

BROWN WILLIAM WELLS

THE NEGRO IN THE
AMERICAN REBELLION

William Brown

The Negro in The American Rebellion

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The Negro in The American Rebellion His Heroism and His Fidelity

PREFACE

Feeling anxious to preserve for future reference an account of the part which the Negro took in suppressing the Slaveholders' Rebellion, I have been induced to write this work. In doing so, it occurred to me that a sketch of the condition of the race previous to the commencement of the war would not be uninteresting to the reader.

For the information concerning the services which the blacks rendered to the Government in the Revolutionary War, I am indebted to the late George Livermore, Esq., whose "Historical Research" is the ablest work ever published on the early history of the negroes of this country.

In collecting facts connected with the Rebellion, I have availed myself of the most reliable information that could be obtained from newspaper correspondents, as well as from those who were on the battle-field. To officers and privates of several of the colored regiments I am under many obligations for detailed accounts of engagements.

No doubt, errors in fact and in judgment will be discovered, which I shall be ready to acknowledge, and correct in subsequent editions. The work might have been swelled to double its present size; but I did not feel bound to introduce an account of every little skirmish in which colored men were engaged.

I waited patiently, before beginning this work, with the hope that some one more competent would take the subject in hand; but, up to the present, it has not been done, although many books have been written upon the Rebellion.

WILLIAM WELLS BROWN

Cambridgeport, Mass., Jan. 1, 1867.

CHAPTER I – BLACKS IN THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR AND IN 1812

The First Cargo of Slaves landed in the Colonies in 1620. – Slave Representation in Congress. – Opposition to the Slave-Trade. – Crispus Attucks, the First Victim of the Revolutionary War. – Bancroft's Testimony. – Capture of Gen. Prescott. – Colored Men in the War of 1812. – Gen. Andrew Jackson on Negro Soldiers.

I now undertake to write a history of the part which the colored men took in the great American Rebellion. Previous to entering upon that subject, however, I may be pardoned for bringing before the reader the condition of the blacks previous to the breaking out of the war.

The Declaration of American Independence, made July 4, 1776, had scarcely been enunciated, and an organization of the government commenced, ere the people found themselves surrounded by new and trying difficulties, which, for a time, threatened to wreck the ship of state.

The forty-five slaves landed on the banks of the James River, in the colony of Virginia, from the coast of Africa, in 1620, had multiplied to several thousands, and were influencing the political, social, and religious institution's of the country. Brought into the colonies against their will; made the "hewers of wood and the drawers of water;" considered, in the light of law and public opinion, as mere chattels, – things to be bought and sold at the will of the owner; driven to their unrequited toil by unfeeling men, picked for the purpose from the lowest and most degraded of the uneducated whites, whose moral, social, and political degradation, by slavery, was equal to that of the slave, – the condition of the negro was indeed a sad one.

The history of this people, full of sorrow, blood, and tears, is full also of instruction for mankind. God has so ordered it that one class shall not degrade another, without becoming themselves contaminated. So with slavery in America. The institution bred in the master insulting arrogance, deteriorating sloth, pampered the loathsome lust it inflamed, until licentious luxury sapped the strength and rottened the virtue of the slave-owners of the South. Never were the institutions of a people, or the principles of liberty, put to such a severe test as those of the American Republic. The convention to frame the Constitution for the government of the United States had not organized before the slave-masters began to press the claims of their system upon the delegates. They wanted their property represented in the national Congress, and undue guarantees thrown around it; they wanted the African slave-trade made lawful, and their victims returned if they should attempt to escape; they begged that an article might be inserted in the Constitution, making it the duty of the General Government to put down the slaves if they should imitate their masters in striking a blow for freedom. They seemed afraid of the very evil they were clinging so closely to. "Thus conscience doth make cowards of us all."

In all this early difficulty, South Carolina took the lead against humanity, her delegates ever showing themselves the foes of freedom. Both in the Federal Convention to frame the Constitution, and in the State Conventions to ratify the same, it was admitted that the blacks had fought bravely against the British, and in favor of the American Republic; for the fact that a black man (Crispus Attucks) was the first to give his life at the commencement of the Revolution was still fresh in their minds. Eighteen years previous to the breaking out of the war, Attucks was held as a slave by Mr. 'William Brown of Framingham, Mass., and from whom he escaped about that time, taking up his residence in Boston. The Boston Massacre, March 5, 1770, may be regarded as the first act in the great drama of the American Revolution. "From that moment," said Daniel Webster, "we may date the severance of the British Empire." The presence of the British soldiers in King Street excited the patriotic indignation of the people. The whole community was stirred, and sage counsellors were

deliberating and writing and talking about the public grievances. But it was not for “the wise and prudent” to be the first to *act* against the encroachments of arbitrary power. “A motley rabble of saucy boys? negroes and mulattoes, Irish Teagues, and outlandish Jack tars” (as John Adams described them in his pica in defence of the soldiers) could not restrain their emotion, or stop to inquire if what they *must do* was according to the letter of any law. Led by Crispus Attucks, the mulatto slave, and shouting, “The way to get rid of these soldiers is to attack the main guard; strike at the root; this is the nest,” with more valor than discretion, they rushed to King Street, and were fired upon by Capt. Preston’s Company. Crispins Attucks was the first to fall: he and Samuel Gray and Jonas Caldwell were killed on the spot. Samuel Maverick and Patrick Carr were mortally wounded.

The excitement which followed was intense. The bells of the town were rung. An impromptu town meeting was held, and an immense assembly was gathered.

