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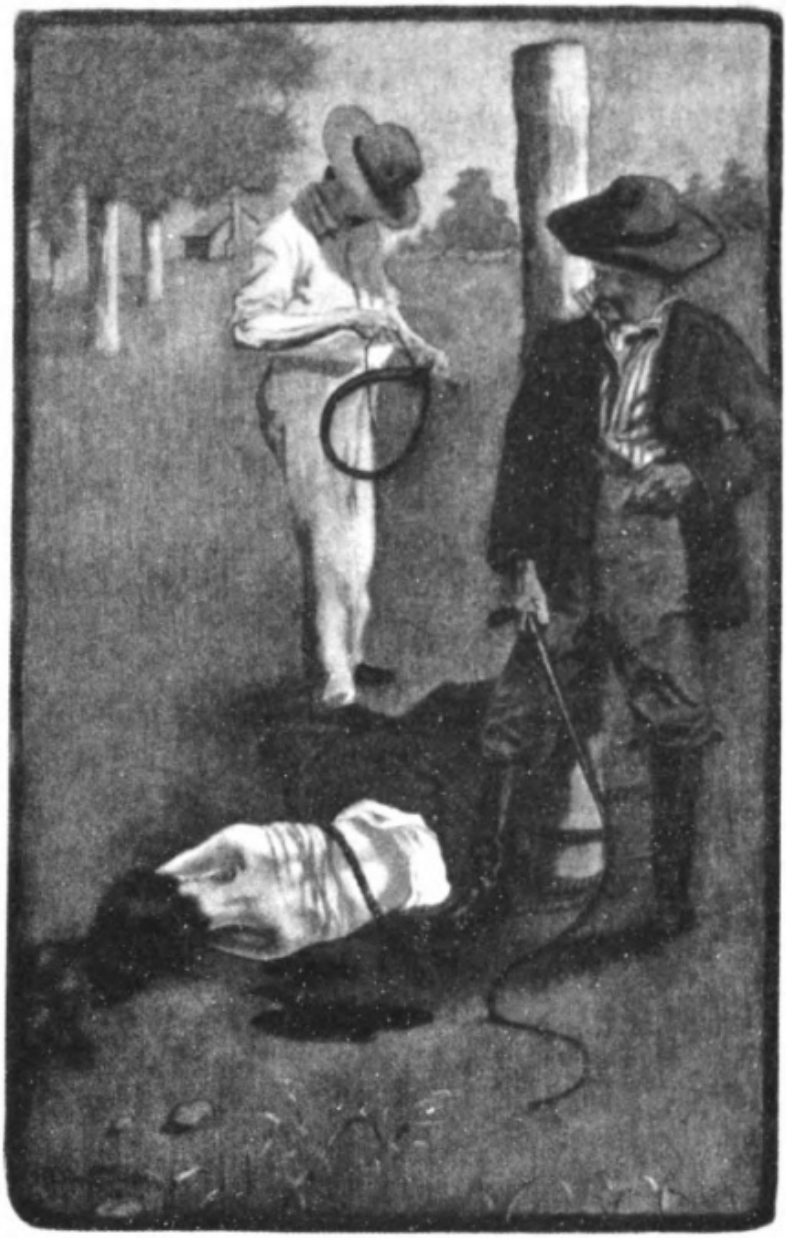

HE CUT THE ROPES THAT BOUND HER, AND SHE SANK UPON THE GROUND AGAIN. (See page 69.)

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A ROMANCE ILLUSTRATIVE OF NEGRO LIFE NORTH AND SOUTH

BY

PAULINE E. HOPKINS

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND COVER DESIGN BY

R. EMMETT OWEN

"The civility of no race can be perfect whilst another race is degraded."

— EMERSON.

BOSTON, MASS.
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Dedication.

To the
Friends of Humanity Everywhere
I offer this humble tribute
written by
one of a proscribed race.

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PREFACE.

In giving this little romance expression in print, I am not actuated by a desire for notoriety or for profit, but to do all that I can in an humble way to raise the stigma of degradation from my race.

While I make no apology for my somewhat abrupt and daring venture within the wide field of romantic literature, I ask the kind indulgence of the generous public for the many crudities which I know appear in the work, and their approval of whatever may impress them as being of value to the Negro race and to the world at large.

The colored race has historians, lecturers, ministers, poets, judges and lawyers,— men of brilliant intellects who have arrested the favorable attention of this busy, energetic nation. But, after all, it is the simple, homely tale, unassumingly told, which cements the bond of brotherhood among all classes and all complexions.

Fiction is of great value to any people as a preserver of manners and customs — religious, political and social. It is a record of growth

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and development from generation to generation. *No one will do this for us; we must ourselves develop the men and women who will faithfully portray the inmost thoughts and feelings of the Negro with all the fire and romance which lie dormant in our history*, and, as yet, unrecognized by writers of the Anglo-Saxon race.

The incidents portrayed in the early chapters of the book actually occurred. Ample proof of this may be found in the archives of the courthouse at Newberne, N. C., and at the national seat of government, Washington, D. C.

In these days of mob violence, when lynch-law is raising its head like a venomous monster, more particularly in the southern portion of the great American republic, the retrospective mind will dwell upon the history of the past, seeking there a solution of these monstrous outbreaks under a government founded upon the greatest and brightest of principles for the elevation of mankind. While we ponder the philosophy of cause and effect, the world is horrified by a fresh outbreak, and the shocked mind wonders that in this — the brightest epoch of the Christian era — *such things are.*

Mob-law is nothing new. Southern senti-

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ment has not been changed; the old ideas close in analogy to the spirit of the buccaneers, who formed in many instances the first settlers of the Southland, still prevail, and break forth clothed in new forms to force the whole republic to an acceptance of its principles.

"Rule or ruin" is the motto which is committing the most beautiful portion of our glorious country to a cruel revival of piratical methods; and, finally, to the introduction of *Anarchy*. Is this not so? Let us compare the happenings of one hundred — two hundred years ago, with those of today. The difference between then and now, if any there be, is so slight as to be scarcely worth mentioning. The atrocity of the acts committed one hundred years ago are duplicated today, when slavery is supposed no longer to exist.

I have tried to tell an impartial story, leaving it to the reader to draw conclusions. I have tried to portray our hard struggles here in the North to obtain a respectable living and a partial education. I have presented both sides of the dark picture — lynching and concubinage — truthfully and without vituperation, pleading for that justice of heart and mind for my people which the Anglo-Saxon in America never withholds from suffering humanity.

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In Chapter XIII. I have used for the address of the Hon. Herbert Clapp the statements and accusations made against the Negro by ex-Governor Northen of Georgia, in his memorable address before the Congregational Club at Tremont Temple, Boston, Mass., May 22, 1899. In Chapter XV. I have made Will Smith's argument in answer to the Hon. Herbert Clapp a combination of the best points made by well-known public speakers in the United States — white and black — in defense of the Negro. I feel my own deficiencies too strongly to attempt original composition on this subject at this crisis in the history of the Negro in the United States. I have introduced enough of the exquisitely droll humor peculiar to the Negro (a work like this would not be complete without it) to give a bright touch to an otherwise gruesome subject.

THE AUTHOR.

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CONTENDING FORCES.

CHAPTER I.

A RETROSPECT OF THE PAST.

We wait beneath the furnace-blast
The pangs of transformation;
Not painlessly doth God recast
And mould anew the nation.
Hot burns the fire
Where wrongs expire;
Nor spares the hand
That from the land
Uproots the ancient evil.

— J. G. Whittier.

In the early part of the year 1800 the agitation of the inhabitants of Great Britain over the increasing horrors of the slave trade carried on in the West Indian possessions of the Empire was about reaching a climax. Every day the terrible things done to slaves were becoming public talk, until the best English humanitarians, searching for light upon the subject, became sick at heart over the discoveries that they made and were led to declare the principle: "The air of England is too pure for any slave to breathe."

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To go back a little way in the romantic history of the emancipation of the slaves in the islands will not take much time, and will, I hope, be as instructive as interesting. Tales of the abuses of the slaves, with all the sickening details, had reached the Quaker community as early as 1783, and that tender-hearted people looked about themselves to see what steps they could take to ameliorate the condition of the Negroes in the West Indies, and to discourage the continuation of the trade along the African coast.

Thomas Clarkson, a student at Cambridge, was drawn into writing a prize essay on the subject, and became so interested that he allied himself with the Quakers and investigated the subject for himself, thereby confirming his own belief, "that Providence had never made that to be wise that was immoral; and that the slave trade was as impolitic as it was unjust."

After strenuous efforts by Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox, Parliament became interested and instituted an inquiry into the abuses of the slave trade. Finally, Mr. Wilberforce was drawn into the controversy, and for sixteen years waged an incessant warfare against the planters, meeting with defeat in his plans for ten consecutive years; but finally, in 1807, he was successful, and the slave trade was abolished.

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These assailants of the slave trade had promised not to try to abolish slavery; but in a short time they learned that the trade was still carried on in ships sailing under the protection of false flags. Tales of the cruelties practiced upon the helpless chattels were continually reaching the ears of the British public, some of them such as to sicken the most cold-hearted and indifferent. For instance: causing a child to whip his mother until the blood ran; if a slave looked his master in the face, his limbs were broken; women in the first stages of their accouchement, upon refusing to work, were placed in the treadmill, where terrible things happened, too dreadful to relate.

Through the efforts of Granville Sharpe, the chairman of the London committee, Lord Stanley, minister of the colonies, introduced into the House of Commons his bill for emancipation.

Lord Stanley's bill proposed *gradual* emancipation, and was the best thing those men of wisdom could devise. Earnestly devoted to their task, they sought to wipe from the fair escutcheon of the Empire the awful blot which was upon it. By the adoption of the bill Great Britain not only liberated a people from the cruelties of their masters, but at the same time took an important step forward in the onward

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march of progress, which the most enlightened nations are unconsciously forced to make by the great law of advancement; "for the civility of no race can be perfect whilst another race is degraded."

In this bill of gradual emancipation certain conditions were proposed. All slaves were entitled to be known as apprenticed laborers, and to acquire thereby all the rights and privileges of freemen. "These conditions were that prædials should owe three-fourths of the profits of their labors to their masters for six years, and the non-prædials for four years. The other fourth of the apprentice's time was to be his own, which he might sell to his master or to other persons; and at the end of the term of years fixed, he should be free."

In the winter of 1790, when these important changes in the life of the Negro in the West Indies were pending, many planters were following the course of events with great anxiety. Many feared that in the end their slaves would be taken from them without recompense, and thereby render them and their families destitute. Among these planters was the family of Charles Montfort, of the island of Bermuda.

Bermuda's fifteen square miles of area lays six hundred miles from the nearest American

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coast. Delightful is this land, formed from coral reefs, flat and fertile, which to the eye appears as but a pin point upon the ocean's broad bosom, one of "a thousand islands in a tropic sea."

Once Bermuda was second only to Virginia in its importance as a British colony; once it held the carrying trade of the New World; once was known as the "Gibraltar of the Atlantic," although its history has been that of a simple and peaceful people. Its importance to the mother country as a military and naval station has drawn the paternal bonds of interest closer as the years have flown by. Indeed, Great Britain has been kind to the colonists of this favored island from its infancy, sheltering and shielding them so carefully that the iron hand of the master has never shown beneath the velvet glove. So Bermuda has always been intensely British, — intensely loyal. Today, at the beginning of the new century, Bermuda presents itself, outside of its importance as a military station for a great power, as a vast sanatorium for the benefit of invalids. A temperate climate, limpid rivers, the balmy fragrance and freshness of the air, no winter, — nature changing only in the tints of its foliage, — have contributed to its renown as a health-giving region; and thus Shakespeare's magic

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island of Prospero and Miranda has become, indeed, to the traveler

The spot of earth uncurst,
To show how all things were created first.

Mr. Montfort was the owner of about seven hundred slaves. He was well known as an exporter of tobacco, sugar, coffee, onions and other products so easily grown in that salubrious climate, from which he received large returns. He was neither a cruel man, nor an avaricious one; but like all men in commercial life, or traders doing business in their own productions, he lost sight of the individual right or wrong of the matter, or we might say with more truth, that he perverted right to be what was conducive to his own interests, and felt that by owning slaves he did no man a wrong, since it was the common practice of those all about him, and he had been accustomed to this peculiar institution all his life.

Indeed, slavery never reached its lowest depths in this beautiful island; but a desire for England's honor and greatness had become a passion with the inhabitants, and restrained the planters from committing the ferocious acts of brutality so commonly practiced by the Spaniards. In many cases African blood had become diluted from amalgamation with the

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higher race, and many of these "colored" people became rich planters or business men (themselves owning slaves) through the favors heaped upon them by their white parents. This being the case, there might even have been a strain of African blood polluting the fair stream of Montfort's vitality, or even his wife's, which fact would not have caused him one instant's uneasiness. Moreover, he was a good master, and felt that while he housed his slaves well, fed them with the best of food suited to their occupations and the climate, and did not cruelly beat them, they fared better with him than they would have with another, perhaps, or even if they held property themselves.

The speeches of Mr. Pitt, Mr. Burke and others, together with the general trend of public sentiment as expressed through the medium of the British press, had now begun to make an impression upon some of the more humane of the planters on this island, and among them was Mr. Montfort. Uneasiness now took the place of his former security; thought would obtrude itself upon him, and in the quiet hours of the night this man fought out the battle which conscience waged within him, and right prevailed to the extent of his deciding that he would free his slaves, but in his own

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way. He determined to leave Bermuda, and after settling in some other land, he would gradually free his slaves without impoverishing himself; bestow on each one a piece of land, and finally, with easy conscience, he would retire to England, and there lead the happy life of an English gentleman of fortune.

With this end in view, being a man of affairs and well acquainted with the whole of the American continent, he naturally turned his eyes towards the United States, where the institution flourished, and the people had not yet actually awakened to the folly and wickedness exemplified in the enslavement of their fellow-beings. For reasons which were never known, he finally made choice of Newbern, N. C., for a home.

Sunday was and is the high holiday in all tropical climes.. On that day the slave forgot his bonds. It was noon; the early service of the Church of England was ended. The clergyman of the parish had accompanied Charles Montfort home. Mrs. Montfort was visiting friends, so the two gentlemen dined alone. The clergyman was rather glad that he had the opportunity of seeing Mr. Montfort alone, and had used all his powers of persuasion to turn him from his proposed exodus. It was of no avail, as the good man soon found;

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and with a sigh, he finally took his hat and prepared to leave. Both stood outside the house upon the broad walk beneath the shade of the fragrant cedars and the fruitful tamarind trees. The silence of deep feeling was between these two men. The clergyman could only remember the reverence he had always received, and the loving service given him by this family. Montfort thought with pain of the holy ministrations of this silver-haired man, who had pronounced the solemn words that bound him to his gentle wife, had baptized his children, and (tenderest act of all) had buried the little daughter whose grave was yonder, beneath the flowering trees in the churchyard. Yes, it was sad to part and leave all these tender ties of friendship behind.

"The bishop will come himself, Charles, to persuade you that this is a dangerous step you are about to take," finally the good man said, breaking the silence.

"Why dangerous? Is it any more so for me than for those who left England to build a home here in the wilderness?"

"Different, very different. The mother hand was still over them, even in these wilds. Out there," and he pointed in the direction of the bay, "they tell me that for all their boasted freedom, the liberty of England is not found,

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and human life is held cheaply in the eyes of men who are mere outlaws. Ah! but the bishop," he continued with a sigh, "he can tell you; he has seen; he is not a weak old man like me. He will talk you out of this plan of separation from all your friends."

Again silence fell upon them. In the direction of the square a crowd of slaves were enjoying the time of idleness. Men were dancing with men, and women with women, to the strange monotonous music of drums without tune, relics of the tom-tom in the wild African life which haunted them in dreamland. Still, there was pleasure for even a cultivated musical ear in the peculiar variation of the rhythm. The scanty raiment of gay-colored cotton stuffs set off the varied complexions, — yellow, bronze, white, — the flashing eyes, the gleaming teeth, and gave infinite variety to the scene. Over there, waterfalls fell in the sunlight in silvery waves; parti-colored butterflies of vivid coloring, and humming-birds flashed through the air with electrical radiance; gay parrakeets swung and chattered from the branches of the trees.

"Where, my son," said the clergyman, indicating the landscape with a wave of his hand, "will you find a scene more beautiful than this? How can you leave it and those who love you and yours?"

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"Beautiful, indeed; and I will confess that it grows dearer as the time for my departure draws near," answered Montfort. "I will walk with you," he continued, as the clergyman turned in the direction of the road. As they passed through the wide entrance gates a Negro woman was weeding her little garden; her pickaninny was astride her back, spurring his mother as a rider his horse. The woman and the child looked up and smiled at the master and his guest, and the woman put the child on the ground and stood upright to bob a queer little courtesy. They walked along in silence until they reached the plaza.

"My son, will you not be persuaded?"

"Father, I have made up my mind firmly, after due consideration. I believe it is for the best."

They paused a moment at the square; then the holy man said solemnly, as he raised his hand in benediction: "If it then be for the best, which God grant it may be, I pray the good Father of us all to keep you in safety and in perfect peace." He turned and disappeared in the crowd.

Charles Montfort was immediately surrounded by his friends, who greeted him joyously, for he was a genial man and had endeared himself greatly to his neighbors.

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"Still determined to leave us, Charles?" inquired one.

"Yes, for the good of myself and family. How can we submit tamely to the loss of our patrimonies without an effort to reimburse ourselves when a friendly land invites us to share its hospitality?"

"There is truth in your argument for all who, like you, Charles, have a large venture in slaves. Thank heaven I am so poor that a change of laws will not affect me," said one.

"Where a man's treasure is, there also is his heart. It is nature. Almost you persuade me, Charles, to do likewise," remarked another.

"As I have told you, I will retain my patrimony and free my slaves, too, by this venture in the United States under a more liberal government than ours."

"Ah! Charles," remarked another listener, "you forget the real difference between our government and that of the United States. And then the social laws are so different. You will never be able to accustom yourself to the habits of a republic. Do you not remember the planters from Georgia and Carolina who fought for good King George, and were stanch Royalists? They retired to the Bahamas when our cause was lost in the American colonies. My brother has just returned from a trip there. He

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tells strange tales of their surprise at many things we do here. I fear it is but a cold welcome you will receive from men of their class."

"Certainly," replied Montfort, "I shall try to be a good subject or citizen of whatever country I may be compelled to reside in for a long or short time."

"But surely you will not expose your wife to the inconveniencies of life in that country," said another.

"She has had her choice, but prefers hardships with me to life without me," proudly returned Montfort.

"A willful man must have his way," murmured one who had not yet spoken, "and I will give you three months to stay in the land of savages before you will be returning to us bag and baggage."

"Well," laughed Montford, "we shall see."

Twilight had fallen now, and Montfort bared his head to the refreshing sea breeze which fluttered every leaf. When he bade his friends good night, finally, and started on his homeward walk, the arguments of the good clergyman and of his friends were present in his harassed mind, and he wondered if he were doing wrong not to be prevailed upon to yield to the opinions of others. Once he almost determined that he would give it all up and remain in this

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land of love and beauty. To collect his scattered thoughts and calm his mind he turned toward the bay, and stood upon the beach, still allowing the breeze to play about his heated temples. Never before had he appreciated his home so much as now, when he contrasted it with the comparative barrenness of the new spot he had chosen. The water was alive with marine creatures; the sea aflame. The air was full of light-giving insects, incessantly moving, which illumined the darkness and gave life to every inanimate object. Over all the moon and stars were set in the cloudless deep-blue sky of coming night. Alas! his good angel fled with the darkness, and morning found him more determined than ever to go on with his project.

When it became generally known in Bermuda that Charles Montfort had decided to leave the place of his birth and establish himself in a foreign land, many friends gathered about him and advised him to reconsider his determination. Montfort laughingly invited them to join him in his new venture, and then earnestly pointed out to them the dangers which threatened their fortunes. He painted his plans in glowing colors, and ended by promising them that in less than twenty-five years he would land in England, a retired

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planter, his former slaves free and happy, and he himself rich and honored.

