Wisdom is better than rubies.—Prov. viii, 11.
Apply thy heart unto instruction, and thine ears to the words of knowledge.—Prov. xxiii, 12.

Readers are requested to be careful in using this book, and punctual in returning it. To injure a library book, or to retain it longer than is right, is to do an injury to others which cannot be easily repaired.

Book No. 121

Dewitt A. S. School

Dist No 1

No 732

The Minister's Call.

See page 11.

THE

EARNEST LABORER;

OR,

MYRTLE HILL PLANTATION.

BEING

SKETCHES AND INCIDENTS DRAWN FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF A SCHOOL TEACHER.

A Book for Senior Scholars.

THREE ILLUSTRATIONS.

New York:
PUBLISHED BY CARLTON & PORTER,
SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION, 200 MULBERRY-STREET.

CONTENTS.

Chapter		Page
I.	Childhood's Home	7
II.	A great Change	11
III.	Beginning Well	16
IV.	College	21
V.	Myrtle Hill Plantation	26
VI.	The Forest School	33
VII.	The Play-ground	38
VIII.	Sunday on Myrtle Hill Plantation.	46
IX.	An Experiment	59
X.	Difficulties Overcome	70
XI.	Encouraging Indications	81
XII.	The Young Laborer	88
XIII.	Myrtle Hill excited	98
XIV.	Father Clifton	106
XV.	The Ripening Harvest	112
XVI.	Precious Fruit	121

CHAPTER PAGE

XVII. THE SURPRISE 137

XVIII. THE SLAVE MOTHER'S ANGUISH 146

XIX. WICKED DEMANDS 153

XX. THE ESCAPE 161

XXI. THE DEAR OLD HOME 168

Illustrations.

THE MINISTER'S CALL 2

GELIA TEACHING THE NEGROES 68

THE VISIT TO DEER RUN 126

THE EARNEST LABORER;

OR,

MYRTLE PLANTATION.

CHAPTER I.

CHILDHOOD'S HOME.

THE father of George Freeman was a farmer living in a quiet town on the banks of the Connecticut river. He was not rich, neither did he know the sorrows of poverty. He was content to earn his daily bread by an honest industry. But Solomon Freeman was more than an honest and an industrious man. He was sincerely and earnestly pious. The incense of prayer had ascended morning and evening from his family altar from the day that he became the head of a family. His exactness in the performance of this duty was proverbial among his neighbors. Neither the press of business nor unusual weariness,

nor even the presence of irreligious friends or strangers, caused its omission.

Mr. Freeman was equally exact in his attendance upon the public service of God's house, and the regular social worship of the Church with which he was connected. The faithfulness of Mr. Freeman's performance of the duty of secret prayer could be known only by the general consistency of his Christian character. But there was one fact of his history which was noticed and remembered by his children. He always quietly retired, after his midday meal, to his chamber for a short time. This practice was uniform, and carried through a long life, so that it made a deep impression upon the minds of his family. They did not need to be told that he had retired from the confusion of worldly care to spend a few moments in communion with God.

The piety of Mr. Freeman was ever cheerful, aided it may be in this respect by a naturally hopeful disposition. But he seldom forgot what became the man of God amid the pleasures of social intercourse.

We need not say more in this place of Mrs. Freeman than that she was a Christian woman, worthy of her excellent husband. Her character may be judged by the children whom she gave to the Church.

George, whose history in part we propose to sketch, was the oldest child. Five other children made a family which taxed, for its support, the industry and good management of the parents. George had lived to be nearly sixteen years of age before anything had occurred in his history of marked interest. His time had been divided from his twelfth year between labor on the farm and the brief school privileges of the summer and winter. He had now begun to manifest a decided ambition in the pursuit of knowledge. His school books for the preceding season had not been laid aside at the close of the winter school. They were taken up during his spare moments through the summer, and when the winter school commenced again he astonished his teacher and schoolmates by his proficiency. His ambition was much quickened by the commendation which he received,

and before midwinter he had, in his own mind, formed large plans for future study. In fact, the inclination to become a student, which he had for some time been cultivating, now took a definite form. The future to George Freeman was full of inspiring interest, as he bent over his book at the early morning and late evening hours.

CHAPTER II.

A GREAT CHANGE.

It was a clear cold day in the winter of which we were speaking that Mr. Parsons, Mr. Freeman's pastor, called at his residence.* It was apparent to Mr. Freeman and to his wife that their minister had some special communication to make to them; and, as there was perfect freedom between the pastor and this family of his flock, he was not long in making known his errand.

"I perceive," he remarked, "that George has become quite ambitious in his studies of late."

"Yes," replied Mr. Freeman; "the leisure of the summer has been given to his books."

"Ah!" said Mr. Parsons with some animation, "that explains what I learned from his teacher this morning. He says he has made astonishing advancement

* See Frontispiece.

since last winter. I have strong hopes of your son's future usefulness."

"I gave him to God at his birth," suddenly interposed Mrs. Freeman; and she added decidedly, "George will be a minister of the Gospel."

"But he is not pious," said Mr. Parsons seriously.

"I know it," replied the mother, "but Mr. Freeman and I have prayed for his conversion every morning at a stated hour since God gave him to us, and he is about to answer our prayers."

Mr. Parsons's countenance brightened at this unexpected expression of confidence in the revival of the work of God. The interview closed with prayer, and he returned home to finish his preparation for the Sabbath with an increased faith in the divine aid.

The winter wore away, and the school term closed. The interest of George in his studies was unabated, but he was now much more engaged in the work of the farm. Arrangements had been made for him to attend an academy in a neighbor-

ing town. The sacrifice that his father would make in dispensing with his assistance during the summer George well understood and deeply felt. He was keenly alive to the welfare of others, and it was therefore much easier for him to confer favors than to receive them. The thought of not only leaving his father to perform alone the farm work of the summer, but of being an expense to him for board, books, and tuition, was very unpleasant. Having been early taught self-reliance, he began to devise some way to pursue his studies without this expense. His pastor's assistance he could not ask, for he had the care pressing upon him of a large family, in addition to his pastoral duties. After much study a thought suddenly broke upon his mind. "I have it," he exclaimed earnestly to himself; "I'll have the arrangement made this very night."

That evening found George in close conversation with a former playmate, some years older than himself, who lived about a mile from his father's house. He had been one year in college, but proposed,

on account of ill health, to spend a year at home. He had no objections that George should begin the study of Latin and Greek under his instruction. It would keep the rules fresh in his own mind, and help to pass away time which was likely to hang heavily on his hands. The arrangement was made, and needed only the approval of George's parents. This, it may be supposed, he readily obtained. This was George's first effort in self-denying labor, and it proved of great advantage to him. It was the spring of much future usefulness. Without interrupting any necessary attention to his studies, he was able to render his father valuable assistance every day.

But a larger benefit arose from this step than could have been anticipated by either the parents or the son. The Church had become much quickened by the Holy Ghost; the confessions of God's people when they met together became more full and earnest, and their prayers more definite and believing. The Spirit strove with George, and he became a professed inquir-

er after personal salvation. When the peace from assured forgiveness of sin began to be revealed to his mind, the true purpose and end of life appeared as it had never done before. Scholarship, and distinction as a teacher, had been the end of his ambition. Life now seemed made for a nobler purpose. He felt that he ought to glorify God in his life. And this did not appear as a cold duty, but a high privilege, for which, by grace, he felt a warm congeniality of feeling. He studied with increased ardor and with much more satisfaction.

The incense of prayer from the family altar of Solomon Freeman arose with more than usual thanksgiving and praise. It had a meaning to George which he had not before understood. He wondered that it had been to him so much of a form. He could now in some measure understand why his father had so rigidly maintained it, and he devoutly thanked God for such parents and such a home, and inwardly resolved that its principles should be the guide of his life.

CHAPTER III.

BEGINNING WELL.

THE obligation to be a Christian which George was now trying to meet he had early felt. When he was only eight years of age the Spirit strove in a special manner with him. He then saw clearly that he was a sinner; and at one time, under the influence of this conviction, he went into the field of new made hay, and behind one of the haystacks, away from the sight of men, he kneeled down and prayed God to forgive his sins. The Saviour, who is never afar off when the penitent heart cries unto him, even then appeared with the comforts of his presence; and now that these feelings had been revived, he felt as he could not, or certainly as he did not feel in childhood, the importance of cultivating them by all the means which God had provided for a growth in grace. Happily George had been trained to give at least a *formal* attention to religious duties. More

than a formal attention he could not give while his heart remained unchanged. Now he could engage in them with a devotional feeling. They were no longer mere duties, but precious privileges.

George had a spiritual guide in his Sabbath-school superintendent, Mr. Ela, as well as in his pastor and his parents.

"We have work for you," remarked Mr. Ela to George, in his quiet way, at the close of a Sabbath-school session. "Young men who have been so long receiving instruction should begin to impart some of their knowledge."

"Why, Mr. Ela," replied George, "I have only just *begun* to learn."

Mr. Ela smiled at this remark, but without regarding it, said, "Several children have been added to the school to-day. There they are," he continued, pointing to five very uninviting looking lads who occupied a settee in one corner of the room. "They were never in a Sunday-school before. They have been added to the school by the solicitations of two faithful ladies, and now it is your part to teach

them. God requires young Christians to work in his vineyard. I shall depend upon your services next Sabbath."

This was said in a familiar and kind manner, but in a tone of serious earnestness which forbade refusal. Mr. Ela walked away, and left George in severe conflict of mind. It seemed to him that his teacher had never explained the word of God as he had done that day. The interest he felt in learning its truth was unlike the interest he had felt in books of amusement only; it was a deeper and more satisfactory interest. He felt that this profit of learning would be lost if he became a teacher. But in this he found himself mistaken. The study to which he was prompted in order to teach wonderfully quickened his own mind. Besides, God directly blessed his labor of love, so that after a few Sabbaths' teaching he was convinced that he was in the best way of obtaining religious knowledge.

But the intelligence and piety of Mr. Ela soon provided another means by which George's position as a teacher was made

one of still greater religious improvement. He had long seen the necessity of a better preparation of the teachers for their work; and as the evenings were becoming longer, and the people less busy with the work of the farms, he proposed to form a "teacher-class," to meet on Wednesday evening at his residence, for the purpose of studying the lessons to be taught the following Sabbath. To this the teachers readily agreed, and chose Mr. Ela their instructor. To George it became a kind of theological school. The maps and Bible dictionaries which its teacher freely used, made the lessons deeply interesting. The discussion which grew out of the lessons impressed them upon his mind. His Sabbath scholars too derived great benefit from these Wednesday evening meetings, in the preparation it afforded him to teach them. Their teacher's stimulated interest increased their attachment to the school.

"John," remarked one of his scholars as the class were retiring, "my father thought that George Freeman was too young to

teach us boys; but I think he knows as much as a minister."

"So do I," was the quick reply. "And I mean to get a lot of boys to join our class, for I know they'll like it. There's Henry Jones; he's not been to Sunday-school this long time. He left because he said his teacher did not know, half the time, where the lesson was. I guess that our teacher can tell where the lesson is and what it means too."

George's interest was increased by the evident improvement of his scholars, and both teacher and class became busy in adding to its members. They obtained several from the too often large list of "lost scholars," and a few from the "highways and hedges."

Such were some of the fruits of a good beginning in the Christian life.

CHAPTER IV.

COLLEGE.

A LITTLE over two years of severe study, relieved by some hard but healthy work upon the farm, had given George, in the estimation of his teachers, a fair preparation for college. The last six months had been spent in a neighboring academy, where his character and scholarship had won for him the esteem of all. The arrangements for commencing a college life were nearly completed. The son, quite as much as the father, was in constant study to make the expenses as light as possible. The means of Solomon Freeman were small, but his desire to have his son fitted for the most extensive usefulness was that of a truly pious man. Yet if George had not learned to economize this small means his education could not have been secured.

"You intend to board yourself, I think,"

remarked Mr. Freeman the evening before George's departure.

"Yes," replied George. "That is not uncommon with poor students."

"And," added his father, smiling, "you will need to obtain a room-mate as poor as yourself to make his society pleasant."

"That will not be difficult," said George, "and such a one will not be likely to be a drone in his studies. We shall be agreed to live plainly and study hard."

"Your mother," continued Mr. Freeman, "has, I am sure, made the best use possible of the materials we can command for your clothing outfit and for the furnishing of your room."

"Of that I am sure too," thought George, recollecting how busy she had been, both night and day, for weeks past.

A few plain articles of furniture, which she could but poorly spare, had been varnished, and made to look as well as possible. His trunk had been quietly and thoughtfully packed. A mother's blessing upon her departing son was breathed in her every act. While George's thoughts

were thus wandering away upon his mother, Mr. Freeman had been silent. *His* thoughts too were busy. "I have one thing to enjoin upon you, George," he suddenly exclaimed, starting up.

"What is that, father?"

"Let not the necessities of poverty cause you to injure, by over study or labor, your health."

A timely warning, which George better understood in after years.

Two years of college life were sufficient to test severely his power of enduring constant exertion and rigid economy. He taught school during the winter months, and spent the summer vacation in work upon the farm. His tuition at college had been paid by an uncle whose name he bore and whose means were ample. When, therefore, he received a note from this uncle saying, under the convenient plea of "hard times," that he could not continue this favor, George's perplexity was great. It did not relieve him any to know that Uncle George could continue to himself and family every extravagant indulgence.

After much thought and prayer, George resolved to embrace the first favorable opportunity to spend a year or two in teaching. Such an opportunity was soon presented. It was an application, through a student of the extreme South-west, for a friend's family in that section.

"I regret," wrote his father, in answer to a letter asking advice in reference to his plans, "that I cannot make it possible for you to remain in college until you graduate. The aid that your uncle has withdrawn is just the amount more than we can honestly provide; your mother and I therefore reluctantly give our consent to your proposed engagement to teach at the South for a year or two. The money for your outfit and journey may be safely borrowed on the guarantee of your salary. We trust that God's good providence is in this unexpected enterprise, and that it will all be for the best." This last expression, "it will all be for the best," was frequently used by George's parents. "What a conquest," he exclaimed as he laid down the letter, "have my dear parents achieved

over their feelings, to enable them to say, in this case, 'It's all for the best.' I know well how great a sacrifice to them this separation will be."

George hastened home to get ready for his departure. There were kind words spoken, and careful preparations made by busy hands and loving hearts during those few never forgotten days; and then, amid prayers and tears, the much-loved son and brother took his leave of a home to whose influence he owed a manly and Christian fitness for a home among strangers.

CHAPTER V.

MYRTLE HILL PLANTATION.

THE arrival of the new teacher on Myrtle Hill plantation in the far South was a marked occasion, both with the servants, and with the children whom George was to teach.

"I know he's a mighty fine man," remarked Aunt Ann, the cook, who had just passed his supper into the dining-room. A little knot of servants have gathered about her to learn her first impressions of the stranger.

Aunt Ann was an oracle of wisdom with her friends, especially in her opinions of "white folks." When, therefore, she declared that George was "mighty fine," it became a key-note to the remarks of the whole kitchen company.

"Reckons," said Jordan, who lay stretched upon a long bench, quite to the annoyance of the cook, "reckons massa's children have a smart chance to larn dis

time; only jest they is so shockin' lazy they never 'proves no privileges. Massa better, nuff sight, send de young massas into de cotton field and let dis boy get de larnin'."

This effort of Jordan's pleasantry caused a merry but suppressed laugh, which was arrested by the decided tone of Aunt Ann, who replied, "Jordan aint nobody! Let Yellow Jim have de new teacher's sarvices, and I reckons dare'll be somethin' done."

The appearance of Aunt Maria, the stewardess, gave a sudden check to the talk. Maria was the mother of Yellow Jim, of whom we shall learn more by and by.

Maria was about equally removed in her position from her fellow-slaves and the mistress. She moved with the dignity of one having authority among the former, but suffered much from the arbitrary will of the latter.

Maria gave the chambermaid orders concerning the teacher's room without offering any remarks concerning him. But Aunt Ann ventured to say, when Ma-

ria had returned to the house, that she was "special pleased with the teacher."

