

THE DESERTER SLAVE.

It will have blood ; they say, blood will have blood !
SHAKSPEARE.

In the year 1820 a frigate, in which the writer of these pages was an officer, visited Porto Bello, and remained there three days. As a lady and family were going on board passengers to the Havannah, some little bustle occurred on their embarkation, which took place about sunset. After the frigate was under way several things were reported as missing, consisting of various silver family utensils, which it was ascertained had been purloined by the men of the boat which had brought them on board ; after some difficulty the property was restored, when it was discovered that one of the crew, a slave, was no where to be found. His master was in a canoe alongside whilst search was making to no purpose, and vowing vengeance on the wretch should he be found ; and he unwillingly left the ship without his property, in the hope his slave had returned on shore by some other conveyance. Such, however, was not the case, as the unfortunate black made his appearance after the ship was out of sight of land, having been concealed, or jammed in as the sailors call it, between the pumps in the steerage on the lower deck for twenty-four hours. What between fright and exhaustion the poor fellow was scarcely able to stand, and even in that state, however cruel it may

appear, he was ordered to be put in irons as a runaway slave, until an opportunity should offer for delivering him up to some party who would undertake to send him back to the master he had escaped from, and where, indeed, a severe doom awaited him should he be so transferred. Such was the law, and to have infringed it would have been more than an officer's commission is worth. Let it be understood, that although compelled to do his duty on every occasion, the breast of the officer who gives so apparently harsh an order is by no means devoid of the feelings of humanity; and in this instance the deserter slave, although in confinement, was kindly treated, and fed almost entirely from the officers' table.

Late at night, when the crew, excepting the watch on deck, were in their hammocks, the master at arms was desired to bring his negro prisoner quietly below, and leave him in the surgeon's cabin until further orders; and there, in the presence of myself and the frigate's doctor, the following story was told. How far the slave may have exaggerated or extenuated is of little consequence, but his story shall be rendered into plain English, for the convenience of the readers who are not conversant with West Indian *patois*, which is indeed apt to puzzle folks uninitiated. The narrative ran thus:—

“On the estate of Monsieur Pichaud, on the island of St. Domingo, I have my first recollection. I was a slave without a friend or protector. Who my parents were I never knew, and most likely never shall know—that is now a secondary interest with me, since to find them would be most likely to see them in slavery, a state most abhorrent to my soul. I do not think I was brought from Africa, as nothing has ever crossed my mind which could give me an early idea of a voyage by sea, and the cruel-

ties inflicted on the slaves during those voyages are, as I have heard, not likely to be forgotten.

“ Monsieur Pichaud was kind when on his estate, and took care that his slaves experienced good treatment, although he spared them not as to the quantity of work to be got through in the cane patches, in the mills, or in the culture of his grounds, because he was fond of amassing money; but it was very different when he was absent from home. Then, we had not only more work to perform, but severe chastisement, and often without in the least deserving it.

“ Two overseers, one French and the other Dutch, became particularly obnoxious to the slaves from their harsh and cruel behaviour. No one dared to complain to Monsieur Pichaud on his return, from fear of the consequences when he would be again absent; yet curses, not loud but deep, were muttered in secret, and the cruel slave-drivers had soon cause to feel the vengeance of turbulent spirits, which had been for some time curbed, but not broken.

“ I was then too young to be admitted among the elder slaves when they held their private conversations, but was desired to retire with the women, and those children of my own age who did not always have their dinner in the fields, which is the custom for the men slaves in general; yet I could not help observing the dark and malignant looks of the men whilst in consultation, little thinking I should so soon become a participator, not only in their guilt, but in the misfortunes and privations which afterwards fell to their lot.

