

THE ESCAPE.

Alone by the sounding sea they sat,
He in hisannels white.
She in her gown and her jaunty hat,
Fleecy and fluffy and white.

"I've promised to marry you soon," she said,
"And I mean it, so never fear;
But I wanted to ask if you knew," she said,
"That gowns like these are dear?"

"I mention this gown, because, you see,
It fits me and feels so nice;
If you're a good guesser, my dear, maybe
You'll hit right away on the price."

"Why, certainly, dearest," he laughingly spoke.

"I'm aware that your gowns are not a joke;

And of course getting married is never a joke;

Let us say twenty dollars or so."

She smiled. "Was a pitying smile she gave

"It was ninety-five dollars," quoth she;

And her lover rose as a great, green wave

Came in from the sobbing sea.

"Ninety-five dollars?" he echoed. "Well, well,
Excuse me a moment, my own;

Some one is calling me in the hotel,

But an instant I'll leave you alone."

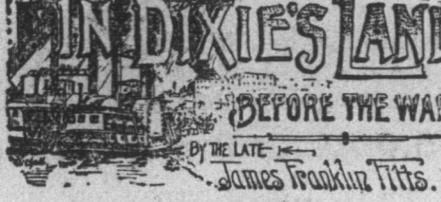
And he sped away, and his bill he paid,

And homeward his footstep set;

And as for the ninety-five dollar maid,

Maybe she's sitting there yet

-Tom Masson, in N. Y. Sun



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CHAPTER XVIII.

SET FREE.

Very affectionately did Mr. Bostock bid me good night. He laid his hand upon my shoulder and spoke and looked kindly.

"This will be your work, Dorr. But for your seeking her and loving her, I might have gone on in the old foolish way, without doing what is necessary to make her what she ought to be. After all, we are often led not by our own choosing. Was it not something more than a whim that led me ten years ago up among the New Hampshire hills to look, for my old schoolmate? Is it not something more than accident or mere human design that brings you here now, to prompt me to do what I should have done long ago, but for my pride? I think so. I surely think so."

I slept but little. Lying awake for hours, I reviewed all the strange events of my life and the story of Mr. Bostock and his family. I closed the retrospect with a triumphant self-satisfaction. Everything was clear now. My way was plain. My path was leading straight to perfected love, to wealth and happiness. I thought of good Mr. Dorion, and resolved, in my last waking moments, that I would write to him on the morrow and tell him all.

I slept light and woke early; so early that nobody was astir in the house. I dressed myself and descended, and presently Le Fevre joined me. He wished to ride over to Thibodeaux, as Mr. Bostock had requested him to do, before the heat of the day began, and he stormed at the negro woman for not having his breakfast ready.

The omelet, the corn bread and coffee were soon prepared, and the overseer asked me to sit down with him. "What's in the wind?" he inquired. "The old man asked me just before he went to bed to go over and get Mr. Coteau, the lawyer."

"I believe he wants some papers made out."

"Will—eh?"

"Like enough."

"O, I see, youngster. You know more'n you want to tell. It's all right, though, if the old man is fixing it so that his rascal of a son will be cut off. Reckon I shouldn't stand much chance with him at the head. But with you and Miss Coral it might be different."

"It certainly would be, Mr. Le Fevre. I'm not telling you anything that is going to happen; but you would be perfectly safe with Miss Bostock and me."

"The Yankee is coming out in you, Mr. Jewett. You are making your harvest with a vengeance. You've been here only a few weeks, and, as near as I can judge, you've captured the handsomest and the richest girl in the whole La Fourche. Well, I congratulate you. Hope there'll be no



I WATCHED HIM AS HE CANTERED OFF.

drawback. Now I'll ride over for the lawyer."

I watched him as he cantered off on the bayou road. Returning into the house I met Coralie at the foot of the stairs. She was so bright, so sweet, so tempting, and the opportunity was so good, that I improved it by taking her in my arms and kissing her.