While those in and about the mansion of Myrtle Hill were indulging in a curious scrutiny of the new teacher, his own feelings were both new and strange. In the sail down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers he had been intensely interested. The ride on horseback from the landing, about twenty miles, was scarcely less so. And now for the first time he began to realize the peculiarities of his situation, and that he was indeed "away from home." The plantation had been made by "a clearing" in a vast forest, by which it was surrounded. The mansion of the owner was approached through fields now white with cotton. He had seen large numbers of slaves in the fields;—slaves had met him at the mansion to usher him in, a slave had waited upon him at the table, and a slave had directed him to his sleeping-room. His employer, Mr. Craig, and his wife, had given him a formal welcome; and their children, consisting of three boys and two girls, though embar-

rassed, had expressed a more decided cordiality.

"Here then I am," George remarked to himself when quietly seated in his own room, "surrounded by snow white fields of cotton, by negro slaves, and by favored and perhaps spoiled children of slave masters. I am at present *at home in duty*, and must try, at least, to be so in feeling."

George did not fail, though weary, to seek before retiring, by fervent prayer, a blessing upon his new field of labor.

The next morning Mr. Craig and his family were more at ease, and there was a mutual good feeling manifested.

"What are your first impressions of our sunny South?" was the rather embarrassing question of Mrs. Craig.

"I have seen," replied George, "but little of society here, and can of course form no opinion of it; but if your people are as excellent as your rivers are noble and as your forests are grand, and if I shall enjoy the society as much as I have the beauties of nature since I left the land-

ing, I shall esteem it a privilege to be here."

"All in good keeping, sir," interposed Mr. Craig in a decided manner. "Our country is nature's garden, and our society is the first in the world."

Allowing me, thought George, to except my own New England; but he ventured no reply, only querying whether Mr. Craig could be in earnest.

"You'll find my boys," said Mr. Craig, rather abruptly changing the conversation, "sad rogues; but you must tame them down, for they have played enough, and must study this year."

The boys looked confused at this unexpected introduction; but without noticing this, Mr. Craig turned to the girls and said, "as to these little plagues, they are worse than the boys, I do believe."

It was evident to George that Mr. Craig was an indulgent father, fond of saying smart but unmeaning things to his children.

"My scholars and I," he replied, "will be good friends I am sure."

"I dare say," remarked Mr. Craig,

evidently pleased with the teacher's spirit and reply. "And I think," she added, "you'll find our children good children."

When the breakfast was finished Mr. Craig remarked in his direct way, "my friend at the college wrote that he had sent a *pious* teacher; I suppose you have been used to family prayers. I have no objections to a prayer in the *morning*."

It was not often that prayer had been offered in this family, but it was received by all, especially the servants, with evident respect. Every person in and about the room reverently kneeled, a practice that George afterward learned was, on such occasions, customary throughout that section of country.

"Didn't I tell you he was the right sort," said Aunt Ann in a triumphant spirit, when Fielding, the table boy, told her of the strange occurrence. "Hopes," continued Aunt Ann, "Massa won't swear 'fore as ever Mr. Freeman gets out of hearin'."

"Do you know, Ann, why *I* like Mr.

Freeman?" inquired Yellow Jim, with a quick and intelligent flash of his eye.

"Why," answered Ann archly, "s'pose it's cause ye cotched *my* 'pinion of him."

"No," said Jim, "it's because he's got the right *name*."

"Hi, now you Jim!" said Ann, "you are allers talkin' like o' that."

CHAPTER VI.

THE FOREST SCHOOL.

THE Monday following George's arrival at Myrtle Hill his labors in teaching commenced. A few rods from the dwelling-house, and just within the shade of the forest, stood the school-house. It was situated on a gentle swell of land, at the foot of which, and a little further among the trees, was a small and ever running stream. The school-house was built of logs. Openings between the logs on two sides answered instead of windows. Planed boards placed lengthwise, and in a slanting position directly under these openings, formed the desks. A large and crudely made fireplace was an excellent substitute for the New England stove. Rough seats for the scholars, and a table and chair for the teacher, completed the furnishing for the forest school-house. Its location, with the constant presence of singing birds, the not unfrequent chirping

of the large gray squirrel, and the occasional sound of the quick jump of the timid rabbit, rendered it a delightful spot.

James, the oldest scholar, was seventeen years of age; Edwin about fifteen; May thirteen; Angelin, or "Gelia" as she was familiarly called, was eight; and Frank, or "Frankie," just old enough to be entertained rather than taught in school. He was not quite four. With these the teacher was expected to spend seven hours daily of diligent labor. It was not difficult for him to find employment every moment of this time, for every lesson of each scholar was recited separately.

The daily order of the school was soon learned both by teacher and scholars; but the dispositions, and the proper management of the minds to be trained, and the hearts to be cultivated, were not soon learned. A glance at each scholar will exhibit, in a degree, the difficult task which devolved upon the young teacher.

James was quiet, generally teachable,

slow to learn, and sometimes exceedingly obstinate.

Edwin was generous, excitable, often angry at the slightest provocation, but soon appeased, and frank in the acknowledgment of his errors. He learned with great ease and rapidity when he gave attention to his books. This, however, was not often. It was a source of vexation to James that Edwin, by an occasional glance at them, was quite as ready for a recitation as he was after diligent application.

May possessed many of the aspirations of the young lady with the simplicity of the girl. Gelia was as lively as the morning birds, ready for a run in the woods or a frolic with her brothers. Little Frankie was the petted friend of all, a great annoyance to the study hours, and the merry idol of the play time.

"How shall I meet the wants of this little group of restless minds?" mused George soon after the close of an afternoon session in which he had exhausted his powers of body and mind. A train of discour-

aging thoughts were pressing upon him, when his reverie was happily interrupted. His scholars, save Frankie, came shouting up the school-house hill, and rushed into the school-room.

"Ho! Mr. Freeman," exclaimed Edwin, panting for breath. Edwin was chief speaker when the group had any request to urge upon the teacher. "Do, Mr. Freeman, please play with us. We want something *new*." He emphasized the last word in a manner which showed how monotonous their round of amusements had become.

"O *do!*" added May, "for I have heard that the New England children have *a heap of plays*."

"They have *many* plays," answered George quietly, "but not many more than you do, even here on the plantation, nor very different."

The children looked disappointed.

"Well now, Mr. Freeman," persisted May, "*you* can *make* a play."

"O yes," chimed in Gelia, "*teachers* can do a heap of things."

Now, thought George, here is a way to the heads and hearts of the children of which I have not thought. I wonder I have not. If I can successfully direct heitr plays I can better guide their studies. I will try. He pacified the impatience of his scholars, and promised to direct their amusements at the close of the next day.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PLAY-GROUND.

THE grounds around the school-house had a great variety of surface: abrupt mounds, sharp ridges, between which were pleasant rivulets, and, occasionally, openings of level surface free from trees. It lacked but one thing in aid of the plan which George had conceived for the amusement of his pupils. There were no rocks, either large or small.

The little company pressed closely upon the steps of George as he led them, in a walk of examination, about the grounds.

"Now do please tell us what the play is to be," said Gelia hurriedly. "I want a real run."

"You ought to be ashamed to be so much like a boy," said May sharply.

"Here," said the teacher, coming to a quiet pond of water about two rods wide and several times as long — "here we have an ocean, and we will see how much

of the map of the world we can lay out in the grounds around it."

"O is that it!" exclaimed Gelia in a lively tone.

James expressed a decided interest in the suggestion. Edwin looked coldly upon the scheme. It seemed to him too much like study. He preferred Gelia's "real run."

"I think," remarked George, "that, by damming up the brook which runs from the pond, and thus flowing the plain just beyond, we shall extend our ocean many times its present length. But before we do that we must make some mounds of earth, which shall be our islands when the water surrounds them.

The scholars began to catch the idea, and to enter into the plan with much spirit. George examined the grounds carefully, and taxed his ingenuity to shape them into such a form that, by the exercise of some imagination, of which the children had much, it might represent the two hemispheres, and the water represent the intervening Atlantic Ocean, with

islands scattered here and there. By taking advantage of the rolling surface some distance up the brook which fed the pond, streams could, he thought, be made to run into it in several places. The plan was unfolded to the scholars, and work enough laid out for the playtime of several weeks. It included an ocean, continents, rivers, islands, lakes, bays and inlets, with hills and mountains. The school maps were studied for the perfection of the arrangement, and even Gelia became a critic on the fitness of the several representations. Frankie was quiet an officious manager. He floated his tiny boats down the stream, and brought contempt upon the rivers by jumping over them.

The fame of this amusement spread through the plantation. The servants offered their aid in completing the laborious part of the work. Mr. and Mrs. Craig observed its progress with quiet interest.

They were pleased because the children were made happy. The mother watched the influence the teacher was securing over the children with unfeigned satisfaction.

George was, in the mean time, using this influence to secure their increased improvement of the school hours. He made diligent study there a condition of his presence and aid during playtime.

When all was completed, a considerable extent of ground had assumed the appearance of a map. Boats were made to sail down the rivers to bear the products of the island countries to the ocean. Ships were built for the seas. George's directions in this part of the play were indispensable, for his scholars had never seen a sail vessel. Carriage roads were made along the mountain sides and over the plains.

"We must have railroads and canals," exclaimed Edwin, who had become as zealous in the amusement as even Gelia. None of the children had seen either, but they had read about them, and seen pictures of them in their school-books.

"Well," replied George, "but there is one thing which you must do before you make railroads and canals."

"What is that?" said Edwin.

"You must build churches and school-houses."

"What have they to do with it?" said Edwin rather sharply.

"They have much to do with it," replied George. "Religion and education are the means of the improvements among the people. Do heathen nations have railroads, telegraphs, and canals?"

"I suppose not," said Edwin, who began to see the matter more clearly.

"No," continued George, "neither do they have true religion nor education."

"Now I see," said Gelia, with animation, "how it is. All our teachers come from the north, and Aunt Alice, who spent last summer there, said it was full of churches and school-houses and railroads and ships, and such things. We must fill our map full of churches and school-houses."

Busy knives were immediately at work to form mimic places of worship and learning. George took great pleasure in reproducing from fond recollection the little square buildings, with a roof running to a

point in the center, so characteristic of the New England country school-house. He colored them red, and placed them on the hill-sides and in the valleys of his imaginary home-land. The churches he placed upon the little village greens and at the road crossings. He took pains to explain to his scholars the progress which New England was constantly making in the size and beauty of its churches and its school-houses. If his own country was made the example of what religion and education would do, it was because his thoughts were constantly upon it; but he showed at the same time that he loved every country and all people.

"Now," exclaimed Gelia, when the ground which represented Christian nations had been dotted over with these signs of progress, "now, Mr. Freeman, do make a railroad. What do railroads look like? O I remember the picture in my geography; I will go and get it and see if you make them right;" and away she ran to the school-room.

When Gelia returned she sat down

under a tree with the book in her hand.

"What are these poles in the picture, with strings along the tops of them?" inquired Gelia of her teacher, holding up the book.

"Those are telegraph poles, and the strings, as you call them, are telegraph wires."

"And are we to have telegraphs too?" shouted Gelia.

"We shall have something like them," said George.

When all was finished the play-grounds were very attractive, and the children passed many pleasant hours upon them. Even "the people" of the plantation took much interest in them. Slaves on southern plantations are frequently called *the people* by the white persons. These slaves had many questions to ask concerning the map, and Gelia was ever ready to show her own knowledge for the gratification of her humble inquirers. On the Sabbath, which was *generally* the leisure day of the slaves, groups were seen here and there

talking over the items of their newly acquired knowledge of geography, and proclaiming warmly the praises of the new teacher. But none watched the progress of this amusement with so much interest as Yellow Jim. His questions were few, but they plainly showed how readily he understood what George designed to teach. When he had, with evident satisfaction, studied every part of it, he said to George, in a low tone, "Mr. Freeman, I want to ask you a question if you please, sir." Jim never addressed George as "master," and he generally succeeded in avoiding the negro language.

"Well, Jim," said George, "what is your question?"

"Which part of the map do you think I like best?"

"I cannot tell, Jim; which is it?"

"Canada," said Jim, with a quick, sharp tone.

CHAPTER VIII.

SUNDAY ON MYRTLE HILL PLANTATION.

THOUGH George had thus endeavored to provide for the amusement of the children of the plantation on the week-days, much labor was evidently needed to lead them to enjoy and improve their Sundays in a right manner. The plantation was fifteen miles from the village, and that was the nearest place of stated Sabbath preaching. There was occasional week-day service on some of the plantations of the vicinity. Many, therefore, of the Sabbaths were spent by George at home with the family. He greatly missed the Sunday-school and public preaching, yet he had the Bible and some good books, with which he resorted to his quiet school-room, and there conversed through them with holy things. The place was fitted for prayer and religious thought, though it could not make up the lack of the house of God. He occasionally strolled into the

forest, which brought many impressive lessons concerning God to the eye and ear.

But George often exclaimed with the Psalmist, "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord."

The mere absence of his accustomed privileges was not the only inconvenience which George suffered on those Sundays. Though the labor of the field ceased, lively and sometimes boisterous sounds were heard around the quarters of the field hands. They wore away the long and, to them, often wearisome Sabbath by eating and lying down in listless repose, and in rude plays or ruder talk.

Mr. Craig and his wife had, of course, more refined means of enjoyment. When tired of social chat and of books, which were never intimate companions, they resorted to a drive in the carriage, generally taking with them one of the children. The other children, thus left to themselves, sought amusement with the thoughtlessness of youth. The guns and dogs were freely employed. The quiet of even the teacher's place of resort was sometimes in-

vaded by their noisy mirth, though they intended to be mindful of his known feelings in reference to such interruptions.

George earnestly desired to lead these children into a better regard for God's holy day. While considering in what way he might best begin his efforts, an incident suggested the plan for the desired improvement.

One beautiful Sabbath morning Mr. and Mrs. Craig, accompanied by May, departed early to spend the day with a friend. The servants of the quarters wandered more freely than usual into the fields and forest. James and Edwin took their horses, guns, and dogs, to join the young men of a neighboring plantation in an attempt to start and capture a deer. Frank resorted to the brook to sail his tiny boat. Gelia being left without her playmates, was much at a loss to know what to do. The teacher, with his books, sought his school-room retreat, in which he spent so many pleasant hours. The time with him glided so swiftly away that he forgot both the slaves and the children.

Suddenly Gelia burst into the schoolroom with one of her earnest exclamations: "Ho, Mr. Freeman, I don't know what to do with myself! I can't go any where, and there is no one to play with me. I wish I was a boy! I'll warrant you I'd take Picayune, the pony, and be off after Jim and Ed pretty quick! I have a great mind to go anyhow! I reckon I could ride Pic over a deer range in full gallop as well as any of them."

"Sit down, Gelia, and take breath," said George quietly. "You can find a better way than that to spend the Sabbath. Besides," he added pleasantly, intending to give a serious turn to Gelia thoughts, "you know Picayune has been of late considerably under my instruction, and I don't think he would be willing to take you to a deer hunt on the Sabbath."

"O Mr. Freeman!" replied Gelia sadly, "you are *so* strict. Why, pa and ma and Sister May have gone to ride, and the boys are having a splendid time I'll warrant, *and what shall I do?*"

"Have you no interesting books?" inquired George.

"None but the old ones I've read a hundred times," said Gelia; "besides, you know we can't read always," she added emphatically.

"Well," said George, in a sympathizing tone, "it *is* hard to read 'always,' and to read one book 'a hundred times.' Come, Gelia, we will take a pleasant walk, and I will tell you a story."

"O, a story!" exclaimed Gelia, jumping up and clapping her hands, "that's it, Mr. Freeman; let it be something about the wars, or the Indians, or a lion story!"

Gelia seized her teacher's hand, and as they started off he began his story:

"There was once a ship which left London with a valuable cargo, and several persons on board as passengers. They were going to a distant country to trade. For many weeks they sailed safely with fair winds and a cloudless sky. But when they were approaching some islands of the Pacific Ocean a severe storm came upon

them. The captain and his crew behaved bravely, but they could not manage the ship, and she was driven upon an island."

"And were they all drowned?" interrupted Gelia, the tears starting from her eyes.

"O be patient and I will tell you," said George, smiling at the characteristic earnestness of the warm-hearted girl.

"The ship," continued George, "much broken, and unfit to be occupied, was left grounded upon the beach by the receding tide, and the exhausted men seized such things as they could carry and hurried ashore."

"O I am glad," interrupted Gelia again, "that they are safe!"