“ Well do I remember, it was in the month of August, when a hurricane raged throughout the country, tearing up trees, destroying sugar-canes, ravaging and devastating property of every description, and even

unroofing and levelling the outhouses, when about midnight I felt myself pulled by the arm, and was desired to rise from my pallet immediately. I obeyed; a handkerchief was passed over my eyes, and I was carried I could not tell where, but with much swiftness, in the arms of a man. On the bandage being removed I was astonished to find myself in company of two of the most desperate of the slaves, known by the names of Pierre and Martin. The former had been severely flogged the week before, and Martin had punishment to expect on the following day, through neglect of his hard and cruel duties. It is not for me to endeavour to palliate the heavy sin these deluded men had determined to commit, but surely revenge must be sweet to those who, like myself, have been tortured and ill used from the time when I ought to have experienced, and indeed, needed, a mother's cares. To proceed—the man who carried me and now took the bandage from my eyes, broke silence thus—‘Hark ye, young spawn of misery, do as you are bid or we will tie a stone round your neck and throw you into yonder lake. Look at this axe! attempt to deceive us and you may guess the consequences! It is our intention to break into the overseers' rooms to-night and regale ourselves; brandy and rum are in plenty there, which they do not want, being drunk already; so, come youngster, we shall mount you through the upper window, and mind, as you value your life, you undo the door-bolts without noise.’ This was what I heard him say, yet but indistinctly, as the wind howled fearfully, and the rain poured with such violence as is only known in these tropical climates.

“It appeared the slaves Pierre and Martin had been at work before, as the casement of the upper window had

been cut through, and a hole made large enough to admit a boy of my size. Martin brought a ladder, and Pierre mounted with me in his arms, when thrusting me through, feet foremost, he used the most horrible threats, even to murdering me, if I failed in the task he had appointed me. I trod softly, and between the heavy squalls of wind plainly heard the breathing of inebriated sleep as I passed the chamber doors of the overseers. So fearful was I that I scarcely drew breath; being in double danger both from within and from without should I be discovered, I made my way to the hall-door, undid the bolts, and admitted the villains: not only Pierre and Martin, but three others who took their station at the foot of the staircase. Little did I know or even then fancy the horrible intent of those infuriated wretches, or I would have endeavoured to have escaped from them, assisted by the darkness of the night; but it was now too late, and it was with horror I observed each man was armed not only with an axe, but with a long knife, which latter they drew from their belts, and forming a ring uttered an oath, as if binding each other to firmness and inviolable secrecy. I was now desired by Pierre to follow himself and Martin with a lantern up stairs, leaving the other three men as guards in the hall in case of a surprise. It happened to be the chamber-door of the Dutchman, which first met their view. They tried to open it, but the fastening resisted their efforts; then a short and rapid consultation took place which I could not overhear, as the elements again at war overpowered the low tone in which the men spoke; but presently a kick from both of them, accompanied by a simultaneous blow from the two axes, threw the door off its hinges back into the room—I was beckoned to follow with the

light, and saw the murderous rascals draw their long knives across the throat of the drunken and unresisting Dutchman, who expired with a heavy groan; a gurgling noise issuing from the gash as he attempted to rise when he first felt the incision of the knife. The French overseer's fate was even more barbarous. He was the superior; and many of the cruelties inflicted on the slaves were through his orders to his inferior in office. Leaving the corpse of the Dutchman on the bed, they quitted the room, and turning through a gallery to the left, came to the chamber-door of the French overseer—the noise of breaking it open awoke him, and as they rushed in, he called stoutly to know who was there, at the same time firing a pistol, which shot Martin through the fleshy part of his left arm. This did but increase the fury of the savages, and made their revenge more barbarous and keen. How shall I proceed? the recollection of this night has been ever vivid in my memory, and the horror of the scene is beyond my powers of description.

“ They tied the hands of their victim behind him, regardless of his entreaties and prayers for mercy, and in cold blood cut off his ears and held them up in mockery to his view. The cries of the sufferer were only silenced when Pierre with his axe cleft his skull in two. This last was too much—I dropped the light and ran down stairs to the door as fast as I could, followed by the murderers, who cursed me for my weakness. On our arrival outside the house Martin became faint from loss of blood, and had his arm tied up by Pierre with a handkerchief.

