

A MOTHER'S LOVE.

BY FRED. HASTINGS.

CHAPTER I.—THE RUNAWAY.



N the flat rich district to the northward of Weston-super-Mare, sheltered by the craggy rocks of the Swallow Cliffs, close by the broad Severn, stands all that remains of old Woodspring Priory. The Priory was founded by a William de Courtenay, who was descended from one of the murderers of Thomas à Becket. He built it as an act of penance for the sin of his ancestor, and it was afterwards enriched by gifts of land and houses from the "repentant posterity" of all who had taken part in that murder. It belonged to the order of St. Augustine, and the monks had comparative peace until the wilful eighth Henry dissolved the brotherhood and granted the extensive manors to a Sir William Loe. The Priory was transformed into a farmhouse, but the grand square lofty tower was left untouched. It is still in a perfect state, and from its summit is most clearly seen the stretches of the Bleadon and Mendip Hills, and Brean Down, on which are the three mounds, said to cover the graves of the three murderers of Becket. The barn is part of the monastic pile, and still retains its carved oaken roof, while the ivy grown gateway is ornamented with pieces of quaint sculpture, remnants of mediæval handiwork, and which the rough hand of utilitarianism has fortunately spared. Often has the writer enjoyed a trudge or a scamper to this spot,—skirting Worlebury hill, the site of the remarkable Celtic encampment, through the woods, and then past the sweet little village of Kewstoke, with its picturesque church, nestling at the bottom of the hundred steps,—finishing up with a breathing on the broad sands that lie between Kewstoke and Woodspring point. Cosy indeed is the spot which monkish judgment had selected, and on which aristocratic compunction had erected a costly, ornate, and noble pile.

In this semi-abbey and farm, many years ago, a sturdy yeoman lived, named Elijah Parder. He was a hard-working farmer, and a good father. His family consisted of two sons and three daughters. He trained his eldest son Christopher to follow his own occupation of farmer, but the second, Alexander, an active and intelligent youth, was sent to the neighbouring city of Bristol, and apprenticed to a very clever watchmaker in Broadmead. At first the youth liked the business very much, but afterwards, owing to the long hours, the close application, and the harshness of his master,

he hated it exceedingly. He was often scolded for his clumsiness or neglect. This fretted the youth very much. Brought up on a farm, it was a great change to have to work all day long at cleaning such minute machinery as that of a watch. Having one day disobeyed a command of his master, he was severely upbraided for his carelessness. Though deserving the rebuke, yet he would not bear it; passion so worked that he foolishly determined, by way of revenge, to run away. He had often strolled to the harbour on Sunday afternoon, or to Penpole Point, or down to Portishead, where he would stand and gaze over the Severn, seaward, longing to know of the world. He liked to see the ships go forth to sea, and oft wished he had been on board one of them. He knew well the difference between the whalers as they started for the Arctic regions, or the timber ships from America, and sugar laden ships from Barbadoes. He envied even the fisher boys in the large yawls that put out to drag for sprats, mackerel, or herring. He was therefore only following out a long cherished device when he determined to run away from his master. He thought that in order not to lead to his discovery he would tell no one of his intention. It had been better for him to bear with the rebukes, and strive to deserve praise for his skill. But human nature is ever rebellious, not only against men's commands, but God's righteous requirements. If is not, alas! an uncommon thing for a youth, thrown for amusement upon the streets of a strange town, to find companions who will lead him into mischief, and give a tone to his mind anything but desirable. Alexander had a superabundance of energy, and soon came to be foremost in a band of youths who every evening met, and dared each other to sundry tricks such as made them amenable to law, if indeed the police had caught them. One of the boys with whom he associated was the son of a corn merchant, whose offices and granaries were hidden behind large gates. This youth managed to leave one shutter of the granary undone, and so could gain entrance after the place was supposed to be secure for the night. He and the rest would club their pence together and buy, at a low public-house, porter, beer, and tobacco. It was mean of the publican to sell to such youths, but he cared not about the injury inflicted so long as he gained a small increase in pelf.

After indulging in these and other practices Alexander thought he would be glad to get away from Bristol. The sea was the great attraction. Wandering along the dock sides and quays in search of a ship that was likely to sail very soon, he saw a large foreign trader, the "Speculation," laden, and apparently ready for sea. Having stepped on board, he inquired for the captain. One of the sailors went aft, and summoned him from the cabin. On presenting himself the would-be runaway asked if there was need for another hand on board.

"A poor hand you'll make, I fear," said the captain.



WRECKED.

The reply was, "I'll do the best I can, if only you will take me."