"Well, they were not drowned," continued her teacher, "but they were soon surrounded by the people of the island, who were savage heathen. They robbed the wreck of everything valuable, and treated the unfortunate strangers cruelly. After several months an English ship approached the island, intending to send a boat ashore to obtain water; but their

poor countrymen on the island had seen them when they were afar off, and running to the shore, they seized all the canoes that were near, so that the savages could not pursue them, and reached the ship in safety, which immediately sailed away to another and more friendly island."

"And didn't they when they got home send some big war ships and pay those savages off well?" inquired Gelia with spirit.

"They held meetings in London of many thousands of people," answered George, "when such cruelties were made known, and the consequence was they did send ships to that island, *and paid those ignorant people off well.*"

"O I thought so, and I am real glad of it; it was good enough for them. But did they kill all the savages, Mr. Freeman, the women and children too?"

"Why," said George, "I did not say they *killed* any of them. I said *they paid them off well.* They did not send war ships, but missionary ships; and they did not fight with them, but taught them how

to love God and man. Although the missionaries suffered much for some years, yet the islanders became Christians at last. Now if a ship is wrecked there the people take the crew to their homes and freely give them the best they have, treating them with great kindness."

"There, Mr. Freeman," said Gelia seriously, feeling a little ashamed of her zeal against the islanders, "that is always *your* way of paying folks off."

"And is it not the best way, Gelia?" asked George.

"O yes, Mr. Freeman," replied Gelia, "and I wish *I* was good enough to be a missionary," seeming to become quite thoughtful as the picture of savage huts turned into happy homes began to appear to her lively imagination.

This story led to a spirited conversation between Gelia and her teacher, which continued until their return to the schoolroom. While they were loitering in its vicinity a sudden shriek of alarm came from Frankie, who, as we have stated, had been playing in the brook. He had fol-

lowed his boat down the stream until it entered a basin of water from which a supply for the house was drawn. In reaching after his boat Frankie had fallen in. He was in some danger of drowning. But his teacher arrived soon enough to save him from any injury except from fright. Aunt Maria's tender care soon put the little boatman into a comfortable and happy condition; but the inmates of the house and yard were made somewhat sober. They feared a storm when Frankie's parents should know how great had been his exposure to danger through their want of watchfulness over him.

These apprehensions were not relieved by the arrival of James and Edwin in no very amiable mood. They had started, they said, a fine fat deer and given him a long chase; but the dogs had sadly failed, and the finest one of them was missing.

The two hunters were disposed to blame each other and blame everything. Their unhappy feelings clouded their brows, and found utterance in unpleasant words.

George saw by a glance at the horses that the boys were likely to receive, in their turn, a full share of blame. The poor overdriven animals were ready to fall to the ground from sheer exhaustion. The servant who led them away to the stable yard gave ominous mutterings of the coming storm. "Dis mighty fine Lord's day work," said he; "horses e'en a'most dead — poor old Growler done killed, I'll warrant, by that plaguey old deer what de young massas didn't cotch neither. Reckon Massas Jim and Ed wish dey nebber seen dis day."

Mr. and Mrs. Craig returned at a late hour. They were weary, and not prepared to receive with forbearance the home history of the day. George wisely retired to his room, while the noise of a violent storm of wind and rain drowned the noise of the storm which raged below.

When the hour for the school on Monday morning arrived, the children assembled without their accustomed cheerfulness. Even Gelia had none of her noisy mirth; and master Frankie looked as if he had not

fully recovered from the shock of his sudden bath. James and Edwin seemed to be struggling to suppress a mingled feeling of grief, mortification, and anger.

After the opening devotional exercises a little time was spent in familiar conversation concerning the preceding day's experience. The teacher hoped that an improvement of the present occasion might prepare the way for a better regard for the Sabbath.

Miss May said that the enjoyment of the day was spoiled by the sad state of affairs on her arrival home.

Frankie, who was quite ready to lead the recitals, said that he should not have fallen into the water if Gelia had stayed and played with him, as he wanted her to.

Gelia resented this reflection upon her kindness, and replied sharply, "Frankie always will play in the brook on Sundays!"

James was reserved, and evidently indulged in some self-reproach. But Edwin's conscience was less tender, and his resentment at the parental rebuke more

intense. "Pa scolded us," he muttered, unable to restrain his feelings, "as if we were niggers."

"Why Edwin!" exclaimed May in blank astonishment, "you must not speak so of pa;" and she burst into tears.

It was now Gelia's turn to speak, and the teacher was glad to have a more cheerful tone given to the feelings of his school.

"It was so dull," proceeded Gelia, "because I had no one to play with but Frankie, that I came over here to see Mr. Freeman; and O! such a splendid time I had in hearing his stories. We talked and talked until Frankie spoiled it all by tumbling into the water."

The children laughed at Gelia's earnestness, and the emphatic close of her statement. But when she added that Mr. Freeman said that "you and I, Gelia, have had a kind of Sunday-school," they looked as if they did not quite understand her. A Sunday-school, they thought, must be a dull place. They had never been to any, nor had they ever heard much about them.

"Well now, my scholars," said George, bringing to a close the conversation, "was yesterday a happy day?"

"No, sir," was the emphatic reply from all but Gelia.

"Should you like to try something like Gelia's way of spending the Sabbath?" he again inquired.

After a little more explanation, they agreed to meet in the school-room the next Sabbath at nine o'clock in the morning.

CHAPTER IX.

AN EXPERIMENT.

THE difficulties in the way of the work which George had undertaken were very many. He had proposed to establish on the plantation a Sunday-school for those Sabbaths on which the children did not attend Church. His scholars would be wholly unused to its exercises, and impatient of the restraint it imposed. He had no Sunday-school books to attract and profit them, but, at the same time, their prejudices against it must be overcome, their interest secured, and a love for its privileges excited. With this heavy task to perform there was no one to whisper a stimulating word of encouragement, He did indeed sometimes seem to hear his mother's tender entreaty with which she parted with him, "George, be faithful."

With mingled feelings of curiosity and distrust, the children assembled in their

shady school-room on Sabbath morning. Even Miss May, contrary to George's expectations, had left her piano and books, and had given up her morning ride that she might be present. With her assistance some very appropriate hymns were sung at the opening of the school, which prepared the way for prayer, in which, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, the children's thoughts were gently directed to serious things.

The first object at which George aimed was to make himself more fully acquainted with the extent of his scholars' knowledge of the Bible. He had, at other times, conversed sufficiently with them on religious subjects to be prepared to learn that the Word of God was to them almost an unknown book. He began by referring to some of its most interesting historical stories.

"What man was that," said George, addressing Gelia, who was all excitement with interest for a story, "who was commanded to offer his only son as a sacrifice upon the altar?"

"I never heard of such a one," replied Gelia; "O tell us about him!"

"Why, Gelia!" interposed May, feeling that Gelia's ignorance reflected upon the credit of the family; "you certainly have heard of the touching story of Abraham and Isaac."

"I never did," persisted Gelia; "I *know* I never did, Mr. Freeman; do tell it to us."

"I never did neither!" exclaimed Frankie, who was determined that May's superior knowledge should not stand in the way of his entertainment. James and Edwin "reckoned" they had heard it, but had no objections to hearing it again, having evidently taken a hint from May to help their recollections of a story not very clearly pictured on their minds.

Every step in the course of the story was listened to with interest. A great many questions were asked, especially by Gelia and Edwin.

"O I am so glad," exclaimed Gelia, entering into the reality of the scene, "that God let Abraham take the ram

instead of Isaac!" George explained that God's command concerning the offering of Isaac was for a great purpose, and to teach men in all ages important truth. He tried to show his attentive listeners that we were reminded by Abraham's example that God gave for us a nobler Son than Isaac, and that faith in him is the way to please God and to be made holy. He then related some of his own Sabbath-school experience in which these truths were impressed upon his mind. While thus engaged, Gelia suddenly exclaimed, as if awaking from a dream, "O, Mr. Freeman, tell us a revolutionary story!"

"Why, Gelia!" said May, "how impolite to interrupt Mr. Freeman. You want a revolutionary story on all occasions, as if nothing were interesting which had no war and bloodshed in it. For my part I think we are highly entertained."

"Do, Mr. Freeman," interrupted Edwin impatiently, "tell us how we beat the British and gained our liberty."

"Were we ever slaves?" interposed

Gelia, who caught at the last words of Edwin as if a new thought had been awakened in her mind. "I know we never were," she added with spirit.

The children laughed at the turn the conversation had taken, and for a moment George was perplexed. He wished to give the whole occasion a happy turn that would interest and profit the children, and satisfy, at the same time, his own aim in the proper improvement of the day. A sudden thought occurred to him.

"I have a revolutionary story," he said with animation, "which will please you all."

"Good! good!" shouted Gelia, springing to her feet and clapping her hands; "let it be about the Indians, or Washington and the British!"

"There was once a nation," proceeded George, "of many thousand people who were greatly oppressed by a very wicked king. They were compelled to build cities and vast monuments, and their cruel masters gave them no rest nor peace. But still they multiplied and became very

numerous, and the king feared that their numbers would some time become so great that they would be stronger than his people and gain their freedom."

"Was it the British king?" inquired Gelia.

"Why no, child; what a foolish question," answered May.

"So the king," continued George, "determined to kill all the male children as soon as they were born. A fine plan, he thought, to keep the slave nation in his power; but God defeated his purpose. One of these little boys that he meant to kill grew up to be a man, and many years after he appeared before the king and said, 'Let all my countrymen whom you hold in bondage go free.'"

"Did he have a great army?" inquired Edwin.

"Not a single soldier," replied his teacher. "Yet he said, Let all the people go, or they will march out of your land in spite of all your armies."

"Did he have no cannons, nor guns, nor anything of that sort?" inquired Edwin

again beginning to feel a little doubtful about the truth of the story.

"Not a soldier, nor a gun," said the teacher firmly. "He had only a *rod*, perhaps such a one as the shepherds use to direct their sheep. With this he could do more than the armies of Alexander or Napoleon."

"Ho, Mr. Freeman!" said James in his quiet way, "you are making up a story just to amuse us."

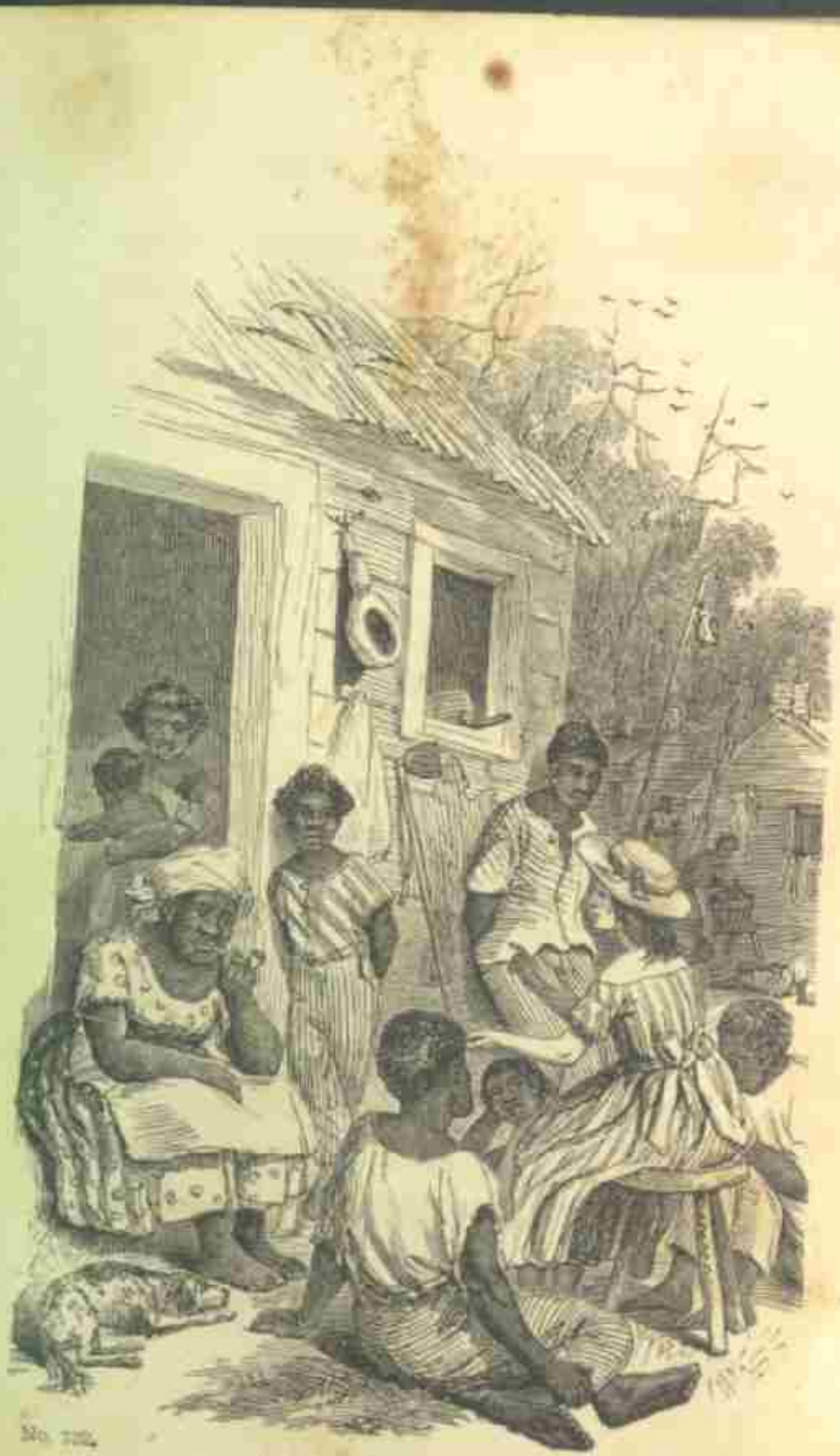
"I'll warrant he is," shouted Gelia, none the less pleased at the idea of a fiction; "it is going to be something like a fairy story I read in a book which told what wonderful things the fairies did with a ring. I hope the great general is going to take his rod and turn the old king into a monkey."

"No," replied George, "he did not turn the king into a monkey, but he turned the water of his noble river into blood."

May smiled with self-satisfied assurance that *she* understood the story, and James began to see the shadow of things he had but imperfectly learned; but no other

scholar had ever learned the account of that greatest revolution of man's history, the rebellion of the Israelites against the rule of the Egyptian king. The teacher proceeded to relate the battles which were fought *for* the oppressed through the means of this great leader and his wonderful rod, until the final victory was won in the sea, and their triumphant song was sung on its shores. All the scholars, even May and James, listened with unabated interest. Gelia declared that it was a better story than any about Washington or the Indians. The explanations of the teacher, and the many questions of the pupils, consumed the hours of the morning; and the children were fairly beguiled out of the impression that a Sunday-school must be tedious and uninteresting.

To provide for another Sabbath morning, George assigned to each a Bible story to learn, hoping that they would be able to relate it in their own language. May engaged to teach little Frankie a Bible story, and to select some little hymn also, for him to commit to memory. Thus



No. 7[illegible].

Gelia Teaching the Negroes.

closed the first experiment of the family Sunday-school. Its influence upon the remaining portion of the day was very pleasing. After dinner as George strolled through the little village of the field hands he observed Gelia seated on an old stool with a group of negroes lying or sitting upon the ground around her. They did not observe the approach of the teacher, so attentively were they listening to Gelia, while she repeated, with a countenance glowing with animation, the stories she had heard in the morning. She was frequently interrupted by questions; but nothing daunted, she answered with unwavering assurance. George silently withdrew unnoticed, and continued his walk into the forest.

The stories passed round from group to group, through the cabins of the slaves, until the Sunday-school was repeated among these neglected laborers of the plantation.

CHAPTER X.

DIFFICULTIES OVERCOME.

THE Sunday following that of which we have spoken was the day of preaching in the neighborhood, so that two weeks passed away before George's experiment could be repeated. He had formed many plans to interest his scholars, and hope had taken the place of despondency with regard to the full success of his labors. But he had other lessons of patience to learn, under the pressure of hopes deferred.

The Sabbath came, and George had already entered his school-room to await the hour for the assembling of the children. Just at this moment the dogs announced by their clamorous barking the approach of strangers. A carriage drove up the avenue toward the house, followed by two dashing young men on horseback. The company consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Craig and their children, two sons and two daughters.

