

Background:

Discussion between Harry and his wife Lisette.

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"There," she said, throwing down her banjo, and seating herself on her husband's knee, "do you know I think you are like white man in the song? I should like to know what is the matter with you. I can see plain enough when you are not happy; but I don't see why."

"O, Lisette, I have very perplexing business to manage," said Harry. "Miss Nina is a dear, good little mistress, but she does n't know anything about accounts, or money; and here she has brought me home a set of bills to settle, and I 'm sure I don't know where the money is to be got from. It 's hard work to make the old place profitable in our days. The ground is pretty much worked up; it does n't bear the crops it used to. And, then, our people are so childish, they don't, a soul of them, care how much they spend, or how carelessly they work. It 's very expensive keeping up such an establishment. You know the Gordons must be Gordons. Things can't be done now as some other families would do them; and, then, those bills which Miss Nina brings from New York are perfectly frightful."

"Well, Harry, what are you going to do?" said Lisette, nestling down close on his shoulder. "You always know how to do something."

"Why, Lisette, I shall have to do what I 've done two or three times before--take the money that I have saved, to pay these bills--our freedom-money, Lisette."

"O, well, then, don't worry! We can get it again, you know. Why, you know, Harry, you can make a good deal with your trade, and one thing and another that you do; and, then, as for me, why, you know, my ironing, and my muslins, how celebrated they are. Come, don't worry one bit; we shall get on nicely."

"Ah! But, Lisette, all this pretty house of ours, garden, and everything, is only built on air, after all, till we are free. Any accident can take it from us. Now, there's Miss Nina; she is engaged, she tells me, to two or three lovers, as usual."

"Engaged, is she?" said Lisette, eagerly, female curiosity getting the better of every other consideration; "she always did have lovers, just, you know, as I used to."

"Yes; but, Lisette, she will marry, some time, and what a thing that would be for you and me! On her husband will depend all my happiness for all my life. He may set her against me; he may not like me. O, Lisette! I 've seen trouble enough coming of marriages; and I was hoping, you see, that before that time came the money for my freedom would all be paid in, and I should be my own man. But, now, here it is. Just as the sum is almost made up, I must pay out five hundred dollars of it, and that throws us back two or three years longer. And what makes me feel the most anxious is, that I 'm pretty sure Miss Nina will marry one of these lovers before long."

"Why, what makes you think so, Harry?"

"O, I 've seen girls before now, Lisette, and I know the signs."

"What does she do? What does she say? Tell me, now, Harry."

"O, well, she runs on abusing the man, after her sort; and she 's so very earnest and positive in telling me she don't like him."

"Just the way I used to do about you, Harry, is n't it?"

"Besides," said Harry, "I know, by the kind of character she gives of him, that she thinks of him very differently from what she ever did of any man before. Miss Nina little knows, when she is rattling about her beaux, what I 'm thinking of. I 'm saying, all the while, to myself, 'Is that man going to be my master?' and this Clayton, I 'm very sure, is going to be my master."

"Well, is n't he a good man?"

"She says he is; but there 's never any saying what good men will do, never. Good men think it right sometimes to do the strangest things. This man may alter the whole agreement between us,--he will have a right to do it, if he is her husband; he may refuse to let me buy myself; and, then, all the money that I 've paid will go for nothing."

"But, certainly, Harry, Miss Nina will never consent to such a thing."

"Lisette, Miss Nina is one thing, but Mrs. Clayton may be quite another thing. I 've seen all that, over and over again. I tell you, Lisette, that we who live on other people's looks and words, we watch and think a great deal! Ah! we come to be very sharp, I can tell you. The more Miss Nina has liked me, the less her husband may like me; don't you know that?"

"No; Harry, you don't dislike people I like."

"Child, child, that 's quite another thing."

"Well, then, Harry, if you feel so bad about it, what makes you pay this money for Miss Nina? She don't know anything about it; she don't ask you to. I don't believe she would want you to, if she did know it. Just go and pay it in, and have your freedom-papers made out. Why don't you tell her all about it?"

"No, I can't, Lisette. I 've had the care of her all her life, and I 've made it as smooth as I could for her, and I won't begin to trouble her now. Do you know, too, that I 'm afraid that, perhaps, if she knew all about it, she would n't do the right thing. There 's never any knowing, Lisette. Now, you see, I say to myself, 'Poor little thing! she does n't know anything about accounts, and she don't know how I feel.' But, if I should tell her, and she should n't care, and act as I 've seen women act, why, then, you know, I could n't think so any more. I don't believe she would, mind you; but, then, I don't like to try."

"Harry, what does make you love her so much?"

"Don't you know, Lisette, that Master Tom was a dreadful bad boy, always wilful and wayward, almost broke his father's heart; and he was always ugly and contrary to her? I 'm sure I don't know why; for she was a sweet little thing, and she loves him now, ugly as he is, and he is the most selfish creature I ever saw. And, as for Miss Nina, she is n't selfish--she is only inconsiderate. But I 've known her do for him, over and over, just what I do for her, giving him her money and her jewels to help him out of a scrape. But, then, to be sure, it all comes upon me, at last, which makes it all the more aggravating. Now, Lisette, I 'm going to tell you something, but you must n't tell anybody. Nina Gordon is my sister!"

"Harry!"

"Yes, Lisette, you may well open your eyes," said Harry, rising involuntarily; "I 'm Colonel Gordon's oldest son! Let me have the comfort of saying it once, if I never do again."

