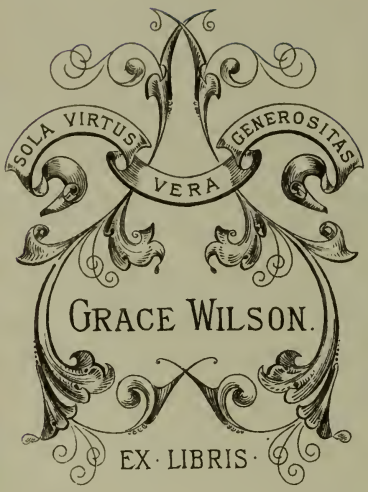
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GRACE WILSON.
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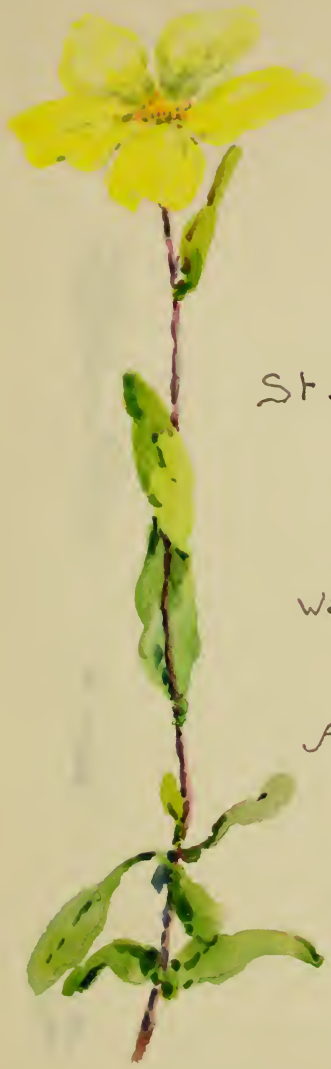
Grace Wilson


At Hampton Point.



Vol. II.

St. Simon's

Island.

Water-colors

by

Amelia M. Watson.

1916

M—— diligently cutting and shaping, and I as diligently stitching. We leave a good supply for the hospitals, and for the individual clients besides who have besieged me ever since my departure became imminent.

Our voyage from the rice to the cotton plantation was performed in the Lily, which looked like a soldier's baggage-wagon and an emigrant transport combined. Our crew consisted of eight men. Forward in the bow were miscellaneous live-stock, pots, pans, household furniture, kitchen utensils, and an indescribable variety of heterogeneous necessaries. Enthroned upon beds, bedding, tables, and other chattels, sat that poor pretty chattel Psyche, with her small chattel children. Midships sat the two tiny free women and myself, and in the stern Mr. —— steering. And "all in the blue unclouded weather" we rowed down the huge stream, the men keeping time and tune to their oars with extemporaneous chants of adieu to the rice-island and its denizens. Among other poetical and musical comments on our departure recurred the assertion, as a sort of burden, that we were "parted in body, but not in mind," from those we left behind. Having relieved one set of sentiments by this reflection, they very wisely betook themselves to the consideration of the blessings that remained to them, and performed a spirited chant in honor of Psyche and our bouncing black housemaid, Mary.

At the end of a fifteen miles' row we entered one among a perfect labyrinth of arms or branches, into which the broad river ravels like a fringe as it reaches the sea, a dismal navigation along a dismal tract, called "Five Pound," through a narrow cut or channel of water divided from the main stream. The conch was sounded, as at our arrival at the rice-island, and we made our descent on the famous long staple cotton island of St. Simon's, where we presently took up our abode in what had all the appearance of an old, half-decayed, rattling farm-house.

This morning, Sunday, I peeped round its immediate neighborhood, and saw, to my inexpressible delight, within hail, some noble-looking evergreen oaks, and close to the house itself a tiny would-be garden, a plot of ground with one or two peach-trees in full blossom, tufts of silver narcissus and jonquils, a quantity of violets and an exquisite myrtle bush; wherefore I said my prayers with especial gratitude.

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Dearest E——,—The fame of my peculiar requisitions has, I find, preceded me here, for the babies that have been presented to my admiring notice have all been without caps; also, however, without socks to their opposite little wretched extremities, but that does not signify quite so much. The people, too, that I saw yesterday were remarkably clean and tidy; to be sure, it was Sunday. The whole day, till quite late in the afternoon, the house was surrounded by a crowd of our poor dependents, waiting to catch a glimpse of Mr. ——, myself, or the children; and until, from sheer weariness, I was obliged to shut the doors, an incessant stream poured in and out, whose various modes of salutation, greeting, and welcome were more grotesque and pathetic at the same time than any thing you can imagine. In the afternoon I walked with —— to see a new house in process of erection, which, when it is finished, is to be the overseer's abode and our residence during any future visits we may pay to the estate. I was horrified at the dismal site selected, and the hideous house erected on it. It is true that the central position is the principal consideration in the overseer's location; but both position and building seemed to me to witness to an inveterate love of ugliness, or, at any rate, a deadness to every desire of beauty, nothing short of horrible; and, for my own part, I think it is intolerable to have to leave the

point where the waters meet, and where a few fine picturesque old trees are scattered about, to come to this place even for the very short time I am ever likely to spend here.

In every direction our view, as we returned, was bounded by thickets of the most beautiful and various evergreen growth, which beckoned my inexperience most irresistibly. —— said, to my unutterable horror, that they were perfectly infested with rattlesnakes, and I must on no account go "beating about the bush" in these latitudes, as the game I should be likely to start would be any thing but agreeable to me. We saw quantities of wild plum-trees all silvery with blossoms, and in lovely companionship and contrast with them a beautiful shrub covered with delicate pink bloom like flowering peach-trees. After that life in the rice-swamp, where the Altamaha kept looking over the dike at me all the time as I sat in the house writing or working, it is pleasant to be on *terra firma* again, and to know that the river is at the conventional, not to say natural, depth below its banks, and under my feet instead of over my head. The two plantations are of diametrically opposite dispositions—that is all swamp, and this all sand; or, to speak more accurately, that is all swamp, and all of this that is not swamp is sand.

On our way home we met a most extraordinary creature of the negro kind, who, coming toward us, halted, and caused us to halt straight in the middle of the path, when, bending himself down till his hands almost touched the ground, he exclaimed to Mr. ——, "Massa ——, your most obedient;" and then, with a kick and a flourish altogether indescribable, he drew to the side of the path to let us pass, which we did perfectly shouting with laughter, which broke out again every time we looked at each other and stopped to take breath: so sudden, grotesque, uncouth, and yet dexterous a gambado never came into

the brain or out of the limbs of any thing but a "niggar."

I observed, among the numerous groups that we passed or met, a much larger proportion of mulattoes than at the rice-island; upon asking Mr. —— why this was so, he said that there no white person could land without his or the overseer's permission, whereas on St. Simon's, which is a large island containing several plantations belonging to different owners, of course the number of whites, both residing on and visiting the place, was much greater, and the opportunity for intercourse between the blacks and whites much more frequent. While we were still on this subject, a horrid-looking filthy woman met us with a little child in her arms, a very light mulatto, whose extraordinary resemblance to Driver Bran (one of the officials who had been duly presented to me on my arrival, and who was himself a mulatto) struck me directly. I pointed it out to Mr. ——, who merely answered, "Very likely his child." "And," said I, "did you never remark that Driver Bran is the exact image of Mr. K——?" "Very likely his brother," was the reply: all which rather unpleasant state of relationships seemed accepted as such a complete matter of course, that I felt rather uncomfortable, and said no more about who was like who, but came to certain conclusions in my own mind as to a young lad who had been among our morning visitors, and whose extremely light color and straight, handsome features and striking resemblance to Mr. K—— had suggested suspicions of a rather unpleasant nature to me, and whose sole-acknowledged parent was a very black negress of the name of Minda. I have no doubt at all, now, that he is another son of Mr. K——, Mr. ——'s paragon overseer.

As we drew near the house again we were gradually joined by such a numerous escort of Mr. ——'s slaves that it was almost with difficulty we could walk along the

path. They buzzed, and hummed, and swarmed round us like flies, and the heat and dust consequent upon this friendly companionship were a most unpleasant addition to the labor of walking in the sandy soil through which we were plowing. I was not sorry when we entered the house and left our body-guard outside. In the evening I looked over the plan of the delightful residence I had visited in the morning, and could not help suggesting to Mr. —— the advantage to be gained in point of picturesqueness by merely turning the house round. It is but a wooden frame one after all, and your folks "down East" would think no more of inviting it to face about than if it was built of cards; but the fact is, here nothing signifies except the cotton crop, and whether one's nose is in a swamp and one's eyes in a sand-heap is of no consequence whatever either to one's self (if one's self was not I) or any one else.

I find here an immense proportion of old people; the work and the climate of the rice plantation require the strongest of the able-bodied men and women of the estate. The cotton crop is no longer by any means as paramount in value as it used to be, and the climate, soil, and labor of St. Simon's are better adapted to old, young, and feeble cultivators than the swamp fields of the rice-island. I wonder if I ever told you of the enormous decrease in value of this same famous sea-island long staple cotton. When Major ——, Mr. ——'s grandfather, first sent the produce of this plantation where we now are to England, it was of so fine a quality that it used to be quoted by itself in the Liverpool cotton market, and was then worth half a guinea a pound; it is now not worth a shilling a pound. This was told me by the gentleman in Liverpool who has been factor for this estate for thirty years. Such a decrease as this in the value of one's crop, and the steady increase at the same time of a slave population, now num-

bering between 700 and 800 bodies to clothe and house, mouths to feed, while the land is being exhausted by the careless and wasteful nature of the agriculture itself, suggests a pretty serious prospect of declining prosperity; and, indeed, unless these Georgia cotton-planters can command more land, or lay abundant capital (which they have not, being almost all of them over head and ears in debt) upon that which has already spent its virgin vigor, it is a very obvious thing that they must all very soon be eaten up by their own property. The rice plantations are a great thing to fall back upon under these circumstances, and the rice crop is now quite as valuable, if not more so, than the cotton one on Mr. ——'s estates, once so famous and prosperous through the latter.

I find any number of all but superannuated men and women here, whose tales of the former grandeur of the estate and family are like things one reads of in novels. One old woman, who crawled to see me, and could hardly lift her poor bowed head high enough to look in my face, had been in Major ——'s establishment in Philadelphia, and told with infinite pride of having waited upon his daughters and granddaughters, Mr. ——'s sisters. Yet here she is, flung by like an old rag, crippled with age and disease, living, or rather dying by slow degrees in a miserable hovel, such as no decent household servant would at the North, I suppose, ever set their foot in. The poor old creature complained bitterly to me of all her ailments and all her wants. I can do little, alas! for either. I had a visit from another tottering old crone called Dorcas, who all but went on her knees as she wrung and kissed my hands; with her came my friend Molly, the grandmother of the poor runaway girl Louisa, whose story I wrote you some little time ago. I had to hear it all over again, it being the newest event evidently in Molly's life; and it ended as before with the highly reasonable proposition:

"Me say, missis, what for massa's niggar run away? Snake eat 'em up, or dey starve to def in a swamp. Massa's niggars dey don't neber run away." If I was "massa's niggars," I "spose" I shouldn't run away either, with only those alternatives; but when I look at these wretches and at the sea that rolls round this island, and think how near the English West Indies and freedom are, it gives me a pretty severe twinge at the heart.

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Dearest E——,—I am afraid my letters must be becoming very wearisome to you; for if, as the copy-book runs, "Variety is charming," they certainly can not be so unless monotony is also charming, a thing not impossible to some minds, but of which the copy-book makes no mention. But what will you? as the French say; my days are no more different from one another than peas in a dish, or sands on the shore: 'tis a pleasant enough life to live for one who, like myself, has a passion for dullness, but it affords small matter for epistolary correspondence. I suppose it is the surfeit of excitement that I had in my youth that has made a life of quiet monotony so extremely agreeable to me; it is like stillness after loud noise, twilight after glare, rest after labor. There is enough strangeness, too, in every thing that surrounds me here to interest and excite me agreeably and sufficiently, and I should like the wild savage loneliness of the far away existence extremely if it were not for the one small item of "the slavery."

I had a curious visit this morning from half a dozen of the women, among whom were Driver Morris's wife and Venus (a hideous old gooddess she was, to be sure), Driver Bran's mother. They came especially to see the children, who are always eagerly asked for, and hugely admired by their sooty dependents. These poor women

went into ecstasies over the little white pickaninnies, and were loud and profuse in their expressions of gratitude to Massa —— for getting married and having children, a matter of thankfulness which, though it always makes me laugh very much, is a most serious one to them; for the continuance of the family keeps the estate and slaves from the hammer, and the poor wretches, besides seeing in every new child born to their owners a security against their own banishment from the only home they know, and separation from all ties of kindred and habit, and dispersion to distant plantations, not unnaturally look for a milder rule from masters who are the children of their fathers' masters. The relation of owner and slave may be expected to lose some of its harsher features, and, no doubt, in some instances, does so, when it is on each side the inheritance of successive generations. And so ——'s slaves laud, and applaud, and thank, and bless him for having married, and endowed their children with two little future mistresses. One of these women, a Diana by name, went down on her knees, and uttered in a loud voice a sort of extemporaneous prayer of thanksgiving at our advent, in which the sacred and the profane were most ludicrously mingled: her "tanks to de good Lord God Almighty that missus had come, what give de poor niggar sugar and flannel," and dat "Massa ——, him hab brought de missis and de two little misses down among de people," were really too grotesque, and yet certainly more sincere acts of thanksgiving are not often uttered among the solemn and decorous ones that are offered up to heaven for "benefits received."

I find the people here much more inclined to talk than those on the rice-island; they have less to do and more leisure, and bestow it very liberally on me; moreover, the poor old women, of whom there are so many turned out to grass here, and of whom I have spoken to you before,

though they are past work, are by no means past gossip, and the stories they have to tell of the former government of the estate under old Massa K—— are certainly pretty tremendous illustrations of the merits of slavery as a moral institution. This man, the father of the late owner, Mr. R—— K——, was Major ——'s agent in the management of this property, and a more cruel and unscrupulous one as regards the slaves themselves, whatever he may have been in his dealings with the master, I should think it would be difficult to find, even among the cruel and unscrupulous class to which he belonged.

In a conversation with old "House Molly," as she is called, to distinguish her from all other Mollies on the estate, she having had the honor of being a servant in Major ——'s house for many years, I asked her if the relation between men and women who are what they call married, *i. e.*, who have agreed to live together as man and wife (the only species of marriage formerly allowed on the estate, I believe now London may read the Marriage Service to them), was considered binding by the people themselves and by the overseer. She said "not much formerly," and that the people couldn't be expected to have much regard to such an engagement, utterly ignored as it was by Mr. K——, whose invariable rule, if he heard of any disagreement between a man and woman calling themselves married, was immediately to bestow them in "marriage" on other parties, whether they chose it or not, by which summary process the slightest "incompatibility of temper" received the relief of a divorce more rapid and easy than even Germany could afford, and the estate lost nothing by any prolongation of celibacy on either side. Of course, the misery consequent upon such arbitrary destruction of voluntary and imposition of involuntary ties was nothing to Mr. K——.

I was very sorry to hear to-day that Mr. O——, the

overseer at the rice-island, of whom I have made mention to you more than once in my letters, had had one of the men flogged very severely for getting his wife baptized. I was quite unable, from the account I received, to understand what his objection had been to the poor man's desire to make his wife at least a formal Christian; but it does seem dreadful that such an act should be so visited. I almost wish I was back again at the rice-island; for, though this is every way the pleasanter residence, I hear so much more that is intolerable of the treatment of the slaves from those I find here, that my life is really made wretched by it. There is not a single natural right that is not taken away from these unfortunate people, and the worst of all is, that their condition does not appear to me, upon farther observation of it, to be susceptible of even partial alleviation as long as the fundamental evil, the slavery itself, remains.

My letter was interrupted as usual by clamors for my presence at the door, and petitions for sugar, rice, and baby-clothes from a group of women who had done their tasks at three o'clock in the afternoon, and had come to say, "Ha do, missis?" (How do you do?), and beg something on their way to their huts. Observing one among them whose hand was badly maimed, one finger being reduced to a mere stump, she told me it was in consequence of the bite of a rattlesnake, which had attacked and bitten her child, and then struck her as she endeavored to kill it; her little boy had died, but one of the drivers cut off her finger, and so she had escaped with the loss of that member only. It is yet too early in the season for me to make acquaintance with these delightful animals, but the accounts the negroes give of their abundance is full of agreeable promise for the future. It seems singular, considering how very common they are, that there are not more frequent instances of the slaves being bitten by

them; to be sure, they seem to me to have a holy horror of ever setting their foot near either tree or bush, or any where but on the open road and the fields where they labor; and, of course, the snakes are not so frequent in open and frequented places as in their proper coverts. The Red Indians are said to use successfully some vegetable cure for the bite, I believe the leaves of the slippery ash or elm; the only infallible remedy, however, is suction, but of this the ignorant negroes are so afraid that they never can be induced to have recourse to it, being, of course, immovably persuaded that the poison which is so fatal to the blood must be equally so to the stomach. They tell me that the cattle wandering into the brakes and bushes are often bitten to death by these deadly creatures; the pigs, whose fat, it seems, does not accept the venom into its tissues with the same effect, escape unhurt for the most part—so much for the anti-venomous virtue of adipose matter—a consolatory consideration for such of us as are inclined to take on flesh more than we think graceful.

*Monday morning*, 25*th*. This letter has been long on the stocks, dear E——. I have been busy all day, and tired, and lazy in the evening latterly, and, moreover, feel as if such very dull matter was hardly worth sending all the way off to where you are happy to be. However, that is nonsense; I know well enough that you are glad to hear from me, be it what it will, and so I resume my chronicle. Some of my evenings have been spent in reading Mr. Clay's anti-abolition speech, and making notes on it, which I will show you when we meet. What a cruel pity and what a cruel shame it is that such a man should either know no better or do no better for his country than he is doing now!

Yesterday I for the first time bethought me of the riding privileges of which Jack used to make such magnificent mention when he was fishing with me at the rice-

island; and desiring to visit the remoter parts of the plantation and the other end of the island, I inquired into the resources of the stable. I was told I could have a mare with foal; but I declined adding my weight to what the poor beast already carried, and my only choice then was between one who had just foaled, or a fine stallion used as a plow-horse on the plantation. I determined for the latter, and shall probably be handsomely shaken whenever I take my rides abroad.

*Tuesday, the 26th.* My dearest E——, I write to you to-day in great depression and distress. I have had a most painful conversation with Mr. ——, who has declined receiving any of the people's petitions through me. Whether he is wearied with the number of these prayers and supplications, which he would escape but for me, as they probably would not venture to come so incessantly to him, and I, of course, feel bound to bring every one confided to me to him, or whether he has been annoyed at the number of pitiful and horrible stories of misery and oppression under the former rule of Mr. K——, which have come to my knowledge since I have been here, and the grief and indignation caused, but which can not, by any means, always be done away with, though their expression may be silenced by his angry exclamations of "Why do you listen to such stuff?" or "Why do you believe such trash? don't you know the niggers are all d—d liars?" etc., I do not know; but he desired me this morning to bring him no more complaints or requests of any sort, as the people had hitherto had no such advocate, and had done very well without, and I was only kept in an incessant state of excitement with all the falsehoods they "found they could make me believe." How well they have done without my advocacy, the conditions which I see with my own eyes, even more than their pitiful petitions, demonstrate; it is indeed true that the sufferings

of those who come to me for redress, and, still more, the injustice done to the great majority who can not, have filled my heart with bitterness and indignation that have overflowed my lips, till, I suppose, —— is weary of hearing what he has never heard before, the voice of passionate expostulation and importunate pleading against wrongs that he will not even acknowledge, and for creatures whose common humanity with his own I half think he does not believe; but I must return to the North, for my condition would be almost worse than theirs—condemned to hear and see so much wretchedness, not only without the means of alleviating it, but without permission even to represent it for alleviation: this is no place for me, since I was not born among slaves, and can not bear to live among them.

Perhaps, after all, what he says is true: when I am gone they will fall back into the desperate uncomplaining habit of suffering, from which my coming among them, willing to hear and ready to help, has tempted them; he says that bringing their complaints to me, and the sight of my credulous commiseration, only tend to make them discontented and idle, and brings renewed chastisement upon them; and that so, instead of really befriending them, I am only preparing more suffering for them whenever I leave the place, and they can no more cry to me for help. And so I see nothing for it but to go and leave them to their fate; perhaps, too, he is afraid of the mere contagion of freedom which breathes from the very existence of those who are free; my way of speaking to the people, of treating them, of living with them, the appeals I make to their sense of truth, of duty, of self-respect, the infinite compassion and the human consideration I feel for them—all this, of course, makes my intercourse with them dangerously suggestive of relations far different from any thing they have ever known; and, as Mr. O—— once al-

most hinted to me, my existence among slaves was an element of danger to the "institution." If I should go away, the human sympathy that I have felt for them will certainly never come near them again.

I was too unhappy to write any more, my dear friend, and you have been spared the rest of my paroxysm, which hereabouts culminated in the blessed refuge of abundant tears. God will provide. He has not forgotten, nor will He forsake these His poor children; and if I may no longer minister to them, they yet are in His hand, who cares for them more and better than I can.

Toward the afternoon yesterday I rowed up the river to the rice-island by way of refreshment to my spirits, and came back to-day, Wednesday, the 27th, through rather a severe storm. Before going to bed last night I finished Mr. Clay's speech, and ground my teeth over it. Before starting this morning I received from head man Frank a lesson on the various qualities of the various sorts of rice, and should be (at any rate till I forget all he told me, which I "feel in my bones" will be soon) a competent judge and expert saleswoman. The dead white speck, which shows itself sometimes in rice as it does in teeth, is in the former, as in the latter, a sign of decay; the finest quality of rice is what may be called flinty, clear and unclouded, and a pretty, clean, sparkling-looking thing it is.

I will tell you something curious and pleasant about my row back. The wind was so high and the river so rough when I left the rice-island, that just as I was about to get into the boat I thought it might not be amiss to carry my life-preserver with me, and ran back to the house to fetch it. Having taken that much care for my life, I jumped into the boat, and we pushed off. The fifteen miles' row with a furious wind, and part of the time the tide against us, and the huge broad, turbid river broken into a foam-

ing sea of angry waves, was a pretty severe task for the men. They pulled with a will, however, but I had to forego the usual accompaniment of their voices, for the labor was tremendous, especially toward the end of our voyage, where, of course, the nearness of the sea increased the roughness of the water terribly. The men were in great spirits, however (there were eight of them rowing, and one behind was steering); one of them said something which elicited an exclamation of general assent, and I asked what it was; the steerer said they were pleased because there was not another planter's lady in all Georgia who would have gone through the storm all alone with them in a boat; *i. e.*, without the protecting presence of a white man. "Why," said I, "my good fellows, if the boat capsized, or any thing happened, I am sure I should have nine chances for my life instead of one;" at this there was one shout of "So you would, missis; true for dat, missis;" and in great mutual good-humor we reached the landing at Hampton Point.

As I walked home I pondered over this compliment of Mr. ——'s slaves to me, and did not feel quite sure that the very absence of the fear which haunts the Southern women in their intercourse with these people, and prevents them from trusting themselves ever with them out of reach of white companionship and supervision, was not one of the circumstances which makes my intercourse with them unsafe and undesirable. The idea of apprehending any mischief from them never yet crossed my brain; and in the perfect confidence with which I go among them, they must perceive a curious difference between me and my lady neighbors in these parts; all have expressed unbounded astonishment at my doing so.

The spring is fast coming on, and we shall, I suppose, soon leave Georgia. How new and sad a chapter of my life this winter here has been!

Dear E——,—I can not give way to the bitter impatience I feel at my present position, and come back to the North without leaving my babies; and though I suppose their stay will not in any case be much prolonged in these regions of swamp and slavery, I must, for their sakes, remain where they are, and learn this dreary lesson of human suffering to the end. The record, it seems to me, must be utterly wearisome to you, as the instances themselves, I suppose, in a given time (thanks to that dreadful reconciler to all that is evil—habit), would become to me.

This morning I had a visit from two of the women, Charlotte and Judy, who came to me for help and advice for a complaint, which it really seems to me every other woman on the estate is cursed with, and which is a direct result of the conditions of their existence; the practice of sending women to labor in the fields in the third week after their confinement is a specific for causing this infirmity, and I know no specific for curing it under these circumstances. As soon as these poor things had departed with such comfort as I could give them, and the bandages they especially begged for, three other sable graces introduced themselves, Edie, Louisa, and Diana; the former told me she had had a family of seven children, but had lost them all through "ill luck," as she denominated the ignorance and ill treatment which were answerable for the loss of these, as of so many other poor little creatures their fellows. Having dismissed her and Diana with the sugar and rice they came to beg, I detained Louisa, whom I had never seen but in the presence of her old grandmother, whose version of the poor child's escape to, and hiding in the woods, I had a desire to compare with the heroine's own story. She told it very simply, and it was most pathetic. She had not finished her task one day, when she said she felt ill, and unable to do so,

and had been severely flogged by Driver Bran, in whose "gang" she then was. The next day, in spite of this encouragement to labor, she had again been unable to complete her appointed work; and Bran having told her that he'd tie her up and flog her if she did not get it done, she had left the field and run into the swamp. "Tie you up, Louisa!" said I; "what is that?" She then described to me that they were fastened up by their wrists to a beam or a branch of a tree, their feet barely touching the ground, so as to allow them no purchase for resistance or evasion of the lash, their clothes turned over their heads, and their backs scored with a leather thong, either by the driver himself, or, if he pleases to inflict their punishment by deputy, any of the men he may choose to summon to the office; it might be father, brother, husband, or lover, if the overseer so ordered it. I turned sick, and my blood curdled listening to these details from the slender young slip of a lassie, with her poor piteous face and murmuring, pleading voice. "Oh," said I, "Louisa; but the rattlesnakes—the dreadful rattlesnakes in the swamps; were you not afraid of those horrible creatures?" "Oh, missis," said the poor child, "me no tink of dem; me forget all 'bout dem for de fretting." "Why did you come home at last?" "Oh, missis, me starve with hunger, me most dead with hunger before me come back." "And were you flogged, Louisa?" said I, with a shudder at what the answer might be. "No, missis, me go to hospital; me almost dead and sick so long, 'spec Driver Bran him forgot 'bout de flogging." I am getting perfectly savage over all these doings, E——, and really think I should consider my own throat and those of my children well cut if some night the people were to take it into their heads to clear off scores in that fashion.

The Calibanish wonderment of all my visitors at the exceedingly coarse and simple furniture and rustic means

of comfort of my abode is very droll. I have never inhabited any apartment so perfectly devoid of what we should consider the common decencies of life; but to them, my rude chintz-covered sofa and common pine-wood table, with its green baize cloth, seem the adornings of a palace; and often in the evening, when my bairns are asleep, and M—— up stairs keeping watch over them, and I sit writing this daily history for your edification, the door of the great barn-like room is opened stealthily, and one after another, men and women come trooping silently in, their naked feet falling all but inaudibly on the bare boards as they betake themselves to the hearth, where they squat down on their hams in a circle, the bright blaze from the huge pine logs, which is the only light of this half of the room, shining on their sooty limbs and faces, and making them look like a ring of ebony idols surrounding my domestic hearth. I have had as many as fourteen at a time squatting silently there for nearly half an hour, watching me writing at the other end of the room. The candles on my table give only light enough for my own occupation, the fire-light illuminates the rest of the apartment; and you can not imagine any thing stranger than the effect of all these glassy whites of eyes and grinning white teeth turned toward me, and shining in the flickering light. I very often take no notice of them at all, and they seem perfectly absorbed in contemplating me. My evening dress probably excites their wonder and admiration no less than my rapid and continuous writing, for which they have sometimes expressed compassion, as if they thought it must be more laborious than hoeing; sometimes at the end of my day's journal I look up and say suddenly, "Well, what do you want?" when each black figure springs up at once, as if moved by machinery; they all answer, "Me come say ha do (how d'ye do), missis;" and then they troop out as noiselessly as they entered, like a procession

"The Atlantic - upon
the White sands of the Beach."

of sable dreams, and I go off in search, if possible, of whiter ones.

Two days ago I had a visit of great interest to me from several lads from twelve to sixteen years old, who had come to beg me to give them work. To make you understand this, you must know that, wishing very much to cut some walks and drives through the very picturesque patches of woodland not far from the house, I announced, through Jack, my desire to give employment in the wood-cutting line to as many lads as chose, when their unpaid task was done, to come and do some work for me, for which I engaged to pay them. At the risk of producing a most dangerous process of reflection and calculation in their brains, I have persisted in paying what I considered wages to every slave that has been my servant; and these my laborers must, of course, be free to work or no, as they like, and if they work for me must be paid by me. The proposition met with unmingled approbation from my "gang;" but I think it might be considered dangerously suggestive of the rightful relation between work and wages; in short, very involuntarily no doubt, but, nevertheless, very effectually I am disseminating ideas among Mr. ——'s dependents, the like of which have certainly never before visited their wool-thatched brains.

*Friday, March* 1. Last night, after writing so much to you, I felt weary, and went out into the air to refresh my spirit. The scene just beyond the house was beautiful; the moonlight slept on the broad river, which here is almost the sea, and on the masses of foliage of the great Southern oaks; the golden stars of German poetry shone in the purple curtains of the night, and the measured rush of the Atlantic unfurling its huge skirts upon the white sands of the beach (the sweetest and most awful lullaby in nature) resounded through the silent air.

I have not felt well, and have been much depressed for

some days past. I think I should die if I had to live here. This morning, in order not to die yet, I thought I had better take a ride, and accordingly mounted the horse which I told you was one of the equestrian alternatives offered me here; but no sooner did he feel my weight, which, after all, is mere levity and frivolity to him, than he thought proper to rebel, and find the grasshopper a burden, and rear and otherwise demonstrate his disgust. I have not ridden for a long time now; but Montreal's opposition very presently aroused the Amazon which is both natural and acquired in me, and I made him comprehend that, though I object to slaves, I expect obedient servants; which views of mine being imparted by a due administration of both spur and whip, attended with a judicious combination of coaxing pats on his great crested neck, and endearing commendations of his beauty, produced the desired effect. Montreal accepted me as inevitable, and carried me very wisely and well up the island to another of the slave settlements on the plantation, called Jones's Creek.

On my way I passed some magnificent evergreen oaks,* and some thickets of exquisite evergreen shrubs, and one or two beautiful sites for a residence, which made me gnash my teeth when I thought of the one we had chosen. To be sure, these charming spots, instead of being conveniently in the middle of the plantation, are at an out of the way end of it, and so hardly eligible for the one quality desired for the overseer's abode, viz., being central.

All the slaves' huts on St. Simon's are far less solid, comfortable, and habitable than those at the rice-island. I do

* The only ilex-trees which I have seen comparable in size and beauty with those of the sea-board of Georgia are some to be found in the Roman Campagna, at Passerano, Lunghegna, Castel Fusano, and other of its great princely farms, but especially in the magnificent woody wilderness of Valerano.

not know whether the laborer's habitation bespeaks the alteration in the present relative importance of the crops, but certainly the cultivators of the once far-famed long staple sea-island cotton of St. Simon's are far more miserably housed than the rice-raisers of the other plantation. These ruinous shielings, that hardly keep out wind or weather, are deplorable homes for young or aged people, and poor shelters for the hard-working men and women who cultivate the fields in which they stand. Riding home I passed some beautiful woodland, with charming pink and white blossoming peach and plum trees, which seemed to belong to some orchard that had been attempted, and afterward delivered over to wildness. On inquiry, I found that no fruit worth eating was ever gathered from them. What a pity it seems! for in this warm, delicious winter climate any and every species of fruit might be cultivated with little pains and to great perfection. As I was cantering along the side of one of the cotton-fields I suddenly heard some inarticulate vehement cries, and saw what seemed to be a heap of black limbs tumbling and leaping toward me, renewing the screams at intervals as it approached. I stopped my horse, and the black ball bounded almost into the road before me, and, suddenly straightening itself up into a haggard hag of a half-naked negress, exclaimed, with panting, eager breathlessness, "Oh, missis, missis, you no hear me cry, you no hear me call. Oh, missis, me call, me cry, and me run; make me a gown like dat. Do, for massy's sake, only make me a gown like dat." This modest request for a riding habit in which to hoe the cotton-fields served for an introduction to sundry other petitions for rice, and sugar, and flannel, all which I promised the petitioner, but not the "gown like dat;" whereupon I rode off, and she flung herself down in the middle of the road to get her wind and rest.

