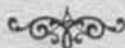


Slavery Days

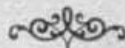
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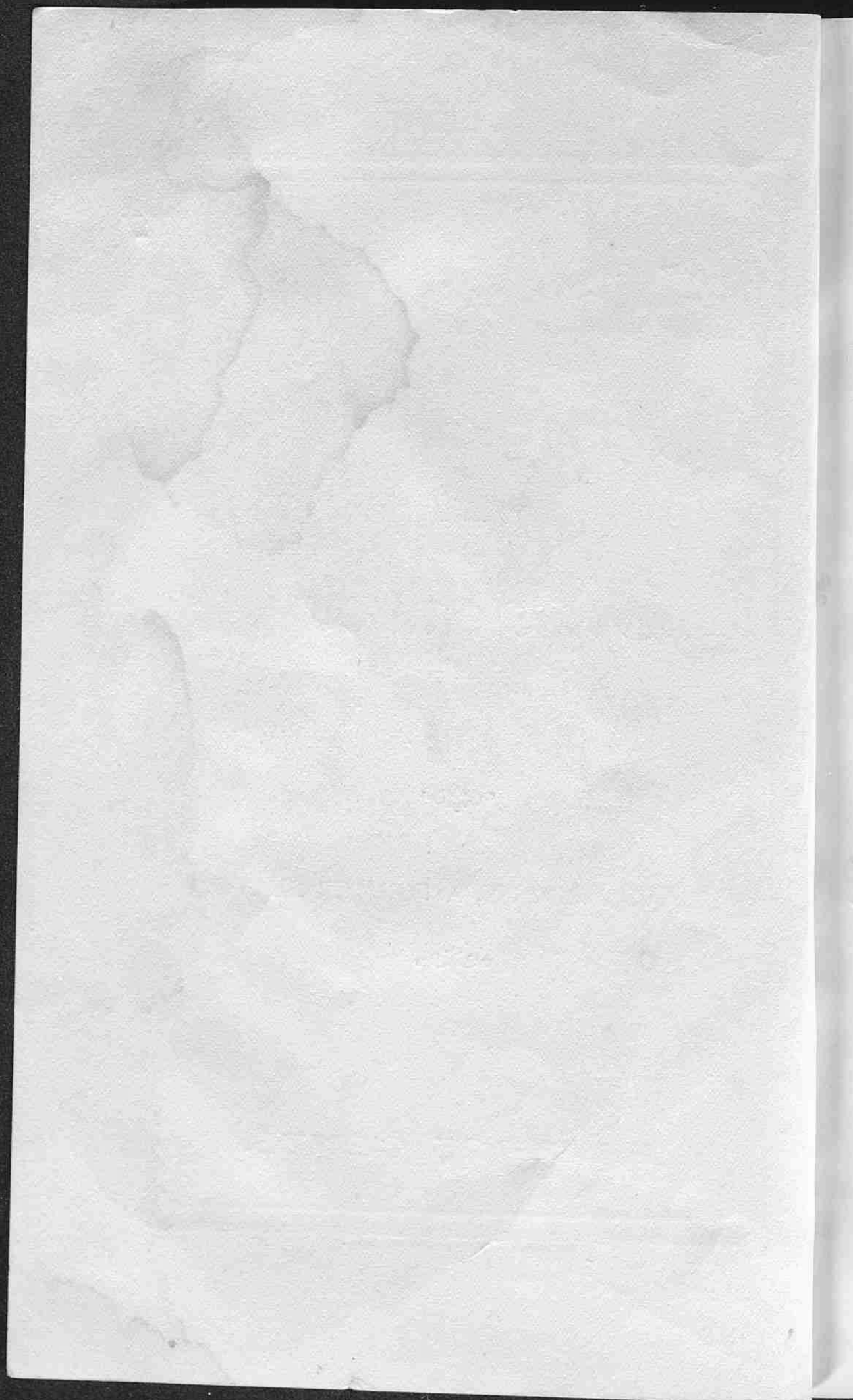


...BY...

ISAAC JOHNSON, A FORMER SLAVE.



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Slavery Days in Old Kentucky.

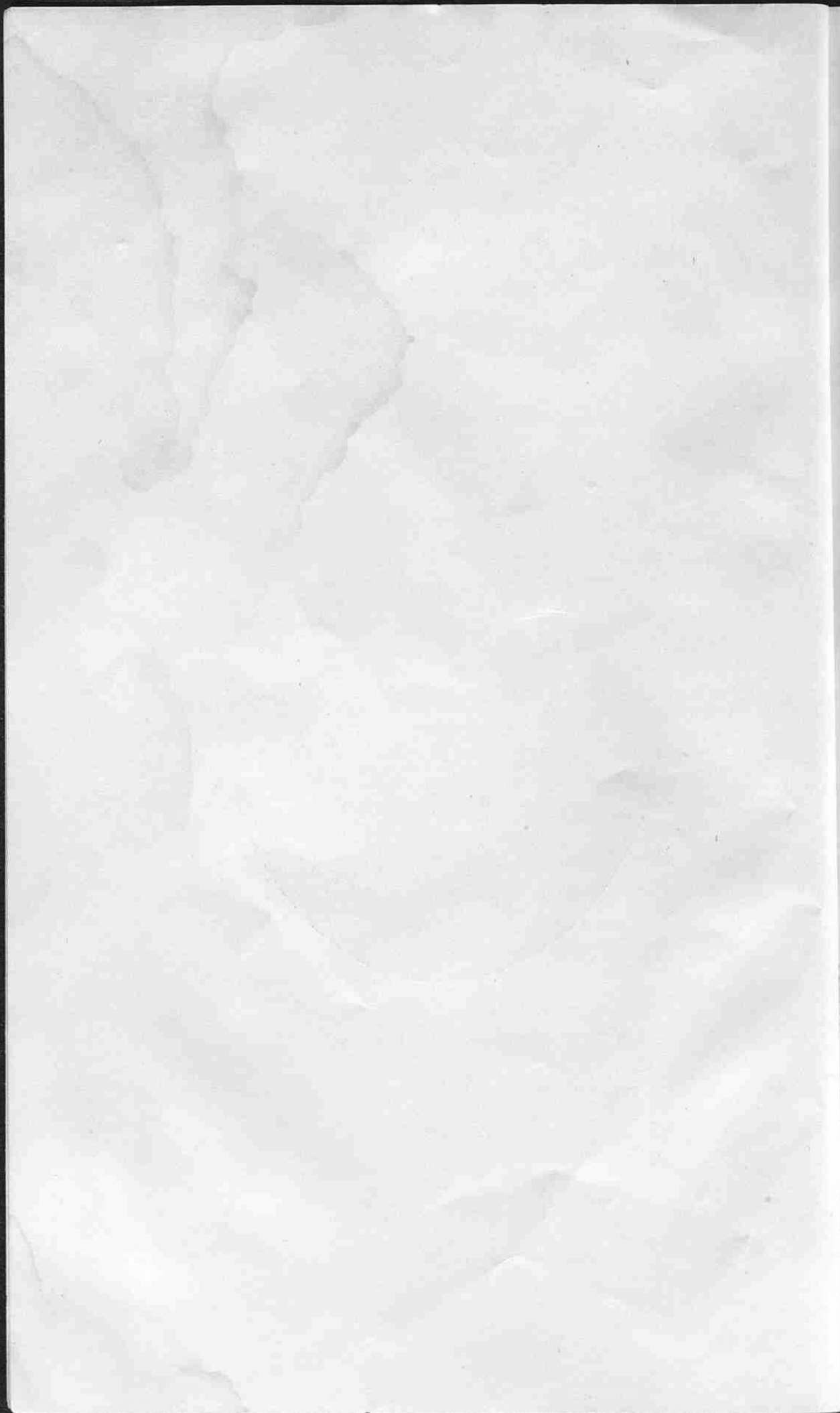


ISAAC JOHNSON

THE AUTHOR, A FORMER SLAVE.