"Harry, who told you?"

"He told me, Lisette--he, himself, told me, when he was dying, and charged me always to watch over her; and I have done it! I never told Miss Nina; I would n't have her told for the world. It would n't make her love me; more likely it would turn her against me. I 've seen many a man sold for nothing else but looking too much like his father, or his brothers and sisters. I was given to her, and my sister and my mother went out to Mississippi with Miss Nina's aunt."

"I never heard you speak of this sister, Harry. Was she pretty?"

"Lisette, she was beautiful, she was graceful, and she had real genius. I 've heard many singers on the stage that could not sing, with all their learning, as she did by nature."

"Well, what became of her?"

"O, what becomes of such women always, among us! Nursed, and petted, and caressed; taught everything elegant, nothing solid. Why, the woman meant well enough that had the care of

her,--Mrs. Stewart, Colonel Gordon's sister,--but she could n't prevent her son's wanting her, and taking her, for his mistress; and when she died there she was."

"Well."

"When George Stewart had lived with her two or three years, he was taken with small-pox. You know what perfect horror that always creates. None of his white acquaintances and friends would come near his plantation; the negroes were all frightened to death, as usual; overseer ran off. Well, then Cora Gordon's blood came up; she nursed him all through that sickness. What 's more, she had influence to keep order on the place; got the people to getting the cotton crops themselves, so that when the overseer came sneaking back, things had n't all gone to ruin, as they might have done. Well, the young fellow had more in him than some of them do; for when he got well he left his plantation, took her up to Ohio, and married her, and lived with her there."

"Why did n't he live with her on his plantation?" said Lisette.

"He could n't have freed her there; it 's against the laws. But, lately, I 've got a letter from her, saying that he had died and left to her and her son all his property on the Mississippi."

"Why, she will be rich, won't she?"

"Yes, if she gets it. But there 's no knowing how that will be; there are fifty ways of cheating her out of it, I suppose. But, now, as to Miss Nina's estate, you don't know how I feel about it. I was trusted with it, and trusted with her. She never has known, more than a child, where the money came from, or went to; and it shan't be said that I 've brought the estate in debt, for the sake of getting my own liberty. If I have one pride in life, it is to give it up to Miss Nina's husband in good order. But, then, the trouble of it, Lisette! The trouble of getting anything like decent work from these creatures; the ways that I have to turn and twist to get round them, and manage them, to get anything done. They hate me; they are jealous of me. Lisette, I 'm just like the bat in the fable; I 'm neither bird nor beast. How often I 've wished that I was a good, honest, black n-----, like Uncle Pomp! Then I should know what I was; but, now, I 'm neither one thing nor another. I come just near enough to the condition of the white to look into it, to enjoy it, and want everything that I see. Then, the way I 've been educated makes it worse. The fact is, that when the fathers of such as we feel any love for us, it is n't like the love they have for their white children. They are half-ashamed of us; they are ashamed to show their love, if they have it; and, then, there 's a kind of remorse and pity about it, which they make up to themselves by petting us. They load us with presents and indulgences. They amuse themselves with us while we are children, and play off all our passions as if we were instruments to be played on. If we show talent and smartness, we hear some one say, aside, 'It 's rather a pity, is n't it?' or, 'He is too smart for his place.' Then, we have all the family blood and the family pride; and what to do with it? I feel that I am a Gordon. I feel in my very heart that I 'm like Colonel Gordon--I know I am; and, sometimes, I know I look like him, and that 's one reason why Tom Gordon always hated me; and, then, there 's another thing, the hardest of all, to have a sister like Miss Nina, to feel she is my sister, and never dare to say a word of it! She little thinks, when she plays and jokes with me, sometimes, how I feel. I have eyes and senses; I can compare myself with Tom Gordon. I know he never would learn anything at any of the schools he was put to; and I know that when his tutors used to teach me, how much faster I got along than he did. And yet he must have all the position, and all the respect; and, then, Miss

Nina so often says to me, by way of apology, when she puts up with his ugliness, 'Ah! well, you know, Harry, he is the only brother I have got in the world!' Is n't it too bad? Col. Gordon gave me every advantage of education, because I think he meant me for just this place which I fill. Miss Nina was his pet. He was wholly absorbed in her, and he was frightened at Tom's wickedness; and so he left me bound to the estate in this way, only stipulating that I should buy myself on favorable terms before Miss Nina's marriage. She has always been willing enough. I might have taken any and every advantage of her inconsiderateness. And Mr. John Gordon has been willing,

too, and has been very kind about it, and has signed an agreement as guardian, and Miss Nina has signed it too, that, in case of her death, or whatever happened, I 'm to have my freedom on paying a certain sum, and I have got his receipts for what I have paid. So that 's tolerably safe. Lisette, I had meant never to have been married till I was a free man; but, somehow, you bewitched me into it. I did very wrong."

"O, pshaw! pshaw!" interrupted Lisette. "I an't going to hear another word of this talk! What 's the use? We shall do well enough. Everything will come out right,--you see if it don't, now. I was always lucky, and I always shall be."

Background:

Tom Gordon, white older brother of Nina Gordon, who dislikes Harry is visiting the plantation.

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"Look there, Miss Nina!" he said. "Do you see my wife and your brother?"

Nina turned, and in an instant the color mounted to her cheeks; her little form seemed to dilate, and her eyes flashed fire; and before Harry could see what she was doing, she was down in the gravel-walk, and had taken Lisette's hand.