“ Although the noise made during this scene of butchery was considerable, not one of the slaves who slept in the outhouses close by interfered; they either

did not wake or else willingly remained quiet, therefore, the country was clear for escape, and as it was now about one o'clock in the morning, four hours' darkness might still be safely calculated on. This had been part of the plan of the murderers, who had foreseen they might reach the fastnesses of the mountains before pursuit could be any avail, but I never fancied they would compel me to bear them company, until the deep rough voice of Pierre (which sounded even more fierce since he had committed the horrible deed), soon convinced me what I was to expect. 'Youngster, you go with us,' said he: 'we leave no chattering witness behind to tell tales and set our master and his friends, eternal curses on them all! in the right track for pursuit; though stop awhile. Do you Martin hold fast this parroquet whilst I once more mount the stairs, and search for the pistols and ammunition of those two wretches whom we have justly sent, somewhat before their time, to everlasting torment. We may find our account in weapons of defence in time of need. Here, you have still an arm left to manage this boy, so lay hold of him, I say, and keep him firm.' He went up the stairs, and in about five minutes returned with a sword, a brace of pistols, a bag containing some powder and ball, and the purses of his victims. Although the slave Martin was suffering severely from his wound, and no doubt much enfeebled, he was still too powerful for me to effect my escape; and, now Pierre had returned, such a project was for the present hopeless, as he passed a cord round my body, tied it tight behind, and searched me very carefully to ascertain whether I had a knife or any thing about me to divide it; at the same time twisting the other end round his left arm, and in this manner we commenced our journey towards the mountains as fast as

Martin's weak state enabled us to proceed. We had not travelled above three miles when he requested a halt as he was faint, but Pierre, who was a very powerful man, would not consent, so giving him a dram of rum from a small bottle he carried in his pocket, bid him be of good cheer, saying at the same time, 'Lean upon me, and courage, man, but for a few hours and we shall be clear from danger.' The difficulty of travelling had been considerably increased by the ravages caused by the hurricane, which was now generally subsiding; and the extreme darkness of the night was succeeded by a beautiful morning, the sea-breeze having again come to us like a blessing from the east, instead of the tremendous west, which, in August, comes but to sweep away and destroy all before it. Daylight did indeed show the magnitude of its power. Cane patches lay flat on the ground as if cut; trees were across the roads within a few yards of each other; huts, here and there, were levelled with the earth, and the birds, particularly the pelican, were screaming as they flew from the marshes and other low places where they had sought shelter from the violent effects of the wind.

"Although to me appalling, the scene appeared familiar to the men; and instead of feeling awe-struck at the wondrous power of Him who had caused the devastation before us, they laughed aloud, and expressed, in no very gentle terms, their satisfaction at the great loss, and in some instances ruin, which must ensue to the planters, wishing the whole property turned to dust of those who kept slaves, who had an equal right to freedom with themselves.

"It was now high morning; we were ascending the lofty mountain, and as Martin still complained, his com-

rade gathered a leaf from the plantain, and undoing the bandage from the arm, applied it to the wound, which it immediately relieved; then tearing that part of the handkerchief which was saturated with blood, he threw it aside, and re-bound Martin's arm tightly round several times, both above and below the wound. A few oranges and grapes served us for breakfast, and we made our way up the difficult pass of the mountain at our best speed; I being still fastened to the murderer Pierre, who pulled me roughly forward whenever I attempted to slacken my pace.

“ We had so far avoided the beaten track as to fancy ourselves quite unobserved, as the few persons we had seen were busily employed in endeavouring to restore their dwellings, which had been damaged the previous night by the fury of the wind; and as the weakness of Martin was evidently increasing, a halt for an hour was determined upon. ‘ I did not calculate on this unfortunate shot, Martin,’ said Pierre, ‘ it will sadly delay us, even to the danger of being overtaken, for Monsieur Pichaud will lose no time in coming after us, should he happen to return to his estate to-day; and if we again meet! why, I will lodge a brace of balls in his contriving head, though mine should be struck from my shoulders as I drew the trigger. The valley beyond this mountain will bring us into Christophe's dominions, there we shall be free! with an emperor of our own colour, who will protect and thank us for ridding the world of a couple of rascals, who have left their own country only to seek an early and a bloody end—so now let us seek an hour's rest in this plantation, and then we must resume our journey.’ They struck into the thicket accordingly; and after looking cautiously around to see