The captain was rather prepossessed by the appearance of the youth, and being rather short manned, after a little consideration and bargaining, agreed to take him. Two days after the engagement the ship sailed. Alexander went on board just an hour before she was to start. As he had been sent out on an errand his master did not seek him before the ship was well out at sea. He thought Alexander was a long time absent, and at length set out to seek for him. It is needless to say that his search was useless. It was a great disappointment and loss to him. He had hoped to make a good workman of Alexander in time, but was, alas! disappointed in his good intentions.

Without a "Good-bye" to his father, or a kiss from his mother,—who loved him as only a mother could love,—and without sending them even word that he was gone, he started to see the world and escape from his hated apprenticeship.

The "Speculation" had not been out of port many hours, when along the same dock sides and quays the father and mother of that youth might have been seen, hastening with anxious hearts, and oftentimes tearful eyes, from ship to ship to try and find their beloved son. With sad spirits and dreary forebodings they gave up the vain search. They hoped he would come back soon; but day after day passed without their hopes being realized. Night after night did the mother say to her husband, as she was about to lock the door before retiring to bed, "I cannot bear to lock the door, it seems like shutting the dear boy out. Oh, that we could hear something of him!"

As days lengthened into months, and months into years, the longing to know what had become of him grew more painfully intense. They were not sure that he had gone to sea, they only surmised that he had done so, because they knew he always had a restless disposition, and a desire to know the world. At times they fancied he might have gone up on foot to London,—that dreadful city for youths without protecting care—but they could learn nothing certain. Sometimes they thought that he must have been murdered, or in some way or other died. These thoughts were most distressing, and they banished them as speedily as possible.

CHAPTER II.—A CASTAWAY.

The ship "Speculation" made long voyages, seldom returning to the same port. She never came back to England, so that Alexander Parder had not the opportunity of returning home. Once he sent a newspaper from Australia, with his initials written in one corner, to let his parents know that he was alive. He felt too much ashamed of his rashness, his ingratitude, and of his long

silence, to write a letter. His conduct was indeed very like that of the sinning souls who think that because they have lived long without prayer to their heavenly Father, it is useless to re-commence. The newspaper assured his parents that he was alive, and that he was in a distant country. They wrote at once warm-hearted letters to him, addressing them to the Post Office of the place, the name of which had been stamped upon the newspaper. Alexander, however neglected to call at the Post Office to see if there were any letters for him. His parents waited long, hoping to hear from him again, and at length so great was their anxiety to find him, that when they found their letters were unanswered, they sent the eldest brother Christopher to that place in Australia from whence the newspaper had been sent, to seek his brother. He willingly left business and home to undertake the search. After a tedious voyage he landed in Australia and did his best to find Alexander, but it was useless. After staying two months he set sail for home again, deeply sorrowing because of his failure, and because of the disappointment which he knew his parents would afresh suffer. As Christopher came home, he read everything he could find on board in order to pass away time. When he had exhausted the few volumes that the ship contained, he took to the Bible, perhaps as much for amusement as duty. As he read, he came upon the parable of the "Prodigal Son," and his own useless errand deepened his interest. He had read that "Prince of Parables" before, but it never had so much meaning as now. He thought of how readily his own father had consented to his going to search for Alexander, and began to realise how great was the love of God in sending His only-begotten Son into the world to seek sinners. He thought it at first strange that in the parable the eldest son was not represented as going to look for the prodigal. On further study he saw how the selfish Jews were represented by the elder son, and he felt thankful that, personally, he had been acting the part of the good elder brother in seeking for Alexander. Certainly he deserved praise for his unselfishness, and for his desire to cheer his parents by tidings of their lost son. He had not sinned, and yet he took a greater burden upon him than any that pressed upon Alexander for a time, on account of his thoughtless action. He came also to understand thereby, something of what the Saviour had suffered for him, in taking upon Him his sins, and coming to seek and to save him. When he reached home he not only had peace in Christ, but had learned to understand something of the meaning of Paul in wishing he were "accursed from Christ for his kinsmen."

But let us see how Alexander fared. He met at Hamburgh, in a beer-garden, a sailor whose parents lived at Bristol. This was a sufficient reason for association. Alec hunted about for a ship, and sometimes wished he were at home. At length he and his newly found companion contrived to get

into the same ship, and they sailed to America. They went up the Bay of Fundy as far as Richibucto. The weather was fearfully cold, and often did they both wish themselves home again, especially when hauling at the hard frozen ropes and sails, or standing long time at the wheel. While the ship was being loaded with timber both strove to do a little business on their own account. They bartered away everything possible to the Indians for tobacco. Alexander even parted with his boot-laces for tobacco, and placed it in tins with a thin covering of sugar over them in order to avoid detection by the custom-house officers.

