TALES MY FATHER TOLD

By Hallie Q. Brown

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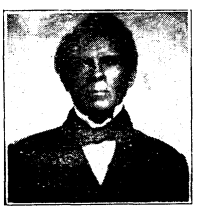
AND OTHER STORIES

BY

Miss Hallie Q. Brown

DEDICATED TO



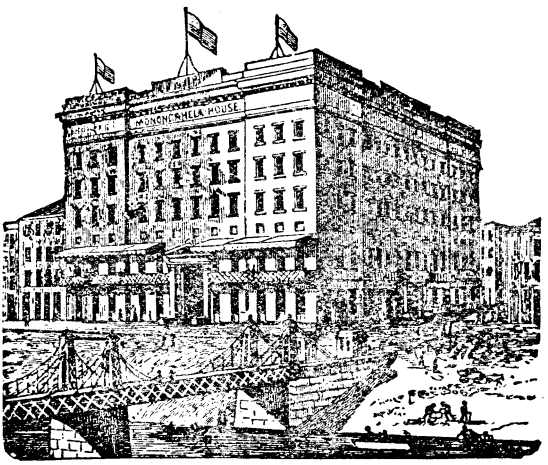
MY FATHER

THOMAS A. BROWN

HOMEWOOD COTTAGE,
Wilberforce, Ohio, U. S. A.

ECKERLE PRINTING CO.

A GLIMPSE OF OLD PITTSBURGH



THE MONONGAHELA HOUSE

Foreword.

Very recently the Monongahela House of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, was torn down to make room, in the onward march of Time, for more modern and commodious structures. This hostelry stood the storm and stress for nearly a century, a silent witness to many thrilling incidents of historic interests as the old city of antebellum days developed into the Pittsburgh of today of greater enterprize and wider activities.

As I read the account of the passing of the old building a troop of memories took possession of my mind. For years my father followed the river for a livelihood. My earliest and most vivid recollection is of our Canadian farm home. When the broad meadows and streams were shrouded in snow, the bitter cold weather was heralded with joy, because we knew the great Mississippi river was sure to be frozen and father would soon be coming home. Then came the time when the jingling of bells announced his coming —the shaking of snow from his great fur coat and fur cap—the stamping of feet and the glad welcome. Our childish glee broke forth afresh at the gifts and trinkets brought from the states, even from the warm waters of the far Southland. The long winter evenings were spent in the living-room where a great log fire roared up the chimney and radiated warmth and cheer to the farthest corner of the room. A large lamp glowed on the center table with its bright chintz cover.

In fancy I see our dear Mother seated in her rocking chair, making the knitting needles fly, her sweet serene face wreathed in smiles. Once more I hear her soft sweet voice in loving kindness or gentle admonition. On the other side of the table sat father in his arm-chair. As we ate the rosy-cheeked apples or cracked the nuts brought from the big baskets on the hearth, father told us stories from his wonderful store of information and experience.

Many of these stories, like our loved ones themselves, have vanished and gone. Some few remain and have become household property.

The tearing away of the Monongahela House recalled the stories and is the only excuse I have for reviving "The Tales My Father Told."

"LIZETTE—THE BEAUTIFUL."

A true story of Slavery.

ONE BLUSTERY March evening in 18—a carriage rolled up and halted at the front entrance of the Old Monongahela House in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. I was acting as night porter. The entire force of employees was composed of Colored men and women of intelligence and considerable native ability. They deserved better places in life, but this was before the Civil War, in the dark days of slavery when persons of color were mainly employed as menials. The city of Pittsburgh boasted of stalwart characters in those days. Lewis Woodson, Augustus Green and William Wells, powerful pulpit orators; John Peck, the first Negro to own and control a fine Hair Goods Establishment; Joseph Miller, leader of the famous choir of Old Wylie Street Church; George B. Vashon, Samuel Neal, and Martin H. Freeman, noted professors of Avery College, and other city schools. Martin R. Delany, distinguished physician and scholar; George Knox, Jesse Wells, William Austin, Barney Mahoney, Matthew and Charles Jones and a host of others I could mention. Ah! these were giants in their day! Given a fair chance in the race of life they would have measured arms with the greatest of earth's noblemen. They served their day and generation; noblemen they were in point of splendid service. But to return to my story—The big Hotel was managed by Mr. and Mrs. Crossan the proprietor and his wife. They were strong abolitionists and reposed the utmost confidence in their employees who assisted in providing for the comforts of an exacting public.

As I said at the beginning a carriage halted at the main entrance. Two travelers, a man and a woman, alighted and walked rapidly to the door, which I opened to admit them, then hastily closed it against the swirling snow and the biting blast which swept the street.

The arrivals were without baggage except a small leather bag, carried by the man. I directed him to the desk. As he removed his gloves and unbuttoned his overcoat, diamonds flashed from his fingers and bosom. He was below medium height, slender and dark, straight hair fell over his collar. A heavy drooping mustache could not hide the sneering curl of his lip. A wide brimmed black hat shaded small ferret-like eyes which were deep-set and restless. His appearance and manner proclaimed him a southern planter before he uttered a word. He spoke in an undertone to the clerk who turned to me and said, "Show the gentleman to room 18 second floor," "Take the girl to room 40 third floor back." "The gentleman will give you further orders." At the word **girl** I looked keenly at the woman who, until now, stood in the shadow of a pillar. The bright light fell upon her fair face. Never shall I forget that lovely young girl! Her tall slender form was enveloped in a long cloak of some dark stuff. The hood which had partly concealed her face was thrown back

revealing her wondrous beauty. Her finely chiseled features and clear olive complexion were enhanced by large dark eyes which glowed, but held within their depths both fear and sorrow. Glossy black hair waved from a smooth broad brow and was hidden beneath her cloak which she drew closely about her.

At a glance I comprehended the situation. This girl was a slave: The man her master: That moment I was fired with determination to rescue her from his clutches, no matter what the cost might be. The man snapped his fingers in her direction, signifying she was to follow him. For an instant she recoiled, her face paled, then flushed. With downcast eyes she walked gracefully to the corridor followed by admiring glances from loungers in the lobby. At No. 18 the man bade me halt while he entered the room and deposited his bag; then followed the girl and myself to No. 40, third floor back. I unlocked and opened the door and turned on the light, the man following closely behind. He carefully scrutinized the room; tested the walls; opened and examined the closets; raised the window sash, looked out and down as if measuring the distance to the pavement below; shut and locked the windows. Apparently satisfied with his findings he turned on his heel walked out of the room without so much as a glance at the girl. He shut and locked the door, and pocketed the key. Although I towered head and shoulders above him and felt myself infinitely his superior as a man, he said, "Boy, are you on watch all night?" Replying in the affirmative he continued, "Bring this girl some bread and butter and tea." "How soon will dinner be served?" "In half an hour, Sir." "Bring the girl's supper at once." he said, consulting his watch. "Yes Sir," I replied, hastening away. In less than twenty minutes every sympathizer in that Old Monongahela House knew there was a slave girl locked in No. 40 third floor back and indignation ran high. On my return with the tea, I found the planter impatiently pacing the hall. He unlocked the door and we entered. I placed the tray upon a small table which stood in the center of the room. The girl had thrown off her wrap and was seated on a stool at the foot of the bed. Her hands tensely locked, lay in her lap. Her wavy black hair was unconfined and literally swept the floor, falling like a cloud about her girlish form. She raised a tear stained face in mute appeal. I dared not look at her again for fear I should say an imprudent word or commit a rash act, so I stepped into the hall where I ccould observe all without being seen. The girl arose, stood erect with the palms of her shapely hands pressed to her temples. The sight of that stricken girl exasperated the master beyond expression. He advanced toward her with menacing finger, stamped his foot and cried angrily, but with suppressed wrath—"Lizette, stop this nonsense," "Eat your supper, then lie down until you are called." "Come now, stop that snuffling." "Mind what I say and be quick about it, too." From the hall I heard the angry words and saw the look of utter despair on Lizette's face but not a murmur escaped her trembling lips. Again the master locked the door and kept the key. Almost immediately the light in the girl's room went out.

