IRENE THE FOUNDLING;

Or, The Slave's Revenge.

By the Author of " The Banker of Bedford."

CHAPTER L IN THE STAGE COACH AND AT THE EXY.

Thick, misty clouds overcast the sky; peals of thunder in the distance came rolling nearer and nearer, until they burst into one prolonged roar just above a lumbering cld stage-coach slowly making its way over the muddy roads of a Virginia post route, the driver incessantly oracking his long whip over the backs of his jaded horses, and arging them, with shouts and exclamations, to accelerate their speed.

This scene occurs in what is now West Virginia. It is west of the mountain range, but where, on every hand, are frowning precipices, deep gorges and swift-flowing torrents. On the right, the jutting headlands are crowned with huge old bowlders, just peoping out from the thicket of evergreens and creeping vines which surround them. Although not called mountainous, it is a country whose picturesque heights and umprageous valleys would excite a degree of enthusiase in the bosom of a lover of the beautiful , n in those lonely valleys, almost hidden in their leafy groves, was the home of many an old Virginia aristocrat. The great, gnarled oak standing upon the verge of some miniature precipice, and glooming sullenly through the misty rain, seems but part of some pictured scene. Far in the distance, faintly penciled against the misty sky, rise headlands to what seems an enor-mous height, about them a dark mass of clouds, like some glant's garment caught upon the peaks and blown about at the will of the wind. It envelops and conceals the highest peaks, leaving the imagination to add to the belief in their stupendous height.

It has been raining all day, and the driver of the stage-coach is anxious to reach his destinution.

" ec-up! If we don't git to Lander's Hill efore dark, I be hanged if we don't are for the night," he exclaimed.

The age-coach moves slowly along, and the sha a of evening are closing in. Six or seven pa engors are seated within, and are about as a comfortable as stage-coach travelers could well be. There is but a single lady among them, and the chivalric spirit of the Southron has assigned to her the most comfortable place in the coach. We are interested in but one of these travelers, a man about forty-five or fifty years of age, something over medium size, whose appearance stamped him as a well-to-do Virginia planter. His face was smooth-shaven, and his hair, once dark, was silvered with the flight of years. His was a handsome face, and a pleasant one to look upon; there was some thing pleasing and attractive about its expression, and the mild gray eyes burned with dress was plain gray homespuv, commonly worn as the travelling dress of a Scutherner of the finest silk, broad-brimmed and lowcrowned, such as Southern planters invariably wore. Though unostentatious in manner, he was evidently a man accustomed to was, moreover, a man accustomed to looking at both sides of a question, and arriving at conclusions without bias or prejudice, frame was a fine type of manhood, and his muscular arms showed him possessed of more than an ordinary degree of strength.

This man alone of all the passengers maintained a silent and thoughtful mood as the coach passed on its way. A constant conver-sation was kept up by the other passengers on the weather, the roads, the journey, its not far off. termination, and last, but not least, the politics of the day. However, while the gentleman whom we have more particularly described, and now introduce to our readers as George W. Tompkins, of Virginia, sat moody of lightning momentarily lit up surrounding and silent, and seemingly utterly oblivious of objects, only to render the blackness more the discomforts within or the gloomy prospect | complete. Far down the road the old man's talking, and continually jostling against him. without rousing Mr. Tompkins from his re-

His mind was clouded by a horror that made him careless of present surroundings. He looked worn and weary, more so than any of the other passengers, and occasionally, when the coach rolled over smooth ground he would lean back in his seat and close his eyes. No sooner done, however, than a thousand fantastic shapes would glide before his mental vision, that seemed to take delight in appoying him. Whenever he became unconscious to his real surroundings, shrieks geemed to sound in his ear, and he seemed to hear the cry :

"Search, search, search! Your task's not over, your task's not over !" 'And where shall I scarch?" he mentally

Enked. "Ah, where?" the voice wailed.

Then the planter would rouse himself, and glance at the passengers and out of the window in the endeavor to keep his mind free from the annoyances. For a few moments he would succeed, but days and nights of exertion, horror and excitement were telling upon him; once more he would succumb and once more the fantastic shadows thronged about him, and the voice, mingling strangely with the grating roar of the coach's wheels, smote on his ear:

"Saarch, search, search! Your task's not

over! Your task's not over!"
"Where shall I search?" "Ah, where?"

