

seed had accumulated in the gin house; and although he worked till nearly 2 o'clock in the morning, he could not remove it all.

The next morning the overseer came into the field, and demanded of me why I had not whipped Harry for not removing all the cotton seed. He then called aloud to Harry to come forward and be whipped. Harry answered somewhat sternly that he would neither be struck by overseer nor driver; that he had worked nearly all night, and had scarcely fallen asleep when the horn blew to summon him to his toil in the field. The overseer raved and threatened, but Harry paid no farther attention to him. He then turned to me and asked me for my pistols, with a pair of which he had furnished me. I told him they were not with me. He growled an oath, threw himself on his horse and left us. In the evening I found him half drunk and raving like a madman. He said he would no longer bear with that nigger's insolence; but would whip him if it cost him his life. He at length fixed upon a plan for seizing him; and told me that he would go out in the morning, ride along by the side of Harry and talk pleasantly to him, and then, while Harry was attending to him, I was to steal upon him and knock him down, by a blow on the head, from the loaded and heavy handle of my whip. I was compelled to promise to obey his directions.

The next morning when we got to the field I told Harry of the overseer's plan, and advised him by all means to be on his guard and watch my motions. His eye glistened with gratitude. "Thank you James," said he, "I'll take care that you don't touch me."

Huckstep came into the field about 10 o'clock. He rode along by the side of Harry talking and laughing. I was walking on the other side. When I saw that Harry's eye was upon me I aimed a blow at him, intending however to miss him. He evaded the blow and turned fiercely round with his hoe uplifted, threatening to cut down any one who again attempted to strike him. Huckstep cursed my awkwardness, and told Harry to put down his hoe and come to him. He refused to do so, and swore he would kill the first man who tried to lay hands on him. The cowardly tyrant shrunk away from his enraged bondman, and for two weeks Harry was not again molested.

About the first of September, the overseer had one of his drunken fits. He made the house literally an earthly hell. He urged me to drink, quarrelled and swore at me for declining, and chased the old woman round the house, with his bottle of peach brandy. He then told me that Harry had forgotten the attempt to seize him, and that in the morning we must try our old game over again.

On the following morning, as I was handing to each of the hands their hoes from the tool house, I caught Harry's eye. "Look out," said I to him. "Huckstep will be after you again to-day." He uttered a deep curse against the overseer and passed on to his work. After breakfast Huckstep came riding out to the cotton field. He tied his horse to a tree, and came towards us. His sallow and haggard countenance was flushed, and his step unsteady. He came up by the side of Harry and began talking about the crops and the weather; I came at the same time on the other side, and in striking at him beat off his hat. He sprang aside and stepped backwards. Huckstep with a dreadful oath commanded him to stop, saying that he had determined to whip him, and neither earth nor hell should prevent him. Harry denied that; and said he had always done the work allotted to him and that was enough; he would sooner die than have the accursed lash touch him. The overseer staggered to his horse, mounted him and rode furiously to the house, and soon made his appearance, returning with his gun in his hand.

"Yonder comes the devil!" said one of the women whose row was near Harry's.

"Yes," said another, "He's trying to scare Harry with his gun."

"Let him try as he pleases," said Harry, in his low, deep, determined tones. "He may shoot me, but he can't whip me."

Huckstep came swearing on; when within a few yards of Harry he stopped, looked at him with a stare of mingled rage and drunken imbecility; and bid him throw down his hoe and come forward. The undaunted slave refused to comply, and continuing his work told the drunken demon to shoot if he pleased. Huckstep advanced within a few steps of him when Harry raised his hoe and told him to stand back. He stepped back a few paces, levelled his gun and fired. Harry received the charge in his breast, and fell instantly across a cotton row. He threw up his hands wildly, and groaned, "Oh, Lord!"