Having an immense amount of property to transport, it happened that Mr. Montfort was compelled to make two trips to Newbern before he removed his family to their new home; but after much energetic work and many difficulties, the little family looked through blinding tears at the receding shores of what had been a happy home. A week later a noble ship stood off the shores of North Carolina. On the deck was Charles Montfort; his wife hung upon his arm; beside the devoted couple were Charles, Jr., named for his father, and Jesse, the young darling of his mother's heart. Silently they gazed upon the fair scene before them, each longing for the land so recently left behind them, though no word of regret was spoken.

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CHAPTER II.

THE DAYS "BEFORE THE WAR."

O FREEDOM! thou art not as poets dream,
A fair young girl with light and delicate limbs,
. . . . . .
Thy birthright was not given by human hands:
Thou wert twinborn with man.

THE shores of Pamlico Sound presented a motley crowd of slaves, overseers, owners of vessels, and a phantasmagoric landscape very charming to eyes unaccustomed to such scenes. It was near the noon siesta. In the harbor lay three or four vessels ready to be loaded with their freight of rice, tobacco or cotton. The sun poured its level rays straight down upon the heads of all. A band of slaves sang in a musical monotone, and kept time to the music of their song as they unloaded a barge that had just arrived:

Turn dat han' spike roun' an' roun',
Hol' hard, honey; hol' hard, honey.
Brack man tote de buckra's load,
Hol' hard, honey; hol' hard, honey

Neber 'fo' seed a nigger like you,
Hol' hard, honey; hol' hard, honey.
Allers tinkin' 'bout yer ol' brack Sue,
Hol' hard, honey; hol' hard, honey.

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Ef I was an alligater what'd I do?
Hol' hard, honey; hol' hard, honey.
Run 'way wid ol' brack Sue,
Hol' hard, honey; hol' hard, honey.

Massa ketch yer, what'd he do?
Hi, hi, honey; hi, hi, honey.
Cut yer back an' ol' brack Sue's,
He, he, honey; he, he, honey.

I cuss massa 'hin' de fence,
Hol' hard, honey; hol' hard, honey.
Massa don' hyar make no differyence,
Hol' hard, honey; hol' hard, honey.

Turn dat han' spike roun' an' roun',
Hol' hard, honey; hol' hard, honey.
Brack man tote de buckra's load,
Hol' hard, honey; hol' hard, honey.

As the refrain died away the bell for the noon rest sounded faintly in the distance, gradually drawing nearer, and again their rich and plaintive voices blended together in sweet cadences as they finished placing the heavy load to the satisfaction of their drivers:

Hark, dat merry, purty bell go
Jing-a-lingle, jing-a-lingle, jingle bell,
Jing-a-lingle, jing-a-lingle, jing-a-lingle bell,
Jingle bell, jingle bell.

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Even so sang the children of Israel in their
6 captivity, as they sat by the rivers of Babylon awaiting deliverance.

Just now a ship, which had some time since appeared as a dark spot on the horizon, turned her majestic prow and steered for the entrance to the sound. Immediately the pilot boat in the harbor put out to her. Everyone on the shore became eagerly intent upon the strange ship, and they watched the pilot climb aboard with all the interest which usually attends the slightest cause for excitement in a small community.

The ship came on very slowly, for there was little wind, under topsail, jib and foresail, the British flag at the peak and the American flag at the fore. The people on shore could see the captain standing by the pilot, the anchor ready to be dropped, and the bowsprit shrouds loose. But now their interest was divided with a new arrival. A man on horseback rode down to the shaky wooden platform which served as a landing place for passengers; behind him, at a respectful distance, rode a white-haired Mulatto. The man leaped from his horse and threw his reins to the slave, signaled a couple of Negroes in a boat, jumped into it as they, obedient to his sign, pulled alongside the wharf, and was rowed swiftly out to the advancing ship, which

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was now making considerable headway toward the shore.

Among the idlers on the wharf was one whom everyone addressed as Bill. He was large, or rather burly, carried a rawhide in his hand, and from his air of authority toward them, was evidently the overseer of the gang of slaves who were loading the tobacco barge. From out the crowd a man who had been sitting idly on a bale of cotton moved toward him.

"Holloa, Bill," he said, addressing the owner of the rawhide.

"Howdy, Hank"; returned Bill, surveying the other curiously, "whar in time did you drap from?"

Hank did not reply directly. He shifted the tobacco quid in his mouth from one cheek to the other, then with a nod of the head toward the approaching vessel, asked: "Whar's she from?"

"Hain't been in town lately, I reckon, or you'd know all about the 'Island Queen' from Bermudy. Planter named Montfort on her. He's movin' his niggers here to Caroliny; gittin' too hot fer him back thar," replied Bill, with a backward jerk of his thumb in the supposed direction of Bermuda. "How's things up yer way?"

"Fair, fair to middlin', Bill; thar's been some talk 'bout a risin' among the niggers, and so we

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jes tuk a few o' them an' strun 'em up fer a eggsample to the res'. I tell you, Bill, we jes don't spec' to hav' no foolin' 'bout this yer question of who's on top as regards a gentleman's owning his niggers, an' whomsoeveder goes ter foolin' with that ar pertickler pint o' discusshun is gwine ter be made a eggsample of, even ef it's a white man. Didn' hyar nuthin' 'bout a circus up our way, did yer?"

Bill scratched his chin and shook his head in the negative.

"Wall, 'twas this here way: Jed Powers, you 'member Dan Powers' Jed, don' yer? Dan thet was tarred an' feathered fer selling good likely whiskey ter niggers?" Bill nodded in the affirmative. "Jed Powers wuz seed walkin' with Jimison's wench Violy. Be blowed ef he wasn't gittin' ready ter cut an' run ter Canidy with her!"

"Don' b'lieve yer, durned ef I do," said Bill.

"Fact! Be durned ef it ain't jes so."

"Wall! of all the onnat'rall cusses!"

"But his wurst offense, in gineral, wuz thet he wuz meanin' fer to marry her!" Hank paused in his narrative to allow a full appreciation of his statement to be impressed upon Bill's mind.

"Wus an' wus!" groaned the latter. "What is we comin' to, by thunder! I allays took Jed

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to be a decen' sort o' cuss, too. What's the committee doin' 'bout it?"

"Wall, we sot out to stop thet fun, anyhow. We got him after a hot chase, an' we put him in jail; an' las' week we guv him his trial. Jedge sentenced him to fifty lashes an' hangin' by the neck untell he wuz dead. But somehow or nuther folks is gittin' squeamish. Jedge don' durst to hang him; he'll jes guv him the fifty lashes an' a talkin' to on the immoralty o' his acts an' ways. Jedge tol' him he wuz young an' had a chance to 'pent from the desolute ways o' his youth, of which his wurst failin' wuz a-wantin' to marry niggers, leastwise he'd end in hell, shure. Jedge tol' him everythin' 'cordin' ter law an' jestice. We wuz calkerlatin' ter have a celebrashun to which all the leading citizens o' this county would 'a' been bid, but, o' course, not havin' the hangin' sort o' took the ginger out o' the whole business."

"I hain't a doubt o' yer horsepertality in case o' the event, Hank; we's allays got along mighty comf'table tergether," replied Bill, nodding an emphatic approval of all that Hank had said. The whole speech had been liberally punctuated with copious floods of tobacco juice, which formed a small river between the two men.

"Best thing I know of down our way," said

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Bill, after they had taken another good look at the ship, "the best thing I know of was a raffle over ter Jellison's auction-rooms. A raffle's a great thing fer pickin up bargains in niggers an' horses. This pertickler one was fer a bay horse, a new light buggy an' harness, an' a Mulatto gal Sal. The whole thing wuz wurth fifteen hundred dollars, an' we had fifteen hundred chances at a dollar a head. Highest throw took first choice; lowest, the remainder. Winners to pay twenty dollars each fer refreshments."

"Leetle bit selfish o' you, Bill, ter keep all thet to yerself," said Hank, giving Bill a reproachful glance.

"Mabby so, mabby so. But you won't lose nuthin', Hank, ef I can help yer in the footur. 'Pears like some one wuz a-tellin' me," he continued reflectively, "thet yer wuz a-wurkin' fer the county 'bout thet time fer board an' clo's."

"Be durned ef I wuzn't," replied Hank with great candor. "Shot at a free nigger an' killed Brady's dog Pete. Ef it'd been the nigger I'd happened ter kill, hit would 'a' been all right; but bein' 'twas a bluded hound thet had tred hundreds o' runaways, it wuz anuther question; an' not havin' the muney ter pay a fine, an' Brady bein' purty mad, why in I went fer a munth."

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"Wall, as I was a-sayin', ter perceed, by a lucky chance it wuz my fust choice, an' I choose the gal. I knowed she wuz a fust-class breeder an' my muney wuz shure fer a hundred per cent on her."

"I swear ter gosh, but yer right, Bill; mate her with the right sort an' you's got yer own muney."

Both men now turned their attention to the advancing ship.

"I see ol' Pollock's got 'em in tow," remarked Hank reflectively, after a moment's silence. "Ans Pollock's as crafty as can be. No 'fense meant, yer know; seems he's yer boss still; mean cuss ef he's rich's a jedge"; he continued, "s'pose they've got a heap o' money, too."

"Can't say as to thet," replied Bill, "but they bought Pollock's ol' place, an' it looks as though money might be plenty the way everything has been fixed up fer the missis."

The noon hours were now over, and a great deal of confusion reigned, caused by the arrival of a ship in port with so rich a man as Mr. Montfort aboard. The two friends became separated in the ensuing bustle which attended the landing of the party. During the preceding conversation a carriage and teams for transporting the baggage and slaves had drawn

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up alongside the shore; and as Mr. Montfort stepped on the rickety wharf and assisted his wife to do the same, a murmur of involuntary admiration ran through the motley crowd of rough white men and ignorant slaves.

Grace Montfort was a dream of beauty even among beautiful women. Tall and slender; her form was willowy, although perfectly molded. Her complexion was creamy in its whiteness, of the tint of the camellia; her hair, a rich golden brown, fell in rippling masses far below the waist line; brown eyes, large and soft as those seen in the fawn; heavy black eyebrows marking a high white forehead, and features as clearly cut as a cameo, completed a most lovely type of Southern beauty.

The two children followed their mother closely. They were sturdy boys, who resembled her in the beauty of their features; and in Jesse, the baby, a still greater resemblance could be traced, because the hair had been allowed to remain in long, soft curls. So they came ashore to their new home, obsequiously waited upon by Mr. Pollock, and lovingly attended by their numerous slaves. In an instant the family was seated in the waiting vehicle; and before the spectators could fully realize the beauty and elegance of the newcomers, they were whirled away, and the carriage was lost in a cloud of dust.

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Hank Davis and Bill Sampson met once more before they left the wharf. "Ef they hain't got an overseer, I'm goin' to 'ply fer the job"; said Hank, "never seed sich a booty in my life."

Bill Sampson scratched his head meditatively: "Strikes me, Hank, thet thet ar female's got a black streak in her somewhar."

Hank stared at Bill a moment, as though he thought he had suddenly lost his senses; then he burst into a loud guffaw.

"You git out, Bill Sampson."

"Wall, maybe," said Bill, "maybe so. Thar's too much cream color in the face and too little blud seen under the skin fer a genooine white 'ooman. You can't tell nothin' 'bout these Britishers; they're allers squeamish 'bout thar nigger brats; yas, sah, very squeamish. I've hern tell that they think nuthin of ejcatin' thar black brats, and freein' 'em, an' makin' 'em rich."

"You go to the devil"; returned Hank, as he moved away, "you're wus' nan ol' nigger, allers seein' a possum up a tree; an' 'taint no possum 'tall,—nuthin' but er skunk."

Apologists tell us as an excuse for the barbarous practice of slavery, that it was a god-like institution for the spread of the gospel of the meek and lowly carpenter's son, and that

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the African savage brought to these shores in chains was a most favored being.

Such may be the thoughts of the careless and superficial mind; but when we survey the flotsam and jetsam left from the wreck of the Civil War, we can deceive ourselves no longer; we must confess that the natural laws which govern individuals and communities never relax in their operation. The fruit of slavery was poisonous and bitter; let us rejoice that it no longer exists.

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CHAPTER III.

"COMING EVENTS CAST THEIR SHADOWS BEFORE."

In sooth I know not why I am so sad:
It wearies me; you say it wearies you;
But how I caught it, found it, or came by it,
What stuff 'tis made of, whereof it is born,
I am to learn;
And such a wantwit sadness makes of me
That I have much ado to know myself.

— Merchant of Venice.

THE old Pollock homestead was an exquisite spot. The house was a long, low, rambling structure, consisting of many large, airy rooms inside, and ornamented without by piazzas supported by huge pillars. Immense trees shaded the driveway and embowered the stately white mansion. Gay parterres of flowers ornamented the rolling lawn, which divided the great house from the Negro quarters which were picturesquely visible at a convenient distance from it.

Within the house Mr. Montfort had gathered all the treasures which could possibly add to the comfort and pleasure of his lovely wife. Beautiful rugs covered the floors, fine paintings adorned the walls, gleaming statuary flashed upon one from odd nooks and corners. In the

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library music had found a home in the most comfortable corner of the room. On a table one might find a volume of Goëthe in the original; on the grand piano the score of a then-popular opera; while a magnificent harp, standing near, hinted of musical talents highly cultivated.

Business had prospered with Montfort; his crops flourished; but a nameless trouble seemed to be halting upon the threshold of the home he loved, and to threaten those whom he cherished so fondly.

The first year of residence in Newbern had been very pleasant for the Montforts. Society, such as it was, opened its arms to the family and voted the highly cultured wife and cherub children great additions. The house was a favorite resort for all the young people of the neighborhood. Mrs. Montfort had been educated in England, and had brought with her to the provincial families with whom she now associated all the refinements of the Old World. Having great wealth for the times, she had always been indulged in every whim by the doting bachelor uncle who had made her his heiress, but who had died soon after her marriage to Charles Montfort. As Grace Montfort, she found again the love her uncle had delighted to lavish upon his adopted child.

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Possessed of a bright, joyous nature, she liked nothing better than to gather about her the young men and women of the neighborhood and make life pleasant for them; and they in turn learned from her customs and refinements which otherwise might never have come their way. Everyone voted her the dearest and most beautiful woman they had ever known, and all would have gone merry as a marriage-bell, *but* (if it were not for the *buts* and *ifs* of this life, what a pleasant place the world would be) into this paradise of good feelings and admiration came Anson Pollock with his bitter envy and his unlawful love, and finally with his determination to possess the lovely Grace Montfort at all hazards.

Gradually the friendly relations of the neighbors turned to coldness and reserve. It was whispered about that Montfort was about to free his slaves. This in itself was a dangerous doctrine at that time in that part of the world, and a man suspected of entertaining ideas of freedom for slaves must either change his tactics or his residence, or else forfeit life and property. Then again, Bill Sampson's words to Hank Davis had somehow found a voice, and the suspicion of Negro blood in the veins of Mrs. Montfort was a deathblow to a proud spirit and social aspirations. These two seri-

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ous charges had spread abroad like wildfire.

It was a hot morning, a very hot morning in early summer. There had been no rain for some time. Mrs. Montfort lay in a hammock outside the breakfast-room windows. Lucy, her maid, was mending lace and children's garments a short distance away.

Lucy was Mrs. Montfort's foster sister; both were born on the same day. Their relations had always been those of inseparable friends rather than of mistress and slave.

"No rain today, Lucy. I never used to mind the heat at home (this with a sigh). How fair it must be over the blue waters of the bay; I can almost smell the cedars outside the entrance gates."

"Yas, Miss Grace" (to Lucy her mistress was always "Miss Grace"), "I do feel sort o' squeamish myself sometimes when I tink of the gals all dancin' Sundays in the square; but reckon we'll git used ter these people here arter a-while; leastwise, I hope so."

Mrs. Montfort did not reply, and her maid noticed, as she glanced anxiously at her mistress, that a frown was on her face. Lucy sighed. "Miss Grace" had been noted once for her sunny, cheerful temper. Now all was changed.

Beyond the rolling lawn fields of cotton

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could be seen, the leaves twisting in the heat and the steady glare of the sun. Zigzag fences separated the cotton from fields of corn; away in the distance dim aisles of pine trees stretched their dark arms towards the heavens, their dark foliage suggestive of cool shadows and quiet glades. The road wound in and out among the pines, through a woodland, and terminated in the highway just visible from the piazza. Inside the long, open windows little Jesse played at building houses with the bags of golden eagles that his father kept in a drawer of his escritoire.

"Grace, Grace, Lucy," called the child, "my houses won't stay up; come in and help me."

Just then a group appeared coming around a corner of an outbuilding. Two men walked beside a pony, astride whose back sat Master Charles. As they approached the house the gentlemen swept off their wide-brimmed hats in a gallant salute to Mrs. Montfort, which she returned by rising from her recumbent position and dropping a low courtesy. The gentlemen were Mr. Montfort and Mr. Pollock. Jesse, hearing the pony's feet, came out the window and ran down the piazza steps to his father, who, as Charles sprang to the ground, lifted the excited child to the pony's back. Mrs. Montfort watched the approach of the little procession

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with a pleased smile. She made a fair picture in her elaborately embroidered white morning robe, her beautiful hair arranged in drooping curls at the sides of her head, as was the fashion of the time.

"See me, Mama Grace," cried Jesse, as he clapped his little hands, and dug the heels of his tiny-slippered feet into the pony's side, in imitation of his father on horseback. As Montfort watched him, the picture of his last Sunday in Bermuda arose before him: the little Negro child astride his mother's back, spurring her like a rider his horse; and in his ears rang the pleasant voice of his silver-haired pastor. At the piazza steps he called a servant to take away the pony, and turned to enter the house, followed by Mr. Pollock, with Jesse in his arms and Charles by his side. Jesse kept up an incessant chatter. They passed through the breakfast-room, where Montfort placed the child upon the floor.

"Charles, help me build my houses!" he cried, attracted to his late employment at sight of the golden eagles. "See, papa, all my houses tumble down. Charles' houses don't fall down, but mine always do. Come and help me, Charles."

"You are not patient enough, my son," replied the father, smiling down upon his petu-

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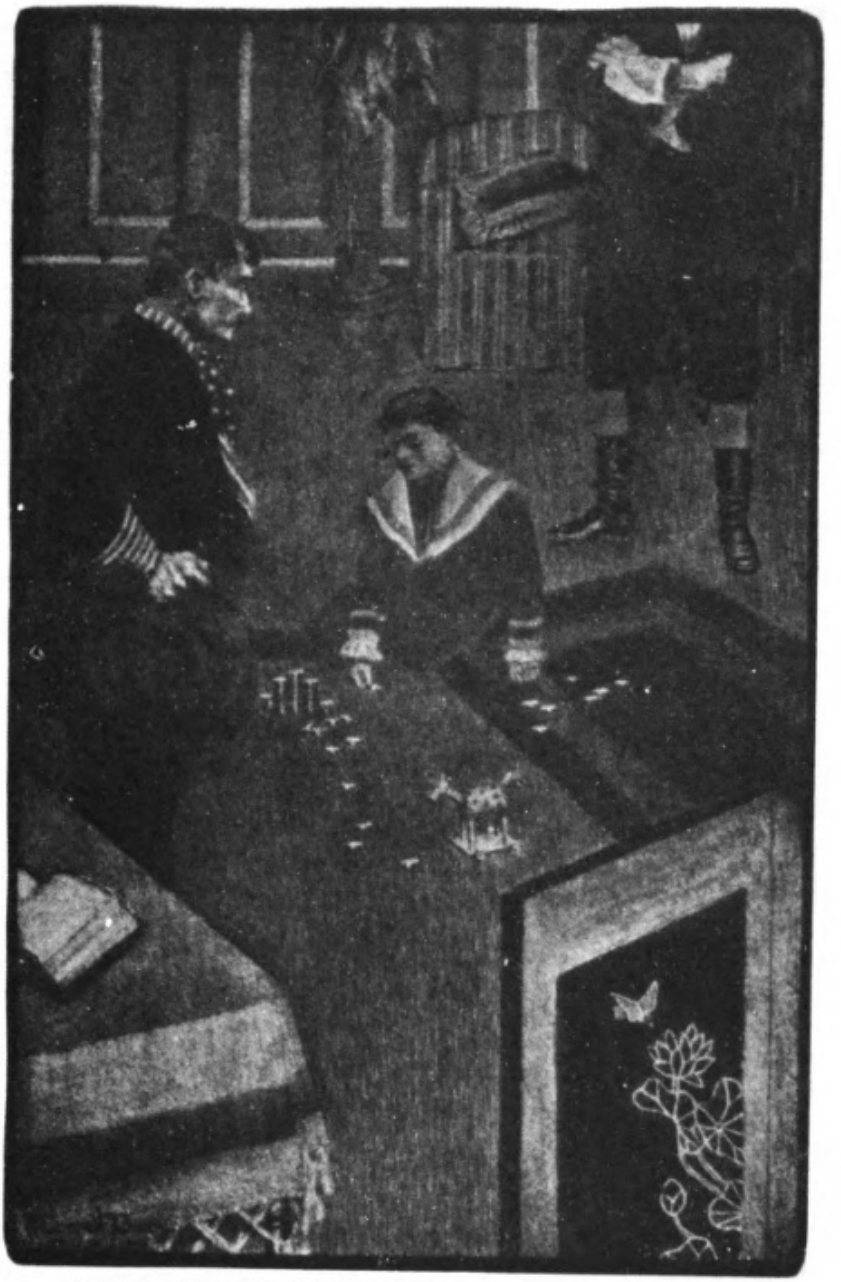

POLLOCK STOOD A LITTLE APART, GAZING IN AMAZEMENT AT THE SCENE BEFORE HIM.