"I was afraid it wouldn't last till morning, Dorr. When I awoke I feared it was a dream. Is it really true?"

"This seems much like a reality, Coral."

She released herself, and ran part way up the stairs.

"Dorr, I have just thought of something. Let us go up to papa's room together. It would be so nice, after all that happened last night, to go and say good morning both at once."

I agreed. We ascended the stairs

and went along the passage. She knocked lightly at his door.

"Louder; he's asleep."

She knocked again. There was no response. I opened the door and we entered. The room was quite dark. I spoke the name of the occupant; still no reply.

I opened the window and unclosed the shutters. The light fell across the bed. Mr. Bostock lay motionless, his right hand outside the covers, his eyes staring, his jaw fallen.

"He is asleep," she said. "But why does he look so strange?"

I put both arms about her again.

"Be strong, now, my love, and trust in God. Your father is dead!"

CHAPTER XIX.

THE CLOVEN FOOT.

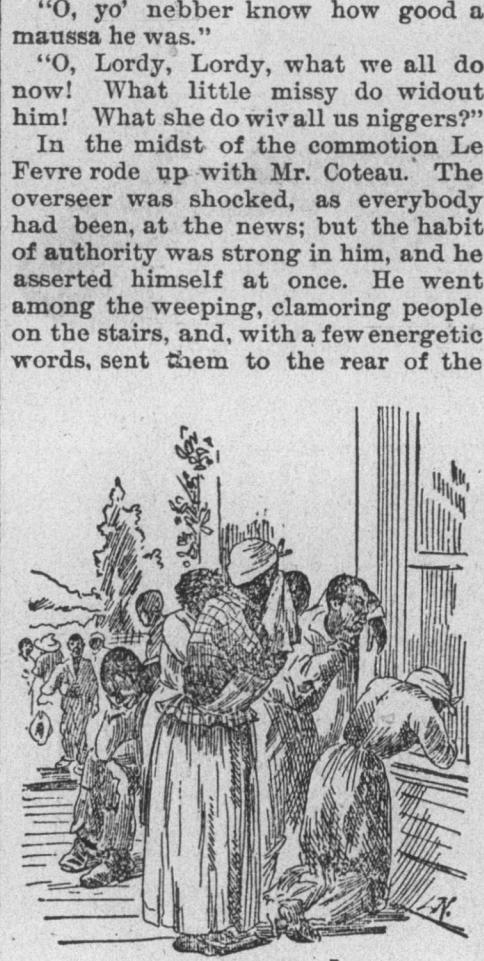
I left her sobbing in her own chamber and sent up one of the women to attend to her. I was half stunned with the suddenness of the blow; the effects likely to follow I had not the courage in that hour to face. They would come soon enough. I broke the news to the house servants and soon had cause to forget my own sorrow and situation in the effort to calm them. The word was carried over to the quarters and the hands came trooping to the house. Never have I seen the strong emotional side of the negro character so displayed. They thronged the verandas, looking into the windows and wringing their hands, groaning and crying with grotesque but genuine grief. The house servants crowded the stairs and gave free vent to their feelings.

I tried to quiet them, but their noise broke out afresh.

"O, yo' nebbey know how good a massa yo' was."

"O, Lordy, Lordy, what we all do now! What little missy do widow him! What she do wiv all us niggers?"

In the midst of the commotion Le Fevre rode up with Mr. Coteau. The overseer was shocked, as everybody had been, at the news; but the habit of authority was strong in him, and he asserted himself at once. He went among the weeping, clamoring people on the stairs, and, with a few energetic words, sent them to the rear of the



ALL DE DARKIES AM A WEEPIN'.

house. The field-hands and their women and children he put to flight summarily to their quarters, bestowing a kick or cuff where he thought that obedience was not ready enough. When this was done he took the lawyer into the house, had his breakfast got for him (for it was still early), and sat and talked with him. When Mr. Coteau had gone Le Fevre came to me.

