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SKETCHES OF SLAVE LIFE:

OR,

ILLUSTRATIONS

OF THE

'PECULIAR INSTITUTION.'

BY

REV. PETER RANDOLPH,

AN EMANCIPATED SLAVE.

SECOND EDITION, ENLARGED.

BOSTON:

PUBLISHED FOR THE AUTHOR.

1855.

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Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year eighteen hundred and fifty-
five,
BY PETER RANDOLPH,
In the Clerk's office of the District Court for the District of Massachusetts.

PREFACE.

In giving the following "SKETCHES OF SLAVE LIFE" to the public, the writer hopes that, whatever may be their literary defects, they will help to increase the sympathy now so widely felt for the poor crushed and perishing slaves in this land—a land most untruly styled "the home of the free and the brave." He has known what it is to be a slave; and now that he has been set free, it is the ruling desire of his heart to do something, however feeble it may be, towards effecting the emancipation of the millions of his afflicted brethren, who are still held in the galling chains of bondage at the South. Remembering that he has never had any education, except such as he has been able to pick up for himself, the readers of this little work (especially in view of its object) will kindly overlook such errors of style as may be found in it.

The writer was formerly owned as a slave by one C. H. EDLOE, of Prince George County, Virginia, who also owned eighty others. His plantation was located on James River, in what was called upper Brandon. He always seemed to have some conscientious scruples in regard to holding slaves, and would not join any church, because "he did not believe he could be a Christian, and yet be a slaveholder." Six years before he died, he made his will, in which he set all his slaves free at his death, which took place July 29, 1844. This was truly a Christian act. More than three years passed away, however, before we obtained our liberty, when, being compelled to leave the State of Virginia, we came to Boston, (sixty-six in number,) Sept. 15, 1847, where we were received with Christian sympathy and kindness. Men, women and children, from twelve months to seventy-five years old, constituted our happy company. Some of these have gone the way of all the earth: the remainder continue in Massachusetts, and are proving to the world, by their conduct, that slaves, when liberated, can take care of themselves, and need no master or overseer to drive them to their toil. All that they need is—first, freedom—next, encouragement and a fair reward for their labor, and a suitable opportunity to improve themselves—without which, no people, black or white, can reasonably be expected to be industrious laborers or enlightened citizens.

May God hasten the day when not a slave shall be found in America, to water her soil with his tears, or stain it with his blood!

PETER RANDOLPH.

BOSTON, May 10, 1855.

NOTE TO THE PREFACE.

It was on the morning of the 15th of September, 1847, that I learned, from a constant and true friend to the slave,—Mr. ROBERT R. CROSBY,—that a large company of colored people, said to be emancipated slaves from Virginia, were then landing from a schooner at Long Wharf. I immediately went thither, and found the report correct. The people in question were in part upon the wharf, and some had not yet left the vessel. I entered into conversation with several of their number, and learned that they had been slaves in Prince George county, Virginia, on the estate of Mr. CARTER H. EDLOE, on the James River. Mr. Edloe died in 1844, and by will provided for the emancipation of his slaves, and for the payment to each one of fifty dollars, whenever they should elect to receive their freedom and go out of the State of Virginia. With a few of his slaves, for especial reasons, he had dealt much more liberally. The provisions of Mr. Edloe's will, it would however appear, were not carried out in the spirit of the testator, and there is reason to believe that the executor designedly deceived and wronged the slaves. They were kept at work upon the estate, as slaves, for more than three years after their master's death, on the pretence that there was not money sufficient to pay them the sum which the will specified. At the end of that time, in despair of obtaining their rights under the will, the larger part of the people determined to take what they could get, which was *less than fifteen dollars each*, and go to a free State. There were sixty-six of them,—of both sexes and of all ages, from seventy-five years down to infancy,—who decided to go to Boston. Their passage was secured in the schooner Thomas H. Thompson, Wickson, master, by which vessel they arrived in Boston, as stated above.

Such was the story told to me; and I may add, that further inquiries have entirely satisfied me of its correctness. I found these emancipated people, without exception, desirous of obtaining situations where they might at once go to work,—none fearing but that they could support themselves and their families, if they could find employment. Of course, I expressed my readiness to aid them in obtaining places, if they wished to do so. The offer was gratefully accepted, and without much loss of time, places were found, out of the city, for about one half of them. The remainder found homes and occupation in the city, or its immediate vicinity.

Eight years have now nearly elapsed, during which time I have observed the course of these emancipated slaves with attention and with some curiosity. I regarded the experiment they were making as an exceedingly interesting one; such an one as, if successful, ought to convince even the most skeptical, of the ability of the colored man, even when reared in the ignorance and partial dependence which the condition of slavery imposes, to “take care of himself.” For this was not a company of slaves selected for any special capacity, or of such as by their own skill and daring had achieved freedom. They were the

ordinary working force of one plantation,—of all ages and capacities, and in various states of health; and might be presumed to be a fair representation of the average condition at least of Virginia slaves. The experiment,—if any choose so to regard it,—has had a fair trial, and has resulted, I can truly say, very much to their credit. Since the first few months after their arrival,—when, on account of their destitution and the strangeness of a new home, occasional help was needed by a number of them,—the instances in which they have sought charitable aid have been few and infrequent. Even an aged and nearly worn-out man of their number for six years maintained himself by his daily labor, and only ceased to attempt it longer, when told that he must desist by reason of infirmity of age, at upwards of four score years. Generally, so far as my knowledge extends, they have secured for themselves a sufficient though frugal living, and some of them have decidedly prospered. And in regard to sobriety, honesty, and general good conduct, they will not suffer by comparison with any like number of people in the community.

It affords me a sincere pleasure to be able to give this testimony in behalf of these people, our hardly-entreated brethren. For, unusually fortunate as they were in having a master so eccentric as to believe that his slaves desired liberty and were entitled to it, yet their lot in slavery left, as it ever must, on body and mind, indelible marks of its blighting power. When all the untoward, disheartening, soul-crushing influences of their former life are considered, it seems to me not less surprising, than it is honorable to themselves, that they have used their liberty so justly and so well.

I think it well to subjoin their names and ages, from a list taken by me at the time of their arrival. Some of them have gone “where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.”

LUCY FOUNTIN, 76.

CHAS. FOUNTIN, ab't 40.

WM. FOUNTIN, do.

CARTER SELDEN, 47, wife and six children.

LEVI SCOTT, about 75.

DANIEL ———.

FRANK CHURCHWELL, 54.

ADAM HARRISON, 55.

GEORGE MAYERSON, 45, wife and two children.

BURRY ROBESON, wife and two children.

DAVY MEAD, 45.

PATTY MEAD, his wife.

children.

DAVY JONES, 40.

PETER RANDOLPH, 27, wife and child.

ANTHONY RANDOLPH, 24.

RICHARD RANDOLPH, 22.

JAMES RANDOLPH, 10.

WYATT LEE, 25, wife and two children.

ANDREW CLARK, 23, wife and child.

HENRY CARTER, and wife.

AMY RICHARDSON, 29, two children.

JUDY GRIFFIN, 26, two children.

FANNY BAILEY, 30.

SAM. JONES, 24.

RICHARD WHITING.

TORRINGTON RUFFIN, 36, wife and four children. JACK HARRISON, 29.

RALPH WEBB, 24.

WILLIAM ARCHY, 32, wife and five children. PETER TAYLOR, 36.

The unpretending work, written by one of the above *sixty-six*, (to the second edition of which this Note is added,) is commended to the public as wholly trustworthy, and deserving of their favor.

SAMUEL MAY, JR.

BOSTON, August 3, 1855.

SKETCHES OF SLAVE LIFE.

The good Anti-Slavery men have very much to contend with, in their exertions for the cause of freedom. Many people will not believe their statements; call them unreasonable and fanatical. Some call them ignorant deceivers, who have never been out of their own home, and yet pretend to a knowledge of what is going on a thousand miles from them. Many call them dangerous members of society, sowing discord and distrust where there should be nought but peace and brotherly love. My Readers! give attention to the simple words of one who knows what he utters is truth; who is no stranger to the *beauties* of slavery or the *generosity* of the slaveholder. Spend a few moments in reading his statement in regard to the system of American slavery. Do not scoff or doubt. He writes what he does know, what he has seen and experienced; for he has been, for twenty-seven years of his life, a slave; and he here solemnly pledges himself to TRUTH. Not once has he exaggerated, for he could not; the half of the woes and horrors of slavery, his feeble pen could not portray.

This system is one of robbery and cruel wrong, from beginning to end. It robs men and women of their liberty, lives, property, affections, and virtue, as the following pages will show. It is not only a source of misery to those in bonds, but those who fasten the chains are made wretched by it; for a state of war constantly exists between the master and servant. The one would enforce obedience to his every wish, however wrong and unjust; he would exact all the earnings of the slave, to the uttermost farthing. The latter feels the restraint and writhes under it; he sees the injustice, and at times attempts to assert his rights; but he must submit either to the command or the lash; obey implicitly he must.

The argument so often brought forward, that it would be for the interest of the owner to treat his slaves well, and of course he would not injure his own interests, may do for some, but not for the thinking and considerate. When does the angry tyrant reflect upon what, in the end, will be the best for him? To gratify his passion for the moment, to wreak out his revenge upon a helpless menial, is, at the time of excitement, his interest, and he will serve it well.

Many argue that the Southern masters are not to blame for this wrong; they inherited it from their fathers, it is said, and what can they do? Get rid of it! Would it be sensible to suppose that generation after generation were justifiable in becoming drunkards, because some ancestor had been? Certainly not; any person who reasoned thus would be considered insane. If my father stole, or murdered, would that excuse me for committing the same crimes? No; we all know better than that.

Again, it is said, the slaveholder has bought them and paid his money for them; perhaps his whole property is in them; should he give them up, and beggar himself? If his property consists in human beings, surely he should give it up, though he starved in consequence. Of whom has he bought them? Who can own humanity but the great Creator? As the good Vermont Judge said,—“Show a bill of sale from the Almighty, and we acknowledge your claim.”

Some will say, “The slaveholder cannot live without the negro; the climate will not permit the white man to toil there.” Very well; admit it. Then let him grant to men their rights; make them free citizens; pay them justly for their honest toil, and see the consequences. All would be happier and better. Slavery enriches not the mind, heart, or soil where it abides; it curses and blights every thing it comes in contact with. Away, away with, tear up by the roots, these noxious weeds, which choke the growth of all fair plants, and sow in their stead the beautiful flowers of freedom, well watered by the pure waters of religion, and what a rich harvest will be yours!

Before going into particulars relative to the horrors of slavery, I will give a little of my own history. I was owned, with eighty-one others, by a man named Edloe, and among them all, only myself could either read or write. When I was a child, my mother used to tell me to look to Jesus, and that He who protected the widow and fatherless would take care of me also. At that time, my ideas of Jesus were the same as those of the other slaves. I thought he would talk with me, if I wished it, and give me what I asked for. Being very sickly, my greatest wish was to live with Christ in heaven, and so I used to go into the woods and lie upon my back, and pray that he would come and take me to himself,—really expecting to see Him with my bodily eyes. I was then between ten and eleven years old, and I continued to look for Him until I began to feel very sorry that He would not come and talk with me; and then I felt that I was the worst little boy that ever lived, and that was the reason Jesus would not talk to me. I felt so about it, I wanted to die, and thought it would be just in God to kill me, and I prayed that he would kill me, for I did not want to live to sin against him any more. I felt so for many days and nights. At last, I gave myself up to the Lord, to do what he would with me, for I was a great sinner. I began to see the offended justice of God. O! my readers, the anguish of my heart! I thought the whole world was on me, and I must die and be lost. In the midst of my troubles, I felt that if God would have mercy on me, I should never sin again. When I had come to this, I felt my guilt give way, and thought that I was a new being. Now, instead of looking with my real eyes to see my Savior, I felt him in me, and I was happy. The eyes of my mind were open, and I saw things as I never did before. With my mind’s eye, I could see my Redeemer hanging upon the cross for me.