He was intent on gaining some money, even in a way that was very questionable, that he might be able to settle down at home after a time. He began to feel that he had wandered enough. He bought even presents for his mother, of whom of late he had thought a great deal, and whom he hoped soon to see. But how often man purposes, and circumstance dispose in another way.

In the sixth year of Alec's sailor life, when off the west coast of Africa, the ship was, through contrary winds, so driven about that they could make no port. The fresh water on board began to grow short; the men were put on scant allowance. The quantity allowed was gradually diminished, until it was reduced to half-a-pint a day to each man. The men became so weak that they were unable to work the ship. Scurvy broke out, and very few hands were left able to work the ship. To crown their misfortunes a storm arose, which drove them on shore. The masts had been cut away, and the ship, with the violence of the waves, turned upside down ere she went to pieces. A few of the crew managed to get into a boat. Even then a further misfortune overtook them, from the surf the boat capsized, and only two of the crew—Alexander and his old companion—reached the land. Alexander managed to clamber up the rocky sides to a place of safety. Their wretchedness was extreme. Weakened and exhausted, they lay on the beach, waiting for the morning to break. The rain came down in torrents. Dark was the night. They could, however, just discern the broad white streak of foam along the coast, and hear the booming sound of the tumbling waves. They also thought they heard, above the roar of the elements, several times, the piteous cry for help from some of their struggling companions. But no help were they able to render; indeed, before morning the one who had reached the shore with Alec died through cold and exhaustion.

(To be Continued.)

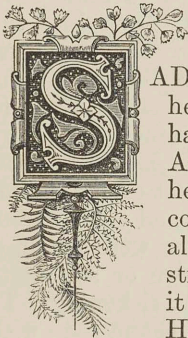
A MAN'S character is like a fence—it cannot be strengthened by mere paint.

THE
MOTHERS' TREASURY.

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CHAPTER III.—ENSLAVED.



AD, indeed were the feelings of the poor survivor, as he looked on the body of his dead companion who had been with him ever since they met at Hamburg. As he realized his lonely position, he almost wished he had died too. Hunger and thirst, however, soon compelled him to put forth some effort. Creeping along the beach under the cliffs, he espied a tiny stream oozing through a cleft rock. Having reached it he drank of its cool waters deeply and thankfully. Having assuaged his thirst, he anxiously looked round for something wherewith to appease his hunger. Bethinking himself of the ship, he glanced along the beach to see if any cask of meal or biscuit had been washed on shore. He was alarmed however to see a number of blacks on the beach. They were looking for whatever valuables might be thrown by the waves on land. His first impulse was to hide himself, but he perceived that one of them had caught sight of him, and was pointing him out to another. To attempt to avoid them he thought, would be useless; and perhaps they might prove friendly. He resolved to go to them. As he approached, they made signs indicative of friendship. How deceptive were those signs! As soon as possible they made him prisoner, and led him up the cliff, where a number of prisoners of war were waiting, under guard. The men who had gone down to the beach, on their return, with a few things they had picked up, moved on towards a place where was laid at anchor, a swift-sailing slaver, ready to take them on board. Alec, faint from battling with the waves, and from hunger, several times sank to the ground during the march. A lash soon roused him. To protest was useless, he could only strive to obey. The writer cannot help here remarking how very strongly the experience of

Alexander in temporal things resembles that of the soul thinking to escape from the bondage of sin. When we begin to seek after good, and the heart turns homewards, the movements of sin, and the strength of evil habits seem to hold with a firmer grip. We understand the meaning of Paul, when he says "Sin revived, and I died." It is not easy to escape from the service of Satan and bondage to the world. In our own strength we could not escape.