"You don't seem to be well, friend," remarked a fellow-traveler, observing the startted and restless manner of Mr. Tompkina.

"Yes, I am well; that is-no, I am not; I am somewhat wearied," Mr. Tompkins an-"So are we all," rejoined the passenger.

"This journey has been enough to wear out men of iron, and the prospects for the night are far from cheering."
"I had expected to reach home to-night,"

said the planter, " but I shall fail by a good

"You live in this State?"

"Yes, sir," answered Mr. Tompkins, set-tling himself in his corner.

The gentleman, evidently a Southern man, seeing that Mr. Tompkins was indisposed to carry on any further conversation, relapsed With another effort Mr. Tompinto silence. kins conquered the stupor which, with all its fantastic concomitants, was once more overcoming him, and sat bolt upright in his seat.

"This has been a fearful week," he soliloquized, "but I have done all I could," The gentleman by his side, catching the last part of the remark, and supposing it had

reference to the present journey, remarked: "Yes, it is no fault of the passengers, but of the managers of this line. They should be prepared for such emergencies, and have a

supply of fresh horses." Observing that his exclamation, though misinterpreted, had arrested attention, Mr. Tompkine, to guard against its recurrence, lest he should divulge the subject of his disturbed thoughts, aroused himself and resisted, with determination, the stuper that was overcoming him. It was while thus combating the fatigue that weighed him down hat the stage-coach came to a very sudden

top.
The driver, pressing his face to the aper ture at the top of the coach, oried out: hanged if the hosses are able to drag ye all up. They are completely fagged out, so I guess ye men folks 'il hev to heof it to the

top, an' occasionally give us a gush, or we'll stick here until mornin'." " How far is it to where we can stop over night?" asked the passenger who had en-deavored to draw Mr. Tompking into convermation.

"After we git on top of the hill it's only bout three miles to Jerry Lycan's inn, where we'll stop for the night, an' it's down hill 'most all the way," replied the driver.

Vith mech grumbling and snuny impreca-

tions on the heads of the managers of the stage line, the passengers clambered out of the coach. A long, muddy hill, in places quite steep, lay before them. It was nearly half a mile to the top, and portions of the road were ccarcely passable even in good

weather. "These are public roads in Virginia!" ex-claimed one gentleman, as he alighted in the

mud. "We can't have railroads to every place," essayed a fellow-traveler, evidently a Virginian; "but you will find our soil good." going to turn a Martin Van Buren and join the Free-soilers?" "Yes, good for sticking purposes," said

greater adhesive qualities."
"Now look "eo," said the driver, "we'll hev some purty smart jogs, where the hosses 'il not be able to pall up, and you'll hav to put your shoulders agin the coach an' give us push."
"May I be blessed!" ejaculated the

Southerner. "They are not even content to make us walk, but want us to draw the coach."

"Better to do that an' hev a coach at the top to ride in than to walk three miles," said

After allowing his herses a brief rest, the driver cracked his whip and the lumbering coach moved on, the passengers slowly plod-ding along behind. None seemed pleased with the prospect of a walk up the long, muddy hill, but the grumtling Southerner manifested a more decided repugnance than either of the others.

"This is worse than wading through Carolina swamps waist deep," he exclaimed, as he trudged along, dragging his weary feet and mud-freighted boots after him.

The coach had not proceeded more than a dozen rods when it came to one of the "joga" in the hill alluded to by the driver. "Now help here, or we'll stick sure. Git up!' cried the driver, and the poor, tired horses nerved themselves for the extra effort required of them. The ascent here was both steep and slippery, and it required the united strength of horses and passengers to pass over the place.

Here the passengers discovered the prodino ambitious designs of fiery passions; his gious strength which lay in the broad shouldress was plain gray homespup, commonly ders of Mr. Tompkins. Not a murmur had escaped his lips when required to walk up the at the time of which we write. His hat was , hill, and he was the first to place his shoulder to the wheel to push the coach over the diffi-cult passage. To still further increase the discomforts of their position they were thoroughly drenched by a passing shower the manifold comforts of Southern life. He | which overtook them before they reach the summit of the hill. Here they again climbed into the coach, and resuming their seats, were whirled along through the gathering darkness toward the inn.