Three days after, on the 8th, a public funeral of the martyrs took place. The shops in Boston were closed; and all the bells of Boston and the neighboring towns were rung. It is said that a greater number of persons assembled on this occasion than were ever before gathered on this continent for a similar purpose. The body of Crispus Attucks, the mulatto slave, had been placed in Faneuil Hall, with that of Caldwell, both being strangers in the city. Maverick was buried from his mother’s house, in Union Street; and Gray from his brother’s, in Royal Exchange Lane. The four hearses formed a junction in King Street; and there the procession marched in columns six deep, with a long file of coaches belonging to the most distinguished citizens, to the Middle Burying-ground, where the four victims were deposited in one grave, over which a stone was placed with this inscription: —

“Long as in Freedom’s cause the wise contend,
Dear to your country shall your fame extend;
While to the world the lettered stone shall tell
Where Caldwell, Attucks, Gray, and Maverick fell.”

The anniversary of this event was publicly commemorated in Boston, by an oration and other exercises, every year until after our national independence was achieved, when the Fourth of July was substituted for the Fifth of March, as the more proper day for a general celebration. Not only was the event commemorated, but the martyrs who then gave up their lives were remembered and honored.

For half a century after the close of the war, the name of Crispus Attucks was honorably mentioned by the most noted men of the country who were not blinded by foolish prejudice. At the battle of Bunker Hill, Peter Salem, a negro, distinguished himself by shooting Major Pitcairn, who, in the midst of the battle, having passed the storm of fire without, mounting the redoubt, and waving his sword, cried to the “rebels” to surrender. The fall of Pitcairn ended the battle in favor of liberty.

A single passage from Mr. Bancroft’s history will give a succinct and clear account of the condition of the army, in respect to colored soldiers, at the time of the battle of Bunker Hill: —

“Nor should history forget to record, that, as in the army at Cambridge, so also in this gallant band, the free negroes of the colony had their representatives. For the right of free negroes to bear arms in the public defence was, at that day, as little disputed in New England as their other rights. They took their place, not in a separate corps, but in the ranks with the white man; and their names may be read on the pension-rolls of the country, side by side with those of other soldiers of the Revolution.” —*Bancroft’s History of the United States*, vol. vii. p. 421.

The capture of Major-Gen. Prescott, of the British army, on the 9th of July, 1777, was an occasion of great joy throughout the country. Prince, the valiant negro who seized that officer, ought always to be remembered with honor for his important service. The exploit was much commended at the time, as its results were highly important; and Col. Barton, very properly, received from Congress the compliment of a sword for his ingenuity and bravery. It seems, however, that it took more than one head to plan and to execute the undertaking. The following account of the capture is historical: —

“They landed about five miles from Newport, and three-quarters of a mile from the house, which they approached cautiously, avoiding the main guard, which was at some distance. *The colonel went foremost, with a stout, active negro close behind him, and another at a small distance: the rest followed so as to be near, but not seen.*

“A single sentinel at the door saw and hailed the colonel: he answered by exclaiming against, and inquiring for, rebel prisoners, but kept slowly advancing. The sentinel again challenged him, and required the countersign. He said he had not the countersign, but amused the sentry by talking about rebel prisoners, and still advancing till he came within reach of the bayonet, which, he presenting, the colonel suddenly struck aside, and seized him. He was immediately secured, and ordered to be silent on pain of instant death. *Meanwhile, the rest of the men surrounding the house, the negro, with his head, at the second stroke, forced a passage into it, and then into the landlord’s apartment. The landlord at first refused to give the necessary intelligence; but, on the prospect of present death, he pointed to the general’s chamber, which being instantly opened by the negro’s head, the colonel, calling the general by name, told him he was a prisoner.*” — *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, Aug. 7, 1777 (in Frank Moore’s “Diary of the American Revolution,” vol. i. p. 468).

There is abundant evidence of the fidelity and bravery of the colored patriots of Rhode Island during the whole war. Before they had been formed into a separate regiment, they had fought valiantly with the white soldiers at Red Bank and elsewhere. Their conduct at the “Battle of” Rhode Island,” on the 29th of August, 1778, entitles them to perpetual honor. That battle has been pronounced by military authorities to have been one of the best-fought battles of the Revolutionary War. Its success was owing, in a great degree, to the good fighting of the negro soldiers. Mr. Arnold, in his “History of Rhode Island,” thus closes his account of it: —

“A third time the enemy, with desperate courage and increased strength, attempted to assail the redoubt, and would have carried it, but for the timely aid of two Continental battalions despatched by Sullivan to support his almost exhausted troops. It was in repelling these furious onsets, that the newly raised black regiment, under Col. Greene, distinguished itself by deeds of desperate valor. Posted behind a thicket in the valley, they three times drove back the Hessians, who charged repeatedly down the hill to dislodge them: and so determined were the enemy in these successive charges, that, the day after the battle, the Hessian colonel, upon whom this duty had devolved, applied to exchange his command, and go to New York, because he dared not lead his regiment again to battle, lest his men should shoot him for having caused them so much loss.” — *Arnold’s History of Rhode Island*, vol. ii. pp. 427, 428.

Three years later, these soldiers are thus mentioned by the Marquis de Chastellux: —

“The 5th [of January, 1781] I did not set out till eleven, although I had thirty miles’ journey to Lebanon. At the passage to the ferry, I met with a detachment of the Rhode-Island regiment, — the same corps we had with us all the last summer; but they have since been recruited and clothed. The greatest part of them are negroes or mulattoes: they are strong, robust men; and those I have seen had a very good appearance.” — *Chastellux’s Travels*, vol. i. p. 454; London, 1789.

When Col. Greene was surprised and murdered, near Points Bridge, New York, on the 14th of May, 1781, his colored soldiers heroically defended him till they were cut to pieces; and the enemy reached him over the dead bodies of his faithful negroes.

