HENTY GEORGE ALFRED

WITH LEE IN VIRGINIA: A STORY OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

George Henty

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Содержание

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PREFACE

My Dear Lads:

The Great War between the Northern and Southern States of America possesses a peculiar interest for us, not only because it was a struggle between two sections of a people akin to us in race and language, but because of the heroic courage with which the weaker party, with ill-fed, ill-clad, ill-equipped regiments, for four years sustained the contest with an adversary not only possessed of immense numerical superiority, but having the command of the sea, and being able to draw its arms and munitions of war from all the manufactories of Europe. Authorities still differ as to the rights of the case. The Confederates firmly believed that the States having voluntarily united, retained the right of withdrawing from the Union when they considered it for their advantage to do so. The Northerners took the opposite point of view, and an appeal to arms became inevitable. During the first two years of the war the struggle was conducted without inflicting unnecessary hardship upon the

general population. But later on the character of the war changed, and the Federal armies carried wide-spread destruction wherever they marched. Upon the other hand, the moment the struggle was over the conduct of the conquerors was marked by a clemency and generosity altogether unexampled in history, a complete amnesty being granted, and none, whether soldiers or civilians, being made to suffer for their share in the rebellion. The credit of this magnanimous conduct was to a great extent due to Generals Grant and Sherman, the former of whom took upon himself the responsibility of granting terms which, although they were finally ratified by his government, were at the time received with anger and indignation in the North. It was impossible, in the course of a single volume, to give even a sketch of the numerous and complicated operations of the war, and I have therefore confined myself to the central point of the great struggle—the attempts of the Northern armies to force their way to Richmond, the capital of Virginia and the heart of the Confederacy. Even in recounting the leading events in these campaigns, I have burdened my story with as few details as possible, it being my object now, as always, to amuse as well as to give instruction in the facts of history.

G. A. HENTY.

CHAPTER I. A VIRGINIAN PLANTATION

"I won't have it, Pearson; so it's no use your talking. If I had my way you shouldn't touch any of the field hands. And when I get my way—that won't be so very long—I will take good care you sha'n't. But you sha'n't hit Dan."

"He is not one of the regular house hands," was the reply; "and I shall appeal to Mrs. Wingfield as to whether I am to be interfered with in the discharge of my duties."

"You may appeal to my mother if you like, but I don't think that you will get much by it. I tell you you are a deal too fond of that whip, Pearson. It never was heard of on the estate during my father's time, and it sha'n't be again when it comes to be mine, I can tell you. Come along, Dan; I want you at the stables."

So saying, Vincent Wingfield turned on his heel, and followed by Dan, a negro lad of some eighteen years old, he walked off toward the house, leaving Jonas Pearson, the overseer of the Orangery estate, looking after him with an evil expression of face.

Vincent Wingfield was the son of an English officer, who, making a tour in the States, had fallen in love with and won the hand of Winifred Cornish, a rich Virginian heiress, and one of the belles of Richmond. After the marriage he had taken her

home to visit his family in England; but she had not been there many weeks before the news arrived of the sudden death of her father. A month later she and her husband returned to Virginia, as her presence was required there in reference to business matters connected with the estate, of which she was now the mistress.

The Orangery, so called from a large conservatory built by Mrs. Wingfield's grandfather, was the family seat, and the broad lands around it were tilled by upward of two hundred slaves. There were in addition three other properties lying in different parts of the State. Here Vincent, with two sisters, one older and one younger than himself, had been born. When he was eight years old Major and Mrs. Wingfield had gone over with their children to England, and had left Vincent there for four years at school, his holidays being spent at the house of his father's brother, a country gentleman in Sussex. Then he had been sent for unexpectedly; his father saying that his health was not good, and that he should like his son to be with him. A year later his father died.

Vincent was now nearly sixteen years old, and would upon coming of age assume the reins of power at the Orangery, of which his mother, however, would be the actual mistress as long as she lived. The four years Vincent had passed in the English school had done much to render the institution of slavery repugnant to him, and his father had had many serious talks with him during the last year of his life, and had shown him that there was a good deal to be said upon both sides of the subject.

"There are good plantations and bad plantations, Vincent; and there are many more good ones than bad ones. There are brutes to be found everywhere. There are bad masters in the Southern States just as there are bad landlords in every European country. But even from self-interest alone, a planter has greater reason for caring for the health and comfort of his slaves than an English farmer has in caring for the comfort of his laborers. Slaves are valuable property, and if they are overworked or badly cared for they decrease in value. Whereas if the laborer falls sick or is unable to do his work the farmer has simply to hire another hand. It is as much the interest of a planter to keep his slaves in good health and spirits as it is for a farmer to feed and attend to his horses properly.

"Of the two, I consider that the slave with a fairly kind master is to the full as happy as the ordinary English laborer. He certainly does not work so hard, if he is ill he is carefully attended to, he is well fed, he has no cares or anxieties whatever, and when old and past work he has no fear of the workhouse staring him in the face. At the same time I am quite ready to grant that there are horrible abuses possible under the laws connected with slavery.

"The selling of slaves, that is to say, the breaking up of families and selling them separately, is horrible and abominable. If an estate were sold together with all the slaves upon it, there would be no more hardship in the matter than there is when an estate changes hands in England, and the laborers upon it work for the new master instead of the old. Were I to liberate all the slaves

on this estate to-morrow and to send them North, I do not think that they would be in any way benefited by the change. They would still have to work for their living as they do now, and being naturally indolent and shiftless would probably fare much worse. But against the selling of families separately and the use of the lash I set my face strongly.

"At the same time, my boy, whatever your sentiments may be on this subject, you must keep your mouth closed as to them. Owing to the attempts of Northern Abolitionists, who have come down here stirring up the slaves to discontent, it is not advisable, indeed it is absolutely dangerous, to speak against slavery in the Southern States. The institution is here, and we must make the best we can of it. People here are very sore at the foul slanders that have been published by Northern writers. There have been many atrocities perpetrated undoubtedly, by brutes who would have been brutes whenever they had been born; but to collect a series of such atrocities, to string them together into a story, and to hold them up, as Mrs. Beecher Stowe has, as a picture of slave-life in the Southern States, is as gross a libel as if any one were to make a collection of all the wife-beatings and assaults of drunken English ruffians, and to publish them as a picture of the average life of English people.

"Such libels as these have done more to embitter the two sections of America against each other than anything else. Therefore, Vincent, my advice to you is, be always kind to your slaves—not over-indulgent, because they are very like children

and indulgence spoils them—but be at the same time firm and kind to them, and with other people avoid entering into any discussions or expressing any opinion with regard to slavery. You can do no good and you can do much harm. Take things as you find them and make the best of them. I trust that the time may come when slavery will be abolished; but I hope, for the sake of the slaves themselves, that when this is done it will be done gradually and thoughtfully, for otherwise it would inflict terrible hardship and suffering upon them as well as upon their masters."

There were many such conversations between father and son, for feeling on the subject ran very high in the Southern States, and the former felt that it was of the utmost importance to his son that he should avoid taking any strong line in the matter. Among the old families of Virginia there was indeed far less feeling on this subject than in some of the other States. Knowing the good feeling that almost universally existed between themselves and their slaves, the gentry of Virginia regarded with contempt the calumnies of which they were the subject. Secure in the affection of their slaves, an affection which was afterward abundantly proved during the course of the war, they scarcely saw the ugly side of the question. The worst masters were the smallest ones; the man who owned six slaves was far more apt to extort the utmost possible work from them than the planter who owned three or four hundred. And the worst masters of all were those who, having made a little money in trade or speculation in the towns, purchased a dozen slaves, a small piece of land, and tried

to set up as gentry.

In Virginia the life of the large planters was almost a patriarchal one; the indoor slaves were treated with extreme indulgence, and were permitted a far higher degree of freedom of remark and familiarity than is the case with servants in an English household. They had been the nurses or companions of the owners when children, had grown up with them, and regarded themselves, and were regarded by them, as almost part of the family. There was, of course, less connection between the planters and their field hands; but these also had for the most part been born on the estate, had as children been taught to look up to their white masters and mistresses, and to receive many little kindnesses at their hands.

They had been cared for in sickness, and knew that they would be provided for in old age. Each had his little allotment, and could raise fruit, vegetables, and fowls for his own use or for sale in his leisure time. The fear of loss of employment or the pressure of want, ever present to English laborers, had never fallen upon them. The climate was a lovely one, and their work far less severe than that of men forced to toil in cold and wet, winter and summer. The institution of slavery assuredly was capable of terrible abuses, and was marked in many instances by abominable cruelty and oppression; but taken all in all, the negroes on a well-ordered estate, under kind masters, were probably a happier class of people than the laborers upon any estate in Europe.

Jonas Pearson had been overseer in the time of Major Wingfield, but his authority had at that time been comparatively small, for the major himself personally supervised the whole working of the estate, and was greatly liked by the slaves, whose chief affections were, however, naturally bestowed upon their mistress, who had from childhood been brought up in their midst. Major Wingfield had not liked his overseer, but he had never had any ground to justify him making a change. Jonas, who was a Northern man, was always active and energetic; all Major Wingfield's orders were strictly and punctually carried out, and although he disliked the man, his employer acknowledged him to be an excellent servant.

After the major's death, Jonas Pearson had naturally obtained greatly increased power and authority. Mrs. Wingfield had great confidence in him, his accounts were always clear and precise, and although the profits of the estate were not quite so large as they had been in her husband's lifetime, this was always satisfactorily explained by a fall in prices, or by a part of the crops being affected by the weather. She flattered herself that she herself managed the estate, and at times rode over it, made suggestions, and issued orders, but this was only in fits and starts; and although Jonas came up two or three times a week to the house nominally to receive her orders, he managed her so adroitly that while she believed that everything was done by her directions, she in reality only followed out the suggestions which, in the first place, came from him.

She was aware, however, that there was less content and happiness on the estate than there had been in the old times. Complaints had reached her from time to time of overwork and harsh treatment. But upon inquiring into these matters, Jonas had always such plausible reasons to give that she was convinced he was in the right, and that the fault was among the slaves themselves, who tried to take advantage of the fact that they had no longer a master's eye upon them, and accordingly tried to shirk work, and to throw discredit upon the man who looked after the interests of their mistress; and so gradually Mrs. Wingfield left the management of affairs more and more in the hands of Jonas, and relied more implicitly upon him.

The overseer spared no pains to gain the good-will of Vincent. When the latter declared that the horse he rode had not sufficient life and spirit for him, Jonas had set inquiries on foot, and had selected for him a horse which, for speed and bottom, had no superior in the State. One of Mrs. Wingfield's acquaintances, however, upon hearing that she had purchased the animal, told her that it was notorious for its vicious temper, and she spoke angrily to Jonas on the subject in the presence of Vincent. The overseer excused himself by saying that he had certainly heard that the horse was high spirited and needed a good rider, and that he should not have thought of selecting it had he not known that Mr. Vincent was a first-class rider, and would not care to have a horse that any child could manage.

The praise was not undeserved. The gentlemen of Virginia

were celebrated as good riders; and Major Wingfield, himself a cavalry man, had been anxious that Vincent should maintain the credit of his English blood, and had placed him on a pony as soon as he was able to sit on one. A pony had been kept for his use during his holidays at his uncle's in England, and upon his return Vincent had, except during the hours he spent with his father, almost lived on horseback, either riding about the estate, or paying visits to the houses of other planters.

For an hour or more every day he exercised his father's horses in a paddock near the house, the major being wheeled down in an easy-chair and superintending his riding. As these horses had little to do and were full of spirit, Vincent's powers were often taxed to the utmost, and he had many falls; but the soil was light, and he had learned the knack of falling easily, and from constant practice was able at the age of fourteen to stick on firmly even without a saddle, and was absolutely fearless as to any animal he mounted.

In the two years which had followed he had kept up his riding. Every morning after breakfast he rode to Richmond, six miles distant, put up his horse at some stable there, and spent three hours at school; the rest of the day was his own, and he would often ride off with some of his schoolfellows who had also come in from a distance, and not return home till late in the evening. Vincent took after his English father rather than his Virginian mother both in appearance and character, and was likely to become as tall and brawny a man as the former had been when

he first won the love of the rich Virginian heiress.

He was full of life and energy, and in this respect offered a strong contrast to most of his schoolfellows of the same age. For although splendid riders and keen sportsmen, the planters of Virginia were in other respects inclined to indolence; the result partly of the climate, partly of their being waited upon from childhood by attendants ready to carry out every wish. He had his father's cheerful disposition and good temper, together with the decisive manner so frequently acquired by a service in the army, and at the same time he had something of the warmth and enthusiasm of the Virginian character.

Good rider as he was he was somewhat surprised at the horse the overseer had selected for him. It was certainly a splendid animal, with great bone and power; but there was no mistaking the expression of its turned-back eye, and the ears that lay almost flat on the head when any one approached him.

"It is a splendid animal, no doubt, Jonas," he said the first time he inspected it; "but he certainly looks as if he had a beast of a temper. I fear what was told my mother about him is no exaggeration; for Mr. Markham told me to-day, when I rode down there with his son, and said that we had bought Wildfire, that a friend of his had had him once, and only kept him for a week, for he was the most vicious brute he ever saw."

"I am sorry I have bought him now, sir," Jonas said. "Of course I should not have done so if I had heard these things before; but I was told he was one of the finest horses in the country, only

a little tricky, and as his price was so reasonable I thought it a great bargain. But I see now I was wrong, and that it wouldn't be right for you to mount him; so I think we had best send him in on Saturday to the market and let it go for what it will fetch. You see, sir, if you had been three or four years older it would have been different; but naturally at your age you don't like to ride such a horse as that."

"I sha'n't give it up without a trial," Vincent said shortly. "It is about the finest horse I ever saw; and if it hadn't been for its temper, it would be cheap at five times the sum you gave for it. I have ridden a good many bad-tempered horses for my friends during the last year, and the worst of them couldn't get me off."

"Well, sir, of course you will do as you please," Jonas said; "but please to remember if any harm comes of it that I strongly advised you not to have anything to do with it, and I did my best to dissuade you from trying."

Vincent nodded carelessly, and then turned to the black groom.

"Jake, get out that cavalry saddle of my father's, with the high cantle and pommel, and the rolls for the knees. It's like an armchair, and if one can't stick on on that, one deserves to be thrown."

While the groom was putting on the saddle, Vincent stood patting the horse's head and talking to it, and then taking its rein led it down into the inclosure.

"No, I don't want the whip," he said, as Jake offered him one.

"I have got the spurs, and likely enough the horse's temper may have been spoiled by knocking it about with a whip; but we will try what kindness will do with it first."

"Me no like his look, Massa Vincent; he debbil ob a hoss dat."

"I don't think he has a nice temper, Jake; but people learn to control their temper, and I don't see why horses shouldn't. At any rate we will have a try at it. He looks as if he appreciates being patted and spoken to already. Of course if you treat a horse like a savage he will become savage. Now, stand out of the way."

Gathering the reins together, and placing one hand upon the pommel, Vincent sprang into the saddle without touching the stirrups; then he sat for a minute or two patting the horse's neck. Wildfire, apparently disgusted at having allowed himself to be mounted so suddenly, lashed out viciously two or three times, and then refused to move. For half an hour Vincent tried the effect of patient coaxing, but in vain.

"Well, if you won't do it by fair means you must by foul," Vincent said at last, and sharply pricked him with his spurs.

