

MRS. STOWE'S "UNCLE TOM" AT HOME IN KENTUCKY.



ON the outskirts of the towns of central Kentucky, a stranger, searching for the picturesque in architecture and in life, would find his attention arrested by certain dense masses of low frame and brick structures, and by the denser multitudes of strange human beings that inhabit them. A single town may have on its edges several of these settlements, which are themselves called "towns," and bear separate names either descriptive of some topographical peculiarity or taken from the original owners of the lots. It is in these that a great part of the negro population of Kentucky has congregated since the war. Here to-day live the slaves of the past with their descendants; old family servants from the once populous country-places; old wagon-drivers from the deep-rutted lanes; old wood-choppers from the slaughtered blue-grass forests; old harvesters and plowmen from the long since abandoned fields; old cooks from the savory, wasteful kitchens; old nurses from the softly rocked and softly sung-to cradles. Here, too, are the homes of the younger generation, of the laundresses and the barbers, teachers and ministers of the Gospel, coachmen and porters, restaurant-keepers and vagabonds, hands from the hemp factories, and workmen on the outlying farms.

You step easily from the verge of the white population to the confines of the black. But it is a great distance — like the crossing of a vast continent between the habitats of alien races. The air seems all at once to tan the cheek. Out of the cold, blue recesses of the midsummer sky the sun burns with a fierceness of heat that warps the shingles of the pointed roofs and flares with blinding brilliancy against some whitewashed wall. Perhaps in all the street no little cooling stretch of shade. The unpaved sidewalks and the roadway between are but undistinguishable parts of a common thoroughfare, along which every upspringing green thing is quickly trodden to death beneath the ubiquitous play and passing of many feet. Here and there, from some shielded nook or other coign of vantage, a single plummy branch of bitter dog-fennel may be seen spreading its small firmament of white and golden stars close to the ground; or be-

tween its pale green stalks the faint lavender of the nightshade will take the eye as the sole emblem of the flowering world.

A negro town! Looking out the doors and windows of the cabins, lounging in the doorways, leaning over the low frame fences, gathering into quickly forming, quickly dissolving groups in the dusty streets, they swarm, they are here from milk-white through all deepening shades to glossy blackness; octoroons, quadroons, mulattoes — some with large liquid black eyes, refined features, delicate forms! working, gossiping, higgling over prices around a vegetable cart, discussing last night's church festival, to-day's funeral, or next week's railway excursion, sleeping, planning how to get work and how to escape it. From some unseen old figure in flamboyant turban, bending over the washtub in the rear of a cabin, comes a crooned song of indescribable pathos; behind a half-closed front shutter, a Moorish-hued *amoroso* in gay linen thrums his banjo in a measure of ecstatic gayety, prelude to the more passionate melodies of the coming night. Here a fight; there the sound of the fiddle and the rhythmic patting of hands. Tatters and silks flaunt themselves side by side. Dirt and cleanliness lie down together. Indolence goes hand in hand with thrift. Superstition dogs the slow footsteps of reason. Passion and self-control eye each other all day long across the narrow way. If there is anywhere resolute virtue, all round it is a weltered muck of low and sensual desire. One sees all the surviving types of old negro life here crowded together with and contrasted with all the new phases of "colored" life — sees the transitional stage of a race, part of whom were born slaves and are now freemen, part of whom have been born freemen but remain so much like slaves.

It cannot fail to happen, as you walk along, that you will come upon some cabin set back in a small yard and half hidden, front and side, by an almost tropical jungle of vines and multiform foliage: patches of great sunflowers, never more leonine in tawny magnificence and sun-loving repose; festoons of white and purple morning-glories over the windows and up to the low eaves; around the porch and above the doorway, a trellis of gourd-vines swinging their long-necked, grotesque yellow fruit; about the entrance flaming hollyhocks and other brilliant bits of bloom, marigolds and petunias — evidences of the warm, native taste that still distinguishes



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the negro after some centuries of contact with the cold, chastened ideals of the Anglo-Saxon.

In the doorway of such a cabin, sheltered from the afternoon sun by his dense jungle of vines, but with a few rays of light glinting through the fluttering leaves across his seamed black face and white woolly head, the muscles of his once powerful arms shrunken, the gnarled hands folded idly in his lap,—his occupation gone,—you will haply see some old-

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time slave of the class of Mrs. Stowe's Uncle Tom. For it is true that scattered here and there throughout the negro towns of Kentucky are representatives of the same class that furnished her with her hero; true, also, that they were never sold by their Kentucky masters to the plantations of the South, but remained unsold down to the last day of slavery.

When the war scattered the negroes of Kentucky blindly, tumultuously, hither and thither,

many of them gathered the members of their families about them and moved from the country into these "towns"; and here to-day the few survivors live, ready to testify of their relations with their former masters and mistresses, and indirectly serving to point a great moral: that, however justly Mrs. Stowe may have chosen one of their number as best fitted to show the fairest aspects of domestic slavery in



the United States, she departed from the common truth of history, as it respected their lot in life, when she condemned her Uncle Tom to his tragical fate. For it was not the *character* of Uncle Tom that she greatly idealized, as has been so often asserted; it was the category of events that were made to befall him.

As citizens of the American Republic, these old negroes — now known as "colored gentlemen," surrounded by "colored ladies and gentlemen" — have not done a great deal. The bud of liberty was ingrafted too late on the ancient slave-stock to bear much fruit. But they are unspeakably interesting, as contemporaries of a type of Kentucky negro whose virtues and whose sorrows, dramatically embodied in literature, have become a by-word throughout the civilized world. And now that the war-cloud is lifting from over the landscape of the past, so that it lies still clear to the eyes of those who were once the dwellers amid its scenes, it is perhaps a good time to scan it and note some of its great moral landmarks before it grows remoter and is finally hidden by the mists of forgetfulness.