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lance. "You must be patient and persevere, and after awhile you will be able to make your houses stand. Isn't that right, Mr. Pollock?"

Pollock stood a little apart, gazing in amazement at the scene before him. *Golden eagles given to a child to play with* was a little beyond him. He made no direct reply to Mr. Montfort's remark, and if the latter had been an observant man, he might have been a bit puzzled at the expression on his face. But Charles Montfort was ingenuousness itself, seeing in no man an enemy. Anson Pollock was his opposite; his ruling passion was covetousness. His eyes were fairly dazzled by the sight of the gold so carelessly strewing the floor. It positively took away his breath.

"Come, Pollock, we will talk over those matters in my study," said Montfort presently. "My son," he added, as he paused at the doorway, "be careful not to lose your ducats. They are your portion to pay your college bills when you cross the ocean to finish your education."

"Going to send him abroad to study?" carelessly inquired Pollock.

"Oh, yes; America's all right for me, but bonny England for my boys."

Anson Pollock, whom Charles Montfort had chosen for his friend, was a man of dashing appearance. He carried his years jauntily, and

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had a good opinion of himself where women were concerned. He was made much of by the ladies in the vicinity because of his wealth. It mattered not that his wife had died mysteriously. Rumor said his ill treatment and infidelity had driven her to suicide; it had even been whispered that he had not hesitated to whip her by proxy through his overseer, Bill Sampson, in the same way he did his slaves; but rumor is a lying jade. Nevertheless, his fair speech, auburn curls and deep-blue eyes, so falsely smiling, won his way, and Mr. Pollock was the popular ladies' man of two counties.

He had showered Mrs. Montfort with assiduous attention since her arrival three years before, but he soon found that he made no headway. Once he dared to tell her of his passion — that from the first moment he saw her aboard the "Island Queen" he had been maddened by her beauty.

"Why do you tell me this?" she cried, in angry amazement at his daring. "Am I so careless of my husband's honor that his friends feel at liberty to insult me?"

"Granted that I overstep the bounds of friendship in speaking thus to you, but it is from no lack of respect; rather the deed of one who risks all upon one throw of the dice. Have mercy, I pray you, and grant me your friendship — your love."

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Then Grace Montfort said, while her eyes blazed with wrath: "Mr. Pollock, we are strangers here, my husband and I. He trusts you, and I have no wish to disturb that trust; but if you ever address such words to me again, I shall let Mr. Montfort know the kind of man you are. I promise you that he will know how to deal with you." This conversation had taken place one night at a grand fête, where Grace had been the belle of the assembly; they were in the conservatory at the time. Anson Pollock was not accustomed to having his advances received in this way by any woman whom he elected to honor with his admiration. As the indignant woman swept back to the ballroom, he stood and watched her with an evil look, which meant no good. After that they met as usual, but Pollock had never ventured to speak to her again of love. Outwardly he was the same suave, genial gentleman, but within his breast was a living fire of hatred. The two men became faster friends than ever. Mrs. Montfort was pleased to have it so; they had so few friends in this alien land; she felt so lonely, so helpless. She dreaded making enemies. It was but the lull before the storm.

When the study door had closed behind the two men, Mr. Montfort dropped his pleasant,

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careless manner and faced Mr. Pollock with an anxious face.

"Pollock," he began abruptly, "I'm worried."

"What about?" asked Pollock, turning from the window, where he seemed to be viewing the landscape.

"Have you heard the rumors about my wife being of African descent?" Montfort asked, coming very close to Pollock, as though afraid the very air would hear him. "There are threats, too, against my life because of my desire to free my slaves."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Pollock. "I have heard the rumors about Mrs. Montfort, but that is nothing — nothing but the malice of some malicious, jealous woman. As for the threats against your life, how can you think of such things a second time. You are among the most chivalrous people on the face of the earth, who will protect you in your home."

Montfort stood a moment before his friend, gazing at him earnestly; then he said: "Pollock, if anything happens to me, I want you to promise me to help my wife and babies to get back to Bermuda."

"Why, what can happen, man; you are nervous without a cause."

"In that safe," continued Montfort, not heeding the interruption, "you will find money and

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deeds; promise me that you will save them for my family."

"I promise; but it is all nonsense."

"I shall hold you to your promise," replied Montfort solemnly.

The committee on public safety generally met once a month. They had a chairman, but no one knew his identity save a chosen few of the committee. Indeed very little was known positively as to the identity of any of the members; certainly no one would ever have suspected the elegant Anson Pollock of being connected with such an organization.

On this particular evening Bill Sampson lounged by the Jefferson house on the lookout for some of his friends. Anson Pollock sat on the broad steps, evidently on the watch for some one, too. "Hi, Bill!" he called, as the latter came in sight.

"Holloa! want me?" returned Bill; and at a nod from his employer, he followed him through the entrance to a small back room, generally used for the meetings of the committee.

"Anything new for the committee to-night?" asked Pollock, as he lounged over the back of a chair. Bill took a seat on the edge of the table and began cutting circles in the air with his rawhide. Bill Sampson was a character in his way. One could not imagine New-

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bern without Bill, and no one could possibly imagine Bill without his rawhide.

"Wall, mabby, mabby; depends on what you call wurk. Somebody," with a sly glance at Pollock from beneath his bushy eyebrows, "somebody's been circlatin' a r'port about a fren' o' yourn."

"Well," replied Pollock sharply.

"Looks like we'd treed a 'possum, sho."

"Well."

"Somebody says how's Montfort's slaves is wurkin' fur part pay; leastways, every mother's son o' them'll be free inside o' five years."

"Anything else?"

"We kin' o' thought that'd do fer a spell. He's done nuff in that ar to convict him an' buy his halter. Thet'll do fer one pint."

"But that don't cover the case. What luck have you had in spreading the other report?"

"Wall," said Bill, as he shot a copious draught of tobacco juice over the sanded floor, "mos' the fellers think it a pity 'bout Mis' Montfort. Blamed nice 'ooman. She's been mighty good to Jeff Peterson's fam'ly, an' Jeff he feels mighty uncomf'table 'bout hurtin' on her, durned ef he don'."

"You and Jeff want to do your duty," replied Pollock. "No matter about sentiment. Influence is great with certain people, and if

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niggers are tolerated in any way, it will end in weakening the law, and then good-by to our institutions."

"Course, course; we 'tend ter do our duty; yas, sir, our whol duty; but it beats all nater 'bout Mis' Montfort. I knowed she wuz mixed the minute I seed her, but 'ain't nuff to 'tract 'tention." He paused a moment, and then said with a sigh: "Well, Cap'n, what's yer orders?"

Pollock saw that the man's sympathy was more than half enlisted on the woman's side, and with arch diplomacy changed his tactics. He handed Bill a cigar, saying, "We may as well make ourselves comfortable"; and before the latter had fairly begun to enjoy the fragrant weed, had called for whiskey and was pressing him to help himself. Under its stimulating influence Bill soon lost what slight scruples he had felt, and was as eager for the downfall of the unfortunate family as his patron.

"Well, Bill," continued Pollock, "the first thing to be done is to put Montfort out of the way; then it will be plain sailing. The next question is: Who will do that job?"

"Reckon I know jes' the man — a man o' the right sperrit, who'll be glad to serve his coun-try fer a reasun'ble consideration. An' thet remin's me, how much o' the property is to be resarved fer you?"

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"The boys may have what they can get of it; I don't care for any part of the spoils; all I want is the mother and the children."

"Jes' so; wall, now, seein's I understan' the case jes' as you want it, I'll lay low, set the boys on; you keep shady an' stan' ready the minute the mine's fired. I ain't got a cuss agin Montfort myself, but the institootion must be respected. Sure thar's plenty o' whiskey an' stuff in the cellur? 'Twould look kin' o' mean in Montfort not to have a full cellur. It's a big job, an' the boys'll be thirsty." With this, the two worthies arose from their seats and sauntered through the door and up to the bar.

A day or two after the foregoing, Hank Davis, true to his word, formally applied to Mr. Montfort for the position of overseer on his plantation.

"What made you think that I wanted an overseer?" asked Montfort, as he pushed his hat off his face a little farther and eyed the petitioner critically, mentally vowing that he would never place even a horse in the power of such an ill-favored, beastly looking fellow.

"Wall, most Southern gentlemen don't keer ter have a nigger overseer. It spiles 'em; they gives themselves airs, an' git sot up in thar idees. Thought mabby you, bein' a stranger, mightn't know our ways. You see, it's jes'

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hyar, we have certain rules in this commoonity that we all mus' 'bide by ef we want t'void trouble." As Hank ventured this last remark in a cautious manner, he scraped the gravel of the walk with one foot while he slyly noted the reception of his venture by an upward cast of his eye.

Charles Montfort looked at him a moment with a slumbering wrath before he asked with dangerous coolness: "What do I understand by what you have just said, Mr. Davis? Do you mean to insinuate that a man cannot do as he will with his own property?"

"Wall, no; not eggsactly; but it's jes' hyar, to speak plainly as 'tween fren's," replied Hank, as he shifted his tobacco to the other side of his mouth, "the plain fac' is: I want the job of drivin' yer niggers, an' you'll want me to keep the commoonity fren'ly to yer now it's got out thet yer a-gwine ter set the gang free byme by."

Charles Montfort possessed one characteristic of the West Indian to a marked degree, and that was a bad temper under just provocation. Without more ado he seized the offending Hank by the collar, and with his riding whip, which he carried in his hand, he administered a sound flogging to the offender. As he released him, he said: "When you leave my grounds, don't you ever set your foot inside

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the gates again, or it will be the worse for you."

Hank said nothing as he raised himself from the ground where the irate man had thrown him, but as he turned to leave the place he looked at Mr. Montfort; and even in his wrath at the insolence of such a mongrel cur, as he mentally styled Davis, Charles Montfort felt a shudder of real physical fear pass over him for a moment. Surprised at himself, he turned to enter the house, dismissing the whole incident as a piece of impudence which he had done well to chastise.

Taking it all in all, Mr. Montfort was not feeling very happy on this June morning, as he sat upon the piazza thinking over the late encounter. An hour passed swiftly away; still the master of the house continued his meditations; but now he had changed his seat for a thoughtful promenade up and down the broad piazza. Finally he said softly to himself: "Yes, that is just what I will do; I'll send Gracie and the little fellows home for awhile on a visit, and there they shall stay until I know just what the trouble is here about the slaves, and certain insinuations concerning my family are cleared up." When a man makes up his mind that he has solved a difficult problem that has worried him, he generally has an air of relief which

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is the more pathetic, that in nine cases out of ten he does not believe that his remedy will prove effective, although he fancies that he so believes.

When Hank Davis left Mr. Montfort he moved slowly down the sun-baked road, nursing his wrath and swearing vengeance. Nothing but the life of the man who had inflicted such an insult upon him could wipe it out. He had received the same treatment that he had given hundreds of his associates, until his name and presence had become a terror in the county where he resided. Hitherto he had given his orders and they had been obeyed; but here was a man, a comparative stranger, for whom he considered that he had been willing to do a great kindness, for a consideration, and not only had he met with a refusal of his request but at the same time had received personal violence of a character that was most galling to the spirit of any free-born Southern man — an ordinary cowhiding, such as he would mete out to his slave. As he thought more and more about the matter he grew more and more filled with a desire for vengeance, — not the ordinary kind, but something extraordinary. As he gradually turned over in his mind schemes for the undoing of the Montforts, he was accosted by the voice of Bill

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Sampson, calling to him from across the fields. Bill was overseeing the harvesting of a great field of cotton, and the voices of the slaves could be heard droning out their weird and plaintive notes, as they sought by song movement to lighten the monotony of their heavy tasks and bring solace to their sad hearts. Some, in their simple ignorance, may not have known why they were sad, but, like the captive bird, their hearts longed for that which was ever the birthright of man — property in himself. Crushed out of sight for many years, the seed of desire for all those things which make a man, and sweeten toil, was struggling ever toward the light of civilization denied to these poor, ignorant, enslaved souls.

Hank sat down on a log by the wayside and beckoned Bill over to him. The latter came slowly across the field and seated himself astride one end of the log.

"Howdy, Hank"; "Howdy, Bill," passed in greeting between the two cronies.

"'Pears like to me, Hank, yer a-lookin' pale," remarked Bill, as he trailed his whip backward and forward in the dust.

Hank could stand it no longer; and with a terrible imprecation, he unfolded to his friend his tale of woe and insult. Bill listened with eager curiosity, and a satisfied, knowing look

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might have been seen to settle about the corners of his eyes and mouth.

"Wall, wall," said he, "these ar' great times when a d—— West Ingy half-white nigger can raise his hand agin a white man. Be yer hurt much, Hank?"

"Some in my body, but more in my feelin's."

"What ar' we a-comin' to? I tell you, Hank, it is 'bout time sumthin' was done."

"That's all well enough to talk," replied Hank, "but what kin a man do agin the money thet thet feller's got to back him up? I cayn't see a handle on him."

"Wall," replied Bill, "I *kin*."

"You *kin!*" exclaimed Hank, while a slow smile of derision covered his face; "wall, I'd jes' like to know how."

"Yer kin laugh, Hank Davis, but it's a fac'. 'Taint goin' to be no hard job, nuther, to git all thet money, all them purty trinkets and fine furniture, and the seven hundred niggers in our pockets *ef*"—(and here he paused as though to give emphasis to his words) "*ef* we wurks the thing right."

"Damn it all, man, why don't yer let out?" demanded Hank, as he rose excitedly from his seat on the log. "I'm the man to help on anythin' agin thet man, an' yer knows it. No need of yer bein' so infernal aggravatin' 'bout tellin' me."

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Bill laughed at his companion's excitement. "Easy thar, easy, Hank. This ar' a mighty titlish job, but we kin wurk it — we kin wurk it. Fust place, yer see Montfort's brought them slaves o' hisn hyar and don't tend to keep 'em only 'bout ten years, and then every one o' them will have bought hisself, accordin' to the laws thet ar' governin' them over to the West Indies. Now, yer know ther's a bad eggsample to set befo' the niggers roun' this town. Eny way, we's goin' to think so," drawled Bill, with an expressive wink at his friend. "It's a law of the United States that ef eny man is caught creatin' dissatisfacshun among the slaves he desarves death, and death he gits. Now, this ar Montfort has been causin' trouble fer us by his eggsample. Every nigger roun' hyar knows all 'bout his 'rangements fer givin' his slaves thar freedom, and I tell yer, Hank, its causin' dissatisfacshun 'mong all our slaves. An' then the money, honey, the money! sech sights of it all done up in little shammy-skin bags, an' thet boy Jesse settin' on the floor amoosin' hisself buildin' houses with them gold eagles!"

Hank listened to his companion's words with open mouth. As the latter finished he said, with a look of admiration: "Wall, I'll be d——d! Now, look a-hyar, Bill Sampson, yer needn't tell me thet all thet yer have just unfolded to me is

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yer own idees, 'cause yer could no more hev got them thoughts through yer thick head than I could. Some one's been fixin' yer up. Out with it now, an' tell me the whole thing. Ef we's goin' inter this business, we's got to be square on the deal with our fren's. Who's the bottom o' this thing?"

Bill produced a plug of tobacco, offered his friend a chew and took one himself. "What I'm tellin' yer, Hank, is 'tween fren's," said he, chewing and crossing his legs.

"Jes' so," replied Hank.

"I wuz tellin' yer the 'riginater o' this plan, or I wuz about to." Bill paused to spit out some of his tobacco juice on the ground, so that it would not overflow the tank, so to speak, and run out of each corner of his mouth. "Beats all nater, Hank, how a man'll git dead set onter a piece o' caliker."

"Meanin' by that, Bill, that Ans Pollock's got set on some gal."

"Fact!" said Bill, with a wink.

"Who's?" asked Hank.

"It mote be Mis' Montfort herself, Hank."

"Sho, you don' say, re'lly," said Hank, with a wicked look. "Don' blame him, blamed ef I do. But thet's all the good it'll do him."

Bill cut the air into imaginary circles with his whip, and without taking any notice of his

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friend, continued: "As I was sayin', Ans Pollock, he says ter me, 'Bill, thet's a dooced purty 'ooman o' Montfort's,' an' I tol' him what I thought 'bout her havin' black blud in her somewhar. 'Mabby,' says he, 'mabby.' An' then he says, kin' o' generous like, 'I'd take the 'ooman an' the two brats, an' the boys might hev the slaves, an' the money, an' the fixin's in the house.' I tol' him I knew the boys 'd stan' by him in enything he might do to rid a peaceful neighborhood of sech a disturbin' critter as Montfort. I tol' him I thought yer would be 'bout the very match to light on Montfort, so he wouldn't give us eny more trouble. An' so we've been waitin' fer the business ter 'velop itself good an' ripe, an' I jes' think this 'tack o' Montfort's on yer will 'bout do the business fer the whole o' them.

"Bill," said Hank Davis, as he held out his hand to his friend, "we's allers been pardners, an' I reckon we allers will be."

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CHAPTER IV.

THE TRAGEDY.

THUS man devotes his brother, and destroys him;
And worse than all, and most to be deplored
Chains him, and tasks him and exacts his sweat
With stripes that Mercy, with a bleeding heart,
Weeps when she sees inflicted on a beast.

— COWPER.

"KISMET," says the Oriental, when unaccountable evils beset his path; "It is fate," says the Anglo-Saxon, under like circumstances: but fate is the will of Providence after all. Nature avenges herself upon us for every law violated in the mad rush for wealth or position or personal comfort where the rights of others of the human family are not respected. If Charles Montfort had been contented to accept the rulings of the English Parliament, and had allowed his human property to come under the new laws just made for its government, although poorer in the end, he would have spared himself and family all the horrors which were to follow his selfish flight to save that property.

The sun rose clear and resplendent a few mornings later. On this particular morning Nature outdid herself. There was a blending together of all the sweet forces — odorous air,

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golden sunshine, musical sounds from bird and from bush; it was pure happiness to feel the life-blood leaping in one's veins; to feel the marvelous joy of living.

Eight o'clock was the usual breakfast hour for the Montforts. The family had just assembled at the table; Aunt Cindy had brought in the great silver coffee urn and placed it beside Mrs. Montfort. Mr. Montfort had settled himself in his chair with a weekly paper, for in this rural neighborhood a newspaper once in a week was a great luxury, when his attention was caught by the sound of hoofbeats of several horses on the road. Mrs. Montfort, with usual Southern hospitality, looked over her well-appointed board to make sure that all was in order for dispensing those creature comforts so dear to the entertainer and the entertained.