Wildfire sprang into the air, and then began a desperate series of efforts to rid himself of his rider, rearing and kicking in such quick succession that he seemed half the time in the air. Finding after awhile that his efforts were unavailing, he subsided at last into sulky immovability. Again Vincent tried coaxing and patting, but as no success attended these efforts, he again applied the spur sharply. This time the horse responded by springing forward like an arrow from a bow, dashed at the top of his speed

across the inclosure, cleared the high fence without an effort, and then set off across the country.

He had attempted to take the bit in his teeth, but with a sharp jerk as he drove the spurs in, Vincent had defeated his intention. He now did not attempt to check or guide him, but keeping a light hand on the reins let him go his own course. Vincent knew that so long as the horse was going full speed it could attempt no trick to unseat him, and he therefore sat easily in his saddle.

For six miles Wildfire continued his course, clearing every obstacle without abatement to his speed, and delighting his rider with his power and jumping qualities. Occasionally, only when the course he was taking would have led him to obstacles impossible for the best jumper to surmount, Vincent attempted to put the slightest pressure upon one rein or the other, so as to direct it to an easier point.

At the end of six miles the horse's speed began slightly to abate, and Vincent, abstaining from the use of his spurs, pressed it with his knees and spoke to it cheerfully urging it forward. He now from time to time bent forward and patted it, and for another six miles kept it going at a speed almost as great as that at which it had started. Then he allowed it gradually to slacken its pace, until at last first the gallop and then the trot ceased, and it broke into a walk.

"You have had a fine gallop, old fellow," Vincent said, patting it; "and so have I. There's been nothing for you to lose your temper about, and the next road we come upon we will turn our

face homeward. Half a dozen lessons like this, and then no doubt we shall be good friends."

The journey home was performed at a walk, Vincent talking the greater part of the time to the horse. It took a good deal more than six lessons before Wildfire would start without a preliminary struggle with his master, but in the end kindness and patience conquered. Vincent often visited the horse in the stables, and, taking with him an apple or some pieces of sugar, spent some time there talking to and petting it. He never carried a whip, and never used the spurs except in forcing it to make its first start.

Had the horse been naturally ill-tempered Vincent would probably have failed, but, as he happened afterward to learn, its first owner had been a hot-tempered and passionate young planter, who, instead of being patient with it, had beat it about the head, and so rendered it restive and bad-tempered. Had Vincent not laid aside his whip before mounting it for the first time, he probably would never have effected a cure. It was the fact that the animal had no longer a fear of his old enemy the whip as much as the general course of kindness and good treatment that had effected the change in his behavior.

It was just when Vincent had established a good understanding between himself and Wildfire that he had the altercation with the overseer, whom he found about to flog the young negro Dan. Pearson had sent the lad half an hour before on a message to some slaves at work at the other end of the estate, and had

found him sitting on the ground watching a tree in which he had discovered a possum. That Dan deserved punishment was undoubted. He had at present no regular employment upon the estate. Jake, his father, was head of the stables, and Dan had made himself useful in odd jobs about the horses, and expected to become one of the regular stable hands. The overseer was of opinion that there were already more negroes in the stable than could find employment, and had urged upon Mrs. Wingfield that one of the hands there and the boy Dan should be sent out to the fields. She, however, refused.

"I know you are quite right, Jonas, in what you say. But there were always four hands in the stable in my father's time, and there always have been up to now; and though I know they have an easy time of it, I certainly should not like to send any of them out to the fields. As to Dan, we will think about it. When his father was about his age he used to lead my pony when I first took to riding, and when there is a vacancy Dan must come into the stable. I could not think of sending him out as a field hand, in the first place for his father's sake, but still more for that of Vincent. Dan used to be told off to see that he did not get into mischief when he was a little boy, and he has run messages and been his special boy since he came back. Vincent wanted to have him as his regular house servant; but it would have broken old Sam's heart if, after being my father's boy and my husband's, another had taken his place as Vincent's."

And so Dan had remained in the stable, but regarding Vincent

as his special master, carrying notes for him to his friends, or doing any odd jobs he might require, and spending no small portion of his time in sleep. Thus he was an object of special dislike to the overseer; in the first place because he had not succeeded in having his way with regard to him, and in the second because he was a useless hand, and the overseer loved to get as much work as possible out of every one on the estate. The message had been a somewhat important one, as he wanted the slaves for some work that was urgently required; and he lost his temper, or he would not have done an act which would certainly bring him into collision with Vincent.

He was well aware that the lad did not really like him, and that his efforts to gain his good-will had failed, and he had foreseen that sooner or later there would be a struggle for power between them. However, he relied upon his influence with Mrs. Wingfield, and upon the fact that she was the life-owner of the Orangery, and believed that he would be able to maintain his position even when Vincent came of age. Vincent on his side objected altogether to the overseer's treatment of the hands, of which he heard a good deal from Dan, and had already remonstrated with his mother on the subject. He, however, gained nothing by this. Mrs. Wingfield had replied that he was too young to interfere in such matters, that his English ideas would not do in Virginia, and that naturally the slaves were set against the overseer; and that now Pearson had no longer a master to support him, he was obliged to be more severe than before

to enforce obedience. At the same time it vexed her at heart that there should be any severity on the Orangery estate, where the best relations had always prevailed between the masters and slaves, and she had herself spoken to Jonas on the subject.

He had given her the same answer that she had given her son: "The slaves will work for a master, Mrs. Wingfield, in a way they will not for a stranger. They set themselves against me, and if I were not severe with them I should get no work at all out of them. Of course, if you wish it, they can do as they like; but in that case they must have another overseer. I cannot see a fine estate going to ruin. I believe myself some of these Abolition fellows have been getting among them and doing them mischief, and that there is a bad spirit growing up among them. I can assure you that I am as lenient with them as is possible to be. But if they won't work I must make them, so long as I stay here."

And so the overseer had had his way. She knew that the man was a good servant, and that the estate was kept in excellent order. After all, the severities of which she had heard complaints were by no means excessive; and it was not to be expected that a Northern overseer could rule entirely by kindness, as the owner of an estate could do. A change would be most inconvenient to her, and she would have difficulty in suiting herself so well another time. Besides, the man had been with her sixteen years, and was, as she believed, devoted to her interests. Therefore she turned a deaf ear to Vincent's remonstrances.

She had always been somewhat opposed to his being left in

England at school, urging that he would learn ideas there that would clash with those of the people among whom his life was to be spent; and she still considered that her views had been justified by the result.

The overseer was the first to give his version of the story about Dan's conduct; for on going to the house Vincent found his sisters, Rosa and Annie, in the garden, having just returned from a two days' visit to some friends in Richmond, and stayed chatting with them and listening to their news for an hour, and in the meantime Jonas had gone in and seen Mrs. Wingfield and told his story.

"I think, Mrs. Wingfield," he said when he had finished, "that it will be better for me to leave you. It is quite evident that I can have no authority over the hands if your son is to interfere when I am about to punish a slave for an act of gross disobedience and neglect. I found that all the tobacco required turning, and now it will not be done this afternoon owing to my orders not being carried out, and the tobacco will not improbably be injured in quality. My position is difficult enough as it is; but if the slaves see that instead of being supported I am thwarted by your son, my authority is gone altogether. No overseer can carry on his work properly under such circumstances."

"I will see to the matter, Jonas," Mrs. Wingfield said decidedly. "Be assured that you have my entire support, and I will see that my son does not again interfere."

When, therefore, Vincent entered the house and began his

complaint he found himself cut short.

"I have heard the story already, Vincent. Dan acted in gross disobedience, and thoroughly deserved the punishment Jonas was about to give him. The work of the estate cannot be carried on if such conduct is to be tolerated; and once for all, I will permit no interference on your part with Jonas. If you have any complaints to make, come to me and make them; but you are not yourself to interfere in any way with the overseer. As for Dan, I have directed Jonas that the next time he gives cause for complaint he is to go into the fields."

Vincent stood silent for a minute, then he said quietly:

"Very well, mother. Of course you can do as you like; but at any rate I will not keep my mouth shut when I see that fellow ill-treating the slaves. Such things were never done in my father's time, and I won't see them done now. You said the other day you would get me a nomination to West Point as soon as I was sixteen. I should be glad if you would do so. By the time I have gone through the school, you will perhaps see that I have been right about Jonas."

So saying, he turned and left the room and again joined his sisters in the drawing-room.

"I have just told mother that I will go to West Point, girls," he said. "Father said more than once that he thought it was the best education I could get in America."

"But I thought you had made up your mind that you would rather stop at home, Vincent?"

"So I had, and so I would have done, but mother and I differ in opinion. That fellow Jonas was going to flog Dan, and I stopped him this morning, and mother takes his part against me. You know, I don't like the way he goes on with the slaves. They are not half so merry and happy as they used to be, and I don't like it. We shall have one of them running away next, and that will be a nice thing on what used to be considered one of the happiest plantations in Virginia. I can't make mother out; I should have thought that she would have been the last person in the world to have allowed the slaves to be harshly treated."

"I am sure we don't like Jonas more than you do, Vincent; but you see mamma has to depend upon him so much. No, I don't think she can like it; but you can't have everything you like in a man, and I know she thinks he is a very good overseer. I suppose she could get another?"

Vincent said he thought that there could not be much difficulty about getting an overseer.

"There might be a difficulty in getting one she could rely on so thoroughly," Rosa said. "You see a great deal must be left to him. Jonas has been here a good many years now, and she has learned to trust him. It would be a long time before she had the same confidence in a stranger; and you may be sure that he would have his faults, though, perhaps, not the same as those of Jonas. I think you don't make allowance enough for mamma, Vincent. I quite agree with you as to Jonas, and I don't think mamma can like his harshness to the slaves any more than you do; but every

one says what a difficulty it is to get a really trustworthy and capable overseer, and, of course, it is all the harder when there is no master to look after him."

"Well, in a few years I shall be able to look after an overseer," Vincent said.

"You might do so, of course, Vincent, if you liked; but unless you change a good deal, I don't think your supervision would amount to much. When you are not at school you are always on horseback and away, and we see little enough of you, and I do not think you are likely for a long time yet to give up most of your time to looking after the estate."

"Perhaps you are right," Vincent said, after thinking for a minute; "but I think I could settle down too, and give most of my time to the estate, if I was responsible for it. I dare say mother is in a difficulty over it, and I should not have spoken as I did; I will go in and tell her so."

Vincent found his mother sitting as he had left her. Although she had sided with Jonas, it was against her will; for it was grievous to her to hear complaints of the treatment of the slaves at the Orangery. Still, as Rosa had said, she felt every confidence in her overseer, and believed that he was an excellent servant. She was conscious that she herself knew nothing of business, and that she must therefore give her entire confidence to her manager. She greatly disliked the strictness of Jonas; but if, as he said, the slaves would not obey him without, he must do as he thought best.

"I think I spoke too hastily, mother," Vincent said as he

entered; "and I am sure that you would not wish the slaves to be ill-treated more than I should. I dare say Jonas means for the best."

"I feel sure that he does, Vincent. A man in his position cannot make himself obeyed like a master. I wish it could be otherwise, and I will speak to him on the subject; but it will not do to interfere with him too much. A good overseer is not easy to get, and the slaves are always ready to take advantage of leniency. An easy master makes bad work, but an easy overseer would mean ruin to an estate. I am convinced that Jonas has our interests at heart, and I will tell him that I particularly wish that he will devise some other sort of punishment, such as depriving men who won't work of some of their privileges instead of using the lash."

"Thank you, mother. At any rate, he might be told that the lash is never to be used without first appealing to you."

"I will see about it, Vincent, and talk it over with him." And with that Vincent was satisfied.

CHAPTER II. BUYING A SLAVE

Mrs. Wingfield did talk the matter over with the overseer, and things went on in consequence more smoothly. Vincent, however, adhered to his wish, and it was arranged that as soon as he could get a nomination he should go to West Point, which is to the American army what Sandhurst and Woolwich are to England. Before that could be done, however, a great political agitation sprang up. The slave States were greatly excited over the prospect of a Republican president being chosen, for the Republicans were to a great extent identified with the abolition movement; and public feeling, which had for some time run high, became intensified as the time approached for the election of a new president, and threats that if the Democrats were beaten and a Republican elected the slave States would secede from the Union, were freely indulged in.

In Virginia, which was one of the most northern of the slave States, opinion was somewhat divided, there being a strong minority against any extreme measures being taken. Among Vincent's friends, however, who were for the most part the sons of planters, the Democratic feeling was very strongly in the ascendant, and their sympathies were wholly with the Southern States. That these had a right to secede was assumed by them as being unquestionable.

But in point of fact there was a great deal to be said on

both sides. The States which first entered the Union in 1776 considered themselves to be separate and sovereign States, each possessing power and authority to manage its own affairs, and forming only a federation in order to construct a central power, and so to operate with more effect against the mother country. Two years later the constitution of the United States was framed, each State giving up a certain portion of its authority, reserving its own self-government and whatever rights were not specifically resigned.

No mention was made in the constitution of the right of a State to secede from the Union, and while those who insisted that each State had a right to secede if it chose to do so declared that this right was reserved, their opponents affirmed that such a case could never have been contemplated. Thus the question of absolute right had never been settled, and it became purely one of force.

Early in November, 1860, it became known that the election of Mr. Lincoln, the Republican candidate, was assured, and on the ninth of that month the representatives of South Carolina met at Charleston, and unanimously authorized the holding of a State convention to meet in the third week in December. The announcement caused great excitement, for it was considered certain that the convention would pass a vote of secession, and thus bring the debated question to an issue. Although opinion in Virginia was less unanimous than in the more southern States, it was generally thought that she would imitate the example of

South Carolina.

On the day following the receipt of the news, Vincent, who had ridden over to the plantations of several of his friends to talk the matter over, was returning homeward, when he heard the sound of heavy blows with a whip and loud curses, and a moment later a shrill scream in a woman's voice rose in the air.

Vincent checked his horse mechanically with an exclamation of anger. He knew but too well what was going on beyond the screen of shrubs that grew on the other side of the fence bordering the road. For a moment he hesitated, and then muttering, "What's the use!" was about to touch the horse with the whip and gallop on, when the shriek again rose louder and more agonizing than before. With a cry of rage Vincent leaped from his horse, threw the reins over the top of the fence, climbed over it in a moment, and burst his way through the shrubbery.

Close by a negro was being held by four others, two having hold of each wrist and holding his arms extended to full length, while a white lad, some two years Vincent's senior, was showering blows with a heavy whip upon him. The slave's back was already covered with weals, and the blood was flowing from several places. A few yards distant a black girl, with a baby in her arms, was kneeling on the ground screaming for mercy for the slave. Just as Vincent burst through the bushes, the young fellow, irritated at her cries, turned round and delivered a tremendous blow with the whip on her bare shoulders.

This time no cry came from her lips, but the slave, who had

stood immovable while the punishment was being inflicted upon himself, made a desperate effort to break from the men who held him. He was unsuccessful, but before the whip could again fall on the woman's shoulders, Vincent sprang forward, and seizing it, wrested it from the hands of the striker. With an oath of fury and surprise at this sudden interruption, the young fellow turned upon Vincent.

"You are a coward and a blackguard, Andrew Jackson!" Vincent exclaimed, white with auger. "You are a disgrace to Virginia, you ruffian!"

Without a word the young planter, mad with rage at this interference, rushed at Vincent; but the latter had learned the use of his fists at his English school, and riding exercises had strengthened his muscles, and as his opponent rushed at him, he met him with a blow from the shoulder which sent him staggering back with the blood streaming from his lips. He again rushed forward, and heavy blows were exchanged; then they closed and grappled. For a minute they swayed to and from but although much taller, the young planter was no stronger than Vincent, and at last they came to the ground with a crash, Vincent uppermost, Jackson's head as he fell coming with such force against a low stump that he lay insensible.

