Annotation Key

colonialism

white supremacy, racism

misogyny, femininity injunctions

sexism by men, Real Men injunctions

context, historical interest, general info

my personal commentary

https://open.spotify.com/playlist/0WtigndmcIN

Reading: the American Civil War

History & Context - "The Clansman"

Book III—The Reign of Terror

CHAPTER I

A Fallen Slaveholder's Mansion

Piedmont, South Carolina, which Elsie and Phil had selected for reasons best known to themselves as the place of retreat for their father, was a favourite summer resort of Charleston people before the war.

Ulster county, of which this village was the capital, bordered on the North Carolina line, lying alongside the ancient shore of York. It was settled by the Scotch folk who came from the North of Ireland in the great migrations which gave America three hundred thousand people of Covenanter martyr blood, the largest and most important addition to our population, larger in number than either the Puritans of New England or the so-called Cavaliers of Virginia and Eastern Carolina; and far more important than either, in the growth of American nationality.

To a man they had hated Great Britain. Not a Tory was found among them. The cries of their martyred dead were still ringing in their souls when George III started on his career of oppression. The fiery words of Patrick Henry, their spokesman in the valley of Virginia, had swept the aristocracy of the Old Dominion into rebellion against the King and on into triumphant Democracy. They had made North Carolina the first home of freedom in the New World, issued the first Declaration of Independence in Mecklenburg, and lifted the first banner of rebellion against the tyranny of the Crown.

They grew to the soil wherever they stopped, always home lovers and home builders, loyal to their own people, instinctive clan leaders and clan followers. A sturdy, honest, covenant-keeping, God-fearing, fighting people, above all things they hated sham and pretence. They never boasted of their families, though some of them might have quartered the royal arms of Scotland on their shields.

To these sturdy qualities had been added a strain of Huguenot tenderness and vivacity.

The culture of cotton as the sole industry had fixed African slavery as their economic system. With the heritage of the Old World had been blended forces inherent in the earth and air of the new Southland, something of the breath of its unbroken forests, the freedom of its untrod mountains, the temper of its sun, and the sweetness of its tropic perfumes.

When Mrs. Cameron received Elsie's letter, asking her to secure for them six good rooms at the "Palmetto" hotel, she laughed. The big rambling hostelry had been burned by roving negroes, pigs were wallowing in the sulphur springs, and along its walks, where lovers of olden days had strolled, the cows were browsing on the shrubbery.

Of course it was.

But she laughed for a more important reason. They had asked for a six-room cottage if accommodations could not be had in the hotel.

She could put them in the Lenoir place. The cotton crop from their farm had been stolen from the gin—the cotton tax of $200 could not be paid, and a mortgage was about to be foreclosed on both their farm and home. She had been brooding over their troubles in despair. The Stonemans' coming was a godsend.

Mrs. Cameron was helping them set the house in order to receive the new tenants.

"I declare," said Mrs. Lenoir gratefully. "It seems too good to be true. Just as I was about to give up—the first time in my life—here came those rich Yankees and with enough rent to pay the interest on the mortgages and our board at the hotel. I'll teach Margaret to paint, and she can give Marion lessons on the piano. The darkest hour's just before day. And last week I cried when they told me I must lose the farm."

"I was heartsick over it for you."

"You know, the farm was my dowry with the dozen slaves Papa gave us on our wedding-day. The negroes did as they pleased, yet we managed to live and were very happy."

Marion entered and placed a bouquet of roses on the table, touching them daintily until she stood each flower apart in careless splendour. Their perfume, the girl's wistful dreamy blue eyes and shy elusive beauty, all seemed a part of the warm sweet air of the June morning. Mrs. Lenoir watched her lovingly.

"Mamma, I'm going to put flowers in every room. I'm sure they haven't such lovely ones in Washington," said Marion eagerly, as she skipped out.

The two women moved to the open window, through which came the drone of bees and the distant music of the river falls.

"Marion's greatest charm," whispered her mother, "is in her way of doing things easily and gently without a trace of effort. Watch her bend over to get that rose. Did you ever see anything like the grace and symmetry of her figure—she seems a living flower!"

"Jeannie, you're making an idol of her——"

"Why not? With all our troubles and poverty, I'm rich in her! She's fifteen years old, her head teeming with romance. You know, I was married at fifteen. There'll be a half dozen boys to see her to-night in our new home—all of them head over heels in love with her."

"Oh, Jeannie, you must not be so silly! We should worship God only."

"Isn't she God's message to me and to the world?"

"But if anything should happen to her——"

The young mother laughed. "I never think of it. Some things are fixed. Her happiness and beauty are to me the sign of God's presence."

"Well, I'm glad you're coming to live with us in the heart of town. This place is a cosey nest, just such a one as a poet lover would build here in the edge of these deep woods, but it is too far out for you to be alone. Dr. Cameron has been worrying about you ever since he came home."

"I'm not afraid of the negroes. I don't know one of them who wouldn't go out of his way to do me a favour. Old Aleck is the only rascal I know among them, and he's too busy with politics now even to steal a chicken."

"And Gus, the young scamp we used to own; you haven't forgotten him? He is back here, a member of the company of negro troops, and parades before the house every day to show off his uniform. Dr. Cameron told him yesterday he'd thrash him if he caught him hanging around the place again. He frightened Margaret nearly to death when she went to the barn to feed her horse."

"I've never known the meaning of fear. We used to roam the woods and fields together all hours of the day and night: my lover, Marion, and I. This panic seems absurd to me."

"Well, I'll be glad to get you two children under my wing. I was afraid I'd find you in tears over moving from your nest."

"No, where Marion is I'm at home, and I'll feel I've a mother when I get with you."

"Will you come to the hotel before they arrive?"

"No; I'll welcome and tell them how glad I am they have brought me good luck."

"I'm delighted, Jeannie. I wished you to do this, but I couldn't ask it. I can never do enough for this old man's daughter. We must make their stay happy. They say he's a terrible old Radical politician, but I suppose he's no meaner than the others. He's very ill, and she loves him devotedly. He is coming here to find health, and not to insult us. Besides, he was kind to me. He wrote a letter to the President. Nothing that I have will be too good for him or for his. It's very brave and sweet of you to stay and meet them."

"I'm doing it to please Marion. She suggested it last night, sitting out on the porch in the twilight. She slipped her arm around me and said:

"'Mamma, we must welcome them and make them feel at home. He is very ill. They will be tired and homesick. Suppose it were you and I, and we were taking my Papa to a strange place.'"

When the Stonemans arrived, the old man was too ill and nervous from the fatigue of the long journey to notice his surroundings or to be conscious of the restful beauty of the cottage into which they carried him. His room looked out over the valley of the river for miles, and the glimpse he got of its broad fertile acres only confirmed his ideas of the "slaveholding oligarchy" it was his life-purpose to crush. Over the mantel hung a steel engraving of Calhoun. He fell asleep with his deep, sunken eyes resting on it and a cynical smile playing about his grim mouth.

As in John C. Calhoun, white supremacist and all around garbage human being who helped to foment the Civil War and has been inspiring terrible, racist politicians ever since.

Margaret and Mrs. Cameron had met the Stonemans and their physician at the train, and taken Elsie and her father in the old weather-beaten family carriage to the Lenoir cottage, apologising for Ben's absence.

"He has gone to Nashville on some important legal business, and the doctor is ailing, but as the head of the clan Cameron he told me to welcome your father to the hospitality of the county, and beg him to let us know if he could be of help."

The old man, who sat in a stupor of exhaustion, made no response, and Elsie hastened to say:

"We appreciate your kindness more than I can tell you, Mrs. Cameron. I trust father will be better in a day or two, when he will thank you. The trip has been more than he could bear."

"I am expecting Ben home this week," the mother whispered. "I need not tell you that he will be delighted at your coming."

Elsie smiled and blushed.

"And I'll expect Captain Stoneman to see me very soon," said Margaret softly. "You will not forget to tell him for me?"

"He's a very retiring young man," said Elsie, "and pretends to be busy about our baggage just now. I'm sure he will find the way."

Elsie fell in love at sight with Marion and her mother. Their easy genial manners, the genuineness of their welcome, and the simple kindness with which they sought to make her feel at home put her heart into a warm glow.

Mrs. Lenoir explained the conveniences of the place and apologized for its defects, the results of the war.

https://www.historynewsnetwork.org/article/p

Poor Whites and Slavery in the Antebellum South: An Interview with Historian Keri Leigh Merritt

White poverty was a serious problem in the South, both before and after the Civil War, and the main reason for this were policies put in place to protect wealthy, white slaveowners. The wealthy have long been using racism and other forms of discrimination to convince the impoverished to vote against their own interests. Plantation owners like the Cameron's in Dixon's novels also suffered a lowered standard of living after the war, but I rather think they deserved it, quite frankly.

"I am sorry about the window curtains—we have used them all for dresses. Marion is a genius with a needle, and we took the last pair out of the parlour to make a dress for a birthday party. The year before, we used the ones in my room for a costume at a starvation party in a benefit for our rector—you know we're Episcopalians—strayed up here for our health from Charleston among these good Scotch Presbyterians."

"We will soon place curtains at the windows," said Elsie cheerfully.

"The carpets were sent to the soldiers for blankets during the war. It was all we could do for our poor boys, except to cut my hair and sell it. You see my hair hasn't grown out yet. I sent it to Richmond the last year of the war. I felt I must do something when my neighbours were giving so much. You know Mrs. Cameron lost four boys."

"I prefer the floors bare," Elsie replied. "We will get a few rugs."

She looked at the girlish hair hanging in ringlets about Mrs. Lenoir's handsome face, smiled pathetically, and asked:

"Did you really make such sacrifices for your cause?"

"Yes, indeed. I was glad when the war was ended for some things. We certainly needed a few pins, needles, and buttons, to say nothing of a cup of coffee or tea."

"I trust you will never lack for anything again," said Elsie kindly.

"You will bring us good luck," Mrs. Lenoir responded. "Your coming is so fortunate. The cotton tax Congress levied was so heavy this year we were going to lose everything. Such a tax when we are all about to starve! Dr. Cameron says it was an act of stupid vengeance on the South, and that no other farmers in America have their crops taxed by the National Government. I am so glad your father has come. He is not hunting for an office. He can help us, maybe."

By implication, the Northerners must have just breezed right through the war with no deprivation or difficulties whatsoever.

No, those are called "reparations" for starting a war.

"I am sure he will," answered Elsie thoughtfully.

Marion ran up the steps lightly, her hair dishevelled and face flushed.

"Now, Mamma, it's almost sundown; you get ready to go. I want her awhile to show her about my things."

She took Elsie shyly by the hand and led her into the lawn, while her mother paid a visit to each room, and made up the last bundle of odds and ends she meant to carry to the hotel.

"I hope you will love the place as we do," said the girl simply.

"I think it very beautiful and restful," Elsie replied. "This wilderness of flowers looks like fairyland. You have roses running on the porch around the whole length of the house."

"Yes, Papa was crazy over the trailing roses, and kept planting them until the house seems just a frame built to hold them, with a roof on it. But you can see the river through the arches from three sides. Ben Cameron helped me set that big beauty on the south corner the day he ran away to the war——"

"The view is glorious!" Elsie exclaimed, looking in rapture over the river valley.

The village of Piedmont crowned an immense hill on the banks of the Broad River, just where it dashes over the last stone barrier in a series of beautiful falls and spreads out in peaceful glory through the plains toward Columbia and the distant sea. The muffled roar of these falls, rising softly through the trees on its wooded cliff, held the daily life of the people in the spell of distant music. In fair weather it soothed and charmed, and in storm and freshet rose to the deep solemn growl of thunder.

The river made a sharp bend as it emerged from the hills and flowed westward for six miles before it turned south again. Beyond this six-mile sweep of its broad channel loomed the three ranges of the Blue Ridge Mountains, the first one dark, rich, distinct, clothed in eternal green, the last one melting in dim lines into the clouds and soft azure of the sky.

As the sun began to sink now behind these distant peaks, each cloud that hung about them burst into a blazing riot of colour. The silver mirror of the river caught their shadows, and the water glowed in sympathy.

As Elsie drank the beauty of the scene, the music of the falls ringing its soft accompaniment, her heart went out in a throb of love and pity for the land and its people.

"Can you blame us for loving such a spot?" said Marion. "It's far more beautiful from the cliff at Lover's Leap. I'll take you there some day. My father used to tell me that this world was Heaven, and that the spirits would all come back to live here when sin and shame and strife were gone."

"Are your father's poems published?" asked Elsie.

"Only in the papers. We have them clipped and pasted in a scrapbook. I'll show you the one about Ben Cameron some day. You met him in Washington, didn't you?"

"Yes," said Elsie quietly.

"Then I know he made love to you."

"Why?"

"You're so pretty. He couldn't help it."

"Does he make love to every pretty girl?"

"Always. It's his religion. But he does it so beautifully you can't help believing it, until you compare notes with the other girls."

"Did he make love to you?"

"He broke my heart when he ran away. I cried a whole week. But I got over it. He seemed so big and grown when he came home this last time. I was afraid to let him kiss me."

"Did he dare to try?"

"No, and it hurt my feelings. You see, I'm not quite old enough to be serious with the big boys, and he looked so brave and handsome with that ugly scar on the edge of his forehead, and everybody was so proud of him. I was just dying to kiss him, and I thought it downright mean in him not to offer it."

"Would you have let him?"

"I expected him to try."

"He is very popular in Piedmont?"

“Every girl in town is in love with him.”

“And he in love with all?”

“He pretends to be—but between us, he’s a great flirt. He’s gone to Nashville now on some pretended business. Goodness only knows where he got the money to go. I believe there’s a girl there.”

“Why?”

“Because he was so mysterious about his trip. I’ll keep an eye on him at the hotel. You know Margaret, too, don’t you?”

“Yes; we met her in Washington.”

“Well, she’s the slyest flirt in town—it runs in the blood—has a half-dozen beaux to see her every day. She plays the organ in the Presbyterian Sunday school, and the young minister is dead in love with her. They say they are engaged. I don’t believe it. I think it’s another one. But I must hurry, I’ve so much to show and tell you. Come here to the honeysuckle——”

Marion drew the vines apart from the top of the fence and revealed a mocking-bird on her nest.

“She’s setting. Don’t let anything hurt her. I’d push her off and show you her speckled eggs, but it’s so late.”

“Oh, I wouldn’t hurt her for the world!” cried Elsie with delight.

“And right here,” said Marion, bending gracefully over a tall bunch of grass, “is a pee-wee’s nest, four darling little eggs; look out for that.”

Elsie bent and saw the pretty nest perched on stems of grass, and over it the taller leaves drawn to a point.

“Isn’t it cute!” she murmured.

“Yes; I’ve six of these and three mocking-bird nests. I’ll show them to you. But the most particular one of all is the wren’s nest in the fork of the cedar, close to the house.”

She led Elsie to the tree, and about two feet from the ground, in the forks of the trunk, was a tiny hole from which peeped the eyes of a wren.

“Whatever you do, don’t let anything hurt her. Her mate sings *‘Free-nigger! Free-nigger! Free-nigger!’* every morning in this cedar.”

“And you think we will specially enjoy that?” asked Elsie, laughing.

“Now, really,” cried Marion, taking Elsie’s hand, “you know I couldn’t think of such a mean joke. I forgot you were from the North. You seem so sweet and homelike. He really does sing that way. You will hear him in the morning, bright and early, *‘Free-nigger! Free-nigger! Free-nigger!’* just as plain as I’m saying it.”

“And did you learn to find all these birds’ nests by yourself?”

“Papa taught me. I’ve got some jay-birds and some cat-birds so gentle they hop right down at my feet. Some people hate jay-birds. But I like them, they seem to be having such a fine time and enjoy life so. You don’t mind jay-birds, do you?”

“I love every bird that flies.”

“Except hawks and owls and buzzards——”

“Well, I’ve seen so few I can’t say I’ve anything particular against them.”

“Yes, they eat chickens—except the buzzards, and they’re so ugly and filthy. Now, I’ve a chicken to show you—please don’t let Aunt Cindy—she’s to be your cook—please don’t let her kill him—he’s crippled—has something the matter with his foot. He was born that way. Everybody wanted to kill him, but I wouldn’t let them. I’ve had an awful time raising him, but he’s all right now.”

Marion lifted a box and showed her the lame pet, softly clucking his protest against the disturbance of his rest.

“I’ll take good care of *him*, never fear,” said Elsie, with a tremor in her voice.

“And I have a queer little black cat I wanted to show you, but he’s gone off somewhere. I’d take him with me—only it’s bad luck to move cats. He’s awful wild—won’t let anybody pet him but me. Mamma says he’s an imp of Satan—but I love him. He runs up a tree when anybody else tries to get him. But he climbs right up on my shoulder. I never loved any cat quite as well as this silly, half-wild one. You don’t mind black cats, do you?”

“No, dear; I like cats.”

“Then I know you’ll be good to him.”

“Is that all?” asked Elsie, with amused interest.

“No, I’ve the funniest yellow dog that comes here at night to pick up the scraps and things. He isn’t my dog—just a little personal friend of mine—but I like him very much, and always give him something. He’s very cute. I think he’s a nigger dog.”

“A nigger dog? What’s that?”

“He belongs to some coloured people, who don’t give turn enough to eat. I love him because he’s so faithful to his own folks. He comes to see me at night and pretends to love me, but as soon as I feed him he trots back home. When he first came, I laughed till I cried at his antics over a carpet—we had a carpet then. He never saw one before, and barked at the colours and the figures in the pattern. Then he’d lie down and rub his back on it and growl. You won’t let anybody hurt him?”

See? Black people were so cruel that they wouldn't even feed a poor, starving dog...What would they do if they ever seized control of the *government?!*

“No. Are there any others?”

“Yes, I ’most forgot. If Sam Ross comes—Sam’s an idiot who lives at the poorhouse—if he comes, he’ll expect a dinner—my, my, I’m afraid he’ll cry when he finds we’re not here! But you can send him to the hotel to me. Don’t let Aunt Cindy speak rough to him. Aunt Cindy’s awfully good to me, but she can’t bear Sam. She thinks he brings bad luck.”

“How on earth did you meet him?”

“His father was rich. He was a good friend of my Papa’s. We came near losing our farm once, because a bank failed. Mr. Ross sent Papa a signed check on his own bank, and told him to write the amount he needed on it, and pay him when he was able. Papa cried over it, and wouldn’t use it, and wrote a poem on the back of the check—one of the sweetest of all, I think. In the war Mr. Ross lost his two younger sons, both killed at Gettysburg. His wife died heartbroken, and he only lived a year afterward. He sold his farm for Confederate money and everything was lost. Sam was sent to the poorhouse. He found out somehow that we loved him and comes to see us. He’s as harmless as a kitten, and works in the garden beautifully.”

“I’ll remember,” Elsie promised.

“And one thing more,” she said hesitatingly. “Mamma asked me to speak to you of this—that’s why she slipped away. There one little room we have locked. It was Papa’s study just as he left it, with his papers scattered on the desk, the books and pictures that he loved—you won’t mind?”

Elsie slipped her arm about Marion, looked into the blue eyes, dim with tears, drew her close and said:

“It shall be sacred, my child. You must come every day if possible, and help me.”