The passion for dress is curiously strong in these peo-

ple, and seems as though it might be made an instrument in converting them, outwardly at any rate, to something like civilization; for, though their own native taste is decidedly both barbarous and ludicrous, it is astonishing how very soon they mitigate it in imitation of their white models. The fine figures of the mulatto women in Charleston and Savannah are frequently as elegantly and tastefully dressed as those of any of their female superiors; and here on St. Simon's, owing, I suppose, to the influence of the resident lady proprietors of the various plantations, and the propensity to imitate in their black dependents, the people that I see all seem to me much tidier, cleaner, and less fantastically dressed than those on the rice plantation, where no such influences reach them.

On my return from my ride I had a visit from Captain F——, the manager of a neighboring plantation, with whom I had a long conversation about the present and past condition of the estate, the species of feudal magnificence in which its original owner, Major ——, lived, the iron rule of old overseer K—— which succeeded to it, and the subsequent sovereignty of his son, Mr. R—— K——, the man for whom Mr. —— entertains such a cordial esteem, and of whom every account I receive from the negroes seems to me to indicate a merciless sternness of disposition that may be a virtue in a slave-driver, but is hardly a Christian grace. Captain F—— was one of our earliest visitors at the rice plantation on our arrival, and I think I told you of his mentioning, in speaking to me of the orange-trees which formerly grew all round the dikes there, that he had taken Basil Hall there once in their blossoming season, and that he had said the sight was as well worth crossing the Atlantic for as Niagara. To-day he referred to that again. He has resided for a great many years on a plantation here, and is connected with our neighbor, old Mr. C——, whose daughter, I be-

lieve, he married. He interested me extremely by his description of the house Major —— had many years ago on a part of the island called St. Clair. As far as I can understand, there must have been an indefinite number of "masters'" residences on this estate in the old major's time; for, what with the one we are building, and the ruined remains of those not quite improved off the face of the earth, and the tradition of those that have ceased to exist, even as ruins, I make out no fewer than seven. How gladly would I exchange all that remain and all that do not for the smallest tenement in your blessed Yankee mountain village!

Captain F—— told me that at St. Clair General Oglethorpe, the good and brave English governor of the State of Georgia in its colonial days, had his residence, and that among the magnificent live oaks which surround the site of the former settlement, there was one especially venerable and picturesque, which in his recollection always went by the name of General Oglethorpe's Oak. If you remember the history of the colony under his benevolent rule, you must recollect how absolutely he and his friend and counselor Wesley opposed the introduction of slavery in the colony. How wrathfully the old soldier's spirit ought to haunt these cotton-fields and rice-swamps of his old domain, with their population of wretched slaves! I will ride to St. Clair and see his oak; if I should see him, he can not have much to say to me on the subject that I should not cry amen to.

*Saturday, March* 2. I have made a gain, no doubt, in one respect in coming here, dear E——, for, not being afraid of a rearing stallion, I can ride; but, on the other hand, my aquatic diversions are all likely, I fear, to be much curtailed. Well may you, or any other Northern Abolitionist, consider this a heaven-forsaken region—why, I can not even get worms to fish with, and was solemnly

assured by Jack this morning that the whole "Point," *i. e.*, neighborhood of the house, had been searched in vain for these useful and agreeable animals. I must take to some more sportsman-like species of bait; but, in my total ignorance of even the kind of fish that inhabit these waters, it is difficult for me to adapt my temptations to their taste.

Yesterday evening I had a visit that made me very sorrowful, if any thing connected with these poor people can be called more especially sorrowful than their whole condition; but Mr. ——'s declaration that he will receive no more statements of grievances or petitions for redress through me makes me as desirous now of shunning the vain appeals of these unfortunates as I used to be of receiving and listening to them. The imploring cry, "Oh missis!" that greets me whichever way I turn, makes me long to stop my ears now; for what can I say or do any more for them? The poor little favors—the rice, the sugar, the flannel—that they beg for with such eagerness, and receive with such exuberant gratitude, I can, it is true, supply, and words and looks of pity, and counsel of patience, and such instruction in womanly habits of decency and cleanliness as may enable them to better, in some degree, their own hard lot; but to the entreaty, "Oh, missis, you speak to massa for us! Oh, missis, you beg massa for us! Oh, missis, you tell massa for we, he sure do as you say!" I can not now answer as formerly, and I turn away choking and with eyes full of tears from the poor creatures, not even daring to promise any more the faithful transmission of their prayers.

The women who visited me yesterday evening were all in the family-way, and came to entreat of me to have the sentence (what else can I call it?) modified which condemns them to resume their labor of hoeing in the fields three weeks after their confinement. They knew, of

course, that I can not interfere with their appointed labor, and therefore their sole entreaty was that I would use my influence with Mr. —— to obtain for them a month's respite from labor in the field after childbearing. Their principal spokeswoman, a woman with a bright sweet face, called Mary, and a very sweet voice, which is by no means an uncommon excellence among them, appealed to my own experience; and while she spoke of my babies, and my carefully tended, delicately nursed, and tenderly watched confinement and convalescence, and implored me to have a kind of labor given to them less exhausting during the month after their confinement, I held the table before me so hard in order not to cry that I think my fingers ought to have left a mark on it. At length I told them that Mr. —— had forbidden me to bring him any more complaints from them, for that he thought the ease with which I received and believed their stories only tended to make them discontented, and that, therefore, I feared I could not promise to take their petitions to him; but that he would be coming down to "the Point" soon, and that they had better come then some time when I was with him, and say what they had just been saying to me; and with this, and various small bounties, I was forced, with a heavy heart, to dismiss them; and when they were gone, with many exclamations of, "Oh yes, missis, you will, you will speak to massa for we; God bless you, missis, we sure you will!" I had my cry out for them, for myself, for us. All these women had had large families, and *all* of them had lost half their children, and several of them had lost more. How I do ponder upon the strange fate which has brought me here, from so far away, from surroundings so curiously different—how my own people in that blessed England of my birth would marvel if they could suddenly have a vision of me as I sit here, and how sorry some of them would be for me!

I am helped to bear all that is so very painful to me here by my constant enjoyment of the strange, wild scenery in the midst of which I live, and which my resumption of my equestrian habits gives me almost daily opportunity of observing. I rode to-day to some new-cleared and plowed ground that was being prepared for the precious cotton-crop. I crossed a salt marsh upon a raised causeway that was perfectly alive with land-crabs, whose desperately active endeavors to avoid my horse's hoofs were so ludicrous that I literally laughed alone and aloud at them. The sides of this road across the swamp were covered with a thick and close embroidery of creeping moss, or rather lichens of the most vivid green and red: the latter made my horse's path look as if it was edged with an exquisite pattern of coral; it was like a thing in a fairy tale, and delighted me extremely.

I suppose, E——, one secret of my being able to suffer as acutely as I do, without being made either ill or absolutely miserable, is the childish excitability of my temperament, and the sort of ecstasy which any beautiful thing gives me. No day, almost no hour, passes without some enjoyment of the sort this coral-bordered road gave me, which not only charms my senses completely at the time, but returns again and again before my memory, delighting my fancy, and stimulating my imagination. I sometimes despise myself for what seems to me an inconceivable rapidity of emotion, that almost makes me doubt whether any one who feels so many things can really be said to feel any thing; but I generally recover from this perplexity by remembering whither invariably every impression of beauty leads my thoughts, and console myself for my contemptible facility of impression by the reflection that it is, upon the whole, a merciful system of compensation by which my whole nature, tortured as it was last night, can be absorbed this morning in a perfectly

pleasurable contemplation of the capers of crabs and the color of mosses as if nothing else existed in creation. One thing, however, I think, is equally certain, and that is, that I need never expect much sympathy, and perhaps this special endowment will make me, to some degree, independent of it; but I have no doubt that to follow me through half a day with any species of lively participation in my feelings would be a severe breathless moral calisthenic to most of my friends — what Shakspeare calls "sweating labor." As far as I have hitherto had opportunities of observing, children and maniacs are the only creatures who would be capable of sufficiently rapid transitions of thought and feeling to keep pace with me.

And so I rode through the crabs and the coral. There is one thing, however, I beg to commend to your serious consideration as a trainer of youth, and that is, the expediency of cultivating in all the young minds you educate an equal love of the good, the beautiful, and the absurd (not an easy task, for the latter is apt in its development to interfere a little with the two others): doing this, you command all the resources of existence. The love of the good and beautiful of course you are prepared to cultivate—that goes without saying, as the French say; the love of the ludicrous will not appear to you as important, and yet you will be wrong to undervalue it. In the first place, I might tell you that it was almost like cherishing the love of one's fellow-creatures — at which, no doubt, you shake your head reprovingly; but, leaving aside the enormous provision for the exercise of this natural faculty which we offer to each other, why should crabs scuttle from under my horse's feet in such a way as to make me laugh again every time I think of it, if there is not an inherent propriety in laughter, as the only emotion which certain objects challenge—an emotion wholesome for the soul and body of man? After all, *why* are we contrived

to laugh at all, if laughter is not essentially befitting and beneficial? and most people's lives are too lead-colored to afford to lose one sparkle on them, even the smallest twinkle of light gathered from a flash of nonsense. Hereafter point out for the "appreciative" study of your pupils all that is absurd in themselves, others, and the universe in general; 'tis an element largely provided, of course, to meet a corresponding and grateful capacity for its enjoyment.

After my crab and coral causeway I came to the most exquisite thickets of evergreen shrubbery you can imagine. If I wanted to paint Paradise I would copy this undergrowth, passing through which I went on to the settlement at St. Annie's, traversing another swamp on another raised causeway. The thickets through which I next rode were perfectly draped with the beautiful wild jasmine of these woods. Of all the parasitical plants I ever saw, I do think it is the most exquisite in form and color, and its perfume is like the most delicate heliotrope.

I stopped for some time before a thicket of glittering evergreens, over which hung, in every direction, streaming garlands of these fragrant golden cups, fit for Oberon's banqueting service. These beautiful shrubberies were resounding with the songs of mocking-birds. I sat there on my horse in a sort of dream of enchantment, looking, listening, and inhaling the delicious atmosphere of those flowers; and suddenly my eyes opened, as if I had been asleep, on some bright red bunches of spring leaves on one of the winter-stripped trees, and I as suddenly thought of the cold Northern skies and earth, where the winter was still inflexibly tyrannizing over you all, and, in spite of the loveliness of all that was present, and the harshness of all that I seemed to see at that moment, no first tokens of the spring's return were ever more welcome to me than those bright leaves that reminded me


"Paths into Paradise"

how soon I should leave this scene of material beauty and moral degradation, where the beauty itself is of an appropriate character to the human existence it surrounds: above all, loveliness, brightness, and fragrance; but below! it gives one a sort of melusina feeling of horror—all swamp and poisonous stagnation, which the heat will presently make alive with venomous reptiles.

I rode on, and the next object that attracted my attention was a very startling and by no means agreeable one —an enormous cypress-tree which had been burnt stood charred and blackened, and leaning toward the road so as to threaten a speedy fall across it, and on one of the limbs of this great charcoal giant hung a dead rattlesnake. If I tell you that it looked to me at least six feet long, you will say you only wonder I did not say twelve; it was a hideous-looking creature, and some negroes I met soon after told me they had found it in the swamp, and hung it dead on the burning tree. Certainly the two together made a dreadful trophy, and a curious contrast to the lovely bowers of bloom I had just been contemplating with such delight.

This settlement at St. Annie's is the remotest on the whole plantation, and I found there the wretchedest huts, and most miserably squalid, filthy, and forlorn creatures I had yet seen here—certainly the condition of the slaves on this estate is infinitely more neglected and deplorable than that on the rice plantation. Perhaps it may be that the extremely unhealthy nature of the rice cultivation makes it absolutely necessary that the physical condition of the laborers should be maintained at its best to enable them to abide it; and yet it seems to me that even the process of soaking the rice can hardly create a more dangerous miasma than the poor creatures must inhale who live in the midst of these sweltering swamps, half sea, half river slime. Perhaps it has something to do with the

fact that the climate on St. Simon's is generally considered peculiarly mild and favorable, and so less protection of clothes and shelter is thought necessary here for the poor residents; perhaps, too, it may be because the cotton crop is now, I believe, hardly as valuable as the rice crop, and the plantation here, which was once the chief source of its owner's wealth, is becoming a secondary one, and so not worth so much care or expense in repairing and constructing negro huts and feeding and clothing the slaves. More pitiable objects than some of those I saw at the St. Annie's settlement to-day I hope never to see: there was an old crone called Hannah, a sister, as well as I could understand what she said, of old House Molly, whose face and figure, seamed with wrinkles, and bowed and twisted with age and infirmity, really hardly retained the semblance of those of a human creature, and as she crawled to me almost half her naked body was exposed through the miserable tatters that she held on with one hand, while the other eagerly clutched my hand, and her poor blear eyes wandered all over me as if she was bewildered by the strange aspect of any human being but those whose sight was familiar to her. One or two forlorn creatures like herself, too old or too infirm to be compelled to work, and the half-starved and more than half-naked children apparently left here under their charge, were the only inmates I found in these wretched hovels.

I came home without stopping to look at any thing, for I had no heart any longer for what had so charmed me on my way to this place. Galloping along the road after leaving the marshes, I scared an ox who was feeding leisurely, and, to my great dismay, saw the foolish beast betake himself with lumbering speed into the "bush:" the slaves will have to hunt after him, and perhaps will discover more rattlesnakes six or twelve feet long.

After reaching home I went to the house of the over-

seer to see his wife, a tidy, decent, kind-hearted little woman, who seems to me to do her duty by the poor people she lives among as well as her limited intelligence and still more limited freedom allow. The house her husband lives in is the former residence of Major ——, which was the great mansion of the estate. It is now in a most ruinous and tottering condition, and they inhabit but a few rooms in it; the others are gradually mouldering to pieces, and the whole edifice will, I should think, hardly stand long enough to be carried away by the river, which in its yearly inroads on the bank on which it stands has already approached within a perilous proximity to the old dilapidated planter's palace. Old Molly, of whom I have often before spoken to you, who lived here in the days of the prosperity and grandeur of "Hampton," still clings to the relics of her old master's former magnificence, and with a pride worthy of old Caleb of Ravenswood showed me through the dismantled decaying rooms and over the remains of the dairy, displaying a capacious fish-box or well, where, in the good old days, the master's supply was kept in fresh salt water till required for table. Her prideful lamentations over the departure of all this quondam glory were ludicrous and pathetic; but, while listening with some amusement to the jumble of grotesque descriptions, through which her impression of the immeasurable grandeur and nobility of the house she served was the predominant feature, I could not help contrasting the present state of the estate with that which she described, and wondering why it should have become, as it undoubtedly must have done, so infinitely less productive a property than in the old major's time.

Before closing this letter, I have a mind to transcribe to you the entries for to-day recorded in a sort of day-book, where I put down very succinctly the number of people who visit me, their petitions and ailments, and also

such special particulars concerning them as seem to me worth recording. You will see how miserable the physical condition of many of these poor creatures is; and their physical condition, it is insisted by those who uphold this evil system, is the only part of it which is prosperous, happy, and compares well with that of Northern laborers. Judge from the details I now send you; and never forget, while reading them, that the people on this plantation are well off, and consider themselves well off, in comparison with the slaves on some of the neighboring estates.

*Fanny* has had six children; all dead but one. She came to beg to have her work in the field lightened.

*Nanny* has had three children; two of them are dead. She came to implore that the rule of sending them into the field three weeks after their confinement might be altered.

*Leah*, Cæsar's wife, has had six children; three are dead.

*Sophy*, Lewis's wife, came to beg for some old linen. She is suffering fearfully; has had ten children; five of them are dead. The principal favor she asked was a piece of meat, which I gave her.

*Sally*, Scipio's wife, has had two miscarriages and three children born, one of whom is dead. She came complaining of incessant pain and weakness in her back. This woman was a mulatto daughter of a slave called Sophy, by a white man of the name of Walker, who visited the plantation.

*Charlotte*, Renty's wife, had had two miscarriages, and was with child again. She was almost crippled with rheumatism, and showed me a pair of poor swollen knees that made my heart ache. I have promised her a pair of flannel trowsers, which I must forthwith set about making.

*Sarah*, Stephen's wife—this woman's case and history were alike deplorable. She had had four miscarriages,

had brought seven children into the world, five of whom were dead, and was again with child. She complained of dreadful pains in the back, and an internal tumor which swells with the exertion of working in the fields; probably, I think, she is ruptured. She told me she had once been mad and had ran into the woods, where she contrived to elude discovery for some time, but was at last tracked and brought back, when she was tied up by the arms, and heavy logs fastened to her feet, and was severely flogged. After this she contrived to escape again, and lived for some time skulking in the woods, and she supposes mad, for when she was taken again she was entirely naked. She subsequently recovered from this derangement, and seems now just like all the other poor creatures who come to me for help and pity. I suppose her constant childbearing and hard labor in the fields at the same time may have produced the temporary insanity.

*Sukey*, Bush's wife, only came to pay her respects. She had had four miscarriages; had brought eleven children into the world, five of whom are dead.

*Molly*, Quambo's wife, also only came to see me. Hers was the best account I have yet received; she had had nine children, and six of them were still alive.

This is only the entry for to-day, in my diary, of the people's complaints and visits. Can you conceive a more wretched picture than that which it exhibits of the conditions under which these women live? Their cases are in no respect singular, and though they come with pitiful entreaties that I will help them with some alleviation of their pressing physical distresses, it seems to me marvelous with what desperate patience (I write it advisedly, patience of utter despair) they endure their sorrow-laden existence. Even the poor wretch who told that miserable story of insanity, and lonely hiding in the swamps, and scourging when she was found, and of her renewed

madness and flight, did so in a sort of low, plaintive, monotonous murmur of misery, as if such sufferings were all "in the day's work."

I ask these questions about their children because I think the number they bear as compared with the number they rear a fair gauge of the effect of the system on their own health and that of their offspring. There was hardly one of these women, as you will see by the details I have noted of their ailments, who might not have been a candidate for a bed in a hospital, and they had come to me after working all day in the fields.

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Dearest E——,—When I told you in my last letter of the encroachments which the waters of the Altamaha are daily making on the bank at Hampton Point and immediately in front of the imposing-looking old dwelling of the former master, I had no idea how rapid this crumbling process has been of late years; but to-day, standing there with Mrs. G——, whom I had gone to consult about the assistance we might render to some of the poor creatures whose cases I sent you in my last letter, she told me that within the memory of many of the slaves now living on the plantation, a grove of orange-trees had spread its fragrance and beauty between the house and the river. Not a vestige remains of them. The earth that bore them was gradually undermined, slipped, and sank down into the devouring flood; and when she saw the astonished incredulity of my look, she led me to the ragged and broken bank, and there, immediately below it, and just covered by the turbid waters of the in-rushing tide, were the heads of the poor drowned orange-trees, swaying like black twigs in the briny flood, which had not yet dislodged all of them from their hold upon the soil which had gone down beneath the water wearing its garland of

bridal blossom. As I looked at those trees a wild wish rose in my heart that the river and the sea would swallow up and melt in their salt waves the whole of this accursed property of ours. I am afraid the horror of slavery with which I came down to the South, the general theoretic abhorrence of an Englishwoman for it, has gained, through the intensity it has acquired, a morbid character of mere desire to be delivered from my own share in it. I think so much of these wretches that I see, that I can hardly remember any others; and my zeal for the general emancipation of the slave has almost narrowed itself to this most painful desire that I and mine were freed from the responsibility of our share in this huge misery; and so I thought, "Beat, beat, the crumbling banks and sliding shores, wild waves of the Atlantic and the Altamaha! Sweep down and carry hence this evil earth and these homes of tyranny, and roll above the soil of slavery, and wash my soul and the souls of those I love clean from the blood of our kind!" But I have no idea that Mr. —— and his brother would cry amen to any such prayer. Sometimes, as I stand and listen to the roll of the great ocean surges on the farther side of little St. Simon's Island, a small green screen of tangled wilderness that interposes between this point and the Atlantic, I think how near our West Indian Islands and freedom are to these unfortunate people, many of whom are expert and hardy boatmen, as far as the mere mechanical management of a boat goes; but, unless Providence were compass and steersman too, it avails nothing that they should know how near their freedom might be found, nor have I any right to tell them if they could find it, for the slaves are not mine, they are Mr. ——'s.

The mulatto woman, Sally, accosted me again to-day, and begged that she might be put to some other than field labor. Supposing she felt herself unequal to it, I

asked her some questions, but the principal reason she urged for her promotion to some less laborious kind of work was, that hoeing in the field was so hard to her on "*account of her color*," and she therefore petitions to be allowed to learn a trade. I was much puzzled at this reason for her petition, but was presently made to understand that, being a mulatto, she considered field labor a degradation; her white bastardy appearing to her a title to consideration in my eyes. The degradation of these people is very complete, for they have accepted the contempt of their masters to that degree that they profess, and really seem to feel it for themselves, and the faintest admixture of white blood in their black veins appears at once, by common consent of their own race, to raise them in the scale of humanity. I had not much sympathy for this petition. The woman's father had been a white man who was employed for some purpose on the estate. In speaking upon this subject to Mrs. G——, she said that, as far as her observation went, the lower class of white men in the South lived with colored women precisely as they would at the North with women of their own race; the outcry that one hears against amalgamation appears therefore to be something educated and acquired rather than intuitive. I can not perceive, in observing my children, that they exhibit the slightest repugnance or dislike to these swarthy dependents of theirs, which they surely would do if, as is so often pretended, there is an inherent, irreconcilable repulsion on the part of the white toward the negro race. All the Southern children that I have seen seem to have a special fondness for these good-natured, childish human beings, whose mental condition is kin in its simplicity and proneness to impulsive emotion to their own, and I can detect in them no trace of the abhorrence and contempt for their dusky skins which all questions of treating them with common justice is so apt to elicit from American men and women.


Jones's Creek.

To-day, for the first time since I left the rice-island, I went out fishing, but had no manner of luck. Jack rowed me up Jones's Creek, a small stream which separates St. Simon's from the main, on the opposite side from the great waters of the Altamaha. The day was very warm. It is becoming almost too hot to remain here much longer, at least for me, who dread and suffer from heat so much. The whole summer, however, is passed by many members of the Georgia families on their estates by the sea. When the heat is intense, the breeze from the ocean and the salt air, I suppose, prevent it from being intolerable or hurtful. Our neighbor, Mr. C——, and his family reside entirely, the year round, on their plantations here without apparently suffering in their health from the effects of the climate. I suppose it is the intermediate region between the sea-board and the mountains that becomes so pestilential when once the warm weather sets in. I remember the Belgian minister, M. de ——, telling me that the mountain country of Georgia was as beautiful as Paradise, and that the climate, as far as his experience went, was perfectly delicious. He was, however, only there on an exploring expedition, and, of course, took the most favorable season of the year for the purpose.

I have had several women with me this afternoon more or less disabled by chronic rheumatism. Certainly, either their labor or the exposure it entails must be very severe, for this climate is the last that ought to engender rheumatism. This evening I had a visit from a bright young woman, calling herself Minda, who came to beg for a little rice or sugar. I inquired from which of the settlements she had come down, and found that she has to walk three miles every day to and from her work. She made no complaint whatever of this, and seemed to think her laborious tramp down to the Point after her day of labor on the field well rewarded by the pittance of rice and sug-

ar she obtained. Perhaps she consoled herself for the exertion by the reflection which occurred to me while talking to her, that many women who have borne children, and many women with child, go the same distance to and from their task-ground—that seems dreadful!

I have let my letter lie from a stress of small interruptions. Yesterday, Sunday, 3d, old Auber, a stooping, halting hag, came to beg for flannel and rice. As usual, of course, I asked various questions concerning her condition, family, etc.; she told me she had never been married, but had had five children, two of whom were dead. She complained of flooding, of intolerable backache, and said that with all these ailments she considered herself quite recovered, having suffered horribly from an abscess in her neck, which was now nearly well. I was surprised to hear of her other complaints, for she seemed to me like quite an old woman; but constant childbearing, and the life of labor, exposure, and privation which they lead, ages these poor creatures prematurely.

Dear E——, how I do defy you to guess the novel accomplishment I have developed within the last two days; what do you say to my turning butcher's boy, and cutting up the carcase of a sheep for the instruction of our butcher and cook, and benefit of our table? You know, I have often written you word that we have mutton here—thanks to the short salt grass on which it feeds—that compares with the best South Down or *Prè salé;* but such is the barbarous ignorance of the cook, or rather the butcher who furnishes our kitchen supplies, that I defy the most expert anatomist to pronounce on any piece (joints they can not be called) of mutton brought to our table to what part of the animal sheep it originally belonged. I have often complained bitterly of this, and in vain implored Abraham the cook to send me some dish of mutton to which I might with safety apply the familiar name of leg,

shoulder, or haunch. These remonstrances and expostulations have produced no result whatever, however, but an increase of eccentricity in the *chunks* of sheeps' flesh placed upon the table; the squares, diamonds, cubes, and rhomboids of mutton have been more ludicrously and hopelessly unlike any thing we see in a Christian butcher's shop, with every fresh endeavor Abraham has made to find out "zackly wot de missis do want;" so the day before yesterday, while I was painfully dragging S—— through the early intellectual science of the alphabet and first reading lesson, Abraham appeared at the door of the room brandishing a very long thin knife, and with many bows, grins, and apologies for disturbing me, begged that I would go and cut up a sheep for him. My first impulse, of course, was to decline the very unusual task offered me with mingled horror and amusement. Abraham, however, insisted and besought, extolled the fineness of his sheep, declared his misery at being unable to cut it as I wished, and his readiness to conform for the future to whatever *patterns* of mutton "de missis would only please to give him." Upon reflection, I thought I might very well contrive to indicate upon the sheep the size and form of the different joints of civilized mutton, and so, for the future, save much waste of good meat; and, moreover, the lesson, once taught, would not require to be repeated, and I have ever held it expedient to accept every opportunity of learning to do any thing, no matter how unusual, which presented itself to be done; and so I followed Abraham to the kitchen, when, with a towel closely pinned over my silk dress, and knife in hand, I stood for a minute or two meditating profoundly before the rather unsightly object which Abraham had pronounced "de beautifullest sheep de missis eber saw." The sight and smell of raw meat are especially odious to me, and I have often thought that if I had had to be my own cook, I should inevitably be-

come a vegetarian, probably, indeed, return entirely to my green and salad days. Nathless, I screwed my courage to the sticking-point, and slowly and delicately traced out with the point of my long carving-knife two shoulders, two legs, a saddle, and a neck of mutton; not probably in the most thoroughly artistic and butcherly style, but as nearly as my memory and the unassisted light of nature would enable me; and having instructed Abraham in the various boundaries, sizes, shapes, and names of the several joints, I returned to S—— and her belles-lettres, rather elated, upon the whole, at the creditable mode in which I flattered myself I had accomplished my unusual task, and the hope of once more seeing roast mutton of my acquaintance. I will confess to you, dear E——, that the *neck* was not a satisfactory part of the performance, and I have spent some thoughts since in trying to adjust in my own mind its proper shape and proportions.

As an accompaniment to "de beautifullest mutton de missis eber see," we have just received from my neighbor Mr. C—— the most magnificent supply of fresh vegetables, green peas, salad, etc. He has a garden, and a Scotchman's real love for horticulture, and I profit by them in this very agreeable manner.

I have been interrupted by several visits, my dear E——, among other, one from a poor creature called Judy, whose sad story and condition affected me most painfully. She had been married, she said, some years ago to one of the men called Temba, who, however, now has another wife, having left her because she went mad. While out of her mind she escaped into the jungle, and contrived to secrete herself there for some time, but was finally tracked and caught, and brought back and punished by being made to sit, day after day, for hours in the stocks—a severe punishment for a man, but for a woman perfectly barbarous. She complained of chronic rheumatism, and other terrible

ailments, and said she suffered such intolerable pain while laboring in the fields, that she had come to entreat me to have her work lightened. She could hardly crawl, and cried bitterly all the time she spoke to me.

She told me a miserable story of her former experience on the plantation under Mr. K——'s overseership. It seems that Jem Valiant (an extremely difficult subject, a mulatto lad, whose valor is sufficiently accounted for now by the influence of the mutinous white blood) was her first-born, the son of Mr. K——, who forced her, flogged her severely for having resisted him, and then sent her off, as a farther punishment, to Five Pound—a horrible swamp in a remote corner of the estate, to which the slaves are sometimes banished for such offenses as are not sufficiently atoned for by the lash. The dismal loneliness of the place to these poor people, who are as dependent as children upon companionship and sympathy, makes this solitary exile a much-dreaded infliction; and this poor creature said that, bad as the flogging was, she would sooner have taken that again than the dreadful lonely days and nights she spent on the penal swamp of Five Pound.

I make no comment on these terrible stories, my dear friend, and tell them to you as nearly as possible in the perfectly plain, unvarnished manner in which they are told to me. I do not wish to add to, or perhaps I ought to say take away from, the effect of such narrations by amplifying the simple horror and misery of their bare details.

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My dearest E——,—I have had an uninterrupted stream of women and children flowing in the whole morning to say "Ha de, missis?" Among others, a poor woman called Mile, who could hardly stand for pain and swelling in her limbs; she had had fifteen children and two miscarriages; nine of her children had died; for the last

three years she had become almost a cripple with chronic rheumatism, yet she is driven every day to work in the field. She held my hands, and stroked them in the most appealing way while she exclaimed, "Oh my missis! my missis! me neber sleep till day for de pain," and with the day her labor must again be resumed. I gave her flannel and sal volatile to rub her poor swelled limbs with; rest I could not give her—rest from her labor and her pain—this mother of fifteen children.

Another of my visitors had a still more dismal story to tell; her name was Die; she had had sixteen children, fourteen of whom were dead; she had had four miscarriages: one had been caused with falling down with a very heavy burden on her head, and one from having her arms strained up to be lashed. I asked her what she meant by having her arms tied up. She said their hands were first tied together, sometimes by the wrists, and sometimes, which was worse, by the thumbs, and they were then drawn up to a tree or post, so as almost to swing them off the ground, and then their clothes rolled round their waist, and a man with a cowhide stands and stripes them. I give you the woman's words. She did not speak of this as of any thing strange, unusual, or especially horrid and abominable; and when I said, "Did they do that to you when you were with child?" she simply replied, "Yes, missis." And to all this I listen—I, an English woman, the wife of the man who owns these wretches, and I can not say, "That thing shall not be done again; that cruel shame and villainy shall never be known here again." I gave the woman meat and flannel, which were what she came to ask for, and remained choking with indignation and grief long after they had all left me to my most bitter thoughts.

I went out to try and walk off some of the weight of horror and depression which I am beginning to feel daily

more and more, surrounded by all this misery and degradation that I can neither help nor hinder. The blessed spring is coming very fast, the air is full of delicious wild-wood fragrances, and the wonderful songs of Southern birds; the wood paths are as tempting as paths into Paradise, but Jack is in such deadly terror about the snakes, which are now beginning to glide about with a freedom and frequency certainly not pleasing, that he will not follow me off the open road, and twice to-day scared me back from charming wood paths I ventured to explore with his exclamations of terrified warning.

I gathered some exquisite pink blossoms, of a sort of waxen texture, off a small shrub which was strange to me, and for which Jack's only name was dye-bush; but I could not ascertain from him whether any dyeing substance was found in its leaves, bark, or blossoms.

I returned home along the river side, stopping to admire a line of noble live oaks beginning, alas! to be smothered with the treacherous white moss under whose pale trailing masses their verdure gradually succumbs, leaving them, like huge hoary ghosts, perfect mountains of parasitical vegetation, which, strangely enough, appears only to hang upon and swing from their boughs without adhering to them. The mixture of these streams of gray-white filaments with the dark foliage is extremely beautiful as long as the leaves of the tree survive in sufficient masses to produce the rich contrast of color; but when the moss has literally conquered the whole tree, and, after stripping its huge limbs bare, clothed them with its own wan masses, they always looked to me like so many gigantic Druid ghosts, with flowing robes and beards, and locks all of one ghastly gray, and I would not have broken a twig off them for the world, lest a sad voice, like that which reproached Dante, should have moaned out of it to me,

"Non hai tu spirto di pietade alcuno?"

A beautiful mass of various woodland skirted the edge of the stream, and mingled in its foliage every shade of green, from the pale, stiff spikes and fans of the dwarf palmetto to the dark canopy of the magnificent ilex—bowers and brakes of the loveliest wildness, where one dare not tread three steps for fear. What a tantalization! it is like some wicked enchantment.

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Dearest E——,—I have found growing along the edge of the dreary inclosure where the slaves are buried such a lovely wild flower; it is a little like the euphrasia or eyebright of the English meadows, but grows quite close to the turf, almost into it, and consists of clusters of tiny white flowers that look as if they were made of the finest porcelain. I took up a root of it yesterday, with a sort of vague idea that I could transplant it to the North; though I can not say that I should care to transplant any thing thither that could renew to me the associations of this place—not even the delicious wild flowers, if I could.