The contest had been so sudden and furious that none had attempted to interfere. Indeed the negroes were so astonished that they had not moved from the moment when Vincent made his appearance upon the scene. The lad rose to his feet.

"You had better carry him up to the house and throw some water on him," he said to the negroes, and then turned to go away. As he did so, the slave who had been flogged broke from the others, who had indeed loosened their hold, and ran up to Vincent, threw himself on his knees, and taking the lad's hand pressed it to his lips.

"I am afraid I haven't done you much good," Vincent said. "You will be none the better off for my interference; but I couldn't help it." So saying he made his way through the shrubbery, cleared the fence, mounted, and rode homeward.

"I have been a fool," he said to himself as he rode along. "It will be all the worse for that poor beggar afterward; still I could not help it. I wonder will there be any row about it. I don't much expect there will, the Jacksons don't stand well now, and this would not do them any good with the people round; besides I don't think Jackson would like to go into court to complain of being thrashed by a fellow a head shorter than himself. It's blackguards like him who give the Abolitionists a right to hold up the slave-owners as being tyrants and brutes."

The Jacksons were newcomers in Virginia. Six years before, the estate, of which the Cedars, as their place was called, formed a part, was put up for sale. It was a very large one, and having been divided into several portions to suit buyers, the Cedars had been purchased by Jackson, who, having been very successful as a storekeeper at Charleston, had decided upon giving up the business and leaving South Carolina, and settling down as a land-

owner in some other State. His antecedents, however, were soon known at Richmond, and the old Virginian families turned a cold shoulder to the newcomer.

Had he been a man of pleasant manners, he would gradually have made his way; but he was evidently not a gentleman. The habits of trade stuck to him, and in a very short time there were rumors that the slaves, whom he had bought with the property, found him a harsh and cruel master. This in itself would have been sufficient to bring him disrepute in Virginia, where as a rule the slaves were treated with great kindness, and indeed considered their position to be infinitely superior to that of the poorer class of whites. Andrew Jackson had been for a few months at school with Vincent; he was unpopular there, and from the rumors current as to the treatment of the slaves on the estate, was known by the nickname of the "slave-driver."

Had Vincent been the son of a white trader, or a small cultivator, he knew well enough that his position would be a very serious one, and that he would have had to ride to the border of the State with all speed. He would have been denounced at once as an Abolitionist, and would have been accused of stirring up the slaves to rebellion against their masters; a crime of the most serious kind in the Southern States. But placed as he was, as the heir of a great estate worked by slaves, such a cry could hardly be raised against him. He might doubtless be fined and admonished for interfering between a master and his slave; but the sympathy of the better classes in Virginia would be entirely with him.

Vincent, therefore, was but little concerned for himself; but he doubted greatly whether his interference had not done much more harm than good to the slave and his wife, for upon them Andrew Jackson would vent his fury. He rode direct to the stables instead of alighting as usual at the door. Dan, who had been sitting in the veranda waiting for him, ran down to the stables as he saw him coming.

"Give the horse to one of the others, Dan; I want to speak to you. Dan," he went on when he had walked with him a short distance from the stables, "I suppose you know some of the hands on Jackson's plantation."

Dan grinned, for although there was not supposed to be any communication between the slaves on the different estates, it was notorious that at night they were in the habit of slipping out of their huts and visiting each other.

"I know some ob dem, Massa Vincent. What you want ob dem? Berry bad master, Massa Jackson. Wust master hereabouts."

Vincent related what had happened, to Dan's intense delight.

"Now, Dan," he went on, "I am afraid that after my interference they will treat that poor fellow and his wife worse than before. I want you to find out for me what is going on at Jackson's. I do not know that I can do anything, however badly they treat them; but I have been thinking that if they ill-treat them very grossly, I will get together a party of fifteen or twenty of my friends and we will go in a body to Jackson's, and warn him

that if he behaves with cruelty to his slaves, we will make it so hot for him that he will have to leave the state. I don't say that we could do anything; but as we should represent most of the large estates round here, I don't think old Jackson and his son would like being sent to Coventry. The feeling is very strong at present against ill-treatment of the slaves. If these troubles lead to war almost all of us will go into the army, and we do not like the thought of the possibility of troubles among the hands when the whites are all away."

"I will find out all about it for you to-night, sah. I don't suspect dat dey will do nuffin to-day. Andrew Jackson too sick after dat knock against de tump. He keep quiet a day or two."

"Well, Dan, you go over to-night and find out all about it. I expect I had better have left things alone, but now I have interfered I shall go on with it."

Mrs. Wingfield was much displeased when Vincent told her at dinner of his incident at Jackson's plantation and even his sisters were shocked at this interference between a master and his slave.

"You will get yourself into serious trouble with these fanciful notions of yours," Mrs. Wingfield said angrily. "You know as well as I do how easy it is to get up a cry against any one as an Abolitionist and how difficult to disprove the accusation; and just at present, when the passions of every man in the South are inflamed to the utmost, such an accusation will be most serious. In the present instance there does not seem that there is a shadow of excuse for your conduct. You simply heard cries of a slave

being flogged. You deliberately leave the road and enter these people's plantation and interfere without, so far as I can see, the least reason for doing so. You did not inquire what the man's offense was; and he may for aught you know have half murdered his master. You simply see a slave being flogged and you assault his owner. If the Jacksons lay complaints against you it is quite probable that you may have to leave the state. What on earth can have influenced you to act in such a mad-brained way?"

"I did not interfere to prevent his flogging the slave, mother, but to prevent his flogging the slave's wife, which was pure wanton brutality. It is not a question of slavery one way or the other. Any one has a right to interfere to put a stop to brutality. If I saw a man brutally treating a horse or a dog I should certainly do so; and if it is right to interfere to save a dumb animal from brutal ill-treatment surely it must be justifiable to save a woman in the same case. I am not an Abolitionist. That is to say, I consider that slaves on a properly managed estate, like ours, for instance, are just as well off as are the laborers on an estate in Europe; but I should certainly like to see laws passed to protect them from ill-treatment. Why, in England there are laws against cruelty to animals; and a man who brutally flogged a dog or a horse would get a month's imprisonment with hard labor. I consider it a disgrace to us that a man may here ill-treat a human being worse than he might in England a dumb animal."

"You know, Vincent," his mother said more quietly, "that I object as much as you do to the ill-treatment of the slaves,

and that the slaves here, as on all well-conducted plantations in Virginia, are well treated; but this is not a time for bringing in laws or carrying out reforms. It is bad enough to have scores of Northerners doing their best to stir up mischief between masters and slaves without a Southern gentleman mixing himself up in the matter. We have got to stand together as one people and to protect our State rights from interference."

"I am just as much in favor of State rights as any one else, mother; and if, as seems likely, the present quarrel is to be fought out, I hope I shall do my best for Virginia as well as other fellows of my own age. But just as I protest against any interference by the Northerners with our laws, I say that we ought to amend our laws so as not to give them the shadow of an excuse for interference. It is brutes like the Jacksons who have afforded the materials for libels like 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' upon us as a people; and I can't say that I am a bit sorry for having given that young Jackson what he deserved."

"Well, I hope there will be no trouble come of it," Mrs. Wingfield said. "I shouldn't think the Jacksons would like the exposure of their doings which would be caused by bringing the matter into court; but if they do, you may be quite sure that a jury in Richmond at the present time would find against you."

"I don't suppose that they will do anything, mother. But if they must, they must; and I don't suppose anything serious will come of it any way."

The next morning Vincent went down early to the stables. As

he approached them Dan came out to meet him.

"Well, Dan, what's your news?"

"Berry great bobbery ober at Jackson's last night, Massa Vincent. Fust of all I crept round to de huts ob de field hands. Dey all know nuffin bout it; but one of dem he goes off and gets to hab a talk with a gal employed in de house who was in de habit of slipping out to see him. She say when de young un war carried in de old man go on furious; he bring suit against you, he hab you punished berry much—no saying what he not going to do. After a time de young un come round, he listen to what the old man say for some time; den he answer: 'No use going on like dat. Set all de county families against us if we have suit. As to dat infernal young villain, me pay him out some other way.' Den de old man say he cut de flesh off de bones ob dat nigger; but de young one say: 'Mustn't do dat. You sure to hear about it, and make great bobbery. Find some oder way to punish him.' Den dey talk together for some time, but girl not hear any more."

"Well, then, there will be no suit anyhow," Vincent said. "As to paying me out some other way, I will look after myself, Dan. I believe that fellow Jackson is capable of anything, and I will be on the lookout for him."

"Be sure you do, Massa Vincent. You ride about a great deal, dat fellow bery like take a shot at you from behind tree. Don't you go near dat plantation, or sure enuff trouble come."

"I will look out, Dan. There is one thing, I always ride fast; and it wants a very good shot to hit one at a gallop. I don't think

they will try that; for if he missed, as he would be almost sure to do, it would be a good deal worse for him than this affair would have been had he brought it into court. You keep your ears open, Dan, and find out how they are thinking of punishing that poor fellow for my interference on his behalf."

After breakfast a negro arrived with a note for Mrs. Wingfield from Mr. Jackson, complaining of the unwarrantable and illegal interference by her son on behalf of a slave who was being very properly punished for gross misconduct; and of the personal assault upon his son. The writer said that he was most reluctant to take legal proceedings against a member of so highly respected a family, but that it was impossible that he could submit to such an outrage as this.

Although Mrs. Wingfield had expressed her disapproval of Vincent's conduct on the evening before, there was no trace of that feeling in her reply to this letter. She wrote in the third person, coldly acknowledging the receipt of Mr. Jackson's letter, and saying that she had heard from her son of his interference to put a stop to one of those brutal scenes which brought discredit upon the Southern States, and that she considered he had most rightly punished Mr. Jackson, jun., for his inhuman and revolting conduct; that she was perfectly aware the interference had been technically illegal, but that her son was fully prepared to defend his conduct if called upon to do so in the courts, and to pay any fine that might be inflicted for his suffering himself to be carried away by his righteous indignation. She ended by saying that as

Mr. Jackson was a stranger in Virginia, he was perhaps not aware that the public sentiment of that State was altogether opposed to such acts of brutality as that of which his son had been guilty.

"What have you been doing to that fellow Andrew Jackson?" one of Vincent's friends, a young fellow two years older than himself, said to him a few days later. "There were a lot of us talking over things yesterday, in Richmond, and he came up and joined in. Something was said about Abolitionists, and he said that he should like to see every Abolitionist in the State strung up to a tree. He is always pretty violent, as you know; but on the present occasion he went further than usual, and then went on to say that the worst and most dangerous Abolitionists were not Northern men but Southerners, who were traitors to their State.

"He said: 'For example, there is that young Wingfield. He has been to England, and has come back with his heart filled with Abolitionist notions;' and that such opinions at the present time were a danger to the State.

"Two or three of us took the matter up, as you might guess, and told him he had better mind what he was saying or it would be the worse for him. Harry Furniss went so far as to tell him that he was a liar, and that if he didn't like that he would have satisfaction in the usual way. Master Jackson didn't like it, but muttered something and slunk off. What's the matter between you?"

"I should not have said anything about it," Vincent replied, "if Jackson had chosen to hold his tongue; but as he chooses to

go about attacking me, there is no reason why I should keep the matter secret." And he then related what had taken place.

The young Virginian gave a low whistle.

"I don't say I blame you, Wingfield; but I tell you, you might have got yourself into an awful mess if the Jacksons had chosen to take it up. You know how hot the feeling is at present, and it is a serious matter at any time to interfere between a master and his slaves in the Southern States. Of course among us our feelings would be all against Jackson; but among the poorer class of whites, who have been tremendously excited by the speeches, both in the North and here, the cry of Abolitionist at the present moment is like a red rag to a bull. However, I understand now the fellow's enmity to you.

"None of us ever liked him when he was at school with us. He is an evil-tempered brute, and I am afraid you may have some trouble with him. If he goes about talking as he did to us, he would soon get up a feeling against you. Of course it would be nonsense to openly accuse a member of an old Virginian family of being an Abolitionist; but it would be easy enough to set a pack of the rough classes of the town against you, and you might get badly mauled if they caught you alone. The fellow is evidently a coward or he would have taken up what Furniss said; but a coward who is revengeful is a good deal more dangerous than an open foe. However, I will talk it over with some of the others, and we will see if we can't stop Andrew Jackson's mouth."

The result of this was that the next day half a dozen of

Vincent's friends wrote a joint letter to Andrew Jackson, saying that they regarded his statements respecting Vincent as false and calumnious, and that if he repeated them they would jointly and severally hold him responsible; and that if, as a result of such accusations, any harm happened to Vincent, they should know where to look for the originator of the mischief, and punish him accordingly.

"You should be more careful, Andrew," his father said, as white with fury, he showed him his letter. "It was you who were preaching prudence the other day, and warning me against taking steps that would set all the whole country against us; and now, you see, you have been letting your tongue run, and have drawn this upon yourself. Keep quiet for the present, my son; all sorts of things may occur before long, and you will get your chance. Let this matter sleep for the present."

A day or two later when Vincent went down to the stables he saw that Dan had something to tell him, and soon found out that he wished to speak to him alone.

"What is your news, Dan?"

"I heard last night, Massa Vincent, that old man Jackson is going to sell Dinah; dat de wife ob de man dey flogged."

"They are going to sell her!" Vincent repeated indignantly. "What are they going to do that for?"

"To punish Tony, sah. Dar am no law against dar selling her. I hear dat dey are going to sell two oder boys, so dat it cannot be said dat dey do it on purpose to spite Tony. I reckon, sah, day

calculate dat when dey sell his wife Tony get mad and run away, and den when dey catch him again day flog him pretty near to death. Folk always do dat with runaway slaves; no one can say nuffin agin dem for dat."

"It's an infamous shame that it should be lawful to separate man and wife," Vincent said. "However, we will see what we can do. You manage to pass the word to Tony to keep up his spirits, and not let them drive him to do anything rash. Tell him I will see that his wife does not get into bad hands. I suppose they will sell the baby too?"

"Yes, Massa Vincent. Natural the baby will go wid de modder."

Vincent watched the list of advertisements of slaves to be sold, and a day or two later saw a notice to the effect that Dinah Morris, age twenty-two, with a male baby at her breast, would be sold on the following Saturday. He mounted his horse and rode into Richmond. He had not liked to speak to his mother on the subject, for she had not told him of the letter she had written to Jackson; and he thought that she might disapprove of any interference in the matter, consequently he went down to Mr. Renfrew, the family solicitor.

"Mr. Renfrew," he said, "I want some money; can you lend it me?"

"You want money," the solicitor said in surprise. "What on earth do you want money for? and if you want it, why don't you ask your mother for it? How much do you want?"

"I don't know exactly. About eight hundred dollars, I should think; though it may be a thousand. I want to buy a slave."

"You want to buy a slave!" repeated Mr. Renfrew. "What on earth do you want to buy a slave for? You have more than you want now at the Orangery."

"It's a slave that man Jackson is going to sell next Saturday, on purpose to spite the poor creature's husband and drive him to desperation," and Vincent then repeated the whole story of the circumstances that had led up to the sale.

"It is all very abominable on the part of these Jacksons," Mr. Renfrew said, "but your interference was most imprudent, my young friend; and, as you see, it has done harm rather than good. If you are so quixotic as to become the champion of every ill-treated slave in the State, your work is pretty well cut out for you."