all was safe, they stretched themselves on the ground; Pierre, drawing me close to him with the cord, and placing me between himself and his comrade. In a short time Martin was asleep. His loss of blood had been great, and the journey fatiguing; besides which, the sun had been for a few hours in full splendour, and it was intensely hot. The ruffian Pierre could scarcely resist the same inclination—he turned several times, whistled, and attempted to sing, took several draughts from his bottle, yet the drowsiness increased, and in a quarter of an hour he was fast asleep beside his comrade. I laid myself down quietly also, that I might not excite suspicion. The idea had struck me that I might escape, and I was employing my thoughts as to the best means (for the cord still bound me,) when my eye was attracted by the gleaming edge of the axe, which hung in the waist belt of Pierre. I therefore drew as close as I could to him without touching, and rubbed the cord upon the sharpest point, which soon set me at liberty. No time was to be lost. Perceiving they still slept, I stole away regardless of the consequences, any fate being preferable to the company of two such wretches, who had committed so heinous a sin as a double murder.

“ For some time I ran on as fast as I was able, and had great faith in my increasing safety, as the wounded man had not strength to follow me, and I felt assured that Pierre, villain as he was, would never quit his comrade while he lived; besides, I made my way still up the mountain instead of returning, as I fancied by endeavouring to get back I should place myself between the fury of the murderers and that of their pursuers: for followed they certainly would be; added to this an innate

wish for liberty urged me forward, whilst the certainty of punishment awaited my being taken.

“ Three days did I toil before I entirely got over this stupendous mountain, and was nearly dead from fatigue when the city of Hayti met my view. I pressed forward with all the energy I was master of, but could not reach my wished-for haven, as I fainted through hunger and weariness by the road side. How long I remained in this situation I know not, until I was aroused by a smart stroke from a horsewhip, and starting on my feet beheld a man standing over me, apparently a planter, wearing a dress of nankeen and a large straw hat. ‘Hollo, boy,’ shouted he, ‘what do you do here idling away your time: where is your master? you will suffer for this snoozing, I fancy, when you get home.’ My spirit was now quite broken. I burst into tears, and confessed I had come a long way from my master, who had used me very ill, and lived on the other side of yonder mountain. ‘What, a mounseer too, eh!’ exclaimed my captor; ‘it’s an ill wind that blows nobody good, so come with me. I shall sail for Martinique in my schooner tomorrow before day, are you willing to work your passage there? I want a lad for my servant on the passage, and will set you on shore when we arrive. What say you, tea-pot?’ A gleam of hope again crossed my bosom, and I cheerfully consented to accompany my new friend, as I then thought him, who lifted me on his horse, placing me before him, and in half an hour we were at his lodgings by the water’s side. At night he embarked, taking me with him, and in a short time we were at sea.

“ Unused to the motion of the vessel, I little knew

what course was steered, and my youth and inexperience prevented me from ascertaining that it was not that for Martinique. In three days we arrived at our destination.

“A long narrow harbour, and a town almost in ruins, were in view, towards which we were fast approaching when I asked one of the crew with some timidity, if this place was called Martinique? ‘No, you young fool; what put such nonsense in your woolly head?’ answered the seaman. ‘Martinique! we are not within two hundred leagues of that island; this is Porto Bello, and the place we are bound to. Martinique! ha, ha! what should we do there, I wonder? it would be more than some of our necks were worth, mayhap.’ It now flashed across my mind that I was in the power of a new master, who had entrapped me by a falsehood, and intended to keep me as his slave. This idea, which was but too true, caused me to shed a flood of tears, and abandon myself entirely to grief and lamentation, under which feeling I was met by the captain, who, laughing, observed, ‘What, my young turkey buzzard, did you expect to fly whilst still unfledged? What, run away from one master and object to another, how very unreasonable! but dry your tears, you shall have no cause to complain, for although you are mine by right, I never treat my people with cruelty; so, there, jump into the boat alongside, and see how well I will use you.’ He accompanied these words by inflicting a severe blow across my shoulders with the end of a rope, so that I was glad to obey to prevent receiving a second stripe, with which he menaced me. I went on shore, and was taken to his house: and I must add, in justice to this Englishman, that for the four years afterwards which I

passed in his service he was a kind and good master, not only to me, but to others who were his slaves. I accompanied him on several voyages in his schooner, but he never would permit me to do so when bound for St. Domingo, and he was on his voyage there when his vessel was captured by a pirate, and he was cruelly put to death. As soon as this intelligence was confirmed I was sold to the man from whom I have just got away, and a hard and dreadful time I have had with him; but I never meditated escape, until the following occurrence placed my life at once at the mercy of an unprincipled villain.

