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For the National Era.

UNCLE TOM'S CABIN:

OR,

LIFE AMONG THE LOWLY.

BY MRS. H. B. STOWE.

CHAPTER I.—*In which the Reader is introduced to a Man of Humanity.*

Late in the afternoon of a chilly day in February, two gentlemen were sitting alone over their wine in a well-furnished dining parlor, in the town of P——, in Kentucky. There were no servants present, and the gentlemen, with chairs closely approaching, seemed to be discussing some subject with great earnestness.

For convenience sake, we have said, hitherto, two *gentlemen*. One of the parties, however, when critically examined, did not seem, strictly speaking, to come under the species. He was a short, thick-set man, with coarse, commonplace features, and that swaggering air of pretension which marks a low man who is trying to elbow his way upward in the world. He was much over-dressed in a gaudy vest of many colors, a blue neckerchief, bedropped gaily with yellow spots, and arranged with a flaunting tie, quite in keeping with the general air of the man. His hands, large and coarse, were plentifully bedecked with rings, and he wore a heavy gold watch-chain, with a bundle of seals of portentous size and a great variety of colors attached to it—which, in the ardor of conversation, he was in the habit of flourishing and jingling with evident satisfaction. His conversation was in free and easy defiance of Murray's grammar and was garnished at convenient intervals with various profane expressions, which not even the desire to be graphic in our account shall induce us to transcribe.

His companion, Mr. Shelby, had the appearance of a gentleman, and the arrangements of the house and the general air of the housekeeping indicated easy and even opulent circumstances. As we before stated, the two are in the midst of an earnest conversation.

"That is the way I should arrange the matter," said Mr. Shelby.

"I can't make trade that way—I positively can't, Mr. Shelby," said the other, holding up a glass of wine between his eye and the light.

"Why, the fact is, Haley, Tom is an uncommon fellow—he is certainly worth that sum anywhere—steady, honest, capable, manages my whole farm like a clock."

"You mean honest, as niggers go," said Haley, helping himself to a glass of brandy.

"No. I mean, really, Tom is a good, steady, sensible, pious fellow. He got religion at a camp-meeting four years ago, and I believe he really got it. I've trusted him since then with everything I have—money, house, horses—and let him come and go round the country, and I always found him true and square in everything."

"Some folks don't believe there is pious niggers, Shelby," said Haley, with a candid flourish of his hand, "but *I do*. I had a fellow, now, in this yer last lot I took to Orleans—twas as good as a meetin now, really, to hear that critter pray; and he was quite gentle and quiet like. He fetched me a good sum, too, for I bought him cheap of a man that was 'bliged to sell out, so I realized six hundred on him. Yes, I consider religion a valeyable thing in a nigger, when it's the genuine article and no mistake."

"Well, Tom's got the real article, if ever a fellow had," rejoined the other. "Why, last fall, I let him go to Cincinnati alone, to do business for me, and bring home five hundred dollars. 'Tom,' says I to him, 'I trust you because I think you're a Christian—I know you wouldn't cheat.' Tom comes back sure enough—I knew he would. Some low fellows, they say, said to him—Tom, why don't you make tracks for Canada? 'Ah, master trusted me and I couldn't'—they told me about it. I am sorry to part with Tom, I must say. You ought to let him cover the whole balance of the debt; and you would, Haley, if you had any conscience."

"Well, I've got just as much conscience as any man in business can afford to keep—just a little, you know, to swear by, as 'twere," said the trader, jocularly; "and then, I'm ready to do anything in reason to 'blige friends, but this yer, you see, is a leetle too hard on a fellow—a leetle too hard." The trader sighed contemplatively, and poured out some more brandy.

"Well then, Haley, how will you trade?" said Mr. Shelby, after an uneasy interval of silence.

"Well, haven't you a boy or gal that you could throw in with Tom?"

"Hum!—none that I could well spare—to tell the truth, it's only hard necessity makes me willing to sell at all. I don't like parting with any of my hands, that's a fact."

Here the door opened, and a small quadroon boy, between four and five years of age, entered the room. There was something in his appearance remarkably beautiful and engaging. His black hair, fine as floss silk, hung in glossy curls about his round, dimpled face, while a pair of large, dark eyes, full of fire and softness, looked out from beneath the rich, long lashes, as he peered curiously into the apartment. A gay robe of scarlet and yellow plaid, carefully made and neatly fitted, set off to advantage the dark and rich style of his beauty; and a certain comic air of assurance, blended with bashfulness, showed that he had been not unused to being petted and noticed by his master.

"Hulloa, Jim Crow!" said Mr. Shelby, whistling, and snapping a bunch of raisins towards him, "pick that up, now!"

The child scampered with all his little strength after the prize, while his master laughed.

"Come here, Jim Crow," said he. The child came up, and the master patted the curly head, and chucked him under the chin.

"Now, Jim, show this gentleman how you can dance and sing." The boy commenced one of those wild, grotesque songs common among the negroes, in a rich, clear voice, accompanying his singing with many comic evolutions of the hands, feet, and whole body, all in perfect time to the music.

"Bravo!" said Haley, throwing him a quarter of an orange.

"Now, Jim, walk like old Uncle Cudjoe, when he has the rheumatism," said his master.

Instantly the flexible limbs of the child assumed the appearance of deformity and distortion, as, with his back humped up and his master's stick in his hand, he hobbled about the room, his childish face drawn into a doleful pucker, and spitting from right to left, in imitation of an old man.

Both gentlemen laughed uproariously.

"Now, Jim," said his master, "show us how old Elder Robbins leads the psalm." The boy drew his chubby face down to a formidable length, and commenced toning a psalm tune through his nose with imperturbable gravity.

"Hurrah! bravo! what a young 'un!" said Haley—"that chap's a case, I'll promise. Tell you what," said he, suddenly clapping his hand on Mr. Shelby's shoulder, "fling in that chap and I'll settle the business—I will. Come, now, if that aint doing the thing up about the rightest!"