That large numbers of negroes were enrolled in the army, and served faithfully as soldiers during the whole period of the war of the Revolution, may be regarded as a well-established historical fact. And it should be borne in mind, that the enlistment was not confined, by any means, to those who had before enjoyed the privileges of free citizens. Very many slaves were offered to, and received by, the army, on the condition that they were to be emancipated, either at the time of enlisting, or when they had served out the term of their enlistment. The inconsistency of keeping in slavery any person who had taken up arms for the defence of our national liberty had led to the passing of an order forbidding “slaves,” as such, to be received as soldiers.

That colored men were equally serviceable in the last war with Great Britain is true, as the following historical document will show: —

GENERAL JACKSON'S PROCLAMATION TO THE NEGROES

Headquarters, Seventh Military District, Mobile, Sept. 21, 1814.

To the Free Colored Inhabitants of Louisiana.

Through a mistaken policy, you have heretofore been deprived of a participation in the glorious struggle for national rights in which our country is engaged. This no longer shall exist.

As sons of freedom, you are now called upon to defend our most inestimable blessing. As Americans, your country looks with confidence to her adopted children for a valorous support, as a faithful return for the advantages enjoyed under her mild and equitable government. As fathers, husbands, and brothers, you are summoned to rally around the standard of the Eagle to defend all which is dear in existence.

Your country, although calling for your exertions, does not wish you to engage in her cause without amply remunerating you for the services rendered. Your intelligent minds are not to be led away by false representations. Your love of honor would cause you to despise the man who should attempt to deceive you. In the sincerity of a soldier, and the language of truth, I address you.

To every noble-hearted, generous freeman of color, volunteering to serve during the present contest with Great Britain, and no longer, there will be paid the same bounty, in money and lands, now received by the white soldiers of the United States; viz., one hundred and twenty dollars in money, and one hundred and sixty acres of land. The non-commissioned officers and privates will also be entitled to the same monthly pay, and daily rations, and clothes, furnished to any American soldier.

On enrolling yourselves in companies, the Major-General Commanding will select officers for your government from your white fellow-citizens. Your non-commissioned officers will be appointed from among yourselves.

Due regard will be paid to the feelings of freemen and soldiers. You will not, by being associated with white men in the same corps, be exposed to improper comparisons or unjust sarcasm. As a distinct, independent battalion or regiment, pursuing the path of glory, you will, undivided, receive the applause and gratitude of your countrymen.

To assure you of the sincerity of my intentions, and my anxiety to engage your invaluable services to our country, I have communicated my wishes to the Governor of Louisiana, who is fully informed as to the manner of enrollment, and will give you every necessary information on the subject of this address.

ANDREW JACKSON,

Major-General Commanding.

[Niles's Register, vol. vii. p. 205.]

Three months later, Gen. Jackson addressed the same troops as follows: —

“To the Men of Color. Soldiers! From the shores of Mobile I collected you to arms. I invited you to share in the perils and to divide the glory of your white countrymen. I expected much from you; for I was not uninformed of those qualities which must render you so formidable to an invading foe. I knew that you could endure hunger and thirst, and all the hardships of war. I knew that you loved the land of your nativity, and that, like ourselves, you had to defend all that is most dear to man. But you surpass my hopes. I have found in you, united to these qualities, that noble enthusiasm which impels to great deeds.

“Soldiers! The President of the United States shall be informed of your conduct on the present occasion; and the voice of the Representatives of the American nation shall applaud your valor, as your general now praises your ardor. The enemy is near. His sails cover the lakes. But the brave are united; and, if he finds us contending with ourselves, it will be for the prize of valor, and fame its noblest reward.” —*Niles's Register*, vol. vii. pp. 345, 346.

Black men served in the navy with great credit to themselves, receiving the commendation of Com. Perry and other brave officers.

Extract of a Letter from Nathaniel Shaler, Commander of the private-armed Schooner Gen. Tompkins, to his Agent in New York, dated, —

“At Sea, Jan. 1, 1813.

“Before I could get our light sails in, and almost before I could turn round, I was under the guns, not of a transport, but of a large *frigate!* and not more than a quarter of a mile from her... Her first broadside killed two men, and wounded six others...

“My officers conducted themselves in a way that would have done honor to a more permanent service...

“The name of one of my poor fellows who was killed ought to be registered in the book of fame, and remembered with reverence as long as bravery is considered a virtue. He was a black man, by the name of John Johnson. A twenty-four pound shot struck him in the hip, and took away all the lower part of his body. In this state, the poor brave fellow lay on the deck, and several times exclaimed to his shipmates, ‘*Fire away, my boy: no haul a color down.*’ The other was also a black man, by the name of John Davis, and was struck in much the same way. He fell near me, and several times requested to be thrown overboard, saying he was only in the way of others.

“When America has such tars, she has little to fear from the tyrants of the ocean.” —*Niles's Weekly Register*, Saturday, Feb. 26, 1814.

CHAPTER II – THE SOUTH-CAROLINA FRIGHT

Denmark Vesey, Peter Poyas, and their Companions. – The deep-laid Plans. – Religious Fanaticism. – The Discovery. – The Trials. – Convictions. – Executions.

Human bondage is ever fruitful of insurrection, wherever it exists, and under whatever circumstances it may be found.

An undeveloped discontent always pervaded the black population of the South, bond and free. Many attempts at revolt were made: two only, however, proved of a serious and alarming character. The first was in 1812, the leader of which was Denmark Vesey, a free colored man, who had purchased his liberty in the year 1800, and who resided in Charleston, S.C. A carpenter by trade, working among the blacks, Denmark gained influence with them, and laid a plan of insurrection which showed considerable generalship. Like most men who take the lead in revolts, he was deeply imbued with a religious duty; and his friends claimed that he had “a magnetism in his eye, of which his confederates stood in great awe: if he once got his eye on a man, there was no resisting it.”