The hoofbeats drew nearer and paused on the graveled walk. Montfort hastened to the door, while Mrs. Montfort turned toward the entrance of the breakfast-room with a pleasant smile of welcome on her lips. She heard a number of voices speaking together in an excited jumble, then a shot, followed by a heavy fall. Little Jesse ran from his station by his mother's side through one of the long windows opening upon the piazza. She heard his

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scream of "papa, papa!" and then again the jumble of excited voices. With little Charles clinging to her skirts she stumbled blindly to the entrance and faced the crowd of angry men, headed by Anson Pollock. Hank Davis had done his work well, and Charles Montfort lay dead with a bullet in his brain, sped by an unseen hand. Mrs. Montfort's arms were grasped by rude hands, and she was forcibly drawn out upon the veranda, where in the sunlight of the beautiful morning she saw the body of her husband lying face downward. She was dimly conscious of hearing the cries of frightened slaves mingled with the screams of her children. Through it all she realized but two things — that the lifeless object lying there so still was the body of her husband, and that the sensual face of Anson Pollock, whom she had grown to loathe and fear, was gloating over her agony, devilish in its triumph. Then she lost consciousness.

As she lay upon the green sward, oblivious to thought and feeling, supported by her weeping maid, who had been ordered to care for her mistress by Mr. Pollock, Hank Davis came and stood for a moment looking down upon the unconscious woman. Suddenly an evil smile lighted up his countenance. He looked around, but saw nothing of Anson Pollock, who had

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disappeared within the house, searching for money and papers in the safe. Now was his time. This woman's husband had flogged him —he would have a sweet revenge. Those lily-like limbs, the tender flesh that had never known aught but the touch of love, should *feel the lash as he had.*

He called to Bill Sampson to help lift her; and despite the prayers and tears of the poor slave girl who followed her beloved mistress until Sampson knocked her senseless with the butt end of his rawhide, they bore the hapless lady to the whipping post. She revived as they reached the spot; and when she realized the fate in store for her, the sweet woman's strong soul failed her. She uttered a wild cry of agony as the rough hand of Hank Davis was laid upon her to tear her garments from her shrinking shoulders.

"Charles, my husband, save me!" she cried, and fell fainting upon the ground. There was none to answer the heartrending appeal. He who would have shed his heart's best blood for her, lay cold in death. She was soon restored to consciousness, for Hank's savage instinct for revenge would only be appeased by the victim's full realization of her sufferings.

She was bound to the whipping post as the victim to the stake, and lashed with rawhides

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alternately by the two strong, savage men. Hank Davis drew first blood by reason of his wrongs at Mr. Montfort's hands. With all his mighty strength he brought the lash down upon the frail and shrinking form. O God! was there none to rescue her! The air whistled as the snaky leather thong curled and writhed in its rapid, vengeful descent. A shriek from the victim — a spurt of blood that spattered the torturer — a long, raw gash across a tender, white back. Hank gazed at the cut with critical satisfaction, as he compared its depth with the skin and blood that encased the long, tapering lash. It was now Bill's turn.

"I'll go you one better," he said, as he sighted the distance and exact place to make his mark with mathematical precision, at the same time shifting his tobacco from the right to the left cheek. Again the rawhide whistled through the air, falling across the other cut squarely in the center. Another shriek, a stifled sob, a long-drawn quivering sigh — then the deep stillness of unconsciousness. Again and again was the outrage repeated. Fainting fit followed fainting fit. The blood stood in a pool about her feet.

When Hank Davis had satiated his vengeful thirst he cut the ropes which bound her, and she sank upon the ground again — unconscious,

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bleeding, friendless, alone. Lucy had hidden in the smokehouse with the two children, that they might not witness their mother's agony.

Meantime, the committee on public safety, instigated by Anson Pollock to put down an imaginary insurrection (having no existence but in his own mind, and supposed to have originated with the slaves of Charles Montfort) and to legalize the looting of the house, took possession of the mansion. Soon the crowd had stripped it of its furniture and all the articles of value. The house itself was fired, and Grace Montfort again became conscious of her misery in time to see the dead body of her husband flung amid the burning rafters of his dwelling. Two and two the slaves were handcuffed together to be driven to the market place. Mrs. Montfort, secured to her maid, was placed in a wagon with her two children; and so the miserable woman was driven away from her outraged home.

In those old days, if accused of aiding slaves in a revolt, a white man stood no more chance than a Negro accused of the same crime. He forfeited life and property. This power of the law Anson Pollock had invoked; and to add to the devilishness of the plot, had used Bill Sampson's suggestion of black blood in Mrs. Montfort, to further his scheme for possessing

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the beautiful woman. So the two children and their mother fell to the lot of Anson Pollock as his portion of the spoils. Shortly after these events Grace Montfort disappeared and was never seen again. The waters of Pamlico Sound tell of sweet oblivion for the broken-hearted found within their soft embrace.

After the loss of their mother the two lads clung very closely to each other. So many changes had come to them, such desperate, bloody scenes had dazed their brains and terrified them, that even the loss of their mother seemed but in keeping with the rest. Bewilderment at so much sorrow, the numbness of black despair was ever with them.

Pollock's rage was terrible when he learned that Mrs. Montfort had destroyed herself. He grew morose and unsociable, so that his society was no longer sought in the county. He seemed to have a superstitious fear of the children, and for a long time would not tolerate them in his presence. It was common talk among the slaves that Mrs. Montfort "walked," weeping and wringing her hands, night after night about the plantation.

But wonder could go no farther when Pollock elected to take Lucy in the place he had designed for Mrs. Montfort. God's mysteries are past man's understanding; and thus the

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poor black girl became his instrument to temper the wind to the shorn lambs. Night after night she stole away to the little attic under the eaves laden with dainties to tempt the appetite of the children. For hours she would sit hushing Jesse's sobs upon her ample breast, and speaking words of comfort in her poor, blind way to Charles.

When a year had dragged its slow length past, a stranger in the town stopped Bill Sampson on the street one day and asked him if he knew where he could hire a likely boy to go with him into the woods for a few days and help arrange specimens of the quartz in that locality. He was looking up the minerals in that section for speculators, he said. Bill promised to get him a boy, and asked Pollock's permission for Charles to go with the man.

"I don't care what you do with him, only keep him away from me. I'll sell him south soon," said Pollock.

So it happened that Charles went every day for a month with the mineralogist. The lad's appearance, education and refinement puzzled the man for a time, until he learned the tragic story.

"Charles," said he, a few weeks later, "I am about to leave this part of the country. I don't want to leave you here. Do you think Mr.

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Pollock could be induced to part with you?"

"O sir!" cried Charles, throwing himself at the gentleman's feet, "for the love of God buy me and my little brother. If you will only take us to Bermuda, some one there will pay you back. My father had money there; we have friends there. O sir, for the love of God!"

The man looked at the weeping boy as through a mist. He had a tender heart.

"I will tell you something, Charles," said he kindly, as he raised the lad and drew him to a seat beside him on the grass, with his arm tenderly enfolding the child. "I am an Englishman, but it will not do to have that fact known here, for then I would be powerless to help you. Anson Pollock would never sell you to me if he knew that fact. I have been trying to buy you and Jesse, but Pollock wants to keep the boy for a valet. He intends to sell you south; you are too old to forget, and he fears you. Now I propose to buy you; and as soon as possible I shall take you to Bermuda, collect the proofs there concerning your family, and then go to England, invoke the power of the home government, and demand Jesse's freedom and indemnity from the United States government for all the outrages perpetrated against your family. Can you keep this secret, and will you try and be patient until I can accomplish my purpose?"

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"I will do anything you say," replied the boy humbly, "but I hate to leave Jesse. O mama, mama, my beautiful mama!" and with a burst of grief he cast himself upon the velvet turf.

The mineralogist lost no time in completing the purchase of Charles, and in a few days they left the town. Then little Jesse, the petted darling of a luxurious home, found himself alone in the power of Anson Pollock. He must wait upon him obsequiously by day, and be ready to answer his call at any hour of the night. Under his enemy's eye by day and night, hopeless, utterly alone upon the wide waste of waters which represented his life. Oh, how black, boundless, trackless, was the unknown future to this unfortunate child! Once, after his brother was sold, he resisted his master — rebelled with all his puny strength. He was severely flogged. That night he slept in the lonely cabin kept as a sort of prison for refractory slaves. Not a sigh disturbed the silence of the night as he lay in pain, gazing up at the stars which shone so peacefully through the dilapidated roof. He thought himself delirious, or was it indeed possible that God had taken compassion on his loneliness and allowed the comfort and help of communion with the dead! He saw his murdered father and mother.

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Hand in hand they passed and repassed over the gaping holes in the roof of the hut. His father's noble, loving face smiled upon him; his mother's curls moved in the faint breeze, while her loving glance seemed to say: "Courage, courage, we are ever near you."

"Father, Grace, speak to me!" he shrieked in agony.

Then he seemed to feel their actual presence, tangible though viewless, beside him in the hut. Calmness came to him, and a change grand to see in that slight frame. Unconsciously he asked the question: "How long must I endure before I join you in heaven?"

It seemed to him that he was answered: "Many days, and even years; but fear not, we will never leave thee."

After that night Jesse's childhood appeared to slip from him, and he became a man in thought. He studied his master, and matched low cunning with lofty determination. He rebelled no more, was silent, not provoking Anson Pollock's wrath. The time seemed long and dreary waiting for the freedom he had resolved to have; still he was patient. Sometimes at night, when rolled in his blanket on the hard floor, he would weep over the painful past. Then he would feel the touch of a tiny hand upon his eyelids. It was his mother's

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hand; he knew it to be so. Then he would lose himself in sweet dreams and awaken in the morning refreshed and comforted. So the years rolled on until he was sixteen. Meantime, nothing was heard from Charles and his supposed friend. Jesse had made up his mind that Charles was either dead or else lost to him forever.

Jesse was now a man in stature, though still slender, with the same haughty bearing and distinguished appearance that had marked his father. Anson Pollock, upon whom age and the memory of dreadful crimes were making fearful inroads, began to look up to the boy and lean upon him for aid in his various plans for making money. He had spoken to him of making him the overseer, in place of Bill Sampson, and had even hinted at his taking a mate. Then Jesse knew that his probation was nearly over. That spring Pollock, as was the common practice among planters, made out passes for Jesse and sent him to New York in charge of a vessel filled with produce, and charged to bring back necessary merchandise for use on the plantation. Pollock thought the boy still too young to venture to leave him. Indeed Jesse had no such idea when he started on his trip to the North. When the vessel reached New York, Jesse performed all the necessary duties

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—disposed of the produce, and reloaded the ship for its homeward voyage. The night before they were to sail he sat on the wharf watching the crews of other vessels making ready for departure. His mind was engrossed with thoughts of Charles. He feared some evil had befallen him.

"At any rate," he said to himself, "I shall never see him again. And must I remain in servitude? Can I do nothing to help myself, since all hope is gone in that direction?" Just then a group of men paused in front of him. They did not know he was a slave.

"Will you give passage to two on board your vessel? You are bound for Newbern in the morning, aren't you? We'll pay you what you charge," said one of the group respectfully.

"Speak to the cap'n," called out a man standing near; "that's nuthin' but a nigger you're talkin' to."

"Well," said the one who had first addressed him, "you're a likely boy, anyhow; who do you belong to?"

Jesse arose from his seat, white with passion, and said to the man: "I am no man's property; I belong to Jesus Christ!" The question had answered itself. When the vessel sailed the next morning, Jesse was far on his road to Boston.

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Traveling then was done by stage, and was a slow process; but about a week later he stood beside the stone wall that enclosed the historic Boston Common, and as he watched the cows chewing their peaceful cuds and inhaled deep draughts of freedom's air, he vowed to die rather than return to Anson Pollock.

He found work in Boston. It mattered not that it was menial work; he was happy. But fate or Providence was not done with him yet.

One day he received word that Anson Pollock was on his way to Boston in search of him. Again he made a hurried journey. This time to Exeter, N. H. In his character of a fugitive slave, the lad had from the first cast his lot with the colored people of the community, and when he left Boston he was directed to see Mr. Whitfield, a negro in Exeter, who could and would help the fugitive.

Late one afternoon, just before tea time, a comely black woman stood in her long, low-raftered kitchen preparing supper before the open fireplace. There was every indication of plenty in the homely furnishings. As the woman passed rapidly from the cupboard to the table she would touch with her foot the rockers of the little red cradle which stood in the center of the floor. The baby in it was crying in a fretful way. "Oh, hush, Lizzie,"

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said the mother; "don't be so cross." There came a low rap at the open door, and in answer to her "Come in," Jesse stepped into the room.

"Is Mr. Whitfield in?" he asked, as he doffed his hat respectfully.

"No," was the reply, "but I expect him every minute. Sit down, won't you? He'll soon be in to his supper, I guess."

Mrs. Whitfield thought him a white man, come on business with her husband. "A handsome lad," she thought. Jesse seated himself; and then as the child continued to cry, said: "Shall I rock the cradle for you, ma'am? The child seems fretful."

Fifteen years later Jesse married Elizabeth Whitfield, the baby he had rocked to sleep the first night of his arrival in Exeter. By her he had a large family.

Thus he was absorbed into that unfortunate race, of whom it is said that a man had better be born dead than to come into the world as part and parcel of it.

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CHAPTER V.

MA SMITH'S LODGING-HOUSE.

LET not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the poor.
— GRAY.

"THANK heaven that is done," said Dora, as she sat down wearily in her mother's large rocker in the cosy kitchen. She had been upstairs the best portion of the day preparing a room for an expected lodger. There had been windows to wash, paint to clean, a carpet to tack down, curtains to hang and furniture to place in position — in short, the thousand and one things to do that are essential to the comfort of the lodger and the good reputation of the house.

"Are you very tired, daughter?" queried her mother, as she glanced with loving pride at the graceful figure before her, at the smooth bands of dark-brown hair, now a little ruffled and disordered, and at the delicate brown face, now somewhat puckered and out of sorts from weariness.

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"Well, not very tired, mummy dear; only this continual scrub and dig is not always the cheerful work we would like to think it. Still I don't care as long as the house pays."

The mother sighed as she asked: "Did you give her the front or back square?"

"Oh, I gave her the front square after all. She's too beautiful for that dreary back room. I know that it is not business to let a good-paying room go under our usual price, but she's a 'steady'; she has the best of references. Father Andrew gives her the best of characters, and so I'll chance getting my money back out of the next cross-grained old bachelor who comes along. See how mercenary I am getting to be since I undertook to direct the fortunes of a lodging-house"; and with a gay laugh the daughter jumped from her seat, every trace of fatigue gone, and grasping her mother about the waist, whirled her around the room to the accompaniment of a sweet, shrill whistle of the latest popular waltz. In the midst of the frolic there came a loud ring of the doorbell, and placing her panting and protesting mother in the rocker just vacated, she vanished; and soon her voice was heard above, as she directed the placing of the luggage of the expected lodger.

The Smith family consisted of the mother, daughter and son. A few years before the

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opening of our story the father had died, leaving a delicate wife, a young daughter, and a son just ready to enter college; also a house in a respectable part of the South End of Boston, Mass., with a heavy mortgage upon it. Like many colored men living in large cities, his life had been a continual struggle with poverty and hard work, combined with a desire for advancement for his children, and a clean, self-respecting citizenship for himself. Smith was a free-born Southern Negro — a Virginian. His father had bought himself and married a free woman. After the birth of Henry his mother died; and when his father married again, his aunts brought him to the city of New Bedford, where he had imbibed, along with copious draughts of salt air, an unwavering desire for all the blessings of liberty, and strong notions that a man must depend upon himself in great measure and carve out his own fortune to the best of his ability with such tools as God had furnished him.

Henry Smith's early manhood was spent upon the sea; and when he at last settled in Boston, he could converse about foreign ports and countries with the ease and familiarity of personal knowledge. Possessed of very little education, yet he concealed the fact admirably under a naturally intelligent manner. Soon

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after he ceased to follow the sea he married a handsome Mulattress from New Hampshire, and with her help saved a small sum of money —enough to make the first payment on a home; then began the struggle of their lives. The masses of the Negro race find for employment only the most laborious work at the scantiest remuneration. A man, though a skilled mechanic, has the door of the shop closed in his face here among the descendants of the liberty-loving Puritans. The foreign element who come to the shores of America soon learn that there is a class which is called its inferior, and will not work in this or that business if "niggers" are hired; and the master or owner, being neither able nor willing to secure enough of the despised class to fill the places of the white laborers, acquiesces in the general demand, and the poor Negro finds himself banned in almost every kind of employment. Henry Smith had his ambitions; but like all of his meek race, he would not or at least had no desire to contend with the force of prejudice, and quietly took up his little business of repairing old clothes in the same patient spirit of the Jew "old clo'" vender or pawnbroker.

Two children were born to this worthy couple — William Jesse Montfort and Dora Grace Montfort. When Willie was seventeen

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and Dora twelve their father sickened and died. Thenceforth the burden of the support of the little family fell upon the mother. Willie was preparing to enter college, but he cheerfully gave up his plans and secured a place as bell-boy in one of the fashionable hostelries with which Boston abounds; and soon by his attention to business, his gentlemanly manners, and intelligent understanding of all that was required of him, made himself invaluable to his employers. Twenty dollars a month with board and "tips" was a very respectable showing for a lad of seventeen, and Willie felt himself repaid when he saw the great help and comfort his small earnings gave to his dear mother. Dora was kept at her studies until she was graduated from the high school. Meantime Mrs. Smith, or "Ma" Smith, as she was called by all the young people of her acquaintance, increased their income by letting furnished rooms. The mother and daughter shared the same sleeping-room, and Will declared himself in favor of an attic chamber as being the least desirable for renting purposes. There he established himself in a very comfortable nest, furnished after the fashion dear to all young fellows' hearts, with everything "handy." The only occasions upon which Will and Dora were known to quarrel were the

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weekly cleaning days, when the latter would insist on "tidying up Will's room." Then shoes were moved from the mantel and the blacking brushes from the top of the dressing-case; collars, cuffs and ties were placed in their proper receptacles, and garments hung in the clothespress. Then Will would scold a good deal because he "couldn't find things," but by the next morning he would have them "handy" again. Many lodgers were obtained through Will's acquaintance with young men at the hotel where he worked, and very soon the mother was able to see that the debt upon the home which she hoped to leave her children, was slowly but surely disappearing. Deep in her heart was the cherished hope that when the mortgage was paid Willie would be free to choose a profession; but they never mentioned among themselves the hope which was cherished in each breast.

As the years rolled slowly by the children saw that their mother could not do as much as formerly; and so by degrees, after Dora had finished school, the burden of the care of the house fell upon her strong young shoulders, and 1896 found her taking full charge, and proving herself to be a woman of ability and the best of managers, husbanding their small income to the best advantage.

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With about every avenue for business closed against them, it is surprising that so many families of color manage to live as well as they do and to educate their children and give them a few of the refinements of living, — such as cultivating a musical talent, gratifying a penchant for languages, or for carving, or for any of the arts of a higher civilization, so common among the whites, but supposed to be beyond the reach of a race just released from a degrading bondage. Whatever grace or accomplishment may be the order of the hour, it is copied or practiced among some portion of the colored population. We may well ask ourselves how this is done. Among the white Americans who perform domestic or personal service, how rare it is to meet the brilliant genius of a Frederick Douglass; but with this people it is a common occurrence to find a genius in a profession, trade, or invention, evolved from the rude nurturing received at the hands of a poor father and mother engaged in the lowliest of service, who see not the nobility of their sacrifices in the delight afforded them in watching the unfolding of the bud of promise in their offspring. From the bosom of the earth we take the diamond; pearls from the depth of the sea; from the lowliest walks of life we cull the hope of a future life beyond the perplexing

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questions of this present existence. Why should we wonder or question, then, when we see the steady advance of a race overriding the barriers set by prejudice and injustice? Man has said that from lack of means and social caste the Negro shall remain in a position of serfdom all his days, but the mighty working of cause and effect, the mighty unexpected results of the law of evolution, seem to point to a different solution of the Negro question than any worked out by the most fertile brain of the highly cultured Caucasian. Then again, we do not allow for the infusion of white blood, which became pretty generally distributed in the inferior black race during the existence of slavery. Some of this blood, too, was the best in the country. Combinations of plants, or trees, or of any productive living thing, sometimes generate rare specimens of the plant or tree; why not, then, of the genus homo? Surely the Negro race must be productive of some valuable specimens, if only from the infusion which amalgamation with a superior race must eventually bring. This is a mighty question. Today, with all the heated discussions of tariff reform, the parity of gold and silver, the hoarding of giant sums of money by trusts and combinations, still the Negro question will not "down"; it is the most important, the mightiest

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in the land, and is quietly assuming greater proportions as it forges its way to the front to take its place shortly as the gravest question in the councils of the nation.