“I will. I’ve so many beautiful places to show you in the woods—places he loved, and taught us to see and love. They won’t let me go in the woods any more alone. But you have a big brother. That must be very sweet.”

Mrs. Lenoir hurried to Elsie.

“Come, Marion, we must be going now.”

“I am very sorry to see you leave the home you love so dearly, Mrs. Lenoir,” said the Northern girl, taking her extended hand. “I hope you can soon find a way to have it back.”

“Thank you,” replied the mother cheerily. “The longer you stay, the better for us. You don’t know how happy I am over your coming. It has lifted a load from our hearts. In the liberal rent you pay us you are our benefactors. We are very grateful and happy.”

Elsie watched them walk across the lawn to the street, the daughter leaning on the mother’s arm. She followed slowly and stopped behind one of the arbor-vitæ bushes beside the gate. The full moon had risen as the twilight fell and flooded the scene with soft white light. A whippoorwill struck his first plaintive note, his weird song seeming to come from all directions and yet to be under her feet. She heard the rustle of dresses returning along the walk, and Marion and her mother stood at the gate. They looked long and tenderly at the house. Mrs. Lenoir uttered a broken sob, Marion slipped an arm around her, brushed the short curling hair back from her forehead, and softly said:

“Mamma, dear, you know it’s best. I don’t mind. Everybody in town loves us. Every boy and girl in Piedmont worships you. We will be just as happy at the hotel.”

In the pauses between the strange bird's cry, Elsie caught the sound of another sob, and then a soothing murmur as of a mother bending over a cradle, and they were gone.

CHAPTER II

The Eyes of the Jungle

Elsie stood dreaming for a moment in the shadow of the arbor-vitæ, breathing the sensuous perfumed air and listening to the distant music of the falls, her heart quivering in pity for the anguish of which she had been a witness. Again the spectral cry of the whippoorwill rang near-by, and she noted for the first time the curious cluck with which the bird punctuated each call. A sense of dim foreboding oppressed her.

She wondered if the chatter of Marion about the girl in Nashville were only a child's guess or more. She laughed softly at the absurdity of the idea. Never since she had first looked into Ben Cameron's face did she feel surer of the honesty and earnestness of his love than to-day in this quiet home of his native village. It must be the queer call of the bird which appealed to superstitions she did not know were hidden within her being.

Still dreaming under its spell, she was startled at the tread of two men approaching the gate.

The taller, more powerful-looking man put his hand on the latch and paused.

"Allow no white man to order you around. Remember you are a freeman and as good as any pale-face who walks this earth."

She recognized the voice of Silas Lynch.

"Ben Cameron dare me to come about de house," said the other voice.

"What did he say?"

"He say, wid his eyes batten' des like lightnen', 'Ef I ketch you hangin' 'roun' dis place agin', Gus, I'll jump on you en stomp de life outen ye.'"

"Well, you tell him that your name is Augustus, not 'Gus,' and that the United States troops quartered in this town will be with him soon after the stomping begins. You wear its uniform. Give the white trash in this town to understand that they are not even citizens of the nation. As a sovereign voter, you, once their slave, are not only their equal—you are their master."

How does that saying go - "To the privileged, equality feels like oppression"? Something like that?

"Dat I will!" was the firm answer.

The negro to whom Lynch spoke disappeared in the direction taken by Marion and her mother, and the figure of the handsome mulatto passed rapidly up the walk, ascended the steps and knocked at the door.

Elsie followed him.

"My father is too much fatigued with his journey to be seen now; you must call to-morrow," she said.

The negro lifted his hat and bowed:

"Ah, we are delighted to welcome you, Miss Stoneman, to our land! Your father asked me to call immediately on his arrival. I have but obeyed his orders."

Elsie shrank from the familiarity of his manner and the tones of authority and patronage with which he spoke.

"He cannot be seen at this hour," she answered shortly.

"Perhaps you will present my card, then—say that I am at his service, and let him appoint the time at which I shall return?"

She did not invite him in, but with easy assurance he took his seat on the joggle-board beside the door and awaited her return.

Against her urgent protest, Stoneman ordered Lynch to be shown at once to his bedroom.

When the door was closed, the old Commoner, without turning to greet his visitor or moving his position in bed, asked:

"Are you following my instructions?"

"To the letter, sir."

"You are initiating the negroes into the League and teaching them the new catechism?"

"With remarkable success. Its secrecy and ritual appeal to them. Within six months we shall have the whole race under our control almost to a man."

"*Almost* to a man?"

"We find some so attached to their former masters that reason is impossible with them. Even threats and the promise of forty acres of land have no influence."

While it's true that not every slave endured brutal treatment and that some did indeed wind up working on the same plantations from which they were freed after the South lost the war - largely because efforts were made to keep black people from being able to work elsewhere - to suggest that they were this attached to slaveowners is insulting and inaccurate.

The old man snorted with contempt.

"If anything could reconcile me to the Satanic Institution it is the character of the wretches who submit to it and kiss the hand that strikes. After all, a slave deserves to be a slave. The man who is mean enough to wear chains ought to wear them. You must teach, *teach*, TEACH these black hounds to know they are men, not brutes!"

The old man paused a moment, and his restless hands fumbled the cover.

"Your first task, as I told you in the beginning, is to teach every negro to stand erect in the presence of his former master and assert his manhood. Unless he does this, the South will bristle with bayonets in vain. The man who believes he is a dog, is one. The man who believes himself a king, may become one. Stop this snivelling and sneaking round the back doors. I can do nothing, God Almighty can do nothing, for a coward. Fix this as the first law of your own life. Lift up your head! The world is yours. Take it. Beat this into the skulls of your people, if you do it with an axe. Teach them the military drill at once. I'll see that Washington sends the guns. The state, when under your control, can furnish the powder."

Oh okay - I see where Dixon is going with this. Every white supremacist's worst nightmare: the newly freed slaves are out to get revenge on their former masters. Maybe this idea wouldn't have held so much power over these people if they didn't have such guilty consciences.

"It will surprise you to know the thoroughness with which this has been done already by the League," said Lynch. "The white master believed he could vote the negro as he worked him in the fields during the war. The League, with its blue flaming altar, under the shadows of night, has wrought a miracle. The negro is the enemy of his former master and will be for all time."

"For the present," said the old man meditatively, "not a word to a living soul as to my connection with this work. When the time is ripe, I'll show my hand."

Elsie entered, protesting against her father's talking longer, and showed Lynch to the door.

He paused on the moonlit porch and tried to engage her in familiar talk.

She cut him short, and he left reluctantly.

As he bowed his thick neck in pompous courtesy, she caught with a shiver the odour of pomade on his black half-kinked hair. He stopped on the lower step, looked back with smiling insolence, and gazed intently at her beauty. The girl shrank from the gleam of the jungle in his eyes and hurried within.

Because all non-white people are out to defile the sanctified perfection of the noble, delicate white woman.

She found her father sunk in a stupor. Her cry brought the young surgeon hurrying into the room, and at the end of an hour he said to Elsie and Phil:

"He has had a stroke of paralysis. He may lie in mental darkness for months and then recover. His heart action is perfect. Patience, care, and love will save him. There is no cause for immediate alarm."

CHAPTER III

Augustus Cæsar

Phil early found the home of the Camerons the most charming spot in town. As he sat in the old-fashioned parlour beside Margaret, his brain seethed with plans for building a hotel on a large scale on the other side of the Square and restoring her home intact.

The Cameron homestead was a large brick building with an ample porch looking out directly on the Court House Square, standing in the middle of a lawn full of trees, flowers, shrubbery, and a wilderness of evergreen boxwood planted fifty years before. It was located on the farm from which it had always derived its support. The farm extended up into the village itself, with the great barn easily seen from the street.

Phil was charmed with the doctor's genial personality. He often found the father a decidedly easier person to get along with than his handsome daughter. The Rev. Hugh McAlpin was a daily caller, and Margaret had a tantalizing way of showing her deference to his opinions.

Phil hated this preacher from the moment he laid eyes on him. His pugnacious piety he might have endured but for the fact that he was good-looking and eloquent. When he rose in the pulpit in all his sacred dignity, fixed his eyes on Margaret, and began in tenderly modulated voice to tell about the love of God, Phil clinched his fist. He didn't care to join the Presbyterian church, but he quietly made up his mind that, if it came to the worst and she asked him, he would join anything. What made him furious was the air of assurance with which the young divine carried himself about Margaret, as if he had but to say the word and it would be fixed as by a decree issued from before the foundations of the world.

He was pleased and surprised to find that his being a Yankee made no difference in his standing or welcome. The people seemed unconscious of the part his father played at Washington. Stoneman's Confiscation Bill had not yet been discussed in Congress, and the promise of land to the negroes was universally regarded as a hoax of the League to win their followers. The old Commoner was not an orator. Hence his name was scarcely known in the South. The Southern people could not conceive of a great leader except one who expressed his power through the megaphone of oratory. They held Charles Sumner chiefly responsible for Reconstruction.

The fact that Phil was a Yankee who had no axe to grind in the South caused the people to appeal to him in a pathetic way that touched his heart. He had not been in town two weeks before he was on good terms with every youngster, had the entrée to every home, and Ben had taken him, protesting vehemently, to see every pretty girl there. He found that, in spite of war and poverty, troubles present and troubles to come, the young Southern woman was the divinity that claimed and received the chief worship of man.

The tremendous earnestness with which these youngsters pursued the work of courting, all of them so poor they scarcely had enough to eat, amazed and alarmed him beyond measure. He found in several cases as many as four making a dead set for one girl, as if heaven and earth depended on the outcome, while the girl seemed to receive it all as a matter of course—her just tribute.

Every instinct of his quiet reserved nature revolted at any such attempt to rush his cause with Margaret, and yet it made the cold chills run down his spine to see that Presbyterian preacher drive his buggy up to the hotel, take her to ride, and stay three hours. He knew where they had gone—to Lover's Leap and along the beautiful road which led to the North Carolina line. He knew the way—Margaret had showed him. This road was the Way of Romance. Every farmhouse, cabin, and shady nook along its beaten track could tell its tale of lovers fleeing from the North to find happiness in the haven of matrimony across the line in South Carolina. Everything seemed to favour marriage in this climate. The state required no license. A legal marriage could be celebrated, anywhere, at any time, by a minister in the presence of two witnesses, with or without the consent of parent or guardian. Marriage was the easiest thing in the state—divorce the one thing impossible. Death alone could grant divorce.

The patriarchal-minded man's dream. His wife can't leave him no matter what he does or doesn't do.

He was now past all reason in love. He followed the movement of Margaret's queenly figure with pathetic abandonment. Beneath her beautiful manners he swore with a shiver that she was laughing at him. Now and then he caught a funny expression about her eyes, as if she were consumed with a sly sense of humour in her love affairs.

What he felt to be his manliest traits, his reserve, dignity, and moral earnestness, she must think cold and slow beside the dash, fire, and assurance of these Southerners. He could tell by the way she encouraged the preacher before his eyes that she was criticizing and daring him to let go for once. Instead of doing it, he sank back appalled at the prospect and let the preacher carry her off again.

Male supremacist (i.e. patriarchal) societies encourage men to center themselves in every human interaction.

He sought solace in Dr. Cameron, who was utterly oblivious of his daughter's love affairs.

Phil was constantly amazed at the variety of his knowledge, the genuineness of his culture, his modesty, and the note of youth and cheer with which he still pursued the study of medicine.

His company was refreshing for its own sake. The slender graceful figure, ruddy face, with piercing, dark-brown eyes in startling contrast to his snow-white hair and beard, had for Phil a perpetual charm. He never tired listening to his talk, and noting the peculiar grace and dignity with which he carried himself, unconscious of the commanding look of his brilliant eyes.

"I hear that you have used hypnotism in your practice, Doctor," Phil said to him one day, as he watched with fascination the changing play of his mobile features.

"Oh, yes! used it for years. Southern doctors have always been pioneers in the science of medicine. Dr. Crawford Long, of Georgia, you know, was the first practitioner in America to apply anesthesia to surgery."

"But where did you run up against hypnotism? I thought this a new thing under the sun?"

The doctor laughed.

"It's not a home industry, exactly. I became interested in it in Edinburgh while a medical student, and pursued it with increased interest in Paris."

"Did you study medicine abroad?" Phil asked in surprise.

"Yes; I was poor, but I managed to raise and to borrow enough to take three years on the other side. I put all I had and all my credit in it. I've never regretted the sacrifice. The more I saw of the great world, the better I liked my own world. I've given these farmers and their families the best God gave to me."

"Do you find much use for your powers of hypnosis?" Phil asked.

"Only in an experimental way. Naturally I am endowed with this gift—especially over certain classes who are easily the subjects of extreme fear. I owned a rascally slave named Gus whom I used to watch stealing. Suddenly confronting him, I've thrown him into unconsciousness with a steady gaze of the eye, until he would drop on his face, trembling like a leaf, unable to speak until I allowed him."

I'm so tired of this guy using black people to exemplify every negative human characteristic, behavior, feeling, etc. I *seriously* want to punch his face.

"How do you account for such powers?"

"I don't account for them at all. They belong to the world of spiritual phenomena of which we know so little and yet which touch our material lives at a thousand points every day. How do we account for sleep and dreams, or second sight, or the day dreams which we call visions?"

Phil was silent, and the doctor went on dreamily:

"The day my boy Richard was killed at Gettysburg, I saw him lying dead in a field near a house. I saw some soldiers bury him in the corner of that field, and then an old man go to the grave, dig up his body, cart it away into the woods, and throw it into a ditch. I saw it before I heard of the battle or knew that he was in it. He was reported killed, and his body has never been found. It is the one unspeakable horror of the war to me. I'll never get over it."

"How very strange!" exclaimed Phil.

"And yet the war was nothing, my boy, to the horrors I feel clutching the throat of the South to-day. I'm glad you and your father are down here. Your disinterested view of things may help us at Washington when we need it most. The South seems to have no friend at court."

He thinks that losing his son during a civil war was better than the possibility of sharing political equality with black Americans.

"Your younger men, I find, are hopeful, Doctor," said Phil.

"Yes, the young never see danger until it's time to die. I'm not a pessimist, but I was happier in jail. Scores of my old friends have given up in despair and died. Delicate and cultured women are living on cowpeas, corn bread, and molasses—and of such quality they would not have fed it to a slave. Children go to bed hungry. Droves of brutal negroes roam at large, stealing, murdering, and threatening blacker crimes. We are under the heel of petty military tyrants, few of whom ever smelled gunpowder in a battle. At the approaching election, not a decent white man in this country can take the infamous test oath. I am disfranchised because I gave a cup of water to the lips of one of my dying boys on the battlefield. My slaves are all voters. There will be a negro majority of more than one hundred thousand in this state. Desperadoes are here teaching these negroes insolence and crime in their secret societies. The future is a nightmare."

And yet Dixon has been insinuating that enslaved people were treated well by their "owners."

I'm sure he's referring to the Freedmen's Bureau and the Colored National Labor Union...

"You have my sympathy, sir," said Phil warmly, extending his hand. "These Reconstruction Acts, conceived in sin and brought forth in iniquity, can bring only shame and disgrace until the last trace of them is wiped from our laws. I hope it will not be necessary to do it in blood."

Insisting that the South are innocent victims while simultaneously threatening to start another war if white men don't get their own way. Charming.

The doctor was deeply touched. He could not be mistaken in the genuineness of any man's feeling. He never dreamed this earnest straightforward Yankee youngster was in love with Margaret, and it would have made no difference in the accuracy of his judgment.

"Your sentiments do you honour, sir," he said with grave courtesy. "And you honour us and our town with your presence and friendship."

As Phil hurried home in a warm glow of sympathy for the people whose hospitality had made him their friend and champion, he encountered a negro trooper standing on the corner, watching the Cameron house with furtive glance.

Instinctively he stopped, surveyed the man from head to foot and asked:

"What's the trouble?"

"None er yo' business," the negro answered, slouching across to the opposite side of the street.

Phil watched him with disgust. He had the short, heavy-set neck of the lower order of animals. His skin was coal black, his lips so thick they curled both ways up and down with crooked blood marks across them. His nose was flat, and its enormous nostrils seemed in perpetual dilation. The sinister bead eyes, with brown splotches in their whites, were set wide apart and gleamed apelike under his scant brows. His enormous cheekbones and jaws seemed to protrude beyond the ears and almost hide them.

"That we should send such soldiers here to flaunt our uniform in the faces of these people!" he exclaimed, with bitterness.

He met Ben hurrying home from a visit to Elsie. The two young soldiers whose prejudices had melted in the white heat of battle had become fast friends.

Two white men with nothing else in common formed a bond through white supremacy, as freed black people with voting rights posed an existential threat to Ben and Phil's place at the top of the hierarchy.

Phil laughed and winked:

"I'll meet you to-night around the family altar!"

When he reached home, Ben saw, slouching in front of the house, walking back and forth and glancing furtively behind him, the negro trooper whom his friend had passed.

He walked quickly in front of him, and blinking his eyes rapidly, said:

"Didn't I tell you, Gus, not to let me catch you hanging around this house again?"

The negro drew himself up, pulling his blue uniform into position as his body stretched out of its habitual slouch, and answered:

"My name ain't 'Gus.'"

Ben gave a quick little chuckle and leaned back against the palings, his hand resting on one that was loose. He glanced at the negro carelessly and said:

"Well, Augustus Cæsar, I give your majesty thirty seconds to move off the block."

Gus' first impulse was to run, but remembering himself he threw back his shoulders and said:

"I reckon de streets free——"

"Yes, and so is kindling wood!"

Quick as a flash of lightning the paling suddenly left the fence and broke three times in such bewildering rapidity on the negro's head he forgot everything he ever knew or thought he knew save one thing—the way to run. He didn't fly, but he made remarkable use of the facilities with which he had been endowed.

Ben watched him disappear toward the camp.

He picked up the pieces of paling, pulled a strand of black wool from a splinter, looked at it curiously and said:

"A sprig of his majesty's hair—I'll doubtless remember him without it!"

CHAPTER IV

At the Point of the Bayonet

Within an hour from Ben's encounter he was arrested without warrant by the military commandant, handcuffed, and placed on the train for Columbia, more than a hundred miles distant. The first purpose of sending him in charge of a negro guard was abandoned for fear of a riot. A squad of white troops accompanied him.

Elsie was waiting at the gate, watching for his coming, her heart aglow with happiness.

When Marion and little Hugh ran to tell the exciting news, she thought it a joke and refused to believe it.

"Come, dear, don't tease me; you know it's not true!"

"I wish I may die if 'tain't so!" Hugh solemnly declared. "He run Gus away 'cause he scared Aunt Margaret so. They come and put handcuffs on him and took him to Columbia. I tell you Grandpa and Grandma and Aunt Margaret are mad!"

Elsie called Phil and begged him to see what had happened.

When Phil reported Ben's arrest without a warrant, and the indignity to which he had been subjected on the amazing charge of resisting military authority, Elsie hurried with Marion and Hugh to the hotel to express her indignation, and sent Phil to Columbia on the next train to fight for his release.

In a white male supremacist society, white men tend to believe that they are above the laws and norms by which the rest of civilization must conduct themselves.