With a muttered imprecation, he commanded me to call the girl at 11 p. m., to order a cab to take them to meet the midnight express South, then strode haughtily downstairs and into the dining room.

Shortly afterward a half dozen determined men held a brief but decisive consultation. Mrs. Crossan and the chamber-maid on the third floor; were taken into our confidence. Watches were stationed in the several halls and on stairways; a special one was placed to observe the movements, of the planter. The headwaiter was instructed to delay serving the courses at dinner. With all speed messages were dispatched to friends in the city. The word soon came that a closed carriage would be at the door at 9 p. m. The planter had met some boon companions and everything favored our daring scheme. I was given the task of getting the girl out of the room. How was it to be done? The clerk, whom we did not trust, held the pass key, the planter had the other one safe in his pocket. Keys were brought from every part of the house, but the lock No. 40 would not yield. All plans and suggestions failed. Time was flying! We were getting desperate! Finally I called in a low tone through the key hole. "Lizette," "Lizette," "We are your friends," "Come nearer." "Are you a slave?" "Yes," came the faint answer. "Do you wish to be free?" "Yes, God knows I do." "Will you trust us and do as we tell you?" "Yes, I will," came the prompt response. How were we to get her out! Like a flash the idea came to me. There was but one way, draw her through the transom over the door! "Quick," I cried, bring a strong rope and ladder!" Then the thought would she consent? Had she courage for such an ordeal? It was a trying moment! We worked nervously almost breathlessly. The rope and the ladder were secured. We made a noose, thew it through the transom. The girl put it around her waist as we directed. With great daring and heroism she suffered herself to be drawn through the transom into the hall. We could have shouted for joy, but the battle was yet to be won.

Lizette was hurried into the chamber-maid's room and dressed in male attire. Her shapely head was quickly shorn of its beautiful tresses; green goggles concealed her bright eyes; a wide brimmed hat shaded her face. I threw a gentleman's cape about her shoulders. Leaning on my arm, as an invalid we passed within a few feet of the master, puffing his after dinner pipe in great contentment; passed the loungers in the lobby, the clerk at his desk—out into the street and the wintry gale. The poor girl trembled so violently I fearedd she would fall. I actually carried her from the door to the carriage. A Quaker lady gathered Lizette in her arms as I quickly closed the door. The whip was given to the horses and the vehicle was soon lost in the blinding snow storm. I returned to the lobby just as the clock chimed the hour of **nine.** Our work was accomplished! As we passed, confederates in a holy cause, we silently grasped each other's hands and tears welled to our eyes.

At the home of the Quakeress Lizette told her simple story. She had gone from Virginia to Baltimore, Md., as maid to her mistress. Longing for freedom she ran away, but was apprehended. At her third attempt to escape her master, who was her half brother, decided to sell her to a Georgia Soul Driver, who was to claim her the next day. With the master she was on her way to the place where she was to be turned over to her purchaser when they had halted at Pittsburgh and her rescue had occurred. Kind friends dressed her in a dark travelling suit; gave her a well filled purse and by 10 p. m., she was on the North bound

train speeding to Canada and Freedom.

Not waiting for "Watch" to call the girl, ten minutes to 11 o'clock the master went to No. 40 rapping loudly and saying it was time to be up. Getting no response he unlocked the door and turned on the light, only to find the room empty. **The bird had flown!** He screamed in rage and called "Lizette," "Lizette," "Where are you, Lizette?" The cry was so loud and insistent that doors were hastily thrown open, while guests and servants alike ran into the corridors, thinking the cry an alarm of fire. It was with great difficulty that he was quieted and only on the promise that a thorough search should be made in the morning. As no one had seen her escape, he was led to believe that she must be in the house.

The planter refused to retire, but sat, the remainder of the night, in the office near the main entrance to watch and stationed watches at all other exits. By daylight the house was in an uproar. The planter ran here and there calling excitedly and incriminating **everybody.** Detectives searched the premises but without avail. The house watchmen were arraigned. The planter demanded their arrest. They were about to be taken into custody. At that moment all the employees in the house stepped forward and asked for their wages, signifying their intention to quit the service.

With uplifted hands, Mrs. Crossan exclaimed, "For my sake Brown don't leave." "The guests are at the table and there is no one to serve breakfast." "We are men, madame, and must be treated as such," I replied. Mr. Crossan turned to us and said, "You may resume your work without threat or fear." Then addressing the planter he added with emphasis—"Sir, I have a set of men whom I can trust." "If you lay your pocket book down you will get it again, **but I will not vouch for your nigger.**" The planter left immediately swearing eternal vengeance against the Old Monongahela House, and everybody in it; all Pittsburgh and the North generally—**but beautiful Lizette he never saw again.**

LITTLE DELL—THE WHITE SLAVE

THE SUMMER of 18—was unusually hot. The Old Monongahela House was thronged with guests from the far South, breaking the journey at Pittsburgh, Pa., on their way to the cooler watering places of the North. Many of them were true to their nativity. Proud of the South; proud of the institution of slavery; proud of their ancestors; proud of themselves; in fact they were puffed up with pride and very boastful. They constantly expressed their opinions, which to them were final, at all times and in all places, whether it pleased or offended. Old Colonel N. of Texas, short, fat and florid was often in heated arguments with a little mild-mannered man from Connecticut who was easily vanquished by the redoubtable Colonel. "Yes suh," I heard him say, "If I had my way suh, ev'ry niggah of the N'oth would be in a cotton patch or a Ca'liny rice swamp whah he belongs, yes suh." "Don't you think **some** of them **deserve** freedom?" said the Connecticut man. "No suh, God-A-Mighty made them to serve us and when they git wuthless I throw them out as I do an ol' dead hoss, yes suh." "But you don't deny that they have souls, do you?" timidly asked the little man. "Souls?"

"Souls, the devil!" "Souls, no suh, not like yours an' mine, souls!" chuckling as if it were a new idea. "If they have souls they are an inferior kind of souls suh, like my ol' mule ush" "Ha!" "ha!" "Wha' d'ye think of that, Miss Betty?."