II.

THESE three types — Mrs. Stowe's Uncle Tom, and the Shelbys, his master and mistress — were the outgrowth of natural and historic conditions peculiar to Ken-

tucky. "Perhaps," wrote Mrs. Stowe in her novel, "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, had not those temptations to hard-heartedness 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." These words contain many truths.

For it must not be forgotten, first of all, that the condition of the slave in Kentucky was measurably determined by certain physical laws which lay beyond the control of the most inhuman master. Consider the nature of the country — elevated, rolling, without miasmatic districts or fatal swamps; the soil in the main slaveholding portions of the State, easily tilled, abundantly yielding; the climate, temperate and invigorating. Consider the system of agriculture — not that of vast plantations, but of small farms, part of which regularly consisted of woodland and meadow that required little attention. Consider the further limitations to this system imposed by the range of the great Kentucky staples — it being in the nature of corn, wheat, hemp, and tobacco, not to yield profits sufficient to justify the employment of an immense predial force, nor to require seasons of forced and exhausting labor. It is evident that under such conditions slavery was not stamped with those sadder features which it wore beneath a devastating sun, amid unhealthy or sterile regions of country, and through the herding together of hundreds of slaves who had the outward but not the inward discipline of an army. True, one recalls here the often quoted words of Jefferson on the raising of tobacco — words nearly as often misapplied as quoted; for he was considering the condition of slaves who were unmercifully worked on exhausted lands by a certain proletarian type of master, who did not feed and clothe them. Only under such circumstances could the culture of this plant be described as "productive of infinite wretchedness," and those engaged in it as "in a continual state of exertion beyond the powers of nature to support." It was by reason of these physical facts that slavery in Kentucky assumed the



THE MASTER.

phase which is to be distinguished as domestic; and it was this mode that had prevailed at the North and made emancipation easy.

Furthermore, in all history the condition of an enslaved race under the enslaving one has been partly determined by the degree of moral justification with which the latter has regarded the subject of human bondage; and the life of the Kentucky negro, say in the days of Uncle Tom, was further modified by the body of laws which had crystallized as the sentiment of the people, slaveholders them-

selves. But even these laws were only a partial exponent of what that sentiment was; for some of the severest were practically a dead letter, and the clemency of the negro's treatment by the prevailing type of master made amends for the hard provisions of others.

It would be a most difficult thing to write the history of slavery in Kentucky. It is impossible to write a single page of it here. But it may be said that the conscience of the great body of the people was always sensitive touch-

ing the rightfulness of the institution. At the very outset it seems to have been recognized simply for the reason that the early settlers were emigrants from slaveholding States and brought their negroes with them. The commonwealth began its legislation on the subject in the face of an opposing sentiment. By early statute restriction was placed on the importation of slaves, and from the first they began to be emancipated. Throughout the seventy-five years of pro-slavery State-life, the general conscience was always troubled.

The churches took up the matter. Great preachers, whose names were influential beyond the State, denounced the system from the pulpit, pleaded for the humane and Christian treatment of slaves, advocated gradual emancipation. One religious body after another



proclaimed the moral evil of it, and urged that the young be taught and prepared as soon as possible for freedom. Anti-slavery publications and addresses, together with the bold words of great political leaders, acted as a further leaven in the mind of the slaveholding class. As evidence of this, when the new constitution of the State

was to be adopted, thirty thousand votes were cast in favor of an open clause in it, whereby gradual emancipation should become a law as soon as the majority of the citizens should deem it expedient for the peace of society; and these votes represented the richest, most intelligent slaveholders in the State.

In general the laws were perhaps the mildest. Some it is vital to the subject in hand not to pass over. If slaves were inhumanly treated by their owner or not supplied with proper food and clothing, they could be taken from him and sold to a better master. This law was not inoperative. I have in mind the instance of a family who lost their negroes in this way, were socially disgraced, and left their neighborhood. If the owner of a slave had bought him on condition of not selling him out of the county, or into the Southern States, or so as to separate him from his family, he could be sued for violation of contract. This law shows the opposition of the better class of Kentucky masters to the slave-trade, and their peculiar regard for the family ties of their negroes. In the earliest Kentucky newspapers



will be found advertisements of the sales of negroes, on condition that they would be bought and kept within the county, or the State. It was within chancery jurisdiction to prevent the separation of families. The case may be mentioned of a master who was tried by his church for unnecessarily separating a husband from his wife. Sometimes slaves who had

been liberated and had gone to Canada voluntarily returned into service under their former masters. Lest these should be overreached, they were to be taken aside and examined by the court to see that they understood the consequences of their own action, and were free from improper constraint. On the other hand, if a slave had a right to his freedom, he could file a bill in chancery and enforce his master's assent thereto.

But a clear distinction must be made between the mild view entertained by the Kentucky slaveholders regarding the system itself and their dislike of the agitators of forcible and immediate emancipation. A community of masters, themselves humane to their negroes and probably intending to liberate them in the end, would yet combine into a mob to put down individual or organized antislavery efforts, because they resented what they regarded an interference of the abolitionist with their own affairs, and believed his measures inexpedient for the peace of society. Therefore, the history of the antislavery movement in Kentucky, at times so turbulent, must not be used to show the sentiment of the people regarding slavery itself.

III.

FROM these general considerations it is now possible to enter more closely upon a study of the domestic life and relations of Uncle Tom and the Shelys.

"Whoever





THE MAMMY.

