

the middle of September that the now fugitive party got into a little skiff and was rowed across the river, running by their master's estate, by a fellow slave. In the middle of the stream the boatman said: "It will be the end of me if this is ever found out; but you won't be brought back alive, Sie, will you?" "Not if I can help it," replied Josiah, and he thought of the pistols and knife he had bought some time before from a poor white. "And if they're too many for you, and you get seized, you'll never tell my part in this business?" "Not if I'm shot through like a sieve." "That's all," again said the boatman, "and God help you." The latter subsequently escaped to the land of freedom and the two have often talked over the conversation of that dark night on the river.

For a fortnight the fugitives pressed on their journey, keeping to the road during the night; hiding whenever a chance vehicle or horseman was heard, and during the day burying themselves in the woods. Their provisions were rapidly giving out, and two days before the party reached Cincinnati there was nothing left. All night the children cried with hunger, the father was weary and his back and shoulders raw with the burden he had been carrying. A sense of insecurity and a fear of detection ever followed him, and in the night he would start out of his sleep in terror, imagining that the dogs and slave hunters were upon him. But something must be done or they all would starve almost within sight of liberty. He resolved to sally boldly out and seek for provisions. The first house he reached he was told, "No! I have nothing for niggers!" At the second the man of the house met him in the same style, but the wife overheard the conversation, said, "How can you treat any human being so? If a dog was hungry I would give him something to eat; we have children, and who knows but they may some day need the help of a friend." She then loaded a plate with venison and bread, put it into the handkerchief of the needy one, and he hurried away to his starving wife and little ones. Two days after they were all in Cincinnati.

In Cincinnati Henson was comparatively at home. Those who had before befriended him now again administered to the comfort of the fugitive party, carefully providing for their welfare until their strength was recruited, and then sent them on thirty miles by waggon. They followed on in the manner they were now well accustomed to—travelling by night and resting by day—till they arrived at Scioto, when they struck the military road of General Hull, made in the last war with Great Britain, along which they were informed they might safely travel by day. They had not been told, however, that the road was cut through a wilderness and that it was necessary for them to carry food for the whole length of their journey, and they carried none. They travelled all day in hopes of seeing some hospitable habitation where food might be obtained, but were disappointed. In the morning they divided a small piece of dried beef, too little to satisfy their hunger, amongst them and renewed their journey. Suddenly, as they were plodding along, the father, who was a little way ahead of the rest of the party with his two babes on his back, heard himself called. Turning around he saw his wife prostrate on the ground. "Mother's dying!" cried one of the boys, and it seemed as if such were the case. From sheer exhaustion she had fallen in surmounting a log. After some minutes she recovered and was enabled slowly to pursue her journey. But starvation stared them in the face and hope began to die away into despair. But the lesson learnt by very many was again to be taught here, that "man's extremity is God's opportunity."

About three o'clock in the afternoon a party were seen approaching at no great distance. They could not be friends, it was thought, and the fugitives kept themselves on the alert. In a moment the strangers had advanced so that it was seen they were Indians with packs on their shoulders. If they were unfriendly it was useless to attempt to escape, and Josiah walked boldly to meet them. Their eyes had been bent to the ground till now, and raising them they looked at him in a frightened sort of way for a moment, and then setting up a peculiar howl, turned round and ran away as fast as they could. This was a matter of surprise to the others, who could not imagine the cause of this perceptible fright. But Josiah followed them and on going nearer with his companions discovered the Indians peeping at them from behind the trees and dodging out of sight when the negroes looked at them. Presently the party came upon the wigwams and saw a fine-looking stately Indian, with his arms folded waiting for them to approach. He was the chief, and saluting them civilly discovered they were human beings, and speaking to his young men who were scattered about, made them come in and give up their foolish fears. Their fears were turned into curiosity. Everyone wanted to touch the negro children, and the latter, who were as shy as partridges from their

long night journeys in the woods, would jump back when touched, and the Indians would jump back also as if they were about to be bitten. But soon the Indians were made to understand the wants of the fugitives and they were bountifully supplied and a comfortable wigwam given them for their night's rest. The hospitality continued after the night, for some of the young men were sent to point out the place they were to turn off, and parted with them with as much kindness as possible.

The next day they came within sight of Sandusky City, on Lake Erie. About a mile from the lake Josiah hid his wife and children in the bushes, and pushed forward to a small building from which a number of men were engaged in loading a vessel. They turned out to be friendly. He explained his case and they agreed to carry him as far as Buffalo, cautioning him to remain hid till dark, as there were a lot of "irregular nigger-catchers" in the village below. It was decided that when the vessel was laden and had got off it should heave to near where the party were hid, when a boat would be sent off to them.

The subject of this sketch thus describes his last hours as a slave, and his first minutes as a freeman:—

"I watched the vessel with intense interest as she latched her mooring. Away she went before the free breeze. Already she seemed beyond the spot at which the captain agreed to lay to, and still she flew along. My heart sank within me; so near deliverance, and again to have my hopes blasted, again to be cast on my own resources! I felt that they had been making sport of my misery. The sun had sunk to rest, and the purple and gold of the west were fading away into grey. Suddenly, however, as I gazed with a weary heart, the vessel swung round into the wind, the sails flapped, and she stood motionless. A moment more and a boat was lowered from her stern, and with a steady stroke made for the point at which I stood. I felt that my hour of release had come. On she came, and in ten minutes she rode up handsomely on to the beach.