"I know that, sir," Vincent replied, smiling, "and I can assure you I did not intend to enter upon any such crusade; but, you see, I have wrongly or rightly mixed myself up in this, and I want to repair the mischief which, as you say, I have caused. The only way I can see is to buy this negress and her baby."

"But I do not see that you will carry out your object if you do, Vincent. She will be separated just as much from her husband if you buy her as if any one else does. He is at one plantation and she is at another, and were they ten miles apart or a hundred, they are equally separated."

"I quite see that, Mr. Renfrew; but, at least, she will be kindly treated, and his mind will be at rest on that score. Perhaps some

day or other the Jacksons may put him up for sale, and then I can buy him, and they will be reunited. At any rate, the first step is to buy her. Can you let me have the money? My mother makes me a very good allowance."

"And I suppose you spend it," the lawyer interrupted.

"Well, yes, I generally spend it; but then, you see, when I come of age I come in for the outlying estates."

"And if you die before, or get shot, or any other accident befalls you," Mr. Renfrew said, "they go to your sisters. However, one must risk something for a client, so I will lend you the money. I had better put somebody up to bid for you, for after what has happened the Jacksons would probably not let her go if they knew that you were going to be the purchaser."

"Thank you very much," Vincent said warmly; "it will be a great weight off my mind," and with a light heart he rode back to the Orangery.

Vincent said nothing during the next two days to any of his friends as to the course the Jacksons were taking in selling Tony's wife; for he thought that if the news got about, some of his friends who had heard the circumstances might go down to the auction and make such a demonstration that Jackson would be obliged to withdraw Dinah from the sale, in which case he would no doubt dispose of her privately. On the Saturday he mounted his horse and rode into Richmond, telling Dan to meet him there. At the hour the sale was announced he went to the yard where it was to take place.

This was a somewhat quiet and secluded place; for although the sale of slaves was permitted by law in Virginia, at any rate these auctions were conducted quietly and with as little publicity as possible. For although the better classes still regarded slavery as a necessary institution, they were conscious that these sales, involving as they did the separation of families, were indefensible, and the more thoughtful would gladly have seen them abolished, and a law passed forbidding the sale of negroes save as part and parcel of the estate upon which they worked, an exception only being made in the case of gross misconduct. Many of the slave-owners, indeed, forbade all flogging upon their estates, and punished refractory slaves, in the first place, by the cutting off of the privileges they enjoyed in the way of holidays, and if this did not answer, threatened to sell them—a threat which was, in the vast majority of cases, quite sufficient to ensure good behavior; for the slaves were well aware of the difference between life in the well-managed establishments in Virginia and that in some of the other Southern States. Handing his horse to Dan, Vincent joined a knot of four or five of his acquaintances who had strolled in from mere curiosity.

There were some thirty or forty men in the yard, a few of whom had come in for the purpose of buying; but the great majority had only attended for the sake of passing an idle hour. Slaves had fallen in value; for although all in the South professed their confidence that the law would never attempt by force of arms to prevent their secession, it was felt that slave property

would in future be more precarious, for the North would not improbably repeal the laws for the arrest of fugitive slaves, and consequently all runaways who succeeded in crossing the border would be lost to their masters.

Upon the other side of the yard Vincent saw Andrew Jackson talking to two or three men who were strangers to him, and who, he guessed, were buyers from some of the more southern States There were in all twelve lots to be disposed of. Of these two or three were hands who were no longer fit for field work, and who were bought at very low prices by men who owned but a few acres of land, and who could utilize them for odd jobs requiring but little strength. Then there was a stir of attention. Dinah Moore took her stand upon the platform, with her baby in her arms. The message which Dan had conveyed from Vincent to her husband had given her some hope, and though she looked scared and frightened as she clasped her babe to her breast, she was not filled with such utter despair as would otherwise have been the case.

The auctioneer stated the advantages of the lot in the same business-like tone as if he had been selling a horse:

"Lot 6. Negro wench, Dinah; age twenty-two; with male child. Strong and well made, as you see, gentlemen; fit for field work, or could be made a useful hand about a house; said to be handy and good-tempered. Now, gentlemen, what shall we say for this desirable lot?"

One of the men standing by Andrew Jackson bid a hundred dollars. The bid was raised to a hundred and fifty by a rough-

looking fellow standing in front of the platform. For some time the bidding was confined to these two, and it rose until it reached seven hundred and fifty, at which point the man near the platform retired, and there was a pause.

Vincent felt uncomfortable. He had already been round to Mr. Renfrew, who had told him that he had deputed an agent to buy; and until the man near the platform stopped he had supposed that he was the solicitor's agent.

"Now, gentlemen," the auctioneer said, "surely you are not going to let this desirable piece of property go for seven fifty? She would be cheap at double the price. I have sold worse articles for three thousand."

"I will go another twenty-five dollars," a tall man in homespun and a broad planter's straw hat said quietly.

The contest now recommenced, and by bids of twenty-five dollars at a time the amount was raised to twelve hundred and fifty dollars.

"That's enough for me," the man standing by Andrew Jackson said; "he may have her at twelve fifty, and dear enough, too, as times go."

"Will any one else make an offer?" the auctioneer asked. There was no response, and the hammer fell.

"What name?"

"Nathaniel Forster," the tall man said; and advancing to the table he counted out a roll of notes and gave them to the auctioneer, who handed to him a formal note certifying to his

having duly and legally purchased Dinah Moore and her infant, late the property of Andrew Jackson, Esquire, of the Cedars, State of Virginia.

The purchaser had evidently made up his mind beforehand to secure the lot, for he handed a parcel he had been holding to Dinah, and said briefly, "Slip those things on, my lass."

The poor girl, who had before been simply attired in the scantiest of petticoats, retired to a corner of the yard, and speedily came forward again dressed in a neat cotton gown. There were several joking remarks made by the bystanders, but Dinah's new master took no notice of them, but with a motion of his hand to her to follow him, walked out of the yard.

A minute later Vincent followed, and although he had no doubt that the man was the agent Mr. Renfrew had employed, he did not feel thoroughly satisfied until he saw them enter the lawyer's office. He quickly followed. They had just entered the private room of Mr. Renfrew.

"That's right, Wingfield," the lawyer said. "You see we have settled the business satisfactorily, and I think you have got a fairly cheap bargain. Just wait a moment and we will complete the transaction."

Dinah gave a start as Vincent entered, but with the habitual self-repression of a slave she stood quietly in the corner to which she had withdrawn at the other end of the room.

The lawyer was busy drawing up a document, and touching the bell ordered a clerk to go across to Mr. Rawlins, justice of

the peace, and ask him to step across the road.

In a minute Mr. Rawlins entered.

"I want you to witness a deed of sale of a slave," Mr. Renfrew said. "Here are the particulars: 'Nathaniel Forster sells to Vincent Wingfield his slave, Dinah Moore and her male infant, for the sum of fourteen hundred dollars.' These are the parties. Forster sign this receipt."

The man did so. The justice put his signature as witness to the transaction, dropped into his pocket the fee of five dollars that the lawyer handed to him, and without a word strolled out again.

"There, Dinah," Mr. Renfrew said, "Mr. Wingfield is now your master."

The girl ran forward, fell on her knees before Vincent, seized his hand and kissed it, sobbing out her thanks as she did so.

"There, that will do, Dinah," the lawyer said, seeing that Vincent was confused by her greeting. "I think you are a lucky girl, and have made a good exchange for the Orangery instead of the Cedars. I don't suppose you will find Mr. Wingfield a very hard master. What he is going to do with you I am sure I don't know."

Vincent now went to the door and called in Dan and told him to take Dinah to the Orangery, then mounting his horse he rode off home to prepare his mother for the reception of his new purchase.

CHAPTER III.
AIDING A RUNAWAY

"Well, you are an extraordinary boy, Vincent," Mrs. Wingfield said as her son told her the story, while his sisters burst into fits of laughter at the idea of Vincent owning a female slave with a baby. "Why did you not tell me that you wanted the money instead of going to Mr. Renfrew? I shall tell him I am very angry with him for letting you have it for such a purpose."

"I was not sure whether you would let me have it, mother; and if you had refused, and I had got it afterward from Mr. Renfrew, I should not have liked to bring her home here."

"That would have been fun," Annie said. "Fancy Vincent's troubles with a female slave on his hands and nowhere to put her. What would you have done, Vincent?"

"I suppose I could have got a home for her somewhere," Vincent said quietly. "I don't think there would have been any difficulty about that. Still I am glad I didn't have to do so, and one slave more or less can make no difference here."

"Not at all," Mrs. Wingfield said; "I dare say Chloe will find something for her to do in the way of washing, and such other light work that she is fit for about the house. It is not that, but it is years since a slave was brought into the Orangery; never since I can remember. We raise more than we want ourselves; and when

I see all those children about, I wonder sometimes what on earth we are to find for them all to do. Still, it was a scandalous thing of that man Jackson selling the girl to punish her husband; and as you say it was your foolish interference in the matter that brought it about, so I do not know that I can blame you for doing what you can to set the matter straight. Still, except that the knowledge that she is here and will be well treated will be a comfort to the man, I do not see that he will be much the better off, unless indeed the Jacksons should try to sell him also, in which case I suppose you would want to buy him."

"I am afraid they won't do that, mother. Still, somehow or other, in time they may come together again."

"I don't see how they can, Vincent. However we need not think of that now. At any rate I hope there will be no further opportunity for your mixing yourself up in this business. You have made two bitter enemies now, and although I do not see that such people as these can do you any harm, it is always well not to make enemies, especially in times like these when no one can foresee exactly what may occur."

And so Dinah Moore became an inmate of the Orangery; and though the girls had laughed at their brother, they were very kind to her when she arrived with Dan, and made much of her and of her baby. The same night Dan went over to the Cedars, and managed to have an interview with Tony, and to tell him that his wife had been bought by Vincent. The joy of the negro was extreme. The previous message had raised his hopes that Vincent

would succeed in getting her bought by some one who would be kind to her, but he knew well that she might nevertheless fall to the lot of some higher bidder and be taken hundreds of miles away, and that he might never again get news of her whereabouts. He had then suffered terrible anxiety all day, and the relief of learning that Vincent himself had bought her, and that she was now installed as a house servant at the Orangery, but a few miles away, was quite overpowering, and for some minutes he could only gasp out his joy and thankfulness. He could hope now that when better times came he might be able to steal away some night and meet her, and that some day or other, though how he could not see, they might be reunited. The Jacksons remained in ignorance that their former slave was located so near to them.

It was for this reason that Mr. Renfrew had instructed his agent to buy her in his own name instead of that of Vincent; and the Jacksons, having no idea of the transfer that had subsequently taken place, took no further interest in the matter, believing that they had achieved their object of torturing Tony, and avenging upon him the humiliation that Andrew had suffered at Vincent's hands. Had they questioned their slaves, and had these answered them truly, they would have discovered the facts. For although Tony himself said no word to any one of what he had learned from Dan, the fact that Dinah was at the Orangery was speedily known among the slaves; for the doings at one plantation were soon conveyed to the negroes on the others by the occasional visits which they paid at night to each other's quarters, or to some

common rendezvous far removed from interruption.

Occasionally Tony and Dinah met. Dan would come up late in the evening to the house, and a nod to Dinah would be sufficient to send her flying down the garden to a clump of shrubs, where he would be waiting for her. At these stolen meetings they were perfectly happy; for Tony said no word to her of the misery of his life—how he was always put to the hardest work and beaten on the smallest pretext, how in fact his life was made so unendurable that the idea of running away and taking to the swamps was constantly present to him.

As to making his way north, it did not enter his mind as possible. Slaves did indeed at times succeed in traveling through the Northern States and making their way to Canada, but this was only possible by means of the organization known as the underground railway, an association consisting of a number of good people who devoted themselves to the purpose, giving shelter to fugitive slaves during the day, and then passing them on to the next refuge during the night. For in the Northern States as well as the Southern any negro unprovided with papers showing that he was a free man was liable to be arrested and sent back to the South a prisoner, large rewards being given to those who arrested them.

As he was returning from one of these interviews with his wife, Tony was detected by the overseer, who was strolling about round the slaves' quarters, and was next morning flogged until he became insensible. So terrible was the punishment that for some

days he was unable to walk. As soon as he could get about he was again set to work, but the following morning he was found to be missing. Andrew Jackson at once rode into Richmond, and in half an hour placards and handbills were printed offering a reward for his capture. These were not only circulated in the neighborhood, but were sent off to all the towns and villages through which Tony might be expected to pass in the endeavor to make his way north. Vincent soon learned from Dan what had taken place.

"You have no idea, I suppose, Dan, as to which way he is likely to go?"

Dan shook his head.

"Me suppose, massa, dat most likely he gone and hidden in de great woods by de James River. Berry difficult to find him dere."

"Difficult to find him, no doubt," Vincent agreed. "But he could not stop there long—he would find nothing to eat in the woods; and though he might perhaps support himself for a time on corn or roots from the clearings scattered about through the James Peninsula, he must sooner or later be caught."

"Dar are runaways in de woods now, Massa Vincent," Dan said; "some ob dem hab been dar for month."

"But how do they live, Dan?"

"Well, sah, you see dey hab friends on de plantations, and sometimes at night one of de slaves will steal away wid a basket ob yams and corn-cakes and oder things and put dem down in a certain place in de forest, and next morning, sure enough, dey

will be gone. Dangerous work dat, massa; because if dey caught with food, it known for sure dat dey carry it to runaway, and den you know dey pretty well flog the life out of dem."

"Yes, I know, Dan; it is a very serious matter hiding a runaway slave, and even a white man would be very heavily punished, and perhaps lynched, if caught in the act. Well, make what inquiries you can among the slaves, and find out if you can whether any of those Jacksons have an idea which way Tony has gone. But do not go yourself on to Jackson's place; if you were caught there now it would be an awkward matter for both of us."

"I will find out, Massa Vincent; but I don't s'pose Tony said a word to any of the others. He know well enough dat de Jacksons question ebery one pretty sharp, and perhaps flog dem all round to find out if dey know anything. He keep it to himself about going away for suah."

The Jacksons kept up a vigorous hunt after their slave and day after day parties of men ranged through the woods but without discovering any traces of him. Bloodhounds were employed the first day, but before these could be fetched from Richmond the scent had grown cold; for Tony had gone off as soon as the slaves had been shut up for the night and had, directly he left the hut, wrapped leaves round his feet, therefore the hounds, when they arrived from Richmond, were unable to take up the scent.

A week after Tony's escape, Vincent returned late one evening from a visit to some friends. Dan, as he took his horse, whispered to him: "Stop a little on your way to house, Massa Vincent; me

hab something to tell you."

"What is it, Dan?" Vincent asked, as the lad, after putting up his horse in the stable, came running up to him.

"Me have seen Tony, sah. He in de shrubs ober dar. He want to see Dinah, but me no take message till me tell you about him. He half starved, sah; me give him some yams."

"That's right, Dan."

"He pretty nigh desperate, sah; he say dey hunt him like wild beast."

"I will see him, Dan. If I can help him in any way I will do so. Unfortunately I do not know any of the people who help to get slaves away, so I can give him no advice as to the best way to proceed. Still I might talk it over with him. When I have joined him, do you go up to the house and tell Chloe from me to give you a pile of corn-cake—it's no use giving him flour, for he would be afraid to light a fire to cook it. Tell her to give you, too, any cold meat there may be in the house. Don't tell Dinah her husband is here till we have talked the matter over."

Dan led Vincent up to a clump of bushes.