After resolving to incite the slaves to rebellion, Denmark began taking into his confidence such persons as he could trust, and instructing them to gain adherents from among the more reliable of both bond and free.

Peter Poyas, a slave of more than ordinary foresight and ability, was selected by him as his lieutenant; and to him was committed the arduous duty of arranging the mode of attack, and of acting as the military leader. Poyas voluntarily undertook the management of the most difficult part of the enterprise, the capture of the main guard-house, and had pledged himself to advance alone, and surprise the sentinel. Gullah Jack, Tom Russell, and Ned Bennett, – the last two were not less valuable than Peter Poyas; for Tom was an ingenious mechanic, and made battle-axes, pikes, and other instruments of death with which to carry on the war, – all of the above were to be generals of brigades, and were let into every secret of the intended rising. It had long been the custom in Charleston for the country slaves to visit the city in great numbers on Sunday, and return to their homes in time to commence work on the following morning. It was, therefore, determined by Vesey to have the rising take place on Sunday. The slaves of nearly every plantation in the neighborhood were enlisted, and were to take part. The details of the plan, however, were not rashly committed to the mass of the confederates: they were known only to a few, and were finally to have been announced after the evening prayer-meeting on the appointed Sunday. But each leader had his own company enlisted, and his own work marked out. When the clock struck twelve, all were to move. Poyas was to lead a party ordered to assemble at South Bay, and to be joined by a force from James’ Island: he was then to march up and seize the arsenal and guard-house opposite St. Michael’s Church, and detach a sufficient number to cut off all white citizens who should appear at the alarm-posts. A second body of blacks, from the country and the Neck, headed by Ned Bennett, was to assemble on the Neck, and seize the arsenal there. A third was to meet at Governor Bennett’s Mills under the command of Rolla, another leader, and, after putting the governor and intendant to death, to march through the city, or be posted at Cannon’s Bridge, thus preventing the inhabitants of Cannons-borough from entering the city.

A fourth, partly from the country and partly from the neighboring localities in the city, was to rendezvous on Gadsden’s Wharf, and attack the upper guard-house. A fifth, composed of country and Neck blacks, was to assemble at Bulkley’s Farm, two miles and a half from the city, seize the upper powder magazine, and then march down; and a sixth was to assemble at Vesey’s, and obey his orders. A seventh detachment, under Gullah Jack, was to come together in Boundry Street, at the head of King Street, to capture the arms of the Neck company of militia, and to take an additional supply from Mr. Dugueron’s shop. The naval stores on Meg’s Wharf were also to be attacked. Meanwhile a

horse company, consisting of many draymen, hostlers, and butcher boys, was to meet at Lightwood's Alley, and then scour the streets to prevent the whites from assembling.

Every white man coming out of his own door was to be killed, and, if necessary, the city was to be fired in several places; a slow match for this purpose having been purloined from the public arsenal, and placed in an accessible position. The secret and plan of attack, however, were incautiously divulged to a slave named Devany, belonging to Col. Prioleau; and he at once informed his master's family. The mayor, on getting possession of the facts, called the city council together for consultation. The investigation elicited nothing new, for the slaves persisted in their ignorance of the matter; and the authorities began to feel that they had been imposed upon by Devany and his informants, when another of the conspirators, being bribed, revealed what he knew. Arrest after arrest was made, and the mayor's court held daily examinations for weeks. After several weeks of incarceration, the accused, one hundred and twenty in number, were brought to trial: thirty-four were sentenced to transportation, twenty-seven acquitted by the court, twenty-five discharged without trial, and thirty-five condemned to death. With but two or three exceptions, all of the conspirators went to the gallows feeling that they had acted right, and died like men giving their lives for the cause of freedom. A report of the trial, written soon after, says of Denmark Vesey, "For several years before he disclosed his intentions to any one, he appears to have been constantly and assiduously engaged in endeavoring to imbitter the minds of the colored population against the whites. He rendered himself perfectly familiar with those parts of the Scriptures which he could use to show that slavery was contrary to the laws of God; that slaves were bound to attempt their emancipation, however shocking and bloody might be the consequences; and that such efforts would not only be pleasing to the Almighty, but were absolutely enjoined, and their success predicted, in the Scriptures.

"His favorite texts, when he addressed those of his own color, were Zech. xiv. 1-3, and Joshua vi. 21; and, in all his conversations, he identified their situation with that of the Israelites. Even while walking through the streets in company with another, he was not idle; for, if his companion bowed to a white person, he would rebuke him, and observe that all men were born equal, and that he was surprised that any one would degrade himself by such conduct; that he would never cringe to the whites, nor ought any one who had the feelings of a man. When answered, 'We are slaves,' he would sarcastically and indignantly reply, 'You deserve to remain slaves;' and if he were further asked, 'What can we do?' he would remark, 'Go and buy a spelling-book, and read the fable of Hercules and the wagoner,' which he would then repeat, and apply it to their situation.

"He sought every opportunity of entering into conversation with white persons, when they could be overheard by slaves near by, especially in grog-shops, during which conversation, he would artfully introduce some bold remark on slavery; and sometimes, when from the character of the person he was conversing with he found he might be still bolder, he would go so far, that, had not his declarations in such situations been clearly proved, they would scarcely have been credited. He continued this course till some time after the commencement of the last winter; by which time he had not only obtained incredible influence amongst persons of color, but many feared him more than they did their masters, and one of them declared, even more than his God."

The excitement which the revelations of the trial occasioned, and the continual fanning of the flame by the newspapers, was beyond description. Double guard in the city, the country patrol on horseback and on foot, the watchfulness that was observed on all plantations, showed the deep feeling of fear pervading the hearts of the slave-holders, not only in South Carolina, but the fever extended to the other Southern States, and all seemed to feel that a great crisis had been passed. And, indeed, their fears appear not to have been without ground; for a more complicated plan for an insurrection could scarcely have been conceived.