Old Jerry Lycan stood on the long porch o his old-fashioned Virginia tavern, and peered down the road through the gloom. It had been dark but a few moments. The old man's ears caught the sound of wheels coming down the road, and he knew the stage was

"The roads are just awful," said the land-lord, "and no wonder it is belited."

The night was intensely dark; not a star was to be seen in the sky; an occasional flash without, his fellow-passengers were continually eyes caught a glimpse of the coach-lights bobbing up and down as the ponderous vehicle oscillated over the rough roads. Approaching slowly, like a wearied thing of life, the cumbrous stage at last appeared, made visible only by its own lamps, which the driver had lighted. The splashing of six horses along the miry roads and the dull rolling of the huge wheels made the vehicle heard long before it was seen.

"Rube haint no outside passengers tonight," said the landlord, seeing that the top seats of the coach were vacant. "'Spose nobody'd want to ride out in the rain.'

"Here ye are at Lycan's inn," called out the driver to the inmates of the coach as he reined in his waary horses in front of the readside tavern.

Uncle Jerry as he was called, with his old, perforated tin lantern, came to open the stage door and show his guests into the house Rube, the driver, tossing the rein to the stable-boy, climbed down from his lofty perch, and went into the bar-room to get something hot' to warm his benumed body.

The landlord brought the wet and weary men into the room, where a great fire was blezing, and promised that supper should be ready by the time they were dry. The Southerner declared that he was much too dry within, though he was dripping wet without. Uncle Jerry smiling invited him into the bar-room. The Southerner needed no second invitation, and soon returned, saying that Virginia inna were not so bad after all.

The lady had been shown to a private apartment, while the gentlemen were attempting to dry their clothing by the fire in the public room. The Southerner, who had been in much better humor since his visit to the bar, seemed now to look very philosophically upon his souking and other inconveniences of travel.

Our planter, Mr. Tompkins, sat in front of the pile of blazing logs, gazing at the bright, panoramic pictures constantly forming there, Sleeping or waking, darkness of the stagecoach and in those glowing embers, he saw but one picture, and its horrors were con-

stantly haunting his mind. The other guests talked and laughed while their soaked clothes were drying, but Mr. Tompkins was silent, whether sitting or standing. Almost before their clothes were dry supper was aunounced, and they all re-paired to the long, low dining room and seated themselves at the table. The supper, plain and substantial, was just suited to the

needs of the hungry guests.

The evening meal over, they returned to the sitting room. The Southerner had lit a clear, and kept up a constant flow of conver-

sation, "Virginia is too near the Free-soilers," said, evidently directing his remarks to Mr. Tompkins; "don's they come over here and steal your niggers?"

"They never bave," Mr. Tompkins an swered.

'I take it for granted you own slaves?" "Yes, sir; I have a number on my planta tlon, and never have had one stolen yet."

"Barnburners," 'Wooly "Don't the Barnburners, Wooly Heads' and Abolitionists from Ohio and Pennsylvania come over here and steal them away ?'

"They have never taken any from me." "Well, that's a wonder. I know a numimpossible to keep niggers at all." "Perhaps they are not good masters," said Mr. Tompkins.

"They were the best of masters, and they lost their niggers, though they guarded them phers, and his familiarity with historical with watchful overseers and bloodhounds." events shows him to have been a student; "But do you think that a good master needs to guard his slaves with armed over-

every week by reports of some of their outrages: S. samps and canebrakes have become the haunts of runaway blacks, who, having murdered their master, seek to wreck vengeance on innocent children or women," Mr. Tompkins started at these assertions,

as though he felt a pang at his heart. even a beast may be goarded to madness. Is it not an unrighteous system which is chrushing and cursing our beloved country?"

"What system?"

"Slavery."
"Why, sir, you are a singular slave-holder," cried the Southerner. "Are you

"There is a great deal in that question, the first speaker, trying to snake some of the mud from his boots; "I never saw soil with else I would not own a slave; but if our else I would not own a slave; but if our slaves are to be treated as animals, it were better if the institution were abolished."

