

"Two or three days after, he came to me, and says he, 'Charity, how should you like to be sold to Mr. Kinmore?' I told him I would rather be sold to him than to anybody else, because my husband belonged to him. My husband was a nice good man, and we set stores by one another. Mr. Kinmore agreed to buy us; and so I and my children went there to live. He was a kind master; but as for mistress Kinmore, she was a devil! Mr. Kinmore died a few years after he bought us, and in his will he give me and my husband free; but I never knowed anything about it, for years afterward. I don't know how they managed it. My poor husband died, and never knowed that he was free. But it's all the same now. He's among the ransomed. He used to say, 'Thank God, it's only a little way home; I shall soon be with Jesus.' O, he had a fine old Christian heart."

Here the old woman sighed deeply, and remained silent for a moment, while her right hand slowly rose and fell upon her lap, as if her thoughts were mournfully busy. At last she resumed.

"Sixteen children I've had, first and last; and twelve I've nursed for my mistress. From the time my first baby was born, I always set my heart upon buying freedom for some of my children. I thought it was of more consequence to them, than to me; for I was old, and used to being a slave. But mistress Kinmore wouldn't let me have my children. One after another—one after another—she sold 'em away from me. O, how many times that woman's broke my heart!"

Here her voice choked, and the tears began to flow. She wiped them quickly with the corner of her apron, and continued: "I tried every way I could, to lay up a copper to buy my children; but I found it pretty hard; for mistress kept me at work all the time. It was Charity! Charity! Charity! from morning till night. Charity, do this, and Charity, do that."

"I used to do the washings of the family; and large washings they were. The public road run right by my little hut; and I thought to myself, while I stood there at the wash tub, I might, just as well as not, be earning something to buy my children. So I set up a little oyster-board; and when anybody come along, that wanted a few oysters and a cracker, I left my wash tub and waited upon him. When I got a little money laid up, I went to my mistress and tried to buy one of my children. She knew how long my heart had been set upon it, and how hard I had worked for it. But she wouldn't let me have one! She wouldn't let me have one! So I went to work again; and set up late o'nights, in hopes I could earn enough to tempt her. When I had two hundred dollars, I went to her again; but she thought she could find a better market, and she wouldn't let me have one. At last, what do you think that woman did? She sold me and five of my children to the speculators! O, how I *did* feel, when I heard my children were sold to the speculators!"

I knew very well that by speculators the poor mother meant men whose trade it is to buy up coffles of slaves, as they buy cattle for the market.

After a short pause, her face brightened up, and her voice suddenly changed to a gay and sprightly tone.

"Surely, ma'am, there's always some good comes of being kind to folks. While I kept my oyster-board, there was a thin, peaked-looking man, used to come and buy of me. Some times he would say, 'Aunt Charity,' (he always called me Aunt Charity) you must fix me up a nice little mess, for I feel poorly to-day.' I always made something good for him; and if he didn't happen to have any change, I always trusted him. He liked my messes mighty well. Now, who do you think that should turn out to be, but the very speculator that bought me! He come to me, and says he, 'Aunt Charity' (he always called me Aunt Charity), you've been very good to me, and fixed me up many a nice little mess, when I've been poorly; and now you shall have your freedom for it, and I'll give you your youngest child."

"That was very kind," said I, "but I wish he had given you all of them."

With a look of great simplicity, and in tones of expostulation, the slave mother replied, "O, he couldn't afford *that*, you know."

"Well," continued she, "after that, I concluded I'd come to the free states. But mistress had one child of mine, a boy about twelve years old. I had always set my heart upon buying

Richard. He was the image of his father; and my husband was a nice good man; and we set stores by one another. Besides, I was always uneasy in my mind about Richard. He was a spiritly lad; and I knew it was very hard for him to be a slave. Many a time I have said to him, 'Richard, let what will happen, never lift your hand against your master.'

"But I knew it would always be hard work for him to be a slave. I carried all my money to my mistress, and told her I had more due to me; and if all of it wasn't enough to buy my poor boy, I'd work hard and send her all my earnings, till she said I *had* paid enough. She *knew* she could trust me. She *knew* Charity always kept her word. But she was a hard-hearted woman. She wouldn't let me have my boy. With a heavy heart, I went to work to earn more, in hopes I might one day be able to buy him. To be sure, I didn't get much more time, than I did when I was a slave; for mistress was always calling upon me; and I didn't like to disoblige her. I wanted to keep the right side of her, in hopes she'd let me have my boy. One day, she sent me of an errand. I had to wait some time. When I come back, mistress was counting a heap of bills in her lap. She was a rich woman; she rolled in gold. My little girl stood behind her chair; and as mistress counted the money—ten dollars, —twenty dollars—fifty dollars—I see that she kept crying. I thought may be mistress had struck her. But when I see the tears keep rolling down her cheeks all the time, I went up to her, and whispered, 'What's the matter?' She pointed to mistress's lap and said, 'Broder's money! Broder's money!' O, then I understood it all! I said to mistress Kinmore, 'Have you sold my boy?' Without looking up from counting her money, she drawled out, 'Yes, Charity; and I got a great price for him!'"

[Here the coloured woman imitated to perfection the languid, indolent tone of southern ladies.]

"O, my heart was too full! She had sent me away of an errand, because she didn't want to be troubled with our cries. I hadn't any chance to see my poor boy. I shall *never* see him again in this world. My heart felt as if it was under a great load of lead. I couldn't speak my feelings. I never spoke them to her, from that day to this. As I went out of the room, I lifted up my hand, and all I could say was, 'Mistress, how *could* you do it?'"

The poor creature's voice had grown more and more tremulous as she proceeded, and was at length stifled with sobs.

After some time, she resumed her story; "When my boy was gone, I thought I might sure enough as well go to the free states. But mistress had a little grandchild of mine. His mother died when he was born. I thought it would be some comfort to me, if I could buy little orphan Sammy. So I carried all the money I had to my mistress again, and asked her if she would let me buy my grand-on. But she wouldn't let me have him. Then I had nothing more to wait for; so I come on to the free states. Here I have taken in washing; and my daughter is smart at her needle; and we've got a very comfortable living."

"Do you ever hear from any of your children?" said I.

"Yes, ma'am, I hear from *one* of them. Mistress Kinmore sold one to a lady, that comes to the north every summer; and she brings my daughter with her."

"Don't she know that it is a good chance to take her freedom, when she is brought to the north?" said I.

"To be sure she knows *that*," replied Charity, with significant emphasis. "But my daughter is pious. She's a member of a church. Her mistress knows she wouldn't tell a lie for her right hand. She makes her promise on the Bible, that she won't try to run away, and that she will go back to the south with her; and so, ma'am, for her honour and her Christianity's sake, she goes back into slavery."

"Is her mistress kind to her?"

"Yes, ma'am; but then every body likes to be free. Her mistress is *very* kind. She says I may buy her for four hundred dollars; and that's a low price for her—two hundred paid down, and the rest as we can earn it. Kitty and I are trying to lay up enough to buy her."

"What has become of your mistress Kinmore? Do you ever hear from her?"

"Yes, ma'am, I often hear from her; and summer before last, as I was walking up Broadway, with a basket of clean clothes, who should I meet but my old mistress Kinmore! She gave a sort of a start, and said, in her drawling way, 'O, Charity, is it *you*?' Her voice sounded deep and hollow, as if it come