At this moment the door was pushed gently open, and a young quadroon woman, apparently about twenty-five, entered the room.

There needed only a glance from the child to her, to identify her as its mother. There was the same rich, full, dark eye, with its long lashes, the same ripples of silky black hair, the brown of her complexion gave way on the cheek to a perceptible flush, which deepened as she saw the gaze of the strange man fixed upon her in bold and undisguised admiration. Her dress was of the neatest possible fit, and set off to advantage her finely moulded shape—a delicately formed hand and a trim foot and ankle were items of appearance that did not escape the quick eye of the trader, well used to run up at a glance the points of a fine female article.

"Well, Eliza," said her master, as she stopped and looked hesitatingly at him.

"I was looking for Harry, please, sir," and the boy bounded toward her, showing his spoils, which he had gathered in the skirt of his robe.

"Well, take him away, then," said Mr. Shelby, and hastily she withdrew, carrying the child on her arm.

"By Jupiter," said the trader, turning to him in admiration, "there's an article, now! You might make your fortune on that ar gal in Orleans any day. I've seen over a thousand in my day paid down for gals not a bit handsomer."

"I don't want to make my fortune on her," said Mr. Shelby, dryly, and, seeking to turn the conversation, he uncorked a bottle of fresh wine, and asked his companion's opinion of it.

"Capital, sir—first chop!" said the trader; then turning and slapping his hand familiarly on Shelby's shoulder, he added—

"Come, how will you trade about the gal—what shall I say for her—what'll you take?"

"Mr. Haley, she is not to be sold," said Shelby. "My wife would not part with her for her weight in gold."

"Aye, aye! women always say such things, cause they hant no sort of calculation. Just show 'em how many watches, and feathers, and trinkets, one's weight in gold would buy, and that alters the case, *I* reckon."

"I tell you, Haley, this must not be spoken of; I say no, and I mean no," said Shelby, decidedly.

"Well, you'll let me have the boy, though," said the trader; "you must own I've come down pretty handsomely for him."

"What on earth can you want with the child?" said Shelby.

"Why, I've got a friend that's going into this yer branch of the business—wants to buy up handsome boys to raise for the market—fancy articles entirely—sell for waiters, and so on, to rich 'uns that can pay for handsome 'uns. It sets off one of yr great places—a real handsome boy to open door, wait, and tend—they fetch a good sum—and this little devil is such a comical, musical concern—he's just the article."

"I would rather not sell him," said Mr. Shelby, thoughtfully; "the fact is, sir, I'm a humane man, and I hate to take the boy from his mother, sir."

"Oh, you do?—La! yes—somethin of that ar natur. I understand perfectly. It is mighty onpleasant getting on with women, sometimes. I al'ays hates these yer screachin, screamin times. They are *mighty* onpleasant; but as I manages business, I generally avoids 'em, sir. Now, what if you get the girl off for a day, or a week, or so, then the thing's done quietly, all over before she comes home. Your wife might get her some ear-rings, or a new gown, or some such truck, to make up with her."

"I'm afraid not."

"Lor bless ye, yes. These critters aint like white folks, you know, they gets over things, only manage right. Now, they say," said Haley, assuming a candid and confidential air, "that this kind o' trade is hardening to the feelings, but I never found it so. Fact is, I never could do things up in the way that some fellers manage the business. I've seen 'em as would pull a woman's child out of her arms, and set him up to sell, and she screechin' like mad all the time—very bad policy—damages the article—makes em quite unfit for service sometimes. I knew a real handsome girl, once, in Orleans, as was entirely ruined by this sort o' handling. The fellow that was trading for her didn't want her baby, and she was one of your real high sort, when her blood was up. I tell you, she squeezed up her child in her arms, and talked and went on real awful, it kinder makes my blood run cold to think on't—and when they carried off the child, and locked her up, she jest went ravin' mad, and died in a week. Clear waste then, sir, of a thousand dollars, just for want of management—there's where 'tis. It's always best to do the humane thing, sir, that's been *my* experience." And the trader leaned back in his chair, and folded his arms, with an air of virtuous decision, apparently considering himself a second Wilberforce.

The subject appeared to interest the gentleman deeply, for, while Mr. Shelby was thoughtfully peeling an orange, he broke out afresh, with becoming diffidence, but as if actually driven by the force of truth to say a few words more.

"It don't look well now, for a feller to be a praisin' himself, but I say it jest because it's the truth. I believe I'm reckoned to bring in about the finest droves of niggers that is brought in—at least I've been told so. If I have once, I reckon I have a hundred times, all in good case, fat and likely, and I lose as few as any man in the business, and I lays it all to my management, sir, and humanity, sir, I may say, is the great pillar of *my* management."

Mr. Shelby did not know what to say, and so he said "Indeed!"

"Now I've been laughed at for my notions, sir, and I've been talked to. They aint popular, and they aint common, but I stuck to 'em, sir, I've stuck to 'em, and realized well on 'em, yes, sir, they have paid their passage, I may say," and the trader laughed at his joke.

There was something so piquant and original in these elucidations of humanity, that Mr. Shelby could not help laughing in company. Perhaps you laugh too, dear reader, but you know humanity comes out in a variety of strange forms now-a-days, and there is no end to the odd things that humane people will say and do.

Mr. Shelby's laugh encouraged the trader to proceed.

"It's strange now, but I never could beat this into people's heads. Now, there was Tom Loker, my old partner down in Natchez; he was a clever fellow, Tom was, only the very devil with niggers—on principle 'twas, you see, for a better hearted feller never broke bread; 'twas his *system*, sir. I used to talk to Tom. 'Why, Tom,' I used to say, 'when your gals takes on and cry, what's the use o' crackin' on 'em over the head, and knockin' on em round? It's ridiculous,' says I, 'and dont do no sort of good. Why, I don't see no harm in their cryin',' says I, 'its natur,' says I, 'and if natur can't blow off one way, it will another. Besides, Tom,' says I, 'it jest spiles your gals; they gets sickly and down in the mouth—and sometimes they gets ugly—particular yallow gals do—and it's the devil and all getting on 'em broke in—now,' ses I, 'why can't you kinder coax em up, and speak 'em fair? Depend on it, Tom, a little humanity thrown in along, goes a heap farther than all your jawin' and crackin' and it pays better,' ses I, 'depend on't.' But Tom couldn't get the hang on't, and he spiled so many for me, that I had to break off with him, tho' he was a good hearted fellow, and as fair a business hand as is goin'."

