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Mrs. Wingfield said,  
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each family, and tell them that as long as they stay here it is theirs rent-free; they will be paid for their work upon the estate, three, four, or five days a week, as they can spare time from their own plots. In this way they will be settled down, and have crops upon their plots of land, before the whole black population is upset by the sudden abolition of slavery."

"But supposing they won't work at all, even for wages, Vincent?"

"I should not give them the option, mother; it will be a condition of their having their plots of land free that they shall work at least three days a week for wages."

"I will think over what you say, Vincent, and tell you my decision in the morning. I certainly think your plan is a good one."

The next morning Mrs. Wingfield told Vincent that she had decided to adopt his plan. He at once held a long consultation with the overseer, and decided which fields should be set aside for the allotments, choosing land close to the negroes' quarters and suitable for the raising of vegetables for sale in the town.

In the afternoon Mrs. Wingfield went down with him. The bell was rung and the whole of the slaves assembled. Vincent then made them a speech. He began by reminding them of the kind treatment they had always received, and of the good feeling that had existed between the owners of the Orangery and their slaves. He praised them for their good conduct since the beginning of the troubles, and said that his mother and himself had agreed that they would now take steps to reward them, and to strengthen the tie between them. They would all be granted their freedom at once, and a large plot of land would be given to each man, as much as he and his family could cultivate with an average of two days a week steady labour.

Those who liked would, of course, be at liberty to leave; but he hoped that none of them would avail themselves of this