis, und ef He doan do dat I knows whut He is ergwine ter do—He is ergwine ter dribe dese Filistin men outen dis kentry wid a storm ob yaller jackets lak He drib Farro outen de lan ob de Mallyskites."

Clarissa having performed her work in the great house came into the cabin at this moment and was greatly surprised to find Ned in an animated conversation with her mistress: Ned observing as her footfall arrested his attention:

"Dar now, Clarsy, yer is dun und gone und fotched us down agin."

"Fotched yer whar, Ned," exclaimed Clarissa in wonderment.

"Frum de perly gates, dat's whar," replied Ned. "Me und Miss Alice has jes bin ergwine erbout all ober de New Jerusalem, und yu fotched us rite back to de yurth agen—dat's er sin ter yer, Clarsy."

"Fo de Lawd, is yer er plum stracted idjet? What is yer er doin in de New Jerusalem? Is yer dun und washed erway yer sins? I don't see no whings in dis heer house—how did yer git up dar Ned."

Alice laughed immoderately, and even Ned obliged himself to confess "dat he was in de sperret in de New Jerusalem."

"Miss Alice," asked Ned quite earnestly, "has yer got de good book wid yer?"

"Yes, Ned, I have my mother's bible with me; wherever I go it is my companion always. Shall I read a passage to you?" answered Alice.

"Ef yer plese, mum. I aims ter cut ernudder notch in my ole walkin stick, und when I looks at dat I'm ergwine ter drap rite down und pray." [Pg 182]

Alice opened the little thumb-worn book at the second chapter of John and began to read:

"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ the Righteous."

"Don't you see, Uncle Ned," Alice said as she looked up into the old negro's black face, "how good the Lord is to us? He puts it into the mouth of His apostle to call us little children, and he tells us that the Saviour is pleading for us poor sinners. 'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him.' When we are in distress or trouble," continued Alice, "we must turn away from the beggarly elements of the world and cast our cares upon Him, for He careth for us."

"Whot sort er elements did yer say, missis?" asked Ned attentively.

"Beggarly elements," replied Alice. "There is nothing that satisfieth in this life, uncle Ned; and all the world can give us in comforts and riches are as husks—we must look to Jesus and to Him only for consolation—for salvation."

"Dat is de Gospel truf," exclaimed Clarissa, with emotion.

"Miss Alice, will yer fault me fur axin yer wun mo questun? Is dere eny defference in hebben twixt er cullud pussun und a white pussun?"

"No indeed," replied Alice; "we are His children if we are faithful—the work of His hands."

"Dat questiun, missis, has oversized me all dese days, und I was afeered dat we was de gotes dat de Lawd drib ober on tother side, erway frum de lams, kase, missis, when I gits dar I wants ter live rite close ter ole marsers und young missis' 'great house,' whar I kin see yer und tend yer boff." [Pg 183]

"You will not need to do us that service, Uncle Ned. You will have a mansion of your own; there will be no great houses there. The good Lord will know no difference between you and me, only as you or I shall excel here in doing His holy will. Don't you want to serve Him, old negro, so you shall have a crown of rejoicing by and by?"

"Dat I does, young missis. My ole bones is mity shackly, und it aint ergwine ter be long afore I goes outen dis cabin fer de las time; und ef its His will ter call me fust, I'm agwine ter pick out de butifulest great house in de city, und stay rite dere lak er watch-dorg twell yer und ole marsers cums und taks perseshun. When I gits outen dis bed, missis, I'm gwine back home—gwine back to ole Mars Jon, lak dat prodigle man dat woured up dem korn cobs way out yander."

Alice, the true hearted Christian, could not withhold her tears as the old negro so eloquently, yet so ignorantly, revealed his love and loyalty. She arose from her chair to bid him good bye:

"One word mo, missis, und den I'm dun. I wants jes one little drap o' prayer, pleas'm."

Alice knelt reverently at the bed and tenderly prayed that the old negro might be accepted as a child of the King—a royal son of a Royal Father, whose kingdom was above all thrones and principalities, and from everlasting to everlasting.

"Und now, Clarsy," said old Ned, "yer stan rite dere, und Miss Alice yer stan whar yer is, und hear me swar dis ofe: 'I, Ned Semo, does swar und kiss dis little bible ob ole missusses' who's dun und gon to hebben, dat nebber mo' will I lif my mouf nur my han nur my hart in mischuf agen ole marsers und young Miss Alice, so help me Gawd!"

Let us believe that the recording angel in the heavenly court has engrossed this oath in a never-fading holograph in his journal, and that whenever the sacred tome is read as witnessing the good there is in the creature, the word "approve" shall appear upon the margin. [Pg 184]

THE BLACK DIPLOMAT.

Alice was persevering in those little attentions to the sick negro that were operating in a salutary way upon his heart. What power, however rebellious or unfriendly, could withstand the charm of that fragrant life?—a life so redundant in acts of charity and benevolence, that carried its dispensations into the cabins of the poor freedmen to whom the authorities under reconstruction made so many promises—promises to the ear to be broken to the hope.

The old negro's sympathies now and then for his master and young mistress would die down into ashes, and then again, when he looked toward Ingleside and thought of its defenceless inmates, his feelings would be grateful and kind.

In all the years that were gone, his old master and mistress had been so kind to him, in sickness and health; they had clothed and fed him; without their assistance he would have been so helpless. Indeed, Ned had never felt the rigors or oppression of slavery in this household or upon this plantation. Old master's government was patriarchal, and emancipation had come so inopportunistly; somehow it never appealed to the affections, or the love of the old negroes, but it came upon them as other great crises have come—with arguments and reinforcements that shattered every principle of manhood and bestialized their natures. It came with proclamations against the universally denounced crime of slavery, and with an energetically centralized power; and the old negroes, unable to reason intelligently from premises so false and enticing, forgot their loyalty to their friends and looked to the carpet-bagger for a new revelation.

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The lovely girl was always happy when ministering to the sick, even in the huts of destitution and squalor. She was happy when she pressed Uncle Ned's wrinkled brow and felt that the consuming fever had been driven out of his system by medication and faithful nursing.

When her own heart was burdened by sorrow, she sang out of its fullness and pathos to the negro, and the tears glided out of his eyes and ran down into the deep-cut furrows of his black face.

The old negro discovered in the experience of the few eventful years that there was nothing hopeful or helpful in the pledges or proclamations of the reconstructionists. The very old negroes were not counted in the aggregation of their numerical power, or in the sum total of the freedmen. "Old Glory" never welcomed them with a dip of its proud crest as they passed in and out of the town in tatters and rags. It never bade them with its caress to pause within its grateful shadow in the dog days when they were over wearied with marching and counter-marching.

The great Commissariat persistently withheld its bounty when there was no election—no votes to be polled for Laflin and his pampered minions. These dilapidated creatures were post-prandial guests in the banqueting halls of the bosses; hounds rather to gnaw the bones that were flung as offal upon the refuse heaps. They were not the artisans who were toiling upon the superstructure of the new south; not wanted in cabals, intrigues, conventions; not the journeymen who were revamping the political edifice; not mechanics who were refurbishing the weapons of plunder; not trained to the harness as beasts of burden in dragging the car of reconstruction with its whetted knives over the prostrated country. Hence it was that gaunt poverty with its steel tined fork was constantly prodding the old negroes who had turned their backs upon their masters and whose new masters were dull of hearing, hence it was that so many who had hungered for the flesh pots were going back to the leaks and garlic; hence it was that hunger had given such acuteness to old Ned's sense of smell, that Alice was greeted with an exclamation brimming over with gratitude.

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"I'm so skeert, young missis, dat I haint ergwine to git outen dis house in a hole munt."

The exclamation provoked a smile from the sweet girl who came laden with good things for Ned and she replied apologetically,

"I am sorry, uncle Ned, that I couldn't know just what you wanted."

The sick negro shook his head, for his mouth was too full for verbal explanations, and then bowed his thanks, observing after a moment.

"Clarsy, when I heerd yung missis at de do I node it was Santy Clors, sho nuff."

"Bress you hart, missis, enny nigger dat wudn't fite twell def fur yu und ole marser had ort to be hung by de nek twell hes ded."

Ned would have extemporized upon the subject perhaps at greater length; but for the interruption of a dilapidated negro, dressed in a dingy threadbare blue uniform; whose white head was covered by a decayed beaver, from which a dirty red handkerchief hung over his left eye.

The new comer was Joshua; perhaps the first and most patriotic recruit in the army of the freedmen; among the first to cut asunder the ligature of slavery.

As the huge Commissariat advertised the fatness of reconstruction, so Joshua advertised the leanness thereof.

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The black diplomat in a tentative way was preparing the colored people for an event of momentous consequence. His mission to Ned's cabin was for this purpose.

"Mornin to yu boff," came the crusty greeting.

"Is dat yu, brudder Joshaway?" Clarissa enquired.

"Yes, dis is me."

"Cum in, den," said Clarissa, and Joshua, reeling from old age tottered in and took a seat with a groan.

"Is dat you, Miss Alice?" he asked looking up and shading his eyes with a palsied hand and seeing the young lady in the cabin.

"Scuse me, marm, I haint seed yu afore."

"Good morning, Uncle Joshua, I am very glad to see you. You are a stranger to us and the old home. I should think you would come to see us now and then, to know how we are getting on. Have you entirely forgotten your old friends?"

The old negro dropped his head embarrassingly as he replied with hesitation. "Not eggzackly, mum, but fokeses has dun und got so kurous now a days dar haint no telling how menny scrapes yu is ergwine to git kotched in; I'm moest afeered to git outen Hanner's wision, deed I is, mum."

"You are not a soldier I hope, uncle Joshua? Do you belong to the army," asked Alice as she observed the blue uniform that he wore.

"No mum, not pintedly," the negro furtively answered. "Dat is I don't tote no muskeet—und I got my deesharge from de leftenant—und I haint got no offis in pertickler, but de cappen lowed dat he mout pint me corpurul of de gyard at de kumissurry ef I cud hole out."

"Ef I cud hole out" sneeringly repeated Clarissa. "Ugh! Nigh unto er hunded year ole er holin out; mouter say ef yu cud hole in; jess es ragged es er sedge hen." [Pg 189]

Alice was very much amused at the coarse wit of Clarissa, but it was important that she should return home and perhaps, too, her presence might embarrass the interview between the freed slaves, and taking uncle Joshua's hand in her own she bade him good bye with the observation.

"Remember, old man, that father and I are still your friends; and when you are in trouble or distress come to us. May God bless you, uncle Joshua."

"Good by, missis!" exclaimed Joshua, as he wiped his eyes with his coat sleeve, "May de Lord do de same to yu missis."

After the young lady had retired, Joshua, with some trepidation, observed:

"Brudder Johnsing, Hanner sont me ober heer to ax yu und sister to de weddin Saddy nite und to tell sister Johnsing how she mout bake er cake wid ice on de tip eend of hit, ur she moutent ef she didn't want to."

"Who dat want er cake?" exclaimed Clarissa.

"Yu heerd whot I sed, didn't yu?" Joshua petulantly replied.

"Who dat ergwine to git married Joshua?" she asked.

"Efrum, dats who," replied Joshua.

"My King! dat biggerty nigger ergwine to git married sho nuff?"

"Deed he is, und he is ergwine to marry way up yander outen site too—ergwine to git er portly white gal wid de moest dimuns und watch chains und bunnets kivered wid hostrich fedders. When yu sees dat gal yu'll see er hole steer kaart full of dimuns er shinin ebery which er way; und yu has to keep yo eyes shot rite tite, don't yu ergwine to git struck plum bline, same as de possle Peter dun when dat white man was ergwine up to Jarriko; dat yu will! Is you und sister Jonsin ergwine to de weddin; und is yu ergwine to bake de cake? Tell me dat fust." [Pg 190]

Clarissa deliberately raised herself out of the rickety chair in which she was sitting, with a grunt, and walked over to Joshua, and lifting the old beaver from his head, remarked in a provoking way:

"I spishuned dat de boss had dun und crapped yo years wid swaller forks."

"How much yu dun und got from ole Laffin fur bein his nigger; yu und Efrum; tell me dat?"

"Swaller forks!" indignantly replied Joshua. "Sich humans as yu is dun woured up de creeters dat toted de swaller-forks fo de belliun fell. Swaller-forks!" he again repeated in disgust; and turned in his seat to look savagely at Clarissa and held his peace.

"You need nt shine dem ole holler eyes at me, Joshaway; yuse ergwine erbout er hipperty hop from wun house to ernudder wid yo weddin inwites und I lay a fo pence yu haint got narry tater nur hocake nudder whar yu stays. I don't look fur nuffin else but er yurthshake to swaller up de pizened niggers big und little er keepin dis plantashun in er monstus flustrashun ebery day und nite de Lord sends. Ergwine to marry er portly white gal! Great King! Und yu er noratin de news, lookin dis werry minit lak a po run down gizzard shad wid one foot in de grabe und tuther wun er slanting innards. Ergwine to de weddin! When yu sees er biggerty nigger er jinin hissef to er white gal in dis lan, yu ergwine to see seben moons in de hellyments at wun time."

"Yu and Efrum needn't spishun kase de Soufland is dun und konkered wun time und flung upon hits back dat yu pizened niggers is gwine to git de underholt de nex time, ef boff her hands is tied, Dares ole mars Jon's sord a lycin agen de bofat er natally cryin fur a moufful of yore black meat same as a strayed gander er squorkin for his shipmates, und it aims to cut hit off whay hit [Pg 191]

aint ergwine to heal togedder no mo! und ef yu don't walk mity perpundikkler, de werry fust time yu cums to yo membrunce, dat ole crows' nest on de tip eend of yo ole hed is ergwine to be layin in wun jam of de fence und yo old karkuss in er nudder. Ergwine to de weddin! Grate Jerusalem!"

Joshua for a moment was completely disarmed by the rapid volleys from Clarissa's battery, but he was not without resources, even in this terrific encounter. He fixed his savage glance upon the old negress, as he asked with due gravity.

"Is yu ergwine to fight for the secesh ef de war do take a fresh rise?"

"Yu heerd what I sed, Joshaway," replied Clarissa with a significant gesture. "Ef yu don't want Mars Jon's sord er gashing yu into leetle hunks of horg meat yu got to walk mity perpundikkler.

"Bress God!" exclaimed Joshua as he wiped his face with his dirty handkerchief, "How kin a humans walk perpundikkler wid free crooks in de back und de rumatiz in boff shanks?"

"Dat ole sord is ergwine to tak dem dere crooks outen yore back same as a toof doctor jerkin out dat ole snag of yourn," answered Clarissa.

"To be sho yu haint ergwine agin yo own kuller?" suggested Joshua.

"Is yu fur de Nuniun ur de Secesh, ef de belliu haint squelched ur nuffin?"

There was a directness about the question that momentarily unnerved Clarissa but she saw that she was tacitly reinforced by Ned and she replied with the same exhibition of temper.

"Me und Ned is boff ergwine to fight for ole marser, ef de war haint swaged und de time we gits froo wid yu, yu's ergwine to immytate dat ole gyarment, er layin dere in dat pail of poke juice." [Pg 192]

"Grate Jarryko!" exclaimed Joshua with vehemence, "dat ar nigger dun und fotched on ernudder belliu widout ary shutin ion ur muskeet udder. Don't do hit, chile," he continued patronizingly, "kase ef yu uprares ernudder insurreckshun fo dis heer wun is dun und ceasded in dis heer po souf, de dekins in de church is ergwine to fling yer into outer darkness. Yu er sot back er Sundys in de jam of de mussy seat wid eyes shot tite lak de slidin elder, er singin 'Kanyun, sweet Kanyun,' und bress Gawd yu is batin de lams ob de flock wid leetle mouffuls o' hell farr."

"Ergwine tu de weddin! My Lord!" This was the derisive answer that Clarissa made to this fanfaronade of old Joshua.

Ned laid upon the bed laughing to himself with his eyes fixed upon the crude masonry of a dirt-dauber that was preparing to go into winter quarters just above his head.

"Is yu dun wid speechifyin, sister Johnsin?" asked uncle Joshua as he again wiped his moist face with his handkerchief. "Ef yu is, I has jes got wun reckymendashun fur sich ez yu. Pend upon it, sister, ef yu wus Hanner und Hanner wus yu, I wud play hail-kerlumpy-happy-lan on yo ole bones wid er palin fo brekfus und arter supper too, all de time. Ole Satan hes dun und stobbed boff yo yeares wid pitch-forks, und de Lawd nose he is wusser dan de boss, und de pitch-forks is wusser dan de swaller-forks. Ef dat white gal wants to jine hersef to dat cullud gemman, who's ergwine to hender? Tell me dat? I haint ergwine to pester mysef wid no sich low down trash es yu is, und ef yu goes to de weddin dare haint ergwine to be no weddin gyarment fur yu, und when yu nocks at de do, brudder Effrum is ergwine to fling yu out into tarnel darkness whar de whang doodlum hoops und hollers fur hits onliest chile." [Pg 193]

"My King," exclaimed Clarissa "whot is dat ole nigger er spashiatin erbout Ned?"

Ned could not restrain himself, but burst out into a great guffaw. Joshua angered above measure gathered himself together and walked out of the cabin with the observation:

"I wants to see wun mo whupping post in de lan fo I dies, und I wants hits upared at dis do, und I wants to fling de whoop fur de high shuruff."

Upon the exit of Joshua Ned began seriously to think of the flagrant acts of injustice which had more or less warped his nature; and all in his heedless pursuit of freedom and sovereignty. He saw within his cabin a perpetual menace to the peace of old master and young mistress. Upon every visit that Alice made to his lowly home he saw that a grief too deep to be sounded, bayoneted afresh her poor heart. The armed soldier who slew her brother and sweetheart wore a blue jacket like the one that hung in the rack above his bed; how could he be true to his oath with these menaces flaunting in the face of his young mistress? So with a huge frown upon his face he said to his wife, "Clarsy, dem ole blu gyarments und dat ole muskett is jess whot plade de devul twixt me und ole marser. Mouter node dey wud set ole marser er fire; he er fitin dem yankys fur fo year in de war und got yung mars Harry kilt, to cum back home und see dese heer niggers er marchin baccards und furrards all ober de plantashun wid dem dar blu jackets jess lak de yankys wo in de war, und er beatin drums dat sounds to ole marsa same as er berryin. Yu jess take dem ole gyarments outen dis house und gib to Ellik, und tell him to gib em to de boss leutenant, und tell him dat corpul Jonsin has sined his persish in de milintery cumpny, und dat he aint ergwine to war no mo." [Pg 194]

"Dats whot you orter dun und dun fo yu jined," answered Clarissa deprecatingly; "jess gon und fotched all dis trubble on de lan fur nuffin. Mouter node ole marser was ergwine to raise er harrykane when he seed de cussed niggers wid dere muskeets er marchin up und down de plantashun lak er passel of squorking gooses. I got wexed mysef und I haint fit in no war nudder. Dars dat po gal er cryin her eyeballs out, und her po lovyer er lying ober yander under de cold clods of Furginny. I don't specks nuffin else but dat ole Laflin ergwine to get all de niggers in de New United States massacred. Needn't pin dere fafe to whippin de Souf ef she is flung upon her back.

"Yander cums Ellik now lak a lunytik wid fedders nuff on de tip eend of his hat to stuff a fedder bed, wid his neck as stiff es er poker und his eyes same es de sun in de clipse er sot in de sky."

"Halt! Serlute!" came a self addressed command from the negro sergeant.

"Aha! missus Jonsin, how is yo ladyship dis a. m.?" he asked in the stern voice of an officer.

"I haint got no ladyship; dats whot I haint got, nur I haint ergwine to say amen to no sich dooins nudder," replied Clarissa poutingly.

"Hi!" ejaculated the black sergeant; "why, missus Jonsin," he continued "De las time I dun yu de onner to wisit yu, yu was spashiatin erbout de fousend doller peanny corpul Jonsin was agwine to purchis fur yu, und how yu was ergwine to play de hopperattiks fur yo frens.

"Ugh!" grunted Clarissa scornfully, "I plays de hopperattiks now ebery day, twell my fingurs is clean wo' out on de wash bode, er slavin fur er no count miluntary nigger jes lak yu."

"Nigger!" exclaimed the sergeant derisively, "Dere is no niggers in dis 'lan ob de free und de home ob de brave.' We is sufferens und kings, und our wifes und dorters is queens; und yu holes de specter in yo hans ef yu node it."

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Clarissa, greatly irritated at the saucy negro, placed her arms akimbo, and fixing her gaze upon him, exclaimed with wrath,

"Yu go erway frum here, Ellik. I natally spises yu enny how, yu hateful creetur. I haint er puttin my mouf on yu, nigger, but fo' dis bressed year runs out, yu is ergwine ter be er spexter, und de buzzards is ergwine ter be er huvverin erroun yer ole bones; jess see ef day don't. Ole Mars Jon aint ergwine ter stan no mo'. Yu und Efrum er trapesin backards und farrards ober dis plantashun wid a hep, hep, hep, same as Captin Grant ur Ginurl Linkum. Pend upon it, nigger, dem white fokeses in de town fools yu to def yit."

"Yu sprises me, missus Jonsin," responded the negro with assumed dignity. "I spishioned yu wus a patrot."

"No I haint, nudder, und I haint ergine tu be no patrot; but I kin tell yu whot yu is ergwine ter be fo' dis year runs out—yu is ergwine ter be er pennytenshur conwick, er yu is ergwine ter be histed twixt de hebbens und de yurth on de gallus. Ef yu takes my wice yu'll burn up dem ole sojer gyarments und tell ole Mars Jon yu is dun und cum back to stay. Dat is de moest senserbulest fing you can doo; dats whot me und Ned dun und dun und now ole mars Jon is es happy es a cockerroche in er borrhul of flour."

The sergeant waltzed up to Clarissa, and taking her with some violence by the arm sang in a harsh unmusical voice:

"Oh: say kin yu see by the dorhns early lite?"

when a heavy back banded blow sent the sergeant bowling, as Clarissa shouted in her anger.

"Yaas, I sees de dorn und yu sees de stors."

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"Ah!" he exclaimed "I perseeves yu is not er patrot," and he commanded "Attenshun! eyes to de front! forrard march!" and marched away as he whistled

"De jay bird died wid de hooping coff,
Und de sparrer died wid de kollery."

Clarissa made one observation as the negro marched off, "Yu will be ded, sted of de sparrer und de jay bird."

What had become of the warning paragraph in the reconstruction calendar? The three blood red stars that punctuated the enigmatical judgment, "sixty days within which to prove your loyalty." Powers that be, at whose shrine shall the persecuted man make the act of apotheosis? Shall it be at the altar of Laflin, the freedman's deity? Shall it be in the presence of the cringing minions who will mock at his calamity and laugh when his fear cometh?

An arctic night has dropped down upon the south; and in our dense blindness we know not in what direction lies the Serbonian bog. We once erected upon this soil a mighty temple which wisdom and virtue consecrated to patriotism. We laid the edifice upon foundations of concession and compromise; and we were vain enough to believe that it would stand forever; but not so. So the dykes of Holland; the mountains of Switzerland, and the surrounding Sea of Venice were proclaimed as everlasting pledges for the preservation of patriotism, but intestine struggles engendered those revolutionary factions which invited the attack of a despotism and secured its victory. So reasoned with himself this veteran of the civil war, and the father of a loyal-hearted daughter, this slave of a power whose minions were drunken with its excess.

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CHAPTER XVI.

UNDER THE HAMMER.

As Colonel Seymour was passing a group of negroes in the court-yard this irritating remark from one of them arrested his attention. "Dat dar secesh's home is agwine to be sold at auction ter day

under a margige, und de boss is ergwine ter buy hit;" and very soon thereafter a half-grown negro boy ringing a huge bell, and bearing aloft a placard as imperiously as a Roman lictor bore the axe and fasces, halted before him, and displayed offensively the following advertisement. "By virtue of a certain deed of mortgage executed by John W. Seymour and wife Alice to James W. Bowden, and duly recorded in the proper office of the — county, and value duly assigned to me, I shall sell for cash on Saturday, the 6th day of November, 186— the lands and premises described in said mortgage deed, and known and designated as Ingleside, containing twenty-five hundred acres," Abram Laflin, assignee. Thus ran the publication that may possibly furnish a key to the mystic meaning of the three blood-red stars under the written order. "Sixty days in which to prove your loyalty." To-day, and the patrimonial estate of Ingleside with all but its cherished memories, will pass by right of purchase into the hands of the carpet baggers and negroes; to-day, and the axe of the barbarian will be laid at the roots of the ancestral oaks; to-day, and the grained corridors will echo to ribaldry and wassail; to-day, and the war scathed veteran and his beautiful daughter, like the pariahs of Hindoostan, shelterless vagrants, will beg their bread and home. "If an uninterpretable destiny; if an inscrutable providence so orders and decrees, that I shall surrender this home, yet as token of the love I bear this wretched country, I will abide by her; I will cherish her as my wife, my mother, my child; I will defend her with my sword, my speech, my life, and I will be to my oppressed countrymen, their friend, their champion and their brother. I abhor these natural sons of Belial who are whetting the knife that will drink their blood;" so exclaimed the old soldier without a blemish upon his name. So thought the fire-tried christian who was appealing to the ultimate tribunal for right; so thought the man who was harrassed by every resource of vengeance, as he turned his rigid face from the jeering crowd, the assassins of his peace.

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The old man with fading memory tried in vain to recollect the transactions he had had with James W. Bowden, to whom he once owed twenty-five thousand dollars, and to whom he had conveyed in trusts the valuable estate of Ingleside. He asked appealingly of his daughter "Have you no knowledge of these affairs that will aid me in this extremity."

"My dear father," she answered reflectively, "I am sure the debt has been paid. Indeed I heard you say that you paid it in gold."

"But where are my papers?" he asked; "Scattered to the winds by the school mistress and her negro pupils. Shall I ever be able to exhibit any proof of its payment? Can you not assist me? Perhaps we may find somewhere the cancelled note."

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Bowden was dead and a profligate son alone survived.

There were a hundred negroes who thronged the negro auctioneer.

"What is I bid fur dis plantashun?" "Fifteen thousand dollars."

