

LETTER XVI.

Buildings connected with a Southern Plantation—A Walk in the Woods—The Robin—The Preparation of Cotton for the Market—Women engaged in Falling Trees and Building Fences.

AGREEABLE to my promise in my last letter, I will now go on with my description of the buildings belonging to a Southern plantation.

In the first place there was a paling enclosing all the buildings belonging to the family and all the house servants. In the centre of this enclosure stood the principal house, the same I have already in a previous letter described. In this the father of the family and all the females lodged. The next house of importance was the one occupied by the steward of the plantation, and where all the white boys belonging to the family had their sleeping apartments. The next after this was a school house consisting of two rooms, one for a study, the other the master's dormitory. Then the cook, the washer-woman, and the milk-maid, had each their several houses, the children's nurses always sleeping upon the

floor of their mistress' apartment. Then again there was the kitchen, the store-house, corn-house, stable, hen-coop, the hound's kennel, the shed for the corn mill, all these were separate little buildings within the same enclosure. Even the milk-safe stood out under one great tree, while under another the old washer woman had all her apparatus arranged; even her kettle was there suspended from a cross-pole. Then to increase the beauty of the scene, the whole establishment was completely shaded by ornamental trees, which grew at a convenient distances among the buildings, and towering far above them all. The huts of the field servants formed another little cluster of dwellings at considerable distance from the master's residence, yet not beyond the sight of his watchful and jealous eye. These latter huts were arranged with a good deal of order and here each slave had his small patch of ground adjacent to his own dwelling, which he assiduously cultivated after completing his daily task. I have known the poor creatures, notwithstanding "tired nature" longed for repose, to spend the greater part of a moonlight night on these grounds. In this way they often raise considerable crops of corn, tobacco, and potatoes, besides various kinds of garden vegetables. Their object in doing this

is to have something with which to purchase tea, coffee, sugar, flour, and all such articles of diet as are not provided by their masters, also such clothing as is necessary to make them appear decent in church, but which they can not have unless they procure it by extra efforts.

From this you see the slave is obliged to work the greater part of his time, for one coarse torn garment a year, and hardly food enough of the coarsest kind to support nature, without the least luxury that can be named. Neither can they after the fatigues of the day repose their toil worn bodies upon a comfortable bed unless they have earned it by laboring many a long, weary hour after even the beasts and the birds have retired to rest. It is a common rule to furnish every slave with one coarse blanket each, and these they always carry with them, so when night overtakes them, let it be where it may, they are not obliged to hasten home to go to rest. Poor creatures! all the home they have is where their blanket is, and this is all the slave pretends to call his own besides his dog. But I find I have wandered far from the morning which commenced the period of my residence in the country, so now I will return to my own strange quarters again.

Early I went to work to make such a disposition of my books and all other things pertaining to my own apartment as I fancied would contribute most to my own comfort and make it appear the most homelike. When this was done I left the house for a walk in the woods, hoping there to be able to shake off those evil spirits, sometimes called the blues, which I found were determined to haunt me at all events. Although it was now the last of December the forests were still green, and scarcely a tree had shed its summer leaves, yet there was not that freshness in the verdure that characterizes the young leaves of spring, but age was written upon every little shrub and twining vine, and an autumnal hue tinged every thing with a sort of melancholy. I went far into the woods, and finding a little grassy mound in the midst of a sort of opening among the trees, I seated myself to think of that sacred spot in the land of my fathers I still loved to call my home, and if fancy's airy wings could have as easily transported the material as the immaterial, how soon should I have been there basking in the sunshine of a mother's love! Though I always make it a point in whatever situation I am placed "therewith to be content," yet I must confess a degree of sadness came over me I do not often experience, and I shall

never forget how opportunely a lone robin came and seated herself upon the ground at a little distance from me. I would have pressed the dear bird to my bosom, for she was one of my own country's sweet songsters, and I knew that like myself, she felt that she was a stranger there. She looked sorrowful and timid as though she thought she must be careful about her deportment while from home, and it is a fact that the robins do not appear to be the same cheerful, happy birds while at their winter homes that they are at the North. I never heard a robin sing while I was there, and instead of coming around the buildings as they do when they are with us, they appear shy and tarry in the woods. People at the South never see their nests and young ones, but when spring comes they hasten home, and every little child here knows with what glad songs they return to their old nests again.

I found after I had been in the country a few months that the season when I first went there was the most gloomy part of the year. At this time there were but few slaves upon the plantation, many of them being let out to boatmen who at this season of the year are busily engaged in the transportation of goods and produce of all kinds up and down the rivers. The sweet sing-

ing birds, too, were all gone to their winter quarters still farther South, but when they had all returned, and the trees began to assume the freshness of summer, and the plants to put forth their blossoms, I found it was far from being a dull and gloomy place. During the greater part of the winter season the negro women are busy in picking, ginning, and packing the cotton for market.

In packing the cotton, the sack is suspended from strong spikes, and while one colored person stands in it to tread the cotton down, others throw it into the sack. I have often wondered how the cotton could be sold so cheap when it required so much labor to get it ready for the market, and certainly it could not be if all their help was hired at the rate of northern labor.

The last of January the servants began to return to the plantation to repair the fences and make ready for planting and sowing. The fences are built of poles arranged in a zigzag manner, so that the ends of one tier of poles rests upon the ends of another. In this work the women are engaged as well as the men. They all go into the woods and each woman as well as man cuts down her own pine sapling, and brings it upon her head. It certainly was a most revolting sight to see the female form

scarcely covered with one old miserable garment, with no covering for the head, arms, or neck, nor shoes to protect her feet from briers and thorns, employed in conveying trees upon her head from one place to another to build fences. When I beheld such scenes I felt culpable in living in ease and enjoying the luxuries of life, while so many of my own sex were obliged to drag out such miserable existences merely to procure these luxuries enjoyed by their masters. When the fences were completed, they proceeded to prepare the ground for planting. This is done by throwing the earth up in ridges from one side of the field to the other. This work is usually executed by hand labor, the soil is so light, though sometimes to facilitate the process a light plough, drawn by a mule, is used. The ground there is reckoned by tasks instead of acres. If a person is asked the extent of a certain piece of land, he is told it contains so many tasks, accordingly so many tasks are assigned for a day's work. In hoeing corn, three tasks are considered a good day's work for a man, two for a woman and one and a half for a boy or girl fourteen or fifteen years old.

LETTER XVII.

Why the Southern Planters build no better houses—Hand Mills
—Negro Dance—The African slave—A Southern cook.

IN answer to the question, "Why the planters have no better dwellings," I would reply, that they are under the necessity of changing their places of residence so often, on account of the soil, which in a few years becomes barren, owing to the manner in which it is cultivated, if they invested much property in buildings, they would be obliged to make great pecuniary sacrifices; therefore they have but little property that is not moveable. Their possessions generally consist in slaves, herds of swine and cattle, horses, mules, flocks of goats, and numerous fowls of all kinds, fine carriages, furniture, plate, etc., which can be transported when occasion demands a removal from one old worn out plantation to another of new and fruitful soil. A Northerner, who is accustomed to judge of a farmer's property by his buildings, would suppose, when he first went into the country at

the South, that many of great wealth were poor men, their buildings are so miserable. The manner of estimating a planter's pecuniary circumstances is by the number of his slaves, consequently a man ambitious to be called wealthy, strives as hard to increase the number of his slaves, as a man North does to add to the number of his acres of land, or dollars in the bank. I have visited plantations where the master's residence had not a pane of glass in the windows, nor a door between the apartments, and even the outside doors would have been dispensed with, if it could have been done with personal safety. Neither was there the shadow of a board to intervene between the ground floor and the coarse unhewn shingles, as seen on the inside of the roof, yet the table was loaded with an almost endless variety of the richest delicacies that could be obtained from the woods, fields and creeks, and when night came, beds of the softest down were ready for our reception. The fields, too, were full of men servants and women servants. The poultry yards were full to overflowing, and the woods teemed with numerous herds of cattle, horses, mules, and goats, while scores of red and yellow swine literally turned up the meadows in search of worms; yet with all these posses-

sions, that which we consider so indispensable to comfort, was a mere shell, and could all be taken down and removed in a few hours.

In traveling in that section one often meets deserted plantations, and I have often been told such is the case throughout the Slave States. This is occasioned by no means being used to enrich the soil. A plantation is cleared, and a sort of temporary huts erected, then covered with slaves who cultivate the soil as long as it will produce any thing, then left for another to be used in the same way. I have often visited these ruined grounds, but never could I walk over the spot where the poor slave seated himself to partake of his scanty meal, or where he couched down upon the hard ground in his tent for a short repose after a long day of hard toil, without thinking of the many tears that had probably fallen there, and of the sighs and groans that had been wafted to heaven from that very spot, and when I looked over those desolate and barren wastes, I was superstitious enough to think that even the toil of the stolen son of Africa had cursed the soil, and that his sweat bedewing the ground had been transformed to a blighting mildew.

I have, in a previous letter, spoken of the slaves grinding corn; this is done by hand-

mills constructed of two round flat stones, the upper one being turned around upon the other by hand labor. One person can, though, with a good deal of difficulty, grind corn alone, but it is customary for two at a time to engage in this labor. This mill is probably the same in kind with those used in Oriental countries, respecting which our Savior said, "Two women shall be grinding at the mill, the one shall be taken the other left." The time for the grinding of corn was always in the evening after the daily tasks were done.

About seven o'clock, in the summer season, the colored people would generally begin to assemble in the yard belonging to the planter's residence. Here they would kindle little bonfires, not only to ward off the musquitoes, but because they are considered essential in the hot season to purify the air when it is filled with feverish vapors that arise from decayed vegetable matter. Then while two of their number are engaged at the mill, all the rest join in a dance around the burning fagots. In this manner were spent the greater part of the summer evenings, and it was usual for the white members of the family to assemble on the piazza to witness their pastimes, and sometimes at the request of a favorite slave, I have seen the white

children engage in the waltz, or take their places in the quadrille. Slaves from adjoining plantations would often come to spend an evening with their acquaintances, and bring their corn with them to grind. The grinding generally commences at about six in the evening, and the hoarse sound of the mill seldom ceased much before midnight.

Though the slaves in general, notwithstanding all their hard toils and sorrows, had their happy hours, there was one old woman on the plantation who always looked cast down and sorrowful, and never appeared to take any interest in what caused the joy and mirth of those around her. She was one of Afric's own home born daughters, and she had never forgotten those who nursed her in infancy, nor the playmates of her childhood's happy hours. She told me she was stolen one day while gathering shells into a little basket on the sea shore, when she was about ten years old, and crowded into a vessel with a good many of her own race, who had also been stolen and sold for slaves, and from that hour when she left her mother's hut to go out to play she had never seen one of her own kindred, though she had always hoped that Providence might bring some of them in her way; "but now," she replied, "I begin to

despair of ever seeing those faces which are still fresh in my memory, for now I am an old woman, and shall soon get through all my troubles and sorrows, and I only think now of meeting them in heaven." When requested she would favor us with a song in her own language, learned before she was stolen, but when she came to sing of her native hills and sparkling streams, the tears would trickle down her sunburnt and furrowed cheeks, and my heart could but ache for this poor creature, stolen away in the innocence of youth, from parents, kindred, home, and country, which were as dear to her as mine to me.

Of all the house-servants, I thought the task of the cook was the most laborious. Though she did no other house-work she was obliged to do every thing belonging to the kitchen department, and that, too, with none of those conveniences without which a Northern woman would think it was impossible for her to prepare a meal of victuals. After having cooked the supper and washed the dishes she goes about making preparations for the next morning's meal. In the first place she goes into the woods to gather sticks and dried limbs of trees, which she ties in bundles and brings to the kitchen on her head, with which to kindle the morning fire;

to get as much fuel as she will want to use in preparing the breakfast she is often obliged to go into the woods several times. When this is done she has all the corn to grind for the hommony and bread, then the evening's preparations are completed. In the morning she is obliged to rise very early, for she has every article of food that comes on to the table to cook, nothing ever being prepared till the hour it is needed. When she has gone through with all the duties connected with the morning's repast, then she goes about the dinner, bringing fuel from the woods, grinding corn, etc. In this manner the cook spends her days, for in whatever department the slaves are educated, they are generally obliged to wear out their lives.

LETTER XVIII.

Cultivation of Rice—The Sweet Potato—Pea Nuts—Feeding of Swine—Garden Vegetables, Fruits, Flowers, Shrubs and Trees.

BESIDES rice, I believe corn is the only kind of grain produced in the Southern part of Georgia, and this differs very much in the size of its kernel, color and taste from the kind which is used among us. The flour that is made from it is as white as our wheat flour, and makes much better bread than our corn. As no wheat is raised there, corn meal and flour are used in cooking almost every dish. It is served up in homony, to be used as a vegetable with meat, generally three times a day. On the plantations but a very little bread is used besides the corn bread, and this is prepared hot for every meal. In its growth it is very stout and tall, reaching to the height of eight or nine feet. I have been in corn-fields so extensive and the stalks so much above my head that I thought one might be in nearly as much danger of losing his way out

as he would be in a forest he was unacquainted with. The Southern corn is much longer in coming to maturity than ours. It is planted two or three months earlier, and gathered about the same time. The next thing that is planted after the corn is the sweet potato. This vegetable is of two kinds, called yams and slips. The yams are raised by planting the root in the spring as our farmers do the Irish potato, then when the tops of these are about six inches high, slips are cut from them and planted on another piece of ground. This is done on rainy days, or in the morning and evening, when the dew is on the ground. The potato obtained in this way is called the slip, and is long and slender in form while the yam is short and thick. Great quantities of pea-nuts are raised there, not only as an article for export, but to fatten swine upon. They are planted in the same manner as potatoes and when they have come to maturity the swine are turned in upon them to dig their own food. It is not usual for planters to feed their swine in any other way, and this only in the fall previous to slaughter. At other times they procure their own food, either by digging roots in the woods, or hunting for snails and worms in the marshes. When they are fed the performance is attended to every day just between day-light

and dark. First, their suppers are all made ready for them, then a horn is sounded which occasions a truly swinish concert from every hole, nook and corner in the surrounding woods and marshes, from which one or two hundred of these noisy creatures might issue. It was strange to me they could so readily distinguish the horn that was sounded for them from the one that called the dogs to hunting; but they perfectly understood the difference, so did the hounds. The cattle also in that region procured their own sustenance, both in summer and winter, in the woods and swamps. It is common for one man to own one thousand or fifteen hundred cattle, all of which, except a very few, being too wild to come out in the open fields. In the summer season the slaves kindle little bonfires on the borders of the plantation every evening, around which crowds of cattle gather to escape the dreadful bite of the gallinippers, a kind of mammoth musquitoes. When a beef is to be killed, several men, mounted on fleet horses and followed by a pack of hounds, hunt them down as they would other wild game. Of all the productions of slavery, the cultivation of no one is attended with so much physical suffering and loss of life as that of the rice plant. This is owing to the circum-

stance of its being raised in a swamp overflowed with stagnant water. I never visited but one rice field, then I was obliged to go on horseback, as it was inaccessible on foot, all the ground lying round about the field being covered with mud and water. Rice grounds are those over which the tide flows, but to make them suitable for the production of this grain, the salt water is turned off by dikes, and overflowed with fresh water, which soon stagnates in that hot country; this is what makes these fields so unhealthy. Formerly, all the land bordering on the Savannah river, from its mouth up a good many miles, both on the Georgia and Carolina sides, was cultivated with rice; the consequence of which was those yellow fevers which proved so fatal to thousands in Savannah several years ago. Now the government forbids the cultivation of those grounds, and being cleansed and purified twice in the course of twenty-four hours by the rising of the tides, Savannah has become one of the most healthy cities on the Atlantic coast. The swamp I visited was cut out in the heart of the woods, and the stumps of the trees were all standing among the rice stalks, which were then about five feet high and almost covered with water. When the rice is ready for harvesting, the

water is drained off a few days before it is gathered. Mosquitoes accumulate in these swamps beyond all conception. The few moments I tarried at the field it seemed as if I should be devoured alive, and I believe those monstrous gallinippers, if they had an opportunity, would have in a little while transformed myself and beast into mere skeletons. Yet in such horrible places as these, filled with pestilential vapors, scarcely less fatal than the deadly simoon of the desert, not only men, but thousands of poor, feeble, and half-starved women and girls, with flesh and blood like our own, are compelled by the lash to drag out their wretched and miserable, but short existence, merely to procure an article of diet for those of their brethren in the human family who were born with little fairer complexions.

