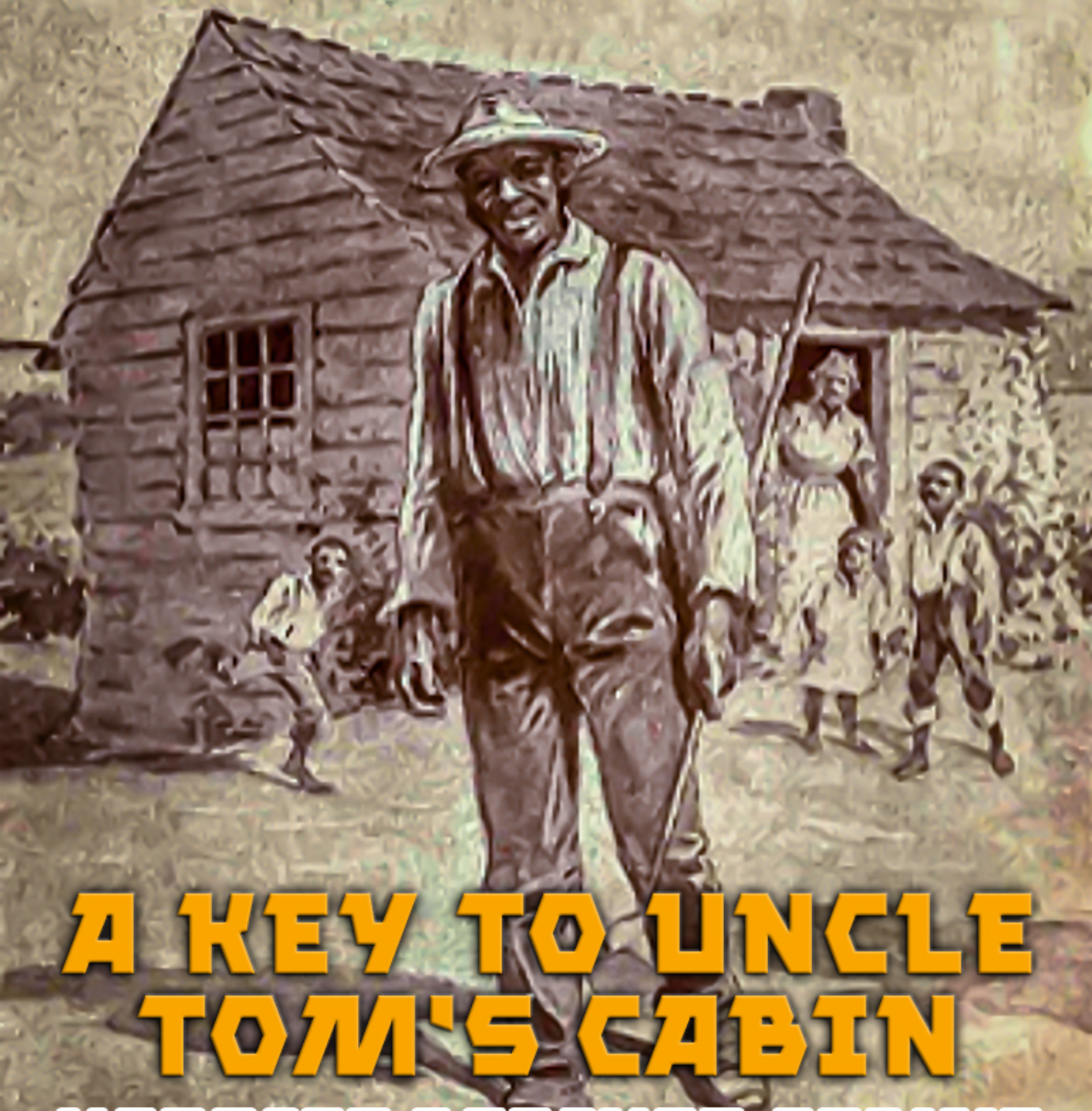
CLASSICS TO GO



A KEY TO UNCLE TOM'S CABIN

HARRIET BEECHER STOWE

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PREFACE.

The work which the writer here presents to the public is one which has been written with no pleasure, and with much pain.

In fictitious writing, it is possible to find refuge from the hard and the terrible, by inventing scenes and characters of a more pleasing nature. No such resource is open in a work of fact; and the subject of this work is one on which the truth, if told at all, must needs be very dreadful. There is no bright side to slavery, as such. Those scenes which are made bright by the generosity and kindness of masters and mistresses, would be brighter still if the element of slavery were withdrawn. There is nothing picturesque or beautiful, in the family attachment of old servants, which is not to be found in countries where these servants are legally free. The tenants on an English estate are often more fond and faithful than if they were slaves. Slavery, therefore, is not the element which forms the picturesque and beautiful of Southern life. What is peculiar to slavery, and distinguishes it from free servitude, is evil, and only evil, and that continually.

In preparing this work, it has grown much beyond the author’s original design. It has so far overrun its limits that she has been obliged to omit one whole department;—that of the characteristics and developments of the colored race in various countries and circumstances. This is more properly the subject for a volume; and she hopes that such an one will soon be prepared by a friend to whom she has transferred her materials.

The author desires to express her thanks particularly to those legal gentlemen who have given her their assistance and support in the legal part of the discussion. She also desires to thank those, at the North and at the South, who have kindly furnished materials for her use. Many more have been supplied than could possibly be used. The book is actually selected out of a mountain of materials.

The great object of the author in writing has been to bring this subject of slavery, as a moral and religious question, before the minds of all those who profess to be followers of Christ, in this country. A minute history has been given of the action of the various denominations on this subject.

The writer has aimed, as far as possible, to say what is true, and only that, without regard to the effect which it may have upon any person or party. She hopes that what she has said will be examined without bitterness,—in that serious and earnest spirit which is appropriate for the examination of so very serious a subject. It would be vain for her to indulge the hope of being wholly free from error. In the wide field which she has been called to go over, there is a possibility of many mistakes. She can only say that she has used the most honest and earnest endeavors to learn the truth.

The book is commended to the candid attention and earnest prayers of all true Christians, throughout the world. May they unite their prayers that Christendom may be delivered from so great an evil as slavery!

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

At different times, doubt has been expressed whether the representations of “Uncle Tom’s Cabin” are a fair representation of slavery as it at present exists. This work, more, perhaps, than any other work of fiction that ever was written, has been a collection and arrangement of real incidents,—of actions really performed, of words and expressions really uttered,—grouped together with reference to a general result, in the same manner that the mosaic artist groups his fragments of various stones into one general picture. His is a mosaic of gems,—this is a mosaic of facts.