The hands instantly dropped their hoes. The women shrieked aloud. For my own part I stood silent with horror. The cries of the women enraged the overseer, he dropped his gun, and snatching the whip from my hand, with horrid oaths and imprecations, fell to whipping them, laying about him like a maniac. Upon Harry's sister he bestowed his blows without mercy, commanding her to quit her screaming and go to work. The poor girl, whose brother had thus been murdered before her eyes, could not wrangle down the awful agony of her feelings, and the brutal tormentor left her without effecting his object. He then, without going to look at his victim, told four of the hands to carry him to the house, and taking up his gun left the field. When we got to the poor fellow, he was alive, and groaning faintly. The hands took him up, but before they reached the house he was dead. Huckstep came out, and looked at him, and finding him dead, ordered the hands to bury him. The burial of a slave in Alabama is that of a brute. No coffin—no decent shroud—no rudo box—is thrown in without further ceremony.

From this time the overseer was regarded by the whole gang with detestation and fear—as a being to whose rage and cruelty there were no limits. Yet he was constantly telling us that he was the kindest of overseers—that he was formerly somewhat severe in managing his hands, but that now he was, if anything too indulgent. Indeed he had the reputation of being a good overseer, and an excellent manager, when sober. The slaves on some of the neighboring plantations were certainly worse clothed and fed, and more frequently and cruelly whipped than ours. Whenever we saw them they complained of over working and short feeding. One of Flincher's, and one of Sturtivant's hands ran away, while I was in Alabama; and after remaining in the woods awhile, and despairing of being able to effect their escape, resolved to put an end to their existence and their slavery together. Each twisted himself a vine of the muscadine grape, and fastened one end around the limb of an oak, and made a noose

in the other. Jacob, Flincher's man, swung himself off first, and expired after a long struggle. The other, horrified by the contortions and agony of his comrade, dropped his noose, and was retaken. When discovered, two or three days afterwards, the body of Jacob was dreadfully torn and mangled, by the buzzards.

Among the slaves who were brought from Virginia, were two young and bright mulatto women, who were always understood throughout the plantation to have been the daughters of the elder Larrimore, by one of his slaves. One was named Sarah and the other Hannah. Sarah, being in a state of pregnancy, failed of executing her daily allotted task of hoeing cotton. I was ordered to whip her, and on my remonstrating with the overseer, and representing the condition of the woman, I was told that my business was to obey orders; and that if I was told "to whip a dead nigger I must do it." I accordingly gave her fifty lashes. This was on Thursday evening. On Friday she also failed through weakness, and was compelled to lie down in the field. That night the overseer himself whipped her. On Saturday the wretched woman dragged herself once more to the cotton field. In the burning sun, and in a situation which would have called forth pity in the bosom of any one save a cotton-growing overseer, she struggled to finish her task. She failed—nature could do no more—and sick and despairing, she sought her cabin. There the overseer met her and inflicted fifty more lashes upon her already lacerated back.

The next morning was the Sabbath. It brought no joy to that suffering woman. Instead of the tone of the church bell summoning to the house of prayer, she heard the dreadful sound of the lash falling upon the backs of her brethren and sisters in bondage. For the voice of prayer she heard curses. For the songs of Zion obscene and hateful blasphemies. No bible was there with its consolations for the sick of heart. Faint and fevered, scarred and smarting from the effects of her cruel punishment, she lay upon her pallet of moss—dreading the coming of her relentless persecutor,—who, in the madness of one of his periodical fits of drunkenness, was now swearing and cursing through the quarters.

Some of the poor woman's friends on the evening before, had attempted to relieve her of the task which had been assigned her, but exhausted nature, and the selfishness induced by their own miserable situation, did not permit them to finish it; and the overseer, on examination, found that the week's work of the woman, was still deficient. After breakfast, he ordered her to be tied up to the limb of a tree, by means of a rope fastened round her wrists, so as to leave her feet about six inches from the ground. She begged him to let her down, for she was very sick.

"Very well!" he exclaimed with a sneer and a laugh,—"I shall bleed you then, and take out some of your Virginia blood. You are too proud a miss for Alabama."