"And do you find your ways of managing do the business better than Tom's?" said Mr. Shelby.

"Why yes, sir, I may say so. You see, when I any ways can I takes a leetle care about the onpleasant parts, like selling young uns and that—get the gals out of the way—out of sight out of mind, you know—and when it's clean done, and can't be helped, they naturally gets used to it. 'Tant, you know, as if it was white folks, that's brought up in the way of 'spectin' to keep their children and wives and all that. Niggers, you know, that's fetched up properly, ha'n't no kind of 'spectations of no kind; so all these things comes easier."

"I'm afraid mine are not properly brought up, then," said Mr. Shelby.

"'Spose not; you Kentucky folks spile your niggers. You mean well by 'em, but 'tant no real kindness arter all. Now a nigger, you see, what's got to be hacked and tumbled round the world, and sold to Tom, and Dick, and the Lord knows who, 'tan't no kindness to be givin' on him notions and expectations, and bringin' on him up too well, for the rough and tumble comes all the harder on him arter. Now, I venture to say your niggers would be quite chop-fallen in a place where some of your plantation niggers would be a singing and whooping like all possessed. Every man, you know, Mr. Shelby, naturally thinks well of his own ways, and I think I treat niggers just about as well as it's ever worth while to treat 'em."

"It's a happy thing to be satisfied," said Mr. Shelby, with a slight shrug, and some perceptible feelings of a disagreeable nature.

"Well," said Haley, after they had both silently picked their nuts for a season, "what do you say?"

"I'll think the matter over, and talk with my wife," said Shelby. "Meantime, Haley, if you want the matter carried on in the quiet way you speak of, you'd best not let your business in this neighborhood be known. It will get out among my boys, and it will not be a particularly quiet business, getting away any of my fellows, if they know it, I'll promise you."

"Oh! certainly, by all means, mum! of course. But I'll tell you, I'm in a devil of a hurry, and shall want to know, as soon as possible, what I may depend on," said he, rising and putting on his overcoat.

"Well, call up this evening, between six and seven, and you shall have my answer," said Mr. Shelby, and the trader bowed himself out of the apartment.

"I'd like to have been able to kick the fellow down the steps," said he to himself, as he saw the door fairly closed, "with his impudent assurance, but he knows how much he has me at advantage. If anybody had ever said to me that I should sell Tom down South to one of those rascally traders, I should have said, 'Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?' And now it must come, for aught I see. And Eliza's child, too! I know that I shall have some fuss with wife about that, and for that matter, about Tom, too. So much for being in debt! heigho! The fellow sees his advantage, and means to push it."

Perhaps the mildest form of the system of slavery is to be seen in the State of Kentucky. The general prevalence of agricultural pursuits of a quiet and gradual nature, not requiring those periodic seasons of hurry and pressure that are called for in the business of more Southern districts, makes the task of the negro a more healthful and reasonable one; while the master, content with a more gradual style of acquisition, has not those temptations to hardheartedness which always overcome frail human nature when the prospect of sudden and rapid gain is weighed in the balance with no heavier counterpoise than the interests of the helpless and unprotected.

Whoever visits some estates there, and witnesses the good humored indulgence of some masters and mistresses, and the affectionate loyalty of some slaves, might be tempted to dream the oft-fabled poetic legend of a patriarchal institution and all that; but over and above the scene, there broods a portentous shadow—the shadow of *Law*. So long as the law considers all these human beings, with beating hearts and living affections, only as so many *things* belonging to a master—so long as the failure, or misfortune, or imprudence, or death, of the kindest owner, may cause them any day to exchange a life of kind protection and indulgence for one of hopeless misery and toil, so long it is impossible to make anything beautiful or desirable in the best regulated administration of slavery.

Mr. Shelby was a fair average kind of man, good-natured and kindly, and disposed to easy indulgence of those around him, and there had never been a lack of anything which might contribute to the physical comfort of the negroes on his estate. He had, however, speculated largely and quite loosely—had involved himself deeply, and his notes to a large amount had come into the hands of Haley, and this small piece of information is the key to the preceding conversation.

Now, it had so happened that, in approaching the door, Eliza had caught enough of the conversation to know that a trader was making offers to her master for somebody.

She would gladly have stopped at the door to listen as she came out, but her mistress just then calling, she was obliged to hasten away.

Still she thought she heard the trader make an offer for her boy—could she be mistaken? Her heart swelled and throbbed, and she involuntarily strained him so tight that the little fellow looked up into her face in astonishment.

"Eliza, girl, what ails you to-day?" said her mistress, when Eliza had upset the wash pitcher, knocked down the work stand, and finally was abstractedly offering her mistress a long nightgown in place of the silk dress she had ordered her to bring from the wardrobe.

Eliza started. "Oh, missis!" she said, raising her eyes, then bursting into tears, she sat down in a chair, and began sobbing.

"Why, Eliza, child! what ails you?" said her mistress.

"Oh! missis, missis," said Eliza, "there's been a trader talking with master in the parlor. I heard him."

"Well, silly child, suppose there has."

"Oh, missis, *do* you suppose mas'r would sell my Harry?" And the poor creature threw herself into a chair, and sobbed convulsively.

"Sell him! No, you foolish girl! You know your master never deals with those Southern traders, and never means to sell any of his servants as long as they behave well. Why, you silly child, who do you think would want to buy your Harry? Do you think all the world are set on him as you are, you goosie? Come, cheer up, and hook my dress. There, now put my back hair up in that pretty braid you learnt the other day, and don't go listening at doors any more."