Artistically considered, it might not be best to point out in which quarry and from which region each fragment of the mosaic picture had its origin; and it is equally unartistic to disentangle the glittering web of fiction, and show out of what real warp and woof it is woven, and with what real coloring dyed. But the book had a purpose entirely transcending the artistic one, and accordingly encounters, at the hands of the public, demands not usually made on fictitious works. It is *treated* as a reality,—sifted, tried and tested, as a reality; and therefore as a reality it may be proper that it should be defended.

The writer acknowledges that the book is a very inadequate representation of slavery; and it is so, necessarily, for this reason,—that slavery, in some of its workings, is too dreadful for the purposes of art. A work which should represent it strictly as it is would be a work which could not

be read. And all works which ever mean to give pleasure must draw a veil somewhere, or they cannot succeed.

The author will now proceed along the course of the story, from the first page onward, and develop, as far as possible, the incidents by which different parts were suggested.

CHAPTER II.
MR. HALEY.

In the very first chapter of the book we encounter the character of the negro-trader, Mr. Haley. His name stands at the head of this chapter as the representative of all the different characters introduced in the work which exhibit the trader, the kidnapper, the negro-catcher, the negro-whipper, and all the other inevitable auxiliaries and indispensable appendages of what is often called the “divinely-instituted relation” of slavery. The author’s first personal observation of this class of beings was somewhat as follows:

Several years ago, while one morning employed in the duties of the nursery, a colored woman was announced. She was ushered into the nursery, and the author thought, on first survey, that a more surly, unpromising face she had never seen. The woman was thoroughly black, thick-set, firmly built, and with strongly-marked African features. Those who have been accustomed to read the expressions of the African face know what a peculiar effect is produced by a lowering, desponding expression upon its dark features. It is like the shadow of a thunder-cloud. Unlike her race generally, the woman did not smile when smiled upon, nor utter any pleasant remark in reply to such as were addressed to her. The youngest pet of the nursery, a boy about three years old, walked up, and laid his little hand on her knee, and seemed astonished not to meet the quick smile which the negro almost always has in reserve for the little child. The writer thought her very cross and disagreeable, and, after a few moments’ silence, asked, with perhaps a little impatience, “Do you want anything of me to-day?”

“Here are some papers,” said the woman, pushing them towards her; “perhaps you would read them.”

The first paper opened was a letter from a negro-trader in Kentucky, stating concisely that he had waited about as long as he could for her child; that he wanted to start for the South, and must get it off his hands; that, if she would send him two hundred dollars before the end of the week, she should have it; if not, that he would set it up at auction, at the court-house door, on Saturday. He added, also, that he might have got more than that for the child, but that he was willing to let her have it cheap.

“What sort of a man is this?” said the author to the woman, when she had done reading the letter.

“Dunno, ma’am; great Christian, I know,—member of the Methodist church, anyhow.”

The expression of sullen irony with which this was said was a thing to be remembered.

“And how old is this child?” said the author to her.

The woman looked at the little boy who had been standing at her knee, with an expressive glance, and said, “She will be three years old this summer.”

On further inquiry into the history of the woman, it appeared that she had been set free by the will of her owners; that the child was legally entitled to freedom, but had been seized on by the heirs of the estate. She was poor and friendless, without money to maintain a suit, and the heirs, of course, threw the child into the hands of the trader. The necessary sum, it may be added, was all raised in the small neighborhood which then surrounded the Lane Theological Seminary, and the child was redeemed.

If the public would like a specimen of the correspondence which passes between these worthies, who are the principal

reliance of the community for supporting and extending the institution of slavery, the following may be interesting as a matter of literary curiosity. It was forwarded by Mr. M. J. Thomas, of Philadelphia, to the *National Era*, and stated by him to be “a copy taken verbatim from the original, found among the papers of the person to whom it was addressed, at the time of his arrest and conviction, for passing a variety of counterfeit bank-notes.”

Poolsville, Montgomery Co., Md.,
March 24, 1831.

DEAR SIR: I arrived home in safety with Louisa, John having been rescued from me, out of a two-story window, at twelve o’clock at night. I offered a reward of fifty dollars, and have him here safe in jail. The persons who took him brought him to Fredericktown jail. I wish you to write to no person in this state but myself. Kephart and myself are determined to go the whole hog for any negro you can find, and you must give me the earliest information, as soon as you do find any. Enclosed you will receive a handbill, and I can make a good bargain, if you can find them. I will in all cases, as soon as a negro runs off, send you a handbill immediately, so that you may be on the look-out. Please tell the constable to go on with the sale of John’s property; and, when the money is made, I will send on an order to you for it. Please attend to this for me; likewise write to me, and inform me of any negro you think has run away,—no matter where you think he has come from, nor how far,—and I will try and find out his master. Let me know where you think he is from, with all particular marks, and if I don’t find his master, *Joe’s dead!*

Write to me about the crooked-fingered negro, and let me know which hand and which finger, color, &c.; likewise any mark the fellow has who says he got away from the negro-buyer, with his height and color, or any other you think has run off.

Give my respects to your partner, and be sure you write to no person but myself. If any person writes to you, you can inform me of it, and I will try to *buy* from them. I think we can make money, if we do business together; for I have plenty of money, if you can find plenty of negroes. Let me know if Daniel is still where he was, and if you have heard anything of Francis since I left you. Accept for yourself my regard and esteem.

REUBEN B. CARLLEY.

JOHN C. SAUNDERS.

This letter strikingly illustrates the character of these fellow-patriots with whom the great men of our land have been

acting in conjunction, in carrying out the beneficent provisions of the Fugitive Slave Law.

With regard to the *Kephart* named in this letter the community of Boston may have a special interest to know further particulars, as he was one of the dignitaries sent from the South to assist the good citizens of that place in the religious and patriotic enterprise of 1851, at the time that Shadrach was unfortunately rescued. It therefore may be well to introduce somewhat particularly JOHN KEPHART, as sketched by RICHARD H. DANA, Jr., one of the lawyers employed in the defence of the perpetrators of the rescue.

I shall never forget John Caphart. I have been eleven years at the bar, and in that time have seen many developments of vice and hardness, but I never met with anything so cold-blooded as the testimony of that man. John Caphart is a tall, sallow man, of about fifty, with jet-black hair, a restless, dark eye, and an anxious, care-worn look, which, had there been enough of moral element in the expression, might be called melancholy. His frame was strong, and in youth he had evidently been powerful, but he was not robust. Yet there was a calm, cruel look, a power of will and a quickness of muscular action, which still render him a terror in his vocation.

In the manner of giving in his testimony there was no bluster or outward show of insolence. His contempt for the humane feelings of the audience and community about him was too true to require any assumption of that kind. He neither paraded nor attempted to conceal the worst features of his calling. He treated it as a matter of business which he knew the community shuddered at, but the moral nature of which he was utterly indifferent to, beyond a certain secret pleasure in thus indirectly inflicting a little torture on his hearers.

