

'It ought to be,' said the other. 'I've been at it nearly a lifetime.'

'Ah, not that by a long shot,' cried the slave dealer, jovially; 'you've got a big slice of life before you.' Look here, Mr. Slater,' he added, 'you don't know of a smart, tidy girl I could pick up somewhere for a house servant?'

'No,' said Slater—'no, I don't think I do.'

'Suitable for a young couple just going to housekeeping. I have a good offer from a Southern gentleman. I could give a thousand dollars for the right sort of article.'

'Pretty good price,' said Slater.

'You couldn't let me have the girl who waited on the table? I rather think she'd fill the bill.'

'She belongs to my daughter,' said Slater. 'My daughter is not at home. She's visiting in the North.'

'I reckon I might go eleven hundred,' continued Heppart, dryly; 'even twelve, if I was sure of what I got. Been fully trained, I suppose?'

'Fetched to the house as soon as she could walk. She's about fifteen now.' Then, John Slater added, a trifle eagerly: 'I tell you she has a twin sister; they're as like as two peas. There she is now.'

Heppart's eyes turned critically upon the figure of a medium-sized colored girl, who climbed over the fence about two yards from the open gate, 'all tags an' tattas an' ba' legs.' She carried a hoe across her shoulders and she was singing shrilly.

'Oh, no, wouldn't do,' said the slave dealer; 'too rough.'

'Don't think she could be trained?'

'Takes too long. You take a little time to think about the other one, and if you decide to sell, why, drop me a line. I'll be along Thursday two weeks for the boys. Have 'em at the landin' by sun-up.'

Twelve hundred dollars would make the second payment on the piece of pasture land and go far toward the third. John Slater told his wife that night of Heppart's offer. She was angry that he had not accepted at once. He might pick up another girl, she said, and refuse to renew it. It was all foolishness about Rose belonging to Julia. If Julia must own a slave why not let her have Brier; the girl was getting rough and sassy in the fields. 'You write to Heppart to-night,' she concluded, 'before it is too late.'

'Very well,' said Slater, with a grunt, 'and you please go and tell Delie.'

There was weeping and wailing in the quarter after Mrs. Slater's visit.

'My Rosie gunno be soie!' cried Delie, throwing her arms wildly over her head. 'My li'l Rosie gunno be soie!' Rose herself stood like a statue in the quarter door, her black eyes regarding them all in a terrified way. Old Kale bowed and moaned in the chimney corner. The boys who were to be sold spoke harsh words of John Slater. Suddenly a figure rose from the lower step of the loft ladder. 'Ef Rosie gunno be sole, den I swa' dar ain' no Gawd?' shrieked Brier, and dashed recklessly out into the night.

It was raining and dark enough everywhere, but Brier fled to the woods. A flash of lightning revealed her as she sat huddled up on an old stump, rocking to and fro, murmuring at intervals: 'Ef Rosie gunno be sole, den I swa' dar ain' no Gawd!'

The storm-clouds overhead parted and rolled away, the moon shone down on Brier, milder winds played about her. 'Ef on'y Miss Julie'd git home,' sobbed the girl, 'ef on'y Rosie could git wud to Miss Julie.' But Miss Julie was not expected home for a month to come, and there was no possible way to get her word. The wind commenced

stirring again. The girl looked up at the drifting clouds and the partly shaded moon. 'It'll clean breck Mammy's hawt,' she said, hoarsely, an' ole Pappy he goin' fas' a'ready. Ef 'tw a' me'—

When Brier crept up the ladder stairway, the chickens were crowing for midnight. Old Kale, lying in the lower room with his eyes wide open, sighed to himself: 'De Evil One am in de gal.'

The next morning Brier was taken into the house.

'We'll train her, and have her ready for Julia, as you're so particular,' said Mrs. Slater; and John Slater gave a grunt.

When Brier had worked in the fields she had been encouraged to do her best, even her mammy allowing that 'Bria wa' smawt 'nough.' But when the girl tried eagerly to please at her new duties in the house, the quarter folks grumbled. 'She ain't gunno be Rosie in a jiffy,' they said; 'but she tryin' mighty hawd.'

Mrs. Slater thought differently from the negroes. 'The girl is a heap stronger than Rose,' she said; 'and I never knew any one so quick to learn.'

The reproachful eyes of Rose followed Brier about as she swept and dusted in her place or carefully carried the dishes from the cupboard to the table. Brier's own eyes were sometimes full of tears, but she rubbed them away in the privacy of the pantry.

The first Thursday had come and gone. On Friday Delie was attacked with typhoid fever. In her delirium the mother of the twins cried out to fetch Rosie to her and keep dat Bria away.

Mrs. Slater was concerned about Delie's illness. 'Let Rose stay with her as much as possible,' she ordered, 'and try not to let her worry.'