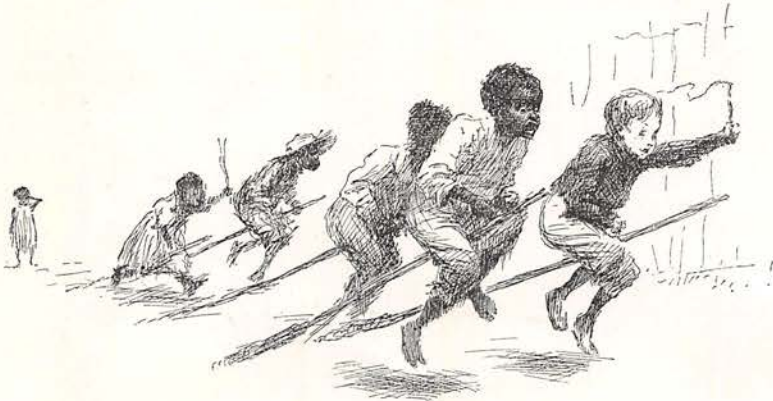
visits some estates there," wrote Mrs. Stowe, "and witnesses the good-humored indulgence of some masters and mistresses and the affectionate loyalty of some slaves, might be tempted to dream of the oft-fabled poetic legend of a patriarchal institution." Along with these words, taken from "Uncle Tom's Cabin," I should like to quote an extract from a letter written me by Mrs. Stowe under date of April 30th, 1886:

"In relation to your letter, I would say that I never lived in Kentucky, but spent many years in Cincinnati, which is separated from Kentucky only by the Ohio

River, which, as a shrewd politician remarked, was dry one-half the year and frozen the other. My father was president of a theological seminary at Walnut Hills, near Cincinnati, and with him I traveled and visited somewhat extensively in Kentucky, and there became acquainted with those excellent slaveholders delineated in 'Uncle Tom's Cabin.' I saw many counterparts of the Shelbys — people humane, conscientious, just, and generous, who regarded slavery as an evil and were anxiously considering their duties to the slave. But it was not till I had finally left the West, and my husband was settled as professor in Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine, that the passage of the fugitive-slave law and the distresses that followed it drew this from me."

The typical boy on a Kentucky farm was tenderly associated from infancy with the negroes of the household and the fields. His old black "Mammy" became almost his first mother and was but slowly crowded out of his conscience and his heart by the growing image of the true one. She had perhaps nursed him at her bosom when he was not long enough to stretch across it, sung over his cradle at

lane on blooded alder-stalk horses, afterwards leading the exhausted coursers into stables of the same green bushes and haltering them high with a cotton string. It was one of these hatless children of original Guinea that had crept up to him as he lay asleep in the summer grass and told him where the best hidden of all nests was to be found in a far fence corner,—that of the high-tempered, scolding



"ON BLOODED ALDER-STALK HORSES."

noon and at midnight, taken him out upon the velvety grass beneath the shade of the elm-trees to watch his first manly resolution of standing alone in the world and walking the vast distance of some inches. Often, in boyish years, when flying from the house with a loud appeal from the incomprehensible code of Anglo-Saxon punishment for small misdemeanors, he had run to those black arms and cried himself to sleep in the lap of African sympathy. As he grew older, alas! his first love grew faithless; and while "Mammy" was good enough in her way and sphere, his wandering affections settled humbly at the feet of another great functionary of the household,—the cook in the kitchen. To him her keys were as the keys to the kingdom of heaven, for his immortal soul was his immortal appetite. When he stood by the biscuit bench while she, pausing amid the varied industries that went into the preparation of an old-time Kentucky supper, made him marvelous geese of dough, with farinaceous feathers and genuine coffee-grains for eyes, there was to him no other artist in the world who possessed the secret of so commingling the useful with the beautiful.

The little half-naked imps, too, playing in the dirt like glossy blackbirds taking a bath of dust, were his sweetest, because perhaps his forbidden, companions. With them he went clandestinely to the fatal duck-pond in the stable lot, to learn the art of swimming on a walnut rail. With them he raced up and down the

guinea-hen. To them he showed his first Barlow knife; for them he blew his first home-made whistle. He is their petty tyrant to-day; to-morrow he will be their repentant friend, dividing with them his marbles and proposing a game of hop-sotch. Upon his dialect, his disposition, his whole character, is laid the ineffaceable impress of theirs, so that they pass into the final reckoning-up of his life here and in the world to come.

But Uncle Tom!—the negro overseer of the place—the greatest of all the negroes—greater even than the cook, when one is not hungry. How often has he straddled Uncle Tom's neck, or ridden behind him afield on a barebacked horse to the jingling music of the trace-chains! It is Uncle Tom who plaits his hempen whip and ties the cracker in a knot that will stay. It is Uncle Tom who brings him his first young squirrel to tame, the teeth of which are soon to be planted in his right forefinger. Many a time he slips out of the house to take his dinner or supper in the cabin with Uncle Tom; and during long winter evenings he loves to sit before those great roaring cabin fireplaces that throw their red and yellow lights over the half circle of black faces and on the mysteries of broom-making, chair-bottoming, and the cobbling of shoes. Like the child who listens to "Uncle Remus," he too hears songs and stories, and creeps back to the house with a wondering look in his eyes and a vague hush of spirit.

Then come school-days and vacations dur-



THE COOK.

ing which, as Mrs. Stowe says, he may teach Uncle Tom to make his letters on a slate or expound to him the Scriptures. Then, too, come early adventures with the gun, and 'coon hunts and 'possum hunts with the negroes under the round moon, with the long-eared, deep-voiced hounds—to him delicious and ever-memorable nights! The crisp air, through which the breath rises like white incense, the thick autumn leaves, begemmed with frost, rustling underfoot; the shadows of the mighty trees; the strained ear; the heart leaping with excitement; the negroes

and dogs mingling their wild delight in music that wakes the echoes of distant hillsides. Away! Away! mile after mile, hour after hour, to where the purple and golden persimmons hang low from the boughs, or where from topmost limbs the wild grape drops its countless clusters in a black cascade a sheer two hundred feet.