I am not, however, altogether clear, to do John Caphart justice, that he is entirely conscience-proof. There was something in his anxious look which leaves one not without hope.

At the first trial we did not know of his pursuits, and he passed merely as a police-man of Norfolk, Virginia. But, at the second trial, some one in the room gave me a hint of the occupations many of these police-men take to, which led to my cross-examination.

From the Examination of John Caphart, in the "Rescue Trials," at Boston, in June and Nov., 1851, and October, 1852.

Question. Is it a part of your duty, as a police-man, to take up colored persons who are out after hours in the streets?

Answer. Yes, sir.

Q. What is done with them?

A. We put them in the lock-up, and in the morning they are brought into court and ordered to be punished,—those that are to be punished.

Q. What punishment do they get?

A. Not exceeding thirty-nine lashes.

Q. Who gives them these lashes?

A. Any of the officers. I do, sometimes.

Q. Are you paid *extra* for this? How much?

A. Fifty cents a head. It used to be sixty-two cents. Now it is fifty. Fifty cents for each one we arrest, and fifty more for each one we flog.

Q. Are these persons you flog men and boys only, or are they women and girls also?

A. Men, women, boys and girls, just as it happens.

[The government interfered, and tried to prevent any further examination; and said, among other things, that he only performed his duty as police-officer under the law. After a discussion, Judge Curtis allowed it to proceed.]

Q. Is your flogging confined to these cases? Do you not flog slaves at the request of their masters?

A. Sometimes I do. Certainly, when I am called upon.

Q. In these cases of private flogging, are the negroes sent to you? Have you a place for flogging?

A. No. I go round, as I am sent for.

Q. Is this part of your duty as an officer?

A. No, sir.

Q. In these cases of private flogging, do you inquire into the circumstances, to see what the fault has been, or if there is any?

A. That’s none of my business. I do as I am requested. The master is responsible.

Q. In these cases, too, I suppose you flog women and girls, as well as men.

A. Women and men.

Q. Mr. Caphart, how long have you been engaged in this business?

A. Ever since 1836.

Q. How many negroes do you suppose you have flogged, in all, women and children included?

A. [Looking calmly round the room.] I don’t know how many niggers you have got here in Massachusetts, but I should think I had flogged as many as you’ve got in the state.

[The same man testified that he was often employed to pursue fugitive slaves. His reply to the question was, “I never refuse a good job in that line.”]

Q. Don’t they sometimes turn out bad jobs?

A. Never, if I can help it.

Q. Are they not sometimes discharged after you get them?

A. Not often. I don’t know that they ever are, except those Portuguese the counsel read about.

[I had found, in a Virginia report, a case of some two hundred Portuguese negroes, whom this John Caphart had seized from a vessel, and endeavored to get condemned as slaves, but whom the court discharged.]

Hon. John P. Hale, associated with Mr. Dana, as counsel for the defence, in the Rescue Trials, said of him, in his closing argument:

Why, gentlemen, *he sells agony*! Torture is his stock-in-trade! He is a walking scourge! He hawks, peddles, retails, groans and tears about the streets of Norfolk!

See also the following correspondence between two traders, one in North Carolina, the other in New Orleans; with a word of comment, by Hon. William Jay, of New York:

Halifax, N. C., Nov. 16, 1839.

DEAR SIR: I have shipped in the brig Addison,—prices are below:

No. 1. Caroline Ennis,	$650.00
No. 2. Silvy Holland,	625.00
No. 3. Silvy Booth,	487.50
No. 4. Maria Pollock,	475.00
No. 5. Emeline Pollock,	475.00
No. 6. Delia Averit,	475.00

The two girls that cost $650 and $625 were bought before I shipped my first. I have a great many negroes offered to me, but I will not pay the prices they ask, for I know they will come down. I have no opposition in market. I will wait until I hear from you before I buy, and then I can judge what I must pay. Goodwin will send you the bill of lading for my negroes, as he shipped them with his own. Write often, as the times are critical, and it depends on the prices you get to govern me in buying. Yours, &c.,

G. W. BARNES.

Mr. THEOPHILUS FREEMAN, }
New Orleans. }

The above was a small but choice invoice of wives and mothers. Nine days before, namely, 7th Nov., Mr. Barnes advised Mr. Freeman of having shipped a lot of forty-three men and women. Mr. Freeman, informing one of his correspondents of the state of the market, writes (*Sunday*, 21st Sept., 1839), "I bought a boy yesterday, sixteen years old, and likely, *weighing* one hundred and ten pounds, at $700. I sold a likely girl, twelve years old, at $500. I bought a man yesterday, twenty years old, six feet high, at $820; one *to-day*, twenty-four years old, at $850, black and sleek as a mole."

The writer has drawn in this work only one class of the negro-traders. There are all varieties of them, up to the great wholesale purchasers, who keep their large trading-houses; who are gentlemanly in manners and courteous in address; who, in many respects, often perform actions of real generosity; who consider slavery a very great evil, and hope the country will at some time be delivered from it, but who think that so long as clergyman and layman, saint and sinner, are all agreed in the propriety and necessity of slave-holding, it is better that the necessary trade in the article be conducted by men of humanity and decency, than by swearing, brutal men, of the Tom Loker school. These men are exceedingly sensitive with regard to what they consider the injustice of the world in excluding them from good society, simply because they undertake to supply a demand in the community which the bar, the press and the pulpit, all pronounce to be a proper one. In this respect, society certainly imitates the unreasonableness of the ancient Egyptians, who employed a certain class of men to prepare dead bodies for embalming, but flew at them with sticks and stones the moment the operation was over, on account of the sacrilegious liberty which they had taken. If there is an ill-used class of men in the world, it is certainly the slave-traders; for, if there is no harm in the institution of slavery, —if it is a divinely-appointed and honorable one, like civil government and the family state, and like other species of property relation,—then there is no earthly reason why a man may not as innocently be a slave-trader as any other kind of trader.

CHAPTER III.
MR. AND MRS. SHELBY.

It was the design of the writer, in delineating the domestic arrangements of Mr. and Mrs. Shelby, to show a picture of the fairest side of slave-life, where easy indulgence and good-natured forbearance are tempered by just discipline and religious instruction, skilfully and judiciously imparted.

The writer did not come to her task without reading much upon both sides of the question, and making a particular effort to collect all the most favorable representations of slavery which she could obtain. And, as the reader may have a curiosity to examine some of the documents, the writer will present them quite at large. There is no kind of danger to the world in letting the very fairest side of slavery be seen; in fact, the horrors and barbarities which are necessarily inherent in it are so terrible that one stands absolutely in need of all the comfort which can be gained from incidents like the subjoined, to save them from utter despair of human nature. The first account is from Mr. J. K. Paulding's Letters on Slavery; and is a letter from a Virginia planter, whom we should judge, from his style, to be a very amiable, agreeable man, and who probably describes very fairly the state of things on his own domain.