"Well, but missis, *you* never would give your consent—to—to—"

"Nonsense, child! to be sure I shouldn't. What do you talk so for? I would as soon have one of my own children sold. But really, Eliza, you are getting altogether too proud of that little fellow. A man can't put his nose into the door, but you think he must be coming to buy him."

Reassured by her mistress's confident tone, Eliza proceeded nimbly and adroitly with her toilet, laughing at her own fears as she proceeded.

Mrs. Shelby was a woman of a high class, both intellectually and morally. To that natural magnanimity and generosity of mind which one often marks as characteristic of the women of Kentucky, she added high moral and religious sensibility and principle, carried out with great energy and ability into practical results. Her husband, who made no professions to any particular religious character, nevertheless reverenced and respected the consistency of hers, and stood perhaps a little in awe of her opinion. Certain it was, that he gave her unlimited scope in all her benevolent efforts for the comfort, instruction, and improvement of her servants, though he never took any decided part in them himself. In fact, if not exactly a believer in the doctrine of the efficiency of the extra good works of saints, he really seemed somehow or other to fancy that his wife had piety and benevolence enough for two—to indulge a shadowy expectation of getting into heaven through her superabundance of qualities to which he made no particular pretension.

The heaviest load on his mind, after his conversation with the trader, lay in the foreseen necessity of breaking to his wife the arrangement contemplated—meeting the importunities and opposition which he knew he should have reason to encounter.

Mrs. Shelby, being entirely ignorant of her husband's embarrassments, and knowing only the general kindliness of his temper, had been quite sincere in the entire incredulity with which she had met Eliza's suspicions. In fact, she dismissed the matter from her mind, without a second thought, and being occupied in preparations for an evening visit, it passed out of her thoughts entirely.

CHAPTER II.—*The Mother.*

Eliza had been brought up by her mistress from girlhood as a petted and indulged favorite.

The traveller in the South must often have remarked that peculiar air of refinement, that softness of voice and manner, which seems in many cases to be a particular gift to the quadroon and mulatto women. These natural graces in the quadroon are often united with beauty of the most dazzling kind, and in almost every case with a personal appearance prepossessing and agreeable. Eliza, such as we have described her, is not a fancy sketch, but taken from remembrance, as we saw her years ago, in Kentucky. Safe under the protecting care of her mistress, Eliza had reached maturity without those temptations which make beauty so fatal an inheritance to a slave. She had been married to a bright and talented young mulatto man, who was a slave on a neighboring estate, and bore the name of George Harris.

This young man had been hired out by his master to work in a bagging factory, where his adroitness and ingenuity caused him to be considered the first hand in the place. He had invented a machine for the cleaning of the hemp, which, considering the education and circumstances of the inventor, displayed quite as much mechanical genius as Whitney's cotton gin.

He was possessed of a handsome person and pleasing manners, and was a general favorite in the factory. Nevertheless, as this young man was in the eye of the law not a man, but a thing, all these superior qualifications were subject to the control of a vulgar, narrow-minded, tyrannical master. This same gentleman, having heard of the fame of George's invention, took a ride over to the factory, to see what this intelligent chattel had been about. He was received with great enthusiasm by the employer, who congratulated him on possessing so valuable a slave.

He was waited upon over the factory, shown the machinery by George, who, in high spirits, talked so fluently, held himself so erect, looked so handsome and manly, that his master began to feel an uneasy consciousness of inferiority. What business had his slave to be marching round the country, inventing machines, and holding up his head among gentlemen. He'd soon put a stop to it. He'd take him back and put him to hoeing and digging and see if he'd step about so smart. Accordingly, the manufacturer and all hands concerned were astounded when he suddenly demanded George's wages, and announced his intention of taking him home.

"But, Mr. Harris," remonstrated the manufacturer, "isn't this rather sudden?"

"What if it is—isn't the man mine?"

"We would be willing, sir, to increase the rate of compensation."

"No object at all, sir. I hain't need to hire any of my hands out, unless I've a mind to."

"But, sir, he seems peculiarly adapted to this business."

"Dare say he may be—never was much adapted to anything that I set him about, I'll be bound."

"But only think of his inventing this machine," interposed one of the workmen, rather unluckily.

"Oh! yes—a machine for saving work, is it? He'd invent that, I'll be bound; let a nigger alone for that any time. They are all labor saving machines themselves, every one of 'em. No, he shall tramp."

George had stood like one transfixed at hearing his doom thus suddenly pronounced by a power that he knew was irresistible. He folded his arms, tightly pressed in his lips, but a whole volcano of bitter feelings burned in his bosom, and sent streams of fire through his veins. He breathed short, and his large dark eyes flashed like live coals, and he might have broken out into some dangerous ebullition, had not the kindly manufacturer touched him on the arm, and said, in a low tone—

"Give way, George—go with him for the present. We'll try to help you yet."

The tyrant observed the whisper, and conjectured its import, though he could not hear what was said, and he inwardly strengthened himself in his determination to keep the power he possessed over his victim.

George was taken home, and put to the meanest drudgery of the farm. He had been able to repress every disrespectful word, but the flashing eye, the gloomy and troubled brow, were part of a natural language that could not be repressed—indubitable signs, which showed too plainly that the man could not become a thing.

It was during the happy period of his employment in the factory that George had seen and married his wife. During that period—being much trusted and favored by his employer—he had free liberty to come and go at discretion. The marriage was highly approved of by Mrs. Shelby, who, with a little womanly complacency in match-making, felt pleased to unite her handsome favorite with one of her own class who seemed in every way suited to her—and so they were married in her mistress's great parlor, and her mistress herself adorned the bride's beautiful hair with orange blossoms, and threw over it the bridal veil, which certainly could scarce have rested on a fairer one—and there was no lack of white gloves and cake and wine, of admiring guests to praise the bride's beauty and her mistress's indulgence and liberality. For a year or two Eliza saw her husband frequently, and there was nothing to interrupt their happiness, except the loss of two infant children to whom she was passionately attached, and whom she mourned with a grief so intense as to call for gentle remonstrance from her mistress, who sought with maternal anxiety to direct her naturally passionate feelings within the bounds of reason and religion.