Many were of opinion, that, the rising once begun, they would have taken the city, and held it, and might have sealed the fate of slavery in the South. The best account of this whole matter is

to be found in an able article in the “Atlantic Monthly” for June, 1861, from the pen of Col. T. W. Higginson, and to which I am indebted for the extracts contained in this sketch.

CHAPTER III. – THE NAT TURNER INSURRECTION

Nat Turner. – His Associates. – Their Meetings. – Nat's Religious Enthusiasm. – Bloodshed. – Wide-spread Terror. – The Trials and Executions.

The slave insurrection which occurred in Southampton County, Na., in the year 1831, although not as well planned as the one portrayed in the preceding chapter, was, nevertheless, more widely felt in the South. Its leader was Nat Turner, a slave.

On one of the oldest and largest plantations in Southampton County, Va., owned by Benjamin Turner, Esq., Nat was born a slave, on the 2d of October, 1800. His parents were of unmixed African descent. Surrounded as he was by the superstition of the slave-quarters, and being taught by his mother that he was born for a prophet, a preacher, and a deliverer of his race, it was not strange that the child should have imbibed the principles which were afterwards developed in his career. Early impressed with the belief that he had seen visions, and received communications direct from God, he, like Napoleon, regarded himself as a being of destiny. In his childhood, Nat was of an amiable disposition; but circumstances in which he was placed as a slave brought out incidents that created a change in his disposition, and turned his kind and docile feeling into the most intense hatred to the white race.

The ill-treatment he experienced at the hands of the whites, and the visions he claimed to have seen, caused Nat to avoid, as far as he could, all intercourse with his fellow-slaves, and threw around him a gloom and melancholy that disappeared only with his life.

Both the young slave and his friends averred that a full knowledge of the alphabet came to him in a single night. Impressed with the belief that his mission was a religious one, and this impression strengthened by the advice of his grandmother, a pious but ignorant woman, Nat commenced preaching when about twenty-five years of age, but never went beyond his own master's locality. In stature, he was under the middle size, long-armed, round-shouldered, and strongly marked with the African features. A gloomy fire burned in his looks, and he had a melancholy expression of countenance. He never tasted a drop of ardent spirits in his life, and was never known to smile. In the year 1828, new visions appeared to Nat; and he claimed to have direct communication with God. Unlike most of those born under the influence of slavery, he had no faith in conjuring, fortunetelling, or dreams, and always spoke with contempt of such things. Being hired out to a cruel master, he ran away, and remained in the woods thirty days, and could have easily escaped to the Free States, as did his father some years before; but he received, as he says in his confession, a communication from the Spirit, which said, "Return to your earthly master; for he who knoweth his Master's will, and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes." It was not the will of his earthly but his heavenly Master that he felt bound to do; and therefore Nat returned. His fellow-slaves were greatly incensed at him for coming back; for they knew well his ability to reach Canada, or some other land of freedom, if he was so inclined. He says further, "About this time I had a vision, and saw white spirits and black spirits engaged in battle; and the sun was darkened, the thunder rolled in the heavens, and blood flowed 'in streams; and I heard a voice saying, 'Such is your luck, such are you called on to see; and let it come, rough or smooth, you must surely bear it!'" Some time after this, Nat had, as he says, another vision, in which the spirit appeared and said, "The Serpent is loosened, and Christ has laid down the yoke he has borne for the sins of men; and you must take it up, and fight against the Serpent, for the time is fast approaching when the first shall be last, and the last shall be first." There is no doubt but that this last sentence filled Nat with enthusiastic feeling in favor of the liberty of his race, that he had so long dreamed of. "The last shall be first, and the first shall be last," seemed to him to mean something. He saw in it the overthrow of the whites, and the establishing of the blacks in their stead; and to this end he bent the energies of his mind. In February, 1831, Nat received his last communication, and

beheld his last vision. He said, "I was told I should arise and prepare myself, and slay my enemies with their own weapons." The plan of an insurrection was now formed in his own mind, and the time had arrived for him to take others into the secret; and he at once communicated his ideas to four of his friends, in whom he had implicit confidence. Hark Travis, Nelson Williams, Sam Edwards, and Henry Porter were slaves like himself, and, like him, had taken their names from their masters. A meeting must be held with these, and it must take place in some secluded place where the whites would not disturb them; and a meeting was appointed. The spot where they assembled was as wild and romantic as were the visions that had been impressed upon the mind of their leader.

Three miles from where Nat lived was a dark swamp, filled with reptiles, in the middle of which was a dry spot, reached by a narrow, winding path, and upon which human feet seldom ever trod, on account of its having been the place where a slave had been tortured to death by a slow fire, for the crime of having flogged his cruel and inhuman master. The night for the meeting arrived, and they came together. Hark brought a pig, Sam bread, Nelson sweet potatoes, and Henry brandy; and the gathering was turned into a feast. Others were taken in, and joined the conspiracy. All partook heartily of the food, and drank freely, except Nat. He fasted and prayed. It was agreed that the revolt should commence that night, and in their own masters' households, and that each slave should give his oppressor the death-blow. Before they left the swamp, Nat made a speech, in which he said, "Friends and brothers! We are to commence a great work to-night. Our race is to be delivered from slavery, and God has appointed us as the men to do his bidding; and let us be worthy of our calling. I am told to slay all the whites we encounter, without regard to age or sex. We have no arms or ammunition, but we will find these in the houses of our oppressors; and, as we go on, others can join us. Remember that we do not go forth for the sake of blood and carnage; but it is necessary, that, in the commencement of this revolution, all the whites we meet should die, until we have an army strong enough to carry on the war upon a Christian basis. Remember that ours is not a war for robbery, and to satisfy our passions: it is a struggle for freedom. Ours must be deeds, and not words. Then let's away to the scene of action."