"Tom Gordon," she said, "I 'm ashamed of you! Hush! hush!" she continued, fixing her eyes on him, and stamping her foot. "Dare to come to my place, and take such liberties here! You shall not be allowed to while I am mistress; and I am mistress! Dare to lay a finger on this girl while she is here under my protection! Come, Lisette!" And she seized the trembling girl by the hand, and drew her along towards the house.

Tom Gordon was so utterly confused at this sudden burst of passion in his sister, that he let them go off without opposition. In a few moments he looked after her, and gave a long, low whistle.

"Ah! Pretty well up for her! But she 'll find it 's easier said than done, I fancy!" And he sauntered up to the veranda, where Harry stood with his arms folded, and the veins in his forehead swelling with repressed emotion.

"Go in, Lisette," said Nina; "take the things into my room, and I 'll come to you."

"Pon my word, Harry," said Tom, coming up, and addressing Harry in the most insulting tone, "we are all under the greatest obligations to you for bringing such a pretty little fancy article here!"

"My wife does not belong to this place," said Harry, forcing himself to speak calmly. "She belongs to a Mrs. Le Clere, who has come into Belleville plantation."

"Ah! thank you for the information! I may take a fancy to buy her, and I 'd like to know who she belongs to. I 've been wanting a pretty little concern of that sort. She 's a good housekeeper, is n't she, Harry? Does up shirts well? What do you suppose she could be got for? I must go and see her mistress."

During this cruel harangue Harry's hands twitched and quivered, and he started every now and then, looking first at Nina, and then at his tormentor. He turned deadly pale; even his lips were of ashy whiteness; and, with his arms still folded, and making no reply, he fixed his large blue eyes upon Tom, and, as it sometimes happened in moments of excitement and elevation, there appeared on the rigid lines of his face, at that moment, so strong a resemblance to Col. Gordon, that Nina noticed and was startled by it. Tom Gordon noticed it also. It added fuel to the bit-

terness of his wrath; and there glared from his eyes a malignancy of hatred that was perfectly appalling. The two brothers seemed like thunder-clouds opposing each other, and ready to dart lightning. Nina hastened to interfere.

"Hurry, hurry, Harry! I want that message carried. Do, pray, go directly!"

"Let me see," said Tom, "I must call Jim, and have my horse. Which is the way to that Belleville plantation? I think I 'll ride over there." And he turned and walked indolently down the steps.

"For shame, Tom! you won't! you can't! How can you want to trouble me so?" said Nina. He turned and looked upon her with an evil smile, turned again, and was gone.

"Harry, Harry, go quick! Don't you worry; there 's no danger!" she added, in a lower voice. "Madam Le Clere never would consent."

"There 's no knowing!" said Harry, "never any knowing! People act about money as they do about nothing else."

"Then--then I 'll send and buy her myself!" said Nina.

"You don't know how our affairs stand, Miss Nina," said Harry, hurriedly. "The money could n't be raised now for it, especially if I have to go off this week. It will make a great difference, my being here or not being here; and very likely Master Tom may have a thousand dollars to pay down on the spot. I never knew him to want money when his will was up. Great God! have n't I borne this yoke long enough?"

"Well, Harry," said Nina, "I 'll sell everything I 've got -- my jewels--everything! I 'll mortgage the plantation, before Tom Gordon shall do this thing! I 'm not quite so selfish as I 've always seemed to be. I know you 've made the sacrifice of body and soul to my interest; and I 've always taken it, because I loved my ease, and was a spoiled child. But, after all, I know I 've as much energy as Tom has, when I am roused, and I 'll go over this very morning and make an offer for her. Only you be off. You can't stand such provocation as you get here; and if you yield, as any man will do, at last, then everything and everybody will go against you, and I can't protect you. Trust to me. I 'm not so much of a child as I have seemed to be! You 'll find I can act for myself, and you too! There comes Mr. Clayton through the shrubbery--that 's right! Order two horses round to the door immediately, and we 'll go over there this morning."

Nina gave her orders with a dignity as if she had been a princess, and in all his agitation Harry could not help marvelling at the sudden air of womanliness which had come over her.

"I could serve you," he said, in a low voice, "to the last drop of my blood! But," he added, in a tone which made Nina tremble, "I hate everybody else! I hate your country! I hate your laws!"

"Harry," said Nina, "you do wrong--you forget yourself!"

"O, I do wrong, do I? We are the people that are never to do wrong! People may stick pins in us, and stick knives in us, wipe their shoes on us, spit in our face--we must be amiable! we must be models of Christian patience! I tell you, your father should rather have put me into quarters and made me work like a field-negro, than to have given me the education he did, and leave me under the foot of every white man that dares tread on me!"

Nina remembered to have seen her father in transports of passion, and was again shocked and startled to see the resemblance between his face and the convulsed face before her.

"Harry," she said, in a pitying, half-admonitory tone, "do think what you are saying! If you love me, be quiet!"

"Love you? You have always held my heart in your hand! That has been the clasp upon my chain! If it had n't been for you, I should have fought my way to the north before now, or I would have found a grave on the road!"

"Well, Harry," said Nina, after a moment's thought, "my love shall not be a clasp upon any chain; for, as there is a God in heaven, I will set you free! I 'll have a bill introduced at the very next legislature, and I know what friend will see to it. So go, now, Harry, go!"