I wanted all the other slaves to see him thus, and feel as happy as I did. I

used to talk to others, and tell them of the friend they would have in Jesus, and show them by my experience how I was brought to Christ, and felt his love within my heart,—and love it was, in God's adapting himself to my capacity.

After receiving this revelation from the Lord, I became impressed that I was called of God to preach to the other slaves. I labored under this impression for seven years, but then I could not read the Bible, and I thought I could never preach unless I learned to read the Bible, but I had no one to teach me how to read. A friend showed me the letters, and how to spell words of three letters. Then I continued, until I got so as to read the Bible,—the great book of God,—the source of all knowledge. It was my great desire to read easily this book. I thought it was written by the Almighty himself. I loved this book, and prayed over it, and labored until I could read it. I used to go to the church to hear the white preacher. When I heard him read his text, I would read mine when I got home. This is the way, my readers, I learned to read the Word of God when I was a slave. Thus did I labor eleven years under the impression that I was called to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, the ever-blessed God.

Then I learned to write. Here I had no teaching; but I obtained a book with the writing alphabet in it, and copied the letters until I could write. I had no slate, so I used to write on the ground. All by myself I learned the art of writing. Then I used to do my own letter-writing, and write my own passes. When the slave wants to go from one plantation to another, he must have a pass from the overseer. I could do my own writing, unbeknown to the overseer, and carry my own pass.

My oldest brother's name was Benjamin. He was owned by C. H. Edloe, the same person who owned me. Benjamin was a very bright young man, and very active about his work. He was fond of laughing and frolicking with the young women on the plantation. This Lacy, the overseer, did not like, and therefore was always watching Benjamin, seeking an occasion to have him whipped. At one time, a pig had been found dead. The little pig could not tell why he was dead, and no one confessed a knowledge of his death; consequently, Lacy thought so great a calamity, so important a death, should be revenged. He advised Edloe to have every slave whipped. Edloe consented, expecting, probably, to prevent, by such cruelty, any other pig from dying a natural death. Lacy, the tender-hearted overseer, with a heart overflowing with sorrow at the great loss and sad bereavement of Edloe's plantation, took his rawhide, with a wire attached to the end of it, and gave each man twenty lashes on the bare back. O, monster! the blood was seen upon the side of the barn where these slaves were whipped for days and months. The wounds of these poor creatures prevented them from performing their daily tasks. They were, indeed, so cut up, that pieces came out of the backs of some of them, so that a child twelve or thirteen years old could lay his fist in the cruel place. My

brother Benjamin was one of the slaves so savagely beaten. One morning, Lacy—perhaps thinking piggy’s death not wholly avenged—proposed again to whip my brother; but Benjamin did not agree with him as to the necessity of such proceedings, and determined not to submit; therefore, he turned his back upon Lacy, and his face to the woods, making all possible speed towards the latter. Lacy fired upon him, but only sent a few shot into his flesh, which did not in the least frighten Benjamin; it only served to make him run as fast as if he himself had been shot from the overseer’s gun. For seven months, he lived in the swamps of Virginia, while every effort was made to catch him, but without success. He once ventured on board a vessel on James River. There he was caught, but soon made his escape again to the swamp, where my mother and myself used to carry him such food as we could procure to keep him alive. My poor broken-hearted mother was always weeping and praying about Benjamin, for the overseer had threatened that if he ever saw him, he would shoot him, as quick as he would a wild deer. All the other overseers had made the same threats.

Edloe, not thinking it best to take Benjamin on to his plantation, (provided he could catch him,) sold him to another man, who, after he had succeeded in his sham plan of buying my poor brother, sent for him to come out of the swamp and go with him. Benjamin went home to his new master, and went faithfully to work for him,—smart young man that he was!

Sometimes, Benjamin would steal over at night to see mother, (a distance of ten miles.) He could not come in the day-time, because Lacy still declared he would kill him the first time he saw him. He did see him one Sabbath, but having no gun or pistol with him, my brother again escaped him, thanks to the mercies of God. Benjamin continued to serve his new master, until he was suddenly bound and carried to Petersburg, Virginia, and sold to a negro-trader, who put him in a slave-pen, until a large number of slaves were bought up by him, to be carried into bondage further South, there to lead miserable lives on the cotton and sugar plantations. Benjamin, my dear brother, left Petersburg, and I have not seen him since. Thanks be unto God, prayer can ascend, and will be listened to by Him who answereth prayer! To him who crieth unto Him day and night, He will listen, and send His angel of peace to quiet his troubled heart, with the assurance that the down-trodden shall be lifted up, the oppressed shall be delivered from his oppressor, all captives set free, and all oppressors destroyed, as in ancient times. I know that God heard the prayers of my praying mother, because she was a Christian, and a widow, such as feared God and loved his commandments. She used often to sing the following hymn:

“Our days began with trouble here,

Our lives are but a span,
While cruel death is always near—
What a feeble thing is man!

“Then sow the seed of grace while young,
That when you come to die,
You may sing the triumphant song,
Death! where’s thy victory?”

With the above lines has my mother often soothed, for a time, her own sorrows, when she thought of her poor son, so far away from her, she knew not where, neither could she know of his sufferings; and again, she would become a prey to bitter grief. Her only hope was to meet her son in heaven, where slaveholders could not come with their purchase-money, where Lacy could not come with his dogs, his guns, or his pistols, with powder or balls; neither would she have to steal away to see him, with a little food well concealed. Neither will Benjamin be obliged to crouch in the forest, hearing the midnight cry of wild beasts around him, while he seeks repose upon the cold, bare ground. No, she will meet him at the right hand of the Redeemer, who will wipe the briny tears from the eyes of the poor slave, and feed him with the hidden treasures of His love.

MY PARENTS.

My father did not belong to Edloe, but was owned by a Mr. George Harrison, whose plantation adjoined that of my master. Harrison made my father a slave-driver, placing an overseer over him. He was allowed to visit my mother every Wednesday and every Saturday night. This was the time usually given to the slaves to see their wives. My father would often tell my mother how the white overseer had made him cruelly whip his fellows, until the blood ran down to the ground. All his days he had to follow this dreadful employment of flogging men, women and children, being placed in this helpless condition by the tyranny of his master. I used to think very hard of my father, and that he was a very cruel man; but when I knew that he could not help himself, I could not but alter my views and feelings in regard to his conduct. I was ten years old when he died.

When my father died, he left my mother with five children. We were all young at the time, and mother had no one to help take care of us. Her lot was very hard indeed. She had to work all the day for her owner, and at night for those who were dearer to her than life; for what was allowed her by Edloe was not sufficient for our wants. She used to get a little corn, without his knowledge, and boil it for us to satisfy our hunger. As for clothing, Edloe

would give us a coarse suit once in three years; mother sometimes would beg the cast-off garments from the neighbors, to cover our nakedness; and when they had none to give, she would sit and cry over us, and pray to the God of the widow and fatherless for help and succor. At last, my oldest brother was sold from her, and carried where she never saw him again. She went mourning for him all her days, like a bird robbed of her young,—like Rachel bereft of her children, who would not be comforted, because they were not. She departed this life on the 27th of September, 1847, for that world “where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.”

THE WILL OF C. H. EDLOE.

Edloe made his will six years before his decease. He said to some of his slaves, just before his death, that he had another will, which he had given into the hands of a lawyer in Petersburg, Va., to keep for him, but this will was never heard from. The slaves knew about it, but their voice or testimony was nothing; therefore, nothing could be done about it.

I present that will here, together with the decree of the Court respecting it, in order that my readers may judge for themselves as to the intention of our master, and be convinced that what I have to say in reference to the manner in which the will was executed is perfectly just, and warranted by the facts.

IN THE NAME OF GOD, AMEN!—I, CARTER H. EDLOE, of the County of Prince George, being of sound mind and disposing memory, but considering the uncertainty of life, do make and ordain this to be my last Will and Testament:

1st. I desire that all debts that I may owe at the time of my decease, shall be paid out of the money on hand or the profits of my estate.

2d. I desire that my estate shall be kept together and cultivated to the best advantage, until a sufficient sum can be raised to pay my debts, should there be any deficiency in the amount of money on hand and debts due to me, and to raise a sufficient sum to pay for the transportation of my Slaves to any Free State or Colony which they may prefer, and give to each Slave Fifty Dollars on their departure, either in money or other articles which may suit them better; but should any of my slaves prefer going immediately, they can do so, but they are not to be furnished with money. It is not my wish to force them away without their consent. In the event of any of them preferring to remain in slavery, they must take the disposition hereinafter directed.

3d. After the provisions in the preceding clauses of my Will have been complied with, I loan to my niece, Elizabeth C. Orgain, my Plantation in Prince George, called Mt. Pleasant, during her life; but in the event of her marrying and having children, I then give to her children, at her death, the said land, to them and their heirs forever.

4th. I loan to my niece, Mary Orgain, my Plantation in Prince George, called Brandon and Dandridge's, during her life; but should she marry and have children, I then give to her children, at her death,

the said lands, to them and their heirs forever.

5th. The rest and residue of my estate, of whatever kind soever, I desire may be divided into two equal parts, and one part to go to each of my nieces, Elizabeth and Mary; and should any of my Slaves prefer remaining in slavery, I desire they may be divided into two equal parts, and one part go to each of my nieces, during their lives, and then to their children, in the same manner as the landed property is given, except my Household Furniture, Wines and Liquors, all of which I give to Mary Orgain during her life, and then to her children. Those negroes under age at my death may have until they are twenty-one years of age to decide whether they will go or remain; but in the event of but one of my nieces having children, I desire that those children have the whole of my property at the death of their aunt.

6th. I give and bequeath to my female Slave, Harriet Barber and her children, (all of whom I bought of R. G. Orgain, Esq.,) Eight Thousand Dollars, which sum I desire my Executors to take from my estate, and either lay it out in good stock, or put the money out at interest, always taking undoubted security—the stock I should prefer—the interest of which shall be paid to said Harriet yearly. Should there not be a sum sufficient to pay this legacy, either in stock or money, I direct my Executors to sell my land in Southampton. Should that not make up the deficiency, other land must be sold, or horses and cattle, as my Executors may think best.

7th. It is my wish that the said Harriet and children should remain on my estate, or in any situation which they may prefer that the law will allow; and I direct my Executors to furnish Harriet and her children with their Free Papers, whenever they may desire to have them, and assist them to remove to any place they may choose to locate themselves.

I do hereby appoint David D. Brydon, of the Town of Petersburg, and John A. Seldon, of Charles City county, my Executors, requiring them to give no security for the performance of their duty. I do hereby revoke all former Wills, this being my last Will. In testimony whereof, I have hereunto subscribed my name, this 20th day of March, One Thousand Eight Hundred and Thirty-Eight.

CARTER H. EDLOE.