"Hold!" interrupted Colonel Seymour now advancing. "I forbid the sale of this land or any part of it, the debt is paid."

"Ha, Ha. Ha," jeered the negroes, "dat dar secesh's mind is a purified wanderin," shouted a chorus of voices. "Cry de bid Mr. auctioneer," shouted the negro Wiggins. "Ef dat ar white man mak eny mo sturbance, we's agwine ter slap him in de jail forthwid. I warrantees de title fer de boss." "Twenty thousand—twenty-five thousand—once, twice, free, times dun und gone to Mr. Laflin."

The whole affair seemed an illusion, an unnatural evaporation of land and houses—the Ingleside plantation dissipated into thin vapor like the genii of the sealed casket in the Arabian Nights.

"Great God," exclaimed the broken hearted old man, "and Laflin the wretch! Laflin the monster standing there in dumb show, and nodding his head in savage and pantomimic gravity when the hammer fell."

The old Colonel and his daughter rode back to their home perhaps for the last time. One of the blood-red stars had been blotted out of the tyrants' calendar. Two more like the painted dolphins in the circus at Antioch remained to be taken down, one by one. The search for the missing document was renewed when they reached home, but unavailingly. Alice however discovered in an old ash barrel in a neatly folded package, two papers signed by Abram Laflin to her father; one a note for five thousand dollars, the other a mortgage securing the payment of the note. No trace however, of the twenty-five thousand dollar mortgage. Alice carried the Laflin note to her father whose mind for a moment appeared a complete blank; he then remembered the transaction circumstantially.

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"Yes, Yes," he exclaimed reminiscently; "the note was executed to me as a fee, when he was indicted and acquitted for murder in 1866. Now he may let slip the dogs of war, and 'damned be he who first cries hold! Enough!'"

It was painful to observe that Mr. Seymour had become so injuriously affected by the exciting events transpiring from day to day, that his mind upon matters of business was almost inert. Certainly his memory was fast failing; a giving away of the mental poise; and in consequence thereof, poor Alice was picking up here and there great bits of trouble, with as much freedom as the washwoman gathers sticks for her fire. "Tomorrow she exclaimed will be the Sabbath. Blessed day will it bring surcease from sorrow, a moment's respite from the maelstrom of trouble?" she asked, "I can only hope. I feel sometimes like crying aloud, 'What shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue!'"

When the morning broke tranquilly upon the old home, the little birds were caroling in the trees, and the poor girl felt that her care worn spirit should rest this holy Sabbath day. After the

morning meal, her father perturbed and dejected walked along the river's bank, and she retired to the parlor where she sang and played. In the evening old Ned came to express again his sense of gratitude to his young mistress and his old master, and observed among other things, remorsefully, how foolish he had been to take up with the vagaries of the negroes, who were fomenting so much trouble. "And mars John," he continued, "I seed where I was agwine rong, und I knowed yu wud fetch me outen de miry clay. Times is er gitten so mistrustful dat I cum ter ax yu und yung missis mouten me und Clarissa stay wid yu in de grate house? Whar we kin run on urrans fo yu nite und day."

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Old Ned like the hunted rabbit had been smoked out of his hollow. Reconstruction with its insipid pageants had come: It had emptied its cornucopia in the old commissariat; not a dust of flour, nor a fluid dram of molasses, nor a pound of bacon had it put into the jug or sack of the aged and the poor; and the stars and stripes waved as proudly from its mast head as if there were no vacant stomachs, no hungry freedmen in all the South. Colonel Seymour was inexpressibly glad to see the change that had come over the spirit of the old slave. He had been employed in many situations and he was faithful in all. He had been his carriage driver; he had packed old missis trunks when she went to the seaside or the springs in the happy old days; and Ned remembered how contented he was, when an imaginary line separated peace from discord, plenty from squalor. He had seen old missis put away in the ground, and with him were feelings that would not be stifled that were now recasting his nature, however sensual and hardened it had become by contact with vicious companions. When the clouds of war lowered angrily Ned's faith in old missis grew stronger and stronger, and like a watch dog always on duty, so Ned was always at his post; to obey every command, to anticipate every wish. It was Ned who held ajar the old plantation gate, that day the young cavalier rode into the deepening shadows on his way to Manassas, and with hat in hand bade him good-bye with the entreaty, "Be shore und cum back nex Saddy to yo po mammy. I'll be rite heer to open de gate." It was Ned who reverently placed the spray of the little immortelle upon the grave of Mars Harry when the procession had turned their faces homeward. It was Ned who carried "old Missis" in his arms back to the carriage when she swooned at the grave, and now he had come back like the prodigal confessing his sins.

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"If Gord spares me ter outlive ole marser, I'm agwine ter put him erway lak ole missis and yung mars Harry, und strow his grave wid hiasents und lillys ob de valley. I haint agwine ter put no mpendence in de carpet baggers, dey will gouge de eyeballs outen yo hed, und I'm agwine ter twist my eyes clean erround de tother side when I passes de ole kommissery. 'Ole glory' is jess flirting up its skerts, und larfing when poor ole niggers is agwine erlong de rode, jess es scornful es er flop-eared mule when he pokes yu under de jaw wid his hind foot, widout ary warnin. I wishes dat de bosum of struction wud slam de ole kommissery clean clar to de yurth, dat I does."

"You seem to be very thoroughly disgusted with the situation Ned?" observed the Colonel.

"I is mars John, deed I is. Ef a pusson fools yu won time, or maybe two times, er yu mout say free time, you mout try him agin, but ef he fools yu all de time ole Marser, what is yu agwine to do den, mout as well be flinging de hook in de crick for Joshaway's munny, as agwine to dat ole kommissery wid yo happysack speckin arry moufful ob wittles."

"Is that the experience of all the colored people?" the Colonel inquired.

"No sar, no sar," Ned replied with feeling. "Dem dat carries woters to de conwenshun, und drinks de bosses sperits dey gits a leetle now und den, but tother wuns sucks de fingers in misury all de time, specktin, un gittin disappointed."

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"By the way tell me something about Ephraim, how is he getting on," asked the Colonel.

"Why bress your soul mars John he is clean outen site; er totin great big yaller upper lips on his sholders, und er sword dat runs on a wheel on de groun, und fedders on his hat same as a pee-fowell. He is dun und growd outen my membrance. Dey got norated eroun dat he is agwine ter marry a white gal in de town, und Joshaway und Hannah has dun and got er inwite to de weddin."

"And Aleck, what is he doing?" asked the Colonel.

"Ugh, Ugh," exclaimed Ned, "now yu obersizes my kalkilashuns, mars John. He's wusser den Efrum, er uprarin fine housen all ober dis plantashun."

"The savage?" muttered the enraged man. "All Laflin's doings I suppose. Sixty days within which to prove your loyalty," he muttered. "The black flag of the buccaneers of reconstruction marked not with death's heads but by red stars!" A score of carpenters were plying their vocation on the plantation. A confusion of sounds, such as sawing and hammering, drowned the melody of the singing birds, and Aleck like the boldest of pirates, was caracoling here and there giving orders; and fashionably dressed negro women strolled offensively and imperiously over the grounds.

"Mars Jon," exclaimed Ned, "I dun and tole yu so; now yu sees fo yosef."

Before the deed of purchase was recorded, the devilish freedmen were enforcing their claim to the plantation by visible, notorious and violent occupation. The colonel and Alice were sitting in the verandah one beautiful starlit night; there was scarcely the rustle of a leaf and the full-orbed moon was shining with a radiant splendour. Of course there was but one event to think about. Was it not a grief that lay like a dead bulk upon the heart, all the day and all the night; and peopled their dreams with negroes and ogres too?

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"Thank God," exclaimed Alice "mother is out of it all. They were but heaping the fagots around the furnace when she so wearied went home to her eternal rest. Now the fires are all consuming."

"My daughter," said Colonel Seymour dejectedly after awhile, "I will go to my grave with the knowledge that the Bowden debt has been paid; and not one cent do I owe upon it. It is possible I may err, but as God is my judge, this great loss has come upon me, through the devilish machinations of Laflin, in the employment of the schoolmistress, to occupy the office in which he knew my valuable papers were deposited. An ingeniously devised plot doubtlessly, but one distressingly successful."

"Mars Jon," interrupted Clarissa quite seriously, "Haint yu neber foun dem papers yit, yu was er sarchin fur?"

"No indeed, and I do not believe I shall ever find them."

"Grate King! Ole marser I specks dem dere pizen niggers shooslickin eround de offis dun und stroyed em outen purified cussedness."

"Quite likely," rejoined the Colonel.

"Lemme studdy er minit," said Clarissa. "Pears lak Ned gin me sum papers to stow erway in my ole blue chiss. Wud yu kno hit ef you wast to see hit mars Jon? Don't speck it is wurf nuffin do. Ned he gin hit to me way back yander, I dismember how long ergo, und he tole me to put it in de blu chiss, twell he ax for hit. Don't speck hit is ergwine to do mars Jon no good do, but hit haint ergwine to pizen noboddy ef hit don't doo no good. I'm ergwine to fetch it rite now."

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The old gentleman paid but little attention to the negro until he saw her returning with uplifted hand like a stalking spectre.

"Now mars Jon," she cried, out of breath, "yu read dat paper, und cide fo yoself."

As soon as the old man took the paper in his hand, he forgot his gouty joints, and his white hairs; he forgot who he was or where he was and danced a succession of Scottish reels with old Clarissa, as an unwilling partner.

"Why father!" cried Alice in great fright, "Clarissa! Clarissa! What is the matter with my dear father?"

"Oh! Oh! Oh! The mortgage and the note! The mortgage and the note!" wildly screamed her father. "Thank God! Thank God!"

Clarissa, rubbing her head with both hands where it had struck a pillar in the wild whirl of the dance, emotionally exclaimed, "Bress de Lord; mars Jon has yu dun und gon plum crazy? I neber seed sich shines fo in all my born days; jambye busted dis ole hed wide open ergin dat postess."

"Clarissa," excitedly exclaimed the Colonel, "you shall have forty acres and a mule too."

"Grate Jurusulum! Mars Jon, whot I want wid dat lan? Und I dun got wun mule, und de Lord knose he tarrifies de life outen me."

"Alice," remarked her father, still excited, "I know all about the matter now. Old Mr. Bowden was very ill when I paid the debt, but feebly raised himself in bed and marked upon the face of the note, 'Paid in full.' Here it is," said the Colonel, "and he surrendered the note and mortgage in the presence of his worthless son, and promised that he would cancel the record; but the poor fellow died. His son witnessed the settlement. I had no doubt that this villainous son, knowing that his father had died before cancelling the mortgage, and believing that in the terrible condition of the country I could not prove the payment of the debt, did unlawfully, maliciously and feloniously conspire, combine and confederate with the wretch Laflin to defraud me of my property. Thank God the beasts have been hounded to their lair. I remember that upon coming out of the town my hands were filled with letters and papers, and in getting into my carriage this particular package dropped into the road and I ordered Ned to pick it up, and I doubt not that while I was busy reading Ned did not care to interrupt me, and put it into his pocket, and thinking it of no value, forgot to give it to me. I feel now like falling down upon my knees and thanking the great God of heaven and earth for this, His especial providence and mercy."

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It is said that in one of the beautiful isles in the southern Pacific—the land of the mango and pineapple, where the air is perpetually perfumed by the aroma of flowers; where the birds of every plume and every voice, like animated pictures in gold and emerald and carmine, flit in and out of whispering branches; where pellucid waters ripple along, their voices keyed to song and laughter—that the people are bestial and barbaric. They distil from a gum that exudes from one of their umbrella-top trees an intoxicant that bestializes the man, woman and child who drinks it, and he or she will run a-muck, ferocious in temper, devilish in spirit, and betraying a morbid desire to destroy whoever or whatever they may encounter. Here in these full grown years of nineteenth-century civilization, amid Christian churches and ministers; amid ten thousand object lessons suggesting the vanity of human pursuits originating in wrong; the eternity of God's punishments; the certainty and swiftness of His retributions—the black, defiled, distorted genius of reconstruction was running a-muck, drinking from a brazen chalice the sweetened liquor.

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CHAPTER XVII.

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A HOUSE WARMING.

A skilled artisan in the employment of the local authorities had been for many days surveying and

diagramming, until a certain area of the old plantation remote from the mansion was arranged in geometrical figures, scientifically corespondent to each other, and there were curves and angles artistically precise. If the reader will place before him a miniature flag of the Turkish empire, the alignment of the tenements of the negroes will be seen, the concave line of the crescent indicating the position of the modest little houses of the freedmen, and the star the position of the stately mansion of Mr. Alexander Wiggins, a former slave of Colonel Seymour.

Up to the time of this unblushing trespass upon the private domain of Colonel Seymour, and indeed afterwards, the negroes, like rodents, had burrowed in colonies in old dank cellars and where ever else they could find rest and shelter. This unhappy condition, post-dating the surrender at Appomattox, had a demoralizing effect upon them. They became spiritless and languid, or else vicious and vindictive. They felt that freedom was an illusion, an ignis fatuus that they had been recklessly pursuing, that lured them further into an impenetrable morass. In the excited state of their ignorant minds they had been indulging feverish and extravagant projects; chimerical notions of wealth and aggrandizement, and again like inert bodies they would drop lifelessly into the very depths of despair. It is impossible just now for the most active imagination to conceive a condition of human society more wretched. The sympathies of the old masters were moved; their humanity shocked; their very hearts grieved at the injustice done under the direction of the freedman's bureau in this violent and forced state of things.

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"An outrage," exclaimed the Colonel, "long matured, maliciously devised, and boldly perpetrated. Fanatics! you have emancipated by fraud and violence the slaves you affect to pity; you have doomed them to beggary, outlawry, prostitution and crime! You have filled them with discontent and made them to feel a chain they never felt before, and turned against them the care and consideration of their own masters, while your red squadrons of fanaticism are careering wildly through our plantations, so lately scourged by the hurricane of war; you the minions of a power confessedly omnipotent. Will you, too, destroy the Doric edifice of our morals, the Corinthian porticoes of our religion, stifle the denationalizing stream until it swells in great tides of blood? When the incendiary is lightning his torch, and the vultures are looking on with felon eyes, may the holy memories of the past give you pause."

Thus spoke the old man in the eloquence of high-wrought feeling, for his country; for the poor negroes who, like bats and owls, were peopling dens and holes of darkness in this "land of the free and home of the brave."

On the night of the 15th of September the elegant mansion of Mr. Wiggins, the pampered slave of Laflin, lay smiling and smirking in beautiful frescoes from turret to foundation stone; astral lamps hung in rich festoons, shimmered from dome and window and verandah, lighting up the broad pebbly avenues that rayed out from the central vestibule.

It was a night of surprises, of merriment, of revelry, of rivalries; when the bat and owl came out of their hollow, the cat out of its lair, the negro out of his cabin, the ku-klux out of his skin. It was a night that punctuated reconstruction with a red-hot iron, and dropped its dead ashes upon a score of hearth-stones. It was a night that stealthily removed the fifth wheel from the chariot of the bosses and dropped its inert body into the road.

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Ah! there were surprises! Corporal Ephraim Gillum was to take unto himself a wife, and Priscilla Pinxly, a spinster, was to take unto herself husband. No doleful Jeremiads in this carnival; no forbidding of banns; no scandal on religion; no trespass on the law. "Ef dat ar white gal is a mine ter jine hersef ter dat cullud gemman, who's ergwine ter hender?"

There were ferns and smilax, hollies and magnolias; there was an altar embellished with carnations, red and white; who shall say it was profaned by this ceremonial? There were heavily groined parlors reposing in velvety carpets, bric-a-brac and rugs. Here were the minions of reconstruction in red, white and blue, the favorites of this institutional era; here were the animated beauties of the town bedizened, bejeweled and beflowered; here was the pompous celebrant in patent-leather slippers and dress coat, Elder Tuttle, paying court to the ladies.

Here was the bride, a very spare lady in the forties, with fishy eyes and gold spectacles. Here was the groom, as black as an antarctic midnight, reposing uncomfortably in a celluloid collar that cut a transverse line through both cheeks, dressed in blue uniform with yellow epaulets upon his shoulders as large as sunflowers; here were the bats and owls, human earth burrowers, who were not wanted at the wedding supper, peeping slyly in the windows; here was Mrs. Parthenia Wiggins in silks and satins, and her lord in satins and silks; here was Joshua an octogenarian in regimentals, looking like a revolutionary drum major in masquerade, greeting the happy hostess with the exclamation:—"Pend pon it, your ladyship, I smelt dat barbeku clean clar to my house fore it was kilt," pausing now and then in his circuit around the supper table, to cut "de pigeon whing;" here was old Hannah, in hoops and frills, "er following Joshua, frustated lak, kase some gal or udder mout run erway wid him unbeknownist to her;" here was old Ned "er settin in der chimney corner all by his lone lorn sef;" and then here was a skeleton at the feast, a spectre at the banquet, who greeted neither host, groom or bride—a living knight of the "White Camelia." Then there was a pause; then there was a proclamation by the host: "All hands around fur de fust kertillien," and there was a voluntary shuffling of slippered, sandalled and booted feet. Then the music struck up and all went merry as a marriage bell. Castanets and cymbals, cornets and trombones, distributed huge chunks of melody, chopped off the "Star Spangled Banner," "Rally around the flag boys," "The Girl I left behind me," and "Brudder Ephrum got de coon and gone on."

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As the dance went on and on in the great hall the Kuklux slipped out of the shadows and into the parlor and concealed himself behind the embowered altar. Ned, at his suggestion, stole into the

dining room, and taking the cover off of the basted pig, brought it out and gave it to the hideous creature, and still the dance went on. With uplifted hand Mr. Wiggins cried "Tention ladies und gemman's. All you who's invited to the weddin follow me to the parlor," and the band struck up "Johnny get your gun." "Come parson, you shassay in fust," and the parson struck out in an Irish reel, and the crowd followed like flotsam upon a current of water, tossing here and there, up and down, automatically, to the music.

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"Now breddin und sistern," exclaimed the parson in a nasal sing-song, "range erlong side de haltar whilst I spaciate upon dis weddin. Now den, fustly und foremostly, who gin dis bride away?"

"I does" replied Mr. Wiggins, pompously stepping to the front.

"Well, den, I'll persede wid de sallymony. Fustly und foremostly, I'm agwine in my sebenty seben year, please God I lives to see de harvest moon, und I has been a exhauster, und locus preacher, und surkus rider, und slidin elder fust und last, und I've jined black ones und yallow ones und yallow ones und black ones, und now I'm agwine ter jine a white und black one togedder in de yoke of bondage, und in the bonds of purgertory, ef I haint upset fore I gits froo by de kommisserys ob de debbil."

"Land sakes alive!" ejaculated Joshua, as he brought his hollow jaws together with a resounding crash, "Don't talk about de kommissery, parson; I'm hungry rite now."

"Now den, ef der is any pusson or debbil, here or here erbout, who is agwine to nullify dis weddin, I commands dem ter hold dere peace foreber mo."

Instantly a hooded figure of gigantic stature, clad in a gown of dragons' tongues, with small red lanterns burning in the socket of his eyes, arose behind the parson. The audience, first paralyzed with fear, now gave shriek after shriek which filled the house, as he gave an unearthly yell and with the basted pig cudgelled the black parson over the head as he leaped with a frantic cry into the bosom of the spectacled bride, and then through glass and shutter out of the window.

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"Kuklux! Kuklux!" shrieked the terrified negroes, as in desperation they fled out of the house.

Joshua, in his frantic efforts to escape, ran his head against a heated stove and red hot coals of fire were scattered over rug, carpet and floor. As the last society lady somersaulted out of the window, great tongues of fire were lapping up frieze and cornice, and facade, and the crescent and star disappeared in a ghastly cincture of fire.

As Jake the Kuklux was passing near the cabin of Joshua the next morning, on his way to the dark recesses of the swamp, he heard groans and incoherent exclamations that caused him to knock at the door and ask what was the matter. No answer came, but the groans were louder and more frequent. He opened the door and entered. Joshua was lying on the bed swathed in red flannel and Hannah, with a bandanna tied around her head, was tossing to and fro in an old rickety chair, holding her jaw in both hands.

"Hello!" exclaimed the Kuklux, "What ails you folkses."

"Who dat a woicing dat lamentashun?" cried Joshua. "Go lang away wid yu white man, I aint agwine to be pestered," he continued.

"Hi there Aunt Hannah, what ails you?"

"Oh my Lord!" exclaimed Hannah, amid her groans. "Go lang way frum heer I haint agwine to put myself on ekality wid no low down white trash lak you is." And Hannah kept sea-sawing in the rickety chair. Jake took a slouching stride toward the fire-place and making the letter V with his fingers spat in the fire and accidentally overturned a stew pan in which two or three small catfish were cooking.

"Fo my King! white man," exclaimed Hannah wrathfully, "What hes yu gon und dun now? I wishes yu would stay outen dis house. Now whar is Joshaway agwine to git his supper er me udder?"

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This lamentation caused Joshua to unswathe the bandage about his eyes and he groaned louder and longer. "Dem was de onliest mouffel ob wittles in dis house, und now me und Hannah hes got ter suck de fingers twell de good Lord send us mo," he exclaimed mournfully.

"You lay dar spectin de Lord to send you mo, und you will be stark naked as a picked ginny hen," said Hannah.

Jake squinted his right eye as he drawled out:

"You knows Aunt Hannah dat de Lord does feed his lambs, don't you."

"How cum Joshaway enny of his lambs? Mouter say he is de debbils old billy gote," answered Hannah savagely.

"Kase I is one of his lambs," said Joshua. "How cums I goes to Filadelfy meeting-house ebervy fourth Sunday, und how cums I courages de moners, und how cums I goes to de baptizin und totes de passons gown? Tell me dat."

"Ugh! Ugh!" grunted Hannah; "I nebber seed de lams cutting up sich shines in a grate house lak yu dun las nite; yu went to de weddin, didn't yu Joshaway? Und yu seed de kommissery ob de debbil; did yu see de Lord's lambs dare? und yu set yo mouf for de barbeku, didn't yu, und yu seed a harrykane too, didn't yu?"

"Oh, yu go erlong way frum here," said Joshua, "I natally spises dese heer biggity niggers dat is tarnally butting up agen de good Lord's jedgements. You is fell frum grace, dat's what yu done,"

replied Joshua deprecatingly.

"Is?" ejaculated Hannah. "Und yu fell frum something last nite. What was dat?"

"Now dat dere tantalizing nigger thinks I fell outen de window, but I clumb down de jice, dat is what I dun," angrily replied the old negro. [Pg 215]

"When you seed de bride und de passon und de tother lams lak yu, Joshaway? tell me dat!" continued old Hannah provokingly.

"Nuff sed Hannah, yu dun und sot my po hed er akin wusser. You is de debbils own billy gotte not me."

Reaching down into his greasy haversack the Kuklux brought out a great chunk of barbecue, and flourished it around old Joshua's head like a musician's baton.

"Dar now Hannah, what I tole yu, you sees whar my fafe is, don't yu?" said Joshua smiling. "Don't de Scriptur sez how dat ef yu hes fafe, ef yu hes fafe," he repeated with emphasis, "you can tote away mountains, tell me dat?"

"It mout," answered Hannah quizzically, "und den agin it mout'nt. Do hit say anyfing erbout barbyku?" continued Hannah, "Tell me dat."

"Oh, go long, nigger," tartly answered Joshua; "I haint ergwine ter argify de question no mo wid a debilish nigger dat actally mistrusts de bible; yu is dun und sot in yo ways, und all Filadelfy church aint ergwine ter save yu, nudder."

"Not ef it is ergwine ter preach dat dar kind ob fafe. I wudn't put no pendance in de slidin elder ef he was to say pine plank dat dat dar barbyku is in de bible."

"Don't de scriptur say how dat a passel ob horgs broke er loose outen de gap und run down er hill und choked up de sea? Tell me dat? Und what does yu make barbeku outen? Catfishes I spouse!" asked Joshua contemptuously.

Hannah turned her back upon the old negro with the observation, "You is er black satan kotin de scriptur."

And all the time the musician's baton was marking curves around old Joshua's head, and Joshua's hollow eyes, as if under the spell of a mesmerist, were moving mechanically right and left, left and right, while his great mouth was yawning like a cavern in a red marl pit. [Pg 216]

"Boss," he exclaimed, "ef yu eber specks tu giv me ary mouful ob dat ar barbyku, fur de Lawd's sake drap hit rite inter dis heer mouf," and he brought his old jaws together with a resounding crash, like an alligator biting at a leaping frog.

The ku-klux, without further teasing, gave the big chunk of meat to Joshua, who devoured it like a starved dog.

"Haint yu ergwine ter give me nun?" asked Hannah.

Joshua slowly replied between bites,

"Yu is got er gripin misery now, Hanner, und ef yu wuz ter your dis peppery stuff und tuck wid a gripin pain, I'd neber hear de eend ob it. De nex time I'm ergwine ter give yu a grate big hunk, perwidin yu haint got no gripin misery ur nuffin," he continued as he gnawed the last piece of gristle from the bone.

"Boss," he observed, as he wiped his capacious mouth, "ef I hadn't bin ticed erway by dat nigger sea-sawin ober dar, I wudn't er bin in dis heer fixment. De women fokeses fotched de debil in dis heer wurld, und bress de Lawd when dey is ceasded dey is ergwine ter take him erlong wid dem. Does yer see how slak-sided I'se got? Look at dese ole holler eyes; yu kin jamby play marbles in dem. I'm ergwine rite strate back ter ole marser, lak dat progigle man in de scriptur, und I'm ergwine ter tell him he mout hab my freedom. I'd ruther hab de tarrifyin fever dan be a franksized woter. I wishes ole Laflin had er died fo' he wuz born, upsottin de niggers, und dey ergwine erbout lak ragged ruffins, wid nuffin ter do but beatin drums und wotin yaller tickets. Dar aint narry grane o' rest nite nor day. Peers lak Hanner she gits sick de wery wustest time in de wurld, und when she aint ailin she's tarnally moufin erbout no meal in de gum und no catfish es in de stewpan. De Lawd knows dis ole stractified nigger hes sucked misery long ernuff. I haint neber node ole marser ter turn his back on nobody, und es fur Miss Alice, her purty white hans is wide open all de time, und she do say 'Uncle Joshaway' de hebenliest I eber seed." [Pg 217]

With these heartfelt expressions the old negro maintained a dead silence, and Hannah, like the Temanite of old, essayed to answer,

"Yu needn't blame it all on me, dat yu needn't. Enybody er seein yu er wourin up dat grate big hunk o' meat mout hab node yu wuz er horgish nigger, und hit maks no diffunce who parishes so yo stumick is full. Er lym dar now er pickin yo ole snags und er hikkerpen es full es er dorg tick, und me er settin here er fairly rackin wid mizry."