Harry stood a moment, then suddenly raised the hand of his little mistress to his lips, turned, and was gone.

Background:

Harry has had a confrontation with Tom Gordon because of Gordon's interest in his wife Lisette. With the help of Clayton, Nina buys Lisette from the neighbouring plantation. Fearing trouble between her brother Tom and Harry, Nina sends Harry on an errand to her Uncle John's plantation.

chapter 18, volume 1

HARRY spent the night at the place of Mr. John Gordon, and arose the next morning in a very discontented mood of mind. Nothing is more vexatious to an active and enterprising person than to be thrown into a state of entire idleness; and Harry, after lounging about for a short time in the morning, found his indignation increased by every moment of enforced absence from the scene of his daily labors and interests. Having always enjoyed substantially the privileges of a freeman in the ability to regulate his time according to his own ideas, to come and go, to buy and sell, and transact business unfettered by any felt control, he was the more keenly alive to the degradation implied in his present position.

"Here I must skulk around," said he to himself, "like a partridge in the bushes, allowing everything to run at loose ends, preparing the way for my being found fault with for a lazy fellow, by and by; and all for what? Because my younger brother chooses to come, without right or reason, to domineer over me, to insult my wife; and because the laws will protect him in it, if he does it! Ah! ah! that's it. They are all leagued together! No matter how right I am--no matter how bad he is! Everybody will stand up for him, and put me down; all because my grandmother was born in Africa, and his grandmother was born in America. Confound it all, I won't stand it! Who knows what he 'll be saying and doing to Lisette while I am gone? I 'll go back and face him, like a man! I 'll keep straight about my business, and, if he crosses me, let him take care! He has n't got but one life, any more than I have. Let him look out!"

And Harry jumped upon his horse, and turned his head homeward. He struck into a circuitous path, which led along that immense belt of swampy land, to which the name of Dismal has been given. As he was riding along, immersed in thought, the clatter of horses' feet was heard in front of him. A sudden turn of the road brought him directly facing to Tom Gordon and Mr. Jekyl, who had risen early and started off on horseback, in order to reach a certain stage-dépôt before the heat of the day. There was a momentary pause on both sides; when Tom Gordon, like one who knows his power, and is determined to use it to the utmost, broke out, scornfully:

"Stop, you d----d n-----, and tell your master where you are going!"

"You are not my master!" said Harry, in words whose concentrated calmness conveyed more bitterness and wrath than could have been given by the most violent outburst.

"You d--d whelp!" said Tom Gordon, striking him across the face twice with his whip, "take *that*, and *that*! We 'll see if I 'm not your master! There, now, help yourself, won't you? Is n't that a master's mark?"

It has been the life-long habit of Harry's position to repress every emotion of anger within himself. But, at this moment, his face wore a deadly and frightful expression. Still, there was something majestic and almost commanding in the attitude with which he reined back his horse, and slowly lifted his hand to heaven. He tried to speak, but his voice was choked with repressed passion. At last he said:

"You may be sure, Mr. Gordon, this mark will *never* be forgotten!"

There are moments of high excitement, when all that is in a human being seems to be roused, and to concentrate itself in the eye and the voice. And, in such moments, *any* man, apparently by virtue of his mere humanity, by the mere awfulness of the human soul that is in him, gains power to over-awe those who in other hours scorn him. There was a minute's pause, in which neither spoke; and Mr. Jekyl, who was a man of peace, took occasion to touch Tom's elbow, and say:

"It seems to me this is n't worth while--we shall miss the stage." And, as Harry had already turned his horse and was riding away, Tom Gordon turned his, shouting after him, with a scornful laugh:

"I called on your wife before I came away, this morning, and I liked her rather better the second time than I did the first!"

This last taunt flew like a Parthian arrow backward, and struck into the soul of the bondman with even a keener power than the degrading blow. The sting of it seemed to rankle more bitterly as he rode along, till at last he dropped the reins on his horse's neck, and burst into a transport of bitter cursing.

"Aha! aha! it has come nigh *thee*, has it? It toucheth *thee*, and thou faintest!" said a deep voice from the swampy thicket beside him.

Harry stopped his horse and his imprecations. There was a crackling in the swamp, and a movement among the copse of briars; and at last the speaker emerged, and stood before Harry. He was a tall black man, of magnificent stature and proportions. His skin was intensely black, and polished like marble. A loose shirt of red flannel, which opened very wide at the breast, gave a display of a neck and chest of herculean strength. The sleeves of the shirt, rolled up nearly to the shoulders, showed the muscles of a gladiator. The head, which rose with an imperial air from the broad shoulders, was large and massive, and developed with equal force both in the reflective and perceptive department. The perceptive organs jutted like dark ridges over the eyes, while that part of the head which phrenologists attribute to the moral and intellectual sentiments, rose like an ample dome above them. The large eyes had that peculiar and solemn effect of unfathomable blackness and darkness which is often a striking characteristic of the African eye. But there burned in them, like tongues of flame in a black pool of naphtha, a subtle and restless fire, that betokened habitual excitement to the verge of insanity. If any organs were predominant in the head, they were those of ideality, wonder, veneration, and firmness; and the whole combination was such as might have formed one of the wild old warrior prophets of the heroic ages. He wore a fantastic sort of turban, apparently of an old scarlet shawl, which added to the outlandish effect of his appearance. His nether garments, of coarse negro-cloth, were girded round the waist by a strip of scarlet flannel, in which was thrust a bowie-knife and hatchet. Over one shoulder he carried a rifle, and a shot-pouch was suspended to his belt. A rude game-bag hung upon his arm. Wild and startling as the apparition might have been, it appeared to be no stranger to Harry; for, after the first movement of surprise, he said, in a tone of familiar recognition, in which there was blended somewhat of awe and respect:

"O, it is you, then, Dred! I did n't know that you were hearing me!"