Melons of all kinds, the nicest and richest I ever saw, were raised in such abundance on the plantation where I was that they were brought from the field by cart loads. Their fruit consists principally of figs and oranges;—attempts have been made to raise the Northern apple, but with very little success; if they succeed at all in raising apples, they will be crabbed and spongy. Some planters try to cultivate

the Irish potato, but they are as miserable as is the sweet potato when it is cultivated here. Figs are raised in abundance in the Southern part of Georgia. This fruit, when fresh from the tree, is extremely delicious, and bears no sort of resemblance in taste, color, or shape to the same fruit when dried. When on the tree, it resembles in shape a bell pear, in color our purple grape. To preserve figs they are placed on tins, covered over with sugar, and dried in the sun. In beauty the fig-tree holds a high rank in the vegetable kingdom; its branches are long and slender, and all the lower ones reach the ground, while its broad, palmate leaves are so numerous that the tree not only forms a cool and shady covert from the sun, but also a safe retreat from wind and rain. I have often thought, while sitting beneath one of these beautiful trees, completely hidden from the view of those round about, that Nathaniel might well think that our Savior must be divine, if he saw him "when he was under the fig tree." Habakkuk says, "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom," but it is an anomaly in the vegetable kingdom that the fig-tree never does blossom. I have examined very closely the little stalks from which the fruit makes its appearance, and I never could discover the least appearance of

anything that resembled the organs of fructification. I suppose, however, they are contained in the fruit itself. Before closing this letter I will say a word or two about plants and flowers. In the Southern country we see a great many more flowering shrubs than we do here. Many plants that are annual here, and have soft fibrous stems, become perennial there, and their stems grow hard and woody. Geraniums almost become shrubs at the South. Some plants which we cultivate with care, as the chrysanthemum, are there regarded as noxious weeds. The prickly pear almost covers the uncultivated soil, and the colored people with their unshod feet often suffer very much in consequence of traveling among them. Among the forest trees, the different species of the laurel, as the bay tree and magnolia, might be considered as the pride of the woods. They all bear beautiful, large, white blossoms, even more fragrant than the pond lily; and when they are in full bloom, they fill the air with their delicious fragrance. The leaves of the magnolia are large and lustrous, and I have often plucked them for sun-shades, and as long as they lasted found them equally as good as those manufactured of silk and whale bone. Many of the Southern forests are literally hedged up with all kinds of tough vines, so

interwoven among the trees that the woods in many places are utterly impenetrable. Many of these vines bear the sweetest flowers of every rich hue that can be described, literally forming a hedge of blossoms. Cedars are among the most common trees that grow in the open fields and on the banks of the creeks, and many have been the twilight hours I have spent among their dark shadows.

LETTER XIX.

Birds of the South—The Buzzard—Alligator—Deer Hunting—Fishes.

I should be doing violence to my own feelings if I did not honor the most lovely part of creation with a place in my letters, not that I expect with my feeble powers to do justice to the downy singers of Georgia, but it surely would be wanting in respect, for me to pass them by, when I speak of so many other things belonging to the place.

Of all the birds I ever heard sing, the mocking bird has the greatest compass of voice. This bird very much resembles our little ground sparrow in color; in size it may be a little larger. One would never suppose, just to see her, she could afford such rich entertainment as will at times pour forth from her little throat. I never heard them sing excepting in the night, and then their sweet melodious songs have kept me awake during many of the hours of darkness.

Some nights I have hardly closed my eyes in sleep before daylight began to dawn. During the day they generally concealed themselves in the woods, but when evening came, and every thing about the buildings was hushed and still, then they began to collect among the boughs that overshadowed my windows, and there for hours at a time, vie with other in variety and sweetness of strains. In the woods they will imitate every bird they hear. Sometimes they will draw around them flocks of birds by counterfeiting the soft tones of their notes, and then all of a sudden throw them into a terrible fright by screaming like a hawk. They will often lead the hunter astray by imitating the notes of the game he is in pursuit of. When she is domesticated she will not only make her little voice accord with every tone of the piano, but she will mock with precision every other sound she hears. Sometimes she she will cluck like a hen and a flock of chickens will be running in all directions to find their mother; she mews like a hurt kitten, and old puss runs to see what has happened to her young ones; at another time she will collect together a pack of hounds, which thought their master had called them to hunting. Not less sweet and charming, though not of that endless variety as those of the mock-

ing bird, were the notes of the rice birds. The plumage of this bird was very beautiful; the body being covered with feathers as black and lustrous as that of the raven; the wings were nearly red, tinged with a golden color, and a tuft of yellow feathers ornamented its head.

I have sat for hours at my window to see these gay birds clinging firmly to a slender twig at the utmost extremity of a branch, waving in the air at the slightest breath, while the more rudely the winds seemed to sport with their frail situations, the more widely they opened their mouths to warble out a louder song. These songsters continued through the day, and when twilight came, the whip-poor-will appeared, to finish out the song, so we had our evening as well as morning music.

In the latter part of the summer the rice bird becomes very fat, then vast numbers of them are killed and served up on the table; but it always seemed to me to be a sacrilege for us to gorge on such little sweet musical instruments; to cut these little throats that filled the air with praises to God.

The most useful bird in all the South, is the buzzard, more properly called the vulture. It is about as large as our tame turkey, and is a

very ugly, filthy-looking bird, though there are none more harmless. They are so useful in clearing the ground of all putrid flesh, that the public authorities impose a fine of five dollars upon any person who intentionally kills one of them. As they are never frightened by being fired at, they have become so tame they will enter the front yards, and perch upon the fences and the tops of houses and chimneys, and they can scarcely be driven away. I have counted thirty of them at one time sitting close together upon the paling enclosing the house. In no way are the buzzards more useful to places on the sea-board than in destroying alligator's eggs. It is said the buzzard perches upon the top of a tree and there watches the alligator when it comes up out of the water to deposit its eggs in the sand, then as soon as it returns to the river, he calls a great many other buzzards to the spot where they uncover the eggs and eat them. The alligator lays from one to two hundred eggs a year, and if a great many of them were not in some way destroyed, the whole coast would be so overrun with these terrible animals no one could live there. They came up in the creeks all about the plantation where I resided, and a gentleman told me they would often spring out of the water, and seize a dog, a swine, or a calf

two years old, if any of these animals happened to be on the shore of the creek, and plunge with them into the deep water again. He said, also, little colored children had been caught in their ponderous jaws while playing on the shores. I have often seen their places of concealment when walking in damp places and near the marshes. The slaves caught one soon after I went on to the plantation, and dragged it up uninjured to the house. This one was about sixteen feet long, and its jaws not less than three quarters of a yard in length. A gentleman tried several times with a pistol, to shoot it, but the balls would bound from the scaly covering as soon as if they had been fired upon a rock. There are two places, however, just back of each eye that may be penetrated by a ball. Many of the plantations near the sea board are bordered on one, or all its sides, by extensive marshes, which are overflowed twice in the course of every twenty-four hours by the tide. In these marshes, thousands of birds, called marsh-hens, build their nests upon the ground, and when the tide came up and drove them from their eggs they would make the marsh resound with their cackling till one was nearly stunned.

Many large birds lived in the marshes by digging worms and snails. The largest of these are the gannet and "poor job." The gannet is a grey bird, with very long legs, neck, and bill, and about as large as the crane. The poor job is a good deal larger and as white as snow, with a long yellow bill about ten inches in length, and legs in proportion to its bill. The mourning dove is a solitary bird nearly as large as the robin, and of a light brown color. They seemed to keep aloof from all other birds, and were seldom seen in pairs. They had a very forlorn appearance, and their mournful cooing has given them the name of "Mourning Doves." Wild turkeys were very common in the woods, and were hunted a great deal, not only for the flesh, but as a source of amusement.

Of all the amusements resorted to, at the South, by gentlemen, to pass away time, I always looked upon deer hunting, as one of the most cruel. When I saw half a dozen men on horse-back, followed by as many hungry hounds all in hot pursuit for one of those helpless and innocent animals, I always wondered how men could enjoy such sports. When closely pursued, they would often retreat to the plantations, and when I have seen them panting for

breath, and almost dead with fear, shifting and turning, sometimes retracing their own steps to elude the hounds, my sympathies were always with the poor animals rather than the cruel hunters, and I always wanted to lend a helping hand to effect their escape. Deer hunting days are always hailed as the most joyous and merry, and when the company was about setting out, the prancing of the horses and the barking of the hounds testified their eagerness to be in the chase; but I never could see these preparations, without commiseration for the poor animals, at whose expense all this merriment was to be purchased.

As I have a little more room in my sheet, I will say a few words about the fishes I saw while in Georgia. The most valuable of the finny tribes was the drum fish. These attain a very large size; I have seen them as large as swine, weighing four or five hundred, and they somewhat resemble this animal. A good deal of danger attends the taking of them; unless much precaution is used, they will upset the boat of the fisherman. The white fish, black fish, and even the cat fish, came on to the table as frequently as any other; shell fish, such as the crab, shrimp, and prawns, were more saleable than those with fins.

Oyster banks were very numerous; rising out of the rivers like a ledge of rocks, and when these banks occur near the plantations the slaves are able to add a very valuable article of diet to their otherwise coarse food.

LETTER XX.

Sabbath at the South—Going to Church—Visit to a Cemetery—Service at Church—Refreshments—Stubbornness of a mule—Pastimes of Slaves.

THAT my readers may have some idea of the manner of spending holy time at the South, I propose to relate in this letter some of the events as they occurred on one of the Sabbaths in July, while I was in the country, and this will give you a pretty good idea of the way of spending the Sabbath in general. But in attempting to do this, I am aware that I may show a picture that to New-England's daughters, who have been brought up within the sound of the church going bell, could hardly appear true to life. For even, after I had been there so long as to become somewhat accustomed to that mode of society, I often found it difficult to realize the return of holy time, so much labor was performed and so many kinds of amusements were indulged in; but still I felt that I was culpable for losing sight for one moment of that day of

rest, which seems to be a prelude to that long and everlasting rest which is in reserve for God's dear children; for notwithstanding there was so little distinction made between the days of the week, it seemed as though there was something in nature itself, that said, "This is the Sabbath; remember to keep the day holy;" and so did it speak to me on the morning of that day, whose events I am now about to relate, as I arose and threw aside my curtain to enjoy a rich view of the broad Atlantic, as it rolled and dashed its briny waters far upon the shore.

Though nature was not silent, her voice was not the hum of a busy world, but a sublime anthem, sung as a prelude to the worship of this holy day, in which the lowing cattle made sweet harmony with the songsters of the groves, while the ocean's loud peal formed the bass to the whole; and even the flowers, whose language is that of the deaf and dumb, seemed to lift up their heads and smile a welcome to the coming Sabbath. But I dwell too long upon the most pleasant, the most sacred part of the day, for the purpose I had in view when I sat down to write this letter, but I have done it because it is so painful to reflect that the rising of that being from a night of sweet repose for

whom the Sabbath was alone designed, should cause its violation, and now I almost regret that I have thought of exposing those customs and arrangements which so much interfere with a strict observance of the Sabbath; but as I intended at the commencement of this letter I will begin with the morning.

After the first duties of the day had been discharged, which were, to serve up the morning repast, the family was called together (that is, the white portion of it,) to attend prayers, a ceremony, which, for want of time, could not be attended to on any other day of the week. This duty was succeeded by one, that by the spirit which accompanied it, I judged was considered by the family the most important of the two. This was a loud exercise in scolding, and long enough to last all day, preparatory to the white people going to church, and the slaves staying at home to work or play according to the indulgence of the master.

I never very well understood the philosophy of this kind of discipline, unless it was the same which prompts some men to beat their cattle in anticipation of what they may possibly do.

The next thing that was to be done, was to assign to the house servants the various kinds of labor each must perform before he could be

allowed to play. Some were sent to churn the milk, some to grind corn, and others to the fields to prevent the depredations of jackdaws, a kind of birds that are equally as well skilled in the art of pulling up corn at the South as our crows are at the North; and there instead of stuffing old coats and hats, to be a terror to all the birds, it is only necessary to command some half dozen colored boys and girls, and the cotton fields and corn fields are well supplied with the most effectual scare-crows. After all these duties had been discharged it was time for us to prepare for church.

As all the plantations in that section of the country are five, ten, or fifteen miles from the place of worship, it was customary for people to go there in coaches; but that day, as all the horses on the plantation had been on a journey, I was either under the necessity of staying at home or be conveyed to church on the back of a mule, and being very fond of this kind of exercise, I chose the later alternative; so in due time my mule was properly equipped, and when every thing was ready for our departure, I was glad to turn my face from the spot where old and young, boys and girls, servants and dogs, had all assembled to see how I should look going to church mule-back.

On leaving the house my path to the highway carried me across the plantation among numerous luxuriant fields of cotton, corn, and tobacco; and now will you suffer me to depart from my subject long enough to say, that I never saw any thing in the vegetable kingdom more beautiful than an extensive cotton field in full blossom. The blossoms of the cotton plant are about as large as a half blown hollyhock, and red, or yellow, or white, according to the kind of cotton. The beauty of these fields is greatly enhanced by high cultivation. The slaves watch over them with such paternal care, that every stalk seems obliged to grow to the same stature, and not a noxious weed ventures to show its head.

Here, as I rode along, I had an opportunity to see a plenty of those human scare-crows I referred to a few lines above. One of these poor oppressed daughters of Africa roused my sympathies more than all the rest. I judged she was about the age of fifteen. Her form, instead of being thick and robust like colored girls in general, was slight and delicate. She was standing in the open field, exposed to the intense heat of a July sun, with not a vestige of any thing to shield her head from its rays or her body from being scorched, but an old tattered garment,

she was trying to draw around her form, that was so amaciated the crows could not have been considered culpable if they had mistaken their prey.