A TRUE STORY OF A FATHER WHO SOLD HIS WIFE AND FOUR CHILDREN.

BY ONE OF THE CHILDREN.

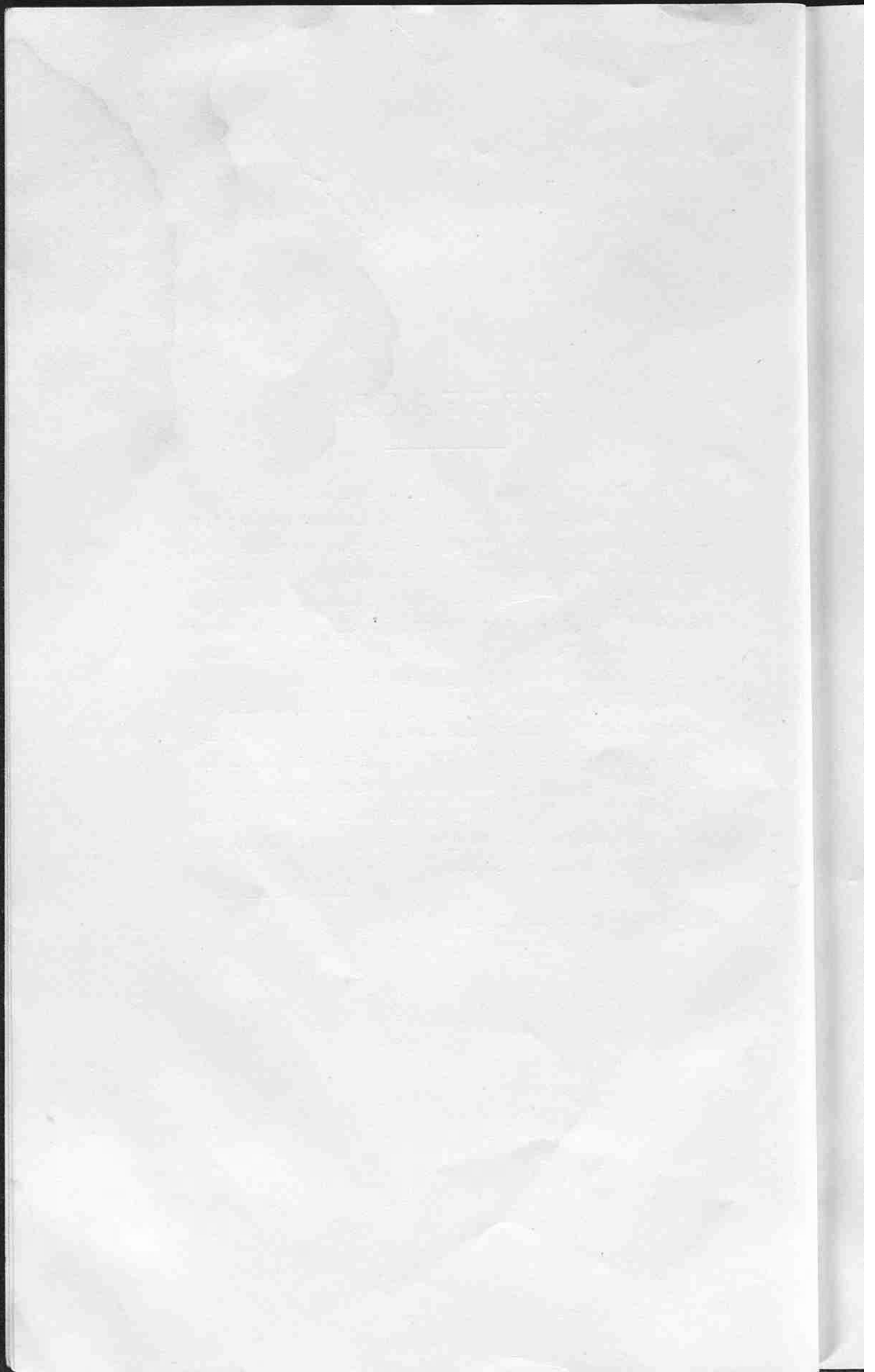


PREFACE.

The present generation knows but little of actual slavery. Attempts are sometimes made to color the Institution to make it appear as though the old days of American slavery were patriarchal days to be desired, to surround the Institution with a glamour as though it possessed great intrinsic merits of value to both races. But we believe that any system of human slavery is always degrading both to the master and the slave. The hardships of my slave life were nothing in comparison with many, and the following pages of my actual experience as a slave are given, not for the purpose of casting reflections upon those who favored the Institution, but to give to the world a knowledge of the subject that no eloquence may ever make the same thing again possible.

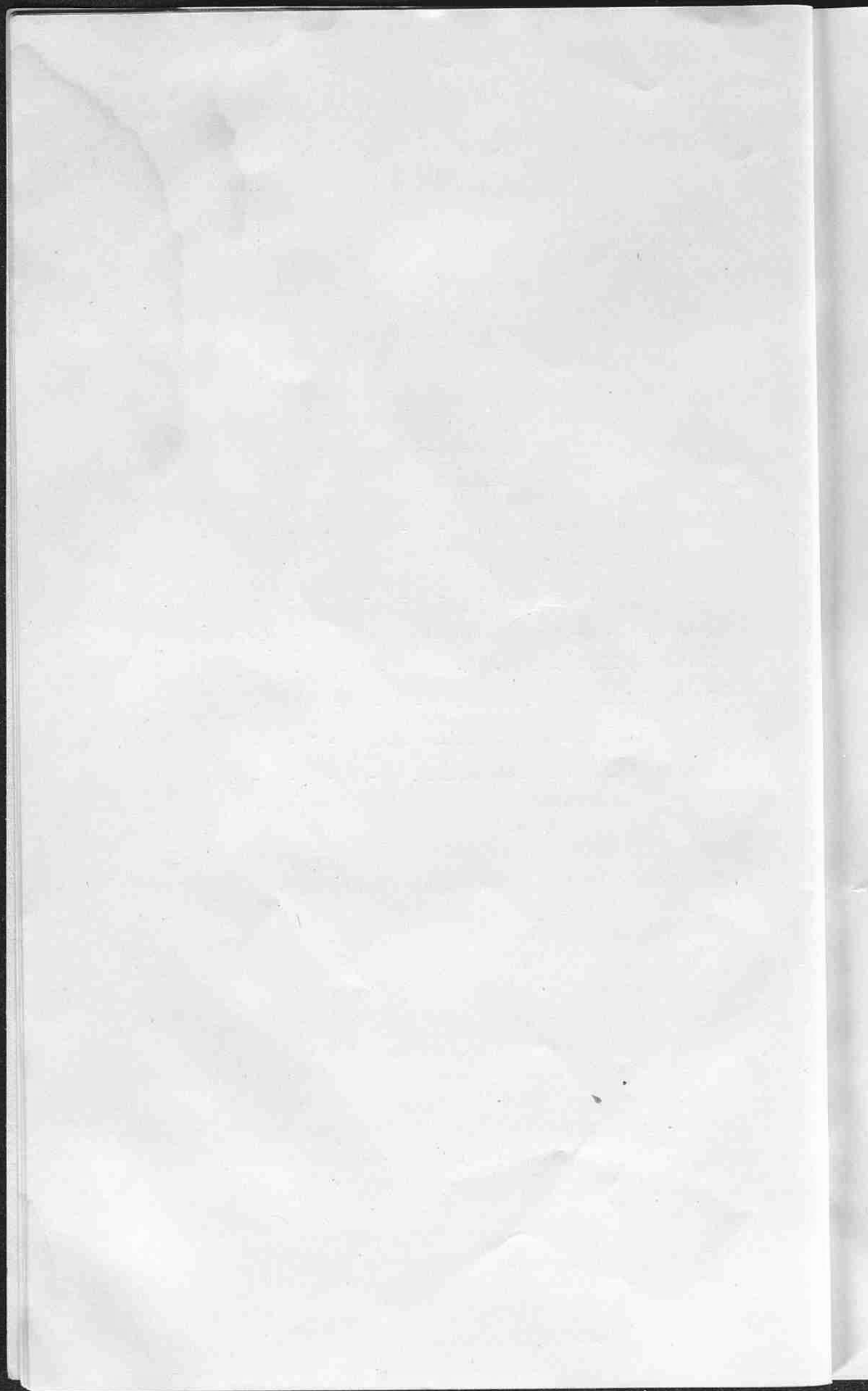
THE AUTHOR.