By the use of a bribe Phil discovered that a special inquisition had been hastily organized to procure perjured testimony against Ben on the charge of complicity in the murder of a carpet-bag adventurer named Ashburn, who had been killed at Columbia in a row in a disreputable resort. This murder had occurred the week Ben Cameron was in Nashville. The enormous reward of $25,000 had been offered for the conviction of any man who could be implicated in the killing. Scores of venal wretches, eager for this blood money, were using every device of military tyranny to secure evidence on which to convict—no matter who the man might be. Within six hours of his arrival they had pounced on Ben.

Carpetbaggers were Northerners who moved South after the war, either because they saw economic possibilities for themselves or because they wanted to assist newly freed black Americans - or both. They were viewed by the South as opportunists and race-traitors.

They arrested as a witness an old negro named John Stapler, noted for his loyalty to the Camerons. The doctor had saved his life once in a dangerous illness. They were going to put him to torture and force him to swear that Ben Cameron had tried to bribe him to kill Ashburn. General Howle, the Commandant of the Columbia district, was in Charleston on a visit to headquarters.

Phil resorted to the ruse of pretending, as a Yankee, the deepest sympathy for Ashburn, and by the payment of a fee of twenty dollars to the Captain, was admitted to the fort to witness the torture.

They led the old man trembling into the presence of the Captain, who sat on an improvised throne in full uniform.

"Have you ordered a barber to shave this man's head?" sternly asked the judge.

"Please, Marster, fer de Lawd's sake, I ain' done nuttin'—doan' shave my head. Dat ha'r been wropped lak dat fur ten year! I die sho' ef I lose my ha'r."

"Bring the barber, and take him back until he comes," was the order. In an hour they led him again into the room blindfolded, and placed him in a chair.

"Have you let him see a preacher before putting him through?" the Captain asked. "I have an order from the General in Charleston to put him through to-day."

"For Gawd's sake, Marster, doan' put me froo—I ain't done nuttin' en I doan' know nuttin'!"

The old negro slipped to his knees, trembling from head to foot.

The guards caught him by the shoulders and threw him back into the chair. The bandage was removed, and just in front of him stood a brass cannon pointed at his head, a soldier beside it holding the string ready to pull. John threw himself backward, yelling:

Just a plain old revolver wasn't enough for these terrified white supremacists, I guess, they had to bring a *cannon* in to threaten an impoverished man with no political rights. Real superior.

"Goddermighty!"

When he scrambled to his feet and started to run, another cannon swung on him from the rear. He dropped to his knees and began to pray.

"Yas, Lawd, I'se er comin'. I hain't ready—but, Lawd, I got ter come! Save me!"

"Shave him!" the Captain ordered.

While the old man sat moaning, they lathered his head with two scrubbing-brushes and shaved it clean.

"Now stand him up by the wall and measure him for his coffin," was the order.

They snatched him from the chair, pushed him against the wall, and measured him. While they were taking his measure, the man next to him whispered:

"Now's the time to save your hide—tell all about Ben Cameron trying to hire you to kill Ashburn."

"Give him a few minutes," said the Captain, "and maybe we can hear what Mr. Cameron said about Ashburn."

"I doan' know nuttin', General," pleaded the old darkey. "I ain't heard nuttin'—I ain't seed Marse Ben fer two monts."

"You needn't lie to us. The rebels have been posting you. But it's no use. We'll get it out of you."

"'Fo' Gawd, Marster, I'se telling de truf!"

"Put him in the dark cell and keep him there the balance of his life unless he tells," was the order.

At the end of four days, Phil was summoned again to witness the show.

John was carried to another part of the fort and shown the sweat-box.

"Now tell all you know or in you go!" said his tormentor.

The negro looked at the engine of torture in abject terror—a closet in the walls of the fort just big enough to admit the body, with an adjustable top to press down too low for the head to be held erect. The door closed tight against the breast of the victim. The only air admitted was through an auger-hole in the door.

The old man's lips moved in prayer.

"Will you tell?" growled the Captain.

"I cain't tell ye nuttin' 'cept'n' a lie!" he moaned.

They thrust him in, slammed the door, and in a loud voice the Captain said:

"Keep him there for thirty days unless he tells."

He was left in the agony of the sweat-box for thirty-three hours and taken out. His limbs were swollen and when he attempted to walk he tottered and fell.

The guard jerked him to his feet, and the Captain said:

"I'm afraid we've taken him out too soon, but if he don't tell he can go back and finish the month out."

The poor old negro dropped in a faint, and they carried him back to his cell.

Phil determined to spare no means, fair or foul, to secure Ben's release from the clutches of these devils. He had as yet been unable to locate his place of confinement.

He continued his ruse of friendly curiosity, kept in touch with the Captain, and the Captain in touch with his pocketbook.

Summoned to witness another interesting ceremony, he hurried to the fort.

The officer winked at him confidentially, and took him out to a row of dungeons built of logs and ceiled inside with heavy boards. A single pane of glass about eight inches square admitted light ten feet from the ground.

There was a commotion inside, curses, groans, and cries for mercy mingling in rapid succession.

"What is it?" asked Phil.

"Hell's goin' on in there!" laughed the officer.

"Evidently."

A heavy crash, as though a ton weight had struck the floor, and then all was still.

"By George, it's too bad we can't see it all!" exclaimed the officer.

"What does it mean?" urged Phil.

Again the Captain laughed immoderately.

"I've got a blue-blood in there taking the bluin' out of his system. He gave me some impudence. I'm teaching him who's running this country!"

"What are you doing to him?" Phil asked with a sudden suspicion.

"Oh, just having a little fun! I put two big white drunks in there with him—half-fighting drunks, you know—and told them to work on his teeth and manicure his face a little to initiate him into the ranks of the common people, so to speak!"

Unfortunately, I don't have a color reserved for classism for this excellent example. It's also interesting that the men beating Ben were specifically identified as being white.

Again he laughed.

Phil, listening at the keyhole, held up his hand:

"Hush, they're talking——"

He could hear Ben Cameron's voice in the softest drawl:

"Say it again."

"Please, Marster!"

"Now both together, and a little louder!"

"*Please, Marster*," came the united chorus.

"Now what kind of a dog did I say you are?"

"The kind as comes when his marster calls."

"Both together—the under dog seems to have too much cover, like his mouth might be full of cotton."

They repeated it louder.

"A common—stump-tailed—cur-dog?"

"Yessir."

"Say it."

Humiliating his fellow white men by forcing them to cos-play the role of enslaved black people. How cute.

"A common—stump-tailed—cur-dog—Marster!"

"A pair of them."

"A pair of 'em."

"No, the whole thing—all together—'we—are—a—pair!'"

"Yes—Marster." They repeated it in chorus.

"With apologies to the dogs——"

"Apologies to the dogs——"

"And why does your master honour the kennel with his presence to-day?"

"He hit a nigger on the head so hard that he strained the nigger's ankle, and he's restin' from his labours."

"That's right, Towser. If I had you and Tige a few hours every day I could make good squirrel-dogs out of you."

There was a pause. Phil looked up and smiled.

"What does it sound like?" asked the Captain, with a shade of doubt in his voice.

"Sounds to me like a Sunday-school teacher taking his class through a new catechism."

The Captain fumbled hurriedly for his keys.

"There's something wrong in there."

He opened the door and sprang in.

Ben Cameron was sitting on top of the two toughs, knocking their heads together as they repeated each chorus.

"Walk in, gentlemen. The show is going on now—the animals are doing beautifully," said Ben.

The Captain muttered an oath. Phil suddenly grasped him by the throat, hurled him against the wall, and snatched the keys from his hand.

"Now open your mouth, you white-livered cur, and inside of twenty-four hours I'll have you behind the bars. I have all the evidence I need. I'm an ex-officer of the United States Army, of the fighting corps—not the vulture division. This is my friend. Accompany us to the street and strike your charges from the record."

I assume that by "vulture division" Phil means the Northern troops sent to govern the South, which was under military rule at the time because they refused to comply with American law.

"Only a fraction of Union troops occupied the South after the war, and the balance mustered out according to length of service. Because blacks were not admitted into ranks until the middle of the war, they were retained at a higher rate, making the occupying force "blacker" than the one that won the war. The roughly 200,000 black Americans who served in the Union Army comprised an estimated 10 percent of the North's total fighting force. But by the last quarter of 1865, blacks made up about one-third of the occupation army. Many Southerners took this as a deliberate Union insult." - Slate

The coward did as he was ordered, and Ben hurried back to Piedmont with a friend toward whom he began to feel closer than a brother.

When Elsie heard the full story of the outrage, she bore herself toward Ben with unusual tenderness, and yet he knew that the event had driven their lives farther apart. He felt instinctively the cold silent eye of her father, and his pride stiffened under it. The girl had never considered the possibility of a marriage without her father's blessing. Ben Cameron was too proud to ask it. He began to fear that the differences between her father and his people reached to the deepest sources of life.

Phil found himself a hero at the Cameron House. Margaret said little, but her bearing spoke in deeper language than words. He felt it would be mean to take advantage of her gratitude.

But he was quick to respond to the motherly tenderness of Mrs. Cameron. In the groups of neighbours who gathered in the evenings to discuss with the doctor the hopes, fears, and sorrows of the people, Phil was a charmed listener to the most brilliant conversations he had ever heard. It seemed the normal expression of their lives. He had never before seen people come together to talk to one another after this fashion. More and more the simplicity, dignity, patience, courtesy, and sympathy of these people in their bearing toward one another impressed him. More and more he grew to like them.

Marion went out of her way to express her open admiration for Phil and tease him about Margaret. The Rev. Hugh McAlpin was monopolizing her on the Wednesday following his return from Columbia and Phil sought Marion for sympathy.

"What will you give me if I tease you about Margaret right before her?" she asked.

He blushed furiously.

"Don't you dare such a thing on peril of your life!"

"You know you like to be teased about her," she cried, her blue eyes dancing with fun.

"With such a pretty little friend to do the teasing all by ourselves, perhaps——"

"You'll never get her unless you have more spunk."

"Then I'll find consolation with you."

"No, I mean to marry young."

"And your ideal of life?"

"To fill the world with flowers, laughter, and music—especially my own home—and never do a thing I can make my husband do for me! How do you like it?"

[reality of plantation wives' lives]

"I think it very sweet," Phil answered soberly.

At noon on the following Friday, the Piedmont *Eagle* appeared with an editorial signed by Dr. Cameron, denouncing in the fine language of the old school the arrest of Ben as "despotism and the usurpation of authority."

At three o'clock, Captain Gilbert, in command of the troops stationed in the village, marched a squad of soldiers to the newspaper office. One of them carried a sledge-hammer. In ten minutes he demolished the office, heaped the type and their splintered cases on top of the battered press in the middle of the street, and set fire to the pile.

Some of the black Union troops tasked with governing the South did overstep the bounds of their authority. From Slate again:

"And there is good evidence that black soldiers did not treat the returning Confederates delicately. Members of the 35th United States Colored Troops were disciplined for entering the homes of white Charlestonians and confiscating guns. In other cases, black soldiers duplicated the looting and ravaging done to them by their white counterparts during the war.4 In April 1865, soldiers from the 52nd United States Colored Infantry descended on the Vicksburg, Mississippi, plantation of Jared and Minerva Cook. Some of them evidently had been enslaved by Cook before the war. Brandishing revolvers, they demanded that Cook turn over his guns and ransacked the house. Before it was over, they had shot and killed Minerva Cook and wounded Jared. When their crimes were detected, the men were court-martialed, and several of them were hanged."

On the courthouse door he nailed this proclamation:

To the People of Ulster County:

The censures of the press, directed against the servants of the people, may be endured; but the military force in command of this district are not the servants of the people of South Carolina. We are your masters. The impertinence of newspaper comment on the military will not be brooked under any circumstances whatever.

G. C. Gilbert,

Captain in Command.

Not content with this display of power, he determined to make an example of Dr. Cameron, as the leader of public opinion in the county.

He ordered a squad of his negro troops to arrest him immediately and take him to Columbia for obstructing the execution of the Reconstruction Acts. He placed the squad under command of Gus, whom he promoted to be a corporal, with instructions to wait until the doctor was inside his house, boldly enter it and arrest him.

When Gus marched his black janizaries into the house, no one was in the office. Margaret had gone for a ride with Phil, and Ben had strolled with Elsie to Lover's Leap, unconscious of the excitement in town.

Dr. Cameron himself had heard nothing of it, having just reached home from a visit to a country patient.

Gus stationed his men at each door, and with another trooper walked straight into Mrs. Cameron's bedroom, where the doctor was resting on a lounge.

Had an imp of perdition suddenly sprung through the floor, the master of the house of Cameron would not have been more enraged or surprised.

A sudden leap, as the spring of a panther, and he stood before his former slave, his slender frame erect, his face a livid spot in its snow-white hair, his brilliant eyes flashing with fury.

Gus suddenly lost control of his knees.

His old master transfixed him with his eyes, and in a voice, whose tones gripped him by the throat, said:

"How dare you?"

The gun fell from the negro's hand, and he dropped to the floor on his face.

His companion uttered a yell and sprang through the door, rallying the men as he went:

"Fall back! Fall back! He's killed Gus! Shot him dead wid his eye. He's conjured him! Git de whole army quick."

They fled to the Commandant.

For historical accuracy, black soldiers were every bit as brave and competent as were their white comrades:

By the end of the Civil War, roughly 179,000 black men (10% of the Union Army) served as soldiers in the U.S. Army and another 19,000 served in the Navy. Nearly 40,000 black soldiers died over the course of the war—30,000 of infection or disease. Black soldiers served in artillery and infantry and performed all noncombat support functions that sustain an army, as well. Black carpenters, chaplains, cooks, guards, laborers, nurses, scouts, spies, steamboat pilots, surgeons, and teamsters also contributed to the war cause. There were nearly 80 black commissioned officers. Black women, who could not formally join the Army, nonetheless served as nurses, spies, and scouts, the most famous being Harriet Tubman (photo citation: 200-HN-PIO-1), who scouted for the 2d South Carolina Volunteers.

Because of prejudice against them, black units were not used in combat as extensively as they might have been. Nevertheless, the soldiers served with distinction in a number of battles. Black infantrymen fought gallantly at Milliken's Bend, LA; Port Hudson, LA; Petersburg, VA; and Nashville, TN. The July 1863 assault on Fort Wagner, SC, in which the 54th Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteers lost two-thirds of their officers and half of their troops, was memorably dramatized in the film *Glory*. By war's end, 16 black soldiers had been awarded the Medal of Honor for their valor.

https://www.history.com/news/black-heroes-u

6 Black Heroes of the Civil War | HISTORY

Whether as soldiers, spies, recruiters or medical personnel, African Americans made crucial contributions to the Union cause.

Gilbert ordered the negroes to their tents and led his whole company of white regulars to the hotel, arrested Dr. Cameron, and rescued his fainting trooper, who had been revived and placed under a tree on the lawn.

The little Captain had a wicked look on his face. He refused to allow the doctor a moment's delay to leave instructions for his wife, who had gone to visit a neighbour. He was placed in the guard-house, and a detail of twenty soldiers stationed around it.

The arrest was made so quickly, not a dozen people in town had heard of it. As fast as it was known, people poured into the house, one by one, to express their sympathy. But a greater surprise awaited them.

Within thirty minutes after he had been placed in prison, a Lieutenant entered, accompanied by a soldier and a negro blacksmith who carried in his hand two big chains with shackles on each end.

The doctor gazed at the intruders a moment with incredulity, and then, as the enormity of the outrage dawned on him, he flushed and drew himself erect, his face livid and rigid.

He clutched his throat with his slender fingers, slowly recovered himself, glanced at the shackles in the black hands and then at the young Lieutenant's face, and said slowly, with heaving breast:

"My God! Have you been sent to place these irons on me?"

"Such are my orders, sir," replied the officer, motioning to the negro smith to approach. He stepped forward, unlocked the padlock, and prepared the fetters to be placed on his arms and legs. These fetters were of enormous weight, made of iron rods three quarters of an inch thick and connected together by chains of like weight.

"This is monstrous!" groaned the doctor, with choking agony, glancing helplessly about the bare cell for some weapon with which to defend himself.

Suddenly looking the Lieutenant in the face, he said:

"I demand, sir, to see your commanding officer. He cannot pretend that these shackles are needed to hold a weak unarmed man in prison, guarded by two hundred soldiers?"

"It is useless. I have his orders direct."

"But I must see him. No such outrage has ever been recorded in the history of the American people. I appeal to the Magna Charta rights of every man who speaks the English tongue—no man shall be arrested or imprisoned or deprived of his own household, or of his liberties, unless by the legal judgment of his peers or by the law of the land!"

"The bayonet is your only law. My orders admit of no delay. For your own sake, I advise you to submit. As a soldier, Dr. Cameron, you know I must execute orders."

"These are not the orders of a soldier!" shouted the prisoner, enraged beyond all control. "They are orders for a jailer, a hangman, a scullion—no soldier who wears the sword of a civilized nation can take such orders. The war is over; the South is conquered; I have no country save America. For the honour of the flag, for which I once poured out my blood on the heights of Buena Vista, I protest against this shame!"

The Lieutenant fell back a moment before the burst of his anger.

"Kill me! Kill me!" he went on passionately, throwing his arms wide open and exposing his breast. "Kill—I am in your power. I have no desire to live under such conditions. Kill, but you must not inflict on me and on my people this insult worse than death!"

Equality with black Americans was worse than dying to these broken people.

"Do your duty, blacksmith," said the officer, turning his back and walking toward the door.

The negro advanced with the chains cautiously, and attempted to snap one of the shackles on the doctor's right arm.

With sudden maniac frenzy, Dr. Cameron seized the negro by the throat, hurled him to the floor, and backed against the wall.

The Lieutenant approached and remonstrated:

"Why compel me to add the indignity of personal violence? You must submit."

"I am your prisoner," fiercely retorted the doctor. "I have been a soldier in the armies of America, and I know how to die. Kill me, and my last breath will be a blessing. But while I have life to resist, for myself and for my people, this thing shall not be done!"

The Lieutenant called a sergeant and a file of soldiers, and the sergeant stepped forward to seize the prisoner.

Dr. Cameron sprang on him with the ferocity of a tiger, seized his musket, and attempted to wrench it from his grasp.

The men closed in on him. A short passionate fight and the slender, proud, gray-haired man lay panting on the floor.

Four powerful assailants held his hands and feet, and the negro smith, with a grin, secured the rivet on the right ankle and turned the key in the padlock on the left.

As he drove the rivet into the shackle on his left arm, a spurt of bruised blood from the old Mexican War wound stained the iron.

Dr. Cameron lay for a moment in a stupor. At length he slowly rose. The clank of the heavy chains seemed to choke him with horror. He sank on the floor, covering his face with his hands and groaned:

"The shame! The shame! O God, that I might have died! My poor, poor wife!"

Captain Gilbert entered and said with a sneer:

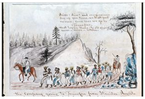
"I will take you now to see your wife and friends if you would like to call before setting out for Columbia."

The doctor paid no attention to him.

"Will you follow me while I lead you through this town, to show them their chief has fallen, or will you force me to drag you?"

Receiving no answer, he roughly drew the doctor to his feet, held him by the arm, and led him thus in half-unconscious stupor through the principal street, followed by a drove of negroes. He ordered a squad of troops to meet him at the depot. Not a white man appeared on the streets. When one saw the sight and heard the clank of those chains, there was a sudden tightening of the lip, a clinched fist, and an averted face.

