

air distractedly with her open palms. On the other side of the station a dog howled, and the engine uttered an angry whistle as if impatient of the delay.

After five years of prison discipline, the ugly little town appeared to Ordway to contain an alluring promise of freedom. At the instant the animation in the scene spoke to his blood as if it had been beauty, and movement seemed to him to possess some peculiar æsthetic quality apart from form or colour. The brightly dyed calicos on the Negro women; the shining black faces of the men, smooth as ebony; the tragic primitive voices, like voices imprisoned in the soil; the strumming of the rude banjo; the whistling engine and the howling dog; the odours of smoke and dust and fertilisers—all these things blended in his senses to form an intoxicating impression of life. Nothing that could move or utter sounds or lend a spot of colour appeared common or insignificant to his awakened brain. It was all life, and for five years he had been starved in every sense and instinct.

The main street—Warehouse Street, as he found later that it was called—appeared in the distance as a broad river of dust which ran from the little station to where the warehouses and small shops gave place to the larger dwellings which presided pleasantly over the neighbouring fields. As Ordway followed the board sidewalk, he began idly reading the signs over the shops he passed, until "Kelly's Saloon," and "Baker's General Store" brought him suddenly upon a dark oblong building which ran back, under