Miss Betty K., a maiden of uncertain age who dressed in silks and laces and wore mitts and corkscrew curls, nodded her approval behind a large mother of pearl and feather fan. Miss Betty was greatly taken up with the Colonel. "La Colonel," she simpered, "I quite agree with you." "You are just the one we need in N'Arleans to straighten out our darkies." "I declar' there's no livin' for them at times." "Storm at 'em like h---" roared the Colonel. "An' if that don't do, tie 'em up by the thumbs and flog 'em till the blood runs." "That's what I say, yes suh." And the Colonel with an air of finality leaned back in his chair, took a pinch of snuff and sneezed vigorously.

When the gong sounded, the Colonel, quite pleased with the impression he had made upon Miss Betty, gallantly offered his arm to escort her to the dining room.

The hallway floor had recently been highly polished and Miss Betty, unfortunately dropped her handkerchief. The Colonel stooped to pick it up, but in the attempt lost his balance and fell sprawling, full length, on the shining surface. Fuming, spluttering and swearing the irate Colonel was lifted to his feet by a servant who was passing at the time. Instead of being grateful to his rescuer, who was in no way to blame, the Colonel, very red and very angry, swore dreadfully—"Yes suh, d- - - it, you did it on purpose." "Shined that flo' as slick as glass." "I know yo' tricks." "If I had yo' on my plantation I'd give yo' a hundred lashes on yo' bar' back, yes suh, yo' d- - - rascal." Shaking his fist and still fuming he mounted the steps and went to his room. Miss Betty, shocked and alarmed at the mishap of her gallant, was relieved from her embarrassing position by the little man from Connecticut who escorted her in to the dining room with the air of a conqueror. It may be imagined that the employees, who served these birds of passage, rejoiced when they plumed their wings and soared away.

Mrs. Fenton, of Georgia, with two little girls, was among the few who remained. She awaited her husband, Captain Fenton, who was to join her before proceeding to Saratoga Springs, N. Y. Mrs. Fenton was a tall angular woman, very dark, showily dressed and wore a profusion of jewels. She was most arrogant, ordering every one around with a high hand. Her meals were served in her private apartment with extra care; but nothing suited her fastidious taste.

One morning while I was busy hanging pictures in the ladies' parlor, Mrs. Fenton and her children entered. She engaged me in conversation, asking numerous questions concerning the House, the guests, and the city, then ordered me to open a window; close a blind; get her a cool drink, all of which I politely did, although it was not my duty to do so. During this time my attention was particularly drawn to the two children. They appeared to be of the same age, about six years I judged, but wholly unlike in appearance. One was dark, and resembled the woman; the other was fair as a lily, with dark blue eyes and hair like burnished gold which clung in curls about her pretty face and neck. The dark child was richly dressed and hung about the woman, toying with

her jewels. The fair one wore a simple white slip and stood apart with her hands behind her back. When I recovered from the surprise occasioned by observation of the differences between the two my suspicions were aroused and soon confirmed. "You have two beautiful children, Madam," I ventured to remark. "This is my child," and drawing the dark one closer to her said, "Anita dear, let Mother tie your ribbon." "And this little curly head is—" I hesitated seeing the lady did not speak of the other child. —"That's my sla—" that's Dell, I am training her for Anita's maid" "Dell bring Anita's doll" "Now fan yo' Miss Anita, she is so wa'm."

I lingered longer than was necessarary, arranging pictures, bric-a-brac and furniture; at the same time observing, and rapidly coming to definite conclusions. During the next forty-eight hours several secret conferences were held with our allies in the city and our plans were perfected. It was considered wise to wait until Captain Fenton came and to strike the decisive blow on the eve of their departure. Many who saw little Dell doubted that she was a slave and advised us to be extremely cautious.

One day Mrs. B., a wealthy lady from the suburban town of S., was in the city shopping and came, as her custom was, to the House for dinner.

While resting in the parlor, and screened by draperies, she saw Mrs. Fenton and the children come in. Unobserved Mrs. B. noticed the treatment accorded each child by the woman. On the slightest provocation she would fillip Dell and finally struck her in the face with such force as to knock the child down, causing her head to strike a large arm-chair. So indignant was Mrs. B. that she left the parlor, but not without a withering look at Mrs. Fenton. Meeting me on the stairs she related the incident and asked about the inhuman woman. We confided to her our fears, our feelings and our plans concerning the child. She became deeply interested and later proved to be one of our strongest supporters. On leaving the hotel she handed me her card, saying, **"Count on me for anything."**

A week passed and the Captain had not arrived; but something happened that precipitated affairs. It was Saturday morning about ten o'clock. I was passing through the hall on the second floor when I heard a child scream as if in great fear; almost immediately, little Dell dashed out of Mrs. Fenton's apartment with that lady in quick pursuit. With terror-stricken face and wild scream the child ran toward me with her chubby baby arms outstretched. Before she reached me Mrs. Fenton caught her by the hair and with clenched fist pounded her head and face, at the same time exclaiming in an excited tone—"You good for nothing little niggah, I'll show you," and dragged her into the room, slamming and locking the door behind her. I turned to go upstairs, a lump in my throat and my heart filled with anguish, for I thought of my own little girls, when Mrs. Crossan who had been a witness to the scene, beckoned me to come to her private parlor.

"Now Brown," she began as soon as the door was closed, "get that child from that tigress as soon as you can, Captain or no Captain," "I feel like flying at her throat." And Mrs. Crossan walked the floor in great agitation. I needed no urging and before I slept that night all plans were laid to rescue little Dell. Mrs. Fenton was not seen until late next day. The intense heat had driven the guests to the porticoes and ter-

races. Mrs. Crossan found a cool retreat on the river front for Mrs. Fenton and the children. It was a quiet Sabbath evening. Many people promenaded the streets and thronged the bridges which spanned the river seeking a cool breeze and hoping to find respite from heated dwellings.

Mrs. Crossan engaged Mrs. Fenton in earnest conversation. The two little girls mingled with other children who were romping and playing on street and terrace, while sweet voices made music in the Summer air.

Twilight deepened! The lights winked out on street and river and distant hills! And still the children played!

I went out, by a side entrance, to the terrace, and threw handfuls of candy kisses, with which I had filled my pockets, tossing them here and there while the children in high glee scrambled to find them on the lawn. At the same time I contrived to separate little Dell from the others and finally got her around one corner of the House. I gave her candy and drew her attention to a lady, Mrs. B., who held up a large wax doll. "Run Dell," I cried, run get the doll the lady has for you!" I heard Mrs. B's endearing words as she patted the child's curly head. I saw Dell hug the doll to her breast, then they disappeared in a waiting carriage. The horses sprang at the driver's lash and then I heard only the rumbling of wheels over the stony street. I hastily re-entered the House after having been gone exactly **five minutes.** It had all been done so quickly and satisfactory that I could hardly bring myself to believe in its accomplishment.

