

— not deep nor strong. I think that the house quarters are safe and the stables. But we must get the women and children and the old men from the lower quarter. And the cattle in the fields —" She ran faster.

In the pallor of the dawn the house of Cape Jessamine rose before them. Winged, with columns and verandahs, it loomed in the grey light above leisurely climbing wide lawns and bosky garden. At the house gates, — iron scroll and tracery between brick pillars, antique, graceful, — they were met by the younger, less responsible of the house servants.

"O my Lawd! O Lawd Jesus! O my Lawd, Missy! de ribber's out! O my Lawd, my sins! What we gwine ter do?"

"We 're going to stand a siege," said Désirée. "Have they brought Mr. Marcus in?"

"No'm. Dey waitin' fer you ter tell dem —"

She pushed the cluster aside and ran on up the broad path, Edward following. They mounted the steps, passed between the pillars, entered, and sped through a wide panelled hall and came out upon another verandah commanding a grassy space between house and offices. At a little distance, upon the same level, straggling away beneath pecan and pine and moss-draped oak, could be seen the house quarter.

The negroes came crowding, men and women, big and little. "De ribber, Missy! De ribber, Missy! I don' climb er tree en' see hit! I see hit er-comin' en' er-eatin' up de cotton en' de cane! O my Lawd, hit er comin' lak er thief in de night-time! O my Lawd, hit er comin' lak er ha'nt!"

Désirée stood on the verandah steps and issued her orders. "Mingo, you take four men and go to the overseer's house. Tell Mr. Marcus that I say he's not to trust to the water not coming high in his house. Tell him I *order* him to come to the big house. Take him up on his mattress and bring him. Hurry, now, hurry! Mingo Second, Lawrence, Adolph, Creed, Lot, — six more of you! Try what you can do for the cattle in the lower fields! Try hard! If you bring them in, you shall have everything double to-night! — Haiti, Sambo, Hannah's Tom, all of you men on this side, — yes, you too, soldier, if you will! — we'll go now and bring the women and children and old men from the lower quarter!"