"It am all right, Tony," he said; "here is Massa Vincent come to see you."

The bushes parted and Tony came out into the full moonlight. He looked haggard and worn; his clothes were torn into strips by the bushes.

"My poor fellow," Vincent said kindly, "I am sorry to see you in such a state."

A great sob broke from the black.

"De Lord bress you, sah, for your goodness and for saving Dinah from de hands of dose debils! Now she safe wid you and de child, Tony no care berry much what come to him—de sooner he dead de better. He wish dat one day when dey flog him dey had kill him altogether; den all de trouble at an end. Dey hunt him ebery day with dogs and guns, and soon dey catch him. No can go on much longer like dis. To-day me nearly gib myself up. Den me thought me like to see Dinah once more to say good-by, so make great effort and ran a bit furder."

"I have been thinking whether it would be possible to plan some way for your escape, Tony."

The negro shook his head.

"Dar never escape, sah, but to get to Canada; dat too far any way. Not possible to walk all dat way and get food by de road. Suah to be caught."

"No, I do not think it will be possible to escape that way, Tony. The only possible plan would be to get you on board some ship going to England."

"Ships not dare take negro on board," Tony said. "Me heard dat said many times—dat against de law."

"Yes, I know it's against the law," Vincent said, "and it's against the law my talking to you here, Tony; but you see it's done. The difficulty is how to do it. All vessels are searched before they start, and an officer goes down with them past Fortress Monroe to see that they take no one on board. Still it is

possible. Of course there is risk in the matter; but there is risk in everything. I will think it over. Do not lose heart. Dan will be back directly with enough food to last you for some days. If I were you I would take refuge this time in White Oak Swamp. It is much nearer, and I hear it has already been searched from end to end, so they are not likely to try again; and if you hear them you can, if you are pressed, cross the Chickahominy and make down through the woods. Do you come again on Saturday evening—that will give me four days to see what I can do. I may not succeed, you know; for the penalty is so severe against taking negroes on board that I may not be able to find any one willing to risk it. But it is worth trying."

"De Lord bless you, sah!" Tony said. "I will do juss what you tole me; but don't you run no risks for me, my life ain't worth dat."

"I will take care, Tony. And now here comes Dan with the provisions."

"Can I see Dinah, sah?" Tony pleaded.

"I think you had better not," Vincent replied. "You see the Jacksons might at any moment learn that she is here, and then she might be questioned whether she had seen you since your escape; and it would be much better for her to be able to deny having done so. But you shall see her next time you come, whether I am able to make any arrangements for your escape or not. I will let her know to-morrow morning that I have seen you, and that you are safe at present."

The next morning Vincent rode over to City Point, where ships with a large draught of water generally brought up, either transferring their goods into smaller craft to be sent up by river to Richmond, or to be carried on by rail through the town of Petersburg. Leaving his horse at a house near the river, he crossed the James in a boat to City Point. There were several vessels lying here, and for some hours he hung about the wharf watching the process of discharging. By the end of that time he had obtained a view of all the captains, and had watched them as they gave their orders, and had at last come to the conclusion as to which would be the most likely to suit his purpose. Having made up his mind, he waited until the one he had fixed upon came ashore. He was a man of some five-and-thirty years old, with a pleasant face and good-natured smile. He first went into some offices on the wharf, and half an hour later came out and walked toward the railway-station. Vincent at once followed him, and as he overtook him said:

"I want very much to speak to you, sir, if you could spare me a minute or two."

"Certainly," the sailor said with some surprise. "The train for Petersburg does not go for another half hour. What can I do for you?"

"My name is Vincent Wingfield. My father was an English officer, and my mother is the owner of some large estates near Richmond. I am most anxious to get a person in whom I am interested on board ship, and I do not know how to set about it."

"There's no difficulty about that," the captain said smiling; "you have only to go to an office and pay for his passage to where he wants to go."

"I can't do that," Vincent replied; "for unfortunately it is against the law for any captain to take him."

"You mean he is a negro?" the captain asked, stopping short in his walk and looking sharply at Vincent.

"Yes, that is what I mean," Vincent said. "He is a negro who has been brutally ill-treated and has run away from his master, and I would willingly give five hundred dollars to get him safely away."

"This is a very serious business in which you are meddling, young sir," the sailor said. "Putting aside the consequences to yourself, you are asking me to break the law and to run the risk of the confiscation of my ship. Even if I were willing to do what you propose it would be impossible, for the ship will be searched from end to end before the hatches are closed, and an official will be on board until we discharge the pilot after getting well beyond the mouth of the river."

"Yes, I know that," Vincent replied; "but my plan was to take a boat and go out beyond the sight of land, and then to put him on board after you have got well away."

"That might be managed, certainly," the captain said. "It would be contrary to my duty to do anything that would risk the property of my employers; but if when I am out at sea a boat came alongside, and a passenger came on board, it would be

another matter. I suppose, young gentleman, that you would not interfere in such a business, and run the risk that you certainly would run if detected, unless you were certain that this was a deserving case, and that the man has committed no sort of crime; for I would not receive on board my ship a fugitive from justice, whether he was black or white."

"It is indeed a deserving case," Vincent said earnestly. "The poor fellow has the misfortune of belonging to one of the worst masters in the State. He has been cruelly flogged on many occasions, and was finally driven to run away by their selling his wife and child."

"The brutes!" the sailor said. "How you people can allow such things to be done is a mystery to me. Well, lad, under those circumstances I will agree to do what you ask me, and if your boat comes alongside when I am so far away from land that it cannot be seen, I will take the man to England."

"Thank you very much indeed," Vincent said; "you will be doing a good action. Upon what day do you sail?"

"I shall drop down on Monday into Hampton Roads, and shall get up sail at daylight next morning. I shall pass Fortress Monroe at about seven in the morning, and shall sail straight out."

"And how shall I know your ship?" Vincent asked. "There may be others starting just about the same time."

The sailor thought for a moment. "When I am four or five miles out I will hoist my owner's flag at the foremast-head. It is a red flag with a white ball, so you will be able to make it out

a considerable distance away. You must not be less than ten or twelve miles out, for the pilot often does not leave the ship till she is some miles past Fortress Monroe, and the official will not leave the ship till he does. I will keep a sharp lookout for you, but I cannot lose my time in waiting. If you do not come alongside I shall suppose that you have met with some interruption to your plans."

"Thank you very much, sir. Unless something goes wrong I shall be alongside on Tuesday."

"That's settled, then," the captain said, "and I must be off, or else I shall lose my train. By the way, when you come alongside do not make any sign that you have met me before. It is just as well that none of my crew should know that it is a planned thing, for if we ever happened to put in here again they might blab about it, and it is just as well not to give them the chance. Good-by, my lad; I hope that all will go well. But, you know, you are doing a very risky thing; for the assisting of a runaway slave to escape is about as serious an offense as you can commit in these parts. You might shoot half a dozen men and get off scot free, but if you were caught aiding a runaway to escape there is no saying what might come of it."

After taking leave of the captain, Vincent recrossed the river and rode home. He had friends whose fathers' estates bordered some on the James and others on the York River, and all of these had pleasure-boats. It was obviously better to go down the York River, and thence round to the mouth of the James at Fortress

Monroe, as the traffic on the York was comparatively small, and it was improbable that he would be noticed either going down or returning. He had at first thought of hiring a fishing-boat from some of the free negroes who made their living on the river. But he finally decided against this; for the fact of the boat being absent so long would attract its owner's attention, and in case any suspicion arose that the fugitive had escaped by water, the hiring of a boat by one who had already befriended the slave, and its absence for so long a time, would be almost certain to cause suspicion to be directed toward him. He therefore decided upon borrowing a boat from a friend, and next morning rode to the plantation of the father of Harry Furniss, this being situated on a convenient position on the Pamunkey, one of the branches of the York River.

"Are you using that sailing-boat of yours at present, Harry? Because, if not, I wish you would let me have the use of it for a week or so."

"With pleasure, Vincent; and my fishing-lines and nets as well, if you like. We very seldom use the boat. Do you mean to keep it here or move it higher up the river, where it would be more handy for you, perhaps?"

"I think I would rather leave it here, Furniss. A mile or two extra to ride makes no difference. I suppose it's in the water?"

"Yes; at the foot of the boathouse stairs. There is a padlock and chain. I will give you the key, so you can go off whenever you like without bothering to come up to the house. If you just call in

at the stable as you ride by, one of the boys will go down with you and take your horse and put him up till you come back again."

"That will do capitally," Vincent replied. "It is some time since I was on the water, and I seem to have a fancy for a change at present. One is sick of riding into Richmond and hearing nothing but politics talked of all day. Don't be alarmed if you hear at any time that the boat has not come back at night, for if tide and wind are unfavorable at any time I might stop at Cumberland for the night."

"I have often had to do that," Furniss said. "Besides, if you took it away for a week, I don't suppose any one would notice it; for no one goes down to the boathouse unless to get the boat ready for a trip."

The next day Vincent rode over to his friend's plantation, sending Dan off an hour beforehand to bail out the boat and get the masts and sails into her from the boathouse. The greater part of the next two days was spent on the water, sometimes sailing, sometimes fishing. The evening of the second of these days was that upon which Vincent had arranged to meet Tony again, and an hour after dark he went down through the garden to the stable; for that was the time the fugitive was to meet him, for he could not leave his place of concealment until night fell. After looking at the horses, and giving some instructions to the negroes in charge, he returned to the shrubbery, and, sending Dan up to summon Dinah, he went to the bushes where he had before met Tony. The negro came out as he approached.

"How are you, Tony?"

"Much better dan I was, massa. I hab not been disturbed since I saw you, and, thanks to dat and to de good food and to massa's kind words, I'm stronger and better now, and ready to do whatever massa think best."

"Well, Tony, I am glad to say that I think I have arranged a plan by which you will be got safely out of the country. Of course, it may fail; but there is every hope of success. I have arranged for a boat, and shall take you down the river, and put you on board a ship bound for England."

The black clapped his hands in delight at the news.

"When you get there you will take another ship out to Canada, and as soon as I learn from you that you are there, and what is your address, I will give Dinah her papers of freedom and send her on to you."

"Oh, massa, it is too much," Tony said, with the tears running down his cheeks; "too much joy altogeder."

"Well, I hope it will all come right, Tony. Dinah will be here in a minute or two. Do not keep her long, for I do not wish her absence from the house to be observed just now. Now, listen to my instructions. Do you know the plantation of Mr. Furniss, on the Pamunkeyunky, near Coal harbor?"

"No, sir; but me can find out."

"No, you can't; because you can't see any one or ask questions. Very well, then, you must be here again to-morrow night at the same hour. Dan will meet you here, and act as your guide. He

will presently bring you provisions for to-morrow. Be sure you be careful, Tony, and get back to your hiding-place as soon as you can, and be very quiet to-morrow until it is time to start. It would be terrible if you were to be caught now, just as we have arranged for you to get away."

On the following afternoon Vincent told his mother that he was going over that evening to his friend Furniss, as an early start was to be made next morning; they intended to go down the river as far as Yorktown, if not further; that he certainly should not be back for two days, and probably might be even longer.

"This new boating freak of yours, Vincent, seems to occupy all your thoughts. I wonder how long it will last."

"I don't suppose it will last much longer, mother," Vincent said with a laugh. "Anyhow, it will make a jolly change for a week. One had got so sick of hearing nothing talked about but secession that a week without hearing the word mentioned will do one lots of good, and I am sure I felt that if one had much more of it, one would be almost driven to take up the Northern side just for the sake of a change."

"We should all disown you, Vin," Annie said, laughing; "we should have nothing to say to you, and you would be cut by all your friends."

"Well, you see, a week's sailing and fishing will save me from all that, Annie; and I be all be able to begin again with a fresh stock of patience."

"I believe you are only half in earnest in the cause, Vincent,"

his mother said gravely.

"I am not indeed, mother. I quite agree with what you and every one say as to the rights of the State of Virginia, and if the North should really try to force us and the other Southern States to remain with them, I shall be just as ready to do everything I can as any one else; but I can't see the good of always talking about it, and I think it's very wrong to ill-treat and abuse those who think the other way. In England in the Civil War the people of the towns almost all thought one way, and almost all those of the counties the other, and even now opinions differ almost as widely as to which was right. I hate to hear people always laying down the law as if there could not possibly be two sides of the case, and as if every one who differed from them must be a rascal and a traitor. Almost all the fellows I know say that if it comes to fighting they shall go into the State army, and I should be quite willing, if they would really take fellows of my age for soldiers, to enlist too; but that is no reason why one should not get sick of hearing nothing but one subject talked of for weeks."

It was nearly dark when Vincent started for his walk of ten miles; for he had decided not to take his horse with him, as he had no means of sending it back, and its stay for three days in his friend's stables would attract attention to the fact of his long absence.

After about three hours' walking he reached the boat house, having seen no one as he passed through the plantation. He took the oars and sails from the boathouse and placed them in the

boat, and then sat down in the stern to await the coming of the negroes. In an hour they arrived; Tony carrying a bundle of clothes that Dan had by Vincent's orders bought for him in Richmond, while Dan carried a large basket of provisions. Vincent gave an exclamation of thankfulness as he saw the two figures appear, for the day having been Sunday he knew that a good many men would be likely to join the search parties in hopes of having a share in the reward offered for Tony's capture, and he had felt very anxious all day.

"You sit in the bottom of the boat, Tony, and do you steer, Dan. You make such a splashing with your oar that we should be heard a mile away. Keep us close in shore in the shadow of the trees; the less we are noticed the better at this time of night."

Taking the sculls, Vincent rowed quietly away. He had often been out on boating excursions with his friends, and had learned to row fairly. During the last two days he had diligently instructed Dan, and after two long days' work the young negro had got over the first difficulties, but he was still clumsy and awkward. Vincent did not exert himself. He knew he had a long night's row before him, and he paddled quietly along with the stream. The boat was a good-sized one, and when not under sail was generally rowed by two strong negroes accustomed to the work.

Sometimes for half an hour at a time Vincent ceased rowing, and let the boat drift along quietly. There was no hurry, for he had a day and two nights to get down to the mouth of the river, a distance of some seventy miles, and out to sea far enough to

intercept the vessel. At four o'clock they arrived at Cumberland, where the Pamunkey and Mattapony Rivers unite and form the York River. Here they were in tidal waters; and as the tide, though not strong, was flowing up, Vincent tied the boat to the branch of a tree, and lay down in the bottom for an hour's sleep, telling Dan to wake him when the tide turned, or if he heard any noise. Day had broken when the boat drifted round, and Dan aroused him.

The boat was rowed off to the middle of the river, as there could be no longer any attempt at concealment. Dan now took the bow oar, and they rowed until a light breeze sprang up. Vincent then put up the mast, and, having hoisted the sail, took his place at the helm, while Dan went forward into the bow. They passed several fishing-boats, and the smoke was seen curling up from the huts in the clearings scattered here and there along the shore. The sun had now risen, and its heat was pleasant after the damp night air.

Although the breeze was light, the boat made fair way with the tide, and when the ebb ceased at about ten o'clock the mouth of the river was but a few miles away. The mast was lowered and the sails stowed. The boat was then rowed into a little creek and tied up to the bushes. The basket of provisions was opened, and a hearty meal enjoyed, Tony being now permitted for the first time to sit up in the boat. After the meal Vincent and Dan lay down for a long sleep, while Tony, who had slept some hours during the night, kept watch.