Dated September, 1901.



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SLAVERY DAYS IN OLD KENTUCKY.

CHAPTER I.

IN THE BEGINNING.

So many people have inquired as to the particulars of my slave life and seemingly listened to the same with interest, that I have concluded to give the story in this form.

I was born in the State of Kentucky in 1844. When I first came to a knowledge of myself I was a child living with my parents on a farm located on the banks of Green river in my native State. The family at that time consisted of my father, Richard Yeager, my mother, Jane, an older brother, Louis, a younger brother, Ambrose, and later on another brother, Eddie. I was next to Louis in age. Here we lived a happy and contented family, and prosperous beyond most of the farmers in that section of the State. For reasons that will appear before the end is reached my sur-name is the maiden name of my mother. As I look back to my boyhood days I can see that my mother was an intelligent woman, considering her station in life, and it is from her, and my paternal uncles in after years, I learned as to my ancestry.

My grandfather was an Irishman, named Griffin Yeager, and his brothers were engaged in the villainous vocation of the Slave Trade. Their business was to steal negroes from Africa or wherever they could

get them and sell them as slaves in the United States. My mother was stolen by these people from the island of Madagascar in the year 1840. She was brought to America and given to my grandfather who concluded she would make a good servant. He gave her the name of Jane and kept her till he died, which was soon after.

By the terms of grandfather's will, Jane was bequeathed to his eldest son Richard, commonly known as Dick Yeager. Dick also received by the will other personal property, and, equipped with cows, sheep, horses and some farming utensils, he took Jane and moved onto the farm referred to on Green river. He used Jane in all respects as a wife and she, in her innocence, supposed she was such. I well remember their little house. It was about twenty feet by sixteen with a nine foot ceiling. It had only one outside door and two windows. The house was divided into two rooms, a kitchen and bed room. A fireplace occupied a part of one end, the foundation being large flat stones on which the cooking was done. Their furniture was limited as well as their cooking utensils, but these were sufficient for their wants, and on the whole it was a happy home. They at first had no neighbors nearer than ten miles. They worked together in harmony, she taking the lead in the house and he in the field, where she often assisted him. The first year they raised such vegetables as they needed but these brought no money. They then commenced raising tobacco and hogs. Their first crop of tobacco brought them \$1600 in cash, but the hogs all died. They were so encouraged by the tobacco crop that they devoted all their energy to this product thereafter, and in time they became the leading tobacco growers. Other people soon came as neighbors, none of whom owned

slaves. The new comers disapproved of and freely talked about Yeager and his manner of living with a slave and raising children by her. This talk resulted in social ostracism of the Yeager family notwithstanding he was more prosperous than any of them. Yeager felt the social cut keenly and concluded to sell out and leave that part of the country. He accordingly advertised his farm and stock for sale. At this time his children were aged as follows: Louis was nine years of age, Isaac (myself) was seven, Ambrose five and Eddie was two. The sale took place. He retained the horses which were taken to the New Orleans market, leaving the family during his absence. Here we remained waiting patiently his return, till about two months thereafter, when the sheriff came and took us all to Bardstown in Nelson county, about two days journey eastward, and here we were placed in the negro pen for the night.

CHAPTER II.

THE AUCTION SALE.

The next morning, to our astonishment, a crowd gathered and took turns examining us. What it all meant we could not imagine till Louis was led out about ten o'clock, placed on the auction block and the auctioneer cried out: "How much do I hear for this nigger?" Allow me to say here, it was only the vulgar and low whites who used the term "nigger," the better classes always spoke of us as negroes or colored folks. The auctioneer continued his cry for bids and Louis was at last sold for eight hundred dollars. By this time we had taken in the situation, and it seemed as though my mother's heart would break. Such

despair I hope I may never again witness. We children knew something terrible was being done, but were not old enough to fully understand.

Then the auctioneer called for Isaac and I was led out, the auctioneer saying, "Time is precious, gentlemen, I must sell them all before night; how much do I hear for this nigger?" We were instructed before hand that we must answer all questions put to us by "Yes, sir," and "No, sir." I was asked if I had ever been whipped, or sick, or had had the toothache, and similar questions to all of which I answered. He then cried for bids. The first bid was four hundred dollars. This was gradually raised until I was struck off for seven hundred dollars, and sold to William Madinglay, who came forward and said: "Come along with me, boy, you belong to me." I said to him: "Let me go and see my mother." He answered me crossly: "Come along with me, I will train you without your mother's help." I was taken one side and chained to a post as though I had been a horse. I remained hitched to this post till late in the afternoon.

The next one sold was Ambrose. I could not see him, but I could hear the auctioneer crying for bids and my little four year old brother was sold for five hundred dollars to William Murphy.

The next to be set up was my mother and our little baby boy Eddie. To the cry for bids no one responded for some time and it looked for awhile that they were to escape being sold. But some one called out: "Put them up separately." Then the cry was: "How much do I hear for the woman without the baby?" The first bid was eight hundred dollars, and this was gradually raised till she was sold for eleven hundred dollars.

The next sale was of Eddie, my little brother whom we all loved so much, he was sold for two hundred dollars, to one John Hunter. Thus, in a very short time, our happy family was scattered, without even the privilege of saying "Good by" to each other, and never again to be seen, at least so far as I was concerned.

CHAPTER III.

MY NEW HOME.

Late in the afternoon my new master put me into a wagon and took me over very rough and hilly roads to his home about five miles distant, on a farm located on the bank of Beech Fork river. We reached this home of William Madinglay about ten o'clock at night. His wife, one child, and Peter, a slave, constituted his family, and I made one more.

On reaching the place, Madinglay called loudly: "Peter!" This individual soon appeared, saying: "Yes, sir, Master!" He was then asked:

"Have you put in feed for the horses?"

"Yes, sir, Master!"

Turning to me he said: "Come along with me."

We went to the kitchen and there we met his wife at the door when she asked: "What have you there, William?"

His answer was: "Oh, I have a little boy here for you."

"Indeed, you have a bright little fellow," she replied.

He then said: "This is one of the Yeager niggers we saw advertised for sale at auction."

"I declare he is not a very dark colored one."

“No, wife, he isn’t, you see he is one of those pumpkin seed niggers from the mountains.”