"My black friend and two sailors jumped out, and we started off at once for my wife and children. To my horror, they were gone from the place where I left them. Overpowered with fear, I supposed they had been found and carried off. There was no time to lose, and the men told me I would have to go alone. Just at the point of despair, however, I stumbled on one of the children. My wife, it seemed, alarmed at my long absence, had given up all for lost, and supposed I had fallen into the hands of the enemy. When she heard my voice, mingled with those of the others, she thought my captors were leading me back to make me discover my family, and in the extremity of her terror she had tried to hide herself. I had hard work to satisfy her. Our long habits of concealment and anxiety had rendered her suspicious of every one; and her agitation was so great that for a time she was incapable of understanding what I said, and went on in a sort of paroxysm of distress and fear. This, however, was soon over, and the kindness of my companions did much to facilitate the matter.

"And now we were off for the boat. It required little time to embark our baggage—one convenience, at least, of having nothing. The men bent their backs with a will, and headed steadily for a light hung from the vessel's mast. I was praising God in my soul. Three hearty cheers welcomed us as we reached the schooner, and never till my dying day shall I forget the shout of the captain—he was a Scotchman—"Coom up on deck, and clop your wings and crow like a rooster; you're a free nigger as sure as you're a live mon." Round went the vessel, the wind plunged into her sails as though inoculated with the common feeling—the water seethed and hissed past her sides. Man and nature, and more than all, I felt the God of man and nature, who breathes love into the heart and maketh the winds His ministers, were with us. My happiness that night rose at times to positive pain. Unnerved by so sudden a change from destitution and danger to such kindness and blessed security, I wept like a child.

"The next evening we reached Buffalo, but it was too late to cross the river that night. 'You see those trees,' said the noble-hearted captain, next morning, pointing to a group in the distance; 'they grow on free soil, and as soon as your feet touch that, you're a man. I want to see you go and be a freeman. I'm poor myself, and have nothing to give you; I only sail the boat for wages; but I'll see you across. Here, Green' said he to a ferryman, 'what will you take this man and his family over for—he's got no money?' 'Three shillings.' He then took a dollar out of his pocket and gave it to me. Never shall I forget the spirit in which he spoke. He put his hand on my head and said, 'Be a good fellow, won't you?' I felt streams of emotion running down in electric courses from head to foot. 'Yes,' said I: 'I'll use my freedom well;

I'll give my soul to God.' He stood waving his hat as we pushed off for the opposite shore. God bless him! God bless him eternally! Amen!

"It was the 28th of October, 1830, in the morning, when my feet first touched the Canada shore. I threw myself on the ground, rolled in the sand, seized handfuls of it and kissed them, and danced around, till, in the eyes of several who were present, I passed for a madman. 'He's some crazy fellow,' said a Colonel Warren, who happened to be there. 'Oh no, master! don't you know? I'm free!' He burst into a shout of laughter. 'Well, I never knew freedom make a man roll in the sand in such a fashion.' Still I could not control myself. I hugged and kissed my wife and children, and, until the first exuberant burst of feeling was over, went on as before."

Here we will leave him, simply remarking that most of the time since he has lived in the Township of Down; that he several times crossed the Atlantic and received Royal notice in England, and that at the present time he resides in Dresden, Ontario, a hale old man of eighty-nine years, and, as regards the things of this world, lives in comfort and opulence.

WONDERFUL LETTERS.

Is there anything in the world more wonderful than a letter? When the English missionaries first went to Africa, nothing surprised the black people more than the letters they wrote. "Does the person you write to hear you speak?" said a chief to one of the missionaries. "No." "Does he see your lips move?" "No." Then he ranged a long line of his people in a field, asked the missionary to stand at one end, and stood with a second at the other end. "Now write what I bid you." The missionary beside him put down the chief's words, and the bit of paper passed on by a messenger to the other end. At that end the missionary standing there read the words to the messenger. The messenger repeated them to the chief, and the chief cried out, "It is just magic!"

And a letter is really a kind of magic. It is only a sheet of paper with some signs on it. But it tells what is going on ten, twenty, a hundred, or a thousand miles away. Through these signs, we, sitting at our breakfast tables, can see homes over wide seas, and the people living in them, and baptisms, and marriages, and sick-beds and funerals. By these signs commands come from far countries, and merchants in this land rise and go to the market, or the exchange, or the bookstore, or the house of a neighbor, and do the biddings of those who wrote them down. And by these signs the secrets of one heart are carried into another; and two hearts know the secrets instead of one.

What Paul says in one of his letters is, that Christian people are, in the same wonderful way, letters of Christ. Christ tells the secrets of his heart by means of them and they carry his commands. And those who meet with his people and come to know them learn the secrets of the heart of Christ, and what is taking place in Christ's home in the heaven.