“Six months ago my master brought a fresh slave into his service, who, I perceived, eyed me as if he recognised me. I cannot express the horror I endured when I knew him to be Dominique, one of the three slaves who guarded the door at the time the murder of the overseers was doing, and he now addressed me thus: ‘Are you here, my little traitor? When we last met things were somewhat different, I recollect. You betrayed our friends, I believe. Now a word from me would cause you to be strung up to yonder tree, for you were present, as I can swear, when the deed was done.’ I had much difficulty in convincing this fellow as to the cause of my being in this country, and it was from him I heard the fate of the two murderers, Pierre and Martin, whom I had left sleeping on the mountain, as before mentioned. Dominique spoke as follows:—

“‘It was six o’clock in the morning on which the overseers were killed that our late master, Monsieur Pichaud, unexpectedly arrived on his estate, brought thither by the alarm of the hurricane, I believe, and attended by only one white servant on horseback. He

found the doors of the habitation open, and in much astonishment proceeded immediately up stairs. You may fancy how he was surprised at the situation in which he found the overseers' rooms. He immediately rang the alarm bell to summon the slaves, mustered them over by the list, when Pierre, Martin, and yourself were the only persons absent. He considered a moment or two, then ran into the house, wrote a hasty note, which he put into the hands of his white attendant, at the same time whispering to him some eager message. The man rode off at full speed, whilst we remained in fear as to the result of the examination; but all were firm and true, no one giving the slightest information, only answering the questions of Monsieur Pichaud with looks of amazement and horror.

“ ‘In about an hour the servant returned, bringing with him two of those fierce blood-hounds which have been so successfully employed to hunt our people, and are a curse to our race; these were speedily followed by three gentlemen on horseback, well armed, who were friends of Monsieur Pichaud. One of the hounds, on being brought to the door, gave signs of the scent of blood upon the ground, and being encouraged by his master, commenced his way on the road the runaways had taken; the other dog almost immediately took up the scent and followed, growling angrily. Monsieur Pichaud ordered four of his slaves to attend him, and I was among the number. How I wished, as those dreadful beasts made their way so truly on their course, to have struck them dead with my axe, but I was only one against many men, therefore was compelled to follow, and leave the rest to fortune. Several hours were

passed in pursuit, the ban dogs going toward the mountain, sometimes at a swift pace, and sometimes gently, the fierce savage growl issuing from their dark throats as the scent lay strongest, when suddenly there was a stop. Monsieur Pichaud, drawing forth his pistols from their holsters, called out, 'Now my friends, now gentlemen, depend upon it the rascals are near; stand by me now, I beg of you.' 'Be quiet,' said the owner of the bloodhounds, 'and watch the dogs. The murderers are not here, I fancy, or they have made bad use of their time; however let us be prepared: mark the red dog, I say, see, see!' At this moment a howl from the red dog, and a violent barking from the other, gave token some new event was to happen. The owner of the animals jumped from his horse, and after some exertion of strength, and a plentiful application of the whip, took a cloth from the dog's mouth, and brought it to Monsieur Pichaud for inspection. 'Ha!' exclaimed our master, 'we are on the right scent here, indeed; this handkerchief belonged to the villain Pierre, and it is covered with blood. The rascal must be wounded, too; but pray, my good friends, let us lose no time; forward, if you please, and let these faithful dogs be still our pilots.'

“ ‘My heart failed me when I saw the bloodhounds take up the scent afresh, and move forward at a rapid pace, still toward the mountain. I was in hope that one or two of the friends of Monsieur Pichaud might take another road, and I felt assured, should such be the case, the three slaves who besides myself were of the party, would hesitate to capture Pierre or Martin should they be found, particularly if I should favour their cause,

which I had made up my mind to do; yet I dared not speak on the subject to my comrades, for fear of exciting suspicion.