When Dora returned to the kitchen her mother had about finished the preparations for supper. The short winter afternoon had dropped into early twilight. Every alternate night was Will Smith's early night home from the hotel, and the little family always managed to have an inviting tea and to pass a cheerful evening together. Lately another person had attached himself to the Smiths; a fellow-waiter with Will had finally worked himself into the profession of law, and having established himself in business in a down-town office, had put his admiration for Dora into words, and it was understood that in due course of time they would marry.

Dora lighted the lamps, drew the curtains, and looked about the cosy kitchen with a satisfaction which might well be pardoned, for even in palatial homes a more inviting nest could not be found. The table was carefully spread with a nicely ironed cloth of spotless white, red-bordered napkins lay at each plate, a good quality of plated silverware mingled with the plain, inexpensive white ware in which the meal was to be served. Ma Smith, in her neat

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calico dress and long white apron, busied herself in making the tea and coffee and seeing that the delicate muffins were browned to just the right turn, while Dora busied herself in putting the finishing touches to a house dress for her mother.

"Well, Dora," said her mother, as she bustled about the room, "does the young woman seem pleased with your arrangements? I am sure she ought to after all the labor you spent on that room."

"She says she is greatly pleased with everything. Say, ma, she's got a typewriter, and she says she picks up a good living at home with it. Talk about your beauties! my, but she's the prettiest creature I ever saw! I expect all the men in this house will be crazy over her."

"Yes, dear," replied her mother with a quiet laugh; "you don't want John making eyes at her, do you?"

Dora laughed as she said: "I'd just drop John P. Langley if I thought he admired any woman more than he did me. But really, ma, you won't be able to keep from loving her; she has the sweetest and saddest face I ever saw. I have read of the woman with a story written on her face, but I never believed it anything but a fairy tale. You'll believe me when you see her and talk with her."

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"There are the boys," said her mother, as the sound of voices reached their ears, together with the closing of the front door and great stamping of feet to brush away the snow. The next moment the door opened, and two young men entered the cheerful room, and with jest and laugh bade the two women good evening.

Will Smith was tall and finely formed, with features almost perfectly chiseled, and a complexion the color of an almond shell. His hair was black and curly, with just a tinge of crispness to denote the existence of Negro blood. His eyes were dark and piercing as an eagle's. Ladies of high position followed his tall form with admiring glances as he moved about his duties at the hotel, and wondered that so much manly beauty should be wasted upon an inferior race.

John Langley, his companion, was shorter in stature and very fair in complexion. His hair was dark and had no indication of Negro blood in its waves; his features were of the Caucasian cut. He possessed a gentle refinement of manner, apt to take well with the opposite sex; but to a reader of character, the strong manhood and honesty of purpose which existed in Will Smith were lacking in John Langley. He was a North Carolinian — a descendant of slaves and Southern "crackers." We might call this

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a bad mixture — the combination of the worst features of a dominant race with an enslaved race; and in some measure John Langley would bear out the unfavorable supposition upon close acquaintance. Many of his young friends did not care for him because he developed a revengeful trait of character. He liked his ease, and enjoyed indulging himself in every luxury that his modest means would allow. He had, moreover, a carefully concealed strain of sensuality in his nature, which as yet had never been aroused to an overindulgence in illegitimate and questionable pleasures; and with it all he had a mercenary streak, which made love of money his great passion. He possessed great political acumen and was strong in debate, which attracted a certain class of politicians around him. These attributes, combined with the practice of his profession, might eventually make or mar his fortunes in the untried future that stretched before him.

Seated at the pleasant tea table, the gay laugh and jolly joke went round, and even Ma Smith forgot her years and contributed her share of mirth to the general good time.

"Talking about funny things happening," said Ma Smith, "your grandfather, Will, was a comical genius. You know that I have told you there were fourteen in our family — all

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girls, and very near each other in age. When your aunts, Fanny and Lottie, began to receive company there was a great time to keep it from father for awhile. Mother was heart and hand with the girls and wanted to see them have a pleasant time, but father did not like it. Your grandfather worked hard and at night was very tired, so the dear old man would go to bed soon after his supper and pipe. Then was the girls' time. A fire was made in the parlor, which was at the front of the house, a good distance away from father's room, and by the time the young man arrived to make his call the old gentleman was generally sound asleep. One night, however, things did not work so well.

In those days we had large open fireplaces; stoves did not come in until I was about five years old. I can see that low-ceiled parlor now with its brick hearth and brass andirons holding the glowing logs, the flames crackling and shooting upward, the firelight dancing and shining on the little cupboard doors on each side of the chimney. There was a rag carpet on the floor — your grandmother made her own carpets from rags; and our floors were covered with large handmade rag mats, for no housekeeper was counted much who did not have a large supply of such things. There were china figures on the mantel, and vases

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filled with golden-rod gathered the summer before. The furniture was mahogany, polished until you could see your face in any part of it. There was a red cloth on the table which stood between the two windows, and in the center of it was a large astral lamp trimmed about the edges with long crystal pendants, which we children called diamonds. We thought nothing could be more elegant than that lamp. It was a wedding present to your grandmother."

"Did you have kerosene in those days, ma?" asked Dora.

"Lord bless you, no; we burned whale oil or sperm oil in that lamp. Poor people used candles. Your grandmother used to save her fat and clarify it and mix it with beeswax to harden it, and we made our candles every week as regularly as we did the family cooking. Sometimes there was danger of the supply of oil giving out in the stores, and then oil cost a great deal of money; that never lasted long, however, and in a few weeks some New Bedford whaler would be in port with a large cargo of whale oil, and then there would be a big supply selling cheap."

"I don't see how you got along without stoves and things," observed Dora; "baking day must have been a terror."

"We had tin kitchens and Dutch ovens. We never had any trouble."

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"What's a tin kitchen?" asked John.

"It's an oven made of tin, for roasting meat. It stood on four legs about a foot from the floor, and had a place for a charcoal fire at the back, and a chimney to carry off the smoke. The front fastened by a hasp to the back and could be let down to put the food on the little grate inside. It was a very convenient arrangement, and I wish I had one this minute. A Dutch oven was very much like our iron kettles which we use for boiling; there was a grate inside to hold the food."

"It must have been a great nuisance keeping house under such circumstances."

"Well, what became of the young man that particular evening, ma?" chimed in Will.

"This night father was restless and did not retire with his usual promptness, and we had only just got him out of the way when the expected caller arrived. However, everything went on very well, and you may be sure that there was much peeping and giggling on the part of the half-grown sisters who were denied the great privilege of the parlor and company as yet. Your grandmother sat in the kitchen knitting and trying to keep the younger children in order, when to her consternation the door opened and in walked father. 'Elizabeth,' said he, 'I hear a man's voice in the parlor.

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What's the trouble?' Poor mother tried to explain, and murmured something about a gentleman calling on Fanny. 'A man,' roared father, 'calling on my daughter!' and the first thing we knew, he seized the bucket of water from the kitchen dresser — we had wells in those days, and a bucket of water always stood on the dresser — and started for the parlor and flung the door open. Without speaking to the astonished occupants of the room, he stalked to the fireplace and deliberately poured the water upon the blazing wood; then he turned to the caller and said: 'Young man, if you have a home, go to it; this is no half-way house for the accommodation of young squirts. Fanny,' he said, turning to your aunt, 'you go to bed, and don't let this thing occur again.' The young man left as quickly as possible, and poor Fanny retired to her room greatly mortified."

"That's good discipline for girls," said John with a laugh. "If we had more fathers after that stamp, we fellows would get better wives."

"And we girls better husbands," chimed in Dora. "Still, I pity poor Aunt Fanny."

"The fellow wasn't much or he'd have stuck, and not been driven off that way. I'd have made the old gentleman like me in spite of himself if I had meant business," said Will. "Oh, by the by, did your new lodger come, Dora?"

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"Yes; and, Will, I never met anyone so beautiful in all my life. You'll be fascinated when you meet her."

"That's you all over, Dora; all your swans generally turn out geese. I'll bet you a new pair of Easter gloves that she's a rank old maid with false teeth, bald head, hair on her upper lip" —

"All right, Will Smith, all right. Just wait until you see her! I'll wager a new pair of embroidered silk suspenders that you're over head and ears in love with her long before that time."

"I'll hold the stakes," cried John.

They rose from the table now, and John said, with a tender glance at Dora: "I thought some one would enjoy seeing the 'Old Homestead.' It's at the Boston Theatre tonight; don't you want to go, Dora?" Dora's eyes sparkled as he held the two tickets before her.

"Get your things on, Dora; you've just time to reach the theatre before the curtain rises," said her brother.

In a little while the house was quiet, and the mother and son settled down to the enjoyment of a quiet evening together.

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CHAPTER VI.

MA SMITH'S LODGING-HOUSE.— *Concluded.*

THE gray day darkened into night,
. . . Made hoary with the swarm
And whirl-dance of the blinding storm,
As zigzag wavering to and fro,
Crossed and recrossed the winged snow.

— WHITTIER.

FEBRUARY drew slowly to a close. Boston had lain for the past three or four days in the grasp of the snow king. At No. 500 D Street each tenant seemed content to keep within the bounds of his or her small domain, literally "frozed up," as Mrs. Ophelia Davis expressed it.

No one had seen much of the new lodger. She passed in and out each morning with a package of work in her hand; and all day long, from nine in the morning until late at night sometimes, the click of the typewriter could be heard coming from the "first front-square," which interpreted meant the front room on the second floor. Dora had been very neighborly and had called on Miss Clark frequently. There was a great fascination for her about the quiet, self-possessed woman. She did not, as a rule, care much for girl friendships, holding

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that a close intimacy between two of the same sex was more than likely to end disastrously for one or the other. But Sappho Clark seemed to fill a long-felt want in her life, and she had from the first a perfect trust in the beautiful girl.

Mrs. Smith had furnished her rooms substantially and well, but there had been no attempt at decoration. The first time Dora entered the room after Sappho had settled herself in it, she was struck at the alteration in its appearance. The iron bedstead and the washing utensils were completely hidden by drapery curtains of dark-blue denim, beautifully embroidered in white floss; a cover of the same material was thrown over the small table between the windows; plain white muslin draperies hid the unsightly but serviceable yellow shades at the windows; her desk and typewriter occupied the center of the room, and a couch had been improvised from two packing-cases and a spring, covered with denim and piled high with cushions; two good steel engravings completed a very inviting interior.

"How pretty you have made it," observed Dora, looking curiously around the room.

Sappho came and stood beside her, and the two girls smiled at each other in a glow of mutual interest, and became fast friends at once.

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"I always carry these things with me in my travels, and I find that I can make myself very comfortable in a short time with their help."

"I wish you would show me how to do this embroidery," said Dora, as she lifted the edge of the denim curtain before the toilet stand and critically examined it. "This is beautifully done. Where did you learn?"

"I will teach you with pleasure," replied Sappho; but Dora noticed that she did not tell her where she had learned.

"Do you like your work — is it hard?" asked Dora, as she idly wandered from one object to another in the pretty room, pausing beside the desk to glance admiringly at a pile of neatly written sheets, just taken from the machine.

"Oh, I like the work very well. Sometimes the dictator is obtuse, or long-winded, or thinks that the writer ought to do his thinking for him as well as the corrections; then it is not pleasant work. But, generally speaking, I prefer it to most anything that I know of. Do sit down," she continued, pushing a chair toward Dora.

"This man receiveth sinners," read Dora from a pamphlet on the desk, as she turned to accept the offered chair. "I see that is your illuminated text for the day. Are you a Christian?" Then she saw an ivory crucifix sus-

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pended at the left side of the desk, and stopped in some confusion.

Sappho dropped the dress she was mending, and for a moment her eyes took on the far-away look of one in deep thought. Finally she said: "I saw you glance at the crucifix. I am not a Catholic, but I have received many benefits and kindnesses at their hands. Your question is a hard one to answer. I am afraid I am not a Christian, as we of our race understand the expression; but I try to do the best I can."

'And he who does the best he can
Need never fear the church's ban
Nor hell's damnation.
God recks not how man counts his beads,
For righteousness is not in creeds
Nor solemn faces;
But rather lies in Christian deeds
And Christian graces';

quoted Dora softly. "For my part, I am sick of loud professions and constant hypocrisy. My religion is short, and to the point—feed the starving thief and make him an honest man; cover your friend's faults with the mantle of charity and keep her in the path of virtue."

"Then you are not one of those who think that a woman should be condemned to eternal banishment for the sake of one misstep?"

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"Not I, indeed; I have always felt a great curiosity to know the reason why each individual woman loses character and standing in the eyes of the world. I believe that we would hang our heads in shame at having the temerity to judge a fallen sister, could we but know the circumstances attending many such cases. And, after all we may do or say," continued the girl softly, "the best of us, who have lived the purest lives on earth that mortal can conceive, find at last that our only hope lies in the words of that text—'This man receiveth sinners.'"

"You are a dear little preacher," said Sappho gently, as she looked at Dora from two wet eyes; "and if our race ever amounts to anything in this world, it will be because such women as you are raised up to save us."

Dora laughed and said, as she rose from her seat: "I think I am forgetting my errand." And making an elaborate bow, she continued: "If it please your royal highness, I present to you the compliments of the occupants of No. 500 D Street, with the request that you will honor us on Sunday evening, at half after seven, in the parlor of the worthy landlady of said house, where an informal reception will be held to further the better acquaintance of Miss Sappho Clark with her fellow-occupants of said house.

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Music during the evening. Refreshments at nine sharp; after which, you are all expected to retire to your rooms like virtuous citizens."

"I herewith most gratefully accept your kind invitation," replied Sappho, with a deep courtesy.

"Ta, ta, then, until Sunday night. I sha'n't see you before that. I shall be lost for the remainder of the week 'getting ready for company'"; and Dora, with a gay laugh, ran lightly down the stairs.

Mrs. Smith, after many trials, found that her house contained respectable though unlettered people, who possessed kindly hearts and honesty of purpose in a greater degree than one generally finds in a lodging-house. Her great desire, then, was to make them as happy together as possible, and to this end she had Dora institute musical evenings or reception nights, that her tenants might have a better opportunity of becoming acquainted with each other. She argued, logically enough, that those who were inclined to stray from right paths would be influenced either in favor of upright conduct or else shamed into an acceptance of the right. It soon became noised about that very pleasant times were enjoyed in that house; and that a sick lodger had been nursed back to health, instead of being hustled into the

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hospital ambulance at the first sign of sickness. It was also whispered that to enjoy these privileges one must be "pretty nice," or as some expressed it: "You've got to be high-toned to get in there." The result, however, justified Mrs. Smith's judgment, and rooms were always hard to get at No. 500 D Street.

Saturday was a busy day for Dora and her mother. At these little gatherings Mrs. Smith always gave her guests plenty of good home-made cake, sandwiches, hot chocolate, and on very special occasions, ice cream or sherbet. Sunday night there was to be ice cream in honor of the new lodger. "Good things to eat," said Ma Smith, as she industriously beat eggs, sugar and butter together in a large yellow bowl, "good things to eat make a man respect himself and look up in the world. You can't feel that you are nobody all the time if once in a while you eat the same quality of food that a millionaire does."

Dora lighted the lamps all over the house on Sunday night as soon as it fell dark. In the parlor there was a handsome piano lamp, which was only used on special occasions; it was lighted, and threw a soft, warm glow over the neat woolen carpet, the modest furniture and few ornaments. In a corner stood Dora's piano, given her on her sixteenth birthday by

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her brother. Very soon after seven o'clock the guests began to drop in; and as Dora and her mother were busy still over a few last preparations, Will and John volunteered to act as the reception committee.

The first comers were the two occupants of the basement rooms,—those which would have answered for the dining-room and kitchen of a moderately well-to-do family living in this class of house. Mrs. Ophelia Davis and Mrs. Sarah Ann White were friends of long standing. They were both born in far-away Louisiana, had been raised on neighboring plantations, and together had sought the blessings of liberty in the North at the close of the war. Mrs. Davis had always been a first-class cook, while Mrs. White tempted fortune as a second-girl. As their ideas of life and living enlarged, and they saw the possibilities of enjoying some comfort in a home, they began to think of establishing themselves where they could realize this blessing, and finally hit upon the idea of going into partnership in a laundry. After looking about them for a suitable situation for such a project, their choice finally fell upon Mrs. Smith's house, because of her known respectability, and because they could there come in contact with brighter intellects than their own; for, strange to say, it is a very hopeless

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case when a colored man or woman does not respect intelligence and good position.

"Yas, Sis'r Smith," said Mrs. Ophelia Davis the day she and Sarah Ann White went to engage the rooms; "yas'm, I'm tired o' livin' in white folkses' kitchens. Yas'm, thar's lots o' talk 'bout servant gals not bein' as good as enybody else, specially cooks. Yas'm, I kin git my five dollars a week with enyone; but ef you puts on a decent dress to go to church with a-Sunday afternoon, the mistis is a-wonderin' how you kin 'ford sech style and you nuthin' but a cook in her kitchen. Yas'm, I've got a silk dress, two of 'em, an' a lace shawl an' a gold watch and chain. People wants ter know how'd I git 'em. I come by 'em hones', I did. Yas'm, when my ol' mistis left her great big house an' all that good stuff — silver an' things — a-layin' thar fer enyone to pick up thet had sense 'nough to know a good thing an' git it ahead of enybody else, I jes' said to myself: ''Phelia, chile, now's yer time!' Yas'm, I feathered my nes', I jes' did. Sarah Ann, you 'member that time, honey, an' how skeered we was fer fear some o' them Union sojers would ketch us. You stuffed yerself with greenbacks, but, honey, I took clo's, too."

"Bless Gawd, Sis'r 'Phelia," replied her friend, with a chuckle and a great shaking of her fat

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sides; "bless Gawd, I disremember how much I did took in that ar pile; but Lord love yer, honey, I'se got some o' that money yet."

The two women engaged the rooms and prospered in their enterprise. The clothes under their deft fingers seemed to gain an added prettiness. They became the style; and no young bride on the Back Bay felt that she was complete unless "The First-class New Orleans Laundry" placed the finishing polish on the dainty lingerie of her wedding finery.

Tonight Mrs. Davis wore the famous black silk dress and gold watch and chain of ante bellum days, and Mrs. White was gay in a bright blue silk skirt and rose-colored silk shirt-waist. She said that she did not believe in any of your gloomy colors; for her part, she'd be dead soon enough and have a long time enough to stay "moulderin' inter clay, without buryin' herself befo' it was time." The next arrival was the young student preacher from the "first square-back." He was due at a prayer meeting; but when the time came for him to go there, he peeped over the banister and caught sight of Dora flitting back and forth in the entries, and then a whiff of Ma Smith's famous white cake was borne temptingly to his nostrils and banished the last scruple. He satisfied his conscience by hugging to his breast

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the idea that his presence was necessary to give the festivities the religious air which was needed for Sunday evening. In his Prince Albert coat and high white stock and tie he entered the parlor early, so that proper decorum might be maintained. Two dressmakers from the "second-front and back" now appeared and were made very welcome by the family; and then Sappho entered.

Her dress was plain black, with white chiffon at the neck and wrists, and on her breast a large bunch of "Jack" roses was fastened. With modest self-possession she moved to Mrs. Smith's side, and soon found herself being presented to the occupants of the parlor. For a moment or two there was an unbroken hush in the room. Tall and fair, with hair of a golden cast, aquiline nose, rosebud mouth, soft brown eyes veiled by long, dark lashes which swept her cheek, just now covered with a delicate rose flush, she burst upon them — a combination of "queen rose and lily in one."