He struck her a few blows. Swinging thus by her arms, she succeeded in placing one of her feet against the body of the tree, and thus partly supported herself, and relieved in some degree the painful weight upon her wrists. He threw down his whip—took a rail from the garden fence, ordered her feet to be tied together, and thrust the rail between them. He then ordered one of the hands to sit upon it. Her back at this time was bare, but the strings of the only garment which she wore passed over her shoulders and prevented the full force of the wip from acting on her flesh. These he cut off with his pen-knife, and thus left her entirely naked. He struck her only two blows, for the second one, cut open her side and abdomen with a frightful gash. Unable to look on any longer in silence, I entreated him to stop, as I feared he had killed her. The overseer looked at the wound—dropped his whip, and ordered her to be untied. She was carried into the house in a state of insensibility, and died in three days after.

During the whole season of picking cotton, the whip was frequently and severely plied. In his seasons of intoxication, the overseer made no distinction between the stout man and the feeble and delicate woman—the sick and the well. Women in a far advanced state of pregnancy were driven out to the cotton field. At other times he seemed to have some consideration; and to manifest something like humanity. Our hands did not suffer for food—they had a good supply of ham and cornmeal, while on Flincher's plantation the slaves had meat but once a year, at Christmas.

Near the commencement of the weeding season of 1835, I was ordered to whip a young woman, a light mustee, for not performing her task. I told the overseer that she was sick. He said he did not care for that, she should be made to work. A day or two afterwards, I found him in the house half intoxicated. He demanded of me why I had not whipped the girl; and I gave the same reason as before. He flew into a dreadful rage, but his miserable situation made him an object of contempt rather than fear. He sat shaking his fist at me, and swearing for nearly half an hour. He said he would teach the Virginia lady to sham sickness; and that the only reason I did not whip her was, that she was a white woman, and I did not like to cut up her delicate skin. Some time after I was ordered to give two of our women, named Hannah and big Sarah, 150 lashes each, for not performing their tasks. The overseer stood by until he saw Hannah whipped, and until Sarah had been tied up to the tree. As soon as his back was turned I struck the tree instead of the woman, who understanding my object, shrieked as if the whip at every blow was cutting into her flesh. The overseer heard the blows and the woman's cries, and supposing that all was going on according to his mind, left the field. Unfortunately the husband of Hannah stood looking on; and indignant that his wife should be whipped and Sarah spared, determined to revenge himself by informing against me.

Next morning Huckstep demanded of me whether I had whipped Sarah the day before; I replied in the affirmative. Upon this he called Sarah forward and made her show her back, which bore no traces of recent whipping. He then turned upon me and told me that the blows intended for Sarah should be laid on my back. That night the overseer, with the help of three of the hands, tied me up to a large tree—my arms and legs being clasped round it, and my body drawn up hard against it by two men pulling at my arms, and one pushing against my back. The agony occasioned by this alone was almost intolerable. I felt a sense of painful suffocation, and could scarcely catch my breath.

A moment after I felt the first blow of the overseer's whip across my shoulders. It seemed to cut into my very heart. I felt the blood gush, and ran down my back. I fainted at length under the torture, and on being taken down, my shoes contained

blood which ran from the gashes in my back. The skin was worn off from my breast, arms, and thighs, against the rough bark of the tree. I was sick and feverish, and in great pain for three weeks afterwards; most of which time I was obliged to lie with my face downwards, in consequence of the extreme soreness of my sides and back. Huckstep himself seemed concerned about me, and would come frequently to see me, and tell me that he should not have touched me had it not been for "the cursed peach brandy."

Almost the first person that I was compelled to whip after I recovered, was the man who pushed at my back when I was tied up to the tree. The hands who were looking on at that time, all thought he pushed me much harder than was necessary: and they expected that I would retaliate upon him the injury I had received.

After he was tied up, the overseer told me to give him a severe flogging, and left me. I struck the tree instead of the man. His wife who was looking on, almost overwhelmed me with her gratitude.