“Oh Bill! what makes you talk that way? I think he will make a good servant.”

His reply was: “I reckon he will when he gets that black snake around him a couple of times.” (He referred to the raw hide whip.)

“William, I hope he will not need that at all, I don’t think he is as stupid as Peter.”

“Oh well, Margaret, I don’t mind if he is stupid, I can train him, there is nothing like the black snake for stupidity.”

I had never heard such talk before, and I hung my head and began to cry when she said: Oh Bill, don’t scare the boy to death, I think he will be a good boy.

Master then commanded: “Stand up there and straighten up, let your Mistress see what kind of a boy you are, she hasn’t half seen you yet.”

She brought a lamp from the shelf and carefully looked me over, after which she said: “Oh what a nice little lad, and what a nice suit he has on!”

“Oh yes, wife, up on the mountains they don’t know how to work the niggers, but I will teach him how to work. The idea of a nigger with a suit on him like that! Wait till I get a suit on him, I’ll show him how to work.”

She then asked: “What is your name?”

“Isaac,” I answered.

“That’s a nice little name. Take off your hat, put it on the chair and sit down in the corner.”

I took off my hat and coat and looked for a place to hang them, as I had been accustomed to do in our old home, but found none. I laid them on the little bundle I had with me and walked over to the corner of the

fireplace and sat on the floor. Peter came in and Master asked: "Have you got your chores all done?"

"Yes, sir, Master."

"Did you go to the mill to-day?"

"Yes, sir, Master."

"Did you bring a load of meal home!"

"Yes, sir, Master."

"Is there plenty of wood at the still?"

"Yes, sir, Master."

"Do you know if they are going to grind tomorrow?"

"Yes, sir, Master, dey's going to grind tomorrow."

After Master and his wife had eaten their supper, which consisted of mush and milk, she brought us a pan of the same for our supper, after which Master said: "Peter, this is a little nigger who is to help you in your work, he is green, but you must teach him." Mistress then brought an old quilt saying: "This is a quilt for your bed tonight, you and Peter can sleep together, he will show you."

Peter also had an old quilt, we laid one down and took the other for a cover, our bed being the floor.

Oh, what a change! The sight of Peter set me nearly crazy. All he wore was a long tow shirt, a cloth cap and no shoes. It did not take him long to turn in as he had nothing to take off. I took off my shoes, socks, pants and coat, and then looked around to see what he had for a pillow and found he had none, but was curled up like a snake. I sat there for hours thinking of my mother, brothers and father until I was nearly wild with the change that had come, changed from a happy home to be used like a dog, and a pretty mean one at that. I wondered if I should ever see my people again. I little dreamed then what I afterwards learned, that my own father had brought all this change to us, that we were sold by his orders

and the three thousand three hundred dollars we were sold for went into his pockets less the expenses of the sale. He had sold his own flesh and blood. That is what American slavery made possible. That is the "Divine institution" we have heard so much about, the cornerstone of the proposed Confederacy. Is it any wonder the Southerners were defeated with such an incubus around their necks, dragging them down to a condition lower than their slaves, making them human demons! Do you wonder that when freedom came to me I preferred the maiden name of my sainted mother to the name of my father? In my ignorance of the true situation I mourned for him in common with my mother and brothers, and sat through that night bewildered, until tired nature forced me to lie down. I took my little bundle for a pillow, wrapped the quilt about me, not to sleep but rather to dream and wonder what terrible thing had happened to my dear father, as I then thought of him, to bring all this misfortune upon us. I tried to console myself with the thought that there must be some hereafter when we could all meet again sometime. The night wore away at last but I had had no rest. Then I heard the mournful voice of Master calling: "Peter, Peter, are you awake?"

"Yes, sir, Master."

"Make the fire in the kitchen and in here."

"Yes, sir, Master."

"Bring Isaac, the lad, and show him what to do."

"Yes, sir, Master."

"Take him with you to do the chores."

"Yes, sir, Master."

"Peter then told me to bring some water while he split some wood for the Mistress. I asked where I would get the water.

He said: "See dat tree down dare?"

I said "Yes."

He said, "You go to dat tree, when you get dare you see nuther tree uther side dat tree, and when you get dare you'll see little grass uther side dat tree, and uther side dat grass dare is big hole and dat is whare de water is."

I went but failed to find "de big hole," and he upbraided me, saying: "You nice nigger! can't fin dat well when it's bin dare long while, long fore I comed here and you can't fin it!"

He took the pail and showed me the well. After we returned he asked: "Do you tink you can fin dat well now?"

I said, "I thought I could," and he sent me for another pailful while he carried in the wood after which we were to have something to eat.

We went into the house and Mistress asked: "Peter, have you done all the chores?"

"Yes, mam!" said Peter, and we then sat on the floor, Peter in one corner of the fireplace and I in the other; here we sat until Master and Mistress had finished their breakfast when she brought us our mush and milk once more.

Master then came and said, "Peter!"

"Yes, sir, Master."

"Have you finished your breakfast?"

"Yes, sir, Master."

"Go and hitch up the mules and bring them ready to put on the grists for the mill." We obeyed and the mules were loaded with three sacks of corn on each except two that carried only two sacks each, these last were to be ridden and the others were to be led.

CHAPTER IV.

AT HOME WITH MISTRESS.

Master and Peter went with the mules and I was left to help Mistress do the washing. I was pleased with this arrangement as I liked her better than the Master. She, wishing to learn my skill as a washer, gave me first the baby's soiled clothes, these I cleaned to her satisfaction; she then gave me Master's clothes which I also washed and then she gave me her own clothes, all of which pleased her. She then asked if I could iron? I told her I would try. The clothes were dried and brought in and I ironed all of them. She was kind to me and complimented my work saying: "You have done very well, my boy, and now you may sit down and rest."

I sat down, but not to rest. The moment I stopped working a great grief came to me so overpowering I could not conceal my feelings and I began to cry. She asked me kindly: "What is the matter, Isaac?" I told her, "I wanted to see my mamma."

She tried to pacify me by saying: "Don't cry and fret about that, Isaac, you will see your mother again, Master will buy her and the rest of them sometime."

I asked: "Why didn't he buy them when he bought me?"

She replied: "My boy, never mind about that, your mother will be sold again soon and you will be together once more."

I asked: "Who bought her?"

Her reply was: "Never mind who bought her, you must not ask questions about such things, not a question, my word is law."

Soon thereafter Master and Peter returned; on entering the house Master asked: "Well, Margaret, how did you get along with the lad?"

She informed him that I had done nicely and that I was a good little worker. His next inquiry was: "Have you taught him how to talk?"

"No," she replied, "but he'll learn without any trouble."

"That's the next thing he must learn," he said and then he called in a loud commanding tone: "Isaac, come here!"

"All right," I answered.

In an angry voice he said: "All right? is that the way you answer your Master? When I tell you to 'come here' I want you to say, 'Yes, sir, Master,' Now I'll try you once more; Isaac, come here."

I was frightened and again said, "All right."

He was angry. He took up the whip and said: "Isaac, you nigger you, if you don't talk to me as you ought to I shall use this black snake on you. When I call you, you must say, 'yes, sir, Master,' and to your Mistress you must say, 'yes, Madam,' and don't you ever let me hear you say 'all right' to a white man, and when you meet a white man always take off your hat and say 'yes, sir,' or 'no, sir,' and stand to one side till he passes. Remember what I have told you or I shall try the black snake on your back. Now go and help Peter do the chores."

