

THE NEGRO'S LIFE IN SLAVERY

BY BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

THE SECOND ARTICLE IN THE STORY OF THE NEGRO

SOME years ago one of the frequent subjects of discussion among the white people and the colored people was the question, Who was responsible for slavery in America? Some people said the English Government was the guilty party, because England would not let the colonies abolish the slave trade when they wanted to. Others said the New England colonies were just as deep in the mire as England or the Southern States, because for many years a very large share of the trade was carried on in New England ships.

As a matter of fact, there were, as near as I have been able to learn, three parties who were directly responsible for the slavery of the Negro in the United States.

First of all, there was the Negro himself. It should not be forgotten that it was the African who, for the most part, carried on the slave raids by means of which his fellow-African was captured and brought down to the coast for sale. When, some months ago, the Liberian embassy visited the United States, Vice-President Dossen explained to me that one reason why Liberia had made no more progress during the eighty-six years of its existence was the fact that for many years the little State had been engaged in a life-and-death struggle with native slave-traders, who had been accustomed for centuries to ship their slaves from Liberian ports and were unwilling to give up the practice. It was only after the slave trade had entirely ceased, he said, that Liberia had begun to exercise an influence upon the masses of the native peoples within its jurisdiction.

The second party to slavery was the slave-trader, who at first, as a rule, was an Englishman or a Northern white man. During the Colonial period, for instance, Newport, Rhode Island, was the principal headquarters of the slave trade in this country. At one time Rhode Island had one hundred and fifty vessels engaged in the traffic. Down to 1860 Northern capital was very largely invested in the slave

trade, and New York was the port from which most of the American slave smugglers fitted out.

Finally, there was the Southern white man, who owned and worked the bulk of the slaves, and was responsible for what we now ordinarily understand as the slave system. It would be just as much a mistake, however, to assume that the South was ever solidly in favor of slavery as it is to assume that the North was always solidly against it. Thousands of persons in the Southern States were opposed to slavery, and numbers of them, like James G. Birney, of Alabama, took their slaves North in order to free them, and afterward became leaders in the anti-slavery struggle.

As with every other human thing, there is more than one side to slavery, and more than one way of looking at it. For instance, as defined in the slave laws in what was known as the Slave Code, slavery was pretty much the same at all times all over the South. The regulations imposed upon master and upon slave were, in several particulars, different for the different States. On the whole, however, as a legal institution, slavery was the same everywhere.

On the other hand, actual conditions were not only different in every part of the country, but they were likely to be different on every separate plantation. Every plantation was, to a certain extent, a little kingdom by itself, and life there was what the people who were bound together in the plantation community made it. The law and the custom of the neighborhood regulated, to a certain extent, the treatment which the master gave his slave. For instance, in the part of Virginia where I lived both white people and colored people looked with contempt upon the man who had the reputation of not giving his slaves enough to eat. If a slave went to an adjoining plantation for something to eat, the reputation of his master was damned in that community.

On the whole, however, each plantation was a little independent state, and one master was very little disposed to interfere with the affairs of another.

The account that one gets of slavery from the laws that were passed for the government of slaves shows that institution on its worst side. No harsher judgment was ever passed on slavery, so far as I know, than that which will be found in the decision of a justice of the Supreme Court of North Carolina in summing up the law in a case in which the relations of master and slave were defined.

The case I refer to, which was tried in 1829, was one in which the master, who was the defendant, was indicted for beating his slave. The decision which acquitted him affirmed the master's right to inflict any kind of punishment upon his slave short of death. The grounds upon which this judgment was based were that in the whole history of slavery there had been no such prosecution of a master for punishing a slave, and, in the words of the decision, "against this general opinion in the community the court could not hold."

It was a mistake, the decision continued, to say that the relations of the master and slave were like those of a parent and child. The object of the parent in training his son was to render him fit to live the life of a free man, and, as a means to that end, he gave him moral and intellectual instruction. In the case of the slave it was different. There could be no sense in addressing moral considerations to a slave. Chief Justice Ruffin, of North Carolina, summed up his opinion upon this point in these words:

The end is the profit of the master, his security, and the public safety; the subject, one doomed in his own person and his posterity to live without knowledge and without the capacity to make anything his own, and to toil that another may reap the fruits. What moral consideration shall be addressed to such a being to convince him, what it is impossible but that the most stupid must feel and know can never be true—that he is thus to labor upon a principle of natural duty, or for the sake of his own personal happiness? Such services can only be expected from one who has no will of his own, who surrenders his will in implicit obedience to that of another. Such obedience is the consequence only of uncontrolled authority

exercised over the body. There is nothing else which can operate to produce the effect. The power of the master must be absolute to render the submission of the slave perfect.