Uncle Walter was a great favorite at the plantation. His visits were generally made upon the Sabbath, which became in consequence a day of feasting and amusement. Their arrival was a signal for the slaying of fowls in the vicinity of the kitchen, and of painstaking preparations on the part of Aunt Maria and her co-laborers. No days were burdened with severer toil to the house servants than those honored, or rather desecrated, by the visits of Uncle and Aunt Craig. To the cousins they were of course high days. From the mind of the impulsive Gelia the thoughts of the Sunday-school were as easily effaced on such occasions as her interest at other times was easily excited. She was a child of emotions.

May, true to her cherished notions of politeness, ran over to the school-room to excuse herself to her teacher. The other children had, in the mean time, excused themselves by planning for the pleasures of the day.

Thus, not only disappointed in hoping to make some fresh impressions for good

upon the minds of his young friends, but in seeing them plunge again into their old habits of Sabbath-breaking, George yielded for the moment to feelings of discouragement. His faith, which just now seemed to stand firm in the promise of God that he that soweth shall reap, gave way to sinful unbelief. Never before had his hands so hung down nor his heart so fainted. He knelt in the corner of his little school-room, where he had often at the close of day found relief in prayer.

While thus engaged he was startled by a subdued response under the window outside. When he rose from his knees, a gentle knock was heard at the door.

"May it please Massa Freeman," said an old man, as George opened the door, "may it please Massa Freeman," he repeated, hesitating and evidently in doubt whether his request would be regarded as proper, "to let us poor sarvants hear one of dem Bible stories what Miss Gelia tell us about. All de young massas and missuses clar forgot dis blessed new way of

spendin, de Lord's time now dem young folks come."

This was uttered with a low bow, the speaker's venerable locks tossing in the wind. He was accompanied by about a score of fellow-servants, who stood at a respectful distance, waiting with evident solicitude the success of the application.

It may seem strange that they should have entertained any doubts of its success. But their master had never invited any religious teacher to instruct or address his servants. George had himself once pressed the subject upon his attention and had received the bitter, caviling reply that the more privileges they had the greater was their disobedience and idleness. Yet the circumstances under which the present application was made, the reasonableness of the request itself, made him feel that it was an answer to the prayer just offered. So taking his audience a little into the woods, he sat down under a wide-spreading oak, while his hearers gathered about him. Some sat upon the dry leaves, some leaned against

the trees, and others threw themselves prostrate upon the ground. George talked to them of the garden of Eden, the beauty and glory of the place, and of the happiness of Adam and Eve while in it. He told the story of the fall, impressing upon their minds the terrible consequences of sin.

The old man, Simeon, who had made the request of George for these stories, responded occasionally with, "dat's right," "bless de Lord." Some ventured to ask explanations and answers to questions, some of which might have excited a smile; and others were shrewd and not easily answered.

During the progress of the talk large additions had been made, the negroes from various directions slipping up softly, one after another. Nearly all the field hands, including many children, had come within the sound of his voice. Not less than sixty persons were receiving instruction from his simple narrative.

The slaves retired to their humble dwellings to repeat the instruction of the

morning, to propose and to answer the profound questions the stories had suggested, and, what was of great interest to them, to discuss the probabilities of the privilege of another such meeting with the teacher. Some reckoned largely upon Mr. Freeman's influence with their master. Simeon ventured the opinion, which he expressed with great enthusiasm, that, "De good Lord have a hook in massa's nose dis time, and he must let de people have de meetins."

But Yellow Jim silenced all debate by flatly contradicting the pious old Simeon, and telling the confounded company that "there would be no more camp-meetings on that plantation."

The following Sunday George met his scholars at the appointed hour. The children plainly were a little embarrassed. They had lost confidence in themselves. Besides, as George expected, some prejudice had been excited against the Sunday-school, in the minds of both the parents and the children, by the attention George had given to the slaves; yet no reference

was made to these matters, and the scholars proceeded, after the reading of the Scriptures and prayer, to relate, in their own language, the stories which they had learned from the Bible. Frankie told the story and recited the hymn which had been taught him, much to the gratification of all.

George added such explanations and such questions as the interest of the hour required. The school closed pleasantly, and a decided gain had been made in securing a permanent weekly gathering.

No servants came to ask for their crumb of spiritual food from the Bread of Life at the hand of the faithful teacher. Yellow Jim's prediction seemed to be true. But George was not to be easily turned aside from so rich a harvest field as that presented in the judicious teaching of the slaves. Yet he felt keenly that in this matter "wisdom was necessary to direct." We shall see how wisely he acted in carrying out his purpose.

Among George's most valued acquaintance was Judge Walker. His home-place

was near the village, but he had a plantation adjoining Mr. Craig's, over which an overseer was placed.

Judge Walker was a man of great natural kindness, and of high professions of religious experience. He defended slavery on the ground that it could be made beneficial to the colored people; and so, contrary to the general sentiment among his fellow-slaveholders, he insisted that they should have all possible religious privileges. Such was Judge Walker's position that his opinions and practice in this respect possessed much influence over his neighbors. He was rich and in power, and so was one having authority to speak on so delicate a subject.

Mr. Craig vainly boasted of his intimacy with Judge Walker. George, having the confidence of the judge, determined to direct his influence against Mr. Craig's oppressive treatment of his slaves in reference to their religious privileges. This was easily done. A day spent at the judge's hospitable mansion was mostly occupied in discussing plans of usefulness

for the benefit of the neglected. George called attention to the state of things at Myrtle Hill. An early call of the judge upon his friend Craig afforded him an opportunity of introducing the subject.

"Friend Craig," remarked the judge in his bland manner, "now that your teacher has stepped out, I will take the occasion to express my admiration of his character. He is a zealous working man; and, if you have no objections, I want to engage a part of his services in the instruction of my people in your vicinity. Or," added the judge, in a very condescending manner, "I will direct my overseer to accompany them to your place, to be instructed in connection with yours."

The judge silently enjoyed the embarrassment of his friend at this proposal. Mr. Craig desired the good opinion of his friend, but he did not wish to extend the religious privileges of his slaves. He, however, rallied resolution to say that Mr. Freeman's time on the Sabbath was his own, and that he had no doubt he would be pleased to teach the judge's people;

but he would not put them to the trouble to come to his plantation for that purpose.

"Well," said the judge, determined not to receive evasions, "since you are so considerate of my people, let the servants of the two plantations take turns in the labor of walking to the place of instruction. I assure you *mine* will not mind the walk, and I am sure they will serve God and man much better for it."

Mr. Craig gave his consent to this arrangement, but with ill-concealed opposition of heart.

"O, I am glad Mr. Freeman is going to talk to the servants," shouted Gelia when the judge had gone. "Wont Uncle Simeon be glad!"

"Yes," muttered Mr. Craig, as if talking to himself; "and so will Yellow Jim be glad. I told the rascal the other day that he shouldn't be getting white people's knowledge while I was master of the place. But the judge's influence is too much for me; I think he'll see his error yet."

"The quarters" were full of joy that night. Uncle Simeon lifted up his hands

in devout gratitude at the failure of Jim's prediction and the establishment of his own. "De good Lord," he exclaimed, "be too mighty for massa! Didn't I tell ye, Jim, de Lord have de hook in massa's nose to lead him wedder or no?" Jim looked very wise but said nothing. He did not very often enter into any discussion with his fellow-servants. He held their opinions in too light esteem, and thought too much of his own.

George was thankful that his sphere of usefulness was so unexpectedly enlarged.

He sat down that very evening and wrote a long and glowing letter to the loved ones of his dear old Connecticut home. He kept his parents and his pastor, and his kindly-remembered Sunday-school superintendent, Mr. Ela, informed of all his plans, and received in return valuable words of sympathy and counsel.

CHAPTER XI.

ENCOURAGING INDICATIONS.

WHEN Mr. Ela read George's letter, which stated that some of the most serious obstacles to his usefulness had been overcome, he wrote back this encouraging word: "You must now expect the aid of those who lately hindered you."

So George thought if he could make the family Sunday-school successful, he should raise up warm friends to aid in teaching the servants. With this object in view he spared no pains to secure the interest and profit of the little Sunday group of children at the school-room. Mr. and Mrs. Craig became so far interested as to give him a small amount of money for the purchase of a library. To this his friends at the North added a little, and a neat library, with pictorial cards and a year's subscription to a Sunday-school paper, was obtained. Their arrival was a great era at Myrtle Hill. The sight

even of so many pretty books delighted all. But the reading opened a new source of pleasure. The elegant and smiling paper caused many hours to pass pleasantly and profitably away which would have been spent in Sabbath-breaking. Frankie took sole possession of the pictorial cards, and George appointed Gelia his teacher, telling her that she should be at the head of the infant department. He explained to her the duties of so important a position, and she did not fail to magnify her office.

Yellow Jim was employed to make a library case. This he did with great skill, aided by George's suggestions. Jim was the carpenter of the plantation, and apt at every kind of work.

We must not omit to mention that Mr. Ela, who made the purchase of the library, slipped among the books a new Sunday-school song book. Thus having a new library, a new paper once in two weeks, and new and lively songs, a wonderful vigor was given to the family Sunday-school. The colored people crept slily around the school-house to hear the songs,

which they soon learned and repeated through every part of the plantation.

A severe test of the increased interest of the children in the school was afforded by the renewed visit of Uncle Walter and his family. The cousins expected their usual freedom and sport. George invited them to examine the library, which made a remarkable show in his little log schoolhouse. The scholars sung their sweetest songs, and the teacher prepared himself with attractive religious stories. The result was encouraging; the school session was continued, and the attention of the visitors was attracted to a new and instructive manner of spending their time.

Mr. Craig declared, when they had gone, that he had never enjoyed so quietly the visit of his brother, for he added, in fine humor, "Mr. Freeman fairly caged the young folks." His brother was also gratified. He did not greatly value the moral good the school might secure to his children, for of this he was quite thoughtless; but the restraint it imposed upon them added to his comfort. The visit of his

family were repeated more frequently, and it was evident that the Sabbaths were selected during which the school was in session. Two of his children became especially interested in the school: Milton, a boy of thirteen years, and Ella, a girl of ten.

"Father," said Ella, as Uncle Walter was returning home from one of these Sunday visits, "I want to come to Mr. Freeman's Sunday-school every time it meets!" "So do I," added Milton, "and I reckon that Ella and I can take the ponies and come ourselves."

The proposal created some discussion with their parents and older brother and sister, but it was finally decided that when the carriage did not come Ella and Milton should come on the ponies, accompanied by one of the servants. The distance was eight miles.

This addition was a new occasion of interest to George's scholars and led to important results. Children of other families on the plantations of the vicinity were attracted by the report which went abroad

concerning the school, and desired to attend. Uncle Walter proposed to the parents of these new attendants to unite with him in making an addition to the library. This, after a few months, was secured, and the number of the scholars increased to twenty-five. Still, Gelia's infant department consisted of Frankie only. But she kept up its interest with unceasing zeal, though it might have seemed to a stranger that Frank and Gelia too were the scholars and George the teacher of both. He kept Gelia supplied with stories which she repeated to Frank quite as much for her own as his amusement.

The scholars and the books were now obtained for a successful school. But two serious difficulties remained to be overcome; the want of a disposition on the part of the scholars to *study* the Bible, and the want of teachers. Thus far George had done all the teaching by familiar lectures. This was very laborious, and the scholars were not brought by it to the immediate reading and study of God's word. Judge Walker, who watched with deep interest

the progress of George's labors, proposed to aid him in securing the assistance of some friends in the enterprise.

There were family teachers on several plantations not many miles distant. But unfortunately, many of these, though from New England, and though when at home acting Christians, had fallen into a conformity to the prevailing indifference to religion of those about them. They disliked, they said, to be singular. They objected to George's introduction among their southern friends of Yankee zeal and puritanical strictness. It would not do, they insisted; it would lessen their influence with their employers.

Against such feelings George had contended with his northern friends, to whom he had applied for assistance in his labors of love. But when Judge Walker made the same request of them the case was different. Several were ready to come at his solicitation.

With two such colaborers, George's enterprise assumed new importance. Though they did not begin in the love

of their work, George rightly calculated that their efforts would stimulate in themselves a Christian zeal. This was further increased by occasional seasons of prayer in the forest for the blessing of God on their labors, to which George invited them.

Besides this improvement in earnest piety on the part of the teachers, evidence began to appear of the presence of God's awakening Spirit at Myrtle Hill. On perceiving this, George became still more importunate in prayer for cases of clear conversion. This alone was the end of his efforts. He saw that, among the many blessings of such an occurrence, the raising up of new and efficient laborers would not be among the least. His prayer was, "Lord, send forth more laborers into the harvest;" nor was the answer long delayed.

CHAPTER XII.

THE YOUNG LABORER.

THERE was living on a plantation not far from Myrtle Hill a widow lady by the name of Stuart. Mrs. Stuart, unlike most landholders, was poor. Her husband had cultivated the cotton with his own hands and by a few hired servants. He was an earnest Christian, and a true friend of the colored people. Uncle Simeon had been brought to God by his labors, and nearly all that the slaves of Myrtle Hill had ever heard of Christ, or of their soul's welfare, was from the conversation of Mr. Stuart. Since his death his widow had done what she could to cultivate the spiritual seed which her husband had sown. She labored constantly for her family's temporal good, but this only gave her a keener relish for the labor of saving souls. Her only child, a boy of sixteen years, named Melville, worked as hard in the cotton and corn fields as the slaves of

other plantations. He had never attended school a single day in his life, but his parents had done the best they could for his education, having taught him to read and write. George, from his first acquaintance with the Stuart family, had taken great interest in Melville. Though Melville had never given his heart to God, he was an industrious and obedient son. George made an effort at one time to obtain for him permission to attend his week-day school, during the leisure of the winter months; but this Mr. Craig peremptorily refused.

The introduction of Melville into the Sunday-school was at first received coldly by some of the other scholars. Edwin's impulsive nature gave expression to this dislike. "I rather reckon," he said, addressing his cousin Milton, "that we boys had better leave if Mr. Freeman is going to bring white niggers into the Sunday-school." Milton made no reply, for his kind heart had been won by the pleasant spirit and modest manners of Melville. But May came at once to Melville's de-

fense. "Why Edwin!" she exclaimed, "how can you say so? I am certain we ought to be kind to good Mrs. Stuart's son, if they are poor."

"Mel is as good as Ed anyhow," interposed Gelia in a resentful manner. Gelia had found Melville a ready play-fellow, notwithstanding he was several years older; "Mel and I have right smart runs about the play-ground," she added with increased excitement, "and Ed sha'n't call him a nigger."

But the prejudice against Melville soon disappeared. His superior knowledge of religious truth was soon apparent to all, and his kind and earnest desire to learn secured their esteem. His teacher noticed this with pleasure, but there was another thing which inspired his gratitude to God. The truth which Melville had been taught from childhood, which had been accompanied by fervent prayers, began to show evidence of gracious fruit. To cultivate these indications more effectually, George made frequent visits during the week to the humble dwelling of the Widow Stuart.

She had noticed, with a joy which only a Christian parent can feel on such occasions, her son's religious convictions; and uniting her efforts with the faithful teachers, she expected to see Melville enter into the joy and freedom of the Christian life. God soon blessed these efforts, and Melville was led into that religious liberty in which he could sing,

"The spirit answers to the blood,
And tells me I am born of God."

During the next visit that Melville made to Myrtle Hill he related to the artless and susceptible Gelia the story of his new-found peace in God. After she had listened with marked attention to the close of his feeling recital, she started from the grassy seat where she had been sitting, and exclaimed, "O Mel, *I* mean to have religion too, right off!" Melville smiled at her earnestness, and tried to explain the way of life more clearly. He spoke of our sinfulness and of the need of sincere sorrow for it, and of repentance toward God and faith toward Christ. These remarks caused Gelia to feel more

sober. She began to see a little better her young teacher's meaning. When she repeated her prayers that night before retiring, her heart melted into tenderness as it had never done before; and her observing teacher began to see in her conduct from this time a sobriety mingled with her overflowing joyfulness.

With the aid of Melville, George endeavored to instruct the neglected laborers of the Myrtle Hill plantation. But this privilege, so reluctantly granted by Mr. Craig, was very jealously watched; no formal meetings were held. But George sat down among them when their day's toil was over and they were resting about their log-cabins; here they listened to his words with eager attention while he spoke to them of Jesus and his precious gospel. Sometimes little groups lingered about him until a late hour at night, inquiring after a personal knowledge of Jesus in the heart. Now and then a burdened inquirer was led through these labors into the joys of the true Christian. The senseless songs of the quarters, so long

heard mingled with the noise of the rude dance, were exchanged for the sweet and melting songs of Zion.