I immediately sought Mrs. Crossan relative to some household matter. I took good care to keep in sight of Mrs. Fenton until she called the children— "Anita dear—Dell, time to come in." She called the second time. Anita came. Again she called very sharply for Dell, but no reponse. She ran into the street, on the lawn and terrace calling and peering into the children's faces incriminating every one she met saying someone had stolen her little "Niggah." She became hysterical and a physician was called. Consternation reigned!

The Old Monongahela House had witnessed similar scenes, but all feigned surprise and joined in the search for the lost child. Next morning the Captain came. He was very angry and swore a great deal because a slave had slipped through his fingers. Officers were called who scurried here and there looking for a curly headed, blue-eyed child child dressed in pink, aged six, named Dell. The Captain offered large rewards for her discovery, ordered the rivers dragged, and even rode into the mountains with officers who searched a gypsy camp reported to have in their midst a white child who answered to Dell's description, but Dell was not found.

The city papers were full of the mysterious disappearance, but no trace of the lost child could be discovered. Three days later Captain, Mrs. Fenton and Anita departed for the Springs but without their slave girl, little Dell.

Years after the above events had taken place I moved my family to Wilberforce, Ohio, that I might give my children the advantages of a college education. In soliciting funds for the University my itinerary embraced the city of Pittsburgh.

Walking down Penn. Avenue one fine afternoon I came face to face with Mrs. B. We instantly recognized each other. "Ah Mr. Brown," said she as we talked of other days, "are you still up to your old tricks?"

"No madam," I replied. "Thank God there is no need of it today." "The shadow of Slavery has forever passed." "We are all freemen; but tell me, what ever became of little Dell?"

"Well," said she smiling, "Dr. B. and I legally adopted her as our own child." "We changed her name and in a few years all of those unhappy days were effaced." "We reared and educated her. Her beauty, education and charm made her the belle of any society. She married a leading banker of W." They have three beautiful children, live in a palatial home, and she is happy in the love of her husband and her children."

"Ah! Mr. Brown," said she as we parted, "that was a rare bit of work you did that Sabbath evening." As I walked the crowded streets, the world suddenly grew brighter, a song of joy filled my heart. I uttered a prayer of thankfulness that little Dell had been rescued by Providence from the chains of misery, that she had been spared the shame and igominy of a dishonored womanhood which would have been her portion under the cruel system of Slavery.

"JANE"

THE roustabouts gave their final "Ye-ho-o" on the last bale and barrel and ran ashore. The gang plank was "hauled up" and the packet "Diana" slipped from her moorings with the grace of her namesake, out into midstream and steamed down the Ohio River. We were leaving Pittsburgh bound for Cincinnati. It was in the early part of June and the weather was ideal, which drew the passengers to the upper deck. The earth glowed with the colors of civilization; the banks of the river were embellished with the richest grasses and flowers; woodlands and fields blended harmoniously; the birds poured forth their sweetest songs, while flocks and herds were peacefully grazing on the distant hills. Constant music, on deck, filled the air, contributing to the pleasure and gaiety of the light-hearted people.

An unusually large company had booked with us on this trip and among them some very interesting characters, whom I enjoyed watching and studying. Other passengers came aboard when we reached Wheeling, Va. Among them was a group which at once attracted my attention. It consisted of a southern planter, his wife and baby boy. The latter was carried by a dark brown-skinned girl, very slender and very dejected in appearance. She seemed to be about fifteen or sixteen years old. The babe was fretful and cried nearly all the time. The mistress was kind enough but insisted that the girl amuse her little charge to keep him from crying. The poor girl seemed to do her best, crooning, singing and patting him as she kept up a constant walk in the ladies' cabin, until she looked fit to drop from sheer exhaustion.

The stewardess, a kind motherly woman, learned that the girl's name was Jane; that she was a slave from Georgia and an orphan, and that she longed for freedom. The trusty ones on the boat soon came together and decided that if the girl desired freedom they were there to help her obtain it. One day the fine clear weather drew passengers on deck where music and dancing held sway, only Jane, with the crying baby was left in the ladies' cabin.

Under pretext of tacking a strip

of carpet I drew near the girl and in a low voice asked, "Are you a slave?" "Yes," she murmured. "Do you wish to be free?" "O. yes I do,' was the earnest response. "When you get a chance go to the Stewardess and she will tell you what to do." I then hurried away that I might not be seen talking to the girl. We were due at Portsmouth, Ohio next evening and decided upon that point as our place of action. The morning broke clear and bright but all day long we were in a state of nervous tension, hoping, praying that our plans would not fail. We reached Portsmouth while dinner was being served and most of the guests were at the meal. Passing through the ladies' cabin I met the Stewardess with the baby in her arms, who said in a hurried whisper "Jane is in my room dressed as an old woman, all in black, veil over her face." "Get her ashore as quick as possible."

I soon found the girl, but did not recognize her, so complete was her disguise. I passed the "old woman" from the Diana to another boat in port, almost dragged her up the steep bank, placed her in the hands of friends always on the lookout for the unfortunate. Several months later I learned that within a few hours from the time she left the boat, she was on her way to Canada, via the "Underground Railway.'

Hastening back to the Diana I helped to load the freight with feverish anxiety and felt greatly relieved when the bell rang and we were once more on the broad breast of the river. The guests lingered at dinner; and we had gone several miles before the mistress came to see about the infant. The Stewardess was drowsily swaying to and fro with the sleeping babe on her bosom. Nearby stood the piano upon which lay Jane's bonnet and shawl. "Where's Jane?" asked the mistress. "She was here a short time ago and asked me to hold the baby," was the reply. "The little dear and I both fell fast asleep," she chuckled, "He's sound asleep' "Now; ain't he good." said the woman failing to mention, however, the drops of paregoric baby had taken with his bottle. "Yes, he is good," said the proud mother "And that's just what I tell Jane." "If she would hold him right and have patience he would be the best baby in the world." And so they sat chatting about the baby's good points, till the stars came out and the boat was ablaze with light and good cheer, and mile after mile was gained between Jane and her owners. "Jane should be here by this time." remarked the mistress. "If you will take the baby, I will send her to you." "There's her bonnet and shawl on the piano," said the Stewardess. Half an hour later she returned, looking greatly worried to tell the mistress that she had looked every where but could not find Jane. "Call my husband," the lady demanded. Soon all was confusion and dismay! Where was Jane! Nearly everyone had seen her "just a moment ago." The Captain ordered the boat searched from stem to stern; from the hold to the hurricane deck, but without the slightest trace of the missing girl.

One passenger declared that just before the lights were on he saw a dark object plunge into the river. "Well," said the people, "that must have been Jane." And so it became current that the girl had leaped overboard and to her death.

"She was always moody and discontented," wept the mistress "and now she has spoiled all my pleasure."

"I shall have to take care of the baby myself, when I had planned such a fine holiday." The lady wept

afresh and was inconsolable. The master pulled hard on his mustache and scowled at every one because he had lost so valuable a piece of property.

Twenty years later I removed my family from Pittsburgh, Pa., to Chatham, Ontario. I purchased a farm four miles from the city and began the erection of a dwelling, barn etc., with the view of permanent location.