Among those who had joined the conspirators was Will, a slave, who scorned the idea of taking his master's name. Though his soul longed to be free, he evidently became one of the party as much to satisfy revenge as for the liberty that he saw in the dim distance. Will had seen a dear and beloved wife sold to the negro-trader, and taken away, never to be beheld by him again in this life. His own back was covered with scars, from his shoulders to his feet. A large scar, running from his right eye down to his chin, showed that he had lived with a cruel master. Nearly six feet in height, and one of the strongest and most athletic of his race, he proved to be the most unfeeling of all the insurrectionists. His only weapon was a broad-axe, sharp and heavy.

Nat and his accomplices at once started for the plantation of Joseph Travis, with whom the four lived; and there the first blow was struck. In his confession, just before his execution, Nat said, —

"On returning to the house, Hark went to the door with an axe, for the purpose of breaking it open, — as we knew we were strong enough to murder the family should they be awakened by the noise; but, reflecting that it might create an alarm in the neighborhood, we determined to enter the house secretly, and murder them whilst sleeping. Hark got a ladder, and set it against the chimney, on which I ascended, and, hoisting a window, entered and came down stairs, unbarred the doors, and removed the guns from their places. It was then observed that I must spill the first blood. On which, armed with a hatchet, and accompanied by Will, I entered my master's chamber. It being dark, I could not give a death-blow. The hatchet, glanced from his head: he sprang from the bed, and called his wife. It was his last word. Will laid him dead with a blow of his axe."

They went from plantation to plantation, until the whole neighborhood was aroused; and the whites turned out in large numbers to suppress the rebellion. Nat and his accomplices fought bravely, but to no purpose.

Reinforcements came to the whites; and the blacks were overpowered and defeated by the superior numbers of the enemy. In this battle, many were slain on both sides. Will, the blood-thirsty and revengeful slave, fell with his broad-axe uplifted, after having laid three of the whites dead at his feet with his own strong arm and his terrible weapon. His last words were, "Bury my axe with me." For he religiously believed, that, in the next world, the blacks would have a contest with the whites, and that he would need his axe. Nat Turner, after fighting to the last with his short sword, escaped with some others to the woods near by, and was not captured for nearly two months. When brought to trial, he pleaded "not guilty," feeling, as he said, that it was always right for one to strike for his own liberty. After going through a mere form of trial, he was convicted and executed at Jerusalem, the county-seat for Southampton County, Ya. Not a limb trembled, or a muscle was observed to move. Thus died Nat Turner, at the early age of thirty-one years, a martyr to the freedom of his race, and a victim to his own fanaticism. He meditated upon the wrongs of his oppressed and injured people till the idea of their deliverance excluded all other ideas from his mind; and he devoted his life to its realization. Every thing appeared to him a vision, and all favorable omens were signs from God. He foretold, that, at his death, the sun would refuse to shine, and that there would be signs of disapprobation given from Heaven. And it is true that the sun was darkened, a storm gathered, and more boisterous weather had never appeared in Southampton County than on the day of Nat's execution. The sheriff, warned by the prisoner, refused to cut the cord that held the trap. No black man would touch the rope. A poor old white man, long-besotted by drink, was brought forty miles to be the executioner.

Fifty-five whites and seventy-three blacks lost their lives in the Southampton Rebellion. On the fatal night, when Nat and his companions were dealing death to all they found, Capt. Harris, a wealthy planter, had his life saved by the devotion and timely warning of his slave Jim, said to have been half-brother to his master. After the revolt had been put down, and parties of whites were out hunting the suspected blacks, Capt. Harris, with his faithful slave, went into the woods in search of the negroes. In saving his master's life, Jim felt that he had done his duty, and could not consent to become a betrayer of his race; and, on reaching the woods, he handed his pistol to his master, and said, "I cannot help you hunt down these men: they, like myself, want to be free. Sir, I am tired of the life of a slave: please give me my freedom, or shoot me on tire spot." Capt. Harris took the weapon, and pointed it at the slave. Jim, putting his right hand, upon his heart, said, "This is the spot; aim here." The captain fired, and the slave fell dead at his feet.

CHAPTER IV. – SLAVE REVOLT AT SEA

Madison Washington. – His Escape from the South. – His Love of Liberty. – His Return. – His Capture. – The Brig “Creole.” – The Slave-traders. – Capture of the Vessel. – Freedom of the Oppressed.

The revolt on board of the brig “Creole,” on the high seas, by a number of slaves who had been shipped for the Southern market, in the year 1841, created at the time a profound sensation throughout the country. Before entering upon it, however, I will introduce to the reader the hero of the occasion.

Among the great number of fugitive slaves who arrived in Canada towards the close of the year 1840, was one whose tall figure, firm step, and piercing eye attracted at once the attention of all who beheld him. Nature had treated him as a favorite. His expressive countenance painted and reflected every emotion of his soul. There was a fascination in the gaze of his finely cut eyes that no one could withstand. Born of African parentage, with no mixture in his blood, he was one of the handsomest of his race. His dignified, calm, and unaffected features announced at a glance that he was endowed with genius, and created to guide his fellow-men. He called himself Madison Washington, and said that his birthplace was in the “Old Dominion.” He might have been twenty-five years; but very few slaves have any correct idea of their age. Madison was not poorly dressed, and had some money at the end of his journey, which showed that he was not from amongst the worst-used slaves of the South. He immediately sought employment at a neighboring farm, where he remained some months. A strong, able-bodied man, and a good worker, and apparently satisfied with his situation, his employer felt that he had a servant who would stay with him a long while. The farmer would occasionally raise a conversation, and try to draw from Madison some account of his former life, but in this he failed; for the fugitive was a man of few words, and kept his own secrets. His leisure hours were spent in learning to read and write; and in this he seemed to take the utmost interest. He appeared to take no interest in the sports and amusements that occupied the attention of others. Six months had not passed ere Madison began to show signs of discontent. In vain his employer tried to discover the cause.