I went, but you can imagine with what a heavy heart. Had it not been for the hope of again seeing my mother and brothers, I would gladly have laid down to die. Why should I be treated in this way; and still this was but the beginning of my new experiences. I helped Peter about the barn, after which we returned to the house for supper. We were allowed only two meals a day and mush and milk were not very lasting. After supper, which was about 5:30 o'clock, Peter and I were sent to the corn crib to shell

corn which was done by beating the ears with sticks very much the shape of hockey clubs. We were required to work at this till about ten o'clock at night during the winter, as long as the corn lasted.

As soon as spring came we were employed in cultivating the land, plowing, sowing, planting and hoeing. During this season of the year new hands were brought in every few days. One of these new hands was called "Jim." A few days later there were among those brought in a woman and her child, she was "Amelia," and her child was called "Lucy."

After the regular work was finished on the farm we were then set to clearing new land. Amelia was the cook and she had been there but a short time when she and the Mistress fell out. Amelia, to get even with the Mistress, put turpentine in the breakfast food, thinking it would poison the family; it didn't, however, but it made us all sick. The next day two men came and took Amelia away and left her child. What became of her we never knew but her child was sent to a neighbor's. In a few days Master purchased another woman to take the place of Amelia, by the name of Anna, and harvesting the various crops commenced.

CHAPTER V.

HIRED OUT.

The harvesting was finally all done and the first day of January, 1853, had arrived. The first of January was the time when local sales and hiring took place. Myself, Jim and Peter were among those to be hired out and we were taken to Bardstown for this purpose. Our services for the year were sold at auction. Jim was sold for the year for \$150, Peter for \$125 and I

was sold for \$100. The cook, Anna, was taken along and sold outright to the slave dealers, and that was the last we knew of her. Peter and Jim were hired by one Miller, a farmer on the Columbia river, and I was hired to one Yates, a store keeper in Hart county. His store was near the Mammoth cave, around which at that time was a wilderness. His family consisted of himself, his wife, two sons, a woman slave and myself. My work was to do the chores about the house and run on errands to the store, which was about a mile distant. I had a fairly easy time here, my hardest work being to carry water from the cave to the house, the distance being about a mile. I had a yoke which laid across my shoulders, at each end were hooks so I could carry two pails at once. To get the water I had to enter the cave and descend about thirty feet. I was always afraid when I entered the cave because people told all manner of stories about it, saying that there were all kinds of devils and animals living in there who just delighted in catching colored people and killing them.

I managed, so far as I could, to go to the cave when the sun was shining bright so that I could see my way clearly to run if a devil appeared. The two sons of the Master were very mischievous, and when they learned how afraid I was they would go each Sunday and build a fire inside the cave and then send me for water. When I entered the cave and saw the fire I was sure it was the devil, and would run screaming at the top of my voice much to their amusement. They would then go back with me and enter the cave, by which time the fire would be out, and they would then accuse me of lying about seeing the devil. This occurred so often that Master became suspicious. He asked why it was the devils only appeared on Sundays.

This I could not explain. He concluded to investigate for himself, and the next Sunday went with me and caught the boys building the fire, and that ended the stories of devils being in the cave and I had no more trouble. I remained at this place till Christmas, when we were given a week's holiday, and on the first of January, 1854, I was sent to my Master's brother, his name was James Madinglay. I remained with him two months. He was the meanest kind of a slave holder. He had two slaves, a girl and a boy. He drank very hard and seldom left his room on account of his being too drunk to do so. He would order the slaves to his room and whip them unmercifully without any cause or provocation. His son was equally as mean as he, he would watch the slaves, and if he saw one idle, only for a moment, he would inform his father and that meant, every time, a severe whipping. We were to husk corn one morning during the husking season, but it rained so very hard that we did not start at once for the crib. For this delay, Master called us all in to be punished. I stood by and saw him whip the other boy severely. I knew my turn would come next, and I started on the run for home as hard as I could run, not stopping till I reached there. Mistress saw me and wished to know my reasons for my appearance. I told her what had taken place and she said it was "all right, stay here till your Master comes home."

I didn't know what Master would say or do, but when he came I told him all about it. He listened quietly till I was through, and then said: "It is all right this time, Isaac, as I have rented my farm for four years and sold you to my brother, John, who lives on the Beech Fork river, about six miles from here; he is not at home now but will be in a few days, so you can 'back' your things and I will take you there in the morning."

I felt very well satisfied with the result and said: "I have nothing to 'back' as all I have is on my back and I can go any time."

The next morning we went to his brother John's farm. There was no one there except the overseer and an old negro woman. The overseer's name was Steward, and he had been engaged to manage what was called "an improved stock farm." In a few days my new Master sent to the farm a fine looking slave girl, an octoroon, she was to take charge as stewardess. Master had won her at a game of poker in St. Louis. This girl he kept for his own use, and she was made Mistress of the stock farm. By stock it will be understood is meant negro slaves.

The stock soon began to arrive, there was a negro with a couple of brood mares, then came Jim and Peter, then two males, then three women, then about the first of April John Madinglay made his appearance with a group of twenty, making thirty slaves all told. There were also brought onto the farm, farming utensils, mules, ten horses, thirty head of cattle, one hundred hogs and fifty sheep. He owned one thousand acres of land, but most of it was covered with brush or bushes. He raised the usual farm products and when these did not require attention we were set to work clearing the land. He had agents out in the country buying slaves and forwarding them to the farm, and soon there were one hundred and twenty slaves on the farm. After harvesting, the surplus negroes were sent to the Southern markets at Grand Gulf, Jackson and Vicksburg, at each of which places he had slave pens.

The time of the removal was kept secret from the slaves, and about ten o'clock the night before, twelve men were sent into the cabins and these hand-cuffed the males. In the morning these were brought out by

twos and fastened to a chain about forty or fifty feet long. The women and children not able to walk were packed into wagons and the line of march commenced, the chained men first, the women able to walk next, and the wagons brought up the rear. A beautiful sight for a country that boasts of its freedom! How the boasted Southern chivalry must have delighted in such sights, delighted in them so greatly they were ready to go to war to preserve the "sacred institution" of human slavery! I have tasted its sacredness and felt that its Divinity is devilish. The line of march was to Nashville where they were placed aboard of boats and taken to the different slave pens.

The pens were divided into groups, women in one, men in another, girls and young boys by themselves. Here the buyers came and examined the stock, feeling of them as men do horses, looking into their mouths and eyes and asked questions as to sickness. Then the sales commenced and were held from November till about the first of March, during which time the agents were scouring the country, picking up new stock and forwarding the same to the market. After the first of March, if there were any unsold, they were taken back to the stock farm to work during the summer and shipped with the next lot ready for market.

The year 1857 was at hand. Fifteen slaves had been left on the farm to do the winter work. These were kept busy husking and shelling corn, taking same to the mill, then to the distillery and made into liquor. That year of 1857 there were from five to six hundred barrels of liquor made and stored in the cellar. Master at this time was about sixty years of age and he married a girl about seventeen. He returned to the farm with his young wife, twelve slaves besides the stewardess, named Rosa, and trouble soon began.

Rosa was well fitted for her position and she had a general oversight of all the slaves. She was an octoroon and had the confidence of Master who trusted her to the utmost.

New slaves were brought in every few days and these were set to work during the summer, clearing land when there was no other work, their hours of labor being from 16 to 18 each day.