At four in the afternoon tide again slackened, and as soon as

it had fairly turned they pushed out from the creek and again set sail. In three hours they were at the mouth of the river. A short distance out they saw several boats fishing, and dropping anchor a short distance away from these, they lowered their sail, and taking the fishing-lines from the locker of the boat, set to to fish. As soon as it was quite dark the anchor was hauled up, and Vincent and Dan took the oars, the wind having now completely dropped. For some time they rowed steadily, keeping the land in sight on their right hand.

Tony was most anxious to help, but as he had never had an oar in his hand in his life, Vincent thought that he would do more harm than good. It was, he knew, some ten miles from the mouth of the York River to Fortress Monroe, at the entrance to Hampton Roads, and after rowing for three hours he thought that he could not be far from that point, and therefore turned the boat's head out toward the sea. They rowed until they could no longer make out the land astern, and then laying in their oars waited till the morning, Vincent sitting in the stern and often nodding off to sleep, while the two negroes kept up a constant conversation in the bow.

As soon as it was daylight the oars were again got out. They could clearly make out the outline of the coast, and saw the break in the shore that marked the entrance to Hampton Roads. There was a light breeze now, but Vincent would not hoist the sail lest it might attract the attention of some one on shore. He did not think the boat itself could be seen, as they were some eight or

nine miles from the land. They rowed for a quarter of an hour, when Vincent saw the white sails of a ship coming out from the entrance.

The breeze was so light that she would, he thought, be nearly three hours before she reached the spot where they were now, and whether she headed to the right or left of it he would have plenty of time to cut her off. For another two hours he and Dan rowed steadily. The wind had freshened a good deal, and the ship was now coming up fast to them. Two others had come out after her, but were some miles astern. They had already made out that the ship was flying a flag at her masthead, and although they had not been able to distinguish its colors, Vincent felt sure that it was the right ship; for he felt certain that the captain would get up sail as soon as possible, so as to come up with them before any other vessels came out. They had somewhat altered their course, to put themselves in line with the vessel. When she was within a distance of about a mile and a half Vincent was able to make out the flag, and knew that it was the right one.

"There's the ship, Tony," he said; "it is all right, and in a few minutes you will be on your way to England."

Tony had already changed his tattered garments for the suit of sailor's clothes that Dan had bought for him. Vincent had given him full instructions as to the course he was to pursue. The ship was bound for Liverpool; on his arrival there he was at once to go round the docks and take a passage in the steerage of the next steamer going to Canada.

"The fare will be about twenty-five dollars," he said. "When you get to Canada you will land at Quebec, and you had better go on by rail to Montreal, where you will, I think, find it easier to get work than at Quebec. As soon as you get a place you are likely to stop in, get somebody to write for you to me, giving me your address. Here are a hundred dollars, which will be sufficient to pay your expenses to Montreal and leave you about fifty dollars to keep you till you can get something to do."

CHAPTER IV. SAFELY BACK

When the ship came within a few hundred yards, Vincent stood up and waved his cap, and a minute later the ship was brought up into the wind and her sails thrown aback. The captain appeared at the side and shouted to the boat now but fifty yards away:

"What do you want there?"

"I have a passenger for England," Vincent replied. "Will you take him?"

"Come alongside," the captain said. "Why didn't he come on board before I started?"

The boat was rowed alongside, and Vincent climbed on board. The captain greeted him as a stranger and led the way to his cabin.

"You have managed that well," he said when they were alone, "and I am heartily glad that you have succeeded. I made you out two hours ago. We will stop here another two or three minutes so that the men may think you are bargaining for a passage for the negro, and then the sooner he is on board and you are on your way back the better, for the wind is rising, and I fancy it is going to blow a good deal harder before night."

"And won't you let me pay for the man's passage, captain? It is only fair anyhow that I should pay for what he will eat."

"Oh, nonsense!" the captain replied. "He will make himself

useful and pay for his keep. I am only too glad to get the poor fellow off. Now, we will have a glass of wine together and then say good-by."

Two minutes later they returned to the deck. Vincent went to the side.

"Jump on board, Tony. I have arranged for your passage."

The negro climbed up the side.

"Good-by, captain, and thank you heartily. Good-by, Tony."

The negro could not speak, but he seized the hand Vincent held out to him and pressed it to his lips. Vincent dropped lightly into his boat; and pushed off from the side of the vessel. As he did so he heard orders shouted, the yards swung round, and the vessel almost at once began to move through the water.

"Now, Dan, up with the mast; and sail again; but let me put two reefs in first, the wind is getting up."

In five minutes the sail was hoisted, and with Vincent at the helm and Dan sitting up to windward, was dashing through the water. Although Vincent understood the management of a sailing-boat on the calm waters of the rivers, this was his first experience of sea-sailing; and although the waves were still but small, he felt at first somewhat nervous as the boat dashed through them, sending up at times a sheet of spray from her bows. But he soon got over this sensation, and enjoyed the lively motion and the fresh wind. The higher points of the land were still visible; but even had they not been so it would have mattered little, as he had taken the precaution to bring with him a small

pocket-compass. The wind was from the southwest; and he was therefore able, with the sheet hauled in, to make for a point where he judged the mouth of the York River lay.

"Golly, massa! how de boat do jump up and down."

"She is lively, Dan, and it would be just as well if we had some ballast on board; however, she has a good beam and walks along splendidly. If the wind keeps as it is, we shall be back at the mouth of the York in three or four hours. You may as well open that basket again and hand me that cold chicken and a piece of bread; cut the meat off the bones and put it on the bread, for I have only one hand disengaged; and hand me that bottle of cold tea. That's right. Now you had better take something yourself. You must be hungry. We forgot all about the basket in our interest in the ship."

Dan shook his head.

"A little while ago, massa, me seem berry hungry, now me doesn't feel hungry at all."

"That's bad, Dan. I am afraid you are going to be seasick."

"Me no feel seasick, massa; only me don't feel hungry." But in a few minutes Dan was forced to confess that; he did feel ill, and a few moments afterward was groaning in the agonies of seasickness.

"Never mind, Dan," Vincent said cheerfully. "You will be better after this."

"Me not seasick, massa; de sea have nuffin to do with it. It's de boat dat will jump up and down instead of going quiet."

"It's all the same thing, Dan; and I hope she won't jump about more before we get into the river."

But in another half hour Vincent had to bring the boat's head up to the wind, lower the lug, and tie down the last reef.

"There, she goes easier now, Dan," he said, as the boat resumed her course; but Dan, who was leaning helplessly over the side of the boat, could see no difference.

Vincent, however, felt that; under her close sail the boat was doing better, and rising more easily on the waves, which were now higher and farther apart than before. In another hour the whole of the shore-line was visible; but the wind had risen so much that, even under her reduced sail, the boat had as much as she could carry, and often heeled over until her gunwale was nearly under water. Another hour and the shore was but some four miles away, but Vincent felt he could no longer hold on.

In the hands of an experienced sailor, who would have humored the boat and eased her up a little to meet the seas, the entrance to the York River could no doubt have been reached with safety; but Vincent was ignorant of the art of sailing a boat in the sea, and she was shipping water heavily. Dan had for some time been bailing, having only undertaken the work in obedience to Vincent's angry orders, being too ill to care much what became of them.

"Now, Dan, I am going to bring her head up to the wind, so get ready to throw off that halyard and gather in the sail as it; comes down. That's right, man; now down with the mast."

Vincent had read that the best plan when caught in an open boat in a gale, was to tie the oars and mast, if she had one, together, and to throw them overboard with the head rope tied to them, as by that means the boat would ride head to sea. The oars, sculls, mast, and sail were firmly tied together and launched overboard, the rope being first taken off the anchor and tied round the middle of the clump of spars.

Vincent carefully played out the rope till some fifteen yards were over, then he fastened it to the ring of the head rope, and had the satisfaction of finding that the boat rode easily to the floating anchor, rising lightly over the waves, and not shipping a drop of water. He then took the bailer and got rid of the water that had found its way on board, Dan, after getting down the sail, having collapsed utterly.

"Now, Dan, sit up; there, man, the motion is much easier now, and we are taking no water on board. I will give you a glass of rum, that will put new strength into you. It's lucky we put it in the basket in case of emergency."

The negro, whose teeth were chattering from cold, fright, and exhaustion, eagerly drank off the spirit. Vincent, who was wet to the skin with the spray, took a little himself, and then settled himself as comfortably as he could on the floor-boards in the stern of the boat, and quietly thought out the position. The wind was still rising, and a thick haze obscured the land. He had no doubt that by night it would be blowing a gale; but the boat rode so easily and lightly that he believed she would get through it.

They might, it was true, be blown many miles off the shore, and not be able to get back for some time, for the gale might last two or three days. The basket of provisions was, however, a large one. Dan had received orders to bring plenty and had obeyed them literally, and Vincent saw that the supply of food, if carefully husbanded, would last; without difficulty for a week. The supply of liquor was less satisfactory. There was the bottle of rum, two bottles of claret, and a two-gallon jar, nearly half empty, of water. The cold tea was finished.

"That would be a poor supply for a week for two of us," Vincent; muttered, as he removed the contents of the basket and stored them carefully in the locker; "however, if it's going to be a gale there is sure to be some rain with it, so I think we shall manage very well."

By night it was blowing really heavily, but although the waves were high the boat shipped but little water. Dan had fallen off to sleep, and Vincent had been glad to wrap himself in the thick coat he had brought with him as a protection against the heavy dews when sleeping on the river. At times sharp rain squalls burst upon them, and Vincent had no difficulty in filling up the water-bottle again with the bailer.

The water was rather brackish, but not sufficiently so to be of consequence. All night the boat was tossed heavily on the waves. Vincent dozed off at times, rousing himself occasionally and bailing out the water, which came in the shape of spray and rain. The prospect in the morning was not cheering. Gray clouds

covered the sky and seemed to come down almost on to the water, the angry sea was crested with white heads, and it seemed to Vincent wonderful that the boat should live in such a sea.

"Now, Dan, wake yourself up and get some breakfast," Vincent said, stirring up the negro with his foot.

"Oh Lor'!" Dan groaned, raising himself into a sitting position from the bottom of the boat, "dis am awful; we neber see the shore no more, massa."

"Nonsense, man," Vincent said cheerily; "we are getting on capitally."

"It hab been an awful night, sah."

"An awful night! You lazy rascal, you slept like a pig all night, while I have been bailing the boat and looking out for you. It is your turn now, I can tell you. Well, do you feel ready for your breakfast?"

Dan, after a moment's consideration, declared that he was. The feeling of seasickness had passed off, and except that he was wet through and miserable, he felt himself again, and could have eaten four times the allowance of food that Vincent handed him. A pannikin of rum and water did much to restore his life and vitality, and he was soon, with the light-heartedness of his race, laughing and chatting cheerfully.

"How long dis go on, you tink, sah?"

"Not long, I hope, Dan. I was afraid last night it was going to be a big gale, but I do not think it is blowing so hard now as it was in the night."

"Where have we get to now, sah?"

"I don't exactly know, Dan; but I do not suppose that we are very many miles away from shore. The mast and oars prevent our drifting fast, and I don't think we are further off now than we were when we left that ship yesterday. But even if we were four or five times as far as that, we should not take very long in sailing back again when the wind drops, and as we have got enough to eat for a week we need not be uncomfortable about that."

"Not much food for a week, Massa Vincent."

"Not a very great deal, Dan; but quite enough to keep us going. You can make up for lost time when you get to shore again."

In a few hours it was certain that the wind was going down. By midday the clouds began to break up, and an hour later the sun was shining brightly. The wind was still blowing strongly, but the sea had a very different appearance in the bright light of the sun to that which it had borne under the canopy of dark gray clouds. Standing up in the boat two hours later, Vincent could see no signs of land.

"How shall we find our way back, Massa Vincent?"

"We have got a compass; besides, we should manage very well even if we had not. Look at the sun, Dan. There it is right ahead of us. So, you know, that's the west—that's the way we have to go."

"That very useful ob de sun, sah; but suppose we not live in de west de sun not point de way den."

"Oh, yes, he would, just the same, Dan. We should know

whether to go away from him, or to keep him on the right hand or on the left."

This was beyond Dan. "And I s'pose the moon will show de way at night, massa?"

"The moon would show the way if she were up, but she is not always up; but I have got a compass here, and so whether we have the sun or the moon, or neither of them, I can find my way back to land."

Dan had never seen a compass, and for an hour amused himself turning it round and round and trying to get it to point in some other direction than the north.

"Now, Dan," Vincent said at last, "give me that compass, and get out the food. We will have a better meal than we did this morning, for now that the wind is going down there's no chance of food running short. When we have had dinner we will get up the sail again. The sea is not so rough as it was, and it is certainly not so high as it was before we lowered the sail yesterday."

"De waves berry big, massa."

"They are big, Dan; but they are not so angry. The heads are not breaking over as they did last night, and the boat will go better over those long waves than she did through the choppy sea at the beginning of the gale."

Accordingly the bundle of spars was pulled up alongside and lifted. The mast was set up and the sail hoisted. Dan in a few minutes forgot his fears and lost even his sense of uneasiness as he found the boat mounted wave after wave without shipping

water. Several times, indeed, a shower of spray flew high up in the air, but the gusts no longer buried her so that the water came over the gunwale, and it was a long time before there was any occasion to use the bailer. As the sun set it could be seen that there was a dark line between it and the water.

"There is the land, Dan; and I do not suppose it is more than twenty miles away, for most of the coast lies low."

"But how we find de York River, massa? Will de compass tell you dat?"

"No, Dan. I don't know whether we have drifted north or south of it. At ordinary times the current runs up the coast, but the wind this morning was blowing from the north of west, and may have been doing so all through the night for anything I know. Well, the great thing is to make land. We are almost sure to come across some fishing-boats, but, if not, we must run ashore and find a house."

They continued sailing until Vincent's watch told him it was twelve o'clock, by which time the coast was quite close. The wind now almost dropped, and, lowering their sail, they rowed in until, on lowering the anchor, they found that it touched the ground. Then they lay down and slept till morning. Dan was the first to waken.

"Dar are some houses dere close down by the shore, sah, and some men getting out a boat."

"That's all right, Dan," Vincent said as he roused himself and looked over. "We shall learn soon where we are."

In a quarter of an hour the fishing-boat put off, and the lads at once rowed to it.

"How far are we from the mouth of the York River?" Vincent asked the two negroes on board.

"About twenty miles, sah. Where you come from?"

"We were off the mouth of the river, and were blown off in the gale."

"You tink yourself berry lucky you get back," one of them said. "Berry foolish to go out like dat when not know how to get back."

"Well, we have managed to get back now, you see, and none the worse for it. Now, Dan, up with the sail again."

There was a light wind off shore, and all the reefs being shaken out the boat ran along fast.

"I should think we are going about five miles an hour, Dan. We ought to be off the mouth of the river in four hours. We must look out sharp or else we shall pass it, for many of these islets look just like the mouth of the river. However, we are pretty sure to pass several fishing-boats on our way, and we shall be able to inquire from them."

There was no need, however, to do this. It was just the four hours from the time of starting when they saw some eight or ten fishing-boats ahead of them.

"I expect that that is the entrance to the river. When we get half a mile further we shall see it open."

On approaching the fishing-boats they recognized at once the

appearance of the shore, as they had noticed it when fishing there before, and were soon in the entrance to the river.

"It will be high tide in about two hours," Vincent said, "according to the time it was the other day. I am afraid when it turns we shall have to get down our sails; there will be no beating against both wind and tide. Then we must get out oars and row. There is very little tide close in by the bank, and every little gain will be a help. We have been out four days. It is Thursday now, and they will be beginning to get very anxious at home, so we must do our best to get back."