"Hush Hannah," interrupted Joshua, "nuff is nuff, ef yu had er wourd dat barbyku und tuck defly sick, dar wudn't been no sleep in dis house dis nite. Twant kase I hankered fo dat leetle grain ob fresh meat dat I didn't wide wid yu, twas kase I knowd it was gwine gin yo stummick."

"Bress God," answered Hannah, "you's er powerful doctor, er puttin yo mouf on sick folkses dat is peert und harty," and Hannah began sea-sawing again.

THE WRIT OF EJECTMENT.

Shortly after the events narrated in the last chapter, the announcement was made by Clarissa that a white man, "und dat biggety nigger Ellic, was at de do to see ole marser." The interview occurred on the verandah.

Abram Laflin, the carpet-bagger, introduced the subject as follows:

"I observed" said he, "in passing the court house on yesterday, that you had advertised my home to be sold to pay a debt of five thousand dollars due you. Will you be kind enough to make the calculation and inform me what is due you, principal and interest?"

"Certainly I will, with great pleasure," replied the Colonel. "Here is the account accurately computed."

"Make your calculations, Mr. Wiggins, and see if the gentleman is correct," he said to the negro.

Mr. Wiggins adjusted his gold rimmed eyeglasses, fingered a moment the gold chain upon his immaculate shirt bosom, scratched his head a time or two with the point of his gold pencil and passed the statement to his lord and master.

"Ah, ha," exclaimed the carpet-bagger, "Four thousand three hundred and fifty-seven dollars and thirty-three and one-third cents, and not five thousand dollars as you have it, Mr. Seymour."

"Ah, very well" replied Mr. Seymour "You may settle by my calculation if you wish, if not the sale shall go on."

"Give me the paper and pencil, Mr. Wiggins, I will make the calculation for myself," said the carpet-bagger. "The result as you have it sir, is correct. Here is your money sir." [Pg 219]

"Now, sir, I will show you the gate," replied the Colonel with asperity. "Good morning," and the two men locked arms and went away.

As the enraged man was entering the verandah, he was greeted unexpectedly and obsequiously by Joshua, with "Compliments, ole Marser. I have fotched you some long-necked gode seeds; spected yer would lak to hab dem, mars Jon."

"Yes, Yes, I am glad you remembered me Joshua. I thought my old slave had quite forgotten me," replied the Colonel.

"You mout hab spected dat ole masser, but I knowed all de time you wus de onliest fren I had in de wurrell," answered the old negro.

"I am surprised to see you looking so badly, Joshua. Why your hair is as white as cotton, and your clothes too are ragged and dirty, and there are great hollows in your cheeks; what have you done with yourself old man?"

The old negro dashed a great big tear from each eye as he replied hesitatingly, "Better ax tother fokeses dat ar questun, ole marsa; better ax de bosses at de kommissery; I'se been froo de froos sens I seed you sar, mommucked up monstus, dat I is. Dem dar pizen'd carpet-baggers tole us cullud fokeses ef we didn't do jess lak dey sed, dat dey was agwine to put us bak in slavery, und dey skeert us jam ni to def, dat dey did. Dey upared a grate big sto in de town, und sakes alive! de moest lasses und horg meat und flower und backer, und sich lak yu nebber did see, mars Jon, und likker, too; und wun ob de bosses he cum to de do und sez, sez he boys, fetch yer happysaks und jimmyjons ebery Tuesday, und eberry Saddy nite de Lord sens und fill dem chok full. I clar marser, I felt jess lak I wus in Paradise, wid de angels er harpin pon golden harps und soppin lasses; und I took dat white man at his word, und I'se been on de rode twixt my house und de sto fur seben weeks, backards und forrards, a totin my ole jimmyjon un happy-sak; I clar pon my Marser in Heben, I haint eben got de rappins ob my finger from dat sto yit. De boss wud laf und say de rashuns had gin out fore I got dere, und to cum agin nex Tuesday sho; und mars Jon, I'se jess nachully a tired to def, widdout a moufful ob wittels in my house fur me nur Hanner nudder, und we bof a perishin to def. Ole marsa, hain't yer got nary ole ash tater, nur a leetle piece ob meat skin yer kin gib dis ole darky jess to pacify his stummik, seems lak I jess hab to draw my galluses rale tite roun it to keep it frum creepin fru my mouf." [Pg 220]

The old soldier of fifty battles looked down upon the poor old negro in his squalor and emaciation and wretchedness, and the tears came into his eyes, too, as he said,

"If there is anything in this house to eat, Joshua, you shall have all you want. I pity you from my heart, old negro. These people are not your friends nor mine. The day will come when you will know them as they are—enemies of every one who will not wash their dirty linen."

"Eber yu spoke de truf, Mars Jon, you spoke it den—hit's de God's truf."

"Clarissa!" called the Colonel, "Clarissa!"

"Sar!" came Clarissa's voice from the kitchen. "I'se er cummin, ole marsa, jes es fast es I ken."

As she saw Joshua she threw up her hands and impulsively exclaimed,

"Fur de Lawd's sake, Joshaway, whot do ail yer eny way? I faut yu wuz er gostis er settin outen here wid ole marser. Po ole nigger! Duz sis Hanner luk lak yu duz? De grabeyard is er yornin fer yu rite now." And Clarissa placed her hand feelingly upon the old negro's white head, saying the while, "Po Joshaway! Po nigger!" while Joshua covered his face with his knotty hands and his [Pg 221]

feeble body shook as with a spasm.

In obedience to orders, Clarissa placed before Joshua a huge dish of boiled ham, cabbage, potatoes—Irish and sweet—and the old negro in the joy of his heart sprang nimbly to his aged and aching feet and "cut de piggen whing jes ter sho ole marsa how spry und suple he wus."

"Bress Gawd!" he gratefully exclaimed, "I'se been happy two times in my life—wun time when I jined de miluntary cumpny when de niggers wus playin 'de jay bird' on der tootin horns (den I wus er fule), und tother time wus dis here time."

After devouring like a starved brute the bulk of the food before him, he considerably placed into his old beaver hat choice bits and fragments, layer upon layer, with the observation,

"I wudn't er tasted a moufful o' dis good truck ef I hadn't er node Hanner wuz ergwine ter git her shar. Jes er watchin me now lak a sparrer hawk er settin on er lim! Tank yer a fousun times, ole marsar! Tank yu, too, sis Clarsy; tank eberybody in de whole wurld. Ole marsa," he continued, "mout I hab jes wun wurd wid yer?"

"Why, certainly, Joshua; what more can I do for you?" asked the old man.

The old negro put his hand to his face as if he were shielding his eyes, and asked sheepishly,

"Mars Jon, ef me und Hanner wus ter turn niggers ergin, jes lak slabery times, wud yer tuck us home—yu und Miss Alice?"

"I would not have you do that, Joshua; but whenever you like, you and Hannah can bring your belongings to the office and Alice and I will always be your friends. You shall never suffer any more for something to eat or wear as long as we live."

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"Tank yer, ole marsar, tank yu, a fousand times!" Joshua replied, as he brushed away great liquid beads that were chasing each other down his haggard cheeks. "Now I mus be ergwine, Mars Jon," and the old stiffened joints bore homeward a filled body and a full heart, as he sang in an untuned but sweet voice,

"Oh de way's so delightful when I sarves de Lord,
Oh de way's so delightful, journey on."

As the sun was going down the old Colonel looked across the field and saw Joshua and Hannah with great bundles upon their heads coming toward the mansion—coming back to the old home; coming back to be just as humble, just as faithful, just as watchful as in the happy old days; coming back to run errands if need be, with joints stiffened by hardships and old age, but with hearts so light and trustful; coming back like homing pigeons to roost under old master's wing in the dove cote. Was there ever such a people before? The sweetest experience in the domesticity of the South will vanish forever when the last old white woolly head is laid low, when the ghostly smile is given to old mistress from the death bed, and the last good-bye is said to "ole marsar und ole missis" as the death film overlays the eye. "Tak keer ob yosefs, ole marsar und ole missis, und meet me up yander." So thought the old master as with liquid eyes he looked upward to the vaulted sky.

"Seben weeks" the old negro weighted down by the ever accumulating burdens of life—its disappointments, its troubles—had with unsteady gait and frequent halts stepped off each rod and furlong twixt "my house und de sto, backards und forards, toting de jimmyjon und de happy-sak." "Fur seben weeks" the torrid sun with its blistering heat had scorched the old negro's head, and crisped the old negro's black skin until it was spotted. For seven weeks a vacuum deep and broad lay between the inner coatings of the famished stomach immeasurable and unfathomable. For seven weeks "Old Glory" waved its welcome at one end of the commissariat, and stark, pallid want walked out without a ration and flaunted its rags at the other. Poor old negro, but what worth is freedom without its pains and penalties; what worth is the huge commissariat without the freedmen, and what worth is the freedmen without the commissariat? Oh how happy the old negro in "de offis of ole marsar." By fits and starts old Joshua would awake throughout the nights and call to Hannah, "Ole womun, duz yer kno whar yer is a roosting to night? Aint agwine to de crick fur catfish in de mornin. I kno whar my wittles is er cummin frum, bress de Lord. Cum rain ur shine, I haint nebber agwine hongry agin, no mo. Old marsa dun und said, ole nigger yer shall nebber want fur sumfing to eat und sumfing to ware no mo, und I nebber cotched ole Mars Jon in a lie yit. Has yu, Hanner?"

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"No, dat I haint, nur Miss Alice nudder," replied Hannah. "I haint got no mo skeer erbout me, Joshaway, dan a billy gote. I kno's when Miss Alice flings a dumplin in de pot for hersef, she is agwine to fling wun in dare fur me too."

"Pears lak, Hanner, I kin heer my stummick ebery now und den nachully singing de ole ship ob Zion, hit is so full ob ole marsar's good wittles."

Bright and early the next morning the old negro was standing in the wide open door of the office, swinging his arms in exercise like a prize fighter, and occasionally "cuttin de piggen whing out of doors," as he said, "dat yung misses mout see how he could twist his foots erbout." As he was skipping about the yard he discovered as it were, a moccasin snake; a red, white, and blue stake about two feet long in the ground near the office, and he knew what it was and called in a fit of rage to Hannah. "Jess cum und see what dem dratted niggers has dun gon und dun. Lord a massy! Duz dem pizened willians fink dey kin oberride dis here plantashun wid me, und Ned, und ole marsa, und yung misses, und yu und Claissy a fendin for deselvs? I'se agwine to lode up my muskit dis bery nite, und de fust nigger dat cums pestering our white fokses on dis here lan, I'se

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agwine to shoot two pounds of hot led into his karkas. Tak dis ole streked striped stick, Hanner, und burn it up," and he jerked the peg out of the ground as if it had been an aching molar in his gum, and threw it violently into the fire-place.

"Who upon de yurth did fetch dese pizened stiks on dis lan? I'm ergwine er roun dis yer plantashun, und maybe I'll fine sum mo ob de ring-streoked-und-striped things, er painted jes like 'ole Glory' out yander in de town, jes ter fool niggers und git dem sassinated lak er passel o' polecats."

While Joshua was making the "grand rounds" over the plantation a carriage with a pair of beautiful, high-stepping horses rolled up to the door, and two "gemmen of culler" alighted and walked with unnatural dignity to the door and rang the bell. Clarissa, of course, obeyed the call, and in their presence was so bewildered that she asked them into the library. Placing into her hands their cards *de visite*, upon which were written the names of the "Hon. Alexander Wiggins" and the "Hon. Ephraim Gillam," she carried them to Colonel Seymour.

Instantly the devil was aroused in the old man, and he told Clarissa to tell them to get out of the house.

Clarissa, in executing the order, said, "Ole marser says how dat yu niggers must go back out er doors. Jes tak yosef outen dis house immegit." Then upon recognizing one of the negroes, she enquired, "Haint dat yer Ellick, wid dem fine close und shoes, und gold specks, und bever hat, comin into dis house lak yer was a king, or a ginerel, or sumfing I don't kno what? What is yer doing here in ole marser's house, anyhow? I specks yer is up to sum devilment rate now." [Pg 225]

"My name is not Ellic, replied the negro, und I am not up to devilment. I am de prieter ob dis manshun house, und my stinguished friend, Mr. Ephrum Gillum und me, hez cum to sarv a rit ob jectment upon Mr. Semo fortwid."

"Lord hab marcy upon my soul!" exclaimed Clarissa in great excitement, "Ef yer sarves dat dar fing on ole marsa, dares gwine to be a ressureckshun in dis grate house fortwid, yer haint agwine to lib to git bak to town. You und dat udder nigger better tak yerselvs offen dis lan fore marser sees yer; he spises yer worse den eny mocksin snake in de crick, und yer nose it."

"Ah, well," the negro replied arrogantly, "Yu jess gib him dis writ ob 'jectment und tell him dat Mr. Wiggins und his lady will return ter-morrer ebenin at ate o'clock und tak perseshun, und see dat yu prepares a bed in de best chamber in dis mansion fur him."

"Jes yer fling dat pizen fing on de flo. I aint ergwine ter mess my hans up wid no sich nasty trash, und yer tak yersefs offen here—don't I'm agwine ter set Jube on yer, yer hateful creetur. Ugh! ef yer gits anyfing pared on dis plantashun hit's ergwine ter be a ded-fall ter kill yu cussed niggers. Dat's de bed yer is ergwine ter git ter morrer at ate o'clock, 'member dat! Ugh! I specks when dat time cums yer will be ded und gon rite strait ter torment." [Pg 226]

Clarissa seized the tongs and prodded the document upon the floor as if it had been a tarantula, then holding it at arm's length, muttering the while like a savage, brought it to Colonel Seymour with the observation,

"Mars Jon, yer mout as well gib up dis grate house und de plantashun, too, to de stinkin, outdashus niggers, don't dey is ergwine ter tarrify de life outen yer, und me too."

To this the old man deigned no reply, but unfolding the paper and reading it, he concluded there was but one thing to be done. For one-third of a century he had been a highly respected communicant in the Episcopal church; orthodox and consistent in his views and observances, but upon reading the insulting document he swore like "our army in Flanders."

"Clarissa," he exclaimed, "bring me my pistols. I will defend my own with my life, and"—

"Mars Jon," interrupted Clarissa, "I'se skeert ob dem dar shootin iruns. What is yer ergwine ter do, ole marser? Is yer ergwine ter hab a resurreckshun in de grate house? Sposin yer und young missis gits kilt—whot in de name ob Gawd is ergwine ter cum ob tother ones? Sarve Ellick rite ef he gits masskreed; but sposin yer und Ned gits kilt, whot is ergwine ter cum ob me und Miss Alice? Yer is too brash, ole marser."

The old soldier was quiet for a moment, and then he called Ned to him.

"Yes, Mars Jon, here I is, sar. Whot yer want now, Mars John?" Ned asked humbly.

"Go and tell Mr. Jake Flowers to come here at once."

"Sartinly, Sar, mejitly, Mars Jon."

And in a short time Mr. Flowers, accompanied by Ned, saluted the Colonel with, [Pg 227]

"What are your orders for to-day, sir?"

Now, thought the Colonel, I shall marshal a force more terrible than an army with banners. I shall recruit my regiment from the "Invincible Empire," and I shall tear down and let them reconstruct if they can. "We will march to victory under the flag of the 'White Camelia,' shall we not, Mr. Flowers?" asked the Colonel.

"Well, when I wants to play demnation wid ther niggers, I don't fight under no other," was the sententious answer of the regulator.

"Come into my library a moment, sir."

As the regulator was ambling along he put his two fingers to his mouth and accidentally(?) expectorated "ambeer" in the eye of old Jupiter, the fox hound, which set up a prolonged howl

and caused Clarissa to exclaim with great warmth;

"Mars Jon, did yer see dat ou'dashus white man a spettin dat dar backer juce in ole Jube's tother eye? Wun ob dem is outen now, und I specks dat fafufulest ole dorg will go plum blind. He is de fafufulest creetur on dis hole plantashun. Po' ole Jube! Nebber mind, Clarsy is ergwine ter set yer on dat speckled-face white man when he cums outen dat do, und is ergwine ter give yu sum mo wittles ef yer chaws him good. Po' ole Jube!" And Clarissa walked back into the kitchen with Jube following her, with the further observation, "Twixt de niggers und de low-down white trash I haint got no chusen—hit's a half duzzen wun way und a half duzzen tother way, und de debbil tak de diffunce."

The Colonel drew a chair up to the table and asked the regulator to be seated.

"Tomorrow night at eight o'clock sharp I will take possession of Ingleside, peaceably if I can, [Pg 228] forcibly if I must."

"When the Prince of the Thebaird sent this message to the queen of lower Egypt, "Tomorrow I will knock at the door of your palace with the hilt of my spear," she returned this warning, "And I will welcome you with bloody hands, and the crocodiles of the Nile shall devour your carcass."

"What shall be our message, Mr. Flowers?"

The regulator thought a little dreamily for awhile, and then with the usual squint in the right eye replied drowsily,

"Wall, thar is two ways to kill a nigger unbeknownst to him. I kin ku-klux him, or I kin strike him with forked litenin; but I haint got ammunition enuff to kill a hole passul at wunce."

The Colonel unfolded and laid upon the table a large sheet of paper, such as engineers use in diagramming, and began in a perfunctory way to mark off lines, angles, eccentric and concentric figures, until he fixed the point of his pencil suspiciously at the upper abutment of a bridge that spanned a rivulet, with this remark,

"Just here, sir, must be the point of attack. This is the only defensible position upon the plantation. If the malicious negroes pass this bridge, all is lost. Now, my friend," he continued, "heroic diseases must be healed with heroic remedies. You and I are old soldiers. Up and down the Chickahominy our army would have been tin soldiers but for our sappers and miners. Now you may sap and mine to your heart's content," he said jocularly. "Do you understand, Mr. Flowers?"

"No, not eggzactly," replied Flowers. "Dos yer want ther cussed niggers drouned?" he asked.

"No, only frightened so they will let me alone," replied the Colonel.

"Frightened!" ejaculated the regulator. "Wall, fokeses in gineral gits frightened before they gits drouned, don't they? If I don't mistrust you, Kernel, you wants the bridge upsot, and then you wants the kerridge upsot, and then you wants the blamed niggers upsot, altogether in the crick." [Pg 229]

"If in your opinion my language bears that construction, you may proceed," said the Colonel.

"Eggzactly so," replied the regulator. "I may percede with another percession and a funeral at the tail eend of it. Eight o'clock, sharp!" reiterated the regulator, and waving his hand backwards at the old man in the verandah, cried back, "I will be thar or thar abouts," took his leave.

Clarissa tried to sick "ole Jube" on the regulator as he passed through the gate, but the old dog looked sheepishly into Clarissa's face and wagged his tail, as much as to say, "Ef yer wants enybody sicked on dat white man, jes sick yersef."

Nero never planned the destruction of Rome, nor Titus the destruction of Jerusalem with a more implacable spirit then did the regulator the destruction of the upper abutment of the wooden bridge on the Ingleside plantation. As the bold man stood upon the bridge contemplating the work to be done, and then upon the cold full orb moon bathing its face in light, cumulus clouds, and then on the cold waters, he said to himself; "A soldier boy that can climb the elements in the Crater fight and butt his head agin the stars, aint pestered by little diffikilties when it comes to drownin niggers."

He threw off his coat, took up the crowbar and went to work. The apron was then propped up upon skids too weak to bear the weight of a carriage, but so skillfully as to ward off suspicion in case the structure or any part of it should fall. At 7:30 sharp the work was done and completely done, the pitfall was laid, and well laid, and at 7:40 a black cavalcade, noisy and ruffianly, were galloping on the way to take by force actual possession of Ingleside, against the emphatic protest of its owner and against the law of the land. They were marching with their trombones and their flags, flags striped and starred, just like the one that laughed in the faces of the starved negroes that marched in platoons, desperately hungry, out of the back doors of the Commissariat. Just like the one ruffian Laflin wrapped about his beastly person when he said to poor oppressed Seymour, "My freedmen may make reprisals whenever they please in this accursed country." Just like the flag that waved from the stern sheets of the batteau, that cold sleety night, when Washington was cutting the ice out of his way upon the Delaware. Just like the "Old Glory" that Ethan Allen wound around his head at Ticonderoga. Just like the flag that thrilled every heart, that Philip Barton Key immortalized in the first battle hymn of the Republic. [Pg 230]

"Tis the Star Spangled Banner long may it wave,
Over the land of the free and the home of the brave."

"Ah, no," the Southern patriot would say "Our hot sun has tarnished its bright stars, has made

black and dingy the blue field, and see! it is blushing ever so red, as it is made to accentuate the horrors of reconstruction." But the flags were coming, so were the horses, and so were the negroes, and so were the trombones, and so was death, each in a vain attempt to bridge the chasm before 8 o'clock sharp. Ah, that crash, that shriek, that doom! The affrightened horses break from the descending carriage and scamper like zebras into the open fields of Ingleside. The uniformed escort turn their horses heads and scamper toward the town, even the trombones have ceased to sound now, but there are echoing hoofs, and there are the wails of the dying, coming up from the darkened abyss, and the moon is still bathing its face in the watery clouds overhead. What! art thou a prophetess, Clarissa, that thou shouldst have said "I specks when dat time cums yer will be ded and gone rate strait to torment?"

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CHAPTER XIX.

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THE CORONER'S INQUEST.

The revolutionary iconoclasts had fully established their sway in the worst and most irritating forms; their resources, directed by irresponsible and offensive authority—controlling the fortunes, hopes and fate of all classes—ramified and extended throughout the South. Mountebanks sat in judgment upon the lives and liberties of a vanquished people; everywhere violating all the guaranties of freedom. The alarming vibrations of this unhallowed power were felt in every home. It was a matter of anxious and fearful thought, "What must be the result of collisions that are sure to come?" It were vain to threaten consequences badgered as the people were into passive submission by a power that ruled supreme—a power that was conducting its operations with unmeasured cruelty wherever the ill-starred Confederacy had raised its hated crest. Retaliation swift and sure pursued a few of the misguided negroes whose black hands were upraised to smite the South. Now and then, under the shadow of the citadel that was garrisoned by the pensioned slaves, the victims of the murderous knife or deadly bullet would be found. Hence the South was the harvest field for the functionaries who delighted in the sudden visitations of Providence, and who looked for the vultures upon circling pinions above the river as couriers of cheering messages; in the language of the negroes, as the "sky sheruffs" who served due notice upon the oppressed taxpayers of this patronizing government of the freedmen.

By a custom that obtained very generally in the South in the post-bellum days, there was a division of offices inequitably made, however, between the carpet-baggers and the negroes; and to the negroes was assigned among others of inconsiderable revenue, the office of county coroner. This office for many generations before the war was a sinecure, but a pictorial page now appears in the history of reconstruction, electrotyped in disgusting caricatures. The office of coroner was constructed out of a mediæval original; it was both ancient and honorable—a remnant of the feudal system that superseded other forms of government in Europe before and since the crusade. So considerable were its revenues and dignity, that the lords chief justices of the King's Bench of England coveted and enjoyed its emoluments and title; and to descend from an antiquity so dignified and remote, from bewigged and begowned lords justices to 15th amendment freedmen, was quite a sheer descent. But reconstruction came with fantastical ideals; with its own peculiar and irritating forms and institutions, and the political fabric was ludicrously inverted and the freedmen appeared to walk through the air on stilts.

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When post-mortem investigations were exceedingly rare in a county that boasted of its healthfulness and its obedience to law, the per diem of the coroner was fixed by legislative enactment to ten dollars, with certain enumerated charges, such as summoning, swearing and empanelling the jury of inquest. But now there was an epidemic of accidental deaths in this phenomenal era. Among the negroes the most natural thing was to die—to die from exposure, from starvation, and sometimes from heroic doses of manhood suffrage. They died in the river, in the creek, in the lowgrounds. Old Uncle Elijah Thorpe, the coroner, would sit moodily by the hour on his dilapidated stoop, intently gazing into the firmament above him for the appearance of "de sky shurruff," and when the circling scavengers of the country would flap and dip their pinions below the fringe of the cypresses that bordered the river, his spirits would revive, and refreshing smiles would play hide and seek in the black caverns of his face.

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The old coroner like Judge Blackstock, appeared to be the "survival of the fittest." He had come out of the toils of slavery with his hair as white as the snow, and with lines in his black face as if a "new ground plow" had been running furrows into it. He was an old man when the great guns were celebrating the emancipation of four million slaves. He was an old man when the bosses placed into his horny, gouty hand the elective franchise. He was an old man when he looked out one night, when the stars were twinkling in the mid-heavens, and saw the luminary of freedom with its bewildering corruscations. He was the advanced guard of the freedmen who welcomed the agent of the bureau with waving of hats and clapping of resounding hands. He was the file leader of Laflin's black reinforcements. When Elijah began to grow rich out of the spoils of his office he observed in a confidential way to Laflin,

"Ef de niggers keeps er gitten sassinated lak deys agwine on und de jurer don't gin out, dis heer Soufland is agwine ter be a sametary from one eend to de tother; the buzzards is lak a passel ob rode hands er cummin und agwine," and then to disarm the carpet-bagger's cupidity he continued with a lugubrious cast of countenance, "By de time I gits de rashuns from de kommissery und de sperrits fur de jurer dars a mity leetle spec left ob de poreseeds. De pay boss

haint ekal to de sponsuality of de offis."

These post-mortem inquiries, like all other functions of the time, presented most ridiculous contrasts. While the circling carrion crows were looking for dead negroes in the river and swamps, the negro women in the cabins and kitchens were watching the movements of the coroner; and whenever the public became advised "dat de corps ob humans was to be sot upon" if the news came in the dead of the night, an outcry would go from cabin to cabin; dusky faces would appear at dirty windows and an inquiry in staccato from some sister would arouse her neighbour.