After the birth of little Harry, however, she had gradually become tranquillized and settled, and every bleeding tie and throbbing nerve, once more entwined with that little life, seemed to become sound and healthful, and Eliza was a happy woman up to the time that her husband was rudely torn from his kind employer, and brought under the iron sway of his legal owner.

The manufacturer, true to his word, visited Mr. Harris a week or two after George had been taken away, when, as he hoped, the heat of the occasion had passed away, and tried every possible inducement to lead him to restore him to his former employment.

"You needn't trouble yourself to talk any longer," said he, doggedly, "I know my own business, sir."

"I did not presume to interfere with it, sir. I only thought that you might think it for your interest to let your man to us on the terms proposed."

"Oh, I understand the matter well enough. I saw your winking and whispering the day I took him out of the factory, but you don't come it over me that way. It's a free country, sir—the man's mine, and I do what I please with him! that's it!"

And so fell George's last hope—nothing before him but a life of toil and drudgery, rendered more bitter by every little smarting vexation and indignity which tyrannical ingenuity could devise.

A very humane jurist once said, the worst use you can put a man to is to hang him. No, there is another use that a man can be put to that is worse!

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

For the National Era.

LET THEM BE HONORED.

SCHUYLKILL, *January* 27, 1851.

MR. EDITOR: Though self-approval is the best earthly support a conscientious man can hope for, yet, that in the weakness of our nature, defectiveness of our training, or the embarrassing, vitiating scenes which surround us, the wisest and best need aid from any source that can enlighten in the preception of duty, or strengthen and stimulate in its performance. Legislators, as a class, have not been remarked for inflexible adherence to moral principle, irrespective of party expediency or other warping influences. Thus much premised, let the heroic men who battled so bravely in the last session of Congress, in the cause of human rights—let them be assured that the part they acted has associated their names inseparably with the idea of expanding liberty in minds which noiselessly cherish the sentiment of veneration for those who yielded to just and humane impulses, and dared to speak their thoughts manfully in the face of formidable opposition within the Capitol, and apathetic, if not hostile, popular sentiment without. Verily they have a reward in the blessings of millions whose sympathies are with them, and who, at this hour, are coöperating up to their estimate of capacity to render service to the most suffering of all causes. In the meetings convened (now too numerous to be reported) to investigate the demands of the Fugitive Bill, and to ascertain the relative importance of moral and legal obligation, the names of these moral heroes elicit manifestations of high respect, and, better still, of confidence. At those meetings, at the country store, at the mill, the smith shop, and by the fireside, may be heard daily. In this unparalleled age of progression, nothing so astonishes and rejoices me, as the mighty impulse given to the spirit of liberty. Mark the doings at Washington! Do the annals of legislation furnish anything to compare? I knew of Giddings, Wilmot, Hale, &c., but whence Stevens, Campbell, Sacket, Julian, and their coadjutors? I thought at the close of every speech that all had been said that could be said, but each in succession brought forth things new and old from the storehouse of eternal truth. The good time coming looms up in the near future.

Let it not be deemed invidious that the writer of this makes especial reference to one name. He is proud of the others, his noble countrymen, it seems to increase his consequence, that his natal breath was inhaled in the same age, in the same land, under the same skies, with them.

In the position of Senator Seward there is something peculiar. Doubtless there have been those, through the ages, who have had at least glimpses of something beyond and paramount to conventionalities, and some of them have so said, each in his own way, but it was left for Seward to select phraseology so simple, yet so comprehensive, as to silence all doubt regarding the clearness of his perception or the cogency of his convictions. The HIGHER LAW is already on almost every moral page, and seems destined to be a technical in ethics for coming generations. The great moral of this combination is its tendency to increase the sense of individuality, that the *man* may not be lost in the *citizen*, the "*individual* not annihilated by merging him in the *State*."

May the champions of freedom keep a steady eye to the Higher Law, let them maintain their integrity, and soon will they be sustained in their righteous efforts. AMOS GILBERT.

For the National Era.

A REMINISCENCE.

BY PATTY LEE.

Some four or five years ago, there came to reside in the neighborhood in which I then lived a family consisting of three persons—an old lady, a young man, and a child of some fourteen years. The cottage they took was divided by a little strip of wood from my own home, and I well remember how rejoiced I was on first seeing the blue smoke curling up from the high red chimneys, for the house had been a long time vacant, and the prospect of having near neighbors gave me delight. Perhaps, too, I was not the less pleased that they were new neighbors. We are likely to under-estimate persons and things we have continually about us, but let separation come, and we learn what they were to us. *Apropos* of this—in the little wood I have spoken of I remember there was an oak tree, taller by a great deal than its fellows, and a thousand times I have felt as though its mates must be oppressed with a painful sense of degradation, and really wished the axe were laid at its root. At last, one day I heard the ringing strokes of that fatal instrument, and, on inquiry, was told that the woodman had received orders no longer to *spare that tree*. Eagerly I listened at first—every stroke was like the song of victory, then the gladness subsided, and I began to marvel how the woods would look with the monarch fallen, then I thought the glory will have departed, and began to reflect upon myself as having sealed its death warrant, so that when the crash told that the mighty was fallen, waking the sleeping echoes from the hills, I cannot tell how sad an one awaked also in my heart. If I could see it standing once more, just once more! but I could not, and till this day I feel a twinge when I think of the tall oak.

But the new neighbors—some curiosity mingled with my pleasure, I confess, and so, as soon as I thought they were settled, and feeling at home, I made my toilet with unusual care for the first call.

The cottage was somewhat back from the main road, to which access was had by a narrow grass-grown lane, bordered on one side by a green belt of meadow land, and on the other by the grove, sloping upward and backward to a clayey hill, where, with children and children's children about them,

> "The rude forefathers of the hamlet slept."