Christ has always been a letter writer. He has written his letters on the blue sky and on the green earth. Summer and winter, spring-time and harvest are sentences from one of his letters. He wrote ten words once, thousands of years ago, on sheets of stone at Mount Sinai, and those words are read still in every part of the earth. He has written two long letters to men in the Bible: the one is called the Old Testament, the other the New Testament, and those letters have been copied thousands of times and are being sent to and fro among all the nations of mankind.

But from the beginning He said: "It is not enough for me that I write on the sky and the field, or on leaves of stone, or paper. I want something better still to write my letter on. I will only be satisfied when men allow me to write my letters on their hearts; and when I can lay my heart with all its secrets on the hearts of men and women and boys and girls, and leave the imprint of those secrets there."

So Paul gives the name to the boys and girls, and the men and women who have let Christ write the secrets of his heart on theirs. He calls them epistles of Christ—letters written on the fleshy leaves of the heart. And there is nothing better in the world for a boy or girl than to be a letter of this kind for Christ.

Two or three years ago the people living in Paris were surrounded by the German army, and could neither get out themselves nor have anybody come in. They were besieged by that army, and all the while the siege lasted neither bread, nor milk, nor coals, nor wood, nor horse, nor cow could get in. It was a hard time, and the people suffered from want of food. But there was another thing they greatly suffered for want of—and that was news of dear ones in other parts of the world. At last those dear ones wrote letters on the first page of the *Times* newspaper in London. Then a photographer made a copy of that first page so small that it was only the size of a penny stamp. Then those tiny

pages were tied under the wings of doves, and carried by them over the heads of the German army into Paris. There the photographers made the tiny papers large again. And in this way the people in Paris got letters from the dear ones far away.

The Lord Jesus does something like this in writing His letters on young hearts. He has a great deal to say: but the hearts of children are too small to receive all his words. So the Lord makes His letter small, so small that it can be printed on a child's heart. And then as years go on and the body grows tall, the heart grows larger and larger, and the letters grow with the growth of the heart, and when boys and girls come to be young men and women they find that the loving Jesus has written nearly all the Bible on their hearts.

But sometimes it is only a single sentence He writes. During a very cold winter, between twenty and thirty years ago, there were two stories in the newspapers which went to every heart. A poor actor left Inverness for the town of Cromarty, where he was engaged to play. He had his little girl with him, a child of seven or eight. Snow had already begun to fall when he set out. But by-and-by a storm arose, and the snow fell so thickly that all the sky became dark with it, and the poor travellers lost their way. In a day or two, half way to Cromarty, at a lonely turn of the road, where there was some shelter, the two were found buried in the snow, and dead. But it was noticed that the child was wrapped round with the father's overcoat, which he had taken from himself to keep her warm.

The cold was so great that year that many poor people died of it in their very houses, where they had neither fire nor food. Among those who died was a lonely mother in one of our cities. She was found cold dead on the floor of her home, and nearly naked, but beside her was her living child, living and warm, well wrapped up in the clothes which the mother had taken from her own body.

What were those two: the poor actor who stripped himself of his coat to keep warm his child: the poor mother who went nearly naked to keep her baby alive? They were letters written by Christ and sent out to be read of all, letters written with one of the deepest secrets of His heart. What He wrote on those two hearts was sacrifice, pity, love, like God's. Just as those two acted, Christ would have acted if He had been in their places. It was even so He did act, when on the cross He died for man. He took His own life and wrapped us round with it, that we might not die but live. And He would have every one of us to act to others as He acted towards us. And on our hearts, as on the hearts of those two of whom I have told, He desires to write pity and self-sacrifice, and kindness and love.—*Sunday Magazine*.

WORDS OF THE WISE.

Don't be ashamed to wear old garments until new ones can be paid for.

Don't be ashamed to speak a kind word to the poor and outcast, even if you are frowned upon by the fastidious.

It is pride that fills the world with so much harshness and severity. We are as rigorous to offenders as if we had never offended.

The surest way of being deceived is to think yourself cleverer and more cunning than anybody else.—*Rochefoucauld*.

It is a duty that grown-up people owe to the rising generation, to hold it in proper subjection. It is an American weakness to permit boys to have their own way at home, at school, and abroad. The result is too apparent everywhere. The prisoners of jails and penitentiaries are of a younger age year by year. Boy-thieves, burglars, and robbers are becoming an acknowledged part of the criminal class.—*N. Y. School Journal*.

Among the forms of insect life there is a little creature known to naturalists, which can gather around itself a sufficiency of atmospheric air, and, so clothed, descend into the bottom of a pool; and you may see the little diver moving about dry and at his ease, protected by his crystal vesture, though the water all around him be stagnant and bitter. Prayer is such a protector, a transparent vesture—the world sees it not; a real defence—it keeps out the world. By means of it the believer can gather so much of heavenly atmosphere around him, and with it descend into the putrid depths of this contaminating world, that for a season no evil will touch him, and he knows when to ascend for a fresh supply. Communion with God kept Daniel pure in Babylon.—*Dr. James Hamilton*.

Where your treasure is,
there will your heart be also.