Keeping close under the bank, they rowed steadily, making on an average about two miles an hour. After five hours' rowing they tied up to the bank, had a meal, and rested until tide turned; then they again hoisted their sail and proceeded on their way. Tide carried them just up to the junction of the two rivers, and landing at Cumberland they procured beds and slept till morning.

Another long day's work took them up to the plantation of Mr. Furniss, and fastening up the boat, and carrying the sails and oars on shore, they started on their walk home.

"Why, Vincent, where on earth have you been all this time?" Mrs. Wingfield said as her son entered. "You said you might be away a couple of nights; and we expected you back on Wednesday at the latest, and now it is Friday evening."

"Well, mother, we have had great fun. We went sailing about right down to the mouth of the York River. I did not calculate that it would take me more than twice as long to get back as to get

down; but as the wind blew right down the river it was precious slow work, and we had to row all the way. However, it has been a jolly trip, and I feel a lot better for it."

"You don't look any better for it," Annie said. "The skin is all off your face, and you are as red as fire. Your clothes look shrunk as well as horribly dirty. You are quite an object, Vincent."

"We got caught in a heavy gale," Vincent said, "and got a thorough ducking. As to my face, a day or two will set it all to rights again; and so they will my hands, I hope, for I have got nicely blistered tugging at those oars. And now, mother, I want some supper, for I am as hungry as a hunter. I told Dan to go into the kitchen and get a good square meal."

The next morning, just after breakfast, there was the sound of horses' hoofs outside the house, and, looking out, Vincent saw Mr. Jackson, with a man he knew to be the sheriff, and four or five others. A minute later one of the servants came in, and said that the sheriff wished to speak to Mrs. Wingfield.

"I will go out to him," Mrs. Wingfield replied. Vincent followed her to the door.

"Mrs. Wingfield," the sheriff said, "I am the holder of a warrant; to search your slave-huts and grounds for a runaway negro named Anthony Moore, the property of Mr. Jackson here."

"Do you suppose, sir," Mrs. Wingfield asked angrily, "that I am the sort of person to give shelter to runaway slaves?"

"No, madam, certainly not," the sheriff replied; "no one would suppose for a moment that Mrs. Wingfield of the Orangery

would have anything to do with a runaway, but Mr. Jackson here learned only yesterday that the wife of this slave was here, and every one knows that where the wife is the husband is not likely to be far off."

"I suppose, sir," Mrs. Wingfield said coldly, "that there was no necessity for me to acquaint Mr. Jackson formerly with the fact that I had purchased through my agent the woman he sold to separate her from her husband."

"By no means, madam, by no means; though, had we known it before, it might have been some aid to us in our search. Have we your permission to see this woman and to question her?"

"Certainly not," Mrs. Wingfield said; "but if you have any question to ask I will ask her and give you her answer."

"We want to know whether she has seen her husband since the day of his flight from the plantation?"

"I shall certainly not ask her that question, Mr. Sheriff. I have no doubt that, as the place from which he has escaped is only a few miles from here, he did come to see his wife. It would have been very strange if he did not. I hope that by this time the man is hundreds of miles away. He was brutally treated by a brutal master, who, I believe, deliberately set to work to make him run away, so that he could hunt him down and punish him. I presume, sir, you do not wish to search this house, and you do not suppose that the man is hidden here. As to the slave-huts and the plantation, you can, of course, search them thoroughly; but as it is now more than a fortnight since the man escaped, it is not

likely you will find him hiding within a few miles of his master's plantation."

So saying she went into the house and shut the door behind her.

Mr. Jackson ground his teeth with rage, but the sheriff rode off toward the slave-huts without a word. The position of Mrs. Wingfield of the Orangery, connected as she was with half the old families of Virginia, and herself a large slave-owner, was beyond suspicion, and no one would venture to suggest that such a lady could have the smallest sympathy for a runaway slave.

"She was down upon you pretty hot, Mr. Jackson," the sheriff said as they rode off. "You don't seem to be in her good books." Jackson muttered an imprecation.

"It is certainly odd," the sheriff went on, "after what you were telling me about her son pitching into Andrew over flogging this very slave, that she should go and buy his wife. Still, that's a very different thing from hiding a runaway. I dare say that, as she says, the fellow came here to see his wife when he first ran away; but I don't think you will find him anywhere about here now. It's pretty certain from what we hear that he hasn't made for the North, and where the fellow can be hiding I can't think. Still the woods about this country are mighty big, and the fellow can go out on to the farms and pick corn and keep himself going for a long time. Still, he's sure to be brought up sooner or later."

A thorough search was made of the slave-huts, and the slaves were closely questioned, but all denied any knowledge of the

runaway. Dan escaped questioning, as he had taken up Vincent's horse to the house in readiness for him to start as soon as he had finished breakfast.

All day the searchers rode about the plantation examining every clump of bushes, and assuring themselves that none of them had been used as a place of refuge for the runaway.

"It's no good, Mr. Jackson," the sheriff said at last. "The man may have been here; he ain't here now. The only place we haven't; searched is the house, and you may be quite sure the slaves dare not conceal him there. Too many would get to know it. No, sir, he's made a bolt of it, and you will have to wait now till he is caught by chance, or shot by some farmer or other in the act of stealing."

"I would lay a thousand dollars," Andrew Jackson exclaimed passionately, "that young Wingfield knows something about his whereabouts, and has lent him a hand!"

"Well, I should advise you to keep your mouth shut about it till you get some positive proof," the sheriff said dryly. "I tell you it's no joke to accuse a member of a family like the Wingfields of helping runaway slaves to escape."

"I will bide my time," the planter said. "You said that some day you would lay hands on Tony dead or alive. You see if some day I don't lay hands on young Wingfield."

"Well, it seems, Mr. Jackson," the sheriff remarked with a sneer, for he was out of temper at the ill success of the day's work, "that he has already laid hands on your son. It seems to me

quite as likely that he will lay hands on you as you on him."

Two days afterward as Vincent was riding through the streets of Richmond he saw to his surprise Andrew Jackson in close conversation with Jonas Pearson.

"I wonder what those two fellows are talking about?" he said to himself. "I expect Jackson is trying to pump Pearson as to the doings at the Orangery. I don't like that fellow, and never shall, and he is just the sort of man to do one a bad turn if he had the chance. However, as I have never spoken to him about that affair from beginning to end, I don't see that he can do any mischief if he wants to."

Andrew Jackson, however, had obtained information which he considered valuable. He learned that Vincent had been away in a boat for five days, and that his mother had been very uneasy about him. He also learned that the boat was one belonging to Mr. Furniss, and that it was only quite lately that Vincent had taken to going out sailing.

After considerable trouble he succeeded in getting at one of the slaves upon Mr. Furniss' plantation. But he could only learn from him that Vincent had been unaccompanied when he went out in the boat either by young Furniss or by any of the plantation hands; that he had taken with him only his own slave, and had come and gone as he chose, taking out and fastening up the boat himself, so that no one could say when he had gone out, except that his horse was put up at the stables. The slave said that certainly the horse had only stood there on two or three

occasions, and then only for a few hours, and that unless Mr. Wingfield had walked over he could never have had the boat out all night, as the horse certainly had not stood all night in the stables.

Andrew Jackson talked the matter over with his son, and both agreed that Vincent's conduct was suspicious. His own people said he had been away for five days in the boat. The people at Furniss' knew nothing about this, and therefore there must be some mystery about it, and they doubted not that that mystery was connected with the runaway slave, and they guessed that he had either taken Tony and landed him near the mouth of the York River on the northern shore, or that he had put him on board a ship. They agreed, however, that whatever their suspicions, they had not sufficient grounds for openly accusing Vincent of aiding their runaway.

CHAPTER V. SECESSION

While Vincent had been occupied with the affairs of Tony and his wife, public events had moved forward rapidly. The South Carolina Convention met in the third week in December, and on the 20th of that month the Ordinance of Secession was passed. On the 10th of January, three days after Vincent returned home from his expedition, Florida followed the example of South Carolina and seceded. Alabama and Mississippi passed the Ordinance of Secession on the following day; Georgia on the 18th, Louisiana on the 23d, and Texas on the 1st of February.

In all these States the Ordinance of Session was received with great rejoicing: bonfires were lit, the towns illuminated, and the militia paraded the streets, and in many cases the Federal arsenals were seized and the Federal forts occupied by the State troops. In the meantime the Northern Slave States, Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Missouri, remained irresolute. The general feeling was strongly in favor of their Southern brethren; but they were anxious for peace, and for a compromise being arrived at. Whether the North would agree to admit the constitutional rights of secession, or whether it would use force to compel the Seceding States to remain in the Union, was still uncertain; but the idea of a civil war was so terrible a one that the general belief was that some arrangement to allow the States to go their own way would probably be arrived at.

For the time the idea of Vincent going to West Point was abandoned. Among his acquaintances were several young men who were already at West Point, and very few of these returned to the academy. The feeling there was very strongly on the side of secession. A great majority of the students came from the Southern States, as while the sons of the Northern men went principally into trade and commerce, the Southern planters sent their sons into the army, and a great proportion of the officers of the army and navy were Southerners.

As the professors at West Point were all military men, the feeling among them, as well as among the students, was in favor of State rights; they considering that, according to the constitution, their allegiance was due first to the States of which they were natives, and in the second place to the Union. Thus, then, many of the professors who were natives of the seven States which had seceded resigned their appointments, and returned home to occupy themselves in drilling the militia and the levies, who were at once called to arms.

Still all hoped that peace would be preserved, until on the 11th of April General Beauregard, who commanded the troops of South Carolina, summoned Major Anderson, who was in command of the Federal troops in Fort Sumter, to surrender, and on his refusal opened fire upon the fort on the following day.

On the 13th, the barracks of the fort being set on fire, and Major Anderson seeing the hopelessness of a prolonged resistance, surrendered. The effect of the news throughout

the United States was tremendous, and Mr. Lincoln at once called out 75,000 men of the militia of the various States to put down the rebellion—the border States being ordered to send their proportion. This brought matters to a climax. Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Missouri all refused to furnish contingents to act against the Southern States; and Virginia, North Carolina, and Kansas a few days later passed Ordinances of Secession and joined the Southern States. Missouri, Maryland, and Delaware were divided in their counsels.

The struggle that was about to commence was an uneven one. The white population of the Seceding States was about 8,000,000; while that the Northern States were 19,614,885. The North possessed an immense advantage, inasmuch as they retained the whole of the Federal navy, and were thereby enabled at once to cut off all communication between the Southern States and Europe, while they themselves could draw unlimited supplies of munitions of war of all kinds from across the Atlantic.

Although the people of Virginia had hoped to the last that some peaceful arrangement might be effected, the Act of Secession was received with enthusiasm. The demand of Mr. Lincoln that they should furnish troops to crush their Southern brethren excited the liveliest indignation, and Virginia felt that there was no course open to her now but to throw in her lot with the other Slaves States. Her militia was at once called out, and volunteers called for to form a provisional army to protect the

State from invasion by the North.

The appeal was answered with enthusiasm; men of all ages took up arms; the wealthy raised regiments at their own expense, generally handing over the commands to experienced army officers, and themselves taking their places in the ranks; thousand of lads of from fifteen to sixteen years of age enrolled themselves, and men who had never done a day's work in their life prepared to suffer all the hardships of the campaign as private soldiers.

Mrs. Wingfield was an enthusiastic supporter of State rights; and when Vincent told her that numbers of his friends were going to enroll themselves as soon as the lists were opened, she offered no objection to his doing the same.

"Of course you are very young, Vincent; but no one thinks there will be any serious fighting. Now that Virginia and the other four States have cast in their lot with the seven that have seceded, the North can never hope to force the solid South back into the Union. Still it is right you should join. I certainly should not like an old Virginian family like ours to be unrepresented; but I should prefer your joining one of the mounted corps.

"In the first place it will be much less fatiguing than carrying a heavy rifle and knapsack; and in the second place, the cavalry will for the most part be gentlemen. I was speaking only yesterday when I went into Richmond to Mr. Ashley, who is raising a corps. He is one of the best riders in the country, and a splendid specimen of a Virginian gentleman. He tells me that

he has already received a large number of applications from young volunteers, and that he thinks he shall be able without any difficulty to get as many as he wants. I said that I had a son who would probably enroll himself, and that I should like to have him in his corps.

"He said that he would be glad to put down your name, and that he had had many applications from lads no older than yourself. He considered that for cavalry work, scouting, and that sort; of thing age mattered little, and that a lad who was at once a light weight, a good rider, and a good shot was of as much good as a man."

"Thank you, mother. I will ride into Richmond to-morrow morning and see Ashley. I have often met him at one house or another, and should like to serve under him very much. I should certainly prefer being in the cavalry to the infantry."

Rosie and Annie, who were of course enthusiastic for the South, were almost as pleased as was Vincent when they heard that their mother had consented to his enrolling himself. So many of the girls of their acquaintance had brothers or cousins who were joining the army, that they would have felt it as something like a slur upon the family name had Vincent remained behind.

On the following morning Vincent rode over and saw Mr. Ashley, who had just received his commission as major. He was cordially received.

"Mrs. Wingfield was speaking to me about you, and I shall be glad to have you with me—the more so as you are a capital rider

and a good shot. I shall have a good many in my ranks no older than you are. Did I not hear a few months since that you bought Wildfire? I thought when I heard it; that you would be lucky if you did not get your neck broken in the course of a week. Peters, who owns the next estate to mine, had the horse for about three weeks, and was glad enough to get rid of it for half what he had given for it. He told me the horse was the most savage brute he ever saw. I suppose you did not keep it many days?"

"I have got it still, and mean to ride it with you. The horse was not really savage. It was hot-tempered, and had, I think, been badly treated by its first owner. Who-ever it had belonged to, I found no difficulty with it. It only wanted kindness and a little patience; and as soon as it found that it could not get rid of me, and that I had no intention of ill-treating it, it settled down quietly, after running away a few times and giving me some little trouble at starting. And now I would not change it for any horse in the State."

"You must be a first-rate rider," Major Ashley said, "to be able to tame Wildfire. I never saw the horse, for I was away when Peters had him, but from his description it was a perfect savage."

"Are we allowed to bring a servant with us?" Vincent asked.

"Yes, if you like. I know that a good many are going to do so, but you must not make up your mind that you will get much benefit from one. We shall move rapidly, and each man must shift for himself, but at the same time we shall of course often be stationary; and then servants will be useful. At any rate I can

see no objection to men having them. We must be prepared to rough it to any extent when it is necessary, but I see no reason why at other times a man should not make himself comfortable. I expect the order to-morrow or next day to begin formally to enroll volunteers. As I have now put down your name there will be no occasion for you to come in then. You will receive a communication telling you when to report yourself.

"I shall not trouble much about uniform at first. High boots and breeches, a thick felt hat that will turn the edge of a sword, and a loose coat-jacket of dark-gray cloth. That is the name of the tailor who has got the pattern, and will make them. So I should advise you to go to him at once, for he will be so busy soon that; there is no saying when the whole troop will get their uniforms."

Upon his return home Vincent related to his mother and sisters the conversation that he had had with Major Ashley.

"Certainly you had better take a servant with you," his mother said. "I suppose when you are riding about; you will have to clean your horse, and cook your dinner, and do everything for yourself; but when you are in a town you should have these things done for you. Who would you like to take?

"I should like to take Dan, mother, if you have no objection. He is very strong and active, and I think would generally be able to keep up with us; besides, I know he would always stick to me."