Melville's influence was exerted among these sincere seekers after divine knowledge in a humble but successful way. He conversed with them individually, telling the story of his own experience of the grace of God. The affection which many of them had felt for his father was readily bestowed upon him. The joy of Uncle Simeon in witnessing his labors broke forth into characteristic expressions of gratitude. "Broder Mel," he exclaimed, "is de good Lord's young angel sent to teach de poor sarvants about de Saviour's precious love."

The fact that Melville belonged to a "poor white family," and, like the slaves themselves, labored daily in the field, did not lessen his influence with them. They did not despise white people because they were poor; but when, as was often the case, they were poor, and very wicked, and quite as ignorant as themselves, they esteemed them as they were truly, "poor

white trash." Of Melville, these were only flattering expressions.

"Dat young Massa Mel," said Aunt Ann to a company of willing hearers who were lounging about the cook house, "be mighty smart. He pray like an elder; an den he talk so kinder hebenly about de blessed narrow way, dat seems like dis poor old sarvant want to go dat way herself." "And I," added Uncle Griffen, the coachman, "tell all ob yer, dat dis poor miserable sinner, dats ben livin' more dan sixty years and nebber lub de blessed Jesus, means to try now Massa Mel's new way; only I'se 'fraid dar aint no hope for like o' me no how." The interruption by Uncle Griffen took the cabin inmates by surprise, and his feeling confession moved them to tears. Griffen had been the persecutor of Uncle Simeon since his conversion, and had ever joined with his master in keeping all religion as far as possible from Myrtle Hill, and he had been sent to the meetings held by George on Judge Walker's plantation as a spy upon his fellow-slaves who were al-

lowed to go. In his conversion, Mr. Craig would lose his most devoted fellow-laborer in the wicked work of destroying souls.

The next day after this scene in Aunt Ann's quarters, Griffen's heart was very heavy. He saw dimly the way of escape from the death of sin which surrounded him, but he seemed to have no power to enter it. He felt his guilt, but did not see clearly the Fountain in which it could be washed away. He had not closed his eyes in sleep during the night, and all day nature itself appeared to him as if shrouded in blackness.

When the evening came, and with it the close of the day's toil, Griffen silently stole to the humble dwelling of the Widow Stuart. No weary slaves about the yard observed his coming, nor fierce dogs challenged his right to enter. As he hesitatingly put forth his hand to knock for admission, his ear caught the sound of prayer. Griffen listened while the youthful suppliant at the family altar grew more and more earnest in his pleading with God. If Griffen had felt restrained in announc-

ing himself and in making known his errand, he felt none when the prayer closed.

"I has come, Massa Mel," said Griffen, holding a torn hat in one hand and pressing the other upon his heart; "O, I has come 'cause I has a mighty big load jest here."

It was a work of great joy to the Widow Stuart and her son to point Griffen to the "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world;" and when they rose from an earnest pleading with God for the aid of the Holy Spirit, in which Griffen had united, it was evident that he had begun to feel peace through faith.

"I bless de Lord," said Griffen, "I believes I feels a leetle better."

The clouds had overspread the sky as Griffen, at a late hour, trod the narrow but familiar path which led back to Myrtle Hill. It was intensely dark, but Griffen stopped several times and kneeled down upon the leafy pathway, and repeated his pleadings for a new heart. Each time as he rose from his knees the way seemed to grow lighter, though no

object was visible; his step, at any rate, was light and free; and when he emerged from the forest into the clearing which led to his cabin, and caught a glimpse of a star just breaking through the parting clouds, it seemed to him like a ray directly from heaven. His glad heart involuntarily broke forth into an utterance of praise.

The inmates of the cabins near Griffen's were startled on that morning, e'er the driver's horn sounded, by Griffen's earnest prayer of thanksgiving; and before the hands left for the cotton-field, the conversion of "old Grif" was the theme on every lip.

CHAPTER XIII.

MYRTLE HILL EXCITED.

THE conversion of Melville, followed so soon by the conversion of Griffen, and the general interest of the slaves in religion, caused much excitement in the family of the owner of Myrtle Hill.

"Uncle Griffen was my chief dependence," said Mr. Craig, much excited. "He has done me good service in watching the people at the mischief-making meetings. Now the black rascals will have things their own way. I'll put a stop to all this."

"Pa, please, you wont stop Mr. Freeman's Sunday-school," said Gelia coaxingly, looking up into her father's clouded face with her most bewitching smile.

"Now I tell you, pa," she continued with animation, "Mel Stuart is going to teach a class, and I am to be one of his scholars. O Mel is so good, pa!"

"There it is again," muttered Mr. Craig;

"a cotton-picking white boy brought into school to teach my children."

Gelia threw her arms around her father's neck, while the big tears stood in her mild blue eyes, and whispered softly, "Please, pa, don't be angry at Mel."

Mr. Craig, with all his rough severity, was a fond and indulgent parent. Gelia had ever been to him an affectionate child, but since her heart had felt the influence of religious instruction she had become even more lovely. Her parents had observed this, and felt, though they never had confessed it, that she had been greatly benefited by the Sunday-school. Her appeal, therefore, in behalf of one whom she already regarded as her teacher, could not be resisted.

"Yes, Gelia," said Mr. Craig in a softened tone, while he planted a kiss on her fair forehead; "I see, you always plead for pious folks, white or black."

Mr. Craig rose after a few moments, and again walked the room much excited. At last he left the house, declaring that

he would stop the "nigger excitement" any way.

A very different interest was felt in this excitement, as Mr. Craig called it, among those gathered at the quarters of Aunt Ann. Jordan was lying, as usual, on the long seat, much to the annoyance of all. Ann was busy both with her hands and tongue. Aunt Maria had just announced from the master the names of those who were permitted to attend the Deer Ridge meeting; all others must stay at home. Simeon had dropped in, to stimulate the religious interest so well begun, and, as he remarked, "to help keep de hebbenly fire a burnin'." Jordan was delighted to learn that he was one of the privileged ones. Not that he cared for the meetings; but he felt vain of the honor of being of the select few.

"I tinks," said Ann, "dat de Lord wont bless massa for dat no how, stoppin' all de meetin's on he own place, an' only jest lettin' *dem* go to Deer Ridge what wont 'prove de privilege."

"Well," interrupted Jordan, "course

massa lets de steddy ones, like dis boy, go, an' keeps dem home what's ollers cuttin' up like Ann and Yellow Jim do."

Ann dropped the dough, which she was putting into the bread-pans, and, with much of it still sticking to her hands, turned upon Jordan a mingled look of indignation and contempt, and exclaimed, "Massa say Jim and I knows too much. He never s'pects Jordan of dat ar."

Simeon, wishing to keep good feeling between all parties, interposed. "Bless de good Spirit!" he exclaimed, "I believes, as de elder say, 'de Lord will work spite ob de wicked.' He all dun sow he seed on dis place, and de devil can't cotch it all away."

At this moment Maria looked in, to admonish the intruders upon the kitchen that it would be prudent for them to disperse.

"Let all de people watch and pray," whispered Simeon as the company retired.

George clearly perceived this unfriendliness of his employer toward his labors

for the slaves of Myrtle Hill; but being intent on his purpose of doing good, he went oftener, and gave more special attention to Deer Ridge. This was, as we have said, the plantation of Judge Walker. It was in charge of an overseer, an ignorant white man living in a log-cabin but little better than the quarters of the common slaves. He hated all meetings, all negro singing and praying, and especially all Yankees. But having Judge Walker's permission, George assumed full liberty over the moral and religious welfare of the place. He occasionally went to Deer Ridge on a week evening, riding over after school and returning when the horn of the overseer blew for the hands to retire. In these pleasant visits he was sometimes accompanied by Melville. The group which gathered about them of tired laborers never seemed so weary as not to enjoy the prayers and exhortations of their teachers. On such Sabbaths as they could spend there, they had the attendance of larger numbers. When the weather permitted, George took his stand on a

swell of land under a wide-spreading oak. He read portions of the Bible, and illustrated them by attractive stories, and simple references to the common affairs of life. Frequent songs of praise were sung, in which the negroes joined heartily; and when prayer was offered, none but the hardened and stupid overseer refused to kneel.

Though it was not often that George could meet the slaves of Deer Ridge on the Sabbath, yet the interest on such occasions increased, so that large numbers assembled from various plantations in the vicinity. Even the master of Myrtle Hill began to relax his opposition, or his orders began to be disregarded, for Simeon and Griffen mingled slyly in the cheerful gatherings; and, when screened by Aunt Maria and the young folks of the mansion, even Ann and Jim were there. Ann had become more truly devout; but Jim was urged by a desire to know more, rather than to become better. He watched the progress of the labors of the young teacher with a keen eye and a thoughtful mind.

He saw, even more clearly than the teacher himself, their probable result. His master was not mistaken in supposing that Jim's already awakened sense of the wrong that he, in common with his fellow-slaves, suffered, was quickened by what he observed in all these kind labors. But though Jim felt more, he manifested less uneasiness than he had done. His mother, Aunt Maria, called the attention of her master to Jim's more quiet temper since the revival commenced. But the reply of Mr. Craig was that he suspected him the more. "These still, knowing niggers," he added sharply, "are my abhorrence. Jim must be watched!"

It began now to be plain that the Sunday-school was becoming too prominent in its influence on Myrtle Hill. The little log school-house had, at times, been abandoned on account of the large number attending, and a portion of the playground had been used for its sessions. In this state of things George took counsel of his friend Judge Walker. The judge cautiously consulted Mr. Craig and all the

patrons of the Sunday-school, and finally concluded to put up a good-sized building at Deer Ridge, to accommodate occasional preaching as well as the Sunday-school.

CHAPTER XIV.

FATHER CLIFTON.

It was with satisfaction that George learned, a few weeks after his interview with the judge, that there was to be preaching the following Sabbath at Deer Ridge. The proposed house was only partly finished, but this meeting was appointed to stimulate the interest in its completion.

George was gratified to learn also that Mr. and Mrs. Craig were intending to go, and to take the children with them. With ill-concealed mortification Mr. Craig himself announced to George this fact. The preaching was to be mainly for the benefit of the colored people. For Mr. Craig to attend such a meeting was to remind him of his own shame in forbidding similar ones on his own place; but the judge had sent him a special invitation to do so. He wished to preserve his friendship, and so consented

to witness religious privileges which he despised.

The coming Sabbath morning was a time of joyful anticipations on many plantations. The venerated Father Clifton, the missionary to the slaves, was expected at Deer Ridge. Once in four weeks he had a week-day appointment at the same place, but he had never been there on the Sabbath.

This Father Clifton was a man whose praise was upon all the plantations. He was small in stature and slight in his physical frame, plain but neat in his dress, and elastic in his every motion. But it was the uniform benevolence of his heart which most impressed those acquainted with him. Like his Master, he went about doing good. Punctually, at his appointed hour, he reached his place of labor, though drenched with rain, impeded by swollen streams, and wearied by long journeys through dense forests and over almost impassable roads. Gentle, and accessible to all, he was at the same time firm and outspoken in rebuking sin. The pious

greatly loved Father Clifton, and the open sinner was subdued into respect before his transparent goodness. His words, when he stood in the sacred desk, were simple, and aimed directly at the heart. When ministering to his congregations of untaught negroes, under the tall trees of the woods or in the rude meeting-houses of a new country, his feelings often prompted a genuine eloquence. The fixed attention and streaming eyes of his audience were his constant encouragement, and the awakening and conversion of many sinners the seals of his ministry.

In the morning of the anticipated Sabbath Father Clifton preached to the assembled white people. A few colored people hung about the outskirts of the congregation, catching, in the distance, a little of the instruction they so much loved.

At three o'clock in the afternoon, or evening, as it was called, the number of slaves had increased to a large congregation. A few white people were scattered here and there. A temporary platform had been prepared for the speaker. The con-

gregation sat upon rough seats, or stood leaning against the trees.

The speaker commenced by "lining" a familiar hymn. The deep emotion with which every strain was sung, the loud swell of at least eight hundred strong and clear voices, and the solemn echo which came back from the depth of the forest, as if nature repeated the hymn of praise, subdued the most unfeeling mind. In the prayer which followed, Father Clifton was drawn into forgetfulness of himself in a solemn sense of the nearness of God. Every word was simple, direct, and earnest; and so unpretending was the discourse which followed, that the hearers thought only of the solemn truths which were uttered. To those for whom his remarks were especially intended he was "as the angel of God."

"He is wonderfully practical, and well adapted to save these perishing souls," remarked George as the service broke up. "Thank God," he added, "for raising up so needed an instrumentality."

"I never did hear any elder preach like

dat," exclaimed Griffen, whose heart God had taught to hear the truth aright; "he 'scribes zackly poor Uncle Grif's feelin's. Sure now, Massa Mel, dun tell him all about how it ben wid me; and den to tink de elder takes de pains to speak right to dis poor sarvant all de time!"

"Bless you, Uncle Grif," interposed Ann, as she pushed aside the crowd to get nearer to Uncle Griffen, "I know now the elder's ben speakin' to me sartin. I couldn't look up, 'cause I s'pects all de people a lookin' right at poor Ann."

The scholars from Myrtle Hill enjoyed the occasion much. Gelia was alive with the excitement of her visit. As on former occasions, she was very communicative.

Before the week had passed she had repeated what she had heard in the ears of half the servants of the plantation. With childish simplicity she chatted away to little groups which gathered about her, supplying the place, in an humble manner, of the teachers who had been denied them. Even James and Edwin thought

that they had a fine time at Father Clifton's meeting. "I should think," said James, in his quiet way, "that pa might let our people hear him."

But Mr. Craig was more disturbed than ever when he perceived the influence that the meetings were exerting over his family. He tried, however, to console himself with the thought, that the removal of the Sunday-school from his plantation would relieve his people from the increasing religious influence. We shall see how far his hopes were realized.

CHAPTER XV.

THE RIPENING HARVEST.

THE interest of the Craig children in their teacher, and his labors for their religious benefit, had become sincere and deep. Their cousins, Milton and Ella, had not ceased to attend the Sunday-school since its removal to Deer Ridge, so that the two families of young people were more than ever under his moral training.

The impulsive Edwin at times seemed about to give his heart to God; but his impetuous feelings were his constant snare. He had occasion to say often, "When I would do good, evil is present with me." He had not quite learned the true and only source of religious strength; he had not yet experienced the power of a simple faith in the blood of Christ.

James was silent, but thoughtful. His struggles for a new heart through the strivings of the Holy Spirit were genuine, but not very apparent. He yielded re-

luctantly to his convictions for sin, but he never retraced his steps.

Gelia's zeal was changeable. She was often carried away from her good purposes by her active imagination; but her views of Bible truths were becoming more intelligent, and her feelings more truly religious.

In the kind and friendly May, George was painfully disappointed. Her regard for religious instruction never extended beyond her ideas of being polite. She was much in gay company, and constantly under the influence of her mother, whose attention to religion was merely cold respect.

The children insisted upon the privilege of going to all the meetings at Deer Ridge. Their interest, and the increasing attendance of others, rendered them so important that they claimed the attention of George nearly every Sunday. Father Clifton preached there every fourth Sabbath, and was unceasing in his efforts to give it a wide influence. He called at Myrtle Hill as frequently as possible, to speak to

George words of counsel and encouragement.

There was one beautiful Sunday at Deer Ridge that George had much occasion to remember. The number present was unusually large. After opening the school and seeing the classes supplied with teachers, he sat down at the head of a Bible class which he only occasionally taught. One of his northern friends was its appointed teacher, but was not very punctual. James and Edwin were in this class. There were other young men there to whom the Word of God had been an unattractive book until within a few months. Sitting among these young men was a man of gray hairs. His name was Smith, but he was generally known by that of "Yankee Smith." Mr. Smith came to the Mississippi Valley when it was mostly a wilderness. He brought no fortune with him, but by industry in early manhood and by a natural force of character he had made one. He had cut paths through the canebrakes and leveled the forest with his own hands. He came

into the country alone, but now a thousand fellow-beings called him master. His lands extended through forests and along the streams for many miles. He spread a sumptuous table, and was never happier than when it was surrounded by numerous guests. But Yankee Smith was an exacting and cruel master. He saw no possible use in society for colored people but as the means of the white man's wealth. Many of his slaves came to Deer Ridge through the influence of religious friends, and, being rather jealous of their privileges, he came to see what was going on. By George's invitation he was now brought in contact with the Word of God for the first time for years. He took no part in the exercises, but listened to what was said with absorbing interest. The earnest questions of James and Edwin and their knowledge of religious things, together with the faithful application of the truth by the teacher, awoke recollections of years long past. He had, in his own New England, been taught from God's Word; he had been the subject

of the prayers of pious parents; he had known the sacred influence of God's house. All this George had learned from his own lips on another occasion. While, therefore, George was urging the acceptance of salvation by Christ as the only true riches, Mr. Smith was much affected He turned away to conceal his emotions, and to pretend, by noticing other parts of the school, an indifference he could not feel. But tears moistened his eyes, which for a long time had been unused to weeping.