At a Court of Quarterly Sessions, held for Prince George county, at the Court House thereof, on Tuesday, the 13th day of August, 1844:

This last Will and Testament of *Carter H. Edloe*, dec'd, was presented into Court, and there being no subscribing witnesses thereto, William C. Rawlings, P. C. Osborne, and David Tennant, appeared in Court and made oath that they are well acquainted with the hand-writing of the Testator, and they verily believe the said Will to be wholly written by the Testator: And thereupon said Will is ordered to be recorded. On the motion of John A. Seldon, an Executor therein named, who made oath thereto, and entered into and acknowledged a bond in the penalty of One Hundred and Twenty Thousand Dollars, (the Testator desiring that no security should be given upon his qualification,) conditioned as the law directs, certificate is granted the said John A. Seldon for obtaining a probate of the said Will in due form.

Teste, RO. GILLIAM, *Clerk.*

VIRGINIA—*Prince George County, to wit:*

I, ROBERT GILLIAM, Clerk of the Court of said county, in the State of Virginia, do hereby certify the fore-going to be a true copy of the last Will and Testament of Carter H. Edloe, deceased.

In testimony whereof, I have hereto set my hand and affixed the seal of the said Court, this thirty-first day of August, 1847, and in the seventy-second year of the Commonwealth.

RO. GILLIAM, *Clerk.*

DECREE OF THE COURT.

VIRGINIA:

At a Circuit Superior Court of Law and Chancery, held for the town of Petersburg, at the court house thereof, on Monday, the 24th day of May, A. D. 1847:

John A. Seldon, Executor of C. H.	}	
Edloe, deceased,	Plaintiff,	}
	<i>against</i>	}
		<i>In chancery.</i>
Mary Orgain and Elizabeth Orgain,	}	
infants, by H. B. Gaines, their	}	
Guardian <i>ad litem</i> , &c.,	Defts.,	}

This cause came on this day to be further heard on the papers formerly read, on the reports of Commissioner Bernard, and of the

special Commissioners appointed to consult the slaves of C. H. Edloe, deceased, and was argued by counsel: *On consideration whereof*, the court being of opinion that the slave Harriet and her children are entitled to no part of the profits of the plantation, and that the several sums charged in the account of profits as expended for them ought not to have been so charged; and adopting the correction of the report in that particular, contained in the note of the Commissioner, p. 1, doth order that the report of Commissioner Bernard, with that correction, and the report of the special Commissioners, be confirmed: And the court doth further adjudge, order and decree, that the Plaintiff do, on or before the fifteenth day of October, one thousand eight hundred and forty-seven, as may seem to him best, discharge from servitude all the slaves of his Testator; that he deliver to said slaves, individually or in families, as he may think best, duly authenticated copies of this decree, endorsing on each copy the name or names of the person or persons to whom it is given; that the Executor, out of the money now in his hands and interest thereon from the thirteenth day of March, one thousand eight hundred and forty-seven, together with the nett proceeds of the growing crop or such thereof as may be secured, pay to the slaves, Robert, Old Ben and Caty, (who elect to remain in service until the full amount of the provision intended for them shall be raised,) each the sum of Fifty Dollars, “on their departure;” that he pay to each of the slaves of the Testator who has remained on the plantation, and shall so remain until the slaves shall be liberated as herein directed, a sum sufficient to pay for his or her transportation to such free State or colony as they may respectively prefer, or provide and pay for their transportation to such free State or colony in such other manner as may to him seem best: And the court doth order that the said Executor do immediately, on discharging the said slaves from servitude, cause them to be removed to the free State or colony which they may respectively select as their future homes; the court being of opinion that it was not the intention of the Testator that they should be emancipated and allowed to receive the bounty provided for them, unless they were removed by the Executor beyond the limits of Virginia; and in case the fund be not sufficient to defray the whole amount of such expenses of transportation, the same shall be divided among the slaves, rateably, taking into consideration their ages, place selected, &c., and that he distribute the residue, if any there be, equally among all the said slaves, without regard to age, and that he deliver the slaves Sylvia and

Jenny, who elect to remain slaves, to the defendants, to whom they are bequeathed by the Will of the Testator.

And it is further ordered, that the Plaintiff settle before a Commissioner a further account of his transactions as Executor, which account the Commissioner is directed to report to the court, with any matter specially stated deemed pertinent by himself, or which any of the parties may require to be so stated.

A copy—Teste, R. McMANN, S. C.

AUGUST 6th, 1847.

When Edloe died, he gave this will, which was the one finally acted upon, into the hands of one of his slaves, not feeling willing to trust any one else.

The Executor of the estate was John A. Seldon, of Charles City County. The will stated, as will be seen, that if there should be any deficiency of money on hand, sufficient must be raised to pay his debts, and transport his slaves to a place of freedom, and pay each of them fifty dollars. Edloe was gone, and could not act for us in person, so this deed of justice was not carried out. Mr. Seldon interpreted the will thus: We were to stay on the plantation and work there till we had earned this money ourselves, and then we were to be free. Meantime, he took from us what the overseer had hitherto given us, and took our earnings too.

For six months, all knowledge of this will was kept from us. I was the only one among the slaves who could read and write. This I had kept secret, for fear of the consequences. A friend, who seemed very much interested in our affairs, showed me a copy of this will, upon promise of secrecy. So I read it, and remembered it all; then he told me of a lawyer who would be a good one for us. I communicated this good news to two of the older and more experienced men of our party, and repeated to them the substance of the will. They went to see the lawyer, and he agreed to take the case in hand. This friend knew how we were treated, and told us it was very unjust and wrong. This lawyer's name was James L. Scarborough, of Prince George County, Va.

He first went to the bank of Petersburg, where Edloe's money was deposited, and found out that there were thirty-two thousand dollars on hand; so he was going at once to get our free papers for us; but soon he came to us again, and said the executor of the estate would give him five hundred dollars to stop the suit—but he would not stop it. But this did not last long. We soon found that Seldon got all our money, and could give him more than we could; so he began to put us off from one court to another, telling us that the court did not have time to attend to us, but the next would certainly settle the matter. We gave him all our little earnings, which amounted to twenty-two dollars, but he got no papers. So he kept us for two years and six months. When we found out

the deception he had practised upon us, we felt very wretched indeed—sure that we had no friend left, and should never get our freedom, but were cruelly robbed of what was our own, not only by right, but as an especial gift.

Seldon used to come and see us when the crops were to be sold, get the money for us, (but we never saw it,) then go away again, without the least advantage to us. At last, we took courage, and got another man to exert himself for us. He was not a *lawyer*, but a magistrate. His name was William B. Harrison, the owner of Middle Brandon. Though a slaveholder himself, he got our free papers, and procured us a passage to Boston, after we had remained three years and thirty-five days in unlawful bondage, according to the laws of Virginia, to say nothing of a higher law.

Instead of the fifty dollars we were each to receive on our landing, we had fourteen dollars and ninety-six cents apiece. All our money was taken from us, because we were black people; but glad enough were we of our freedom.

We were told if we came to Boston, we should be killed, or put in prison, where we should have to work under ground, or be obliged to drag carts all round the streets; but we were determined to try it, live or die.

We came in 1847, and have not been eaten up yet. And now we claim the fifty dollars, and interest, since 1844. It was given to us by the man we served while he was living, and no law or justice can keep it from us, except by downright fraud. Here are old people of the party, unable to do much for themselves, to whom this would be a great blessing. Surely, the day is not far distant when those base men will be shown up to the world for what they are worth. The wrong they committed will not rest upon those ignorant slaves, but will rebound back, covering their white faces, but black hearts, with infamy.

SLAVES ON THE PLANTATION.

THE HOURS FOR WORK.

The slave goes to his work when he sees the daybreak in the morning, and works until dark at night. The slaves have their food carried to them in the field; they have one half hour to eat it in, in the winter, and one hour in the summer. Their time for eating is about eight in the morning, and one in the afternoon. Sometimes, they have not so much time given to them. The overseer stands by them until they have eaten, and then he orders them to work.

The slaves return to their huts at night, make their little fires, and lie down until they are awakened for another day of toil. No beds are given them to sleep on; if they have any, they find themselves. The women and the men all have to work on the farms together; they must fare alike in slavery. Husbands and wives must see all that happens to each other, and witness the sufferings of each. They must see their children polluted, without the power to prevent it.

HOW THE SLAVES CONTRIVE TO GET FOOD.

There are some animals in Virginia called raccoons, possums, old hares, and squirrels. The best of these is the possum, which lives in old trees and in the earth. The slave sets his traps in the swamps, where the possum usually lives. The traps are made by cutting down trees, and cutting them in short pieces about five feet long; then they raise the log on three pieces of stick, like the figure four. These traps are made on the Sabbath. One slave will sometimes have fifteen or twenty of them, and will go at night, with his torch of pitch-pine, and see if his traps have caught anything for him to eat. Sometimes he finds a possum and a raccoon; and sometimes a squirrel and old hare. This old hare is something like a rabbit. All of these little animals are good food for the poor slave, and make him feel very glad that he has them to eat. Some of the slaves hunt these animals with dogs, trained for the purpose. They run them up the trees in the forest, where, as they are a harmless animal, they can be taken very easily. They do not fight very hard when caught, but are very easily overcome; but they are a very deceitful little animal. They will lie on the ground, and make you think they are dead; but if you leave them, they will creep off so soon, that you cannot conceive how the little animal got away so cute. The only way they can be kept safely is to be put in a bag, or in a basket with a cover. The slave knows best when to hunt these creatures. The best time is just at the rise of the tide in the rivers. There is another method that the slave takes to get his food. He makes what is called a fish-trap. This is made by

cutting white oak wood into very small strips, which are tied together with a great deal of ingenuity. This trap is put in very deep water, and attended by the slaves at night, and on the Sabbath, (this being all the time they have to attend to their traps;) and very glad are they of this opportunity of getting some nice fish. Oftentimes the overseer will take what he wants for his own use, and the slaves must submit.

There are some little fruits in Virginia, that are called “simmons”; they grow very plentifully, and are sweet and good. The slaves get them in the fall of the year, then they get a barrel and put the “simmons” into it, and put water there too, and something else that grows on trees, that they call “locusses,” which are about ten inches long, and two across. They put the “locusses” and “simmons” into the water together, and let them stand for two or three days. Then the water is drained off, and the leaves are used as you would use coffee. The slaves put this liquid in gourds, and carry it to the field with them, and drink out of their gourds while they eat their bread.

HOUSE SLAVES.

When the slave-master owns a great many slaves, ten or a dozen are always employed to wait on himself and family. They are not treated so cruelly as the field slaves; they are better fed and wear better clothing, because the master and his family always expect to have strangers visit them, and they want their servants to look well. These slaves eat from their master’s table, wear broadcloth and calico; they wear ruffled-bosomed shirts, too,—such as Doctor Nehemiah Adams declares he saw while on his visit to the South, where he became so much in love with the “peculiar institution.” These slaves, although dressed and fed better than others, have to suffer alike with those whose outward condition is worse. They are much to be compared to galvanized watches, which shine and resemble gold, but are far from being the true metal; so with these slaves who wait upon their masters at table—their broadcloth and calico look fine, but you may examine their persons, and find many a lash upon their flesh. They are sure of their whippings, and are sold the same as others.

Sometimes their masters change, and put them on the farm, that the overseers may whip them. Among those who wait upon the master, there is always one to watch the others, and report them to him. This slave is treated as well as his master, because it is for the master’s interest that he does this. This slave he always carries with him when he visits the North; particularly such slaves as cannot be made to leave their master, because they are their master’s watch-dog at home. So master can trust them. Before leaving, master always talks very kindly to them, and promises something very great for a present, if

they are true to him until his return.

These slaves know what they must say when asked as to their treatment at home, and of the treatment of their fellows. They leave their wives, their mothers, brothers and sisters, and children, toiling and being driven and whipped by the overseer, and tortured and insulted on every occasion.

