

Saved in a Basket, or Daph and Her Charge.

CHAPTER IX.—Continued

With this promise again repeated, Rose kissed the children, and, with a murmured word of comfort to Daph, passed from the room.

Not so soon passed away the influence of that visit prompted by Christian kindness, rich in blessings to the humble negress; most precious to that young disciple of Christ, who had learned to love to be 'about her Master's business.'

CHAPTER X.

STRANGE PROCEEDINGS.

Day after day Rose Stuyvesant continued her ministry of love to Daph and the little ones. The hour of her morning visit was watched for, and hailed with joy; and well it might be, for she brought with her the sweet influence of a loving heart and an earnest and devoted spirit.

The children were, as usual, looking eagerly out for her one morning, about a week after her first appearance in their humble home. Daph, who was once more on her feet, was moving about with a step a little more languid than usual, trying, as she said, 'to make the place look a little more fit for the sweet young lady to sit down in.' Charlie, who was perched on a chair beside his sister, and had his nose pressed from time to time flat against the window, and had drawn all sorts of strange characters with his fat fingers, in the dampness left by his breath against the pane, at length had his attention suddenly arrested. 'Oh, Lou!' he shouted, 'look this way on the steps! there's that ugly, old, bad doctor, that cut dear Daffy's arm, and two big men with him.'

'Good doctor, Charlie!' said Daph; 'he wanted to make Daffy well, but he didn't jus' know how. It took Miss Rose wid her sweet holy words to do Daph good.'

'He's an old, bad doctor, I say, and he shan't come in,' said Charlie, springing towards the door, as the voice of the doctor sounded in the hall, and his hand touched the latch. The sturdy little figure of the boy, resolutely backed up against the door, was but a small obstacle in the way of the strong hands that forced it instantly open.

'For shame, Mass' Charlie! Let the young genman in!' said Daph, as she came forward, dropping a curtsy. 'I'se quite well, sir, to-day,' she continued, 'and I'se mighty tankful for you being so uncommon willing to do somewhat for to cure Daph, for by her arm do be a little stiff for de cuttin' you gib it de oder day.'

'He's an old, bad man to hurt Daffy, and I ain't glad to see him a bit,' said Charlie, with an angry look.

'Do your work. This is the woman!' said the slender young doctor, turning to the stout men he had brought with him.

A strong hand was laid on each shoulder of the astonished Daph, and a rough voice said, 'Come with us, old woman!'

'I isn't goin' to do no such thing,' said she, with an indignant glance. 'What for is I goin' to waste my time goin' wid them as I has no business wid? Perhaps you doesn't know what manners is, to be laying hands on a poor nigger dis way. Take your big hands off! I'se my missus' children to look after, and we's would be glad to hab dis bit of a room to ourselves!'

Daph had not spoken very rapidly, but even as the indignant words forced themselves out of her mouth, she was hurried towards the door.

'You'd better do your talking now,' said one of the men, coarsely, 'for before half an hour's over you'll be locked up where nobody'll hear you if you holler till you are hoarse.'

Daph began to struggle violently, and the sinewy men who held her were well nigh compelled to relinquish their grasp.

'Is you a genman, doctor,' she said desperately, at last; 'is you a genman, and stand still and see a poor woman treated dis way?'

'You are only getting your deserts,' said little Dr. Bates, drawing himself up and trying to look dignified. 'You are to be tried for stealing, and for the other awful crimes which your own conscience can best count over to you; and be sure the severest punishment of the law awaits you!'

'Is that all?' said Daph, her spirit rising. 'Carry me to any real genman, and it would take more liars than ever grew to prove any such like things against poor Daph. I'se not a bit afeared to go wid you, for sartan I'se be back soon 'nough.'

The children, who had at first been struck with silent astonishment, now began to realize that Daph was actually going from them. Louise burst into a violent fit of weeping, and clung to the unfortunate negress, while Crarlie, with an uplifted wash basin, made a sudden attack upon the slender legs of Dr. Bates, which broke up his dignified composure, and made him give a skip that would have done honor to a bear dancing on a hot iron plate.

'No Mass' Charlie, I'se do be ashamed,' said Daph, subduing the grin that had suddenly overspread her face. 'De young genman don't know no better! 'Taint likely he ever had anybody to teach him! You jus' let him be, Mass' Charlie, and tend to your own sister Miss Lou, here. Don't cry, pretty dear, Daph will be back soon. De Lord won't let them hurt Daph! You be jus' good children and dat sweet Miss Rose will comfort you till Daph comes home.'

The last words were hardly uttered when the negress was forced into a long, covered waggon, and rapidly borne away from the door. At this moment Mary Ray ran, breathlessly, up the steps, exclaiming:— 'Where have they taken Daph, mother? Mother, what is the matter?'

'Matter enough,' said Mrs. Ray, vehemently. 'Who could have told it would have ended that way! I am sure I never meant any such thing. Daph's gone to prison; and just as likely I shall never hear the end of it, and have the children upon my hands, into the bargain. Well, well; I wish I'd never set eyes on that bad man, Dr. Bates.'

The bitter reproaches that rose to Mary's lips were hushed at the mention of the children; and she hastened to comfort them as well as she could, while Mrs. Ray went back to her kitchen in no very enviable frame of mind.

CHAPTER XI.

ANOTHER FRIEND.

'Dis don't be the cleanest place in de world!' said Daph to herself, as she looked round the small, bare room, into which

she had been thrust. 'Well,' she continued, 'de Lord Jesus do be everywhere, and Daph no reason to be above stayin' where such as he do set foot. But den de childen! What's to become of de childen?'

Here Daph's resolution gave way, and she had a hearty cry. 'Daph, you do be a wicked creter,' she said to herself, at length. 'Jus' as if de Lord Jesus didn't love little children ebber so much better dan you can! He's jus' able hisself to take care ob de dears; and Daph needn't go for to fret herself 'bout dem.'

(To be continued.)

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