The first thing I saw after leaving the plantation, worthy of note, was a burying ground. Though a sight of these last resting places for all the living, must always cause the reflective mind to feel sad, I do not recollect of ever having a scene create such a feeling of desolateness as I experienced during the few moments I tarried to view this home of the dead. Perhaps the day and my own situation, being separated from all my dear friends, contributed to these feelings in some degree; but the place itself was one of dark shadows; it was far from any human habitation, laid out in a dense dark forest of lofty pines, surrounded by a high brick wall once plastered but now almost overgrown with moss and vines. It was an ancient burying ground, where the silent repose of its long forgotten dead had not been for ages disturbed by the sound of the spade or shovel. The gloomy cypress had been left to grow till its branches touched the graves it sheltered. The willows too, upon which the long grey moss of that country had been suffered to accumulate for ages, looked as though they hung their heads

in sackcloth, and were the only beings left to mourn the fate of the departed. Here the whippoorwills, mistaking the gloominess of the place for evening, came and seated themselves upon the graves and shouted a requiem to the dead, while the midnight owl hooted from his hiding place among the old pines a warning to him who might intrude upon their silent repose. Though this place was enshrouded in gloom, I could have tarried there for hours; and indeed, if I had, I should have received more instruction than I did from the sermons I listened to.

At length, having rode several miles further in the woods, I came to what the people in that country are obliged to call a church, but what we should call a barn, situated among the trees of the forest. This building was merely a frame covered slightly with boards, set up on four posts five or six feet from the ground, and having neither bell, cupola, or glass windows; finally the most that can be said of it, is, that it was only a shelter on the Sabbath for those who went to church, and a great bird-house, where all kinds of the feathered tribes congregate on week days to sing songs and build nests.

When I arrived I saw by the number of horses and carriages that were standing beneath the trees, that I was late to church; I rode up

to a stump in front of the house, dismounted, and when I had fastened my mule in nature's own stable, I went into the church.

In that part of the country both the white people and colored people are seated upon the same floor, with only this difference, the white people sit nearest the pulpit. The services were conducted much as they are at the North, excepting the singing. As the slaves join in this part of the worship, and can not read, the minister to accommodate them only reads two lines of a hymn at a time, and when these are sung, he reads two more, and so on through the hymn. At the close of the morning service the white part of the congregation retired for refreshment to their seats in the woods erected for this purpose. These places seemed to be the general depot for all the news of the week. All letters and papers from the post office were distributed there, strangers introduced, and the state of the cotton market discussed, and, as in all other assemblies, the faults of neighbors slightly hinted at. While all sorts of news was in circulation, the servants at the same time were busy in passing round on trays those luxuries provided for our physical wants, of which the heavens above and the waters beneath had not furnished a meagre part. Our repast being

finished we were once more ready to listen to the eloquence of the pulpit, and having again been entertained by a very fervent appeal to "servants to obey their masters in all things," we were ready to turn our faces homeward.

But as the wind and tide are not always favorable to the course we wish to take, so was not my mules disposition to the direction she was desired to go that evening, for when she was coming towards me, all of a sudden she stopped and planted her feet firmly in the ground, and all the beating, pushing, and coaxing that could be urged by all the men, boys and servants, that had collected on this very important occasion, could not make her move one step for nearly an hour, and notwithstanding it was a very serious affair, I could have enjoyed a good hearty laugh; but as my situation was a very conspicuous one; being through the whole of the scene perched upon a high stump in front of the meeting house, I thought it would be too irreverent to indulge in a propensity so natural to me. Finally, after having more trouble to mount this stubborn creature than I ever had before to do any thing of the kind, I succeeded, and going upon the principle that what had been lost in time should be made up in speed, I soon found myself before the gate of the plantation.

There a new scene presented itself to my view. The slaves had finished the tasks that had been assigned them in the morning, and were now enjoying holiday recreations. Some were trundling the hoop, some were playing ball, some dancing at the sound of the fiddle, some grinding their own corn at the mill, while others were just returning from fishing or hunting excursions.

In this manner the Sabbath is usually spent on a Southern plantation; and when I retired to my own room that evening, and remembered the sanctuaries in my own land, I truly longed for that day when I might once more go up to the house of God in company with those "who keep holy day."

LETTER XXI.

Evils of Slavery as felt by the Master—Early training of Children at the South—Theft and Robbery.

THOSE who have never lived in the Southern States, can have but a faint conception of the evils that accrue to the master as well as slave, from their peculiar institutions. Incidents of such a nature have many times come under my own observation, as almost to cause me to feel that the master lived in the greatest bondage.

But it would be impossible for me to make you believe there is any truth in such an assertion, without something more tangible than the simple statement, therefore I will relate a few facts, not only to show that slaveholders live in constant fear for the safety of their lives and property, but also the corrupting and demoralizing influence such a system has upon every thing that comes in contact with it.

Of all the evils that a country under the dominion of slavery is heir to, I consider that the greatest which arises from the early training

of its youth. Nothing in my opinion seems so calculated to sap the very foundation of all their institutions, both moral and religious, and even government itself, as this. Just think of the very individual who is destined to wield the scepter of government, receiving the first impress upon his mind from an ignorant, degraded, and perhaps profane nurse, to whose almost entire charge his mind as well as his body has been consigned ere his infant tongue has been taught to utter its first syllable. Yet such is the case in a thousand instances, and instead of all those holy influences that hover around the cradle in the Christian mother's nursery, the very atmosphere in which the slaveholder's son draws his first breath, is infected with that moral miasma which poisons the soul, and corrupts all the virtuous principles of the heart; and when the Christian mother would hush her little one to slumber with the sweet assurance that "holy angels will guard its bed," the untutored slave rocks the cradle of its infant master to the song of "Old Dan Tucker," or "Lucy Long." "The manner of training children at the South accounts for that pugilistic spirit and uncontrollable temper when excited we all know is characteristic of the Southerner. At that tender age when the heart is in its most plastic state, no at-

tempts are made to subdue the will or control the passions, and the nurse, whether good or bad, often fosters in her bosom a little Nero, who is taught that it is manly to strike his nurse in the face in a fit of anger. I have seen a child plunge a fork into the face of its nurse, and no punishment was inflicted upon the little criminal. If the boy is allowed to make such free use of the fork, what could we expect to see in the hand of the man but the pistol and bowie knife, ready to be used upon the slightest provocation.

Another of the many evils of slavery and one which in its immediate influence is felt probably as much as any other, is that which arises from the universal want of confidence in the honesty of slaves. The fear of theft haunts the slaveholder at all times and in all places. In harvest time he is obliged to set a strict watch over his corn fields, orchards, and melon patches, when night comes every moveable article of property must be put under lock and key, even the fowls have to be all collected together every evening as soon as it is time for them to go to roost, and locked up in coops. It is really amusing to see kitchens, stables, cotton houses and graneries all fastened with great padlocks, and that too in the day time if not occupied. A slave can not be trusted for a moment with the key to the

granary, if a peck of corn is to be measured, it must be done under the eye of a vigilant steward. It is just so too in the department that particularly belongs to the mistress of the family. She is obliged to weigh and measure every thing that passes into the hands of the cook. In a large family, this duty is so arduous that I have often thought the mistress was the greatest slave. Every cupboard, closet and drawer, in those apartments to which the slaves have access are kept constantly locked, and I myself found by experience that it was not safe to leave my work box in the drawing room unfastened. Then to sum up the whole, a family living on one of these isolated plantations must, when night comes, be all fastened up within windows and doors bolted and barred like a prison house.

In the city it is not unusual to hear of colored boys gaining admittance to a house by descending through the chimney. An instance of this kind came under my observation, while in Savannah. Two young men who boarded at one of the public houses, lodged in rooms over their office, one of which they had furnished for a parlor. It was their custom to send a servant into this room every evening to prepare a table of refreshments, which having done, he would lock the door and hand the key to his masters.

At length they discovered that depredations were committed every evening upon their wines, cigars, etc., and notwithstanding they took great pains, they were not able to get the least clue to the source of this mischief, till one evening when going into the room as usual, they found the culprit lying upon the floor in a state of intoxication. When he recovered his senses sufficiently to give an account of himself, he confessed he had been in the practice of entering the room by the way of the chimney, and taking whatever he wanted, this time he had partaken to freely of champagne to escape detection.

The propensity for stealing among the slaves is so great that even the dead are often exhumed for the purpose of securing their grave clothes. In some parts of Georgia where I have been, it is customary to bury the dead in full dress. For example, a man is interred in every article of dress he would wear in life, even to a coat and boots. A female would be laid out in what would be called a full dress for church. When such is the custom, there is a strong temptation to disturb the grave for the wardrobe it contains. Such a violation, however, of the sacredness of the tomb, if found out, meets a penalty more cruel than death itself, though I could

never see why such an act should be considered more criminal than it would be to steal the body and all, a theft that is committed as frequently by the medical student at the South as with us, and the student if detected is only sentenced a heavy fine.

But the fear the slaveholder often has for his life is much greater than that he suffers for his property. When I was living in the southern part of Georgia, a lady whose husband expected to be gone on a journey for several weeks sent for me to come and stay with her in his absence. While there she gave a particular account of her domestic trials. She said when her husband was not at home, there was not a person on her plantation she dared trust her life with, and as she could not defend herself with fire arms in case of an attack upon her life, she never retired at night without an axe so near her pillow she could lay her hand upon it instantly. In this instance, the fear of this lady had been greatly increased by an attempt a few years previous to an insurrection among her own slaves. This plantation was situated on the sea coast not far from Florida, in the immediate vicinity of the live oak timber. Here the slaves came in frequent contact with the lumber men from Maine, who go out there every

winter in great numbers, to cut the live oak for ship building. Through the instigation of these men, every slave on this plantation united in a plot to rise on a certain night and massacre every member of their master's family. The plot was revealed however, just in time to prevent the execution of the dreadful deed, by one old servant, who felt she could not stand and see her master and mistress and all the children murdered.

In '35 deep measures for the same dreadful purpose were concerted in South Carolina, extending through that and several other contiguous States. The time then fixed upon was Christmas eve, in order to prevent any mistake. In this case, thousands were saved from a dreadful death by the warning one faithful slave gave to her master to take care of himself and family on Christmas night. Circumstances like these have excited so much fear among slaveholders, especially in the extreme South, where the plantations are large and slaves very numerous, they generally go armed with pistols or bowie knives. I have seen young men just on an equestrian excursion for an evening, conceal in their bosoms a brace of pistols loaded with balls, and others only going out a little distance in a gig, take with them their guns, and I had

no reason to think that either had any other motive in doing so than self-defense. I must say, myself, if the use of carnal weapons could ever be justifiable, I should think it was in this, for the same season not far from the plantation where I was staying, three white men were murdered while passing from one plantation to another, by slaves who had secreted themselves for that purpose.

Ladies even, under certain circumstances, provide for their own defense in the use of fire-arms. I have known ladies that would not dare to go to sleep without one or two pistols under their pillows. A lady in Savannah came very near being the executioner of her own husband in consequence of such a custom. He had been from home on a journey, and wishing to give his wife an agreeable surprise, made his arrangements to return a few days sooner than she anticipated. Arriving at a late hour for retiring, he thought he would make her surprise to see him still greater by appearing without the least warning in her own room. Accordingly he succeeded in effecting an entrance into his house, by forcing a shutter in the basement, and with noiseless steps was making his way in the dark up to his wife's apartment. He had gone as far as the stairs, when that

slight creaking which every one understands who has ever tried to walk stealthily in a noiseless house at night, reached her ears, and being prepared by every unusual sound to expect thieves and robbers, she sprang out of her bed, seized a pistol and commanding her chambermaid to follow, she stepped into the hall and then towards the stair case when she indistinctly saw the figure of a man cautiously approaching her. At the first sight she leveled her pistol, and the next instant would in all probability have fixed a bullet in his brain, had not one screech from the well known voice of her husband paralyzed her hand for the moment and caused the deadly weapon to fall harmless at her feet.

I think I have now said enough upon this subject to convince you that slaveholders are by no means, with all their possessions, the happiest people in the world. Sin and iniquity are often accompanied by their own reward, but in this case this truth is strikingly apparent.

Although it is now late in the evening and all around me are lost in the forgetfulness of sleep, still, as I see I have a little more room in my sheet I will trim my midnight lamp and add one more paragraph, though upon a subject a little different from the one contained in the first part of my letter.

The question has often been asked me, can a person under any circumstances be justified in owning property in slaves. I will state two instances of persons possessing property of this kind, with which I was well acquainted in Augusta, Georgia, then leave the question to be decided by my readers.

A large company of slaves had been brought from Virginia to Hamburg, which lies just beyond the river over against Augusta. This place is the great slave market for both Georgia and South Carolina. Among these poor creatures who were mostly purchased for markets again still farther South, was one female with an infant at her breast. When it came her turn to stand under the hammer, the highest bidder would give no more for the mother with the child than he would without it. The auctioneer would not let the child go for any sum less than one hundred dollars, and as he could not dispose of the woman to a better advantage, he concluded to separate the mother and child and the former was dragged off to New Orleans. Finally after many fruitless attempts to sell the infant and the commiseration of a good many had been excited in behalf of the little sufferer, a lady in Augusta hearing of the circumstance, went over to Hamburg, paid the hundred dol-

lars demanded by the owner, and took the child home to her own bed and bosom.

The other instance I thought of mentioning, was that of a gentleman from the North who had been in Augusta several years and up to the time of my story, although wealthy, had never purchased slaves, and was resolved he never would, on any condition, own property in human flesh, and instead of purchasing help he hired it. When he began to keep house, he secured of a gentlemen who had slaves to hire out the services of one for a cook. This woman brought with her an infant child, and as she proved to be a faithful servant, she continued in the family of Mr. P., retaining her child with her till she arrived at the age of fifteen. About this time the owner of these slaves, having occasion to make out a sum of money, offered this girl for sale, and as she had been well trained and had a fine personal appearance, a satisfactory price was soon proposed for her, and the bargain ratified before Mr. P. was apprised of the matter. When the gentleman who had made the purchase came for her, the whole family was thrown into affliction. Mrs. P. had always retained her in her own immediate presence, more in the capacity of a child than of a domestic, and she had never felt the oppressive

chains of slavery, and now the thought that she was to be dragged off, and consigned over to slavery, made her nearly frantic. Mr. P. made great efforts to repurchase her, contrary to his principles, but all to no purpose, and she was taken by main force, put into a carriage and carried away to a distant plantation. After several months, Mr. P. received a letter from this gentleman, saying the girl was so homesick, she was of no service to him, that she appeared to be wasting away every day, and if he wanted the girl he might have her for the price he gave for her. Mr. P. did not allow many hours to elapse after receiving this intelligence, before he was on his way to bring her home. The last time I was in Augusta, I saw Lucy, and a happier face I scarcely ever met. I will now ask one question. Would my readers purchase a slave under the same circumstances? According to the laws of Georgia she was safe no longer than Mr. P. held his claim upon her person as an article of property.

LETTER XXII.

Runaway slaves—The Swamps—Cruelty to slaves—A family in concealment—Murder of an old slave—Elopement of an Orphan Lady.

SUPPOSING many of my readers always associate the term "Runaway slave," with "Canada," or the "North Star," I will devote one letter to the purpose of showing them that there are thousands in the woods and swamps of the Southern States, who have fled from the galling shackles of slavery, that have never heard of Canada, or even learned to distinguish from all the rest that one star which has to so many pointed out the way to the land of free and equal rights.

It has been thought that there are as many south of "Mason and Dixon's line," who have escaped from their masters, as there are north of it. As strange as it may seem to those unacquainted with these things, there are whole families secreted in the uncultivated portions of the slave States, who subsist year after only by

plunder and stealing. To show you how this can be possible, I must give you a little idea of the situation of the Southern plantations, and the unimproved grounds belonging to each, that you may see the opportunity the slaves have to furnish themselves with hiding places.