DECEPTION OF THE SLAVEHOLDER.

All the slaves, as well as their owners, are addicted to drinking; so when the slaveholder wants to make a show of his niggers, (as he calls them,) he gives them rum to drink.

When the master knows a Northern man is to visit him, he gives orders to the overseer, and the overseer orders every slave to dress himself, and appear on the field. If the slaves have any best, they must put it on. Perhaps a man has worked hard, extra times all the year, and got his wife a fourpenny gown,—she must put it on, and go to the field to work. About the time the stranger is expected, a jug of rum is sent to the field, and every slave has just enough given him to make him act as if he was crazy.

When such a stranger as Rev. Dr. Adams appears with the master, he does not see the negroes, but the rum that is in them; and when he hears their hurrah, and sees their Jim-Crow actions, he takes it for granted that they are as happy as need be, and their condition could not be bettered.

The owner gives the visitor liberty to ask his “niggers” questions. He will ask them if they love their master, or wish to leave him. Poor slave will say, he would not leave his master for the world; but O, my reader! just let the poor slave get off, and he would be in Canada very soon, where the slaveholder dare not venture.

The slaves do not speak for themselves. The slaveholding master and his rum are working in their heads, speaking for slavery; and this is the way the slaveholder deceives his friend from the North.

FLOGGING.

For whipping the slaves in Virginia, there are no rules. The slave receives from the slaveholder from fifty to five hundred lashes. The slave-owner would think fifty stripes an insult to the slave. If the slave is let off with fifty lashes, he must show a very good temper. Men, women, and children must be whipped alike on their bare backs, it being considered an honor to whip them over their clothes. The slaves are placed in a certain position when they are flogged, with sufficient management to hold them very still, so they cannot work their hands or feet, while they are “wooding them up,” as they call it in Virginia.

Some of the slaves have to lie down on their stomachs, flat on the ground, and be stretched out so as to keep their skin tight for the lash, and thus lie until they receive as much as they choose to put on; if they move, they must receive so many lashes extra. When the slaveholder expects to give his slave five hundred lashes, he gives him about half at a time; then washes him down with salt and water, and then gives him the remainder of what he is to have. At such times, the slave-owner has his different liquors to drink, while he is engaged in draining the blood of the slave. So he continues to drink his rum and whip his victim. When he does not flog his victims on the ground, they are tied by their hands, and swung up to a great tree, just so the end of their toes may touch the ground. In this way, they receive what number of lashes they are destined to. The master has straw brought, that the blood may not touch his shoes. Ah, reader! this is true, every word of it. The poor slave is whipped till the blood runs down to the earth, and then he must work all day, cold or hot, from week's end to week's end. There are hundreds of slaves who change their skins nearly as often as they have a new suit of clothes.

FARMS ADJOINING EDLOE'S PLANTATION.

I will give my readers a little knowledge concerning the neighbors of my owner, that they may be able to judge of Slavery by something more than the character of one slaveholder, or his management among his slaves.

Edloe's farm was what was called Upper Brandon, on James River. It consisted of about fifty-six square miles, and was worked by eighty-one slaves.

William B. Harrison owned Middle Brandon. His farm was about one hundred square miles. He owned over two hundred slaves. Of their treatment I shall speak, and also of the numerous overseers he had employed.

George B. Harrison, the owner of my father, owned Lower Brandon. His farm was the same in size as his brother's, and he owned the same number of slaves.

Mr. Wm. Harrison fed his slaves what is called "regular" in Virginia; he was one of the best feeders on James River. He clothed them well, too; but he was a great flogger, and probably the greatest in the region. In his dealings with those who were not slaves, he was upright, never deceiving, but always doing as he agreed. If any other case than Slavery came before him, he would make a liberal decision in favor of right; but he would have his slaves whipped whenever the overseer wished it. Sometimes he would go to church and preach to his slaves. I have heard him myself, but, my readers, it did seem like mocking God for such as he to stand up and preach.

The first overseer of Mr. Harrison's that I knew was Benj. Bishop. Under his reign, many of the slaves went into the presence of their God, to show the bloody stripes of the lash received from Ben. Bishop. Harrison did not care for his slaves as the man who owned me did, but left them to the mercy of the overseers. Go to the South, reader! there you will see many mulattoes, the descendants of Ben. Bishop. He continued with Harrison several years, when, being sent down to Richmond to sell some negroes, he made one hundred dollars more than he was to pay his employer; therefore, he concluded to take the business of human traffic into his own hands, and become a "nigger trader." He was not very successful in his undertaking, being too fond of what is called "toddy" in the Southern States. He became a great drunkard and a great gambler, (vices intimately connected with the "peculiar institution,") and was obliged to give up his business.

He was afterwards employed by Edloe, my master; but he did not live with him long before he was discharged, for his unmerciful treatment of the blacks.

Death called to him soon, and he was ushered into the awful presence of the righteous Judge, (who listens to the cries of the poor widows, and the

orphans,) with his guilty hands dripping with the blood of his fellow-creatures, who had sunk groaning to the earth beneath his barbed heel of cruel oppression.

The next man who took charge of this farm was John Q. Adams. This man (notwithstanding his noble name) was a disgrace to civilization; for when he had beaten his victims till their bodies could bear no more, he would lash the bottoms of their feet. My readers, this may seem incredible, but it is truth. Harrison's slaves trembled at the very mention of his name, and the sight of him would bring wo and terror to their very souls; the poor creatures would wish that the earth would open and swallow them, that they might never look upon the face of Adams again, or hear the sound of his voice. His voice had all the fearful sound of the roaring lion, and the hideous howl of the prowling wolf. I verily believe his organs of speech were made of the hardest granite, fastened together with monstrous iron bolts. As his victims were dripping with their own blood, he would bellow forth his curses, and dare them to call on God for help. Groanings and sorrow, pains and misery untold, unspeakable, were the portion of the negroes upon Harrison's plantation.

Adams practised everything that was mean, cruel, devilish, everything that could be thought of by demons. This conduct continued eleven years before I left Virginia, in 1847. I could give a great many more truths concerning this J. Q. Adams, that may seem too outrageous for a human being to conceive. I would not do injustice to any one, not even a slave-driver, for I know I must stand at the bar of the Eternal, and render an account of every word spoken in the flesh. I know that, in order to do good, my testimony *must be the truth*.

The next overseer was Harden Harrison. He owned three slaves himself; but was very religious, and belonged to the Presbyterian Church. He did not beat so much as Adams, but was very strict with the slaves. He used to say his prayers every night, and grace before his meals. Sometimes his grace failed him, and then the poor slave must expect something more than soft words or gentle treatment. He never yet had grace sufficient to excuse any little fault in a negro. He used to quote Moses's law to whip by. His face was very narrow and hypocritical.

He had just enough of professed religion to deceive. He was one of those calculated to deceive Northern visitors, who saw him go on with his solemn ceremonies of religion, to make them believe that good and religious men guided the poor ignorant blacks, and kept them from sinking entirely into the blackness of heathenism. Then Mr. H. would take just enough of his toddy to make him feel as good as any body else. He lived with Mr. W. B. Harrison as long as he wished, then left and went home to his own farm.

The next overseer was named Edloe. He used to call himself the "snapping-turtle," and would raw-hide the slaves so they would be obliged to

wind cotton round their persons, to protect their wounds from their clothing. Of other things of which he was guilty, delicacy forbids me to speak; judge for yourselves. He continued there three years, and was at it when I left Virginia.

One more of these men I have not mentioned, whose name was Ladd. It should have been "Hornet." I cannot speak of the actions of this man, without a shrinking from the fact that I ever knew such a being. He made men and women to growl and bark like dogs. At all hours of the night, you might find Ladd in the woods, with his dogs, prowling about after some skulking fugitive, and all day driving and whipping the persecuted victims, till they were almost driven to self-murder, which nothing but the belief that those who take their own lives cannot be happy in another world kept them from. The slaves used to run away to Edloe, and get him to go and beg mercy for them, and he would do so. For two years, Ladd managed in this way; then the great Judge called him from earth, to give an account of his bloody deeds.

Some of my readers may ask why we were always afflicted with such horrid men, as overseers, in our region, and if there were no good ones. Ah, dear reader, do you think a good man would take such a position? And what man is there who would not become worse daily by being placed in such a situation, with unlimited power over hundreds of abject beings, whom he looks upon as only a little above the brute? Ah, ye who look coolly on in the distance, and doubt the existence of all this wretchedness, go nearer, become yourself the property of another, and then your doubts will be removed!

The first overseer I knew of on George Harrison's plantation was Charles Charbour. "Devilish" is the only word which will describe his character. My father was a colored driver under him, and he was made to beat his fellow slaves most unmercifully, and there was no escape, unless he would have submitted to a worse fate, if possible, for himself. Charbour has been known to cut the skin with a knife from the poor black man's feet, that he might not run away, or that the saying, "I will cut every inch of your black hide off," might be literally fulfilled. Truly, he was one towards whom the blood of the slave will cry, whenever he approaches those fields of labor, or wanders by the swamps, or by the river side. There was no peace for man, woman or child wherever he followed.

Harrison, who owned the slaves, was a young man at this time, and cared for nothing, so Charbour had everything his own way. God in his mercy visited this farm with a great calamity. The cholera came among the slaves, and carried many to their rest. The very atmosphere, at this time, seemed to burn with evil and wrong for the poor negroes, so that death was their best friend. Many of my father's relations were owned here, and well we knew of the sufferings which their owner allowed, and sought no means to alleviate.

Harrison's conduct at last made him an object of scorn and indignation to

most of the people who knew him. One day, he was on business at the court house, and while he was seated among many gentlemen, who were strangers to him, they commenced a conversation about “young Harrison,” and his abominable course in regard to his people. Very freely they discussed his character, and he had the benefit of their opinion from their own mouths. He went home rather humbled, and commenced the work of reformation on his plantation. Charbour was forbidden to whip so much, and the slaves were really treated better. That season was to the slaves what the conversion of Paul was to the church he had persecuted,—there was rest for a little season. Shortly after this sudden change in Geo. Harrison, he died, when the clouds of darkness again fell about those poor negroes. His brother became the guardian of the estate, and everything was left in the hands of overseers, who used their power as bad men might be expected to.

Another neighbor of ours, or rather, of my master’s, was his brother. His plantation was called Willow Hill, and was very large. This Mr. Edloe owned two farms, (one in Cumberland Co.,) and a great many slaves. Many of these slaves were related to me, and those of my fellows who came North with me.

William Allen owned a large farm across from Lower Brandon, in Surrey Co., called Claremont. He also owned twelve other farms, and nine hundred and ninety-nine slaves. He was uncle to Edloe, my owner, and was considered the richest man in Virginia, except old Bob Bolling, of Petersburg. He was not a good man. He was possessed of none of the virtues, but some of the vices of King Solomon. He was very fond of the young females, yet he was married to no *one*. He was very cruel to his people, and used what is called the bell and horns on his slaves, to keep them from running away. He used to chain them together with a long chain, with heavy fastenings at the end of the chain. The bell and horns were a harness made so as to fasten on the slave’s neck, with a band of iron that would go round the neck, to which was attached another band that passed over the top of the head, about three feet perpendicular, then turned with a hook, so as to hook over the limbs of trees, if the slave should attempt running in the swamps, out of sight of the overseer. He always kept a good stock of them on hand, to use as you would use bells for cows, that you might find them easily, if they strayed.