But on the next Wednesday Brier was told to see that Rose gathered her clothes together and was made ready for the morrow. 'She can take a dress and change in a bundle,' said Mrs. Slater; 'but the new mistress must find new clothes.'

Very quietly the twins entered Rose's little room behind Miss Julie's. Rose sat down on the bed and glanced around. 'You'll hev all dese t'ings to-mor, Bria,' she said; 'all my pity t'ings too, I reckon. Wot yo' doin' now?'

Brier was diligently collecting the clothes allowed for the bundle. It was not a very nice frock that she tied up in the bundle. Then she got out a clean gingham frock and a white apron and a stiffly starched sunbonnet and laid them on a chair. 'I reckon you'll wan' a-weah em, Rosie,' she said, cheerfully.

Then Rose gave way. She hid her face in the bedcovers and sobbed and cried. 'Tain't faih,' she sobbed, 'I done b'long to Miss Julie. She fetched me up; she said I allus gunno live with her. Dis here bed's mine, an dem pity t'ings is mine, an' dat spellin' book is mine, an' yo'—yo' don' even b'lieve in Gawd.'

'Yo' ain' sole yit, Rosie,' said Brier, tremulously. 'Mebbe Miss Julie'll git back to-night.'

'Yes, I reckon! W'en Miss Julie git back she fin' yo' in my place, an' de folks sayin' yo' smawta an' quick'n me, an' a-weahin' my cloze, an' a-settin' up nights readin' out my spellin' book. Yo' knows well 'nough, Bria, Miss Julie ain gunno git back to-night.'

It was past the hour of midnight when Rose fell asleep with her head on Delie's pillow and her hands caught tight in Delie's feverish grasp. But Delie was sleeping too. She was better. She did not know that to-morrow would be Thursday.

'Have 'em at the landin' by sunup,' had been Heppart's order. At four o'clock the quarter was alive with excitement. Negroes from the other farms were assembled to say good-by. Whispers floated about; there was fear of waking Delie.

The two boys were standing outside near the overseer, Pete sullen and inclined to be quarrelsome, Charley, true to his reputation, wild to be off.

'Any one done tell Rosie? Who gunno tell Rosie?' cried old Kale. The tears were running down his furrowed cheeks.

Just then Rose appeared in the door. She wore the clean frock and the stiff sunbonnet, and her shoes had been blackened. She had shaken hands with the boss and mistress in the dining room, and they had hoped kindly that she would get along and continue to be a good, industrious girl. Her bonnet was pulled over her face as she bade good-by in the quarter. She lingered a little before old Kale as he raised his bony hands over her head and blessed her.

'That's right, be brave and chairful,' said the overseer, encouragingly, as Rose walked rapidly away from the house. 'I shouldn't wonder, if 'twas a race, but you wouldn't beat the boys.'

The darkies gathered in a group out in the side yard, and waited and watched until the cloud of puffing steam drifted from sight as the boat glided 'down to Geo'gy.' Then some one said:

'Reckon we best see 'bout Delie. Dis gunno be mighty hawd on Delie.'

Two women went together up the ladder staircase. The trapdoor had been kept closed since Delie's illness. They attempted to push it up, but it was locked.

'Wot de daw doin' locked?' cried Hester. 'Wot happen to Delie?'

The key was found hidden behind the old dumb clock, where it had been rusting for years.

'Wot come to de daw?' said Hester again, and then she unlocked it and pushed it up cautiously. Old Kale followed the two women and the others came after old Kale.

'My lawd! heah's Rosie!'

The crowd paused in the little low room. Rose started up in bed, rubbing her eyes. Then Delie awoke, and cried shrilly: 'Dey come fo' Rosie? Dey can' hev her.'

'I give her good-by,' said old Kale, in a state of bewilderment. 'We all done give Rosie good-by down in the quawta.'

Then an old field hand clinched his fists and muttered hoarsely: 'Don' yo' see Rosie settin' dar big es life? Dat gal we give good-by, dat gal wa' Bria.'

[For the 'Messenger.'

Winnie's Class.

(By Mamie A.)

'Mr. Russell, I am afraid that I cannot keep that class any longer. I don't seem to have the influence over them that I would like. They only seem to come out of curiosity, and not from any desire to study the lesson.'

The speaker was a young girl of some twenty summers, with an open sweet face, but it was now somewhat clouded with evident distress.

'I am sorry,' said the superintendent, with a worried, perplexed look. 'I had hoped that they would behave better under your care. I have noticed that they seemed interested lately. What is your trouble with them?'

'Well, I generally have them sing some simple little hymn. They enjoy the singing and stories which I try to make bear on the lesson in some way, but as soon as I approach the lesson their interest is gone and