A little farther on, but in full view of its stunted cypresses and white headstones, was the cottage. Of burial grounds generally I have no dread, but from this particular one I was accustomed, even from a child, to turn away with something of superstitious horror. I could never forget how Laura Hastings saw a light burning there all one winter night, after the death of John Hine, a wild, roving fellow, who never did any real harm in his life to any one but himself, hastening his own death by foolish excesses. Nevertheless, his ghost had been seen more than once, sitting on the cold clay mound beneath which the soul's expression was fading and crumbling into dust—so, at least, said some of the oldest and most pious inhabitants of our village. There, too, Mary Wildermings, a fair young girl who died, more sinned against than sinning, had been heard to sing sad lullabies under the waning moon sometimes, and at other times had been seen sitting by her sunken grave, and braiding roses, as for a bridal, in her hair. True, I never saw any of these wonderful things; but a spot more likely to be haunted by the unresting spirits of the bad could not readily be imagined. The woods, thick and full of birds along the roadside, thinned away toward the desolate ridge, where briers grew over the grave-mounds, and about and through the fallen palings, as they would, with here and there a little clearing among weeds and thistles and high matted grass, for the making of a new bed.

It was the twilight of a beautiful summer day as I walked down the grassy lane and past the lonesome graveyard to make my first call at the cottage, feeling, I scarcely knew why, strangely sad. By an old broken bridge in the hollow between the cottage and the graveyard I remember that I sat down, and for a long time listened to the trickling of the water over the pebbles, and watched the golden patches of sunlight till they quite faded out as "came still evening on, and twilight gray, that in her sober livery all things clad."

So quietly I sat that the mole, beginning its blind work at sunset, loosened and stirred the ground beneath my feet, and the white, thick-winged moths, coming from beneath the dusty weeds, fluttered about me, and lighted in my lap, and the dull, flabby beating of the bat came almost in my face.

The first complaint of the owl sounded along the hollow and died over the next hill, warning me to proceed, when I heard, as it were the echo of my own thought, repeated, in a low, melancholy voice, the conclusion of that beautiful stanza of the elegy in reference to that moping bird. I distinctly caught the lines—

> "Of such as wandering near her sacred bower,
> Molest her ancient solitary reign."

Looking up, I saw approaching slowly, with arms folded and eyes upon the ground, a young and seemingly exceeding handsome man. He passed without noticing me at all, and I think without seeing me. As he did not observe me, I had the better opportunity of observing him, though I would fain have foregone that privilege to have won one glance. He interested me, and I felt humiliated that he should pass me as though I were a stick or a stone. His face was pale and very sad, and his forehead shaded with a mass of black, heavy hair, pushed away from one temple, and falling neglectedly over the other.

"Well!" said I, as I watched him ascending the opposite hill, feeling very much as though he had wantonly slighted some claim I had upon him, though I could not possibly have the slightest, and, turning ill-humoredly away, I walked with a quick step toward the cottage.

A golden-haired young girl sat in the window reading, and on my approach arose and received me with easy gracefulness and well-bred courtesy, but during my stay her manner did not once border upon cordiality. She was very beautiful, but her beauty was like that of statuary. The mother I did not see. She was, as I was told, slightly indisposed, and, on begging that she might not be disturbed, the daughter readily acquiesced. Everything about the place indicated people accustomed to refined and elegant habits, but whence they came, how long they proposed to remain, and what relation the young man sustained to the other members of the family, I confess I would gladly have known.

Seeing a flute on the table, I spoke of music, for I conceived it to belong to the absent young man. I received no enlightenment, however, and as the twilight was already falling deeply, I felt obliged to take leave without obtaining even a glimpse of the person whom I had pictured in imagination young and fair, and of course agreeable.

The sun had been set some time, but the moon had risen full and bright, so that I felt no fear even in passing the graveyard, but walked more slowly than I had done before, till, reaching the gate, I paused to think of the awful mystery of life and death and immortality.

This is not a very desolate spot, after all, thought I, as, leaning over the gate, something of the quiet of the place infused itself into my spirit. Here, I felt, the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest. Here the long train of evils that attach themselves to the best phases of humanity fade to silent dust. Here the thorn-crown of pain is loosened from the brow of sorrow by the white hand of peace, and the hearts that were all their lifetimes bowed under the shadow of a great and haply unpitied affliction never ache any more. And here, O, best of all, the frailties of the unresisting tempted are folded away beneath the shroud from the humiliating glance of pity—from the cold eyes of pride. We have need to be thankful that when man brought upon his primal nature the mildew of sin, God did not cast us utterly from him, but in the unsearchable riches of his mercy struck open the refuge of the grave. If there were no fountain where our sins of scarlet may be washed as white as wool—if the black night of death were not bordered by the golden shadows of the morning of immortality—if deep in the darkness were not sunken the foundations of the white bastions of peace—it were yet an inestimable privilege to lay aside the burden of life for life becomes sooner or later a burden, an echo among ruins.

In the corner of the burial ground, where the trees are thickest, a little apart from the rest, was the grave of Mary Wildermings, and year after year the blue thistles bloomed and faded in its sunken sod.

The train of my reflections naturally suggested her, and, turning my eyes in the direction of her resting place, I saw, or thought I saw, the outline of a human figure. I remembered the story of her unresting ghost, and at first little doubted that I beheld it, and felt, I own, a tumult of strange feeling on finding myself thus alone so near a questionable shape.

Then, I said, this is some delusion of the senses; and I passed my hand over my eyes, for an uncertain glimmer had followed my intensity of gaze. I looked toward the cottage to reassure myself by the light of a human habitation, but all there was dark—a cloud passed over the moon, and, without venturing to look toward the haunted grave, I withdrew from the gate, very lightly, nevertheless, it creaked as I did so. Any sound save the beating of my own heart gave me courage, and when I had walked a little way, I turned and looked again, but the dense shadow would have prevented my seeing anything, if it had been there. Certain it is, I saw nothing.

On returning home I asked the housekeeper, a garrulous person usually, if she remembered Mary Wildermings, and if she were not buried in the graveyard across the wood.