This little incident might have passed unnoticed by some Sunday-school teachers; but George, ever awake to see and encourage the buddings of the spiritual fruit which he sought, from that time made Yankee Smith a subject of daily and earnest prayer. He remembered that seed had been sown by praying hearts in past years, and he labored that it might bring forth fruit even in one so mature in wickedness.

The slaves gave unusual attention during the exercises of the afternoon. The few that could read were formed into

classes in the chapel. Melville, always ready for labors of love, passed round among these little groups to hear the Bible lesson they had committed to memory, and to explain and apply its teachings. A few others occasionally aided in like services.

The slaves who could not read were under George's immediate instruction outside. They were gathered around him, some sitting upon the grass, others leaning against the trees, while several groups were standing at a little distance. Some had even climbed into the low branches of the trees which hung near. All were interested in catching the words which fell from his lips. With the Word of God in his hand, George urged, in a conversational manner, the subject of personal salvation. His remarks were so free from the formality of a set discourse that he was frequently interrupted by questions from his hearers. This he encouraged when it was done in a serious and becoming manner.

Among this group of slaves a few white people mingled, among whom was Yankee Smith.

As George and Melville were returning from Deer Ridge that afternoon, as usual on horseback, George exclaimed with unusual animation,

"Melville, I never saw the golden grain so ripe for the harvest as now. My scholars, James and Edwin, begin to acknowledge their desire for new hearts, and are venturing upon Christ by faith; the colored people are all attention, and even Yankee Smith has shown a tender place in his hard heart."

"Well," said Melville, more quietly, not sharing in his friend's enthusiasm with regard to Smith, "I have no doubt your labors are about to be rewarded by the conversion of your scholars, and that the servants will find Christ, to their great joy; but as to Mr. Smith, my father used to say that the millennium would come soon after Yankee Smith's conversion. He is the sum of all wickedness."

"That may be so," replied George, "and he may have come to Deer Ridge to be a spy upon the privileges of his servants; but if so he has found more than he

sought. He has found words of warning from the truth he has avoided for a lifetime. The Gospel is of God. It can convert Yankee Smith."

Melville smiled at George's earnestness, and remarked, "I am constantly stimulated by your faith. I will try to believe for Smith's conversion."

For several Sabbaths after the one of which we have spoken, Smith's presence at Deer Ridge and attention to the instructions of the Sunday-school and public service were noticed and wondered at by all. The pious slaves were full of exclamations and remarks concerning the astonishing change. Aunt Ann, catching the general spirit, one Sunday morning pushed open George's school-room door, as he sat alone engaged in devotional reading, and exclaimed in a subdued but excited tone: "Ho, Mr. Freeman, dar's a goin' to be a resurrection, sartin sure!"

"Certainly, Ann," said George; "you seem to be as surprised as if you had just heard of that great Bible truth."

"Dere now, Mr. Freeman," replied

Ann, "you don't cotch my meanin'. Dey say Yankee Smith is 'come mighty good; an' sure he's been dead in he wickedness ever since I was a l-e-e-t-l-e pickaninny. Dat's what I calls a resurrection."

Ann shut the door as she uttered these words and hastened away to her task.

Though these words came from the lips of the lowly, they seemed to George to be sent of God to stimulate his faith and hope, and he thanked God with a fervent spirit.

While the Spirit of God was thus at work, the demon of slavery was rousing to his customary work of evil against the ripening spiritual harvest-field.

CHAPTER XVI.

PRECIOUS FRUIT.

MELVILLE had occasion to learn that his faith was that of a babe in Christ. God had prepared lessons for him, concerning the power of his Gospel to save, which should fit him for greater usefulness, as well as for increased personal holiness.

Soon after his conversation with George in reference to Yankee Smith, the Craig children invited him to accompany them on a holiday ride to Deer Run. Deer Run was a beautiful little stream flowing into the Mississippi River. Its nearest point to Myrtle Hill was about six miles. At this place it was very wide during a freshet; but at this time it was quite narrow. The overflow of the waters had brought up a very fine sand, on which the smaller children loved to play. They occasionally found there among the pebbles a pretty variety of the agate. In various places among the sand and pebbles were

small excavations full of water, left by the receding stream. In some of these were tiny fishes. Rabbits, gray squirrels, opossums, and raccoons were abundant in the vicinity.

The Craigs had often rode to Deer Run for a few hours' amusement, but had never before invited Melville to be one of their party. On this occasion Edwin, Gelia, and Frank rode in the family carriage. Edwin had kindly sent Picayune, a favorite pony, to Melville, that he might go on horseback in company with James.

The boys always felt that they were doing a self-denying favor to yield the saddle to a friend for a seat in the carriage.

A gun for each of the older boys, and fishing lines for Gelia and Frank, were committed to the care of the carriage driver.

As the company left Myrtle Hill, Aunt Ann gazed after them until they were lost to her sight, and then returned to her cabin full of pleasant thoughts. "There neber was anything like dat are," she said,

musingly; "de young massars 'gins to like pious folks. I dare say now it will be better dan a meetin' to have Mel wid dem. Shouldn't wonder now if dey goes to play, and comes back to pray; Mel is so kind ob lovin' like, and he ollers talks about Jesus."

George whispered to Melville before they started, reminding him that words spoken for God never fell to the ground void. He encouraged him by the suggestion, also, that James and Edwin were almost persuaded to be Christians. Melville hardly needed this stimulating advice. His heart had been touched by the recent kindness of his friends, and he determined to repay them by labors for their salvation.

Melville and James were seldom many feet apart during the ride. James was in nowise unwilling to hear Melville speak on the subject nearest to his heart. For the first time his purposes assumed a definite shape. He was resolved to be a Christian, and desired to be pointed to Christ. Melville was free in the narration of his own awakening and conversion, as

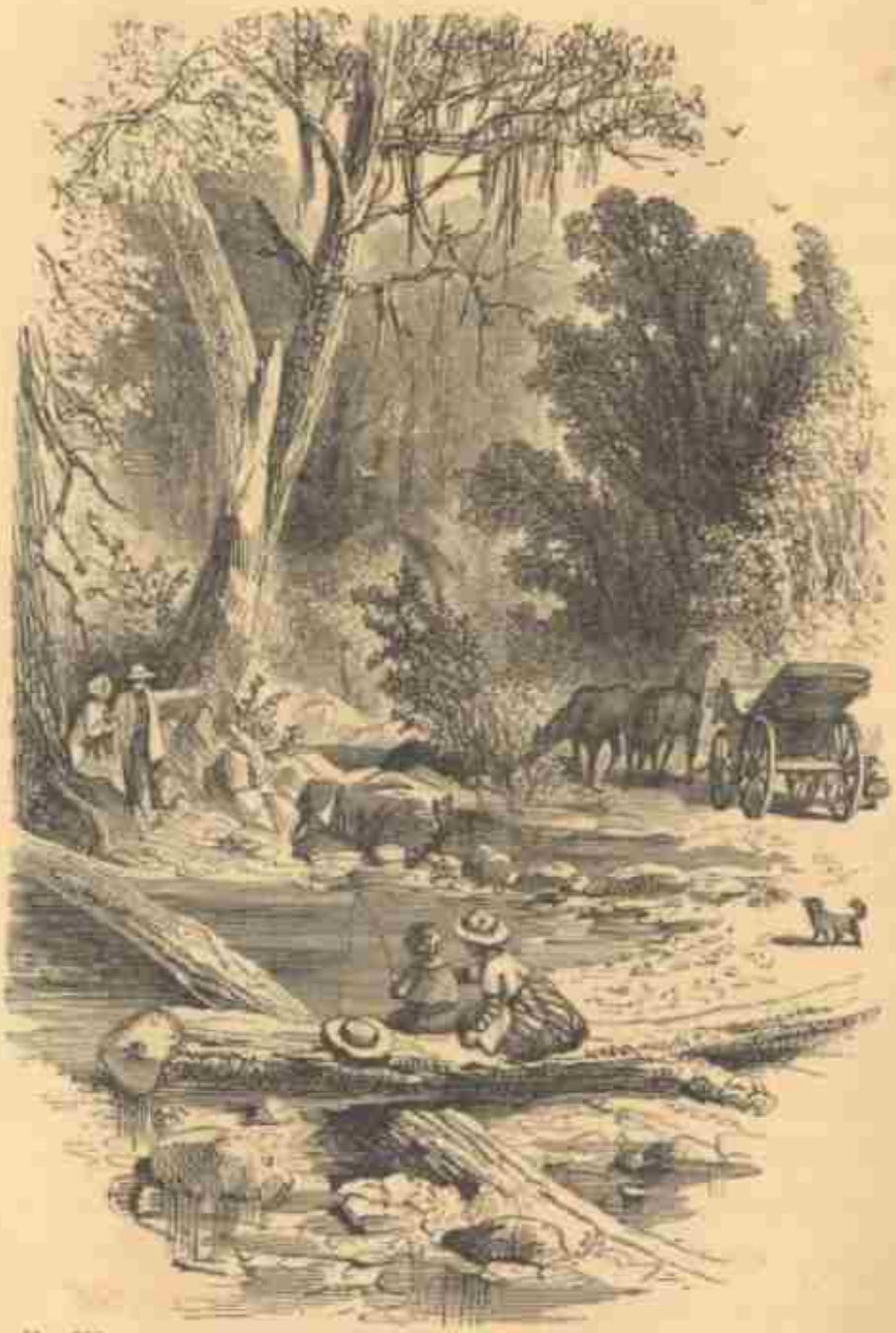
the best instruction he could give the inquirer. He urged especially the believing venture upon Christ as the divine way of pardon and renewal.

It seemed to James but a moment or two before they arrived at Deer Run, so absorbed had he become in the new light that was beaming from heaven upon his heart. But the carriage had been some time on the spot, and Gelia, at least, was impatient for their arrival.

"Why, James!" she shouted as he alighted, "why did you make Mel creep along so slow when you know I wanted him here to play with me?"

"Well," said Melville cheerfully, "it seems to me, Miss Gelia, that we have come amazing quick. But here am I. What shall we do first?"

Melville was ever ready for a cheerful play, as well as a serious talk; and he was a pleasant and earnest playfellow. It was his greatest pleasure to make others happy. He spent the first hour of the visit with Gelia and Frank. He fixed their fishing lines upon suitable rods,



No. 732.

The Visit to Deer Run.

baited their hooks, and seated them in a convenient place to catch the minnows. They were delighted with their success. Gelia declared that it was all owing to Melville, for she never had any such luck before. Frank explained it by exclaiming, "Why, Gelia, the fish know that Mel's bait is better than anybody's!" Gelia accepted the explanation readily.

Gelia and Frank became weary after a short time of their little fishing ponds. They began to direct their attention to the sand and pebbles. They piled them up in various forms, and dug canals from the pools of water to the stream. While they were thus employed, Melville, giving the carriage boy the hint to stay near them, slipped away to join James and Edwin. He had not heard the report of their guns, and suspected they were not having very good luck in starting game. He soon found them sitting under a tree, evidently in earnest conversation. The dogs were gazing impatiently at their young masters, amazed at their want of zeal in the hunt. Not even a squirrel had

been taken, though there were signs of game all around. The reason for this soon became plain to Melville. James had been joyfully rehearsing to Edwin that which he had learned and felt during the morning's ride. Edwin listened with a pleasure which banished all interest in the hunt. The solemn atmosphere of God's Spirit rested upon each heart. Melville had no difficulty in uttering words of counsel, for God had prepared the inquirers for the truth. The three friends kneeled in prayer. It seemed to Melville that he never before had such freedom at a throne of mercy. He wrestled with an assurance that God delighted to hear and answer. James and Edwin followed in broken accents, offering the prayer of a weak but genuine faith.

James felt an increased peace, the depth and satisfaction of which was inexpressible.

Edwin's emotions were more violent. He grasped Melville's hand, earnestly thanking him for his patience with his hasty temper, and for all his labors of love

for his salvation. He then bounded away to tell Gelia how good it was to love God.

During the return home, Edwin took James's place in the saddle; this arrangement afforded Melville an opportunity to prepare Edwin's mind, by such counsel as he was able to give, for the conflicts which awaited him. He knew well his impetuous temper, and what advantage Satan would take of it to cause him to stumble.

Melville's confidence was almost unbounded in George, as a guide and support to the young disciples. He therefore parted with them, when he came to the road leading to his own home, without painful fears that their goodness would be as the early dew.

The feelings of the family that evening at the mansion of Myrtle Hill were those of mingled joy and vexation. Gelia had run into the sitting room exclaiming that James and Edwin had become real good, almost as good as Mel and Mr. Freeman. George, who was sitting in the family circle, smiled at Gelia's standard

of goodness; but serious thoughts were prominent in his mind. He had spent the day mostly at the school-room, and had been much in prayer for the excursionists. When he learned further the facts concerning his scholars, not only from themselves, but afterward from Melville, his joy was unspeakable. He yielded his heart to a spirit of thanksgiving, feeling that it would be wrong to indulge in doubts concerning their steadfastness, knowing that God could as easily keep them as he could convert.

So marked was the change in the spirit and conduct of James and Edwin, that their parents were constrained to acknowledge it; yet their hearts were so secretly opposed to the claims of religion upon themselves that they wished their teacher, to whose influence they referred these changes in their family, was fairly gone to his Connecticut home.

The clusters of precious fruit gathered at Myrtle Hill were but the beginning of the spiritual harvest. The faith of the inquiring slaves was greatly strengthened.

Griffen and Simeon had an open field for their Christian labors. Many obtained the pearl of great price, and published their joy with an earnest, if not a well-directed zeal.

The revival, which was now well begun, was not confined to the slaves. The poor white people first, and then the haughty slaveholders, began to inquire what they should do to be saved. George, in the absence of Father Clifton, was their principal spiritual guide. Pastors from a distance, hearing what God had wrought, came occasionally to Deer Ridge, and gave the work the influence of their presence and preaching. But George made frequent evening and leisure afternoon visits, to aid inquirers. He was invited to many humble homes, and to a few of the wealthy, to direct burdened souls to Jesus.

While the work was thus progressing, George received one evening a note from Yankee Smith, inviting him to his residence. George saw at once that the true cause of this call was Mr. Smith's convictions for sin; at least, he believed this

to be the case, not only from the increased interest he had of late manifested in religious things, but because he had prayed for him habitually. He desired of God his conversion as the crowning evidence in the revival of the power of the Gospel to save.

On the arrival of George at Smith's princely mansion he learned that he had been for some days confined to his room by illness. A physician had been called, but he did not understand his case. His family believed that he was in a rapid decline. A pious slave, who had seen George at Deer Ridge, whispered, as he took his horse, "Massa's sick, sure nuff; but I tink he's got de right doctor dis time."

George found his friend greatly changed. His step was weak and trembling. His pale countenance, marked with the suffering of his mind, showed that his conflicts had been severe. He grasped George's hand with sincere cordiality. "I have been mighty sick, Mr. Freeman," he remarked, "since' I conversed with you at

Deer Ridge concerning those mysterious truths you so much insist upon. The more I think of them, the more I think you may be right. But then I've been thinking what will become of me. Can there be forgiveness for such a sinner? My past life has haunted me like a specter, and the blackness of its sins has tormented me day and night. I believe I am dying, but not of bodily disease. I am sick at heart. At times I have been full of anger at you, as the disturber of my peace. Some of my neighbors say that you are spoiling all the negroes, and that you are an abolitionist and ought to be driven from the country. Do you know, sir, that I have been almost ready to join in this cry, and to raise the storm against you? But I find no relief to myself in this purpose. My life's blindness has been removed, and I know God has done it through his word in your hands. I fear the future; yes, the dreadful future after death. Am I not lost already? Can there be mercy for me?"