"We may expect that fellow here right off," he said.

I started. The fear of his coming was shadowing me; but I had not expected it soon.

"Do you mean Conrad Bostock?"

"Yes. I asked Coteau if he remembered that Mr. Bostock had a son when he was here years ago, before he changed his residence. He said he did remember such a person distinctly. That isn't of great importance, but what he added is."

Le Fevre spoke slowly and with an effort.

"He said that he met Conrad Bostock on Dauphin street, New Orleans, two days ago, and, though he had not seen him for years, he recognized him at once. So you see the fellow won't have to depend on unwilling witnesses like you and Miss Coral and myself to establish his rights here; he can get people to identify him."

"What do you think?"

"I don't dare to think what may happen when that brute takes control. I won't talk about it. We'll wait and see. In the meantime I hope some of his gambling friends will quarrel with him at cards and shoot him."

The telegram from La Fourche crossing took the intelligence of the planter's sudden death to New Orleans that morning; it was published in the afternoon papers. The arrangements had been made to have the funeral on the second day after. On the morning of that day Conrad Bostock arrived, accompanied by three men of his own class, ill-looking fellows, whose appearance led me to believe that they were armed. It occurred to me at once that the man had come determined to assert his ownership here with force, if necessary.

He made no display of his intentions before the funeral; he sat quietly with his companions through the sad ceremonies, and walked with the others to the grave. Absorbed in supporting and trying to console poor Coralie, I took little note of him. When the last rites had been performed, and we had returned to the house, I was called from the side of the woman to the parlor. Conrad Bostock was there with his retainers, and the overseer sat stiffly by himself.

"I want you to understand," said Conrad, in a bullying tone, "that my rig's hers will be well cared for. I've got a lawyer down at the crossing that I brought from New Orleans, and he'll come up as soon as necessary. If my father left a will, one of you ought to know it. Did he?"

I looked at Le Fevre.

"Tell him," he muttered.

"We have reason to believe," I said,

"that the late Mr. Bostock did not leave a will."

A gleam of savage joy shone in the man's face. He slapped his knee with his hand.

"Good, by—!" he cried. "I thought there were peculiar reasons why he wouldn't wish to do it; but I couldn't be sure. Well, then, it seems there ain't to be any dispute about my rights. Both of you understand well enough that I am my father's sole heir; there's nobody to contest it with me. I take possession here now. Mr. Le Fevre, a word with you! Something disagreeable occurred in this room not long ago. I think you were to blame; but I don't want to lay up grudges. I want you to remain in charge of the plantation and the people, for awhile, at least, till I can get the hang of things, and put one of these gentlemen in the place. I don't know what you've been getting; I'll double it, while I want you. Is it a bargain?"

"No," was the curt answer. "I leave here to-morrow. I want nothing from you but the balance of two hundred and fifty dollars which is due me from the place."

The new proprietor drew a thick roll of bank notes from his pocket, counted out the sum named, and handed it to Le Fevre, saying: "I want a receipt." The latter took a blank leather-bound book from his breast pocket, wrote the receipt and handed it over.

Conrad Bostock looked inquiringly at the book.

"Have you a list of the people on the place there?"

"Yes."

"I'd like to see it."

Le Fevre cut out several leaves with his knife and gave them to him. He read aloud at the top: "Field hands and children in the quarters, seventy-nine; house servants, thirteen."

"Is this all?" he asked.

"Yes. We've never cultivated the whole plantation in any year; and I was here some years before Mr. Bostock came back."

"H'm, h'm, h'm. Joe—Israel—Jerry, Lucy, Vic, Esther, Prue."

His eye ran rapidly down the list, and he spoke a name here and there. When he came to the end he folded the leaves, put them in his breast pocket and lit a cigar. His companions followed his example, and soon the parlor was filled with smoke. Le Fevre looked at the lounging, loafing figures and then I saw that his gorge was rising. He rose and threw open the windows.

"Do you want anything more of me?" he asked.