In the first place I will remark that the land at the South never becomes as extensively cleared of all its forest timber as in the Northern States, the reason of this is, the Southern planter never resorts to any artificial means to enrich the soil when once it becomes unproductive; the only way old and worn-out fields are ever improved, is by turning them wild and suffering them to rest for forty or fifty years, in which time the trees attain their full growth, and these fields once covered with cotton, corn and tobacco, assume again every appearance of native forest.

During the time these grounds lie waste, the foliage from the trees and other kinds of vegetable matter, which accumulates and decays from year to year, in course of time, renders the soil as rich and fertile as that which has never been cultivated. This is one reason why the Southern country, although it has been settled longer than ours, always has the appearance of being a new country, just beginning to be settled, for

all the land that is not ploughed and planted every year soon becomes a forest of pines. One accustomed to the growth of the pine, can judge very correctly by their size before they reach their full height, how long the field has been uncultivated. I have seen fields completely covered with little pines just springing from the ground, then others again where they had not grown to the height of a foot, in this case the soil has not been disturbed for about two years. When the sapplings are five or six feet in height, then one calculates the ground has not been cultivated for five or six years, and so on up to the time of the maturity of the trees.

Then again, many of the planters own hundreds and even thousands of acres of land, which on account of their being swampy and infested with snakes and other venemous reptiles, they scarcely ever venture to explore, and when they do, it is only on horseback, when some occasion like hunting cattle and swine that run wild in the woods and swamps, calls them out, yet there are thousands of human beings who can find no other retreat from the cruel hound and knotted scourge, than in the pestilential swamps of the Southern States. To show how many provide for themselves in these lurking places, I will give you one account just

as I had it from the same gentleman who himself assisted in searching out one of these long lost families.

This family consisting of nine persons disappeared all of a sudden, and after many long but fruitless attempts to get some clue to their place of concealment, farther search was deemed useless, and all this property in human flesh and blood, was given up as irrecoverably lost. They were however at last found after they had been gone six years, by one of their number being detected in plundering from the plantation, and followed to his place of rendezvous. The course they had taken to elude the search of the hounds, was to hide themselves where the ground was covered with water, consequently this cut off the scent of the hounds. These poor creatures after having gone several miles through deeply entangled swamps covered with water to the depth of more than a foot, went to work to erect for themselves a little shelter.

First they drove posts into the ground upon which they could lay a foundation above the water, then with branches of trees skillfully and ingeniously woven together, they constructed the floor, roof, and walls of this their most rural habitation. To complete the structure they overlaid the whole with long marsh grass and

the tough palmetto leaves, till it was quite comfortable even during the winter season. The gentleman who gave me this account, said when he found them they had collected together a good supply of food of various kinds, such as meat, potatoes, meal, etc., as well as many other little domestic comforts. They even had a good supply of live fowls, but they had cunningly taken the precaution not to bring into the camp any of the feathered tribes whose loud voices might betray their place of concealment.

Many secure themselves among the branches of trees as their best refuge from hounds and snakes, and wild beasts that prowl about in the night in search of prey. I have many times seen the tree in which a slave was concealed six months. He had carried into the tree sticks of wood and broken branches, and so arranged them as to make a sort of platform, upon which he spread grass and leaves sufficiently thick to make a place of repose quite comfortable when wrapped in his blanket. He afterwards returned to his master of his own accord, and told him the men and dogs in pursuit of him, many times passed beneath the very tree where he was secreted.

The planters are greatly annoyed by the slaves who live in the manner above described,

coming out in the night to plunder every thing they can lay hands upon. They kill their master's cattle and swine, they pluck the corn from the field and dig the potatoes from the ground, rob the poultry yards, brake into the milk house and even go into the same kitchen night after night, to cook their stolen vegetables and meat. You may ask where the watch dogs are all this time, when these depredations are going on in the fields and yards, and why the cook did not lock the kitchen door? In the first instance, those who are on theiving excursions, are careful to go where they are acquainted with the dogs. As to the kitchen, the very cook who is so loud in her vociferations about the operations that have been going on all night in her kitchen, in all probability is accessory to the whole affair.

As harsh treatment is more frequently the cause of the slaves running away than merely the desire for freedom, I will give you one example of that cruelty which scattered and drove into the woods almost one entire plantation of slaves, as I had the account from a friend who was herself a party concerned.

Mrs. B. informed me that when she was at the age of ten, and her only sister sixteen years, they were left orphans with eighty slaves to be

divided equally between them. Her sister soon married one of her many suitors, who had been attracted by so large a fortune. To secure to himself the property of both, Mr. S. succeeded in being appointed guardian over his wife's sister, which gave him complete control over the whole. He very soon abused the power with which he had been invested by a course of treatment that proved him to be one of the most cruel of tyrants. Mrs. B. said he once beat a boy of about ten years of age till his steps for several rods could be traced by the blood that issued from his lacerated back and limbs. Although she gave me many instances of her brother-in-law's cruelty to the slaves, I will only mention one more.

Among the slaves that fell to Mrs. B.'s share, was one old woman, who had been, not only *her* nurse in childhood and infancy, but also her mother's. She had raised her mother and had had almost the entire charge of her from the cradle to the grave. She had taught her infant feet to walk and tongue to speak. She had soothed her childhood's sorrows, and from one season to another had carried her in her arms to and from the school room. In maturer years she had been her mother's counselor and comforter, standing by her bedside in sickness

and death, and her ever faithful hand smoothed the dying pillow and closed the eyelids for their long and lasting sleep.

After the death of her mother, Mrs. B. said there was no person on earth dearer to her than was old Charity. This woman had never labored in the field till she came into the possession of Mr. S., and being then very aged, and unaccustomed to that kind of labor, she often failed, for which she was like the rest cruelly beaten. One day after they had been on this plantation three or four years, Mrs. B. said her brother-in-law returned from the field in the forenoon about ten o'clock in great haste, and said he was called away to another town on business of great importance and probably should not return for several days, and took his departure with so little preparation, as not only to excite in the family great curiosity, but a kind of apprehension of evil no one dared to express. He had not been gone many minutes when several slaves from the plantation, nearly out of breath, rushed into the house, saying, "master has killed old Charity." Mrs. B. said, with feelings that could never be told, they hastened to the spot and found the dreadful intelligence too true. Her master had in the morning driven this old feeble woman with the lash

from her bed, when she was scarcely able to support her weight upon her feet. Fearing she would not labor when she was in the field, he went there to see, and not being satisfied with the manner she used the hoe, he gave her a blow upon the neck, and she fell dead at his feet. She was carried to the house and after these bereaved sisters had exhausted their strength amid sighs and tears, in vain attempts to resuscitate that life that had been so precious to them, they gave up the body to be buried. After several days, the report having been circulated that this old slave had been murdered, several medical men came up and asked permission to have the body disinterred. It was granted and a post-mortem examination being held, it was found that her neck was broken. For a time this circumstance caused a good deal of excitement, but as Mr. S. could not be found, nothing was done. Finally the excitement died away, and as it was only a poor old slave, when the cruel tyrant did return, the whole matter was nearly forgotten excepting by his own family. Mrs. B. said, that by the time she was fifteen, there were but a few slaves left upon the plantation; a good many had died of hardships, and others had fled to the woods, where being exposed to the pestilential miasma of the swamp,

they suffered from fevers, or had their fingers and toes frost bitten till they were greatly mutilated, by exposure to the chilly atmosphere of Southern winter nights, and having an offer of marriage from Mr. B., although very young, she thought she would try to secure for herself a better guardian and for her slaves a kinder master. As soon as Mr. S. became apprized of her determination he was so enraged he locked her in her chamber and forbid her holding any communication with Mr. B. Through the assistance however of faithful servants, she found means to correspond with him, though to her peril, for every letter she received, if her brother-in-law found it out, he would go into her chamber with a cow-hide and beat her just as he did the slaves. Finally as soon as arrangements could be made, she consented to elope with Mr. B. and be married before her guardian should have time to veto such an act. Accordingly the time of midnight was fixed upon, and she leaped from her chamber window into the arms of faithful servants who were there ready to hasten her away with the greatest possible speed to the carriage that was in waiting at the end of the avenue. She said sometimes they actually carried her along without her feet touching the ground in their great fear

she might be overtaken by her guardian who was already on his way in hot pursuit. In a few hours they reached the spot where the marriage ceremony was to be performed, and just as the words were pronounced that made Mr. B. her lawful husband and guardian, Mr. S. rushed into the room and forbid the marriage, but too late, she was no longer exposed to his oppression, and in a few days she had all her slaves under a very different master. I was well acquainted with Mr. B., and I believe but a few slaves find a better one. To use Mrs. B.'s own words, "and now many are the evenings that these old servants come in and sit with me till near midnight, talking over the sufferings we all endured from the hands of my brother-in-law." This depraved man lost every slave, all his property, his wife died, leaving him with two little girls who were in the Orphan Asylum when I taught there. Finally he fell into that state of mind similar to one who has the delirium tremens, and at last died such a frightful death, people shuddered to stand near his bedside, all occasioned, as Mrs. B. believed, by remorse of conscience.

Before I close this letter, suffer me in justice to the good people of the South to say, that such cruelty is not countenanced by them any more

than crime is by the same class of persons at the North, and when incidents such as I have just related do occur, they form for months the leading topics of conversation in the sitting room and parlor, and wherever there is a little collection of persons, the same as criminal acts do with us.

LETTER XXIII.

A visit in the country—A Southern kitchen—Pleasure excursions—An equestrian scene.

TO-DAY an occurrence recalled to my mind a visit I received when in the Southern part of Georgia, from a friend who came from the North, and was like myself engaged in teaching in that country. My friend came and spent a week with me, and as the season we were together, was one of events and amusements to us both, I will give you some account of it, hoping it will furnish you with a few moments of entertainment, and at the same time enable you to see that in almost any situation, if persons are so disposed, there are many sources of pleasure to avail themselves of, even if they are strangers in a land that is not theirs, and far from all the sweet scenes of childhood's happy hours.

Besides Miss S., there was no other person in all that section of the country with whom I ever had a previous acquaintance; the same

was true also in respect to my friend. Though we were situated at a distance of six miles from each other, we found opportunities for frequent interviews, though many of them were but of a few moments' duration. To understand the import, in all its force, of the expression, "birds of a feather flock together," you must be situated just as we were, surrounded by those who had but a few sentiments and interests in common with our own. It was only in each other's society we ever felt at home. Yes, those were angel meetings when we could escape from every watchful eye, and alone and undisturbed, where only squirrels chattered, and the birds sung, heart could meet heart, and voice mingle with voice in sweet and hallowed communion.

"Oh! I remember, and will ne'er forget
Our meeting-spot, our chosen, sacred hours,
Our burning words that uttered all the soul."

A few weeks previous to the visit I am about to describe, my friend had been brought very low by a fever. As soon as she recovered sufficiently to ride out, I sent for her to come and spend a few days with me, thinking she would recover more rapidly if she could be with some one a short time who would try to cheer up her gloomy spirits, that had become very much

depressed by a long illness, through which, she had been surrounded only by strangers, and besides I had the most implicit confidence in yankee nursing, and I was anxious to test its efficacy in the case of my friend. She received my invitation with great pleasure, and in the course of two or three days I had the privilege of trying the potency of my skill in the restoration of the wasted energies of the physical being as well as in dispelling the dark clouds that hung about the mental. I soon learned after her arrival, that she had since her illness, suffered much from want of that kind of food she could relish. Nothing that the cooks there could suggest, would in the least tempt her appetite. She only could think of some dish she had been accustomed to at the North, and after the best directions that could be given, it would be prepared altogether different from what it would have been, if served up by a Northern cook. Finally, after a considerable consultation upon a matter of so much importance, I told her I would go to the kitchen myself, and prove my abilities in the cooking line. But I never was more disheartened about any undertaking of the kind than this, when I found myself surrounded by such an extensive array of culinary apparatus as is always furnished for a Southern kitch-

en. Now if you will suffer me to turn aside from my story a little while, I will tell you something about a kitchen on a Southern plantation.

In the first place, this was built of large, rough logs, the ends of which were standing out in all shapes and at different distances on all its corners. At one end was an immense, but low chimney, not much higher than the roof of the building, built of sticks and mud and the opening at the top was of such great extent one would have the impression, when in the kitchen that a part of the roof was gone. On one side was a wide opening which was used both as a door and windows. Within I found tubs, pails, keelers, piggins, pots, kettles, spiders, Dutch ovens, wafer-irons, and every thing else one could think of belonging to such an apartment, all in one room not over fifteen feet square. After making a few observations upon this homogeneous collection of iron and woodenware, I concluded to leave the cook in the quiet possession of her own sanctum, and do my cooking in the open air. I apprised my friend of my sage determination, and told her she could seat herself before the window, and be an eye-witness of the operations that were then in contemplation, and if I judged correctly

the effect of the scene upon her health was as salutary as the supper itself.

The next day Miss S. was able to walk out, and we commenced a series of excursions that lasted through the week, our good host in the mean time so providing for our accommodation that we had at our command, horses and mules, saddles and carriages, boats and rowers to be used at our discretion or pleasure. Of course, we tried them all; we rode horseback and muleback, in carriages with servants and without them, we sailed the creeks, caught fishes and cooked them, very much to the amusement of the servants who beheld all our operations with perfect amazement and could only account for the whole on the principle that we were yankees and of course would do a great many unaccountable things.

I shall never forget the merriment our first horseback ride occasioned among the servants. As my friend was very timid in the management of a horse, I requested that two of the most gentle saddle beasts should be brought to us that afternoon. Accordingly, Peggy and Van Buren were soon saddled and waiting our pleasure before the gate.

I might as well say here, that it is quite as customary at the South to give names to all

their horses, mules, oxen and cows, as it is to the hounds and dogs. I have often been puzzled to know, when I have heard old Peggy or Sally spoken of, whether the conversation referred to a mule, a cow, or a woman. Sometimes my ears have just caught the isolated word Van Buren, and it was impossible for me to tell, which was meant, a horse, an ox, or the Ex-President of the United States. This time, however, we understood the term Van Buren to mean a noble animal of the horse kind, and Peggy an old grey mule with exceedingly long ears which seemed to stand up unusually erect that afternoon.

These two animals were so accustomed to go together and were so attached to each other, that although the universe could not have persuaded old Peggy to take the lead one inch, yet she would have followed Van Buren if he had gone over the top of the house. But unfortunately for our ride that afternoon, I found my friend too much in the condition of old Peggy, though from a cause altogether different. One was under the influence of a mulish will, the other, that of fear. After we were seated upon our animals, Miss S. upon the back of Van Buren and myself upon Peggy, I found she was as much afraid to make the first move in

advance, although having at her command a beast willing to go at her bidding, as my mule was determined she would not take one step first. I never felt myself in such a comical predicament before. I exerted my persuasive powers to the utmost to induce Jane to exchange beasts, but all my persuasions and arguments were nothing to her, whenever she looked at those great ears that stood up so high before me, and there we sat, surrounded by a large concourse of men, women, boys and girls, who made the plantation resound with their shouts of laughter at our expense. Even the dogs looked as though they wanted to laugh as loud as their masters. At last one of the servants took my mule by the bridle, and led her out a little distance on the plantation, Van Buren following in the rear; but no sooner had he let go his hold upon the bridle, than in direct opposition to all that I could do, she would turn right about, and go back to the gate again, with a great deal more speed than she went from it, Jane, of course, following all the time, most obediently. Finally, all the ride we had that afternoon, was just in semicircles, never getting further than a couple of rods from the house. The next time we contemplated an equestrian excursion, we succeeded a little bet-

ter, for we had the precaution to leave Peggy out of the company.

