

So, at forty-five, the Madam still went clad in black, and crowned with a monstrosity of a widow's cap, that tied under her chin, and no thought of love or marriage breathed in her chilling presence; even when the young man, her son, looked calmly at rosy Bess Lundy, on the next farm, and began faintly to feel that he lived but half a life alone, his half-hearted wish fell shattered before the Madam's scathing criticism on that "blowsy ignoramus," and I hardly dare to think of the fate of Scotch Sandy Ainslie's proposal to her for the slim hand of Miss Katherine! Sandy sold his farm and went away west to the gold fields of California, and Katherine grew a little thinner, a little colder, a little sharper of tongue, a little less liberty to think of ever a sturdy farming man, or long-lipped advocate, and the Madam thanked her stars when the young parson took to himself a wife and relieved her from the last possibility of a son-in-law.

Steevie was a fretful invalid, sick unto death, but long in dying; and, as for Dorothy, she was a child yet! Why, o' day or so ago the Madam had sent her to her room, for an order disobeyed, though, at the same time, she had been forced to admonish her to pick out a tuck from her Sunday dimity, for that such a display of neat ankle and swelling calf was shameful in a "great girl of eighteen." "Nineteen, mother!" Dorothy had argued rebelliously, with one foot on the stair, and "twenty this fall," she had said in a lower key, mindful of the tragedy that marked her birth. How pretty she was in her childish, innocent naughtiness, breaking the laws of the Medes and Persians, and shaking her rough curls over the crankiness of Katherine, the facts of John, or the irritable despotism of Stevie!

How sweet she was, in dimity, short gown and sprigged print skirt, with dainty thread stockings in fairy patterns of her own designing and knitting, with serious eyes and pursed-up lips, concocting some toothsome conserve or wonderful cake, or, with ill-concealed aversion, sewing in the long, winter evenings, by the light of the pine knots in the fireplace, the interminable balls of "carpet-rags". How merry she was, away down the third meadow, with big Bruno as her caretaker, gathering wild strawberries, blackberries—anything sweet and good to eat,—or hunting the mows for black Biddy's eggs, or watching the Darkies and Indians at the "sugaring off," or burrowing into a pile of scented hay, "making her amusement," as the French say, out of all the sweet and innocent uses of nature, in default of human companionship. No one could harrow the Madam's heart by saying, "Dorothy is her father's child!" for no one now at Whitehall knew the lost father, no one at least but old Joe, and he didn't dare. The Madam had gotten rid of every old servant one by one; but still Joe stayed—no one but Joe and the Madam knew why. But it was impossible for her to send away the queer, old darkie, whose patient fealty and daring love had wormed from drunken braves and frightened squaws the story of the "young massa's" death, and whose terrified limbs had searched the pine forests for the mutilated

corpse, and in darkness and loneliness had found and buried all that was left of bonny Jack White, and who had staggered home to the log hut in the late fall, wayworn and famished, with scarce strength enough to breathe in the pale widow's ear the story of his devotion. For this, Joe was privileged to come, to go, to speak unbidden, and to keep treacherous silence over Miss Dorothy's escapades; and Joe took to the full the benefit of his privileges; answering the Madam smartly, coaxing her beautifully, doggedly and obstinately disobeying the Medo-Persian laws, and calmly doing just as he pleased.

He was a comical looking old fellow, this Joe, with a scarlet flannel shirt and voluminous breeches, in danger always of a sudden slide downwards, from the main stay of one time worn "gallus," which was sometimes fastened on a button of wonderful size and design, generally a metal one, bearing the insignia of a British Regiment, and found in Joe's lengthened prowlings on the sites of old battle grounds. His "ha'r" was grizzled, and his wide mouth almost toothless, but ever more decorated with a short corn-cob pipe, in which smoked tobacco of his own growing. This was in open defiance of the Madam's rule of "no smoking on the premises". Joe had an impish delight in any escapade and mischief; any trick to be played or advantage taken of the unwary, and he and Miss Dorothy laughed in concord, and in secret, many and many a time. He was a heathen old creature, with a great pretended terror of "Massa Dibble," and a general leaning unto the works thereof; the malignant influences of his anti-slave life on the Congo clung to him in a wierd halo of charms, beliefs, superstitions and uncanniness generally. But to Dorothy he was the one sympathetic creature in her small world, coaxing for her amusement, inventing excuses for her misdoings, acting as a sort of swarthy good angel in her few outings to junket, or picnic, or drive, or sail. For Dorothy sometimes got an outing, though she was questioned and cautioned and drilled and driven before and after to that extent that she rarely enjoyed herself. And Joe's spirit strove within him as he whitewashed the elm trunks and meditated on the queer unsympathetic surroundings she grew up in. "Joe!" It was the Madam's sharp voice, coming from the clematis-hung porch, "are you nearly done with the whitewash brush?" "Jes done, Madam, soon 's I'se laid out de superobosity ob de wash on dis yer ellum." "When you've done, rinse the brush, —not in the cattle trough, mind, as you did last time,—and hang it up. Where is Miss Dorothy?" "Seed her down de third meadow when I'se titivatin' de eas' chimbley. Want missie, Madam?" "Yes; go and find her and send her home." And Joe, with a final *swoat* of the brush on the rough bark, shuffled and slouched away, and doggedly rinsing the brush in the trough, threw it on the grass, and shambling off in his capacious and over-trodden shoes to the far off third meadow. "Reckon missie's down to de sugah bush," he said sagely. "Generate, dah whar I'se