"Have I not heard?" said the speaker, raising his arm, and his eyes gleaming with wild excitement. "How long wilt thou halt between two opinions? Did not Moses refuse to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter? How long wilt thou cast in thy lot with the oppressors of Israel, who say unto

thee, 'Bow down that we may walk over thee'? Shall not the Red Sea be divided? 'Yea,' saith the Lord, 'it shall.' "

"Dred! I know what you mean!" said Harry, trembling with excitement.

"Yea, thou dost!" said the figure. "Yea, thou dost! Hast thou not eaten the fat and drunk the sweet with the oppressor, and hid thine eyes from the oppression of thy people? Have not *our* wives been for a prey, and thou

hast not regarded? Hath not our cheek been given to the smiter? Have we not been counted as sheep for the slaughter? But thou saidst, Lo! I knew it not, and didst hide thine eyes! Therefore, the curse of Meroz is upon thee, saith the Lord. And *thou* shalt bow down to the oppressor, and his rod shall be upon thee; and *thy* wife shall be for a prey!"

"Don't talk in that way!--don't!" said Harry, striking out his hands with a frantic gesture, as if to push back the words. "You are raising the very devil in me!"

"Look here, Harry," said the other, dropping from the high tone he at first used to that of common conversation, and speaking in bitter irony, "did your master strike you? It 's sweet to kiss the rod, is n't it? Bend your neck and ask to be struck again!--won't you? Be meek and lowly; that 's the religion for you! You are a *slave*, and you wear broadcloth, and sleep soft. By and by he will give you a fip to buy salve for those cuts! Don't fret about your wife! Women always like the master better than the slave! Why should n't they? When a man licks his master's foot, his wife scorns him,--serves him right. Take it meekly, my boy! 'Servants, obey your masters.' Take your master's old coats--take your wife when he 's done with her--and bless God that brought you under the light of the Gospel! Go! *you* are a slave! But, as for me," he said, drawing up his head, and throwing back his shoulders with a deep inspiration, "*I* am a free man! Free by this," holding out his rifle. "Free by the Lord of hosts, that numbereth the stars, and calleth them forth by their names. Go home--that 's all I have to say to you! You sleep in a curtained bed.--I sleep on the ground, in the swamps! You eat the fat of the land. I have what the ravens bring me! But no man whips me!--no man touches *my* wife!--no man says to me, 'Why do ye so?' Go! *you* are a slave!--I am free!" And, with one athletic bound, he sprang into the thicket, and was gone.

The effect of this address on the already excited mind of the bondman may be better conceived than described. He ground his teeth, and clenched his hands.

"Stop!" he cried, "Dred, I will--I will--I 'll do as you tell me--I will not be a slave!"

A scornful laugh was the only reply, and the sound of crackling footsteps retreated rapidly. He who retreated struck up, in a clear, loud voice, one of those peculiar melodies in which vigor and spirit are blended with a wild, inexpressible mournfulness. The voice was one of a singular and indescribable quality of tone; it was heavy as the subbass of an organ, and of a velvety softness, and yet it seemed to pierce the air with a keen dividing force which is generally characteristic of voices of much less volume. The words were the commencement of a wild camp-meeting hymn, much in vogue in those parts:

"Brethren, don't you hear the sound?
The martial trumpet now is blowing;
Men in order listing round,
And soldiers to the standard flowing."

There was a wild, exultant fulness of liberty that rolled in the note; and, to Harry's excited ear, there seemed in it a fierce challenge of contempt to his imbecility, and his soul at that moment seemed to be rent asunder with a pang such as only those can know who have felt what it is to be a slave. There was an uprising within him, vague, tumultuous, overpowering; dim instincts, heroic aspirations; the will to do, the soul to dare; and then, in a moment, there followed the picture of all society leagued against him, the hopeless impossibility of any outlet to what was burning within him. The waters of a nature naturally noble, pent up, and without outlet, rolled back upon his heart

with a suffocating force; and, in his hasty anguish, he cursed the day of his birth. The spasm of his emotion was interrupted by the sudden appearance of Milly coming along the path.

"Why, bless you, Milly," said Harry, in sudden surprise, "where are you going?"

"O, bless you, honey, chile, I 's gwine on to take de stage. Dey wanted to get up de wagon for me; but, bless you, says I, what you s'pose de Lord gin us legs for? I never wants no critturs to tug me round, when I can walk myself. And, den, honey, it 's so pleasant like, to be a walking along in de bush here, in de morning; 'pears like de voice of de Lord is walking among de trees. But, bless you, chile, honey, what 's de matter o' yer face?"

"It 's Tom Gordon, d--n him!" said Harry.

"Don't talk dat ar way, chile!" said Milly; using the freedom with Harry which her years and weight of character had gradually secured for her among the members of the plantation.

"I *will* talk that way! Why should n't I? I am not going to be good any longer."

"Why, 't won't help de matter to be *bad*, will it, Harry? 'Cause you hate Tom Gordon, does you want to act just like him?"