In making this decision Justice Ruffin did not attempt to justify the rule he had laid down on moral grounds. "As a principle of right," he said, "every person in his retirement must repudiate it. But in the actual condition of things it must be so; there is no remedy. This discipline belongs to the state of slavery. It constitutes the curse of slavery both to the bond and free portion of our population."¹

This decision brings out into plain view an idea that was always somewhere at the bottom of slavery—the idea, namely, that one man's evil is another man's good. The history of slavery, if it proves anything, proves that just the opposite is true; namely, that evil breeds evil, just as disease breeds disease, and that a wrong committed upon one portion of a community will, in the long run, surely react upon the other portion of that community.

There was a very great difference between the life of the slave on the small plantations in the uplands and upon the big plantations along the coasts. To illustrate, the plantation upon which I was born, in Franklin County, Virginia, had, as I remember, only six slaves. My master and his sons all worked together side by side with his slaves. In this way we all grew up together, very much like members of one big family. There was no overseer, and we got to know our master and he to know us. The big plantations along the coasts were usually carried on under the direction of an overseer. The master and his family were away for a large part of the year. Personal relations between them could hardly be said to exist.

John C. Calhoun, South Carolina's greatest statesman, was brought up on a plantation not very different from the one upon which I was raised. One of his biographers relates how Patrick Calhoun, John C. Calhoun's father, returning from his legislative duties in Charleston, brought home on horseback behind him

¹ "Slavery in the State of North Carolina," by John Spencer Bassett.

a young African freshly imported into some English or New England vessel. The children in the neighborhood, and, no doubt, some of the older people, had never before seen a black man. He was the first one brought into that part of the country. Patrick Calhoun gave him the name of Adam. Some time later he got for him a wife. One of the children of the black man, Adam, was named Swaney. He grew up on the plantation with John C. Calhoun, and was for many years his playmate.

The conditions of the Negro slave were harder on some of the big plantations in the far South than they were elsewhere. That region was peopled by an enterprising class of persons, of whom many came from Virginia, bringing their slaves with them. The soil was rich, the planters were making money fast, the country was rough and unsettled, and there was undoubtedly a disposition to treat the slaves as mere factors in the production of corn, cotton, and sugar.

And yet there were plantations in this region where the relations between master and slave seem to have been as happy as one could ask or expect under the circumstances. On some of the large estates in Alabama and Mississippi which were far removed from the influence of the city, and sometimes in the midst of the wilderness, master and slaves frequently lived together under conditions that were genuinely patriarchal. But on such plantations there was, as a rule, no overseer.

As an example of the large plantations on which the relations between master and slave were normal and happy I might mention those of the former President of the Confederacy, Jefferson Davis, and his brother Joseph Davis, in Warren County, Mississippi.

The history of the Davis family and of the way in which their plantations, the "Hurricane" and "Brierfield," came into existence is typical. The ancestors of the President of the Confederacy came originally from Wales. They settled first in Georgia, emigrated thence to Kentucky, and finally settled in the rich lands of Mississippi. In 1818 Joseph Davis, who was at that time a lawyer in Vicksburg, attracted by the rich bottom-lands along the Mississippi, took his father's slaves

and went down the river, thirty-six miles below Vicksburg, to the place which is now called "Davis's Bend." There he began clearing the land and preparing it for cultivation.

At that time there were no steamboats on the Mississippi River, and the country was so wild that people traveled through the lonely forests mostly on horseback. In the course of a few years Mr. Davis, with the aid of his slaves, succeeded in building up a plantation of about five thousand acres, and became, before his death, a very wealthy man. One day he went down to Natchez and purchased in the market there a young negro who afterward became known as Ben Montgomery. This young man had been sold South from North Carolina, and because, perhaps, he had heard, as most of the slaves had, of the hard treatment that was to be expected on the big, lonesome plantations, had made up his mind to remain in the city. The first thing he did, therefore, when Mr. Davis brought him home, was to run away. Mr. Davis succeeded in getting hold of him again, brought him back to the plantation, and then, as Isaiah, Benjamin Montgomery's son, has told me, Mr. Davis "came to an understanding" with his young slave.