But now he is a boy no longer, but has his first love-affair, which sends a thrill through all those susceptible cabins; has his courtship, which gives rise to many a wink and innuendo; and brings home his bride, whose

coming converts every youngster into a living rolling ball on the ground, and opens the feasts and festivities of universal joy.

Then some day "ole Marster" dies, and the negroes, one by one, young and old, file into the darkened parlor to take a last look at his quiet face. He had his furious temper, "ole Marster" had, and his sins — which God forgive! To-day he will be buried, and to-morrow "young Marster" will inherit his saddle-horse and ride out into the fields.

Thus he has come into possession of his negroes. Among them are a few whose working days are over. These are to be kindly cared for, decently buried. Next are the active laborers, and, last, the generation of children. He knows them all by name, capacity, and disposition; is bound to them by lifelong associations; hears their communications and complaints. When he goes to town, he is charged with commissions, makes purchases with their own money. Continuing the course of his father, he sets about doing for them what is best under the circumstances,—making them capable, contented workmen. There shall be special training for special aptitude. One shall be made a blacksmith, a second a carpenter, a third a cobbler of shoes. In all the general industries of the farm, education shall not be lacking. It is claimed that a Kentucky negro invented the hemp-brake. As a result of this effective management, the Southern planter, looking northward, will pay him a handsome premium for the blue-grass slave. He will have no white overseer. He does not like the type of man. Besides, one is not needed. Uncle Tom served his father in this capacity; let him be.

Suppose, now, that among his negroes he finds a bad one. What shall he do with him? Keep him? Keeping him makes him worse, and moreover he corrupts the others. Set him free? That is to put a reward upon evil. Sell him to his neighbors? They don't want him. If they did, he wouldn't sell him to them. He sells him into the South. This is a statement, not an apology. Here, for a moment, one touches the terrible subject of the internal slave-trade. Negroes were sold from Kentucky into the Southern market because, as has just been said, they were bad, or by reason of the law of partible inheritance, or, as was the case with Mrs. Stowe's Uncle Tom, under constraint of debt. Of course, in many cases, they were sold wantonly and cruelly; but these, however many, were not enough to make the internal slave-trade more than an incidental and subordinate feature of the system. The belief that negroes in Kentucky were regularly bred and reared for the Southern market is a mistaken one. Mrs. Stowe

herself fell into the error of basing an argument for the prevalence of the slave-trade in this State upon the notion of exhausted lands, as the following passage from "The Key to 'Uncle Tom's Cabin'" shows:

"In Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and Kentucky slave-labor long ago impoverished the soil almost beyond recovery and became entirely unprofitable."

Those words were written some thirty-five years ago and refer to a time long prior to that date. Now, the fact is that at least one-half the soil of Kentucky has never been under cultivation at all, and could not therefore have been exhausted by slave-labor. At least a half of the remainder, though cultivated ever since, is still not seriously exhausted; and of the small portion, a large share was always naturally poor, so that for this reason slave-labor was but little employed on it. The great slave-holding region of the State was the fertile region which has never been impoverished. I am sure that Mrs. Stowe will be glad to see her statement restricted in this way. To return from this digression, it may well be that the typical Kentucky farmer does not find among his negroes a single bad one; for in consequence of the early non-importation of slaves for barter or sale, and through long association with the household, they have been greatly elevated and humanized. If he must sell a good one, he will seek a buyer among his neighbors. He will even ask the negro to name his choice of a master and try to consummate his wish. No purchaser near by, he will mount his saddle-horse and look for one in the adjoining county. In this way the negroes of different estates and neighborhoods were commonly connected by kinship and intermarriage. How unjust to say that such a master did not feel affection for his slaves, anxiety for their happiness, sympathy with the evils inseparable from their condition. Let me cite the case of a Kentucky master who had failed. He could pay his debts by sacrificing his negroes or his farm, one or the other. To avoid separating the former, probably sending some of them South, he kept them in a body and sold his farm. Any one who knows the Kentuckian's love of land and home will know what this means. A few years, and the war left him without anything. Another case is more interesting still. A master, having failed, actually hurried his negroes off to Canada. Tried for defrauding his creditors, and that by slaveholding jurors, he was acquitted. The plea of his counsel, among other arguments, was the master's unwillingness to see his old and faithful servitors scattered and suffering. After emancipation, old farm hands sometimes refused to budge from their cabins. Their

former masters paid them for their services as long as they could work, and supported them when helpless. I have in mind an instance where a man, having left Kentucky, sent back hundreds of dollars to an aged, needy domestic, though himself far from rich; and another case where a man still contributes annually to the maintenance of those who ceased to work for him the quarter of a century ago.

The good in human nature is irrepressible. Slavery, evil as it was, when looked at from the telescopic remoteness of human history as it is to be, will be adjudged an institution that gave development, on the side of virtue, to certain very noble types of character. Along with other social forces peculiar to the age, it produced in Kentucky a kind of gentleman farmer, the like of which will never appear again. He had the aristocratic virtues: highest notions of personal liberty and personal honor, a fine especial scorn of anything that was mean, little, cowardly. As an agriculturist he was not driving or merciless or grasping; for the rapid amassing of wealth was not among his passions, and the contention of splendid living was not among his thorns. To a certain carelessness of riches he added a certain profuseness of expenditure; and indulgent toward his own pleasures, toward others, his equals or dependents, he bore himself with a spirit of ready kindness and proud magnanimity. Intolerant of tyranny, he was in turn no tyrant. To say of such a man, as Jefferson said of every slaveholder, that he lived in perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions and unremitting despotism, and in the exaction of the most degrading submission, was to pronounce a judgment hasty and unfair. Rather did Mrs. Stowe, while not blind to his faults, discern his virtues when she made him, embarrassed by debt, exclaim: "If anybody had 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?'"