The doctor is symbolically enslaved, which means that he's been victimized to precisely the same degree that enslaved black Americans had been and is thus justified to do all of the entitled pants-wetting that is sure to come in the chapters ahead.



https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/slave

Retracing Slavery's Trail of Tears

(For historical accuracy) Because Dixon wants to talk about the terror invoked by the sound of clanking chains, let's talk a bit about slave coffles:

When they approached the hotel, Mrs. Cameron ran to meet him, her face white as death.

In silence she kissed his lips, kissed each shackle on his wrists, took her handkerchief and wiped the bruised blood from the old wound on his arm the iron had opened afresh, and then with a look, beneath which the Captain shrank, she said in low tones:

"Do your work quickly. You have but a few moments to get out of this town with your prisoner. I have sent a friend to hold my son. If he comes before you go, he will kill you on sight as he would a mad dog."

With a sneer, the Captain passed the hotel and led the doctor, still in half-unconscious stupor, toward the depot down past his old slave quarters. He had given his negroes who remained faithful each a cabin and a lot.

They looked on in awed silence as the Captain proclaimed:

"Fellow citizens, you are the equal of any white man who walks the ground. The white man's day is done. Your turn has come."

As he passed Jake's cabin, the doctor's faithful man stepped suddenly in front of him, looking at the Captain out of the corners of his eyes, and asked:

"Is I yo' equal?"

"Yes."

"Des lak any white man?"

"Exactly."

The negro's fist suddenly shot into Gilbert's nose with the crack of a sledge-hammer, laying him stunned on the pavement.

"Den take dat f'um yo' equal, d—n you!" he cried, bending over his prostrate figure. "I'll show you how to treat my ole marster, you low-down slue-footed devil!"

The stirring little drama roused the doctor and he turned to his servant with his old-time courtesy, and said:

"Thank you, Jake."

"Come in here, Marse Richard; I knock dem things off'n you in er minute, 'en I get you outen dis town in er jiffy."

"No, Jake, that is not my way; bring this gentleman some water, and then my horse and buggy. You can take me to the depot. This officer can follow with his men." And he did.

CHAPTER V

Forty Acres and a Mule

The famous phrase "forty acres and a mule" comes from Sherman's Special Field Orders, No. 15. Issued on January 16, 1865, they instructed officers to settle these refugees on the Sea Islands and inland: 400,000 total acres divided into 40-acre plots. Though mules (beasts of burden used for plowing) were not mentioned, some of its beneficiaries did receive them from the army.[80] Such plots were colloquially known as "Blackacres".

Sherman's orders specifically allocated "the islands from Charleston, south, the abandoned rice fields along the rivers for thirty miles back from the sea, and the country bordering the St. Johns River, Florida." The order specifically prohibits whites from settling in this area. Saxton, who, with Stanton, helped to craft the document, was promoted to major general and charged with oversight of the new settlement. On February 3, Saxton addressed a large freedpeople's meeting at Second African Baptist, announcing the order and outlining preparations for new settlement. By June 1865, about 40,000 freedpeople were settled on 435,000 acres in the Sea Islands. - Wikipedia

When Phil returned with Margaret, he drove at Mrs. Cameron's request to find Ben, brought him with all speed to the hotel, took him to his room, and locked the door before he told him the news. After an hour's blind rage, he agreed to obey his father's positive orders to keep away from the Captain until his return, and to attempt no violence against the authorities.

Phil undertook to manage the case in Columbia, and spent three days collecting his evidence before leaving.

Swifter feet had anticipated him. Two days after the arrival of Dr. Cameron at the fort in Colombia, a dust-stained, tired negro was ushered into the presence of General Howle.

He looked about timidly and laughed loudly.

"Well, my man, what's the trouble? You seem to have walked all the way, and laugh as if you were glad of it."

"I 'spec' I is, sah," said Jake, sidling up confidentially.

"Well?" said Howle good-humouredly.

Jake's voice dropped to a whisper.

"I hears you got my ole marster, Dr. Cameron, in dis place."

"Yes. What do you know against him?"

"Nuttin', sah. I des hurry 'long down ter take his place, so's you can sen' him back home. He's erbleeged ter go. Dey's er pow'ful lot er sick folks up dar in de country cain't git 'long widout him, an er pow'ful lot er well ones gwiner be raisin' de debbel 'bout dis. You can hol' me, sah. Des tell my ole marster when ter be yere, en he sho' come."

Jake paused and bowed low.

"Yessah, hit's des lak I tell you. Fuddermo', I 'spec' I'se de man what done de damages. I 'spec' I bus' de Capt'n's nose so 'tain gwine be no mo' good to 'im."

Howle questioned Jake as to the whole affair, asked him a hundred questions about the condition of the county, the position of Dr. Cameron, and the possible effect of this event on the temper of the people.

The affair had already given him a bad hour. The news of this shackling of one of the most prominent men in the State had spread like wildfire, and had caused the first deep growl of anger from the people. He saw that it was a senseless piece of stupidity. The election was rapidly approaching. He was master of the State, and the less friction the better. His mind was made up instantly. He released Dr. Cameron with an apology, and returned with him and Jake for a personal inspection of the affairs of Ulster county.

In a thirty-minutes' interview with Captain Gilbert, Howle gave him more pain than his broken nose.

"And why did you nail up the doors of that Presbyterian church?" he asked suavely.

"Because McAlpin, the young cub who preaches there, dared come to this camp and insult me about the arrest of old Cameron."

"I suppose you issued an order silencing him from the ministry?"

"I did, and told him I'd shackle him if he opened his mouth again."

"Good. The throne of Russia needn't worry about a worthy successor. Any further ecclesiastical orders?"

"None, except the oaths I've prescribed for them before they shall preach again."

"Fine! These Scotch Covenanters will feel at home with you."

"Well, I've made them bite the dust—and they know who's runnin' this town, and don't you forget it."

"No doubt. Yet we may have too much of even a good thing. The League is here to run this country. The business of the military is to keep still and back them when they need it."

"We've the strongest council here to be found in any county in this section," said Gilbert with pride.

"Just so. The League meets once a week. We have promised them the land of their masters and equal social and political rights. Their members go armed to these meetings and drill on Saturdays in the public square. The white man is afraid to interfere lest his house or barn take fire. A negro prisoner in the dock needs only to make the sign to be acquitted. Not a negro will dare to vote against us. Their women are formed into societies, sworn to leave their husbands and refuse to marry any man who dares our anger. The negro churches have pledged themselves to expel him from their membership. What more do you want?"

"There's another side to it," protested the Captain. "Since the League has taken in the negroes, every Union white man has dropped it like a hot iron, except the lone scallawag or carpet-bagger who expects an office. In the church, the social circle, in business or pleasure, these men are lepers. How can a human being stand it? I've tried to grind this hellish spirit in the dirt under my heel, and unless you can do it they'll beat you in the long run! You've got to have some Southern white men or you're lost."

As if there were any danger of white Southern men going extinct. The last two paragraphs have been the height of absurdity.

"I'll risk it with a hundred thousand negro majority," said Howle with a sneer. "The fun will just begin then. In the meantime, I'll have you ease up on this county's government. I've brought that man back who knocked you down. Let him alone. I've pardoned him. The less said about this affair, the better."

As the day of the election under the new régime of Reconstruction drew near, the negroes were excited by rumours of the coming great events. Every man was to receive forty acres of land for his vote, and the enthusiastic speakers and teachers had made the dream a resistless one by declaring that the Government would throw in a mule with the forty acres. Some who had hesitated about the forty acres of land, remembering that it must be worked, couldn't resist the idea of owning a mule.

The proposition was NOT to give freed black men a mule and 40 acres of land previously held by slaveowners *in exchange for their vote.*

The Freedman's Bureau reaped a harvest in $2 marriage fees from negroes who were urged thus to make their children heirs of landed estates stocked with mules.

Smacks of gross white supremacist fears of being "out-bred" by non-white people.

Kansas
Island Mound
1st Kansas (Coloured)
Oct. 29, 1862
Missouri
Camp Jackson
Kentucky
Virginia
North Carolina
Tennessee
Arkansas
South Carolina
Charleston
Fort Sumter
Alabama
Georgia
Savannah
Port Royal
Robert Smalls
May 13, 1862
Mississippi
Native Guards
May 27, 1863
Port Hudson
Louisiana
New Orleans
Pascagoula
Native Guards
April 9, 1863
Florida

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Port_Royal_Experi

Port Royal Experiment

The Port Royal Experiment was a program begun during the American Civil War in which former slaves successfully worked on the land abandoned by planters.

Every stranger who appeared in the village was regarded with awe as a possible surveyor sent from Washington to run the lines of these forty-acre plots.

And in due time the surveyors appeared. Uncle Aleck, who now devoted his entire time to organizing the League, and drinking whiskey which the dues he collected made easy, was walking back to Piedmont from a League meeting in the country, dreaming of this promised land.

He lifted his eyes from the dusty way and saw before him two surveyors with their arms full of line stakes painted red, white, and blue. They were well-dressed Yankees—he could not be mistaken. Not a doubt disturbed his mind. The kingdom of heaven was at hand!

He bowed low and cried:

"Praise de Lawd! De messengers is come! I'se waited long, but I sees 'em now wid my own eyes!"

"You can bet your life on that, old pard," said the spokesman of the pair. "We go two and two, just as the apostles did in the olden times. We have only a few left. The boys are hurrying to get their homes. All you've got to do is to drive one of these red, white, and blue stakes down at each corner of the forty acres of land you want, and every rebel in the infernal regions can't pull it up."

"Hear dat now!"

"Just like I tell you. When this stake goes into the ground, it's like planting a thousand cannon at each corner."

"En will the Lawd's messengers come wid me right now to de bend er de creek whar I done pick out my forty acres?"

"We will, if you have the needful for the ceremony. The fee for the surveyor is small—only two dollars for each stake. We have no time to linger with foolish virgins who have no oil in their lamps. The bridegroom has come. They who have no oil must remain in outer darkness." The speaker had evidently been a preacher in the North, and his sacred accent sealed his authority with the old negro, who had been an exhorter himself.

Aleck felt in his pocket the jingle of twenty gold dollars, the initiation fees of the week's harvest of the League. He drew them, counted out eight, and took his four stakes. The surveyors kindly showed him how to drive them down firmly to the first stripe of blue. When they had stepped off a square of about forty acres of the Lenoir farm, including the richest piece of bottom land on the creek, which Aleck's children under his wife's direction were working for Mrs. Lenoir, and the four stakes were planted, old Aleck shouted:

This is not at all how the land was divvied up, FYI.

"Glory ter God!"

"Now," said the foremost surveyor, "you want a deed—a deed in fee simple with the big seal of the Government on it, and you're fixed for life. The deed you can take to the courthouse and make the clerk record it."

The man drew from his pocket an official-looking paper, with a red circular seal pasted on its face.

Uncle Aleck's eyes danced.

"Is dat de deed?"

"It will be if I write your name on it and describe the land."

"En what's de fee fer dat?"

"Only twelve dollars; you can take it now or wait until we come again. There's no particular hurry about this. The wise man, though, leaves nothing for to-morrow that he can carry with him to-day."

"I takes de deed right now, gemmen," said Aleck, eagerly counting out the remaining twelve dollars. "Fix 'im up for me."

The surveyor squatted in the field and carefully wrote the document.

They went on their way rejoicing, and old Aleck hurried into Piedmont with the consciousness of lordship of the soil. He held himself so proudly that it seemed to straighten some of the crook out of his bow legs.

He marched up to the hotel where Margaret sat reading and Marion was on the steps playing with a setter.

"Why, Uncle Aleck!" Marion exclaimed, "I haven't seen you in a long time."

Aleck drew himself to his full height—at least, as full as his bow legs would permit, and said gruffly:

"Miss Ma'ian, I axes you to stop callin' me 'uncle'; my name is Mr. Alexander Lenoir——"

"Until Aunt Cindy gets after you," laughed the girl. "Then it's much shorter than that, Uncle Aleck."

He shuffled his feet and looked out at the square unconcernedly.

"Yaas'm, dat's what fetch me here now. I comes ter tell yer Ma ter tell dat 'oman Cindy ter take her chillun off my farm. I gwine 'low no mo' rent-payin' ter nobody off'n my lan'!"

"Your land, Uncle Aleck? When did you get it?" asked Marion, placing her cheek against the setter.

"De Gubment gim it ter me to-day," he replied, fumbling in his pocket, and pulling out the document. "You kin read it all dar yo'sef."

He handed Marion the paper, and Margaret hurried down and read it over her shoulder.

Both girls broke into screams of laughter.

Aleck looked up sharply.

"Do you know what's written on this paper, Uncle Aleck?" Margaret asked.

"Cose I do. Dat's de deed ter my farm er forty acres in de land er de creek, whar I done stuck off wid de red, white, an' blue sticks de Gubment gimme."

"I'll read it to you," said Margaret.

"Wait a minute," interrupted Marion. "I want Aunt Cindy to hear it—she's here to see Mamma in the kitchen now."

She ran for Uncle Aleck's spouse. Aunt Cindy walked around the house and stood by the steps, eying her erstwhile lord with contempt.

"Got yer deed, is yer, ter stop me payin' my missy her rent fum de lan' my chillun wucks? Yu'se er smart boy, you is—let's hear de deed!"

Aleck edged away a little, and said with a bow:

"Dar's de paper wid de big mark er de Gubment."

Aunt Cindy sniffed the air contemptuously.

"What is it, honey?" she asked of Margaret.

Margaret read in mock solemnity the mystic writing on the deed:

To Whom It May Concern:

As Moses lifted up the brazen serpent in the wilderness for the enlightenment of the people, even so have I lifted twenty shining plunks out of this benighted nigger! Selah!

As Uncle Aleck walked away with Aunt Cindy shouting in derision, "Dar, now! Dar, now!" the bow in his legs seemed to have sprung a sharper curve.

Knowing my country as I do, I'm 1,000% certain that things like this happened frequently after the war.

CHAPTER VI

A Whisper in the Crowd

The excitement which preceded the first Reconstruction election in the South paralyzed the industries of the country. When demagogues poured down from the North and began their raving before crowds of ignorant negroes, the plow stopped in the furrow, the hoe was dropped, and the millennium was at hand.

Negro tenants, working under contracts issued by the Freedman's Bureau, stopped work, and rode their landlords' mules and horses around the county, following these orators.

The loss to the cotton crop alone from the abandonment of the growing plant was estimated at over $60,000,000.

The one thing that saved the situation from despair was the large grain and forage crops of the previous season which thrifty farmers had stored in their barns. So important was the barn and its precious contents that Dr. Cameron hired Jake to sleep in his.

This immense barn, which was situated at the foot of the hill some two hundred yards behind the house, had become a favourite haunt of Marion and Hugh. She had made a pet of the beautiful thoroughbred mare which had belonged to Ben during the war. Marion went every day to give her an apple or lump of sugar, or carry her a bunch of clover. The mare would follow her about like a cat.

Another attraction at the barn for them was Becky Sharpe, Ben's setter. She came to Marion one morning, wagging her tail, seized her dress and led her into an empty stall, where beneath the trough lay sleeping snugly ten little white-and-black spotted puppies.

The girl had never seen such a sight before and went into ecstasies. Becky wagged her tail with pride at her compliments. Every morning she would pull her gently into the stall just to hear her talk and laugh and pet her babies.

Whatever election day meant to the men, to Marion it was one of unalloyed happiness: she was to ride horseback alone and dance at her first ball. Ben had taught her to ride, and told her she could take Queen to Lover's Leap and back alone. Trembling with joy, her beautiful face wreathed in smiles, she led the mare to the pond in the edge of the lot and watched her drink its pure spring water.

When he helped her to mount in front of the hotel under her mother's gaze, and saw her ride out of the gate, with the exquisite lines of her little figure melting into the graceful lines of the mare's glistening form, he exclaimed:

"I declare, I don't know which is the prettier, Marion or Queen!"

"I know," was the mother's soft answer.

"They are both thoroughbreds," said Ben, watching them admiringly.

YUCK. Just yuck.

"Wait till you see her to-night in her first ball dress," whispered Mrs. Lenoir.

At noon Ben and Phil strolled to the polling-place to watch the progress of the first election under negro rule. The Square was jammed with shouting, jostling, perspiring negroes, men, women, and children. The day was warm, and the African odour was supreme even in the open air.

"...under negro rule" translation: After black men were extended the right to vote.

A crowd of two hundred were packed around a peddler's box. There were two of them—one crying the wares, and the other wrapping and delivering the goods. They were selling a new patent poison for rats.

"I've only a few more bottles left now, gentlemen," he shouted, "and the polls will close at sundown. A great day for our brother in black. Two years of army rations from the Freedman's Bureau, with old army clothes thrown in, and now the ballot—the priceless glory of American citizenship. But better still the very land is to be taken from these proud aristocrats and given to the poor down-trodden black man. Forty acres and a mule—think of it! Provided, mind you—that you have a bottle of my wonder-worker to kill the rats and save your corn for the mule. No man can have the mule unless he has corn; and no man can have corn if he has rats—and only a few bottles left——"

"Gimme one," yelled a negro.

"Forty acres and a mule, your old masters to work your land and pay his rent in corn, while you sit back in the shade and see him sweat."

"Gimme er bottle and two er dem pictures!" bawled another candidate for a mule.

The peddler handed him the bottle and the pictures and threw a handful of his labels among the crowd. These labels happened to be just the size of the ballots, having on them the picture of a dead rat lying on his back, and above, the emblem of death, the crossbones and skull.

"Forty acres and a mule for every black man—why was I ever born white? I never had no luck, nohow!"

I guess a lifetime of enforced labor on said metaphorical 40 acres isn't a convincing reason why black Americans deserved it.

Phil and Ben passed on nearer the polling-place, around which stood a cordon of soldiers with a line of negro voters two hundred yards in length extending back into the crowd.

The negro Leagues came in armed battalions and voted in droves, carrying their muskets in their hands. Less than a dozen white men were to be seen about the place.

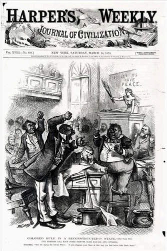
The negroes, under the drill of the League and the Freedman's Bureau, protected by the bayonet, were voting to enfranchise themselves, disfranchise their former masters, ratify a new constitution, and elect a legislature to do their will. Old Aleck was a candidate for the House, chief poll-holder, and seemed to be in charge of the movements of the voters outside the booth as well as inside. He appeared to be omnipresent, and his self-importance was a sight Phil had never dreamed. He could not keep his eyes off him.

"By George, Cameron, he's a wonder!" he laughed.

Aleck had suppressed as far as possible the story of the painted stakes and the deed, after sending out warnings to the brethren to beware of two enticing strangers. The surveyors had reaped a rich harvest and passed on. Aleck made up his mind to go to Columbia, make the laws himself, and never again trust a white man from the North or South. The agent of the Freedman's Bureau at Piedmont tried to choke him off the ticket. The League backed him to a man. He could neither read nor write, but before he took to whiskey he had made a specialty of revival exhortation, and his mouth was the most effective thing about him. In this campaign he was an orator of no mean powers. He knew what he wanted, and he knew what his people wanted, and he put the thing in words so plain that a wayfaring man, though a fool, couldn't make any mistake about it.