Just what that understanding was no one seems now to know exactly, but in any case, as a result of it, Benjamin Montgomery received a pretty fair education, sufficient, at any rate, to enable him in after years, when he came to have entire charge, as he soon did, of Mr. Davis's plantation, to survey the line of the levee which was erected to protect the plantation from the waters of the Mississippi, to draw out plans, and to compute the size of buildings, a number of which were erected at different times under his direction.

Mrs. Jefferson Davis, in her memoir of her husband, referring to Benjamin Montgomery, and to the manner in which Joseph Davis conducted his plantation, says :

A maxim of Joseph E. Davis was, "The less people are governed, the more submissive they will be to control." This idea he carried out with his family and with his slaves. He instituted trial by jury of their peers, and taught them the legal form of holding it. His only share in the jurisdiction

was the pardoning power. When his slave could do better for himself than by daily labor, he was at liberty to do so, giving either in money or other equivalent the worth of ordinary field service. One of his slaves kept a variety shop, and on many occasions the family bought of him at his own prices. He shipped, and indeed sometimes purchased, the fruit crops of the Davis families, and also of other people in "The Bend," and in one instance credited one of us with \$2,000 on his account. The bills were presented by him with promptitude and paid, as were those of others on an independent footing, without delay. He many times borrowed from his master, but was equally as exact in his dealings with his creditors. His sons, Thornton and Isaiah, first learned to work, and then were carefully taught by their father to read, write, and cipher, and now Ben Montgomery's sons are both responsible men of property; one is in business in Vicksburg, and the other is a thriving farmer in the West.

Some years after the settlement on the bottom-lands at Davis's Bend had been made, Mr. Jefferson Davis joined his brother and lived for several years upon an adjoining plantation. The two brothers had much the same ideas about the management of their slaves. Both of them took personal supervision of their estates, and Jefferson Davis, like his brother, had a colored man to whom he refers as his "friend and servant, James Pemberton," who, until he died, seems to have had practically the whole charge of the Brierfield plantation, in the same way that Benjamin Montgomery had charge of the Hurricane. After the war both of these plantations were sold for the sum of \$300,000 to Benjamin Montgomery and his sons, who conducted them for a number of years, until, as a result of floods and the low price of cotton, they were compelled to give them up.

As illustrating the kindly relations and good will which continued to exist between the ex-President of the Confederacy, Jefferson Davis, and his former slaves, both during the years that they lived together on the plantation and afterward, Mrs. Davis has printed several letters written to her by them after Mr. Davis's death.

From all that I have been able to learn, the early slaves, and by these I mean the first generation which were brought to America fresh from Africa, seem to have remained more or less alien in customs and sympathy to their white masters.

This was more particularly the case on the large plantations along the Carolina coast, where the slaves came very little in contact with their masters, and remained to a very large degree and for a considerable time merely an African colony on American soil.

But the later generations, those who knew Africa only by tradition, were different. Each succeeding generation of the Creole Negroes—to use the expression in its original meaning—managed to pick up more and more, as it had the opportunity, the language, the ideas, the habits, the crafts, and the religious conceptions of the white man, until the life of the black man was wholly absorbed into that of the plantation upon which he lived.

The Negro in exile from his native land neither pined away nor grew bitter. On the contrary, as soon as he was able to adjust himself to the conditions of his new life, his naturally cheerful and affectionate disposition began to assert itself. Gradually the natural human sympathies of the African began to take root in the soil of the New World, and then, growing up spontaneously, to twine about the life of the white man, by whose side the black man now found himself. The slave soon learned to love the children of his master, and they loved him in return. The quaint humor of the Negro slave helped him to turn many a hard corner. It helped to excuse his mistakes, and, by turning a reproof into a jest, to soften the resentment of his master for his faults.

Quaint and homely tales that were told around the fireside made the Negro cabin a place of romantic interest to the master's children. The simple, natural joy of the Negro in little things converted every change in the dull routine of his life into an event. Hog-killing time was an annual festival, and the corn-shucking was a joyous event which the whites and blacks, each in their respective ways, took part in and enjoyed. These corn-shucking bees, or whatever they may be called, took place during the last of November or the first half of December. They were a sort of a prelude to the festivities of the Christmas season. Usually they were held upon one of the larger and wealthier plantations.

