

CHAPTER II.

The author's being sold to Mr. J. Gooch.—The cruel treatment he both received and witnessed while on his estate.—Repeated attempts at running away. Escapes to his mother after being absent from her about ten years.—Meets with his sister whom he had never seen before, on the road, who conducted him to his mother.

After travelling several hundred miles, Mr. Hodge sold me to Mr. Gooch, the Cotton Planter, Cashaw County, South Carolina; he purchased me at a town called Liberty Hill, about three miles from his home. As soon as he got home he immediately put me on his cotton plantation to work, and put me under overseers, gave me an allowance of meat and bread with the other slaves, which was not half enough for me to live upon, and very laborious work; here my heart was almost broke with grief at leaving my fellow slaves. Mr. Gooch did not mind my grief, for he flogged me nearly every day, and very severely. Mr. Gooch bought me for his son-in-law, Mr. Hammans, about five miles distance from his residence. This man had but two slaves besides myself; he treated me very kindly for a week or two, but in summer, when cotton was ready to hoe, he gave me task work, connected with this department, which I could not get done, not having worked on cotton farms before. When I failed in my task he commenced flogging me, and set me to work without any shirt, in the cotton field, in a very hot sun, in the month of July. In August, Mr. Condell, his overseer, gave me a task at pulling fodder; having finished my task before night I left the field, the rain came on which soaked the fodder; on discovering this, he threatened to flog me for not getting in the fodder before the rain came. I attempted to run away, knowing that I should get a flogging. I was then between thirteen and fourteen years of age; I ran away to the woods half naked; I was caught by a slave holder who put me in Lancaster Gaol. When they put slaves in gaol, they advertise for their masters to own them; but if the master does not claim his slave in six months from the time of imprisonment, the slave is sold for gaol fees. When the slave runs away, the master always adopts a more rigorous system of flogging; this was the case in the present instance. After this, having determined from my youth to gain my freedom, I made several attempts, was caught, and got a severe flogging of one hundred lashes, each time. Mr. Hammans was a very severe and cruel master, and his wife still worse; she used to tie me up and flog me while naked.

After Mr. Hammans saw that I was determined to die in the woods, and not live with him, he tried to obtain a piece of land from his father-in-law, Mr. Gooch; not having the means of purchasing it, he exchanged me for the land.

As soon as Mr. Gooch had possession of me again, knowing that I was averse to going back to him, he chained me by the neck to his chains.—In this manner he took me to his home at MacDaniel's Ferry, in the County of Chester, a distance of fifteen miles. After which he put me into a swamp to cut trees, the heaviest work, which most of twenty-five or thirty years of age have to do, I being but sixteen. Here I was on very short allowance of food, and having heavy work, was too weak to fulfil my tasks. For this I got many severe floggings: and, after I had got my irons off, I made another attempt at running away. He took my irons off, in the fall