"Yes, I remember her, and she is buried in the corner of the ground on the hill. They came to my house, I know, to get a cup, or something of the sort, with which to dip the water from her grave, for it rained terribly all the day of her funeral. But," she added, "what do you want to talk of the dead and gone for, when there are living folks enough to talk about?"

Truth is, she wanted me to say something of our new neighbors, and was vexed that I did not, though I probably should have done so had they not been quite driven from my thoughts by the more absorbing event of the evening; so, as much vexed and disappointed as herself, I retired. The night was haunted with some troublous dreams, but a day of sunshine succeeded, and my thoughts flowed back to a more cheerful channel.

Days and weeks went by, and we neither saw nor heard anything of our new neighbors, for my call was not returned, nor did I make any further overtures toward an acquaintance.

Often, as I sat under the apple tree by the door, of twilights, I heard the sweet mellow music of the flute.

"Is that at the cottage?" said the housekeeper to me, one night, "it sounds to me as though it were in the corner of the graveyard."

I smiled as she turned her head a little to one side, and, encircling the right ear with her hand, listened for some minutes eagerly, and then proceeded to express her conviction that the music was the result of no mortal agency.

"Did you ever hear of a ghost playing the flute?" said I.

"A flute!" she answered, indignantly, "it's a flute, just as much as you are a flute; and for the sake of enlightening your blind understanding, I'll go to the graveyard, night as it is, if you will go with me."

"Very well," I said. "Come on."

So, under the faint light of the crescent moon, we took our way together. Gradually the notes became lower and sadder, and quite died away. I urged my trembling companion to walk faster, lest the ghost should vanish too; and she acceded to my wish with silent alacrity, that convinced me at once of the sincerity of her expressed belief.

Just as we began to ascend the hill, she stopped suddenly, saying,

"There! did you hear that?"

I answered that I heard a noise, but that it was no unusual thing to hear sounds of the sort in an inhabited neighborhood at so early an hour.

It was the latching of the gate at the graveyard. She answered, solemnly,

"As you value your immortal soul, go no further."

In vain I argued, that a ghost would have no need to unlatch the gate. She positively refused to go farther, and with a courage not very habitual to me, I confess, I walked on alone.

"Do you think I don't know that sound?" she called after me. "I would know it if I had forgotten everything else. Oh, stop till I tell you! The night Mary Wildermings died," I heard her say, but I knew the sound of the gate as well as she, and would not wait even for a ghost story. I have since wished I had, for I could never afterwards persuade her to reveal it.

Gaining the summit of the hill, I perceived, a little way before me, a dark figure, receding slowly; but so intent was I on the superhuman, that I paid little attention to the human, though afterward, in recalling the circumstance, the individual previously seen while I sat on the bridge became in some way associated with this.

How hushed and solemn the graveyard seemed! I was half afraid, as I looked in—quite startled, in fact, when latching and unlatching the gate, to determine whether the sound I had heard were that or not, a rabbit, roused from its light sleep, under the fallen grass, sped fleetly across the still mounds to the safer shelter of the woods. I saw nothing else, save that the grass was trampled to a narrow path leading towards Mary's grave.

During the summer, I sometimes saw the young girl in the woods, and I noticed that she neither gathered flowers nor sang with the birds, but would sit for hours in some deep shadow, without moving her position in the least, not even to push away the light curls which the winds blew over her cheeks and forehead, as they would. She seemed to neither love nor seek human companionship. Once only I noticed, and it was the last time she ever walked in the woods, that he whom I supposed to be her brother was with her. She did not sit in the shade, as usual, but walked languidly, and leaning heavily on the arm of her attendant, who several times swept off the curls from her forehead, and bent down, as if kissing her.

A few days afterwards, being slightly indisposed, I called in the village doctor. Our conversation, naturally enough, was of who was sick and who was dead.

"Among my patients," he said, "there is none that interests me so deeply as a little girl at the cottage—indeed, I have scarcely thought of anything else, since I knew that she must die. A strange child," he continued, "she seems to feel neither love of life nor fear of death—nor does she either weep or smile, and though I have been with her much of late, I have never seen her sleep. She suffers no pain—her face wears the same calm expression, but her large, melancholy eyes are wide open all the time."

The second evening after this though not quite recovered myself, I called at the cottage, in the hope of being of some service to the sick girl. The snowy curtain was dropped over the window of her chamber—the sash partly raised, and all within still—very still. The door was a little open, and, pausing, I heard from within a low, stifled moan, which I could not misunderstand, and pushing open the door, I entered without rapping.

In the white sheet, drawn straight over the head and the feet, I recognised at once the fearful truth—the little girl was dead. By the head of the bed and still as one stricken into stone, sat the personage I so often wished to see. The room was shadowy, and his face buried in his hands—nevertheless, I knew him—it was he who had passed me on the bridge.

Presently the houskeeper, or one that I took to be she, entered, and whispering him, he arose and left the room, so that I but imperfectly saw him. When he was gone, the woman folded the covering away from the face, and to my horror I saw that the eyes were still unclosed. Seeing my surprise, she said, as she folded a napkin, and pinned it close over the shut lids—

"It is strange, but the child would never in life close her eyes—her mother, they say, died in watching for one who never came, and the baby was watchful and sleepless from the first."

The next day, and the next, it was dull and rainy—excitement and premature exposure had induced a return of my first indisposition, so that I was not at the funeral. I saw, however, from my window, preparations for the burial—to my surprise, in the lonesome little graveyard by the woods.

In the course of a fortnight, I prepared for a visit of condolence to the cottage, but, on reaching it, found the inhabitants gone—the place still and empty.

On my return, I stopped at the haunted burial ground—close by the grave of Mary Wildermings was that of the stranger child. The briers and thistles had been carefully cut away, there was no slab and no name over either, but the blue and white violets were planted thickly about both. That they slept well, was all I knew.

For the National Era.

THE FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW.

It is admitted by all that the Greek word for slaveholder is despotes, or despot. Slaveholding is therefore despotism. It is identical in principle and spirit with civil despotism. It only differs in the numbers of its subjects and its power to inflict a deeper wretchedness.