After all the corn had been gathered, thousands of bushels, sometimes, it would

be piled up in the shape of a mound, often to the height of fifty or sixty feet. Invitations would be sent around by the master himself to the neighboring planters, inviting their slaves on a certain night to attend. In response to these invitations as many as one or two hundred men, women, and children would come together.

When all were assembled around the pile of corn, some one individual, who had already gained a reputation as a leader in singing, would climb on top of the mound and begin at once, in clear, loud tones, a solo—a song of the corn-shucking season—a kind of singing which, I am sorry to say, has very largely passed from memory and practice. After leading off in this way, in clear, distinct tones, the chorus at the base of the mound would join in, some hundred voices strong. The words, which were largely improvised, were very simple and suited to the occasion, and more often than not they had the flavor of the camp-meeting rather than of any more secular proceeding. Such singing I have never heard on any other occasion. There was something wild and weird about that music, such as I suspect will never again be heard in America.

One of these songs, as I remember, ran about as follows:

I

Massa's niggers am slick and fat,
Oh! Oh! Oh!
Shine just like a new beaver hat,
Oh! Oh! Oh!

REFRAIN

Turn out here and shuck dis corn,
Oh! Oh! Oh!
Biggest pile o' corn seen since I was born,
Oh! Oh! Oh!

II

Jones's niggers am lean an' po';
Oh! Oh! Oh!
Don't know whether dey get 'nough to eat
or no,
Oh! Oh! Oh!

REFRAIN

Turn out here and shuck dis corn,
Oh! Oh! Oh!
Biggest pile o' corn seen since I was born,
Oh! Oh! Oh!

Little by little the slave songs, the quaint stories, sayings, and anecdotes of the slave's life, began to give their quality

to the life of the plantation. Half the homely charm of Southern life was made by the presence of a Negro. The homes that had no Negro servants were dreary by contrast, and that was not due to the fact that, ordinarily, the man who had slaves was rich and the man who had no slaves was poor.

The four great crops of the South—tobacco, rice, sugar, and cotton—were all raised by slave labor. In the early days it was thought that no labor except that of the Negro was suited to cultivate these great staples of Southern industry, and that opinion prevails pretty widely still. But it was not merely his quality as a laborer that made the Negro seem so necessary to the white man in the South; it was also these other qualities to which I have referred—his cheerfulness and sympathy, his humor and his fidelity. No one can honestly say that there was anything in the nature of the institution of slavery that would develop these qualities in a people who did not possess them. On the contrary, what we know about slavery elsewhere leads us to believe that the system would have developed qualities quite different, so that I think I am justified in saying that most of the things that made slavery tolerable, both to the white man and to the black man, were due to the native qualities of the African.

Southern writers, looking back and seeking to reproduce the genial warmth and gracious charm of that old ante-bellum Southern life, have not failed to do full justice to the part that the Negro played in it. The late Joel Chandler Harris, for instance, has given us in the character of "Uncle Remus" the type of the Negro story-teller who delights and instructs the young children of the "big house" with his quaint animal stories that have been handed down to the Negro by his African ancestors. The "Br'er Rabbit" stories of Uncle Remus are now a lasting element in the literature, not only of the South, but of America, and they are recognized as the peculiar contribution of the American Negro slave to the folk-lore stories of the world.

In my own State of Virginia Mr. Thomas Nelson Page has given us, in "Uncle Billy" and "Uncle Sam," two typical characters worthy of study by

those who wish to understand the human side of the Negro slave on the aristocratic plantations of that State. In Mr. Page's story "Meh Lady" Uncle Billy was guide, philosopher, and friend to his mistress and her daughter in the trying times of war and in their days of poverty. He hid their silver, refused to give information to the Union soldiers, prayed the last prayer with his dying mistress, comforted her lonely daughter, and at last gave her away in marriage.