"How would you treat them?" "Discharge the overseers, to begin with." "I am sure, you would fail."
"The plan has succeeded well on my plantation," said Mr. Tompkins, "and I do not

own a single negro who would not die for

Here were met two men, both believing in the institution of human slavery, but carrying out its principles, how differently! Tae one with cool Northern blood and kindly feelings, advocating a humane mode of ruling the helpless being in his power. The other, representing the extreme type of refined cruelty and oppression. The mind of the one grew more and more in harmony with the idea of abolition, while the other came to hate, with all the fierceness of his Southern heart, the idea of universal freedom; became willing, even, to strike at that flag which had failed to protect his interests and his opi-

nions. The date at which we write was directly after the election and inauguration of Taylor as President of the United States. The opposition to human slavery had steadily been gaining ground, regardless of taunts and sneers, and the ranks of the Abolitionists were hourly on the increase. Slavery was pe sliarly a selfish institution. It is folly to say that only men born and reared in the South could be numbered among the upholders of this "peculiar institution," for many Northern men went South and purchased plantations and slaves, and in 1861 many of these enlisted on the Confederate side, and fought under the Confederate flag, not from principle, but from self-interest.

Mr. Tompkins, who was Northern born, believed in slavery simply because he owned slaves, and not from any well defined prin-Even now the same conflict that later convulsed the Nation was raging in his heart -the conflict between self-interest and the right. Press and pulpit, the lecturer's rostrum and the novelist's pen, had almost plied. wrought out the doom of slavery, when the politician took up the stormy dispute.

The discussion in the Virginia inn was warm but friendly, the Carolinian declaring that God and Nature had ordained the negro for slavery; that his diet should be the ashcake, his stimulant the whip, his reward for obedience a blanket and a hut, his punishment for rebellion chains and death. Doubtless his passion over-reached his judgment in room.

hoping to end the discussion, which was drawing to them the attention of all, "the policy you suggest will, I fear, plunge our whole country into trouble. Few men are torn rulers, and history has never shown one successful who ruled by harsh measures only Admitting that a negro is not a rational being, kindness with a beast can accomplish more than harshness. It is cruel masters who make runaway slaves. The parting of parent and child, husband and wife, torn ruthlessly asunder, never to see each other again, will make even a negro furious. I fear, sir, that slavery is a bad institution, but | thoughts that harassed his mind, and a few it is firmly established among us, and I see no way at present to get rid of it.'

The other guests at Jerry Lycan's inn had gathered in groups of two and three, and were listening silently to the different views of these two upholders of slavery, for there were factions in those days among the slavery men. The landlord had entered the rcom, and, being a politician himself, drank in the discussion with deepest interest.

Just as the argument was at its height the outer door of the inn opened and a boy, wild-eyed, but handsome, entered. A glance at the strangely wild eyes and disheveled hair convinced all present that he was insane. He was about twelve years of age, with a slender figure and a well-shaped head, but some great shock had unseated his reason. His mania was of a mild, harmless type. Walking directly up to Mr. Tompkins, he

"Have you seen my father? You look very much like my father, but I know he has not yet come into Egypt.

The voice was so plaintive and ead that it touched at once the hearts of all, and happily put an end to the conversation. "Who is your father?" asked Mr. Tomo-

kins. "Jacob is my father. I am his favorite son. My brothers sold me a slave into Egypt, and told my father I had been slain by wild beasts. Have you seen my father?"
"He is crazy. Humor him, say something to him," whispered the landlord.

"Your father is not yet ready to come into Egypt," said Mr. Tompkins.
"And my brother Benjamin—did you see

him?" the lad asked. " Yes." "Is the famine sore in the land where my father dwells?"

"And does he suffer—is he old? Oh, yes, I remember; my father must be dead." He seated himself on a low stool by the fireside, and, bowing his head in his hands, seemed

lost in thought. "He does that twenty times a day," said the landlord. "Who is he?" asked one of the travelers, "and where does he come from?"

"He has been here only a few days, and I know nothing about him. His first question was, 'Have you seen my father Jacob?" "Have you tried to find out about him?" asked Mr. Tompkins.

"Yes, but to no purpose," answered Uncle rry. "He came one morning and said he was fleeing from Potiphar's wrath. After inquiring for his father, he remained ellent for some time. I tried to find where he came from, but no one knows and he can not tell. I should judge by the clothes he wore that he was from the South, and, from the worn condition of his shoes, that he came a great

ber of good men on the border who find it way. He is of some respectable family, for impossible to keep niggers at all." too much book learning that has turned the boy's head. He talks of Plate and Socrates and Aristotle, and all the ancient philosoevents shows him to have been a student; but he always imagines that he is Joseph." "Where does he live?" asked Mr. Tomp-

kins. seers and dogs?" said Mr. Tompkins.

