

"'Pears like you's a pretty good Baptiss now, Mas'r Minturn," said Pont, looking back with his good-natured grin. "You done come to't at las'. De' Lantic Ocean done de business for yer dis time, mas'r. I know'd you'd be foted some way, an' we's got de prodigal son back ag'in, an' had 'im baptize, wid a new name."

"Why, Pont," said Nicholas laughing, "I was baptized when I was a baby."

"Ye didn't need it den, I gib ye my word. Ye was as innocent as a lamb, an' ye didn't need it. It's de old sinners dat wants washin' in deep water. You's only sprinkled, I reckon?"

"I suppose so," responded Nicholas.

"Now, I tell ye what it is, mas'r," Pont went on, as if he were uttering a self-evident theological proposition; "when a man gits mercy, he wants 'mersion. Sprinklin' is well enough for babies; it makes 'em cry, but it don't hurt 'em. 'Mersion goes wid mercy, ebery time wid a nigger, and I reckon it's 'bout de same wid white folks."

"What were you saying about a new name, Pont?" inquired Nicholas.

"Ah! mas'r you got yer new name dis side o' Jordan,—Mas'r Hero, now. Missis read it to me in de papers."

"Well, I hope, you'll not call me by the new name, Pont; I don't like it," said Nicholas.

"I kin talk about it to de horses, I reckon?" said Pont inquiringly.

"Yes, but never to people."

Pont was filled with wonder at this refusal of Nicholas to answer to the name that had been given to him at the time he "administered his baptism," but his young master had always been an enigma to him, and as Pont had relieved his mind, he left him, for the remainder of the drive, to his thoughts.

"Thee is very welcome, dear Nicholas, to thy home again," said sweet and tearful Mrs. Fleming, as he alighted at the door. There was no kiss; there was no profusion of exclamations and questions; there was no effusion of sentiment, but there rested on the face of the placid Quaker lady a deep and tender joy. She led him to his room that spoke of her orderly neatness, pressed his hand and left him. He was once more in the atmosphere of love and home and safety; and the changes and perils through which he had passed came back to him with a power that overwhelmed him. He dropped upon his knees by the side of the bed where he had so often knelt with his mother's arm around his neck, and wept like a child. He rested his head on his hands for long minutes, in a tender and almost delicious swoon of mingled sorrow, joy, and gratitude. His welcome had been sweet, but he missed with a pang of which he did not believe himself susceptible after his long and stupifying grief, the bodily presence of one who he could not but believe still knelt