DEAR SIR: As regards the first query, which relates to the "rights and duties of the slave," I do not know how extensive a view of this branch of the subject is contemplated. In its simplest aspect, as understood and acted on in Virginia, I should say that the slave is entitled to an abundance of good plain food; to coarse but comfortable apparel; to a warm but humble dwelling; to protection when well, and to succor when sick; and, in return, that it is his duty to render to his master all the service he can consistently with perfect health, and to behave submissively and honestly. Other remarks suggest themselves, but they will be more appropriately introduced under different heads.

2d. "The domestic relations of master and slave."—These relations are much misunderstood by many persons at the North, who regard the terms as

synonymous with oppressor and oppressed. Nothing can be further from the fact. The condition of the negroes in this state has been greatly ameliorated. The proprietors were formerly fewer and richer than at present. Distant quarters were often kept up to support the aristocratic mansion. They were rarely visited by their owners; and heartless overseers, frequently changed, were employed to manage them for a share of the crop. These men scourged the land, and sometimes the slaves. Their tenure was but for a year, and of course they made the most of their brief authority. Owing to the influence of our institutions, property has become subdivided, and most persons live on or near their estates. There are exceptions, to be sure, and particularly among wealthy gentlemen in the towns; but these last are almost all enlightened and humane, and alike liberal to the soil and to the slave who cultivates it. I could point out some noble instances of patriotic and spirited improvement among them. But, to return to the resident proprietors: most of them have been raised on the estates; from the older negroes they have received in infancy numberless acts of kindness; the younger ones have not unfrequently been their playmates (not the most suitable, I admit), and much good-will is thus generated on both sides. In addition to this, most men feel attached to their property; and this attachment is stronger in the case of persons than of things. I know it, and feel it. It is true, there are harsh masters; but there are also bad husbands and bad fathers. They are all exceptions to the rule, not the rule itself. Shall we therefore condemn in the gross those relations, and the rights and authority they imply, from their occasional abuse? I could mention many instances of strong attachment on the part of the slave, but will only adduce one or two, of which I have been the object. It became a question whether a faithful servant, bred up with me from boyhood, should give up his master or his wife and children, to whom he was affectionately attached, and most attentive and kind. The trial was a severe one, but he determined to break those tender ties and remain with me. I left it entirely to his discretion, though I would not, from considerations of interest, have taken for him quadruple the price I should probably have obtained. Fortunately, in the sequel, I was enabled to purchase his family, with the exception of a daughter, happily situated; and nothing but death shall henceforth part them. Were it put to the test, I am convinced that many masters would receive this striking proof of devotion. A gentleman but a day or two since informed me of a similar, and even stronger case, afforded by one of his slaves. As the reward of assiduous and delicate attention to a venerated parent, in her last illness, I proposed to purchase and liberate a healthy and intelligent woman, about thirty years of age, the best nurse, and, in all respects, one of the best servants in the state, of which I was only part owner; but she declined to leave the family, and has been since rather better than free. I shall be excused for stating a ludicrous case I heard of some time ago:—A favorite and indulged servant requested his master to sell him to another gentleman. His master refused to do so, but told him he was at perfect liberty to go to the North, if he were not already free enough. After a while he repeated the request; and, on being urged to give an explanation of his singular conduct, told his master that he considered himself consumptive, and would soon die; and he thought Mr. B —— was better able to bear the loss than his master. He was sent to a medicinal spring and recovered his health, if, indeed, he had ever lost it, of which his

master had been unapprised. It may not be amiss to describe my deportment towards my servants, whom I endeavor to render happy while I make them profitable. I never turn a deaf ear, but listen patiently to their communications. I chat familiarly with those who have passed service, or have not begun to render it. With the others I observe a more prudent reserve, but I encourage all to approach me without awe. I hardly ever go to town without having commissions to execute for some of them; and think they prefer to employ me, from a belief that, if their money should not quite hold out, I would add a little to it; and I not unfrequently do, in order to get a better article. The relation between myself and my slaves is decidedly friendly. I keep up pretty exact discipline, mingled with kindness, and hardly ever lose property by thievish, or labor by runaway slaves. I never lock the outer doors of my house. It is done, but done by the servants; and I rarely bestow a thought on the matter. I leave home periodically for two months, and commit the dwelling-house, plate, and other valuables, to the servants, without even an enumeration of the articles.

3d. “The duration of the labor of the slave.”—The day is usually considered long enough. Employment at night is not exacted by me, except to shell corn once a week for their own consumption, and on a few other extraordinary occasions. *The people*, as we generally call them, are required to leave their houses at daybreak, and to work until dark, with the intermission of half an hour to an hour at breakfast, and one to two hours at dinner, according to the season and sort of work. In this respect I suppose our negroes will bear a favorable comparison with any laborers whatever.

4th. “The liberty usually allowed the slave,—his holidays and amusements, and the way in which they usually spend their evenings and holidays.”—They are prohibited from going off the estate without first obtaining leave; though they often transgress, and with impunity, except in flagrant cases. Those who have wives on other plantations visit them on certain specified nights, and have an allowance of time for going and returning, proportioned to the distance. My negroes are permitted, and, indeed, encouraged, to raise as many ducks and chickens as they can; to cultivate vegetables for their own use, and a patch of corn for sale; to exercise their trades, when they possess one, which many do; to catch muskrats and other animals for the fur or the flesh; to raise bees, and, in fine, to earn an honest penny in any way which chance or their own ingenuity may offer. The modes specified are, however, those most commonly resorted to, and enable provident servants to make from five to thirty dollars apiece. The corn is of a different sort from that which I cultivate, and is all bought by me. A great many fowls are raised; I have this year known ten dollars worth sold by one man at one time. One of the chief sources of profit is the fur of the muskrat; for the purpose of catching which the marshes on the estate have been parcelled out and appropriated from time immemorial, and are held by a tenure little short of fee-simple. The negroes are indebted to Nat Turner[1] and Tappan for a curtailment of some of their privileges. As a sincere friend to the blacks, I have much regretted the reckless interference of these persons, on account of the restrictions it has become, or been thought, necessary to impose. Since the exploit of the former hero, they have been forbidden to preach, except to their fellow-slaves, the property of the same owner; to have public funerals, unless a