4Of course," the Carolinian snawered;
"Oh, he stays here at the inn, and shows
how else would you keep the black rascals no disposition to leave. He makes himself no disposition to leave at the same at the sam in subjection? Are we not herrified almost useful by helping the stable-boy and carries in fuel, imagining himself a servant of the-

high priest."
"Has he lucid intervals?" asked Mr. Tompkins.

"No, not what could be called lucid intervals. Once he said to a girl in the kitchen that it was books that made his head dizzv. "My friend, what you say is true, too and said something of a home a great ways true," he said; "but is the master always off, from which he had fled to escape great blameless? The regro possesses feelings, and voilence. They hoped then to clear up the and said something of a home a great ways mystery, but the next moment his mind wandered again and he was Joseph sold into Egypt, bewailing his father Jacob and his brother Benjamin." "What is his name?' asked Mr. Tomp-

kins. "We can't get any other name than Joseph, and the boys here call him Crazy

"His malady may be curable; have you consulted a physician about it?" inquired the Carolinian, who was very much interested in the strange case.

Asylum was here day before yesterday, but he pronounced him incurable.' Could not the doctor tell how long he had been in this condition?" asked Mr.

Tompkins.

fron.

"Yes, sir; a doctor from the State Lunatic

Mot with certainty, but thought it only a few weeks or months. He said he had probably escaped from his guard and ran AWAY.

At this moment the subject of conversation rose from the low stool and looked about with a vacant stare.

"Do you want to go home to your parents?" Mr. Tompkins asked. "When the famine is sore in the land they

will come for me." "Why did you run away?" "My brothers sold me to the merchants with their camels. They made my father be-lieve I was killed, and brought me here and

sold me; but I know it is written that my brother Benjamin will come and bring my father to me." "Is it not written that Jacob did go down into Egypt with his whole family, and that he wept on Joseph's neck, and said he was

him out of this strange hallucination. "Yes, yes-oh, yes!" the boy cried, eagerly. "Did not Moses deliver the children of

willing to die?" said Mr. Tompkins, to lead

Israel from bondage long after Jacob's death ?" "I remember now that he did," said Joe. "Then how can you be Joseph, when he

died three or four thousand years ago !" The boy reflected a moment, and then said: "Who can I be, if I am not Joseph?" "Some one who imagines himself Joseph," said Mr. Tompkins. "Now, try to think who you really are and where you came

"I am not Socrates, for he drank the hemlock and died, nor am I Julius Casar, for he was killed by Brutus," the poor lunatic re-

"Try to think what was your father's persisted Mr. Tompkins, hoping to pame," discover something.
"My father's name was Jacob, and I was

sold a slave into Egypt by my brothers; but

there must be something wrong; my father must be dead." Again he scated himself on the low stool and buried his face in his hands. "It's no use,' said the landlord; "that's

the heat of argument, and his brain, perhaps, was not so cool since his visit to the barroom.

as near as you'll ever come to knowing who he is from him. I have advertised him in the Pittsburg daily, but no one has come yet to claim him."

A very strai Carolinian. "Is he always mild?" "Yes; he is never cross or sullen, and seems delighted with children. He answers

them in many ways." It was growing late, and the weary travelers were ready to go to bed. The landlord, assisted by Crazy Jos and another boy, took lighted candles to the various 100ms for the guests.

By the combined aid of a good supper, a warm discussion on slavery, and his interest in the insane boy, Mr. Tompkins had succeeded in fighting away the legion of gloomy minutes after retiring was sleeping peacefully, CHAPTER II.

A NEW ARRIVAL.

Forty years ago a Virginia plenter was a king, his broad acres his kingdom, his wife his queen, his children heirs to his throne, and his slaves his subjects. True, it was a petty kingdom and he but a petty morarch; but, as a rule, petty monarche are tyrannical, and the Southern planter was not always an exception. In those days men were measured, not by moral worth, mental power, or physical stature, but by the number of acres and slaves they owned. The South has never possessed that sturdy class of veomanry that has achieved wonders in the North. Before the war labor was performed by slaves, now it is done by hired help, the farmer himself there seldom cultivating his soil.

