

"One year ago to-night, you thought that your daughter lay dying—you could not sleep for agony—upon whom did you call all that night?"

The merchant started and looked up—there seemed a change to have passed over the whole form of his visitor, whose eye was fixed on him with a calm, intense, penetrating expression, that awed and subdued him—he drew back, covered his face, and made no reply.

"Five years ago," said the stranger, "when you lay at the brink of the grave, and thought that if you died then you should leave a family of helpless children entirely unprovided for, do you remember how you prayed—who saved you then?"

The stranger paused for an answer, but there was a dead silence. The merchant only bent forward as one entirely overcome, and rested his head on the seat before him.

The stranger drew yet nearer, and said in a still lower and more impressive tone, "Do you remember fifteen years since, that time when you felt yourself so lost, so helpless, so hopeless, when you spent days and nights in prayer, when you thought you would give the world for one hour's assurance that your sins were forgiven you—who listened to you then?"

"It was my God and Saviour!" said the merchant with a sudden burst of remorseless feeling—"Oh yes, it was he."

"And has he ever complained of being called on too often," inquired the stranger, in a voice of reproachful sweetness; "say," he added, "are you willing to begin this night and ask no more of Him, if he from this night will ask no more of you?"

"Oh, never, never, never!" said the merchant, throwing himself at his feet, but as he spoke these words the figure seemed to vanish, and he awoke with his whole soul stirred within him.

THE CHILDLESS MOTHER.

BY J. E. SNODGRASS.

After practising my profession for a year or two in Virginia, amid the scenes of my boyhood's mountain circled home, I removed to Williamsport, a quiet little village on the Maryland side of the romantic Potomac.—During my residence in the latter place, an incident occurred, the result of which will, perhaps, serve a useful purpose, while furnishing, as I have been requested to do, "a page for the *Liberty Bell*."

At the dawn of day in early spring, I was startled from slumbers, rendered, perhaps, unusually profound by the labours of the previous day. The cause was a scream which violently cleft the cold air with its piercing agony. I instantly sprang to my feet, only to have my ears saluted by shrieks still more startling. So loud had the voice now become, that it seemed to start from the bosom of the quiet river echoes such as perhaps had never been heard since the days when its glassy tide used to reflect the warhoop of the Indian and the scream of the panther.

The voice could readily be distinguished as a female, though coarse and harsh in its tones. It soon ceased, however, as if stifled by the very intensity of the agony it had expressed. On subsequent inquiry of a servant, I obtained the following solution of the soul-troubling mystery.

In a hut a square or two distant, had lived, for some time, a coloured woman, the mother of two children, whose wants she had supplied with the labour of her own hands. She had regarded herself as a "free woman"—free as the air of the surrounding hill—and she was so regarded by all who knew her. But she had no "free papers," having omitted to secure them, it was said, through over-confidence in the source from which she had received a verbal pledge of freedom. Fatal omission, too frequently made by the virtually freed!

Little did that sable woman dream, amid the quiet darkness which enveloped her tattered frame in unconsciousness, that a still harder lot—O, how hard a one—was so near its awaiting! She was aroused at early dawn by a rap at her humble door. She responded to the signal and bade the visitants enter.—They did so; but for what purpose, suppose you, reader? To talk of work to be done by those who are glad to "ask leave to toil," or utter other words of cheer? No—alas! No, far different the errand on which they came. One of them claimed her as his "chattel," and ordered her to be seized as his slave. It was done, and she was conveyed with her oldest child, to the county jail, some six miles distant, there to await the highest bidder for the blood and bones of his fellow men!

"Was it the fact of being sold into Georgia that caused those unearthly shrieks?" you ask. "Is that not a common thing in Maryland?"

It is far too common, I answer with shame; but it was not that which caused such intense agony. The cause was far worse even than that. I will tell.

Nestling warm in that mother's bosom through that sadly terminated night, had lain a babe but a few weeks old—a babe which, though coloured it was, and doomed to become as despised and helpless ways of a baby—and that mother loved it as fondly as the fairest skinned mother of this land could love her own. But it was deemed an *incumbrance* to its mother in the slave market. So they tore it rudely from her bosom! It was that which caused the shriek of agonized affection—the speechless utterance of a bereaved and tortured soul! Yes, they tore that tender child from its mother, and she became the inmate of a gloomy prison!

"For what cause?" you ask. "Had the woman committed any crime?"

Not the least possible crime was she guilty of, except it really be a crime to wear a black skin. But she was a slave; at least she was claimed as such. Besides you see they only transferred her from one prison to another; for what is slavery but imprisonment! in fact, it is generally imprisonment of the worst kind—*imprisonment for life*.

"What became of the babe?" some anxious mother impatiently asks.

I cannot answer further than it was left with a coloured woman, who promised its mother to take care of it. This, it is probable, she was allowed to do until it was old enough for the Southern market.

Mothers of the land—you who have born children, and felt the feeble pulsations of their little hearts respond to your own—know you not how to commiserate that cruelly bereft mother? I trust you do. Then plead earnestly for the cause of the slave! Strengthen the hands of your husbands, and fathers, and brothers, amid their stern conflict with the giant Wrong—amid their self-denials and their sufferings—in the face of private malice and public scorn! Woman can do much if faithful to her mission—so much that with the co-operation of the wives, and mothers and daughters of our guilty land, the "*Liberty Bell*" would soon cease to send forth such heart-rending tones as the shrieks of the Childless Mother.—*Liberty Bell*.

NEW ENGLAND RICH MEN.—Peter C. Brooks, of New England, is said to be worth \$6,000,000; J. P. Cushing \$2,000,000; Abbott Lawrence \$2,000,000; Amos, \$1,500,000; and William, \$1,000,000; T. H. Perkins \$1,500,000; Daniel Sears \$1,500,000; the three Appletons \$1,000,000 each; Jonathan Philips, R. G. Shaw, and William Sturgis the same sum. Twenty-two millions of dollars owned by thirteen men.

APPLES OF GOLD.

"Turn again our captivity, O Lord," *Psa cxxvi. 4. Divine Answer:* "The Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek, to proclaim liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." *Isa. lxi. 1.* "For thus saith the Lord, &c. I will give thee for a covenant of the people, &c. that thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves; they shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places; they shall not hunger nor thirst." *Isa. xlix. 8, 9, 10. See also Chap. xxxv. 10.*

O Lord, I am hungering after the righteousness and freedom, not only of faith, but of holiness also; not that I may make holiness the foundation of hope, but the evidence of faith; and that I may be able to rejoice and take comfort of thy righteousness alone, without deceiving my soul. Grant, therefore, that I may be truly filled, and may be strong, easy, and free, so as to be kept no longer in any of the most subtle bonds, either of the law, unbelief and a bad conscience, or of a carnal worldly mind!

Buried in shadows of the night
We lie till Christ restores the light;
Wisdom descends to heal the blind,
And chase the darkness from the mind

Jesus beholds where Satan reigns,
Binding his slaves in heavy chains;
He sets the prisoners free, and breaks
The iron bondage from our necks.

Poor helpless worms in thee possess
Grace, wisdom, power, and righteousness;
Thou art our mighty All, and we
Give our whole selves, O Lord, to thee.