Poor Alec, was, during the march, herded with, beaten, and treated like the rest of the slaves. Evil indeed was his case. How he rejoiced when his eyes first fell on an apparently English vessel; but his joy soon turned to grief when he made out her real character. He cherished however a hope that when the Master of the slaver should see that he was a white man, he would set him at liberty. Nor was he entirely disappointed; for, when on board partial liberty was given in that he was permitted to remain on deck and make himself useful, instead of being thrust into the hold of the vessel with her wretched living cargo. Had he been placed there he would have certainly died. Indeed many of the poor blacks did perish in the hell-hold of that vessel, and were dragged out to be thrown overboard, to find as much sympathy from the cold waves and greedy sharks as from the heartless crew of the slaver. The cries for water, at the latter part of the rather long voyage, were most heart-rending. The heat and stench from the hold, where several hundreds of human beings were confined in cramped positions, and never permitted to move or ascend to the deck to get a breath of fresh air, was most sickening. To poor Alec was given any disagreeable work connected with attendance upon them. Ofttimes he felt that he could not perform the tasks appointed, but the hope that he might thereby gain his liberty, led him to strive to do his best to please the brutal captain. Hope is a powerful friend in the dreariest extremities. Had it not been for that hope Alec would doubtless have thrown himself overboard. Once or twice as he leaned at night over the bow of the vessel, watching the phosphorescent waters dashing against her, he felt most strongly tempted to take the plunge. The fear of what might come hereafter alone restrained him. He knew that he was not prepared to die. Conscience pricked him most keenly, when he thought of his past follies, his many sins, and above all, of his neglect of his kind parents, and of the painful anxiety they must have felt on his account. He dared not enter the presence of his Maker by his own act, with these things burdening his soul. Long as he had been away from home and from religious influences he could not banish altogether the impressions made in youth with respect to the need for holiness, pardon and mercy before quitting life.

An out-of-the-way-port in Carolina on the other side the Atlantic was at length reached. The freight of emaciated, diseased, foul

and famished beings was discharged and given over to the custody of slave dealers, who took every precaution to secure their property.

Notwithstanding all the promises of the captain to Alec he was handcuffed and placed with the other slaves. Most earnestly did he beseech the captain to retain him to help to work the vessel, but he was deaf to all his entreaties. The captain had bought him from the slave-traders and so wished to recoup himself.

After being marched long distances and changing hands several times Alec found himself the property of a planter down South. It must be confessed that although he protested constantly that he was not a negro, he had become so dark by exposure, that save from the difference in form and language he looked very much like the rest of the ill-used herd of men. He passed as a half-breed, and his lot was most wretched. Though unable to do as much as the blacks, not less was required of him.

CHAPTER IV.—SEEKING PEACE.

Day after day Alec had to toil in the cotton fields, beneath the sweltering sun. When exhausted, he could not sometimes help sinking on the ground to rest awhile, but the whip and curses of the overseer would soon drive him to work again. He ran away once but the bloodhounds tracked him and brought him back. He was whipped severely for this attempt, and his work made all the more rigorous. He found it was no use to attempt to escape in that way. That someone might find him out and set him free was now his only hope. But as to whence deliverance should come he had no idea. While on this plantation he was made to share the cell of an old negro named Uncle Zack, who had been many years on the estate. This aged man could not read or write but he had been brought to feel the power of divine truth, and a Saviour's love. He and several others had been permitted by his master to go to a gathering on the edge of the plantation where a negro called Uncle Matt often "held forth" in his own quaint way on spiritual matters. He not only spoke on religion, but taught the other poor slaves to sing some of those weird repetitive hymns which have become so well known since as slave melodies. These hymns or chants Alec had heard them humming in the cotton fields, and lightening toil thereby. He could not join in the songs, but he could not help earnestly wishing to be able by their use to throw off the somewhat despondency which oppressed him. One night when he was lying on the mud floor after a most toilsome day, and his back smarting from several lashes which the overseer had given him, he could not help moaning "Oh that God would kill me outright, for I can bear this no longer!" Uncle Zack whispered, "Alec, don't say dat. De Lord don't want kill

you, and 'haps you aint a ready to die. Pray to de good Lord to help bear de sufferins."

"I can't pray," groaned Alec.

"Why can't you honey? You just now prayed to be killed. Why can't you pray to be helped to bear de trials ob dis ere state?"

Alec thought for a few moments, then he groaned "Well I could do that, but the Lord would not hear *me*."

"Why not?"

"I have been such a wicked wretch. Hear me! Absurd! Ah, Zack, you dont know how I have sinned against him before I was made a slave, and it isn't likely he'll hear me now."

"Bruder Alec, you tink dat de good Lord only hear de good people. You tink he only help de people who don't need de blessin. De dear Jesus listen to that wicked tief who hang by his side on Calvary?"

"What thief?"