As he bustled past, forming a battalion of his brethren in line to march to the polls, Phil followed his every movement with amused interest.

Besides being so bow-legged that his walk was a moving joke he was so striking a negro in his personal appearance, he seemed to the young Northerner almost a distinct type of man.


HARPER'S WEEKLY
A JOURNAL OF CIVILIZATION
NEW YORK, SATURDAY, MARCH 14, 1874.
LET US HAVE PEACE.
COLORED RULE IN A RECONSTRUCTED (?) STATE.

White supremacist cartoon portraying black elected officials as boorish impediments to progress.

His head was small and seemed mashed on the sides until it bulged into a double lobe behind. Even his ears, which he had pierced and hung with red earbobs, seemed to have been crushed flat to the side of his head. His kinked hair was wrapped in little hard rolls close to the skull and bound tightly with dirty thread. His receding forehead was high and indicated a cunning intelligence. His nose was broad and crushed flat against his face. His jaws were strong and angular, mouth wide, and lips thick, curling back from rows of solid teeth set obliquely in their blue gums. The one perfect thing about him was the size and setting of his mouth—he was a born African orator, undoubtedly descended from a long line of savage spell-binders, whose eloquence in the palaver houses of the jungle had made them native leaders. His thin spindle-shanks supported an oblong, protruding stomach, resembling an elderly monkey's, which seemed so heavy it swayed his back to carry it.

The animal vivacity of his small eyes and the flexibility of his eyebrows, which he worked up and down rapidly with every change of countenance, expressed his eager desires.

He had laid aside his new shoes, which hurt him, and went barefooted to facilitate his movements on the great occasion. His heels projected and his foot was so flat that what should have been the hollow of it made a hole in the dirt where he left his track.

He was already mellow with liquor, and was dressed in an old army uniform and cap, with two horse pistols buckled around his waist. On a strap hanging from his shoulder were strung a half-dozen tin canteens filled with whiskey.

A disturbance in the line of voters caused the young men to move forward to see what it meant.

Two negro troopers had pulled Jake out of the line, and were dragging him toward old Aleck.

The election judge straightened himself up with great dignity:

“What wuz de rapscallion doin'?”

“In de line, tryin' ter vote.”

“Fetch 'im befo' de judgment bar,” said Aleck, taking a drink from one of his canteens.

The troopers brought Jake before the judge.

“Tryin' ter vote, is yer?”

“'Lowed I would.”

“You hear 'bout de great sassieties de Gubment's fomentin' in dis country?”

“Yas, I hear erbout 'em.”

“Is yer er member er de Union League?”

“Na-sah. I'd rudder steal by myself. I doan' lak too many in de party!”

...as opposed to having the Union League "steal" for him.

“En yer ain't er No'f Ca'liny gemmen, is yer—yer ain't er member er de 'Red Strings?'”

“Na-sah, I come when I'se called—dey doan' hatter put er string on me—ner er block, ner er collar, ner er chain, ner er muzzle——”

“Will yer 'splain ter dis cote——” railed Aleck.

“What cote? Dat ole army cote?” Jake laughed in loud peals that rang over the square.

Aleck recovered his dignity and demanded angrily:

“Does yer belong ter de Heroes ob Americky?”

“Na-sah. I ain't burnt nobody's house ner barn yet, ner hamstrung no stock, ner waylaid nobody atter night—honey, I ain't fit ter jine. Heroes ob Americky! Is you er hero?”

“Ef yer doan' b'long ter no s'iety,” said Aleck with judicial deliberation, “what is you?”

“Des er ole-fashun all-wool-en-er-yard-wide nigger dat stan's by his ole marster 'cause he's his bes' frien', stays at home, en tends ter his own business.”

“En yer pay no 'tenshun ter de orders I sent yer ter jine de League?”

“Na-sah. I ain't er takin' orders f'um er skeer-crow.”

Aleck ignored his insolence, secure in his power.

“You doan b'long ter no s'iety, what yer git in dat line ter vote for?”

“Ain't I er nigger?”

“But yer ain't de right kin' er nigger. 'Res' dat man fer 'sturbin' de peace.”

This is not how it happened. The Union League didn't demand that freedmen vote one way or another. I sincerely think these ignorant slaveowners truly thought that "their slaves" would never vote against their "masters" and were so shocked when they did that they had to invent this conspiracy theory.

They put Jake in jail, persuaded his wife to leave him, and expelled him from the Baptist church, all within the week.

As the troopers led Jake to prison, a young negro apparently about fifteen years old approached Aleck, holding in his hand one of the peddler's rat labels, which had gotten well distributed among the crowd. A group of negro boys followed him with these rat labels in their hands, studying them intently.

“Look at dis ticket, Uncle Aleck,” said the leader.

“Mr. Alexander Lenoir, sah—is I yo' uncle, nigger?”

The youth walled his eyes angrily.

“Den doan' you call me er nigger!”

“Who' yer talkin to, sah? You kin fling yer sass at white folks, but, honey, yuse er projeckin' wid death now!”

“I ain't er nigger—I'se er gemman, I is,” was the sullen answer.

“How ole is you?” asked Aleck in milder tones.

“Me mudder say sixteen—but de Buro man say I'se twenty-one yistiddy, de day 'fo' 'lection.”

More conspiratorial nonsense pretending that freedmen lied about their age to vote. If anything, freedmen were PREVENTED from voting more than they were encouraged to somehow stuff the freaking ballot box.

“Is you voted to-day?”

“Yessah; vote in all de boxes 'cept'n dis one. Look at dat ticket. Is dat de straight ticket?”

Aleck, who couldn't read the twelve-inch letters of his favourite bar-room sign, took the rat label and examined it critically.

“What ail it?” he asked at length.

The boy pointed at the picture of the rat.

“What dat rat doin', lyin' dar on his back, wid his heels cocked up in de air—'pear ter me lak a rat otter be standin' on his feet!”

Aleck reëxamined it carefully, and then smiled benignly on the youth.

“De ignance er dese folks. What ud yer do widout er man lak me enjued wid de sperit en de power ter splain tings?”

“You sho' got de sperits,” said the boy impudently, touching a canteen.

Aleck ignored the remark and looked at the rat label smilingly.

“Ain't we er votin', ter-day, on de Constertooshun what's ter take de ballot away f'um de white folks en gib all de power ter de cullud gemmen—I axes yer dat?”

The boy stuck his thumbs under his arms and walled his eyes.

“Yessah!”

“Den dat means de ratification ob de Constertooshun!”

Phil laughed, followed, and watched them fold their tickets, get in line, and vote the rat labels.

Ben turned toward a white man with gray beard, who stood watching the crowd.

He was a pious member of the Presbyterian church but his face didn't have a pious expression to-day. He had been refused the right to vote because he had aided the Confederacy by nursing one of his wounded boys.

These poor, oppressed white Southern men...

He touched his hat politely to Ben.

“What do you think of it, Colonel Cameron?” he asked with a touch of scorn.

“What's your opinion, Mr. McAllister?”

“Well, Colonel, I've been a member of the church for over forty years. I'm not a cussin' man—but there's a sight I never expected to live to see. I've been a faithful citizen of this State for fifty years. I can't vote, and a nigger is to be elected to-day to represent me in the Legislature. Neither you, Colonel, nor your father are good enough to vote. Every nigger in this county sixteen years old and up voted to-day—I ain't a cussing man, and I don't say it as a cuss word, but all I've got to say is, IF there BE such a thing as a d—d shame—that's it!”

“Mr. McAllister, the recording angel wouldn't have made a mark had you said it without the 'IF.'”

“God knows what this country's coming to—I don't,” said the old man bitterly. “I'm afraid to let my wife and daughter go out of the house, or stay in it, without somebody with them.”

Ben leaned closer and whispered, as Phil approached:

“Come to my office to-night at ten o'clock; I want to see you on some important business.”

The old man seized his hand eagerly.

“Shall I bring the boys?”

Ben smiled.

“No. I've seen them some time ago.”

CHAPTER VII

By the Light of a Torch

On the night of the election Mrs. Lenoir gave a ball at the hotel in honour of Marion's entrance into society. She was only in her sixteenth year, yet older than her mother when mistress of her own household. The only ambition the mother cherished was that she might win the love of an honest man and build for herself a beautiful home on the site of the cottage covered with trailing roses. In this home dream for Marion she found a great sustaining joy to which nothing in the life of man answers.

The ball had its political significance which the military martinet who commanded the post understood. It was the way the people of Piedmont expressed to him and the world their contempt for the farce of an election he had conducted, and their indifference as to the result he would celebrate with many guns before midnight.

The young people of the town were out in force. Marion was a universal favourite. The grace, charm, and tender beauty of the Southern girl of sixteen were combined in her with a gentle and unselfish disposition. Amid poverty that was pitiful, unconscious of its limitations, her thoughts were always of others, and she was the one human being everybody had agreed to love. In the village in which she lived wealth counted for naught. She belonged to the aristocracy of poetry, beauty, and intrinsic worth, and her people knew no other.

All qualities designed to make men's lives easier. Wives existed in a less overt and brutal form of slavery.

Implying that only this aristocracy has "intrinsic worth", which reads to me as "human rights." Charming.

As she stood in the long dining-room, dressed in her first ball costume of white organdy and lace, the little plump shoulders peeping through its meshes, she was the picture of happiness. A half-dozen boys hung on every word as the utterance of an oracle. She waved gently an old ivory fan with white down on its edges in a way the charm of which is the secret birthright of every Southern girl.

Now and then she glanced at the door for some one who had not yet appeared.

Phil paid his tribute to her with genuine feeling, and Marion repaid him by whispering:

"Margaret's dressed to kill—all in soft azure blue—her rosy cheeks, black hair, and eyes never shone as they do to-night. She doesn't dance on account of her Sunday-school—it's all for you."

Phil blushed and smiled.

"The preacher won't be here?"

"Our rector will."

"He's a nice old gentleman. I'm fond of him. Miss Marion, your mother is a genius. I hope she can plan these little affairs oftener."

It was half-past ten o'clock when Ben Cameron entered the room with Elsie a little ruffled at his delay over imaginary business at his office. Ben answered her criticisms with a strange elation. She had felt a secret between them and resented it.

At Mrs. Lenoir's special request, he had put on his full uniform of a Confederate Colonel in honour of Marion and the poem her father had written of one of his gallant charges. He had not worn it since he fell that day in Phil's arms.

No one in the room had ever seen him in this Colonel's uniform. Its yellow sash with the gold fringe and tassels was faded and there were two bullet holes in the coat. A murmur of applause from the boys, sighs and exclamations from the girls swept the room as he took Marion's hand, bowed and kissed it. Her blue eyes danced and smiled on him with frank admiration.

"Ben, you're the handsomest thing I've ever seen!" she said softly.

"Thanks. I thought you had a mirror. I'll send you one," he answered, slipping his arm around her and gliding away to the strains of a waltz. The girl's hand trembled as she placed it on his shoulder, her cheeks were flushed, and her eyes had a wistful dreamy look in their depths.

When Ben rejoined Elsie and they strolled on the lawn, the military commandant suddenly confronted them with a squad of soldiers.

"I'll trouble you for those buttons and shoulder straps," said the Captain.

Elsie's amber eyes began to spit fire. Ben stood still and smiled.

"What do you mean?" she asked.

"That I will not be insulted by the wearing of this uniform to-day."

"I dare you to touch it, coward, poltroon!" cried the girl, her plump little figure bristling in front of her lover.

Ben laid his hand on her arm and gently drew her back to his side: "He has the power to do this. It is a technical violation of law to wear them. I have surrendered. I am a gentleman and I have been a soldier. He can have his tribute. I've promised my father to offer no violence to the military authority of the United States."

He stepped forward, and the officer cut the buttons from his coat and ripped the straps from his shoulders.

Oh - the degradation and inhumanity!! (swoons) No wonder white men established a terrorist organization that murdered thousands of black Americans after savagery such as this.

While the performance was going on, Ben quietly said:

"General Grant at Appomattox, with the instincts of a great soldier, gave our men his spare horses and ordered that Confederate officers retain their side-arms. The General is evidently not in touch with this force."

"No: I'm in command in this county," said the Captain.

"Evidently."

When he had gone, Elsie's eyes were dim. They strolled under the shadow of the great oak and stood in silence, listening to the music within and the distant murmur of the falls.

"Why is it, sweetheart, that a girl will persist in admiring brass buttons?" Ben asked softly.

She raised her lips to his for a kiss and answered:

"Because a soldier's business is to die for his country."

As Ben led her back into the ballroom and surrendered her to a friend for a dance, the first gun pealed its note of victory from the square in the celebration of the triumph of the African slave over his white master.

Ben strolled out in the street to hear the news.

The Constitution had been ratified by an enormous majority, and a Legislature elected composed of 101 negroes and 23 white men. Silas Lynch had been elected Lieutenant-Governor, a negro Secretary of State, a negro Treasurer, and a negro Justice of the Supreme Court.

When Bizzel, the wizzen-faced agent of the Freedman's Bureau, made this announcement from the courthouse steps, pandemonium broke lose. An incessant rattle of musketry began in which ball cartridges were used, the missiles whistling over the town in every direction. Yet within half an hour the square was deserted and a strange quiet followed the storm.

Old Aleck staggered by the hotel, his drunkenness having reached the religious stage.

"Behold, a curiosity, gentlemen," cried Ben to a group of boys who had gathered, "a voter is come among us—in fact, he is the people, the king, our representative elect, the Honourable Alexander Lenoir, of the county of Ulster!"

"Gemmens, de Lawd's bin good ter me," said Aleck, weeping copiously.

"They say the rat labels were in a majority in this precinct—how was that?" asked Ben.

Oh, okay - so the election was supposedly fraudulent, because it would be impossible for black men to get elected unless people cheated. Gee, this sounds awfully familiar...

"Yessah—dat what de scornful say—dem dat sets in de seat o' de scornful, but de Lawd er Hosts He fetch 'em low. Mistah Bissel de Buro man count all dem rat votes right, sah—dey couldn't fool him—he know what dey mean—he count 'em all for me an' de ratification."

"Sure-pop!" said Ben; "if you can't ratify with a rat, I'd like to know why?"

"Dat's what I tells 'em, sah."

"Of course," said Ben good-humouredly. "The voice of the people is the voice of God—rats or no rats—if you know how to count."

As old Aleck staggered away, the sudden crash of a volley of musketry echoed in the distance.

"What's that?" asked Ben, listening intently. The sound was unmistakable to a soldier's ear—that volley from a hundred rifles at a single word of command. It was followed by a shot on a hill in the distance, and then by a faint echo, farther still. Ben listened a few moments and turned into the lawn of the hotel. The music suddenly stopped, the tramp of feet echoed on the porch, a woman screamed, and from the rear of the house came the cry:

"Fire! Fire!"

Almost at the same moment an immense sheet of flame shot skyward from the big barn.

"My God!" groaned Ben. "Jake's in jail to-night, and they've set the barn on fire. It's worth more than the house."

The crowd rushed down the hill to the blazing building, Marion's fleet figure in its flying white dress leading the crowd.

The lowing of the cows and the wild neighing of the horses rang above the roar of the flames.

Before Ben could reach the spot Marion had opened every stall. Two cows leaped out to safety, but not a horse would move from its stall, and each moment wilder and more pitiful grew their death cries.

Marion rushed to Ben, her eyes dilated, her face as white as the dress she wore.

"Oh, Ben, Queen won't come out! What shall I do?"

"You can do nothing, child. A horse won't come out of a burning stable unless he's blindfolded. They'll all be burned to death."

"Oh! no!" the girl cried in agony.

"They'd trample you to death if you tried to get them out. It can't be helped. It's too late."

As Ben looked back at the gathering crowd, Marion suddenly snatched a horse blanket, lying at the door, ran with the speed of a deer to the pond, plunged in, sprang out, and sped back to the open door of Queen's stall, through which her shrill cry could be heard above the others.

As the girl ran toward the burning building, her thin white dress clinging close to her exquisite form, she looked like the marble figure of a sylph by the hand of some great master into which God had suddenly breathed the breath of life.

As they saw her purpose, a cry of horror rose from the crowd, her mother's scream loud above the rest.

Ben rushed to catch her, shouting:

"Marion! Marion! She'll trample you to death!"

He was too late. She leaped into the stall. The crowd held their breath. There was a moment of awful suspense, and the mare sprang through the open door with the little white figure clinging to her mane and holding the blanket over her head.

A cheer rang above the roar of the flames. The girl did not loose her hold until her beautiful pet was led to a place of safety, while she clung to her neck and laughed and cried for joy. First her mother, then Margaret, Mrs. Cameron, and Elsie took her in their arms.

As Ben approached the group, Elsie whispered to him: "Kiss her!"

Ben took her hand, his eyes full of unshed tears, and said:

"The bravest deed a woman ever did—you're a heroine, Marion!"

Before she knew it he stooped and kissed her.

She was very still for a moment, smiled, trembled from head to foot, blushed scarlet, took her mother by the hand, and without a word hurried to the house.

Poor Becky was whining among the excited crowd and sought in vain for Marion. At last she got Margaret's attention, caught her dress in her teeth and led her to a corner of the lot, where she had laid side by side her puppies, smothered to death. She stood and looked at them with her tail drooping, the picture of despair. Margaret burst into tears and called Ben.

He bent and put his arm around the setter's neck and stroked her head with his hand. Looking at up his sister, he said:

"Don't tell Marion of this. She can't stand any more to-night."

The crowd had all dispersed, and the flames had died down for want of fuel. The odour of roasting flesh, pungent and acrid, still lingered a sharp reminder of the tragedy.

Ben stood on the back porch, talking in low tones to his father.

"Will you join us now, sir? We need the name and influence of men of your standing."

"My boy, two wrongs never made a right. It's better to endure awhile. The sober commonsense of the Nation will yet save us. We must appeal to it."

"Eight more fires were seen from town to-night."

"You only guess their origin."

"I know their origin. It was done by the League at a signal as a celebration of the election and a threat of terror to the county. One of our men concealed a faithful negro under the floor of the school-house and heard the plot hatched. We expected it a month ago—but hoped they had given it up."

Freed black people didn't organize to terrorize white people in this way. I feel like that should be pretty self-evident. This is just projection and guilt.

"Even so, my boy, a secret society such as you have planned means a conspiracy that may bring exile or death. I hate lawlessness and disorder. We have had enough of it. Your clan means ultimately martial law. At least we will get rid of these soldiers by this election. They have done their worst to me, but we may save others by patience."

"It's the only way, sir. The next step will be a black hand on a white woman's throat!"

White men were ***obsessed*** with the idea of black men having sex - consenting or otherwise - with white women.

The doctor frowned. "Let us hope for the best. Your clan is the last act of desperation."

"But if everything else fail, and this creeping horror becomes a fact—then what?"

"My boy, we will pray that God may never let us live to see the day!"

CHAPTER VIII

The Riot in the Master's Hall

Alarmed at the possible growth of the secret clan into which Ben had urged him to enter, Dr. Cameron determined to press for relief from oppression by an open appeal to the conscience of the Nation.

He called a meeting of conservative leaders in a Taxpayers' Convention at Columbia. His position as leader had been made supreme by the indignities he had suffered, and he felt sure of his ability to accomplish results. Every county in the State was represented by its best men in this gathering at the Capitol.