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"Oh! Sophia Ann, has yu heerd de news, or is yu pine blank ded? De crowner has dun und put de saddle on ole 'sametary' und de saddle-bags und de jimmyjon too, und agwine ter set on er corps fortwid."

"Hush! sister Becky," would come the answer; "Aint you got anudder tack of hystericks;" and rayless jaundiced lights would appear in windows; then the screeching of fowls in the coops, then pots would simmer and boil; then little Bill would be jerked out of bed with the angry exclamation, "Fore de King, I believes dis heer yungun would sleep clar froo de jedgment day und wudn't heer nary trumpet. Git outen heer yu Bill und fetch dat ar steer und de kaart fore de door fortwid." And then Bill, yawning and gaping and grunting, and twisting his arms over his black head, would stagger with tangled feet to the stable and command,

"Cum outen dis heer door ole Linkum fore I whacks yu ober de hed wid dis heer palin." And then old Linkum would toss his head and start towards Bill with a boo—o-o and then back into his stall with another boo-oo, and then Maria would shout from the kitchen,

"Yu Bill has yu und ole Linkum gone plum ter sleep? Why don't yu fetch dat aggrawating steer outen dar?" And then she would turn to pack away the pies and chickens in the basket, and then ole Linkum and Bill and Maria and "Ladybird," the ugly fice dog, would be reinforced upon the road by a picturesque caravan. There would be women and children of all sizes, ages and conditions; then the hard cider carts, fakirs and pie women, then the old parson and the deacons and the singing sisters, then the man with a hand organ and a monkey, then a score of yelping hounds, curs and fices, then the coroner in battered beaver and green goggles, astride his flopped-eared, flee-bitten mule, "ole Samitary," all with laughter, jest and song hurrying to the scene of the catastrophe; while the poor misguided subjects of the investigation would be staring with great lack-lustre eyes into the sky.

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Upon this occasion the rising sun as he passed through the mist veiled his face from a spectacle terribly ghastly. Four black corpses in silks and satins and tawdry lace, with upturned faces, lay rigid with a seasaw motion in the ooze and water; and a huge black object, like the back of a leviathan with striped banners in his nostrils, dammed up the stream that flowed with a sluggish current from the river. This then was the end of the carnival; the due return upon the writ of ejection.

What utopian dreams were whispered into ears into which the eddying waters were intoning a refrain! Shall the mistress of Ingleside descend into this cold, forbidding flood with the keys of her broad domain, and place them as a symbolical delivery of title into hands so rigid and nerveless, that never guarded its portals with one night's vigil? Shall the officers of the law, under these broken arches, endorse a due return upon the writ of ejection? When we see the star spangled banner down there, dyeing the waters as it seemed with blood, "with the Union" down, does it bind us to an allegiance to the powers that sent these outlaws upon their mission of assassination.

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Joshua was very wretched when he heard of the horrifying disaster that overreached the human beagles that were pursuing their quarry so heartlessly. Old negroes like Joshua and Ned were fast becoming disillusioned; they had danced attendance to Lafin and his pampered slaves when they were desperately hungry; they had marched and counter marched, when from sheer weakness they could scarcely keep step to the fife and drum; they had seen the hollow pageantry; had heard the discordant fanfares from brazen trumpets; the mockery of commands to "fall in" and to "fall out;" indeed they had been lashed to the treadmill of fatiguing servitude when there wasn't a bazaar or a sutler's shop into which they could enter and beg a morsel of bread; and when they "broke ranks" there wasn't a ration of meat or flour distributed to the old hulks that were to all intents and purposes out of commission. Joshua felt that all the events and catastrophes of this mortal life were in some mysterious way the annotations of Sacred Writ, and hence as he clothed himself in the spic-span homespun garments that Alice had given him, he said to his wife,

"Now eff I kin ever find my old bever, und my specks, I'm agwine to ax Miss Alice what de scriptur says erbout dis insurreckshun. Cording to my membrance when de Mallyskites flung ole Farro outen de charryot into de sea, dat Fillisten ginril was imitating Ellick in his devilishness; haint dat scriptur, Hannah?"

Hannah looked up from her wash-board with earnestness and with just a suggestion of temper as she observed:

"Whicherway in de scriptur duz yu find dat passage? Cordin to my membrance dare want none of dem charryots in dem deys epsepting Lijah's, und hit warn't hitched to no hosses."

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As Joshua was going toward the mansion he said to himself, "Dey is agwine to spishun ole marsa wid killing dem niggers, und den de werry ole harrykin is gwine to brake loose in dis plantashun. Grate Jarryko! Ef it cums to de wursest me und Ned und Clarsy und Hanna is agwine to stan

twixt him und dem twell de eend."

It appears to be exclusively the prerogative of women to be the burden bearers for others; assuredly this virtue was heroically exercised by the beautiful girl, whose heart was all sympathy for the misguided wretches. Not one thought, not a care, for her poor, defenceless self; all for the negroes who were drunken upon the lees of reconstruction, the poor slaves of a power they dared not oppose.

"Uncle Joshua," she asked in tears "Have you heard the sad fate of Aleck and Ephraim?"

"Yes, marm, I dun und heerd de news dis mornin fo sun up, und I'm missurble fur yer und ole marsa, missis. Dis werry sassinashun cum to my membrunce las nite twixt lebben 'clock und day, und when hit wuz fust norated er roun, I ses ter Hanner, sez I, Dar now! I spishuned dat werry axydent wuz ergwine ter happ'n. Und Hanner she ups und sez, sez she, 'How cum yer node mo dan tuther humans? Is yer er possel ur a wangel?' Und den I upped und tole her, und hit cum erbout in disser fashun, missis: A bitter sadness lay upon my piller las nite, yung missis, und way in de shank o' de nite I seed yo precious mammy, und she wur er weepin lak her po hart wud brake, und I sed to her, sez I, 'Ole missis, haint dat yu?' Und den she smoled one leetle smole, und den she sed, sez she, 'Ole nigger, I'm so missurble, for my dear husbun und my preshus child are in danger; won't yu help em?' Und den she pinte her lily finger down de appenu toards de crick, and den I heerd her say, sez she, 'Rite dare is whar de niggers is ergwine ter kill my po dears;' und den she banished lak a sperret outen my site. Fo Gawd, yung missis, dem dar wurd sont a shower ob isickles all ober me."

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This simple, affecting narrative chilled the heart of poor Alice, too, and her grief became as frigid as if smitten by polar frosts.

Oh, what would Alice give for the reign of peace, of law in this Idumea of the South! "Why prepare these watery sepulchres for the freedmen whose hopes have been built upon their delusive pledges? Why starve and drown them as if they were vermin, without aspirations and without souls? Who can excel these authors of misrule in the fine art of assassination?" she asked.

Clarissa stood at the side of her young mistress, whilst Joshua, as if by inspiration, was narrating the vision of the night. She was transfixed with terror, and shaking from head to foot she exclaimed:

"Bress Gawd! dis is de eend ob hit all—fust cums de bellium, den de hosses und de charryot, den def!"

"Stop rite dar! Stop rite dar, Clarsy! Nary nudder wurd," exclaimed Joshua with emphasis. "Don't de scriptur say how dat whot is ergwine ter cum is ergwine ter cum? Und ef hit haint er gwine ter cum hit haint ergwine ter cum; why, in cose; ef me und Ned hez ary grane ob spishun erbout Miss Alice und ole marser, me und him is ergwine to uprare a barrykade rite at de grate house, und dey will be drib back lak de Mallyskites. Yu jess hole yer gripe upon Proverdense und grace, Clarsy, und den we kin fling de charryots und de hosses in de creek agen, und ole marser und yung missis will be saved."

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"Grate king!" replied Clarissa, still greatly alarmed. "Yu mout ez well uprare dat barrykade rite now; kase when dem niggers sees dese drownded corpses er see-sawin in de creek, day is ergwine ter cum down on dis hear grate house same ez de yaller flies on dem pided steers out yander in de mash."

"Yu is too brash, sister," replied Joshua. "I haint ergwine ter hab dem debbils spishunin dat dar's a trap sot fo I gits hit sot. When de moon gits back yander hind de trees hit will be sot, und I aims fur yu ter pull de trigger."

"Oh, my king!" blurted out Clarissa, as she wrung her hands, "und sposin hit don't go off ur nuffin; den whot? Dis heer po nigger wud immytate wun ob dem sojers dat wuz dug outen de krater way ole Mars Jon got his def wound. Ef dat ar trap is sot its bleegeed ter be upspot by sumbody dat's got mo ambishun agen his kuller dan I is, yu heers my racket!" exclaimed Clarissa in great excitement.

Joshua was the first to interview the dead bandits. I can see him squatted upon his haunches with palsied finger pointed at the fishy eyes exclaiming;

"Dar now square Wiggins jess see what yu is fotched up agen at las. I dun und tole yu so; now haint yu dun und dun it er trying to skeer ole marser outen de grate house; mout heb node yu was ergwine to git obertook by sum jedgment ur udder. I don't spishun nuffin else dat fo dis devilish konstruckshun is dun wid, dare haint ergwine to be er live nigger in de Nunited States; und de biggerty niggers like yu und Efrum is ergwine to mak hit wusser fur tuther fokeses. Yu dun und dun de wussest fing yu ebber dun in yo born days, when yu sot down in dat dare kerrige wid all dem flags er flying at de hine eend lak er sho nuff surkuss; und deres yo po innosen wife er follerin yu backards und furrards lak yu was ole Farro kommandin de yurth, er lying down dare same as a drownded warmint in de crick, und her po leetle yunguns crying mammy! mammy! und all dun und dun kase yu started a hullyberlo erbout ole marser's plantashun; wurf mo den all de dratted niggers big und leetle on de top side of de yurth; und kase yu fotched ole Shurmun's army wid dare muskits in de ded ob de nite to tak ole marser und yung missis ded er live. I nebber seed er nigger lak yu play biggerty dat de good Lord didn't slam to de yurth wid his jedgments. Pend 'pon it de Lord is gwine to git de under holt ebery time." And all the time Aleck lay with great lack-lustre eyes staring and grinning at Joshua. "Und yu is down dare too Efrum wid dem yaller upperlips, pine plank lak de sun flowers in de jam of Hanna's gyarden er bobbin

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up und down same as a kildee in de mash; und boff of yu er smokin in de tarnel hell farr. Und all cum erbout kase dere's too much freedom in de lan. I nebber seed a drouded nigger fore de bellion fell in all my born days, and now yer kaint fro yer hook in de crick fur a catfish yer aint skeered yu mout git tangled up wid a drouded nigger."

Joshua paused to wipe the perspiration from his face with his ragged coat sleeve, and the great black crowd moved as by a common impulse to the brink of the stream and gazed with a contrariety of emotions upon the drowned negroes. The goggle eyed coroner with his beaver in his hand stepped a little to the front and commanded attention.

"Breddin," he said, "dars a time to live und dars a time to die, und ef I must spaciate upon def befo dis conjugation I mout say dat he cums in a heap aways und a heap er fashuns; den agin he cums when he hedn't ought ter cum. He cum dis time when he hedn't ought ter cum und he hes flung de hole government out of jint."

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"Und I specks de boss will be bleegeed ter mak a signment ob de assets of North Caliny. Fur de lans sake," exclaimed Joshua, "let me git wun moufful ef she's agwine to bust." Without noting the interruption, however, the coroner proceeded:

"I'm agwine ter ax brudder Skyles de slidin elder to lead us all in prayer, und ter bless de Lord dat de crowner und jurer is rite heer to sympathize with our bereaved friends in the bonds of iniquity."

Aleck and his ill fated friends were still sea-sawing in the water and after the prayer the man with the hand organ and the monkey began to play in squeaky, stridulous tones "The girl I left behind me."

Joshua the octogenarian, was among the men who were chosen upon the jury.

"Now den what is yer gemman gwine ter side erbout dese drouded corpses?" asked the coroner. There was a long painful pause when a very venerable negro confronted the coroner with this enquiry;

"I rises to a question ob pribilige sar. I wishes to quire, ef a crowbar mout be er witniss in his own beharf, sar?"

"Sartanly sar, sartanly," answered the coroner:

"How is yer agwine to swar hit?" he continued.

"Now yer oversizes my siggassity sar; yer axes pine blank" said the coroner, raising his spectacles with great dignity, "'How dis jurer is agwine to swar a crowbar;' is dat hit?"

"Yas sar," replied the negro.

"What sez yer gemman ob de jurer to dis qustun," asked the coroner. After laying their heads together, a juror pompously observed.

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"Dat he hed seed a horg crost questuned in de kote, und he convicted de prisner."

"Were he a white man?" the jury asked.

"No sar, dat time de prisoner was a cullud gemman sar."

"Aye, Aye," they exclaimed in chorus.

"Und de nex time I seed a pare of galluses convict a prisner."

"Was he a cullud gemman?" again they asked.

"No sar, he were a po white man."

"Jess so, Jess so," they again exclaimed with infinite satisfaction.

"Fetch dat crowbar in heer und tell where yer git him," said the coroner.

"I scovered him under de bridge," the negro answered.

"Whose name is dat, sar?" the coroner asked pointing to the letters J. W. S. chiseled into the iron handle.

"Haint dat Semo's name?" he again asked.

"It ar" answered a juror.

"Constable," the coroner stormed with wrath, "Yer fech dat white man fo me, ded er live, und summuns de possy common ta ters to go wid yer sar. Und bredden," he continued, "we'll pass de jimmyjon und tak a swipe while wee's erwaiting fur de prisner."

Clarissa looked out of the kitchen window and descried the negro constable and his posse advancing rapidly toward the mansion. With her hands just out of the kneaded flour she ran frantically to her young mistriss with the exclamation,

"Lord have mercy, Miss Alice, yander cums ole Shermans army; de plantashun is black und blu wid niggers wid der muskits," "Oh, my Lord have mussy on us."

Alice though greatly alarmed, replied as calmly as possible,

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"Dont you know Clarissa, we have never harmed these people. Do you think they will kill us in cold blood. Where is father? Come father, come Clarissa, we will go into the verandah and meet them, kindly face to face. Come, father, I know you are brave—and you are a Christian. If they have come to murder us—there is but a pang and all will be over. In a moment we shall forget our

griefs, our humiliations. Let us clasp hands and die altogether."

The negro constable observing the distress of the family and wishing for the time being to avoid excitement, halted his gang at the gate and advanced to the old man with his warrant.

"Mr. Semo," said he, "Yer is scused of ferociously homisiden de corpses in de crick und I'm sent to fetch yer to de crowner."

"All right I will accompany you," the old man said with resignation.

Poor Alice clung to her father's neck crying as if her heart would break, and spoke pleadingly to the negro.

"May I not go with my father? May I not die with him? Oh, my dear, dear father. I cannot bear the separation, the suspense. Please, please Mr. Constable let my father remain here and let me suffer and die for him."

"Oh my daughter, my child," petulantly cried the old man, "this will not do." "Dry your tears my dear child and be assured that the coroner cannot do me harm. If he shall find me guilty, I shall remain in jail only to-morrow. The court convenes on Monday next when I shall be discharged and return home. Give me a kiss now, and remember dear, that your father is safe: Good-bye, God bless you."

As Joshua, a juror, saw the feeble old man with great effort advancing with the negro posse, he began to shed tears and covered his furrowed face with his old beaver: [Pg 245]

"Po Mars Jon," he sobbed audibly, "Has it cum to dis, scusing the bestest man in de kentry wid foroshus homosiden. Marsar, yu shall hab jestice. I'll stan twix yer und def. Yu know'd nuffin about dis massacre, jess ez innerson ob dis scusation ez a baby—ebery bit und grane."

"Constable," asked the coroner, "fetch me dat crowbar und de prisner." "Now den, dis heer crowbar is a witnis agin yer, Mr. Semo, what has yer got to say agin dis scusation sar?"

The Colonel replied with dignity, "I have not seen it before in twelve months, I am sure."

"How cum dis heer crowbar under de bridge, how cum de bridge fell down und how cum dem fokses drouned, answer me dat?" sharply answered the coroner.

"I cannot tell sir, I know nothing whatever about the matter, and——"

"Boss Crowner," interrupted Joshua, "does yer sposing dat ar crowbar was de cashun ob dat dar drounen? Answer me dat fust. I aint agwine ter sot on no man dat aint gilty. Diss heer bisniss is ticklish bisniss, I tell yer dat rite now, und we is all sworn ter find out whedder dat crowbar kilt dose fokses ur whedder dey kilt deyselves. Now yer look er heer, when dis heer gang cum down dat rode a rasin und a hollering lak wild panthers, dey want a noticing nuffin und dat ole bridge hez been shackly und cranksided for a mont, und der horses cummin a prancing und er gallupin wid all dem flags a flying mout er knowed sumfin was agwine to gib way, und ef I wotes ter hang eny body it is agwine to be de oberseer ob de rode, taint agwine to be ole marsar. Ef I wotes, I says ef I wotes, I am agwine ter clar ole marsar ob dis heer terble scusashun und I am reddy ter wote rite now. I got a plenty ob munny und a plenty ob good wittles, too, und I haint agwine to grunt und root roun de kommissery lak a horg nudder, wid de ole flag a twisted ober de back lak de tail ob a chicken rooster. Marsar Jon shall hab jestis ef I hab to go outen dese Nunited States fur it. Mout as well be sarchin fur fleas on a catfish ez fer jestis in dis kote. I move dis honerble kote to turn ole marsar Jon loose, und I call for de wote rite now."

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This speech of the old negro seemed, as it were, the gift of an oracle. It grappled with a great subject of principle. Joshua was indeed an immune, having nothing to fear from the negroes, on account of his extreme old age and enjoying the trust of the Colonel and his daughter.

He looked up at the flag as he concluded, as it seemed to him just now to be overcast with the murky vapors of oppression, and pointing his bony finger toward its scarlet-veined folds, exclaimed with the pathos, the spirit of an orator of nature,

"De grate Lawd forbid dat yore stripes, 'Ole Glory,' shall be washed in de blood ob my ole marsar. I welcomed yu in de Souf when I seed yu chassayin in de wild storm; I bowed my ole hed to yu when yu flung yo storry crown toards de hebens; I've marched backards und farrards, tired unto def, when yu led de rigiment, und felt dere wuz power und pride und peace under yo stripes und under yo storrs; und when hongry und starving fur bread, I flung my ole bever in de air und cheered fur de flag ob de Nunion. I lubs my ole marsar ez I lubs yu, 'Ole Glory' und he mus not die—he shall not die; ef de blood of Ellick und Efrum wuz upon his hans und upon his soul ez thick ez de mud upon dare gyarments."

Suffice it to say that in the opinion of the jury John W. Seymour had committed the murder alleged in the warrant and was committed to the common jail for the unbailable capital crime. [Pg 247]

CHAPTER XX.

"A DANIEL COME TO JUDGMENT."

The Reconstruction period in the South was offensively institutional. There was a fascination about the spoils principle, the "cohesive power of public plunder" that allured all conditions of

men who put themselves in juxtaposition to the new order of things. There was not a negro who valued his manhood suffrage that did not yield implicit faith and obedience to all that was told him by the carpet-baggers, who came south as the "waves come when navies are stranded." The elective judiciary too was no mean accessory in the wholesale plunder of the people; in the sale, delay and denial of justice. The presence of the judge in the county town to hold the court was, an event that was commonly distinguished by farcical displays; exhibitions as it were of harlequins, bazaars, organ-grinders and negroes. From the four quarters of the county exhausted mules and oxen were brought into requisition and hitched to primitive vehicles; negroes who were the worthless heads of pauper families, astride the bare backs of horned cattle, arriving in the town before the break of day and thronging the public buildings, thoroughfares and court house. The leaders among the negroes would call upon the judge in his chamber with a disgusting obsequiousness that marked the depravity of their origin. Punishments at times were the refinement of oppression and as often a mockery of the law. Partisan judgments were not unusual or surprising.

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An untried judge had come to hold the assizes; he had come without the blast of a trumpet, but the compact assemblage awaited with every demonstration of joy his presence upon the bench. The judge was a young man, seemingly of great intellectual reserve, possessing a steel gray eye that shot its glances through the subject as if it were but marking a point through which his judgment of a man would enter. There were courage, self poise, wisdom, integrity apparent in the man who had arrived to administer the law. For the first time this judicial officer saw before him an indistinguishable mass of the freedmen of the south. He knew by intuition that they were ignorant, vicious and corruptible; he saw that the prosecuting attorney was a negro, the deputies of the sheriff were negroes, the foreman of the grand jury was a negro and doubtless he addressed to himself this interrogatory in the law latin *cui bono?*

"There were indictments almost without number for frauds, embezzlements and forgeries; the travail of reconstruction."

Laflin had been perniciously active all the morning. Before the judge had taken his seat upon the bench, he had interviewed many of the men who had been summoned upon the venire to try a veteran of the lost cause for murder and their pockets were filled with small bribes. He had checked off twelve names and given the list to the solicitor with the heartless remark "Now we'll hang the old secesh higher than Haman, and you and I Mr. Solicitor will divide between us his homestead." At this point of time an interruption came from one of the negro jurors to this effect, "Boss dere's wun secesh nigger dat sez he's agwine to hang de jurer epseps yu gin him wun mo dollar."

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"Blast the wretch!" came the curse of this man of baleful power, "Where is he?" he enquired.

"See dat man standin dere ergin dat postess, dats him."

"Here you fellow," said Laflin, "How much money have you been paid to find the old secesh guilty?"

The negro in an abstracted way felt in his pockets and told the wretch that one juror had been paid two dollars, while he had received only one dollar, "und he mout conwic de rong man, den yu see boss, de pay mout not be ekal to de sponuality. Fling in wun mo dollar und de jurer gwine to hang dat secesh sho."

This conclave of diabolical spirits was held in the office of the sheriff at the hour of 9 a. m. Back yonder in the common jail, behind the fretted bars, was the veteran in the cell with black felons.

Why should the catalogue of this poor man's misfortune be enlarged, by super-adding to the loss of domestic tranquility, that greatest of all calamities, the loss of his liberty, aggravated by the imputation of crime and its consequent ignominy. He feels that the storm without is fraught with lightning, that renders desolate the face of nature, his mind has lost its elasticity, its spring, its pride; and who is the prisoner, whom the black crowd follow with the gaping vacuity of vulgar ignorance, assaulting him now and again with obscene gibes, as he is led from the cell to the dock? He is gifted by the God of nature with rare endowments, whose unconquered spirit breaks forth in a sentiment such as this,

"Let the hangman lead these miscreants to the gibbet,
And let the ravens of the air
Fatten upon their flesh until they pick each tainted carcass from the bones."

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There were indictments also for capital felonies, and in the dock sat three hardened black criminals, and one aged white man of distinguished presence, who was whispering now and then to a beautiful maiden in tears, a maiden so radiant in personal attractions that she might have sat approvingly for the portrait of Beatrice Cenci that looks down upon the upturned faces in the Art Gallery in Florence. He was a veteran of the civil war; a hero at Malvern Hill; colonel commanding the regiment of cavalry that by an extra hazardous maneuver drove a Federal brigade into the death trap. By his side sat as his attorney a white-haired gentleman, who like a stately man of war, just going out of commission, was sighting his guns upon the enemy for the last time. This spectacle was so full of the pathos of human life that it deserves to be perpetuated in the memory, after the dry rot shall have utterly honey-combed the odious system of reconstruction. The arraignment of the prisoner was proceeded with; the negro solicitor presuming upon the hearty co-operation of the judge ventilated his spleen upon the unfortunate prisoner.

"Stand up, prisoner at the bar," he commanded as he fairly spat his venom like a jungle serpent

into the face of the poor man. "Are you guilty or not guilty of the felony and murder with which you stand charged?" he cried.

"Not Guilty," answered the prisoner with a quiet dignity.

"By whom will you be tried," the officer inquired wrathfully.

"By God and my country," was the answer of this veteran of a hundred battles; this wise counsellor of the law. [Pg 251]

Were the twelve black jurors in the box his country? had they ever given direction to his impulses as a patriot? had they ever nerved his arm to strike down the foe, that scourged his home into barrenness and peopled the city of the dead with his kindred? Had they like Joshua and Hur ever stayed the hand of the prisoner, when with drawn sword he guarded the portal of the temple? Great God! Shall these human chattels, without a single intellectual resource, without one ray of discernment, besotted and bedraggled by fanaticism, superstition and ignorance bring to this poor man in this extremity a safe deliverance? In conducting the prosecution, in the examination of the witnesses the same brutish treatment was observed by the solicitor for the state toward the aged prisoner, and with an offensive parade of authority he announced that the state had closed its case; thereupon the white-haired Governor arose to ask for the discharge of the prisoner for want of sufficient evidence to convict. Now came the first interruption upon the part of the judge, who up to this moment had observed a reticence quite noteworthy in a high judicial officer who was holding his first court where the negroes ruled.

"It is unnecessary Governor that I should hear you," he remarked with evident self-poise.

Turning to the solicitor he asked with deliberation,

"Can you tell me how the indictment against this old man found its way into this court?"

"I can, sir," the solicitor impudently replied, "and I propose," he exclaimed vehemently, "to make good the charge by convicting this assassin before this conscientious jury."

"Ah, indeed!" rejoined the judge quite complacently. "Are you quite sure of your premises?" [Pg 252]

"Yes indeed!" replied the solicitor.