At the distance of about six miles from us in an opposite direction to the plantation where my friend Miss S. was teaching, was a Southern lady who was also engaged in the same vocation. Out of nineteen female teachers who were located in that section of the country, when I was there, she was the only native teacher; all the rest were from the North. If you ask how she would compare with Northern teachers in qualifications for such a station, I would answer, by no means unfavorably. Her intellectual attainments and personal accomplishments were of a high order. During this week, our Southern friend who had heard we had dismissed our schools for a vacation, dismissed hers also, for a few days, and sent us an invitation to come and spend a day with her. According to the general practice of that country when a ride is to be taken in the Summer season, we were up early the next day, and started on our way long before the morning flowers had faded, or the dew had disappeared from the leaves. Never did I enjoy a morning ride more than this. It was just at that season of the year when the woods of Georgia were decked in their utmost loveliness, and the open

fields were waving with luxuriant crops of grain cotton and tobacco, in full bloom.

From all directions echoed the merry laugh of the refreshed and invigorated slaves now going to their morning tasks. The young men arrayed in their sea-green hunting garbs were busily engaged in collecting their rifles, balls and powder, for a deer-hunt, while the horses already at the gate, impatiently pawed the ground at the sound of the bugle and barking of the hounds that always accompany the preparations for a hunting day. After leaving the house we went about one mile on the open plantation before we entered the avenue that led to the highway. This path was about a mile in length, and so narrow, and the branches of the trees so low, we often got sprinkled with the heavy dew that was still on the trees, if we were so careless as to let our bonnets touch a bough. The highway between the plantations was one complete arch of lofty oaks and giant cypresses, crowned from their roots to the topmost branches with the woodbine, honeysuckle and trumpet-flowered jessamine, all in blossom, rendering the atmosphere deliciously fragrant with their sweet odors, while multitudes of birds with every variety of gay plumage, made the woods vocal with their early music. Though

we had prolonged the time of our morning ride as much as possible for the purpose of enjoying the beauties around us, still we found ourselves at an early hour before the gate of the plantation where we were to spend the day, and were cordially met at the carriage by those who even then had been waiting our arrival with fears that we were not coming. The situation of this plantation was more pleasant than that of any one I ever saw on a Southern sea-coast. In my next letter, I will give you a little account of it.

LETTER XXIV.

A plantation on the sea-coast—Different kinds of trees—Rising of the Tide—A storm—Return from a visit.

THE plantation to which I alluded in my last letter, was bounded on the North and West by a forest of the oak, cypress, and long-leaved pine, with which were beautifully mingled the dogwood tree, bay, laurel and magnolia. The Southern dogwood bears a little white flower very much like the wild rose; it puts forth its blossoms before the green leaves appear, and they so completely cover the tree that at a distance it strikingly resembles our New England trees when loaded with snow in the winter. The magnolia is about as large as a full-grown pine and a few rods distant it might be mistaken for one, on account of its height. The blossom of the magnolia is of a cream color, the corolla bell-form, and about as large as a pint measure. When the tree is full of these blossoms it presents a most beautiful appearance. The flowers are very fragrant, and I have known one tree to

fill the air with their sweet perfume for more than half a mile in every direction. The bay and laurel belong to the same class of trees as the magnolia, but of different species. All the difference I could discover between them consisted in size.

On this plantation I had an opportunity for the first time to see what was to me a great curiosity in the vegetable kingdom. This was the cabbage-tree, or more properly in botanical language, the "cabbage palmetto." I could call it nothing more nor less than a huge cabbage, consisting of two parts only, the body twenty or thirty feet in height, and perhaps a foot and a half in diameter, surmounted by an enormous head of coarse large leaves snugly rolled up like our garden cabbage, and ten to twelve feet in diameter. I have been told that the leaves in the middle of the head are often served up on the table, and could hardly be distinguished from the common cabbage. These trees I have since heard are very common in Florida. Their trunks are filled with the same kind of vegetable matter that composes the heart of the garden cabbage stump.

On the South and East the plantation was bounded by a beautiful green marsh which separated it from the Atlantic. Every where

through this meadow, quietly crept the clear, smooth creek, advancing and retreating in its serpentine course, sometimes coming very near the plantation, then softly retracing its path, till finally its waters are mingled with the parent fountain. This creek was navigable for sloops which were constantly coming and going laden with imports and exports to and from the plantation. These articles of merchandize were landed at a small wharf but a few rods from the house. Fishing boats and canoes in various directions moved leisurely among these green meadows, and flocks of wild geese and ducks appeared as if propelled by some magic power, as they sailed upon these still waters with so little apparent motion. No scene of the kind was ever to me fraught with so many rural beauties, perfectly enchanting to the eye as well as ear as this, for in addition to that sweet music from the trees, with which the singing birds of Georgia are ever ready to regale the ear, such melodious strains from the bugle, the violin and the harp, often issued from these little barques, that one could not feel it would be compromising the dignity of Orpheus to suppose he had resumed his harp again. Between these streams of water, fowls of the gralic order, the bittern and crane, "with bills

engulphed, shook the surrounding marsh" in gathering from the muddy soil their snails and worms.

This plantation was nearer to a level with the ocean than perhaps any other on the coast of Georgia. This circumstance in part accounts for the distressing event that occurred there, several years previous to the time we were there, to the family of the lady with whom we were spending the day. Mrs. G. informed us that a few years subsequent to the time they took up their residence on this plantation, the sea rose one night to the distance of ten or twelve feet above the ordinary height of the Spring tide, a phenomenon that had never to their knowledge previously occurred on the Atlantic coast. At first, they only beheld the tide rising to an uncommon height, with surprise, but when they found the water was overflowing that part of the plantation the tide had never reached before, they began to feel alarmed, and this alarm increased, as Mrs. G. said, to a consternation that could not be described, when white people, children and servants, all saw the waters with a rapid course still upwards, reaching their own doors. Then one thought only pervaded the minds of all, which was to escape to a little eminence at the distance of one or

two miles. Then almost instantly women and children flew from their dwellings, plunged into the tide two or three feet deep, hoping to save their lives by securing this rise of ground, but soon, the waters rose with such great rapidity, all hope was abandoned of reaching the spot excepting by those who could swim, or had in the first place been thoughtful enough to secure some of the boats, of which there are generally a good supply upon those plantations abounding with creeks.

By this thoughtfulness many of the slaves saved their lives. Mrs. G. said her husband and herself started with their three children, carrying the two youngest in their arms, while the oldest trying to follow on foot was soon swept away by the flood. Finding after they had gone a few rods that it was useless for them to try to stem the current any longer, they ascended a high stump with their children in their arms, still the course of the waters was upwards and about midnight it reached their chins, then all hope of life was lost, they were nearly exhausted, they had but little strength to resist the mighty waves that swept over them, and the little ones they had till then, held in their arms were carried away by the raging billow. Mrs. G. said herself and husband stood in that situa-

tion, with their heads just out of the water, till the morning began to dawn. The flood rose no higher than this and by the following noon the tide had entirely subsided, and they were enabled to return to their house. Only a few rods from where they spent the night, these bereaved parents found the bodies of all their children. A good many of the slaves were drowned, and their bodies left upon the dry ground on various parts of the plantation, as also the bodies of swine, cattle, horses and mules.

Mrs. G. always wore a melancholy countenance, and she often said to her friends, she could never again be that cheerful happy woman she was previous to that dreadful night.

A circumstance took place during the afternoon of the day we were visiting this plantation that first taught me how the land at the South is cleared of its timber when needed for cultivation, and as a little information upon this subject may be interesting to you, I will speak of it in this place together with an incident with which this information will always be associated in my own mind. When a piece of forest is to be brought under cultivation at the South no other labor is required but to clear the spot of all the underwood, girdle all the large trees, then plough and plant the ground. I have seen slaves

planting cotton on these grounds when they were so much shaded by the thick foliage of the trees, that was still green, one would think their labor must all be lost. But by the time the seed has vegetated, and the plant ready to appear above ground, the foliage is generally withered and fallen, and the first crop produced from such a field is usually the most abundant. The trees left standing in this way are never removed till they become so decayed as to fall off themselves, or are thrown down by heavy winds. As soon as this occurs, they are taken away one by one, till the field is free from timber, but it requires a good many years to clear a plantation in this way. Nothing is more common at the South than to see hundreds of acres of land covered with these ghostly looking trees stripped of their bark and leaves stretching out their naked limbs as if imploring pity for their forlorn condition. At a distance a forest of these old dead trees very much resembles an extensive Navy Yard with its thousand of tall masts and its yards extending in all directions.

No sight presents a more gloomy aspect in the night than one of these decaying forests. Whenever I have found myself in the evening surrounded by these spectre-like objects, I have invariably experienced the same kind of sensa-

tions one feels while walking at the same gloomy hour among the tombstones of a church-yard. When these trees have become a good deal decayed, it is very unsafe to be within their reach during a heavy gale of wind. It greatly adds to the terror that always accompanies a tempest of wind and rain to hear those giant oaks and pines falling in all directions with one dreadful crash after another, till it would almost seem that the heavens above were tumbling to the ground. The Southern States are subject to such violent winds and the soil is so light and sandy, that it is not a few, also, of the live trees that are upturned from their roots during these gales. I have lain hour after hour on a stormy night in breathless silence, through fear that the next heavy blast would prostrate upon the roof above my head the very tree that in the daytime sheltered my window from the scorching sun.

During the afternoon of the day I have been speaking of in this letter, one of these dreadful storms arose, and this was the first time we ever witnessed one of these terrific scenes. Contrary to our expectation, after the storm came up the wind ceased, and the rain so far abated towards evening, though the clouds still looked ominous, we were encouraged to turn

our faces homewards. Accordingly we set out, little dreaming of the trouble we should have to encounter on a dark evening without any one to protect us, for in the morning we had refused a driver in order to enjoy our ride without the embarrassment a third person usually occasions. Although the evening was very dark, we proceeded on our way for a considerable distance without any difficulty, but how greatly had the scene changed in the course of a few hours.

In the morning all was music, pleasure and sunshine; in the evening there was no pleasant light to cheer our path, and no sound to greet our ears save the screeching of the owls and the croaking of frogs. After we had left the highway and gone a few rods in the avenue that lead to our home, all of a sudden our carriage stopped, but it was impossible for us to see from what cause, so great was the darkness that surrounded us.

On leaving the carriage I immediately found that the gale in the afternoon, had thrown across our path a huge pine, for a few moments we were completely at our wit's end. We could not go forward, and the road was so narrow, it was impossible for us to turn the carriage round to go back. We soon decided there were but two alternatives. One of us must go to the plantation for assistance, the other stay

with the carriage. My friend said she would choose the least of evils to her, and in a few moments I heard her retreating footsteps in that dark place, with fears for *her* safety that almost caused me to forget my own. For more than an hour I held by the bridle the beast that was attached to our carriage, with as great a degree of excitement as my physical strength was able to endure. Every moment he became more and more furious in consequence of the dreadful biting of the gallinippers that seemed as if they would devour us alive. I received several blows from this tortured animal, in his attempts to brush away these insects that would have thrown me to the ground if it had not been for my hold upon the bridle. At length I heard in the far off distance the barking of the hounds that were accompanying the servants to my relief. Never did a more grateful sound fall upon my ears, than was the one that assured me that dark night that assistance was so near at hand. In the course of a couple of hours I met my friend at the house, where we received the hearty congratulations of the whole family that we had met with nothing worse than a severe fright. It is now several years since I have seen my friend, but we have never forgotten the week we spent together on a Southern plantation.

LETTER XXV.

Schools in Georgia—Public Examinations—A Barbacue—
Macon Female College.

AMONG the many evils that arise from the peculiar institutions of the South, I look upon those which are connected with the present system of education as by no means the least to be deplored. As long as slavery exists, I can not see how education can be universally diffused even among the white population. On the other hand, the legislators of the South are fully aware that as soon as means are taken for the promotion of education among all classes as at the North, a most effectual blow has been given to slavery. The reason why slavery has existed until the present time, is owing in a great degree to the ignorance of so large a proportion of the white people. If the free people of the South had as a general thing, education sufficient to enable them to read and write with ease, the slaves, who must necessarily come in frequent contact with them, would soon acquire

the same knowledge. Even now, it is but a small proportion of the white servants that belong to educated families, who cannot read a little and write at least their own names.

As I have said before, each child has its own servant, who is always a few years its senior. This servant is not only a kind of body-guard and waiter, but a companion of private hours and an assistant teacher during the school days of his young master. It is frequently the case that a lesson that is to be given to the pupil is first taught to the servant, whose duty it is to repeat it to his infant master, till it is thoroughly committed to memory. Those who have ever had the care of children, very well know how readily they imitate and catch words and expressions from each other. Such is the case at the South among the children of the educated and the slaves. While the former, previous to going to school, are repeating over and over again lessons in reading, spelling, grammar, and geography, the latter are curious and eager listeners, and generally, by the time the lesson is called for, those who stay at home are as well prepared for recitation as the class who go to the school room.

Now if the mass of free people at the South were as well informed as they are in New Eng-

land, the slaves would soon acquire sufficient knowledge to enable them to realize their situation and power, and the consequence would be, they would lay plans to unite their strength and free themselves and their posterity from the oppression of slavery.

But it is much easier to criticise the present school system of the Southern States than to suggest plans that would improve this system, and at the same time meet with a favorable reception from those whose interests must necessarily be affected either for the better or worse by any change.

The great expense that attends an education in the Southern States, has placed an impassable barrier between the rich and poor. It has been so, that the wealthy only were educated, and this is true now in the country. Within a few years, however, cities have been at the expense of supporting some free schools, but in the slave States the term "free schools" is synonymous with "schools for poor people." Though these institutions prove a great blessing to many, still the odium attached to them prevents many more from availing themselves of the privileges they afford. Among a certain class the feeling prevails, that it is quite as reputable not to have an education, as to have it said they

were educated at a free school. Even teachers often shrink from incurring the stigma of teaching in these institutions.

This state of things as deplorable as it is, must continue till common schools are recognized and provided for by law as at the north.

In the country, where the plantations are so large, families are separated at the distance of several miles from each other. Education was formerly confined to those whose wealth enabled them to support private teachers at a great expense. Consequently many in affluent circumstances made no attempts to educate their children. But now efforts are being made by planters in various parts of Georgia to collect together in little communities during a portion of the year, in order to unite their funds in sustaining select schools and academies. This arrangement has been the means of establishing a great many excellent schools, for the education of those children whose parents have sufficient property to constitute them respectable citizens, and many of this class now enjoy the privileges of education, that they did not when teaching was confined to families.

In order to secure the advantages of society, many of the planters now, who live within the compass of twenty, thirty, or forty miles, select

some healthy spot among the sand hills and there congregate and erect their summer residences, a church, academy, and other public buildings. Then the prospect of school and church privileges, soon attract to such a village mechanics, traders, and professional men, who, as they have no occasion, like the planters, to retire for the winter, sustain the schools and meetings and other forms of society through the year.

These schools are prized so highly, and parents, who themselves have never been educated, witness the progress their sons and daughters make from year to year in the various sciences they are pursuing, with such delight, they are ready to incur a great expense for the purpose of entertaining those who will often travel the distance of one hundred miles to attend their examinations.

These annual exhibitions usually occur on the fourth and fifth of July, at which time the people are entertained with speeches, orations, and public songs, in addition to the exercises of the school, at the same also they are treated to a "barbacue," a term that means at the South, one or more swine roasted whole.