The home of Mr. George W. Tompkins,

our acquaintance, was a marvel of beauty and taste. Located in the Northwestern portion of the State, before its division, it was just where the heat of the South was delightfully tempered by the cool winds of the North. No valley in all Virginia was more lovely. To the east were hills which might dolight any mountain lover, all clothed and fringed with delicate evergreens, through which could be caught occasional glimpses of precipitous rocks. Over the heights the sun climbed every morning to illuminate the vallev below with a radiance of glory. Mountain cascades came tumbling and plunging from mossy retreats to swell a clear pebblestrewn stream which afforded the finest tront to be found in the entire State.

The great mansion, built after the old Virginia plan, with a long stone plazza in front, stood on an eminence facing the post-road which ran within a few rods of it. The house was substantial, heavy columns, painted white as marble, supporting the porch, and quaint, old-fashioned gables, about which the swallows twittered, breaking the lines of the roof. In the front yard grew the beach and elm and chestnut tree, their wide-spreading branches indicating an existence for centuries. A little below the structure, and south-west from it, was a colony of low, small buildings, where dwelt the slaves of Mr. Tompkins. One or two were nearer, and in these the domestics lived. These were a higher order of servants than the field-hands. and they never let an opportunity pass to assert their superiority over their fellow slaves. Socially, as well as geographically, Mr. Tompkins' home combined the extremes of the North and South. He, with his calm face and mild gray eyes, was a native of the green hills of New Hampshire, while his dark-syed wife was a daughter of sunny

wealthy Georgia planter. Mr. Tompkins bad met her first in Atlanta, where he was spending the winter with a class-mate, both having graduated at Yale the year before. Their meeting grew into intimacy, from intimacy it ripened into love. Shortly after the marriage of his daughter, his only child, the planter exchanged his property for more extensive possessions in Virginia, but he never occupied this new home. He and his wife were in New Orleans, when the dread inalady, yellow-fever, seized upon them, and they died before their daughter or her huzband could go to them.

"Mr. Tompkins, a man who had always been opposed to slavery, thus found himself the owner of a large plantation in Virginia, and more than a hundred slaves. There seemed to be no other alternative, and he accepted the situation, and tried, by being a humane master, to conciliate his wounded conscience for being a master at all.

He and his only brother, Henry, had in-herited a large and valuable property from their father, in their palivo State. brother, like himself, had gone South and married a planter's daughter, and become a large slave-holder. He was a far different man from his brother. Naturally overbearing and cruck, he seemed to possess none of the other's kindness of heart or cool, dispassionate reason. He was a hard taskmaster, and no "fire-eating" Southerner ever exercised his power more remorselessly than he, and no one hated the Abolition party more cordially. But it is not with Henry Tompkins we have to deal at present.

It was near noon the day after the travelers reached Jerry Lycan's inn. Mrs. Tompkins sat on the plasza, looking down the road that led to the village. She was one of those was discovered among the ruins, but so Southern beauties who attract at a first burned and charred that it was impossible to glance; her eyes large, and dark, and brillisht; her hair soft and glossy, like waves of an animal. I have done everything I could lustrous silk. Of medium height, though not think of, and yet something seems to tell me quite so slender as when younger, her form my task is not over."

was faultless. Her cheek had the olive tint

"What has been done with the plantaof the South, and as she reclined with indolent grace in her easy chair, one little foot restlessly tapping the carpet on which it rested, she looked a very queen.

The Tompkins mansion was the grandest for many miles around, and the whole plantation bore evidence of the taste and judgment of its owner. There seemed to be nothing, from the crystal fountain splashing in front of the white-pillared dwelling to the vast fields of corn, wheat and tobacco stretching far into the back-ground, which did not add to the beauty of the place. On the north were barns, immense and

well filled granaries and stables. Then came tobacco houses, covering acres of ground. One would hardly have suspected the plain, unpretention. Mr. Tompkins as being the possessor of all this wealth. But his house held his greatest treasures—two bright little boys, aged respectively nine and seven years. Abner, the elder, had bright blue eyes and the clear Saxon complexion of his father Oleah, the younger, was of the same dark Southern type as his mother. They were two such children as even a Roman mother might have been proud to call her jewels. Bright and affectionate, they yielded a quick obedience to their parents, and-a remarkable thing for Loys-were always in perfect

accord. "Oh, mamma, mamma!" cried Oleah, following close after his trother, and quite as much excited.