"Take your seat, sir," the judge commanded, with a frown upon his intelligent face. "I am informed," said he, addressing the negro solicitor, "that you have been perniciously active in the persecution of this feeble old man; that you have gone out of your way to harass and humiliate him in all possible situations; that you have advised and encouraged and rewarded placable agents and emissaries to render his life burdensome and his condition intolerable; that you have caused inquisitorial visits to be made to his home by ruffianly negroes in the dead hours of the night; that you have conspired and confederated with a loathsome being—a man, however, of controlling influence with the negroes—by the name of Laflin, to inflict upon him and his daughter every indignity your evil imagination could suggest; that acting under your devilish advice and inventions, lawless, brutish negroes have set at defiance every dictate of humanity, every precept of religion, and every commandment of the law, and have turned his home into a hell; that when a superficial examination into this case would have shown you that this negro, whom you say was murdered by this unfortunate prisoner gathered around him a bestial mob of the most despicable, offensive negroes, armed with guns and swords to take his life by force of insurrectionary combinations, you dare to clutch the ermine of this court with your defiled fingers! You have disgraced the position you occupy; your right to prosecute the criminal docket in this court is suspended. You will take your seat in the prisoner's dock until I can have you tried and sentenced to the penitentiary. This man is in your custody, Mr. Sheriff. Mr. Clerk, you will at once issue a bench warrant for the arrest of Abram Laflin and the coroner, Jackson Thorp, and have them brought before me at once. Colonel Seymour," he continued, addressing the prisoner, and at the same time extending his hand, "you have my sympathy. I have observed with pain and indignation the alarming condition of affairs in your county. I am sitting upon this bench as a judge to discharge my duty in the fear of God. You are fully vindicated, sir, and may retire when you please." [Pg 253]

A stampede of negroes who had thronged the court room swept away every obstruction, and within one hour after the arrest of the carpet-bagger and the coroner, mules, oxen, negroes, dogs and organs and monkeys were in precipitate flight through the town.

"Grate Jerusalem!" exclaimed an old negro who had fallen down the stairway in his flight, "de debbil has sho broke loose in dis hear town. Dat ar jedge is wusser dan a harrykane."

The scene that followed was intensely dramatic. Men who had never been demonstrative before, at the hour of recess, thronged the judge to thank him for his honesty and courage in this hour of trial. The Governor, Colonel Seymour and his beautiful daughter awaited the presence of the judge in the parlor of the public inn, and as the learned man entered the room greatly embarrassed, Alice thought he was the manliest man she ever saw—faultlessly handsome, with the poise of a patrician. The judge took her extended hand, and blushing deeply, looked down into the lustrous blue eyes that were laughing through tears and said, almost audibly, to himself, "Is it possible that this beauty will ever fade?" Could we introspect the great man's heart, we should find even then a little weaver picking up here and there golden threads and criss-crossing them into entangling meshes; and perhaps a little archer was drawing back his bow to transfix two hearts and hold them up before him while he laughed and laughed again at his conquest. [Pg 254]

"Miss Seymour," the judge exclaimed, quite compassionately, "I regret that your father has been so greatly outraged. I hope he will soon forget it and that his life will be happy. I am grateful to

you for the pleasure of this visit. May I hope to see you at your home in the country?"

Alice replied, both weeping and smiling, that she could never repay the debt of gratitude.

"I feel that there is not now a cloud upon my little horizon—that your considerate judgment has dispelled the shadows that veiled in my life, and I shall live now for my father and his happiness."

"Ah, my dear miss!" replied the judge, somewhat confused, "do not thank me for doing my duty. You don't know how my heart yearned towards your helpless father in the hands of these barbarians." And all the while the little archer, now an imprisoned eaves-dropper, was peeping out of the curtains with his chubby hand to his tiny ear and whispering, "Love at first sight."

Joshua was a unit in this compact mass of freedmen that squatted here and there upon rude benches and crowded the aisles in that great auditorium of negroes. There were snow-white dishevelled locks under primitive hats and bonnets; there were hollow cheeks and lack lustre eyes; there were hungry stomachs, limbs palsied and stiffened here in the very May day of reconstruction. The commissariat with its great reservoirs of fatness was ever so far away, and its approaches were guarded by armed freedmen who like bearded pards demanded money. "Old Glory" too, hung inert from the flag staff, blushing perhaps because the judge is sitting upon the bench to despatch business; because a Daniel has come to judge Laflin and to give him his pound of flesh without blood. As the colonel was assisting his daughter into the buggy, after the tumult was over, Joshua ambled up to him with his battered beaver in his hand with fulsome congratulations.

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"I knowed all de time ole marsers dat yu was agwine to get clar. I seed it in dat judge's eyes when he heered dat ditement red. He got wexed dat ar minit, und shuck his hed und I knowed den dat de state had flung de fat in de farr, und I said to myself, Joshaway, yu und ole marsers is agwine home wid wun anuder dis werry nite und it cum out lak I spishuned."

"Uncle Joshua," interrupted Alice feelingly, "father and I are very grateful for your kindness and you shall never suffer as long as we live. Here is a dollar; buy Aunt Hannah what she needs, remember, you must not buy whiskey with it."

"Tank yu yung missis, tank yu a fousand times. I am gwine to lay dis out for Hannah. I aint agwine to tech narry cent of it, und when dat nigger sees me coming home with all my bundles she is agwine to jump clean clar outen her skin. I don't care ef I nebber sees dat kommissary no mo," and in the transport of joy the old negro tossed his old beaver high into the air while he lustily cried out, "free cheers for Miss Alice und ole marsers."

There were many things that pre-occupied the minds of Alice and her father as they were driving home. The old man in a sentimental spirit felt like exclaiming with the sacred writer "These, and such as these are spots in our feasts of charity; clouds they are without water, trees whose fruit withereth; raging waves of the sea foaming out their own shame; wandering stars to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever."

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As they neared the old homestead, Clarissa was standing in the gateway, jumping up and down automatically with arms tossing like the fans of a Dutch windmill, shouting frantically, "glory, glory, the dead has cum to life agin, blessed Lord de insurreckshun has done und riz agen. Jurusalem my happy home" and she threw her arms around her young mistress and in the excess of feeling hugged even the old hound. "Come in to de kitchen ole marsers und Miss Alice fur de lans sake und see what a snipshus dinner I has got, barbecue, taters and chicken and homily und sich lak."

Joshua stood in the road to watch his ole marsers fast disappearing in the distance; then taking the crisp note from the lining of his old hat, brandished it aloft as if it were 'old glory.' It was the first currency of the kind he had ever seen, for the coroner had refused to pay his per diem as a juror at the inquest, averring as an excuse therefor dat dat wote was agin de consecushon und hit jam nigh spiled de hole werdict. Joshua steadied himself against an empty whisky barrel and began to calculate as to the purchasing capacity of the dollar note.

"Now lem me count on de tip eend of the fingers scusing de fumb dat don't count," said he. "Hanner she wants a kote und a par of brogans, allus awanting mo dan de munny is agwine to fetch," he observed parenthetically, "und den dare is me, bleegeed to have a weskote und gallusses, und dat will take every bit und grane; und how is I agwine to git eny bakker, und I'm bleegeed to have a drap of sperrits. Now lem me count over gin und git dis ole fumb outen de way; de kote is fifty cents und de shoes is seventy five cents, dat won't do," he said as he scratched his head, "I'm gwine to leabe off de kote; den dere is de shoes seventy-five cents, und de weskote seventy-five cents; dat won't do nudder. I'm agwine to leabe off de shoes; den dare is de gallusses twenty-five cents, und de weskote seventy-five cents; den whar is de bakker? I'm agwine to lebe off de weskote; den dare is de gallusses twenty-five cents, und de bakker twenty-five cents, und de sperrits fifty cents; de munny haint ergwine to hole out no udder way I can fix it; now den de sperrits fust, und de bakker nex und gallusses las," and when the old negro had solved the problem he struck a bee line to the nearest groggery, saying to himself, "Ef Miss Alice had axed me not to buy no sperrits I'd a been kotched pine plank."

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"Two years in the penitentiary," Joshua heard some one exclaim as he was passing the court house.

"Who dat boss gwine to de penitenshur?" he stopped to enquire.

"Abram Laflin," came the answer.

"Don't you heer dat!" exclaimed Joshua, "Fredum is sho gin out now. Ellic dun und gon und got

hissef drouded, und on de tip eend of dat de boss is dun und got hissef in de penitenshur. Land sakes alive! Niggers got to walk perpendickler now," and with that the old negro dodged into the tipping shop.

"Say boss?" Joshua said to the rum-seller, "Fill me a tickler rite full er rum; don't put narry drap of whiskey in hit, kase ef yu dus my creddick is dun und gon fur ebber. Now what dus I have to pay?" he asked as he put the bottle into his haversack.

"Seventy-five cents," sharply answered the salesman.

"My King!" ejaculated Joshua, "Den what is I gwine to do about dem gallusses?"

"Come old negro," the clerk crustily replied, "get out and let that man come to the counter."

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As Joshua was moving suspiciously out of the dram shop he glanced savagely at the man and said to himself, "Dis heer low down white trash is a gwine to be de ruinashun ob dis kentry yit, agougging de werry eyeballs out ob yer hed, und yu are standin rite dare urseein dem do hit. I wishes dat dar jedge wud git holt ob dese speretual shops und squashes dem lak he dun dat ditement agin ole marser."

In the small hours of the night Joshua stumbled against the door of his cabin crying like a lunatic.

"Fer de lan sake Hanner, run out here und kill dese heer snakes, und fetch my muskit along wid yu."

And Hannah in her night robes ran out frantically crying, "Show me dem dar sarpents, whar is dey Joshaway?"

"Dar dey go," said he, and seizing the musket he banged away at the earth exclaiming, "Ef yu is sho naff snakes yu is in a bad fix und ef yu aint sho nuff snakes den I's in a wusser wun."

"Yu stracted fool," angrily shouted Hannah, "Yu is got de lerium tremenjous, dat's what ails yu."

CHAPTER XXI.

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AN UNSEEN HAND UPON THE LEVER.

The old master at Ingleside had been so greatly exasperated by intrusive visitors that Clarissa, who was now acting in the dual character of man and maid, had received express orders to admit no one into the mansion who could not give a good account of himself or herself; so when Judge Livingstone rang the door-bell, Clarissa who was sweeping the dust from the hall dropped the broom with the tart observation,

"I specks dat is ernudder dratted scalyhorg cum to tantylize ole mars Jon," and she crept dubiously to the door to peep, and perceiving that there was a white man in the verandah without a gun or other weapon of offensive war, she halloed loudly through the keyhole.

"Whos yu?" To which no answer was returned.

"Don't yu heer me axes yu whos yu? If yu don't answer white man I'm agwine to sick ole Jube on yu, und run yu outen dis plantashun. Whos yu I sez?" repeated the old negro.

"My name is Mr. Livingtone, a friend of your young mistress, to whom I would be pleased to speak," came the reply.

"I kaint heer nary wurd yu sez, fur ole Jube." "Git outen de way dorg wid your whinin. You jes wait outen dar twell I axes Miss Alice mout yu cum in. What you sez your name is?" again cried the old negro.

"I am Judge Liv——"

"Oh, my Lord," interrupted Clarissa with a scream, and she ran back like a maniac wringing her hands and shouting,

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"Oh, my po yung missis, de man has dun und cum to preach de funral; de gallus is dun und uprared in dis grate house, und de jedge hez dun und cum to pull de trigger, und de werry fust one he axes fur is yu. Good-bye, Miss Alice," she exclaimed, as she frantically clutched her dress and dropped upon her knees. "Und ef I nebber sees yu no mo in dis wurell tak care of yerself und meet me in de starry hellyments whar dar aint gwine ter be no mo tribbylashun of sperets."

It was a full minute before Alice could calm her agitation, as tears from an excess of conflicting sensations ran down her cheeks. Regaining self-possession she said with a show of authority, "You must not act in this way Clarissa; what will the gentleman think of us if we do not render a proper excuse for your misconduct?"

"Miss Alice," said Clarissa, as she placed her arms akimbo, "Ef yu had seed dat dar man's eyes when he sed he was de jedge yu'd er run too, und yu wudn't er stopt running twell yit. My King! dem eyes was wusser dan shuting stors," she exclaimed, as she wiped the great beads of sweat from her face with her apron.

"You go to the door now, and very politely invite the gentleman into the parlor, be very careful Clarissa that you do not offend him."

As Clarissa, now reassured, was moving stealthily toward the door, her mistress overheard her

say to herself,

"I aint agwine to fend him ecepts he fends me fust, den I'm agwine ter run agin, und I aint ergwine ter stop no mo twell I gits to de mashas."

Clarissa opened the door with a very polite bow, as she addressed the stranger patronizingly.

"Misses sed how dat you mout come in, being how dat it was yu. So cum erlong rite back of me. Git outen de way Jube, er scrapin quaintance wid dat stinguished white man, same as he was a low down nigger; fust ting you knose yu be shut up in de jail house widout ary moufful of wittles, er howlin same as er wildcat."

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It is proper just here to remark that Clarissa had never been a correspondent or pupil of Lord Chesterfield. She had been emancipated from the slavvish drudgery of the corn-field, promoted as it were from the cabin to the mansion. Her manners were direct, pungent, self-assertive, and her gibberish and volubility were immensely amusing to the high official who was now adapting himself to conditions and experiences as they prevailed in the southland; and from time to time interrogating the negro as he or she appeared without the superficialities of reconstruction.

As Clarissa saw Judge Livingstone safely in the parlor she went back to her mistress, and with emphasis of speech and gesture told her what had been said and done, and returned with the commands of her mistress to the distinguished guest.

"You jes set rite whar yu is und mak yerself homelike, dar aint no foolishness erbout our white folks. Me und Miss Alice has been aworrying ourselves jamby to def ober de smutty cook pots, und she says how dat yu must scuse her," and she wiped her black face again with her old apron. The judge failing to comprehend the meaning of the negro in the crude vernacular of the plantation, a speech that under all circumstances with malice prepense slew the idioms of the English language, arose to retire, regretting as he said, "That he could not see her young mistress;" when Clarissa with great warmth expostulated.

"Hole on dar, Mars Jedge; Miss Alice is ergwine ter cum jes ez soon ez she washes de smut offen her face und slicks back her eyebrows. My king! duz yu speks er high quality lady lak my yung missis kin do eberyting in wun minit? She haint ergwine ter brake her neck kase a jedge cums heer a courtin her. My missis seed jedges fore ter-day; yu aint de onliest jedge she ever seed." And with this confusing declamation Clarissa shuffled out of the parlor with the parting remark, "Yu's stay rite whar yu is twell she cums."

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When the negro had gone the judge laughed immoderately. Indeed, he was laughing with wide-open mouth as Alice entered the parlor, and advanced to grasp her hand, confused and stammering.

"Ah, permit me," he said, "er, er, er, to felicitate myself that you have given me the pleasure of this interview."

Alice felt a suspicion that the old negress had been amusing the learned judge in her droll way, but she did not know to what extent she had been compromised by her oddities and ignorance, and to quiet her apprehensions as far as she could, she asked with seriousness:

"How long have you been in our county?"

"It is my first visit, and I have greatly enjoyed it," replied the judge, with an effort to conceal his mirth. "The South has been an object lesson of great educational value to me."

"Ah! and who are your teachers?" asked Alice.

"Why, who can they be but the negroes?" replied the judge interrogatively.

"I am quite surprised!" exclaimed the young lady.

"Not so much so as I have been, I am sure," the judge replied. "I am a Northern man with a heart firmly set against what I believed to be the vagaries of Southern people: absorbing the sentiments and convictions of my home folks; but since I have been in your country I have discovered that the South has been outraged and scandalized beyond the point of endurance. Do you know," he continued argumentatively, "that I have never seen among my most intimate friends truer or nobler men, and I have never seen in the jails and penitentiaries of the north a criminal class more hardened and vicious than these wretches whom you call carpet-baggers."

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"Yes, indeed," replied Alice reflectively, "they have given us a great deal of trouble, and we are so glad that you have punished the infamous wretch Laflin, who has incited the negroes to acts of violence and bloodshed."

"Yes," replied the judge, "I only regret that the law interposed a limit to the measure of punishment. I would have been glad to have sentenced the villain for life to the penitentiary at hard labor."

"By the way, Miss Seymour, the governor bade me say to your father that he would join us here to-day. Will you convey the message to him at your leisure?"

"Thank you, sir," said the girl. "Pray excuse me for a moment. My father will be delighted to receive the information; the governor is an old and dear friend."

The picture now presented to her distinguished guest, a man of clear discernment, as Colonel Seymour, leaning upon the arm of his lovely daughter—whose beautiful face was aglow with health—painfully walked into the parlor, was picturesque and pathetic; indeed, it was the deepening twilight and the blush of Aurora. Here were hard, rigid lines, corded and seamed by age, and here were the pencilings of the artist, whose handiwork is seen as well in the exquisite

tintings of the morning iris. Here were palsied limbs, snow-white hair, accentuated by intimate contact with marvellous beauty and liveness of figure, that impressed the intellectual, discriminating judge.

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Advancing with extended hand, he met the old man upon the threshold of the room with an affectionate refinement of manner that bespoke the thoroughness of the gentleman; the Colonel observing to his guest, as the latter conducted him to a chair, that the gout had made a cripple of him, but that in all other respects he was quite himself. It was all too evident to the far-sighted judge that an unseen hand had its grasp upon the lever and was running the home-stretch with accelerated momentum.

"Your coming," said the Colonel, "has been like the bearing of a flag of truce; it has given us hope—life; it has ungued the harrow that crushed us so remorselessly."

"I thank you, my dear sir," most gratefully answered the judge with feeling. "I have endeavored to discharge my duty, and how could I do this, sir, in this country without using the scourge? You have a fine country and a magnanimous people—a people who love liberty and law—and it is a personal affliction to witness in how many ways you are insulted and oppressed."

At this juncture Clarissa knocked softly at the door to announce to her mistress "dat de gubermment hez dun und riv," and Alice, excusing herself, retired, concealing her laughter as much as possible, which was provoked by the ludicrous deficiencies of the corn-field negro. It was a metaphor which the negro had ignorantly employed. The Governor was not the government, or any part thereof. Had he been, Ingleside would have been safeguarded by a sentinel utterly impervious to any sensation of fear, not so ignorant or cowardly as Clarissa.

The arrival of the Governor was formally announced by Alice and he was ushered into the parlor, and Alice withdrew to give some directions to Clarissa, whom she found sitting in her rickety chair in the kitchen humming

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"My ole Kentucky home, fur away."

"Clarissa," the young lady asked as she approached her, "what do you suppose the judge thought of us this morning and of our maid of all work?"

Clarissa looked up into the face of her young mistress with a stare almost of vacuity, and after a moment's reflection said, with her accustomed pertness,

"I kaint hep dat, Miss Alice, ole marsers dun und gin me my orders, und I want agwine ter let nobody pass nur repass ef I knoed it. Ole marsers he noes his bizness, und ef he tells me ter keep de kyarpet-sackers outen dis grate house I'm ergwine ter do it ef de good Lawd spares me. Don't fault me, Miss Alice, wid ole marsers' doins, fur de lan's sake. How cum dat dar jedge outen here any how? Dar aint no kote ergwine on in dis heer grate house dat I noes of. Specks dar is ergwine ter be wun do, und don't specks nuffin else but sumbody is ergwine ter git convicted und sont clean erway frum heer," and the old negro laughed boisterously. "Dat dar jedge is er portly man, but my king! dem dar eyes, ugh-h-h! cuts froo yu same ez er razor."

Alice laughed again and again at the old negro, and after awhile coyishly remarked, "Never mind, Clarissa, never mind."

Clarissa turned her old head to one side as she replied with great earnestness.

"Taint wurf while to say neber mind Clarsy, neber mind, I seed fo now what was agwine to be de upshot of dis bisness. I knowed pine plank which er way de cat wuz er gwine to jump. Ole missus allus sed dat yu was ergwine to marry er jedge er a lyar er a mefodis slidin elder er a sircus rider und I hopes und prays dat yu may, kase ef yu don't youse ergwine ter be er lone lorn orfin creetur arter ole marsers' hed dun und layed low."

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The conversation of the distinguished gentleman naturally drifted into channels that had been cut very deep by the sharp edged tools of reconstruction; the judge deferentially yielding to his seniors who had witnessed the workmanship of unskilled hands, and what he ventured to say from time to time was in the way of suggestions or mild expostulations.

The Governor when discussing reconstruction was opinionated and emphatic. Every paragraph was punctuated with a sneer, gesture or frown.

"Had the suggestions of president Lincoln prevailed," he began, "the South would have been God's country; but wicked counsels predominated. There was not a statute enacted by a legislature, nor an order made by a general, nor a proclamation issued by a governor, nor a requisition made by the head of a department that did not whet the sword with which they were prodding into the bowels of the South, after the final capitulation. These atrocious policies were conceptions of men who swore in their wrath that not a blade of grass should spring where their hellish coursers planted hoof; that in the realigning of the federal union, strong black lines should be drawn with a savage vengeance over the face of the South. Reconstruction was the act of self-destruction, and the suicides deserve to be buried without the shedding of a tear, without christian sepulture in outlawed graves. They made the thorn to spring up where the fir-tree had flourished, and the bramble instead of the myrtle tree. In these abominable acts there is death; death enough to satisfy the grave. Before the ink was dry upon the parchment, before the funereal bake-meats were cold, they contract an unnatural covenant of marriage with four million slaves, disbanded outlaws from the army, and put upon them the mask of freedom to conceal the horrid front of tyranny. Sirs, we rebel against the outrage. When the Philistines are upon us shall we not rise and shake ourselves, or shall we lay our heads in the lap of Delilah, to be shorn of our

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power; to be bound in chains, until we shall pray God to avenge our wrongs in the common destruction of ourselves and our enemies. No sirs, they shall find that when we are prostrated, that like Antæus we shall rise with renewed vigor from our shame. Why this glozing title "Reconstruction?" Who shall declare its generation? What holy font was polluted by its baptism? Whence its bastard origin? Plots, the vile brood of malice have been hatched under fanatical incubation and piloted southward, like flocks of harpies, that by their uncleanness they might defile our civilization. Every blight of calumny from ultra partisan—press and pulpit, has been blown upon southern character. Their speeches are filled with fields scourged down to barrenness, and negroes multiplied and worked up to the very tragedy of indiscriminate assassinations. We will not propitiate the black devils by heaping their altars with sacrifices; black fiends who, like the great dragon in the Apocalypse, are sweeping after them into the abyss, filled with slaughter, one third of the stars in our political heaven. Which of these stars are to be fixed, or which are to be planetary in this black firmament of eternal night; which primary, and which central, which wandering stars and which satellites, are matters for their savage taste. For my state may God in his infinite mercy decree that the laws of position and movement may be ascertained and established, before it, once so beautiful and bright, shall go down and down forever below a horizon of blood. They may like wrestlers in the arena bring us to our knees, but never sir, shall they lay us on our backs. Let us alone, and the dews and the rains and the sunshine of heaven, (the only creatures of God left by them in friendship with us) shall give to our blood-stained fields moisture and fertility, and time and labor and God's blessing shall cover the land with verdure, with cottonfields and gardens, pastures and meadows. They promised us peace, and it came with the mutterings of a tornado. In our vain efforts to compromise the situation we turned our backs upon the past, hallowed as were its memories. We had ceased to remember the execrations of fanatics, even the 'league with the devil, and the covenant with hell.'

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"We did all this and more, after we had passed fire-scathed through an ordeal whose voice was storm and whose movement was earthquake, which swept from us every visible substance; so that in our last and extremest agony we were forced to cry aloud, like Francis at Pavia, "All is lost save honor." We gave the government our parole; we hammered our swords into plow-shares and pruning-hooks; we pitched our tents upon the fire-blasted lands where once had been our homes, and with axe and mattock and blade and plow began to cut away brambles and bushes and cultivate our fields; and when we believed that we were secure in the enjoyment of our rights of persons and property, the authors of reconstruction swept down upon the beleaguered South like Hyder Ali upon the Carnatic, and left scarcely a vestige upon which to hope, or from which to rebuild, except our worn-out lands and our own splendid manhood and womanhood. States were despoiled of their resources, towns and cities were battered and burned; the angel of death had crossed every threshold, and three hundred thousand of the flower and chivalry of the land were lying in soldiers' graves. Our public institutions were languishing unto death; from centre to circumference there were outlawries, assassinations, conflagrations; and our people looked into the faces of each other and in their helplessness asked what other calamities are reserved for us and our children. They seized upon four million slaves and hurled them like immense projectiles against our civilization. And to conclude, sir, for I find I am getting excited, in this catastrophe our hopes were stayed upon the honest men of the North, like you, sir, and our noble, patriotic women, like you, my dear miss," bowing with boyish gallantry to Alice. "The women of the sixties are more than heroines in the storm-swept crisis—they are a revelation in the flesh. What Arria was to Pætus, what Natalia was to Adrian, what Gertrude was to Rudolph, what Helen, the Jennie Dean of the 'Heart of Midlothian,' was to Tibbie, what Prascovia was to the Russian exile, our self-sacrificing women are to us. There has never been an occasion when the habit of instantaneous obedience to the voice of love and country has produced more affecting and constant instances of devotion and loyalty upon the part of the women, than in the gleanings of the aftermath by hands saturated with all the crimes of the calendar.

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"And now, gentlemen," (the Governor bowed), "if I have given offence by any intemperate expression, will you please forgive me, for my wrath waxes warm when concentrated upon the subject of reconstruction. Perhaps, sir," he continued, addressing His Honor, "you are not in sympathy with the views I may have inconsiderately expressed?"

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"Why, my dear sir," the judge replied, "I have never been in sympathy with a policy which you have so eloquently denounced, and which the patriotic people of the North sincerely deprecate, and I quite agree with you that reconstruction has unlocked a Pandora box of evils whose fledgelings are hovering over this land."

The sun was now setting with an iridescent aureole of gold and carmine and purple as the judge remarked apologetically, "I have been struggling with myself between inclination and duty; indeed I find it embarrassingly difficult to tear myself from so charming a circle. I have only a few minutes to catch the train, and you don't know how much I grieve to say good-bye. I shall be in your town again within the next month, and may I indulge the hope that I shall be once more welcomed at Ingleside?"

"We shall only be too glad to be similarly honored," replied Colonel Seymour with deference.

Clarissa, who was standing near the door with her arms folded and grinning like a blackamoor, gave the judge the parting bow, as he placed into her hand a dollar note, and putting her apron to her face, so she might whisper the better, with a negroish curtsy, said,

"Yu mus sho cum ergin mars jedge, our fokses laks yu mazing, und I'm ergwine ter tell yu de nex time what Miss Alice dun und sed erbout yu; I knose dats ergwine ter fotch yu back."