IV.

BUT there was another person who, more than the master, sustained close relationship to the negro life of the household,— the mistress. In the person of Mrs. Shelby Mrs. Stowe described some of the best traits of a Kentucky woman of the time; but perhaps only a Southern woman herself could do full justice to a character which many duties and many burdens endued with extraordinary strength and varied efficiency.

She was mistress of distinct realms — the house and the cabins — and the guardian of the bonds between the two, which were always troublesome, often delicate, sometimes distressing. In those cabins were nearly always

some poor creatures needing sympathy and watch-care: the superannuated mothers helpless with babes, babes helpless without mothers, the sick, perhaps the idiotic. Apparel must be had for all. Standing in her doorway and pointing to the meadow, she must be able to say in the words of a housewife of the period, "There are the sheep; now get your clothes." Some must be taught to keep the spindle and the loom going; others trained for dairy, laundry, kitchen, dining-room; others yet taught fine needlework. Upon her falls the labor of private instruction and moral exhortation, for the teaching of negroes was not forbidden in Kentucky. She must remind them that their marriage vows are holy and binding; must interpose between mothers and their cruel punishment of their own offspring. What is hardest of all, she must herself punish for lying, theft, immorality. Her own children, too, must be guarded against temptation and corrupting influences. In her life there is no cessation of this care: it renews itself daily, year in and year out. Beneath every other trouble is the secret conviction that she has no right to enslave these creatures, and that, however improved their condition, this life is one of great and necessary evils. Mrs. Stowe well makes her say: "I have tried — tried most faithfully as a Christian woman should — to do my duty toward these poor, simple, dependent creatures. I have cared for them, instructed them, watched over them, and known all their little cares and joys for years. . . . I have taught them the duties of the family, of parent and child, and husband and wife. . . . I thought by kindness and care and instruction, I could make the condition of mine better than freedom." Sorely overburdened and heroic mold of woman! Fulfilling each day a round of intricate duties, rising at any hour of the night to give medicine to the sick, liable at any time, in addition to the cares of her great household, to see an entire family of acquaintances arriving unannounced, with trunks and servants of their own, for a visit protracted in accordance with the large hospitalities of the time,— what wonder if, from sheer inability to do all things herself, she trains her negroes to different posts of honor, so that the black cook finally expels her from her own kitchen and rules over that realm as an autocrat of unquestioned prerogatives?

Mistresses of this kind had material reward in the trusty adherence of their servants during the war. Their relations throughout this period — so well calculated to try the loyalty of the African nature — would of themselves make up a volume of the most touching incidents. Even to-day one will find in many Kentucky households survivals of the old



THE MISTRESS.

order — find "Aunt Chloe" ruling as a despot in the kitchen, and making her will the pivotal point of the whole domestic system. I have spent nights with a great Kentuckian, self-willed and high-spirited, whose occasional refusals to rise for a half-past five o'clock breakfast always brought the cook from the kitchen up to his bedroom, where she delivered her commands in a voice worthy of Catherine the Great. "We shall have to get up," he would say, "or there'll be a row!" One may yet see, also, old negroes setting out for an annual or a semi-annual visit to their

former mistresses, and bearing some offering, — a basket of fruits or flowers. I should like to mention the case of one who died after the war and left her two children to her mistress, to be reared and educated. The troublesome and expensive charge was taken and faithfully executed.

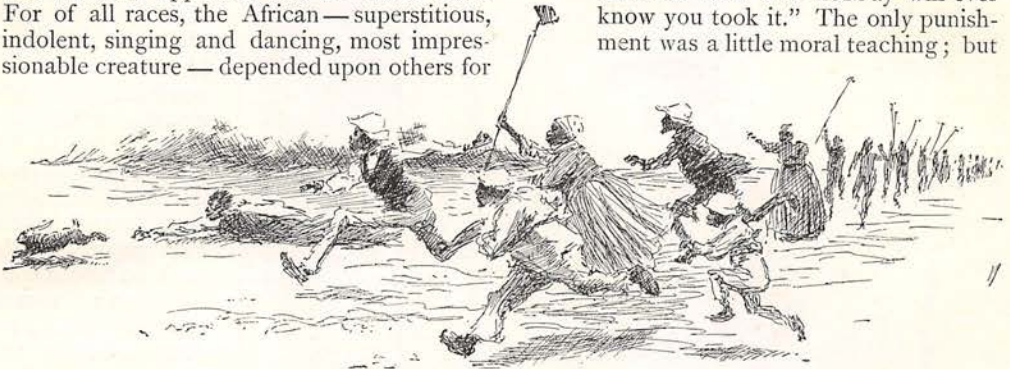
Here, in the hard realities of daily life, here is where the crushing burden of slavery fell, — on the women of the South. History has yet to do justice to the noblest type of them, whether in Kentucky or elsewhere. In view of what they accomplished, despite the difficulties in their way, there is nothing they have

found harder to forgive in the women of the North than the failure to sympathize with them in the struggles and sorrows of their lot, and to realize that *they* were the real practical philanthropists of the negro race.

v.