The day he undertook to present his memorial to the Legislature was one he never forgot. The streets were crowded with negroes who had come to town to hear Lynch, the Lieutenant-Governor, speak in a mass-meeting. Negro policemen swung their clubs in his face as he pressed through the insolent throng up the street to the stately marble Capitol. At the door a black, greasy trooper stopped him to parley. Every decently dressed white man was regarded a spy.

Give me a freaking break.

As he passed inside the doors of the House of Representatives the rush of foul air staggered him. The reek of vile cigars and stale whiskey, mingled with the odour of perspiring negroes, was overwhelming. He paused and gasped for breath.

...because white people don't stink when they sweat, I guess.

The space behind the seats of the members was strewn with corks, broken glass, stale crusts, greasy pieces of paper, and picked bones. The hall was packed with negroes, smoking, chewing, jabbering, pushing, perspiring.

A carpet-bagger at his elbow was explaining to an old darkey from down east why his forty acres and a mule hadn't come.

On the other side of him a big negro bawled:

"Dat's all right! De cullud man on top!"

The doctor surveyed the hall in dismay. At first not a white member was visible. The galleries were packed with negroes. The Speaker presiding was a negro, the Clerk a negro, the doorkeepers negroes, the little pages all coal-black negroes, the Chaplain a negro. The negro party consisted of one hundred and one—ninety-four blacks and seven scallawags, who claimed to be white. The remains of Aryan civilization were represented by twenty-three white men from the Scotch-Irish hill counties.

A scalawag was a white native Southerner who supported the North/Union in the Civil War. Colloquially known as "race traitors", they were also lynched during this time - although not nearly in the same numbers as black Americans.

The doctor had served three terms as the member from Ulster in this hall in the old days, and its appearance now was beyond any conceivable depth of degradation.

The ninety-four Africans, constituting almost its solid membership, were a motley crew. Every negro type was there, from the genteel butler to the clodhopper from the cotton and rice fields. Some had on second-hand seedy frock-coats their old master had given them before the war, glossy and threadbare. Old stovepipe hats, of every style in vogue since Noah came out of the ark, were placed conspicuously on the desks or cocked on the backs of the heads of the honourable members. Some wore the coarse clothes of the field, stained with red mud.

Old Aleck, he noted, had a red woollen comforter wound round his neck in place of a shirt or collar. He had tried to go barefooted, but the Speaker had issued a rule that members should come shod. He was easing his feet by placing his brogans under the desk, wearing only his red socks.

Each member had his name painted in enormous gold letters on his desk, and had placed beside it a sixty-dollar French imported spittoon. Even the Congress of the United States, under the inspiration of Oakes Ames and Speaker Colfax, could only afford one of domestic make, which cost a dollar.

The uproar was deafening. From four to six negroes were trying to speak at the same time. Aleck's majestic mouth with blue gums and projecting teeth led the chorus as he ambled down the aisle, his bow-legs flying their red-sock ensigns.

See?!? Look at the *oppression* these poor white men endured! One-dollar spittoons?! I've never heard of such an outrage - and when lowly black people get a fancy French one, no less!!

The Speaker singled him out—his voice was something which simply could not be ignored—rapped and yelled:

"De gemman from Ulster set down!"

Aleck turned crestfallen and resumed his seat, throwing his big flat feet in their red woollens up on his desk and hiding his face behind their enormous spread.

He had barely settled in his chair before a new idea flashed through his head and up he jumped again:

"Mistah Speaker!" he bawled.

"Orda da!" yelled another.

"Knock 'im in de head!"

"Seddown, nigger!"

The Speaker pointed his gavel at Aleck and threatened him laughingly:

"Ef de gemman from Ulster doan set down I gwine call 'im ter orda!"

Uncle Aleck greeted this threat with a wild guffaw, which the whole House about him joined in heartily. They laughed like so many hens cackling—when one started the others would follow.

The most of them were munching peanuts, and the crush of hulls under heavy feet added a subnote to the confusion like the crackle of a prairie fire.

The ambition of each negro seemed to be to speak at least a half-dozen times on each question, saying the same thing every time.

No man was allowed to talk five minutes without an interruption which brought on another and another until the speaker was drowned in a storm of contending yells. Their struggles to get the floor with bawlings, bellowings, and contortions, and the senseless rap of the Speaker's gavel, were something appalling.

On this scene, through fetid smoke and animal roar, looked down from the walls, in marble bas-relief, the still white faces of Robert Hayne and George McDuffie, through whose veins flowed the blood of Scottish kings, while over it brooded in solemn wonder the face of John Laurens, whose diplomatic genius at the court of France won millions of gold for our tottering cause, and sent a French fleet and army into the Chesapeake to entrap Cornwallis at Yorktown.

The little group of twenty-three white men, the descendants of these spirits, to whom Dr. Cameron had brought his memorial, presented a pathetic spectacle. Most of them were old men, who sat in grim silence with nothing to do or say as they watched the rising black tide, their dignity, reserve, and decorum at once the wonder and the shame of the modern world.

At least they knew that the minstrel farce being enacted on that floor was a tragedy as deep and dark as was ever woven of the blood and tears of a conquered people. Beneath those loud guffaws they could hear the death rattle in the throat of their beloved State, barbarism strangling civilization by brute force.

For all the stupid uproar, the black leaders of this mob knew what they wanted. One of them was speaking now, the leader of the House, the Honourable Napoleon Whipper.

Dr. Cameron had taken his seat in the little group of white members in one corner of the chamber, beside an old friend from an adjoining county whom he had known in better days.

"Now listen," said his friend. "When Whipper talks he always says something."

"Mr. Speaker, I move you, sir, in view of the arduous duties which our presiding officer has performed this week for the State, that he be allowed one thousand dollars extra pay."

The motion was put without debate and carried.

The Speaker then called Whipper to the Chair and made the same motion, to give the Leader of the House an extra thousand dollars for the performance of his heavy duties.

It was carried.

"What does that mean?" asked the doctor.

"Very simple; Whipper and the Speaker adjourned the House yesterday afternoon to attend a horse race. They lost a thousand dollars each betting on the wrong horse. They are recuperating after the strain. They are booked for judges of the Supreme Court when they finish this job. The negro mass-meeting to-night is to indorse their names for the Supreme Bench."

"Is it possible!" the doctor exclaimed.

When Whipper resumed his place at his desk, the introduction of bills began. One after another were sent to the Speaker's desk, a measure to disarm the whites and equip with modern rifles a negro militia of 80,000 men; to make the uniform of Confederate gray the garb of convicts in South Carolina, with a sign of the rank to signify the degree of crime; to prevent any person calling another a "nigger"; to require men to remove their hats in the presence of all officers, civil or military, and all disfranchised men to remove their hats in the presence of voters; to force black and whites to attend the same schools and open the State University to negroes; to permit the intermarriage of whites and blacks; and to inforce social equality.

Whipper made a brief speech on the last measure:

"Before I am through, I mean that it shall be known that Napoleon Whipper is as good as any man in South Carolina. Don't tell me that I am not on an equality with any man God ever made."

Dr. Cameron turned pale, and trembling with excitement, asked his friend:

"Can that man pass such measures, and the Governor sign them?"

"He can pass anything he wishes. The Governor is his creature—a dirty little scallawag who tore the Union flag from Fort Sumter, trampled it in the dust, and helped raise the flag of Confederacy over it. Now he is backed by the Government at Washington. He won his election by dancing at negro balls and the purchase of delegates. His salary as Governor is $3,500 a year, and he spends over $40,000. Comment is unnecessary. This Legislature has stolen millions of dollars, and already bankrupted the treasury. The day Howle was elected to the Senate of the United States every negro on the floor had his roll of bills and some of them counted it out on their desks. In your day the annual cost of the State government was $400,000. This year it is $2,000,000. These thieves steal daily. They don't deny it. They simply dare you to prove it. The writing paper on the desks cost $16,000. These clocks on the wall $600 each, and every little Radical newspaper in the State has been subsidized in sums varying from $1,000 to $7,000. Each member is allowed to draw for mileage, per diem, and 'sundries.' God only knows what the bill for 'sundries' will aggregate by the end of the session."

Well, this certainly sounds familiar. The more things change, the more they stay the same.

"I couldn't conceive of this!" exclaimed the doctor.

"I've only given you a hint. We are a conquered race. The iron hand of Fate is on us. We can only wait for the shadows to deepen into night. President Grant appears to be a babe in the woods. Schuyler Colfax, the Vice-president, and Belknap, the Secretary of War, are in the saddle in Washington. I hear things are happening there that are quite interesting. Besides, Congress now can give little relief. The real lawmaking power in America is the State Legislature. The State lawmaker enters into the holy of holies of our daily life. Once more we are a sovereign State—a sovereign negro State."

Omg - someone get a fainting couch upon which this loser can swoon, he sounds hysterical.

"I fear my mission is futile," said the doctor.

"It's ridiculous—I'll call for you to-night and take you to hear Lynch, our Lieutenant-Governor. He is a remarkable man. Our negro Supreme Court Judge will preside—"

Uncle Aleck, who had suddenly spied Dr. Cameron, broke in with a laughing welcome:

"I 'clar ter goodness, Dr. Cammun, I didn't know you wuz here, sah. I sho' glad ter see you. I axes yer ter come across de street ter my room; I got sumfin' pow'ful pertickler ter say ter you."

The doctor followed Aleck out of the hall and across the street to his room in a little boarding-house. His door was locked, and the windows darkened by blinds. Instead of opening the blinds he lighted a lamp.

"Ob cose, Dr. Cammun, you say nuffin 'bout what I gwine tell you?"

"Certainly not, Aleck."

The room was full of drygoods boxes. The space under the bed was packed, and they were piled to the ceiling around the walls.

"Why, what's all this, Aleck?"

The member from Ulster chuckled:

"Dr. Cammun, yu'se been er pow'ful frien' ter me—gimme medicine lots er times, en I hain't nebber paid you nuttin'. I'se sho' come inter de kingdom now, en I wants ter pay my respects ter you, sah. Des look ober dat paper, en mark what you wants, en I hab 'em sont home fur you."

The member from Ulster handed his physician a printed list of more than five hundred articles of merchandise. The doctor read it over with amazement.

"I don't understand it, Aleck. Do you own a store?"

"Na-sah, but we git all we wants fum mos' eny ob 'em. Dem's 'sundries,' sah, dat de Gubment gibs de members. We des orda what we needs. No trouble 'tall, sah. De men what got de goods come roun' en beg us ter take 'em."

The doctor smiled in spite of the tragedy back of the joke.

"Let's see some of the goods, Aleck—are they first class?"

"Yessah; de bes' goin'. I show you."

He pulled out a number of boxes and bundles, exhibiting carpets, door mats, hassocks, dog collars, cow bells, oilcloths, velvets, mosquito nets, damask, Irish linen, billiard outfits, towels, blankets, flannels, quilts, women's hoods, hats, ribbons, pins, needles, scissors, dumb bells, skates, crape skirt braids, tooth brushes, face powder, hooks and eyes, skirts, bustles, chignons, garters, artificial busts, chemises, parasols, watches, jewellery, diamond earrings, ivory-handled knives and forks, pistols and guns, and a Webster's Dictionary.

Look how good these uppity black folk have it when there are proud, brave white people reduced to wearing rags and starving in the very streets they worked so hard to oversee being built!!!!

"Got lots mo' in dem boxes nailed up dar—yessah, hit's no use er lettin' good tings go by yer when you kin des put out yer han' en stop 'em! Some er de members ordered horses en carriages, but I tuk er par er fine mules wid harness en two buggies an er wagin. Dey 'roun at de libry stable, sah."

The doctor thanked Aleck for his friendly feeling, but told him it was, of course, impossible for him at this time, being only a taxpayer and neither a voter nor a member of the Legislature, to share in his supply of "sundries."

He went to the warehouse that night with his friend to hear Lynch, wondering if his mind were capable of receiving another shock.

This meeting had been called to indorse the candidacy, for Justice of the Supreme Court, of Napoleon Whipper, the Leader of the House, the notorious negro thief and gambler, and of William Pitt Moses, an ex-convict, his confederate in crime. They had been unanimously chosen for the positions by a secret caucus of the ninety-four negro members of the House. This addition to the Court, with the negro already a member, would give a majority to the black man on the last Tribunal of Appeal.

The few white men of the party who had any sense of decency were in open revolt at this atrocity. But their influence was on the wane. The carpet-bagger shaped the first Convention and got the first plums of office. Now the negro was in the saddle, and he meant to stay. There were not enough white men in the Legislature to force a roll-call on a division of the House. This meeting was an open defiance of all pale-faces inside or outside party lines.

Every inch of space in the big cotton warehouse was jammed—a black living cloud, pungent and piercing.

The distinguished Lieutenant-Governor, Silas Lynch, had not yet arrived, but the negro Justice of the Supreme Court, Pinchback, was in his seat as the presiding officer.

Dr. Cameron watched the movements of the black judge, already notorious for the sale of his opinions, with a sense of sickening horror. This man was but yesterday a slave, his father a medicine man in an African jungle who decided the guilt or innocence of the accused by the test of administering poison. If the poison killed the man, he was guilty; if he survived, he was innocent. For four thousand years his land had stood a solid bulwark of unbroken barbarism. Out of its darkness he had been thrust upon the seat of judgment of the laws of the proudest and highest type of man evolved in time. It seemed a hideous dream.

Oh. My. God. This is honestly the most offensive and infuriating book I've ever read, which is quite a strong statement. I've had to walk away from it countless times due to feelings of helpless rage.

His thoughts were interrupted by a shout. It came spontaneous and tremendous in its genuine feeling. The magnificent figure of Lynch, their idol, appeared walking down the aisle escorted by the little scallawag who was the Governor.

He took his seat on the platform with the easy assurance of conscious power. His broad shoulders, superb head, and gleaming jungle eyes held every man in the audience before he had spoken a word.

In the first masterful tones of his voice the doctor's keen intelligence caught the ring of his savage metal and felt the shock of his powerful personality—a personality which had thrown to the winds every mask, whose sole aim of life was sensual, whose only fears were of physical pain and death, who could worship a snake and sacrifice a human being.

Again with white supremacy's homoerotic fixation with their twisted version of black masculinity. Also the stereotype of black people being generally sexually rapacious.

His playful introduction showed him a child of Mystery, moved by Voices and inspired by a Fetish. His face was full of good humour, and his whole figure rippled with sleek animal vivacity. For the moment, life was a comedy and a masquerade teeming with whims, fancies, ecstasies and superstitions.

He held the surging crowd in the hollow of his hand. They yelled, laughed, howled, or wept as he willed.

Now he painted in burning words the imaginary horrors of slavery until the tears rolled down his cheeks and he wept at the sound of his own voice. Every dusky hearer burst into tears and moans.

This is fucking insulting beyond imagination. I've been trying not to swear, but holy shit - go fuck yourself so incredibly much, Thomas Dixon, Jr.

He stopped, suddenly brushed the tears from his eyes, sprang to the edge of the platform, threw both arms above his head and shouted:

"Hosannah to the Lord God Almighty for Emancipation!"

Instantly five thousand negroes, as one man, were on their feet, shouting and screaming. Their shouts rose in unison, swelled into a thunder peal, and died away as one voice.

Dead silence followed, and every eye was again riveted on Lynch. For two hours the doctor sat transfixed, listening and watching him sway the vast audience with hypnotic power.

The implication with all of this mesmeric mumbo-jumbo is that since freedmen were far too stupid to develop their own opinions, they must have been brainwashed into supporting Lynch and his nefarious plans.

There was not one note of hesitation or of doubt. It was the challenge of race against race to mortal combat. His closing words again swept every negro from his seat and melted every voice into a single frenzied shout:

"Within five years," he cried, "the intelligence and the wealth of this mighty State will be transferred to the negro race. Lift up your heads. The world is yours. Take it. Here and now I serve notice on every white man who breathes that I am as good as he is. I demand, and I am going to have, the privilege of going to see him in his house or his hotel, eating with him and sleeping with him, and when I see fit, to take his daughter in marriage!"

As the doctor emerged from the stifling crowd with his friend, he drew a deep breath of fresh air, took from his pocket his conservative memorial, picked it into little bits, and scattered them along the street as he walked in silence back to his hotel.

CHAPTER IX

At Lover's Leap

In spite of the pitiful collapse of old Stoneman under his stroke of paralysis, his children still saw the unconquered soul shining in his colourless eyes. They had both been on the point of confessing their love affairs to him and joining in the inevitable struggle when he was stricken. They knew only too well that he would not consent to a dual alliance with the Camerons under the conditions of fierce hatreds and violence into which the State had drifted. They were too high-minded to consider a violation of his wishes while thus helpless, with his strange eyes following them about in childlike eagerness. His weakness was mightier than his iron will.

So, for eighteen months, while he slowly groped out of mental twilight, each had waited—Elsie with a tender faith struggling with despair, and Phil in a torture of uncertainty and fear.

In the meantime, the young Northerner had become as radical in his sympathies with the Southern people as his father had ever been against them. This power of assimilation has always been a mark of Southern genius. The sight of the Black Hand on their throats now roused his righteous indignation. The patience with which they endured was to him amazing. The Southerner he had found to be the last man on earth to become a revolutionist. All his traits were against it. His genius for command, the deep sense of duty and honour, his hospitality, his deathless love of home, his supreme constancy and sense of civic unity, all combined to make him ultraconservative. He began now to see that it was reverence for authority as expressed in the Constitution under which slavery was established which made Secession inevitable.

Besides, the laziness and incapacity of the negro had been more than he could endure. With no ties of tradition or habits of life to bind him, he simply refused to tolerate them. In this feeling Elsie had grown early to sympathize. She discharged Aunt Cindy for feeding her children from the kitchen, and brought a cook and house girl from the North, while Phil would employ only white men in any capacity.

a) Even if it were true that black Americans were lazy, incapable, without "ties of tradition or habits of life to bind him", maybe it's because they were *forced into slavery for 400 freaking years.*

b) Aunt Cindy got fired for feeding her black children food intended for white people. In real life at this time poverty, disease, and starvation were enormous problems for newly freed black Americans, and for impoverished white Americans as well. So if Aunt Cindy's were out there stealing food, they likely had a very good reason.

In the desolation of negro rule the Cameron farm had become worthless. The taxes had more than absorbed the income, and the place was only kept from execution by the indomitable energy of Mrs. Cameron, who made the hotel pay enough to carry the interest on a mortgage which was increasing from season to season.

The doctor's practice was with him a divine calling. He never sent bills to his patients. They paid something if they had it. Now they had nothing.

Ben's law practice was large for his age and experience, but his clients had no money.

While the Camerons were growing each day poorer, Phil was becoming rich. His genius, skill, and enterprise had been quick to see the possibilities of the waterpower. The old Eagle cotton mills had been burned during the war. Phil organized the Eagle & Phœnix Company, interested Northern capitalists, bought the falls, and erected two great mills, the dim hum of whose spindles added a new note to the river's music. Eager, swift, modest, his head full of ideas, his heart full of faith, he had pressed forward to success.

As the old Commoner's mind began to clear, and his recovery was sure, Phil determined to press his suit for Margaret's hand to an issue.

Ben had dropped a hint of an interview of the Rev. Hugh McAlpin with Dr. Cameron, which had thrown Phil into a cold sweat.