“ ‘The journey was continued rapidly until five in the afternoon, fatiguing, indeed, to us who followed on foot; the horses were likewise suffering from the heat of the day, and the difficulty of the ascent of this cloud-capped mountain. The gentlemen perceived the necessity of giving rest to their beasts and to us their slaves, when a violent barking from the foremost dog again attracted attention; it was followed by the immediate report of a pistol, and the animal was stretched lifeless on the ground. Our comrade Pierre’s never-failing hand was there, beyond a doubt. The remaining dog was some time before he could be recovered from his fright; but cheered on by his master, who followed with caution, he was again advancing, when stopping suddenly he uttered a most savage growl. The gentlemen immediately dismounted, and rushing into the thicket, found the body of a man. On inspection it was ascertained to be that of Martin; he was still warm, and could not have been dead many minutes.

“ ‘This accounts for our successful pursuit so far,’ exclaimed Monsieur Pichaud, taking the bandage from the wounded arm of the corpse,—‘but what can have caused his death? flesh wounds, indeed, like these disable, but they do not kill,—open his frock, let us examine further:’ on this being done, the mark of a recent wound was discovered, which had been inflicted with a knife, and had reached the heart. ‘Desperate scoundrels,’ continued Monsieur Pichaud, ‘where will their guilt end? Let us proceed; the other villain has slain his comrade to prevent his capture alive; he must,

therefore, be near at hand, for neither the instrument with which this wound has been inflicted, nor the pistol with which the dog has been shot, are to be found. On then, my friends, for the love of heaven, to secure the villain Pierre and the boy.' The party were again in motion following the dog, but the progress was slow, as the scent was not so easily found and kept up, and it was with difficulty they could get the hound from the recently slain man, so much does their savage nature delight to revel in human blood. The pursuit was, therefore, not continued long after dark, and the party assembled round a fire kindled under shelter of the mountain peak, and partook of some refreshments which had been provided by the care of our master's friends. We, the slaves, were separated several yards from the gentlemen, and the time was portioned out in watches to last until dawn of day. About midnight, when my companions were asleep, and our master was holding a scarcely audible conversation with one of his friends, I felt a slight pull at the sleeve of my frock, and on looking round beheld the figure of a man on the ground. By a signal from him, I immediately recognised the object of the search. It was Pierre, weary and worn out with fatigue from the vast endeavours he had made to escape. I made a noise affecting to sing, whilst he in a whisper told me that he had had the misfortune to sprain his ankle, and could proceed no further; seeing the fire, he had crawled thither to endeavour to obtain some refreshment, as he was dying from thirst. I gave the exhausted wretch my canteen, which he most greedily emptied, and then asked if the dog was dead: 'Or shall I,' said he, 'still be traced even if I hide myself from mortal eye?' 'The dog is dead,' was my reply. 'Thanks for that,' fiercely

answered Pierre, 'I thought my hand too true to fire in vain; I may still hope to be free.' It was with a suppressed groan he heard me say, another dog was with his persecuting hunters, not so savage, but equally keenscented and true as the one he had killed. 'Then, there is no hope for me,' continued he; 'curses on this accident, which has deprived me of my strength and made a child of me, I would else sell my life dearly, and show those men, who call themselves our masters, that if they provoke their slaves to desperation it is not always to be done with impunity;' then, imposing silence by placing his finger on his lips, he pressed me by the hand and crawled away as quietly as he had approached.

" 'I could not hope for his ultimate escape crippled as he was by a sprained ankle, but I looked forward with much interest and some alarm to the time of his being found, feeling assured, from his resolute and determined disposition, loss of life would ensue ere he was captured, be it when or where it might.

" 'At dawn our party were again in pursuit; the too sure bloodhound was led round and round for several minutes, when uttering his usual growl he took up the scent on the very spot which I had occupied the preceding night, and advanced in the same track Pierre had crawled away. Monsieur Pichaud darted a look at me which evinced strong suspicion of my fidelity. There was now no doubt that Pierre would be taken, as he could not be far away. Our master and his friends mounted their horses, and I followed my companions with a heavy heart, to be an unwilling spectator of the death or capture of my friend.

" 'From the very great caution taken by the pursuers and the eager looks they cast upon the dog whilst they had their pistols ready for immediate action, it was

evident they were aware no child's play might be expected, and that Pierre in his desperate situation would resist to the last, whatever might be the fate of the boy. The dog was unusually slow in his advance; they could scarcely urge him forward, as he had not now the warm blood scent as an inducement, which was the case before Martin's body was found; yet the owner of the animal assured Monsieur Pichaud of success, and to hold himself in immediate readiness to act.