white person officiates; or to be taught to read and write. Their funerals formerly gave them great satisfaction, and it was customary here to furnish the relations of the deceased with bacon, spirit, flour, sugar and butter, with which a grand entertainment, in their way, was got up. We were once much amused by a hearty fellow requesting his mistress to let him have his funeral during his lifetime, when it would do him some good. The waggish request was granted; and I venture to say there never was a funeral the subject of which enjoyed it so much. When permitted, some of our negroes preached with great fluency. I was present, a few years since, when an Episcopal minister addressed the people, by appointment. On the conclusion of an excellent sermon, a negro preacher rose and thanked the gentleman kindly for his discourse, but frankly told him the congregation "did not understand his *lingo*." He then proceeded himself, with great vehemence and volubility, coining words where they had not been made to his hand, or rather his tongue, and impressing his hearers, doubtless, with a decided opinion of his superiority over his white co-laborer in the field of grace. My brother and I, who own contiguous estates, have lately erected a chapel on the line between them, and have employed an acceptable minister of the Baptist persuasion, to which the negroes almost exclusively belong, to afford them religious instruction. Except as a preparatory step to emancipation, I consider it exceedingly impolitic, even as regards the slaves themselves, to permit them to read and write: "Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise." And it is certainly impolitic as regards their masters, on the principle that "knowledge is power." My servants have not as long holidays as those of most other persons. I allow three days at Christmas, and a day at each of three other periods, besides a little time to work their patches; or, if very busy, I sometimes prefer to work them myself. Most of the ancient pastimes have been lost in this neighborhood, and religion, mock or real, has succeeded them. The banjo, their national instrument, is known but in name, or in a few of the tunes which have survived. Some of the younger negroes sing and dance, but the evenings and holidays are usually occupied in working, in visiting, and in praying and singing hymns. The primitive customs and sports are, I believe, better preserved further south, where slaves were brought from Africa long after they ceased to come here.

6th. "The provision usually made for their food and clothing,—for those who are too young or too old to labor."—My men receive twelve quarts of Indian meal (the abundant and universal allowance in this state), seven salted herrings, and two pounds of smoked bacon or three pounds of pork, a week; the other hands proportionally less. But, generally speaking, their food is issued daily, with the exception of meal, and consists of fish or bacon for breakfast, and meat, fresh or salted, with vegetables whenever we can provide them, for dinner; or, for a month or two in the spring, fresh fish cooked with a little bacon. This mode is rather more expensive to me than that of weekly rations, but more comfortable to the servants. Superannuated or invalid slaves draw their provisions regularly once a week; and the moment a child ceases to be nourished by its mother, it receives eight quarts of meal (more than it can consume), and one half-pound of lard. Besides the food furnished by me, nearly all the servants are able to make some addition from their private stores; and there is among the adults hardly an

instance of one so improvident as not to do it. He must be an unthrifty fellow, indeed, who cannot realize the wish of the famous Henry IV. in regard to the French peasantry, and enjoy his fowl on Sunday. I always keep on hand, for the use of the negroes, sugar, molasses, &c., which, though not regularly issued, are applied for on the slightest pretexts, and frequently no pretext at all, and are never refused, except in cases of misconduct. In regard to clothing:—the men and boys receive a winter coat and trousers of strong cloth, three shirts, a stout pair of shoes and socks, and a pair of summer pantaloons, every year; a hat about every second year, and a great-coat and blanket every third year. Instead of great-coats and hats, the women have large capes to protect the bust in bad weather, and handkerchiefs for the head. The articles furnished are good and serviceable; and, with their own acquisitions, make their appearance decent and respectable. On Sunday they are even fine. The aged and invalid are clad as regularly as the rest, but less substantially. Mothers receive a little raw cotton, in proportion to the number of children, with the privilege of having the yarn, when spun, woven at my expense. I provide them with blankets. Orphans are put with careful women, and treated with tenderness. I am attached to the little slaves, and encourage familiarity among them. Sometimes, when I ride near the quarters, they come running after me with the most whimsical requests, and are rendered happy by the distribution of some little donation. The clothing described is that which is given to the crop hands. Home-servants, a numerous class in Virginia, are of course clad in a different and very superior manner. I neglected to mention, in the proper place, that there are on each of my plantations a kitchen, an oven, and one or more cooks; and that each hand is furnished with a tin bucket for his food, which is carried into the field by little negroes, who also supply the laborers with water.

7th. “Their treatment when sick.”—My negroes go, or are carried, as soon as they are attacked, to a spacious and well-ventilated hospital, near the mansion-house. They are there received by an attentive nurse, who has an assortment of medicine, additional bed-clothing, and the command of as much light food as she may require, either from the table or the store-room of the proprietor. Wine, sago, rice, and other little comforts appertaining to such an establishment, are always kept on hand. The condition of the sick is much better than that of the poor whites or free colored people in the neighborhood.

8th. “Their rewards and punishments.”—I occasionally bestow little gratuities for good conduct, and particularly after harvest; and hardly ever refuse a favor asked by those who faithfully perform their duty. Vicious and idle servants are punished with stripes, moderately inflicted; to which, in the case of theft, is added privation of meat, a severe punishment to those who are never suffered to be without it on any other account. From my limited observation, I think that servants to the North work much harder than our slaves. I was educated at a college in one of the free states, and, on my return to Virginia, was struck with the contrast. I was astonished at the number of idle domestics, and actually worried my mother, much to my contrition since, to reduce the establishment. I say to my contrition, because, after eighteen years’ residence in the good Old Dominion, I find myself surrounded by a troop of servants about as numerous as that against which I formerly so loudly exclaimed. While on this subject it may

not be amiss to state a case of manumission which occurred about three years since. My nearest neighbor, a man of immense wealth, owned a favorite servant, a fine fellow, with polished manners and excellent disposition, who reads and writes, and is thoroughly versed in the duties of a butler and housekeeper, in the performance of which he was trusted without limit. This man was, on the death of his master, emancipated with a legacy of six thousand dollars, besides about two thousand dollars more which he had been permitted to accumulate, and had deposited with his master, who had given him credit for it. The use that this man, apparently so well qualified for freedom, and who has had an opportunity of travelling and of judging for himself, makes of his money and his time, is somewhat remarkable. In consequence of his exemplary conduct, he has been permitted to reside in the state, and for very moderate wages occupies the same situation he did in the old establishment, and will probably continue to occupy it as long as he lives. He has no children of his own, but has put a little girl, a relation of his, to school. Except in this instance, and in the purchase of a few plain articles of furniture, his freedom and his money seem not much to have benefited him. A servant of mine, who is intimate with him, thinks he is not as happy as he was before his liberation. Several other servants were freed at the same time, with smaller legacies, but I do not know what has become of them.

I do not regard negro-slavery, however mitigated, as a Utopian system, and have not intended so to delineate it. But it exists, and the difficulty of removing it is felt and acknowledged by all, save the fanatics, who, like “fools, rush in where angels dare not tread.” It is pleasing to know that its burdens are not too heavy to be borne. That the treatment of slaves in this state is humane, and even indulgent, may be inferred from the fact of their rapid increase and great longevity. I believe that, constituted as they are, morally and physically, they are as happy as any peasantry in the world; and I venture to affirm, as the result of my reading and inquiry, that in no country are the laborers so liberally and invariably supplied with bread and meat as are the negro slaves of the United States. However great the dearth of provisions, famine never reaches them.