BUT as is the master, so is the slave, and it is through the characters of the Shelbys that we must approach that of Uncle Tom. For of all races, the African — superstitious, indolent, singing and dancing, most impressionable creature — depended upon others for

of lard, naming the thief and the hiding-place. "Say not a word about it," replied his master. The next day he rode out into the field where the culprit was plowing, and, getting down, walked along beside him. "What's the matter, William?" he asked after a while; "you can't look me in the face as usual." William burst into tears, and confessed everything. "Come to-night, and I will arrange so that you can put the lard back and nobody will ever know you took it." The only punishment was a little moral teaching; but



CHASING THE RABBIT.

enlightenment, training, and happiness. If, therefore, you find him so intelligent that he may be sent on important business commissions, so honest that he may be trusted with money, house, and home, so loyal that he will not seize opportunity to become free; if you find him endowed with the manly virtues of dignity and self-respect united to the Christian virtues of humility, long-suffering, and forgiveness, then do not, in marveling at him on these accounts, quite forget his master and his mistress, — they made him what he was. And it is something to be said on their behalf, that in their household was developed a type of slave that could be set upon a sublime moral pinnacle to attract the admiration of the world.

Attention is fixed on Uncle Tom first as head-servant of the farm. In a small work on slavery in Kentucky by George Harris, it is stated that masters chose the cruellest of their negroes for this office. It is not true, exceptions allowed for. The work would not be worth mentioning, had not so many people at the North believed it. The amusing thing is, they believed Mrs. Stowe also. But if Mrs. Stowe's account of slavery in Kentucky is true, the other is not. But those who have been able to accept both would not care, of course, to be restricted to one.

It is true that Uncle Tom inspired the other negroes with some degree of fear. He was censor of morals, and reported derelictions of the lazy, the destructive, and the thievish. For instance, an Uncle Tom on one occasion told his master of the stealing of a keg

of the Uncle Tom in the case, though he kept his secret, looked for some days as though the dignity of his office had not been suitably upheld.

It was "Uncle Tom's" duty to get the others off to work in the morning. In the fields he did not drive the work, but led it — being a master worker — led the cradles and the reaping-hooks, the hemp-breaking and the corn-shucking. The spirit of happy music went with the workers. They were not goaded through their daily tasks by the spur of pitiless husbandry. Nothing was more common than their voluntary contests of skill and power. My recollection reaches only to the last two or three years of slavery; but I remember the excitement with which I witnessed some of these hard-fought battles of the negroes. Rival hemp-breakers of the neighborhood, meeting in the same field, would slip out long before breakfast and sometimes never stop for dinner. So it was with cradling, corn-shucking, or corn-cutting — in all work where rivalries were possible. No doubt there were other motives. So much was a day's task; for all over there was extra pay. A capital hand, by often performing double or treble the required amount, would clear a neat profit in a season. The days of severest labor fell naturally in harvest-time. But then intervals of rest in the shade were commonly given; and milk, coffee, or, when the prejudice of the master did not prevent (which was not often!), whisky was distributed between meal-times. As a rule they worked without hurry. De Tocqueville gave unintentional testimony to a



THE PREACHER.

characteristic of slavery in Kentucky when he described the negroes as "loitering" in the fields. On one occasion all the hands dropped work to run after a rabbit the dogs had started. A passer-by indignantly reported the fact at headquarters. "Sir," said the old gentleman, with a hot face, "I'd have whipped the last damn rascal of 'em if they *hadn't* run 'im!"

The negroes made money also off their truck-patches, in which they raised for sale melons, broom-corn, vegetables. When Charles

Sumner was in Kentucky, he saw with almost incredulous eyes the comfortable cabins with their flowers and poultry, the fruitful truck-patches, and a genuine Uncle Tom — "a black gentleman with his own watch!" Well enough does Mrs. Stowe put these words into her hero's mouth, when he hears he is to be sold: "I'm feared things will be kinder goin' to rack when I'm gone. Mas'r can't be 'spected to be a-pryin' round everywhere as I've done, a-keepin' up all the ends. The boys means well, but they's powerful car'less."

More interesting is Uncle Tom's character as a preacher. Contemporary with him in Kentucky was a class of men among his people who exhorted, held prayer-meetings in the cabins and baptizings in the woods, performed marriage ceremonies, and enjoyed great freedom of movement. There was one in nearly every neighborhood, and all together they wrought effectively in the moral development of their race. I have nothing to say

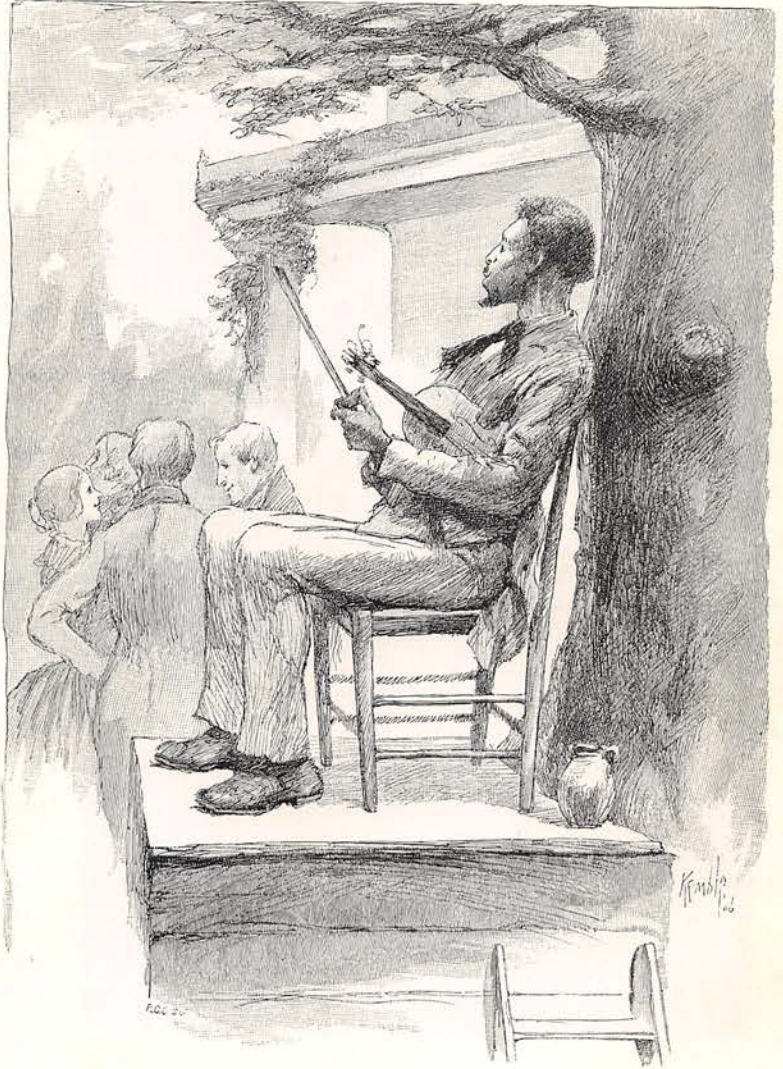
here touching the vast and sublime conception which Mrs. Stowe formed of "Uncle Tom's" spiritual nature. But certainly no idealized manifestation of it is better than this simple occurrence: One of these negro preachers was allowed by his master to fill a distant appointment. Belated once, and returning homeward after the hour forbidden for slaves to be abroad, he was caught by the patrol and cruelly whipped. As the blows fell, his only words were: "Jesus Christ suffered for righteousness"