These feasts are prepared and given in the woods in a most rural manner.

Animals cooked in this way are generally undergoing the roasting process, at least one

night previous to their being served up. Pits are dug in the ground and then filled with live coals, which are frequently renewed from another great fire at a little distance kept constantly burning for that purpose.

At a convenient distance from this scene of preparation, a sufficient number of tables to accommodate hundreds, are provided with every luxury that it is possible to furnish in the country. The last course at these entertainments is usually made up of healths to friends, songs, toasts, and speeches upon political or scientific subjects, according to the pleasure of the speaker.

This practice of leaving the rich and consequently unhealthy soil during the summer season which the planters are obliged to select in order to have productive plantations, has proved to be so effectual in promoting the health of their families, that setting aside all the extra privileges it affords them, it is decidedly a matter of economy to be at the expense of moving twice every year. Every planter of course makes an effort to secure the richest soil, but in doing this, he is obliged to take with it an atmosphere productive of fevers and agues and infected with a miasma that in the summer season would prove nearly as fatal to a stranger as the

deadly simoom of Sahara. The slaves, who are not so readily affected by these unhealthy influences as the white people, remain on these plantations through the year.

In the winter, as this is the time for the picking, ginning, and packing of the cotton for market, the oversight of this work constantly needs the vigilant eye of the master, consequently as soon as this kind of labor commences, he is obliged to move back to the plantation and remains there till the time of planting returns again. I have known gentlemen who went regularly three times a week to their plantations, through the summer season, at the distance of twenty miles.

It is quite common now, too, for the children and youth who attend these schools to board at home when they live at no greater distance than from four to six miles. I have myself boarded at the distance of four miles from the school room, and would always prefer to do so under the same circumstances, and with the same company of jolly school girls.

Little girls will ride four or five miles every day on horse-back to attend school, and consider it no more of an hardship than children at the North do to walk half a mile for the same purpose. They always set out on their little

journeys early in the morning, taking their dinner with them, and do not return till the cool of the evening.

The mules and horses that convey them to and from school twice every day soon become so accustomed to their tasks, and the childish freaks of their riders, they are as docile and easily managed as sheep. If a hard lesson is to be studied a little more before recitation, it can be done just as well on the way to school as any where else, for without the least guidance, these faithful animals would take their previous burdens directly to the academy door, or if a bird's nest is to be hunted or a few choice flowers collected for an herbarium, they are equally obedient to the will of their youthful riders.

As a general thing, pupils at the South are not as far advanced in intellectual attainments at the ages of ten and twelve as the same class of students at the North. This can be accounted for from the circumstance that children there are not put into schools at as early ages as they are with us, but as far as my experience goes, when they are brought under good intellectual culture, their minds are more vigorous and intellectual developments more rapid, than has been the case with children of the same age I ever had the care of at the North.

For the encouragement of those of my readers who may be expecting to locate themselves as teachers in the Southern States, I would say, that of all my pupils both at the North and South, who were of the same age and have made the greatest progress in their studies in the same given time, and who have evinced the greatest enthusiasm in the various sciences they were pursuing, and especially in the study of the Bible, they have been among the dear youth I have had the privilege of teaching in Georgia.

While as a general thing the Southern States are far behind the age in popular education, still they can boast of some of the finest literary institutions in the United States. To say nothing of the medical schools, law schools, and colleges for young men, many of which every one who knows any thing about them is ready to acknowledge have always taken a stand in the literary world second to none in the country, Georgia will ever have the honor of founding the first college for ladies in the United States. This institution is located at Macon, a fine flourishing town, about eighty miles North of Savannah. Its principal building is a large brick edifice erected at a great expense by the Methodist denomination, which is the most wealthy and popular religious sect in the South-

ern States. In this institution ladies furnish their own apartments and change rooms as they advance in their classes from year to year according to the usual college custom.

The President and most of the professors of this college were, when I was in Georgia, gentlemen from the North. From personal acquaintance with ladies from this institution, I am prepared to give it as my opinion, that in point of literary excellence and all those privileges calculated to raise the standard of female education far above its ordinary level, Macon Female College stands the highest in our country excepting the Oberlin College in Ohio. To this institution as far as advantages for extensive female education are concerned, although it has many faults, I must give the pre-eminence to all others in our country, till institutions shall arise, which I trust all the friends of female education hope soon to see, that will take a stand upon a platform far higher and broader and more liberal than Oberlin has ever done. When such is the case, then may the females of our country, thousands of whom are now crushed by hard service in kitchens and workshops, or wearing out their lives at the looms and spindles of our manufacturing establishments, look up with joy and gratitude, for the day of "their redemption draweth nigh."

LETTER XXVI.

The sand-hillers, their habits, poverty and ignorance.

ALTHOUGH praise-worthy attempts have been made in various parts of Georgia, to diffuse the means of education more extensively than was formerly thought necessary, still there is a class of people in that State, as also in the Carolinas, who have never been benefitted by any of these privileges; and these individuals, though degraded and ignorant as the slaves, are, by their little fairer complexions entitled to all the privileges of legal suffrage. These people are known at the South by such names as crackers, clay-eaters, and sand-hillers. I have previously mentioned the circumstance from which they derived the appellation of crackers. They are called clay-eaters, because all this class of people, from the oldest to little children, are as much addicted to the eating of clay as some communities are to the use of tobacco and snuff. This senseless habit is indulged in to such an extent, that when a person has once

seen a clay-eater, he can, ever after, instantly recognize any one of their number by their sickly, sallow, and most unnatural complexions, let them be seen in never so large a crowd. Children, by the time they are ten or twelve years of age, begin to look old, their countenances are stupid and heavy and they often become dropsical and loathsome to the sight. Those who survive this practice thirty or forty years, look very wrinkled and withered, their flesh shrunken to their bones like that of very aged people. They are also called sand-hillers from the grounds they usually occupy, which are the barren and sandy districts of Georgia and South Carolina, to which these poor wretched beings have been driven by the powerful and rich planters, who have wealth and avarice sufficient to secure to themselves all the best soil.

This part of the population of Georgia and some of the contiguous States, are the lineal descendents of those paupers from England, whom Gen. Oglethorpe brought to this country and by whom Georgia was first settled. The same crushed spirit that will ever suffer one to accept of a home in an alms house, seems to have been transmitted down to the present posterity of these emigrants, and their situation has always been such, they never have had the

power to acquire education or wealth sufficient to raise them above their original degradation or enable them to shake off that odium they have inherited from their pauper ancestry. They have no ambition to do any thing more than just what is necessary to procure food enough of the coarsest kind to supply the wants of the appetite, and a scanty wardrobe of a fabric they manufacture themselves. If they should ever cherish a desire for any other life than such as the brutes might lead, it would be all in vain, for the present institutions and state of society at the South are calculated to paralyze every energy of both body and mind. They are not treated with half the respect by the rich people that the slaves are, and even the slaves themselves look upon them as their inferiors. I have seen the servants when one of these poor women came into a planter's house, dressed in her homespun frock, bonnet and shawl, collect together in an adjoining room or on the piazza and indulge in a fit of laughter and ridicule about her "cracker gown and bonnet," as they would call them.

Slavery renders labor so disreputable, and wages of slave labor so low, that if places could be found where they might hire out to service, there would be but little inducement to do so.

Sometimes a young man who has a little more ambition than usually falls to the lot of his people, will succeed in obtaining a situation as overseer on a plantation. As such an office is to them quite honorable, they will almost give their services for it. I knew one young man about the age of nineteen who took the entire charge of a large plantation, and even labored with his own hands in the time of preparing the cotton for market, for the paltry sum of fifty dollars per year besides his board.

The sand-hillers usually cultivate a few acres of that barren land they are allowed to live upon, in the labor of which the females are obliged to take a part as well as the man. In this way they raise their corn, vegetables, and cotton, sufficient for domestic manufacture and sometimes a small quantity for market. When they do this, they can provide themselves with such luxuries as coffee, tea, sugar, etc., though besides coffee they seldom use any thing that is not the product of their own industry.

While I was residing in the interior of Georgia, one of these women sent her little daughter for me on horseback to go and make her a visit. I returned with the child on the beast with her; in the evening she carried me home in the same way. I found this woman living in a

small log house, very neat, but there was nothing belonging to it, to which the term comfortable could be applied. She had a bed, a table, two or three benches that were used instead of chairs and a very little crockery. The kitchen was a separate little building, of course scantily supplied with cooking utensils. The entertainment she prepared for me, while I sat with her in her little kitchen on a stool, consisted of coffee without sugar, fried bacon and corn bread mixed with water only. She had neither vegetables, or butter, or any other condiment we consider essential to any repast. In the course of the afternoon she showed me a roll of cloth she had just taken from the loom, which she told me, was all the product of her own hard labor, commencing with the cotton seed. On inquiring if she could not purchase cloth much cheaper than she could manufacture it, she replied, "she could if her time was worth any thing, but there was no labor she could perform that would bring her any money."

At that age when the youth of the North are confined at hard lessons for six hours a day from one season to another, these children are wasting the spring time of their lives, in the fields and woods, climbing trees, robbing bird's nests, or breaking up the haunts of squirrels,

and engaged in every such kind of mischief, enough of which is always to be found for idle hands to do. These are the children and youth that the advantages of education which some enjoy at the South, have never yet reached, and probably never will, till some special effort is made in their behalf by missionary labor. As long as the present feeling between the rich and poor exists, they can never be brought together into the same schools and if this could be effected it would not be expedient. I have seen the results of such an experiment in my own school. While I was teaching in the north part of Georgia, I gave two little girls belonging to one of these poor families, their tuition for the purpose of encouraging them to come to school, but the neglect and scornful treatment they received from those who considered themselves their superiors, because they had wealthy parents and servants and could dress fashionably while they were obliged to wear their coarse homespun dresses, contributed to make them so miserable they could derive but little advantage from their instruction, and such will always be the case if attempts are made to bring them into the schools of the wealthy.

Efforts have been made to persuade these parents to put their sons to useful trades, but if

they do this they are obliged to labor in the shops with the slaves, and this being placed on a level with the colored people, they feel is a degradation they can not submit to, therefore they choose to bring up their sons to hunting and fishing.

I have been thus particular in my account of these oppressed people, with the hope, that this little book may fall into the hands of some philanthropic person who may, in the hands of God, be instrumental in educating and elevating a class of people now surrounded by all the intellectual and religious privileges of our boasted free and happy land, who might almost be termed heathen.

Those who have been from early youth partakers of all the blessings of the sanctuary and Sabbath schools, and day schools, and religious and scientific lectures, books, periodicals and papers of every name and description, can have but a faint conception of the darkness of that mind to which the door to all such mental discipline has ever been closed. If such minds are ever brought within the doors of the church, they are so illiterate, that to them the sermon they may hear is only an idle tale. As far as I have been able to learn, they universally believe in God and a crucified Redeemer, but their ideas

of Him and the great plan of salvation are extremely vague, like "the poor Indian," their untutored minds

"See God in clouds, or hear Him in the winds."

Having no instruction but that which nature affords, their minds become an easy prey to superstition in all its forms. The screeching of an owl or the barking of a hound at midnight are harbingers of some dire event. The ticking of the death-watch in the wall foretells the death of some friend, and the matron with her iron-bowed glasses can distinctly see in the inverted coffee cup prosperity or adversity, a marriage or a funeral. To the benighted traveler, the barkless tree or innocent guide post, becomes a ghost in a winding sheet, and as a favorite poet says,

"What at evening played along the swamp,
Fontastic, clad in robe of fiery hue,
He thought the devil in disguise, and fled
With quivering heart and winged footsteps home."

I can devise no other means by which these people can be properly educated and trained to all kinds of useful labor than, by sending individuals among them with funds to erect institutions, into which children and youth shall be collected, to remain for a certain number of years till they have been taught some useful

trade and received sufficient instruction in the fundamental branches of education to render them useful members of society.

Now will not some of those self-denying young men and women, who are contemplating the life of missionaries in some foreign field of labor, just cast an eye over this broad vineyard, now already white for the harvest, before they decide that their mission calls them to California or Oregon, or the islands of the Pacific?

And does not the National Popular Education Society hear the cry from the South, "come down and help us," while it is gathering its hundreds of teachers from among the rocks and hills of New England, for the great valley of the Mississippi, Texas and the Rocky Mountains?

LETTER XXVII.

The residence of an aged matron—Affection and fidelity of her servants.

I WILL not trouble my youthful friends with but one more account of one of those enchanting scenes it was my privilege to resort to, while in that part of Georgia where I never met but one individual with whom I ever had had a previous acquaintance. This was one of those hospitable and precious homes God always provides for his dear children, when He has seen it good in his wise providence, to remove them far away from that consecrated spot the fond heart loves to call home, and with which every tree which once formed a shelter for a play-ground, every shrub where was found a brood of young birds, every clear stream wherever was caught the tiny fishes with a pin-hook, every grassy mound where sported the snow-white lambs in childhood's happy hours, must ever remain imprinted upon the tablets of the heart among the names of its earliest friends.

This spot to which I always fled as a refuge from home-sickness and discontent and every such evil was the residence of an aged lady from whom God had removed her husband and all her children, and for years she had lived almost in solitude in this lone retreat, surrounded only by her slaves.

This residence, more secluded than any one I have ever described to you, was situated at the distance of six miles from the highway. Between the public road and this house was nothing but a dense forest, through which to have access to the plantation an intricate path just wide enough for a carriage to pass was kept open by frequently clearing away the underwood and fallen limbs and renewing the marks on the trees as soon as they had become erased. Trees marked in this way are said to be blazed, and this is the usual way of laying out roads and commencing the foundation of cities at the South. In that country one often hears the remark made, "that it takes only a few blazed trees to make a city."

I was introduced to this good old lady by a company of young people who occasionally visited her, and wished much to have me enjoy the privilege with them. The day preceding the one that had been appointed to go and see

her, a message was sent respecting the contemplated visit and she was prepared to welcome us at the gate with the cordial salutation, "The Lord bless these dear children for remembering an old woman in her solitude."

Unlike plantations in general, all the cleared land belonging to this, excepting about twenty acres, was concealed from the sight, by a piece of heavy wood land that completely surrounded the buildings, and these few acres that were occupied by yards, gardens, orchards and vegetable-patches of various kinds. It was truly one of the loveliest little spots I ever visited, and I gladly accepted the invitation I received that day to make it my home as long and whenever I chose. After this I went frequently to see Mrs. A., and often spent the night. I found her a devoted Christian, and was happy to learn that the result of Christian example and kind treatment, was to make the most docile and faithful servants. They appeared to take the same interest and pleasure in contributing to the comfort of their old mistress, that children would cherish towards an aged mother. She trusted in them as parents would in children in whom they had implicit confidence. They took the charge of the plantation, and carried to market the cotton and the other

products, and attended to the sale of them, and made all the purchases for the whole plantation, and all the slaves looked so happy and contented, and were so well clothed and fed that even slavery there seemed to wear some pleasant features.

The last time I visited Mrs. A., I went with a sick friend, who I trust is now waiting to welcome my aged friend and myself to that bright world, to whose joys earth's elysiums are scarcely able to give the faintest prelude. At this time we found her sitting by a window that looked into the court-yard, with a large family Bible spread open before her, on a little stand, from which she raised her eyes as a servant ushered us into the room, with her accustomed salutation, "The Lord bless you."