P. S.—It might have been stated above that on this estate there are about one hundred and sixty blacks. With the exception of infants, there has been, in eighteen months, but one death that I remember,—that of a man fully sixty-five years of age. The bill for medical attendance, from the second day of last November, comprising upwards of a year, is less than forty dollars.

The following accounts are taken from “Ingraham’s Travels in the South-west,” a work which seems to have been written as much to show the beauties of slavery as anything else. Speaking of the state of things on some Southern plantations, he gives the following pictures, which are presented without note or comment:

The little candidates for “field honors” are useless articles on a plantation during the first five or six years of their existence. They are then to take their first

lesson in the elementary part of their education. When they have learned their manual alphabet tolerably well, they are placed in the field to take a spell at cotton-picking. The first day in the field is their proudest day. The young negroes look forward to it with as much restlessness and impatience as school-boys to a vacation. Black children are not put to work so young as many children of poor parents in the North. It is often the case that the children of the domestic servants become pets in the house, and the playmates of the white children of the family. No scene can be livelier or more interesting to a Northerner, than that which the negro quarters of a well-regulated plantation present on a Sabbath morning, just before church-hours. In every cabin the men are shaving and dressing; the women, arrayed in their gay muslins, are arranging their frizzly hair,—in which they take no little pride,—or investigating the condition of their children; the old people, neatly clothed, are quietly conversing or smoking about the doors; and those of the younger portion who are not undergoing the infliction of the wash-tub are enjoying themselves in the shade of the trees, or around some little pond, with as much zest as though slavery and freedom were synonymous terms. When all are dressed, and the hour arrives for worship, they lock up their cabins, and the whole population of the little village proceeds to the chapel, where divine service is performed, sometimes by an officiating clergyman, and often by the planter himself, if a church-member. The whole plantation is also frequently formed into a Sabbath class, which is instructed by the planter, or some member of his family; and often, such is the anxiety of the master that they should perfectly understand what they are taught,—a hard matter in the present state of their intellect,—that no means calculated to advance their progress are left untried. I was not long since shown a manuscript catechism, drawn up with great care and judgment by a distinguished planter, on a plan admirably adapted to the comprehension of the negroes.

It is now popular to treat slaves with kindness; and those planters who are known to be inhumanly rigorous to their slaves are scarcely countenanced by the more intelligent and humane portion of the community. Such instances, however, are very rare; but there are unprincipled men everywhere, who will give vent to their ill feelings and bad passions, not with less good will upon the back of an indented apprentice, than upon that of a purchased slave. Private chapels are now introduced upon most of the plantations of the more wealthy, which are far from any church; Sabbath-schools are instituted for the black children, and Bible-classes for the parents, which are superintended by the planter, a chaplain, or some of the female members of the family.

Nor are planters indifferent to the comfort of their gray-headed slaves. I have been much affected at beholding many exhibitions of their kindly feeling towards them. They always address them in a mild and pleasant manner, as “Uncle,” or “Aunty,”—titles as peculiar to the old negro and negress as “boy” and “girl” to all under forty years of age. Some old Africans are allowed to spend their last years in their houses, without doing any kind of labor; these, if not too infirm, cultivate little patches of ground, on which they raise a few vegetables,—for vegetables grow nearly all the year round in this climate,—and make a little money to purchase a few extra comforts. They are also always receiving presents from their masters and mistresses, and the negroes on the estate, the

latter of whom are extremely desirous of seeing the old people comfortable. A relation of the extra comforts which some planters allow their slaves would hardly obtain credit at the North. But you must recollect that Southern planters are men, and men of feeling, generous and high-minded, and possessing as much of the “milk of human kindness” as the sons of colder climes—although they may have been educated to regard that as right which a different education has led Northerners to consider wrong.

With regard to the character of Mrs. Shelby the writer must say a few words. While travelling in Kentucky, a few years since, some pious ladies expressed to her the same sentiments with regard to slavery which the reader has heard expressed by Mrs. Shelby.

There are many whose natural sense of justice cannot be made to tolerate the enormities of the system, even though they hear it defended by clergymen from the pulpit, and see it countenanced by all that is most honorable in rank and wealth.

A pious lady said to the author, with regard to instructing her slaves, “I am ashamed to teach them what is right; I know that they know as well as I do that it is wrong to hold them as slaves, and I am ashamed to look them in the face.” Pointing to an intelligent mulatto woman who passed through the room, she continued, “Now, there’s B——. She is as intelligent and capable as any white woman I ever knew, and as well able to have her liberty and take care of herself; and she knows it isn’t right to keep her as we do, and I know it too; and yet I cannot get my husband to think as I do, or I should be glad to set them free.”

A venerable friend of the writer, a lady born and educated a slave-holder, used to the writer the very words attributed to Mrs. Shelby:—“I never thought it was right to hold slaves. I always thought it was wrong when I was a girl, and I thought so still more when I came to join the church.” An incident related by this friend of her examination for the church shows in a striking manner what a difference may often exist between theoretical and practical benevolence.

A certain class of theologians in America have advocated the doctrine of disinterested benevolence with such zeal as to make it an imperative article of belief that every individual ought to be willing to endure everlasting misery, if by doing so they could, on the whole, produce a greater amount of general good in the universe; and the inquiry was sometimes made of candidates for church-membership whether they could bring themselves to this point, as a test of their sincerity. The clergyman who was to examine this lady was particularly interested in these speculations. When he came to inquire of her with regard to her views as to the obligations of Christianity, she informed him decidedly that she had brought her mind to the point of emancipating all her slaves, of whom she had a large number. The clergyman seemed rather to consider this as an excess of zeal, and recommended that she should take time to reflect upon it. He was, however, very urgent to know whether, if it should appear for the greatest good of the universe, she would be willing to be damned. Entirely unaccustomed to theological speculations, the good woman answered, with some vehemence, that “she was sure she was not;” adding, naturally enough, that if that had been her purpose she need not have come to join the church. The good lady, however, was admitted, and proved her devotion to the general good by the more tangible method of setting all her slaves at liberty, and carefully watching over their education and interests after they were liberated.

Mrs. Shelby is a fair type of the very best class of Southern women; and while the evils of the institution are felt and deplored, and while the world looks with just indignation on the national support and patronage which is given to it, and on the men who, knowing its nature, deliberately make efforts to perpetuate and extend it, it is but justice that it should bear in mind the virtues of such persons.

Many of them, surrounded by circumstances over which they can have no control, perplexed by domestic cares of which women in free states can have very little conception, loaded down by duties and responsibilities which wear upon the very springs of life, still go on bravely and patiently from day to day, doing all they can to alleviate what they cannot prevent, and, as far as the sphere of their own immediate power extends, rescuing those who are dependent upon them from the evils of the system.