He hurried to the hotel to ask Margaret to drive with him that afternoon. He would stop at Lover's Leap and settle the question.

He met the preacher, just emerging from the door, calm, handsome, serious, and Margaret by his side. The dark-haired beauty seemed strangely serene. What could it mean? His heart was in his throat. Was he too late? Wreathed in smiles when the preacher had gone, the girl's face was a riddle he could not solve.

To his joy, she consented to go.

As he left in his trim little buggy for the hotel, he stooped and kissed Elsie, whispering:

"Make an offering on the altar of love for me, Sis!"

"You're too slow. The prayers of all the saints will not save you!" she replied with a laugh, throwing him a kiss as he disappeared in the dust.

As they drove through the great forest on the cliffs overlooking the river, the Southern world seemed lit with new splendours to-day for the Northerner. His heart beat with a strange courage. The odour of the pines, their sighing music, the subtone of the falls below, the subtle life-giving perfume of the fullness of summer, the splendour of the sun gleaming through the deep foliage, and the sweet sensuous air, all seemed incarnate in the calm, lovely face and gracious figure beside him.

They took their seat on the old rustic built against the beech, which was the last tree on the brink of the cliff. A hundred feet below flowed the river, rippling softly along a narrow strip of sand which its current had thrown against the rocks. The ledge of towering granite formed a cave eighty feet in depth at the water's edge. From this projecting wall, tradition said a young Indian princess once leaped with her lover, fleeing from the wrath of a cruel father who had separated them. The cave below was inaccessible from above, being reached by a narrow footpath along the river's edge when entered a mile downstream.

The view from the seat, under the beech, was one of marvellous beauty. For miles the broad river rolled in calm, shining glory seaward, its banks fringed with cane and trees, while fields of corn and cotton spread in waving green toward the distant hills and blue mountains of the west.

Every tree on this cliff was cut with the initials of generations of lovers from Piedmont.

They sat in silence for awhile, Margaret idly playing with a flower she had picked by the pathway, and Phil watching her devoutly. The Southern sun had tinged her face the reddish warm hue of ripened fruit, doubly radiant by contrast with her wealth of dark-brown hair. The lustrous glance of her eyes, half veiled by their long lashes, and the graceful, careless pose of her stately figure held him enraptured. Her dress of airy, azure blue, so becoming to her dark beauty, gave Phil the impression of eiderdown feathers of some rare bird of the tropics. He felt that if he dared to touch her she might lift her wings and sail over the cliff into the sky and forget to light again at his side.

"I am going to ask a very bold and impertinent question, Miss Margaret," Phil said with resolution. "May I?"

Margaret smiled incredulously.

"I'll risk your impertinence, and decide as to its boldness."

"Tell me, please, what that preacher said to you to-day."

Margaret looked away, unable to suppress the merriment that played about her eyes and mouth.

"Will you never breathe it to a soul if I do?"

"Never."

"Honest Injun, here on the sacred altar of the princess?"

"On my honour."

"Then I'll tell you," she said, biting her lips to keep back a laugh. "Mr. McAlpin is very handsome and eloquent. I have always thought him the best preacher we have ever had in Piedmont——"

"Yes, I know," Phil interrupted with a frown. "He is very pious," she went on evenly, "and seeks Divine guidance in prayer in everything he does. He called this morning to see me, and I was playing for him in the little music-room off the parlour, when he suddenly closed the door and said:

"'Miss Margaret, I am going to take, this morning, the most important step of my life——'

"Of course I hadn't the remotest idea what he meant——

"'Will you join me in a word of prayer?' he asked, and knelt right down. I was accustomed, of course, to kneel with him in family worship at his pastoral calls, and so from habit I slipped to one knee by the piano stool, wondering what on earth he was about. When he prayed with fervour for the Lord to bless the great love with which he hoped to hallow my life—I giggled. It broke up the meeting. He rose and asked me to marry him. I told him the Lord hadn't revealed it to me——"

Phil seized her hand and held it firmly. The smile died from the girl's face, her hand trembled, and the rose tint on her cheeks flamed to scarlet.

"Margaret, my own, I love you," he cried with joy. "You could have told that story only to the one man whom you love—is it not true?"

"Yes. I've loved you always," said the low, sweet voice.

"Always?" asked Phil through a tear.

"Before I saw you, when they told me you were as Ben's twin brother, my heart began to sing at the sound of your name——"

Hmm...Interesting. I'm going to file that away for my re-reading to see if perhaps a pattern develops.

"Call it," he whispered.

"Phil, my sweetheart!" she said with a laugh.

"How tender and homelike the music of your voice! The world has never seen the match of your gracious Southern womanhood! Snowbound in the North, I dreamed, as a child, of this world of eternal sunshine. And now every memory and dream I've found in you."

"And you won't be disappointed in my simple ideal that finds its all within a home?"

"No. I love the old-fashioned dream of the South. Maybe you have enchanted me, but I love these green hills and mountains, these rivers musical with cascade and fall, these solemn forests—but for the Black Curse, the South would be to-day the garden of the world!"

"And you will help our people lift this curse?" softly asked the girl, nestling closer to his side.

"Yes, dearest, thy people shall be mine! Had I a thousand wrongs to cherish, I'd forgive them all for your sake. I'll help you build here a new South on all that's good and noble in the old, until its dead fields blossom again, its harbours bristle with ships, and the hum of a thousand industries make music in every valley. I'd sing to you in burning verse if I could, but it is not my way. I have been awkward and slow in love, perhaps—but I'll be swift in your service. I dream to make dead stones and wood live and breathe for you, of victories wrung from Nature that are yours. My poems will be deeds, my flowers the hard-earned wealth that has a soul, which I shall lay at your feet."

"Who said my lover was dumb?" she sighed, with a twinkle in her shining eyes. "You must introduce me to your father soon. He must like me as my father does you, or our dream can never come true."

A pain gripped Phil's heart, but he answered bravely:

"I will. He can't help loving you."

They stood on the rustic seat to carve their initials within a circle, high on the old beechwood book of love.

"May I write it out in full—Margaret Cameron—Philip Stoneman?" he asked.

"No—only the initials now—the full names when you've seen my father and I've seen yours. Jeannie Campbell and Henry Lenoir were once written thus in full, and many a lover has looked at that circle and prayed for happiness like theirs. You can see there a new one cut over the old, the bark has filled, and written on the fresh page is 'Marion Lenoir' with the blank below for her lover's name."

Phil looked at the freshly cut circle and laughed:

"I wonder if Marion or her mother did that?"

"Her mother, of course."

"I wonder whose will be the lucky name some day within it?" said Phil musingly as he finished his own.

CHAPTER X

A Night Hawk

When the old Commoner's private physician had gone and his mind had fully cleared, he would sit for hours in the sunshine of the vine-clad porch, asking Elsie of the village, its life, and its people. He smiled good-naturedly at her eager sympathy for their sufferings as at the enthusiasm of a child who could not understand. He had come possessed by a great idea—events must submit to it. Her assurance that the poverty and losses of the people were far in excess of the worst they had known during the war was too absurd even to secure his attention.

He had refused to know any of the people, ignoring the existence of Elsie's callers. But he had fallen in love with Marion from the moment he had seen her. The cold eye of the old fox hunter kindled with the fire of his forgotten youth at the sight of this beautiful girl seated on the glistening back of the mare she had saved from death.

As she rode through the village every boy lifted his hat as to passing royalty, and no one, old or young, could allow her to pass without a cry of admiration. Her exquisite figure had developed into the full tropic splendour of Southern girlhood.

She had rejected three proposals from ardent lovers, on one of whom her mother had quite set her heart. A great fear had grown in Mrs. Lenoir's mind lest she were in love with Ben Cameron. She slipped her arm around her one day and timidly asked her.

A faint flush tinged Marion's face up to the roots of her delicate blonde hair, and she answered with a quick laugh:

"Mamma, how silly you are! You know I've always been in love with Ben—since I can first remember. I know he is in love with Elsie Stoneman. I am too young, the world too beautiful, and life too sweet to grieve over my first baby love. I expect to dance with him at his wedding, then meet my fate and build my own nest."

Old Stoneman begged that she come every day to see him. He never tired praising her to Elsie. As she walked gracefully up to the house one afternoon, holding Hugh by the hand, he said to Elsie:

"Next to you, my dear, she is the most charming creature I ever saw. Her tenderness for everything that needs help touches the heart of an old lame man in a very soft spot."

"I've never seen any one who could resist her," Elsie answered. "Her gloves may be worn, her feet clad in old shoes, yet she is always neat, graceful, dainty, and serene. No wonder her mother worships her."

Truly feminine women must be neat, graceful, dainty, and serene. It would be hard to have much of a life while consistently maintaining such a timid and helpless veneer.

Sam Ross, her simple friend, had stopped at the gate, and looked over into the lawn as if afraid to come in.

When Marion saw Sam, she turned back to the gate to invite him in. The keeper of the poor, a vicious-looking negro, suddenly confronted him, and he shrank in terror close to the girl's side.

"What you doin' here, sah?" the black keeper railed. "Ain't I done tole you 'bout runnin' away?"

"You let him alone," Marion cried.

The negro pushed her roughly from his side and knocked Sam down. The girl screamed for help, and old Stoneman hobbled down the steps, following Elsie.

When they reached the gate, Marion was bending over the prostrate form.

"Oh, my, my, I believe he's killed him!" she wailed.

"Run for the doctor, sonny, quick," Stoneman said to Hugh. The boy darted away and brought Dr. Cameron.

"How dare you strike that man, you devil?" thundered the old statesman.

"'Case I tole 'im ter stay home en do de wuk I put 'im at, en he all de time runnin' off here ter git somfin' ter eat. I gwine frail de life outen 'im, ef he doan min' me."

"Well, you make tracks back to the Poorhouse. I'll attend to this man, and I'll have you arrested for this before night," said Stoneman, with a scowl.

The black keeper laughed as he left.

"Not 'less you'se er bigger man dan Gubner Silas Lynch, you won't!"

When Dr. Cameron had restored Sam, and dressed the wound on his head where he had struck a stone in falling, Stoneman insisted that the boy be put to bed.

Turning to Dr. Cameron, he asked:

"Why should they put a brute like this in charge of the poor?"

"That's a large question, sir, at this time," said the doctor politely, "and now that you have asked it, I have some things I've been longing for an opportunity to say to you."

"Be seated, sir," the old Commoner answered, "I shall be glad to hear them."

Elsie's heart leaped with joy over the possible outcome of this appeal, and she left the room with a smile for the doctor.

"First, allow me," said the Southerner pleasantly, "to express my sorrow at your long illness, and my pleasure at seeing you so well. Your children have won the love of all our people and have had our deepest sympathy in your illness."

Stoneman muttered an inaudible reply, and the doctor went on:

"Your question brings up, at once, the problem of the misery and degradation into which our country has sunk under negro rule——"

Stoneman smiled coldly and interrupted:

"Of course, you understand my position in politics, Doctor Cameron—I am a Radical Republican."

"So much the better," was the response. "I have been longing for months to get your ear. Your word will be all the more powerful if raised in our behalf. The negro is the master of our State, county, city, and town governments. Every school, college, hospital, asylum, and poorhouse is his prey. What you have seen is but a sample. Negro insolence grows beyond endurance. Their women are taught to insult their old mistresses and mock their poverty as they pass in their old, faded dresses. Yesterday a black driver struck a white child of six with his whip, and when the mother protested, she was arrested by a negro policeman, taken before a negro magistrate, and fined $10 for 'insulting a freedman.'"

Stoneman frowned: "Such things must be very exceptional."

"They are everyday occurrences and cease to excite comment. Lynch, the Lieutenant-Governor, who has bought a summer home here, is urging this campaign of insult with deliberate purpose——"

The old man shook his head. "I can't think the Lieutenant-Governor guilty of such petty villainy."

"Our school commissioner," the doctor continued, "is a negro who can neither read nor write. The black grand jury last week discharged a negro for stealing cattle and indicted the owner for false imprisonment. No such rate of taxation was ever imposed on a civilized people. A tithe of it cost Great Britain her colonies. There are 5,000 homes in this county—2,900 of them are advertised for sale by the sheriff to meet his tax bills. This house will be sold next court day——"

Stoneman looked up sharply. "Sold for taxes?"

"Yes; with the farm which has always been Mrs. Lenoir's support. In part her loss came from the cotton tax. Congress, in addition to the desolation of war, and the ruin of black rule, has wrung from the cotton farmers of the South a tax of $67,000,000. Every dollar of this money bears the stain of the blood of starving people. They are ready to give up, or to spring some desperate scheme of resistance——"

The old man lifted his massive head and his great jaws came together with a snap:

"Resistance to the authority of the National Government?"

"No; resistance to the travesty of government and the mockery of civilization under which we are being throttled! The bayonet is now in the hands of a brutal negro militia. The tyranny of military martinets was child's play to this. As I answered your call this morning I was stopped and turned back in the street by the drill of a company of negroes under the command of a vicious scoundrel named Gus who was my former slave. He is the captain of this company. Eighty thousand armed negro troops, answerable to no authority save the savage instincts of their officers, terrorize the State. Every white company has been disarmed and disbanded by our scallawag Governor. I tell you, sir, we are walking on the crust of a volcano——"

Old Stoneman scowled as the doctor rose and walked nervously to the window and back.

"An appeal from you to the conscience of the North might save us," he went on eagerly. "Black hordes of former slaves, with the intelligence of children and the instincts of savages, armed with modern rifles, parade daily in front of their unarmed former masters. A white man has no right a negro need respect. The children of the breed of men who speak the tongue of Burns and Shakespeare, Drake and Raleigh, have been disarmed and made subject to the black spawn of an African jungle! Can human flesh endure it? When Goth and Vandal barbarians overran Rome, the negro was the slave of the Roman Empire. The savages of the North blew out the light of Ancient Civilization, but in all the dark ages which followed they never dreamed the leprous infamy of raising a black slave to rule over his former master! No people in the history of the world have ever before been so basely betrayed, so wantonly humiliated and degraded!"

A quote from the Dred Scott decision, one of our country's most shameful hours.

Reminds me of that line of Wordsworth's (I'm paraphrasing): "We must be free or die, we who speak the tongue that Shakespeare spake." So Dixon is a racist AND unoriginal.

Stoneman lifted his head in amazement at the burst of passionate intensity with which the Southerner poured out his protest.

"For a Russian to rule a Pole," he went on, "a Turk to rule a Greek, or an Austrian to dominate an Italian is hard enough, but for a thick-lipped, flat-nosed, spindle-shanked negro, exuding his nauseating animal odour, to shout in derision over the hearths and homes of white men and women is an atrocity too monstrous for belief. Our people are yet dazed by its horror. My God! when they realize its meaning, whose arm will be strong enough to hold them?"

"I should think the South was sufficiently amused with resistance to authority," interrupted Stoneman.

lolz

"Even so. Yet there is a moral force at the bottom of every living race of men. The sense of right, the feeling of racial destiny—these are unconquered and unconquerable forces. Every man in South Carolina to-day is glad that slavery is dead. The war was not too great a price for us to pay for the lifting of its curse. And now to ask a Southerner to be the slave of a slave——"

"And yet, Doctor," said Stoneman coolly, "manhood suffrage is the one eternal thing fixed in the nature of Democracy. It is inevitable."

*Man*hood suffrage. Fun fact: the words "woman/women" aren't mentioned in the Constitution. I bet these people have known that bit of trivia for quite awhile...

"At the price of racial life? Never!" said the Southerner, with fiery emphasis. "This Republic is great, not by reason of the amount of dirt we possess, the size of our census roll, or our voting register—we are great because of the genius of the race of pioneer white freemen who settled this continent, dared the might of kings, and made a wilderness the home of Freedom. Our future depends on the purity of this racial stock. The grant of the ballot to these millions of semi-savages and the riot of debauchery which has followed are crimes against human progress."

"Yet may we not train him?" asked Stoneman.

"To a point, yes, and then sink to his level if you walk as his equal in physical contact with him. His race is not an infant; it is a degenerate—older than yours in time. At last we are face to face with the man whom slavery concealed with its rags. Suffrage is but the new paper cloak with which the Demagogue has sought to hide the issue. Can we assimilate the negro? The very question is pollution. In Hayti no white man can own land. Black dukes and marquises drive over them and swear at them for getting under their wheels. Is civilization a patent cloak with which law-tinkers can wrap an animal and make him a king?"

"But the negro must be protected by the ballot," protested the statesman. "The humblest man must have the opportunity to rise. The real issue is Democracy."

"The issue, sir, is Civilization! Not whether a negro shall be protected, but whether Society is worth saving from barbarism."

Wow, lots of colonialist language and sentiment flying around in this chapter. Super gross.

"The statesman can educate," put in the Commoner.

The doctor cleared his throat with a quick little nervous cough he was in the habit of giving when deeply moved.

"Education, sir, is the development of that which *is*. Since the dawn of history the negro has owned the continent of Africa—rich beyond the dream of poet's fancy, crunching acres of diamonds beneath his bare black feet. Yet he never picked one up from the dust until a white man showed to him its glittering light. His land swarmed with powerful and docile animals, yet he never dreamed a harness, cart, or sled. A hunter by necessity, he never made an axe, spear, or arrowhead worth preserving beyond the moment of its use. He lived as an ox, content to graze for an hour. In a land of stone and timber he never sawed a foot of lumber, carved a block, or built a house save of broken sticks and mud. With league on league of ocean strand and miles of inland seas, for four thousand years he watched their surface ripple under the wind, heard the thunder of the surf on his beach, the howl of the storm over his head, gazed on the dim blue horizon calling him to worlds that lie beyond, and yet he never dreamed a sail! He lived as his fathers lived—stole his food, worked his wife, sold his children, ate his brother, content to drink, sing, dance, and sport as the ape!

"And this creature, half child, half animal, the sport of impulse, whim, and conceit, 'pleased with a rattle, tickled with a straw,' a being who, left to his will, roams at night and sleeps in the day, whose speech knows no word of love, whose passions, once aroused, are as the fury of the tiger—they have set this thing to rule over the Southern people——"

This is so ridiculous and inaccurate that I'm not going to waste my time debunking each of these points. I've never before so badly wanted to burn every copy of a book but one - I'd leave one in the Library of Congress, for the sake of maintaining an accurate "History of Iniquity," as Jorge Luis Borges put it.

The doctor sprang to his feet, his face livid, his eyes blazing with emotion. "Merciful God—it surpasses human belief!"

He sank exhausted in his chair, and, extending his hand in an eloquent gesture, continued:

"Surely, surely, sir, the people of the North are not mad? We can yet appeal to the conscience and the brain of our brethren of a common race?"

Stoneman was silent as if stunned. Deep down in his strange soul he was drunk with the joy of a triumphant vengeance he had carried locked in the depths of his being, yet the intensity of this man's suffering for a people's cause surprised and distressed him as all individual pain hurt him.

Dr. Cameron rose, stung by his silence and the consciousness of the hostility with which Stoneman had wrapped himself.

"Pardon my apparent rudeness, Doctor," he said at length, extending his hand. "The violence of your feeling stunned me for the moment. I'm obliged to you for speaking. I like a plain-spoken man. I am sorry to learn of the stupidity of the former military commandant in this town——"

"My personal wrongs, sir," the doctor broke in, "are nothing!"