The slaves were divided into gangs, and over each gang was a Boss, who was also one of the slaves. At four o'clock each morning, the bell was rung and each Boss had to see that his gang was up and ready to commence the day's work. They marched by gangs to the tables set up under some trees in the yard, where breakfast was served for which one half hour was allowed, after which each Boss marched his gang to the fields or to the kind of work laid out for them. The overseer rode on horse back from one gang to another seeing that all were kept busy. If he saw two or three idle, or talking to each other, if no satisfactory reason could be given, a whipping was sure to follow. At no time were three allowed to talk together unless the overseer was present. At twelve o'clock the gangs were marched to the tables for dinner, and one hour was allowed for dinner and rest, and then they were marched again to their work, where they remained as long as there was daylight to work by, and then they were marched once more to the tables for supper, after which they went to their cabins, each cabin being occupied by from ten to twelve persons, men and women were in separate cabins, except where they were married, and such had cabins by themselves. At ten o'clock the bell was rung when all must go to bed, or at half past ten, when the overseer made his rounds, if any were found up they were taken to the punishment room, and in the morning

Master administered such punishment as he thought best. The punishment was a certain number of lashes from the whip for the first offence and more if the offence was repeated, with the addition of an iron weight tied to their backs for a number of days or weeks according to the Master's pleasure, these weights to be carried during the day while they were at work.

The year of which we are writing, about two hundred slaves were gathered on the stock farm, and in the fall most of them were marched off to the several slave markets in the same manner as before described, fastened to a long chain with the women who could walk following, and the women and children not able to walk in wagons. Of the two hundred, 170 were taken, leaving thirty to run the farm and do the winter work. This lot was taken to Bardstown, thence to Louisville, where they were put aboard of boats rigged with stalls similar to horse stalls into which the slaves were placed and chained until they reached Vicksburg or other places where markets were held.

On this trip Rosa accompanied the Master, and his wife was left on the farm to attend to matters there. His wife was a devout Catholic, and while Master was gone she used to gather the slaves remaining, each morning in her dining room and teach them prayers and some of the younger ones she taught to read. When the Master returned in the spring and learned what she had been doing he was very angry. He had always told his slaves that he was their Lord and Master, and now informed them his wife should not have told them of any other Lord. From Rosa we learned that he lectured his wife for her conduct about as follows: "If you teach them to pray and read they may think they are human beings and we will not be able to keep them as slaves; the more ignorant we

keep them about such things the better slaves they are. The worst slaves we have are those who know the most, they are the ones we have to punish to keep them down. We have here from twenty to two hundred slaves each year, and if they should know as much as we do, where would we be? They would murder us in spite of the law. After this, my dear wife, you must never teach a negro the Lord's prayer, or any other prayer."

After the above there was no more gathering for prayers, and the little prayer book she had distributed among us and the little primers she had given were taken from us by Rosa, she saying: "The Master says you do not need them." Thus we soon lost what little we had learned, except, for some reason, the Lord's prayer, so simple and yet so full of meaning and comfort, was quite generally remembered. It has always seemed to me that there was some Divine help in this. That little prayer increased my wonder why we should be the slaves of the whites, and especially did I wonder in my own case when I thought of the fact that my mother was from the island of Madagascar and her people were never slaves. Why then should I be one?

After Master's lecture to his wife she had no more to do with us and the care of the slaves was turned over to Rosa who was a slave herself, and the Sunday following, Master had us all seated on the ground in the yard and lectured us as follows:

"You must not think hard of me for telling you the truth about yourselves and the Whites. The great God above has made you for the benefit of the White-man, who is your law maker and law giver. Whenever you disobey his commands you must expect punishment. Your duty is in all cases to never raise your

hand against a Whiteman and whenever you meet a Whiteman, no matter who or what he is, you must stop, take off your hat and stand to one side and say, 'Good day, Master,' or 'Good evening,' as the case may be. By doing this you do what is right on your side. You must understand you are just the same as the ox, horse, or mule, made for the use of the Whiteman and for no other purpose. You must do as the Whiteman tells you, if you do not, he will punish you just the same as he would the mule when he breaks him. If you can't break the mule I tell you to kill him and that is the same with you. If you don't do what is right by me, why, my duty is to kill you just as I tell you to kill the mule if he doesn't do what is right. There is no more harm in me killing you than there is in you killing the mule, and I now say to you, if the mule doesn't do what is right—kill him! That is the law that you must go by."

CHAPTER VI.

BOB, THE CANADIAN.

Among the five slaves brought back to the stock farm unsold, was one named Bob who had come from Canada. He was an engineer and had hired on the steamer Louisville at Cincinnati, Ohio, for the round trip. When they reached New Orleans the cargo was sold, and just as the boat was ready to return, the sheriff came aboard and all negroes found who were not owned by a Whiteman were taken to the city jail, advertised for three months as runaway slaves, and if no owner claimed them they were sold to the highest bidder. This is the way Bob became a slave. At that sale of Bob, my master, John Madinglay, was

the purchaser. He took him to Grand Gulf and not being able to sell him there he brought him to the stock farm where he was placed in the hoe gang over which I was boss. My gang consisted of six boys and six girls besides Bob and myself. Bob was a shrewd as well as a powerful man. He was closely watched and not allowed to talk to any of the men, though he could at all times talk to and associate with Rosa and was encouraged to do so. The result was, Bob fell deeply in love with Rosa and talked with her freely. He told her all about his home and life in Canada and proposed that she go there with him. He pictured to her how pleasantly they could live in that land of freedom, where colored people were treated as human beings, and he laid before her all his plans to escape. She apparently consented to his proposals and the time was fixed when they were to start. The stock farm was on the banks of Beech Fork river, and whenever there was a heavy rain this river was swollen to a flood. When this should next occur was the time fixed upon for escape, and I was to go with them, though at first I did not know that Rosa was to go with us.

The flood soon came. I had charge of the skiff and watched eagerly till the water was at its height, when I informed Bob of the situation. I explained to him how we could go over the dams in safety. It was Saturday and I proposed to Bob that we start that night and when evening came I urged Bob to start at once. But Bob said "No!" He was going to take Rosa with him. This was the first I knew of his intentions with reference to Rosa and I told him not to trust her, that she told everything she knew to Master. He refused to start that night, but said he would go next Monday morning as the Master was going away that day and would not return till night.

I told him that would never do and tried to impress him with the fact that Rosa could not be trusted; but he insisted that I leave the matter to him and everything would be all right. I was finally persuaded to do as he said. Monday morning came and I got the horse for Master who said he was going to town and told me to go to the field to my work. On reaching the field I informed Bob Master had gone and there was the skiff. At this point of the river there was an elbow around which the distance was ten miles, while across the land it was only three miles. Bob told me to take the boat around the elbow and he and Rosa would meet me by going across the land. I started. The current was strong and I made the distance in good time, reached the other side but no Bob or Rosa was there. I waited and waited for them for about three hours when I concluded to wait no longer. Bob had explained to me the whole route to be taken to reach Canada and so I started alone. I continued down stream till about seven o'clock in the evening. I was halted during the day three different times by men on the shore who had guns and shot at me. The first shot struck the boat but did not injure it. Soon after I was shot at twice, but neither of them came near me. This gave me courage and I thought: "Fire away! you can't hit me!" Still I pulled harder than ever and soon reached the railroad bridge and passed under without being seen. About half of a mile inland I saw a light which I took for a negro cabin. I was fearfully hungry, having had nothing to eat since morning. I pulled my boat ashore and started for the light. After I had gone two or three hundred yards the light disappeared and I started back to the boat. As I drew near I saw two men armed and they had two dogs with them. I turned and ran for a swamp

near by, the men and dogs following. I managed to keep out of their way for a couple of hours or more. The number of men had increased to ten and I saw there was no chance for me to escape and the longer I tried to evade them the worse it would be for me. I knew the character of the dogs and what I might expect from them if they should reach me before the men were near and I gave myself up. One of the men said he would take me to his house till morning and then return me to master. I was taken to the depot near by, where there were about fifty men armed, all of whom had been hunting for me. Although I was only a poor negro boy, ignorant and without arms, these men were thoroughly armed with guns, knives and dogs as if they were in pursuit of a wild and ferocious animal. I was taken to the house, given some supper, which I was glad to get as I was as hungry as a bear, was given a place to lie down in a corner, the man and his wife were in another corner in the same room, so also were the dogs. He bolted the door, laid his revolver on a table near his bed in which he and his wife slept.