Some of his slaves were put to death by his overseers, but he did not trouble himself about it—he had plenty more. Ah, my readers! more blood has been drawn from Allen’s slaves than he would be willing to carry upon his shoulders for one moment.

He was very close with his slaves with regard to food and clothes, and those who lived along the rivers used to catch fish at stolen moments, so as to keep themselves along, from time to time, until Allen died. When that occurred, Edloe immediately went over, and freed all the poor creatures from

their harnesses, leg-irons, and handcuffs. Allen had freed his colored sons, and about eight others. The rest of his slaves he gave to one of his nephews, named William Allen. He gave one of his farms to be divided among all his relations. Edloe was one, and he drew eighteen of those slaves, who were all freed with myself. The rest went to drudge with their new masters, under a bondage worse than Egyptian.

CABIN POINT.

There was but one village near Brandon, where the large farms were cultivated, and that was in Surrey County, about seven miles from Lower Brandon. This village was called "Cabin Point," and there the United States mail stopped. Five or six stores were kept there, and it was a great place for loafers; for at these stores, you could buy almost every thing, especially rum and other liquors. Saturdays and Sundays, all the lower class of whites and free colored people used to assemble there, to drink and gamble. No slaves were allowed there, unless sent by their masters, with a pass.

"Cabin Point" was famous for its fighting, drunkenness, and every kind of degradation. The whites beat the free colored people there, and they dare not raise their hands, lest they should be mobbed. Females were not safe there an instant; nothing could protect them from the violence of those drunken desperadoes. If any good man from the North should witness one of these scenes, he would think it indicative of any thing but civilization.

This place is the rendezvous for all the rowdies of Prince George and Surrey counties. There the overseers would meet for their drunken revels, and return to the farms, to make the backs of the outraged negroes pay the bills for their debauchery.

There were many wealthy men there, who owned many human beings. The most prominent among them were Mr. Peters, A. Sledge, Dr. Strong, and Dr. Graves.

Dr. Graves was so cruel and wicked, he would not take time even to whip his slaves, but would use his knife on them. He would chain them on their backs, and give them nothing to eat for two or three days at a time. He was called the best physician in the place, but he was as good a devil as I should wish to see. He was employed by all the large farmers to attend their slaves in sickness, and was very fond of the female slaves, to whom he was a good doctor. I will not spend time to write more of him; he was so wicked, my feelings become excited, and language fails me in speaking of him.

Dr. Strong was a mild man,—as fine a man as I ever knew among slaveholders. He was not cruel; he looked upon his negroes as human beings, possessed of feelings, and as capable of enjoyment and suffering as himself,

and he treated them kindly. He appeared to be a Christian; but still, he held his fellow-men in bondage; he did not allow them to act for themselves and work for themselves. Even kind-hearted Dr. Strong could not live out the precepts of Jesus and remain a slaveholder. He was succeeded by Dr. Gray, who, though a very strict man among his people, was not cruel.

Mr. Peters was not as bad as many other slaveholders, though he used to whip his slaves to keep them tame, for fear they would run wild. Mr. Peters was a mild, whipping slaveholder, died a slaveholder, and will receive a slaveholder's reward.

Amos Sledge was very cruel and inhuman in the treatment of his people. He worked them very hard, fed them very poorly, clothed them but scantily, whipped them unmercifully, and allowed them no privileges. They were a downcast, heart-broken set of people.

OVERSEERS.

The first overseer I served under was Henry Hallingwork, a cruel and a bad man. He often whipped my mother and the children, and worked the slaves almost day and night, in all weather. The men had no comfort with their wives, for any of the latter who pleased him, he would take from their husbands, and use himself. If any refused his lewd embraces, he treated them with the utmost barbarity. At night, he watched the slaves' huts, to find out if they said anything against him, or had any food except what he had allowed them; and if he discovered anything he disliked, they were severely whipped. He continued this conduct for about three years, when Mr. Edloe discovered it, and discharged him.

The next overseer who lived on the plantation did not treat the people so badly as did Hallingwork, but he drove them very hard, and watched them very closely, to see that they took nothing but their allowance. He only lived there two years, when he was discharged for misconduct.

The next overseer, a man named Harris, only remained about six months; his cruelty was so great, it came to Mr. Edloe's ear, and he was discharged.

The successor of Harris was L. Hobbs. He was very cruel to the people, especially to all women who would not submit to him. He used to bind women hand and foot, and whip them until the blood ran down to the earth, and then wash them down in salt and water, and keep them tied all day, when Edloe was not at home. He used to take my cousin and tie her up and whip her so she could not lie down to rest at night until her back got well. All this was done on Edloe's plantation, the *good slaveholder* who owned me; and the other slaveholders used to say to him that he "spoiled his niggers;"—but this was the way he spoiled them. Hobbs continued this ill-treatment for the space of three

years, then he was turned off. Thus ends the history of Hobbs on Edloe's plantation, with the exception of leaving what are termed "mulattoes" in Virginia.

The fifth overseer was B. F. Bishop. He came to the plantation as a tyrant, and proved himself such to men, women and children. He reigned tyrannically for one year, and did many things which decency will not permit me to speak of. He, and all of the overseers, were in the habit of stealing from their employer, and the colored people knew it, but their informing Edloe would have done no good, for he could not believe a slave. According to the laws of Virginia, the testimony of a slave against an overseer could not be taken. This Benj. Bishop reigned "monarch of all he surveyed" (doing as he chose in every thing—cruel as cruel could be) one year, when he was discharged.

The sixth overseer was R. Lacy, a native of Charles City, Va. He reigned seven years. I cannot describe to my readers the malice and madness with which this being treated Edloe's slaves. You cannot find his parallel in history, except it be in Nero or Caligula. Indeed, he was a very wicked man, and a great hypocrite. I cannot point to one good deed he ever performed. He would enter the houses, and bind men and women, and inflict torture upon them, whether innocent or guilty. The blood of innocent slaves is yet crying to the God of justice to avenge their sufferings, and pour out deserved judgment upon the head of Lacy.

The seventh overseer was P. Vaughn. He was cruel, but not so much so as some of the others had been. He was too fond of rum and the females, so Edloe gave him his walking ticket.

The eighth overseer was J. G. Harrison. He was with Mr. Edloe at the time of his decease. Harrison was, like others in his station, hard and unmerciful. He made his dogs tear and bite my mother very badly. She died soon after, and was freed from her tormentors, at rest from her labors, and rejoicing in heaven.

This same Harrison shot one of Edloe's men, because he would not submit to the lash; but no one said anything to Harrison about his conduct. (He did not kill the man. Although shot, he is now living in Charlestown, Mass. His name is Wyatt Lee. He is well known in Boston.)

FOOD AND CLOTHING.

I shall now show what the slaves have to eat and wear. They have one pair of shoes for the year; if these are worn out in two months, they get no more that year, but must go barefooted the rest of the year, through cold and heat. The shoes are very poor ones, made by one of the slaves, and do not last more than two or three months. One pair of stockings is allowed them for the year; when these are gone, they have no more, although it is cold in Virginia for five

months. They have one suit of clothes for the year. This is very poor indeed, and made by the slaves themselves on the plantation. It will not last more than three months, and then the poor slave gets no more from the slaveholder, if he go naked. This suit consists of one shirt, one pair of pants, one pair of socks, one pair of shoes, and no vest at all. The slave has a hat given him once in two years; when this is worn out, he gets no more from the slaveholder, but must go bareheaded till he can get one somewhere else. Perhaps the slave will get him a skin of some kind, and make him a hat.

The food of the slaves is this: Every Saturday night, they receive two pounds of bacon, and one peck and a half of corn meal, to last the men through the week. The women have one half pound of meat, and one peck of meal, and the children one half peck each. When this is gone, they can have no more till the end of the week. This is very little food for the slaves. They have to beg when they can; when they cannot, they must suffer. They are not allowed to go off the plantation; if they do, and are caught, they are whipped very severely, and what they have begged is taken from them.

CUSTOMS OF THE SLAVES, WHEN ONE OF THEIR NUMBER DIES.

They go to the overseer, and obtain leave to sit up all night with their dead, and sing and pray. This is a very solemn season. First, one sings and another prays, and this they continue every night until the dead body is buried. One of the slaves makes the coffin,—and a very bad one it generally is. Some wheat straw is put in the coffin, and if they can get it, they wrap the body in a piece of white cloth; if they cannot get it, they put the body in the coffin without anything around it. Then they nail up the coffin, and put it in a cart, which is drawn by oxen or mules, and carried to the grave. As they have no tombs, they put all the slaves in the earth. If the slave who died was a Christian, the rest of the Christians among them feel very glad, and thank God that brother Charles, or brother Ned, or sister Betsey, is at last free, and gone home to heaven,—where bondage is never known. Some, who are left behind, cry and grieve that they, too, cannot die, and throw off their yoke of slavery, and join the company of the brother or sister who has just gone.

When the overseer is in good humor, he will let all the people go to look the last time upon their relative; if he is ill-tempered, he will not let the slaves go at all; so it all depends upon the state of mind the overseer is in, whether the child is permitted to look upon the remains of its parent, the husband upon his wife, the mother upon her child, or any other dear relative. Ah, my readers! think of this, and see the cruelty of the “peculiar institution.” Slaves have tender human feelings,—very warm and tender they are; but it matters not how sorrowful and heavy a heart the poor negro may have, he cannot see his lifeless

friends unless the slaveholder wills it.

When several of the slaves die together, the others go to their owner, and ask him to let them have a funeral. Most of the owners will grant their slaves this privilege. When the owner and overseer give their consent, the slaveholder sends a note to a white preacher; then they set the day, and the slaves make ready for the funeral services over their friends.

The slaves go to the woods, and make seats to sit upon, (this is done Saturday night). When the seats are prepared, they are left till the slaves take their seats upon them, and sit until about ten o'clock, when the slaveholding minister comes, and preaches about one hour and a half. Then he gives the negroes liberty to sing and pray, and he stands by them. This is to keep the slaves from their master, because they are not allowed to meet together, except a white man be present. At the funeral, all the slaves from the adjoining plantations obtain passes from their overseers, and come; so this is really a great day for the poor blacks to see each other. If their hearts are sad, they are happy to see their friends, and they all go to some place, and their friends receive such entertainment as it is in their power to give. They stay together till night draws on, and then each leaves for his home. As soon as possible after the funeral, the slaves must go to their work. They have no person to speak a word of comfort to them, to cheer their heavy hearts; but they must go on working and mourning all the day and night. If they had some one to sympathize with them, their burden would be lightened; but no one cares for the tears of the widow, the sighs of the disconsolate husband, the sobbing cries of the mother, whose little son or daughter has been taken from her. No one pities the widow's son, that his mother (who labored all her life for the slaveholder, and for her son, when she could get an opportunity) is gone to the grave, leaving her only one behind, to toil on yet longer beneath the lash of tyrant overseers, and at the mercy of unfeeling slaveholders. Ah! my readers! even in the grave there is more comfort to the sad ones afflicted, than in the prison-house of hopeless slavery. Once, oh Northern reader! visit the auction-block, and all that is human within your soul will be aroused, and you will feel and know *what American slavery is*.

SLAVES ON THE AUCTION-BLOCK.

The auctioneer is crying the slave to the highest bidder. "Gentlemen, here is a very fine boy for sale. He is worth twelve hundred dollars. His name is Emanuel. He belongs to Dea. William Harrison, who wants to sell him because his overseer don't like him. How much, gentlemen,—how much for this boy? He's a fine, hearty nigger. Bid up, bid up, gentlemen; he must be sold." Some come up to look at him, pull open his mouth to examine his teeth, and see if they are good. Poor fellow! he is handled and examined like any piece of merchandize; but he must bear it. Neither tongue nor hand, nor any other member, is his own,—why should he attempt to use another's property?