George's sympathy was greatly excited

for the unhappy man. He felt the nearness of eternity and its solemn destinies as he had never felt them before. Could he believe in salvation for one so near to death and everlasting ruin? For a moment he was appalled by a danger so great. But he turned away from this dark scene to the Saviour. He thought of him as "the first and the last"—"the Almighty." His faith caught the words, "Whosoever will, let him come." "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as wool." Why should he hesitate to ask great things of such a Saviour when encouraged by many great and precious promises? He prayed, and power to agonize in prayer was given him. He held his friend up to God as the chief of sinners, but asked for him pardon through an infinite Saviour. The Spirit granted his divine aid, and faith became triumphant.

A holy calm filled the mind of the Earnest Laborer when he ceased his supplications. It was the tranquillity of one who had prevailed with God.

"Did you say," inquired Mr. Smith, ris-

ing from his knees with the tears of a heavenly tenderness of soul moistening his eyes, "did you say that Christ was an infinite Saviour?"

"Yes; he is the fullness of God," replied George.

"And he can save all?" he asked again.

"Certainly; unto the uttermost," exclaimed George with glowing energy.

"Will he save me *now?*" said the broken-hearted inquirer once more.

"He will do precisely that," said George, rising and walking toward his friend to grasp his hand, as if he would congratulate him for a victory already won.

"Thank God for that!" said Mr. Smith, taking George's extended hand. "Thank God for everything; bless his holy name for ever and ever!"

Calmly and sweetly did this brand plucked from the fire rest in the atoning blood from this time. There were hours of conflict, but not of unbelief. As a babe in Christ, he was fed with the "sincere milk of the word" and "grew thereby." Though he increased in the knowledge

and experience of holy things his health failed rapidly, and in a few weeks after his conversion he passed from earth to heaven, whispering gratefully as he sunk in death, "Saved—saved—saved as by fire."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SURPRISE.

GEORGE'S friend, Yellow Jim, was a deeply interested observer of all these labors and successes, though he gave but little expression to his feelings except when he could speak to him privately. On such occasions he astonished George by his understanding of the truths to which he had listened, and his shrewd opinions concerning what was going on. One of these private interviews was well remembered by George. He had leisurely walked at the close of the day much beyond his usual limits. The sun was just setting behind the tall trees, and the birds had nestled their heads quietly under their wings for a night's repose. The bats and the night hawks had not yet commenced their quick and varied evolutions in the air, nor had the owl begun her dismal croakings. George sat down in a little arbor formed by the rich foliage of a vine

overspreading the branches of a youthful oak. The rest and quiet of the hour to him were such as the earnest laborer only enjoys. His thoughts, which had been much occupied with the work in which he was engaged, had suddenly wandered far away. The old home in Connecticut, the loving hearts which yearned to greet him, the solemn Sabbath gatherings and the cheerful Sunday-school, appeared so distinctly in memory's picture that the unconscious tear stole down his face. He knelt and repeated the often offered prayer for the dear ones of his earliest and warmest affection, but e'er he closed he added words of earnest supplication "for those in bonds as bound with them."

As he rose from his knees he heard a footstep of some person stealing toward him.

"It's only Jim, sir," said a voice which George instantly recognized as that of Yellow Jim.

"Excuse me, sir, for disturbing you," said Jim, taking off his hat and approaching with a modest yet decided air, like

one who felt that he could justify his intrusion by the importance of his errand.

"I have been seeking for many weeks," he continued, "an opportunity of freeing my mind to you; and now I have it, if you will allow me, sir."

"Certainly, Jim," said George; "sit down here. What troubles you? Nothing alarming, I hope."

"Nothing," replied Jim, with a manifest sadness, "if there is nothing to fear in being a slave."

"O that is it!" replied George. "But can I help you?" he added tenderly; "such a cause of sorrow is beyond my reach."

"It will be something if I can speak," added Jim with a sudden earnestness.

"Well then, speak," said George, "there is no one here to report you, unless the owls croak what you say in the ears of your master."

"Owls are free," replied Jim promptly. "They hate slavery. Everything is free but the colored man. The master is idle,

but the colored man must work. The master may have learning, but his servant mustn't know too much. The Bible may be very good—very true—all full of comfort for the poor slave, as Uncle Simeon says; but he must hear and know only that part of it which his master is pleased to allow. The elder may preach very well, but master keeps the larger part of us from the meetings, except when he can't well help it. Why, Mr. Freeman, until you came here the people on this place didn't know nothing about meetings any how. Uncle Sim somehow picked up a little about religion when master let him out to Neighbor Stuart. All the boys laughed at Sim's religion, because they knew that was the way to please master. But now master's been fairly beat, though he's raving mad, I tell you. He wont stand it much longer, no how, your getting the whole place into your pious notions. He's a big coward himself, but he's stirring up the masters all about. A heap of trouble's a comin', I reckon. Master's awful cruel on us poor slaves when he gets

some white folks to help him make it appear all right."

"You mean," said George, seeming not to understand Jim fully, "that master purposes to prevent the people from attending the meetings?"

"Worse than that," said Jim bitterly.

"He cannot stop the meetings at Deer Ridge," said George in a decided tone.

"He may," replied Jim.

"But, thank God!" exclaimed George, whose faith and hope began to assume their accustomed control, "he can never put out the light the people have already received. Some are now converted, and the leaven will work."

Jim looked with astonishment at the teacher's persistent faith and love. His profound respect deepened into veneration. Grasping George's hand, his resolute spirit for once yielded to his emotions, and he wept freely.

"O, Mr. Freeman," he exclaimed, "if I had *your* religion I could almost be a slave in peace!"

"You may be God's freeman," replied

George persuasively. "You can have the peace of God that passeth understanding."

"But what shall we do when you are gone—driven away from us?" inquired Jim anxiously.

"I shall leave God with you, even if it ever happens that I am driven away," said George. "And," he added, with a warmth of feeling which started the tears again from Jim's eyes, "you, my friend, must give your heart to God; you must then strengthen your trembling, feeble fellow-servants; you may become an example of patient continuance in well-doing, committing the keeping of your soul to Him who judges righteously."

"I *never* can be patient in slavery," replied Jim, burying his face in his hands and bursting into tears.

"Remember your mother, my friend," said George tenderly, "and for her sake be patient."

"Mother!" echoed Jim, starting at the mention of her name, "it's on her account that I *cannot* be patient. Do you know

that she has been threatened with the auction block at the New Orleans market? and master will do it too!" and the old fire flashed at the thought from the eye of the outraged son, showing that he had not learned to bear all things.

"God is on your side," said George soothingly.

"Is he, *sure?*" said Jim, forgetting the privacy of the interview and raising his voice to a loud sharp tone, which came back in echoes from the silent forest. "Why then," he continued, dropping his voice into a low, earnest expression, "why then don't God help us, and crush the oppressor?"

"Hush!" said George. "God hath said, 'Vengeance is mine;' 'Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart; and *then* shall every man have praise of God.' He cannot forget you. Trust him."

"O, Mr. Freeman," said Jim despondingly, "I am afraid I shall never learn your way of having peace of mind."

"Say rather," said George, "I will listen to Him who hath said, 'My peace I give unto you.' Now let us return. There will be a stir about us."

The night had fairly begun, and shut out every trace of the path through which George had wandered. But Jim was familiar with the very shadow of the trees, and he silently led the way.

"What is that?" whispered Jim, pausing suddenly and crouching down among the bushes.

"You hear only a rabbit which we have started from his night's covert," said George.

"It's more like Jordan's clumsy footsteps," replied Jim coolly.

When they reached the open drive way Jim slipped around to his humble quarters. The teacher's absence had been noticed by the watchful Gelia, who, as he approached the veranda, sprung into his arms exclaiming,

"Ho! Mr. Freeman, you lost your way, didn't you?"

The family accepted Gelia's surmise, and George passed on to his room.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SLAVE MOTHER'S ANGUISH.

It was not long before Aunt Maria had an opportunity of expressing to George the fears to which her son Jim had alluded.

The family carriage had just disappeared in the woody avenue beyond the mansion grounds, bearing away the master and mistress and the older children. The house was quiet, and George had just drawn up to his table to enjoy the luxury of a few hours' uninterrupted study. But a gentle knock at his door and the entrance softly of Aunt Maria put study and books at once from his mind. She was dignified and calm, but her countenance wore a look of painful anxiety.

"May I sit down a moment?" she inquired respectfully.

"Certainly," said George. "But are you sick, Maria? you appear distressed."

"Yes, sick, Mr. Freeman," she replied

earnestly; "my heart is sick; I believe it will break sure."

"What now, Aunt Maria?" said George tenderly. "You seem to be pleasantly situated; your quarters are the best on the place, and nearest the master's; your children are about you; you have a position of honor and trust in your master's family; all the servants look up to you with deference; you certainly are neither hungry, cold, nor destitute of comfortable clothes, nor does your labor seem unreasonably hard; what *can* be the matter?"

"Well, now, Mr. Freeman," said Maria, "I dare say you know more of the matter than you seem to. May be, though, I'd a heap better keep my troubles to myself than be bothering you with them. Like enough you'll have plenty of your own. Seems like, though, I must speak. I know you have feelings, and it's a great comfort to a crushed heart to find one such. It aint often a poor slave finds one such, though. Well, now, ever since the people have been stirred up about religion

master's been awful jealous. He's been watching Grif and Uncle Simeon night and day. But my poor boy Jim, seems like master wants to kill him right off; and he says to me, 'Maria, you encourages Jim in his smart nótions,' and then he'll swear and threaten to sell Jim. Then he breaks out again and says, 'Maria, you shall go on to the auction block—you shall—you and Jim too, and you sha'n't go together neither.'"

"But," interrupted George, "master cannot mean so. He speaks in anger; he surely wont sell one who was raised with him; and as to Jim, he is too valuable on the place. Master cannot spare him."

"Ah, Mr. Freeman," replied Maria, "master has his plans, though. Did you hear about them?"

"No, Maria," said George, his interest being fully aroused; "what plans?"

"Well," said Maria, "I'll tell you. Judge Walker has owned a long time a place on the river. Master's been bought a place long side of it. He says this home place is all worn out, and too

many hands here and too little work. I should like to know, though, if they doesn't all work the whole time. Well, he is going to send some hands down to this new place, River Place, he calls it."

"But," said George earnestly, "will Jim be sent to the River Place? are you to go too, Maria? is that the plan?"

"I reckon not; don't know; may be," said Maria, evidently much confused in her opinion about the matter.

"I think master is afraid to trust Jim, then; but there'll be much work on the River Place that no other hand can do. But you know, Mr. Freeman, *it's near the river;*" and Maria looked archly at George as she added, "master says Jim knows too much. I am more afraid he'll sell him at the New Orleans market, where he'll bring fifteen hundred dollars or more. Sure he'll do it if he gets in a passion; and," added Maria in a tone of anguish, "I have no peace while I think of it."

The heart of the laborious teacher was touched with this simple statement of a mother whose sensibilities were as keen

as if the slight tinge of African blood which run in her veins had been pure English. "But what can I do?" he said musingly. "I can only persist, at all hazards, in pointing the oppressed ones to the blood of Christ, which will make them free indeed."

Turning to Maria, he said, in as cheerful a tone as his heavy heart would allow, "Come, be of good cheer; your fears may be groundless. At any rate, God will be your comforter. There is a land where the wicked cease from troubling."

"Yes," said Maria with a sigh; "but I'm thinking who'll encourage us poor servants in that way when you are gone. My Jim says that when the troubles come Mr. Freeman can just return to his own free land; but the poor colored boy must stay and bear it all."

"But I shall leave God and religion with you," said George.

"But who'll help us to trust God?" still inquired Maria; "that's what I'm thinking on."

"God will provide all necessary aid,"

said George decidedly. "Has not precious seed been sown in the hearts of your young masters? There is Gelia, too, she cannot forget all her good resolutions, and she will soon be a young woman, and—"

"Thank God!" exclaimed Maria, interrupting George as a sudden rush of encouraging thoughts caused her to forget for the moment that George was speaking. "Bless God, there is a mighty change in the gang masters. And do you know," continued Maria, in a lower tone of voice, "that master would have dismissed his teacher long ago only, as he says, 'the silly young folks think so much of him and he does teach them so mighty well?' But I suspects he wont bear the meetings much longer. They're too much for him."

George thought it prudent not to encourage a prolonged conversation on these topics, and Maria soon retired, and left him to many conflicting emotions. He had already remained at the South longer than he had purposed. Nearly three years instead of two had been spent in

faithful labor for others, in addition to which he had advanced one year in his college studies. He desired to return and finish the remaining year of the course. But his work of love, which God had so richly blest, had become exceedingly dear to him, and the souls that had been won to Christ were in his heart to live and die with them. He resolved firmly that he would not hasten his departure because the clouds around him looked threatening; the tempest might break, and then it would be time enough to flee.

CHAPTER XIX.

WICKED DEMANDS.

NOTWITHSTANDING the fears of Aunt Maria and her son, the school at Deer Ridge went on for some time prosperously. The interest of the children and of the colored people appeared unabated. Quite a large number, however, of the latter were sent to the River Place, and among the rest were Simeon and Griffen. They were put under an overseer of great severity, and a hater of negro meetings. But the power of saving grace in their hearts was not likely to be crushed out by the hands of tyranny, however much suffering it might cause. Aunt Ann and her few sympathizers at Myrtle Hill felt a new responsibility now that their human props were, in part, removed. She coaxingly secured from the accommodating Gelia frequent readings of the Word of God. "De blessed word!" Ann would exclaim, as passage after passage came

home with comforting power to her heart; "it is food to my poor heart. It does comfort wonderful."

Jordan was still a thorn to the saints, or, perhaps, a willing spy for his master upon their religious freedom.

Jim was occasionally sent to the River Place, and had while there, by an unusual promptness and obedience and constant devotion to his duties, quieted the fears of his master. The overseer had, as he said, "put the screws on to him," and he had shown a submissive spirit. The overseer reported to his master that Jim was "all right" when he was away from the meetings, which spoiled the negroes, and that his services were indispensable in getting the place into good order. So Jim was likely to become settled on the river plantation.

While the work at Deer Ridge was thus quietly going on, George received one of the occasional visits of Father Clifton. He thought he saw upon the good man's countenance a look of sadness, and when they sat down alone in his school-room,

as they had often done, the cause of his sadness was freely disclosed.

"I fear," he said, "we shall be obliged to give up the larger part of our religious efforts at Deer Ridge."

"Why? what now?" said George abruptly.

"Well," replied Father Clifton, "we have gone a little too far in our attention to the colored people perhaps. Our people here at the South have their prejudices; though a few of us do not sympathize with them, yet we must yield some. Your special attention, with Melville, in teaching the slaves to read, is unusual."

"But," said George, "I had the judge's permission.

"True," answered Father Clifton, "and but for that the business would not have been tolerated a week. Even the judge says our labors in this direction have been made too prominent and general. There is quite a feeling about this matter, and we must, for the present, at least, desist."

"We may continue to hold meetings

with the colored people I suppose," said George.

"I shall once in a while preach to them, that is all," said Father Clifton, with evident embarrassment. "Our friends advise the discontinuance of all other meetings, including the entire Sunday-school, such is the excitement. The cry of abolitionism has been raised, and even the judge's influence cannot shield us."

The remark about "abolitionism" caused George to remain for a few moments silent. He thought of his friend Jim, and was more than ever convinced of his superior penetration and judgment. He understood now what he meant by the "heap of trouble" which was coming. But a sweet peace of mind held in control every emotion. God never seemed so near to him. He did not doubt for a moment his protection. He was about to express this confidence when Father Clifton broke the silence.

"I see how it is. Slavery demands this sacrifice of us for its unholy interest. It

crushes out every good work. I will be wholly clean of the abominable thing."

The good man rose from his seat and walked the room under the stimulus of the indignant feelings which burned within. Nor were these feelings inconsistent with what he had already done as a slaveholder. He had for years taken no wages of his few slaves. He had repeatedly assured George that he required of them only not to involve him in debt, giving them their earnings, after they had paid their own living, for the purchase of their freedom. But, pressed by the thought of this new development of slavery's wicked demands, Father Clifton was moved to abandon the country which it so controlled for one of freedom to himself as well as his servants. Many ties of Christian fellowship, especially with those for whom he had labored as an apostle of Christ, as well as many associations of youth and early manhood, came in to shake such a resolution. His conflict of mind was severe.