“ ‘ The morning was particularly fine, and the mountain was free from clouds to the very summit, a sight unusual in the hurricane months. Birds of elegant and various plumage were in great numbers, their constant and lively song adding to the beauty of the scene; but on a projecting point of the mountain, the lower part of which was covered by a thicket, sat an ill-omened solitary vulture, which took flight, screaming discordantly, as the party, led forward by the dog, made their slow approach. The animal evinced the greatest agitation, growling whilst trembling, and every now and then looking backwards towards his master. The crisis was at hand! The gentlemen dismounted, giving me their horses to hold by desire of Monsieur Pichaud, who I am certain suspected me. The pursuers now formed a semicircle in the rear of the dog, so as to cover the whole way at equal distances to the projecting point, the slaves being placed alternately with our master and his friends, and each within close pistol shot; therefore escape was rendered impossible, as the precipice at the back of the projection was nearly perpendicular, and at least one hundred feet deep. All seemed convinced Pierre was concealed there, and the shout which was vociferated by Monsieur Pichaud, of ‘ See the murderer is there!’ was simultaneous with the report of two pistols discharged

into the thicket. These shots were answered from the bush twice, and with so true an aim that the hat of our master was knocked from his head and he slightly grazed, whilst his friend, who had likewise fired, received a ball in his thigh and fell. As if forgetful of his lameness, Pierre now rushed forth from the concealment, and with his axe gleaming in the rays of the sun as he flourished it over his head, he made towards his master to put him to death; nor would he have escaped the superior strength and ferocity of Pierre, had not our master's friends, who had reserved their fire, now shot with deliberate aim—a ball from one of the pistols crushed Pierre's shoulder-blade, and the dangerous uplifted axe fell harmless on the ground. The murderer was speedily surrounded, seized, and after a desperate struggle, bound hand and foot and secured across the horse of the gentleman he had wounded, for whom a litter was hastily constructed, and in this manner we retraced our steps to the estate. Three days afterwards, Pierre was hanged upon a lofty gibbet which had been erected for that purpose before the door of the house where the murder had been committed. He confessed nothing, as he never spoke from the time of his being overpowered and made prisoner. His body was allowed to hang supported by ropes from various parts, until the birds of prey had rendered it a sight too disgusting to behold; it was then cut down and burned, no burial being permitted for a convicted murderer taken in the act of attempting his master's life. Thus terminated this sanguinary affair, in which you as a boy were implicated as a principal, and thus I have you in my power at all times; and I will teach you I know how to use that power and keep my advantage, if you ever attempt to thwart me or my plans, which I may endeavour to put in execution—so, look to it! This was

the account the slave, Dominique, gave me of the fate of my companions on that fearful occasion; and as I knew him to be both cunning and revengeful, I could not hold my life safe for a moment whilst it hung as by a thread on his secrecy. I therefore made up my mind to attempt my escape on the first opportunity, and I have got on board this frigate, even at the hazard of being sent back to my master, to whom, indeed, I do not properly belong, as I was kidnapped from St. Domingo." The young slave's narrative concluded here, and after receiving some refreshment, he was again consigned to the care of the master at arms, and put in irons, under charge of the sentry at the cabin door.

The harbour of Havannah to which we were bound is so safe and the lights so good, there is no danger in running in at night-time to those who have been there before, and as it was dark when we arrived, an attempt was made to sail in, but the wind failing at the entrance, the frigate was brought to an anchor close under the Moro (or castle) within twenty fathoms of the shore. At daylight the irons were empty, the slave was gone, and has not since been heard of. The sentry who had charge of him was to have been tried by a court-martial for neglect of duty, but as he died from yellow fever before the trial could take place, the affair was hushed up, and no further notice was taken of the escape of the deserter slave.

The recent act of emancipation, which has at length been granted to our fellow mortals, will put an end to such atrocious deeds as have been here narrated: deeds which mistaken men, driven to despair and desperation, have thought founded on justice, but which are in fact, like slavery itself, a grievous sin both against God and man.