This was one of the most beautiful afternoons in May, which at the South is always the most pleasant month in the year. Trees and shrubs had on their foliage of the freshest green. Altheas and pomegranates never looked more beautiful, and jessamines and rose-trees never sent forth a more delicious fragrance. No place of residence was ever more quiet than this, as it was so far in the woods and removed at such a distance from that part of the plantation where the slaves labored. This afternoon it

seemed to me like a second Eden. The few servants that waited on their mistress were all in their own little apartments quietly at work.

The dogs and goats were taking their siestas in the court-yard, and scores of white chickens and cooing doves, had gathered among the branches of the trees above them. Here no unpleasant sounds fell upon the ear to interrupt the harmony of those sweet songs that were poured forth in such endless variety from the neighboring trees it would almost seem as if all the birds had collected in this little paradise below to give those who resided there, a foretaste of the everlasting songs of the paradise above. Here, surely, "the animals as once in Eden lived in peace."

In the course of the afternoon, our friend gave us an account of those afflictive dispensations which had made her so desolate, but at the same time she acknowledged the goodness of God in giving her the kindest and most faithful of servants. She appeared to look forward to the rest that "remaineth for the people of God," with all the joy of one anticipating a speedy return to the friends and youthful scenes of an earthly home after a long absence. With saints of old she "confessed she was a stranger and pilgrim on the earth and that she desired a

better country, that is an heavenly " one. This last interview and the parting words of this good friend who many times made me welcome and happy in her quiet home, will never be forgotten, and often now in the silence of my own chamber do I recall those scenes with longing desires to live them all over again.

LETTER XXVIII.

A large plantation—Cause of an unhealthy atmosphere—Cattle, swine and sheep—Driving of oxen by Southerners—Shops of various kinds—Ploughing of the land by men and women—Sports of the slaves—A quilting party—Marriages and funerals—A nursery for colored children.

FOR a few months while in Georgia, I resided on one of the largest plantations of Burke Co.; this circumstance furnished me with an opportunity to become acquainted with all the domestic customs of one of these extensive families, and as the same system of arrangements I saw here, as far as I am personally acquainted and have been able to learn from others, are to be found on all large and well-conducted plantations in the Southern States, I hope my readers will not find this letter I am about to write to them this morning altogether unprofitable.

This County, as I have been told, has more wealth, larger plantations, and richer soil than any other in Georgia. But at the same time, according to the laws of nature which have so provided for every country that where there are

great local advantages to be enjoyed there are also great evils to be endured, this is also the most unhealthy county in all the State, and is universally known at the South by the appellation of the "Grave Yard of Georgia."

The rich soil and impure atmosphere of this part of the country, are both attributable to the same cause; its low swampy grounds, acres of which previous to cultivation were covered with stagnant pools of water.

The lands are prepared for cultivation by digging deep ditches through them in various directions. I have frequently seen excavations of this kind sufficiently deep when filled with water to float a good sized sloop. This kind of labor furnished employment for a great many Irishmen, who have already learned in their own "green isle," the art of draining low wet lands. At first this work is attended by a great outlay of funds yet it requires but a few seasons after these fields have been brought under cultivation to restore to the pocket of the landholder not only the sum that was originally expended upon them, but also a liberal interest.

The plantation which furnishes the subject of this letter, consisted of forty-nine square miles of land. My readers will at once see that this one plantation extended over an area, equal

if not larger than many of our New England towns. Several of its fields contained no less than from two to four hundred acres each, still, a large proportion of the whole remained a forest, and was only occupied as a range for large herds of swine and cattle, and numerous flocks of sheep and goats, the latter being raised solely for the flesh of the kids, which is considered in that country as an article of diet far preferable to that of lambs.

Although the raising of sheep for their fleeces, as a general thing, at the South, is not considered a very lucrative kind of business, still many plantations in the more northerly part of Georgia, realize quite an income from this source. The expense and care attending the raising of sheep at the South is far less than it is with us, as they are turned into the woods and seldom require any other attention than what is bestowed upon them at the time of shearing their fleeces, but at the same time the wool raised at the South will never command so high a price by several cents per pound, as the same article does when produced in a cold country, for in hot climates it will always be coarse and hairy, and consequently unfit for any soft, delicate fabric, yet the Southern wool furnished a strong, coarse material quite valuable for the manufacture of

carpets and other kinds of heavy cloth, for which it is always used.

As it respects the swine, I believe the people of the South would not think they could subsist without their flesh; bacon, instead of bread, seems to be **THEIR** staff of life. Consequently, you see bacon upon a Southern table, three times a day, either boiled or fried. This custom of course demands the slaughter of a great number of these animals on every plantation during the year. On the one of which I am speaking in this communication, during the Fall I was there, one hundred passed under the butcher's knife at one time, and all for home consumption. I will leave my New England friends, who well know what a disturbance the butchering of *one* of those noisy creatures creates with us, to judge what a scene would be occasioned by the collecting together and massacre of one hundred at a time.

Pork at the South is never to my knowledge, salted and barreled as it is with us, but flitches as well as hams are hung up without being divided, in a house built for that purpose, and preserved in a smoke that is kept up night and day through the year.

Cattle in the Southern States are raised for those purposes to which the milk, flesh, skins

and horns, could be appropriated, but seldom as beasts of burden. The Southerner knows nothing about the Northern manner of training steers for labor. It is one of the most comical sights in the world to see a slave trying to drive a yoke of oxen in the manner they always do when they attempt any thing of the kind. When oxen are to be used as beasts of burden, they are chased and caught in the woods like wild animals, then half frightened to death, yoked together in pairs, and fastened to a cart; the driver either mounted on their backs, or standing in the vehicle behind them, attempts to urge them forward by a whip and guide them by the ropes he had previously fastened to their horns. Of course, the poor brutes know nothing about what such things mean, and while their eyes indicate that they are almost frantic with terror and rage, they shake and toss their heads first one way, then another, hook and crowd and then pull in opposite directions, and as any one would readily imagine, take all courses excepting a straight-forward one.

But I fear you will think I have digressed very far from the design of my letter as proposed at its commencement, therefore I will try to retrace my steps a little, and say that this plantation which was a township of itself, had

within its own borders so many resources of convenience, that setting aside those things that can only be termed the luxuries of life, it could be quite independent of any foreign aid or article of merchandize. It had its own mills and shops of various kinds, its milliners and mantuamakers, tailors and barbers, and its cards, looms and spindles, and every article for the table, which was always furnished luxuriously, was usually the product of home industry, excepting tea, coffee, and the spices.

Teachers in the languages, music and the other sciences, received good salaries, and while I was there, the master of this plantation, anxious to live independent of all the world, was endeavoring to make such arrangements that he could have his own church and chaplain. On some plantations this is always customary. Often the preacher on the Sabbath is the family teacher during the week.

On most plantations it is customary to measure out to the slaves weekly a certain quantity of grain, potatoes, meat, etc., and let every one do their own cooking, but on this, a plan had been adopted, much more economical to the master, and convenient for the servant. Instead of each person being obliged to spend a portion of each day in the preparation of their own

food, it was the business of a few to cook for the whole and call all the slaves together at regular hours to take their meals. The first thing in the morning about four o'clock, every living creature on the whole plantation is aroused from its slumbers by the blowing of trumpets which is invariably and almost simultaneously answered by the cackling of fowls, the barking of dogs, and braying of mules. In a few moments, the slaves are collected together, and receive their orders for the day from the overseer. They then go to the field and labor till nine o'clock, when the trumpet sounds again to call them to their breakfast. At two o'clock, P. M., they are called up to dine; they take their suppers late in the evening after the day's labors are all completed. During the season of ploughing, the scene that is acted six times a day by the servants with their mules going and returning from the field, is extremely amusing and novel to a stranger, and appears to be attended by a great deal of jollity among the actors themselves. At the time to which I am alluding, there were fifty ploughs running every day: there were one hundred ploughs belonging to the plantation, one-half of which in ploughing-time, were always kept in the field, the other half in the blacksmith's shop which

belonged also to the plantation. As soon as one set had become dull, they were returned to the shop, and exchanged for those that had just been undergoing repairs. These ploughs are light, and are always drawn by one mule and held by one man or woman, who at the same time guides the beast by leading lines that are fastened to their own persons. In those large fields of which I have previously spoken, thirty and forty men and women promiscuously run their ploughs side by side, and day after day, till the colter has passed over the whole, and as far as I was able to learn, the part the women sustained in this masculine employment, was quite as efficient as that of the more athletic sex. In the harnessing and unharnessing of the mules and in the distribution of the provender among them when they returned from the field, I always observed that the females displayed the most agility, and usually completed their tasks first. Every man and woman has the entire charge of the beast they drive before the plough, and there is not a little ambition excited among them to see who shall have the finest looking and most spirited animals, and they usually test their fleetness by running races with each other, in going and returning from the scene of their labors, which they always do

on the back of their mules. I have been an eye-witness of these sports a great many times, and have generally had the gratification of seeing the women go a little ahead of the men.

The overseer on this plantation was an active, intelligent colored man, very gentlemanly in his deportment and much respected by the white people and beloved by the slaves. Although he was himself a slave, he lived in good style in a framed and well furnished house close to his master's door, who treated his favorite slave more like a companion than a menial, and always consulted him upon business matters of much importance. I have often overheard their conversations together, and as far as that was concerned, there was such an equality and frankness, and friendliness in expression between them, I never should have for once supposed that one was a master and the other a slave. His master told me that since he had made this man his superintendent, he had had more peace and order upon his plantation and much more work done than when he employed white men for that purpose, that the slaves were treated better and consequently were happier and more contented with their lot. This overseer so arranged the work upon the plantation that the slaves not only had considerable leisure to cul-

tivate a few acres of land for themselves, but also their seasons for pastimes. All the cotton, vegetables, and poultry the slaves could raise for themselves, their master always purchased from them at the market price. They kept their own accounts and their master settled with them annually, as he would with strangers, and paid in cash for all he had purchased of them during the year. I was in his family at the time of one of these settlements and he said he had paid some of them seventy and eighty dollars for their produce, and he doubted not they would expend it all in tobacco and whiskey.

The slaves upon this plantation had their holidays and seasons for frolics as frequently as any one could think was reasonable, and occasionally their entertainments, the provisions of which were furnished at the expense of their master. Such privileges as these are seldom enjoyed by the Southern slaves; in this instance they were always the rewards of good behavior, and their indulgent, yet calculating master was wise enough to see that nothing so speedily tended to make faithful and affectionate servants as such a course of treatment. While I was on this plantation, the overseer's wife made a quilting at which she invited the field slaves, both

men and women. It may seem strange to my readers to hear of men being invited to a quilting but I can say to them, that among the Southern field hands, the women can hoe as well as the men, and the men can sew as well as the women, and they engage in all departments of labor according to the necessity of the case without regard to sex. This quilting party was held in the night, the first part of which was devoted to work on the quilt, the latter part to festivity and dancing. Caroline, the overseer's wife was one of my best friends on this plantation, and from her I had learned the minutæ of the preparations for this scene, and when her guests had all assembled and were seated around the quilt, she sent for me to go and see them at the work. It was most assuredly an amusing sight; the men and women were seated promiscuously around the frame, very quietly yet as expeditiously plying the needle to all sorts of lines, both crooked and straight, as if their lives depended upon having the quilt out before midnight, but in justice to them I must say that there was a good deal more order and less talk among them about their neighbors than is usually observed at parties of the same kind that I have many times attended in the "Yankee land." But oh! what

quilting; it was, however, executed very much as one would suppose it would be by hands much more accustomed to wield the spade and shovel than the cambric needle. They quilted with darning needles and traced their designs with charcoal, and I can assure you, those athletic fingers drew no microscopic lines, but every one of them exhibited a width and distinctness worthy of a heavy hand.

The entertainment Caroline served up for her company, with the permission from her master to provide just what she pleased, was well calculated to tempt the appetite of the most fastidious epicure. Pastry of various kinds and frosted cake that would rival any thing of the kind coming from the confectioner's oven, tea and coffee that a Frenchman might consider it a luxury to sip, and fowls and ham, and other meat most deliciously prepared, all together contributed to make up a feast that any ambitious landlady might be proud of.

Weddings and funerals among the slaves, as far as I know, are always conducted in the night. As a general thing the marriage ceremony is but a little regarded among the slaves, but there are instances when the favorite slave of a wealthy master is honored with as extensive prepa-

rations for a wedding as an own daughter might expect from her parents.

But it was always a melancholy thought to me that after a life of hard toil, no other hours but those of darkness could be allowed for the poor slave to be returned to his kindred dust. When a slave dies, the friends and companions of the deceased assemble together on the night of the same day on which the death occurred, and for an hour or two they sing and pray, and weep and wail for the departed. Then the body is taken up and carried to the grave. On a starless night the gloomy path of the mourners is lighted by pitch-pine torches, which every one forming the funeral procession holds a little above his head. But the body of the poor slave that is now so little heeded and cared for, when it can no longer minister to the pleasure of its master, and is now hurried to its long home amid the darkness of the evening, is destined ere long to rise in a new and glorious form in the brightness of the morning, and though all that remains of this once afflicted and crushed body is soon mingled with its native soil and forgotten by every thing earthly, "yet our Father's care shall keep this little dust,

"Till the last angel rise and break
The long and dreary sleep."

In a previous letter I spoke of the packing of cotton by hand labor. When I wrote that article I had never seen it put up for market in any other way, but since that, I have made a second tour to the South, and have learned that this method has now given place to the machine, which greatly facilitates the process and compresses the same amount of cotton into a much smaller compass. The machine will press into a sack one yard and a half long, three quarters of a yard wide and the same in depth, from four to five hundred pounds.

Tales are often circulated at the North about the infant children of slaves being left unprotected in the field while the mother is obliged to continue at her task. All the time I was at the South, I never saw or heard of any such incident, and as I believe such statements are false, and know them to be altogether inconsistent with the solicitude the slaveholder always evinces with respect to this kind of property, I thought I would in this letter speak of the manner in which the young children are provided for in their mother's absence. On all plantations of much extent there are always nurseries where all the children from infants a week old, up to ages of four or five are cradled and nursed as well as the aged women to whose

care they are entrusted while their mothers are in the field, are capable of doing. But even then it seems cruel that a mother can not see her little nursling oftener than three times a day, and then for only a few hasty moments, and I doubt not from the cries I have heard from those nurseries, that those helpless little ones often suffer from want of that nourishment nature has provided for infancy.

The situation of those who have the charge of these houses demands as much if not more commiseration than that of the children themselves.

The individuals to whom such a task is consigned, is generally those women whose great age incapacitates them for any other labor. It is no small task for two or three of these females, themselves in a second infancy, to rock the cradles and attend to the wants of twenty or thirty young children.

But slavery in its best form is nothing more nor less than a cruel bondage of which any country ought to be ashamed, much more one that makes such loud boasts of freedom as ours is always ready to trumpet far and wide.

LETTER XXIX.

A Southern Camp-meeting—Preparations for the same—Removal to the camp ground—Scenes on the camp ground—Meeting for the colored people.

NOTHING would give me more pleasure than to furnish my readers with a full account of a Southern camp-meeting, if I could be assured it would afford them half the entertainment I have myself enjoyed from a scene so extremely novel.

Those of my readers who have had the pleasure of mingling with such congregations in the Northern country, may suppose I can present nothing new upon this subject, but if I fail of clothing this account with interest, it will certainly be owing to a defect in the descriptive powers of the writer, rather than to a want of what is in itself truly novel, amusing and exciting, for I can assure you, a Southern camp-meeting is very unlike any thing called by the same name at the North.