I took in the situation and made up my mind to have that revolver before morning. I laid down determined not to sleep. My day's work, however, had been a hard one, harder even than it would have been in the field on the old stock farm. I had scarcely laid down before I was fast asleep and knew nothing whatever till the man called me in the morning. My disappointment was great. I feared I had lost my last chance for freedom, still I had a little hope left and did not wholly despair. I was given some breakfast and told to split some wood while he hitched the horses. I watched him, sideways, till he entered the barn and as soon as he was out of sight I took to my

heels and ran for the swamp. I must have had a quarter of a mile start before he set the dogs on my track. I heard their loud baying and quickened my speed. If there is anything that will make one almost fly through the air, it is one of those blood hounds on his track, with the knowledge that unless he outstrips them he is liable to be torn in pieces. It is no wonder to me that deer and other animals chased by dogs become so fleet. I have never since heard of such a chase for a deer, but I think of this race of my own, and I must say it has created in me a sympathy for the animal, and I would gladly banish by law, if I could, all such manner of hunting. I reached the swamp pretty well exhausted. Here I hid, and, as luck would have it, the dogs passed on beyond me, baying at every jump. After they had passed I ran for the river and followed it till about four o'clock in the afternoon. If I heard an alarm on one side of the river I swam to the other side and continued my race. I watched for a skiff, not finding one, I concluded to make a raft. I had one about completed and was covering it with brush, in which I hoped to hide from sight of those ashore, when I heard the sound of dogs near by. I did not have time to push off the raft, so I plunged into the water, swam a short distance to a big stump near the shore. The water in this river was almost as black as ink, and an object could not be seen below its surface. I sank in the water, leaving only my nose and mouth above. Here I lay for some time. There were five men on the shore and the dogs were hunting up and down the bank. At last one of the dogs got the scent and started for me with a yelp. The men gathered at once on the bank and, pointing their guns at me, ordered me to swim ashore. I saw there was no further use in my trying to escape and I surrendered.

I was taken to the nearest depot and thence to my Master, who paid fifty dollars for my recovery. I was taken to the garret in his home, handcuffed for the night, and, to make sure I would not escape again, Peter was handcuffed to me. The next morning Peter was released, skackles were placed on my legs, and I remained in this shape till about 10 o'clock, when Master and his brother William, who was his slave agent, came to the garret, took off the skackles, handcuffed my hands behind my back and took me to the punishment room or shanty where I saw Bob lying on a few boards, his throat cut and he was slowly dying in great misery. From him I afterwards learned that about half an hour after I left the field, Master and three slave drivers came to the still house, sent for Bob to come there, which he did, not mistrusting what was before him. As soon as he arrived the four men all pounced upon him like four ravenous wolves upon a lamb. He fought all of them till he was overpowered. They then drove four stakes in the ground and he was tied to these with his back up and the four men took turns lashing him with a raw hide whip, the black snake I have referred to, until his back appeared like a piece of beefsteak pounded. They then took hot coals from the furnace and poured them over his back, after which they took him to the punishment cabin, shackled his feet, chained him to the punishment block and in the night two of them went into the cabin and cut his throat, taking care not to cut the jugular, but cutting just enough so he would die gradually in torture.

Bob's condition was a lesson to the rest of us, and no means were allowed to escape making it an impressive one. He lived in this condition for five days and then his poor soul took its flight to the region where it

is hoped no slave holder will ever have the privilege of exercising his power over human beings.

Talk to me about human slavery being a "Divine institution!" As well tell me the devil is a merciful God. The system not only degraded the slave, but it degraded the master even more. Any man of the South who is a descendant of a slave holder who upheld the system of American slavery, ought to blush with shame for his degraded origin. I have in me the blood of one such, on the side of my father, and to me, my poor black negro mother shines as an angel in comparison to a devil, and, if I could, I would willingly draw from my veins every drop of that white blood that goes pulsing through my body received by way of my father. It is the only stain I have, received from the laws of nature, of which I am ashamed, while on the other hand, I am proud of my negro blood. Poor Bob's skin was black, but his soul was pure and in the great future where, we are taught, we shall be ruled by a just God, what will be Bob's condition in comparison with those who tormented and murdered him? But, the worst of all is, that Rosa, whom Bob loved and trusted, was his betrayer. The white blood in her tainted her so that she was equally as bad as her ancestors. Perhaps, however, there was some excuse for her. She was bright and intelligent beyond most of her people, or even many of the whites, and it may be that she had learned to love her Master and was blinded, by reason of this, to all humanity for another. Had she carried out all that she promised to Bob and started to leave with him and been captured, she would have shared his fate. Perhaps she was not strong enough to fully recognize the enormity of her relations with her Master and maybe she hoped those relations would some day be the means of her own freedom.

As bad as it is we do not wholly condemn when men are cast upon the ocean where sure death is before them unless they have food and then draw cuts to see which one shall die to furnish food for the others. Perhaps she regarded her own condition much like the above and acted as she did to save herself. I do not know. I would like to shield her if I could, but I sometimes fear she was the treacherous being Bob believed and she appeared to be.

Bob was at last dead and then followed his funeral. A box was made into which he was placed, all the slaves were brought to view his remains, a grave was dug, the improvised coffin was loaded into a cart and we all followed him to his burial. After the remains were lowered into the grave Master preached what was called a funeral sermon. The substance of his words were: "This negro, Bob, was a bad man. I paid my money for him and I was his master. You all know that if he had done right as you have done, he would never have been where he is. He cut his own throat and beat me out of my money. You know that I must be obeyed and if you do not obey me I must whip you; but he was so mean that whipping was of no use to him and it would have been better for you and me if his throat had been cut long ago. There isn't one among you but knows I have done right, as he was a mean, mean negro. You must understand there is no Lord or God who has anything to do with any of you, as I alone am your Master, your maker and your law giver, and when you do what I tell you to do you will get along all right."

After Bob's condition had been impressed upon me sufficiently, as they thought, and before Bob had died, at the time they took me to see him, I was again taken to the garret, from there I was taken to a ladder which

stood between the house and the garden. My clothes were taken off and I was strapped to this ladder. Master's wife came forward and said: "Let him tell the whole truth about going away." I don't know, but I think she wished to implicate Rosa. Knowing that Bob was the same as dead and could not be hurt any further, I told them that "I was going to Canada because there I would be a free man." Master then asked: "Who told you that Canada is a country in which you can be free?"

I said: "Bob told me."

He asked how many of the negroes knew about the runaway and I told him, "not one that I know of."

He said: "Don't you know that you are lying to me? Doesn't Rosa know all about it?"

I told him, "No! if I had thought she knew about it I would not have started, because I knew she would tell you."

He asked: "Are you sure none of the other negroes know anything about it?"

I answered, "I am sure, so far as I know."

The Mistress then said: "Isaac, I don't want to see you killed the same as Bob has been; if you will go in the garden and obey my orders I will see that your Master does not hurt you. I want you to never speak to a negro on the place, nor leave the garden without my permission, and when you come to meals come to my dining room and Rosa will serve you and at night you must go to the garret to sleep."