"Yes. I want to know how you happened to omit one name from that inventory."

"Nothing is omitted. It is a correct list of the negroes belonging to the place."

"I correct you. The name of Coralie Bonfant, daughter of one Louise Bonfant, who died the slave of my father, is nowhere on these papers."

I started up, almost speechless with passion.

"Coralie was his daughter, you know that?"

The man merely glanced at me; he took no other notice of my interruption.

"That girl is one of the most valuable properties on the place; probably the most valuable. She appears to have been treated rather too much like one of the family; but that was my father's way. Gardette, you saw her at the funeral—the slim girl in black, with the long veil, that this chap here was making some fuss over. What should you say she's worth?"

The man addressed suspended his smoking long enough to give a shrill whistle.

"Why, the devil! You don't mean to tell me that she's your nigger?"

"Just so."

"She's worth twenty-five hundred dollars. She'd bring two thousand at the block any day."

"Stay!" I exclaimed. My voice was hoarse, and I shook with emotion.

"Conrad Bostock, she is of your own blood—your father's daughter. The last evening of his life he gave his consent that I should marry her. He sent for a lawyer to draw her free papers, and to draw a will, leaving her everything. The lawyer arrived here after he had died. Mr. Le Fevre here knows this. Coralie will go with me; he seized her and took her into the cellar, where the body lay concealed.

He then proceeded to have a bath, leaving all his money in charge of the landlady. Tempted by the largeness of the sum, the woman conceived the idea of murdering her lodger and appropriating his property. The young man meanwhile returned from his bath and went to bed, and she, seizing the opportunity, murdered him with a kitchen knife while he slept, and then deposited the corpse in a cellar.

The proprietor of the inn, who was absent while this tragedy was being enacted, returned home on the following day, when his wife informed him of what she had done, and took him into the cellar, where the body lay concealed.

On his way through the town the father had heard of his son's return from America, and, after a close scrutiny, recognized the corpse as that of his own son, notwithstanding his changed appearance after many years' absence. The wretched woman had hardly looked at her visitor, and murdered him, without suspecting who he was.

The unfortunate father, overwhelmed by the horrible discovery, fell down dead on the spot, while the police, who were informed of what had passed, immediately arrested the woman, who is now in prison awaiting trial.

FARMER'S ARCADIA.

Where Fences Are Needless and Mowing Fields Extend to the Turnpike.

You can't see cattle, sheep or hogs running at large in any of the public highways of the Empire state nowadays, says the New York Sun. A few years ago the legislature passed a law prohibiting the pasturing of stock in the public highways of the state, and the people everywhere have liked the law and lived up to it. As a result the residents of many of the villages in the great commonwealth have removed their dooryard fences, and the long stretches of park-like front yards are the most noticeable feature to visitors from other states. The property owners don't need to be on the watch for stray cattle, and their gardens are never overrun by vagrant cows and hogs. Everybody is pleased with the law, and therefore no one breaks it.

"I make you a proposition," he said to the proprietor. "I will give you twenty-five hundred dollars for her."

"No."

"Three thousand dollars."

"No. She is not at present for sale."

"Four thousand dollars!" Le Fevre cried, with an excitement that I had never known him to betray. "Four thousand dollars; every cent I own in the world I will give you for her. She is nothing to you more than her money value; she is everything to Dorr. Considering who and what she is, you ought to be glad to let her go in this way."

The fiend shook his head. I could bear it no longer. With fists clenched and muscles strained, I dashed at him.

Le Fevre restrained me and dragged me from the room.

As the door was closed behind us, I heard a roar of laughter from within.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

A SAFE TEAM.

The Foreman Considered It Thoroughly Reliable.

Mr. Theodore Roosevelt, writing of "Cowboy Land" in the Century Magazine, says that there is nothing more refreshing than the light-hearted belief entertained by the average man that any animal which by main force has been two or three times saddled and ridden, or harnessed and driven, is a "broke horse." Mr