One very warm afternoon in August after superintending the work on the farm, I started home taking a short cut through a skirt of woods to the main, or Gravel Road. On the way I passed a neat log cabin, with flowers about the door and vines climbing over the roof.

I knocked at the door and asked the tidy woman who opened it, for a drink from the well nearby. She drew the water by means of the old wellsweep and handed me a gourd full. As I drank she fixed her eyes intently on my face. Thanking her for the cooling draught I turned to leave, but she cried out, "Look here, man, ain't I seen you somewhere?" "Perhaps so madam," I replied. Didn't you help a po' slave girl of'en a boat once?" she asked. It was inindeed none other than the nursemaid Jane now in the land of freedom; married and sitting under her own vine and fig tree with none to molest or make her afraid.

A few years later when fire destroyed my home and a beloved daughter met death in the flames, no friend was so true and faithful, to a bereaved family as the former slave girl Jane rescued from the packet "Diana" on the Ohio River.

THOMAS A. BROWN
At the Age of 75

BURNING OF SHORTER HALL

A few weeks ago the College bell in the tower of Shorter Hall tolled for the passing of Profoessor Thomas H. Jackson, last member of the first Graduating Class, 1870, of Wilberforce University.

Wednesday evening, December seventh, as the students were returning to their dormitories from prayer service, the old bell rang violently. It sounded an alarm of fire, which caused the stoutest heart to quail. From blanched lips the cry came: "Shorter Hall is on fire!" Harking back to the old regime when the west wing housed the boys and the east, the girls—one cried, "the boys' wing is on fire!"

Again the bell pealed out on the frosty air. It was the last time. It rang its own requiem, sounded its own death knell!

In gleeful haste the fire swept to the main, or center building, then to the "girls" wing, and soon the whole structure was one seething mass of flames. Great shafts that shot to the sky, lighting the country round, while trees and shrubs cast shadows strange and weird.

The upper chapel, not used in later years, went down with a crash, while myriads of sparks flew upward and paled the stars. Then, in muffled silence, the old bell fell not in haste, but story by story, as if loth to leave its habitat of many a decade, until it proved its metal. Those who knew have told us that the tower was too small; that the clapper struck on the outside; that the bell never had its proper setting, if so, it would have been heard five miles distant that we had never heard it in its beauty! As we watched the greedy tongues lap casement and ceiling, memory crowded on memory. How often had the old bell tolled for the passing of a loved one! It had rung out with joyous notes on festive occasions.

Its silvery peal will never be forgotten by each proud alumnae as she marched to its music on Graduating Day. How often called the pious and the wayward to the house of God. Helpless and mute we stood as its voices were stilled forever.

The hungry flames leaped from beam to beam, from floor to floor till, with a mighty plunge and roar all went down together. The last to go was the old College Chapel, where so oft we met in song and praise, hallowed by the prayers of the faithful who caught a vision of a greater day. We recalled many of Earth's noblemen who came to that humble chapel—noble in thought, in speech and in deed. They came from great cities and across the seas; from Congress and legislative hall, from Colleges and workshop; the wise and the prudent to give hope and cheer to a struggling people.

But the relentless demon had gorged itself and eaten out the vitals of old Shorter, until the morning after the fire only debris remained. Wire, girders, iron pillars, great beams smouldering as in a dying struggle, all heaped in a tangled mass and only blackened walls, charred wood, great wide-eyed openings with a wonder-stare look down upon you.

Once girls and boys, care free and happy trooped to her classic halls and gazed from those portals

to colorful campus or peaceful cottage that stretched away and beyond.

On the night of the fire from my bedroom window, I saw Shorter Hall as never before. Every door and window was ablaze from the molten mass wthin. It seemed a phantom castle, lighted up to hold a revelry and serve a feast to the gods. How majestic she looked! Ah, the name of Shorter Hall and the good she has done can never die! Founded on prayer and the eternal verities, mighty in deeds, she has been purified by fire.

She has gone! Old Shorter Hall has passed with all her history and her memories—our Alma Mater-Mother! But a newer, brighter day has come!

"The old order changeth, giving place to new, and God fulfills Himself in many ways lest one good custom should corrupt the world." So sang the poet and so sing we.

We will not repine. We will arise and build again. Phoenix like a greater, better equipped hall will arise from these ashes.

Our friends will respond to the need of housing two hundred boys; to the need of recitation rooms; chapel and laboratories, and make of this, a blessing instead of a calamity.

Our loss is great but the hearts of the people are greater.

OUR SONGS OF CAPTIVITY

One morning, so it was told to me, the sweet voice of a woman was heard in the slums of one of our great cities. She sang a simple ballad but the effect was almost magical. The children swarmed out of their dingy homes and surrounded the singer; the steps and porches were crowded by adults; old heads leaned out of windows for several blocks on either side. Faces brightened everywhere. The blacksmith ceased his din and stood with arms akimbo on the sidewalk. The poor sick widow in the near tenement listened and forgot her sorrow and pain. The broad faced wife, whose stolid countenance, hardened by want and contact with vice, paused from her work and as she listened, something touched her heart and she wished she had a penny to give the singer.

The hod carriers halted—the well dressed man was hurrying past that illsorted crowd—but at last stood still and blushed as the beauty of the song stirred his inmost heart.

The music ceased, the listeners turned again to their employment as if refreshed in spirits and quickened to contented thoughts of this old workaday world.

Who among us does not know the softening power of music, especially the human voice. It is like the angel-whisperings of kind words in the hour of trouble. Who can be angry when the voice of love speaks in song? Truly there is power in music. An almost omnipotent power and who can tell us where music is not—we hear it in the sighing of the breeze, we see it in the sparkling river, we hear it in the roar of the ocean's wave and the sweep of the hurricane's wild flight and just now a sweet voice uttered words of music that set our hearts a-glowing—the sun sets the day to singing and God hath made man to sing songs of praise to him throughout all eternity. Music is a God-gift. It dwelleth in the secret

places of the Almighty. God challengeth Job in these words: "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? Or who laid the cornerstone thereof? When the morning star sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"

Music is coeval with man and vocal music preceded instrumental. The first traces of music were dicovered in Egypt where the art was carried to a high degree of perfection. Of Hebrew music little is known except what may be gathered from Holy Writ. Tubal Cain who was only seven in descent from Adam is spoken of as the Father of all such who handle the harp and the organ. No mention is again made of music until 600 years after the Deluge when Laban says to Jacob— "Wherefore didst thou flee away secretly and steal away from me and didst not tell me that I might have thee away with mirth and with songs, with tabret and harps."

The Babylonish Captivity covering sixty three years, proved a mortal blow to the Jewish music. Since the destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem both instrumental and vocal music have been excluded from all Jewish Synagogues, excepting those of the German Jews—as they consider it improper to sing and rejoice before the coming of Messiah.

But Messiah has come and echoing over Judea's plains we hear Angels chanting that Heavenly song—"Glory to God in the Highest, Peace and good will to men on earth." The world needs music. Men are tired of the inharmonious din of toil and trouble; and a few sweet notes bring hours of pleasure to the weary and world-forsaken.