"Well, what is the matter?" the mother asked, with a smile. "It's coming! it's coming! it's coming!"

cried Oleah. "He's coming! he's coming!" shouted Abner.

"Who is coming?" asked the mother. "Para, para, papa!" shouted both at the top of their voices. "Papa is coming down the big hill on the stage-scash."

Mrs. Tempkins was now looking for her-Sure enough there was the great, oldfashioned stage-loach lumbering down the hill, and her husband was an outside passen ous horn of the overleer, calling the slaves to ger, as the sky was now clear and the sun showed the mud stains of its long travel, and

the roads in places were yet filled with water. The winding of the coachman's horn, which never failed to set the boys dancing with delight, sounded mellow and clear on the morn-

ing air.
"It's going to stop! it's going to stop!" shouted Atner, and toth kept up a frautic shouting, "Whos, whos!" to the prancing horses as they drew near the house. It paused in front of the gate, and Mrs.

Tompkins and her two boys hurried down the walk. Mr. Tompkini' baggage had just been taken from the boot and placed inside the gate, and the stage had rolled on, as his wife and two boys came up to tue traveler. "Mamma first, and me next," said Oleah,

preparing his red lips for the expected kiss. "And I come after Oleab," said Abner. Mr. Tompkins called to a negro boy who was near to carry the baggage to the house, and the happy group made their way to the great plazzi, the two boys clinging to their father's hands and keeping up a torrent of questions. Where had he been? What had he seen? What had he brought home for them? The porch reached, Mrs. Tompkins drew up the arm-chair for her tired husband. "Rest a few minutes," she said, "and then you can take a bath and change your clothes, and you will feel quite yourself once

The planter took the seat, with a brightfaced child perched on each side of him. "You were gone so long without writing that I became uneasy," said his wife, drawing

her chair close to his side. "I had a great deal to do," he answered. shaking his head sadly, "and it was terrible work, I assure you. The memory of the past three weeks, I fear, will never leave my mind."

"Was it as terrible as the message said?" asked Mrs. Tompkins, with a shudder. "Yes, the horrible story was all true. The whole family was murdered.'

"By whom !" "That remains a mystery, but it is supposed to have been done by one of the slaves, as two or three ran away about that time."
"How did it happen? Tell me all,"

The little boys were sent away, for this story was not for children to hear, and Mr. Tompkins proceeded.

"We could hardly believe the news the dispatch brought us, my dear, but it did not tell us the worst. The roads between here and North Carolina are not the best, and I was four or five days making it, even with the aid of a few hours occasionally by rail. I found my brother's next neighbor, Mr. Clayborne, at the village waiting for me. On the way he told all that he or any one seemed to know of the affair. My brother had a slave who was half negro and part Indian, with some white blood in his veins. This slave had a quadroon wife, whom he loved with all his wild, passionate heart, She was very beautiful, and a belle among the negroes. But Henry, for some disobedience on the part of the husband, whose In-dian and white blood revolted against slavery, sold the wife to a Louisiana sugar planter The half-breed swore he would be revenged, and my brother, unfortunately possessing a

hasty temper, had him tied up and severely whipped—"
"Served the black rascal quite right," in-Georgia.

Mrs. Tompkins was the only child of a terrupted the wife, who, being Southern

born, could not endure the least self assertion on the part of a slave.
"I think not, my dear, though we will not argue the question. After his punishment the diack hung about for a week or two, sullen and silent. Several friends cautioned my brother to beware of him, but Henry was headstrong and took no man's counsel. Suddenly the slave disappeared, and although the woods. awamps and canabashs were the woods, swamps and cane bran's were soured by experienced hunters and dogs he could not be found. Three weeks had passed, and all thought of the runaway had passed

from the minds of the people. Late one night the man who told me this was passing my brother's house, when he saw firmes shooting about the roof and out of the windows. He gave the alarm, and roused the negroes. As he ran up the lawn toward the house a bloody ax met his view. On enter. ing the front door my brother Henry was found lying in the had, his skull cheft in twaia. I connot repeat all that met the

> his wife and two of the children when the roof lell in." "And the other two children ?" asked Mrs. Tompkins. "Were evidently murdered also, but their

> man'a horror-stricken gaza. They had only time to suatch away the bodies of my brother,

bodies could not be found. It is supposed they were burned to ashes amid the ruins." "Did you cause any extra search to be

made? "I did, but it was useless. I have searched, searched - mountain, plain and swamp. The rivers were dragged, the wells examined, the rains raked, but in vain. The oldest and the youngest of the children could not be found. A skull bone

tion?" Mrs. Tompkins asked. "The father of my brother's wife is the administrator of the estate, and he will

manage it." " And the murderer ?"