"Don't you know 'bout him? Den I will tell you." Then Uncle Zack did his best to teach Alexander about the penitent thief, and the latter listened as though it were all new to him. As he listened he was carried back to the days when he went with his father and mother on Sundays, either round by the breezy bay, or over the fields and along the hedged and tree shaded lane, to the beautiful old church of Kewstoke. The rush of home memories made the poor fellow put his face close to the ground and weep like a child. After a time old Zack spoke to him again, and tried to cheer him up, promising also to try and get the overseer to let Alec go with him the next time he went to hear Uncle Matt. Would Alec like to go and hear more about Jesus? Alec thanked him. Zack did not find it an easy task to persuade the overseer to let Alec go. The previous efforts to escape had made the overseer very hard towards him, but Uncle Zack managed to get leave after a time, and the broken-hearted Englishman was led by this pious old negro to the creek where Uncle Matt preached to the oppressed. Alec was prepared to listen to the preaching negro, and he was surprised at the way in which Uncle Matt seemed just to adapt his words to his need. He spoke of the children of Israel who would not listen to Moses by reason of their bondage, of how that bondage was like the service of the world and Satan, of how the more we strive to get away from Satan and sin, the more he tightens his hold, of how Jesus was stronger than the devil. Old Matt went on to liken Christ to Moses. He was at home here. The story of the deliverance of the Israelites was always dear to the poor Southern slaves. At once in the middle of his sermon or talk old Matt broke out lustily his face all glowing with intense excitement, "Go down Moses, tell Ole Pharoah let my people go." Then he restrained himself and spoke of how Jesus, like Moses, came to deliver those who

would believe in Him, of how He was sent by God,—of how, just as Moses had despised the glory of Pharaoh's court, Jesus had put aside His glory to come from heaven to save us. Then he again referred to the deliverance from Egypt, and drew a picture of the Israelites going out of that hateful land, and through the Red Sea followed by their enemies. He grew "mighty" eloquent again in describing those on the opposite shore rejoicing in their safety, looking at the dead bodies of their enemies thrown on the beach. Poor Alec was much moved, and bent down to hide the tears of emotion which would steal along his cheeks. As he went away back to his cell with old Zack he felt like a new man. He was humble as a child, and emptied of all self-trust. He began to feel hope with respect to the future, in respect to deliverance from his slavery. Not only so but he had some longing for salvation from sin. It was a dim longing and a faint hope. As often as he could he went with Zack to hear the Moses of their district, and in listening to him he saw gradually ingratitude to his parents, his escape from his apprenticeship, and wanderings in distant lands were only illustrations of how he had treated his heavenly Father, broken away from his law, and followed the sinful desires of his heart. He saw too how helpless he was to deliver himself, and he again began to despair because he had so long neglected God. He felt ashamed to ask for salvation. Some memory of the passage which he had learned when a boy,—“They shall call upon me and I will not answer, I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh,” again plunged him into despair from which old Zack had very great difficulty in drawing him. With respect to his physical and spiritual slavery he saw most clearly how hopeless was his position until someone should come and set him free. He knew too well the selfish spirit of his owner to believe that he would give him his liberty unbought. He found help in thinking of Christ, but he did not see how Christ loved him and gave Himself for him until several months had gone by. Often did old Uncle Matt quote the touching words of St. Paul: “He loved me and gave Himself for me,” and Alec came to have some hope that Christ loved him, but it was still a faint hope. Bitterly did he repent his folly in running away from home. Still he believed, if only he could get free and return, that the father, whose knee he had in childhood climbed, and the mother, whose lips he had so often kissed, would forgive him. When he thought of what pain he must have caused them, he would weep freely. Then he slackened at his work, but the crack of the whip would lead him to hastily dash away his tears, and use his hoe or spade most energetically. Very often did he look around, or bend his view across the fields, and over the swamps, to see if he could discern any signs of an approaching deliverer. None came. Despair was taking possession of him. What! must he live and die with the sound of that

hated whip constantly in his ears? Shall he be to his end the property of another, and have the burial of a dog? No other prospect seemed before him. He now prayed that God would help him. No Bible had he to which he could go for comfort. He oftentimes wished for one, but there was not a copy of the precious book on the whole plantation. A few passages which were impressed on his mind when young, now by the help of Uncles Matthew and Zack came back to him. When he remembered them, they only made him yearn all the more for home. Oh, for some tidings from the "far country" in which his parents dwelt, then he thought that he would be content still to work as a slave, or to die on the cotton field.

(To be Continued.)

MUSIC IN THE HOME.



WE should have as much melody in the home as possible. Let the mother hum tunes, or after tea try and get the children to sing a hymn and chorus. It will brighten the closing hours of day. Longfellow says beautifully, "There is something exceedingly thrilling in the voices of children singing. Though their music be unskilful, yet it finds its way to the heart with wonderful celerity. Voices of cherubs are they, for they breathe of Paradise; clear, liquid tones, that flow from pure lips and innocent hearts, like the sweetest notes of a flute, or the falling of water from a fountain!"

Every family that can possibly obtain a musical instrument seems to think the home establishment incomplete without one, yet how few of our children can draw very much real music out of it when they have it, and still fewer use the instrument nature has endowed every one with for making melody at home. The German children almost invariably sing, and rarely a child can be found who cannot be taught vocal music.