The woods here are full of wild plum-trees, the delicate white blossoms of which twinkle among the evergreen copses, and, besides illuminating them with a faint starlight, suggest to my mind a possible liqueur like kirsch, which I should think could quite as well be extracted from wild plums as wild cherries, and the trees are so numerous that there ought to be quite a harvest from them. You may, and, doubtless, have seen palmetto plants in Northern green and hot houses, but you never saw palmetto roots; and what curious things they are! huge, hard, yellowish-brown stems, as thick as my arm, or thicker, extending and ramifying under the ground in masses that seem hardly justified or accounted for by the elegant, light, spiky fans of dusky green foliage with which they

fill the under part of the woods here. They look very tropical and picturesque, but both in shape and color suggest something metallic rather than vegetable; the bronze-green hue and lance-like form of their foliage has an arid, hard character, that makes one think they could be manufactured quite as well as cultivated. At first I was extremely delighted with the novelty of their appearance; but now I feel thirsty when I look at them, and the same with their kinsfolk, the yuccas and their intimate friends, if not relations, the prickly pears, with all of which once strange growth I have grown contemptuously familiar now.

Did it ever occur to you what a strange affinity there is between the texture and color of the wild vegetables of these sandy Southern soils, and the texture and color of shells? The prickly pear, and especially the round little cactus plants all covered with hairy spikes, are curiously suggestive of a family of round spiked shells, with which you, as well as myself, are doubtless familiar; and though the splendid flame-color of some cactus blossoms never suggests any nature but that of flowers, I have seen some of a peculiar shade of yellow-pink, that resembles the mingled tint on the inside of some elaborately colored shell, and the pale white and rose flowers of another kind have the coloring and almost texture of shell, much rather than of any vegetable substance.

To-day I walked out without Jack, and, in spite of the terror of snakes with which he has contrived slightly to inoculate me, I did make a short exploring journey into the woods. I wished to avoid a plowed field, to the edge of which my wanderings had brought me; but my dash into the woodland, though unpunished by an encounter with snakes, brought me only into a marsh as full of land-crabs as an ant-hill is of ants, and from which I had to retreat ingloriously, finding my way home at last by the beach.

I have had, as usual, a tribe of visitors and petitioners ever since I came home. I will give you an account of those cases which had any thing beyond the average of interest in their details. One poor woman, named Molly, came to beg that I would, if possible, get an extension of their exemption from work after childbearing. The close of her argument was concise and forcible. "Missis, we hab um pickanniny — tree weeks in de ospital, and den right out upon the hoe again — *can we strong* dat way, missis? No!" And truly I do not see that they can. This poor creature has had eight children and two miscarriages. All her children were dead but one. Another of my visitors was a divinely named but not otherwise divine Venus; it is a favorite name among these sable folk, but, of course, must have been given originally in derision. The Aphrodite in question was a dirt-colored (convenient color I should say for these parts) mulatto. I could not understand how she came on this property, for she was the daughter of a black woman and the overseer of an estate to which her mother formerly belonged, and from which I suppose she was sold, exchanged, or given, as the case may be, to the owners of this plantation. She was terribly crippled with rheumatism, and came to beg for some flannel. She had had eleven children, five of whom had died, and two miscarriages. As she took her departure, the vacant space she left on the other side of my writing-table was immediately filled by another black figure with a bowed back and piteous face, one of the thousand "Mollies" on the estate, where the bewildering redundancy of their name is avoided by adding that of their husband; so when the question, "Well, who are you?" was answered with the usual genuflexion, and "I'se Molly, missis!" I, of course, went on with "whose Molly," and she went on to refer herself to the ownership (under Mr. —— and heaven) of one Tony, but proceeded to say that

he was not her *real* husband. This appeal to an element of reality in the universally accepted fiction which passes here by the title of marriage surprised me; and on asking her what she meant, she replied that her real husband had been sold from the estate for repeated attempts to run away. He had made his escape several times, and skulked starving in the woods and morasses, but had always been tracked and brought back, and flogged almost to death, and finally sold as an incorrigible runaway. What a spirit of indomitable energy the wretched man must have had, to have tried so often that hideously hopeless attempt to fly! I do not write you the poor woman's jargon, which was ludicrous; for I can not write you the sighs, and tears, and piteous looks, and gestures, that made it pathetic; of course she did not know whither or to whom her *real* husband had been sold; but in the mean time Mr. K——, that merciful Providence of the estate, had provided her with the above-named Tony, by whom she had had nine children, six of whom were dead; she, too, had miscarried twice. She came to ask me for some flannel for her legs, which were all swollen with constant rheumatism, and to beg me to give her something to cure some bad sores and ulcers, which seemed to me dreadful enough in their present condition, but which she said break out afresh and are twice as bad every summer.

I have let my letter lie since the day before yesterday, dear E——, having had no leisure to finish it. Yesterday morning I rode out to St. Clair's, where there used formerly to be another negro settlement, and another house of Major ——'s. I had been persuaded to try one of the mares I had formerly told you of, and to be sure a more "curst" quadruped, and one more worthy of a Petruchio for a rider I did never back. Her temper was furious, her gait intolerable, her mouth the most obdurate that ever tugged against bit and bridle. It is not wise any

where — here it is less wise than any where else in the world—to say, "Jamais de cette eau je ne boirai;" but I *think* I will never ride that delightful creature Miss Kate again.

I wrote you of my having been to a part of the estate called St. Clair's, where there was formerly another residence of Major ——'s; nothing remains now of it but a ruined chimney of some of the offices, which is standing yet in the middle of what has become a perfect wilderness. At the best of times, with a large house, numerous household, and paths, and drives of approach, and the usual external conditions of civilization about it, a residence here would have been the loneliest that can well be imagined; now it is the shaggiest desert of beautiful wood that I ever saw. The magnificent old oaks stand round the place in silent solemn grandeur; and among them I had no difficulty in recognizing, by the description Captain F—— had given me of it, the crumbling, shattered relic of a tree called Oglethorpe's oak. That worthy, valiant old governor had a residence here himself in the early days of the colony, when, under the influence of Wesley, he vainly made such strenuous efforts to keep aloof from his infant province the sore curse of slavery.

I rode almost the whole way through a grove of perfect evergreen. I had with me one of the men of the name of Hector, who has a good deal to do with the horses, and so had volunteered to accompany me, being one of the few negroes on the estate who can sit a horse. In the course of our conversation, Hector divulged certain opinions relative to the comparative gentility of driving in a carriage and the vulgarity of walking, which sent me into fits of laughing; at which he grinned sympathetically, and opened his eyes very wide, but certainly without attaining the least insight into what must have appeared to him my very unaccountable and unreasonable merriment.

Among various details of the condition of the people on the several estates in the island, he told me that a great number of the men on all the different plantations had *wives* on the neighboring estates as well as on that to which they properly belonged. "Oh, but," said I, "Hector, you know that can not be; a man has but one lawful wife." Hector knew this, he said, and yet seemed puzzled himself, and rather puzzled me to account for the fact, that this extensive practice of bigamy was perfectly well known to the masters and overseers, and never in any way found fault with or interfered with. Perhaps this promiscuous mode of keeping up the slave population finds favor with the owners of creatures who are valued in the market at so much per head. This was a solution which occurred to me, but which I left my Trojan hero to discover, by dint of the profound pondering into which he fell.

Not far from the house, as I was cantering home, I met S——, and took her up on the saddle before me, an operation which seemed to please her better than the vicious horse I was riding, whose various demonstrations of dislike to the arrangement afforded my small equestrian extreme delight and triumph. My whole afternoon was spent in shifting my bed and bedroom furniture from a room on the ground floor to one above; in the course of which operation a brisk discussion took place between M—— and my boy Jack, who was nailing on the vallence of the bed, and whom I suddenly heard exclaim, in answer to something she had said, "Well, den, I do tink so; and dat's the speech of a man, whether um bond or free." A very trifling incident, and insignificant speech; and yet it came back to my ears very often afterward — "the speech of a *man*, whether bond or free." They might be made conscious—some of them are evidently conscious—of an inherent element of manhood superior to the bitter accident of slavery, and to which, even in their degraded

condition, they might be made to refer that vital self-respect which can survive all external pressure of mere circumstance, and give their souls to that service of God, which is perfect freedom, in spite of the ignoble and cruel bondage of their bodies.

My new apartment is what I should call decidedly airy; the window, unless when styled by courtesy shut, which means admitting of draught enough to blow a candle out, must be wide open, being incapable of any intermediate condition; the latch of the door, to speak the literal truth, does shut; but it is the only part of it that does—that is, the latch and the hinges; every where else its configuration is traced by a distinct line of light and air. If what old Dr. Physic used to say be true, that a draught which will not blow out a candle will blow out a man's life (a Spanish proverb originally I believe), my life is threatened with extinction in almost every part of this new room of mine, wherein, moreover, I now discover to my dismay, having transported every other article of bedroom furniture to it, it is impossible to introduce the wardrobe for my clothes. Well, our stay here is drawing to a close, and therefore these small items of discomfort can not afflict me much longer.

Among my visitors to-day was a poor woman named Oney, who told me her husband had gone away from her now for four years; it seems he was the property of Mr. K——, and when that gentleman went to slave-driving on his own account, and ceased to be the overseer of this estate, he carried her better half, who was his chattel, away with him, and she never expects to see him again. After her departure I had a most curious visitor, a young lad of the name of Renty, whose very decidedly mulatto tinge accounted, I suppose, for the peculiar disinvoltura of his carriage and manner; he was evidently, in his own opinion, a very superior creature, and yet, as his conver-

sation with me testified, he was conscious of some flaw in the honor of his "yellow" complexion. "Who is your mother, Renty?" said I (I give you our exact dialogue). "Betty, head man Frank's wife." I was rather dismayed at the promptness of this reply, and hesitated a little at my next question, "Who is your father?" My sprightly young friend, however, answered, without an instant's pause, "Mr. K——." Here I came to a halt, and, willing to suggest some doubt to the lad, because for many peculiar reasons this statement seemed to me shocking, I said, "What, old Mr. K——?" "No, Massa R——." "Did your mother tell you so?" "No, missis, me ashamed to ask her; Mr. C——'s children told me so, and I 'spect they know it." Renty, you see, did not take Falconbridge's view of such matters; and as I was by no means sorry to find that he considered his relation to Mr. K—— a disgrace to his mother, which is an advance in moral perception not often met with here, I said no more upon the subject.

*Tuesday, March* 3. This morning, old House Molly, coming from Mr. G——'s upon some errand to me, I asked her if Renty's statement was true; she confirmed the whole story, and, moreover, added that this connection took place after Betty was married to head man Frank. Now he, you know, E——, is the chief man at the rice-island, second in authority to Mr. O——, and, indeed, for a considerable part of the year, absolute master and guardian during the night of all the people and property at the rice plantation; for, after the early spring, the white overseer himself is obliged to betake himself to the main land to sleep, out of the influence of the deadly malaria of the rice swamp, and Frank remains sole sovereign of the island from sunset to sunrise—in short, during the whole period of his absence. Mr. —— bestowed the highest commendations upon his fidelity and intelligence, and,

during the visit Mr. R—— K—— paid us at the island, he was emphatic in his praise of both Frank and his wife, the latter having, as he declared, by way of climax to his eulogies, quite the principles of a white woman. Perhaps she imbibed them from his excellent influence over her. Frank is a serious, sad, sober-looking, very intelligent man; I should think he would not relish having his wife borrowed from him even by the white gentleman who admired her principles so much; and it is quite clear, from poor Renty's speech about his mother, that by some of these people (and if by any, then very certainly by Frank) the disgrace of such an injury is felt and appreciated much after the fashion of white men.

This old woman Molly is a wonderfully intelligent, active, energetic creature, though considerably over seventy years old; she was talking to me about her former master, Major ——, and what she was pleased to call the *revelation* war (*i. e.*, revolution war), during which that gentleman, having embraced the side of the rebellious colonies in their struggle against England, was by no means on a bed of roses. He bore King George's commission, and was a major in the British army; but having married a great Carolina heiress, and become proprietor of these plantations, sided with the country of his adoption, and not that of his birth, in the war between them, and was a special object of animosity on that account to the English officers who attacked the sea-board of Georgia, and sent troops on shore and up the Altamaha to fetch off the negroes, or incite them to rise against their owners. "De British," said Molly, "make old massa run about bery much in de great revelation war." He ran effectually, however, and contrived to save both his life and property from the invader.

Molly's account was full of interest, in spite of the grotesque lingo in which it was delivered, and which once or


Old Tabby Slave Cabin.

twice nearly sent me into convulsions of laughing, whereupon she apologized with great gravity for her mispronunciation, modestly suggesting that *white words* were impossible to the organs of speech of black folks. It is curious how universally any theory, no matter how absurd, is accepted by these people; for any thing in which the contemptuous supremacy of the dominant race is admitted, and their acquiescence in the theory of their own incorrigible baseness is so complete, that this, more than any other circumstance in their condition, makes me doubtful of their rising from it.

In order to set poor dear old Molly's notions straight with regard to the negro incapacity for speaking plain the noble white words, I called S—— to me and set her talking; and having pointed out to Molly how very imperfect her mode of pronouncing many words was, convinced the worthy old negress that want of training, and not any absolute original impotence, was the reason why she disfigured the *white words*, for which she had such a profound respect. In this matter, as in every other, the slaves pay back to their masters the evil of their own dealings with usury, though unintentionally. No culture, however slight, simple, or elementary, is permitted to these poor creatures, and the utterance of many of them is more like what Prospero describes Caliban's to have been, than the speech of men and women in a Christian and civilized land: the children of their owners, brought up among them, acquire their negro mode of talking—slavish speech surely it is—and it is distinctly perceptible in the utterances of all Southerners, particularly of the women, whose avocations, taking them less from home, are less favorable to their throwing off this ignoble trick of pronunciation than the more varied occupation and the more extended and promiscuous business relations of men. The Yankee twang of the regular down Easter is not more easily detected by

any ear, nice in enunciation and accent, than the thick negro speech of the Southerners: neither is lovely or melodious; but, though the Puritan snuffle is the harsher of the two, the slave *slobber* of the language is the more ignoble, in spite of the softer voices of the pretty Southern women who utter it.

I rode out to-day upon Miss Kate again, with Jack for my esquire. I made various vain attempts to ride through the woods, following the cattle-tracks; they turned round and round into each other, or led out into the sandy pine barren, the eternal frame in which all nature is set here, the inevitable limit to the prospect, turn landward which way you will. The wood paths which I followed between evergreen thickets, though little satisfactory in their ultimate result, were really more beautiful than the most perfect arrangement of artificial planting that I ever saw in an English park; and I thought, if I could transplant the region which I was riding through bodily into the midst of some great nobleman's possessions on the other side of the water, how beautiful an accession it would be thought to them. I was particularly struck with the elegant growth of a profuse wild shrub I passed several times to-day, the leaves of which were pale green underneath, and a deep red, varnished brown above.

I must give you an idea of the sort of service one is liable to obtain from one's most intelligent and civilized servants hereabouts, and the consequent comfort and luxury of one's daily existence. Yesterday Aleck, the youth who fulfills the duties of what you call a waiter, and we in England a footman, gave me a salad for dinner, mixed with so large a portion of the soil in which it had grown that I requested him to-day to be kind enough to wash the lettuce before he brought it to table. M—— later in the day told me that he had applied to her very urgently for soap and a brush, "as missis wished de lettuce scrub-

bed," a fate from which my second salad was saved by her refusal of these desired articles, and farther instructions upon the subject.

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Dearest E——,—I have been long promising poor old House Molly to visit her in her own cabin, and so the day before yesterday I walked round the settlement to her dwelling, and a most wretched hovel I found it. She has often told me of the special directions left by her old master for the comfort and well-being of her old age, and certainly his charge has been but little heeded by his heirs, for the poor faithful old slave is most miserably off in her infirm years. She made no complaint, however, but seemed overjoyed at my coming to see her. She took me to the hut of her brother, old Jacob, where the same wretched absence of every decency and every comfort prevailed; but neither of them seemed to think the condition that appeared so wretched to me one of peculiar hardship—though Molly's former residence in her master's house might reasonably have made her discontented with the lot of absolute privation to which she was now turned over—but, for the moment, my visit seemed to compensate for all sublunary sorrows, and she and poor old Jacob kept up a duet of rejoicing at my advent, and that I had brought "de little missis among um people afore they die."

Leaving them, I went on to the house of Jacob's daughter Hannah, with whom Psyche, the heroine of the rice-island story, and wife of his son Joe, lives. I found their cabin as tidy and comfortable as it could be made, and their children, as usual, neat and clean; they are capital women, both of them, with an innate love of cleanliness and order most uncommon among these people. On my way home I overtook two of my daily suppliants, who

were going to the house in search of me, and meat, flannel, rice, and sugar, as the case might be; they were both old and infirm-looking women, and one of them, called Scylla, was extremely lame, which she accounted for by an accident she had met with while carrying a heavy weight of rice on her head; she had fallen on a sharp stake, or snag, as she called it, and had never recovered the injury she had received. She complained also of falling of the womb. Her companion (who was not Charybdis, however, but Phœbe) was a cheery soul who complained of nothing, but begged for flannel. I asked her about her family and children; she had no children left, nothing but grandchildren; she had had nine children, and seven of them died quite young; the only two who grew up left her to join the British when they invaded Georgia in the last war, and their children, whom they left behind, were all her family now.

In the afternoon I made my first visit to the hospital of the estate, and found it, as indeed I find every thing else here, in a far worse state even than the wretched establishments on the rice-island, dignified by that name; so miserable a place for the purpose to which it was dedicated I could not have imagined on a property belonging to Christian owners. The floor (which was not boarded, but merely the damp hard earth itself) was strewn with wretched women, who, but for their moans of pain, and uneasy, restless motions, might very well each have been taken for a mere heap of filthy rags; the chimney refusing passage to the smoke from the pine-wood fire, it puffed out in clouds through the room, where it circled and hung, only gradually oozing away through the windows, which were so far well adapted to the purpose that there was not a single whole pane of glass in them. My eyes, unaccustomed to the turbid atmosphere, smarted and watered, and refused to distinguish at first the different dis-

mal forms, from which cries and wails assailed me in every corner of the place. By degrees I was able to endure for a few minutes what they were condemned to live their hours and days of suffering and sickness through; and, having given what comfort kind words and promises of help in more substantial forms could convey, I went on to what seemed a yet more wretched abode of wretchedness. This was a room where there was no fire because there was no chimney, and where the holes made for windows had no panes or glasses in them. The shutters being closed, the place was so dark that, on first entering it, I was afraid to stir lest I should fall over some of the deplorable creatures extended upon the floor. As soon as they perceived me, one cry of "Oh missis!" rang through the darkness; and it really seemed to me as if I was never to exhaust the pity, and amazement, and disgust which this receptacle of suffering humanity was to excite in me. The poor dingy supplicating sleepers upraised themselves as I cautiously advanced among them; those who could not rear their bodies from the earth held up piteous beseeching hands, and as I passed from one to the other I felt more than one imploring clasp laid upon my dress, to solicit my attention to some new form of misery. One poor woman, called Tressa, who was unable to speak above a whisper from utter weakness and exhaustion, told me she had had nine children, was suffering from incessant flooding, and felt "as if her back would split open." There she lay, a mass of filthy tatters, without so much as a blanket under her or over her, on the bare earth in this chilly darkness. I promised them help and comfort, beds and blankets, and light and fire—that is, I promised to ask Mr. —— for all this for them; and, in the very act of doing so, I remembered with a sudden pang of anguish that I was to urge no more petitions for his slaves to their master. I groped my way out, and, emerging on the piazza,

all the choking tears and sobs I had controlled broke forth, and I leaned there crying over the lot of these unfortunates till I heard a feeble voice of "Missis, you no cry; missis, what for you cry?" and, looking up, saw that I had not yet done with this intolerable infliction. A poor crippled old man, lying in the corner of the piazza, unable even to crawl toward me, had uttered this word of consolation, and by his side (apparently too idiotic, as he was too impotent, to move) sat a young woman, the expression of whose face was the most suffering, and, at the same time, the most horribly repulsive I ever saw. I found she was, as I supposed, half-witted; and, on coming nearer to inquire into her ailments and what I could do for her, found her suffering from that horrible disease—I believe some form of scrofula—to which the negroes are subject, which attacks and eats away the joints of their hands and fingers —a more hideous and loathsome object I never beheld; her name was Patty, and she was granddaughter to the old crippled creature by whose side she was squatting.

I wandered home, stumbling with crying as I went, and feeling so utterly miserable that I really hardly saw where I was going, for I as nearly as possible fell over a great heap of oyster-shells left in the middle of the path. This is a horrid nuisance, which results from an indulgence which the people here have and value highly; the waters round the island are prolific in shell-fish, oysters, and the most magnificent prawns I ever saw. The former are a considerable article of the people's diet, and the shells are allowed to accumulate, as they are used in the composition of which their huts are built, and which is a sort of combination of mud and broken oyster-shells, which forms an agglomeration of a kind very solid and durable for such building purposes; but, instead of being all carried to some specified place out of the way, these great heaps of oyster-shells are allowed to be piled up

any where and every where, forming the most unsightly obstructions in every direction. Of course, the cultivation of order for the sake of its own seemliness and beauty is not likely to be an element of slave existence; and as masters have been scarce on this plantation for many years now, a mere unsightliness is not a matter likely to trouble any body much; but, after my imminent overthrow by one of these disorderly heaps of refuse, I think I may make bold to request that the paths along which I am likely to take my daily walks may be kept free from them.

On my arrival at home—at the house—I can not call any place here my home!—I found Renty waiting to exhibit to me an extremely neatly-made leather pouch, which he has made by my order, of fitting size and dimensions to receive Jack's hatchet and saw. Jack and I have set up a sort of Sir Walter and Tom Purdie companionship of clearing and cutting paths through the woods nearest to the house; thinning the overhanging branches, clearing the small evergreen thickets which here and there close over and across the grassy track. To me this occupation was especially delightful until quite lately, since the weather began to be rather warmer and the snakes to slide about. Jack has contrived to inoculate me with some portion of his terror of them; but I have still a daily hankering after the lovely green wood walks; perhaps, when once I have seen a live rattlesnake, my enthusiasm for them will be modified to the degree that his is.

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Dear E——,—This letter has remained unfinished, and my journal interrupted for more than a week. Mr. —— has been quite unwell, and I have been traveling to and fro daily between Hampton and the rice-island in the

long-boat to visit him; for the last three days I have remained at the latter place, and only returned here this morning early. My daily voyages up and down the river have introduced me to a great variety of new musical performances of our boatmen, who invariably, when the rowing is not too hard, moving up or down with the tide, accompany the stroke of their oars with the sound of their voices. I told you formerly that I thought I could trace distinctly some popular national melody with which I was familiar in almost all their songs; but I have been quite at a loss to discover any such foundation for many that I have heard lately, and which have appeared to me extraordinarily wild and unaccountable. The way in which the chorus strikes in with the burden, between each phrase of the melody chanted by a single voice, is very curious and effective, especially with the rhythm of the rowlocks for accompaniment. The high voices all in unison, and the admirable time and true accent with which their responses are made, always make me wish that some great musical composer could hear these semi-savage performances. With a very little skillful adaptation and instrumentation, I think one or two barbaric chants and choruses might be evoked from them that would make the fortune of an opera.

The only exception that I have met with yet among our boat voices to the high tenor which they seem all to possess is in the person of an individual named Isaac, a basso profondo of the deepest dye, who nevertheless never attempts to produce with his different register any different effects in the chorus by venturing a second, but sings like the rest in unison, perfect unison, of both time and tune. By-the-by, this individual *does* speak, and therefore I presume he is not an ape, orang-outang, chimpanzee, or gorilla; but I could not, I confess, have conceived it possible that the presence of articulate sounds, and the

absence of an articulate tail, should make, externally at least, so completely the only appreciable difference between a man and a monkey, as they appear to do in this individual "black brother." Such stupendous long thin hands, and long flat feet, I did never see off a large quadruped of the ape species. But, as I said before, Isaac *speaks*, and I am much comforted thereby.

You can not think (to return to the songs of my boatmen) how strange some of their words are: in one, they repeatedly chanted the "sentiment" that "God made man, and man makes"—what do you think?—"money!" Is not that a peculiar poetical proposition? Another ditty to which they frequently treat me they call Cæsar's song; it is an extremely spirited war-song, beginning "The trumpets blow, the bugles sound—Oh, stand your ground!" It has puzzled me not a little to determine in my own mind whether this title of Cæsar's song has any reference to the great Julius, and, if so, what may be the negro notion of him, and whence and how derived. One of their songs displeased me not a little, for it embodied the opinion that "twenty-six black girls not make mulatto yellow girl;" and as I told them I did not like it, they have omitted it since. This desperate tendency to despise and undervalue their own race and color, which is one of the very worst results of their abject condition, is intolerable to me.

While rowing up and down the broad waters of the Altamaha to the music of these curious chants, I have been reading Mr. Moore's speech about the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, and I confess I think his the only defensible position yet taken, and the only consistent argument yet used in any of the speeches I have hitherto seen upon the subject.

I have now settled down at Hampton again; Mr. —— is quite recovered, and is coming down here in a day or

two for change of air; it is getting too late for him to stay on the rice plantation even in the day, I think. You can not imagine any thing so exquisite as the perfect curtains of yellow jasmine with which this whole island is draped; and as the boat comes sweeping down toward the Point, the fragrance from the thickets hung with their golden garlands greets one before one can distinguish them; it is really enchanting.

I have now to tell you of my hallowing last Sunday by gathering a congregation of the people into my big sitting-room, and reading prayers to them. I had been wishing very much to do this for some time past, and obtained Mr. ——'s leave while I was with him at the rice-island, and it was a great pleasure to me. Some of the people are allowed to go up to Darien once a month to church; but, with that exception, they have no religious service on Sunday whatever for them. There is a church on the island of St. Simon, but they are forbidden to frequent it, as it leads them off their own through neighboring plantations, and gives opportunities for meetings between the negroes of the different estates, and very likely was made the occasion of abuses and objectionable practices of various kinds; at any rate, Mr. K—— forbade the Hampton slaves resorting to the St. Simon's church, and so for three Sundays in the month they are utterly without Christian worship or teaching, or any religious observance of God's day whatever.

I was very anxious that it should not be thought that I *ordered* any of the people to come to prayers, as I particularly desired to see if they themselves felt the want of any Sabbath service, and would of their own accord join in any such ceremony; I therefore merely told the house servants that if they would come to the sitting-room at eleven o'clock, I would read prayers to them, and that they might tell any of their friends or any of the

people that I should be very glad to see them if they liked to come. Accordingly, most of those who live at the Point, *i. e.*, in the immediate neighborhood of the house, came, and it was encouraging to see the very decided efforts at cleanliness and decorum of attire which they had all made. I was very much affected and impressed myself by what I was doing, and I suppose must have communicated some of my own feeling to those who heard me. It is an extremely solemn thing to me to read the Scriptures aloud to any one, and there was something in my relation to the poor people by whom I was surrounded that touched me so deeply while thus attempting to share with them the best of my possessions, that I found it difficult to command my voice, and had to stop several times in order to do so. When I had done, they all with one accord uttered the simple words, "We thank you, missis," and instead of overwhelming me as usual with petitions and complaints, they rose silently and quietly, in a manner that would have become the most orderly of Christian congregations accustomed to all the impressive decorum of civilized church privileges. Poor people! They are said to have what a very irreligious young English clergyman once informed me I had—a "*turn* for religion." They seem to me to have a "turn" for instinctive good manners too; and certainly their mode of withdrawing from my room after our prayers bespoke either a strong feeling of their own, or a keen appreciation of mine.

I have resumed my explorations in the woods with renewed enthusiasm, for during my week's absence they have become more lovely and enticing than ever: unluckily, however, Jack seems to think that fresh rattlesnakes have budded together with the tender spring foliage, and I see that I shall either have to give up my wood walks and rides, or go without a guide. Lovely blossoms are

springing up every where—weeds, of course, wild things, impertinently so called. Nothing is cultivated here but cotton; but in some of the cotton-fields beautiful creatures are peeping into blossom, which I suppose will all be duly hoed off the surface of the soil in proper season; meantime I rejoice in them, and in the splendid, magnificent thistles, which would be in flower-gardens in other parts of the world, and in the wonderful, strange, beautiful butterflies that seem to me almost as big as birds, that go zigzagging in the sun. I saw yesterday a lovely monster, who thought proper, for my greater delectation, to alight on a thistle I was admiring, and as the flower was purple, and he was all black velvet fringed with gold, I was exceedingly pleased with his good inspiration.

This morning I drove up to the settlement at St. Annie's, having various bundles of benefaction to carry in the only equipage my estate here affords — an exceedingly small, rough, and uncomfortable cart, called the sick-house wagon, inasmuch as it is used to convey to the hospital such of the poor people as are too ill to walk there. Its tender mercies must be terrible indeed for the sick, for I, who am sound, could very hardly abide them; however, I suppose Montreal's pace is moderated for them: to-day he went rollicking along with us behind him, shaking his fine head and mane, as if he thought the more we were jolted the better we should like it. We found, on trying to go on to Cartwright's Point, that the state of the tide would not admit of our getting thither, and so had to return, leaving it unvisited. It seems to me strange that, where the labor of so many hands might be commanded, piers, and wharves, and causeways are not thrown out (wooden ones, of course, I mean) wherever the common traffic to or from different parts of the plantation is thus impeded by the daily rise and fall of the river; the trouble and expense would be nothing, and the gain in conven-

ience very considerable. However, perhaps the nature of the tides, and of the banks and shores themselves, may not be propitious for such constructions, and I rather incline, upon reflection, to think this may be so, because to go from Hampton to our neighbor Mr. C——'s plantation, it is necessary to consult the tide in order to land conveniently. Driving home to-day by Jones's Creek, we saw an immovable row of white cranes, all standing with imperturbable gravity upon one leg. I thought of Boccaccio's cook, and had a mind to say Ha! at them, to try if they had two. I have been over to Mr. C——'s, and was very much pleased with my visit, but will tell you of it in my next.

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Dear E——,—I promised to tell you of my visit to my neighbor Mr. C——, which pleased and interested me very much. He is an old Glasgow man, who has been settled here many years. It is curious how many of the people round this neighborhood have Scotch names; it seems strange to find them thus gathered in the vicinity of a new Darien; but those in our immediate neighborhood seem to have found it a far less fatal region than their countrymen did its namesake of the Isthmus. Mr. C——'s house is a roomy, comfortable, handsomely laid-out mansion, to which he received me with very cordial kindness, and where I spent part of a very pleasant morning, talking with him, hearing all he could tell me of the former history of Mr. ——'s plantation. His description of its former master, old Major ——, and of his agent and overseer Mr. K——, and of that gentleman's worthy son and successor the late overseer, interested me very much; of the two latter functionaries his account was terrible, and much what I had supposed any impartial account of them would be; because, let the propensity to lying of the poor

wretched slaves be what it will, they could not invent, with a common consent, the things that they one and all tell me with reference to the manner in which they have been treated by the man who has just left the estate, and his father, who for the last nineteen years have been sole sovereigns of their bodies and souls. The crops have satisfied the demands of the owners, who, living in Philadelphia, have been perfectly contented to receive a large income from their estate without apparently caring how it was earned. The stories that the poor people tell me of the cruel tyranny under which they have lived are not complaints, for they are of things past and gone, and very often, horridly as they shock and affect me, they themselves seem hardly more than half conscious of the misery their condition exhibits to me, and they speak of things which I shudder to hear of almost as if they had been matters of course with them.

Old Mr. C—— spoke with extreme kindness of his own people, and had evidently bestowed much humane and benevolent pains upon endeavors to better their condition. I asked him if he did not think the soil and climate of this part of Georgia admirably suited to the cultivation of the mulberry and the rearing of the silkworm; for it has appeared to me that hereafter silk may be made one of the most profitable products of this whole region: he said that that had long been his opinion, and he had at one time had it much at heart to try the experiment, and had proposed to Major —— to join him in it, on a scale large enough to test it satisfactorily; but he said Mr. K—— opposed the scheme so persistently that of course it was impossible to carry it out, as his agency and co-operation were indispensable; and that in like manner he had suggested sowing turnip crops, and planting peach-trees for the benefit and use of the people on the Hampton estate, experiments which he had tried with excellent success on


Cherokee Roses from the
Wesley Oak.

his own; but all these plans for the amelioration and progress of the people's physical condition had been obstructed and finally put entirely aside by old Mr. K—— and his son, who, as Mr. C—— said, appeared to give satisfaction to their employers, so it was not his business to find fault with them; he said, however, that the whole condition and treatment of the slaves had changed from the time of Major ——'s death, and that he thought it providential for the poor people that Mr. K—— should have left the estate, and the young gentleman, the present owner, come down to look after the people.

He showed me his garden, from whence come the beautiful vegetables he had more than once supplied me with; in the midst of it was a very fine and flourishing date-palm-tree, which he said bore its fruit as prosperously here as it would in Asia. After the garden we visited a charming, nicely-kept poultry-yard, and I returned home much delighted with my visit and the kind good-humor of my host.