We read of Him who shall at last come to judgment, that “His fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner.” Out of the great abyss of national sin he will rescue every grain of good and honest purpose and intention. His eyes, which are as a flame of fire, penetrate at once those intricate mazes where human judgment is lost, and will save and honor at last the truly good and sincere, however they may have been involved with the evil; and such souls as have resisted the greatest temptations, and persisted in good under the most perplexing circumstances, are those of whom he has written, “And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.”

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1. The leader of the insurrection in lower Virginia, in which upwards of a hundred white persons, principally women and children, were massacred in cold blood.

CHAPTER IV.
GEORGE HARRIS.

The character of George Harris has been represented as overdrawn, both as respects personal qualities and general intelligence. It has been said, too, that so many afflictive incidents happening to a slave are improbable, and present a distorted view of the institution.

In regard to person, it must be remembered that the half-breeds often inherit, to a great degree, the traits of their white ancestors. For this there is abundant evidence in the advertisements of the papers. Witness the following from the *Chattanooga* (Tenn.) *Gazette*, Oct. 5th, 1852:

$500 REWARD.

Runaway from the subscriber, on the 25th May, a VERY BRIGHT MULATTO BOY, about 21 or 22 years old, named WASH. Said boy, without close observation, might pass himself for a white man, as he is very bright—has sandy hair, blue eyes, and a fine set of teeth. He is an excellent bricklayer; but I have no idea that he will pursue his trade, for fear of detection. Although he is like a white man in appearance, he has the disposition of a negro, and delights in comic songs and witty expressions. He is an excellent house servant, very handy about a hotel,—tall, slender, and has rather a down look, especially when spoken to, and is sometimes inclined to be sulky. I have no doubt but he has been decoyed off by some scoundrel, and I will give the above reward for the apprehension of the boy and thief, if delivered at Chattanooga. Or, I will give $200 for the boy alone; or $100 if confined in any jail in the United States, so that I can get him.

GEORGE O. RAGLAND.

Chattanooga, June 15, 1852.

From the *Capitolian Vis-a-vis*, West Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Nov. 1, 1852:

$150 REWARD.

Runaway about the 15th of August last, *Joe*, a yellow man; small, about 5 feet 8 or 9 inches high, and about 20 years of age. *Has a Roman nose*, was raised in New Orleans, and *speaks French and English*. He was bought last winter of Mr. Digges, Banks Arcade, New Orleans.

In regard to general intelligence, the reader will recollect that the writer stated it as a fact which she learned while on a journey through Kentucky, that a young colored man invented a machine for cleaning hemp, like that alluded to in her story.

Advertisements, also, occasionally propose for sale artisans of different descriptions. Slaves are often employed as pilots for vessels, and highly valued for their skill and knowledge. The following are advertisements from recent newspapers.

From the *South Carolinian* (Columbia), Dec. 4th, 1852:

VALUABLE NEGROES AT AUCTION.

BY J. & L. T. LEVIN.

WILL be sold, on MONDAY, the 6th day of December, the following valuable NEGROES:

Andrew, 24 years of age, a bricklayer and plasterer, and thorough workman.

George, 22 years of age, one of the best barbers in the State.

James, 19 years of age, an excellent painter.

These boys were raised in Columbia, and are exceptions to most of boys, and are sold for no fault whatever.

The terms of sale are one-half cash, the balance on a credit of six months, with interest, for notes payable at bank, with two or more approved endorsers.

Purchasers to pay for necessary papers.

WILLIAM DOUGLASS.

November 27, 36.

From the same paper, of November 18th, 1852:

Will be sold at private sale, a LIKELY MAN, boat hand, and good pilot; is well acquainted with all the inlets between here and Savannah and Georgetown.

With regard to the incidents of George Harris' life, that he may not be supposed a purely exceptional case, we propose to offer some parallel facts from the lives of slaves of our personal acquaintance.

Lewis Clark is an acquaintance of the writer. Soon after his escape from slavery, he was received into the family of a sister-in-law of the author, and there educated. His conduct during this time was such as to win for him uncommon affection and respect, and the author has frequently heard him spoken of in the highest terms by all who knew him.

The gentleman in whose family he so long resided says of him, in a recent letter to the writer, "I would trust him, as the saying is, with untold gold."

Lewis is a quadroon, a fine-looking man, with European features, hair slightly wavy, and with an intelligent, agreeable expression of countenance.

The reader is now desired to compare the following incidents of his life, part of which he related personally to the author, with the incidents of the life of George Harris.

His mother was a handsome quadroon woman, the daughter of her master, and given by him in marriage to a free white man, a Scotchman, with the express understanding that she and her children were to be free. This engagement, if made sincerely at all, was never complied with. His mother had nine children, and, on the death of her husband, came back, with all these children, as slaves in her father's house.

A married daughter of the family, who was the dread of the whole household, on account of the violence of her temper, had taken from the family, upon her marriage, a young girl. By the violence of her abuse she soon reduced the child to a state of idiocy, and then came imperiously back to her father's establishment, declaring that the child was good for

nothing, and that she would have another; and, as poor Lewis' evil star would have it, fixed her eye upon him.

To avoid one of her terrible outbreaks of temper, the family offered up this boy as a pacificatory sacrifice. The incident is thus described by Lewis, in a published narrative:

Every boy was ordered in, to pass before this female sorceress, that she might select a victim for her unprovoked malice, and on whom to pour the vials of her wrath for years. I was that unlucky fellow. Mr. Campbell, my grandfather, objected, because it would divide a family, and offered her Moses; * * * but objections and claims of every kind were swept away by the wild passion and shrill-toned voice of Mrs. B. Me she would have, and none else. Mr. Campbell went out to hunt, and drive away bad thoughts; the old lady became quiet, for she was sure none of her blood run in my veins, and, if there was any of her husband's there, it was no fault of hers. Slave-holding women are always revengeful toward the children of slaves that have any of the blood of their husbands in them. I was too young—only seven years of age—to understand what was going on. But my poor and affectionate mother understood and appreciated it all. When she left the kitchen of the mansion-house, where she was employed as cook, and came home to her own little cottage, the tear of anguish was in her eye, and the image of sorrow upon every feature of her face. She knew the female Nero whose rod was now to be over me. That night sleep departed from her eyes. With the youngest child clasped firmly to her bosom, she spent the night in walking the floor, coming ever and anon to lift up the clothes and look at me and my poor brother, who lay sleeping together. *Sleeping*, I said. Brother slept, but not I. I saw my mother when she first came to me, and I could not sleep. The vision of that night—its deep, ineffaceable impression—is now before my mind with all the distinctness of yesterday. In the morning I was put into the carriage with Mrs. B. and her children, and my weary pilgrimage of suffering was fairly begun.