"Lord," said Ophelia Davis to her friend Sarah Ann, "I haven't see enything look like thet chile since I lef' home."

"That's the truth, 'Phelia," replied Sarah Ann; "that's somethin' God made, honey; thar ain't nothin' like thet growed outside o' Loosyannie."

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"Miss Clark," said Mrs. Davis, during a lull in the conversation, "I presume you're from Loosyannie?"

"My mother was born in New Orleans," replied the girl.

"I knowed it," cried Mrs. White, as she triumphantly glanced around the room. "Ol' New Orleans blood will tell on itself anywhere. These col'-blooded Yankees can't raise nuthin' that looks like thet chile; no, 'ndeed!"

Two or three of the young friends of the family who lived in the neighborhood had now arrived, and the conversation became very animated. Then it was announced that a literary and musical programme had been provided. Dora played an opening piece, which was a medley of Moody and Sankey hymns; Will sang "Palm Branches" in a musical baritone voice; John contributed a poem, and two young friends gave the duet from "Il Trovatore." After a little persuasion Sappho rendered the "Chariot Race" from "Ben Hur" in true dramatic style, and breathing so much of the stage that the Rev. Tommy James, the young theologian, felt that possibly he might have made a mistake in going into such hilarious company on the Sabbath.

"Now," said Mrs. Ophelia Davis, "I'm goin' to sing 'Suwanee River.' None o' yer high-

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falutin' things can tech that song." Dora accompanied her, and soon the air was filled with Mrs. Davis' ambitious attempts to imitate an operatic artist singing that good old-time song. With much wheezing and puffing — for the singer was neither slender nor young — and many would-be fascinating jumps and groans, presumed to be trills and runs, she finished, to the relief of the company. Her friend, Mrs. White, looked at her with great approval, and immediately informed them that 'Phelia made a great impression the Sunday before at Tremont Temple.

"The whole congregation was to sing 'Where's My Wandering Boy.' 'Phelia had no paper to see the words, — not as thet made eny matter, 'cause 'Phelia can't read nohow, — an' the gentleman next us on the other side, he gave 'Phelia a paper thet *he* had. The man wanted ter be perlite. Well, 'Phelia was thet flattered thet she jes' let herself go, an' thet man never sung another note, he was so '*sprised*. After the second verse 'Phelia saw the distraction she was makin', an' she says to me, says she: '*How's thet, Sarah Ann?*' an' I says to her: '*That's out o' sight, 'Phelia!*' You jes' ought ter seen them white folks look! they was paralyzed! Why, you could hear 'Phelia *clean* above the orgin!"

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Meantime the young people in the room had gathered in a little knot, and were discussing many questions of the day and their effect upon the colored people. During a pause in the music the last remark made by John Langley was distinctly heard: "Yes, I must admit that our people are improving in their dress, in their looks and in their manners."

"What's that, John Langley?" asked Mrs. Davis, as she leaned forward to catch the words of the speaker; "colored people improvin' in ther manners? I should think they was! Don't yer fool yerself 'bout thet, now, will yer? The other night Sarah Ann and me was goin' down to Beacon Street to 'liver some goods, an' the car was crowded with people, an' thar was a pile o' young colored folks on it from the West End. Some o' them was a-standin' up in thet car, an' every onct in a while I noticed thet a passenger'd squirm as ef suthin' had hit him. Finally I got so mad I jes' couldn't see along with sech antics from them critters a-disgracin' theirselves and the whole o' the res' o' the colored population, an' I jes' elbowed myself into thet crowd o' young jades — what's thet (as Will murmured something under his breath), was they gals? yas, they was; young *jades*, every one o' them! Now what do yer think they was a-doin'?" she asked, as she swept her gaze over the company.

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"Not being a mind-reader, I wouldn't dare to say," replied John Langley, with a grin of delight.

"*They was a-trampin' onto the feet of every white man an' woman in thet car to show the white folks how free they was!* I jes' took my ambriller an' knocked it into two or three o' them thet I knowed, an' tol' 'em I'd tell ther mothers. Improvin' in ther manners! I should think they was!"

At this moment refreshments were served, and the attention of the company was turned to the wants of the inner man.

Dora had placed a pretty little tea table at one side of the room, and Sappho had promised to pour the tea and chocolate. At a sign from Mrs. Smith she took her place, and soon the steaming beverage was cheering the hearts of the guests. The young men vied with each other in serving her. The tea table became the center of attraction, in fact, for the whole room. Even the divinity student was drawn into the magic circle, and divided his attention between Sappho and Mrs. Ophelia Davis, for whom he seemed to have a very tender regard.

The girl was naturally buoyant and bright, and the influence of the pleasant company in which she found herself seemed to inspire her, and yet no man would have overstepped the

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bounds of propriety with her in his manner. The pleasant word and jest were free from all coquetry. John was dumb before so much beauty and wit. Will was so blinded by her charms that he was scarcely conscious of what he was doing; but not a word or movement of hers was lost to him.

Dora watched the tea table smilingly. She loved to see her friends enjoy themselves. It never occurred to her to be jealous of the attention given Sappho by her brother and John Langley.

Presently there were many pleasant compliments passed on the enjoyable evening which had so quickly flown, and each gentleman proposed a toast, which was drunk in a cup of hot chocolate; and as the clock struck ten, they all joined hands and united in singing "Auld Lang Syne" and "Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow." The evening was over; the lights were out; but up in John's attic chamber the two young men smoked a social cigar before separating for the night.

They were silent for some time, and then Will said: "Miss Clark is a very beautiful woman; don't you think so, John?"

"Well," replied John, "beauty is not the word to describe her. She's a stunner, and no mistake."

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John went to bed; but Will sat by the fire a longer time than usual, thinking thoughts which had never before troubled his young manhood; and, unconsciously, one face — the face of Sappho Clark — formed the background of his thoughts.

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CHAPTER VII.

FRIENDSHIP.

WHAT is so great as friendship? The only reward of virtue is virtue: the only way to have a friend is to be one. — EMERSON.

AFTER that evening the two girls were much together. Sappho's beauty appealed strongly to Dora's artistic nature; but hidden beneath the classic outlines of the face, the graceful symmetry of the form, and the dainty coloring of the skin, Dora's shrewd common sense and womanly intuition discovered a character of sterling worth — bold, strong and ennobling; while into Sappho's lonely self-suppressed life the energetic little Yankee girl swept like a healthful, strengthening breeze. Care was forgotten; there was new joy in living. It was the Southern girl's first experience of Northern life. True, the seductive skies of her nativity had a potent hold upon her affections, but truth demanded her to recognize the superiority of the vigorous activity in the life all about her. The Negro, while held in contempt by many, yet reflected the spirit of his surroundings in his upright carriage, his fearlessness in advancing his opinions, his self-reliance, his anxiety to obtain paying employment that

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would give to his family some few of the advantages enjoyed by the more favored classes of citizens, his love of liberty, which in its intensity recalled the memory of New England men who had counted all worldly gain as nothing if demanding the sacrifice of even one of the great principles of freedom. It was a new view of the possibilities and probabilities which the future might open to her people. Long she struggled with thoughts which represented to her but vaguely a life beyond anything of which she had ever dreamed.

Sappho generally carried her work home in the morning, but ten o'clock would find her seated at her desk and ready to begin her task anew. Some days she was unoccupied; but this did not happen very frequently. These free days were the gala days of her existence, when under Dora's guidance she explored various points of interest, and learned from observation the great plan of life as practiced in an intelligent, liberty-loving community. Here in the free air of New England's freest city, Sappho drank great draughts of freedom's subtle elixir. Dora was interested and amused in watching the changes on the mirror-like face of her friend whenever her attention was arrested by a new phenomenon. It was strange to see this girl, resembling nothing so much as a lily

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in its beautiful purity, shrink from entering a place of public resort for fear of insult. It was difficult to convince her that she might enter a restaurant frequented by educated whites and meet with nothing but the greatest courtesy; that she might take part in the glorious service at fashionable Trinity and be received with punctilious politeness. To this woman, denied association with the vast sources of information, which are heirlooms to the lowliest inhabitant of Boston, the noble piles, which represented the halls of learning, and the massive grandeur of the library, free to all, seemed to invite her to a full participation in their intellectual joys. She had seen nothing like them. Statuary, paintings, sculptures, — all appealed to her beauty-loving nature. The hidden springs of spirituality were satisfied and at rest, claiming kinship with the great minds of the past, whose never-dying works breathed perennial life in the atmosphere of the quiet halls.

Now was the beginning of the storm season in New England, and on stormy days the two girls would sit before the fire in Sappho's room and talk of the many things dear to women, while they embroidered or stitched. So they sat one cold, snowy day. The storm had started the afternoon before and had raged with unceasing fury all night, — snow and rain

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which the increasing cold quickly turned into cutting sleet. Morning had brought relief from the high winds, and the temperature had moderated somewhat; but the snow still fell steadily, drifting into huge piles, which made the streets impassable. It was the first great storm Sappho had seen. It was impossible for her to leave home, so she begged Dora to pass the day with her and play "company," like the children. Dora was nothing loathe; and as soon as her morning duties were finished, she told her mother that she was going visiting and would not be at home until tea time. By eleven o'clock they had locked the door of Sappho's room to keep out all intruders, had mended the fire until the little stove gave out a delicious warmth, and had drawn the window curtains close to keep out stray currents of air. Sappho's couch was drawn close beside the stove, while Dora's small person was most cosily bestowed in her favorite rocking-chair.

It was a very convenient stove that Sappho had in her room. The ornamental top could be turned back on its movable hinge, and there was a flat stove cover ready to hold any vessel and heat its contents to just the right temperature. Sappho was prouder of that stove than a daughter of Fortune would have been of the

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most expensive silver chafing-dish. It was very near lunch time, so the top was turned back, and the little copper teakettle was beginning to sing its welcome song. Dora had placed a small, round table between the couch and the rocker. A service for two was set out in dainty china dishes, cream and sugar looking doubly tempting as it gleamed and glistened in the delicate ware. One plate was piled with thinly cut slices of bread and butter, another held slices of pink ham.

Sappho lay back among her cushions, lazily stretching her little slippered feet toward the warm stove, where the fire burned so cheerily and glowed so invitingly as it shone through the isinglass door. She folded her arms above her head and turned an admiring gaze on the brown face of her friend, who swayed gently back and forth in her rocking-chair, her feet on a hassock, and a scarlet afghan wrapped about her knees. Dora was telling Sappho all about her engagement to John Langley and their plans for the future.

"I think you will be happy, Dora, if you love him. All things are possible if love is the foundation stone," said Sappho, after a slight pause, as she nestled among her pillows. Dora was sitting bolt upright with the usual business-like look upon her face.

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"I like him well enough to marry him, but I don't believe there's enough sentiment in me to make love a great passion, such as we read of in books. Do you believe marriage is the beautiful state it is painted by writers?"

"Why, yes," laughed Sappho; "I wouldn't believe anything else for your sake, my little brownie."

"No joking, Sappho; this is dead earnest. Don't you ever expect to marry, and don't you speculate about the pros and cons and the maybes and perhapses of the situation?" asked Dora, as she filled the cups with steaming cocoa and passed one to her friend.

"Dora, you little gourmand, what have you got in the refrigerator?" A box ingeniously nailed to the window seat outside, and filled with shelves, and having a substantial door, was the ice-box, or refrigerator, where Sappho kept materials handy for a quick lunch. Dora closed the window and returned quickly to her seat, placing a glass dish on the table as she did so.

"It's only part of a cream pie that ma had left last night. I thought it would help out nicely with our lunch."

"What, again!" said Sappho significantly. "That's the fourth time this week, and here it is but Friday. You'll be as fat as a seal, and

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then John P. won't want you at any price. Take warning, and depart from the error of your ways before it is too late."

Dora laughed guiltily and said, as she drew a box from her apron pocket: "Well, here are John's chocolate bonbons that he brought last night. I suppose you won't want me to touch *them*, for fear of getting fat."

Sappho shook her head in mock despair. "And your teeth, your beautiful white teeth, where will they be shortly if you persist in eating a pound of bonbons every day? Think of your fate, Dora, and pause in your reckless career — forty inches about the waist and only scraggy snags to show me when you grin!"

"Thank heaven I'll never come to that while there's a dentist in the city of Boston! I'll eat all the bonbons I want in spite of you, Sappho, and if you don't hurry I'll eat your slice of cream pie, too." At this dire threat there ensued a scramble for the pie, mingled with peals of merry laughter, until all rosy and sparkling, Sappho emerged from the fray with the dish containing her share of the dainty held high in the air.

Presently lunch was over, and they resumed their old positions, prepared to "take comfort."

"You haven't answered my question yet, Sappho."

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"To tell you the truth, I had forgotten your remark, Dora; what was it?"

"I suspect that is a bit of a fib to keep me from teasing you about getting married. What I want to know is: Do you ever mean to marry, or are you going to pine in single blessedness on my hands and be a bachelor-maid to the end?"

"Well," replied Sappho, with a comical twist to her face, "in the words of Unc' Gulliver, 'I mote, an' then agin I moten't.'"

"What troubles me is having a man bothering around. Now I tell John P. that I'm busy, or something like that, and I'm rid of him; but after you marry a man, he's on your hands for good and all. I'm wondering if my love could stand the test."

"That's queer talk for an engaged girl, with a fine, handsome fellow to court her. Why, Dora, 'I'm s'prised at yer!'" laughed Sappho gaily.

"I'm not ashamed of John P.'s appearance in company; he looks all right; but when one is terribly in love one is supposed to want the dear object always near; but matches, — love matches, — my child, turn out so badly that a girl hesitates to 'git jined to eny man fer betterer or worserer,' as Dr. Peters says. Then I get tired of a man so soon! (This with a doleful

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sigh.) I dread to think of being tied to John for good and all; I know I'll be sick of him inside of a week. I do despair of ever being like other girls."

Sappho laughed outright at the woe-begone countenance before her.

"It is generally the other way: the men get tired of us first. A woman loves one man, and is true to him through all eternity."

"That's just what makes me feel so *unsexed*, so to speak; I like John's looks. He's the style among all the girls in our set. I like to know that I can claim him before them all. It's fun to see 'em fluttering around him, kindly trying to put my nose out of joint. I must say that I feel real *comfortable* to spoil sport by walking off with him just when they think they've got things running as they wish. Yes, it's real *comfortable* to know that they're all as jealous as can be. But for all that, I know I'll get tired of him."

"Let us hope not, if you have really made up your mind to marry him. Dora, sometimes I am afraid that you mean what you say. I notice that you call him 'John P.' What's the P for?"

"Pollock — John Pollock Langley. His grandfather was his father's master, and Pollock was his name," sang Dora, as she rocked gently

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to and fro. "Now, there's Arthur Lewis," she continued; "he's jolly fun. He isn't a fascinator, or anything of that sort; he's just good."

"Who is he?" asked Sappho, with languid interest.

"Properly speaking, he's Dr. Arthur Lewis. We were children together, although he is five years older than I. He's a fine scholar and a great business man. He has a large industrial school in Louisiana. He's gone up in the world, I tell you, since we made mud pies on the back doorsteps; but I never think of him except as old Arthur, who used to drag me to school on his sled."

There was a gleam of fun in Sappho's eyes, as she said demurely: "You seem to know all about him. Was he ever a lover of yours?"

"Lover! no, indeed!" Dora flushed vividly under her brown skin. "The idea of Arthur as my lover is too absurd."

"Excuse me, dear, for my mistake," said Sappho mischievously. "I didn't know but that he might be the mysterious link which would join love, marriage and the necessary man in a harmonious whole."

"Well," said Dora, after a slight pause, blushing furiously, "I don't say he wouldn't like the rôle. You'll see him soon; he's coming to Boston on business in a few weeks. Oh, we've

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had rare times together." She sighed and smiled, lost for the moment in pleasant memories. Sappho smiled, too, in sympathy with her mood.

"Ah, yes; I think I understand. Poor John!"

"John's all right. Don't shed any tears over him," said Dora testily. They sat awhile in silence, listening to the sound of the whirling frozen flakes wind-driven against the window panes. It was scarce three o'clock, but darkness was beginning to envelop the city, and it was already a pleasant twilight in the room.

"Tell me about Dr. Lewis and his work, Dora," said Sappho presently. "Do you know, he interests me exceedingly."

"I don't really understand Arthur's hobbies, but I believe that he is supposed to be doing a great work in the Black Belt. His argument is, as I understand it, that industrial education and the exclusion of politics will cure all our race troubles."

"I doubt it," returned Sappho quickly, with an impatient toss of the head. "That reasoning might be practically illustrated with benefit to us for a few years in the South, but to my mind would not effect a permanent cure for race troubles if we are willing to admit that human nature is the same in us as in others.

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The time will come when our men will grow away from the trammels of narrow prejudice, and desire the same treatment that is accorded to other men. Why, one can but see that any degree of education and development will not fail of such a result."

"I am willing to confess that the subject is a little deep for me," replied Dora. "I'm not the least bit of a politician, and I generally accept whatever the men tell me as right; but I know that there is something very wrong in our lives, and nothing seems to remedy the evils under which the colored man labors."

"But you can see, can't you, that if our men are deprived of the franchise, we become aliens in the very land of our birth?"

"Arthur says that would be better for us; the great loss of life would cease, and we should be at peace with the whites."

"Ah, how can he argue so falsely! I have lived beneath the system of oppression in the South. If we lose the franchise, at the same time we shall lose the respect of all other citizens. Temporizing will not benefit us; rather, it will leave us branded as cowards, not worthy a freeman's respect — an alien people, without a country and without a home."

Dora gazed at her friend with admiration, and wished that she had a kodak, so that she

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might catch just the expression that lighted her eyes and glowed in a bright color upon her cheeks.

"I predict some fun when you and Arthur meet. I'll just start you both out some night, and you'll be spitting at each other like two cats inside of five minutes. Arthur thinks that women should be seen and not heard, where politics is under discussion."

"Insufferable prig!" exclaimed Sappho, with snapping eyes.

"Oh, no, he isn't; Arthur's all right. But you see he is living South; his work is there, and he must keep in with the whites of the section where his work lies, or all he has accomplished will go for naught, and perhaps his life might be forfeited, too."

"I see. The mess of pottage and the birthright."

"Bless you! not so bad as that; but money makes the mare go," returned Dora, with a wink at her friend, and a shrewd business look on her bright little Yankee face. "I say to you, as Arthur says to me when I tell him what I think of his system: 'If you want honey, you must have money.' I don't know anything about politics, as I said before, but my opinion won't cost you anything: when we can say that lots of our men are as rich as Jews, there'll be

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no question about the franchise, and my idea is that Arthur 'll be one of the Jews."

"Oh!" exclaimed Sappho disgustedly, as she resumed her lounging position.

"Sappho, how did you come to take up stenography? I should have thought you would have preferred teaching."

"I had to live, my dear; I could not teach school, because my education does not include a college course. I could not do housework, because my constitution is naturally weak."

It was noticeable in these confidential chats that Sappho never spoke of her early life. Dora had confided to her friend every event of importance that had occurred in her young life; and, in harmless gossip, had related the history of all the friends who visited the house intimately; but all this had begot no like unburdening to eager ears of the early history of her friend. Wonderful to relate, however, Dora did not resent this reserve, which she could see was studied. It spoke well for the sincerity of the love that had taken root in her heart for Sappho, that it subdued her inquisitiveness, and she gladly accepted her friendship without asking troublesome questions.

"How did you finally succeed in getting work? I have always heard that it was very difficult for colored girls to find employment

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in offices where your class of work is required."

"And so it is, my dear. I sometimes think that if I lose the work I am on, I shall not try for another position. I shall never forget the day I started out to find work: the first place that I visited was all right until the man found I was colored; then he said that his wife wanted a nurse girl, and he had no doubt she would be glad to hire me, for I looked good-tempered. At the second place where I ventured to intrude the proprietor said: 'Yes; we want a stenographer, but we've no work for your kind.' However, that was preferable to the insulting familiarity which some men assumed. It was dreadful! I don't like to think about it. Father Andrew induced the man for whom I am working to employ me. I do not interfere with the other help, because I take my work home; many of the other clerks have never seen me, and so the proprietor runs no risk of being bothered with complaints from them. He treats me very well, too."

