

knew, we took turns rocking and singing to our little baby sister, just as we had seen mother do."

Here he stopped a moment, and Raymond, who was rather impatient, said, "Don't stop; go on."

The old man wiped his eyes, and said, "Heavens and arth, don't hurry a feller so, can't you let him wait till the big bumps gits out of his throat, or would you have me bellin' here like a calf?"

"Take your 'ime, Mr. Middleton," said Mr. Stafford, who was as much affected as his brother at the remembrance of that sad night, when he first felt what it was to be motherless.

After an instant Mr. Middleton continued, "Directly that sister got big enough, she was married and started to go to England, but the vessel went to smash and the crew went to the bottom. Poor gal, she always hated salt, but she's used to it by this time, I reckon. Then thar was pap died next, but he was old and ^{and} ~~and~~ ^{grave-headed} ~~and~~ ed and sick-hearted like, and wanted to go, but it made it jest as bad for me. Then thar was Bill."

Here Mr. Stafford moved his chair, so as to hide his face from the speaker, who continued, "I did think I might have one left, but 'twasn't to be. He went too, and Josh was left alone."

Mr. Middleton cleared his throat a little, refilled his cob pipe, and proceeded. "The Lord gin me two gals, and then he sent me as noble a boy as ever was, I don't care where t'other comes from. He wasn't mine, but I loved him all the same. You, Mr. Miller, knew him, but you didn't know, —no, nor begin to know, how old Josh loved him, and what a tremendous wrench it gin my old heart when I come home and found he was dead. But, Lord, hain't he got a fine grave stun though! You go to the Cimetry at Frankford, and you'll see it, right along side of Leftenant Carrington's, whose widow's a flirtin' with every body in creation any way, and Frankford sartin."

"I've now told you of all that's dead," continued he, striking the ashes out of his pipe and wiping it on his bagging trousers, "but I hain't told you yit what troubles me more than all. Thar's something haunts old Josh, that makes his heart stand still with mortal fear. Thar's Sunshine, dearer to her old pap than his own life. You've all seen her, and I reckon she's made some of your hearts ache; but something's come over her. She seems delicate like, and is 'adin' away."

Here two big tears, that couldn't be mistaken, rolled down Mr. Middleton's cheek, as he added emphatically, "and by Jehu, if Sunshine goes, old Josh'll bust up and go too!"

The winding up of Uncle Joshua's story, was so odd and unexpected, that all the gentlemen, Mr. Stafford included, laughed loudly.

"Taint no laughin' matter, boys," said Mr. Middleton, "and so you'll all think if you ever have a gal as sweet and lovin'-like as Sunshine."

Here Mr. Stafford said, "Your sister's name was Fanny, I believe."

"Yes, 'twas; who told you?" asked Mr. Middleton.

"No one I knew it myself," answered Mr. Stafford, looking his brother earnestly in the face.

Mr. Middleton seemed puzzled, and after closely scrutinizing Mr. Stafford's features, he said, "Confound it, am I in a nightmare? I thought for a minute, —but no, it can't be neither, for you've got too thunderin' black a hide to be Bill!"

Before Mr. Stafford replies to this remark he will take the reader to the kitchen, where a group of negroes are assembled round old Aunt Katy, and are listening with breathless interest to what she is saying. Aunt Katy was so infirm that she kept her bed for the greater part of the time, but on this day she was sitting up, and from her low cabin window had caught a view of the visitors as they alighted from the carriage. When Mr. Stafford appeared she half started from her chair and said aloud, "Who upon airth can that be, and whar have I seen him? Somewhar, I'm sartin."

It then occurred to her that she would go to the kitchen and inquire who "that tall darkish-looking geneleman was." Accordingly she hobbled out to make the inquiry. She was much disappointed when she heard the name. "No," said she, "'tain't nobody I ever knowed, and yet how 't long after 'em J. V. seen."

to herself, "Go way now; what makes me keep a thinkin' so of Marster William this mornin'?" "Pears like he keeps hauntin' me." Then rising she went to an old cupboard, and took from it a cracked earthen teapot. From this teapot she drew a piece of brown paper, and opening it, gazed fondly on a lock of soft brown hair.

"Bless the boy," said she, "I mind jest how he looked when I cut this har from his head, the very day his mother was buried. Poor Marster William," continued she, "most likely he's gone to 'tarnity 'fore this time."

As she said this, tears, which were none the less sincere because she who wept them belonged to Afric's sable race, fell upon the once bright but now faded lock of hair, which the faithful creature had for more than forty years preserved as a memento of him whom she had long since looked upon as dead, although she had never ceased to pray for him, and always ended her accustomed prayer, "Now I lay me ——" with the petition that "God would take care of Marster William and bring him home again." Who shall say that prayer was not answered?

Going back to her seat, she took up her knitting, and was soon living over the past, when she was young and dwelt with "the old folks at home." Suddenly there came from the house the sound of merry laughter. High above all the rest was a voice, whose clear, ringing tones made Katy start up so quickly that as she afterwards described it, "a sudden misery cotched her in the back, and pulled her down quicker." There was something in the sound of that laugh, which seemed to Katy like an echo of the past. "But," thought she, "I'm deaf like, and mebbly didn't hear straight. I'll go to the kitchen, agin and hark."

In a few moments she was in the kitchen and dropping down on the meal chest as the first seat handy, she said, "Ho, Judy, is you noticed the strange gentleman's laugh?"

"I hain't noticed nothing," answered Judy, who chanced to be out of sorts, because, as she said, "the white folks had done et up every atom of egg; they didn't even leave her the yaller of one!"

"Well, suthin in his laugh kerried me back to the old plantation in Carlina, and I b'lieve, between you and me, Judy, that Marster William's here," said Katy.

"Marster William, Marster William, what