Again the bidding goes on: "I will give one thousand dollars for that boy." The auctioneer says, "Sir, he is worth twelve hundred at the lowest. Bid up, gentlemen, bid up; going, going—are you all done?—once, twice, three times—all done?—GONE!"

See the slaveholder, who just bought the image of God, come to his victim, and take possession of him. Poor Emanuel must go away from his wife, never to see her again. All the ties of love are severed; the declaration of the Almighty, which said, "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder," is unheeded, and he must leave all to follow his *Christian* master,—a member of the Episcopal Church,—a partaker, from time to time, of the Lord's sacrament! Such men mock religion and insult God. O that God would rend the heavens and appear unto these heartless men!

Next come Jenny and her five children. Her husband was sold and gone. The oldest of her children is a girl seventeen years old,—her name, Lucy.

Auctioneer—"Here, gentlemen, is a fine girl for sale: how much for her? Gentlemen, she will be a fortune for any one who buys her that wants to raise niggers. Bid up, gentlemen, bid up! Fine girl; very hearty; good health; only seventeen years old; she's worth fifteen hundred dollars to any one who wants to raise niggers. Here's her mother; she's had nine children; the rest of them are sold. How much, gentlemen,—how much? Bid up! bid up!"

Poor Lucy is sold away from all the loved ones, and goes to receive the worst of insults from her cruel taskmaster. Her poor mother stands by heart-broken, with tears streaming down her face. O! is there a heart, not all brutish, that can witness such a scene without falling to the earth with shame, that the rights of his fellow-creatures are so basely trampled upon? The seller or buyer of a human being, for purposes of slavery, is not human, and has no right to the name.

The next "article" sold is Harry, a boy of fifteen.

Auctioneer—"Gentlemen, how much for this boy? He is an honest boy, can be trusted with any thing you wish; how much for him?"

Harry is sold from his mother, who is standing watching for her turn. She began to scream out, "O, my child! my child!" Here the old slaveholder said, "Ah, my girl! if you do not stop that hollering, I will give you something to holler for." Poor Jenny, the mother, tried to suppress her grief, but all in vain. Harry was gone, and the children cried out, "Good by, Harry; good by!" The broken-hearted mother sobbed forth, "Farewell, my boy; try to meet me in heaven."

The next of the children was Mary. She was put upon the block and sold. Then the mother became so much affected that she seemed like one crazy. So the old rough slaveholder went to the mother, and began to lay the lash upon her; but it mattered not to her—her little Mary was gone, and now her turn had come. O, mothers, who sit in your comfortable homes, surrounded by your happy children, think of the poor slave mother, robbed so cruelly of her all by a fate worse than death! O, think of her, pray for her, toil for her, ever; teach your blooming daughters to think with compassion of their far-off colored sisters, and train them up anti-slavery women! Teach your sons the woes and burning wrongs of slavery; make them grow up earnest, hard-working anti-slavery men. When mothers all do this, we may hope yet to live in a *free country*.

Wretched, childless, widowed Jenny was placed upon the block for sale.

Auctioneer—"Gentlemen, here is Jenny,—how much for her? She can do good work. Now, gentlemen, her master says he believes her to be a Christian, a very pious old woman; and she will keep every thing straight around her. You may depend on her. She will neither lie nor steal: what she says may be believed. Just let her *pray*, and she will keep right."

Here Jesus Christ was sold to the highest bidder; sold in Jenny to keep her honest, to bring gold to the slaveholder. Jenny was sold away from all her little children, never to see them again. Poor mother! who had toiled day and night to raise her little children, feeling all a mother's affection for them, she must see them no more in this world! She feels like great mourning,—“like Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they were not.” So she commends them to the care of the God of the widow and the fatherless, by bathing her bosom in tears, and giving them the last affectionate embrace, with the advice to meet her in heaven. O, the tears of the poor slave that are in bottles, to be poured out upon this blood-stained nation, as soon as the cup of wrath of the almighty Avenger is full, when He shall say, “I have heard the groanings of my people, and I will deliver them from the oppressor!”

Slaveholders carry the price of blood upon their backs and in their pockets; the very bread they eat is the price of blood; the houses they live in are bought

with blood; all the education they have is paid for by the blood and sorrows of the poor slaves.

In parting with their friends at the auction-block, the poor blacks have the anticipation of meeting them again in the heavenly Canaan, and sing—

“O, fare you well, O, fare you well!
God bless you until we meet again;
Hope to meet you in heaven, to part no more.

CHORUS—Sisters, fare you well; sisters, fare you well;
God Almighty bless you, until we meet again.”

Among the slaves, there is a great amount of talent, given by the hand of inspiration; talent, too, which, if cultivated, would be of great benefit to the world of mankind. If these large minds are kept sealed up, so that they cannot answer the end for which they were made, somebody must answer for it on the great day of account. O think of this, my readers! Think of that great day when it shall be said to all the world, “Give an account of thy stewardship!” Among the slaves may be found talents, which, if improved, would be instrumental in carrying the blessed Gospel of Truth to distant lands, and in bringing the people to acknowledge the true and living God. But all has been crushed down by a Christian world, and by the Christian Church. With these solemn facts written against this nation, see to it, my readers, before this iniquity overthrow you, and it be too late to repent.

The sin of holding slaves is not only against one nation, but against the whole world, because we are here to do one another good, in treating each other well; and this is to be done by having right ideas of God and his religion. But this privilege is denied to three millions and a half of the people of this, our own “free” land. The slaveholders say we have not a true knowledge of religion; but the great Teacher said, when he came on his mission, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor. He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted; to preach deliverance to the captive, and recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised, and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.” This ought to be the work of the ministers and the churches. Any thing short of this is not the true religion of Jesus.

This is the great commandment of the New Testament—“Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself.” “Do unto others as ye would that they should do to you,” is the golden rule for all men to follow. By this rule shall all men be judged. We have got to hear, “Come, ye blessed; depart, ye cursed!” These are my convictions, and my belief of the religion of Jesus, the wonderful Counsellor of the children of the created Adam, our great

progenitor.

In view of these things, I earnestly beg my readers to renew their interest in the anti-slavery cause, never turning a deaf ear to the pleadings of the poor slave, or to those who speak, however feebly, for him. The Anti-Slavery cause is the cause of HUMANITY, the cause of RELIGION, the cause of GOD!

CITY AND TOWN SLAVES.

The slaves in the cities (Petersburg, Richmond and Norfolk, in Virginia) do not fare so hard as on the plantations, where they have farming work to do. Most of the town and city slaves are hired out, to bring in money to their owners. They often have the privilege of hiring themselves out, by paying their owners so much, at stated times,—say once a week, or once a month. Many of them are employed in factories and work at trades. They do very well, for if they are industrious, they can earn considerably more than is exacted of them by their owners. All can dress well, have comfortable homes, and many can read and write. Many of them lay up money to purchase either their own freedom or that of some dear one. These slaves are not subjected to the lash as the poor creatures upon the plantations are, for their owners would feel (as every man should feel, in the true sense) their dignity fallen, their nobility sullied, by raising the whip over their human property.

Slavery, as seen here by the casual observer, might be supposed not to be so hard as one would imagine, after all the outcry of philanthropists, who “sit in their chimney-corners amid the Northern hills, and conjure up demoniac shapes and fiendish spirits, bearing the name of slaveholders.” But Slavery is *Slavery*, wherever it is found. Dress it up as you may, in the city or on the plantation, the human being must feel that which binds him to another’s will. Be the fetters of silk, or hemp, or iron, all alike warp the mind and goad the soul.

The city slave may escape the evil eye and cruel lash of the overseer, but if he offend the all-important master, there is retribution for him. “Hand this note to Capt. Heart,” (of Norfolk,) or “Capt. Thwing,” (of Petersburg,)—and well does the shrinking slave know what is to follow. These last-mentioned gentlemen *give* their time to, and improve their talents by, laying the lash upon the naked backs of men and women!

Ah, my readers! take what side you will of slavery,—Dr. Adams’s “South side,” or the Abolitionist’s North side,—there is but *one side*, and that is dark, *dark*. You may think you see bright spots, but look at the surroundings of those spots, and you will see nothing but gloom and darkness. While toiling industriously, and living with a dear family in comparative comfort and happiness, the city slave (whose lot is thought to be so easy) suddenly finds himself upon the auction-block, knocked down to the highest bidder, and carried far and forever from those dearer to him than life; a beloved wife, and tender, helpless children are all bereft, in a moment, of husband, father and protector, by a fate worse than death;—and for what? To gratify some spirit of

revenge, or add to the weight of the already well-filled purse of some *Christian white man*, who professes ownership in his fellow-man. Wretch! you may command, for a season, the bones and sinews of that brother, so infinitely your superior; but, remember! that form is animated by a never-dying spirit; it will not always slumber; a God of infinite love and justice reigns over all, and beholds your unholy, inhuman traffic! Believe you, justice will triumph, the guilty shall not go unpunished on the earth; the righteous are to be recompensed, *much more the wicked and the sinner*.

The whipping-posts are the monuments of the religion and greatness of the Southern cities, though none but the basest of men officiate there; yet they think as much of their office as a poor conceited dandy would of his, were he raised to the Presidency of some great institution.

Yet, with the knowledge of all these wrongs constantly thrust before the people, they wilfully shut their eyes, and will not see; and thousands who walk these shores, free men, support by word and deed this abominable wickedness! Yes, even the ministers of our religion defend, from those temples erected for the worship of the one living and true God, this “domestic institution”! With all their official sanctity, they enter the sacred desk, dedicated to the service of a God of tender mercies, and consecrated to the work of imparting to those congregated before it the teachings of that pure and holy One, who preached deliverance to the captives, and opened the eyes of the blind, who rebuked sin wherever found,—among rulers or servants, in the synagogues, the halls of justice, or by the public ways,—and, instead of imitating their Divine Master, the American clergy uphold these crying enormities of the “dear people,” who feed and pamper their luxurious appetites, and clothe them in fine linen. Ah, my readers! I was once a slave, and was a partaker and witness of all its horrors till I was twenty-seven years old. I, in my ignorance, felt that I was called of God to preach His acceptable word to this down-trodden race. Through His mercy, I was made a *free man*, and now resolve to devote my life, my all, to the spreading of the truth in regard to this great sin of our nation. And O! it makes my heart ache, when I see and hear those men, possessed, all their lives, of every advantage, receiving their education at our seats of learning, stand up before the people, as lights of the world, and defend the slaveholder, or forever hold their peace in regard to the plague-spot of Slavery.

What right, human or divine, can one man have to another, who, like himself, was created in the glorious image of our common Father and Creator? How can such men pray, “*Our Father?*” How can they talk about the human family, and the great day of judgment which is to come? Surely, like the false prophets of old, they are deceiving the people.

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION.

Many say the negroes receive religious education—that Sabbath worship is instituted for them as for others, and were it not for slavery, they would die in their sins—that really, the institution of slavery is a benevolent missionary enterprise. Yes, they are preached to, and I will give my readers some faint glimpses of these preachers, and their doctrines and practices.