"No!" said Harry, "I won't be like him, but I 'll have my revenge! Old Dred has been talking to me again, this morning. He always did stir me up so that I could hardly live; and I won't stand it any longer!"

"Chile," said Milly, "you take care! Keep clear on him! He 's in de wilderness of Sinai; he is with de blackness, and darkness, and tempest. He han't come to de heavenly Jerusalem. O! O! honey! dere 's a blood of sprinkling dat speaketh better things dan dat of Abel. Jerusalem above is *free*--is *free*, honey; so, don't you mind, now, what happens in *dis* yer time."

"Ah, ah, Aunt Milly! this may do well enough for old women like you; but, stand opposite to a young fellow like me, with good strong arms, and a pair of doubled fists, and a body and soul just as full of fight as they can be; it don't answer to go to telling about a heavenly Jerusalem! We want something here. We 'll have it too! How do you know there is any heaven, any how?"

"Know it?" said Milly, her eye kindling, and striking her staff on the ground. "Know it? I knows it by de *hankering arter it* I got in here;" giving her broad chest a blow which made it resound like a barrel. "De Lord knowed what he was 'bout when he made us. When he made babies rooting round, with der poor little mouths open, he made milk, and de mammies for 'em too. Chile, we 's nothing but great babies, dat an't got our eyes opened--rooting round and round; but de Father 'll feed us yet--he will so."

"He 's a long time about it," said Harry, sullenly.

"Well, chile, an't it a long time 'fore your corn sprouts--a long time 'fore it gets into de ears?--but you plants, for all dat. What 's dat to me what I is here?--Shan't I reign with de Lord Jesus?"

"I don't know," said Harry.

"Well, honey, *I does!* Jest so sure as I 's standing on dis yer ground, I knows in a few years I shall be reigning with de Lord Jesus, and a casting my crown at his feet. Dat 's what I knows. Flesh and blood did n't reveal it unto me, but de Spirit of de Father. It 's no odds to me what I does here; every road leads straight to glory, and de glory an't got no end to it!" And Milly uplifted her voice in a favorite stave --

"When we 've been dere ten thousand years,
Bright shining like de sun,
We 've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we first begun."

"Chile," said she to him, solemnly, "I an't a fool. Does ye s'pose dat I thinks folks has any business to be sitting on der cheers all der life long, and working me, and living on my money?"

Why, I knows dey han't! An't it all wrong, from fust to last, de way dey makes merchandise o' us! Why, I knows it is; but I 's still about it, for de Lord's sake. I don't work for Miss Loo--I works for de Lord Jesus; and he is good pay--no mistake, now I tell you."

Well," said Harry, a little shaken, but not convinced, "after all, there is n't much use in trying to do any other way. But you 're lucky in feeling so, Aunt Milly; but I can't."

"Well, chile, any way, don't you do nothing rash, and don't you hear *him*. Dat ar way out is through seas of blood. Why, chile, would you turn against Miss Nina? Chile, if they get a going, they won't spare nobody. Don't you start up dat ar tiger; 'cause, I tell ye, ye can't chain him, if ye do!"

"Yes," said Harry, "I see it 's all madness, perfect madness; there 's no use thinking, no use talking. Well, goodmorning, Aunt Milly. Peace go with you!" And the young man started his horse, and was soon out of sight.

Background – There has been an outbreak of Cholera in the South. On returning from a visit to the doctor to get information to help her family and soaves through the outbreak, Nina stops at her Uncle John's plantation and finds the outbreak has hit there. She assists in fighting the disease until she is called to her own plantation to fight it there. Uncle John, Aunt Maria and Aunt Nesbitt die. Clayton hears of the outbreak and rushes to be with Nina. Shortly after his arrival Nina dies of Cholera.

Volume II Chapter XIV THE TIE BREAKS.

CLAYTON remained at Canema several days after the funeral. He had been much affected by the last charge given him by Nina, that he should care for her people; and the scene of distress which he witnessed among them, at her death, added to the strength of his desire to be of service to them.

He spent some time in looking over and arranging Nina's papers. He sealed up the letters of her different friends, and directed them in order to be returned to the writers, causing Harry to add to each a memorandum of the time of her death. His heart sunk heavily when he reflected how little it was possible for any one to do for servants left in the uncontrolled power of a man like Tom Gordon. The awful words of his father's decision, with regard to the power of the master, never seemed so dreadful as now, when he was to see this unlimited authority passed into the hands of one whose passions were his only law. He recalled, too, what Nina had said of the special bitterness existing between Tom and Harry; and his heart almost failed him when he recollected that the very step which Nina, in her generosity, had taken to save Lisette from his lawlessness, had been the means of placing her, without remedy, under his power. Under the circumstances, he could not but admire the calmness and firmness with which Harry still continued to discharge his duties to the estate; visiting those who were still ailing, and doing his best to prevent their sinking into a panic which might predispose to another attack of disease. Recollecting that Nina had said something of some kind of a contract, by which Harry's freedom was to be secured in case of her death, he resolved to speak with him on the subject. As they were together in the library, looking over the papers, Clayton said to him:

"Harry, is there not some kind of contract, or understanding, with the guardians of the estate, by which your liberty was secured in case of the death of your mistress?"

"Yes," said Harry, "there is such a paper. I was to have my freedom on paying a certain sum, which is all paid into five hundred dollars."

"I will advance you that money," said Clayton, unhesitatingly, "if that is all that is necessary. Let me see the paper."