In the story of "Marse Chan" Mr. Page lets Uncle Sam, the slave body-guard, tell in the following language what happened to his young master during the Civil War on the field of battle :

Marse Chan he calls me, an' he sez, " Sam, we'se goin' to win in dis battle, an' den we'll go home an' git married; an' I'm going home wid a star on my collar." An' den he sez, " Ef I'm wounded, kyah me, yo' hear?" An' I sez, " Yes, Marse Chan." Well, jes' den dey blowed boots an' saddles an' we mounted—an' dey said, " Charge 'em," an' my King ef ever yo' see bullets fly, dey did dat day. . . . We wen' down de slope, I 'long wid de res', an' up de hill right to de cannons, an' de fire wuz so strong dyah our lines sort o' broke an' stop; an' de cun'l was kilt, an' I b'lieve dey wuz jes' 'bout to break all to pieces wen Marse Chan rid up an' cotch holt de flag and hollers, " Follow me." . . . Yo' ain' never heah thunder. Fust thing I knowed de Roan roll head over heels an' flung me up 'gainst de bank like yo' chuck a nubbin over 'g'inst de foot o' de corn pile. An' dat wat kep me from being kilt, I 'spects. When I look 'roun' de Roan was lying dyah stone dead. 'Twan' mo'n a minit, de sorrel come gallupin' back wid his mane flyin' and de rein hangin' down on one side to his knee. I jumped up an' run over de bank an' dyah, wid a whole lot ob dead mens and some not dead yit, on de one side o' de guns, wid de flag still in he han' an' a bullet right thru' he body, lay Marse Chan. I tu'n 'im over an' call 'im, " Marse Chan," but 'twan' no use. He wuz done gone home. I pick him up in my arms wid de flag still in he han' an' toted 'im back jes' like I did dat day when he wuz a baby an' ole master gin 'im to me in my arms, an' say he could trus' me, an' tell me to tek keer on 'im long as he lived. I kyah'd 'im way off de battlefiel' out de way o' de balls an' I laid 'im down under a big tree till I could git somebody to ketch de sorrel for me. He was kotched arter a while, an' I hed some money, so I got some pine plank an' made a coffin dat evenin' an' wrap Marse Chan's body up in de flag an' put 'im in de coffin, but I didn't nail de top on strong, 'cause I knowed de old missus wan' to see 'im; an' I got a ambulance an' set out fo' home dat night.

We reached dyah de nex' evenin' arter travelin' all dat night an' all nex' day.

In the Palace of Fine Arts, in St. Louis, during the Exposition of 1904, there was a picture which made a deep impression on every Southern white man and black man who saw it who knew enough of the old life to understand what it meant. The Rev. A. B. Curry, of Memphis, Tennessee, referring to this picture in a sermon in his home city on November 27, 1904, said :

When I was in the Palace of Fine Arts, in St. Louis, this summer, I saw a picture before which I stood and wept. In the distance was a battle scene; the dust of trampling men and horses, the smoke of cannon and rifles filled the air; broken carriages and dead and dying men strewed the ground. In the foreground was the figure of a stalwart Negro man, bearing in his strong arms the form of a fair-haired Anglo-Saxon youth. It was the devoted body-servant of a young Southerner, bearing the dead body of his young master from the field of carnage, not to pause or rest till he had delivered it to those whose love for it only surpassed his own; and underneath the picture were these words—" Faithful Unto Death;" and there are men before me who have seen the spirit of that picture on more than one field of battle.

The slaves in Virginia and the border States were, as a rule, far superior, or at least they considered themselves so, to the slaves of the lower South. Even in freedom this feeling of superiority remains. Furthermore, the mansion house-servants, of whom Mr. Page writes, having had an opportunity to share to a large extent the daily life of their masters, were very proud of their superior position and advantages, and had little contact with the field-hands. It is, perhaps, not generally understood that in slavery days lines were drawn among the slaves just as they were among the white people. The servants owned by a rich and aristocratic family considered that the servants of " a poor white man," one who was not able to own more than half a dozen slaves, were not in the same social class with themselves. And yet the life of these more despised slaves had its vicissitudes, its obscure heroisms, and its tragedies just like the rest of the world. In fact, it was from the plantation hands, as a rule, that the most precious records of slave life came—the plantation hymns. The field-hands sang these songs and they expressed their lives.

I have frequently met and talked with old men of my race who have grown up in slavery. It is difficult for these old men to express all that they feel. Occasionally, however, they will utter some quaint, humorous turn of expression in which there is a serious thought underneath.

One old farmer who owns a thousand acres of land not far from Tuskegee said: "We's jes' so ign't out heah, we don' see no diff'rence 'twe'n freedom an' slav'ry, 'cept den we's workin' fer some one else, and now we's workin' fer oursel's."

Some time ago an old colored man who has lived for a number of years near the Tuskegee Institute, in talking about his experience since freedom, remarked that the greatest difference he had found between slavery and freedom was that in the days of slavery his master had to think for him, but since he had been free he had to think and plan for himself.