"You shall have him certainly, Vincent; I will make him over formally to you."

"Thank you, mother," Vincent said joyfully; for he had often wished that Dan belonged to him, as he would then be able to prevent any interference with him by the overseer or any one else, and could, if he liked, give him his freedom—although this would, he knew, be of very doubtful advantage to the lad as long as he remained in the South.

The next morning the necessary papers were drawn up, and the ownership of Dan was formally transferred to Vincent. Dan was wild with delight when he heard that Vincent was now his master, and that he was to accompany him to the war. It had been known two days before that Vincent was going, and it seemed quite shocking to the negroes that the young master should go as a private soldier, and have to do everything for himself—"just," as they said, "like de poor white trash;" for the slaves were proud to belong to an old family, and looked down with almost contempt upon the poorer class of whites, regarding their own position as infinitely superior.

Four days later Vincent received an official letter saying that the corps would be mustered in two days' time. The next day was spent in a long round of farewell visits, and then Vincent mounted Wildfire, and, with Dan trotting behind, rode off from the Orangery amid a chorus of blessings and good wishes from all the slaves who could on any pretext get away from their duties, and who had assembled in front of the house to see him start.

The place of meeting for the regiment was at Hanover Courthouse—a station on the Richmond and Fredericksburg

Railway, close to the Pamunkey River, about eighteen miles from the city.

The Orangery was a mile from the village of Gaines, which lay to the northeast of Richmond, and was some twelve miles from Hanover Courthouse.

A month was spent in drill, and at the end of that time the corps were able to execute any simple maneuver. More than this Major Ashley did not care about their learning. The work in which they were about to engage was that of scouts rather than that of regular cavalry, and the requirements were vigilance and attention to orders, good shooting and a quick eye. Off duty there was but little discipline. Almost the whole of the men were in a good position in life, and many of them very wealthy; and while strict discipline and obedience were expected while on duty, at all other times something like equality existed between officers and men, and all were free to live as they chose.

The rations served out were simple and often scanty, for at present the various departments were not properly organized, and such numbers of men were flocking to the standards that the authorities were at their wit's end to provide them with even the simplest food. This mattered but little, however, to the regiment, whose members were all ready and willing to pay for everything they wanted, and the country people round found a ready market for all their chickens, eggs, fruit, and vegetables at Hanover Courthouse, for here there were also several infantry regiments, and the normally quiet little village was a scene of bustle and

confusion.

The arms of the cavalry were of a very varied description. Not more than a dozen had swords; the rest were armed with rifles or shot-guns, with the barrels cut short to enable them to be carried as carbines. Many of them were armed with revolvers, and some carried pistols so antiquated that they might have been used in the revolutionary war. A certain number of tents had been issued for the use of the corps. These, however, were altogether insufficient for the numbers, and most of the men preferred to sleep in shelters composed of canvas, carpets, blankets, or any other material that came to hand, or in arbors constructed of the boughs of trees, for it was now April and warm enough to sleep in the open air.

In the third week in May the order came that the corps was to march at once for Harper's Ferry—an important position at the point where the Shenandoah River runs into the Potomac, at the mouth of the Shenandoah Valley. The order was received with the greatest satisfaction. The Federal forces were gathering rapidly upon the northern banks of the Potomac, and it was believed that, while the main army would march down from Washington through Manassas Junction direct upon Richmond, another would enter by the Shenandoah Valley, and, crossing the Blue Ridge Mountains, come down on the rear of the Confederate army, facing the main force at Manassas. The cavalry marched by road, while the infantry were despatched by rail as far as Manassas Junction, whence they marched to

Harper's Ferry. The black servants accompanied the infantry.

The cavalry march was a pleasant one. At every village through which they passed the people flocked out with offerings of milk and fruit. The days were hot, but the mornings and evenings delightful; and as the troops always halted in the shade of a wood for three or four hours in the middle of the day, the marches although long were not fatiguing. At Harper's Ferry General Johnston had just superseded Colonel Jackson in command. The force there consisted of 11 battalions of infantry, 16 guns, and after Ashley's force arrived, 300 cavalry. Among the regiments there Vincent found many friends, and learned what was going on.

He learned that Colonel Jackson had been keeping them hard at work. Some of Vincent's friends had been at the Virginia Military Institute at Lexington, where Jackson was professor of natural philosophy and instructor of artillery.

"He was the greatest fun," one of the young men said; "the stiffest and most awkward-looking fellow in the institute. He used to walk about as if he never saw anything or anybody. He was always known as Old Tom, and nobody ever saw him laugh. He was awfully earnest in all he did, and strict, I can tell you, about everything. There was no humbugging him. The fellows liked him because he was really so earnest about everything, and always just and fair. But he didn't look a bit like a soldier except as to his stiffness, and when the fellows who had been at Lexington heard that he was in command here they did not think

he would have made much hand at it; but I tell you, he did. You never saw such a fellow to work.

"Everything had to be done, you know. There were the guns, but no horses and no harness. The horses had to be got somehow, and the harness manufactured out of ropes; and you can imagine the confusion of nine battalions of infantry, all recruits, with no one to teach them except a score or two of old army and militia officers. Old Tom has done wonders, I can tell you. You see, he is so fearfully earnest himself every one else has got to be earnest. There has been no playing about anything, but just fifteen hours' hard work a day. Fellows grumbled and growled and said it was absurd, and threatened to do all sorts of things. You see, they had all come out to fight if necessary, but hadn't bargained for such hard work as this.

"However, Jackson had his way, and I don't suppose any one ever told him the men thought they were too hard worked. He is not the sort of man one would care about remonstrating with. I don't know yet whether he is as good at fighting as he is at working and organizing; but I rather expect a fellow who is so earnest about everything else is sure to be earnest about fighting, and I fancy that when he once gets into the thick of it he will go through with it. He had such a reputation as an oddity at Lexington that there were a lot of remarks when he was made colonel and sent here; but there is no doubt that he has proved himself the right man so far, and although his men may grumble they believe in him.

"My regiment is in his brigade, and I will bet any money that we have our share of fighting. What sort of man is Johnston? He is a fine fellow—a soldier, heart and soul. You could tell him anywhere, and we have a first-rate fellow in command of the cavalry—Colonel Stuart—a splendid dashing fellow, full of life and go. His fellows swear by him. I quite envy you, for I expect you will astonish the Yankee horsemen. They are no great riders up there, you know, and I expect the first time you meet them you will astonish them."

Here he suddenly stopped, stood at attention, and saluted.

Vincent at once did the same, although, had he not been set the example by his friend, he would never have thought of doing so to the figure who passed.

"Who is it?" he asked, as his companion resumed his easy attitude.

"Why, that's Old Tom."

"What! Colonel Jackson!" Vincent said in surprise. "Well, he is an odd-looking fellow."

The figure that had passed was that of a tall, gaunt man, leaning awkwardly forward in his saddle. He wore an old gray coat, and there was no sign of rank, nor particle of gold lace upon the uniform. He wore on his head a faded cadet cap, with the rim coming down so far upon his nose that he could only look sideways from under it. He seemed to pay but little attention to what was going on around him, and did not enter into conversation with any of the officers he met.

The brigade commanded by Jackson was the first of the army of the Shenandoah, and consisted of the 2d, 4th, 5th, and 27th Virginians, to which was shortly afterward added the 33d. They were composed of men of all ranks and ages, among them being a great number of lads from fifteen and upward; for every school had been deserted. Every boy capable of carrying a musket had insisted upon joining, and among them were a whole company of cadets from Lexington. The regiments selected their own officers, and among these were many who were still lads. Many of the regiments had no accouterments, and were without uniforms, and numbers carried no better arms than a double-barreled shot-gun; but all were animated with the same spirit of enthusiasm in their cause, and a determination to die rather than to allow the invaders to pass on through the fertile valleys of their native land.

Of all these valleys that of Shenandoah was the richest and most beautiful. It was called the Garden of Virginia; and all writers agreed in their praises of the beauties of its fields and forests, mountains and rivers, its delicious climate, and the general prosperity which prevailed among its population.

It was a pleasant evening that Ashley's horse spent at Harper's Ferry on the day they marched in. All had many friends among the other Virginian regiments, and their camp-fires were the center toward which men trooped by scores. The rest was pleasant after their hard marches; and, although ready to do their own work when necessary, they appreciated the advantage of

having their servants again with them to groom their horses and cook their food.

The negroes were not less glad at being again with their masters. Almost all were men who had, like Dan, been brought up with their young owners, and felt for them a strong personal attachment, and, if it had been allowed, would gladly have followed them in the field of battle, and fought by their side against the "Yankees." Their stay at Harper's Ferry was to be a short one. Colonel Stuart, with his 200 horse, was scouting along the whole bank of the Potomac, watching every movement of the enemy, and Ashley's horse was to join them at once.

It was not difficult for even young soldiers to form an idea of the general nature of the operations. They had to protect the Shenandoah Valley, to guard the five great roads by which the enemy would advance against Winchester, and not only to save the loyal inhabitants and rich resources of the valley from falling into the hands of the Federals, but what was of even greater importance, to prevent the latter from marching across the Blue Ridge Mountains, and falling upon the flank of the main Confederate army at Manassas.

The position was a difficult one, for while "the grand army" was assembling at Alexandria to advance against Manassas Junction, McClellan was advancing from the northwest with 20,000 men, and Patterson from Pennsylvania with 18,000.

In the morning before parading his troop, 100 strong, Ashley called them together and told them that, as they would now be

constantly on the move and scattered over a long line, it was impossible that they could take their servants with them.

"I should never have allowed them to be brought," he said, "had I known that we should be scouting over such an extensive country; at the same time, if we can manage to take a few on it would certainly add to our comfort. I propose that we choose ten by lot to go on with us. They must be servants of the troop and not of individuals. We can scatter them in pairs at five points, with instructions to forage as well as they can, and to have things in readiness to cook for whoever may come in off duty or may for the time be posted there. Henceforth every man must groom and see to his own horse, but I see no reason, military or otherwise, why we shouldn't get our food cooked for us; and it will be just as well, as long as we can, to have a few bundles of straw for us to lie on instead of sleeping on the ground.

"Another ten men we can also choose by lot to go to Winchester; which is, I imagine, the point we shall move to if the enemy advance, as I fancy they will, from the other side of the Shenandoah Valley. The rest must be sent home."

Each man accordingly wrote his name on a piece of paper, and placed them in a haversack. Ten were then drawn out; and their servants were to accompany the troop at once. The servants of the next ten were to proceed by train to Winchester, while the slaves of all whose names remained in the bag were to be sent home at once, provided with passes permitting them to travel. To Vincent's satisfaction his name was one of the first ten drawn,

and Dan was therefore to go forward. The greater part of the men evaded the obligation to send their servants back to Richmond by despatching them to friends who had estates in the Shenandoah Valley, with letters asking them to keep the men for them until the troop happened to come into their neighborhood.

At six o'clock in the morning the troop mounted and rode to Bath, thirty miles away. It was here that Stuart had his headquarters, whence he sent out his patrols up and down the Potomac, between Harper's Ferry on the east and Cumberland on the west. Stuart was away when they arrived, but he rode in a few hours afterward.

"Ah! Ashley, I am glad you have arrived," he said, as he rode up to the troop, who had hastily mounted as he was seen approaching. "There is plenty for you to do, I can tell you; and I only wish that you had brought a thousand men instead of a hundred. I am heartily glad to see you all, gentlemen," he said to the troop. "I am afraid just at first that the brightness of your gray jackets will put my men rather to shame; but we shall soon get rid of that. But dismount your men, Ashley; there is plenty for them and their horses to do without wasting time in parade work. There is very little of that here, I can tell you. I have not seen a score of my men together for the last month."

Vincent gazed with admiration at the young leader, whose name was soon to be celebrated throughout America and Europe. The young Virginian—for he was not yet twenty-eight years old—was the beau ideal of a cavalry officer. He was

singularly handsome, and possessed great personal strength and a constitution which enabled him to bear all hardships. He possessed unfailing good spirits, and had a joke and laugh for all he met; and while on the march at the head of his regiment he was always ready to lift up his voice and lead the songs with which the men made the woods resound.

He seemed to live in his saddle, and was present at all hours of the night and day along the line he guarded seeing that the men were watchful and on the alert, instructing the outposts in their duty, and infusing his own spirit and vigilance among them. He had been educated at West Point, and had seen much service with the cavalry against the Indians in the West. Such was the man who was to become the most famous cavalry leader of his time. So far he had not come in contact with the enemy, and his duties were confined to obtaining information regarding their strength and intentions, to watching every road by which they could advance, and to seeing that none passed north to carry information to the enemy as to the Confederate strength and positions, for even in the Shenandoah Valley there were some whose sympathies were with the Federals.

These were principally Northern men settled as traders in the towns, and it was important to prevent them from sending any news to the enemy. So well did Stuart's cavalry perform this service, and so general was the hostility of the population against the North, that throughout the whole of the war in Virginia it was very seldom that the Northern generals could obtain any

trustworthy information as to the movements and strength of the Confederates, while the latter were perfectly informed of every detail connected with the intentions of the invaders.

The next morning Ashley's troop took up their share of the work at the front. They were broken up into parties of ten, each of which was stationed at a village near the river, five men being on duty night and day. As it happened that none of the other men in his squad had a servant at the front, Vincent was able without difficulty to have Dan assigned to his party. A house in the village was placed at their disposal, and here the five off duty slept and took their meals while the others were in the saddle. Dan was quite in his element, and turned out an excellent cook, and was soon a general favorite among the mess.

CHAPTER VI. BULL RUN

The next fortnight passed by without adventure. Hard as the work was, Vincent enjoyed it thoroughly. When on duty by day he was constantly on the move, riding through the forest, following country lanes, questioning every one he came across; and as the men always worked in pairs, there was no feeling of loneliness. Sometimes Ashley would draw together a score of troopers, and crossing the river in a ferryboat, would ride twenty miles north, and, dashing into quiet villages, astonish the inhabitants by the sight of the Confederate uniform. Then the villagers would be questioned as to the news that had reached them of the movement of the troops; the post office would be seized and the letters broken open; any useful information contained in them being noted. But in general questions were readily answered; for a considerable portion of the people of Maryland were strongly in favor of the South, and were only prevented from joining it by the strong force that held possession of Baltimore, and by the constant movement of Federal armies through the State. Vincent was often employed in carrying despatches from Major Ashley to Stuart, being selected for that duty as being the best mounted man in the troop. The direction was always a vague one. "Take this letter to Colonel Stuart, wherever he may be," and however early he started, Vincent thought himself fortunate if he carried out his mission before

sunset; for Stuart's front covered over fifty miles of ground, and there was no saying where he might be. Sometimes after riding thirty or forty miles, and getting occasional news that Stuart had passed through ahead of him, he would learn from some outpost that the colonel had been there but ten minutes before, and had ridden off before he came, and then Vincent had to turn his horse and gallop back again, seldom succeeding in overtaking his active commander until the latter had halted for his supper at one or other of the villages where his men were stationed. Sometimes by good luck he came upon him earlier, and then, after reading the despatch, Stuart would, if he were riding in the direction where Ashley's command lay, bid him ride on with him, and would chat with him on terms of friendly intimacy about people they both knew at Richmond, or as to the details of his work, and sometimes they would sit down together under the shade of some trees, take out the contents of their haversacks, and share their dinners.

"This is the second time I have had the best of this," the colonel laughed one day; "my beef is as hard as leather, and this cold chicken of yours is as plump and tender as one could wish to eat."

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.