To the country people in the Northern part of Georgia, the season of the annual camp-meeting furnishes a date, from which and before

which, all the most important events of the whole year are reckoned. This convocation is to them, what the Thanksgiving day is to the New England people, and it occurs at about the same time of the year. By it, the time for the closing of the summer schools and commencement of the winter schools is regulated, and many business transactions refer to this time, and for months previous to an event of so much importance to all, every member in the family from the oldest to the youngest, anticipated an addition to his or her wardrobe, and this is so well understood by the city merchants and milliners, they endeavor to make their arrangements, if possible to meet all the demands upon their stock of fancy and dry goods, during this, as I have heard them say, their best harvest-time in all the year, and while Christians in anticipation of a glorious revival of religion, often recall to mind the most eloquent speakers of the past year, and ask who are expected to be, the coming season, the principal topics of conversation among the young and gay will be, costly and elegant articles of dress, and who was the "belle" last year and who probably will be this; and this rage for dress is not confined to the parlor and keeping rooms, but extends with equal ardor to the kitchen and field,

and you might hear the cook at the corn mill and women bending over the plough, each saying, she must have a new pair of shoes or a new frock, or a new handkerchief for her head.

All past events are reckoned from the last camp-meeting. For instance, you will hear one woman say, "she has had a bad cough ever since the camp meeting, such a person was taken sick with a fever soon after the camp-meeting, another died or was married so many months after the camp-meeting.

The removal of planters from their summer to their winter residences occurs at this time, for the hospitable and generous planter of the South, on occasions such as I am now describing, not only makes provision for the the entertainment of his own family and numerous relations, but also for a large company of strangers; therefore he is obliged to take with him all those household conveniences that are indispensable to the comfort and good order of a well regulated family at home. Consequently they make their arrangements, in order to avoid the trouble of one extra move in the year, to go with all their goods and chattels from their summer homes to the camp ground, and from thence to their winter quarters.

The camp ground I visited was a beautiful square lot of forest land about one acre and a half in extent, laid out amid a native and gigantic growth of oaks several miles from any plantation. Upon one corner of this square stands the oldest church in the United States, and I believe the only one, for the erection of which a grant was obtained from the king of England. This building accommodates the usual Sabbath-day congregation, but for all large assemblies, and the annual county meetings, another large building called the Tabernacle has been erected upon an opposite corner of the same square. This latter house of worship, in construction, more strikingly resembles the city market, which I have already described, than it does a church, as it consists merely of a roof of great extent every where supported by pillars standing at regular distances from each other.

On every side of the square, all fronting the centre, the fathers of the principal families constituting these assemblies, have each their own family residence. These little habitations are built of logs, having a piazza in front, and their number is sufficient to enclose the entire square, while in the background are arranged all the out-houses belonging to each, such as the kitchens, stables for the horses, as also pens for the swine

and folds for the herds and flocks, and coops for the chickens, all of which have been previously stalled for the coming slaughter; and I ought not to forget to mention in this connection, the kennels for the hounds and watch dogs, which are needed even more at such places than on the plantations, and which in many parts of Georgia and South Carolina, constitute the only police of the place.

But while such ample provision is made for the entertainment of those who assemble together for a season of spiritual refreshment, arrangements are also made to supply the wants of those who congregate in the out skirts of this little village to drink whisky, smoke cigars, play cards and steal horses. For the accommodation of this class of persons, a large framed saloon has been erected just a little beyond the church square, which was well furnished with all those things calculated to tempt the appetite, that one usually finds at resorts of the same kind in the city. I think I can truly say, I never saw a congregation of people, where the extremes from good to bad were so great as in this. It appeared to me that if it was ever true, that "when the sons of God assembled together, Satan came also," it was in this instance, for while the fervent and incessant prayers of

the righteous ascended on high like holy incense from within the camp, the curses and blasphemies that were poured forth from the throats of those who had encamped round about this place of prayer and praise, were sufficient to induce one to conclude he must have fallen somewhere near the precincts of the infernal regions.

For several days previous to the commencement of worship, persons from all quarters within the distance of fifteen or twenty miles, are busy in the transportation of all kinds of food and articles of furniture; chairs, tables, beds and bedsteads, cradles for babies, and coops for chickens, all heaped upon cotton Jersey carts, together with scores of men-servants and women-servants accompanied by a large supply of the canine race equally as well pleased as their masters with every thing new and exciting, all on the move to the same spot, composed a scene that was to me amusing beyond expression, and very forcibly recalled to my mind a little couplet associated with my early school days, which probably some of you will recollect having seen in Adams' old Arithmetic :

“Kits, cats, sacks and wives,
How many were going to St. Ives ?”

But after every article of household furniture is arranged in its proper place, as the sailor

would say, in "sea trim" and every thing reduced to order and quiet, the whole scene within the camp-ground assumes an aspect not only imposing but beautiful and romantic in the extreme, and particularly so in the evening and during the intervals of worship, when hundreds of young and joyous people, richly and gaily dressed, could be seen moving in all directions, or standing in small groups beneath the shade of some wide spreading tree, in this little city of oaks, as it might justly be called; for when the ground was prepared for the purpose for which it is now used, a sufficient number of the native forest trees were left standing to form a complete shade for the whole area. And now the branches from one tree to another have become so interwoven and the foliage so thick and heavy the sun's rays hardly ever reach the ground, but the same dark and green shade which renders this little spot so delightfully cool and refreshing during a hot summer's day, would also prevent those who spent the night there, from ever enjoying a moonlight evening, therefore to compensate for this apparent loss of the moon, every man has erected in front of his own house a platform about six feet from the ground and four or five feet square, upon which is laid earth to the depth of about one foot, for the

purpose of making a foundation for a fire, which is lighted every evening as soon as the stars begin to appear. This light is kept burning till towards midnight by a constant supply of pitch wood furnished by boys whose business it is to see that the whole camp-ground is sufficiently lighted during the convocation. These great fires at this elevation sent forth such a broad and brilliant sheet of light in all directions, that those who seated themselves in front of their dwellings could read with perfect ease without the aid of any other light, and while millions of sparks emitted from the burning fagots were carried up amid wreaths of curling smoke and lost among the thick boughs of the trees. The older members of the families would seat themselves beneath the piazzas to witness the pastimes of the children, all collected together to vie with each other in the dexterity of trundling the hoop, throwing the ball, jumping the rope or running races, in all of which sports the dogs sustained a part by no means the least conspicuous, with caninish glee running to pick up the fallen hoop, bringing back the ball that had bounded too far, and in the race, often outstripping all the children.

But how I regret that a want of descriptive talent must prevent me from giving you a full

and complete idea of a scene so rich and beautiful, the best that I can do, it will fall far short of the reality and I must submit to this meagre description of a scene I now contemplate with interest and pleasure. The first thing in the morning, just as the sun is rising, this sleeping congregation is aroused from its slumbers by several loud and long blasts from a hunting trumpet, to attend early prayers, consequently with a slight attention to the toilet, the members of each family are soon collected together for worship. I shall never forget the impression made upon my mind, the first time I ever had the pleasure of being present at one of these scenes. The master of the family in which I was most hospitably entertained for several days was a young man of about the age of twenty-six or eight, yet he presided over one of these extensive household establishments with all that ease and dignity becoming a patriarch of three score and ten. On that morning to which I have just alluded when for the first time I constituted one member of his family, now greatly increased by a large number of strangers, as soon as we were assembled he arose and in a sweet, clear and strong voice, sung,

“A charge to keep I have,
A God to glorify,” &c.

We were assembled in that part of the house called the "dining hall," the front of which was all open to the public view, and as all the other families were similarly situated, the songs of praise which went up from each could be distinctly heard by all the rest, as they resounded that morning through every part of the camp-ground. I never expect to enjoy another scene like this beneath the skies, but in the language of the poet I could sincerely say,

"My willing soul would stay,
In such a scene as this."

During the meetings we had usually four sermons in the day from different speakers, the first in the morning at eight o'clock, then at eleven, one and four in the afternoon. As the most commanding eloquence of the Southern pulpits is collected on such occasions, one would not fail of having at least, an intellectual feast if not a spiritual one.

Before closing this letter, I will just notice an assembly of the colored people, who are during these meetings exempt from all labor, excepting what is connected with their masters' establishments. A good many of the servants, especially the females, prefer to go to the Tabernacle to meeting with their masters' families, but as there are hundreds more who want that free-

dom in speaking, singing, shouting and praying, they could not enjoy in the presence of their masters, efforts were made to accommodate them at an out-of-hearing distance, as any one would suppose from the white congregation, but after all, the sound of "glory to God," shouted from the top of a strong sonorous voice on a still evening, would often fall upon the ears of those seated on the camp-ground. The ministers in their turn went down to preach for the colored people, and they frequently returned with the tale that there, they had had the most interesting meetings. Now I will close this letter by saying, I can never recall the scenes connected with a Southern camp-meeting, but with emotions of the deepest interest and pleasure, and when with a retrospective glance of the mind's eye, I review scenes such as I have described in these letters, my soul invariably thirsts for a return to Southern life.

LETTER XXX.

Conclusion.

BEFORE I close these letters, I will observe, that if I had allowed a predilection for Southern life to have influenced my pen, I should have withheld every incident that would in the least be calculated to militate against the character, manners, or institutions of the South, but I have laid aside as far as I was able all my own individual prejudices, and endeavored honestly to present things in a true light, sometimes exhibiting the light side of the picture, then again the dark side, and that too, by showing the state of my own feelings under different circumstances, as for instance, my readers could not help seeing I was unhappy when I saw the Sabbath spent as I have described, when I was in the Southern part of Georgia, then again, when I was in an other section of the country and under other circumstances, I enjoyed the camp-meeting, and if my Southern friends should be

disposed to think I have been too severe, I would say to them, if I were to give an account of the manners and customs of any place wherever I have visited at the North, I could draw one side of a picture with many shadows.

I would not be so illiberal as to wish to expose the mote in your eye while a beam is in ours, but while I regret the oppression that exists at the South, I can only wish for that place, with which many of the fondest recollections of my life are associated, that the morning of that day will ere long dawn upon her, when her laws shall annul the right

“To buy and sell, to barter, whip and hold
In chains a being of celestial make,
Of kindred form of kindred faculties,
Of kindred feelings, passions, thoughts, desires,
Born free, an heir of an immortal hope.”

But with all the faults of the South, I love her still, her sunny skies and forests ever green, her birds of song with voices sweet and plumage gay, are painted in indellible characters upon the tablets of my memory and often present themselves to my mind with all the freshness and vividness of a pleasing dream when one awaketh, and if I did not hold in grateful remembrance a place where I have received so

many favors, my conscience must plead guilty for the sin of ingratitude, for I never received any other treatment while in the Southern country, but that of the utmost politeness and kindness, and I do not know how I can express the sentiments I now entertain for all my Southern friends and acquaintances better than in the words of the valedictory I gave to the institution with which I was last connected at the South just before I left to return home, and as the expressions of respect, gratitude and affection which it contains are equally applicable to all the students and officers of the different institutions in which I have taught in that country, as well as to friends in general, I will repeat the same to all my Southern friends who may happen to see this work.

“As my labors in the A—— Female Seminary are now about to close, I deem it requisite for me to address a few words to the patrons and members of the Institution before I leave, therefore I have chosen this time as the one most convenient and proper for this purpose, and it may not be unmeet for my friends and pupils to learn my feelings when about to bid adieu, and that perhaps forever, to a place that by many hallowed associations, has found a deep place in my affections.

“Till within a few weeks I have considered A—— my home, but an overruling hand of Providence has recently caused me to change my purposes, and now seems to bid me return to my own country and people, and leave that situation which I have occupied for the few past months, to be filled by another who I trust will discharge the duties of one of the most responsible and difficult stations with no less acceptance to all than her predecessor.

“In justice to the young ladies who have been committed to my care, and for the satisfaction of their parents and guardians, I will now say, that your lady-like deportment in school and the strong attachment you have universally manifested towards me, has not only won my highest respect for you but my most sincere affection. The interest the greater part of you have felt in your studies and the rapid progress you have made in the various sciences you have been pursuing, has been a source of extreme satisfaction to me, and I think we can all say we have enjoyed ourselves much in each others society, notwithstanding we have had many occasions for deep sorrow. Death has been permitted to make inroads upon one little number, and to some of us under the most af-

fictive circumstances,* but in these trying hours we have shared each others sympathies and our tears have flowed together, but now we are about to separate, and though hundreds of miles shall intervene between us, I trust we

* Within the short space of five months, while the writer of these letters was connected with this Institution she buried her husband, lost one pupil who died of a fever, after an illness of only a few hours; another, a young lady of fifteen, in a most horrible manner by fire, and that too, in the school room in time of recess. As the day was rather cool for a Southern winter's day, this young lady with several of her companions had drawn around the stove for a few moments, which was an open one, and at the time had but a little fire in it. While standing there, earnestly engaged in conversation, her dress caught fire, and having on a great number of inflammable garments, she was in a moment enveloped in such a flame it was out of human power to extinguish it before her flesh was burnt to a crisp. The muscles in her limbs were so contracted, she said to one standing by her bedside, "aunt, I shall never straighten these arms again." After she was removed from the spot, where she had been burnt, the entire skin of one hand, all in shape like a glove, with the nails upon each finger, and two rings upon the third finger, was picked up by one of the young ladies which was buried without informing the bereaved friends, of the painful circumstance. She survived her first dreadful agonies but a few hours, then her soul, as we doubted not by her Christian life, took its flight to a better world, without a groan or struggle.

shall ever maintain a strong place in each others' memories and affections, and if you would show your love for me when I am gone, let your deportment on all occasions be such, that no one shall have reason to reproach me, for having been remiss in my instruction to you, and now may God grant that if we are never permitted to meet again this side of the grave, we may at last all be united where separation is never known.

TO THE HONORABLE BOARD OF TRUSTEES:—

Sirs :—To a stranger as I was when I came among you, cast upon the mercies of those to whom no claim could be laid by any natural ties, for that friendship and protection which a lone female so much needs, nothing could be more acceptable than the tokens of kindness, which I have received at your hands since my lot has fallen among you, and nothing could have been more opportune, nor more gratefully received than was that recent testimonial of yours which so warmly expressed your approbation of my course in school, and reassured me of your firm and unshaken friendship, and now for this as well as for all other favors you have bestowed upon me, please accept my most cordial thanks.

To my friends in general, I would say, that I hope I fully appreciate all your efforts to make my situation among you a pleasant one. That

hospitality towards strangers, for which the people of the Southern States are so distinguished has ever been shown to me. I have visited many of you and never failed of receiving the most cordial welcome, and when affliction has nearly overwhelmed me, you have been ready to soothe my sorrows, and pour the balm of consolation into my wounded heart; but though every kind look and word, and every token of affection I have received from you, are treasured up in a heart that can never forget them, yet the favors I value above all price are those which were bestowed upon him whose mortal remains I must leave when I go away, to slumber in your soil.

It is with mingled emotions of pain and pleasure that I think of leaving a place that has become so dear to me. Year after year will pass away, and with them those who now know me here, and I shall be forgotten; but while life remains, I cannot forget A—, for with that name must forever be associated not only the most pleasant, but also the most painful reminiscences of my life.

Now with the desire that you may be abundantly rewarded for all your kindness to me, and that you in like circumstances will receive like favors, I will bid you *Adieu*.