At another time out in Kansas I met an old colored woman who had left her home in Tennessee directly after the war and settled with a large number of other colored people in what is called "Tennessee Town," now a suburb of Topeka, Kansas. In talking with her about her experiences in freedom and in slavery, I asked her if she did not sometimes feel as if she would not like to go back to the old days and live as she had lived on the plantation.

"Sometimes," she replied, "I feel as I'd like to go back and see my old massa and missus"—she hesitated a moment and then added, "but they sold my baby down South."

Aside from the slave songs very little has come down to us from slavery days that shows how slavery looked to the masses of the people.

There are a considerable number of slave narratives written by fugitive slaves with the assistance of abolitionist friends; but, as these were composed for the most part under the excitement of the anti-slavery agitation, they show things, as a rule, somewhat out of proportion. There is one of these stories, however, that gives a picture of the changing fortunes and vicissitudes of slave life which makes it especially interesting. I refer to the

story of Charity Bower, who was born in 1779, near Edenton, North Carolina, and lived to a considerable age after she obtained her freedom. She described her master as very kind to his slaves. He used to whip them sometimes with a hickory switch, she said, but never let his overseer do so. Continuing, she said:

My mother nursed all his children. She was reckoned a very good servant, and our mistress made it a point to give one of my mother's children to each one of her own. I fell to the lot of Elizabeth, the second daughter. Oh, my mistress was a kind woman. She was all the same as a mother to poor Charity. If Charity wanted to learn to spin, she let her learn; if Charity wanted to learn to knit, she let her learn; if Charity wanted to learn to weave, she let her learn. I had a wedding when I was married, for mistress didn't like to have her people take up with one another without any minister to marry them. . . . My husband was a nice, good man, and mistress knew we set stores by one another. Her children promised they never would separate me from my husband and children. Indeed, they used to tell me they would never sell me at all, and I am sure they meant what they said. But my young master got into trouble. He used to come home and sit leaning his head on his hands by the hour together, without speaking to anybody. I see something was the matter, and begged him to tell me what made him look so worried. He told me he owed seventeen hundred dollars that he could not pay, and he was afraid he should have to go to prison. I begged him to sell me and my children, rather than to go to jail. I see the tears come into his eyes. "I don't know, Charity," he said; "I'll see what can be done. One thing you may feel easy about; I will never separate you from your husband and children, let what will come."

Two or three days after he come to me, and says he: "Charity, how should you like to be sold to Mr. Kinmore?" I told him I would rather be sold to him than to anybody else, because my husband belonged to him. Mr. Kinmore agreed to buy us, and so I and my children went there to live.

Shortly after this her new master died, and her new mistress was not as kind to her as he had been. Thereupon she set to work to buy the freedom of her children.

"Sixteen children I've had, first and last," she said, "and twelve I've nursed for my mistress. From the time my first baby was born I always set my heart upon buying freedom for some of my children. I thought it was more consequence to them than to me, for I was old and used to being a slave."

In order to save up money enough for

this purpose she set up a little oyster board just outside her cabin, which adjoined the open road. When any one came along who wanted a few oysters and crackers, she would leave her washing and wait upon them. In this way she saved up two hundred dollars, but for some reason or another she never succeeded in getting her mistress's consent to buy one of the children. It was not always easy for a master to emancipate his slave in those days, even if he wanted to do so. On the contrary, as she says, "one after another—one after another—she sold 'em from me."

It was to a "thin, peaked-looking man who used to come and buy of me," she says, that she finally owed her freedom. "Sometimes," she continued, "he would say, 'Aunt Charity, you must fix me up a nice little mess, for I am poorly to-day.' I always made something good for him; and if he didn't happen to have any change, I always trusted him."

It was this man, a Negro "speculator," according to her story, who finally purchased her with her five children, and, giving her the youngest child, set her free.

"Well," she ended, "after that I concluded I'd come to the free States. Here I am takin' in washing; my daughter is smart at her needle, and we get a very comfortable living."

There was much in slavery besides its hardships and its cruelties; much that was tender, human, and beautiful. The heroic efforts that many of the slaves made to buy their own and their children's freedom deserve to be honored equally with the devotion that they frequently showed in the service of their masters. And, after all, considering the qualities which the Negro slave developed under trying conditions, it does not seem to me that there is any real reason why any one who wishes him well should despair of the future of the Negro either in this country or elsewhere.