Harry produced it, and Clayton looked it over. It was a regular contract, drawn in proper form, and with no circumstance wanting to give it validity. Clayton, however, knew enough of the law which regulates the condition in which Harry stood, to know that it was of no more avail in his case than so much blank paper. He did not like to speak of it, but sat reading it over, weighing every word, and dreading the moment when he should be called upon to make some remark concerning it; knowing, as he did, that what he had to say must dash all Harry's hopes, -- the hopes of his whole life. While he was hesitating a servant entered and announced Mr. Jekyl; and that gentleman, with a business-like directness which usually characterized his movements, entered the library immediately after.

"Good-morning, Mr. Clayton," he said, and then, nodding patronizingly to Harry, he helped himself to a chair, and stated his business, without further preamble.

"I have received orders from Mr. Gordon to come and take possession of the estate and chattels of his deceased sister, without delay."

As Clayton sat perfectly silent, it seemed to occur to Mr. Jekyl that a few moral reflections of a general nature would be in etiquette on the present occasion. He therefore added, in the tone of voice which he reserved particularly for that style of remark:

"We have been called upon to pass through most solemn and afflicting dispensations of Divine Providence, lately. Mr. Clayton, these things remind us of the shortness of life, and of the necessity of preparation for death!"

Mr. Jekyl paused, and, as Clayton still sat silent, he went on:

"There was no will, I presume?"

"No," said Clayton, "there was not."

"Ah, so I supposed," said Mr. Jekyl, who had now recovered his worldly tone. "In that case, of course the whole property reverts to the heir-at-law, just as I had imagined."

"Perhaps Mr. Jekyl would look at this paper," said Harry, taking his contract from the hand of Mr. Clayton, and passing it to Mr. Jekyl; who took out his spectacles, placed them deliberately on his sharp nose, and read the paper through.

"Were you under the impression," said he, to Harry, "that this is a legal document?"

"Certainly," said Harry. "I can bring witnesses to prove Mr. John Gordon's signature, and Miss Nina's also."

"O, that 's all evident enough," said Mr. Jekyl. "I know Mr. John Gordon's signature. But all the signatures in the world could n't make it a valid contract. You see, my boy," he said, turning to Harry, "a slave, not being a person in the eye of the law, cannot have a contract made with him. The law, which is based on the old Roman code, holds him, *pro nullis, pro mortuis*; which means, Harry, that he 's held as nothing -- as dead, inert substance. That 's his position in law."

"I believe," said Harry, in a strong and bitter tone, "that is what religious people call a Christian institution!" "Hey?" said Mr. Jekyl, elevating his eyebrows, "what's that?"

Harry repeated his remark, and Mr. Jekyl replied in the most literal manner:

"Of course it is. It is a divine ordering, and ought to be met in a proper spirit. There 's no use, my boy, in rebellion. Hath not the potter power over the clay, to make one lump to honor, and another to dishonor?"

"Mr. Jekyl, I think it would be expedient to confine the conversation simply to legal matters," said Clayton.

"O, certainly," said Mr. Jekyl. "And this brings me to say that I have orders from Mr. Gordon to stay till he comes, and keep order on the place. Also that none of the hands shall, at any time, leave the plantation until he arrives. I brought two or three officers with me, in case there should be any necessity for enforcing order."

"When will Mr. Gordon be here?" said Clayton.

"To-morrow, I believe," said Mr. Jekyl. "Young man," he added, turning to Harry, "you can produce the papers and books, and I can be attending to the accounts."

Clayton rose and left the room, leaving Harry with the imperturbable Mr. Jekyl, who plunged briskly into the business of the accounts, talking to Harry with as much freedom and composure as if he had not just been destroying the hopes of his whole lifetime.

If, by any kind of inward clairvoyance, or sudden clearing of his mental vision, Mr. Jekyl could have been made to appreciate the anguish which at that moment overwhelmed the soul of the man with whom he was dealing, we deem it quite possible that he might have been moved to a transient emotion of pity. Even a thorough-paced political economist may sometimes be surprised in this way, by the near view of a case of actual irremediable distress; but he would soon have consoled himself by a species of mental algebra, that the greatest good of the greatest number was nevertheless secure; therefore there was no occasion to be troubled about infinitesimal amounts of suffering. In this way people can reason away every kind of distress but their own; for it is very remarkable that even so slight an ailment as a moderate tooth-ache will put this kind of philosophy entirely to rout.

"It appears to me," said Mr. Jekyl, looking at Harry, after a while, with more attention than he had yet given him, "that something is the matter with you, this morning. Are n't you well?"

"In body," said Harry, "I am well."

"Well, what is the matter, then?" said Mr. Jekyl.

"The matter is," said Harry, "that I have all my life been toiling for my liberty, and thought I was coming nearer to it every year; and now, at thirty-five years of age, I find myself still a slave, with no hope of ever getting free!"

Mr. Jekyl perceived from the outside that there was something the matter inside of his human brother; some unknown quantity in the way of suffering, such as his algebra gave no rule for ascertaining. He had a confused notion that this was an affliction, and that when people were in affliction they must be talked to; and he proceeded accordingly to talk.

"My boy, this is a dispensation of Divine Providence!"

"I call it a dispensation of human tyranny!" said Harry.