At length one morning, late in the fall of 1835, I saw Huckstep, and a gentleman ride out to the field. As they approached, I saw the latter was my master. The hands all ceased their labor, and crowded around him, inquiring about old Virginia. For my own part, I could not hasten to greet him. He had too cruelly deceived me. He at length came towards me, and seemed somewhat embarrassed. "Well James," said he, "how do you stand it here?" "Badly enough," I replied. "I had no thought that you could be so cruel as to go away and leave me as you did." "Well, well, it was too bad but it could not be helped—you must blame Huckstep for it." "But," said I, "I was not his servant; I belonged to you, and you could do as you pleased." "Well," said he, "we will talk about that by and by." He then inquired of Huckstep where big Sarah was. "She was sick and died," was the answer. He looked round among the slaves again, and inquired for Harry. The overseer told him that Harry undertook to kill him, and that, to save his life, he was obliged to fire upon him, and that he died of the wound. After some further inquiries, he requested me to go into the house with him. He then asked me to tell him how things had been managed during his absence. I gave him a full account of the overseer's cruelty. When he heard of the manner of Harry's death, he seemed much affected and shed tears. He was a favorite servant of his father's. I showed him the deep scars on my back occasioned by the whipping I had received. He was, or professed to be, highly indignant with Huckstep; and said he would see to it that he did not lay hands on me again. He told me he should be glad to take me with him to Virginia, but he did not know where he should find a driver who would be so kind to the hands as I was. If I would stay ten years, he would then give me a thousand dollars and a piece of land to plant on my own account. "But," said I, "my wife and children." "Well," said he, "I will do my best to purchase them, and send them on to you." I now saw that my destiny was fixed: and that I was to spend my days in Alabama, and I retired to my bed that evening with a heavy heart.

My master staid only three or four days on the plantation. Before he left, he cautioned Huckstep to be careful and not strike me again, as he would on no account permit it. He told me to give the hands food enough, and not over-work them, and, having thus satisfied his conscience, left us to our fate.

Out of the two hundred and fourteen slaves who were brought out from Virginia, at least one-third of them were members of the Methodist and Baptist churches in that State. Of this number five or six could read. They had been torn away from the care and discipline of their respective churches, and from the means of instruction, but they retained their love for the exercises of religion; and felt a mournful pleasure in speaking of the privileges and spiritual blessings which they enjoyed in Old Virginia. Three of them had been preachers, or exhorters, viz. Solomon, usually called Uncle Solomon, Richard and David. Uncle Solomon was a grave, elderly man, mild and forgiving in his temper, and greatly esteemed among the more serious portion of our hands. He used to snatch every occasion to talk to the lewd and vicious about the concerns of their souls, and advise them to fix their minds upon the Saviour, as their only helper. Some I have heard curse and swear in answer, and others would say that they could not keep their minds upon God and the devil (meaning Huckstep) at the same time: that it was of no use to try to be religious—they had no time—that the overseer wouldn't let them meet to pray—and that even Uncle Solomon, when he prayed, had to keep one eye open all the time, to see if Huckstep was coming. Uncle Solomon could both read and write, and had brought out with him from Virginia a Bible, a hymn book and some other religious books, which he carefully concealed from the overseer. Huckstep was himself an open infidel as well as blasphemer. He used to tell the hands that there was no hell hereafter for white people, but that they had their punishment on earth in being obliged to take care of the negroes. As for the blacks, he was sure there was a hell for them. He used frequently to sit with his bottle by his side, and a Bible in his hand; and read passages and comment on them, and pronounce them lies. Any thing like religious feeling among the slaves irritated him. He said that so much praying and singing prevented the people from doing their tasks, as it kept them up nights, when they should be asleep. He used to mock, and in every possible way interrupt the poor slaves, who after the toil of day, knelt in their lowly cabins to offer their prayers and supplications to Him whose ear is open to the sorrowful sighing of the prisoner, and who hath promised in His own time to come down and deliver. In his drunken seasons he would make excursions at night through the slave-quarters, enter the cabins, and frighten the inmates, especially if engaged in prayer or singing. On one of these occasions he came back rubbing his hands and laughing. He said he had found Uncle Solomon in his garden, down on his knees, praying like an old owl, and had tipped him over, and frightened him half out of his wits. At another time he found Uncle David sitting on his stool with his face thrust up the chimney, in order that his voice might not be heard by his brutal persecutor. He was praying, giving utterance to these words, probably in reference to this:—*How long, oh Lord, how long?* "As long as my whip!" cried the overseer, who had stoled behind him, giving him a blow. It was the sport of a demon.

To be Continued.