

CHAPTER XIV.

BALTIMORE.

BALTIMORE!—what shall I say of Baltimore?—merely that our stay was so short, that we had only time to think we shouldn't like to end our days there. At Baltimore, however, I, for the first time, had an opportunity of seeing slaves, slave-owners, and their plantations.

What is my opinion of Slavery?

Always maintaining the opinion that no one should express an opinion on any matter, with which he is not thoroughly acquainted, *my* opinion on Slavedom cannot be worth having. The Yankee query-nuisance of "What do you think of our country?" is here changed for "What do you think of our slaves?"—and it is curious to note the anxiety depicted in the countenance of the querist. *My* answer was invariably to both, "I have not seen enough of it," or "them." This reply, one evening (the first on our arrival), drew from a tall, intelligent-looking person, whom I, by chance, had entered into conversation with at the bar of the *hotel*, the following *polite* and pithy invitation: "You are a Britisher—an Englishman, I reckon—least-ways, you don't talk like a Frenchman. Now, just you go and take your name off old H——'s book, and fetch away that darned handsome gal I saw a hanging on to you, and come right slick away to my diggings—I guess we'll just fix your 'pinions about slaves pretty considerable, darned unalterable—yes, sir-r."

This (*the first invitation to any man's house I had received in America*), I at once accepted for myself, Lucille agreeing to stay, and do the dutiful, with her mother. A delightful drive of ten miles brought us to the plantation, and for the pleasant hours I spent thereat, I here tender my thanks to my kind host, who, should he ever read this book, will, I trust, pardon my having chronicled his little peculiarity of speech, and only see in my narrative a grateful reminiscence.

Much as I had heard of planter hospitality, all fell far short of what I experienced at the hands of Mr. W—— and his pretty wife. Their house—a model of neatness, and superbly furnished—reminded me of