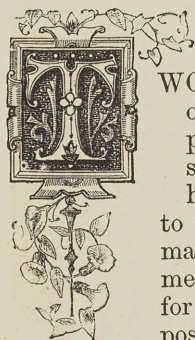
Very few can have exceptional talent, voice or training, yet it is within the reach of almost all to attain to at least mediocre performance in the simpler forms of music, ballads, national airs, or the playing and singing of hymns, and nothing tends more to keeping the children good tempered and sweet natured than to have plenty of music in the family. It is a subject which ought to receive due attention from every father and mother in the land. The hymn at family prayers has often held a child when the scripture reading or the prayers have failed to make an impression, and in after years how many incidents will recall the familiar strains heard in childhood, soothing the perturbed spirit into quietude and peace, or inspiring the conscience to fresh impulses of right action, which, dulled and sluggish by reason of friction with the world, needed just some such inspiration to quicken it

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CHAPTER V.—REDEEMED.



NO further tedious and laborious years passed away on the plantation. See him at the end of that period toiling 'neath the sweltering sun, hard and silently, in the field. A harsh summons falls on his ear. Shouldering his hoe, he hastens timidly to the overseer. "Come with me," says the stern man. Alec follows, wondering whether some punishment for some imputed negligence may not be in store for him. He shudders at the thought of the whipping post. Round to the front of the house he is led.

He sees there a gentleman holding his horse, and chatting kindly to the planter's daughter at the doorway. The planter had just gone within to see what price he gave for Alec. The little girl who was her father's pride and joy, held by the neck a ferocious dog. The child was interested in this stranger, and readily answered some of his queries concerning the white slave.

Alec began to guess as he caught sight of the horseman why he had been called from the field. Some one, he thought, wants to purchase me and the planter will be willing to part with so troublesome a hand as I am. The prospect of merely having a change of masters quite caused a flush of joy. He stood timidly at a distance until the planter reappeared.

"Perhaps this is the one you are seeking," said the planter to the stranger, when he came out and called up Alec.

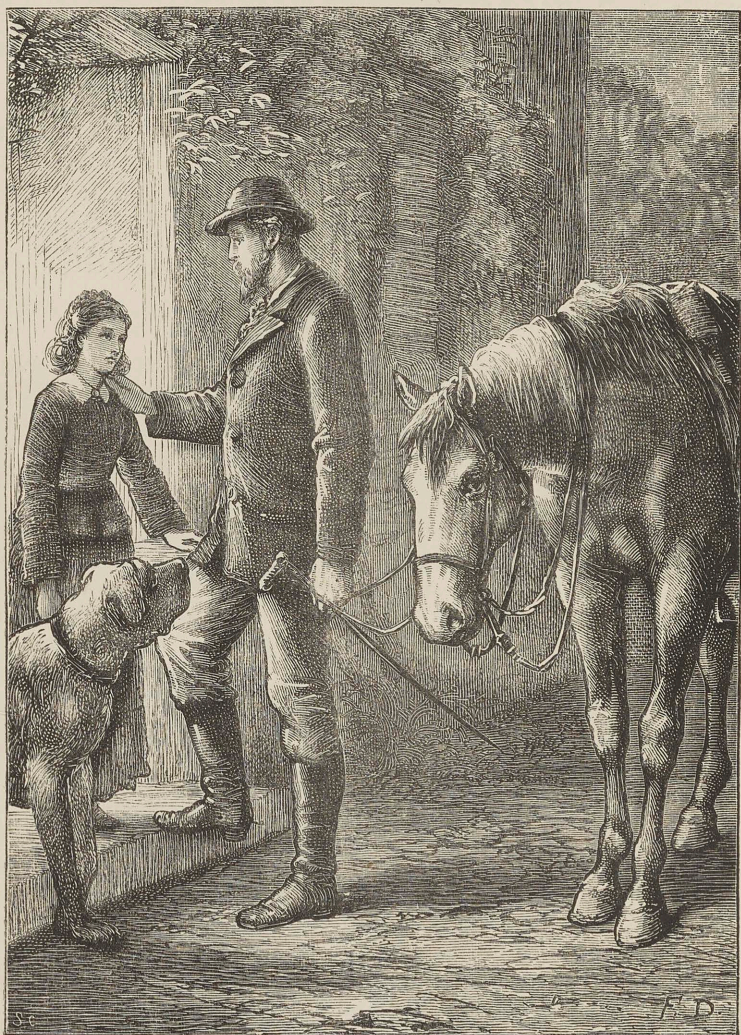
With the bridle of the horse over his arm the stranger goes up to the slave, takes hold of him by the shoulder, and looks most searchingly into his face for several moments.