"I have heard many girls tell much the same tale about other lines of business," said Dora. "It makes me content to do the work of this house, and not complain."

"You ought to thank God every day for such a refuge as you have in your home."

"I cannot understand people. Here in the

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North we are allowed every privilege. There seems to be no prejudice until we seek employment; then every door is closed against us. Can you explain this?"

"No, I cannot; to my way of thinking the whole thing is a Chinese puzzle."

"Bless my soul! Just look at that clock!" exclaimed Dora, as she scrambled to her feet and began gathering up her scattered property. "Five o'clock, and tea to get. Sappho, you've been lazy enough for one day. Come downstairs and help me get tea. The boys will be here in no time, as hungry as bears."

Piloted by Dora, Sappho became well acquainted with ancient landmarks of peculiar interest to the colored people. They visited the home for aged women on M—— Street, and read and sang to the occupants. They visited St. Monica's Hospital, and carried clothes, flowers, and a little money saved from the cost of contemplated Easter finery. They scattered brightness along with charitable acts wherever a case of want was brought to their attention.

Dora had accepted the position of organist for a prominent colored church in the city. There was a small salary attached to the place, which she was glad to receive. Sappho usually went with her to choir rehearsals, and sitting in the shadows, well hidden from view, would

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think over the romantic history of the fine old edifice. The building, so the story ran, was the place of worship of a rich, white Baptist congregation in the years preceding the emancipation. Negroes were allowed in the galleries only. Believing this color-bar to be a stigma on the house of God, a few of the members protested, but finding their warnings unheeded, withdrew from the church, and finally found a Sabbath home in an old building long used as a theatre. These people prospered, and grew rich and powerful; colored people were always welcome in the congregation. The society in the old church, left to itself, had at last been glad to sell the building to its present occupants. Thus the despised people, who were not allowed a seat outside of the galleries, now owned and occupied the scene of their former humiliation. It was a solemn and wonderful dispensation of Providence, and filled the girl's heart with strong emotion.

During these evenings, when she waited for the close of the rehearsals, she became acquainted with many odd specimens of the race: men of brain and thought, but of unique expression and filled with quaint humor. One of these characters was known as Dr. Abraham Peters. Doctor Peters was a well-read man, greatly interested in scientific research, but

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who had lacked the opportunity to obtain information in his youth. He had been a slave when a boy, a few years before the Civil War. Now he was the church janitor, and to eke out his scanty income kept a little boot-black stand just around the corner from the church, and knowing something of medicine and nursing the sick, had advertised himself as a magnetic physician. He displayed much skill in practice, and had acquired something of a local reputation. Doctor Peters and Sappho were good friends, and he brought out all his store of knowledge, proudly displaying it for her approval.

"You see, Miss Sappho, I've knocked 'bout the worl' some consid'ble," he said one night, in his soft Southern tones and quaint Northernized dialect, as they sat in the cosy vestry waiting for the close of the rehearsal. "Ben po'rer than eny chuch mouse. But I've saved somethin', an' I know the worl'. Perhaps you's int'rest'd 'nuff in an ole man to want to hear how I come to 'vertis myself as a magnifyin' doctor, an' where I picked it up, eh?"

"Yes," replied Sappho, "I certainly am interested in your story."

"Well, while they're caterwaulin' on that Easter anthem in ten flats, I reckon I'll have time to tell you all 'bout it. Fust I knowed

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'bout magnetics was brought to my 'tention down home. Some people said I had the evil eye, an' some said it was only a *strong* eye, but be that homsomever, it was a bad eye, an' 'a terror ter watermilyun thieves when it was my watch on the chickun houses. *Magnifyin'* an' *hoodooin'* is 'bout the same thing down thar, tho' sense the 'srender mos' all ol'-time doin's is done 'way. 'Bout the time I realized that I had this power I had 'sperinced ruligeon, an' had been jestified an' concentrated, so that I got the blessin'. Them days, too, I was a-sottin' out to court my Susie (that's my wife), an' all the young fellers 'roun' the county was a-sprucin' up to her jes' like crows 'roun' carr'on. Sunday was the day I had mos' on my mind, 'cause they'd ride up an' hitch thar mules in a line all along the ole man's fence (you see he had right smart prop'ty, an' I spec' that had a mighty drawin' infloonce on some of them shif'less fellers who hadn't nuff skonsh to start thar own mule team up a hill), an' thar they'd sot like so many buzzards, waitin' fer a chance to sly Susie off to chuch under my nose. I had ter wurk lively, I tell you; Susie was kin' o' skittish an' res'less, an' it was fus' come, fus' sarved, with her, bein' she had her choice. Well, jes' at the time I got the blessin' I got the insurance that Susie was gwine ter have me. All the fellers

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was satisfied but Possum Tooit. Possum an' me was boys together, an' we'd both run each other purty hard strivin' to come through fust at the mourner's bench as well as to git the gal. Possum was beat when he found I had a full hand and had swept the pot."

"Oomhoo!" laughed Brother Jones, who was an interested listener to Doctor Peters' story. "Oomhoo, Brother Peters; done guv yerself 'way. What you know 'bout 'full hands an' pots?'"

"Who give himself 'way, Brother Jones? Ever hear me say Ise better'n enybody else in this chuch? I'm er man, sah, I'm er man! Ise done truspassed on the flesh-pots of Egypt as much as eny other man. Don't yer 'oomhoo' me, Brother Jones, no sah!"

"Tech a sore place, Brother Peters, tech a sore place," laughed the brother as he walked away, his shoulders shaking like great mounds of jelly. It was some minutes before Doctor Peters could recover his equilibrium and go on with his tale.

"Possum Tooit was so mad an' disapinted that he finally challenged me to fight a jewel. I wasn't in no state of mind to be killed by any of his hoodoo tricks, Possum bein' an export at puttin' spells an' sech like on enybody fer from twenty-five cents up to five dollars; neither

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did I want Susie to think I was 'fraid of Possum Tooit. So thar I was 'tween a hawk an' a buzzard. Well, I accepted the challenge, an' bein' the defendant in the matter, of course, I had the choice of weapins, an' I choose rifles. We kep' mighty secret 'bout the 'rangements, an' met at moonrise on a field jes' back of the graveyard. The seconds measured off ten spaces after we'd shooken hands, an' we each stepped to our places. Tho' it was a solemn 'casion, I wasn't skeered, but Possum was a rollin' up the whites of his eyes, an' you could hear his teeth chatter worse than dried corn shuks. Ike Watkins was head second, an' he stood 'tween us, holdin' his red bandanna in his han' waitin' to say the word. 'Gemplemen, is you ready?' he says. 'Let her go, Ike,' says I. 'Take aim,' says he, an' I pinted the rifle at Possum, an' callin' up all the power in me I threw it along the body of the gun plumb 'tween Possum's eyes jes' above the bridge of his nose. An' that was a fair target, 'cause the bridge of Possum's nose was a miracle fer size. Possum gave a yell when he felt the strength of that eye, that would a splut yer year-pan in two. An' in two seconds he was in the worst alpaca fit you ever seen. The seconds acknowledged me the victor by a reckless invention of Providence, they bein' aware that the adversary

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wasn't hit by nary bullet, the rifles bein' loaded with salt fer fear of mischief. Possum owned up like a man that I was more powerful than him, because of the sufernatral strength in my bad eye.

"Well, I kep' on prayin' fer mo' faith until I got the power in my hands, an' by layin' em on a sick pusson I could 'lectrocute 'em instantly, an' thar bad feelin's would disappear. People got the notion I could pray a pusson right out the grave, an' my fame spread abroad until I began charging fer my services, explainin' to my patients that the dead might be raised, but not fer nuthin', after which I seed a fallin' off in my poperlarity. Business bein' purty brief jes' then, I took Susie an' moved up Norf, an' went ter cookin' on a steamboat. I've done mos' everythin' in this worl', honey, as I tol' you, to git an hones' livin' without stealin' it. An' I dunno," added the old man reflectively, as he stroked the gray, stubby fringe on his chin, "I dunno as I'm eny too good ef I got pushed real hard to help myself out; humans is humans, an' I've seen many a well-'tentioned feller settin' in the caboose when times was hard, an' the mule mortgaged for full value to three men at once to buy meal an' bread, an' hog an' hominy, an' terbacccr. But mos' in ginerally, I've got along without silin' my hands

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with other people's prop'ty. Well, honey, they gave me fifteen dollars a munf an' found, fer bein' head cook, an' I paid ten dollars a munf house rent out of that. Things was purty brief, purty brief. Times was more an' more spurious, an' it was work yer wits, Abraham Peters, to git a livin'. I jes' didn't know whicher way to turn.

"One day I got a telegraph at the other end of the route that the baby was dead an' no money to pay the undertaker, an' the ole 'ooman sick in the bed from worryin'. The Lord jes' seemed to pour his blessin' down on us in a house full o' chillun. After Susie'd had twenty I used to pray the Lord to stop blessin' us that way, 'cause he could see fer himself that too many blessins was a gittin' to be a nuisance. I cooked the dinner myself that day, bein' the other cook was ashore, an' you believe me, I sung an' I prayed an' I wrastled fer help in that ole steamboat kitchen down behin' my bigges' brass biler where I was kivered from pryin' eyes. All of a suddint I felt the power, an' the Lord spoke to me an' he said: 'Git up, Abraham Peters, an' go out an' hoodoo the fust man you meet.' Bless yo, chile, I riz up in a hurry an' started out, not knowin' no more than nuthin' what was meant by that. Fust man I saw when I got on deck was the cap'n; I went

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up to him, an' I smiled. I must have been a purty picture with my face all grease an' tears. I says, not thinkin' what wurds I was goin' ter utter: 'Mornin', Cap'n; how's yer corporosity seem to segashiate?' Cap'n he roared; you could a heard him holler up to Boston. He slapped me on the back, an' says he: 'Abe Peters, that's the gol darndest thing I ever heard.' With that he hauled out a five-dollar bill an' gave me, an' walked off laughin' fit to kill hisself. By night I had twenty dollars in my pocket, an' everybody on the boat was a callin' me 'corporosity segashiate.' I've used that hoodoo ever since, an' I ain't found nary white gempleman can seem to git 'way from it without showing the color of his money.

"One of the owners of the boat took a great liking to me, an' he says to me one day, says he: 'Abe, how'd you like to wurk ashore so you could be nearer your family an' git better pay?' 'Like it?' says I. 'If you don't want to pulverize me, don' make me no sech an offer.' He laughed a bit, an' then he says: 'I've got a big buildin' up Washington Street, an' I want a trusty man to keep it clean an' look after the tenants. I'll give you ten dollars a week.'

"I took off my cap, an' I truly bowed down to that man, an' I says: 'The Lord's been a wurkin' on yer heart, Mr. Pierson.' 'Maybe

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he has,' says he; 'anyhow, you can pack up an' go ashore next trip; your place'll be waitin' fer yer.' Fust thing I knowed I was a bossin' a big job of janitorin'. Mos' of the people in the buildin' was Christian Science. After they'd got a little bit acquainted with me they found out the power I had in my hands fer layin' on. 'Twant long before I was a pickin' up right smart nussin' nights. Don't suppose you know much 'bout this Science business, do you?" Sappho confessed her ignorance.

"Christian Science is a faith-cure; that is, it's usin' yer brains an' trainin' 'em to know that there's nuthin' 'tall the matter with you ef you only think there ain't. They argify that all sickness is a mistake, 'cause it's 'maginary. I don't b'lieve that, though, 'cause I had the rheumatism while I was there, an' the doctors started in to cure me by prayin' an' wurkin' on my body through my spirit, an' it warn't no more good than nuthin' 'tall. I've got as much faith as eny livin' man, but rheumatism is one o' them things that'll convince you agin' your will; it will draw speech out of a deef mute an' make a blind man see, when them pains is a grindin' inter your bones an' jints worse than a saw cuttin' thro' knots in a cord wood stick. I'm free to say that curin' my mind didn't have no effect on my pain, an' I jes' kep' on seein'

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blue blazes an' swearin' like mad. I'll 'low that faith can move mountains, faith, as *kettle* as a mustard seed, an' that's mighty small. Ef you b'lieve you'll get what you wants an' asks fer, that's faith. That's good; that's all right. Trouble is we *don't b'lieve it 'cordin' to scripter.* We git mad when our prayers ain't answered, not thinkin' it's 'cause we ain't got horse sense nuff to use *discretion* in puttin' our faith on subjects that is approvin' to the Lord, an' will fit in with his own idees 'bout runnin' the business of the universe. An' that's where faith-cure is weak, 'cause it's comin' in 'junction with God. Faith-cure won't operate on any man where it was *pre*ordinated that a *pre*tickler man was to die with a *pre*tickler complaint. No'm, we ain't up to comin' in 'junction with the Lord's business. There's a number of grand diversions to Christian Science. There's hypnism an' pessimism an' a number of other isms, but they all bear the same way—a sort of applostic healin' of sickness. The doctors kept after me 'bout my gifts of healin', an' very kindly showed me wherein I could make an hones' dollar, an' business bein' business I finally determined to adop' magnifyin' as a perfeshun. I've been in the business nigh upon ten years now, an' I've picked up as good a livin' as any colored gempleman who has wurked a sight

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harder an' had to take piles o' unregenerate sass from his boss."

That night they walked home together after the rehearsal: the four young people — Dora and John, Sappho and Will. Some one of the choir boys walking ahead of them was singing in a sweet, high tenor voice the refrain of an old love song: "Couldst thou but know how much I love thee." It suited Will's mood, and voiced his dream exquisitely. Across the heavens the Northern Lights streamed in radiance. Meteors bright and shooting stars added to the beauty of the night. The moon, at its full, shed the light of day about them. The wind whispered amidst the leafless branches of the huge old trees on the Common and Public Garden as they passed them on their homeward way. Once Will took her hand in his; she let it stay a moment while she made an incoherent little speech about clouds and trees. Will said nothing. It was not time yet, he told himself. He would wait a little longer.

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CHAPTER VIII.

THE SEWING-CIRCLE.

WHERE village statesmen talked with looks profound,
Imagination fondly stoops to trace
The parlor splendors of that festive place.

. . . . . .

Yes! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
These simple blessings of the lowly train;
To me more dear,
One native charm than all the gloss of art.

— GOLDSMITH.

MA SMITH was a member of the church referred to in the last chapter, the most prominent one of color in New England. It was situated in the heart of the West End, and was a very valuable piece of property. Every winter this church gave many entertainments to aid in paying off the mortgage, which at this time amounted to about eight thousand dollars. Mrs. Smith, as the chairman of the board of stewardesses, was inaugurating a fair — one that should eclipse anything of a similar nature ever attempted by the colored people, and numerous sewing-circles were being held among the members all over the city. Parlor entertainments where an admission fee of ten cents was collected from every patron, were

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also greatly in vogue, and the money thus obtained was put into a fund to defray the expense of purchasing eatables and decorations, and paying for the printing of tickets, circulars, etc., for the fair. The strongest forces of the colored people in the vicinity were to combine and lend their aid in making a supreme effort to clear this magnificent property.

Boston contains a number of well-to-do families of color whose tax-bills show a most comfortable return each year to the city treasury. Strange as it may seem, these well-to-do people, in goodly numbers, distribute themselves and their children among the various Episcopal churches with which the city abounds, the government of which holds out the welcome hand to the brother in black, who is drawn to unite his fortunes with the members of this particular denomination. It may be true that the beautiful ritual of the church is responsible in some measure for this. Colored people are nothing if not beauty-lovers, and for such a people the grandeur of the service has great attractions. But in justice to this church one must acknowledge that it has been instrumental in doing much toward helping this race to help itself, along the lines of brotherly interest.

These people were well represented within the precincts of Mrs. Smith's pretty parlor one

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afternoon, all desirous of lending their aid to help along the great project.

As we have said, Mrs. Smith occupied the back parlor of the house as her chamber, and within this room the matrons had assembled to take charge of the cutting out of different garments; and here, too, the sewing machine was placed ready for use. In the parlor proper all the young ladies were seated ready to perform any service which might be required of them in the way of putting garments together.

By two o'clock all the members of the sewing-circle were in their places. The parlor was crowded. Mrs. Willis, the brilliant widow of a bright Negro politician, had charge of the girls, and after the sewing had been given out the first business of the meeting was to go over events of interest to the Negro race which had transpired during the week throughout the country. These facts had been previously tabulated upon a blackboard which was placed upon an easel, and occupied a conspicuous position in the room. Each one was supposed to contribute anything of interest that she had read or heard in that time for the benefit of all. After these points had been gone over, Mrs. Willis gave a talk upon some topic of interest. At six o'clock tea was to be served in the kitchen, the company taking refreshment in

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squads of five. At eight o'clock all unfinished work would be folded and packed away in the convenient little Boston bag, to be finished at home, and the male friends of the various ladies were expected to put in an appearance. Music and recitations were to be enjoyed for two hours, ice cream and cake being sold for the benefit of the cause.

Mrs. Willis was a good example of a class of women of color that came into existence at the close of the Civil War. She was not a *rara avis*, but one of many possibilities which the future will develop from among the colored women of New England. Every city or town from Maine to New York has its Mrs. Willis. Keen in her analysis of human nature, most people realized, after a short acquaintance, in which they ran the gamut of emotions from strong attraction to repulsion, that she had sifted them thoroughly, while they had gained nothing in return. Shrewd in business matters, many a subtle business man had been worsted by her apparent womanly weakness and charming simplicity. With little money, she yet contrived to live in quiet elegance, even including the little journeys from place to place, so adroitly managed as to increase her influence at home and her fame abroad. Well-read and thoroughly conversant with all

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current topics, she impressed one as having been liberally educated and polished by travel, whereas a high-school course more than covered all her opportunities.

Even today it is erroneously believed that all racial development among colored people has taken place since emancipation. It is impossible of belief for some, that little circles of educated men and women of color have existed since the Revolutionary War. Some of these people were born free, some have lost the memory of servitude in the dim past; a greater number by far were recruited from the energetic slaves of the South, who toiled when they should have slept, for the money that purchased their freedom, or else they boldly took the rights which man denied. Mrs. Willis was one from among these classes. The history of her descent could not be traced, but somewhere, somehow, a strain of white blood had filtered through the African stream. At sixty odd she was vigorous, well-preserved, broad and comfortable in appearance, with an aureole of white hair crowning a pleasant face.

She had loved her husband with a love ambitious for his advancement. His foot on the stairs mounting to the two-room tenement which constituted their home in the early years of married life, had sent a thrill to her very

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heart as she sat sewing baby clothes for the always expected addition to the family. But twenty years make a difference in all our lives. It brought many changes to the colored people of New England — social and business changes. Politics had become the open sesame for the ambitious Negro. A seat in the Legislature then was not a dream to this man, urged by the loving woman behind him. Other offices of trust were quickly offered him when his worth became known. He grasped his opportunity; grew richer, more polished, less social, and the family broadened out and overflowed from old familiar "West End" environments across the River Charles into the aristocratic suburbs of Cambridge. Death comes to us all.

Money, the sinews of living and social standing, she did not possess upon her husband's death. Therefore she was forced to begin a weary pilgrimage — a hunt for the means to help her breast the social tide. The best opening, she decided after looking carefully about her, was in the great cause of the evolution of true womanhood in the work of the "Woman Question" as embodied in marriage and suffrage. She could talk dashingly on many themes, for which she had received much applause in by-gone days, when in private life she had held forth in the drawing-room of some

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Back Bay philanthropist who sought to use her talents as an attraction for a worthy charitable object, the discovery of a rare species of versatility in the Negro character being a sure drawing-card. It was her boast that she had made the fortunes of her family and settled her children well in life. The advancement of the colored woman should be the new problem in the woman question that should float her upon its tide into the prosperity she desired. And she succeeded well in her plans: conceived in selfishness, they yet bore glorious fruit in the formation of clubs of colored women banded together for charity, for study, for every reason under God's glorious heavens that can better the condition of mankind.