In the afternoon I sat as usual at the receipt of custom, hearing of aches and pains till I ached myself sympathetically from head to foot.

Yesterday morning, dear E——, I went on horseback to St. Annie's, exploring on my way some beautiful woods, and in the afternoon I returned thither in a wood-wagon, with Jack to drive and a mule to draw me, Montreal being quite beyond his management; and then and there, the hatchet and saw being in company, I compelled my slave Jack, all the rattlesnakes in creation to the contrary notwithstanding, to cut and clear a way for my chariot through the charming copse.

My letter has been lying unfinished for the last three days. I have been extraordinarily busy, having emancipated myself from the trammels of Jack and all his terror, and as I fear no serpents on horseback, have been daily

riding through new patches of woodland without any guide, taking my chance of what I might come to in the shape of impediments. Last Tuesday I rode through a whole wood of burned and charred trees, cypresses and oaks, that looked as if they had been each of them blasted by a special thunderbolt, and whole thickets of young trees and shrubs perfectly black and brittle from the effect of fire, I suppose the result of some carelessness of the slaves. As this charcoal woodland extended for some distance, I turned out of it, and round the main road through the plantation, as I could not ride through the blackened boughs and branches without getting begrimed. It had a strange, wild, desolate effect, not without a certain gloomy picturesqueness.

In the afternoon I made Israel drive me through Jack's new-made path to break it down and open it still more, and Montreal's powerful trampling did good service to that effect, though he did not seem to relish the narrow wood road with its grass path by any means as much as the open way of what may be called the high road. After this operation I went on to visit the people at the Busson Hill settlement. I here found, among other noteworthy individuals, a female named Judy, whose two children belong to an individual called (not Punch, but) Joe, who has another wife, called Mary, at the rice-island. In one of the huts I went to leave some flannel, and rice, and sugar for a poor old creature called Nancy, to whom I had promised such indulgences: she is exceedingly infirm and miserable, suffering from sore limbs and an ulcerated leg so cruelly that she can hardly find rest in any position from the constant pain she endures, and is quite unable to lie on her hard bed at night. As I bent over her to-day, trying to prop her into some posture where she might find some ease, she took hold of my hand, and with the tears streaming over her face, said, "I have worked every day

through dew and damp, and sand and heat, and done good work; but oh, missis, me old and broken now; no tongue can tell how much I suffer." In spite of their curious thick utterance and comical jargon, these people sometimes use wonderfully striking and pathetic forms of speech. In the next cabin, which consisted of an inclosure called by courtesy a room, certainly not ten feet square, and owned by a woman called Dice—that is, not owned, of course, but inhabited by her—three grown-up human beings and eight children stow themselves by day and night, which may be called close packing, I think. I presume that they must take turns to be inside and outside the house, but they did not make any complaint about it, though I should think the aspect of my countenance, as I surveyed their abode and heard their numbers, might have given them a hint to that effect; but I really do find these poor creatures patient of so much misery, that it inclines me the more to heed as well as hear their petitions and complaints when they bring them to me.

After my return home I had my usual evening reception, and, among other pleasant incidents of plantation life, heard the following agreeable anecdote from a woman named Sophy, who came to beg for some rice. In asking her about her husband and children, she said she had never had any husband; that she had had two children by a white man of the name of Walker, who was employed at the mill on the rice-island; she was in the hospital after the birth of the second child she bore this man, and at the same time two women, Judy and Sylla, of whose children Mr. K—— was the father, were recovering from their confinements. It was not a month since any of them had been delivered, when Mrs. K—— came to the hospital, had them all three severely flogged, a process which *she* personally superintended, and then sent them to Five Pound—the swamp Botany Bay of the plantation, of

which I have told you—with farther orders to the drivers to flog them every day for a week. Now, E——, if I make you sick with these disgusting stories, I can not help it; they are the life itself here; hitherto I have thought these details intolerable enough, but this apparition of a female fiend in the middle of this hell I confess adds an element of cruelty which seems to me to surpass all the rest. Jealousy is not an uncommon quality in the feminine temperament; and just conceive the fate of these unfortunate women between the passions of their masters and mistresses, each alike armed with power to oppress and torture them. Sophy went on to say that Isaac was her son by Driver Morris, who had forced her while she was in her miserable exile at Five Pound. Almost beyond my patience with this string of detestable details, I exclaimed—foolishly enough, heaven knows—"Ah! but don't you know—did nobody ever tell or teach any of you that it is a sin to live with men who are not your husbands?" Alas! E——, what could the poor creature answer but what she did, seizing me at the same time vehemently by the wrist: "Oh yes, missis, we know—we know all about dat well enough; but we do any thing to get our poor flesh some rest from de whip; when he made me follow him into de bush, what use me tell him no? he have strength to make me." I have written down the woman's words; I wish I could write down the voice and look of abject misery with which they were spoken. Now you will observe that the story was not told to me as a complaint; it was a thing long past and over, of which she only spoke in the natural course of accounting for her children to me. I make no comment; what need, or can I add, to such stories? But how is such a state of things to endure? and again, how is it to end? While I was pondering, as it seemed to me, at the very bottom of the Slough of Despond, on this miserable creature's story, an-

other woman came in (Tema), carrying in her arms a child the image of the mulatto Bran; she came to beg for flannel. I asked her who was her husband. She said she was not married. Her child is the child of Bricklayer Temple, who has a wife at the rice-island. By this time, what do you think of the moralities, as well as the amenities, of slave life? These are the conditions which can only be known to one who lives among them; flagrant acts of cruelty may be rare, but this ineffable state of utter degradation, this really *beastly* existence, is the normal condition of these men and women, and of that no one seems to take heed, nor have I ever heard it described, so as to form any adequate conception of it, till I found myself plunged into it; where and how is one to begin the cleansing of this horrid pestilential immondezzio of an existence?

It is Wednesday, the 20th of March; we can not stay here much longer; I wonder if I shall come back again! and whether, when I do, I shall find the trace of one idea of a better life left in these poor people's minds by my sojourn among them.

One of my industries this morning has been cutting out another dress for one of our women, who had heard of my tailoring prowess at the rice-island. The material, as usual, was a miserable cotton, many-colored like the scarf of Iris. While shaping it for my client, I ventured to suggest the idea of the possibility of a change of the nethermost as well as the uppermost garment. This, I imagine, is a conception that has never dawned upon the female slave mind on this plantation. They receive twice a year a certain supply of clothing, and wear them (as I have heard some nasty fine ladies do their stays, for fear they should get out of shape), without washing, till they receive the next suit. Under these circumstances I think it is unphilosophical, to say the least of it, to speak of the ne-

groes as a race whose unfragrance is heaven-ordained, and the result of special organization.

I must tell you that I have been delighted, surprised, and the very least perplexed, by the sudden petition on the part of our young waiter, Aleck, that I will teach him to read. He is a very intelligent lad of about sixteen, and preferred his request with an urgent humility that was very touching. I told him I would think about it. I mean to do it. I will do it; and yet, it is simply breaking the laws of the government under which I am living. Unrighteous laws are made to be broken—*perhaps*—but then, you see, I am a woman, and Mr. —— stands between me and the penalty. If I were a man, I would do that and many a thing besides, and doubtless should be shot some fine day from behind a tree by some good neighbor, who would do the community a service by quietly getting rid of a mischievous incendiary; and I promise you, in such a case, no questions would be asked, and my lessons would come to a speedy and silent end; but teaching slaves to read is a finable offense, and I am *feme couverte*, and my fines must be paid by my legal owner, and the first offense of the sort is heavily fined, and the second more heavily fined, and for the third, one is sent to prison. What a pity it is I can't begin with Aleck's third lesson, because going to prison can't be done by proxy, and that penalty would light upon the right shoulders! I certainly intend to teach Aleck to read. I certainly won't tell Mr. —— any thing about it. I'll leave him to find it out, as slaves, and servants, and children, and all oppressed, and ignorant, and uneducated and unprincipled people do; then, if he forbids me, I can stop—perhaps before then the lad may have learned his letters. I begin to perceive one most admirable circumstance in this slavery: you are absolute on your own plantation. No slaves' testimony avails against you, and no white testimony exists but such

as you choose to admit. Some owners have a fancy for maiming their slaves, some brand them, some pull out their teeth, some shoot them a little here and there (all details gathered from advertisements of runaway slaves in Southern papers); now they do all this on their plantations, where nobody comes to see, and I'll teach Aleck to read, for nobody is here to see, at least nobody whose seeing I mind; and I'll teach every other creature that wants to learn. I haven't much more than a week to remain in this blessed purgatory; in that last week perhaps I may teach the boy enough to go on alone when I am gone.

*Thursday*, 21*st*. I took a long ride to-day all through some new woods and fields, and finally came upon a large space sown with corn for the people. Here I was accosted by such a shape as I never beheld in the worst of my dreams; it looked at first, as it came screaming toward me, like a live specimen of the arms of the Isle of Man, which, as you may or may not know, are three legs joined together, and kicking in different directions. This uncouth device is not an invention of the Manxmen, for it is found on some very ancient coins—Greek, I believe; but, at any rate, it is now the device of our subject Island of Man, and, like that set in motion, and nothing else, was the object that approached me, only it had a head where the three legs were joined, and a voice came out of the head to this effect: "Oh, missis, you hab to take me out of dis here bird-field; me no able to run after birds, and ebery night me lick because me no run after dem." When this apparition reached me and stood as still as it could, I perceived it consisted of a boy who said his name was "Jack de bird-driver." I suppose some vague idea of the fitness of things had induced them to send this living scarecrow into the cornfield, and if he had been set up in the midst of it, nobody, I am sure, would have imagined he was any thing else; but it seems he was expected to run after the

feathered fowl who alighted on the grain-field, and I do not wonder that he did not fulfill this expectation. His feet, legs, and knees were all maimed and distorted, his legs were nowhere thicker than my wrist, his feet were a yard apart from each other, and his knees swollen and knocking together. What a creature to run after birds! He implored me to give him some meat, and have him sent back to Little St. Simon's Island, from which he came, and where he said his poor limbs were stronger and better.

Riding home, I passed some sassafras-trees, which are putting forth deliciously fragrant tassels of small leaves and blossoms, and other exquisite flowering shrubs, which are new to me, and enchant me perhaps all the more for their strangeness. Before reaching the house I was stopped by one of our multitudinous Jennies with a request for some meat, and that I would help her with some clothes for Ben and Daphne, of whom she had the sole charge; these are two extremely pretty and interesting-looking mulatto children, whose resemblance to Mr. K—— had induced me to ask Mr. ——, when first I saw them, if he did not think they must be his children. He said they were certainly like him, but Mr. K—— did not acknowledge the relationship. I asked Jenny who their mother was. "Minda." "Who their father?" "Mr. K——." "What! old Mr. K——?" "No, Mr. R—— K——." "Who told you so?" "Minda, who ought to know." "Mr. K—— denies it." "That's because he never has looked upon them, nor done a thing for them." "Well, but he acknowledged Renty as his son, why should he deny these?" "Because old master was here then when Renty was born, and he made Betty tell all about it, and Mr. K—— had to own it; but nobody knows any thing about this, and so he denies it"—with which information I rode home. I always give you an exact report of any conversation I may have with any of the people,

and you see from this that the people on the plantation themselves are much of my worthy neighbor Mr. C——'s mind, that the death of Major —— was a great misfortune for the slaves on his estate.

I went to the hospital this afternoon to see if the condition of the poor people was at all improved since I had been last there; but nothing had been done. I suppose Mr. G—— is waiting for Mr. —— to come down in order to speak to him about it. I found some miserable new cases of women disabled by hard work. One poor thing, called Priscilla, had come out of the fields to-day scarcely able to crawl; she has been losing blood for a whole fortnight without intermission, and, until to-day, was laboring in the fields. Leah, another new face since I visited the hospital last, is lying quite helpless from exhaustion; she is advanced in her pregnancy, and doing task-work in the fields at the same time. What piteous existences, to be sure! I do wonder, as I walk among them, well fed, well clothed, young, strong, idle, doing nothing but ride and drive about all day, a woman, a creature like themselves, who have borne children too, what sort of feeling they have toward me. I wonder it is not one of murderous hate—that they should lie here almost dying with unrepaid labor for me. I stand and look at them, and these thoughts work in my mind and heart, till I feel as if I must tell them how dreadful and how monstrous it seems to me myself, and how bitterly ashamed and grieved I feel for it all.

To-day I rode in the morning round poor Cripple Jack's bird-field again, through the sweet, spicy-smelling pine land, and home by my new road cut through Jones's wood, of which I am as proud as if I had made instead of found it—the grass, flowering shrubs, and all. In the afternoon I drove in the wood-wagon back to Jones's, and visited Busson Hill on the way, with performances of certain

promises of flannel, quarters of dollars, etc., etc. At Jones's, the women to-day had all done their work at a quarter past three, and had swept their huts out very scrupulously for my reception. Their dwellings are shockingly dilapidated and overcrammed—poor creatures!—and it seems hard that, while exhorting them to spend labor in cleaning and making them tidy, I can not promise them that they shall be repaired and made habitable for them.

In driving home through my new wood cut, Jack gave me a terrible account of a flogging that a negro called Glasgow had received yesterday. He seemed awfully impressed with it, so I suppose it must have been an unusually severe punishment; but he either would not or could not tell me what the man had done. On my return to the house I found Mr. —— had come down from the rice plantation, whereat I was much delighted on all accounts. I am sure it is getting much too late for him to remain in that pestilential swampy atmosphere; besides, I want him to see my improvements in the new wood paths, and I want him to come and hear all these poor people's complaints and petitions himself. They have been flocking in to see him ever since it was known he had arrived. I met coming on that errand Dandy, the husband of the woman for whom I cut out the gown the other day; and asking him how it had answered, he gave a piteous account of its tearing all to pieces the first time she put it on; it had appeared to me perfectly rotten and good for nothing, and, upon questioning him as to where he bought it and what he paid for it, I had to hear a sad account of hardship and injustice. I have told you that the people collect moss from the trees and sell it to the shopkeepers in Darien for the purpose of stuffing furniture; they also raise poultry, and are allowed to dispose of the eggs in the same way. It seems that poor Dandy had taken the miserable material Edie's gown was made

of as payment for a quantity of moss and eggs furnished by him at various times to one of the Darien storekeepers, who refused him payment in any other shape, and the poor fellow had no redress; and this, he tells me, is a frequent experience with all the slaves both here and at the rice-island. Of course, the rascally shopkeepers can cheat these poor wretches to any extent they please with perfect impunity.

Mr. —— told me of a visit Renty paid him, which was not a little curious in some of its particulars. You know none of the slaves are allowed the use of fire-arms; but Renty put up a petition to be allowed Mr. K——'s gun, which it seems that gentleman left behind him. Mr. —— refused this petition, saying at the same time to the lad that he knew very well that none of the people were allowed guns. Renty expostulated on the score of his *white blood*, and finding his master uninfluenced by that consideration, departed with some severe reflections on Mr. K——, his father, for not having left him his gun as a keepsake, in token of (paternal) affection, when he left the plantation.

It is quite late, and I am very tired, though I have not done much more than usual to-day, but the weather is beginning to be oppressive to me, who hate heat; but I find the people, and especially the sick in the hospital, speak of it as cold. I will tell you hereafter of a most comical account Mr. —— has given me of the prolonged and still protracted pseudo-pregnancy of a woman called Markie, who for many more months than are generally required for the process of continuing the human species, pretended to be what the Germans pathetically and poetically call "in good hope," and continued to reap increased rations as the reward of her expectation, till she finally had to disappoint the estate and receive a flogging.

He told me, too, what interested me very much, of a

conspiracy among Mr. C——'s slaves some years ago. I can not tell you about it now; I will some other time. It is wonderful to me that such attempts are not being made the whole time among these people to regain their liberty; probably because many are made ineffectually, and never known beyond the limits of the plantation where they take place.

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Dear E——,—We have been having something like Northern March weather—blinding sun, blinding wind, and blinding dust, through all which, the day before yesterday, Mr. —— and I rode together round most of the fields, and over the greater part of the plantation. It was a detestable process, the more so that he rode Montreal and I Miss Kate, and we had no small difficulty in managing them both. In the afternoon we had an equally detestable drive through the new wood paths to St. Annie's, and having accomplished all my errands among the people there, we crossed over certain sounds, and seas, and separating waters, to pay a neighborly visit to the wife of one of our adjacent planters.

How impossible it would be for you to conceive, even if I could describe, the careless desolation which pervaded the whole place; the shaggy unkempt grounds we passed through to approach the house; the ruinous, rackrent, tumble-down house itself; the untidy, slatternly, all but beggarly appearance of the mistress of the mansion herself. The smallest Yankee farmer has a tidier estate, a tidier house, and a tidier wife than this member of the proud Southern chivalry, who, however, inasmuch as he has slaves, is undoubtedly a much greater personage in his own estimation than those capital fellows W—— and B——, who walk in glory and in joy behind their plows upon your mountain sides. The Brunswick Canal project


On the Shore at Hampton Point

was descanted upon, and pronounced, without a shadow of dissent, a scheme the impracticability of which all but convicted its projectors of insanity. Certainly, if, as I hear, the moneyed men of Boston have gone largely into this speculation, their habitual sagacity must have been seriously at fault, for here on the spot nobody mentions the project but as a subject of utter derision.

While the men discussed about this matter, Mrs. B—— favored me with the congratulations I have heard so many times on the subject of my having a white nursery-maid for my children. Of course, she went into the old subject of the utter incompetency of negro women to discharge such an office faithfully; but, in spite of her multiplied examples of their utter inefficiency, I believe the discussion ended by simply our both agreeing that ignorant negro girls of twelve years old are not as capable or trustworthy as well-trained white women of thirty.

Returning home, our route was changed, and Quash the boatman took us all the way round by water to Hampton. I should have told you that our exit was as wild as our entrance to this estate, and was made through a broken wooden fence, which we had to climb partly over and partly under, with some risk and some obloquy, in spite of our dexterity, as I tore my dress, and very nearly fell flat on my face in the process. Our row home was perfectly enchanting; for, though the morning's wind and (I suppose) the state of the tide had roughened the waters of the great river, and our passage was not as smooth as it might have been, the wind had died away, the evening air was deliciously still, and mild, and soft. A young slip of a moon glimmered just above the horizon, and "the stars climbed up the sapphire steps of heaven," while we made our way over the rolling, rushing, foaming waves, and saw to right and left the marsh fires burning in the swampy meadows, adding another colored light in the

landscape to the amber-tinted lower sky and the violet arch above, and giving wild picturesqueness to the whole scene by throwing long flickering rays of flame upon the distant waters.

*Sunday, the 14th.* I read service again to-day to the people. You can not conceive any thing more impressive than the silent devotion of their whole demeanor while it lasted, nor more touching than the profound thanks with which they rewarded me when it was over, and they took their leave; and to-day they again left me with the utmost decorum of deportment, and without pressing a single petition or complaint such as they ordinarily thrust upon me on all other occasions, which seems to me an instinctive feeling of religious respect for the day and the business they have come upon, which does them infinite credit.

In the afternoon I took a long walk with the chicks in the woods—long at least for the little legs of S—— and M——, who carried baby. We came home by the shore, and I stopped to look at a jutting point, just below which a sort of bay would have afforded the most capital position for a bathing-house. If we staid here late in the season, such a refreshment would become almost a necessary of life, and any where along the bank just where I stopped to examine it to-day an establishment for that purpose might be prosperously founded.

I am amused, but by no means pleased, at an entirely new mode of pronouncing which S—— has adopted. Apparently the negro jargon has commended itself as euphonious to her infantile ears, and she is now treating me to the most ludicrous and accurate imitations of it every time she opens her mouth. Of course I shall not allow this, comical as it is, to become a habit. This is the way the Southern ladies acquire the thick and inelegant pronunciation which distinguishes their utterances from the Northern snuffle, and I have no desire that S—— should

adorn her mother tongue with either peculiarity. It is a curious and sad enough thing to observe, as I have frequent opportunities of doing, the unbounded insolence and tyranny (of manner, of course it can go no farther) of the slaves toward each other. "Hi! you boy!" and "Hi! you girl!" shouted in an imperious scream, is the civilest mode of apostrophizing those at a distance from them; more frequently it is "You niggar, you hear? hi! you niggar!" And I assure you no contemptuous white intonation ever equaled the *prepotenza* of the despotic insolence of this address of these poor wretches to each other.

I have left my letter lying for a couple of days, dear E——. I have been busy and tired; my walking and riding is becoming rather more laborious to me, for, though nobody here appears to do so, I am beginning to feel the relaxing influence of the spring.

The day before yesterday I took a disagreeable ride, all through swampy fields, and charred, blackened thickets, to discover nothing either picturesque or beautiful; the woods in one part of the plantation have been on fire for three days, and a whole tract of exquisite evergreens has been burnt down to the ground. In the afternoon I drove in the wood-wagon to visit the people at St. Annie's. There has been rain these last two nights, and their wretched hovels do not keep out the weather; they are really miserable abodes for human beings. I think pigs who were at all particular might object to some of them. There is a woman at this settlement called Sophy, the wife of a driver, Morris, who is so pretty that I often wonder if it is only by contrast that I admire her so much, or if her gentle, sweet, refined face, in spite of its dusky color, would not approve itself any where to any one with an eye for beauty. Her manner and voice, too, are peculiarly soft and gentle; but, indeed, the voices of all these poor people, men as well as women, are much pleasanter

and more melodious than the voices of white people in general. Most of the wretched hovels had been swept and tidied out in expectation of my visit, and many were the consequent petitions for rations of meat, flannel, osnaburgs, etc.; promising all which, in due proportion to the cleanliness of each separate dwelling, I came away. On my way home I called for a moment at Jones's settlement to leave money and presents promised to the people there for similar improvement in the condition of their huts. I had not time to stay and distribute my benefactions myself, and so appointed a particularly bright, intelligent-looking woman, called Jenny, paymistress in my stead, and her deputed authority was received with the utmost cheerfulness by them all.

I have been having a long talk with Mr. —— about Ben and Daphne, those two young mulatto children of Mr. K——'s, whom I mentioned to you lately. Poor pretty children! they have refined and sensitive faces as well as straight, regular features; and the expression of the girl's countenance, as well as the sound of her voice, and the sad humility of her deportment, are indescribably touching. Mr. B—— expressed the strongest interest in and pity for them, *because of their color:* it seems unjust almost to the rest of their fellow-unfortunates that this should be so, and yet it is almost impossible to resist the impression of the unfitness of these two forlorn young creatures for the life of coarse labor and dreadful degradation to which they are destined. In any of the Southern cities the girl would be pretty sure to be reserved for a worse fate; but even here, death seems to me a thousand times preferable to the life that is before her.

In the afternoon I rode with Mr. —— to look at the fire in the woods. We did not approach it, but stood where the great volumes of smoke could be seen rising steadily above the pines, as they have now continued to

do for upward of a week; the destruction of the pine timber must be something enormous. We then went to visit Dr. and Mrs. G——, and wound up these exercises of civilized life by a call on dear old Mr. C——, whose nursery and kitchen garden are a real refreshment to my spirits. How completely the national character of the worthy canny old Scot is stamped on the care and thrift visible in his whole property, the judicious, successful culture of which has improved and adorned his dwelling in this remote corner of the earth! The comparison, or rather contrast, between himself and his quondam neighbor, Major ——, is curious enough to contemplate. The Scotch tendency of the one to turn every thing to good account, the Irish propensity of the other to leave every thing to ruin, to disorder, and neglect; the careful economy and prudent management of the mercantile man, the reckless profusion and careless extravagance of the soldier. The one made a splendid fortune and spent it in Philadelphia, where he built one of the finest houses that existed there in the old-fashioned days, when fine old family mansions were still to be seen breaking the monotonous uniformity of the Quaker city. The other has resided here on his estate, ameliorating the condition of his slaves and his property, a benefactor to the people and the soil alike—a useful and a good existence, an obscure and tranquil one.

Last Wednesday we drove to Hamilton, by far the finest estate on St. Simon's Island. The gentleman to whom it belongs lives, I believe, habitually in Paris; but Captain F—— resides on it, and, I suppose, is the real overseer of the plantation. All the way along the road (we traversed nearly the whole length of the island) we found great tracts of wood all burnt or burning; the destruction had spread in every direction, and against the sky we saw the slow rising of the smoky clouds that showed the pine forest to be on fire still. What an immense quantity of

property such a fire must destroy! The negro huts on several of the plantations that we passed through were the most miserable human habitations I ever beheld. The wretched hovels at St. Annie's, on the Hampton estate, that had seemed to me the *ne plus ultra* of misery, were really palaces to some of the dirty, desolate, dilapidated dog-kennels which we passed to-day, and out of which the negroes poured like black ants at our approach, and stood to gaze at us as we drove by.

The planters' residences we passed were only three. It makes one ponder seriously when one thinks of the mere handful of white people on this island. In the midst of this large population of slaves, how absolutely helpless they would be if the blacks were to become restive! They could be destroyed to a man before human help could reach them from the main, or the tidings even of what was going on be carried across the surrounding waters. As we approached the southern end of the island we began to discover the line of the white sea-sands beyond the bushes and fields, and presently, above the sparkling, dazzling line of snowy white—for the sands were as white as our English chalk cliffs—stretched the deep blue sea-line of the great Atlantic Ocean.

We found that there had been a most terrible fire in the Hamilton woods—more extensive than that on our own plantation. It seems as if the whole island had been burning at different points for more than a week. What a cruel pity and shame it does seem to have these beautiful masses of wood so destroyed! I suppose it is impossible to prevent it. The "field-hands" make fires to cook their midday food wherever they happen to be working, and sometimes through their careless neglect, but sometimes, too, undoubtedly on purpose, the woods are set fire to by these means. One benefit they consider that they derive from the process is the destruction of the dreaded


Old Cabins at Hamilton

rattlesnakes that infest the woodland all over the island; but really the funeral pyre of these hateful reptiles is too costly at this price.

Hamilton struck me very much—I mean the whole appearance of the place; the situation of the house, the noble water prospect it commanded, the magnificent old oaks near it, a luxuriant vine trellis, and a splendid hedge of yucca gloriosa, were all objects of great delight to me. The latter was most curious to me, who had never seen any but single specimens of the plant, and not many of these. I think our green-house at the North boasts but two; but here they were growing close together, and in such a manner as to form a compact and impenetrable hedge, their spiky leaves striking out on all sides like *chevaux de frise*, and the tall, slender stems, that bear those delicate ivory-colored bells of blossoms, springing up against the sky in a regular row. I wish I could see that hedge in blossom. It must be wonderfully strange and lovely, and must look by moonlight like a whole range of fairy Chinese pagodas carved in ivory.

At dinner we had some delicious green peas, so much in advance of you are we down here with the seasons. Don't you think one might accept the rattlesnakes, or perhaps indeed the slavery, for the sake of the green peas? 'Tis a world of compensations—a life of compromises, you know; and one should learn to set one thing against another if one means to thrive and fare well, *i. e.*, eat green peas on the twenty-eighth of March.

After dinner I walked up and down before the house for a long while with Mrs. F——, and had a most interesting conversation with her about the negroes and all the details of their condition. She is a kind-hearted, intelligent woman; but, though she seemed to me to acquiesce, as a matter of inevitable necessity, in the social system in the midst of which she was born and lives, she did not ap-

pear to me, by several things she said, to be by any means in love with it. She gave me a very sad character of Mr. K——, confirming by her general description of him the impression produced by all the details I have received from our own people. As for any care for the moral or religious training of the slaves, that, she said, was a matter that never troubled his thoughts; indeed, his only notion upon the subject of religion, she said, was that it was something *not bad* for white women and children.

We drove home by moonlight; and as we came toward the woods in the middle of the island, the fireflies glittered out from the dusky thickets as if some magical golden veil was every now and then shaken out into the darkness. The air was enchantingly mild and soft, and the whole way through the silvery night delightful.

My dear friend, I have at length made acquaintance with a live rattlesnake. Old Scylla had the pleasure of discovering it while hunting for some wood to burn. Israel captured it, and brought it to the house for my edification. I thought it an evil-looking beast, and could not help feeling rather nervous while contemplating it, though the poor thing had a noose round its neck, and could by no manner of means have extricated itself. The flat head, and vivid, vicious eye, and darting tongue, were none of them lovely to behold; but the sort of threatening whirr produced by its rattle, together with the deepening and fading of the marks on its skin, either with its respiration, or the emotions of fear and anger it was enduring, were peculiarly dreadful and fascinating. It was quite a young one, having only two or three rattles in its tail. These, as you probably know, increase in number by one annually, so that you can always tell the age of the amiable serpent you are examining—if it will let you count the number of joints of its rattle. Captain F—— gave me the rattle of one which had as many as twelve joints. He

said it had belonged to a very large snake, which had crawled from under a fallen tree-trunk on which his children were playing. After exhibiting his interesting captive, Israel killed, stuffed, and presented it to me for preservation as a trophy, and made me extremely happy by informing me that there was a nest of them where this one was found. I think with terror of S—— running about with her little socks not reaching half way up her legs, and her little frocks not reaching half way down them. However, we shall probably not make acquaintance with many more of these natives of Georgia, as we are to return as soon as possible now to the North. We shall soon be free again.

This morning I rode to the burnt district, and attempted to go through it at St. Clair's, but unsuccessfully: it was impossible to penetrate through the charred and blackened thickets. In the afternoon I walked round the Point, and visited the houses of the people who are our nearest neighbors. I found poor Edie in sad tribulation at the prospect of resuming her field labor. It is really shameful treatment of a woman just after child-labor. She was confined exactly three weeks ago to-day, and she tells me she is ordered out to field-work on Monday. She seems to dread the approaching hardships of her task-labor extremely. Her baby was born dead, she thinks in consequence of a fall she had while carrying a heavy weight of water. She is suffering great pain in one of her legs and sides, and seems to me in a condition utterly unfit for any work, much less hoeing in the fields; but I dare not interfere to prevent this cruelty. She says she has already had to go out to work three weeks after her confinement with each of her other children, and does not complain of it as any thing special in her case. She says that is now the invariable rule of the whole plantation, though it used not to be so formerly.

I have let my letter lie since I wrote the above, dear E——; but as mine is a story without beginning, middle, or end, it matters extremely little where I leave it off or where I take it up; and if you have not, between my wood rides and sick slaves, come to Falstaff's conclusion that I have "damnable iteration," you are patient of sameness. But the days are like each other; and the rides and the people, and, alas! their conditions, do not vary.

To-day, however, my visit to the Infirmary was marked by an event which has not occurred before—the death of one of the poor slaves while I was there. I found, on entering the first ward—to use a most inapplicable term for the dark, filthy, forlorn room I have so christened—an old negro called Friday lying on the ground. I asked what ailed him, and was told he was dying. I approached him, and perceived, from the glazed eyes and the feeble rattling breath, that he was at the point of expiring. His tattered shirt and trowsers barely covered his poor body; his appearance was that of utter exhaustion from age and feebleness; he had nothing under him but a mere handful of straw that did not cover the earth he was stretched on; and under his head, by way of pillow for his dying agony, two or three rough sticks just raising his skull a few inches from the ground. The flies were all gathering around his mouth, and not a creature was near him. There he lay—the worn-out slave, whose life had been spent in unrequited labor for me and mine, without one physical alleviation, one Christian solace, one human sympathy, to cheer him in his extremity—panting out the last breath of his wretched existence like some forsaken, overworked, wearied-out beast of burden, rotting where it falls! I bent over the poor awful human creature in the supreme hour of his mortality; and while my eyes, blinded with tears of unavailing pity and horror, were fixed upon him, there was a sudden quivering of the eye-

lids and falling of the jaw—and he was free. I stood up, and remained long lost in the imagination of the change that creature had undergone, and in the tremendous overwhelming consciousness of the deliverance God had granted the soul whose cast-off vesture of decay lay at my feet. How I rejoiced for him; and how, as I turned to the wretches who were calling to me from the inner room, whence they could see me as I stood contemplating the piteous object, I wished they all were gone away with him, the delivered, the freed by death from bitter, bitter bondage. In the next room I found a miserable, decrepid old negress, called Charity, lying sick, and I should think near too to die; but she did not think her work was over, much as she looked unfit for farther work on earth; but with feeble voice and beseeching hands implored me to have her work lightened when she was sent back to it from the hospital. She is one of the oldest slaves on the plantation, and has to walk to her field labor, and back again at night, a distance of nearly four miles. There were an unusual number of sick women in the room today; among them quite a young girl, daughter of Boatman Quash's, with a sick baby, who has a father, though she has no husband. Poor thing! she looks like a mere child herself. I returned home so very sad and heart-sick that I could not rouse myself to the effort of going up to St. Annie's with the presents I had promised the people there. I sent M—— up in the wood-wagon with them, and remained in the house with my thoughts, which were none of the merriest.