"You have not always been a slave, have you?"

"No, sir," Alec fearfully replies.

"Are you an African?"

"No, an Englishman."



“And chatting kindly to the planter’s daughter.”

"From what part of England did you come?"

"From Somerset."

"Is not your name Parder?"

"It is, sir."

"Alexander Parder?"

"Yes, sir."

"Thank God! Oh, thank God! Found at last! Do you not know me, Alec?" eagerly asks the stranger.

To hear his name mentioned in that manner melts the heart of the almost despairing man. He recognizes home accents. Surely, he thinks, it must be my elder brother! At length, half fearful lest his senses deceived him, he says, "You are very like my brother Cris., only so much older."

"I am he! Oh, Alec, how I have sought for you! How rejoiced I am to have found you. I can hardly believe it! How glad our dear parents will be to know that I have found you! What a search I have had! In Australia, and at the Cape, and in this great land."

The well-dressed stranger grasps with both his hands those of the slave,—the long lost brother,—bends his head on his shoulder, and weeps tears of joy. Alec, throwing back his head, looks up through moistening eyes to heaven, and says, his lips quivering with intensest emotion, "O God, Thou hast heard my prayer at last! I bless thee." What more he murmured of thankfulness none could catch. Utterance seemed choked, his heart overflowed with joy. "News from a far country" had come at last. More refreshing even than the "cool waters" which, when perishing with thirst, he had found oozing from the rock on the morning after his shipwreck, was the sight of one bringing tidings from a far country.

But before the slave can be given up to his brother, the planter must be reimbursed that which he had given for him. He set a high value upon him. Hitherto Alec had been accounted the most useless slave on the plantation; now, because there is the prospect of a good price being paid for his ransom, he is the best. Exorbitant was the price demanded. Christopher had not nearly enough money with him. He had spent so much in finding Alec that he had but a few English sovereigns to offer. These the slave owner would not accept as sufficient. Cris. told the planter the story of his search, but the hard man saw only now the prospect of making still more by his bargain. Christopher tried to get him to let them leave, promising that he would send the money, but the appeal was useless. One or two ways only out of the difficulty presented themselves. Either Alec must remain until he should send for the money from home, or he must take Alec's place and send him to England. After another attempt to persuade the slave owner to trust them to send the money, Christopher proposed to take Alec's place. The slave owner said

it did not matter to him if he became Alec's substitute, if he only could do as much work as Alec. But Alec protested against this. Moreover, he said, that as he had become accustomed to such severe toil under the burning sun he could better bear its continuance than could his elder brother. But Christopher insisted upon taking Alec's place for a day to try it. The owner consented to this, and Cris. went forth with the gang of slaves to the cotton field. Alec remained in his hut for a short time after Christopher had gone to the field and then he followed him. As he saw Cris. lifting the heavy hoe and toiling hard to keep pace with the others, he could not bear it. He went and forcibly took the hoe from Christopher, and said :

"You shall never bear all this for me, I am not worthy of it, I will rather die than that you should do it."

Christopher had to yield to Alec at least for that day, but the next day, the latter was smitten down with a fever, the result of excitement and exposure. When he could not go forth the owner blamed Christopher for hindering. He offered to do what he could for his brother's lack, and when Alec recovered Christopher would still go down to the field, and keep as near to him as possible, cheering him with the hope that the money would soon come, and they would both go home. Thus for three months did Christopher wait, working at some carpentering to earn the food and shelter he received from the slave owner. He would not go back without Alec. As they at eventide strolled together, Christopher told his long-lost brother how it was he had found him ; of how one day there came to his father's house a rough-looking sailor, who said, that he had something most important to communicate to Mr. Parder concerning his absent son, and how he bargained first for a good sum to reveal his whereabouts. "He told us," said Cris. to the deeply attentive brother, "that he had been one of the crew of a slaver ; that you were captured and sold as a slave ; that while on board you had told him your name and the name of the place where you had lived, that you had been disappointed by the faithless captain ; that he could not help feeling sorry that you, a white man, should be degraded to the position of a black ; that he, having left the slave trade, had made up his mind to try and deliver you ; that he had learnt the name of the dealer who had bought you, and that it would not be difficult to track you. What joy did it cause our dear parents to hear even this of you ! Mother had been gradually sinking, and we feared we should soon lose her, but the 'news from a far country' was like balm to her anxious spirit."