sake ; so kin I." Another of them was recommended for deacon's orders and actually ordained. When liberty came, he refused to be free, and continued to work in his master's family till his death. With considerable knowledge of the Bible and a fluent tongue, he would nevertheless sometimes grow confused and lose his train of thought. At these embarrassing junctures it was his wont suddenly to call out at the top of his voice, "Saul! Saul! why persecutest thou me?" The effect upon his hearers was electrifying; and as none but a very highly favored being could be thought worthy of enjoying this persecution, he thus converted his loss of mind into spiritual reputation. A third, named Peter Cotton, united the vocations of exhorter and wood-chopper. He united them literally, for one moment Peter might be seen standing on his log chopping away, and the next kneeling down beside it praying. He got his mistress to make him a long jeans coat and on the ample tails of it to embroider, by his direction, sundry texts of Scripture, such as: "Come

unto me, all ye that are heavy laden!" Thus literally clothed with righteousness, Peter went from cabin to cabin preaching the Word. Well for him if that other Peter could have seen him! The apostle might have felt proud to go along.

These men sometimes made a pathetic addition to their marriage ceremonies: "Until death or our higher powers do you separate!"

Another typical contemporary of Uncle Tom's was the negro-fiddler. It should be



THE FIDDLER.

of the former consisted of a crook-necked, hard-shell gourd and a piece of sheep-skin. There were sometimes other instruments,—the flageolet and the triangle. I have heard of a kettle-drum's being made of a copper still. (A Kentucky negro carried through the war as an osseous tambourine the skull of a mule, the rattling teeth being secured in the jaw-bones.) Of course the bones were everywhere. Negro music on one or more instruments was in the highest vogue at the house. The young Ken-

tuckians often used it on serenading bravuras. The old fiddler, most of all, was held in reverent esteem and met with the gracious treatment of the ancient minstrel in feudal halls. At parties and weddings, at picnics in the summer woods, he was the soul of melody, and with an eye to the high demands upon his art, he widened his range of selections and perfected according to native standards his inimitable technique. The deep, tender, pure

you to-day the same assurance. Nay, it is an awkward discovery to make, that some of them still cherish resentment toward agitators who came secretly among them, fomented discontent, and led them away from homes to which they afterwards returned. And I want to state here, for no other reason than that of making an historic contribution to the study of the human mind and passions, that a man's views of slavery in those days did not always deter-

mine his treatment of his slaves. The only case of mutiny and stampede that I have been able to discover in a certain part of Kentucky, took place among the negroes of a man who was known as an outspoken emancipationist. He pleaded for the freedom of the negro, but in the mean time worked him at home with the chain round his neck and the ball resting on his plow.

Christmas was, of course, the time of holiday merry-making, and the "Ketchin' marster an' mistiss Christmas gif' " was a great feature. One morning an aged couple presented themselves.

"Well, what do you want for your Christmas gift?"

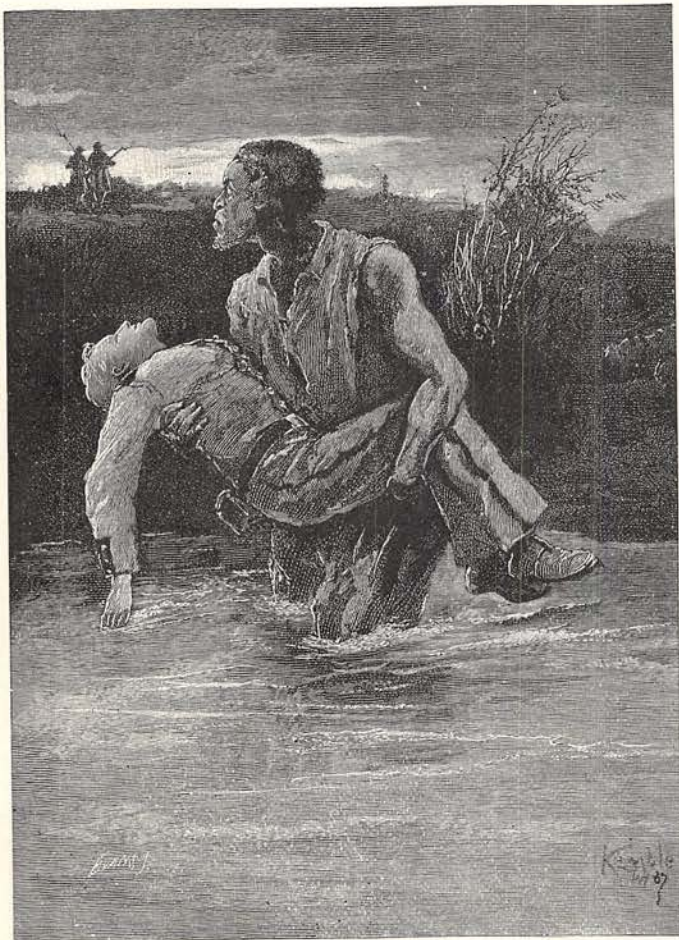
"Freedom! Mistiss."