In far off heathen lands comes the wail of the heart-hungry soul feeling for the unknown God. It is cadenced in the voices of Africa's sons and daughters where poetry and music go hand in hand. Those of us who have heard the wonderful South African Choirs and those of our own African Students, recognize in their songs the epic, the heroic, the martial, the comic, the satyric, the dramatic and religious styles. Their poetry is sung or chanted and vocal music is always expressed with words.

The peasant class of every nation has its folks songs. The border feuds gave England her Jacobite songs while Slavery gave us our Captivity songs. Parallel with the Hebrew Race runs the history of our people. Our songs of sorrow may be something of an echo of the songs of the captive children of Israel, when they hanged their harps on the willows and wept by the waters of Babylon, and their songs, if they could have been handed down to us, must have been most beautiful, for the Jews are the first musicians and the first composers of the world. But as song, like poetry, is the outcome of the passions whether of joy or sorrow, all the world over, these wild plaintive hymns— a longing to be away and in the **home** to come, might have some resemblance to those of Jewish races of ages past since both were bound down under the Slaver's heel.

The great war of the Rebellion—the war of retribution—with its stream of human blood, became the Red Sea through which these long suffering ones with aching, trembling limbs, with hearts possessed half with fear and half with hope, so long deferred, passed into the "Promised Land of blessed liberty." Freedom had come. It was not the purpose of man, but the providence of God. Slavery was ended. The great recon-

struction days came on. The first duty was to repair as far as possible its immense devastation made upon the minds of those who had so long been its victims. The freedmen were to be educated and fitted for the enjoyment of their new position.

School houses sprang up as if by magic. Missionary organizations sought to build up the waste places of the South. Among the first of these societies that carried a higher religion and a much needed education was the "American Missionary Association." A number of philanthropic persons from the North gathered into an old government building, formerly used for storage purposes a number of freed children and some grown persons living in and near Nashville, Tennessee and formed a school under the direction of Professor Ogden. This was the beginning of "Fiske University."

As the years passed the number of pupils increased and better facilities for instruction were required. Larger and more permanent biuldings were necessary. Just how these were to be obtained was the problem, until Mr. George L. White, one of the teachers, gave the solution. He had often been struck by the charming melody of the "Slave songs" sung by the children of the school. He believed that these songs so beautiful and heart-touching would fall with delightful novelty upon Northern ears, and conceived the idea of taking a company of students on a concert tour over the country in order to obtain sufficient funds to build a college. A bold idea and apparently visionary, but the sequel proved that it was a most practical one.

In 1871, Mr. White started with his band of singers and at Columbus, Ohio, after a sleepless night named the company the "Jubilee Singers." Thus the Fiske Jubilee Singers were the first to call the attention of the world to the songs so well known to us as the "Jubilee Songs," "Plantation Melodies," or the "Spirituals."

The story of the Jubilee Singers has been likened unto the legend of the daring Argonauts who sailed with Jason on his famous voyage in quest of the Golden Fleece. The story of a little band of emancipated slaves who set out to secure by their singing fabulous sums and finally were enabled to erect two magnificient buildings, Jubilee and Livingstone Halls, for a poor and unknown school, of which they were students, was indeed a wild and seemingly impossible under taking. Like the fire-breathing bulls, or the fierce warriors that sprang from dragon's teeth, these young freed people unaccustomed to travel, met poverty, social prejudices, disappointments and stormy experiences which tested their faith and courage. But on they went moulding sentiment, breaking down prejudice and winning friends. They crossed oceans and seas, visited many lands and were honored by crowned heads, kings and queens, potentates and statesmen. The literati and the critics of the musical world bowed down to the strange sweet melody of these songs born of slavery.

But what are these melodies which so affect the hearer? Judged from a musical standpoint the critic stands completely disarmed in their presence. He must not only recognize their immense power over audiences which include people of the highest culture, but if he be not thoroughly prejudiced he must yield a tribute of admiration on his own part and acknowledge that these songs touch a chord which the most consummate art fails to reach. It was this effect, no doubt, which called forth Longfellow's "The Slave

Singing at Midnight."

Loud he sang the Psalms of David:
He, a Negro, and enslaved,
Sang of Israel's victory,
Sang of Zion, bright and free.

And the voice of his devotion
Filled my soul with strange emotion;
For its tones by turns were glad
Sweetly solemn, wildly sad.

Their origin is remarkable as well as unique. They were never composed after the manner of ordinary music— but sprang into life ready made from the white heat of religious fervor, at campmeetings or Church or in some lone bayou. They are the wail of sorrow-laden hearts—they are the songs given in the night to the weary grief-stricken slave who longed for a home over yonder, seeing no day of delivering on earth. They are the voices telling truly the real condition of the soul. Hear the soul-cry to God—

"O Lord, O my Good Lord,
Keep me from sinking down."

"Deep river, my home is over Jordan,
Deep river I want to cross over into camp ground
Lord, I want to cross over into camp ground"

"Swing Low, Sweet Chariot,
Coming for to carry me home."

They came from no musical cultivation whatever, but from the simple ecstatic utterances of wholly untutored, unlettered minds. One writer says—"There was genius in the melody making power an innate comprehension, a power in expression and love of harmony; and rythm to a degree that is simply intense." How then, coming from such a mass of ignorance and crudities would this music be endurable to the trained ear? The cultivated listener confesses to a new charm and to a power never before felt. How may we account for their remarkable hold upon the hearer? Because, in my humble opinion, these child-like minds, these unfortunates were wrought upon with a heavenly inspiration, and God who hears the cry of the meek and lowly bestowed this gift to quicken the pulse of life and keep them from falling into a state of utter hopelessness. I believe them to be divinely inspired. This fact may explain why they have never been successfully caricatured. They were prayer songs welling up to the Almighty Father for deliverance, holding on with the wrestling faith of Jacob until God snapped their chain asunder and set them free from cruel bondage. Waiting on the carriage box, or caring for the children on the **outside,** the servant listened to the gospel while the master worshipped **within** the temple. That gospel so full, so free, that embraces all mankind, was wafted through open door and window and fell upon the heart of the lowly in mind and found lodgment. When the last light winked out in the great house, when all was shrouded in darkness, a little group of slaves would silently steal away to some lone spot to moan and groan unto God until the moan, the agonizing groan burst into joy—into a shout. **He gave them songs in the nights** "Steal Away to Jesus"— "I'm troubled in mind,"—"If Jesus don't help me I surely will die," ended with

"My Lord's been here
He's blest my soul and gone."

"Rise, shine, Give God the Glory,"—

"Good news, Good news, The Chariot's coming." "There's a great Camp-meeting in the Promised Land."

Music became the nurse of the soul: Thus they were nourished and sang sweetly throughout all the dark and dismal night of slavery. Only death itself could destroy that sympathy with musical sounds that was born with the soul.