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Dearest E——,—On Friday I rode to where the rattlesnake was found, and where I was informed by the negroes there was a *nest* of them—a pleasing domestic picture of home and infancy that word suggests, not alto-

gether appropriate to rattlesnakes, I think. On horseback I felt bold to accomplish this adventure, which I certainly should not have attempted on foot; however, I could discover no sign of either snake or nest—(perhaps it is of the nature of a mare's nest, and undiscoverable); but, having done my duty by myself in endeavoring to find it, I rode off and coasted the estate by the side of the marsh till I came to the causeway. There I found a new cleared field, and stopped to admire the beautiful appearance of the stumps of the trees scattered all about it, and wreathed and garlanded with the most profuse and fantastic growth of various plants, wild roses being among the most abundant. What a lovely aspect one side of nature presents here, and how hideous is the other!

In the afternoon I drove to pay a visit to old Mrs. A——, the lady proprietress whose estate immediately adjoins ours. On my way thither I passed a woman called Margaret walking rapidly and powerfully along the road. She was returning home from the field, having done her task at three o'clock; and told me, with a merry, beaming black face, that she was going "to clean up de house, to please de missis." On driving through my neighbor's grounds, I was disgusted more than I can express with the miserable negro huts of her people; they were not fit to shelter cattle—they were not fit to shelter any thing, for they were literally in holes, and, as we used to say of our stockings at school, too bad to darn. To be sure, I will say, in excuse for their old mistress, her own habitation was but a very few degrees less ruinous and disgusting. What would one of your Yankee farmers say to such abodes? When I think of the white houses, the green blinds, and the flower-plots of the villages in New England, and look at these dwellings of lazy filth and inert degradation, it does seem amazing to think that physical and moral conditions so widely oppo-

site should be found among people occupying a similar place in the social scale of the same country. The Northern farmer, however, thinks it no shame to work, the Southern planter does; and there begins and ends the difference. Industry, man's crown of honor elsewhere, is here his badge of utter degradation; and so comes all by which I am here surrounded—pride, profligacy, idleness, cruelty, cowardice, ignorance, squalor, dirt, and ineffable abasement.

When I returned home I found that Mrs. F—— had sent me some magnificent prawns. I think of having them served singly, and divided as one does a lobster—their size really suggests no less respect.

*Saturday*, 31*st*. I rode all through the burnt district and the bush to Mrs. W——'s field, in making my way out of which I was very nearly swamped, and, but for the valuable assistance of a certain sable Scipio who came up and extricated me, I might be floundering hopelessly there still. He got me out of my Slough of Despond, and put me in the way to a charming wood ride which runs between Mrs. W——'s and Colonel H——'s grounds. While going along this delightful boundary of these two neighboring estates, my mind not unnaturally dwelt upon the terms of deadly feud in which the two families owning them are living with each other. A horrible quarrel has occurred quite lately upon the subject of the ownership of this very ground I was skirting, between Dr. H—— and young Mr. W——; they have challenged each other, and what I am going to tell you is a good sample of the sort of spirit which grows up among slaveholders. So read it, for it is curious to people who have not lived habitually among savages. The terms of the challenge that has passed between them have appeared like a sort of advertisement in the local paper, and are to the effect that they are to fight at a certain distance with

certain weapons—fire-arms, of course; that there is to be on the person of each a white paper, or mark, immediately over the region of the heart, as a point for direct aim; and whoever kills the other is to have the privilege of *cutting off his head, and sticking it up on a pole on the piece of land which was the origin of the debate;* so that, some fine day, I might have come hither as I did to-day, and found myself riding under the shadow of the gory locks of Dr. H—— or Mr. W——, my peaceful and pleasant neighbors.

I came home through our own pine woods, which are actually a wilderness of black desolation. The scorched and charred tree-trunks are still smoking and smouldering; the ground is a sort of charcoal pavement, and the fire is still burning on all sides, for the smoke was rapidly rising in several directions on each hand of the path I pursued. Across this dismal scene of strange destruction, bright blue and red birds, like living jewels, darted in the brilliant sunshine. I wonder if the fire has killed and scared away many of these beautiful creatures. In the afternoon I took Jack with me to clear some more of the wood paths; but the weather is what I call hot, and what the people here think warm, and the air was literally thick with little black points of insects, which they call sand-flies, and which settle upon one's head and face literally like a black net; you hardly see them or feel them at the time, but the irritation occasioned by them is intolerable, and I had to relinquish my work and fly before this winged plague as fast as I could from my new acquaintance the rattlesnakes. Jack informed me, in the course of our expedition, that the woods on the island were sometimes burnt away in order to leave the ground in grass for fodder for the cattle, and that the very beautiful ones he and I had been clearing paths through were not unlikely to be so doomed, which strikes me as a horrible idea.


On Mrs. W—'s Shore.

In the evening poor Edie came up to the house to see me, with an old negress called Sackey, who has been one of the chief nurses on the island for many years. I suppose she has made some application to Mr. G—— for a respite for Edie, on finding how terribly unfit she is for work; or perhaps Mr. ——, to whom I represented her case, may have ordered her reprieve; but she came with much gratitude to me (who have, as far as I know, had nothing to do with it), to tell me that she is not to be sent into the field for another week. Old Sackey fully confirmed Edie's account of the terrible hardships the women underwent in being thus driven to labor before they had recovered from childbearing. She said that old Major —— allowed the women at the rice-island five weeks, and those here four weeks, to recover from a confinement, and then never permitted them for some time after they resumed their work to labor in the fields before sunrise or after sunset; but Mr. K—— had altered that arrangement, allowing the women at the rice-island only four weeks, and those here only three weeks, for their recovery; "and then, missis," continued the old woman, "out into the field again, through dew and dry, as if nothing had happened; that is why, missis, so many of the women have falling of the womb and weakness in the back; and if he had continued on the estate, he would have utterly destroyed all the breeding women." Sometimes, after sending them back into the field at the expiration of their three weeks, they would work for a day or two, she said, and then fall down in the field with exhaustion, and be brought to the hospital almost at the point of death.

Yesterday, Sunday, I had my last service at home with these poor people; nearly thirty of them came, all clean, neat, and decent, in their dress and appearance. S—— had begged very hard to join the congregation, and upon the most solemn promise of remaining still she was ad-

mitted; but, in spite of the perfect honor with which she kept her promise, her presence disturbed my thoughts not a little, and added much to the poignancy of the feeling with which I saw her father's poor slaves gathered round me. The child's exquisite complexion, large gray eyes, and solemn and at the same time eager countenance, was such a wonderful piece of contrast to their sable faces, so many of them so uncouth in their outlines and proportions, and yet all of them so pathetic, and some so sublime in their expression of patient suffering and religious fervor: their eyes never wandered from me and my child, who sat close by my knee, their little mistress, their future providence, my poor baby! Dear E——, bless God that you have never reared a child with such an awful expectation: and at the end of the prayers, the tears were streaming over their faces, and one chorus of blessings rose round me and the child—farewell blessings, and prayers that we would return; and thanks so fervent in their incoherency, it was more than I could bear, and I begged them to go away and leave me to recover myself. And then I remained with S——, and for quite a long while even her restless spirit was still in wondering amazement at my bitter crying. I am to go next Sunday to the church on the island, where there is to be service; and so this is my last Sunday with the people.

When I had recovered from the emotion of this scene, I walked out with S—— a little way, but meeting M—— and the baby, she turned home with them, and I pursued my walk alone up the road, and home by the shore. They are threatening to burn down all my woods to make grass-land for the cattle, and I have terrified them by telling them that I will never come back if they destroy the woods. I went and paid a visit to Mrs. G——; poor little, well-meaning, helpless woman, what can she do for these poor people, where I, who am supposed to own

them, can do nothing? and yet how much may be done, is done, by the brain and heart of one human being in contact with another! We are answerable for incalculable opportunities of good and evil in our daily intercourse with every soul with whom we have to deal; every meeting, every parting, every chance greeting, and every appointed encounter, are occasions open to us for which we are to account. To our children, our servants, our friends, our acquaintances—to each and all every day, and all day long, we are distributing that which is best or worst in existence—influence: with every word, with every look, with every gesture, something is given or withheld of great importance it may be to the receiver, of inestimable importance to the giver.

Certainly the laws and enacted statutes on which this detestable system is built up are potent enough; the social prejudice that buttresses it is almost more potent still; and yet a few hearts and brains well bent to do the work would bring within this almost impenetrable dungeon of ignorance, misery, and degradation, in which so many millions of human souls lie buried, that freedom of God which would presently conquer for them their earthly liberty. With some such thoughts I commended the slaves on the plantation to the little overseer's wife; I did not tell my thoughts to her—they would have scared the poor little woman half out of her senses. To begin with, her bread, her husband's occupation, has its root in slavery; it would be difficult for her to think as I do of it. I am afraid her care, even of the bodily habits and sicknesses of the people left in Mrs. G——'s charge, will not be worth much, for nobody treats others better than they do themselves; and she is certainly doing her best to injure herself and her own poor baby, who is two and a half years old, and whom she is still suckling.

This is, I think, the worst case of this extraordinary

delusion so prevalent among your women that I have ever met with yet; but they all nurse their children much longer than is good for either baby or mother. The summer heat, particularly when a young baby is cutting teeth, is, I know, considered by young American mothers an exceedingly critical time, and therefore I always hear of babies being nursed till after the second summer; so that a child born in January would be suckled till it was eighteen or nineteen months old, in order that it might not be weaned till its second summer was over. I am sure that nothing can be worse than this system, and I attribute much of the wretched ill health of young American mothers to over-nursing; and of course a process that destroys their health and vigor completely must affect most unfavorably the child they are suckling. It is a grievous mistake. I remember my charming friend F—— D—— telling me that she had nursed her first child till her second was born—a miraculous statement, which I can only believe because she told it me herself. Whenever any thing seems absolutely impossible, the word of a true person is the only proof of it worth any thing.

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Dear E——,—I have been riding into the swamp behind the new house; I had a mind to survey the ground all round it before going away, to see what capabilities it afforded for the founding of a garden, but I confess it looked very unpromising. Trying to return by another way, I came to a morass, which, after contemplating, and making my horse try for a few paces, I thought it expedient not to attempt. A woman named Charlotte, who was working in the field, seeing my dilemma, and the inglorious retreat I was about to make, shouted to me at the top of her voice, "You no turn back, missis; if you want to

go through, send, missis, send; you hab slave enough, nigger enough, let 'em come, let 'em fetch planks, and make de bridge; what you say dey must do—send, missis, send, missis!" It seemed to me, from the lady's imperative tone in my behalf, that if she had been in my place, she would presently have had a corduroy road through the swamp of prostrate "niggers," as she called her family in Ham, and have ridden over the sand dry-hoofed; and to be sure, if I pleased, so might I, for, as she very truly said, "what you say, missis, they must do." Instead of summoning her sooty tribe, however, I backed my horse out of the swamp, and betook myself to another pretty wood path, which only wants widening to be quite charming. At the end of this, however, I found swamp the second, and out of this having been helped by a grinning, facetious personage, most appropriately named Pun, I returned home in dudgeon, in spite of what dear Miss M—— calls the "moral suitability" of finding a foul bog at the end of every charming wood path or forest ride in this region.

In the afternoon I drove to Busson Hill to visit the people there. I found that both the men and women had done their work at half past three. Saw Tema with her child, that ridiculous image of Driver Bran, in her arms, in spite of whose whity-brown skin she still maintains that its father is a man as black as herself—and she (to use a most extraordinary comparison I heard of a negro girl making with regard to her mother) is as black as "de hinges of hell." Query: Did she really mean hinges, or angels? The angels of hell is a polite and pretty paraphrase for devils, certainly. In complimenting a woman called Joan upon the tidy condition of her house, she answered, with that cruel humility that is so bad an element in their character, "Missis no 'spect to find colored folks' house clean as white folks'." The mode in which they have learned to accept the idea of their own degradation

and unalterable inferiority is the most serious impediment that I see in the way of their progress, since assuredly "self-love is not so vile a sin as self-neglecting." In the same way yesterday, Abraham the cook, in speaking of his brother's theft at the rice-island, said "it was a shame even for a colored man to do such things." I labor hard, whenever any such observation is made, to explain to them that the question is one of moral and mental culture—not the color of an integument—and assure them, much to my own comfort, whatever it may be to theirs, that white people are as dirty and as dishonest as colored folks, when they have suffered the same lack of decent training. If I could but find one of these women on whose mind the idea had dawned that she was neither more nor less than my equal, I think I should embrace her in an ecstasy of hopefulness.

In the evening, while I was inditing my journal for your edification, Tema made her appearance with her Bran-brown baby, having walked all the way down from Busson Hill to claim a little sugar I had promised her. She had made her child perfectly clean, and it looked quite pretty. When I asked her what I should give her the sugar in, she snatched her filthy handkerchief off her head; but I declined this sugar-basin, and gave it to her in some paper. Hannah came on the same errand.

After all, dear E——, we shall not leave Georgia so soon as I expected; we can not get off for at least another week. You know, our movements are apt to be both tardy and uncertain. I am getting sick in spirit of my stay here; but I think the spring heat is beginning to affect me miserably, and I long for a cooler atmosphere. Here, on St. Simon's, the climate is perfectly healthy, and our neighbors, many of them, never stir from their plantations within reach of the purifying sea influence. But a land that grows magnolias is not fit for me—I was going to say magnolias and rattlesnakes; but I remember K——'s

adventure with her friend the rattlesnake of Monument Mountain, and the wild wood-covered hill half way between Lenox and Stockbridge, which your Berkshire farmers have christened Rattlesnake Mountain. These agreeable serpents seem, like the lovely little hummingbirds which are found in your northernmost as well as southernmost states, to have an accommodating disposition with regard to climate.

Not only is the vicinity of the sea an element of salubrity here, but the great masses of pine wood growing in every direction indicate lightness of soil and purity of air. Wherever these fragrant, dry, aromatic fir forests extend, there can be no inherent malaria, I should think, in either atmosphere or soil. The beauty and profusion of the weeds and wild flowers in the fields now is something, too, enchanting. I wish I could spread one of these enameled tracts on the side of one of your snow-covered hills now, for I dare say they are snow-covered yet.

I must give you an account of Aleck's first reading lesson, which took place at the same time that I gave S—— hers this morning. It was the first time he had had leisure to come, and it went off most successfully. He seems to me by no means stupid. I am very sorry he did not ask me to do this before; however, if he can master his alphabet before I go, he may, if chance favor him with the occasional sight of a book, help himself on by degrees. Perhaps he will have the good inspiration to apply to Cooper London for assistance; I am much mistaken if that worthy does not contrive that Heaven shall help Aleck, as it formerly did him, in the matter of reading.

I rode with Jack afterward, showing him where I wish paths to be cut and brushwood removed. I passed the new house, and again circumvented it meditatingly to discover its available points of possible future comeliness, but remained as convinced as ever that there are absolute-

ly none. Within the last two days a perfect border of the dark blue virginicum has burst into blossom on each side of the road, fringing it with purple as far as one can look along it; it is lovely. I must tell you of something which has delighted me greatly. I told Jack yesterday that, if any of the boys liked, when they had done their tasks, to come and clear the paths that I want widened and trimmed, I would pay them a certain small sum per hour for their labor; and behold, three boys have come, having done their tasks early in the afternoon, to apply for *work* and *wages:* so much for a suggestion not barely twenty-four hours old, and so much for a prospect of compensation!

In the evening I attempted to walk out when the air was cool, but had to run precipitately back into the house to escape from the clouds of sand-flies that had settled on my neck and arms. The weather has suddenly become intensely hot; at least that is what it appears to me. After I had come in I had a visit from Venus and her daughter, a young girl of ten years old, for whom she begged a larger allowance of food, as, she said, what she received for her was totally inadequate to the girl's proper nourishment. I was amazed, upon inquiry, to find that three quarts of grits a week—that is not a pint a day—was considered a sufficient supply for children of her age. The mother said her child was half-famished on it, and it seemed to me terribly little.

My little workmen have brought me in from the woods three darling little rabbits which they have contrived to catch. They seemed to me slightly different from our English bunnies; and Captain F——, who called to-day, gave me a long account of how they differed from the same animal in the Northern states. I did not like to mortify my small workmen by refusing their present; but the poor little things must be left to run wild again, for


A.M.W.
Still making fields and
Roadsides Blue.

we have no conveniences for pets here, besides we are just weighing anchor ourselves. I hope these poor little fluffy things will not meet any rattlesnakes on their way back to the woods.

I had a visit for flannel from one of our Dianas to-day —who had done her task in the middle of the day, yet came to receive her flannel—the most horribly dirty human creature I ever beheld, unless, indeed, her child, whom she brought with her, may have been half a degree dirtier.

The other day, Psyche (you remember the pretty under nurse, the poor thing whose story I wrote you from the rice plantation) asked me if her mother and brothers might be allowed to come and see her when we are gone away. I asked her some questions about them, and she told me that one of her brothers, who belonged to Mr. K——, was hired by that gentleman to a Mr. G——, of Darien, and that, upon the latter desiring to purchase him, Mr. K—— had sold the man without apprising him or any one member of his family that he had done so—a humane proceeding that makes one's blood boil when one hears of it. He had owned the man ever since he was a boy. Psyche urged me very much to obtain an order permitting her to see her mother and brothers. I will try and obtain it for her; but there seems generally a great objection to the visits of slaves from neighboring plantations, and, I have no doubt, not without sufficient reason. The more I see of this frightful and perilous social system, the more I feel that those who live in the midst of it must make their whole existence one constant precaution against danger of some sort or other.

I have given Aleck a second reading lesson with S——, who takes an extreme interest in his newly-acquired alphabetical lore. He is a very quick and attentive scholar, and I should think a very short time would suffice to teach him to read; but, alas! I have not even that short

time. When I had done with my class I rode off with Jack, who has become quite an expert horseman, and rejoices in being lifted out of the immediate region of snakes by the length of his horse's legs. I cantered through the new wood paths, and took a good sloping galop through the pine land to St. Annie's. The fire is actually still burning in the woods. I came home quite tired with the heat, though my ride was not a long one.

Just as I had taken off my habit and was preparing to start off with M—— and the chicks for Jones's in the wood-wagon, old Dorcas, one of the most decrepid, rheumatic, and miserable old negresses from the farther end of the plantation, called in to beg for some sugar. She had walked the whole way from her own settlement, and seemed absolutely exhausted then, and yet she had to walk all the way back. It was not otherwise than slightly meritorious in me, my dear E——, to take her up in the wagon and endure her abominable dirt and foulness in the closest proximity, rather than let her drag her poor old limbs all that way back; but I was glad when we gained her abode and lost her company. I am mightily reminded occasionally in these parts of Trinculo's soliloquy over Caliban. The people at Jones's had done their work at half past three. Most of the houses were tidy and clean, so were many of the babies. On visiting the cabin of an exceedingly decent woman called Peggy, I found her, to my surprise, possessed of a fine large Bible. She told me her husband, Carpenter John, can read, and that she means to make him teach her. The fame of Aleck's literature has evidently reached Jones's, and they are not afraid to tell me that they can read or wish to learn to do so. This poor woman's health is miserable; I never saw a more weakly, sickly-looking creature. She says she has been broken down ever since the birth of her last child. I asked her how soon after her confinement she went out

into the field to work again. She answered very quietly, but with a deep sigh, "Three weeks, missis; de usual time." As I was going away, a man named Martin came up, and with great vehemence besought me to give him a Prayer-book. In the evening he came down to fetch it, and to show me that he can read. I was very much pleased to see that they had taken my hint about nailing wooden slats across the windows of their poor huts, to prevent the constant ingress of the poultry. This in itself will produce an immense difference in the cleanliness and comfort of their wretched abodes. In one of the huts I found a broken looking-glass; it was the only piece of furniture of the sort that I had yet seen among them. The woman who owned it was, I am sorry to say, peculiarly untidy and dirty, and so were her children; so that I felt rather inclined to scoff at the piece of civilized vanity, which I should otherwise have greeted as a promising sign.

I drove home, late in the afternoon, through the sweet-smelling woods, that are beginning to hum with the voice of thousands of insects. My troop of volunteer workmen is increased to five—five lads working for my wages after they have done their task-work; and this evening, to my no small amazement, Driver Bran came down to join them for an hour, after working all day at Five Pound, which certainly shows zeal and energy.

Dear E——, I have been riding through the woods all the morning with Jack, giving him directions about the clearings, which I have some faint hope may be allowed to continue after my departure. I went on an exploring expedition round some distant fields, and then home through the St. Annie's woods. They have almost stripped the trees and thickets along the swamp road since I first came here. I wonder what it is for; not fuel surely, nor to make grass-land of, or otherwise cultivate the

swamp. I do deplore these pitiless clearings; and as to this once pretty road, it looks "forlorn," as a worthy Pennsylvania farmer's wife once said to me of a pretty hill-side from which her husband had ruthlessly felled a beautiful grove of trees.

I had another snake encounter in my ride this morning. Just as I had walked my horse through the swamp, and while contemplating ruefully its naked aspect, a huge black snake wriggled rapidly across the path, and I pulled my reins tight and opened my mouth wide with horror. These hideous-looking creatures are, I believe, not poisonous, but they grow to a monstrous size, and have tremendous *constrictive* power. I have heard stories that sound like the nightmare of their fighting desperately with those deadly creatures, rattlesnakes. I can not conceive, if the black snakes are not poisonous, what chance they have against such antagonists, let their squeezing powers be what they will. How horrid it did look, *slithering* over the road! Perhaps the swamp has been cleared on account of its harboring these dreadful worms.

I rode home very fast, in spite of the exquisite fragrance of the wild cherry blossoms, the carpets and curtains of wild flowers, among which a sort of glorified dandelion glowed conspicuously—dandelions such as I should think grew in the garden of Eden, if there were any at all there. I passed the finest magnolia that I have yet seen; it was magnificent, and I suppose had been spared for its beauty, for it grew in the very middle of a cotton-field; it was as large as a fine forest tree, and its huge glittering leaves shone like plates of metal in the sun; what a spectacle that tree must be in blossom, and I should think its perfume must be smelt from one end of the plantation to the other. What a glorious creature! Which do you think ought to weigh most in the scale, the delight of such a vegetable, or the disgust of the black animal I had just


A M W
"A sort of
Glorified Dandelion."

met a few minutes before? Would you take the one with the other? Neither would I.

I have spent the whole afternoon at home; my "gang" is busily at work again. Sawney, one of them, came to join it nearly at sundown, not having got through his day's task before. In watching and listening to these lads, I was constantly struck with the insolent tyranny of their demeanor toward each other. This is almost a universal characteristic of the manner of the negroes among themselves. They are diabolically cruel to animals too, and they seem to me, as a rule, hardly to know the difference between truth and falsehood. These detestable qualities, which I constantly hear attributed to them as innate and inherent in their race, appear to me the direct result of their condition. The individual exceptions among them are, I think, quite as many as would be found, under similar circumstances, among the same number of white people.

In considering the whole condition of the people on this plantation, it appears to me that the principal hardships fall to the lot of the women—that is, the principal physical hardships. The very young members of the community are of course idle and neglected; the very, very old, idle and neglected too; the middle-aged men do not appear to me overworked, and lead a mere animal existence, in itself not peculiarly cruel or distressing, but involving a constant element of fear and uncertainty, and the trifling evils of unrequited labor, ignorance the most profound (to which they are condemned by law), and the unutterable injustice which precludes them from all the merits and all the benefits of voluntary exertion, and the progress that results from it. If they are absolutely unconscious of these evils, then they are not very ill-off brutes, always barring the chance of being given or sold away from their mates or their young—processes which even brutes do

not always relish. I am very much struck with the vein of melancholy, which assumes almost a poetical tone in some of the things they say. Did I tell you of that poor old decrepid creature Dorcas, who came to beg some sugar of me the other day? saying, as she took up my watch from the table and looked at it, "Ah! I need not look at this; I have almost done with time!" Was not that striking from such a poor old ignorant crone?

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Dear E——,—This is the fourth day that I have had a "gang" of lads working in the woods for me after their task hours for pay; you can not think how zealous and energetic they are; I dare say the novelty of the process pleases them almost as much as the money they earn. I must say they quite deserve their small wages.

Last night I received a present from Mrs. F—— of a drum-fish, which animal I had never beheld before, and which seemed to me first cousin to the great Leviathan. It is to be eaten, and is certainly the biggest fish food I ever saw; however, every thing is in proportion, and the prawns that came with it are upon a similarly extensive scale; this magnificent piscatorial bounty was accompanied by a profusion of Hamilton green peas, really a munificent supply.

I went out early after breakfast with Jack hunting for new paths; we rode all along the road by Jones's Creek, and most beautiful it was. We skirted the plantation burial-ground, and a dismal place it looked; the cattle trampling over it in every direction, except where Mr. K—— had had an inclosure put up round the graves of two white men who had worked on the estate. They were strangers, and of course utterly indifferent to the people here; but by virtue of their white skins, their resting-place was protected from the hoofs of the cattle, while

the parents and children, wives, husbands, brothers and sisters, of the poor slaves, sleeping beside them, might see the graves of those they loved trampled upon and browsed over, desecrated and defiled, from morning till night. There is something intolerably cruel in this disdainful denial of a common humanity pursuing these wretches even when they are hid beneath the earth.

The day was exquisitely beautiful, and I explored a new wood path, and found it all strewed with a lovely wild flower not much unlike a primrose. I spent the afternoon at home. I dread going out twice a day now, on account of the heat and the sand-flies. While I was sitting by the window, Abraham, our cook, went by with some most revolting-looking "raw material" (part, I think, of the interior of the monstrous drum-fish of which I have told you). I asked him, with considerable disgust, what he was going to do with it; he replied, "Oh! we colored people eat it, missis." Said I, "Why do you say we colored people?" "Because, missis, white people won't touch what we too glad of." "That," said I, "is because you are poor, and do not often have meat to eat, not because you are colored, Abraham; rich white folks will not touch what poor white folks are too glad of; it has nothing in the world to do with color; and if there were white people here worse off than you (amazing and inconceivable suggestion, I fear), they would be glad to eat what you perhaps would not touch." Profound pause of meditation on the part of Abraham, wound up by a considerate "Well, missis, I suppose so;" after which he departed with the horrid-looking offal.

To-day — Saturday—I took another ride of discovery round the fields by Jones's. I think I shall soon be able to survey this estate, I have ridden so carefully over it in every direction; but my rides are drawing to a close, and even were I to remain here this must be the case, unless

I got up and rode under the stars in the cool of the night. This afternoon I was obliged to drive up to St. Annie's: I had promised the people several times that I would do so. I went after dinner and as late as I could, and found very considerable improvement in the whole condition of the place; the houses had all been swept, and some of them actually scoured. The children were all quite tolerably clean; they had put slats across all their windows, and little chicken-gates to the doors to keep out the poultry. There was a poor woman lying in one of the cabins in a wretched condition. She begged for a bandage, but I do not see of what great use that can be to her, as long as she has to hoe in the fields so many hours a day, which I can not prevent.

Returning home, Israel undertook to pilot me across the cotton-fields into the pine land; and a more excruciating process than being dragged over that very uneven surface in that wood-wagon without springs I did never endure, mitigated and soothed though it was by the literally fascinating account my charioteer gave me of the rattlesnakes with which the place we drove through becomes infested as the heat increases. I can not say that his description of them, though more demonstrative as far as regarded his own horror of them, was really worse than that which Mr. G—— was giving me of them yesterday. He said they were very numerous, and were found in every direction all over the plantation, but that they did not become really vicious until quite late in the summer; until then, it appears that they generally endeavor to make off if one meets them, but during the intense heats of the latter part of July and August they never think of escaping, but at any sight or sound which they may consider inimical they instantly coil themselves for a spring. The most intolerable proceeding on their part, however, that he described, was their getting up into the trees, and

either coiling themselves in or depending from the branches. There is something too revolting in the idea of serpents looking down upon one from the shade of the trees to which one may betake one's self for shelter in the dreadful heat of the Southern midsummer; decidedly I do not think the dog-days would be pleasant here. The moccasin snake, which is nearly as deadly as the rattlesnake, abounds all over the island.

In the evening I had a visit from Mr. C—— and Mr. B——, who officiates to-morrow at our small island church. The conversation I had with these gentlemen was sad enough. They seem good, and kind, and amiable men, and I have no doubt are conscientious in their capacity of slaveholders; but to one who has lived outside this dreadful atmosphere, the whole tone of their discourse has a morally muffled sound, which one must hear to be able to conceive. Mr. B—— told me that the people on this plantation not going to church was the result of a positive order from Mr. K——, who had peremptorily forbidden their doing so, and of course to have infringed that order would have been to incur severe corporal chastisement. Bishop B——, it seems, had advised that there should be periodical preaching on the plantations, which, said Mr. B——, would have obviated any necessity for the people of different estates congregating at any given point at stated times, which might perhaps be objectionable, and at the same time would meet the reproach which was now beginning to be directed toward Southern planters as a class, of neglecting the eternal interest of their dependents. But Mr. K—— had equally objected to this. He seems to have held religious teaching a mighty dangerous thing—and how right he was! I have met with conventional cowardice of various shades and shapes in various societies that I have lived in, but any thing like the pervading timidity of tone which I

find here on all subjects, but, above all, on that of the condition of the slaves, I have never dreamed of. Truly slavery begets slavery, and the perpetual state of suspicion and apprehension of the slaveholders is a very handsome offset, to say the least of it, against the fetters and the lash of the slaves. Poor people, one and all, but especially poor oppressors of the oppressed! The attitude of these men is really pitiable; they profess (perhaps some of them strive to do so indeed) to consult the best interests of their slaves, and yet shrink back terrified from the approach of the slightest intellectual or moral improvement which might modify their degraded and miserable existence. I do pity these deplorable servants of two masters more than any human beings I have ever seen—more than their own slaves a thousand times!

To-day is Sunday, and I have been to the little church on the island. It is the second time since I came down to the South that I have been to a place of worship. A curious little incident prefaced my going thither this morning. I had desired Israel to get my horse ready and himself to accompany me, as I meant to ride to church; and you can not imagine any thing droller than his horror and dismay when he at length comprehended that my purpose was to attend divine service in my riding-habit. I asked him what was the trouble; for, though I saw something was creating a dreadful convulsion in his mind, I had no idea what it was till he told me, adding that he had never seen such a thing on St. Simon's in his life—as who should say, such a thing was never seen in Hyde Park or the Tuileries before. You may imagine my amusement; but presently I was destined to shock something much more serious than poor Israel's sense of *les convénances et bienséances*, and it was not without something of an effort that I made up my mind to do so. I was standing at the open window speaking to him about

the horses, and telling him to get ready to ride with me, when George, another of the men, went by with a shade or visor to his cap exactly the shape of the one I left behind at the North, and for want of which I have been suffering severely from the intense heat and glare of the sun for the last week. I asked him to hand me his cap, saying, "I want to take the pattern of that shade." Israel exclaimed, "Oh, missis, not to-day; let him leave the cap with you to-morrow, but don't cut pattern on de Sabbath day!" It seemed to me a much more serious matter to offend this scruple than the prejudice with regard to praying in a riding-habit; still, it had to be done. "Do you think it wrong, Israel," said I, "to work on Sunday?" "Yes, missis, parson tell we so." "Then, Israel, be sure you never do it. Did your parson never tell you that your conscience was for yourself and not for your neighbors, Israel?" "Oh yes, missis, he tell we that too." "Then mind that too, Israel." The shade was cut out and stitched upon my cap, and protected my eyes from the fierce glare of the sun and sand as I rode to church.

On our way we came to a field where the young corn was coming up. The children were in the field—little living scarecrows—watching it, of course, as on a week-day, to keep off the birds. I made Israel observe this, who replied, "Oh, missis, if de people's corn left one whole day not watched, not one blade of it remain to-morrow; it must be watched, missis." "What, on the Sabbath-day, Israel?" "Yes, missis, or else we lose it all." I was not sorry to avail myself of this illustration of the nature of works of necessity, and proceeded to enlighten Israel with regard to what I conceive to be the genuine observance of the Sabbath.

You can not imagine any thing wilder or more beautiful than the situation of the little rustic temple in the

woods where I went to worship to-day, with the magnificent live oaks standing round it and its picturesque burial-ground. The disgracefully neglected state of the latter, its broken and ruinous inclosure, and its shaggy, weed-grown graves, tell a strange story of the residents of this island, who are content to leave the resting-place of their dead in so shocking a condition. In the tiny little chamber of a church, the grand old Litany of the Episcopal Church of England was not a little shorn of its ceremonial stateliness; clerk there was none, nor choir, nor organ, and the clergyman did duty for all, giving out the hymn and then singing it himself, followed as best might be by the uncertain voices of his very small congregation, the smallest I think I ever saw gathered in a Christian place of worship, even counting a few of the negroes who had ventured to place themselves standing at the back of the church—an infringement on their part upon the privileges of their betters, as Mr. B—— generally preaches a second sermon to them after the *white* service, to which, as a rule, they are not admitted.