"It pleased the Lord," continued Mr. Jekyl, "to foredoom the race of Ham --"

"Mr. Jekyl, that humbug don't go down with me! I 'm no more of the race of Ham than you are! I 'm Colonel Gordon's oldest son -- as white as my brother, whom you say owns me! Look at my eyes, and my hair, and say if any of the rules about Ham pertain to me!"

"Well," said Mr. Jekyl, "my boy, you must n't get excited. Everything must go, you know, by general rules. We must take that course which secures the greatest general amount of good on the whole; and all such rules will work hard in particular cases. Slavery is a great missionary enterprise for civilizing and christianizing the degraded African." "Wait till you see Tom Gor-

don's management on this plantation," said Harry, "and you 'll see what sort of a christianizing institution it is! Mr. Jekyl, you *know* better! You throw such talk as that in the face of your northern visitors, and you know all the while that Sodom and Gomorrah don't equal some of these plantations, where nobody is anybody's husband or wife in particular! You know all these things, and you dare talk to me about a missionary institution! What sort of missionary institutions are the great trading-marts, where they sell men and women? What are the means of grace they use there? And the dogs, and the negro-hunters! -- those are for the greatest good, too! If your soul were in our souls' stead, you 'd see things differently."

Mr. Jekyl was astonished, and said so. But he found a difficulty in presenting his favorite view of the case, under the circumstances; and we believe those ministers of the Gospel, and elders, who entertain similar doctrines, would gain some new views by the effort to present them to a live man in Harry's circumstances. Mr. Jekyl never had a more realizing sense of the difference between the abstract and concrete.

Harry was now thoroughly roused. He had inherited the violent and fiery passions of his father. His usual appearance of studied calmness, and his habits of deferential address, were superinduced; they resembled the thin crust which coats over a flood of boiling lava, and which a burst of the seething mass beneath can shiver in a moment. He was now wholly desperate and reckless. He saw himself already delivered, bound hand and foot, into the hands of a master from whom he could expect neither mercy nor justice. He was like one who had hung suspended over an abyss, by grasping a wild rose; the frail and beautiful thing was broken, and he felt himself *going*, with only despair beneath him. He rose and stood the other side of the table, his hands trembling with excitement.

"Mr. Jekyl," he said, "it is all over with me! Twenty years of faithful service have gone for nothing. Myself and wife, and unborn child, are the slaves of a vile wretch! Hush, now! I will have my say for once! I 've borne, and borne, and borne, and it shall come out! You men who call yourselves religious, and stand up for such tyranny, -- you serpents, you generation of vipers, -- how can you escape the damnation of hell? You keep the clothes of them who stone Stephen! You encourage theft, and robbery, and adultery, and you know it! You are worse than the villains themselves, who don't pretend to justify what they do. Now, go, tell Tom Gordon -- go! I shall fight it out to the last! I 've nothing to hope, and nothing to lose. Let him look out! They made sport of Samson, -- they put out his eyes, -- but he pulled down the temple over their heads, after all. Look out!"

There is something awful in an outburst of violent passion. The veins in Harry's forehead were swollen, his lips were livid, his eyes glittered like lightning; and Mr. Jekyl cowered before him.

"There will come a day," said Harry, "when all this shall be visited upon you! The measure you have filled to us shall be filled to you *double* -- mark my words!"

Harry spoke so loudly, in his vehemence, that Clayton overheard him, and came behind him silently into the room. He was pained, shocked, and astonished; and, obeying the first instinct, he came forward and laid his hand entreatingly on Harry's shoulder.

"My good fellow, you don't know what you are saying," he said.

"Yes I do," said Harry, "and my words will be true!"

Another witness had come behind Clayton -- Tom Gordon, in his travelling-dress, with pistols at his belt. He had ridden over after Jekyl, and had arrived in time to hear part of Harry's frantic ravings.

"Stop!" he said, stepping into the middle of the room; "leave that fellow to me! Now, boy," he said, fixing his dark and evil eye upon Harry, "you did n't know that your master was hearing you, did you? The last time we met, you told me I was n't your master! *Now*, we 'll see if you 'll say that again! You went whimpering to your mistress, and got her to buy Lisette, so as to keep her out of *my* way! Now who owns her? -- say! Do you see this?" he said, holding up a long, lithe gutta-

percha cane. "This is what I whip dogs with, when they don't know their place! Now, sir, down on your knees, and ask pardon for your impudence, or I 'll thrash you within an inch of your life!"

"I won't kneel to my younger brother!" said Harry.

With a tremendous oath, Tom struck him; and, as if a rebound from the stroke, Harry struck back a blow so violent as to send him stumbling across the room, against the opposite wall; then turned, quick as thought, sprang through the open window, climbed down the veranda, vaulted on to Tom's horse, which stood tied at the post, and fled as rapidly as lightning to his cottage door, where Lisette stood at the ironing-table. He reached out his hand, and said, "Up, quick, Lisette! Tom Gordon 's here!" And before Tom Gordon had fairly recovered from the dizziness into which the blow had thrown him, the fleet blood-horse was whirling Harry and Lisette past bush and tree, till they arrived at the place where he had twice before met Dred.

Dred was standing there. "Even so," he said, as the horse stopped, and Harry and Lisette descended; "the vision is fulfilled! Behold, the Lord shall make thee a witness and commander to the people!"

"There 's no time to be lost," said Harry.

"Well I know that," said Dred. "Come, follow me!"

And before sunset of that evening Harry and Lisette were tenants of the wild fastness in the centre of the swamp.