The slave was forbidden to read or to write, but every fragment of the Word they heard fell on fertile soil and sprang into life with an accuracy that is astonishing. How curiously wrought, yet how true to scripture are such songs as—"He's the Lily of the Valley,"—"Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel?"—"Then Ten Virgins,"—"Wrestle Jacob,"—"Turn Back Pharoah's Army," and "Go Down Moses, way down in Egypt land"— in the latter song the whole history of the children of Israel is told in twenty-five verses.

Often a song would be composed for the benefit of some recalcitrant or back-sliding sister or brother such as:—

"My Lord's writing all the time
He sees all you do,
He hears all you say,
My Lord's writing all the time."

"You say your Lord has set you free,
Why don't you let your neighbor be;
You say you are aimin' for the Skies,
Why don't you stop your tellin' lies?"

"Everybody talkin' 'bout Heaven Ain't going there."

"Its not my father, nor my mother
But it's me O' Lord,
Standin' in the need of prayer."

One may almost hear the twang of the bagpipes in "The Angels done changed my Name," and it is a coincidence worthy of note that the melodies are written in the same scale as that of the Scottish Music and also that of the Ancient Greeks while the question has been pertinently asked —"May it not be a peculiar language of nature, or a simpler alphabet, than the ordinary diatonic scale, in which the uncultivated mind finds its easiest expression?" All attempts to convert their songs into European music have failed. There is no such other music on earth: It is the only true American music. All other has been imported from the Old World and grafted on the stem of the New. But these are the songs which melt the listener to tears.

No one else can sing them quite so well as Colored people themselves. They are a part of their history. The Jews lost their songs while in Captivity; the former slave has preserved his and may hand them down to posterity. At a great meeting at Tuskegee Institute a young woman sang with a voice clear as a silver bell, rich in color as a golden summer sunset—then hundreds of other voices blended with hers till there was a roll of voices like the surging of the waves. Mr. Andrew Carnegie, an enthusiastic listener, sprang to his feet and declarerd that their singing was the highest triumph of art; and that the nearest approach to it was the singing he had heard in the great Cathedrals of Russia. As these simple heart songs moved him, so they touched the Mother Queen Victoria and millions of hearts around the world. One fair morn as the sun gilded the eastern horizon a little band of singers stood in the most beautiful, the most wonderful tomb of the world, the tomb of the Taj-Mahal at Agra, India and for the first time sweet voices sang those Christian songs in a Mohammedan Temple. An omen of a brighter day for India's millions. I believe they

are destined to live in the hearts of mankind wherever the history of the American slave is told, these simple songs, born of a simple race will be sung to teach a child-like faith in the love and delivering power of an Almighty Father—GOD.

AT THE LAST

We were fellow-travellers. She was an educated woman, full of bright ideas and well versed in the history of the country through which we were passing. Coming to a busy thrifty looking town she said. "This is L—. This town had a tragedy last winter. Have you heard of it? No? Well it is very sad, but holds a wonderful lesson for our young people of today on the value of thrift and temperance."

And this is the story she told me. Phillip Austin, a young American, inherited a small fortune from his uncle, a brewer of Yorkshire, England, who had recently met his death in a railway accident. Austin transferred his wealth to this country and invested it in a chain of saloons, considering that the quickest way to get rich. Plenty of money was what he desired and what he would have, he remarked to a friend. In his home city he equipped and opened a magnificient establishment, named it "The Palace" and became its proprietor. The solid mahogany wood, gold and silver hangings, cut glass decanters, elegant mirrors—made it up-to-date —first-class in every praticular Only the high-toned—the extremely wealthy, declared he, could patronize him and loll on his exquisitely upholstered divans in his private parlors and dens.

And the wealthy came, both men and boys and many a one dated his downfall from the hour he crossed that threshold. He prospered and considered himself a shrewd business man, but scores of widows and orphans knew that Phillip Austin's wealth was built up on their poverty and utter wretchedness. The widow Gray, a sad-eyed little woman, could tell you how her husband died from drunkenness and in a month's time Austin turned her out of doors and claimed her home for drink bills, made by her husband, at his place.

Mrs. Hamilton, a strong-minded, public-spirited woman, denounced him in the clubs and caused his defeat at the polls when he was candidate for Mayor. She openly occosted him, one day, on the street, saying she was sorry for his life and example, and adding, that if he did not suffer, his boy would.

Phillip Austin's wife had died some years before and left to his sole care one child, a son, John Philip or "Jack," as he was familiarly called. Jack was sent to college, finished his college education and then was carefully trained at a Law School for the legal profession. It was prophesied that he would be a shining example in the world, since he exhibited all the ear marks of a successful lawyer and even those of a great judge. On his return home he became the lion of society. Gay, debonair, with a certain winning frankness he soon won all hearts. His luxurious bachelor quarters became a rendezvous for all the smart young men. "It was true his father did not ply a very respectable trade, but the son was in no way responsible for that," said dame Grundy. Designing

Mamas courted his favor. At every social function he was the leading figure. So handsome, so cultured, so entertaining, it was no wonder that his society was constantly sought after. He was the center of attraction. Many a young man envied his dash and verve; and many a maidens' heart beat the quicker when Jack Austin with handsome face and fine form swung into view. He spent with a lavish hand and was easily the "good fellow" of the town. It was suggested that he begin his law practice. "Time enough," was his response, "I have been in school all my life and now I intend to enjoy liberty for a season." The months slipped into a year and the gay rounds of pleasure continued; bright eyes and sweet smiles beguiled his waking hours, and visions of fair faces tantalized his nightly dreams.

Among the pretty young girls of his circle none appealed to Jack so strongly as Margaret or "Meg" Minot. She was an orphan and made her home with a relative, a contractor in fair circumstance with a large family of boys and girls. Meg was a big sister to them, sharing their joys and sorrows. Vivacious, fun-loving and pretty, she was the belle of the town and wooed by every eligible young man who knew her. It was not until Jack came that she gave one serious thought to love and marriage.

From the very first they had unconsciously gravitated toward each other. Finally at an elegant affair in Meg's honor the engagement was announced. An early date was set for the wedding. Jack insisted on great elaborateness and Phillip Austin gave generously of his funds to make it so. Everything that money, art and ingenuity could buy or fashion made the nuptials the most notable event ever witnessed in that community. The handsome bridegroom, the beautiful bride,—her trousseau and costly jewels,—Jack's gift to her was a rope of pearls costing $5000, —were the theme of conversation for many a day. All declared that nothing could excel it; that Meg was a most lucky woman and deserved her good fortune.

The happy couple spent their honeymoon on Jack's yacht "Sylvia" cruising in Southern waters. At the end of three months they returned and occupied their palatial residence, which had been elegantly fitted up during their absence, on one of the fashionable boulevards. Jack opened his law apartments and was pleased at the sign—"John Philip Austin, Attorney at Law." Of course clients did not come as fast as he anticipated, but Jack said he could wait. In the meantime he intended to be happy. Their home became the center of pleasure and gaiety. Meg was a charming hostess, while Jack drew the boys to him as steel to a magnet and held high revel around the convivial bowl. After these nightly orgies Jack's hand was unsteady and his face flushed. His head ached so that he was often compelled to remain in bed the greater part of the following day. Matters had gone on thus for a year. Jack was seldom at his office and it was closed most of the time.