The Governor remained at Ingleside throughout the night and like a gladiator in the arena was fighting, with the broad sword of invective, a duel in dialectics with the parliamentarians of reconstruction; the Colonel the meanwhile reinforcing the athlete as a reserve. Alice at a late hour retired with her head filled with fantastic notions, and Clarissa too stretched her aching bones upon her bed wondering in her pragmatic way, "Ef dat shiny eyed judge was agwine ter hold his sho nuff kote in de grate house, und ef she was agwine ter be de juror und Miss Alice de konwick."

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Old Joshua like an overripe sheaf of barley was now to lay his head in the dust. The swift horses were harnessed and cantering toward his door.

"Son of man behold I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke, yet neither shalt thou mourn, neither shalt thy tears run down." Four score and two years were the days of the years of his pilgrimage; many and evil had the days of his years been. Would there be mourners at the burial? Will 'old glory' hang its head again as it did at the assizes, when an outraged commonwealth was proceeding to judgment against Laflin for enumerated transgressions? Three score and ten years are the complement of life, within which the balance sheet is prepared; repenting against sinning; undoing against doing; dying against living; accounts and contra-accounts, all fairly computed, and the quotient announced by Him who breathes into man's nostrils the breath of life. Four score and two years! What changes in the theories and forms of governments; what contrarieties in the pursuits and ambitions of man. The messenger came without the rattling of wheels, without knocking at the door, came on unsandaled feet.

"Hannah, I'm agwine home, good-bye," was the hurried parting, as the messenger thrust him into his chariot. Side by side he sat with the voiceless ambassador, while the stars were twinkling in the midnight sky; a fast disappearing type of the picturesque civilization of the sixties. His tracks around the old commissariat are now faded into nothingness, and old glory will wave on and on "froo de trees," just as proudly as that day when he stood at its staff and patriotically saluted the stars and stripes with uncovered head, proclaiming his loyalty in the grateful expression, "I node when I seed yu a sea-sawing in de air dat dar was a stummick full of good wittles some whays."

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In the true representative outlines of the old South there is a number dropped from the rolls, that is all. In its new birth of constitutional liberty, postponed until patriots shall have tired of a government inefficient and venal, the memory of Joshua, laden with fragrance, will cling to hearts that now deplore his death. Good bye, Uncle Joshua until we meet upon the golden strand! Until we see you again without your staff, with your face radiant with a celestial gleam, in a fleecy robe, with golden sandals; until we hear you say so contentedly, "Brederin, dere is kommissaries all erroun in dis butiful country, und yu kin buy widout munny und widout price."

CHAPTER XXII.

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AN HOUR WITH DICKENS.

Alice felt that she could see a new light come into the window, into the old home, into her soul; that a peace had come visibly into the shadowed mansion, now that Aleck and Ephraim and the negro constable were dead in the mud of the river; now that the Federal head had been removed by the battle-axe of the fearless judge. She began to hope again, perhaps to love again, who shall say? There was, it may be, a tiny sunbeam coquetting with the old shadows that had so long overlaid every approach to her young heart, and perhaps a little be-jewelled goldsmith was tinkering and hammering upon a tiny arrow pointed with a ruby, and feathered with tiny pinions of some diminutive bird, that nested among fragrant mangoes far away in the isles of the sea, with which he was to shoot down those unsightly idols that had long pre-empted her heart. The days were loitering, she thought, in their flight, and the little brownie who had been counting the numerals of time in their flight had fallen asleep, and the old clock in the great hall ticked languidly as if it were tired to death with its unvarying round of toil.

In this awakening to the brighter possibilities whom should she clasp to her heart but her old friend, Charles Dickens? The Dickens of Dombey, of Bleakhouse, of David Copperfield. She remembered how this marvellous story-teller, so familiar to all young readers, who had so many children of his own, the offspring of an overflowing fancy, one bleak day had passed up and down Westminster Hall, clasping to his heart the magazine that contained his first effusions, with eyes dimmed with pride and joy, as he dropped stealthily, at twilight, a suspicious package into a dark letter box down a dark alley. How many times the narrative had woven golden filaments here and there through the warp of reconstruction! What a bright filagree into the shadows that were unceasingly coming and going! How many happy hours she had whiled away with Mr. Pickwick and his admiring friends! How delightfully she had been entertained by the wit of Samuel Weller, the eloquence of Sergeant Buzfuz, of Captain Bunsby! Many a hypochondriac had laughed immoderately at the ludicrous exercises of Crummles and the infant phenomenon! What a charming companion is Dick Swiveller, the inimitable! Dear old Dick; reeling now and then from excess of wine, but great hearted withal. Who does not even now occasionally inhale the fragrant odors of the delicious punches compounded by that blighted being, Mr. Wilkins Micawber, as he listens to Sairy Gamp and laughs at Mrs. Harriss? Where is the tender-hearted Christian who would shout for a policeman, while they are ducking Shepherd, or pommelling Squeers, or cudgelling Pecksniff, or inflicting divers and deserved assaults upon Uriah Heep? With what a

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motley crowd of living characters Dickens has peopled our literature? What children were ever like his children? What homes were ever like their homes? There is little Pip and honest old Joe Gargery, who pauses for a moment at his anvil to observe with animation, "Which I mean ter say, that if you come into my place bull baiting and badgering me, come out! Which I mean ter say, as sech, if yu're a man, come on! which I mean to say that what I mean ter say, I mean to say and stand or fall by;" and Mrs. Joe over watchful and over masterful always, who in the alembic of nature had discovered no better way of bringing little Pip up than "by hand." Then there is little Oliver Twist, a poor little waif, always hungry, licking the platter and now and then, embarrassingly asking "for more;" and poor Smikes is more terribly tragic, for he lived longer; and little Nell the heart child of unnumbered thousands, tramping along the roads, footsore and ever so weary, a poor little wanderer without home, until the good Lord looks down into her tearful eyes and says one day, "Little Nell your little hands and your little feet and your little heart are so tired, will you not come with me, child?" And little Paul Dombey lying wearily in the trundle bed, within sound of the manifold voices of the sea, turns languidly to his sister Florence and asks with the natural inquisitiveness of a child, "What are the wild waves saying?" And Joe All Jones moves almost heedlessly on to death through more streets than those of London; and Tom Pinch, Betsy Trotwood and faithful old Peggotty and Ham, whose very oddities and deficiencies are turned into a crown of glory; and the sneering melodramatic villains and scape-graces, Monck and Quilp, and the blind man in Barnaby Rudge, and the Jew Fagan and Murdstone and Carker; and the high spirited Steerforth and Nickleby and Creakle, and Stiggins and Chadband and Sampson Brass and Snawley; and poor little idiotic Barnaby, as on the way to the gallows he points to the stars, and says to Hugh of the Maypole, "I guess we shall know who made the stars now;" and last of all, but not least, Pecksniff, the masterpiece of them all. From boot to hat he is all over and all under, Pecksniff; drunk or sober he is Pecksniff. He is the virtuous Pecksniff all the time, and altogether. He hugs himself to his own heart as the embodiment of all the virtues of the decalogue and the beatitudes. No matter into what rascality he may be plunging, his serene self conscious virtue never forsakes him. The child wife, too, passes by us into the spirit land, and there is the beautiful, dreamy eyed Agnes, who quite charms us with her love and trust, and the sad, calm face of Florence looks timidly upon us; and Mrs. Jellyby tells us to look out for Borioboola Gha; and poor Micawber informs us that nothing has turned up yet, and hinting darkly about laudanum and razors. What a marvellous characterization! Will the world ever tire of this man and his children, that he has materialized out of ideals so unpromising; whom he has reared up in the slums of London, many of them upon garbage?

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The blessed Sabbath day was passing uneventfully. There were no alarms from any source. Old Hannah in her gloom was moving in and out of the office and the "ole master" who had retired to his bed chamber was weakening as the days would come and go. Alice, with the acumen of an experienced physician, was noting the changes from time to time, and realized that the final change would come some day and perhaps at an hour least expected. The sad life of little Nell had wrought upon her womanly feelings and she began to think of herself, her situation, of her loneliness should her father be taken from her, and she thought of the crude inelegant suggestion of old Clarissa.

"De crowsfoot is ergwine to cum into yer lubly face, und kurlykus and frowns under yer eyes, und what wud you do in dis grate big grate house, und dis great big plantashun by yer lone lorn self."

The contemplation of such a situation could only harrow her heart more and more, but there was the gallant Arthur lying over in Virginia, and she had plighted her troth to him that day, that she reviewed the cavalry parade, when he stood by her side so handsome, so happy, in his Confederate uniform, with the nodding plumes in his hat, when he said to her, "Sweet Alice, will you be true to me until I return from the war?" And she promised him with a kiss that she would; "and if dear Arthur you shall never return, Alice will still be true to you."

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Is there no limitation to such a contract; are not its conditions already performed? She asked herself. Assuredly there are no marriages in Heaven. She remembered that the Saviour of the world had said to the Sadducees, "Ye do err not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in Heaven." "Arthur knew that I loved him—that I loved him from our childhood, and I am sure that our friends as they enter the gates, are greeted by our friends up there, and that they ask with so much interest and affection about their loved ones in this sad, lonely terrene.

If Arthur could speak to me now, and could know that ere long I shall be bereft of the last of my kindred, I am sure he would say to me with a smile, "Sweet Alice, your loving heart has been my own all these sad years, but we cannot marry here, though we may be sweethearts. You require a manly heart in which you may place your burdens, and a manly bosom upon which you may recline your tired, wearied head; strong arms that shall shield you from every peril. Think of me at the nuptial hour and know that I shall give you away at the altar with my blessing and smile."

Thus ran the current of her meditation. Thus in her fancy she was scattering over the flagstones, in the nave of the old church, a sheen as of pure gold. Tired out with these thoughts she fell asleep in her chair, and her dreams were sweet and refreshing until she was awakened by a gentle rap upon the door which announced the presence of her father.

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Ned had now been installed as the butler at Ingleside. Clarissa observing as he assumed his untried office, "Dat Ned was more spryer und cud fend fur hesef bettern oman fokses. What cud wun lone lorn oman do ef de carpet-sackers shud come back sho nuff. Old marsers ort to fort ob dis fo now."

The valuable estate of Burnbrae, an adjoining plantation, had fallen under the auctioneer's

hammer for unpaid taxes and an overdue mortgage. The old owner had struggled with adverse fate to preserve it for his children, in the same plight it had descended to him from his ancestors; saving and excepting reasonable wear and tear and other unavoidable casualties. This large estate of more than two thousand acres had been purchased by Judge Bonham with its impedimenta of freed slaves that had been dumped into its cellars like offal by the Freedman's Bureau.

This incident alone was a sad commentary upon the times. From affluence to penury the descent had been sheer and without the fault of Mr. Baring the owner. Judge Bonham said to him however that he should not want, and that he might remain where he was at least for the present. The purchasing of this property was the occasion of a visit from that distinguished proprietor to Colonel Seymour at Ingleside. Judge Bonham had been a distinguished lawyer and jurist, and in the very best of times had highly dignified his profession by a seat upon the Superior Court bench. He was, however, confronted now by a condition and not a theory. He had interviewed from time to time the authors of his text books, digests and reports, but from their dead lips came no satisfactory response to the question, "What shall be done with these poor negroes?" Thrust out of their home nests like unfledged eaglets, their very sustenance precarious and their condition the most pitiable and squalid. Idlers and vagrants, watching like a shipwrecked crew hopelessly for succor, when there is none to come.

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It happened that the judge and the Colonel were in confidential communication for more than an hour, and doubtless the subject was exhaustively examined and reviewed, as if it were under a microscope. The judge, had been a widower for a few years, was a man of quite dignified presence, and perhaps fifty-five years of age. He had seen Alice but once before, at the Memorial exercises at the cemetery, and to-day he contemplated the southern beauty as if he were looking upon the face of Beatrice Cenci as it smiles upon the throngs from the gallery at Florence. Her exquisite grace, her extraordinary beauty, rekindled instantly the fire that had burned down into dead ashes so many years ago.

He asked himself the question, "Can I be in love? Have I been ensnared by the pretty fowler, enmeshed by the witcheries, the fascinations of this royal and unsophisticated beauty?" And all this done and accomplished without the movement of a finger upon her part.

"You, Livy Bonham, almost in the sere leaf, a veteran of fifty-four years, striking the flag to a feebly manned battery of bewitching blue eyes before it has opened fire! Impossible! Impossible!" This exclamation was just loud enough for the Colonel to overhear, who enquired of the judge, "what it was that was impossible?"

"Ah, I was thinking if I couldn't persuade the negroes to vacate my premises, that was all."

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"Perhaps I may find it necessary to consult you further, say to morrow. You know I am living at Burnbrae now, and the distance between us is very short, and I am sure we shall become very intimate."

When the judge left the mansion the old man, accompanied by Alice sought rest in the parlor upon one of the mahogany sofas.

"And now my daughter you will please take up your book again and read to me. What are you reading," he continued.

"I was reading just then my dear father," the girl replied, "about the death of little Paul Dombey. I never weary of sentiments so heart pervading that I find running like golden threads through all of Dickens' works. You remember little Paul, father?"

"Yes, oh yes," replied the old man, "Read it all over again."

And Alice in her sweet, musical voice read so soothingly to her father that he sank to sleep.

Closing the door softly behind her she went out into the verandah and sang quite plaintively one or more old songs, it might have been for the little birds that were piping their notes too in the tree boughs above her.

Shall we slip away from Alice for a moment to invade the privacy of the judge?

If the judge had knowledge of our unbidden presence, would he not say in the law latin that we had committed a trespass, "*quare clausum fregit?*" Oh, no, it would flatter him immensely to suspect that he was in love, and that with the beauty of Ingleside. He was stupidly ignorant after propounding the question a score of times to himself, his answer, dubiously made, was always, "Well, we shall see perhaps."

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CHAPTER XXIII.

THE ABSENT-MINDED JUDGE.

Burnbrae, the home of the Barings, with its productive acres fringed by vine-clad vales and hills, had by an irrevocable event passed irredeemably out of the possession of its embarrassed owner, and heart-broken the old man yielded his tenure to the new master. The mortgage debt and taxes, like omniverous caterpillars, began to eat away at its four corners at one and the same time. Mr. Baring could only await the inevitable hour with the saddest apprehensions. For

himself it was a matter of little consequence, for like the sea-tossed sailor, he could discern within the length of a cable the ultimate haven, land-locked and tranquil; but for his two daughters who would survive him the stroke was almost heart-crushing.

The forced sales of beautiful homesteads like Burnbrae, in the days of reconstruction were not much of an incident; when there was no halting by that unbrigaded army that was laying waste field and plantation, and scourging the land into nakedness; when by the extra judicial processes of assimilation and absorption the spoils system was budding into a vigorous life and the spoilsmen were animated, remorseless and persevering.

Around this home there were memories dear and tender, trellised in the affections of the Barings; incense came forth from chambers and bowers, and out yonder where the smooth white stones glisten in the moonlight like platoons of white-gowned maidens, the Baring generations lay in unbroken files.

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It is a sad thing to see a home, like a worthless chattel, under the hammer of a callous-hearted auctioneer; to hear him cry going, going, going, with as much delight as if he were parting company with a pestilence; but alas! with the owner it is like a judgment of outlawry to pass the keys, the symbolical title, to the purchaser, who is animated by no kind sentiment; who sees no tears and hears no sighs. "Going, going, going!" There slips out of the master's control the nursery where infancy was cradled, swathed in the manifolding of love and tenderness.

I see in retrospection a beautiful young mother, with a redundance of soft black hair as velvety as the wing of a raven, with her foot upon the rocker smiling so sweetly upon the sleepy-eyed child, who arouses her little tired self only long enough to whisper dreamily,

"Sing please, again, mama; sing Dix—" and falls asleep. And then there is the old conservatory just under mother's window, aromatic with memories. Mother called it her "Flowery kingdom," because every morning and every evening she entered her throne-room there with its dais of japonicas and camelias; and there were her little maids of honor in russet and gold and carmine glistening in dewy diamonds and pearls; and they would thrust back their silky night-caps and their little eyes would be bright, as they peeped out of tiny hoods of blue and purple, red and white. Ah, this was a royal realm of the queen mother, and those little star rayed princesses were so loyal in their beauty and fragrance. And this, too, like a beautiful pantomime, was passing away, leaving only shadows that, like some horrid dream, were darkening the soul. Oh, the charm, the aroma of the vine-clad conservatory, dear mother's "Flowery kingdom" and her little royal maids?

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And there is the old drawing-room with a bountiful bouquet of memories. This hallowed chamber was so often refreshed in the golden twilight by mother's presence, by mother's devotions, by mother's voice as it blended softly with the harmonies of the old harpsichord; and it seems as if there were sweet chimes out of doors in the stilly air, and perhaps the stars were re-enforcing the old songs with whispering symphonies.

Then there was the chamber just next to mother's, embowered in columbine and the trailing arbutus where there are treasured still old letters, books and shoes and articles of vertu that belonged to Walter; just where he placed them before he enlisted in the Confederate cavalry; before he died and was rudely buried without a winding sheet, under the clods of the Shenandoah valley, that day that Stonewall Jackson unfurled the star barred banner in the streets of Winchester; to rest, aye, to rest until the bugler of the skies shall pipe the reveille. Going, going, going. It is the knell of happy days; the dirge of hearts crushed by sacrifices, sorrows; it is the thud of the cold clay upon the coffin of hope; the shroud that a remorseless destiny has flung around our idols as they fall one by one from their pedestals. "Going, going, going," the echo is thrust back upon the bruised heart from the white cold stones out yonder under the Mulberry. Perhaps Mr. Baring's daughters, who planted about these sacred mounds the star eyed daisies and the lily white violets, never thought of the dance that should go on and on to the fascination of lute and harp in the resounding halls, when the stranger should occupy in his right dear old Burnbrae. So bewildering are the changes in this life. It seems to them but yesterday that their lovely sister, a maiden of sixteen years, was laid away by the side of their mother, to arise one day transfigured and glorified; and now they were going to tell the old home with its cherished memorials good-bye; and the old graveyard and mother's vine clad "Flowery kingdom" too. Ah, every footfall is like an echo from some deserted shrine; and there is no kind voice to bid them "come again." The little twittering birds are piping the refrain of the sad, sad song of the auctioneer. Others enter now with the keys of a lawful dominion; they unlock the dead chambers, but the fragrance of happy lives is gone like the breath exhaled from the nostril. The stranger never heard the old harpsichord with its responsive chords, as they were swept by mother's lily white hands and almost syllabled her angel voice. They were never charmed by that sweet sunny voice that in so many twilights has been singing vespers in heaven; they know naught of the dead white ashes that lay in the unlighted furnaces of the poor souls, who are saying now so tenderly, so tearfully, to their old home and its memorials, its idols, "Good-bye, good-bye!"

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Judge Bonham, the purchaser, had been highly distinguished in the civic and military employments of the country. Like his old friend, Colonel Seymour, he was with Lee at Spottsylvania, Gettysburg and Appomattox, and like his colleague in the humiliations of the hour he had declined to "bend the pregnant hinges of the knee that thrift may follow fawning." To say that under all circumstances he maintained a perpendicular, from which there was no swerving backwards or forwards or to the right, or the left would be a falsification of biography. He, like all other mortals upon this terrene had his passions, when his temper, despite curbs and

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restraints, almost overmastered him. Judicial experiences had affected his manners, so that he appeared austere and unfriendly; but he had a kind heart, open-handed to a fault, true to his convictions, his friends, his God.

There were curves and lines in the physical man here and there that appeared misplaced and misshapen. His long stringy hair or what there was left of it, was of a carrotty color, his nose was aquiline with unnatural projections, and his mouth though a little rigid in outline displayed, when animated, a beautiful set of teeth.

He was a very scholarly man; a religious man too, and entertained throughout his life strong Calvinistic convictions. It was strange indeed that a gentleman so exemplary in life, should sometimes run the hazard of being suspected as a rogue by those who were ignorant of the infirmity that harassed him all of his years. When meditating upon this playfulness of nature he would observe confidentially, that in any community where he was not known he would be oftener in the State's prison than without it.

"Better a Bedouin in the trackless desert than a man who is forever running the gauntlet at such a risk," he said embarrassingly.

There was the gossip of the town in which he lived as biting as the hoar frost, revamped and magnified to his hurt. When the gossiping spinsters heard that the judge was reinforcing his natural attractiveness by the glossiest and finest of raiment, coming out of the wardrobe like the butterfly out of the chrysalis, they hurried to and fro among the neighbors, like magpies chattering and twittering, and they laid the poor fellow under the power of an anodyne upon the cold marble slab, and with scalpels scarified him horribly, as some women only can do. "Did you ever! Did you ever!" came a refrain from puckered lips.

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"Who would have believed it!" exclaimed Miss Jerusha Timpkins, as she rolled up her dancing eyes and clasped her bony hands as if in expostulation.

"The idea! The idea!" ejaculated Miss Narcissa Scoggins.

"That man going to marry!" they all exclaimed in chorus. "My, my, my!"

"And pray who told you so?" asked Miss Jemima Livesay with a biting expression.

"Why, where have you been, Jemima, all these months, you ain't heard it? It is the town talk. Why, Amarylla Hedgepeth she heard it straight from the knitting society. Squire Jiggetts told old Deacon Bobbett that the judge had spoken to him to marry him to the beautiful Alice Seymour, and Deacon Bobbett told his wife, and Mrs. Bobbett told Sarah Marlow, and Sarah Marlow told Polly Ann Midgett, and Polly Ann ups and tells Martha Gallop, and that's how the news gets to us strait."

"Well sir!" exclaimed Miss Serepta Hightower, forgetting she was speaking to old maids who had a loathing for any expression that suggested a man or the name or the memory of a man, except the man they were prodding and scarifying. "I wouldn't believe it if the news came pine blank from the clouds; that I wouldn't!" and she gave emphasis to the utterance by the malicious and vehement stroking of one skinny fist against the other.

"Why, that man?" she exclaimed with horror, "Why, he would forget his marriage vows before he ever made them. Why when he led Malindy Hartsease a blushing bride to the altar thirty years ago; why, don't you all remember that he sauntered out of the church by his lone lorn self, and the preacher had to go to his house in the dead of night in the rain and tell him that he had left his bride in the church crying her very eyeballs out?"

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"The monster! the monster!" all exclaimed and skinny hands and skinny arms and skinny necks were tossing and swaying automatically.

"Of course I warnt there myself (nor I either, came interruptions from all the spinsters) but I heard my mother, poor soul, say that she was right there and that she never felt so sorry for a poor human being in all her life as she did for poor Malindy; but she has gone to her rest now, thank the Lord!" and a dozen handkerchiefs instantly gravitated toward a dozen hysterical faces.

"I pity any poor soul that ties herself to such a man as that from the bottom of my heart," said Miss Anastasia Perkins in great sympathy. "Why she won't know whether she is married or not, neither will he; just as likely as not he will go courting somebody else with his poor wife a sitting back in the chimney corner in the ashes."

"And there is another pint I haint ever said anything about, but I think it ought to be known here betwixt ourselves and not to go any further" said, Miss Martha Gallop "but the way he treated his poor wife Malindy was a purified scandal. Now I aint a telling you this as coming from me, for the good Lord knows when that thing happened, I was a little teensy weensy tot, (with a coquettish toss of her antique head) but old aunt Mehetibel Parsley knows all about it, and I've heard her say over and over again that when Judge Bonham and Malindy would be riding in their carriage to meeting that he would forget where he was going and would fetch up right against the poor house three miles or more in the other direction, and that poor mournful woman would be a sitting back in the carriage with eyes as red as a gander's, and a looking pine plank like she was coming from a funeral."

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"Oh the cruel, cruel monster!" came another refrain, and skinny fists would double up and strike against ancient knees like resounding boards, and the spinsters would all heave great, tumultuous sighs, and corkscrew curls, like spiral springs, would dance up and down mechanically upon their well oiled pivots.

Judge Bonham was quite nervously gravitating toward a situation that required great force of character; a situation always extra hazardous and demanding the exercise of every resource.

This phlegmatic man was running the biblical parallel, dreaming dreams and seeing visions; not the distorted creations of the night-mare, but beautiful little crayons of love, swinging like tiny acrobats from blue ribbons on the walls, and descending like vagrant sunbeams upon the vermilion carpet; composite faces, too, with bright golden hair and brighter blue eyes.

The old gentleman sat back in his easy chair, thinking of the captivating beauty over at Ingleside, and there were ecstatic little chimes ringing in his ears, and their chorus always was this,

"I don't care what the gossips say,
I shall marry some fair day."

"But am I really in love?" asked he. It was a perplexing question to a mind unusually acute and active in the powers of analysis and synthesis; to a mind that could grasp, multiply and divide remainders, particular estates and reversions in all their infiniteness. And the old man began to ponder seriously upon the situation.

Something quite unusual and quite unnatural was tinkering upon the frayed out heart strings of the old judge, until the learned man quite bewildered found himself addressing his reflected image in the mirror.

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"Quite handsome, upon my honor, Mr. Livy Bonham," he exclaimed, "and she will say so, too, when she sees her beautiful image in my soft blue eyes; for they will speak to her in love and she will understand."

He turned from the mirror singing sweetly,

"And bright blue was her ee,
And for bonnie Annie Laurie
I'll lay me doon and dee."

As he passed out of the door with his brand new beaver hat canted to the right side of his head and twirling his gold-headed cane in his hand, he said to his old cook,

"Remember, Harriet, to come to me when I return, as I shall have orders for a general cleaning of the house by and by, and tell Lije to put the carriage in apple-pie order."

"I wonder what mars judge do mean?" asked the simple negro as she turned away, "Hit pears lak his mind is a purified a wonderin; noboddy haint rid in dat kerrige since ole missis died, und it do seem lak a skandle to rub ole missis' tracks out dis late day. Ef Mars Livy is agwine to get married he orter dun und dun it soon arter old missis died, den dere wudn't ben no skandle in de lan lak dere is agwine to be now. Folkses high und low is ergwine to look skornful, wid dere fingers pinte at de gal, und ax deyselves how cum she jined herself to ole marser, wid wun foot in de grave, jes to suck sorrer arter he is dun und gon."