On leaving the church, I could not but smile at the quaint and original costumes with which Israel had so much dreaded a comparison for my irreproachable London riding-habit. However, the strangeness of it was what inspired him with terror; but, at that rate, I am afraid a Paris gown and bonnet might have been in equal danger of shocking his prejudices. There was quite as little affinity with the one as the other in the curious specimens of the "art of dressing" that gradually distributed themselves among the two or three indescribable machines (to use the appropriate Scotch title) drawn up under the beautiful oak-trees, on which they departed in various directions to the several plantations on the island.

I mounted my horse, and resumed my ride and my conversation with Israel. He told me that Mr. K——'s great


The Wesley Oaks,
on the Road to Frederica.

objection to the people going to church was their meeting with the slaves from the other plantations; and one reason, he added, that he did not wish them to do that was, that they trafficked and bartered away the cooper's wares, tubs, piggins, etc., made on the estate. I think, however, from every thing I hear of that gentleman, that the mere fact of the Hampton people coming in contact with the slaves of other plantations would be a thing he would have deprecated. As a severe disciplinarian, he was probably right.

In the course of our talk, a reference I made to the Bible, and Israel's answer that he could not read, made me ask him why his father had never taught any of his sons to read; old Jacob, I know, can read. What followed I shall never forget. He began by giving all sorts of childish unmeaning excuses and reasons for never having tried to learn—became confused and quite incoherent —and then, suddenly stopping, and pulling up his horse, said, with a look and manner that went to my very heart, "Missis, what for me learn to read? me have no prospect!" I rode on without venturing to speak to him again for a little while. When I had recovered from that remark of his, I explained to him that, though indeed "without prospect" in some respects, yet reading might avail him much to better his condition, moral, mental, and physical. He listened very attentively, and was silent for a minute; after which he said, "All you say very true, missis, and me sorry now me let de time pass; but you know what de white man dat goberns de estate him seem to like and favor, dat de people find out bery soon and do it; now Massa K——, him neber favor our reading, him not like it; likely as not he lick you if he find you reading; or, if you wish to teach your children, him always say, 'Pooh! teach 'em to read—teach 'em to work.' According to dat, we neber paid much attention to it; but

now it will be different; it was different in former times. De old folks of my father and mother's time could read more than we can, and I expect de people will dare to give some thought to it again now." There's a precious sample of what one man's influence may do in his own sphere, dear E——! This man Israel is a remarkably fine fellow in every way, with a frank, open, and most intelligent countenance, which rises before me with its look of quiet sadness whenever I think of these words (and they haunt me), "I have no prospect."

On my arrival at home I found that a number of the people, not knowing I had gone to church, had come up to the house, hoping that I would read prayers to them, and had not gone back to their homes, but waited to see me. I could not bear to disappoint them, for many of them had come from the farthest settlements on the estate; and so, though my hot ride had tired me a good deal, and my talk with Israel troubled me profoundly, I took off my habit, and had them all in, and read the afternoon service to them. When it was over, two of the women—Venus and Tressa—asked if they might be permitted to go to the nursery and see the children. Their account of the former condition of the estate was a corroboration of Israel's. They said that the older slaves on the plantation had been far better off than the younger ones of the present day; that Major —— was considerate and humane to his people; and that the women were especially carefully treated. But they said Mr. K—— had ruined all the young women with working them too soon after their confinements; and as for the elder ones, he would kick them, curse them, turn their clothes over their heads, flog them unmercifully himself, and abuse them shamefully, no matter what condition they were in. They both ended with fervent thanks to God that he had left the estate, and rejoicing that we had come, and, above all,

that we "had made young missis for them." Venus went down on her knees, exclaiming, "Oh, missis, I glad now; and when I am dead, I glad in my grave that you come to us and bring us little missis."

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Dear E——,—I still go on exploring, or rather surveying the estate, the aspect of which is changing every day with the unfolding of the leaves and the wonderful profusion of wild flowers. The cleared ground all round the new building is one sheet of blooming blue of various tints; it is perfectly exquisite. But in the midst of my delight at these new blossoms, I am most sorrowfully bidding adieu to that paragon of parasites, the yellow jasmine; I think I must have gathered the very last blossoms of it to-day. Nothing can be more lovely, nothing so exquisitely fragrant. I was surprised to recognize by their foliage to-day some fine mulberry-trees by Jones's Creek; perhaps they are the remains of the silk-worm experiment that Mr. C—— persuaded Major —— to try so ineffectually. While I was looking at some wild plum and cherry trees that were already swarming with blight in the shape of multitudinous caterpillars' nests, an ingenious darkie, by name Cudgie, asked me if I could explain to him why the trees blossomed out so fair, and then all "went off into a kind of dying." Having directed his vision and attention to the horrid white glistening webs, all lined with their brood of black devourers, I left him to draw his own conclusions.

The afternoon was rainy, in spite of which I drove to Busson Hill, and had a talk with Bran about the vile caterpillar blights on the wild plum-trees, and asked him if it would not be possible to get some sweet grafts from Mr. C—— for some of the wild fruit-trees, of which there are such quantities. Perhaps, however, they are not worth

grafting. Bran promised me that the people should not be allowed to encumber the paths and the front of their houses with unsightly and untidy heaps of oyster-shells. He promised all sorts of things. I wonder how soon after I am gone they will all return into the condition of brutal filth and disorder in which I found them.

The men and women had done their work here by half past three. The chief labor in the cotton-fields, however, is both earlier and later in the season. At present they have little to do but let the crop grow. In the evening I had a visit from the son of a very remarkable man, who had been one of the chief drivers on the estate in Major ——'s time, and his son brought me a silver cup which Major —— had given his father as a testimonial of approbation, with an inscription on it recording his fidelity and trustworthiness at the time of the invasion of the coast of Georgia by the English troops. Was not that a curious reward for a slave who was supposed not to be able to read his own praises? And yet, from the honorable pride with which his son regarded this relic, I am sure the master did well so to reward his servant, though it seemed hard that the son of such a man should be a slave. Maurice himself came with his father's precious silver cup in his hand, to beg for a small pittance of sugar, and for a Prayer-book, and also to know if the privilege of a milch cow for the support of his family, which was among the favors Major —— allowed his father, might not be continued to him. He told me he had ten children "working for massa," and I promised to mention his petition to Mr. ——.

On Sunday last I rode round the woods near St. Annie's, and met with a monstrous snake, which Jack called a chicken-snake; but whether because it particularly affected poultry as its diet, or for what other reason, he could not tell me. Nearer home I encountered another

gliding creature, that stopped a moment just in front of my horse's feet, as if it was too much afraid of being trampled upon to get out of the way: it was the only snake animal I ever saw that I did not think hideous. It was of a perfectly pure apple-green color, with a delicate line of black like a collar round its throat; it really was an exquisite worm, and Jack said it was harmless. I did not, however, think it expedient to bring it home in my bosom, though, if ever I have a pet snake, it shall be such a one.

In the afternoon I drove to Jones's with several supplies of flannel for the rheumatic women and old men. We have ridden over to Hamilton again, to pay another visit to the F——'s, and on our way passed an enormous rattlesnake hanging dead on the bough of a tree. Dead as it was, it turned me perfectly sick with horror, and I wished very much to come back to the North immediately, where these are not the sort of blackberries that grow on every bush. The evening air now, after the heat of the day, is exquisitely mild, and the nights dry and wholesome, the whole atmosphere indescribably fragrant with the perfume of flowers; and as I stood, before going to bed last night, watching the slow revolving light on Sapelo Island, that warns the ships from the dangerous bar at the river's mouth, and heard the measured pulse of the great Atlantic waters on the beach, I thought no more of rattlesnakes—no more, for one short while, of slavery. How still, and sweet, and solemn it was!

We have been paying more friendly and neighborly visits, or rather returning them; and the recipients of these civilized courtesies on our last calling expedition were the family one member of which was a party concerned in that barbarous challenge I wrote you word about. Hitherto that very brutal and bloodthirsty cartel appears to have had no result. You must not, on that account, im-

agine that it will have none. At the North, were it possible for a duel intended to be conducted on such savage terms to be matter of notoriety, the very horror of the thing would create a feeling of grotesqueness, and the antagonists in such a proposed encounter would simply incur an immense amount of ridicule and obloquy. But here nobody is astonished and nobody ashamed of such preliminaries to a mortal combat between two gentlemen, who propose firing at marks over each other's hearts, and cutting off each other's heads; and though this agreeable party of pleasure has not come off yet, there seems to be no reason why it should not at the first convenient season. Reflecting upon all which, I rode, not without trepidation, through Colonel H——'s grounds, and up to his house. Mr. W——'s head was not stuck upon a pole any where within sight, however, and as soon as I became pretty sure of this, I began to look about me, and saw instead a trellis tapestried with the most beautiful roses I ever beheld, another of these exquisite Southern flowers — the Cherokee rose. The blossom is very large, composed of four or five pure white petals, as white and as large as those of the finest camellia, with a bright golden eye for a focus; the buds and leaves are long and elegantly slender, like those of some tea-roses, and the green of the foliage is dark, and at the same time vivid and lustrous; it grew in masses so as to form almost a hedge, all starred with these wonderful white blossoms, which, unfortunately, have no perfume.

We rode home through the pine land to Jones's, looked at the new house which is coming on hideously, saw two beautiful kinds of trumpet honeysuckle already lighting up the woods in every direction with gleams of scarlet, and when we reached home found a splendid donation of vegetables, flowers, and mutton from our kind neighbor Mrs. F——, who is a perfect Lady Bountiful to us.

"Trumpet Honeysuckle lighting
up the Woods"

This same mutton, however—my heart bleeds to say it—disappeared the day after it was sent to us. Abraham the cook declares that he locked the door of the safe upon it, which I think may be true, but I also think he unlocked it again. I am sorry; but, after all, it is very natural these people should steal a little of our meat from us occasionally, who steal almost all their bread from them habitually.

I rode yesterday to St. Annie's with Mr. ——. We found a whole tract of marsh had been set on fire by the facetious negro called Pun, who had helped me out of it some time ago. As he was set to work in it, perhaps it was with a view of making it less damp; at any rate, it was crackling, blazing, and smoking cheerily, and I should think would be insupportable for the snakes. While stopping to look at the conflagration, Mr. —— was accosted by a three parts naked and one part tattered little she slave—black as ebony, where her skin was discoverable through its perfect incrustation of dirt—with a thick mat of frizzly wool upon her skull, which made the sole request she preferred to him irresistibly ludicrous: "Massa, massa, you please to buy me a comb to tick in my head?" Mr. —— promised her this necessary of life, and I promised myself to give her the luxury of one whole garment. Mrs. —— has sent me the best possible consolation for the lost mutton, some lovely flowers, and these will not be stolen.

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*Saturday, the 13th.* DEAR E——,—I rode to-day through all my wood paths for the last time with Jack, and I think I should have felt quite melancholy at taking leave of them and him but for the apparition of a large black snake, which filled me with disgust and nipped my other sentiments in the bud. Not a day passes now that I do not

encounter one or more of these hateful reptiles; it is curious how much more odious they are to me than the alligators that haunt the mud banks of the river round the rice plantation. It is true that there is something very dreadful in the thick shapeless mass, uniform in color almost to the black slime on which it lies basking, and which you hardly detect till it begins to move. But even those ungainly crocodiles never sickened me as those rapid, lithe, and sinuous serpents do. Did I ever tell you that the people at the rice plantation caught a young alligator and brought it to the house, and it was kept for some time in a tub of water? It was an ill-tempered little monster; it used to set up its back like a cat when it was angry, and open its long jaws in a most vicious manner.

After looking at my new path in the pine land, I crossed Pike Bluff, and, breaking my way all through the burnt district, returned home by Jones's. In the afternoon we paid a long visit to Mr. C——. It is extremely interesting to me to talk with him about the negroes; he has spent so much of his life among them, has managed them so humanely, and apparently so successfully, that his experience is worthy of all attention. And yet it seems to me that it is impossible, or rather, perhaps, for those very reasons it is impossible, for him ever to contemplate them in any condition but that of slavery. He thinks them very like the Irish, and instanced their subserviency, their flattering, their lying, and pilfering, as traits common to the characters of both peoples. But I can not persuade myself that in both cases, and certainly in that of the negroes, these qualities are not in great measure the result of their condition. He says that he considers the extremely low diet of the negroes one reason for the absence of crimes of a savage nature among them; most of them do not touch meat the year round. But in this respect they certainly do not resemble the Irish, who con-

trive, upon about as low a national diet as civilization is acquainted with, to commit the bloodiest and most frequent outrages with which civilization has to deal. His statement that it is impossible to bribe the negroes to work on their own account with any steadiness may be generally true, but admits of quite exceptions enough to throw doubt upon its being natural supineness in the race rather than the inevitable consequence of denying them the entire right to labor for their own profit. Their laziness seems to me the necessary result of their primary wants being supplied, and all progress denied them. Of course, if the natural spur to exertion, necessity, is removed, you do away with the will to work of a vast proportion of all who do work in the world. It is the law of progress that man's necessities grow with his exertions to satisfy them, and labor and improvement thus continually act and react upon each other to raise the scale of desire and achievement; and I do not believe that, in the majority of instances among any people on the face of the earth, the will to labor for small indulgences would survive the loss of freedom and the security of food enough to exist upon. Mr. —— said that he had offered a bribe of twenty dollars apiece, and the use of a pair of oxen, for the clearing of a certain piece of land, to the men on his estate, and found the offer quite ineffectual to procure the desired result; the land was subsequently cleared as usual task-work under the lash. Now, certainly, we have among Mr. ——'s people instances of men who have made very considerable sums of money by boat-building in their leisure hours, and the instances of almost life-long, persevering, stringent labor, by which slaves have at length purchased their own freedom and that of their wives and children, are on record in numbers sufficient to prove that they are capable of severe sustained effort of the most patient and heroic kind for that great object,

liberty. For my own part, I know no people who dote upon labor for its own sake; and it seems to me quite natural to any absolutely ignorant and nearly brutish man, if you say to him, "No effort of your own can make you free, but no absence of effort shall starve you," to decline to work for any thing less than mastery over his whole life, and to take up with his mess of porridge as the alternative. One thing that Mr. —— said seemed to me to prove rather too much. He declared that his son, objecting to the folks on his plantation going about bareheaded, had at one time offered a reward of a dollar to those who should habitually wear hats without being able to induce them to do so, which he attributed to sheer careless indolence; but I think it was merely the force of habit of going uncovered rather than absolute laziness. The universal testimony of all present at this conversation was in favor of the sweetness of temper and natural gentleness of disposition of the negroes; but these characteristics they seemed to think less inherent than the result of diet and the other lowering influences of their condition; and it must not be forgotten that on the estate of this wise and kind master a formidable conspiracy was organized among his slaves.

We rowed home through a world of stars, the steadfast ones set in the still blue sky, and the flashing swathes of phosphoric light turned up by our oars and keel in the smooth blue water. It was lovely.

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*Sunday*, 14*th*. My dear E——,—That horrid tragedy with which we have been threatened, and of which I was writing to you almost jestingly a few days ago, has been accomplished, and apparently without exciting any thing but the most passing and superficial sensation in this community. The duel between Dr. H—— and Mr. W——

did not take place, but an accidental encounter in the hotel at Brunswick did, and the former shot the latter dead on the spot. He has been brought home and buried here by the little church close to his mother's plantation; and the murderer, if he is even prosecuted, runs no risk of finding a jury in the whole length and breadth of Georgia who could convict him of any thing. It is horrible.

I drove to church to-day in the wood-wagon, with Jack and Aleck, Hector being our charioteer, in a gilt guard-chain and pair of slippers to match as the Sabbatic part of his attire. The love of dirty finery is not a trait of the Irish in Ireland, but I think it crops out strongly when they come out here; and the proportion of their high wages put upon their backs by the young Irish maidservants in the North indicates a strong addiction to the female passion for dress. Here the tendency seems to exist in men and women alike; but I think all savage men rejoice, even more than their women, in personal ornamentation. The negroes certainly show the same strong predilection for finery with their womenkind.

I stopped before going into church to look at the new grave that has taken its place among the defaced stones, all overgrown with briers, that lie round it. Poor young W——! poor widowed mother, of whom he was the only son! What a savage horror! And no one seems to think any thing of it, more than of a matter of course. My devotions were any thing but satisfactory or refreshing to me. My mind was dwelling incessantly upon the new grave under the great oaks outside, and the miserable mother in her home. The air of the church was perfectly thick with sand-flies; and the disgraceful carelessness of the congregation in responding and singing the hymns, and the entire neglect of the Prayer-book regulations for kneeling, disturbed and displeased me even more

than the last time I was at church; but I think that was because of the total absence of excitement or feeling among the whole population of St. Simon's upon the subject of the bloody outrage with which my mind was full, which has given me a sensation of horror toward the whole community. Just imagine—only it is impossible to imagine—such a thing taking place in a New England village; the dismay, the grief, the shame, the indignation, that would fill the hearts of the whole population. I thought we should surely have some reference to the event from the pulpit, some lesson of Christian command over furious passions. Nothing—nobody looked or spoke as if any thing unusual had occurred; and I left the church, rejoicing to think that I was going away from such a dreadful state of society. Mr. B—— remained to preach a second sermon to the negroes—the duty of submission to masters who intermurder each other.

I had service at home in the afternoon, and my congregation was much more crowded than usual; for I believe there is no doubt at last that we shall leave Georgia this week. Having given way so much before when I thought I was praying with these poor people for the last time, I suppose I had, so to speak, expended my emotion, and I was much more composed and quiet than when I took leave of them before. But, to tell you the truth, this dreadful act of slaughter done in our neighborhood by one man of our acquaintance upon another, impresses me to such a degree that I can hardly turn my mind from it, and Mrs. W—— and her poor young murdered son have taken almost complete possession of my thoughts.

After prayers I gave my poor people a parting admonition, and many charges to remember me and all I had tried to teach them during my stay. They promised with one voice to mind and do all that "missis tell we;" and with many a parting benediction, and entreaties to me to

return, they went their way. I think I have done what I could for them—I think I have done as well as I could by them; but when the time comes for ending any human relation, who can be without their misgivings? who can be bold to say, I could have done no more, I could have done no better?

In the afternoon I walked out, and passed many of the people, who are now beginning, whenever they see me, to say "Good-by, missis!" which is rather trying. Many of them were clean and tidy, and decent in their appearance to a degree that certainly bore strong witness to the temporary efficacy of my influence in this respect. There is, however, of course much individual difference even with reference to this, and some take much more kindly and readily to cleanliness, no doubt to godliness too, than some others. I met Abraham, and thought that, in a quiet tête-à-tête, and with the pathetic consideration of my near departure to assist me, I could get him to confess the truth about the disappearance of the mutton; but he persisted in the legend of its departure through the locked door; and as I was only heaping sins on his soul with every lie I caused him to add to the previous ones, I desisted from my inquiries. Dirt and lying are the natural tendencies of humanity, which are especially fostered by slavery. Slaves may be infinitely wrong, and yet it is very hard to blame them.

I returned home, finding the heat quite oppressive. Late in the evening, when the sun had gone down a long time, I thought I would try and breathe the fresh sea air, but the atmosphere was thick with sand-flies, which drove me in at last from standing listening to the roar of the Atlantic on Little St. Simon's Island, the wooded belt that fends off the ocean surges from the north side of Great St. Simon's. It is a wild little sand-heap, covered with thick forest growth, and belongs to Mr. ——. I

have long had a great desire to visit it. I hope yet to be able to do so before our departure.

I have just finished reading, with the utmost interest and admiration, J—— C——'s narrative of his escape from the wreck of the Pulaski: what a brave, and gallant, and unselfish soul he must be! You never read any thing more thrilling, in spite of the perfect modesty of this account of his. If I can obtain his permission, and squeeze out the time, I will surely copy it for you. The quiet, unassuming character of his usual manners and deportment adds greatly to his prestige as a hero. What a fine thing it must be to be such a man!

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Dear E——,—We shall leave this place next Thursday or Friday, and there will be an end to this record; meantime I am fulfilling all sorts of last duties, and especially those of taking leave of my neighbors, by whom the neglect of a farewell visit would be taken much amiss.

On Sunday I rode to a place called Frederica to call on a Mrs. A——, who came to see me some time ago. I rode straight through the island by the main road that leads to the little church.

How can I describe to you the exquisite spring beauty that is now adorning these woods, the variety of the fresh, new-born foliage, the fragrance of the sweet, wild perfumes that fill the air? Honeysuckles twine round every tree; the ground is covered with a low, white-blossomed shrub more fragrant than lilies of the valley. The accacias are swinging their silver censers under the green roof of these wood temples; every stump is like a classical altar to the sylvan gods, garlanded with flowers; every post, or stick, or slight stem, like a Bacchante's thyrsus, twined with wreaths of ivy and wild vine, waving in the tepid wind. Beautiful butterflies flicker like flying flowers


The Ruins at Frederica

among the bushes, and gorgeous birds, like winged jewels, dart from the boughs, and—and—a huge ground snake slid like a dark ribbon across the path while I was stopping to enjoy all this deliciousness, and so I became less enthusiastic, and cantered on past the little deserted church-yard, with the new-made grave beneath its grove of noble oaks, and a little farther on reached Mrs. A——'s cottage, half hidden in the midst of ruins and roses.

This Frederica is a very strange place; it was once a town—*the* town, the metropolis of the island. The English, when they landed on the coast of Georgia in the war, destroyed this tiny place, and it has never been built up again. Mrs. A——'s, and one other house, are the only dwellings that remain in this curious wilderness of dismantled crumbling gray walls compassionately cloaked with a thousand profuse and graceful creepers. These are the only ruins, properly so called, except those of Fort Putnam, that I have ever seen in this land of contemptuous youth. I hailed these picturesque groups and masses with the feelings of a European, to whom ruins are like a sort of relations. In my country, ruins are like a minor chord in music; here they are like a discord; they are not the relics of time, but the results of violence; they recall no valuable memories of a remote past, and are mere encumbrances to the busy present. Evidently they are out of place in America except on St. Simon's Island, between this savage selvage of civilization and the great Atlantic deep. These heaps of rubbish and roses would have made the fortune of a sketcher; but I imagine the snakes have it all to themselves here, and are undisturbed by camp-stools, white umbrellas, and ejaculatory young ladies.

I sat for a long time with Mrs. A——, and a friend of hers staying with her, a Mrs. A——, lately from Florida. The latter seemed to me a remarkable woman; her con-

versation was extremely interesting. She had been stopping at Brunswick, at the hotel where Dr. H—— murdered young W——, and said that the mingled ferocity and blackguardism of the men who frequented the house had induced her to cut short her stay there, and come on to her friend Mrs. A——'s. We spoke of that terrible crime which had occurred only the day after she left Brunswick, and both ladies agreed that there was not the slightest chance of Dr. H——'s being punished in any way for the murder he had committed; that shooting down a man who had offended you was part of the morals and manners of the Southern gentry, and that the circumstance was one of quite too frequent occurrence to cause any sensation, even in the small community where it obliterated one of the principal members of the society. If the accounts given by these ladies of the character of the planters in this part of the South may be believed, they must be as idle, arrogant, ignorant, dissolute, and ferocious as that mediæval chivalry to which they are fond of comparing themselves; and these are Southern women, and should know the people among whom they live.

We had a long discussion on the subject of slavery, and they took, as usual, the old ground of justifying the system, *where* it was administered with kindness and indulgence. It is not surprising that women should regard the question from this point of view; they are very seldom *just*, and are generally treated with more indulgence than justice by men. They were very patient of my strong expressions of reprobation of the whole system, and Mrs. A——, bidding me good-by, said that, for aught she could tell, I might be right, and might have been led down here by Providence to be the means of some great change in the condition of the poor colored people.

I rode home pondering on the strange fate that has brought me to this place so far from where I was born,

this existence so different in all its elements from that of my early years and former associations. If I believed Mrs. A——'s parting words, I might perhaps verify them; perhaps I may yet verify, although I do not believe them. On my return home I found a most enchanting bundle of flowers, sent to me by Mrs. G——; pomegranate blossoms, roses, honeysuckle, every thing that blooms two months later with us in Pennsylvania.

I told you I had a great desire to visit Little St. Simon's, and the day before yesterday I determined to make an exploring expedition thither. I took M—— and the children, little imagining what manner of day's work was before me. Six men rowed us in the "Lily," and Israel brought the wood-wagon after us in a flat. Our navigation was a very intricate one, all through sea swamps and marshes, mud-banks and sand-banks, with great white shells and bleaching bones stuck upon sticks to mark the channel. We landed on this forest in the sea by Quash's house, the only human residence on the island. It was larger and better, and more substantial than the negro huts in general, and he seemed proud and pleased to do the honors to us. Thence we set off, by my desire, in the wagon through the woods to the beach; road there was none, save the rough clearing that the men cut with their axes before us as we went slowly on. Presently we came to a deep dry ditch, over which there was no visible means of proceeding. Israel told me if we would sit still he would undertake to drive the wagon into and out of it; and so, indeed, he did, but how he did it is more than I can explain to you now, or could explain to myself then. A less powerful creature than Montreal could never have dragged us through; and when we presently came to a second rather worse edition of the same, I insisted upon getting out and crossing it on foot. I walked half a mile while the wagon was dragged up and down the deep gul-

ly, and lifted bodily over some huge trunks of fallen trees. The wood through which we now drove was all on fire, smoking, flaming, crackling, and burning round us. The sun glared upon us from the cloudless sky, and the air was one cloud of sand-flies and musquitoes. I covered both my children's faces with veils and handkerchiefs, and repented not a little in my own breast of the rashness of my undertaking. The back of Israel's coat was covered so thick with musquitoes that one could hardly see the cloth; and I felt as if we should be stifled if our way lay much longer through this terrible wood. Presently we came to another impassable place, and again got out of the wagon, leaving Israel to manage it as best he could. I walked with the baby in my arms a quarter of a mile, and then was so overcome with the heat that I sat down in the burning wood, on the floor of ashes, till the wagon came up again. I put the children and M—— into it, and continued to walk till we came to a ditch in a tract of salt marsh, over which Israel drove triumphantly, and I partly jumped and was partly hauled over, having declined the entreaties of several of the men to let them lie down and make a bridge with their bodies for me to walk over. At length we reached the skirt of that tremendous wood, to my unspeakable relief, and came upon the white sand-hillocks of the beach. The trees were all strained crooked, from the constant influence of the sea-blast. The coast was a fearful-looking stretch of dismal, trackless sand, and the ocean lay boundless and awful beyond the wild and desolate beach, from which we were now only divided by a patch of low, coarse-looking bush, growing as thick and tangled as heather, and so stiff and compact that it was hardly possible to drive through it. Yet in spite of this, several lads who had joined our train rushed off into it in search of rabbits, though Israel called repeatedly to them, warning them of


On Little St. Simon's Shore.

the danger of rattlesnakes. We drove at last down to the smooth sea sand; and here, outstripping our guides, was barred farther progress by a deep gully, down which it was impossible to take the wagon. Israel, not knowing the beach well, was afraid to drive round the mouth of it; and so it was determined that from this point we should walk home under his guidance. I sat in the wagon while he constructed a rough foot-bridge of bits of wood and broken planks for us over the narrow chasm, and he then took Montreal out of the wagon and tied him behind it, leaving him for the other men to take charge of when they should arrive at this point. And so, having mightily desired to see the coast of Little St. Simon's Island, I did see it thoroughly; for I walked a mile and a half round it, over beds of sharp shells, through swamps half knee deep, poor little S—— stumping along with dogged heroism, and Israel carrying the baby, except at one deep *mal passo*, when I took the baby and he carried S——; and so, through the wood round Quash's house, where we arrived almost fainting with fatigue and heat, and where we rested but a short time, for we had to start almost immediately to save the tide home.

I called at Mr. C——'s on my way back, to return him his son's manuscript, which I had in the boat for that purpose. I sent Jack, who had come to meet me with the horses, home, being too tired to attempt riding; and, covered with mud literally up to my knees, I was obliged to lie down ignominiously all the afternoon to rest. And now I will give you a curious illustration of the utter subserviency of slaves. It seems that by taking the tide in proper season, and going by boat, all that horrible wood journey might have been avoided, and we could have reached the beach with perfect ease in half the time; but because, being of course absolutely ignorant of this, I had expressed a desire to go through the wood, not a syllable

of remonstrance was uttered by any one; and the men not only underwent the labor of cutting a path for the wagon and dragging it through and over all the impediments we encountered, but allowed me and the children to traverse that burning wood, rather than tell me that by waiting and taking another way I could get to the sea. When I expressed my astonishment at their not having remonstrated against my order, and explained how I could best achieve the purpose I had in view, the sole answer I got even from Israel was, "Missis say so, so me do; missis say me go through the wood, me no tell missis go another way." You see, my dear E——, one had need bethink one's self what orders one gives, when one has the misfortune to be despotic.

How sorry I am that I have been obliged to return that narrative of Mr. C——'s without asking permission to copy it, which I did not do because I should not have been able to find the time to do it! We go away the day after to-morrow. All the main incidents of the disaster the newspapers have made you familiar with—the sudden and appalling loss of that fine vessel laden with the very flower of the South. There seems hardly to be a family in Georgia and South Carolina that had not some of its members on board that ill-fated ship. You know it was a sort of party of pleasure more than any thing else; the usual annual trip to the North for change of air and scene, for the gayeties of Newport and Saratoga, that all the wealthy Southern people invariably take every summer.

The weather had been calm and lovely; and dancing, talking, and laughing, as if they were in their own drawing-rooms, they had passed the time away till they all separated for the night. At the first sound of the exploding boiler Mr. C—— jumped up, and in his shirt and trowsers ran on deck. The scene was one of horrible confusion; women screaming, men swearing, the deck strewn with

broken fragments of all descriptions, the vessel leaning frightfully to one side, and every body running hither and thither in the darkness in horror and dismay. He had left Georgia with Mrs. F—— and Mrs. N——, the two children, and one of the female servants of these ladies under his charge. He went immediately to the door of the ladies' cabin and called Mrs. F——; they were all there half dressed; he bade them dress as quickly as possible, and be ready to follow and obey him. He returned almost instantly, and led them to the side of the vessel, where, into the boats, that had already been lowered, desperate men and women were beginning to swarm, throwing themselves out of the sinking ship. He bade Mrs. F—— jump down into one of these boats which was only in the possession of two sailors; she instantly obeyed him, and he threw her little boy to the men after her. He then ordered Mrs. N——, with the negro woman, to throw themselves off the vessel into the boat, and, with Mrs. N——'s baby in his arms, sprang after them. His foot touched the gunwale of the boat, and he fell into the water; but, recovering himself instantly, he clambered into the boat, which he then peremptorily ordered the men to set adrift, in spite of the shrieks, and cries, and commands, and entreaties of the frantic crowds who were endeavoring to get into it. The men obeyed him, and rowing while he steered, they presently fell astern of the ship, in the midst of the darkness, and tumult, and terror. Another boat laden with people was near them. For some time they saw the heart-rending spectacle of the sinking vessel, and the sea strewn with mattresses, seats, planks, etc., to which people were clinging, floating, and shrieking for succor, in the dark water all round them. But they gradually pulled farther and farther out of the horrible chaos of despair, and, with the other boat still consorting with them, rowed on. They watched from a distance the pite-

ous sight of the ill-fated steamer settling down, the gray girdle of light that marked the line of her beautiful saloons and cabins gradually sinking nearer and nearer to the blackness, in which they were presently extinguished; and the ship, with all its precious human freight ingulfed —all but the handful left in those two open boats, to brave the dangers of that terrible coast!

They were somewhere off the North Carolina shore, which, when the daylight dawned, they could distinctly see, with its ominous line of breakers and inhospitable perilous coast. The men had continued rowing all night, and as the summer sun rose flaming over their heads, the task of pulling the boat became dreadfully severe; still they followed the coast, Mr. C—— looking out for any opening, creek, or small inlet that might give them a chance of landing in safety. The other boat rowed on at some little distance from them.

All the morning, and through the tremendous heat of the middle day, they toiled on without a mouthful of food —without a drop of water. At length, toward the afternoon, the men at the oars said they were utterly exhausted and could row no longer, and that Mr. C—— must steer the boat ashore. With wonderful power of command, he prevailed on them to continue their afflicting labor. The terrible blazing sun pouring on all their unsheltered heads had almost annihilated them; but still there lay between them and the land those fearful foaming ridges, and the women and children, if not the men themselves, seemed doomed to inevitable death in the attempt to surmount them. Suddenly they perceived that the boat that had kept them company was about to adventure itself in the perilous experiment of landing. Mr. C—— kept his boat's head steady, the men rested on their oars, and watched the result of the fearful risk they were themselves about to run. They saw the boat enter the break-

ers—they saw her whirled round and capsized, and then they watched, slowly emerging and dragging themselves out of the foaming sea, *some*, and only some, of the people that they knew the boat contained. Mr. C——, fortified with this terrible illustration of the peril that awaited them, again besought them to row yet for a little while farther along the coast, in search of some possible place to take the boat safely to the beach, promising at sunset to give up the search, and again the poor men resumed their toil; but the line of leaping breakers stretched along the coast as far as eye could see, and at length the men declared they could labor no longer, and insisted that Mr. C—— should steer them to shore. He then said that he would do so, but they must take some rest before encountering the peril which awaited them, and for which they might require whatever remaining strength they could command. He made the men leave the oars and lie down to sleep for a short time, and then, giving the helm to one of them, did the same himself. When they were thus a little refreshed with this short rest, he prepared to take the boat into the breakers.