“Do I not pay you enough, and treat you in a becoming manner?” asked Mr. Dickson one day when the fugitive seemed in a very desponding mood.

“Yes, sir,” replied Madison.

“Then why do you appear so dissatisfied of late?”

“Well, sir,” said the fugitive, “since you have treated me with such kindness, and seem to take so much interest in me, I will tell you the reason why I have changed, and appear to you to be dissatisfied. I was born in slavery, in the State of Virginia. From my earliest recollections I hated slavery, and determined to be free. I have never yet called any man master, though I have been held by three different men who claimed me as their property. The birds in the trees and the wild beasts of the forest made me feel that I, like them, ought to be free. My feelings were all thus centred in the one idea of liberty, of which I thought by day and dreamed by night. I had scarcely reached my twentieth year, when I became acquainted with the angelic being who has since become my wife. It was my intention to have escaped with her before we were married, but circumstances prevented.

“I took her to my bosom as my wife, and then resolved to make the attempt. But, unfortunately, my plans were discovered; and, to save myself from being caught and sold off to the far South, I escaped to the woods, where I remained during many weary months. As I could not bring my wife away, I would not come without her. Another reason for remaining was that I hoped to get up an insurrection of the slaves, and thereby be the means of their liberation. In this, too, I failed. At last it was agreed, between my wife and I, that I should escape to Canada, get employment, save my earnings, and with it purchase her freedom. With the hope of attaining this end, I came into your

service. I am now satisfied, that, with the wages I can command here, it will take me not less than five years to obtain by my labor the amount sufficient to purchase the liberty of my dear Susan. Five years will be too long for me to wait; for she may die, or be sold away, ere I can raise the money. This, sir, makes me feel low spirited; and I have come to the rash determination to return to Virginia for my wife.”

The recital of the story had already brought tears to the eyes of the farmer, ere the fugitive had concluded. In vain did Mr. Dickson try to persuade Madison to give up the idea of going back into the very grasp of the tyrant, and risking the loss of his own freedom without securing that of his wife. The heroic man had made up his mind, and nothing could move him. Receiving the amount of wages due him from his employer, Madison turned his face once more towards the South. Supplied with papers purporting to have been made out in Virginia, and certifying to his being a freeman, the fugitive had no difficulty in reaching the neighborhood of his wife. But these “free papers” were only calculated to serve him where he was not known. Madison had also provided himself with files, saws, and other implements, with which to cut his way out of any prison into which he might be cast. These instruments were so small as to be easily concealed in the lining of his clothing; and, armed with them, the fugitive felt sure he should escape again were he ever captured. On his return, Madison met, in the State of Ohio, many of those whom he had seen on his journey to Canada; and all tried to prevail upon him to give up the rash attempt. But to every one he would reply, “Liberty is worth nothing to me while my wife is a slave.” When near his former home, and unable to travel in open day without being detected, Madison betook himself to the woods during the day, and travelled by night. At last he arrived at the old farm at night, and hid away in the nearest forest. Here he remained several days, filled with hope and fear, without being able to obtain any information about his wife. One evening, during this suspense, Madison heard the singing of a company of slaves, the sound of which appeared nearer and nearer, until he became convinced that it was a gang going to a corn-shucking; and the fugitive resolved that he would join it, and see if he could get any intelligence of his wife.

In Virginia, as well as in most of the other corn-raising slave-States, there is a custom of having what is termed “a corn-shucking,” to which slaves from the neighboring plantations, with the consent of their masters, are invited. At the conclusion of the shucking, a supper is provided by the owner of the corn; and thus, together with the bad whiskey which is freely circulated on such occasions, the slaves are made to feel very happy. Four or five companies of men may be heard in different directions, and at the same time, approaching the place of rendezvous; slaves joining the gangs along the roads as they pass their masters’ farms. Madison came out upon the highway; and, as the company came along singing, he fell into the ranks, and joined in the song. Through the darkness of the night he was able to keep from being recognized by the remainder of the company, while he learned from the general conversation the most important news of the day.

Although hungry and thirsty, the fugitive dared not go to the supper-table for fear of recognition. However, before he left the company that night, he gained information enough to satisfy him that his wife was still with her old master; and he hoped to see her, if possible, on the following night. The sun had scarcely set the next evening, ere Madison was wending his way out of the forest, and going towards the home of his loved one, if the slave can be said to have a home. Susan, the object of his affections, was indeed a woman every way worthy of his love. Madison knew well where to find the room usually occupied by his wife, and to that spot he made his way on arriving at the plantation; but, in his zeal and enthusiasm, and his being too confident of success, he committed a blunder which nearly cost him his life. Fearful that if he waited until a late hour, Susan would be asleep, and in awakening her she would in her fright alarm the household, Madison ventured to her room too early in the evening, before the whites in the “great house” had retired. Observed by the overseer, a sufficient number of whites were called in, and the fugitive secured ere he could escape with his wife; but the heroic slave did not yield until he with a club had laid three of his assailants upon the ground with his manly blows; and not then until weakened by loss of blood. Madison was

at once taken to Richmond, and sold to a slave-trader, then making up a gang of slaves for the New-Orleans market.