Slaveholders, or domestic despots, have the whole community to aid them in keeping down their slaves. Civil despots are without such backing, and have to make their yoke comparatively light, lest their vassals should toss it from their necks. Like slaveholders, they deny to their subjects the right of voluntary expatriation. Thus the Emperor of China has lately published a law forbidding his subjects to emigrate to California. If any should disobey this law, and run away from their master, are we not bound to catch them, and send them back? This is a question which it would be well for our Congress and our whole nation to consider carefully. We hear it constantly affirmed that we ought to restore fugitive slaves to their despots or masters, because Abraham was a despot, and the angel of the Lord sent back his runaway Hagar, and Philemon was a despot or slaveholder, and Paul sent back to him his fugitive Onesimus. But if we are bound by Bible precedent to deliver up to one class of despots their fugitives, are we not equally bound to deliver up to another class their runaways, too? Pharoah was a despot, and Moses ran away from him. The same angel of the Lord that sent back Hagar to Abraham, sent back Moses to Pharoah. Ahab and Jezebel were despots. It seems Elijah was very unwilling to run away. He stood his ground until all the prophets but himself were slain with the sword, and they were seeking his life to take it away. Despotism was just about to do its worst with him. And then the prophet took to his heels and absconded. But the Lord came to the cave in which he had concealed himself, and, after addressing him twice with that searching question, "what doest thou here, Elijah?" commanded him to return to his master.

Herod was a despot. No slaveholder could be more despotic than he. When he was about to kill the infant Saviour, the angel of the Lord told Joseph and Mary to take him by night, and flee into Egypt. But as soon as Herod was dead, the same angel commanded them to return to the land of Israel, where they were to be subject to Herod's son and heir. Now, if the restoration of Hagar and Onesimus to their masters proves that we ought to deliver up to domestic despots or slaveholders their runaways who escape to us, does not the restoration of Moses to Pharoah, of Elijah to Ahab, and of Joseph and Mary to the family of Herod, prove that we ought to deliver up to civil despots their fugitive servants who take refuge in our borders? I do not see why the argument is not as good in one case as in the other. Indeed, the civil despots can make out a stronger plea than the slaveholders can. It is admitted by all that Pharoah and Ahab and Herod were civil despots, but it would be very hard to prove that Abraham and Philemon were domestic despots or slaveholders. If I were required to prove it, I would think myself in as bad a case as Pharoah's servants were in, when required to make brick without straw.

That wise man, Nabal, had a profound respect for the powers that be. It grieved his wise heart to think that so many servants escaped from their masters in his day as David escaped from Saul. He gave the runaway David a strong hint that he ought to go back to his master, and no doubt, if he had been able, he would have sent him back. The race of the Nabals is not extinct. They have become very numerous in our country, and, like their venerable sire, they vex their righteous souls because so many servants now-a-days take "leg bail" of their despots. But why do they keep all their concern for fugitives from one kind of despotism? If it grieves them to know that men are fleeing from despotism in the South, why does it not grieve them to know that men are fleeing to our borders from the despotism of Austria and Russia and Turkey and China? If the command, "servants, be obedient to your own masters," implies that domestic slaves ought in no case to run away from their despots, does not the command, "let every soul be subject unto the higher powers," imply that political slaves ought never to escape from their lords? Why treat these two classes of fugitives so differently? Congress says that if we give aid and comfort to one class, we must in every instance be fined $1,000 and be imprisoned six months, besides paying another thousand to the master if the slave is lost to him. And, then, the same Congress gives aid and comfort to the fugitives from foreign despotism by voting them money and land!

Some of our Biblical critics have found out why the Jews were forbidden to deliver up the servants who escaped to them. It is this. Those servants were from heathen lands, and to deliver them up to their masters was to send them back to heathenism. Indeed! But the Presbytery of New Orleans declare that there are 100 000 slaves within their borders who have never heard the name of Christ as a Saviour. And the Synod of South Carolina and Georgia tell us that the slaves are the heathen of our country, and in many respects the most hopeless class of heathen on the face of the globe! Now, it does seem to me that if it was wrong to send servants back to heathenism in Asia, it is equally wrong to deliver up servants to heathenism in America.

H. S. FULLERTON.

South Salem, Ohio.

THOMAS RUBEY.

PROSPERITY, WASHINGTON COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, *April* 18, 1851.

To the Editor of the National Era:

DEAR SIR: I wish, through the medium of your paper, to present to a Christian public and the friends of humanity the case of Thomas Rubey, a *slave* who is now travelling in this county and soliciting donations to purchase his freedom. This man was born in slavery, in Culpeper county, Va., was taken in his boyhood to Ky., and in that State he was sold, separated from all his relations, and sent to Mo. in his fifteenth year. His owner learned him to read, and he being of a ready mind, by his own industry and perseverance has made himself master of most of the branches of an English education.

When he was some 23 or 24 years of age, he made a profession of religion, joined the Methodist Episcopal Church, and soon afterwards was licensed to preach the gospel. He preached in slavery to the satisfaction of his church for about 12 years, when he was regularly *ordained* by Bishop Joshua Soule, in the Missouri Annual Conference, at Columbia, Mo., in 1845.

As the light of knowledge began to kindle in his head, the love of liberty began to burn in his heart. Some three years since, believing that liberty was his inalienable right, taking his wife and daughter, he started for a land of freedom, and after travelling some 200 miles was overtaken and carried back to his chains. He made a second effort, but was alike unsuccessful. His master then promised to liberate him, on condition that he would pay him $500. Thomas then applied to his friends, and, with the assistance of a few colored men, was about to succeed in raising the money, when a mob arose, caught him and threw him into jail, and then, through the influence of threats, and an additional $100 on the price, induced his master to sell him to them. He was then handcuffed and started to the New Orleans market. Thus his hopes were blasted, just when he thought himself about to grasp the long sought boon, liberty. But, in consequence of