The two friends kneeled in earnest

prayer, and parted with an increased ardor of Christian friendship. It was their last meeting on earth.

George sought an early opportunity to consult his friend Judge Walker concerning the prevailing excitement. Being now unemployed on the Sabbath, he rode to the residence of the judge on the Saturday following Father Clifton's visit. The judge received with him an embarrassed cordiality. The subject most on George's mind was soon introduced.

"I am told," remarked George, "that the Sunday-school at Deer Ridge must be discontinued."

"I think it must, at least for the present," replied the judge.

"As the prejudices," said George, "seem to be mainly against me, why may not the school be continued without my presence? It is the religious benefit of the young and of the uninstructed adults that I desire; I do not so much covet the personal labor."

"We know," said the judge, with marked kindness of manner and tone, "that

your labor has been disinterested and faithful, and we could not sustain the school without you. But the cry of abolitionism, a thing so hated by our people, stifles all reason, and we must yield to it."

"But wherein," persisted George, "lies my crime? I have only sought the spiritual good of the people. Can any right or interest of society be injured by that?"

"Perhaps," said the judge, "there has been too general an effort made to teach the people to read."

"In that," replied George promptly, "we have only tried to open to them a more perfect knowledge of God, and the way of salvation through his word."

"True," said the judge; "and I have endeavored, in a quiet way, to teach some of my servants to read. It will do for a few to learn a little plain reading. But the teaching of the slaves is forbidden by our laws, and any thing like a general teaching of them, even to that small extent, seems to be forbidden by the necessities of their condition as slaves."

"Yes, I see," said George quietly, un-

conscious of the deep significance of his remark; "the necessities of slavery do forbid obedience to God's commands. In the Scriptures is eternal life. God has said, Search them. Slavery interposes a barrier to the direct access of the slave to this divine treasury. This matter is in God's hands, and he will, I trust, adjust it."

The judge remained silent. The calm and grieved expression of his friend's countenance disarmed resentment if it had been prompted. Indeed, the judge's own thoughts troubled him, and he directed the conversation to other topics.

CHAPTER XX.

THE ESCAPE.

A FEW weeks after George's interview with Judge Walker, Myrtle Hill plantation was thrown into a great excitement. A messenger came in great haste from the River Place, bringing word from the overseer that Yellow Jim, and a boy belonging to Judge Walker by the name of Sam, had run away. He said that Jim had been sent on an errand about twenty miles distant, and that he had been gone twenty-four hours before the overseer thought he had run away.

Mr. Craig immediately took his dogs and started for the river, saying, as he departed, something about Yankee influence and negro meetings. His insinuations were not reported very clearly to George, but the spirit of his remarks he could well enough understand. He was convinced that if Jim had escaped it would be time for the Yankee teacher

to close his labors and return to his old home.

Mr. Craig was absent a week, and it was a week of great solicitude on both plantations. Uncle Simeon and Griffen, on the River Place, hoped and feared while the hunt was going on. They hoped, for Jim's sake, that he would escape, well understanding that if he was caught a hard fate awaited him. They feared any attempt to take him, if found, for they knew his temper too well to suppose it could be done without bloodshed. They knew, too, the consequence to themselves of his success in his efforts to become a free man. Their privileges would be even less than they had been. But this they were willing to bear for the sake of the liberty of one to whom liberty would be so sweet.

Aunt Maria waited in silent anguish the result. It would be sorrow to her in any case. But she preferred Jim's success, because then she alone would suffer.

George remained calm, hoping and believing that Jim's days of slavery were

ended, and that henceforth free scope would be given for the development of his manly spirit. As to himself, he had endeavored to honor God. He had labored in love for the good of his fellowmen. He could trust his case with Him who judgeth righteously.

The children were much confused about the affair. Their education and parental influence inclined them to resent the attempt of a negro to be free. They knew how angry their father would be, and how much he would feel Jim's loss. But they knew also that Jim had fine feelings and a noble mind, or, in their language, that he was "right smart;" besides, their moral feelings, lately so much changed, sided with Jim.

"Don't Jim want to be free as well as anybody?" inquired Frankie, with much simplicity, laying his hand on his teacher's knee and looking earnestly into his face.

George hesitated, and directed his attention to the older scholars.

"Of course he does, or he wouldn't have run away," said Gelia; "but he needn't

be so mean as to plague pa so and make him so angry."

"Negroes aint like other people anyhow, are they, Mr. Freeman?" inquired James. "I reckon they're born to be slaves."

"Most of the colored people of this country are born in slavery," replied George.

"I don't see why Jim haint as good a right to be free as anybody!" exclaimed Edwin warmly. "If I were Jim I would be free if I wanted to."

These were Edwin's feelings under a momentary impulse, directed by his Christian love. He had been, of all the children, the tyrant among the slaves of the plantation. On former occasions, and surrounded by other influences, his utterances had been bitterly in favor of the right of "white folks" to make slaves of "niggers." Nothing but the restraints of a most positive religious influence could keep Edwin from becoming in manhood an ultra slaveholder. But James turned the matter over in his mind with serious and anxious perplexity.

George looked upon this little group with tearful interest; and knowing that his labor with them was about ended, he offered a silent prayer that the seed sown might develop into more precious fruit.

Mr. Craig returned, wearied, vexed, and mortified. Jim had outwitted the overseer and his master, and eluded all efforts to get upon his track. The dogs had traced the fugitives to a neighboring swamp, but could not find them in it nor scent their footprints out of it. They had, Mr. Craig thought, escaped on board a steamer, but he could not see how they could have done so while the last trace of them was toward the swamp. He hinted that Jim must have had some help in planning so successful an escape. He had sent an officer of the law on the mail steamer to overtake and search the way freight boat, which had stopped at the landing the night Jim left.

Another week passed, and the officer sent after Jim returned without obtaining any information concerning him. Mr. Craig now talked openly of George's influence

in causing him the loss of one of the most valuable slaves of the county, worth two thousand dollars! George at once decided to leave. Aunt Maria found an opportunity to hasten his escape by whispering to him that Jordan had just recollected that when he saw Jim and George coming out of the forest together he overheard them talking about this very business. All knew Jordan to be a great liar, but in the present excitement any story might feed the flames. Maria had heard some rumors about excited indignation meetings of angry slaveholders and threatened tar and feathers.

George's parting farewells were brief but feeling. Gelia threw her arms about his neck, wetting his face with her tears as she kissed him a good-by, whispering, "You aint a wicked abolitionist, are you?"

A messenger from Judge Walker met him at the steamboat landing with the following note:

"DEAR FRIEND,—I regret the necessity of your hasty departure from among

us, and deplore the loss of your valuable moral influence, and the undoing, by the resentment which has been excited, of much of the good you have done. I am sure that the suspicions that you were knowing to the escape of the fugitives must be unfounded. So far as my boy Sam is concerned, if he prefers freedom to serving me he is welcome to it. He has done overwork enough to obtain in gold nearly the price of his liberty, which I offered to sell him on liberal terms. He has now gone, and taken his gold and liberty too. I have treated him well, and don't know why he should leave me; but I have forbidden any efforts being made for his recovery."

The excited slave community allowed George to depart without personal injury, although he was several times insulted before he left the landing; but when the steamer which bore him homeward was fairly under way, his enemies, and the field of his faithful toil, as well as his many but humble friends, were soon far behind.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE DEAR OLD HOME.

"It is the same dear old home," said George as he drew a chair up to the fire the morning after his arrival at the farm-house of Solomon Freeman. "Here you are, my dear parents, brothers, and sisters. No breach has been made in our family circle by death during my absence. Thank God for that!"

"It is a pleasant home yet, you think," inquired his mother, looking over the top of her glasses and feasting her eyes again and again with the sight of her long absent son, as if to assure herself it was really her George and not the mockery of a dream. "Your Uncle George used to say," she continued, "that he'd warrant you'd come home with such high notions that the old house would have to be torn down and one of the new fashion sort put up; and that, after having had so many to serve you down South there,

it would take all the family to wait on you."

George smiled at his uncle's little confidence in his firmness in maintaining away from home its good principles.

"Now, my dear mother," he replied, "let me tell you that there is no princely house in this land which could be made so dear to me as this homestead, old-fashioned though it is. It has sheltered those whom I honor and love, and to whom I owe a debt of gratitude I never can express."

While this conversation was going on there was a stir in the kitchen.

"Well, George," said his father, rising up with a countenance beaming with joy, "since you are so well satisfied with the old home you shall see all its inmates. We have two members of the family who modestly refused to be introduced last night, lest, as they said, they should intrude upon the claims of those who had a better right to your attention."

Mr. Freeman then threw open the kitchen door and said, "Come, James and

Samuel, see if you know my son, a young gentleman just from the South?"

There was no need of a further introduction of George to Yellow Jim and Judge Walker's boy, Sam.

"Thank God for this!" exclaimed George, grasping his friend's hand heartily. "God only could have made it possible for you to escape."

"I acknowledge it," said Jim. "My freedom has been given me by God, but next to him I owe everything I have and am to you. You alone taught me to fear and love him and seek his guidance. My freedom seems like a strange dream. But my mother;" and as these last words were uttered his voice faltered. He could not proceed. He feared the consequences to her of his escape.

"She had not been sold when I left, and I think that all thought of doing so has been given up," said George, knowing that Jim's worst fears were in reference to her possible sale.

Jim's countenance brightened up. A heavy load had been taken from his heart,

a load that had marred the joy of his deliverance from slavery. "But my master," said Jim, speaking from the force of habit.

"Mr. Craig, you mean," said George, interrupting him.

Jim smiled an assent to the correction and continued: "Mr. Craig has, I suppose, accused mother of a knowledge at least of my intended escape, and punished her some way."

"There were reports," answered George unwillingly, "of a severe whipping inflicted upon her. But she seemed cheerful when I left, and less anxious about you than when you were on the home plantation."

"Whipped!" exclaimed Solomon Freeman, catching at the word in such a connection, "a woman whipped! and an old lady too!"

Jim's heart had begun to throb with a resentment which for some time had been restrained. But he thought of his mother's escape from the slave market and a servitude in which whipping might have been a daily experience, and the thought

caused his anger to give way to gratitude; and when the sympathizing exclamation of Mr. Freeman was uttered, and the word "lady," applied to his mother, fell upon his ear, the full force of the truth that he was in a land of freedom rushed upon his mind, and he burst into tears.

Sam's feelings were different. He had escaped as much from what he feared for the future as from what he suffered. But his sense of manhood, never known to a negro on slave soil, was inexpressibly elevating and joyous. He calmly looked upon things around him like one gazing upon mountain scenery whose sight had always been confined to the objects of a squalid village.

The particulars of the escape of the fugitives are briefly these, as related by Jim.

Jim, who managed the escape, led the way to a swamp, to mislead the hunt for them by the dogs. Following the stream which flowed from it into the river, they swam the river and concealed themselves until the arrival of the steamer due at the landing at a late hour of the night. The

overseer, thinking Jim had gone in another direction on the business with which he was intrusted, omitted his customary watch during the presence of the steamer. The fugitives, in the mean time, recrossed the river, and, climbing up the river side of the boat, concealed themselves among the goods during the confusion of putting off and taking in freight. Here they remained, nearly suffocated, for forty-eight hours; at the end of this time they left the boat during one of her night stoppings, and took again to the shore and woods, Jim rightly supposing that the boat would be pursued. They lay concealed in sight of the landing until the arrival of a boat which did not in its *upward* trips touch at the River Place, and which would not therefore be so readily suspected of containing them. It had often been at the landing in its downward passage, and Jim's foresight had secured him a friend among its colored firemen.

Some of Sam's gold provided the necessary bribe, and they were stowed away safely and in much more comfortable

quarters than before. Arriving at the up river landing, they soon reached the near est depot of the underground railroad. Friendly counsel and Sam's gold gave them the means of a bold venture after a few days of secret travel on the thoroughfares by which they quickly reached the hospitable dwelling of Solomon Freeman, of whose locality and friendly character they had heard in their southern homes.

Judge Walker's "Sam" became known among his new friends as Samuel Walker. He is now a thrifty mechanic near the "dear old home" of the Freemans. His former master's generosity released him from the fears of pursuit by the man hunters. But another trial, quite as severe as any he had suffered, awaited James Freeman — our friend Yellow Jim. "The fugitive slave law" had just begun its infamous operations. A flight to Canada was his only course of safety. But he has since ventured to return into the neighborhood of his old friends in Connecticut.

Father Clifton has left the South with his servants and is now a free man in the North-west, surrounded by colored freemen.

Melville Stuart came North after a few years to continue his studies. He had learned economy and self-reliance by his fortunate poverty, and so succeeded in paying by his labor the expenses of his education. He returned, after graduating at a New England college, determined to be a faithful minister of Christ in the midst of slavery without being a slaveholder. James Freeman has often been cheered by news from his mother, obtained through Melville, and she has received, in the same way, many a sly message from him.

George Freeman is an earnest minister of the Gospel. The lessons he learned at Myrtle Hill plantation he freely teaches. He declares that the true and only remedy for the *evil* of slavery is the abolition of slavery itself; that practical antislavery men like Father Clifton cannot live long under its operations because

their convictions of right are not allowed a practical application; and that merciful masters like Judge Walker find their mercy stifled and their benevolent plans defeated by the *necessities* of the institution.

THE END.

BOOKS FOR SUNDAY-SCHOOLS.

200 Mulberry-street, New York.

A MISSIONARY NARRATIVE

Of the Triumphs of Grace, as seen in the Conversion of Kafirs, Hottentots, Fingoes, and other Natives of South Africa. By SAMUEL YOUNG, twelve years a Missionary in that Country. 18mo., pp. 160.

THE YOUNG MINER:

A Memoir of John Lean, Jr., of Camborne, in the County of Cornwall. By JOHN BUSTARD. 18mo., pp. 59.

PRAISE AND BLAME.

By Rev. CHARLES WILLIAMS, Author of "Facts, not Fables." With Illustrations. 18mo., pp. 112.

THE LIFE OF MOSES.

By Rev. DANIEL SMITH. Illustrated. 18mo., pp. 224.

HISTORY OF NELLY VANNER.

Written expressly for Children. By JOHN CURWEN. 18mo., pp. 76.

INTERESTING STORIES

For the Entertainment and Instruction of Young Readers. Illustrated. Two volumes, 18mo.

THE BROKEN HYACINTH;

Or, Ellen and Sophia. By MRS. SHERWOOD, Author of "Little Henry and his Bearer." Three Illustrations. 18mo., pp. 96.

DEAF AND DUMB.

Recollections of the Deaf and Dumb. 18mo., pp. 103.

THE LIFE OF HEZEKIAH.

By Rev. DANIEL SMITH. 18mo., pp. 77.

BOOKS FOR SUNDAY-SCHOOLS.

200 Mulberry-street, New York.

MINNIE RAY.

A Story of Faith and Good Works. By Mrs. C. M. Edwards, Author of "The Herbert Family," "The Itinerant," etc. Four Illustrations. 18mo., pp. 198.

AUNT EFFIE;

Or, the Pious Widow and her Infidel Brother. By Rev. Daniel Wise, Author of "Guide to the Saviour," "Path of Life," "Young Man's Counselor," etc. Two Illustrations. 18mo., pp. 174.

SARAH NEAL.

A Tale of Real Life. By the Author of "Roland Rand" and "The Homely Child." Three Illustrations. 18mo., pp. 76.

BE COURTEOUS;

Or, Religion the True Refiner. By Mrs. M. H. Maxwell. Three Illustrations. 18mo., pp. 183.

A SCHOOL-BOY'S LIFE:

Being a Memoir of John Lang Bickersteth, late of Rugby School. 18mo., pp. 69.

MARGARET CRAVEN;

Or, Beauty of the Heart. By the Author of "The Lost Key," "The Golden Mushroom," and "The Little Water-cress Sellers." Five Illustrations. 18mo., pp. 175.

LITTLE JESSIE'S WORK,

And the Broken Rosebuds. Two Engravings. 18mo., pp. 88.

ELLINOR GREY:

Or, the Sunday-School Class at Trimble Hollow. By Mrs. H. C. Gardner, Author of "Annie Lee," etc. Four Illustrations. 18mo., pp. 195.