He laid Mrs. N——'s baby on her breast, and wrapped a shawl round and round her body so as to secure the child to it, and said, in the event of the boat capsizing, he would endeavor to save her and her child. Mrs. F—— and her boy he gave in charge to one of the sailors, and the colored woman who was with her to the other, and they promised solemnly, in case of misadventure to the boat, to do their best to save these helpless creatures; and so they turned, as the sun was going down, the bows of the boat to the terrible shore. They rose two of the breakers safely, but then the oar of one of the men was struck from his hand, and in an instant the boat whirled round and turned over. Mr. C—— instantly struck out to seize Mrs. N——, but she had sunk, and, though he

dived twice, he could not see her; at last he felt her hair floating loose with his foot, and seizing hold of it, grasped her securely and swam with her to shore. While in the act of doing so, he saw the man who had promised to save the colored woman making alone for the beach; and even then, in that extremity, he had power of command enough left to drive the fellow back to seek her, which he did, and brought her safe to land. The other man kept his word of taking care of Mrs. F——, and the latter never released her grasp of her child's wrist, which bore the mark of her agony for weeks after their escape. They reached the sands, and Mrs. N——'s shawl having been unwound, her child was found laughing on her bosom. But hardly had they had time to thank God for their deliverance when Mr. C—— fell fainting on the beach; and Mrs. F——, who told me this, said that for one dreadful moment they thought that the preserver of all their lives had lost his own in the terrible exertion and anxiety that he had undergone. He revived, however, and crawling a little farther up the beach, they burrowed for warmth and shelter as well as they could in the sand, and lay there till the next morning, when they sought and found succor.

You can not imagine, my dear E——, how strikingly throughout this whole narrative the extraordinary power of Mr. C——'s character makes itself felt—the immediate obedience that he obtained from women whose terror might have made them unmanageable, and men whose selfishness might have defied his control; the wise though painful firmness which enabled him to order the boat away from the side of the perishing vessel, in spite of the pity that he felt for the many, in attempting to succor whom he could only have jeopardized the few whom he was bound to save; the wonderful influence he exercised over the poor oarsmen, whose long protracted labor postponed to the last possible moment the terrible risk of

their landing. The firmness, courage, humanity, wisdom, and presence of mind of all his preparations for their final tremendous risk, and the authority which he was able to exercise, while struggling in the foaming water for his own life and that of the woman and child he was saving, over the man who was proving false to a similar sacred charge — all these admirable traits are most miserably transmitted to you by my imperfect account; and when I assure you that his own narrative, full as it necessarily was of the details of his own heroism, was as simple, modest, and unpretending as it was interesting and touching, I am sure you will agree with me that he must be a very rare man. When I spoke with enthusiasm to his old father of his son's noble conduct, and asked him if he was not proud of it, his sole reply was, "I am glad, madam, my son was not selfish."

Now, E——, I have often spoken with you and written to you of the disastrous effect of slavery upon the character of the white men implicated in it; many among themselves feel and acknowledge it to the fullest extent, and no one more than myself can deplore that any human being I love should be subjected to such baneful influences; but the devil must have his due, and men brought up in habits of peremptory command over their fellow-men, and under the constant apprehension of danger, and awful necessity of immediate readiness to meet it, acquire qualities precious to themselves and others in hours of supreme peril such as this man passed through, saving by their exercise himself and all committed to his charge. I know that the Southern men are apt to deny the fact that they do live under an habitual sense of danger; but a slave population, coerced into obedience, though unarmed and half fed, *is* a threatening source of constant insecurity, and every Southern *woman* to whom I have spoken on the subject has admitted to me that they live in terror of

their slaves. Happy are such of them as have protectors like J—— C——. Such men will best avoid and best encounter the perils that may assail them from the abject subject, human element, in the control of which their noble faculties are sadly and unworthily employed.

*Wednesday, 17th April.* I rode to-day, after breakfast, to Mrs. D——'s, another of my neighbors, who lives full twelve miles off. During the last two miles of my expedition I had the white sand hillocks and blue line of the Atlantic in view. The house at which I called was a tumble-down barrack of a dwelling in the woods, with a sort of poverty-stricken pretentious air about it, like sundry "proud planters'" dwellings that I have seen. I was received by the sons as well as the lady of the house, and could not but admire the lordly rather than manly indifference with which these young gentlemen, in gay guard-chains and fine attire, played the gallants to me, while filthy, barefooted, half-naked negro women brought in refreshments, and stood all the while fanning the cake, and sweetmeats, and their young masters, as if they had been all the same sort of stuff. I felt ashamed for the lads. The conversation turned upon Dr. H——'s trial; for there has been a trial as a matter of form, and an acquittal as a matter of course; and the gentlemen said, upon my expressing some surprise at the latter event, that there could not be found in all Georgia a jury who would convict him, which says but little for the moral sense of "all Georgia." From this most painful subject we fell into the Brunswick Canal, and thereafter I took my leave and rode home. I met my babies in the wood-wagon, and took S—— up before me, and gave her a good gallop home. Having reached the house with the appetite of a twenty-four miles' ride, I found no preparation for dinner, and not so much as a boiled potato to eat, and the sole reply to my famished and disconsolate exclamations was, "Being

that you order none, missis, I not know." I had forgotten to order my dinner, and my *slaves*, unauthorized, had not ventured to prepare any. Wouldn't a Yankee have said, "Wal, now, you went off so uncommon quick, I kinder guessed you forgot all about dinner," and have had it all ready for me? But my slaves durst not, and so I fasted till some tea could be got for me.

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This was the last letter I wrote from the plantation, and I never returned there, nor ever saw again any of the poor people among whom I lived during this winter but Jack, once, under sad circumstances. The poor lad's health failed so completely that his owners humanely brought him to the North, to try what benefit he might derive from the change; but this was before the passing of the Fugitive Slave Bill, when, touching the soil of the Northern states, a slave became free; and such was the apprehension felt lest Jack should be enlightened as to this fact by some philanthropic Abolitionist, that he was kept shut up in a high upper room of a large empty house, where even I was not allowed to visit him. I heard at length of his being in Philadelphia; and upon my distinct statement that I considered freeing their slaves the business of the Messrs. —— themselves, and not mine, I was at length permitted to see him. Poor fellow! coming to the North did not prove to him the delight his eager desire had so often anticipated from it; nor, under such circumstances, is it perhaps much to be wondered at that he benefited but little by the change—he died not long after.

I once heard a conversation between Mr. O—— and Mr. K——, the two overseers of the plantation on which I was living, upon the question of taking slaves, servants, necessary attendants, into the Northern states; Mr. O—— urged the danger of their being "got hold of," *i. e.*, set

free by the Abolitionists, to which Mr. K—— very pertinently replied, "Oh, stuff and nonsense; I take care, when my wife goes North with the children, to send Lucy with her; *her children are down here, and I defy all the Abolitionists in creation to get her to stay North.*" Mr. K—— was an extremely wise man.

# APPENDIX.

I WROTE the following letter after reading several leading articles in the *Times* newspaper, at the time of the great sensation occasioned by Mrs. Beecher Stowe's novel of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and after the Anti-slavery Protest which that book induced the women of England to address to those of America on the subject of the condition of the slaves in the Southern states.

MY DEAR E——,—I have read the articles in the *Times* to which you refer on the subject of the inaccuracy of Mrs. Beecher Stowe's book as a picture of slavery in America, and have ascertained who they were written by. Having done so, I do not think it worth while to send my letter for insertion, because, as that is the tone deliberately taken upon the subject by that paper, my counter statement would not, I imagine, be admitted into its columns. I inclose it to you, as I should like you to see how far from true, according to my experience, the statements of the "*Times*' Correspondent" are. It is impossible, of course, to know why it erects itself into an advocate for slavery; and the most charitable conjecture I can form upon the subject is, that the Stafford House demonstration may have been thought likely to wound the sensitive national views of America upon this subject; and the statement put forward by the *Times*, contradicting Mrs. Stowe's picture, may be intended to soothe their irritation at the philanthropic zeal of our lady Abolitionists. Believe me, dear E——, yours always truly,

F. A. K.

*Letter to the Editor of the* "TIMES."

SIR,—As it is not to be supposed that you consciously afford the support of your great influence to misstatements, I request your attention to some remarks I wish to make on an article on a book called "Uncle Tom's Cabin as it is," contained in your paper of the 11th. In treating Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe's work as an exaggerated picture of the evils of slavery, I beg to assure you that you do her serious injustice: of the merits of her book as a work of art I have no desire to speak; to its power as a most interesting and pathetic story, all England and America can bear witness; but of its truth and moderation as a representation of the slave system in the United States, I can testify with the experience of an eye-witness, having been a resident in the Southern states, and had opportunities of observation such as no one who has not lived on a slave estate can have. It is very true that in reviving the altogether exploded fashion of making the hero of her novel "the perfect monster that the world ne'er saw," Mrs. Stowe has laid herself open to fair criticism, and must expect to meet with it from the very opposite taste of the present day; but the ideal excellence of her principal character is no argument at all against the general accuracy of her statements with regard to the evils of slavery; every thing else in her book is not only possible, but probable, and not only probable, but a very faithful representation of the existing facts: faithful, and not, as you accuse it of being, exaggerated; for, with the exception of the horrible catastrophe, the flogging to death of poor Tom, she has portrayed none of the most revolting instances of crime produced by the slave system, with which she might have darkened her picture, without detracting from its perfect truth. Even with respect to the incident of Tom's death, it must not be said

that if such an event is possible, it is hardly probable; for this is unfortunately not true. It is not true that the value of the slave as property infallibly protects his life from the passions of his master. It is no new thing for a man's passions to blind him to his most obvious and immediate temporal interests, as well as to his higher and everlasting ones—in various parts of the world and stages of civilization, various human passions assume successive prominence, and become developed, to the partial exclusion or deadening of others. In savage existence, and those states of civilization least removed from it, the animal passions predominate. In highly cultivated modern society, where the complicated machinery of human existence is at once a perpetually renewed cause and effect of certain legal and moral restraints, which, in the shape of government and public opinion, protect the congregated lives and interests of men from the worst outrages of open violence, the natural selfishness of mankind assumes a different development, and the love of power, of pleasure, or of pelf, exhibits different phenomena from those elicited from a savage under the influence of the same passions. The channel in which the energy and activity of modern society inclines more and more to pour itself is the peaceful one of the pursuit of gain. This is preeminently the case with the two great commercial nations of the earth, England and America; and in either England or the Northern states of America, the prudential and practical views of life prevail so far, that instances of men sacrificing their money interests at the instigation of rage, revenge, and hatred will certainly not abound. But the Southern slaveholders are a very different race of men from either Manchester manufacturers or Massachusetts merchants; they are a remnant of barbarism and feudalism, maintaining itself with infinite difficulty and danger by the side of the latest and most powerful development of commercial civilization.

The inhabitants of Baltimore, Richmond, Charleston, Savannah, and New Orleans, whose estates lie, like the suburban retreats of our city magnates, in the near neighborhood of their respective cities, are not now the people I refer to. They are softened and enlightened by many influences — the action of city life itself, where human sympathy and human respect, stimulated by neighborhood, produce salutary social restraint as well as less salutary social cowardice. They travel to the Northern states and to Europe, and Europe and the Northern states travel to them, and, in spite of themselves, their peculiar conditions receive modifications from foreign intercourse. The influence, too, of commercial enterprise, which in these latter days is becoming the agent of civilization all over the earth, affects even the uncommercial residents of the Southern cities, and, however cordially they may dislike or despise the mercantile tendencies of Atlantic Americans or transatlantic Englishmen, their frequent contact with them breaks down some of the barriers of difference between them, and humanizes the slaveholder of the great cities into some relation with the spirit of his own times and country. But these men are but a most inconsiderable portion of the slaveholding population of the South—a nation, for as such they should be spoken of, of men whose organization and temperament is that of the southern European; living under the influence of a climate at once enervating and exciting; scattered over trackless wildernesses of arid sand and pestilential swamp; intrenched within their own boundaries; surrounded by creatures absolutely subject to their despotic will; delivered over by hard necessity to the lowest excitements of drinking, gambling, and debauchery for sole recreation; independent of all opinion; ignorant of all progress; isolated from all society—it is impossible to conceive a more savage existence within the pale of any modern civilization.

The South Carolinian gentry have been fond of styling themselves the chivalry of the South, and perhaps might not badly represent, in their relations with their dependents, the nobility of France before the purifying hurricane of the Revolution swept the rights of the suzerain and the wrongs of the serf together into one bloody abyss. The planters of the interior of the Southern and Southwestern states, with their furious feuds and slaughterous combats, their stabbings and pistolings, their gross sensuality, brutal ignorance, and despotic cruelty, resemble the chivalry of France before the horrors of the Jacquerie admonished them that there was a limit even to the endurance of slaves. With such men as these, human life, even when it can be bought or sold in the market for so many dollars, is but little protected by considerations of interest from the effects of any violent passion. There is yet, however, another aspect of the question, which is, that it is sometimes clearly *not* the interest of the owner to prolong the life of his slaves; as in the case of inferior or superannuated laborers, or the very notorious instance in which some of the owners of sugar plantations stated that they found it better worth their while to *work off* (*i. e.*, kill with labor) a certain proportion of their force, and replace them by new hands every seven years, than work them less severely and maintain them in diminished efficiency for an indefinite length of time. Here you will observe a precise estimate of the planter's material interest led to a result which you argue passion itself can never be so blind as to adopt. This was a deliberate economical calculation, openly avowed some years ago by a number of sugar planters in Louisiana. If, instead of accusing Mrs. Stowe of exaggeration, you had brought the same charge against the author of the "White Slave," I should not have been surprised; for his book presents some of the most revolting instances of atrocity and crime that the miserable

abuse of irresponsible power is capable of producing, and it is by no means written in the spirit of universal humanity which pervades Mrs. Stowe's volumes; but it is not liable to the charge of exaggeration any more than her less disgusting delineation. The scenes described in the "White Slave" *do* occur in the slave states of North America; and in two of the most appalling incidents of the book—the burning alive of the captured runaway, and the hanging without trial of the Vicksburg gamblers—the author of the "White Slave" has very simply related positive facts of notorious occurrence. To which he might have added, had he seen fit to do so, the instance of a slave who perished in the sea-swamps, where he was left bound and naked, a prey to the torture inflicted upon him by the venomous musquito swarms. My purpose, however, in addressing you was not to enter into a disquisition on either of these publications; but I am not sorry to take this opportunity of bearing witness to the truth of Mrs. Stowe's admirable book, and I have seen what few Englishmen can see—the working of the system in the midst of it.

In reply to your "Dispassionate Observer," who went to the South professedly with the purpose of seeing and judging of the state of things for himself, let me tell you that, little as he may be disposed to believe it, his testimony is worth less than nothing; for it is morally impossible for any Englishman going into the Southern states, except as a *resident*, to know any thing whatever of the real condition of the slave population. This was the case some years ago, as I experienced, and it is now likely to be more the case than ever; for the institution is not *yet* approved divine to the perceptions of Englishmen, and the Southerners are as anxious to hide its uglier features from any note-making observer from this side of the water as to present to his admiration and approval such as

can by any possibility be made to wear the most distant approach to comeliness.

The gentry of the Southern states are pre-eminent in their own country for that species of manner which, contrasted with the breeding of the Northerners, would be emphatically pronounced "good" by Englishmen. Born to inhabit landed property, they are not inevitably made clerks and counting-house men of, but inherit with their estates some of the invariable characteristics of an aristocracy. The shop is not their element; and the eager spirit of speculation and the sordid spirit of gain do not infect their whole existence, even to their very demeanor and appearance, as they too manifestly do those of a large proportion of the inhabitants of the Northern states. Good manners have an undue value for Englishmen, generally speaking; and whatever departs from their peculiar standard of breeding is apt to prejudice them, as whatever approaches it prepossesses them, far more than is reasonable. The Southerners are infinitely better bred men, according to English notions, than the men of the Northern states. The habit of command gives them a certain self-possession, the enjoyment of leisure a certain ease. Their temperament is impulsive and enthusiastic, and their manners have the grace and spirit which seldom belong to the deportment of a Northern people; but, upon more familiar acquaintance, the vices of the social system to which they belong will be found to have infected them with their own peculiar taint; and haughty, overbearing irritability, effeminate indolence, reckless extravagance, and a union of profligacy and cruelty, which is the immediate result of their irresponsible power over their dependents, are some of the less pleasing traits which acquaintance develops in a Southern character. In spite of all this, there is no manner of doubt that the "candid English observer" will, for the season of his sojourning among them, greatly prefer

their intercourse to that of their Northern brethren. Moreover, without in the least suspecting it, he will be bribed insidiously and incessantly by the extreme desire and endeavor to please and prepossess him which the whole white population of the slave states will exhibit—as long as he goes only as a "candid observer," with a mind not *yet* made up upon the subject of slavery, and open to conviction as to its virtues. Every conciliating demonstration of courtesy and hospitable kindness will be extended to him, and, as I said before, if his observation is permitted (and it may even appear to be courted), it will be to a fairly bound, purified edition of the black book of slavery, in which, though the inherent viciousness of the whole story can not be suppressed, the coarser and more offensive passages will be carefully expunged. And now permit me to observe that the remarks of your traveler must derive much of their value from the scene of his inquiry. In Maryland, Kentucky, and Virginia, the outward aspect of slavery has ceased to wear its most deplorable features. The remaining vitality of the system no longer resides in the interests, but in the pride and prejudices of the planters. Their soil and climate are alike favorable to the labors of a white peasantry: the slave cultivation has had time to prove itself there the destructive pest which, in time, it will prove itself wherever it prevails. The vast estates and large fortunes that once maintained, and were maintained by, the serfdom of hundreds of negroes, have dwindled in size and sunk in value, till the slaves have become so heavy a burden on the resources of the exhausted soil and impoverished owners of it, that they are made themselves objects of traffic in order to ward off the ruin that their increase would otherwise entail. Thus the plantations of the Northern slave states now present to the traveler very few of the darker and more oppressive peculiarities of the system; and, provided he does not stray

too near the precincts where the negroes are sold, or come across gangs of them on their way to Georgia, Louisiana, or Alabama, he may, if he is a very superficial observer, conclude that the most prosperous slavery is not much worse than the most miserable freedom.

But of what value will be such conclusions applied to those numerous plantations where no white man ever sets foot without the express permission of the owner? not estates lying close to Baltimore and Charleston, or even Lexington and Savannah, but remote and savage wildernesses like Legree's estate in "Uncle Tom," like all the plantations in the interior of Tennessee and Alabama, like the cotton-fields and rice-swamps of the great muddy rivers of Louisiana and Georgia, like the dreary pine barrens and endless woody wastes of North Carolina. These, especially the islands, are like so many fortresses, approachable for "observers" only at the owners' will. On most of the rice plantations in these pestilential regions, no white man can pass the night at certain seasons of the year without running the risk of his life; and during the day, the master and overseer are as much alone and irresponsible in their dominion over their black cattle, as Robinson Crusoe was over his small family of animals on his desert habitation. Who, on such estates as these, shall witness to any act of tyranny or barbarity, however atrocious? No black man's testimony is allowed against a white, and who, on the dismal swampy rice-grounds of the Savannah, or the sugar-brakes of the Mississippi and its tributaries, or the up-country cotton-lands of the Ocmulgee, shall go to perform the task of candid observation and benevolent inquiry?

I passed some time on two such estates—plantations where the negroes esteemed themselves well off, and, compared with the slaves on several of the neighboring properties, might very well consider themselves so; and I will,

with your permission, contrast some of the items of my observation with those of the traveler whose report you find so satisfactory on the subject of the "consolations" of slavery.

And, first, for the attachment which he affirms to subsist between the slave and master. I do not deny that certain manifestations on the part of the slave may suggest the idea of such a feeling; but whether, upon better examination, it will be found to deserve the name, I very much doubt. In the first place, on some of the great Southern estates, the owners are habitual absentees, utterly unknown to their serfs, and enjoying the proceeds of their labor in residences as far remote as possible from the sands and swamps where their rice and cotton grow, and their slaves bow themselves under the eye of the white overseer, and the lash of the black driver. Some of these Sybarites prefer living in Paris, that paradise of American republicans, some in the capitals of the Middle States of the Union, Philadelphia or New York.

The air of New England has a keen edge of liberty, which suits few Southern constitutions; and unkindly as abolition has found its native soil and native skies, that is its birthplace, and there it flourishes, in spite of all attempts to root it out and trample it down, and within any atmosphere poisoned by its influence no slaveholder can willingly draw breath. Some travel in Europe, and few, whose means permit the contrary, ever pass the entire year on their plantations. Great intervals of many years pass, and no master ever visits some of these properties: what species of attachment do you think the slave entertains for him? In other cases, the visits made will be of a few days in one of the winter months, the estate and its cultivators remaining for the rest of the year under the absolute control of the overseer, who, provided he contrives to get a good crop of rice or cotton into the mar-

ket for his employers, is left to the arbitrary exercise of a will seldom uninfluenced for evil by the combined effects of the grossest ignorance and habitual intemperance. The temptation to the latter vice is almost irresistible to a white man in such a climate, and leading an existence of brutal isolation, among a parcel of human beings as like brutes as they can be made. But the owner who at these distant intervals of months or years revisits his estates, is looked upon as a returning providence by the poor negroes. They have no experience of his character to destroy their hopes in his goodness, and all possible and impossible ameliorations of their condition are anticipated from his advent, less work, more food, fewer stripes, and some of that consideration which the slave hopes may spring from his positive money value to his owner—a fallacious dependence, as I have already attempted to show, but one which, if it has not always predominating weight with the master, never can have any with the overseer, who has not even the feeling of regard for his own property to mitigate his absolutism over the slaves of another man.

There is a very powerful cause which makes the prosperity and well-being (as far as life is concerned) of most masters a subject of solicitude with their slaves. The only stability of their condition, such as it is, hangs upon it. If the owner of a plantation dies, his estates may fall into the market, and his slaves be sold at public auction the next day; and whether this promises a better, or threatens a worse condition, the slaves can not know, and no human being cares. One thing it inevitably brings, the uprooting of all old associations; the disruption of all the ties of fellowship in misery; the tearing asunder of all relations of blood and affection; the sale into separate and far-distant districts of fathers, mothers, husbands, wives, and children. If the estate does not lie in the ex-

treme South, there is the vague dread of being driven thither from Virginia to Georgia, from Carolina to Alabama, or Louisiana, a change which, for reasons I have shown above, implies the passing from a higher into a lower circle of the infernal pit of slavery.

I once heard a slave on the plantation of an absentee express the most lively distress at hearing that his master was ill. Before, however, I had recovered from my surprise at this warm "attachment" to a distant and all but unknown proprietor, the man added, "Massa die, what become of all him people?"

On my arrival on the plantation where I resided, I was hailed with the most extravagant demonstrations of delight, and all but lifted off my feet in the arms of people who had never seen me before, but who, knowing me to be connected with their owners, expected from me some of the multitudinous benefits which they always hope to derive from masters. These, until they come to reside among them, are always believed to be sources of beneficence and fountains of redress by the poor people, who have known no rule but the delegated tyranny of the overseer. In these expectations, however, they very soon find themselves cruelly mistaken. Of course, if the absentee planter has received a satisfactory income from his estate, he is inclined to be satisfied with the manager of it; and as subordination to the only white man among hundreds of blacks must be maintained at any and every cost, the overseer is justified and upheld in his whole administration. If the wretched slave ever dared to prefer a complaint of ill usage the most atrocious, the law which refuses the testimony of a black against a white is not only the law of the land, but of every man's private dealings; and lying being one of the natural results of slavery, and a tendency to shirk compelled and unrequited labor another, the overseer stands on excellent vantage-ground

when he refers to these undoubted characteristics of the system, if called upon to rebut any charge of cruelty or injustice. But pray consider for a moment the probability of any such charge being preferred by a poor creature who has been for years left to the absolute disposal of this man, and who knows very well that in a few days, or months at farthest, the master will again depart, leaving him again for months, perhaps for years, utterly at the mercy of the man against whom he has dared to prefer a complaint. On the estates which I visited, the owners had been habitually absent, and the "attachment" of slaves to such masters as these, you will allow, can hardly come under the denomination of a strong personal feeling.

Your authority next states that the infirm and superannuated slaves no longer capable of ministering to their masters' luxuries, on the estate that he visited, were ending their lives among all the comforts of home, with kindred and friends around them, in a condition which he contrasts, at least by implication, very favorably with the work-house, the last refuge provided by the social humanity of England for the pauper laborer when he has reached that term when "unregarded age is in corners thrown." On the plantation where I lived the Infirmary was a large room, the walls of which were simply mud and laths; the floor, the soil itself, damp with perpetual drippings from the holes in the roof; and the open space which served for a window was protected only by a broken shutter, which, in order to exclude the cold, was drawn so near as almost to exclude the light at the same time. Upon this earthen floor, with nothing but its hard, damp surface beneath him, no covering but a tattered shirt and trowsers, and a few sticks under his head for a pillow, lay an old man of upward of seventy, dying. When I first looked at him I thought, by the glazed stare of his eyes, and the flies that had gathered round his half-open mouth,

that he was dead; but on stooping nearer, I perceived that the last faint struggle of life was still going on, but even while I bent over him it ceased; and so, like a worn-out hound, with no creature to comfort or relieve his last agony, with neither Christian solace or human succor near him, with neither wife, nor child, nor even friendly fellow-being to lift his head from the knotty sticks on which he had rested it, or drive away the insects that buzzed round his lips and nostrils like those of a fallen beast, died this poor old slave, whose life had been exhausted in unrequited labor, the fruits of which had gone to pamper the pride and feed the luxury of those who knew and cared neither for his life or death, and to whom, if they had heard of the latter, it would have been a matter of absolute though small gain, the saving of a daily pittance of meal, which served to prolong a life no longer available to them.

I proceed to the next item in your observer's record. All children below the age of twelve were unemployed, he says, on the estate he visited: this is perhaps a questionable benefit, when, no process of mental cultivation being permitted, the only employment for the leisure thus allowed is that of rolling, like dogs or cats, in the sand and the sun. On all the plantations I visited, and on those where I resided, the infants in arms were committed to the care of these juvenile slaves, who were denominated nurses, and whose sole employment was what they call to "mind baby." The poor little negro sucklings were cared for (I leave to your own judgment how efficiently or how tenderly) by these half-savage slips of slavery—carried by them to the fields where their mothers were working under the lash, to receive their needful nourishment, and then carried back again to the "settlement," or collection of negro huts, where they wallowed unheeded in utter filth and neglect until the time again returned for their

being carried to their mother's breast. Such was the employment of the children of eight or nine years old, and the only supervision exercised over either babies or "baby-minders" was that of the old woman left in charge of the Infirmary, where she made her abode all day long, and bestowed such samples of her care and skill upon its inmates as I shall have occasion to mention presently. The practice of thus driving the mothers afield, even while their infants were still dependent upon them for their daily nourishment, is one of which the evil as well as the cruelty is abundantly apparent without comment. The next note of admiration elicited from your "impartial observer" is bestowed upon the fact that the domestic servants (*i. e.*, house slaves) on the plantation he visited were *allowed* to live away from the owner's residence, and to marry. But I never was on a Southern plantation, and I never heard of one, where any of the slaves were *allowed* to sleep under the same roof with their owner. With the exception of the women to whose care the children of the planter, if he had any, might be confided, and perhaps a little boy or girl slave, kept as a sort of pet animal, and allowed to pass the night on the floor of the sleeping apartment of some member of the family, the residence of *any* slaves belonging to a plantation night and day in their master's house, like Northern or European servants, is a thing I believe unknown throughout the Southern states. Of course I except the cities, and speak only of the estates, where the house-servants are neither better housed or accommodated than the field-hands. Their intolerably dirty habits and offensive persons would indeed render it a severe trial to any family accustomed to habits of decent cleanliness; and, moreover, considerations of safety, and that cautious vigilance which is a hard necessity of the planter's existence, in spite of the supposed attachment of his slaves, would never permit the near

proximity, during the unprotected hours of the night, of those whose intimacy with the daily habits and knowledge of the nightly securities resorted to might prove terrible auxiliaries to any attack from without. The city guards, patrols, and night-watches, together with their stringent rules about about negroes being abroad after night, and their well-fortified lock-up houses for all detected without a pass, afford some security against these attached dependents; but on remote plantations, where the owner and his family, and perhaps a white overseer are alone, surrounded by slaves and separated from all succor against them, they do not sleep under the white man's roof, and for politic reasons, pass the night away from their master's abode. The house-servants have no other or better allowance of food than the field-laborers, but have the advantage of eking it out by what is left from the master's table—if possible, with even less comfort in one respect, inasmuch as no time whatever is set apart for their meals, which they snatch at any hour and in any way that they can—generally, however, standing or squatting on their hams round the kitchen fire; the kitchen being a mere out-house or barn with a fire in it. On the estate where I lived, as I have mentioned, they had no sleeping-rooms in the house; but when their work was over, they retired like the rest to their hovels, the discomfort of which had to them all the additional disadvantage of comparison with their owner's mode of living. In all establishments whatever, of course some disparity exists between the accommodation of the drawing-rooms and best bedrooms and the servants' kitchen and attics; but on a plantation it is no longer a matter of degree. The young women who performed the offices of waiting and housemaids, and the lads who attended upon the service of their master's table where I lived, had neither table to feed at nor chair to sit down upon themselves; the "boys" lay

all night on the hearth by the kitchen fire, and the women upon the usual slave's bed—a frame of rough boards, strewed with a little moss off the trees, with the addition perhaps of a tattered and filthy blanket. As for the so-called privilege of marrying—surely it is gross mockery to apply such a word to a bond which may be holy in God's sight, but which did not prevent the owner of a plantation where my observations were made from selling and buying men and their so-called wives and children into divided bondage, nor the white overseer from compelling the wife of one of the most excellent and exemplary of his master's slaves to live with him; nor the white wife of another overseer, in her husband's temporary absence from the estate, from barbarously flogging three *married* slaves within a month of their confinement, their condition being the result of the profligacy of the said overseer, and probably compelled by the very same lash by which it was punished. This is a very disgusting picture of married life on slave estates; but I have undertaken to reply to the statements of your informant, and I regret to be obliged to record the facts by which alone I can do so. "Work," continues your authority, "began at six in the morning; at nine an hour's rest was allowed for breakfast, and by two or three o'clock the day's work was done." Certainly this was a pattern plantation, and I can only lament that my experience lay amid such far less favorable circumstances. The negroes among whom I lived went to the fields at daybreak, carrying with them their allowance of food, which toward noon, and not till then, they ate, cooking it over a fire which they kindled as best they could where they were working; their *second* meal in the day was at night, after their labor was over, having worked at the *very least* six hours without rest or refreshment since their noonday meal—properly so called, indeed, for it was meal and nothing else, or a

preparation something thicker than porridge, which they call hominy. Perhaps the candid observer, whose report of the estate he visited appeared to you so consolatory, would think that this diet contrasted favorably with that of potato and buttermilk fed Irish laborers. But a more just comparison surely would be with the mode of living of the laboring population of the United States, the peasantry of Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts, or indeed with the condition of those very potato and buttermilk fed Irishmen when they have exchanged their native soil for the fields of the Northern and Northwestern states, and when, as one of them once was heard to say, it was of no use writing home that he got meat three times a day, for nobody in Ireland would believe it. The next item in the list of commendation is the hospital, which your informant also visited, and of which he gives the following account: "It consisted of three separate wards, all clean and well ventilated: one was for lying-in women, who were invariably allowed a month's rest after their confinement." Permit me to place beside this picture that of a Southern Infirmary, such as I saw it, and taken on the spot. In the first room that I entered I found only half of the windows, of which there were six, glazed; these were almost as much obscured with dirt as the other windowless ones were darkened by the dingy shutters which the shivering inmates had closed in order to protect themselves from the cold. In the enormous chimney glimmered the powerless embers of a few chips of wood, round which as many of the sick women as had strength to approach were cowering, some on wooden settles (there was not such a thing as a chair with a back in the whole establishment), most of them on the ground, excluding those who were too ill to rise; and these poor wretches lay prostrate on the earth, without bedstead, bed, mattress, or pillow, with no

covering but the clothes they had on and some filthy rags of blanket in which they endeavored to wrap themselves as they lay literally strewing the floor, so that there was hardly room to pass between them. Here, in their hour of sickness and suffering, lay those whose health and strength had given way under unrequited labor—some of them, no later than the previous day, had been urged with the lash to their accustomed tasks—and their husbands, fathers, brothers, and sons were, even at that hour sweating over the earth whose increase was to procure for others all the luxuries which health can enjoy, all the comforts which can alleviate sickness. Here lay women expecting every hour the terror and agonies of childbirth, others who had just brought their doomed offspring into the world, others who were groaning under the anguish and bitter disappointment of miscarriages—here lay some burning with fever, others chilled with cold and aching with rheumatism, upon the hard cold ground, the draughts and damp of the atmosphere increasing their sufferings, and dirt, noise, stench, and every aggravation of which sickness is capable combined in their condition. There had been among them one or two cases of prolonged and terribly hard labor; and the method adopted by the ignorant old negress, who was the sole matron, midwife, nurse, physician, surgeon, and servant of the Infirmary, to assist them in their extremity, was to tie a cloth tight round the throats of the agonized women, and by drawing it till she almost suffocated them she produced violent and spasmodic struggles, which she assured me she thought materially assisted the progress of the labor. This was one of the Southern Infirmaries with which I was acquainted; and I beg to conclude this chapter of contrasts to your informant's consolatory views of slavery by assuring you once more very emphatically that they have been one and all drawn from estates where the slaves esteemed themselves well treat-

ed, were reputed generally to be so, and undoubtedly, as far as my observation went, were so, compared with those on several of the adjoining plantations.