The man of fifty-five years was met at the door of Ingleside by the faithful old butler, who bowed almost to the floor as he greeted the judge, who, placing his hat into Ned's hands asked suspiciously if his young mistress were at home?

"Deed she is, mars jedge " exclaimed Ned obsequiously.

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"Miss Alice is always at home to er yung gemman lak you is sar. Und she is diked monstrous, mars jedge, in lilacks und princess fedders und jonquils, jes lak she cum outen de observatory, und she is speckin cumpany dis werry minit, und I spek yu knose who dat is sar," said the old negro as he dropped his voice almost to a whisper, laughing and smirking the while.

"Angelic creature!" exclaimed the old man aside, as he began to feel a creepiness up and down his back like great caterpillars upon the march. "What infinite comprehension!" he exclaimed again as he seemed to jerk spasmodically; "What an affectionate appreciation! Doubtless expecting me as if my arrival had been telegraphed from Burnbrae."

"Mars jedge," asked Ned "dus you ame dis wisit for yung missis or ole marser?"

"Undoubtedly, Ned, this visit is for your mistress," said the judge as he rubbed his hands with energy. "When my plans are arranged I will interview your marster—perhaps in the very near future."

"Eggzackly, yung marser," replied Ned as he twirled the judge's new beaver in his hand. "Mout I mak jes wun kurreckshun, sar, fore yu gits too fur?" asked Ned.

"Why, certainly; what is it Ned?"

The old negro placed his hands to his lips as if to keep back the sound of his own voice and asked in a whisper, while a smile played around the corners of his mouth, "Is you sho yus all rite, boss?"

"Why certainly," the judge replied with a degree of impatience "Do you suppose I have come out of the low grounds?"

"Lans saks, yung marser, dis ole nigger don't ames to inturrupt a gemman of your sability. But boss yu dun und flung yo oberkote on de rack, duz yu ame to go into the parlor whar yung missis is wid all her hallibooloos ur dout ary weskote ur koller udder?" and the old negro turned away his head and tittered, while the judge with the embarrassment of a suspected felon was looking and feeling for the missing garments; and he turned his ashen face with a hard grimace to the old

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negro as if he had been the cause of this particular act of absent-mindedness and said angrily.

"Ned if you ever mention this matter to man or beast your life shall pay the forfeit."

"Deed I won't, mars jedge, dat I won't, kase dat mout fling de fat in de farr."

"What shall I do, Ned?" asked the judge confidentially.

"Hit pears lak dat de onliess fing yu can do now is to slip outen dis do rite easy fore ole Jube sees yu und wait out in de piazzy twell I fetch wun of mars Jon's wesכותes und collars, und den yu kin march in sar as biggerty as when yu was de jedge in de kote."

"No, I will go back home; and shall I come again Ned?"

"Sartainly mars jedge, sartainly sar," said Ned, bowing and scraping. "Ef you seed all dat finery Miss Alice has got strowed around her neck und all dem white und pink und yellow jonquills und sweetbetsies und snowballs und princess fedders on top of her bed, und all dun und dun for yu mars jedge, dere wudn't be but seben tater ridges twixt dis grate house und yourn; yu'd be pearter dan any rabbit in de mashes agwine und a cummin."

The foolish widower passed out of the door and out of the gate singing to himself,

"Her brow is like the snowdrift,
Her throat is like the swan."

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His feelings toward the peerless beauty were stoutly reinforced by the observation of the negro "und all dun und dun for yu mars jedge." Clarissa ever and always upon the lookout in these suspicious times, hearing only snatches of the conversation in the hall between the judge and her husband called out imperiously,

"Ned cum to de do er minit," Ned in his slouchy way, giggling like an idiot, advanced toward Clarissa.

"Whot ailed dat white man in dem fine cloes und stove-pipe hat agwine outen de gate?" and Ned only giggled the more.

"Don't yu heer me axing you Ned?" stormed Clarissa.

Ned still giggling with both hands to his black mouth replied distrustfully.

"I gin mars jedge my solum wurd dat I wudn't woice dat diffikilt twixt me und him to man nur cattle beastis nudder."

"Woice what diffikilt Ned?" asked Clarissa in her provoking way. "You knows I haint no man nur cattle beastis nudder; whot maks yu so tantilizin? Ef you haint agwine to tell me I'm agwine rite strate to Miss Alice; I knows she will mak yu tell her." Ned buried his face in both hands and then peeping through his fingers sheepishly observed,

"Now Clarsy you knows you is monstrous handy noratin ebery blessed fing you heers to tuther fokses; now ef I ups und tells yu, und it gits to mars jedge's ears, whose agwine to stand twixt me und him? Tell me dat."

"I'm agwine to stan betwixt yu und de jedge, dats who," replied Clarissa consequentially.

"Oh Lordy! Yu ergwine to stan twixt me und him," interrogated old Ned contemptuously "Jes as well have ole Jube er stanin twixt me und de jedge ebery bit und grane."

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Clarissa thought for a moment and replied with infinite satisfaction.

"Miss Alice is ergwine ter stan twixt yu und de jedge, dats who."

"Dat mout do," said Ned, "und ef de jedge axes me about it I'm agwine to send him rite strate to Miss Alice, und let dem two fite it out twixt dey selves," and Ned with great circumstantiality placed Clarissa in possession of the facts in the case.

"Fo de King!" exclaimed Clarissa after Ned had concluded. "I'm ergwine rite strate und tell Miss Alice."

"Und den dars is gwine to be a rumpus in dis grate house," said Ned with disgust as Clarissa shuffled down the hall to her young mistress's chamber.

Nothing baffled by his misadventure, and realizing that faint heart ne'er won fair lady, the judge reappeared at the hall door of Ingleside with his beaver hat canted on the other side of his head, and rang the door bell quite tentatively, as he felt that Ned would watch for his coming, and would admit him without knocking.

"Now Ned," the judge remarked, as he passed his beaver to the old negro, "examine me from head to foot and tell me if I'm all right." Ned did as he was commanded in great detail of inspection and observed,

"Yes sar, dat yu is, mars jedge, I neber seed such a portly yung man in all my days sar. Pend upon it boss, Miss Alice is ergwine to bite at the hook fore yu flings out de bate. Ef I mout tell yu de truf you looks lak yu was a stepping into de marrage sallymony dis werry minit und I don't speck nofin else but dem yallow und white snowballs und sweet betsies is ergwine to drap rite down und perish on yung misses hed when yu put your little foot in dat dar parlor;" and the vain old man now fully reassured, followed the old butler into the parlor, the latter remarking in a highly patronizing way.

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"Now, mars jedge, I'm ergwine to set yu down in de bridegroom's cheer, kase I knows hit is

ergwine to be yourn fore dis yeer is dun und gon, und den I'm ergwine to be yourn too," he laughingly continued. "Kase I belongs to yung missis und yung missis belongs to de jedge. Ha, ha, ha!"

After Ned had retired to the hall the vain old man, after looking all around him, stealthily arose from his seat and surveyed his person in an elaborate mirror over the mantle piece, arranging his hair, beard, and eyebrows in every detail of evenness and position, and was thus assaulted by the bewitching beauty of Ingleside without a picket or skirmish line, and with his back to the conqueror of hearts. The dilemma was excessively embarrassing and as he turned to speak to the queenly beauty he began to stammer and quite unconsciously to make apologies.

"I called this morning, madam," he began, "er, er, er, to inquire after the health of your father. You don't know er, er, er, how solicitous I have been about him of late. How is he this morning?"

"He is very much better, I thank you, sir," replied Alice with an effort at self control, "and if you will excuse me I will inform him that you are here."

"I beg you will er, er, er"—stammered the judge with an uncontrollable energy.

"Oh, I am sure it will do him so much good to see you," interrupted Alice, as she gracefully bowed herself out of the room, leaving the bewildered lover to destroy with huge battering rams the beautiful castle which his ardent fancy and old Ned's sycophancy had erected.

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"In olden times," soliloquized the judge, as he brought his clenched hand with force upon his knee, "kings alone had their fools; and here I am playing the miserable fool in the presence of an unsophisticated maid. Father indeed! Why did I ask about her father, blasted idiot that I am?"

The old judge was still scourging himself with the thongs of emphatic rebuke, when to his surprise another judge entered the parlor with the beautiful Alice upon his arm.

Colonel Seymour and the two judges had met before in the court room, and were now enjoying themselves in an old-fashioned way in the elaborate parlor of the old mansion.

Judge Bonham was very delicate and refined in his compliments of his friend Judge Livingstone, who in the niceties of the law "could divide a hair 'twixt the north and north-west side." He was the judge who had extracted the poison sacs from the fangs of reconstruction; the judge who had stampeded the vile and vicious hordes that thronged and polluted the temple of justice. As Judge Bonham looked at the man, he felt that the entreaty of the South had been answered by the Power that rules in heaven and earth.

"God give us men; a time like this demands
Great minds, strong hearts, true faith and willing hands;
Men whom the lust of office cannot buy,
Men who have honor and will not lie."

These gentlemen had scarcely begun to sap the foundations of the superstructure of reconstruction, when dinner was announced by the beautiful hostess, who stood in the door, as judge Bonham declared, encircled in a cincture of angelic grace. It was a bountiful meal; there were cheer and laughter and polite jest at the board, and as these distinguished gentlemen were bowing themselves out of the dining room, Judge Bonham was observed by Clarissa to take a napkin ring from his plate and put it in his pocket; with rolled up eyes and wide open mouth, Clarissa looked like a black idol in a Chinese temple. The guests again assembled in the library and Alice busied herself in arranging the table for tea.

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"What sorter man is dat tother jedge Miss Alice?" asked Clarissa in an authoritative kind of a way. "I don't mean dat shiny-eyed jedge, but dat man dat has got dem grate big warts on his nose. Ef dat ar jedge cum to dis grate house many mo times ole missis silver is agwine to be all gone. She tole me to look arter her plunder. I don't ame to sass dat ar jedge Miss Alice, but de fust time I ketches him to hissef I'm ergwine to ax him please turn dem dere pockets rong side outtards und lemme see what he has got stowed erway in dere. Dem kote skeerts haint er bulgin out datterway fur nuffin. Twixt dat secesh man und de scalyhorgs, wun is jamby ez big er fellum ez de tuther; he ergwine erbout punishin tuther fokses for gwine rong, und he, yu mout say, is er conwick hissef. I nebber seed wot yu mout call a high quality white pusson steal yo fings rite fore yo eyes in de broad open daylight lak dat."

"You must not talk that way about Judge Bonham, Clarissa," rejoined Alice with irritation. "I am ashamed of you! What would father say if he were to hear you accuse his guest of stealing!" Alice continued rebukingly.

"Well, Miss Alice," said Clarissa apologetically, "It mout be dat I spoke too brash; seems lak do ef he was a sho nuff jedge he orter have mo manners dan agwine erbout shoolikin und pilferin lak dat; speks ef dat white man was sarched yu mout find udder wallybles belonging to dis grate house in his hine pockets dis werry minit; yu dun und heerd me say dem dar kote skeerts aint a bulging out dat dar way fur nuffin." Clarissa with malice prepense was arraigning the judge upon a cruel indictment, a prejudiced prosecution and a predetermined verdict evidently. There was but one plea that could avail the judge if Clarissa were polled as the jury, and that would require the immediate restitution of the stolen property, and an unconditional withdrawal from old marser's great house; or to punctuate the verdict in Clarissa's emphatic way,

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"Don't yu never set yo foot in dis heer grate house no mo, epseps yu want ole Jube to wour yu up with wun moufful, ef dem is all de manners yu got."

"Permit me to ask you sir," observed Judge Bonham to Judge Livingstone, "if the conditions

prevailing in the South are not entirely unlike those that obtain in the North?"

"Yes, indeed," replied Judge Livingstone. "It would be difficult to realize that we live under the same Federal government. Society in this country seems to be thoroughly disorganized. I can imagine that some great upheaval of nature has widely separated the South from the North."

"I presume," said Judge Bonham, "that you have seen southern character in all of its transformations in your courts?"

"Yes sir, and very frequently in its most abhorrent and disgusting forms. There is such a variety of indictable frauds and many of them growing out of the rudimentary education of the negroes, that this fact, in my opinion, is the most cogent argument against their education."

"I am very decidedly of that opinion," replied Judge Bonham with emphasis. "I believe if it were not for the criminal class of young negroes there would be very few indictments in the courts; but as the matter stands they are congested to that extent that our jails are always over crowded and so are our dockets."

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"Do you know, sir," replied Judge Livingstone, "that there is a side to this ever-shifting panorama that challenges my profoundest sympathy? To give you an illustration: A few days ago, in this county of F., I saw in the dock a decayed old negro, who staggered into the bar from sheer exhaustion. He was dying piece-meal from starvation. He was indicted for the larceny of a peck of sweet potatoes. The prosecuting witness was a white man of about forty years of age, and was what is provincially known as a scalawag. I do not exaggerate very grossly when I say that a blacksmith would have hammered a plowshare out of his hard face. The old negro was convicted; he had no substantial defence. I said to him, 'I want you to tell me why you took the potatoes.' The poor old negro leaned heavily with both hands upon his staff, his unshorn white locks giving him the appearance of a 'sheik of the desert,' and raising his harrowed face, that was wet with tears, tremblingly addressed the court as he grasped the railing for support, 'Mars Jedge, I hab neber nied dis scusashun, und I tole de boss man ef he wudn't sen me to de jail I wud wurk hit out ef hit tuck seben yurs. I libs erway ober yander cross de mash. Dar is my ole marser a settin dar. He noes I'm er tellin yu de naked truf, und God in hebben noes I wudn't tell yu nary lie. Dar is foteen moufs in my fambly er cryin fer wittles ebervy day de good Lawd sends; und Malindy, dat's my dorter, haint struck a lick o' wurk fur mo dan er hole yur; und dar's my growed-up son, dat's Joe, he got drouned in de crick nigh unto er month ago; und dar's my po wife, dat's Mimy, she tuck sick und died when she heerd dat Joe had drouned hissef, und nobody in de wurrel ter git ary moufful o' wittles epsep me; und I was so hongry, und de chillun wuz er cryin twell I wuz moest stracted; und I had a grate big bone fellyun on dis heer han'—dar tis, rite dar—so I cudn't wurk, und I went to de boss man, standin rite dar fo yo eyes, und axed him fer two er free little stringy taters; und he cussed me und driv me er way, und called me er ole free issu dimmycrat nigger; und my ole marser libed so fur erway I cudn't git nary wurd to him; und den, ez I wuz ergwine outen de plantashun, I seed two er free little stringy taters, mout be fo taters, er lyin on de tip eend o' de ridge in de brilin sun arter de taters had bin dug outen de patch, und I didn't fink it wuz no harm to nobody, und I tuck um und toted um home in my pocket ter de po little parishin yunguns, und—"

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"Here the old negro broke down and cried as if his heart would break, and then wiping his eyes with his ragged coat sleeve, he continued,

"Und den dey tuck me und put me in de jale; und I axed de high shurriff ter please git wurd ter ole marser whar I wuz karserated, und he neber sont no wurd ter ole marser. Marser Jedge, I'm ergwine on eighty-free yurs ole, und ef I libs ter see nex Juvember, ef I don't make no mistake I'll be gwine in er hundred. I aint neber been kotched in no scrapes befo in my born days, has I ole marser?' Then turning to a white-haired man on the jury, 'Nary body, white er cullud, hab eber crooked de finger at enyfyng I eber dun rong, und I'm too ole und crazyfied to be sont to de penitenshury, und fur de Lawd's sake, Mars Jedge, please don't sen me dar, ef yu duz my po little yunguns will parish ter def, und I axes all yu white gemmen on dat jurrer ter pray fur me, und de jedge too.'

"The court and jury were in tears when this eloquent plea was concluded, and the poor old negro, shaking from head to foot, sank back into his seat, bowed his white head upon his staff and covered his black face with his old hat. There was a painful pause in the court room; handkerchiefs were freely displayed here and there, and ominous sounds, as if there was weeping, was heard in the great press of people."

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"What is your name?" asked the judge, addressing the white-haired juror in the box to whom the old negro had appealed as his master.

"Grissom," modestly replied the man.

"Do you know the character of this old negro?" asked the judge.

"Very good, very good sir," the juror excitedly repeated, "trustworthy and truthful under all circumstances sir."

After a moment's reflection the judge said to the old negro, "Stand up old man." The negro reeling from weakness raised his bowed, palsied frame, and repeated after the judge the formula used in recognizances as follows substantially.

"I duz hereby nowledg dat I is debted to de State of Norf Caliny in de sum ob ten millun dollars to be leveled pun my goods und cattle, lans turnements und hARRY dettyments to be woid on kondishun dat I maks my pussonel pearance fo de jedge of dis kote next Christmas und bide by de jedgement of dis kote."

"Now old negro," said the judge sympathetically, "You can go home."

"Tank yer mars jedge," he exclaimed as he advanced to grasp the judge's hand.

"May the good Lord in heaben allus be rite by your side when yu gibs jedgement." Taking up his old hat he bowed to the gentlemen of the jury with the observation,

"May nun of you white gemman ever git kitched in such a scrape as dis, epseps yu has dis heer jedge to stand twixt yu und de gallus." He turned again to the judge with a smile that played like sheet lightning over his haggard face and inquired humbly. [Pg 301]

"Mars Jedge, duz yu specks me to pay dat passel of munny to de state nex Krismas too?"

At the conclusion of this narrative our mutual friend Judge Bonham arose to take his leave, remarking as he did so "that his visit should be long remembered, that his distinguished friends were so agreeable;" and grasping the hand of the judge he congratulated him and the country that "a Daniel had come to judgment." When the absent-minded gentleman arrived home, his servant Lije discovered that the judge's head down to his ears was immersed in a light derby hat, and he ventured to ask,

"Mars Jedge, what you agwine to do wid dat dar hat? To be sho you didn't swop your brand new slick beaver off for dat dar camp kittle?"

The judge in his chagrin saw that he had carried away Judge Livingstone's derby hat and had left his beaver in its place. And he said sharply to Lije,

"Go through all of my pockets and see if I have stolen any of the property of Colonel Seymour. I dare not trust myself to visit a neighbor that I am not liable to be sent to the penitentiary." The negro Lije exploiting all suspected places exhibited to the judge a table ring and napkin, that by some inexplicable means had been transferred to his pocket.

"Gracious heavens!" the humiliated man exclaimed, "Larceny both grand and petit by the eternal! Felony without benefit of clergy! Return those stolen articles at once, you black scamp, where they belong, and present my compliments to Colonel Seymour, and tell him they got into the possession of Judge Bonham without his knowledge and against his consent and bring back my beaver and cane. Stop! stop!" he exclaimed excitedly, "What is this?" drawing from his vest pocket a small miniature of Alice that he had seen upon the parlor mantel. "Great Jerusalem!" he fairly shrieked, "condemned beyond the hope of pardon." [Pg 302]

CHAPTER XXIV.

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THE DIPPING OF THE RED STARS.

"Will you oblige me at the piano, Miss Seymour?" Judge Livingstone asked, as they were seated in the parlor at Ingleside after the retirement of Judge Bonham.

With a show of embarrassment Alice consented as the judge escorted her to the instrument.

"Shall I play your favorite?" she asked a little coquettishly.

"Ah no; not mine, but yours, I beg, and please accompany the chords with your own sweet voice, will you not?"

Alice, thrumming the piano in a perfunctory way, lifted her eyes to her guest as she replied smilingly,

"I have no favorite, sir, indeed I have not. Shall I play yours?"

"Well, yes; you may if you will not laugh at my old-fashioned fancy. I do not mind telling you that one of my favorites is, 'Then You'll Remember Me.' I suspect that there are selections from Beethoven, Mozart and Chopin that are inexpressibly grand, but for soulful melody there is nothing like the sweet, dear old song."

Alice threw her spirit into the old song, and with eyes glistening through her tears, remarked sadly, "This old melody is very dear to me, very, very dear."

"I should imagine so," replied the judge, "and I know if it could syllable its love it would tell you of its passion for you. I think it has taken possession of your whole heart, Miss Seymour," continued the high official with animation. [Pg 304]

To this tentative kind of inquiry Alice did not reply, but looked blushing into the judge's earnest face and sweetly laughed, like the artless girl she was.

The golden hours were fast slipping away, and the little goldsmith was hammering, too, at the tiny arrows.

"I fear I have afflicted you very cruelly, my sweet friend," the judge observed after a pause, as he noted that the hour hand of the ivory time piece upon the mantel had run its circuit eight times in succession. "I doubt not that I have wearied you by the unreasonable length of my visit; but like a bound captive, I have been held in thrall with silken chains for forty-eight hours."

"And have you really enjoyed the time?" she asked, quite artlessly.

"Why, my dear Alice," he now ventured to address her, "I am in love—enmeshed in the delightful

toils of the most beautiful woman in the wide, wide world. Will you permit me to declare my passion—my love—for my queen, my beauty? To tell you that I have been captivated by the only girl that can under all circumstances make me happy? And can you, my sweet Alice, reciprocate the feeling?"

There was no response from the girl, but her soul was thrilled by an experience new and exciting, and she buried her face in her hands for the moment.

Perhaps there is very little to interest a third party in the initial chapters of a love story; there are to be sure the old fancies that are animated, then its incidents become melodramatic, and then we laugh, and then possibly forget. As Alice raised her eyes to the portrait just above the piano, her face radiant as it were with an indescribable beauty, the enamored judge looked into the lustrous blue eyes and felt that he read within their azure depths, the passion of a beautiful woman's love; and with much confusion he observed,

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"Perhaps Alice, I have originated a surprise for you; please do not be alarmed if my feelings have overmastered my discretion."

The embarrassed girl essayed quite tactfully to withdraw the attention of her suitor from the subject he was nervously pressing, and pointing to the portrait of a gentleman wearing the stars of a colonel in the Confederate army, she asked him if he recognized her father in the painting.

"Do you know," she remarked without awaiting an answer "that I feel inexpressibly sad when I think of our poor boys who wore the gray in the bloody battles of the South?" and a tiny tear quivered in her soft eye.

"I doubt not," replied the judge in sympathy with her feelings, that the retrospection is extremely painful. "I am sure that I have reason to deplore a catastrophe, that over laid our beloved country as with a shroud."

"You were not a soldier in the Union army?" she suggested interrogatively.

"And could you respect me if I were?" he asked.

"Oh yes," Alice replied without hesitation, "you have been so true to the South in the character of judge I can and do honor you, and I am quite sure if you were a Yankee soldier you believed you were performing your duty."

"My sweet Alice," he exclaimed. "Don't let us have Yankee soldiers in this beautiful Southern home; you don't know how opprobriously the term Yankee sounds to me. I was a Union soldier and fought under the Stars and Stripes, through the bloody battle of Manassas, and can my rebel sweetheart forgive me?" he asked, as he timidly took her soft hand in his own.

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"Assuredly sir," she replied "if you will give me your word upon honor, that you never shot our poor boys in the battle; now did you?" she feelingly asked as she looked into his face, aglow with the holy passion of love.

"No," he replied emphatically, "but if I had carried a musket instead of a sword I would have done my duty."

"Do you know sweet Alice that whilst there were frowning clouds upon the horizon, there were rainbows with bright hues that bridged them over; that whilst there were incidents excitingly tragical, there were experiences that provoked laughter in camps and prisons? Let me give you a single illustration that occurs to me just this moment, if you will pardon me, and let me say that I am convinced that it was patriotism that kept the Confederate soldiers in the army, where they preferred the thick of the battle, and sought death itself as the highest reward of the brave. It would illustrate our pride as a nation to put the gallant soldiers of the South in an attitude of glory equal to our own.

"I was assistant provost marshal at the military prison at Point Lookout in the years 1863 and 1864, and I recall an amusing character who was brought into the prison with a large number of other prisoners who had been captured at Chancellorsville. I think his name was Patrick Sullivan, a red-haired freckled faced Irishman, clad in butternut homespun; and every available square inch of coat, vest, pants and hat was decorated by military buttons of all kinds and sizes. I asked the prisoner why this superfluity of decorations? and he answered with a drawl as he squinted his left eye;

"Wall mister, I reckon ye haint hearn tell how thrivin the cussed Yankees used to be down South twell we un's got to thinnin em out sorter; they come down thar pine blank in gangs, like skeeters in the Savanny mashes, twell weun's run afoul of em like a passel of turkeys chasing hopper grasses in the clover patches; and bless your soul honey the captain lowed that every dead Yankee would fetch a gold dollar at pay day, arter we had licked old Lincum; and I've got just nineteen hundred and seventy-six ginerals and kurnels and captains and privates in the rear rank to my credic at settlin day. That thar button up thar in the tip end of my hat was a Major, that was skeddadlin to the rare arter weun's was plumb licked at Bull Run; and that thar button on the tother end of the hat was the fust giniral I kilt at Seben Pines; and bless your soul honey, killing ginerals and majors after that won't no more than shooting bull-bats down in Georgy; and as to captains and leftenants, I just flung them in with the foot cavalry sorter pomiscuous."

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"Sad to say," the judge continued, "the poor fellow died in prison. We buried him with all his generals and foot cavalry where the Potomac sings its threnody by night and by day."

The narrative with the amusing grimaces of the judge interested Alice, and she laughed until tears came into her eyes. She became serious again however, and asked her guest if he really

participated in the battle of Manassas.

"Yes indeed," he rejoined, "and my experience in that battle was inexpressibly sad. I cannot think of Manassas," he resumed, "that I do not recall an incident full of pathos and glory. Without the mechanism of a regular army; with a currency as erratic as the proclamation money of the colonists, without experience or discipline, they had the courage of Spartans; and the proud eminence they assumed in every engagement made them heroes in the forlorn struggle. There is not a single instance upon record where the swords or guns of the Southern armies were tarnished by ignoble flight or inglorious surrender; and whenever their flag was struck, it was because the elements of resistance were exhausted. Sad indeed that the drama should have begun and closed with such heart-rending tragedies. Could I so order and direct the policy of the government, I would make the glory of our American arms as imperishable as the Republicanism of our government. I would make Gettysburg and Chancellorsville to gleam through the haze of centuries like Marathon and Plataea and upon each return of the glorious anniversaries, I would find a Pericles to proclaim from our American Acropolis the fadeless glory of the men who wore the gray as well as the men who wore the blue."