"Freedom! Haven't you been as good as free for the last ten years?"

"Yaas, mistiss; but—freedom mighty sweet!"

"Then take your freedom!"

The only method of celebrating the boon was the moving into a cabin on the neighboring farm of their mistress's aunt and being freely supported there as



SAVING HIS MASTER.

feeling in the song "Old Kentucky Home" is a true historic interpretation.

It is wide of the mark to suppose that on such a farm as that of the Shelbys the negroes were in a perpetual frenzy of discontent or felt any burning desire for freedom. It is difficult to reach a true general conclusion on this delicate subject. But it must go for something that even the Kentucky abolitionists of those days will tell you that well-treated negroes cared not a snap for liberty. Negroes themselves, and very intelligent ones, will give

they had been freely supported at home!

Mrs. Stowe has said, "There is nothing picturesque or beautiful in the family attachment of old servants, which is not to be found in countries where these servants are legally free." On the contrary, a volume of incidents might readily be gathered, the picturesqueness and beauty of which are due so largely, if not wholly, to the fact that the negroes were not free servants, but slaves. Indeed, many could never have happened at all but in this relationship. I cite the case of an old negro who was

buying his freedom from his master, who continued to make payments during the war, and made the final one at the time of General Kirby Smith's invasion of Kentucky. After he had paid him the uttermost farthing, he told him that if he should ever be a slave again, he wanted him for his master. Less to the point, but too good to leave out, is the case of an old negress who had been allowed to accumulate considerable property. At her death she willed it to her young master instead of to her sons, as she would have been allowed to do. But the war! what is to be said of the part the negro took in that? Is there in the drama of all humanity a figure more picturesque or more pathetic than the figure of the African slave, as he followed his master to the battle-field, marched and hungered and thirsted with him, served and cheered and nursed him,—that master who was fighting to keep him in slavery? Instances are too many; but the one may be mentioned of a Kentucky negro who followed his young master into the Southern army, staid with him till he fell on the field, lay hid out in the bushes a week, and finally, after a long time and many hardships, got back to his mistress in Kentucky, bringing his dead master's horse and purse and trinkets. This subject comprises a whole vast field of its own; and if the history of it is ever written, it will

be written in the literature of the South, for there alone lies the knowledge and *the love*.

It is only through a clear view of the peculiar features of slavery in Kentucky before the war that one can understand the general status of the negroes of Kentucky at the present time. Perhaps in no other State has the race made less endeavor to push itself into equality with the white. This fact must be explained as in part resulting from the conservative ideals of Kentucky life in general. But it is more largely due to the influences of a system which, though no longer in vogue, is still remembered, still powerful to rule the minds of a naturally submissive and most susceptible people. The kind, even affectionate, relations of the races under the old régime have continued with so little interruption that the blacks remain content with their inferiority, and lazily drift through life. I venture to make the statement, that wherever they have attempted most to enforce their new-born rights, they have either, on the one hand, been encouraged to do so, or have, on the other, been driven to self-assertion by harsh treatment. But treat them always kindly and always as hopelessly inferior beings, and they will do least for themselves. This, it is believed, is the key-note to the situation in Kentucky; and the statement is made as a fact, not as an argument.

James Lane Allen.

HAND-CAR 412. C. P. R.

(ON THE CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY.)



FOR the last hour the construction train had been traveling slowly; for a whole hour it had cautiously stumbled over the loosened fish-plates with a monotonous chug-gety-chug, chunkety-chunk that had long ceased to awaken any interest, sympathetic or otherwise, in our drowsy minds. Finally it stopped altogether with a jerk, as if it had suddenly but conclusively realized the vanity of any further effort. The astonished cars pulled at their pins and pounded their buffers as if in angry expostulation at this freak of the locomotive, and some of the men offered energetic advice to the Deity as to what ultimate course to pursue with the management of the road in general and the long freight-links in particular. "Can't help it, can't help it!" said the brakeman as he came along the top of the box-car ahead. "The rails have spread, and it'll be two hours, may be three, before we start her up again."

But the time passed, the train still waited, and we began to grumble stoutly, wondering

why, in the name of various places and things, they chose to dally in such a dismal, god-forsaken spot. It was raining at Rat Crossing; in fact it had been raining slowly, steadily, for two days with a certain desperate pertinacity. There had been no previous drought to render such an abundance of water desirable; in the country through which we passed we had noticed no fields of parched wheat, no withering trees, no drooping vegetables, no thirsty cattle, no traveled roads on which the dust required laying. On the contrary, the lakes were all full to overflowing, the rivers swollen, the ravines drowned, the swamps soaked, and the tanks so full that the relief-pipes poured forth a continuous stream of spattering expostulation.

Notwithstanding this lavish excess of water the air seemed no fresher than before the storm, when the thermometer in the caboose registered 97 degrees on the shady side of the track. Both front and side doors were wide open, and some of the boys, in a vain endeavor to produce a passing sensation of freshness, sat down in the semi-fluid puddles, covered with a film of cin-



ENGRAVED BY T. JOHNSON.

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY SARONY.

Mrs Stowe