She then spoke to her husband, saying: "Let him go and I will look after him."

I was put in the garden which was surrounded by a high fence, the gate was locked and the key was given to Rosa so that I could not get out without her knowing it.

The above occurred before Bob had died. After I had been in the garden two days, Master and his wife went to visit a neighbor. After they had gone Rosa came to the garden and I asked her to allow me to go and see Bob. She had always been friendly with me and consented, saying, however: "You can go, but do not allow anyone to see you, if you do it will make trouble for me." I went. Bob could talk, but his voice was very weak. It was then he told me the particulars I have related about their treatment of him, and that he had been betrayed by Rosa. He also said: "Isaac, there is just one thing I want to do before I die, and that is to punish Master. I am shackled and chained and can't get three feet from the bed. I want you to bring me a hatchet, ax, or something, and I will be satisfied."

I told him I could not do that as I was watched, but that I would get him the prong of a pitch fork. I went to the garden, got the prong, hid it under my shirt, picked some onions and asked Rosa if I could take the onions to Bob. She consented and I took them to him and left the pitchfork prong which he concealed about his bed and waited for a chance to get even with the Master. But Master was too cautious for him and did not go into the place till Bob had been dead some six hours.

CHAPTER VII.

THE YEARS 1859 AND 1860.

During the year 1859 Master had gathered on the stock farm one hundred and twenty negroes and all but ten were taken away to market. These were taken away in the same manner as others had been and ll

were sold except two who were brought back to the farm in the spring of 1860; and during the summer he gathered about eighty more. After the crops were in and harvested these eighty slaves were taken to market, but in the meantime, Abraham Lincoln, God bless his memory, had been elected president. There was no market for the negroes and they were brought back to the farm in the spring of 1861. The war had commenced by this time and slave property was at a discount and he bought no more.

It was then freely talked among the slaves that we would soon all be free. Next, the Yankee soldiers began to appear in the state and I concluded, "Now is the time to make a break for liberty."

I heard there were troops within two miles and on the following Sunday I started. But I soon found I had made a mistake, as the troops proved to be Confederates from our own state. I was arrested and put into the guard house. The guard house was a large tent with a guard stationed in front. A severe storm came that night and blew down the tent which caused quite a confusion, during which I gave the guard the slip and ran for home which I reached without my absence having been discovered. I remained at home for a year, till one day there was a Michigan regiment's train which came within a mile of the farm.

I was at the mill that day and saw them. I made a bargain with one of the men to go and cook for his captain. That night after my work was done I started and about one o'clock I overtook the train. The guard halted me; I said I was a friend and he told me: "Advance friend and give the countersign." I advanced but I had no countersign when he wished to know what I was doing there that time of night? I told him I had hired with one of the men to come and cook for

his captain. He told me if that was so it was all right and took me to the wagons where we found the man who had hired me. I turned in with him for the rest of the night and in the morning he gave me a breakfast and a new suit of soldier clothes. I drove a team to Lebanon where I met Captain Smith of the Eighth Michigan, captain of Company A., and hired out to him for seven dollars per month, the first money I had ever had a chance to earn and call my own. I was then eighteen years of age. We lay in camp a few weeks and then went to Green river. While at this place I had a letter written to Rosa telling her of my good fortune, but the Master got the letter. He, with a negro driver soon started for the camp. I saw them while I was by a brook washing some clothes for my captain. I mistrusted they were after me and hid near the road where I remained till I saw them go away, when I took the clothes to my tent.

The captain came in and asked: "Isaac, what are you looking so down hearted for?"

I said: "Nothing in particular."

He then said: "Oh yes, Isaac, there is something wrong."

He answered: "I suppose you saw your master?"

I said: "I did, but he didn't see me."

"Well," said he, "your Master has been here after you, he went to the colonel and asked for you. The colonel was indignant and told him he hadn't come here to make himself a blood hound to hunt runaway negroes and then said he would give him just fifteen minutes to get outside of his lines, and your Master started without asking any more questions."

The captain then called me into his tent, gave me a revolver and twenty rounds of cartridges saying: "Take these and protect yourself, that is all we have

to protect ourselves and if any man comes to demand your liberty, shoot him as you would a dog, if you don't, you ought to be a slave."

Oh what a feeling of manhood came to me with those words. I felt myself a man, every inch of me. It was my second taste for freedom, the hiring for wages being the first. I took the revolver and cartridges and made up my mind to follow directions if I should be molested and that I would deserve my freedom. I remained with Captain Smith till his term had expired. He and many of his regiment re-enlisted, they were given a furlough and I accompanied him home to Detroit.

CHAPTER VIII.

FULL MANHOOD AT LAST.

After we got to Detroit, I could look across and see that happy land of Canada, to me a Canaan, of which I had heard so much, for which I had yearned, and of which I had dreamed sleeping and awake. I never step my feet upon Canadian soil, even to this day, without a feeling of love and respect for its people, and God bless you! instinctively comes to my thoughts. I told the captain I thought I should go to Canada where I was sure to be free from all masters. He wished me to stay and return with him to the army. I told him, "No! I shall never return unless I can go as a soldier."

He then informed me they were getting up a colored regiment in that city at that time, and if I desired to fight for myself and my race I had better enlist with that regiment, and I did so in short order.

I accordingly enlisted in Company A., 102nd United States Colored troops and I remained with them till

the war was over. After the close of the war I had a strong desire to return to the old Kentucky home to see my old master and to learn what I could of my own people. I think I also had a desire to see Master in the broken condition I imagined the war must have left him. I started and reached the old stock farm at last where I had seen so much misery. I went to the house and found master was in bed, paralyzed. He had not been out of his bed for six months. I said to myself: "The Lord has answered my prayer and allowed me to live and see him punished who so cruelly tortured and murdered my friend Bob."

Master was apparently glad to see me. He said I was the first to leave him and the first to return. With the old time Southern hospitality he sent to the cellar for something to drink and I was made welcome to the best in his house. I could not help but notice the change. There were two ex-Confederates in the room who did not look upon me very kindly, if I read them aright. Master offered me good wages if I would only return and remain while he lived. I think, perhaps, I may have given him, from prudential motives, some hopes that I would do so. But, I knew him too well to think of it seriously. I found Rosa, who had married one of the Draper colored people across the river. The Drapers were Catholics and were always good to their slaves, never selling one to the slave traders. She was a happy woman in her new relations and her husband was industrious and prosperous. I could not learn anything of my own people, but I saw my father's brothers, who told me some of the things herein related. They had never heard from my father after he caused us to be sold.

Master never left his bed. With all my negro blood and all that I have passed through, I would rather be

in my black skin than in his or my father's. Think of being obliged to associate with men of their stamp, say nothing about being their slave, and the mere thought is repulsive. A man who could sell his own children or who would uphold a system that enabled him to do so—the thought is a horror. My people, for I call only the colored people mine, suffered for centuries, and the only wonder to me is that so many have survived, that they are as intelligent as they are, and as forgiving as they have shown themselves to be.

A race with such natural characteristics comes nearer to the teachings of the great Master than any people of whom I have learned. The manner in which they have used their freedom and treated their former masters appears to me they must have indelibly stamped in their natures the Lord's teachings, wherein He says: "But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven."

To be worthy to be counted one who lives up to the above is my desire, notwithstanding all I have experienced.

In order that my relatives may know where to find me, in case this little pamphlet should fall into their hands, I give my Post Office address:

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