Trivialities are not to be despised. Inborn love implanted in a woman's heart for a luxurious, esthetic home life, running on well-oiled wheels amid flowers, sunshine, books and priceless pamphlets, easy chairs and French gowns, may be the means of developing a Paderewski or freeing a race from servitude. It was amusing to watch the way in which she governed societies and held her position. In her hands committees were as wax, and loud murmurings against the tyranny of her rule died down to judicious whispers. If a vote went contrary to her desires, it was in her absence. Thus

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she became the pivot about which all the social and intellectual life of the ~~colored people of~~ her section revolved. ~~No~~ one had yet been found with the temerity to contest her position, which, like a title of nobility, bade fair to descend to her children. It was thought that she might be eclipsed by the younger and more brilliant women students on the strength of their alma mater, but she still held her own by sheer force of will-power and indomitable pluck.

The subject of the talk at this meeting was: "The place which the virtuous woman occupies in upbuilding a race." After a few explanatory remarks, Mrs. Willis said:

"I am particularly anxious that you should think upon this matter seriously, because of its intrinsic value to all of us as race women. I am not less anxious because you represent the coming factors of our race. Shortly, you must fill the positions now occupied by your mothers, and it will rest with you and your children to refute the charges brought against us as to our moral irresponsibility, and the low moral standard ~~maintained by us in~~ comparison with ~~other~~ races."

"Did I understand you to say that the Negro woman in her native state is truly a virtuous woman?" asked Sappho, who had been very silent during the bustle attending the opening of the meeting.

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"Travelers tell us that the native African woman is impregnable in her virtue," replied Mrs. Willis.

"So we have sacrificed that attribute in order to acquire civilization," chimed in Dora.

"No, not 'sacrificed,' but pushed one side by the force of circumstances. Let us thank God that it *is* an essential attribute peculiar to us — a racial characteristic which is slumbering but not lost," replied Mrs. Willis. "But let us not forget the definition of virtue — 'Strength to do the right thing under all temptations.' Our ideas of virtue are too narrow. We confine them to that conduct which is ruled by our animal passions alone. It goes deeper than that — general excellence in every duty of life is what we may call virtue."

"Do you think, then, that Negro women will be held responsible for all the lack of virtue that is being laid to their charge today? I mean, do you think that God will hold us responsible for the *illegitimacy* with which our race has been obliged, as it were, to flood the world?" asked Sappho.

"I believe that we shall not be held responsible for wrongs which we have *unconsciously* committed, or which we have committed under *compulsion*. We are virtuous or non-virtuous only when we have a *choice* under temptation.

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We cannot by any means apply the word to a little child who has never been exposed to temptation, nor to the Supreme Being 'who cannot be tempted with evil.' So with the African brought to these shores against his will — the state of morality which implies will-power on his part does not exist, therefore he is not a responsible being. The sin and its punishment lies with the person *consciously* false to his *knowledge* of right. From this we deduce the truism that 'the civility of no race is perfect whilst another race is degraded.'"

"I shall never forget my feelings," chimed in Anna Stevens, a school teacher of a very studious temperament, "at certain remarks made by the Rev. John Thomas at one of his noonday lectures in the Temple. He was speaking on 'Different Races,' and had in his vigorous style been sweeping his audience with him at a high elevation of thought which was dazzling to the faculties, and almost impossible to follow in some points. Suddenly he touched upon the Negro, and with impressive gesture and lowered voice thanked God that the mulatto race was dying out, because it was a mongrel mixture which combined the worst elements of two races. Lo, the poor mulatto! despised by the blacks of his own race, scorned by the whites! Let him go out and hang himself!"

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In her indignation Anna forgot the scissors, and bit her thread off viciously with her little white teeth.

Mrs. Willis smiled as she said calmly: "My dear Anna, I would not worry about the fate of the mulatto, for the fate of the mulatto will be the fate of the entire race. Did you never think that today the black race on this continent has developed into a race of mulattoes?"

"Why, Mrs. Willis!" came in a chorus of voices.

"Yes," continued Mrs. Willis, still smiling. "It is an incontrovertible truth that there is no such thing as an unmixed black on the American continent. Just bear in mind that we cannot tell by a person's complexion whether he be dark or light in blood, for by the working of the natural laws the white father and black mother produce the mulatto offspring; the black father and white mother the mulatto offspring also, while the *black father* and *quadroon* mother produce the black child, which to the eye alone is a child of unmixed black blood. I will venture to say that out of a hundred apparently pure black men not one will be able to trace an unmixed flow of African blood since landing upon these shores! What an unhappy example of the frailty of all human intellects, when such a man and scholar as

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Doctor Thomas could so far allow his prejudices to dominate his better judgment as to add one straw to the burden which is popularly supposed to rest upon the unhappy mulattoes of a despised race," finished the lady, with a dangerous flash of her large dark eyes.

"Mrs. Willis," said Dora, with a scornful little laugh, "I am not unhappy, and I am a mulatto. I just enjoy my life, and I don't want to die before my time comes, either. There are lots of good things left on earth to be enjoyed even by mulattoes, and I want my share."

"Yes, my dear; and I hope you may all live and take comfort in the proper joys of your lives. While we are all content to accept life, and enjoy it along the lines which God has laid down for us as individuals as well as a race, we shall be happy and get the best out of life. Now, let me close this talk by asking you to remember one maxim written of your race by a good man: 'Happiness and social position are not to be gained by pushing.' Let the world, by its need of us along certain lines, and our intrinsic fitness for these lines, push us into the niche which God has prepared for us. So shall our lives be beautified and our race raised in the civilization of the future as we grow away from all these prejudices which have been the instruments of our advancement

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according to the intention of an All-seeing Omnipotence, from the beginning. Never mind our poverty, ignorance, and the slights and injuries which we bear at the hands of a higher race. With the thought ever before us of what the Master suffered to raise all humanity to its present degree of prosperity and intelligence, let us cultivate, while we go about our daily tasks, no matter how inferior they may seem to us, beauty of the soul and mind, which being transmitted to our children by the law of heredity, shall improve the race by eliminating *immorality* from our midst and raising *morality* and virtue to their true place. Thirty-five years of liberty have made us a new people. The marks of servitude and oppression are dropping slowly from us; let us hasten the transformation of the body by the nobility of the soul."

> For of the soul the body form doth take,
> For soul is form and doth the body make,

quoted Dora.

"Yes," said Mrs. Willis with a smile, "that is the idea exactly, and well expressed. Now I hope that through the coming week you will think of what we have talked about this afternoon, for it is of the very first importance to all people, but particularly so to young folks."

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Sappho, who had been thoughtfully embroidering pansies on white linen, now leaned back in her chair for a moment and said: "Mrs. Willis, there is one thing which puzzles me — how are we to overcome the nature which is given us? I mean how can we eliminate passion from our lives, and emerge into the purity which marked the life of Christ? So many of us desire purity and think to have found it, but in a moment of passion, or under the pressure of circumstances which we cannot control, we commit some horrid sin, and the taint of it sticks and will not leave us, and we grow to loathe ourselves."

"Passion, my dear Miss Clark, is a state in which the will lies dormant, and all other desires become subservient to one. Enthusiasm for any one object or duty may become a passion. I believe that in some degree passion may be beneficial, but we must guard ourselves against a sinful growth of any appetite. All work of whatever character, as I look at it, needs a certain amount of absorbing interest to become successful, and it is here that the Christian life gains its greatest glory in teaching us how to keep ourselves from abusing any of our human attributes. We are not held responsible for compulsory sin, only for the sin that is pleasant to our thoughts and palatable

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to our appetites. All desires and hopes with which we are endowed are good in the sight of God, only it is left for us to discover their right uses. Do I cover your ground?"

"Yes and no," replied Sappho; "but perhaps at some future time you will be good enough to talk with me personally upon this subject."

"Dear child, sit here by me. It is a blessing to look at you. Beauty like yours is inspiring. You seem to be troubled; what is it? If I can comfort or strengthen, it is all I ask." She pressed the girl's hand in hers and drew her into a secluded corner. For a moment the flood-gates of suppressed feeling flew open in the girl's heart, and she longed to lean her head on that motherly breast and unburden her sorrows there.

"Mrs. Willis, I am troubled greatly," she said at length.

"I am *so* sorry; tell me, my love, what it is all about."

Just as the barriers of Sappho's reserve seemed about to be swept away, there followed, almost instantly, a wave of repulsion toward this woman and her effusiveness, so forced and insincere. Sappho was very impressionable, and yielded readily to the influence which fell like a cold shadow between them. She drew back as from an abyss suddenly beheld stretching before her.

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"On second thoughts, I think I ought to correct my remarks. It is not really *trouble*, but more a desire to confirm me in my own ideas."

"Well, if you feel you are right, dear girl, stand for the uplifting of the race and womanhood. Do not shrink from duty."

"It was simply a thought raised by your remarks on morality. I once knew a woman who had sinned. No one in the community in which she lived knew it but herself. She married a man who would have despised her had he known her story; but as it is, she is looked upon as a pattern of virtue for all women."

"And then what?" asked Mrs. Willis, with a searching glance at the fair face beside her.

"Ought she not to have told her husband before marriage? Was it not her duty to have thrown herself upon his clemency?"

"I think not," replied Mrs. Willis dryly. "See here, my dear, I am a practical woman of the world, and I think your young woman builded wiser than she knew. I am of the opinion that most men are like the lower animals in many things — they don't always know what is for their best good. If the husband had been left to himself, he probably would not have married the one woman in the world best fitted to be his wife. I think in her case she did her duty."

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"Ah, that word 'duty.' What is our duty?" queried the girl, with a sad droop to the sensitive mouth. "It is so hard to know our duty. We are told that all hidden things shall be revealed. Must repented and atoned-for sin rise at last to be our curse?"

"Here is a point, dear girl. God does not look upon the constitution of sin as we do. His judgment is not ours; ours is finite, his infinite. *Your* duty is not to be morbid, thinking these thoughts that have puzzled older heads than yours. *Your* duty is, also, to be happy and bright for the good of those about you. Just blossom like the flowers, have faith and *trust*." At this point the entrance of the men made an interruption, and Mrs. Willis disappeared in a crowd of other matrons. Sappho was impressed in spite of herself, by the woman's words. She sat buried in deep thought.

There was evidently more in this woman than appeared upon the surface. With all the centuries of civilization and culture that have come to this grand old world, no man has yet been found able to trace the windings of God's inscrutable ways. There are men and women whose seeming uselessness fit perfectly into the warp and woof of Destiny's web. All things work together for good.

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Supper being over, the elderly people began to leave. It was understood that after nine o'clock the night belonged to the young people. A committee had been formed from among them to plan for their enjoyment, and they consulted with Ma Smith, in the kitchen, as to the best plan of procedure.

"The case is this," said the chairman, who was also the church chorister: "Ma Smith has bought four gallons of ice cream, to be sold for the benefit of this fair. It's *got* to go, and it rests with us to devise ways and means of getting rid of it."

"Get up a dance," suggested Sam Washington, a young fellow who was the life of all social functions.

"Dance!" exclaimed Ma Smith, "not in this house."

The choir-master surreptitiously kicked Sam on the shins, as he said soothingly: "Under the circumstances I see no other way, as we've *got* to sell the cream, and there's no harm in dancing, anyway."

"You ain't going to object to our dancing, are you, Ma? It's all old fogyism about dancing being a sin," chimed in Sam.

"Oh, but my son, I've been a church member over thirty years, a consistent Christian, and I never was up before the board for behavior un-

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becoming a professor. Think of the disgrace on me if the church took it up," she expostulated tearfully.

"Look here, Ma, the deacons and ministers are all fooling you. It's the style for church members to go to the theatre and the circus, to balls and everything you can mention. Why, I've seen our own pastor up to see the Black Crook, and laughing like all possessed at the sights. Fact!"

"Why, Samuel!" said Ma Smith, "how can you stand there and tell me such awful stories?"

"Not a bit of a story," declared the brazen-faced Sam, "it's as true as gospel. I'll find out what seat the minister gets next June when the circus comes into town, and I'll get a seat for you right behind him. If you've never been to the circus, Ma, and to see the seven-headed lady and the dancing mokes, you ought to go as soon as possible. Think of the fun you're missing."

"Oh!" groaned the good woman in holy horror, "how you do go on."

"But that ain't nothing to the ice cream," continued Sam, "and them girls in there have got to be warmed up, or the cream will be left, and there won't be a thing doing when the committee calls for the money."

"That's so," replied Ma Smith, beginning to weaken in her opposition.

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"Well, mother," said Will, who had been an amused listener to the dialogue, "we'll have the dance, and it shall be *my* dance for *my* company. No one shall trouble you; you will have nothing to do with it."

"Well, if you say so, Willie, it's all right," replied his mother with a fond smile; "you are master in this house."

In the meantime the furniture in the parlors had been moved out by other members of the committee, and in one corner a set of whist-players were enjoying themselves at ten cents a head for a thirty-minute game, which ended at the stroke of a small silver bell, their places being taken by others.

Already it was getting very warm in the crowded rooms. The doors leading into the entry had been thrown open, and couples were finding seats in convenient nooks waiting for dancing to begin. The girls were thinking of ice cream. Rev. Tommy James gravitated toward Mrs. Davis's corner. She had not gone out with the other matrons.

"I enjoy a real good time as much as anybody, children," she said; "and when it comes to dancing, you can't lose your Aunt Hannah."

The Reverend Tommy was always at his ease with Mrs. Davis. She led him along paths which caused him no embarrassment.

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He knew that she looked up to him because of his education and his clerical dignity. On his side, he admired her rugged common-sense, which put him at his ease, and banished the last atom of his "ladylike" bashfulness. Early in the winter he had been brought to realize the nature of his feeling for Mrs. Davis, by seeing Brother Silas Hamm, recently left a widower, and having ten children, making a decided stampede in the widow's direction. Reverend Tommy was grieved. To be sure, she was old enough to be his mother, but she had many good points to be considered. She was a good worker, experienced in married life and ways of making a man comfortable. Then her savings must be considered. When Tommy reached this last point he always felt sure that she was the most desirable woman in the world for a young minister. He felt hopeful tonight, because he had seen Brother Hamm and his bride in church the Sunday before. Mrs. Davis opened the conversation by speaking of the bride and groom.

"Hamm and his bride looked mighty comfut'ble in chuch Sunday, didn't they?"

"*He* did. I'm glad he's settled again. It is not good for man to be alone."

"'Deed I'm glad, too."

"*You* — well, well, I'm real glad to hear *you* say it."

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"What for?" asked the widow coyly, looking down and playing with her fan.

"I — I didn't know how you and Brother Hamm stood."

"Stood! Well, I never."

"I thought Brother Hamm had been trying to get you," whispered Tommy, sitting closer and putting his arm across the back of her chair.

"Law suz, Mr. Jeems, how nervous you does make me. Do take yer arm away, everybody'll be a-lookin' at yer, honey. I'm 'sprised at yer thinkin' I'd look at Hamm an' 'all them chillun. Massy knows what the 'ooman he's got's gwine to do with 'em." But she looked so mild and smiling that Tommy went into the seventh heaven of delight, and so lost his head that when he heard the call "Another couple wanted here!" he took Mrs. Davis on his arm and stood up on the floor, forgetful of the fact that he was within a few months of his ordination. A good-natured matron not connected with the church had volunteered to supply the lack of an orchestra. Waltzing was soon in full blast, and the demand on the ice-cream cans was filling Ma Smith's heart with joy, tempered with inward stings of conscience and fear of the Steward's Board. Dora was dancing assiduously and eating ice cream at John's expense, he meantime

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saying that if she kept on she would turn into a frozen dainty, to say nothing of a frost in his pocketbook. Dora declared that it was for the good of the cause, and he'd "just got to stand it." She was wildly happy because of the tender familiarity between her brother and her friend. A long-stemmed rose that Will wore in his button-hole had been transferred to Sappho's corsage. Dora smiled as she caught the half-puzzled, half-wondering expression on her mother's face.

It was approaching twelve o'clock when it was proposed to wind up the festivities with the good old "Virginy" reel. Sam Washington was the caller, and did his work with the fancy touch peculiar to a poetic Southern temperament. He was shrewd and good-natured, and a bit of a wag. He knew all the secret sighings of the ladies and their attendant swains. A lively girl whom everyone called "Jinny," remarked to Sam, referring to the fact that Sam was on probation: "Your class-leader won't recommend you to the Board for membership after tonight."

"Now, Jinny," replied Sam, stopping in his business of arranging couples, "don't make yourself obnoxious bringing up unpleasant subjects. I'll take my medicine like a man when the time comes; but I'd bust, sho, if I didn't git loose tonight. I'm in good company, too," he

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grinned, nodding toward Reverend Tommy and Mrs. Davis, who were just taking their places on the floor. "If this is good for Tommy, it is good enough for me."

All reserve was broken down the instant the familiar strains of the Virginia reel were heard. The dance was soon in full swing — an up-and-down, dead-in-earnest seeking for a good time, and a determination to have it if it was to be got. It was a vehement rhythmic thump, thump, thumpity thump, with a great stamping of the feet and cutting of the pigeon wing. Sam had provided himself with the lively Jinny for a partner, and was cutting grotesque juba figures in the pauses of the music, to the delight of the company. His partner, in wild vivacity, fairly vied with him in his efforts at doing the hoe-down and the heel-and-toe. Not to be out-done, the Rev. Tommy James and Mrs. Davis scored great hits in cutting pigeon wings and in reviving forgotten beauties of the "walk-'round." Tommy "allowed" he hadn't enjoyed himself so much since he came up North.

"Yes," said Sam, "this beats the cake-walk all holler. Now then, one more turn and we're done. Forward on the head; balance yer partner; swing the next gent; swing that lady. Now swing yer rose, yer pretty rose, yer yaller rose of Texas. All promen*ade*."

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Everybody declared it had been a wonderful evening. "Thank the Lord it's over," said Ma Smith to Mrs. Sarah Ann White, who was helping her in the kitchen.

"Well," said the latter, pausing in her work with her arms akimbo, "sech sights as I've seen tonight I never would have believed. 'Phelia Davis, what ought ter be a mother in Jerusalem, kickin' up her heels in your parlor like a colt in a corn-field; and that Tommy Jeems, no more fittin' fer a minister than a suckin' babe, a-traipsin' after her like a bald-headed rooster."

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CHAPTER IX.

"LOVE TOOK UP THE HARP OF LIFE."

Love took up the glass of Time, and turn'd it in his glowing hands;
Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in golden sands.
Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the chords with might.

—Tennyson.

Will Smith sat the next evening in his room trying to engage his mind and chain his wandering thoughts upon an important prize thesis. As a brilliant philosophical student destined to shine in the future in the world of science, he had been requested to become a competitor for the prize. Ever and anon his attention wavered, and finally he threw his books and papers to one side with a sigh, and rising to his feet paced the floor impatiently. Two soft eyes looked into his; the low music of a gentle voice seemed all about him.

"Pshaw!" he exclaimed impatiently, "I have laughed at others only to become more of a drivelling idiot than any of the men I have ridiculed. I never thought mere beauty in a woman could move me so." The smile induced by pleasant thoughts lingered on his face as he threw himself upon his couch and tried to bring order out of the chaos of his thoughts.

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Smith's hopes were all for a finishing course at college, and then a course in philosophy at some good German university. Philosophy was a mania with him. In vain had bishops and clergymen of all denominations warned him that his mania might become a passion, which would draw him from a right conception of the Word, and dull his appreciation of the beauties of Revelation. Will contended that religion and the natural laws were not antagonistic, and that being convinced and thoroughly grounded in his faith, he but discovered fresh evidence of infinite perfection in the doctrine of his Master when he sought to expand his faculties and illuminate his mind by seeking a clearer perception of the interesting relation which weak humanity bears to the glorious mysteries of life and the grandeurs of creation.

He laughed at the idea of Latin and Greek being above the caliber of the Negro and likely to unfit him for the business of bread-getting in the peculiar position in life to which the Negro, as maintained by some, was destined from the beginning. With him Latin and Greek represented but tools which he used to unlock the storehouse of knowledge. The development of his race was a matter of first importance to his mind. The only way to bring the best faculties of the Negro to their full fruition, he

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