One morning, after vainly trying to sleep off the previous night's debauch, the telephone rang sharply. The message was for Jack to come quickly to the "Palace." His car was hastily ordered and in a short time he was speeding to his father. As he sprang from his car a crowd of men fell apart allowing him to pass. Hurrying through the handsomely appointed bar into a private room, the son beheld a sight which caused him to recoil. At a table upon which were cards, several decanters,

cigar stumps and ashes, indicating a carousal, sat his father bolt up-right —stone dead! His face was ashen, his eyes partly open, and glassy. His hand still grasped a goblet of wine. . "Thundering apoplexy!" said the coroner to the awe-stricken group.

Before the sun set that Summer day a tiny babe, John Philip Jr., lay on Meg's bosom. These two events, to some extent, had a sobering effect on Jack. During the weeks that followed he, with other lawyers, was trying to unravel the tangled estate of Austin, Senior. The knowledge was deferred as long as possible, but after a few months the crash came— Philip Austin had died insolvent.

It was a sweeping loss. All property, all household goods, their valuable jewels, Meg's costly furs and rich wardrobe, must go to satisfy the creditors—they were utterly penniless.

About this time the Call to Arms sounded through the nation. Jack felt his chance had come and hastened to the nearest recruiting station to join the ranks. After examination he was rejected as being "physically unfit." Filled with hurt pride and chagrin Jack secured the post of bookkeeper at a Munitions Factory at L—, the town we passed on the outskirts of which he and Meg lived in a two-room cottage. Reduced from affluence to the direst poverty Meg did her utmost to make the humble place attractive for she tenderly loved her husband, and baby Jack was such a darling, that at times she felt real happiness in her homely surroundings.

One cheerless November evening Meg prepared a tempting meal from her frugal store, threw extra bits of wood on the fire and made the cottage as bright as she could for Jack's coming. She waited, then fell to wondering why he did not come. Something must have gone wrong at the works. After a while she arose, put the baby to bed in his little crib, placed Jack's supper where it would keep warm—then waited with a dull pain at her heart. Meg started at every sound. She seemed so far from human help and sympathy. The town clock struck ten. The wind moaned in the trees outside— the rain beat and splashed against the window-pane. This was the first time she had been left alone so late at night. Just as twelve boomed out she heard footsteps, then a knock at the door—"Jack," "Jack," "Is it you Jack, dear!" "Yesh, it's Jack. "Open the door, can't ye?" As she threw open the door a strange voice said, "I helped Jack home, good night" and a man disappeared in the darkness. Jack staggered into the room and fell to the floor in a crumpled heap. Meg put him to bed as best she could while bitter tears fell thick and fast over her sad young face. Next day Jack was quite repentant, promising to do better. He told Meg that he had lost his position as bookkeeper and was doing menial work at the factory, but would soon have a better job. For several days he came home regularly but the old habit was too strong and, night after night, Meg sat alone into the midnight listening for the unsteady steps of the man she loved. Each day was a terrible realization of her condition. Winter had set in with unusual severity. There were days when Meg, with her babe folded in her arms, remained in bed to keep warm. One by one her few remaining trinkets had gone, until she parted with her last precious gift,—her wedding ring, to buy food and fuel. A neighborly soul called to see if she could help her. "Oh no," cried Meg, "Jack will care for us." "I am looking for him at any moment with wood

and coals and all we need." But Jack had ceased to bring his earnings home; all were spent in the saloon. He was a slave to strong drink. His downfall was rapid and complete. The liquid fire had maddened his brain and deadened his sensibilities until he had become deaf to every call of love or duty. He had become an object of pity. Stripped of each noble quality he seemed to sink to the lowest depths of degradation. All chances of reformation were against him. Already he was engulfed in the maelstrom that yearly drags its tens of thousands into the grave. The brave, the true; the high and low have been victims of the demon intemperance! Widow's tears and orphan's cries are its heritage; broken pledges and blighted hopes its monument. It has but one motto —**"More Victims."**

One cold winter evening Jack went direct from the factory to the saloon where he met his old cronies at the gaming table and drinks flowed freely. At 12:30 the landlord turned Jack, the last of his party, out into the wild night. He started for his wretched home. It was difficult for him to walk steadily. The wide streets were deserted. A lone watcher in an upper sick chamber drew aside the curtains and gazed at the thick, murky clouds and the heavy snow that was falling fast. The night wind sighed dismally. Sharp gusts swept around the corners and went wailing down the street like a lost wraith. A man shuffled on, one step at a time—now halting, now struggling again, falling full length on the snow-covered street. It seemed many minutes ere he regained his feet, then on again battling with the storm. It was Jack fighting to reach his home. The **clock struck two.** And now it is supposed that by the time he reached his gate he was so benumbed, so helpless he could not find the latch. He threw his weight against it in the vain hope that it would give way. No doubt he tried to speak—to make a noise, that would bring assistance but all was silent. There he stood, his body sagged, both arms hanging helplessly over the gate, his heavy locks of hair falling over his forehead, his old battered hat resting on the back of his head, his eyes wide open, looking straight at the door as if expecting some one to come and rescue him from a terrible death. His life had gone out while making an effort to enter the miserable place **called home.**

Thicker and faster fell the snow, covering his hat, his hair and ragged coat.

The whistling wind flapped and twirled the loose patches on his clothes until the bits of cloth were whipped to shreds. Drifts of snow piled higher and higher around that body as if to hide so pitiable an object from the sight of its Creator. Thus they found him!

The snow ceased to fall! The wind moaned and lulled to a whisper. The moon's cold rays shone out from behind a fleeting cloud. Some tall elms stretched their bare arms and cast weird shadows on the trackless street. An owl flapped its wings and hooted in an old sycamore tree by the little bridge that spanned a frozen stream. The watcher in the sick chamber saw all this and vaguely wondered about the man she saw fighting his way through the thick snowdrifts. The storm was spent, but to Jack it mattered not. He was beyond the reach of calm or storm or human aid. Next morning in the gray dawn a traveller saw the lifeless form at the gate, and the open door of the cottage. Hastening within a scene of horror met his gaze.

The snow had drifted into the room forming little piles in the corners, on the bed, on the broken chairs and table. A few dead ashes lay on the open fire place while the wind in the chimney sobbed like a motherless child. Seated on the hearth, leaning against the cold hard mantlepiece—wrapped in an old coverlid sat Meg with a frozen babe in her frozen arms, pressed to her frozen breast! Jack, Meg and the baby sleep in one grave at L—. Over it is a broken column, placed there by the W. C. T. U., on which is carved a wine glass and underneath are these simple words:—

"At The Last"

The engine whistled—"Ah, this is where I get off," said my companion, as each of us brushed a tear from her eye. "I hope I have not spoiled our perfectly lovely day by this sad but true story!" she said in parting. Soon she was lost in the throngs on the platform.

The train rolled on! The shadows lengthened, but my mind wandered back to that lone grave with the broken column.

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