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The impassioned eloquence of the distinguished guest enthused Alice with a strange experience, and in her discriminating judgment she discovered a lover whose exalted spirit of patriotism, whose fervid oratory, challenged her admiration. She could only bow her thanks to her honored friend whose role upon the tragic stage must have been highly dramatic.

"I was a lieutenant in the twenty-sixth Pennsylvania cavalry," he continued, "and at the head of a squadron rode a dashing young Confederate officer who, at the time I saw him, was in the act of cleaving the head of one of our captains with his sabre, when a shot from one of our men arrested the sabre in mid air, and he fell mortally wounded from the saddle. I instantly dismounted and raised the young officer in my arms who could only say, "Take the ring on my finger to my darling Al—" and died. I have worn the ring ever since, vainly prosecuting the search for the true claimant. I presume that the owner will never be found. You will observe from its facets and artistic workmanship that the diamond must be very costly; and if you will take it into your hand you will read within the circlet your name and mine, "Alice to Arthur"." The girl taking the ring into her hands uttered a scream that pierced the judge's soul, and she fell heavily upon the floor in a swoon.

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"Merciful Father in Heaven," exclaimed the affrighted man in a paroxysm of agony. "What have I done! what have I done!" Claspng the unconscious girl to his bosom, he cried loudly for help, and Clarissa ran in great agitation into the room shrieking out in a delirium of fear.

"Mars jedge has yu dun und sassinated my yung missis in cold blood in dis heer great house? If yu has yu'l sho be swung on de gallus. Oh my lands sakes alive! Jerrusulum my king!" and the old negro ran frantically about the parlor, hither and thither, over turning tables and chairs and throwing info the face of her young mistress great clusters of flowers and water and rugs which had the happy effect of resuscitating the poor girl; and on regaining her senses she looked dazedly up and saw Clarissa coming with a teapot of boiling water, with which the old negro in her transport was about to parboil her young mistress. She motioned Clarissa away, and as soon as she could control her voice she said to the judge;

"Oh, how I must have alarmed you sir!"

"Ugh! My King!" interrupted Clarissa in her grave earnestness "Yu knows yu skeert us jamby to def; yu fokses aint fittin to stay in dis heer parlor by yoselves, ef dem is de shines yu is agwine to cut up; a little mo und yu mout been dead as a mackrel und den dat dar jedge mout be hung on de gallus;" and with this unparliamentary speech the old negro, decidedly out of temper with the situation of persons and things, strode out of the room muttering to herself as she closed the door, "I aint satisfied in my mind pine plank whedder Miss Alice had a sho nuff fit, or whedder she drapped down dat dar way jest to be kotched up by the jedge fo she hit de flo. Dese heer white gals is monstrous sateful dat day is."

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"You don't understand our maid," Alice observed to her guest apologetically as Clarissa walked out of the room. "We have to make allowances for her." The judge could not speak for a while, for Clarissa's oddities had thrown him into a fit of laughter. After recovering himself he said argumentatively. "I think I can see that the civilization of the South will have lost much of its fragrance when the old negroes are dead. The history of your country has been refreshed by the charm they have brought to it; and I doubt not that despite their strong individuality, their crudities, they will be sadly missed one of these days."

"Now that I have survived those ridiculous sensations that quite overpowered me," Alice blushingly remarked "will you accompany me for a moment?" And the judge quietly assenting gave Alice his arm not knowing whither she was leading him. She paused before an exquisite painting partially veiled by drapery, and bade him look upon it. The judge obeying her command, saw upon the wall the faithful portraiture of the handsome young officer who was slain under his own eye at Manassas; and from whose hand he had taken the ring that had thrown Alice into the swoon.

"Ah!" he exclaimed emotionally "It is he, it is he, your lover, Alice, your brave soldier boy who died for his darling, ever so far away."

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"You will pardon my tears will you not?" she asked entreatingly, "if I tell you that he was so true, so good, so brave, that I loved him so dearly?"

"Yes, I can freely pardon, since you confide your grief, your love to me. Take the ring Alice," he

pleaded so eloquently, "Take it from Arthur Livingstone, who loves you with his whole heart; who has come to Ingleside, to your own sweet bower, to your own dear self, to proffer his life, his honor; to relight the candle upon the same altar, upon which your brave soldier boy first lighted it, when he proffered to you his life, his homage, his all. He who returns the ring to you that you gave Arthur Macrae, would take his place in your heart and guard its portal with his life, until the very stars shall pale their fires in the heavens above. God in Heaven will ratify the compact, and 'neither powers, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor life, nor death shall separate us from one another.'"

A smile of unutterable joy was the only answer she gave him.

"Now my darling," the judge pleaded passionately, "in the presence of the angels and of your own Arthur, let us plight our holy troth to one another."

The girl sweetly looking into the radiant face lovingly answered, "And Arthur has promised to give me away at the altar, and to put the ring that I gave him with my love; this ring upon my finger."

"Thank God," he exclaimed, in an ecstasy of feeling, "the cup of my joy overflows," and pressing her soft hand to his lips he kissed it over and over again, and looking only as a lover can look into her upturned face, beaming with happiness, he said, "After all to what can I compare the love of a true, beautiful woman?"

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"May I guess?" she asked still laughing.

"Yes, oh yes," he rejoined.

"To the love of a true, manly man."

The scattered sun rays were coalescing and forming a nimbus of beauty around every facade and chamber, except one in Ingleside. Upon this threshold, shadows were by turns advancing and receding. The undiplomatic ambassador with his commission of power to slay, without being outlawed by any judicial tribunal, was inditing his judgment. It ran in the name of Commonwealths and States Universal. This Plenipotentiary had been into this mansion before, but he came without terrors, without equipages, without liveried slaves. He came softly and sweetly. There were no harsh commands that he uttered, no rattling of wheels over cobble stones, no exhibition of a despotic will.

"My daughter," he whispered "you are wearied, come with me I will give you rest." Will he come with this fascination again?

Here lies an old man broken like a wheel by the force of cataracts and torrents, that have been increasing their momentum for all these years, as they have heaved and billowed over his poor soul.

Pending the treaty of love in the parlor, old Ned and Clarissa were holding a whispered conversation in the kitchen.

"Ned," Clarissa asked in alarm, "did dat dar jedge ax yu ary question about Miss Alice when he cum in de do?"

"No, not pintedly," Ned answered.

Clarissa hung her head for a moment, and with her old checked apron to her liquid eyes, she continued sobbingly, "Dar is gwine to cum a breaking up in dis heer fambly Ned, sho as yu born. I seed it de fust time dat furrinner sot his foot in dis heer grate house. Miss Alice aint neber had her hart toched befo, but when he cum, her eyes looked bright lak de stars, und a smile smole all over her beautiful face, und she has been singing love himes ever since, und dat dar jedge when he gets whay Miss Alice is, is jes as happy as a mole in a tater hill."

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It was Ned's turn now to dash away a tear from his leaky eyes, and with arms bent over his bowed bosom, and with drooping head and a seesaw motion he said, "Clarsy, I been a studdin erbout dis heer situashun, und ef dat dar furrinner tices yung missis from dis heer plantashun, in de name ob Gord what is agwine to come ob ole marser?"

"Yu better ax wot is agwine ter cum ob me und yu. Ole marser is agwine away fust, yu heer my racket. I dun heerd deth er calling him. Ole marser walks rite cranked-sided now, wid dat wheezin in his chiss, und twixt dese franksized niggers, und dis outlandish konstrukshun, und ole missis dun und gon, ole marser is er pinin lak a dedded gum in de low ground."

"Eggzackly so, eggzackly so," ejaculated Ned, "Wot is agwine ter cum of me und yu."

"Dares where yu interests me Ned; what is agwine ter cum of me und yu sho nuff? Deres ole Joshaway nigh erbout one hundred years ole, ded und gon now, jes lived on de rode trapezing baccards und furrards to de ole kommissary, wid his happysack und jimmyjon as emty as my tub dere wid nary botom, twell ole mars fotched him back home; und pend pon it, Ned, ef Miss Alice don't make some perwishun fur me und yu, we's agwine to suck sorrow as sho as yer born."

"Dat's de gospil troof," replied Ned.

"Uncle Ned," came the voice of Alice from the parlor, "Will you please bring Judge Livingstone's hat to him?"

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"Sartainly, yung missis," quickly the negro replied, and he ran as fast as his stiff joints would permit, and bowing very humbly, placed the hat in the judge's hand.

"And will you not give me a kiss now in the presence of your old servant?" asked the judge. And

the beautiful girl, half yielding, allowed her lover to print one or more upon her rosy lips.

"Adieu my love, until I come again in October to claim my own."

Alice returned to the parlor and threw her soul into the old, old song, the judge's favorite, "Then you'll remember me."

Ned shuffled back to Clarissa with his old bandana to his eyes with the observation "Taint wuff while to pester yosef er sobbing und er sighing no mo Clarsy, I dun und seed de margige sealed und livered. I heerd the nupshall wows sploding same as er passel of poppercrackers."

"Oh my heavens," screamed Clarissa, as she jerked her old apron to her eyes.

The three blood red stars were now blotted out of the reconstruction calendar; like the painted dolphins in the circus at Antioch, they had been taken down one by one. The old Colonel had been running flank and flank with the athletes of reconstruction, but within the last stadium he had lost, and the old man, like the fire scathed oak, was yielding his life after all; dying like a gladiator with his wounds upon his breast; dying, yet holding fast to the traditions of his fathers, with no blemish upon their name or his; with no bar sinister upon the family shield; with no stain upon his sword. Dying a Seymour, a soldier, a southron of the bluest blood; dying with the prophecy upon his lips, "The old South, by the help of God, shall be crowned with all the blessings of civilization, with the last and highest attainments in the manhood and womanhood of her people," Dying with another prophecy upon his lips, scarcely audible, "My daughter, you will live to see the old South, now reeling and tottering like a bewildered traveller, come to her own again; like a magnanimous queen, reigning in love and tranquility; her soil yielding its harvest in bounty, and her people blessed in basket and store."

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CHAPTER XXV.

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THE PARTING OF THE WAYS.

Afflictive dispensations had so often heaped up against the horizon of Alice's affections, frowning, angry clouds; the memory of bier and pall had so cruelly overlaid her young life with its gloom that but for the solace of religion, there would be no refuge from the bitterness of her grief; from the shadows of the grave. But in her mother's chamber, with her mother's precious Bible in her hands, she felt that there was a fountain opened up before her, yes in the very house of David. "Blessed Book! What is life without thee?" she exclaimed. "Is it not a faithful transcript of the last will of our Redeemer? Is it not the key that unlocks the door of Heaven? Yea the guide that elaborates its beauties? 'Eye hath not seen; ear hath not heard; neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive of those things which He hath prepared for them that love Him.'" She felt that in the world's tragedy of sin it was indeed a savor of life unto life; that it erects in the human soul, where there is sin, sorrow and despair, a sanitarium; rendering good for evil, giving back pardon for injury; preferring pity to vengeance; kneeling always upon the heights of virtue to uplift the broken-hearted. Whether its blessed truths be spoken in prophecy or narrative; whether whispered from the sepulchre or the crypt; whether thundered from Sinai or Mars Hill; they tenderly lead poor, fallen human nature into the portals of immortality, into the very gate of Heaven. "Has not religion," she asked, "given to humanity an uplifted brow? Has it not admonished man to put away from him every mercenary calculation and to realize that the scourges of sin are rotting whip cords? Ah yes, wherever there is a tear, there is love, wherever anguish there is consolation, whenever the night is dark and starless and there are deep shadows, an angel stands with bowed head and welcoming arms. What a balm for the scarified, bleeding heart! A precious pearl of great price in a casket of exceeding beauty; a sword of ethereal temper that divides unto the sundering of bone and marrow; but there are diamonds upon the hilt and golden tracery upon the scabbard. Ah, the resurrection, who gives this promise, this faith, this hope? In all the dead aeons of dead centuries, science, nature, man, have asked in vain 'If a man die shall he live again?'—But just as in scaling a beautiful mountain, it needs no chemistry to analyze the air, to tell us that it is free from miasma, as every breath which paints a ruddier glow upon the cheek and sends a tonic tide through the body, will tell of its invigorating touch; so it needs no analysis, no reasoning, to persuade a spiritual mind that the air of Heaven, the breath of God is in this book; and just as on Tabor's brow, when from Christ His own glory pierced its callous, unfeeling sides, it needed no refracting prism to tell us that it was the sunburst of more than earthly radiance the pilgrims were gazing upon. So when a Bible chapter is transfigured, when the Holy Spirit transmutes into it his grace and glory, it will require neither a Paley or Shenstone to prove that the power and wisdom of God are there; but radiant with emitted splendor, in God's own light we will see it to be God's own Book, and know it to be His blessed revelation. 'I know that my Redeemer liveth and that in my flesh I shall see God.' The light of faith in the afflicted man of God was burning feebly, but he begins to feel now the strength, the virtue, which lies in innocency, as if God were beginning to reveal Himself within him. He heeds no longer the hyper-Calvinist when he tells him, 'Thou has taken a pledge from thy brother for naught, and stripped the naked of their clothing; thou has not given water to the weary, and thou hast withholden bread from the hungry.' He raises his finger as if he would command attention and exclaims, not in irony, but in tranquil self-possession, 'God forbid that I should justify you; till I die, I will not remove my integrity from me. My righteousness I will not let go. My heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.'

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"Pictorial scriptures, truly, comprehending all manners, all conditions, all countries. Egypt with the Nile and the Pyramids, the nomad Arabs, the bewildered caravans, the heat of the tropics, the ice of the north, are there; all save the frozen heart of Jewish traditions and ceremonials. How divinely transfigured every page of the precious Book, wherein is life eternal!"

In the great voiceless halls and chambers there was no sound but her poor, tumultuous heart beating wildly against a bosom sore with weeping. Alas, for ties that are so fragile, for pleasures that are so transitory! Old Clarissa would steal tip-toe to her chamber, but she dared not enter, and would return as softly to the kitchen.

"Po Miss Alice, she do suffer mazin. Pears lak ebery now und den when her eyes gits bright und her face is sunny und sweet, und her lafter is lak de ripplin ob de little brook in de medder, dat de good Lord draps anudder drug in de cup und maks her drink ebery drap. Dere aint a gwine to be no mo sorrer for Miss Alice now; yung Mars Harry is gon, und missis is gon, und ole marser is gon, und bimeby her eyes is agwine to git bright agin, und her purty solemcholly face is er gwine to be full of smiles, und de little birds is ergwine to hang dere heads und drap to sleep when she sings dem lubly ole fashined himes agin."

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The poor girl finally fell asleep. It was the only anodyne that nature had in her laboratory for a broken heart; and she slept as tranquilly as a little child. She awoke refreshed by dreams, peopled by friends of her early childhood, many of whom were living and happy. She went into the kitchen, to give directions to Clarissa, whom she found at her accustomed labor. Crushed and spiritless as she was, there was comfort for her in the broken, incoherent utterances of the old negro.

"Don't cry no mo," said Clarissa quite sympathetically. "I used to heer ole missis say when she was ailin monstrous bad, dat ebery cloud had a silver linin, und I beliebs it pine plank. I beliebs dat when de good Lord sends trouble on dis here lan He's ergwine ter sen grace too. Dat's my belief, yung misses, und I'm ergwine to lib by it und I'm ergwine to die by it. When I looked down into ole marser's grave and seed all dem lilies ob de walley kivered up in de dirt, I node de good Lord was not ergwine to mommuck up ole marser's soul fur nuthin. I node dere wuz ergwine to be a transplantin in His hebenly garden of all de beautifullest flowers dat withers and parishes here in dese low grouns oh sorrow, und I sez to mysef, dat I specks ole missis is er runnin ter meet ole marser dis bery minit, wid boff hans chock full ob white roses und jonquils und lilies ob de walley. Duz yer kno what I beliebs, Miss Alice?" she continued, as she wiped her eyes in her old checked apron. "When I sees a little white flower er droopin und er dyin in ole missis' garden, I nose dat she hez cum down fru de purly gates to pull it und tak it back in her busum to yung Mars Harry; und when I sees a little teensy baby a droopin und er dyin jest lak dat little flower, I nose de good Lawd is er takin it home in His busum too. Wun ob dese days yu und me is agwine ter see fur ousefs. Bress de Lawd!"

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The days were passing now so languidly, and wretchedness was still brooding in the heart of Alice. To one event, however, she looked forward with intense yearnings. There was somewhere in the wide, wide world a great sympathetic heart perpetually telegraphing its love, and she was feeling the electric current in its pulsations every moment in the day. He had promised to come again in the mellow, fragrant month of October, before the flowers fade and die; when the artist of nature is painting the foliage upon the trees green, purple and golden, and with a richer iris the twilight sky, and dappling the fleecy clouds. Yes, he is coming, not as the judge of the assizes, but as a prisoner of hope. Her affections hitherto were divided—now he yearns for the whole heart. Coming to endow her with a treasure selfishly coveted above rubies and diamonds, above principalities and thrones; coming to plight his troth at God's altar, that in sickness and in health they would cling to one another till death doth part them.

How would Alice appear in her funereal robes before him, before the altar? Perhaps Clarissa can reassure her in this dilemma.

"Miss Alice," she exclaimed as she clapped her hands approvingly, "If yer is as butiful when the jedge cums as yer is now, dat er po man is ergwine stracted wid hissef. I clare fore my blessed Marster up yander if I had er node how butiful yer is agwine ter look in dat black mourning, I wuld er swaded yer to dun und dun it fore ole marsa died." And what is going to become of Clarissa and Ned? The mildew of age is upon them both. For years past their old heads have been whitening with the hoar frost. "Now ole marsa is dun und gon, de fambly is ergwine to break up und de grate house is agwine to be the home of de owls, und de swallers und de bull-bats." So thought Clarissa as in the quiet gloaming she stood in the verandah, and listened to the melancholy winds and the more melancholy bleating of the cattle. Ned had been doing little chores about the house all the day, and after he had eaten his supper, he and Clarissa had by permission assembled in the dining-room where they found their young mistress engaged in some light needle work. She of course welcomed the negroes heartily. They were her friends and had been through many sore trials.

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Clarissa was the first to break the silence, as she enquired of her young mistress the day of the month.

"It is the 27th day of September replied Alice."

"Ugh! Ugh! I tole yer so Ned. Aint nex mont October?" she asked again.

"Yes, why do you ask?" replied Alice.

"Kase Ned sed the jedge warnt agwine to cum no mo twell juvember. Ned is frustrated monstrus, Miss Alice. So skeered de jedge is ergwine to tak yer away frum me und him."

"And if he does, I am sure you will both be very glad," Alice replied.

"Dat mout be so, yung mistress ef me und Clarsy wus peerter und cud fend fur deyselves. But bofe uv us is mity cranksided now er days, und de Lord in Heaben only nose whar we'se agwine to git ary moufful ob wittles when yu is dun und gon to de tother eend ov de yearth. Me und Clarsy slaved fur ole marsa fore de bellyun fell, und we aint got no ole marsa to look bak to now, und we puts our pence in yu yung mistress."

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"If I go away, Uncle Ned," replied Alice, "you and Clarissa shall never suffer as long as I live."

"Ugh! Ugh! now yer got de wurd," exclaimed Clarissa in tears.

"I haint er mistrusting yu Miss Alice," Ned answered, quite dejectedly, as he raised his old coat sleeve to his face, "but when yer is dun und gon clean away how is yer eber agwine to git to us, ef me er Clarissy mout need ye? Dar is de pint right dar, misses. Ef I hes er bad misery in my head, und calls fur Miss Alice she cums lak er butterfly und lays her soft hands on my po head und de misery stops rite short; und ef I hankers arter er chicken it is de same fing. Ef yer duz go erway, misses, old Ned will follow yer with his shaky jints twill yer gits clean, clar outen site, und pray ebery day de Lord sens, dat yer mout be ez happy as de angels."

It was Alice's turn as a matter of conceit to ask the old negro what he thought of Judge Livingstone?

"Dat is a pinted questun," Ned answered hesitatingly.

"You mout ax me ef he was er suple man und dat wudn't be a pinted questun, but yung missis I'm blegged to mistrust dese furreners dat cums down here und spreads deyselves all ober de lan, und fetches freedum und de horg colery, und plays ruination wid our white fokses, und den runs clean clar away wid our white gals, upsotting de whole creashun wid dey flamborgasted fixments. You mout be happy way off yander to de tuther eend ob de yearth, den agin you mouten. Yer can't tell misses how fur de bull-frog is ergwine ter jump by lookin at his mouf."

To the foregoing argument Clarissa was assenting by repeated nods of the head, ejaculating occasionally "Ugh! Ugh! dats de gospel trufe."

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"But Uncle Ned," enquired Alice, "would you have me as your friend, a poor lonely girl to remain at Ingleside without protection? Why don't you know I would be miserable?"

"Yer mout be miserabler dan yer is, misses. Heep er times our white gals finks dey is er upsotting de yearth by gittin jined to de furreners when dey is er flinging de fat in de fire. Look at dat white gal ober de medder. She run away wid wun ob dese carpet-sackers, und she wus dat proud dat she wud hold her nose ef de po white trash breshed up agin her cote skeerts. Und where is she now?"

"Ugh! Ugh!" ejaculated Clarissa. "Wid de furrener in de penitenshur, und she ergwine to de ole kommissary fur her rashuns. Don't yer see?" exclaimed Clarissa.

"Now misses I aint er sensing yer wid nun ob dis bad luck, und I aint er putting de jedge on er ekality wid de furrener in de penitenshur, but yer don't know misses what is ergwine to happen when de rope is er roun yer neck, und de furrener has got hold ob de tuther eend."

"Dat yer don't," exclaimed Clarissa, rocking to and fro.

"Und yer don't know missis whar me und Clarissa is ergwine when dat ar jedge gits to be de boss ob dis heer plantashun."

"Oh my Lord," shouted Clarissa as she burst into tears. "Dats maks me ses wat I dos, yung missis, dat yu axes me a pinted questun. Dats de truf. It sho is."

Old Ned groaned as the gravity of the argument seemed to affect him and brushed a tear from his eye with the sleeve of his coat. The matter was of momentous consequence to these old landmarks of a decayed civilization, and they felt it acutely. Old Master as long as he lived had held out the lighted candle to light up the dreary, tortuous paths into which reconstruction was driving the old negroes; but the flame had died down into cold ashes, and the hand that held it aloft was nerveless and dead. There came as it were to their old hearts a sad, sad refrain—"Breaking up! breaking up!" It came from the winds that moaned in and out of broken window shutters. It came from the feathered songsters, Prima Donnas of the air, who were sending forth their advance agents to secure homes in Southern climes. "Breaking up! breaking up!" Between such as these and their former masters were there not higher and holier feelings and relations than those of master and servant? Without them the South would have been the mere appurtenance of the commercial North, dragging after it the weary chain of colonial dependence. What a wilderness of wealth they brought to our firesides, what a teeming aggregation of populous and powerful states! Let us at least give these old slaves one look of kindness in the desolate twilight of their lingering days.

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The old negroes bade their young mistress a hearty good night. "May de angels shelter yer dis nite und all tuther nites wid dere whings, missis," exclaimed Ned as he followed Clarissa out of the door. It was the saddest of all anticipations. They loved Alice as if she were the apple of the eye—the heart's core. Their sufferings and privations, their joys and happiness in common, had touched as it were the two extremes of the varied horizon of life. And now they were advancing toward the parting of the ways. Ned and Clarissa, with unsteady, faltering footsteps toward the sunset, the gloaming, the end of life; the young mistress toward the sunrise, never so resplendent as now.

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Judge Livingstone, with his clerical friend from the North, arrived at the appointed time at Ingleside; he a bachelor of thirty-five, to wed this beautiful heiress, the exquisite flower that had budded and bloomed like a rose for twenty-six seasons. Arrived to lacerate the old slavish hearts, that clung so helplessly to the young mistress, like morning glories around the fair flower. Arrived to snatch from Ingleside so rudely its life, its hope, its promise—the all in all to poor Clarissa and old Ned. "Eben ole Jube knows dat sumfing solemkolly is ergwine to happin," observed Clarissa to her young mistress, as she assisted the bride in her adornments for the nuptial hour. "Jess look at dat ole fafeul dorg a lyin dare jess a strugglin wid his moshuns, lak he was a humans sho nuff."

The minister stood at the little altar in the parlor. The ring that Alice had given to "Arthur" was slipped upon her finger, and in the presence of the angels, Judge Livingstone and Alice were made man and wife. As Ned and Clarissa passed out of the little verandah, Ned observed with streaming eyes, "Now Clarsy, dere is no mo music fur us but de crickets upon de hath. Miss Alice has dun und sung her las hime und we kaint foller Miss Alice whar she is ergwine no mo. Ef we uns is tuk sick we kaint holler fur Miss Alice no mo. I feels lak I haint got no frend now. Miss Alice dun jined hersef to dat furriner."

"Dat is Gords truf Ned," exclaimed Clarissa as she drew her old checked apron across her eyes, "Hit pears lak dere is nuffin in dis wurrel epseps tribulashun of sperits. But bress her dear heart," the old negro continued, "I hope she may be jes es happy es de larks down in de medder, und dat when she arrivs way ober yander whar she is er gwine she will send her membrunces to me und yu fortwid."

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It was necessary that Ingleside should be placed in first class order. Above all things else it was necessary that ample provision should be made for Clarissa and Ned. These arrangements in minutest detail were satisfactorily made, as the Judge observed to his bride one morning after the wedding, "Do you not grieve to part from your old friends, my dear?"

Tears came into the sweet girl's eyes as she replied so tenderly, "Yes, yes, they cling so helplessly to me, but dear Arthur, you will not forget them, will you?"

[THE END.]

ERRATA.

[Pg 327]

In the 15th line, page 78, for "permit" read "pretermite."

In line 25, page 99, the word "first" should read "fifth."

In line 2, page 139, for "preservingly" read "perseveringly."

Transcriber's Note:

- Added List of Illustrations.
- The Errata noted at the end of the text have been corrected in this version.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE BROKEN SWORD; OR, A PICTORIAL
PAGE IN RECONSTRUCTION ***

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