Further, Christopher, continuing his story, told how,—acting upon the clue given by the sailor,—he had gone from one place to another, and from one dealer to another seeking the lost one until he found him. Alec listened to the recital over and over again, asking various details and looking each time with deeper and

deeper love on one who had so faithfully followed him until he had found. His joy at the thought that he had such a brother was so great that he was almost content to die, so long as that brother might sit by his death-bed. He told the other poor slaves, when down at old Matt's hut, of his brother's perseverance, love and faithfulness. Old Matt broke out, "Oh, dat is just like the blessed Lord Christ, who came to seek and save us from death and hell. He paid de debt for us. He holy and no sin in self. We hab de sin. He get de right to set us free. He no leave us for de blood hounds of de devil to track us. He make quite safe. We can do nothing but just trust and lub 'im for all de marcy." Cris. went to the meeting and heard all this, but he was not allowed to speak to them. Being a white man the jealousy of those days would not permit him to talk to the slaves lest he should make them the more dissatisfied with their lot. How he wished he could have bought them all and have given them their freedom. He could not do that, but we may be thankful that Christ the Great Saviour has power to save the whole race of men; he delivers them from the curse of a broken law and hopeless slavery to sin by the sacrifice of himself. There is no limit to the worth of his work and merit of his great sacrifice. He came, not only to seek, but to save the lost.

At last the money which was to redeem Alec arrived. Christopher took it to the slave owner himself. Had he gone away and sent it, that hard hearted man would have kept both slave and money. Christopher would not stir until he had a paper giving him a clear right to his brother as his owner. Had he not taken this precaution Alec might have been seized and sent back as a runaway slave. Alec had to act as a slave until they were both safe on board an English ship, and in passing through the slave states there were many suspicious looks and keen enquiries as to the right of Christopher to take Alec with him. He could not change the slave-garb of Alec at once for more decent clothes. To attempt to purchase them was to provoke enquiry, Christopher obtained it at last and Alec threw off the defiled rags of slavery never to put them on again. Thank God that now the horrible slave system is abolished from one end of the States to the other.

On board the English ship, both felt as safe as if they were already in their loved land. They looked up to the flag overhead with pride and joy, for it was in the third year after abolition of slavery in all the British possessions that they sailed from America.

As the ship came up the Severn to Bristol, Sandpoint was passed. The brothers could clearly see the old square tower of the farm house. Alec begged to be put on shore, but the tide was running fast and the wind favourable, so that it would have been a risk to remain to send the boat ashore. Alec seriously meditated trying to swim to land, but Christopher dissuaded him.

Past Clevedon,—then but a scattered village,—and up the Avon they sailed. As Alec looked at the noble red crags and softly tinted woods that fringe the beautiful winding river, he thought he had never seen anything so romantic and grand. He felt he must almost kiss the very ground, so dear seemed the soil of his own native land after his long absence and slavery.

No railways existed by which to come into Weston at that day, so the brothers took the coach to the nearest possible point and then walked to their home. They passed through Worle and over the flat to the homestead so familiar and dear. There at last is the old house with its ecclesiastical appearance, and the farm, whose curious timbering had been such a charm in his early days. Their father saw them coming over the fields, knew Christopher, and was sure that the one with him was Alec. Without saying a word he hurried off to meet them, and came to them as they arrived at the gate of the field nearest the house. Who shall describe the joy of father and sons, or the further joy when all went inside to meet the mother who had so hopefully waited and fervently prayed for the return of her wandering boy?

Alec's health had been much broken by all his exposure and toils, but under the care of his loving mother, he gained more strength and was able to occupy himself about the farm. He did not neglect his Bible now, but read it eagerly as a revelation of God's love. His experiences when in slavery had prepared him to trust in Christ fully, and when he cast himself entirely on His mercy he realized a peace and joy superior to that he had felt when first found by his faithful brother.

Alec never forgot his obligations to Cris. The two brothers became inseparable. Alec sought only to do that which would please his elder brother. When their father died, the two still kept the farm, supporting their loving mother and cheering her declining days by every means in their power. She was happy beyond expression as she rested in their love.

UNNOTICED WORK.—It has been well remarked that “the greater part of the influence exercised by women on the formation of character necessarily remains unknown. They accomplish their best work in the quiet seclusion of the home and the family, by sustained effort and perseverance in the path of duty. Their greatest triumphs, because private and domestic, are rarely recorded; and it is not often, even in the biographies of distinguished men, that we hear of the share which their mothers have had in the formation of their character, and in giving them a bias towards goodness. Yet are they not on that account without their reward. The influence they have exercised, though unrecorded, lives after them, and goes on propagating itself in consequences for ever.”