With regard to the statement respecting the sums of money earned by industrious negroes, there is no doubt that it is perfectly correct. I know of some slaves on a plantation in the extreme South who had received, at various times, large sums of money from a shopkeeper in the small town near their estate for the gray moss or lichen collected from the evergreen oaks of Carolina and Georgia, upon which it hangs in vast masses, and after some cleaning process becomes an excellent substitute for horse-hair, for bed, chair, and sofa-stuffing. On another estate, some of the slaves were expert boat-makers, and had been allowed by their masters to retain the price (no inconsiderable one) for some that they had found time to manufacture after their day's labor was accomplished. These were undoubtedly privileges; but I confess it appears to me that the juster view of the matter would be this: if these men were industrious enough, out of their scanty leisure, to earn these sums of money, which a mere exercise of arbitrary will on the part of the master allowed them to keep, how much more of remuneration, of comfort, of improvement, physical and mental, might they not have achieved, had the due price of their daily labor merely been paid to them? It seems to me that this is the mode of putting the case to Englishmen, and all who have not agreed to consider uncertain favor an equivalent for common justice in the dealings of man with man. As the slaves are well known to toil for years sometimes to amass the means of rescuing themselves from bondage, the fact of their being able and sometimes allowed to earn considerable sums of money is notorious. But now that I have answered one by one the instances you have produced, with others—I am sure as accurate, and I believe as com-

mon—of an entirely opposite description, permit me to ask you what this sort of testimony amounts to. I allow you full credit for yours, allow me full credit for mine, and the result is very simply a nullification of the one by the other statement, and a proof that there is as much good as evil in the details of slavery; but now, be pleased to throw into the scale this consideration, that the principle of the whole is unmitigated abominable evil, as by your own acknowledgment you hold it to be, and add, moreover, that the principle being invariably bad beyond the power of the best man acting under it to alter its execrable injustice, the goodness of the detail is a matter absolutely dependent upon the will of each individual slaveholder, so that though the best can not make the system in the smallest particular better, the bad can make every practical detail of it as atrocious as the principle itself; and then tell me upon what ground you palliate a monstrous iniquity, which is the rule, because of the accidental exceptions which go to prove it. Moreover, if, as you have asserted, good preponderates over evil in the practice, though not in the theory of slavery, or it would not maintain its existence, why do you uphold to us, with so much complacency, the hope that it is surely, if not rapidly approaching its abolishment? Why is the preponderating good, which has, as you say, proved sufficient to uphold the institution hitherto, to become (in spite of the spread of civilization and national progress, and the gradual improvement of the slaves themselves) inadequate to its perpetuation henceforward? Or why, if good really has prevailed in it, do you rejoice that it is speedily to pass away? You say the emancipation of the slaves is inevitable, and that through progressive culture the negro of the Southern states daily approaches more nearly to the recovery of the rights of which he has been robbed. But whence do you draw this happy augury, except from

the hope, which all Christian souls must cherish, that God will not permit much longer so great a wickedness to darken the face of the earth? Surely the increased stringency of the Southern slave-laws, the more than ever vigilant precautions against all attempts to enlighten or educate the negroes, the severer restrictions on manumission, the thrusting forth out of certain states of all free persons of color, the atrocious Fugitive Slave Bill, one of the latest achievements of Congress, and the piratical attempt upon Cuba, avowedly, on the part of all Southerners, abetting or justifying it because it will add slave territory and 600,000 slaves to their possessions—surely these do not seem indications of the better state of things you anticipate, except, indeed, as the straining of the chain beyond all endurable tightness significantly suggests the probability of its giving way.

I do not believe the planters have any disposition to put an end to slavery, nor is it perhaps much to be wondered at that they have not. To do so is, in the opinion of the majority of them, to run the risk of losing their property, perhaps their lives, for a benefit which they profess to think doubtful to the slaves themselves. How far they are right in anticipating ruin from the manumission of their slaves I think questionable, but that they do so is certain, and self-impoverishment for the sake of abstract principle is not a thing to be reasonably expected from any large class of men. But, besides the natural fact that the slaveholders wish to retain their property, emancipation is, in their view of it, not only a risk of enormous pecuniary loss, and of their entire social status, but involves elements of personal danger, and, above all, disgust to inveterate prejudices, which they will assuredly never encounter. The question is not alone one of foregoing great wealth or the mere means of subsistence (in either case almost equally hard); it is not alone the unbinding the

hands of those who have many a bloody debt of hatred and revenge to settle; it is not alone the consenting suddenly to see by their side, upon a footing of free social equality, creatures toward whom their predominant feeling is one of mingled terror and abhorrence, and who, during the whole of their national existence, have been, as the earth, trampled beneath their feet, yet ever threatening to gape and swallow them alive. It is not all this alone which makes it unlikely that the Southern planter should desire to free his slaves: freedom in America is not merely a personal right; it involves a political privilege. Freemen there are legislators. The rulers of the land are the majority of the people, and in many parts of the Southern states the black free citizens would become, if not at once, yet in process of time, inevitably voters, landholders, delegates to state Legislatures, members of Assembly—who knows?—senators, judges, aspirants to the presidency of the United States. You must be an American, or have lived long among them, to conceive the shout of derisive execration with which such an idea would be hailed from one end of the land to the other.

That the emancipation of the negroes need not necessarily put them in possession of the franchise is of course obvious; but, as a general consequence, the one would follow from the other; and at present certainly the slaveholders are no more ready to grant the political privilege than the natural right of freedom. Under these circumstances, though the utmost commiseration is naturally excited by the slaves, I agree with you that some forbearance is due to the masters. It is difficult to conceive a more awful position than theirs: fettered by laws which impede every movement toward right and justice, and utterly without the desire to repeal them—dogged by the apprehension of nameless retributions—bound beneath a burden of responsibility for which, whether they acknowl-

edge it or not, they are held accountable by God and men —goaded by the keen consciousness of the growing reprobation of all civilized Christian communities, their existence presents the miserable moral counterpart of the physical condition of their slaves; and it is one compared with which that of the wretchedest slave is, in my judgment, worthy of envy.

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*Letter to C. G., Esq.*

BEFORE entering upon my answer to your questions, let me state that I have no claim to be ranked as an Abolitionist in the American acceptation of the word, for I have hitherto held the emancipation of the slaves to be exclusively the business and duty of their owners, whose highest moral interest I thought it was to rid themselves of such a responsibility, in spite of the manifold worldly interests almost inextricably bound up with it.

This has been my feeling hitherto with regard to the views of the Abolitionists, which I now, however, heartily embrace, inasmuch as I think that from the moment the United States government assumed an attitude of coercion and supremacy toward the Southern states, it was bound, with its fleets and armies, to introduce its polity with respect to slavery, and wherever it planted the standard of the Union, to proclaim the universal freedom which is the recognized law of the Northern United States. That they have not done so has been partly owing to a superstitious but honorable veneration for the letter of their great charter, the Constitution, and still more to the hope they have never ceased to entertain of bringing back the South to its allegiance under the former conditions of the Union, an event which will be rendered impossible by any attempt to interfere with the existence of slavery.

The North, with the exception of an inconsiderable mi-

nority of its inhabitants, has never been at all desirous of the emancipation of the slaves. The Democratic party, which has ruled the United States for many years past, has always been friendly to the slaveholders, who have, with few exceptions, been all members of it (for, by a strange perversion both of words and ideas, some of the most democratic states in the Union are Southern slave states, and in the part of Georgia where the slave population is denser than in any other part of the South, a county exists bearing the satirical title of *Liberty County*). And the support of the South has been given to the Northern Democratic politicians upon the distinct understanding that their "domestic institution" was to be guaranteed to them.

The condition of the free blacks in the Northern states has of course been affected most unfavorably by the slavery of their race throughout the other half of the Union; and, indeed, it would have been a difficult matter for Northern citizens to maintain toward the blacks an attitude of social and political equality as far as the borders of Delaware, while immediately beyond they were pledged to consider them as the "chattels" of their owners, animals no more noble or human than the cattle in their masters' fields.

How could peace have been maintained if the Southern slaveholders had been compelled to endure the sight of negroes rising to wealth and eminence in the Northern cities, or entering as fellow-members with themselves the halls of that Legislature to which all free-born citizens are eligible? They would very certainly have declined with fierce scorn, not the fellowship of the blacks alone, but of those white men who admitted the despised race of their serfs to a footing of such impartial equality. It therefore was the instinctive, and became the deliberate policy of the Northern people, once pledged to maintain

slavery in the South, to make their task easy by degrading the blacks in the Northern states to a condition contrasting as little as possible with that of the Southern slaves. The Northern politicians struck hands with the Southern slaveholders, and the great majority of the most enlightened citizens of the Northern states, absorbed in the pursuit of wealth and the extension and consolidation of their admirable and wonderful national prosperity, abandoned the government of their noble country and the preservation of its nobler institutions to the slaveholding aristocracy of the South—to a mob of politicians by trade, the vilest and most venal class of men that ever disgraced and endangered a country—to foreign emigrants, whose brutish ignorance did not prevent the Democratic party from seizing upon them as voters, and bestowing on the Irish and German boors just landed on their shores the same political privileges as those possessed and intelligently exercised by the farmers and mechanics of New England, the most enlightened men of their class to be found in the world.

The gradual encroachment of the Southern politicians upon the liberties of the North, by their unrelaxing influence in Congress and over successive cabinets and presidents, was not without its effect in stimulating some resistance on the part of Northern statesmen of sufficient intelligence to perceive the inevitable results toward which this preponderance in the national councils was steadily tending; and I need not remind you of the rapidity and force with which General Jackson quelled an incipient rebellion in South Carolina, when Mr. Calhoun made the tariff question the pretext for a threatened secession in 1832, of the life-long opposition to Southern pretensions by John Quincy Adams, of the endeavor of Mr. Clay to stem the growing evil by the conditions of the Missouri Compromise, and all the occasional attempts

of individuals of more conscientious convictions than their fellow-citizens on the subject of the sin of slavery, from Dr. Channing's eloquent protest on the annexation of Texas, to Mr. Charles Sumner's philippic against Mr. Brooks, of South Carolina.

The disorganization of the Democratic party, after a cohesion of so many years, at length changed the aspect of affairs, and the North appeared to be about to arouse itself from its apathetic consent to Southern domination. The Republican party, headed by Colonel Fremont, who was known to be an anti-slavery man, nearly carried the presidential election six years ago, and then every preparation had been made in the South for the process of secession, which was only averted by the election of Mr. Buchanan, a pro-slavery Southern sympathizer, though born in Pennsylvania. Under his presidency, the Southern statesmen, resuming their attitude of apparent friendliness with the North, kept in abeyance, maturing and perfecting by every treasonable practice, for which their preponderating share in the cabinet afforded them facilities, the plan of the violent disruption of the Union, upon which they had determined whenever the Republican party should have acquired sufficient strength to elect a president with Northern views. Before, however, this event occurred, the war in Kansas rang a prophetic peal of warning through the land; and the struggle there begun between New England emigrants bent on founding a free state, and Missouri border ruffians determined to make the new territory a slaveholding addition to the South, might have roused the whole North and West to the imminence of the peril by which the safety of the Union was threatened.

But neither the struggle in Kansas, nor the strange and piteous episode which grew out of it, of John Brown's attempt to excite an insurrection in Virginia, and his exe-

cution by the government of that state, did more than startle the North with a nine days' wonder out of its apathetic indifference. The Republican party, it is true, gained adherents, and acquired strength by degrees; and Mr. Buchanan's term of office approaching its expiration, it became apparent that the Democratic party was about to lose its supremacy, and the slaveholders their dominion; and no sooner was this evident than the latter threw off the mask, and renounced their allegiance to the Union. In a day—in an hour almost—those stood face to face as mortal enemies who were citizens of the same country, subjects of the same government, children of the same soil; and the North, incredulous and amazed, found itself suddenly summoned to retrieve its lost power and influence, and assert the dignity of the insulted Union against the rebellious attempt of the South to overthrow it.

But it was late for them to take that task in hand. For years the conduct of the government of the United States had been becoming a more desperate and degraded *jobbery*, one from which day by day the Northern gentlemen of intelligence, influence, and education withdrew themselves in greater disgust, devoting their energies to schemes of mere personal advantage, and leaving the commonweal with selfish and contemptuous indifference to the guidance of any hands less nice and less busy than their own.

Nor would the Southern planters—a prouder and more aristocratic race than the Northern merchants—have relished the companionship of their fellow-politicians more than the latter, but *their* personal interests were at stake, and immediately concerned in their maintaining their predominant influence over the government; and while the Boston men wrote and talked transcendentalism, and became the most accomplished of *æstetische* cotton-spinners

and railroad speculators, and made the shoes and cowhides of the Southerners, the latter made their laws (I believe New Jersey is really the great cowhide factory); and the New York men, owners of the fastest horses and finest houses in the land, having made a sort of Brummagem Paris of their city, were the bankers and brokers of the Southerners, while the latter were the legislators.

The grip the slaveholders had fastened on the helm of the state had been tightening for nearly half a century, till the government of the nation had become literally theirs, and the idea of their relinquishing it was one which the North did not contemplate, and they would not tolerate.

If I have said nothing of the grievances which the South has alleged against the North—its tariff, made chiefly in the interest of the Northeastern manufacturing states, or its inconsiderable but enthusiastic Massachusetts and Pennsylvania Abolition party, it is because I do not believe these causes of complaint would have had the same effect upon any but a community of slaveholders, men made impatient (by the life-long habit of despotism) not only of all control, but of any opposition. Thirty years ago Andrew Jackson—a man of keen sagacity as well as determined energy—wrote of them that they were bent upon destroying the Union, and that, whatever was the pretext of their discontent, that was their aim and purpose. "To-day," he wrote, "it is the tariff, by-and-by it will be slavery." The event has proved how true a prophet he was. My own conviction is that the national character produced and fostered by slaveholding is incompatible with free institutions, and that the Southern aristocracy, thanks to the pernicious influences by which they are surrounded, are unfit to be members of a Christian republic. It is slavery that has made the Southerners rebels to their government, traitors to their country,

and the originators of the bloodiest civil war that ever disgraced humanity and civilization. It is for their sinful complicity in slavery, and their shameful abandonment of all their duties as citizens, that the Northerners are paying in the blood of their men, the tears of their women, and the treasure which they have till now held more precious than their birthright. They must now not merely impose a wise restriction upon slavery, they must be prepared to extinguish it. They neglected and despised the task of moderating its conditions and checking its growth; they must now suddenly, in the midst of unparalleled difficulties and dangers, be ready to deal summarily with its entire existence. They have loved the pursuit of personal prosperity and pleasure more than their country; and now they must spend life and living to reconquer their great inheritance, and win back at the sword's point what Heaven had forbidden them to lose. Nor are we, here in England, without part in this tremendous sin and sorrow; we have persisted in feeding our looms, and the huge wealth they coin, with the produce of slavery. In vain our vast Indian territory has solicited the advantage of becoming our free cotton plantation; neither our manufacturers nor our government would venture, would wait, would spend or lose, for that purpose; the slave-grown harvest was ready, was abundant, was cheap—and now the thousand arms of our great national industry are folded in deplorable inactivity; the countless hands that wrought from morn till night the wealth that was a world's wonder are stretched unwillingly to beg their bread; and England has never seen a sadder sight than the enforced idleness of her poor operatives, or a nobler one than their patient and heroic endurance.

And now you ask me what plan, what scheme, what project the government of the United States has formed for the safe and successful emancipation of four millions

of slaves, in the midst of a country distracted with all the horrors of war, and the male population of which is engaged in military service at a distance from their homes? Most assuredly none. Precipitated headlong from a state of apparent profound security and prosperity into a series of calamitous events which have brought the country to the verge of ruin, neither the nation or its governors have had leisure to prepare themselves for any of the disastrous circumstances they have had to encounter, least of all for the momentous change which the President's proclamation announces as imminent: a measure of supreme importance, not deliberately adopted as the result of philanthropic conviction or far-sighted policy, but (if not a mere feint of party politics) the last effort of the incensed spirit of endurance in the North — a punishment threatened against rebels, whom they can not otherwise subdue, and which a year ago half the Northern population would have condemned upon principle, and more than half revolted from on instinct.

The country being in a state of war necessarily complicates every thing, and renders the most plausible suggestions for the settlement of the question of emancipation futile, because from first to last now it will be one tremendous chapter of accidents, instead of a carefully considered and wisely prepared measure of government. But, supposing the war to have ceased, either by the success of the Northern arms or by the consent of both belligerents, the question of manumission in the Southern states when reduced to the condition of territories or restored to the sway of their own elected governors and Legislatures, though difficult, is by no means one of insuperable difficulty; and I do not believe that a great nation of Englishmen, having once the will to rid itself of a danger and a disgrace, will fail to find a way. The thing, therefore, most to be desired now is, that Americans may

unanimously embrace the purpose of emancipation, and, though they have been reluctantly driven by the irresistible force of circumstances to contemplate the measure, may henceforward never avert their eyes from it till it is accomplished.

When I was in the South many years ago I conversed frequently with two highly intelligent men, both of whom agreed in saying that the immense value of the slaves as property was the only real obstacle to their manumission, and that whenever the Southerners became convinced that it was their interest to free them they would very soon find the means to do it. In some respects the conditions are more favorable than those we had to encounter in freeing our West India slaves. Though the soil and climate of the Southern states are fertile and favorable, they are not tropical, and there is no profuse natural growth of fruits or vegetables to render subsistence possible without labor; the winter temperature is like that of the Roman States; and even as far south as Georgia and the borders of Florida, frosts severe enough to kill the orange-trees are sometimes experienced. The inhabitants of the Southern states, throughout by far the largest portion of their extent, must labor to live, and will undoubtedly obey the beneficent law of necessity whenever they are made to feel that their existence depends upon their own exertions. The plan of a gradual emancipation, preceded by a limited apprenticeship of the negroes to white masters, is of course often suggested as less dangerous than their entire and immediate enfranchisement. But when years ago I lived on a Southern plantation, and had opportunities of observing the miserable results of the system on every thing connected with it—the souls, minds, bodies, and estates of both races of men, and the very soil on which they existed together—I came to the conclusion that immediate and entire emancipation was not only an act of imper-

ative right, but would be the safest and most profitable course for the interests of both parties. The gradual and inevitable process of ruin which exhibits itself in the long run on every property involving slavery, naturally suggests some element of decay inherent in the system; the reckless habits of extravagance and prodigality in the masters, the ruinous wastefulness and ignorant incapacity of the slaves, the deterioration of the land under the exhausting and thriftless cultivation to which it is subjected, made it evident to me that there were but two means of maintaining a prosperous ownership in Southern plantations: either the possession of considerable capital wherewith to recruit the gradual waste of the energies of the soil, and supply by all the improved and costly methods of modern agriculture the means of profitable cultivation (a process demanding, as English farmers know, an enormous and incessant outlay of both money and skill), or an unlimited command of fresh soil, to which the slaves might be transferred as soon as that already under culture exhibited signs of exhaustion. Now the Southerners are for the most part men whose only wealth is in their land and laborers—a large force of slaves is their most profitable investment. The great capitalists and moneyed men of the country are Northern men; the planters are men of large estates but restricted means: many of them are deeply involved in debt, and there are very few who do not depend from year to year for their subsistence on the harvest of their fields and the chances of the cotton and rice crops of each season.

This makes it of vital importance to them to command an unrestricted extent of territory. The man who can move a "gang" of able-bodied negroes to a tract of virgin soil is sure of an immense return of wealth; as sure as that he who is circumscribed in this respect, and limited to the cultivation of certain lands with cotton or to-

bacco by slaves, will in the course of a few years see his estate gradually exhausted and unproductive, refusing its increase, while its black population, propagating and multiplying, will compel him eventually, under penalty of starvation, to make *them* his crop, and substitute, as the Virginians have been constrained to do, a traffic in human cattle for the cultivation of vegetable harvests.

The steady decrease of the value of the cotton-crop, even on the famous sea-island plantations of Georgia, often suggested to me the inevitable ruin of the owners within a certain calculable space of time, as the land became worn out, and the negroes continued to increase in number; and had the estate on which I lived been mine, and the laws of Georgia not made such an experiment impossible, I would have emancipated the slaves on it immediately, and turned them into a free tenantry, as the first means of saving my property from impending destruction. I would have paid them wages, and they should have paid me rent. I would have relinquished the charge of feeding and clothing them, and the burden of their old, young, and infirm; in short, I would have put them at once upon the footing of free hired laborers. Of course such a process would have involved temporary loss, and for a year or two the income of the estate would, I dare say, have suffered considerably; but, in all such diversions of labor or capital from old into new channels and modes of operation, there must be an immediate sacrifice of present to future profit, and I do not doubt that the estate would have recovered from the momentary necessary interruption of its productiveness, to resume it with an upward instead of a downward tendency, and a vigorous impulse toward progress and improvement substituted for the present slow but sure drifting to stagnation and decay.

As I have told you, the land affords no spontaneous produce which will sustain life without labor. The ne-

groes, therefore, must work to eat; they are used to the soil and climate, and accustomed to the agriculture, and there is no reason at all to apprehend—as has been suggested—that a race of people singularly attached to the place of their birth and residence would abandon in any large numbers their own country, just as the conditions of their existence in it were made more favorable, to try the unknown and (to absolute ignorance) forbidding risks of emigration to the sterner climate and harder soil of the Northern states.

Of course, in freeing the slaves, it would be necessary to contemplate the possibility of their becoming eventual proprietors of the soil to some extent themselves. There is as little doubt that many of them would soon acquire the means of doing so (men who amass, during hours of daily extra labor, through years of unpaid toil, the means of buying themselves from their masters, would soon justify their freedom by the intelligent improvement of their condition), as that many of the present landholders would be ready and glad to alienate their impoverished estates by parcels, and sell the land which has become comparatively unprofitable to them, to its enfranchised cultivators. This, the future ownership of land by negroes, as well as their admission to those rights of citizenship which every where in America such ownership involves, would necessarily be future subjects of legislation; and either or both privileges might be withheld temporarily, indefinitely, or permanently, as might seem expedient, and the progress in civilization which might justify such an extension of rights. These, and any other modifications of the state of the black population in the South, would require great wisdom to deal with, but their immediate transformation from bondsmen to free might, I think, be accomplished with little danger or difficulty, and with certain increase of prosperity to the Southern states.

On the other hand, it is not impossible that, left to the unimpeded action of the natural laws that govern the existence of various races, the black population, no longer directly preserved and propagated for the purposes of slavery, might gradually decrease and dwindle, as it does at the North, where, besides the unfavorable influence of a cold climate on a race originally African, it suffers from its admixture with the whites, and the amalgamation of the two races, as far as it goes, tends evidently to the destruction of the weaker. The Northern mulattoes are an unhealthy, feeble population, and it might yet appear that even under the more favorable influence of a Southern climate, whenever the direct stimulus afforded by slavery to the increase of the negroes was removed, their gradual extinction or absorption by the predominant white race would follow in the course of time.

But the daily course of events appears to be rendering more and more unlikely the immediate effectual enfranchisement of the slaves: the President's proclamation will reach with but little efficacy beyond the mere borders of the Southern states. The war is assuming an aspect of indefinite duration; and it is difficult to conceive what will be the condition of the blacks, freed *de jure* but by no means *de facto*, in the vast interior regions of the Southern states, as long as the struggle raging all round their confines does not penetrate within them. Each of the combatants is far too busily absorbed in the furious strife to afford thought, leisure, or means either effectually to free the slaves or effectually to replace them in bondage; and, in the mean time, their condition is the worst possible for the future success of either operation. If the North succeeds in subjugating the South, its earliest business will be to make the freedom of the slaves real as well as nominal, and as little injurious to themselves as possible. If, on the other hand, the South makes good its pre-

tensions to a separate national existence, no sooner will the disseverment of the Union be an established fact than the slaveholders will have to consolidate once more the system of their "peculiar institution," to reconstruct the prison which has half crumbled to the ground, and rivet afresh the chains which have been all but struck off. This will be difficult: the determination of the North to restrict the area of slavery by forbidding its ingress into future territories and states has been considered by the slaveholders a wrong, and a danger justifying a bloody civil war; inasmuch as, if under those circumstances they did not abolish slavery themselves in a given number of years, it would infallibly abolish them by the increase of the negro population, hemmed with them into a restricted space by this *cordon sanitaire* drawn round them. But, bad as this prospect has seemed to slaveholders (determined to continue such), and justifying—as it may be conceded that it does from their point of view—not a ferocious civil war, but a peaceable separation from states whose interests were declared absolutely irreconcilable with theirs, the position in which they will find themselves if the contest terminates in favor of secession will be undoubtedly more difficult and terrible than the one the mere anticipation of which has driven them to the dire resort of civil war. All round the Southern coast, and all along the course of the great Mississippi, and all across the northern frontier of the slave states, the negroes have already thrown off the trammels of slavery. Whatever their condition may be—and doubtless, in many respects, it is miserable enough—they are to all intents and purposes free. Vast numbers of them have joined the Northern invading armies, and considerable bodies of them have become organized as soldiers and laborers, under the supervision of Northern officers and employers; most of them have learned the use of arms, and possess

them; all of them have exchanged the insufficient slave diet of grits and rice for the abundant supplies of animal food, which the poorest laborer in that favored land of cheap provisions and high wages indulges in to an extent unknown in any other country. None of these slaves of yesterday will be the same slaves to-morrow. Little essential difference as may yet have been effected by the President's proclamation in the interior of the South in the condition of the blacks, it is undoubtedly known to them, and they are waiting in ominous suspense its accomplishment or defeat by the fortune of the war; they are watching the issue of the contest of which they well know themselves to be the theme, and at its conclusion, end how it will, they must be emancipated or exterminated. With the North not only not friendly to slavery, but henceforward bitterly hostile to slaveholders, and no more to be reckoned upon as heretofore, it might have been infallibly by the Southern white population in any difficulty with the blacks (a fact of which the negroes will be as well aware as their former masters)—with an invisible boundary stretching from ocean to ocean, over which they may fly without fear of a master's claim following them a single inch—with the hope and expectation of liberty suddenly snatched from them at the moment it seemed within their grasp—with the door of their dungeon once more barred between them and the light into which they were in the act of emerging, is it to be conceived that these four millions of people, many thousands of whom are already free and armed, will submit without a struggle to be again thrust down into the hell of slavery? Hitherto there has been no insurrection among the negroes, and observers friendly and inimical to them have alike drawn from that fact conclusions unfavorable to their appreciation of the freedom apparently within their grasp; but they are waiting to see what the North will really

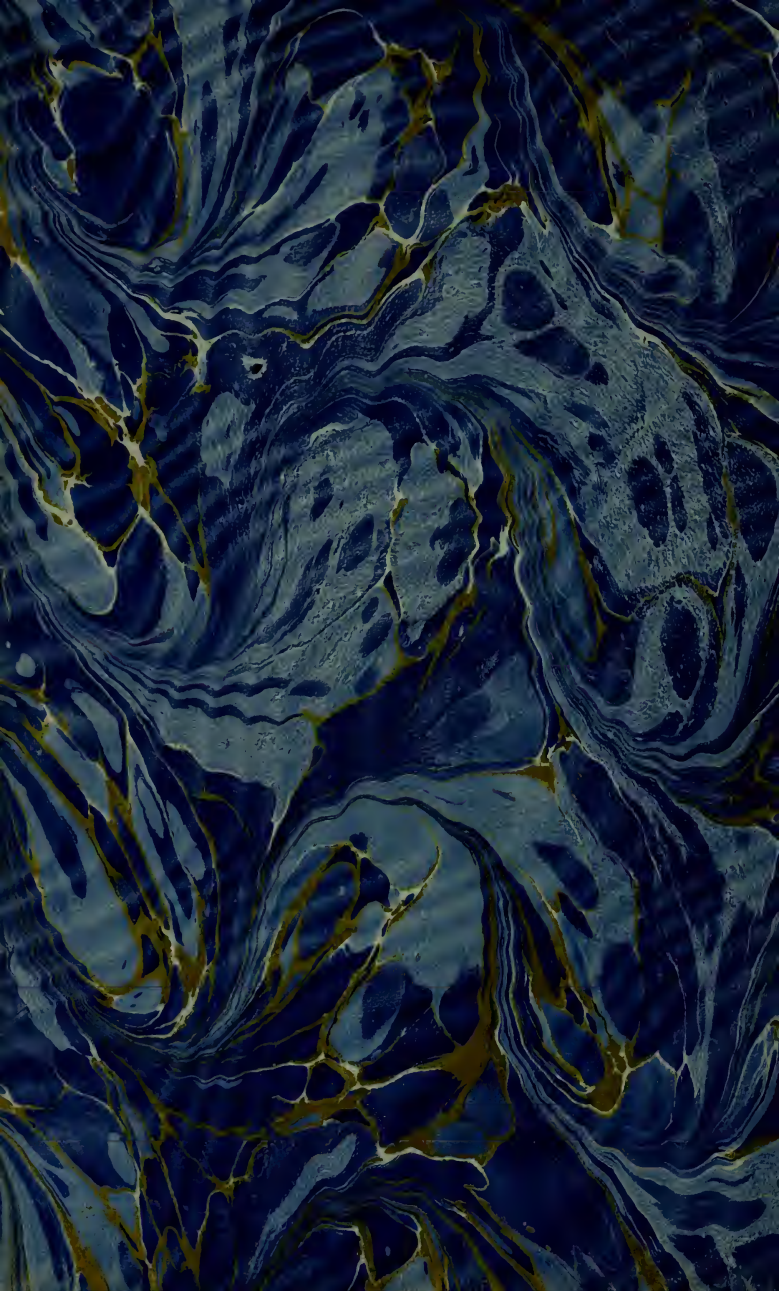
achieve for them. The liberty offered them is hitherto anomalous, and uncertain enough in its conditions; they probably trust it as little as they know it; but slavery they *do* know; and when once they find themselves again delivered over to *that* experience, there will not be ONE insurrection in the South—there will be an insurrection in every state, in every county, on every plantation—a struggle as fierce as it will be futile—a hopeless effort of hopeless men, which will baptize in blood the new American nation, and inaugurate its birth among the civilized societies of the earth, not by the manumission, but the massacre of every slave within its borders.

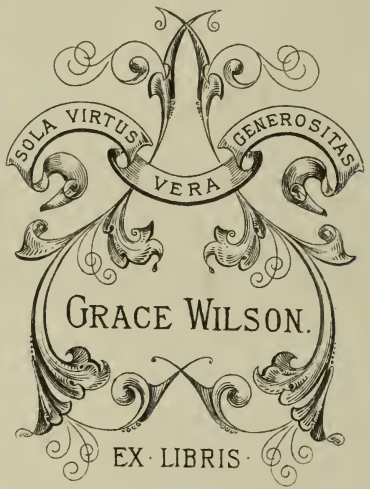
Perhaps, however, Mr. Jefferson Davis means to free the negroes. Whenever that consummation is attained, the root of bitterness will have perished from the land; and when a few years shall have passed, blunting the hatred which has been excited by this fratricidal strife, the Americans of both the Northern and Southern states will perceive that the selfish policy of other nations would not have so rejoiced over their division, had it not seemed, to those who loved them not, the proof of past failure and the prophecy of future weakness.

Admonished by its terrible experiences, I believe the nation will reunite itself under one government, remodel its Constitution, and again address itself to fulfill its glorious destiny. I believe that the country sprung from ours—of all our just subjects of national pride the greatest—will resume its career of prosperity and power, and become the noblest as well as the mightiest that has existed among the nations of the earth.

P

THE END.

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