"No trace of him whatever. Is agems as though, after performing his horrible deed, he must have sank into the earth."

Mrs. Tompkins now, remembering that her husband needed a bath and a change of clothes, hurried him into the house. The recital of that horrible story had cast a shadow over her countenance, which she tried in vain to drive away, and had reawakened in Mr. Tompkins' toul a longing for revenge, though his better reason compelled him to admit that the half-breed was geaded to madness and desperation.

The day passed gloomily enough after the first joy of the husband and father's return. The next morning, just as the sun was peering over the gray peaks of the eastern mounthe valley below, dancing upon the stream of silver which wound beneath, or splintering its ineffectual lances among the branches and trunks of the grand old trees surrounding the plantation, Mr. Tompkins was awakened from the dreamless sleep of exhaustion.
"What was that?" he asked of his wife.

Both waited a moment, listening, when again the feeble wail of an infant reached

their cars. "It is a child's voice," said Mrs. Tompkins; "but why is it there?"

"Some of the uegro children have strayed from the quarters; or, more likely, it is the child of one of the house servants," said Mr. Tompkins.

"The house servants have no children," answered Mrs. Tompkins, "and I have exutioned the field women not to allow their

children to come here, especially in the early morning, to annoy us."
Mr. Tompkins, whose morning nap was not the labors of the day, scunded musical in the one warm and bright. The clumsy vehicle early morning air, and seemed only to sooths wed the mud stains of its long travel, and the wearied master to sleep again. Footsteps were heard upon the carpeted hallway, and then three or four light taps on the door

> "Who is there?" asked Mrs. Tompkins. "It's me, miseus, if you please." door was pushed open and a dark head, wound in a red bandana handkerchief, ap-

> peared in the opening.
> "What is the matter, Dinah?" Mrs. Tompkins asked, for she saw by the woman's mancer that something unusual had occurred. Dinah was her mistress' handmaid and the

> children's nurse. "If you please, missus," she said, "there is a queerest little baby on the front porch in the big clothes-basket." "A baby!" cried the astonished Mis.

Tompkins, "Yes'm, a white baby"

of the bedroom.

"Where is its mother?" "1 don't know, missus. It must a been there nearly all night, an' I suppose they who ever left it there wants you to keep it fur good."
"Bring the poor little thing here," said

Mrs. Tompkins, rising to a sitting position in the bed. In a few minutes Dinah returned with a baby about six months old, dressed in a faded calico gown, and hungrily sucking its tiny fist, while its dark brown eyes were

filled with tears. "It was in de big basket among some ole clothes," said Dinah. "Poor, dear little thing! it is nearly starved and almost frozen. Prepare it some warm milk at oace, Dinah," said the kind-

hearted mistress. The girl hurried away to do her bidding, leaving the baby with Mrs. Tompkins, who held the benumbed child in her arms and

tried to still its cries. Mr. Tompkins was wide awake now, and his mind busy with conjecture how the child came to be left on their p:azza. "What is that?" called Oleah, from the

next room. "Why, it's a baby," answered Abner, and moment later two pairs of little bare feet same pattering into their mother's room.

"Oh, the sweet little thing!" cried Oleah; "I want to kiss it." His mother held it down for him to kiss. "Isn't it pretty!" said Abner. "Its eyes are black, just like Oleah's. Let me kiss it,

The little stranger looked in wonder at the two children, who, in their joy over this treasure-trove, were dancing frantically about

too.

the room. "Oh, mamma, where did you get it?"

asked Oleab. "Dinah found it on the porch," the mother answered. ... Who put it there?"

"I don't know, dear."
"Why, Oleah," said Abner, "it's just like old Mr. Post. Don't you know he found a baby at his door? for we read about it in our First reader."

"Oh, yes; is this the same baby old Mr. Post found?" asked Oleah. "No," answered the mother; "this is another."

"Oh, isn't it sweet?" said Oleah, as the child cried and stretched out its tiny hands. "It's just as pretty as it can be," said Abner,

(To be continued,)