In Prince George County, there were two meeting-houses intended for public worship. Both were occupied by the Baptist denomination. These houses were built by William and George Harrison, brothers. Mr. G. Harrison's was built on the line of his brother's farm, that their slaves might go there on the Sabbath and receive instruction, such as slaveholding ministers would give. The prominent preaching to the slaves was, " 'Servants, obey your masters.' " "Do not *steal* or *lie*, for this is very wrong. Such conduct is sinning against the Holy Ghost, *and is base ingratitude to your kind masters, who feed, clothe, and protect you.*" All Gospel, my readers! It was great policy to build a church for the "*dear slave*," and allow him the wondrous privilege of such holy instruction! Edloe's slaves sometimes obtained the consent of Harrison to listen to the Sabbath teachings so generously dealt out to his servants. Shame! shame! to take upon yourselves the name of Christ, with all that blackness of heart. I should think, when making such statements, the slaveholders would feel the rebuke of the Apostle, and fall down and be carried out from the face of day, as were Ananias and Sapphira, when they betrayed the trust committed to them, or refused to bear true testimony in regard to that trust.

There was another church, about fourteen miles from the one just mentioned. It was called "Brandon's church," and there the white Baptists worshipped. Edloe's slaves sometimes went there. The colored people had a very small place allotted them to sit in, so they used to get as near the window as they could to hear the preacher talk to his congregation. But sometimes, while the preacher was exhorting to obedience, some of those outside would be selling refreshments, cake, candy, and rum, and others would be horse-racing. This was the way, my readers, the Word of God was delivered and received in Prince George County. The Gospel was so mixed with Slavery, that the people could see no beauty in it, and feel no reverence for it.

There was one Brother Shell, who used to preach. One Sabbath, while exhorting the poor, impenitent, hard-hearted, ungrateful slaves, so much beloved by their masters, to repentance and prayerfulness, while entreating them to lead good lives, that they might escape the wrath (of the lash) to come, some of his crocodile tears overflowed his cheek, which so affected his

hearers, that they shouted and gave thanks to God, that brother Shell had at length felt the spirit of the Lord in his heart; and many went away rejoicing that a heart of stone had become softened. But, my readers, Monday morning, brother Shell was afflicted with his old malady, hardness of heart, so that he was obliged to catch one of the sisters by the throat, and give her a terrible flogging.

The like of this is the preaching, and these are the men that spread the Gospel among the slaves. Ah! such a Gospel had better be buried in oblivion, for it makes more heathens than Christians. Such preachers ought to be forbidden by the laws of the land ever to mock again at the blessed religion of Jesus, which was sent as a light to the world.

Another Sunday, when Shell was expounding, (very much engaged was he in his own attempts to enlighten his hearers,) there was one Jem Fulcrum became so enlightened that he fell from his seat, quite a distance, to the floor. Brother Shell thought he had preached unusually well so to affect Jem; so he stopped in the midst of his sermon, and asked, "Is that poor Jemmy? poor fellow!" But, my readers, he did not know the secret,—*brother Jem had fallen asleep*. Poor Shell did not do so much good as he thought he had, so Monday morning he gave Jem enough of his raw-hide spirit to last him all the week; at least, till the next Sabbath, when he could have an opportunity to preach to him.

I could only think, when Shell took so much glory to himself for the effect of his preaching upon the slaves, of the man who owned colored Pompey. This slaveholder was a great fighter, (as most of them are,) and had prepared himself for the contest with great care, and wished to know how he looked; so he said, "Pompey, how do I look?" "O, massa, *mighty*." "What do you mean by 'mighty,' Pompey?" "Why, massa, you look noble." "What do you mean by 'noble?'" "Why, sar, you look just like one *lion*." "Why, Pompey, where have you ever seen a lion?" "I see one down in yonder field the other day, massa." "Pompey, you foolish fellow, that was a *jackass*." "Was it, massa? Well, you look just like him."

This may seem very simple to my readers, but surely, nothing more noble than a jackass, without his simplicity and innocence, can that man be, who will rise up as an advocate of this system of wrong. He who trains his dogs to hunt foxes, and enjoys the hunt or the horse-race on the Sabbath, who teaches his blood-hounds to follow upon the track of the freedom-loving negro, is not more guilty or immoral than he who stands in a Northern pulpit, and hunts down the flying fugitive, or urges his hearers to bind the yoke again upon the neck of the escaped bondman. He who will lisp one word in favor of a system which will send blood-hounds through the forests of Virginia, the Carolinas, Georgia, Kentucky, and all the South, chasing human beings, (who are seeking

the inalienable rights of all men, “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,”) possesses no heart; and that minister of religion who will do it is unworthy his trust, knows not what the Gospel teaches, and had better turn to the heathen for a religion to guide him nearer the right; for the heathen in their blindness have some regard for the rights of others, and seldom will they invade the honor and virtue of their neighbors, or cause them to be torn in pieces by infuriated beasts.

Mr. James L. Goltney was a Baptist preacher, and was employed by Mr. M. B. Harrison to give religious instruction to his slaves. He often used the common text: “Servants, obey your masters.” He would try to make it appear that he knew what the slaves were thinking of,—telling them they thought they had a right to be free, but he could tell them better,—referring them to some passages of Scripture. “It is the devil,” he would say, “who tells you to try and be free.” And again he bid them be patient at work, warning them that it would be his duty to whip them, if they appeared dissatisfied,—all which would be pleasing to God! “If you run away, you will be turned out of God’s church, until you repent, return, and ask God and your master’s pardon.” In this way he would continue to preach his slaveholding gospel.

This same Goltney used to administer the Lord’s Supper to the slaves. After such preaching, let no one say that the slaves have the Gospel of Jesus preached to them.

One of the Baptist ministers was named B. Harrison. He owned slaves, and was very cruel to them. He came to an untimely end. While he was riding out one afternoon, the report of a gun was heard, and he was found dead,—his brains being blown out. It could never be found who killed him, and so he went to judgment, with all his sins on his head.

Mr. L. Hanner was a Christian preacher, selecting texts like the following: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach deliverance to the captives, he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted.” But Hanner was soon mobbed out of Prince George’s County, and had to flee for his life, and all for preaching a true Gospel to colored people.

I did not know of any other denomination where I lived in Virginia, than the Baptists and Presbyterians. Most of the colored people, and many of the poorer class of whites, were Baptists.

SABBATH AND RELIGIOUS MEETINGS.

On the Sabbath, after doing their morning work, and breakfast over, (such as it is,) that portion of the slaves who belong to the church ask of the overseer permission to attend meeting. If he is in the mood to grant their request, he writes them a pass, as follows:—

“Permit the bearer to pass and repass to —, this evening, unmolested.”

Should a pass not be granted, the slave lies down, and sleeps for the day—the only way to drown his sorrow and disappointment.

Others of the slaves, who do not belong to the church, spend their Sabbath in playing with marbles, and other games, for each other’s food, &c.

Some occupy the time in dancing to the music of a banjo, made out of a large gourd. This is continued till the after part of the day, when they separate, and gather wood for their log-cabin fires the ensuing week.

Not being allowed to hold meetings on the plantation, the slaves assemble in the swamps, out of reach of the patrols. They have an understanding among themselves as to the time and place of getting together. This is often done by the first one arriving breaking boughs from the trees, and bending them in the direction of the selected spot. Arrangements are then made for conducting the exercises. They first ask each other how they feel, the state of their minds, &c. The male members then select a certain space, in separate groups, for their division of the meeting. Preaching in order, by the brethren; then praying and singing all round, until they generally feel quite happy. The speaker usually commences by calling himself unworthy, and talks very slowly, until, feeling the spirit, he grows excited, and in a short time, there fall to the ground twenty or thirty men and women under its influence. Enlightened people call it excitement; but I wish the same was felt by everybody, so far as they are sincere.

The slave forgets all his sufferings, except to remind others of the trials during the past week, exclaiming: “Thank God, I shall not live here always!” Then they pass from one to another, shaking hands, and bidding each other farewell, promising, should they meet no more on earth, to strive and meet in heaven, where all is joy, happiness and liberty. As they separate, they sing a parting hymn of praise.

Sometimes the slaves meet in an old log-cabin, when they find it necessary to keep a watch. If discovered, they escape, if possible; but those who are caught often get whipped. Some are willing to be punished thus for Jesus’ sake. Most of the songs used in worship are composed by the slaves themselves, and describe their own sufferings. Thus:

“O, that I had a bosom friend,
To tell my secrets to,
One always to depend upon
In every thing I do!”

“How I do wander, up and down!
I seem a stranger, quite undone;
None to lend an ear to my complaint,
No one to cheer me, though I faint.”

Some of the slaves sing—

“No more rain, no more snow,
No more cowskin on my back;”

then they change it by singing—

“Glory be to God that rules on high.”

In some places, if the slaves are caught praying to God, they are whipped more than if they had committed a great crime. The slaveholders will allow the slaves to dance, but do not want them to pray to God. Sometimes, when a slave, on being whipped, calls upon God, he is forbidden to do so, under threat of having his throat cut, or brains blown out. O, reader! this seems very hard,—that slaves cannot call on their Maker, when the case most needs it. Sometimes the poor slave takes courage to ask his master to let him pray, and is driven away with the answer, that if discovered praying, his back will pay the bill.

SEVERING OF FAMILY TIES.

At one time, Mr. George Harrison employed a vessel to take some of his slaves down the river, as he wished to sell them. The vessel came, and anchored off his farm, as an armed fleet would go to make war upon an enemy's country. While this vessel was steering off the shore, the very waves seemed to speak forth in sorrow and mourning to the dreading slave. Not one word of warning was given them, until the vessel was anchored to receive its living freight. Husbands were thrust on board, leaving their wives behind; wives were torn from the arms which should have protected them, and hurried into that living grave; children were torn shrieking from their parents, never to see them more; tender maidens were dragged from the manly hearts which loved them; the ardent lover was scoffingly compelled to break from the entwining arms of his loved one, and bid a final adieu to all the world held dear to his heart. O, ye defenders of Slavery! tarry here, place yourselves here, in the situation of these miserable beings! *Pro-slavery men and women!* for one moment only, in imagination, stand surrounded by *your* loved ones, and behold *them*, one by one, torn from your grasp, or you rudely and forcibly carried from them—how, think you, you would bear it? Would you not rejoice if one voice, even, were raised in your behalf? were your wife, the partner of your bosom, the mother of your babes, thus ruthlessly snatched from you, were your beloved children stolen before your eyes, would you not think it sufficient cause for a nation's wail? Yea, and a nation's interference! What better are you than those poor down-trodden children of humanity? With them, such scenes are constantly transpiring.

Mothers! while fondling your darling babes in your arms, and watching, with the eye of a mother's affection, their little mental dawns, do you ever think of the poor slave mother, who, with equal affection, looks upon her offspring, yet, with a heart full of agony, prays God to take it to himself, before the evil day comes, when it must be goaded and lashed, and then forbidden every consolation of affection? O, think of her, pray for her, toil for her!

Fathers! you who stand before your fellow-men and uphold this hellish institution, while your blooming daughters are before you, look at them, and think!—in your own land are thousands of daughters, as lovely, as much beloved, as yours, whose parents cannot protect them, whose parents cannot say, "My daughter! beware of the tempter's snare! My daughter! fly to these arms for protection! My daughter! pour out your sorrows upon your mother's bosom; into her listening ear tell your tale of wrongs; she will guide, she will comfort you!" No, but they must look tamely on and witness their degradation;

they must behold them become the spoiler's prey, and presume not to utter one word in their behalf. Why? They are SLAVES! the property of *free-born American citizens*; and why should we *infringe upon their rights*? Ah, father! could you see your daughter in such a situation, and not cry aloud for vengeance? And what better are you than the poor slave, whose only sin is, that his skin is, perhaps, one shade darker than yours—*perhaps not even that*?