Mrs. Banton is a character that can only exist where the laws of the land clothe with absolute power the coarsest, most brutal and violent-tempered, equally with the most generous and humane.

If irresponsible power is a trial to the virtue of the most watchful and careful, how fast must it develop cruelty in those who are naturally violent and brutal!

This woman was united to a drunken husband, of a temper equally ferocious. A recital of all the physical torture which this pair contrived to inflict on a hapless child, some of

which have left ineffaceable marks on his person, would be too trying to humanity, and we gladly draw a veil over it.

Some incidents, however, are presented in the following extracts:

A very trivial offence was sufficient to call forth a great burst of indignation from this woman of ungoverned passions. In my simplicity, I put my lips to the same vessel, and drank out of it, from which her children were accustomed to drink. She expressed her utter abhorrence of such an act by throwing my head violently back, and dashing into my face two dippers of water. The shower of water was followed by a heavier shower of *kicks*; but the words, bitter and cutting, that followed, were like a storm of hail upon my young heart. “She would teach me better manners than that; she would let me know I was to be brought up to her hand; she would have *one* slave that knew his place; if I wanted water, go to the spring, and not drink there in the house.” This was new times for me; for some days I was completely benumbed with my sorrow.

If there be one so lost to all feeling as even to say that the slaves do not suffer when *families* are separated, let such a one go to the ragged quilt which was my couch and pillow, and stand there night after night, for long, weary hours, and see the bitter tears streaming down the face of that more than orphan boy, while with half-suppressed sighs and sobs he calls again and again upon his absent mother.

“Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?
Hovered thy spirit o’er thy sorrowing son?
Wretch even *then*! life’s journey just begun.”

He was employed till late at night in spinning flax or rocking the baby, and called at a very early hour in the morning; and if he did not start at the first summons, a cruel chastisement was sure to follow. He says:

Such horror has seized me, lest I might not hear the first shrill call, that I have often in dreams fancied I heard that unwelcome voice, and have leaped from my couch and walked through the house and out of it before I awoke. I have gone and called the other slaves, in my sleep, and asked them if they did not hear master call. Never, while I live, will the remembrance of those long, bitter nights of fear pass from my mind.

He adds to this words which should be deeply pondered by those who lay the flattering unction to their souls that the oppressed do not feel the sundering of family ties.

But all my severe labor, and bitter and cruel punishments, for these ten years of captivity with this worse than Arab family, all these were as nothing to the

sufferings I experienced by being separated from my mother, brothers and sisters; the same things, with them near to sympathize with me, to hear my story of sorrow, would have been comparatively tolerable.

They were distant only about thirty miles; and yet, in ten long, lonely years of childhood, I was only permitted to see them three times.

My mother occasionally found an opportunity to send me some token of remembrance and affection,—a sugar-plum or an apple; but I scarcely ever ate them; they were laid up, and handled and wept over, till they wasted away in my hand.

My thoughts continually by day, and my dreams by night, were of mother and home; and the horror experienced in the morning, when I awoke and behold it was a dream, is beyond the power of language to describe.

Lewis had a beautiful sister by the name of Delia, who, on the death of her grandfather, was sold, with all the other children of his mother, for the purpose of dividing the estate. She was a pious girl, a member of the Baptist church. She fell into the hands of a brutal, drunken man, who wished to make her his mistress. Milton Clark, a brother of Lewis, in the narrative of his life describes the scene where he, with his mother, stood at the door while this girl was brutally whipped before it for wishing to conform to the principles of her Christian profession. As her resolution was unconquerable, she was placed in a coffle and sent down to the New Orleans market. Here she was sold to a Frenchman, named Coval. He took her to Mexico, emancipated and married her. After residing some time in France and the West Indies with him, he died, leaving her a fortune of twenty or thirty thousand dollars. At her death she endeavored to leave this by will to purchase the freedom of her brothers; but, as a slave cannot take property, or even have it left in trust for him, they never received any of it.

The incidents of the recovery of Lewis' freedom are thus told:

I had long thought and dreamed of LIBERTY. I was now determined to make an effort to gain it. No tongue can tell the doubt, the perplexities, the anxiety, which a slave feels, when making up his mind upon this subject. If he makes an effort, and is not successful, he must be laughed at by his fellows, he will be

beaten unmercifully by the master, and then watched and used the harder for it all his life.

And then, if he gets away, *who*, *what* will he find? He is ignorant of the world. All the white part of mankind, that he has ever seen, are enemies to him and all his kindred. How can he venture where none but white faces shall greet him? The master tells him that abolitionists *decoy* slaves off into the free states to catch them and sell them to Louisiana or Mississippi; and, if he goes to Canada, the British will put him in a *mine under ground, with both eyes put out, for life*. How does he know what or whom to believe? A horror of great darkness comes upon him, as he thinks over what may befall him. Long, very long time did I think of escaping, before I made the effort.

At length, the report was started that I was to be sold for Louisiana. Then I thought it was time to act. My mind was made up.

What my feelings were when I reached the free shore can be better imagined than described. I trembled all over with deep emotion, and I could feel my hair rise up on my head. I was on what was called a *free* soil, among a people who had no slaves. I saw white men at work, and no slave smarting beneath the lash. Everything was indeed *new* and wonderful. Not knowing where to find a friend, and being ignorant of the country, unwilling to inquire, lest I should betray my ignorance, it was a whole week before I reached Cincinnati. At one place where I put up, I had a great many more questions put to me than I wished to answer. At another place, I was very much annoyed by the officiousness of the landlord, who made it a point to supply every guest with newspapers. I took the copy handed me, and turned it over, in a somewhat awkward manner, I suppose. He came to me to point out a veto, or some other very important news. I thought it best to decline his assistance, and gave up the paper, saying my eyes were not in a fit condition to read much.

At another place, the neighbors, on learning that a Kentuckian was at the tavern, came, in great earnestness, to find out what my business was. Kentuckians sometimes came there to kidnap their citizens. They were in the habit of watching them close. I at length satisfied them by assuring them that I was not, nor my father before me, any slave-holder at all; but, lest their suspicions should be excited in another direction, I added my grandfather was a slave-holder.

At daylight we were in Canada. When I stepped ashore here, I said, sure enough, I AM FREE. Good heavens! what a sensation, when it first visits the bosom of a full-grown man; one *born* to bondage; one who had been taught, from early infancy, that this was his inevitable lot for life! Not till *then* did I dare to cherish, for a moment, the feeling that *one* of the limbs of my body was my own. The slaves often say, when cut in the hand or foot, “Plague on the old foot” or “the old hand! It is master’s,—let him take care of it. Nigger don’t care if he never get well.” My hands, my feet, were now my own.

It will be recollected that George, in conversing with Eliza, gives an account of a scene in which he was violently beaten by his master’s young son. This incident was