

ward to the future. The first step will be that all the slaves will be freed. Now, it seems to me that however attacked they may be to their masters and mistresses they will lose their heads over this, flock into the towns, and nearly starve there; or else take up little patches of land and cultivate them, and live from hand to mouth, which will be ruin to the present owners as well as to them. Anyhow for a time all will be confusion and disorder. Now, my idea is this, if you give all your slaves their freedom at once, offer them patches of land for their own cultivation and employ them at wages, you will find that a great many of them will stop with you. There is no place where for them to go at present and nothing to excite them so before the general crash comes they will have settled down quietly to work here in their new positions, and will not be likely to go away."

"It is a serious step to take, Vincent," Mrs. Wingfield said after thinking the matter over in silence for some time. "You do not think there is any probability of the ultimate success of our cause?"

"None, mother; I do not think there is even a possibility. One by one the Southern States have been wrested from the Confederacy. Sherman's march will completely isolate us. We have put our last available man in the field, and tremendous as are the losses of the enemy they are able to fill up the gaps as fast as they are made. No, mother, do not let us deceive ourselves on that head. The end must come, and that before long. The slaves will unquestionably be freed, and the only question for us is how to soften the blow. There is no doubt that our slaves, both at the Orangery and at the other plantations, are contented and happy; but you know how fickle and easily led the negroes are, and in the excitement of finding themselves free and able to go where they please, you must be sure that the greater number will wander away. My proposal is, that we should at once mark out a plot of land