Young man! will you defend Slavery? Will you cast your vote for a slaveholder? Think, before you speak; consider well before you act. Could you have that fair young being you one day hope to call your wife torn from you, and publicly sold to the service of a debauchee? Would you think it too much to call on the laws of the land for redress? Would you think it asking too much to call out the whole military force of the country to the rescue? Ah, no! And could you restrain yourselves, and behold the loved forms of your aged parents reeking with their own blood, drawn forth by one who calls himself their master? Indeed, no! no dungeon deep and loathsome enough for such an one; no gibbet too high to swing him on, as an example to all of his kind. And what better are your loved ones than those millions of colored suffering brothers and sisters? Ask no more, "Why meddle with slavery?" As you would receive assistance, give it to others.

The vessel to which I have alluded, anchored by Harrison's estate, was made ready to sail on Sunday, that all might witness her departure. Imagination cannot conceive, nor language describe, those parting scenes. When all were on board, a dead silence reigned. No sound, except the harsh voice of the captain, as he gave his orders, and the coarse jests of the sailors, was heard. Slowly the vessel crept along the shore, like some guilty thing, trying to hide itself from the light of day. Then pealed forth upon the Sabbath air a cry of wo that rent the heavens, and was registered there. "Good by, my husband!" "Farewell, my wife!" "Good by, children! we must hope to meet in heaven!" With shouts like these, they gazed upon each other as long as the vessel was in sight. Then, indeed, all was over. "Gone, gone, forever," or "left behind," "going, going, farther and farther from the loved ones," these were the cruel reflections. Some returned to their deserted cabins, not one loved one to meet; some fathers drew around them their little ones, bereft of a mother's love; wives sat and wept alone; children wandered about without parents, or any one to love them. O, men with hearts, how can you be unconcerned and careless regarding this curse of your country? O, my readers, I wish you could enter into my feelings, or rather, that my feelings might enter into your souls, on this subject! God, in His infinite wisdom, created the Ethiopian race with skins of a darker hue than the European. He did so with an all-wise purpose; but was that purpose that they might be the subjects of every outrage from their fellow-men, from generation to generation? O, surely not! What crime

can it be to be born with a dark skin? Who is responsible? The Creator alone. But who are responsible for the crimes perpetrated against them? The *slaveholder* and his *supporters*!

This scene of the separation upon James River, where all the tenderest ties of the human heart were sundered, was but one among the very many which occur daily. Go with the poor bereaved ones the next morning, as they rise from their disturbed slumbers, to commence the day of toil. The sight of the master is gall to their wounded spirits; they look not upon the overseer except with absolute horror; but if they falter, they must feel the lash. Even the little crouching, grieving children, are forbidden to weep for their dear parents. The lash, the curse, are their only consolations, except when they can crawl by themselves, and pour out their woes into the sympathising ear of Jesus, their great Comforter.

My father was living at the time these slaves of Harrison were sold. He was one of his drivers, so he was not sold with them; but he had two brothers who were, and with a heavy heart he had to witness their departure, without daring to say his soul was his own. Monday, he must return to his disgraceful business of whipping his fellows; but what could he do? He must obey his master, or suffer a worse penalty than he could inflict upon others. Some may say, while sitting comfortably among their dear friends, "We would die before we would be guilty of beating, at the command of another, our own kinsmen, perhaps our own children." Ah! it is easy to suppose and assert what you would do, while you are safe; but *you are not a slave!* Your feelings of generous affection may well take deep root, shoot upward and flourish; they are never harrowed up by the sight of tortures you are unable to prevent, never trodden upon and crushed into the dust. You may boast of your manly courage and your willingness to die; it may be the poor slave-driver would crave the privilege of dying for his loved ones, but would it profit those left behind, so long as the lash and a white overseer remained? No! no! hands without a heart might use it,—there would be no escape.

Many say the slave on the Southern plantation is the happiest creature alive. They don't know; they don't lift the cover; they don't see them always. I have seen many a white man carry a smiling face to the world, when his heart was aching and cankering in wretchedness; I have heard a merry laugh from a maniac, whose brain had been crazed by mental anguish, but I never supposed he was happy;—and I have told you, in another place, how these slaves are prepared by rum for company and spectators.

COLORED DRIVERS.

The colored overseers are not over the slaves because they wish it, but are

so placed against their will. When they first commence to lash the backs of their fellows, they are like soldiers when they first go to the battle-field; they dread and fear the contest, until they hear the roaring of the cannon, and smell the powder, and mark the whizzing ball; then they rush into the battle, forgetful of all human sympathy while in the fight. So it is with the slave-drivers. They hear the angry tones of the slaveholder's voice, admonishing them that if they refuse to whip, they must take it themselves. After receiving the instructions of their owners, they must forget even their own wives and children, and do all they can for "Master." If they do not do this, they must receive all that would be given the others. In this manner, their hearts and consciences are hardened, and they become educated to whipping, and lose all human feeling.

This is the way the slaveholders take to hide their own wickedness. They say the colored driver is more cruel than the white overseer, and use this as an argument against the poor colored man, to show how cruelly they would treat each other if they had the power. Pardon me, my readers, if I say this is an insult to God; since my own experience teaches me better. Reader, when they say that colored drivers are worse than white, the question may well be asked, Why is this? Is it the fault of the colored people, or is it the fault of the white man? Good sense answers to every thinking mind, and says the poor negro is not the greatest transgressor here, but the white men are the tyrannical instigators of this wrong.

I have known many instances where slaves were put to death by the overseers, without any notice being taken of it by those who administer the laws. Of course, as the word of a black man is not received against a white, nothing could be effected, even if the murderer were arrested. I will give a few cases that came within my own knowledge. James Lewis was shot down by an overseer, and killed. Dick Never was shot down by Owen Woodcock, and killed. Ham was shot by Bishop, and killed. A woman was shot dead by our overseer Hobbs. Wyatt Lee was shot, but not killed. William Painting was shot.

These, my readers, are facts, which will speak for themselves when the great day of reckoning shall come; and those black-hearted sinners will surely be punished, for no sinner escapes finally. If the laws of Virginia and other slaveholding States allow them to go unscathed, the eternal laws of justice and right will not.

MENTAL CAPACITY OF THE SLAVE.

Much is said about the inability of the slaves to learn any thing but drudgery; that they are fit for nothing else; that those who have ever shown any intellectual power are of mixed blood, not the pure African. This I deny, and I will prove that the African is capable of the highest culture. As a people, how can they be expected to have enlightened minds, when they are denied every privilege of learning? They never have teachers, books are not within their reach,—surely, they would be wonderful beings, if, amid all their hardships and privations, they should show themselves scholars! Their ideas of God, heaven, and religion, are very simple and childlike; but they are the conceptions of their own uninstructed minds.

The world sees, in the person of FREDERICK DOUGLASS, what the son of Ethiopia may become. He had no advantages in his youth, but now, before he is old, his fame as an orator has spread over this land, extended itself across the Atlantic, and carried *him* to the shores of the old world, where his eloquence, intelligence, and worth, gained for himself and family a name which will adorn the pages of history long after his voice is hushed in death. Had Douglass been educated in youth, there is not a statesman on this continent who would have stood above him.

Then there is Rev. SAMUEL R. WARD, an unmixed African, who has made great proficiency in learning. His powers as a public speaker are truly captivating, and so ably does he write and speak, that even his enemies acknowledge him to be a man of uncommon power.

There is, also, Rev. HENRY HIGHLAND GARNETT, a son of the same race. He is a scholar, a gentleman and an orator, as all who have seen and heard him admit.

These men are but few out of many, and they prove to the world that the negro is as capable of high intellectual culture as his Saxon brother.

It must be acknowledged by every historian, that Ethiopia was once the most civilized nation upon earth, and that the enlightened nations of the present day are indebted to her for many of the arts of civilization. The people of that country were the first to work in brass, iron, and other metals, and were really the first to invent writing, for they used hieroglyphics to express words and ideas, which no other nation had then done. Let it not be said, then, that the negro cannot be educated. *Free the slaves*, give them equal opportunities with the whites, and I warrant you, they will not fall short in comparison.

I do protest against this great evil of Slavery in this civilized land of America, and solemnly appeal to those having authority in behalf of three

millions and a half of my suffering brethren, who are held by the galling yoke of bondage, that this great evil may be done away, before the retributions of a God of justice overtake this blackest of sins, and scathe the sinner root and branch.

I appeal to the Christian Church to lift up its voice, that it may be heard from shore to shore in defence of the oppressed.

I appeal to the men of America every where to help this cause.

I appeal to the women of America, that they plead for their suffering sisters, toiling and weeping under cruel taskmasters in the sunny South.

I appeal to little children, that they remember in their prayers those little colored brothers and sisters who are robbed of their parents, have no homes for their weary little frames, no affection to make life lovely to them, no one to teach them and guide them to the Fountain of all Truth.

I appeal to high Heaven to listen to the heart-breaking cries of the captive negro, and pray the great Jehovah to soften the hard hearts of the many Pharaohs, that they may let the people go free!

THE BLOOD OF THE SLAVE.

The blood of the slave cries unto God from the ground, and it calls loudly for vengeance on his adversaries.

The blood of the slave cries unto God from the rice swamps.

The blood of the slave cries unto God from the cotton plantations.

The blood of the slave cries unto God from the tobacco farms.

The blood of the slave cries unto God from the sugar fields.

The blood of the slave cries unto God from the corn fields.

The blood of the slave cries unto God from the whipping-post.

The blood of the slave cries unto God from the auction-block.

The blood of the slave cries unto God from the gallows.

The blood of the slave cries unto God from the hunting-dogs that run down the poor fugitive.

The blood of men, women and babes cries unto God from Texas to Maine. Wherever the Fugitive Slave Law reaches, the voice of its victims is heard.

The mighty God, the great Jehovah, speaks to the consciences of men, and says, "LET MY PEOPLE GO FREE!" And the slaveholder answers, "Who is Jehovah, that I should obey him?" Then the Anti-Slavery voice is heard, calling, "Awake! *Awake!* and cry aloud against this great evil; lift up your voice like a trumpet, and show the people their sins, and the nation its guilt. Pray that God may have mercy upon us. O, forgive us this great evil,—the evil of selling, whipping, and killing men, women and children! O, God of justice! give us hearts and consciences to feel the deep sorrow of this great evil that we have so long indulged in! Lo! we have sinned against Heaven; we have sinned against light,—against the civilized world. We have sinned against that declaration which our fathers put forth to the world, '*All men are created equal.*' O, God! forgive us this great sin! O, let this prayer be heard!"

“WHERE IS THY BROTHER?”
BY MRS. E. L. FOLLEN.

“What mean ye, that ye bruise and bind
My people?” saith the Lord;
“And starve your craving brother’s mind,
Who asks to hear my word?

What mean ye, that ye make them toil
Through long and hopeless years;
And shed, like rain, upon your soil,
Their blood and bitter tears?

What mean ye, that ye dare to rend
The tender mother’s heart?
Brother from sister, friend from friend,
How dare ye bid them part?

What mean ye, when God’s bounteous hand
To you so much has given,
That from the slave that tills your land,
Ye keep both earth and heaven?”

When, at the Judgment, God shall call,
“Where is thy brother?”—say!
What mean ye to the Judge of all
To answer, on that day?

TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Mis-spelled words and printer errors have been fixed.

[The end of *Sketches of Slave Life: or, Illustrations of the 'Peculiar Institution'*
by Peter Randolph]