"I am sorry, too, about these individual cases of suffering. They are the necessary incidents of a great upheaval. But may it not all come out right in the end? After the Dark Ages, day broke at last. We have the printing press, railroad, and telegraph—a revolution in human affairs. We may do in years what it took ages to do in the past. May not the black man speedily emerge? Who knows? An appeal to the North will be a waste of breath. This experiment is going to be made. It is written in the book of Fate. But I like you. Come to see me again."

Dr. Cameron left with a heavy heart. He had grown a great hope in this long-wished-for appeal to Stoneman. It had come to his ears that the old man, who had dwelt as one dead in their village, was a power.

It was ten o'clock before the doctor walked slowly back to the hotel. As he passed the armoury of the black militia, they were still drilling under the command of Gus. The windows were open, through which came the steady tramp of heavy feet and the cry of "Hep! Hep! Hep!" from the Captain's thick cracked lips. The full-dress officer's uniform, with its gold epaulets, yellow stripes, and glistening sword, only accentuated the coarse bestiality of Gus. His huge jaws seemed to hide completely the gold braid on his collar.

The doctor watched, with a shudder, his black bloated face covered with perspiration and the huge hand gripping his sword.

They suddenly halted in double ranks and Gus yelled:

"Odah, arms!"

The butts of their rifles crashed to the floor with precision, and they were allowed to break ranks for a brief rest.

They sang "John Brown's Body," and as its echoes died away a big negro swung his rifle in a circle over his head, shouting:

"Here's your regulator for white trash! En dey's nine hundred ob 'em in dis county!"

"Yas, Lawd!" howled another.

"We got 'em down now en we keep 'em dar, chile!" bawled another.

The doctor passed on slowly to the hotel. The night was dark, the streets were without lights under their present rulers, and the stars were hidden with swift-flying clouds which threatened a storm. As he passed under the boughs of an oak in front of his house, a voice above him whispered:

"A message for you, sir."

Had the wings of a spirit suddenly brushed his cheek, he would not have been more startled.

"Who are you?" he asked, with a slight tremor.

"A Night Hawk of the Invisible Empire, with a message from the Grand Dragon of the Realm," was the low answer, as he thrust a note in the doctor's hand. "I will wait for your answer."

The doctor fumbled to his office on the corner of the lawn, struck a match, and read:

"A great Scotch-Irish leader of the South from Memphis is here to-night and wishes to see you. If you will meet General Forrest, I will bring him to the hotel in fifteen minutes. Burn this. Ben."

The doctor walked quickly back to the spot where he had heard the voice, and said:

"I'll see him with pleasure."

The invisible messenger wheeled his horse, and in a moment the echo of his muffled hoofs had died away in the distance.

CHAPTER XI

The Beat of a Sparrow's Wing

Dr. Cameron's appeal had left the old Commoner unshaken in his idea. There could be but one side to any question with such a man, and that was his side. He would stand by his own men, too. He believed in his own forces. The bayonet was essential to his revolutionary programme—hence the hand which held it could do no wrong. Wrongs were accidents which might occur under any system.

Yet in no way did he display the strange contradictions of his character so plainly as in his inability to hate the individual who stood for the idea he was fighting with maniac fury. He liked Dr. Cameron instantly, though he had come to do a crime that would send him into beggared exile.

Individual suffering he could not endure. In this the doctor's appeal had startling results.

He sent for Mrs. Lenoir and Marion.

"I understand, Madam," he said gravely, "that your house and farm are to be sold for taxes."

"Yes, sir; we've given it up this time. Nothing can be done," was the hopeless answer.

"Would you consider an offer of twenty dollars an acre?"

"Nobody would be fool enough to offer it. You can buy all the land in the county for a dollar an acre. It's not worth anything."

"I disagree with you," said Stoneman cheerfully. "I am looking far ahead. I would like to make an experiment here with Pennsylvania methods on this land. I'll give you ten thousand dollars cash for your five hundred acres if you will take it."

"You don't mean it?" Mrs. Lenoir gasped, choking back the tears.

"Certainly. You can at once return to your home. I'll take another house, and invest your money for you in good Northern securities."

The mother burst into sobs, unable to speak, while Marion threw her arms impulsively around the old man's neck and kissed him.

His cold eyes were warmed with the first tear they had shed in years.

He moved the next day to the Ross estate, which he rented, had Sam brought back to the home of his childhood in charge of a good-natured white attendant, and installed in one of the little cottages on the lawn. He ordered Lynch to arrest the keeper of the poor, and hold him on a charge of assault with intent to kill, awaiting the action of the Grand Jury. The Lieutenant-Governor received this order with sullen anger—yet he saw to its execution. He was not quite ready for a break with the man who had made him.

Astonished at his new humour, Phil and Elsie hastened to confess to him their love affairs and ask his approval of their choice. His reply was cautious, yet he did not refuse his consent. He advised them to wait a few months, allow him time to know the young people, and get his bearings on the conditions of Southern society. His mood of tenderness was a startling revelation to them of the depth and intensity of his love.

When Mrs. Lenoir returned with Marion to her vine-clad home, she spent the first day of perfect joy since the death of her lover husband. The deed had not yet been made of the transfer of the farm, but it was only a question of legal formality. She was to receive the money in the form of interest-bearing securities and deliver the title on the following morning.

Arm in arm, mother and daughter visited again each hallowed spot, with the sweet sense of ownership. The place was in perfect order. Its flowers were in gorgeous bloom, its walks clean and neat, the fences painted, and the gates swung on new hinges.

They stood with their arms about one another, watching the sun sink behind the mountains, with tears of gratitude and hope stirring their souls.

Ben Cameron strode through the gate, and they hurried to meet him with cries of joy.

"Just dropped in a minute to see if you are snug for the night," he said.

"Of course, snug and so happy we've been hugging one another for hours," said the mother. "Oh, Ben, the clouds have lifted at last!"

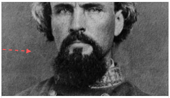
"Has Aunt Cindy come yet?" he asked.

"No, but she'll be here in the morning to get breakfast. We don't want anything to eat," she answered.

"Then I'll come out when I'm through my business to-night, and sleep in the house to keep you company."

"Nonsense," said the mother, "we couldn't think of putting you to the trouble. We've spent many a night here alone."

"But not in the past two years," he said with a frown.



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nathan_Bedford_F

Nathan Bedford Forrest

Nathan Bedford Forrest was a Confederate States Army general during the American Civil War and later the first Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan from 1867 to 1869.

Sometimes referred to as "enforcing federal law."

Women at the time were typically shuffled from the custody and control of one man, their father, into the custody and control of their husbands. Permission had to be attained from the father before this transfer of goods between gentlemen could proceed:

"The 'exchange of women' is the first form of trade, in which women are turned into a commodity and 'reified,' that is, they are thought of more as things than as human beings. The exchange of women, according to Levi-Strauss, marks the beginning of women's subordination. It in turn reinforces a sexual division of labor which institutes male dominance." - Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*

"We're not afraid," Marion said with a smile. "Besides, we'd keep you awake all night with our laughter and foolishness, rummaging through the house."

"You'd better let me," Ben protested.

"No," said the mother, "we'll be happier to-night alone, with only God's eye to see how perfectly silly we can be. Come and take supper with us to-morrow night. Bring Elsie and her guitar—I don't like the banjo—and we'll have a little love feast with music in the moonlight."

"Yes, do that," cried Marion. "I know we owe this good luck to her. I want to tell her how much I love her for it."

"Well, if you insist on staying alone," said Ben reluctantly, "I'll bring Miss Elsie to-morrow, but I don't like your being here without Aunt Cindy to-night."

"Oh, we're all right!" laughed Marion, "but what I want to know is what you are doing out so late every night since you've come home, and where you were gone for the past week?"

"Important business," he answered soberly.

"Business—I expect!" she cried. "Look here, Ben Cameron, have you another girl somewhere you're flirting with?"

"Yes," he answered slowly, coming closer and his voice dropping to a whisper, "and her name is Death."

"Why, Ben!" Marion gasped, placing her trembling hand unconsciously on his arm, a faint flush mantling her cheek and leaving it white.

"What do you mean?" asked the mother in low tones.

"Nothing that I can explain. I only wish to warn you both never to ask me such questions before any one."

"Forgive me," said Marion, with a tremor. "I didn't think it serious."

Ben pressed the little warm hand, watching her mouth quiver with a smile that was half a sigh, as he answered:

"You know I'd trust either of you with my life, but I can't be too careful."

"We'll remember, Sir Knight," said the mother. "Don't forget, then, to-morrow—and spend the evening with us. I wish I had one of Marion's new dresses done. Poor child, she has never had a decent dress in her life before. You know I never look at my pretty baby grown to such a beautiful womanhood without hearing Henry say over and over again—'Beauty is a sign of the soul—the body is the soul!'"

"Well, I've my doubts about your improving her with a fine dress," he replied thoughtfully. "I don't believe that more beautifully dressed women ever walked the earth than our girls of the South who came out of the war clad in the pathos of poverty, smiling bravely through the shadows, bearing themselves as queens though they wore the dress of the shepherdess."

"I'm almost tempted to kiss you for that, as you once took advantage of me!" said Marion, with enthusiasm.

The moon had risen and a whippoorwill was chanting his weird song on the lawn as Ben left them leaning on the gate.

It was past midnight before they finished the last touches in restoring their nest to its old homelike appearance and sat down happy and tired in the room in which Marion was born, brooding and dreaming and talking over the future.

The mother was hanging on the words of her daughter, all the baffled love of the dead poet husband, her griefs and poverty consumed in the glowing joy of new hopes. Her love for this child was now a triumphant passion, which had melted her own being into the object of worship, until the soul of the daughter was superimposed on the mother's as the magnetized by the magnetizer.

"And you'll never keep a secret from me, dear?" she asked Marion.

"Never."

"You'll tell me all your love affairs?" she asked softly, as she drew the shining blonde head down on her shoulder.

"Faithfully."

"You know I've been afraid sometimes you were keeping something back from me, deep down in your heart—and I'm jealous. You didn't refuse Henry Grier because you loved Ben Cameron—now, did you?"

The little head lay still before she answered:

"How many times must I tell you, Silly, that I've loved Ben since I can remember, that I will always love him, and when I meet my fate, at last, I shall boast to my children of my sweet girl romance with the Hero of Piedmont, and they shall laugh and cry with me over——"

"What's that?" whispered the mother, leaping to her feet.

"I heard nothing," Marion answered, listening.

"I thought I heard footsteps on the porch."

"Maybe it's Ben, who decided to come anyhow," said the girl.

"But he'd knock!" whispered the mother.

The door flew open with a crash, and four black brutes leaped into the room, Gus in the lead, with a revolver in his hand, his yellow teeth grinning through his thick lips.

"Scream now, an' I blow yer brains out," he growled.

Blanched with horror, the mother sprang before Marion with a shivering cry:

"What do you want?"

"Not you," said Gus, closing the blinds and handing a rope to another brute. "Tie de ole one ter de bedpost."

The mother screamed. A blow from a black fist in her mouth, and the rope was tied.

With the strength of despair she tore at the cords, half rising to her feet, while with mortal anguish she gasped:

"For God's sake, spare my baby! Do as you will with me, and kill me—do not touch her!"

Again the huge fist swept her to the floor.

Marion staggered against the wall, her face white, her delicate lips trembling with the chill of a fear colder than death.

"We have no money—the deed has not been delivered," she pleaded, a sudden glimmer of hope flashing in her blue eyes.

Gus stepped closer, with an ugly leer, his flat nose dilated, his sinister bead eyes wide apart, gleaming apelike, as he laughed:

"We ain't atter money!"

The girl uttered a cry, long, tremulous, heart-rending, piteous.

A single tiger spring, and the black claws of the beast sank into the soft white throat and she was still.

CHAPTER XII

I'm gonna go out on a limb and suggest that this is because the banjo has its roots in Africa and was an instrument popular with enslaved people. See? Racists can't even enjoy music because their minds are so tiny. It's no way to live.

https://www.npr.org/2011/08/23/139880625/th

The Banjo's Roots, Reconsidered

This is odd - I wonder why he thinks the addition of another woman, who were believed to be largely incapable of defending themselves during this time period, would make them any safer. I wonder if it has anything to do with "Aunt" Cindy being black. I'll have to dig.

Death for freedmen and race traitors, since here Ben is referring to the nighttime meetings held by the Ku Klux Klan. (All of the bravest, "manliest" of men do things under cover of night, amiright?)

Patriarchy's simple-minded insistence on defining women by their appearance is actually more about *men* than it is about women themselves. Germaine Greer described one facet of this truth in *The Female Eunuch*:

"Because [beautiful women are] universally desirable many other men are in love with her - a prime requisite of male fantasy, for the exploit must be hailed by other men."

In other words, men want "beautiful" women because it signals their status to other men within our crippled patriarchal hierarchy. The same applies to men who try to rack up the highest "body count" - the number has nothing to do with the women themselves, but rather everything to do with how a man is perceived by other males. Unless he has other men with whom to flaunt or brag about his conquests, the sex might as well not have happened at all. If other men don't know about it or see it, then it didn't take place. I have an entire arsenal of reasons that the supposedly sky-high male libido is a complete falsehood; this is but one of them.

Wow, this is an inadvertently revealing way to describe her future marriage, lmaoooo...

White supremacy and black male sexuality

"Historically, African Americans were defined as animals, as property to be owned by White men. Racist imagery took gender-specific forms. Because black men did hard manual labor, justifying the harsh conditions forced upon them required objectifying their bodies as big, strong, and stupid...This imagery possessed a sexual component as well. Fear of Black men's sexuality remained pervasive, and they were constantly depicted as a threat to White womanhood if not controlled. White elites reduced Black men to their bodies, and identified their muscles and their penises as their most important sites...This combination of violence and sexuality made black men inherently unsuitable for work until they were trained by White men and placed under their discipline and control. To explain these relations, White elites created the controlling image of the buck. Unlike images of African natives who roam their wild homelands like beasts untamed by civilization (colonialism), the representation of the buck described a human animal that had achieved partial domestication through slavery." - Abby L. Ferber

"Historically, this ideology of Black sexuality that pivoted on a Black heterosexual promiscuity not only upheld racism but it did so in gender specific ways. In the context of U.S. society, beliefs in Black male promiscuity took diverse forms during distinctive historical periods. For example, defenders of chattel slavery believed that slavery safely domesticated allegedly dangerous Black men because it regulated their promiscuity by placing it in the service of slave owners. Strategies of control were harsh and enslaved African men who were born in Africa or who had access

At the Dawn of Day

It was three o'clock before Marion regained consciousness, crawled to her mother, and crouched in dumb convulsions in her arms.

"What can we do, my darling?" the mother asked at last.

"Die—thank God, we have the strength left!"

"Yes, my love," was the faint answer.

"No one must ever know. We will hide quickly every trace of crime. They will think we strolled to Lover's Leap and fell over the cliff, and my name will always be sweet and clean—you understand—come, we must hurry——"

With swift hands, her blue eyes shining with a strange light, the girl removed the shreds of torn clothes, bathed, and put on the dress of spotless white she wore the night Ben Cameron kissed her and called her a heroine.

The mother cleaned and swept the room, piled the torn clothes and cord in the fireplace and burned them, dressed herself as if for a walk, softly closed the doors, and hurried with her daughter along the old pathway through the moonlit woods.

At the edge of the forest she stopped and looked back tenderly at the little home shining amid the roses, caught their faint perfume and faltered:

"Let's go back a minute—I want to see his room, and kiss Henry's picture again."

"No, we are going to him now—I hear him calling us in the mists above the cliff," said the girl—"come, we must hurry. We might go mad and fail!"

Down the dim cathedral aisles of the woods, hallowed by tender memories, through which the poet lover and father had taught them to walk with reverent feet and without fear, they fled to the old meeting-place of Love.

On the brink of the precipice, the mother trembled, paused, drew back, and gasped:

"Are you not afraid, my dear?"

"No; death is sweet now," said the girl. "I fear only the pity of those we love."

"Is there no other way? We might go among strangers," pleaded the mother.

"We could not escape ourselves! The thought of life is torture. Only those who hate me could wish that I live. The grave will be soft and cool, the light of day a burning shame."

"Come back to the seat a moment—let me tell you my love again," urged the mother. "Life still is dear while I hold your hand."

As they sat in brooding anguish, floating up from the river valley came the music of a banjo in a negro cabin, mingled with vulgar shout and song and dance. A verse of the ribald senseless lay of the player echoed above the banjo's pert refrain:

"Chicken in de bread tray, pickin' up dough;

Granny, will your dog bite? No, chile, no!"

The mother shivered and drew Marion closer.

"Oh, dear! oh, dear! has it come to this—all my hopes of your beautiful life!"

The girl lifted her head and kissed the quivering lips.

"With what loving wonder we saw you grow," she sighed, "from a tottering babe on to the hour we watched the mystic light of maidenhood dawn in your blue eyes—and all to end in this hideous, leprous shame. No—No! I will not have it! It's only a horrible dream! God is not dead!"

The young mother sank to her knees and buried her face in Marion's lap in a hopeless paroxysm of grief.

The girl bent, kissed the curling hair, and smoothed it with her soft hand.

A sparrow chirped in the tree above, a wren twittered in a bush, and down on the river's bank a mocking-bird softly waked his mate with a note of thrilling sweetness. "The morning is coming, dearest; we must go," said Marion. "This shame I can never forget, nor will the world forget. Death is the only way."

They walked to the brink, and the mother's arms stole round the girl.

"Oh, my baby, my beautiful darling, life of my life, heart of my heart, soul of my soul!"

They stood for a moment, as if listening to the music of the falls, looking out over the valley faintly outlining itself in the dawn. The first far-away streaks of blue light on the mountain ranges, defining distance, slowly appeared. A fresh motionless day brooded over the world as the amorous stir of the spirit of morning rose from the moist earth of the fields below.

A bright star still shone in the sky, and the face of the mother gazed on it intently. Did the Woman-spirit, the burning focus of the fiercest desire to live and will, catch in this supreme moment the star's Divine speech before which all human passions sink into silence? Perhaps, for she smiled. The daughter answered with a smile; and then, hand in hand, they stepped from the cliff into the mists and on through the opal gates of death.

to their African past were deemed to be the most dangerous. In contrast, the controlling image of the rapist appeared after emancipation because Southern Whites' feared that the unfettered promiscuity of Black freedmen constituted a threat to the Southern way of life. In this situation, beliefs about White womanhood helped shape the mythology of the Black rapist. Making White women responsible for keeping the purity of the White race, White men 'cast themselves as protectors of civilization, reaffirming not only their role as social and familial 'heads,' but their paternal property rights as well.'" - Patricia Hill Collins

Marion is contemplating suicide because, having been deprived of her virginity (by an act of rape with a black man, no less), she will now be considered worthless by society.

I'd also just like to point out that this is how powerful men believe their penises to be - they somehow possess the capability to alter everything about a woman, down to her basic worth. *Unbelievable.*

If a woman isn't beautiful and isn't a virgin (or otherwise sexually pleasing and available to a man/men), then there's quite literally no point to her existence. This has by no means gone away. It's super awesome growing up with this messaging being fed to you in the media 24-7; it really makes for a healthy self esteem and lifestyle choices.