The brig “Creole,” owned by Johnson & Eperson of Richmond, and commanded by Capt. Enson, lay at the Richmond dock, waiting for her cargo, which usually consisted of tobacco, hemp, flax, and slaves. There were two cabins for the slaves, – one for the men, the other for the women. The men were generally kept in chains while on the voyage; but the women were usually unchained, and allowed to roam at pleasure in their own cabin. On the 27th of October, 1841, “The Creole” sailed from Hampton Roads, bound for New Orleans, with her full load of freight, a hundred and thirty-five slaves, and three passengers, besides the crew. Forty of the slaves were owned by Thomas McCargo, nine belonged to Henry Hewell, and the remainder were held by Johnson & Eperson. Hewell had once been an overseer for McCargo, and on this occasion was acting as his agent.

Among the slaves owned by Johnson & Eperson, was Madison Washington. He was heavily ironed, and chained down to the floor of the cabin occupied by the men, which was in the forward hold. As it was known by Madison’s purchasers that he had once escaped, and had been in Canada, they kept a watchful eye over him. The two cabins were separated, so that the men and women had no communication whatever during the passage.

Although rather gloomy at times, Madison on this occasion seemed very cheerful, and his owners thought that he had repented of the experience he had undergone as a runaway, and in the future would prove a more easily-governed chattel. But, from the first hour that he had entered the cabin of “The Creole,” Madison had been busily engaged in the selection of men who were to act parts in the great drama. He picked out each one as if by intuition. Every thing was done at night and in the dark, as far as the preparation was concerned. The miniature saws and files were faithfully used when the whites were asleep.

In the other cabin, among the slave-women, was one whose beauty at once attracted attention. Though not tall, she yet had a majestic figure. Her well-moulded shoulders, prominent bust, black hair which hung in ringlets, mild blue eyes, finely-chiselled mouth, with a splendid set of teeth, a turned and well-rounded chin, skin marbled with the animation of life, and veined by blood given to her by her master, she stood as the representative of two races. With only one-eighth of African blood, she was what is called at the South an “octoroon.” It was said that her grandfather had served his country in the Revolutionary War, as well as in both Houses of Congress. This was Susan, the wife of Madison. Few slaves, even among the best-used house-servants, had so good an opportunity to gain general information as she.

Accustomed to travel with her mistress, Susan had often been to Richmond, Norfolk, White-Sulphur Springs, and other places of resort for the aristocracy of the Old Dominion. Her language was far more correct than that of most slaves in her position. Susan was as devoted to Madison as she was beautiful and accomplished.

After the arrest of her husband, and his confinement in Richmond jail, it was suspected that Susan had long been in possession of the knowledge of his whereabouts when in Canada, and knew of his being in the neighborhood; and for this crime it was resolved that she should be sold, and sent off to a Southern plantation, where all hope of escape would be at an end. Each was not aware that the other was on board “The Creole;” for Madison and Susan were taken to their respective cabins at different times. On the ninth day out, “The Creole” encountered a rough sea, and most of the slaves were sick, and therefore were not watched with that vigilance that they had been since she first sailed. This was the time for Madison and his accomplices to work, and nobly did they perform their duty. Night came on, the first watch had just been summoned, the wind blowing high, when Madison succeeded in reaching the quarter-deck, followed by eighteen others, all of whom sprang to different parts of the vessel, seizing whatever they could wield as weapons. The crew were nearly all on deck. Capt. Enson and Mr. Merritt, the first mate, were standing together, while Hewell was

seated on the companion, smoking a cigar. The appearance of the slaves all at once, and the loud voice and commanding attitude of their leader, so completely surprised the whites, that —

“They spake not a word;
But, like dumb statues or breathless stones,
Stared at each other, and looked deadly pale.”

The officers were all armed; but so swift were the motions of Madison that they had nearly lost command of the vessel before they attempted to use them.

Hewell, the greater part of whose life had been spent on the plantation in the capacity of a negro-driver, and who knew that the defiant looks of these men meant something, was the first to start. Drawing his old horse-pistol from under his coat, he fired at one of the blacks, and killed him. The next moment Hewell lay dead upon the deck, for Madison had struck him with a capstan bar. The fight now became general, the white passengers, as well as all the crew, taking part. The battle was Madison's element, and he plunged into it without any care for his own preservation or safety. He was an instrument of enthusiasm, whose value and whose place was in his inspiration. “If the fire of heaven was in my hands, I would throw it at those cowardly whites,” said he to his companions, before leaving their cabin. But in this he did not mean revenge, only the possession of his freedom and that of his fellow-slaves. Merritt and Gifford, the first and second mates of the vessel, both attacked the heroic slave at the same time. Both were stretched out upon the deck with a single blow each, but were merely wounded: they were disabled, and that was all that Madison cared for for the time being. The sailors ran up the rigging for safety, and a moment more he that had worn the fetters an hour before was master of the brig “Creole.” His commanding attitude and daring orders, now that he was free, and his perfect preparation for the grand alternative of liberty or death which stood before him, are splendid exemplifications of the true heroic. After his accomplices had covered the slaver's deck, Madison forbade the shedding of more blood, and ordered the sailors to come down, which they did, and with his own hands dressed their wounds. A guard was placed over all except Merritt, who was retained to navigate the vessel. With a musket doubly charged, and pointed at Merritt's breast, the slaves made him swear that he would safely take the brig into a British port. All things now secure, and the white men in chains or under guard, Madison ordered that the fetters should be severed from the limbs of those slaves who still wore them. The next morning “Capt. Washington” (for such was the name he now bore) ordered the cook to provide the best breakfast that the storeroom could furnish, intending to surprise his fellow-slaves, and especially the females, whom he had not yet seen. But little did he think that the woman for whom he had risked his liberty and life would meet him at the breakfast-table. The meeting of the hero and his beautiful and accomplished wife, the tears of joy shed, and the hurrahs that followed from the men, can better be imagined than described. Madison's cup of joy was filled to the brim. He had not only gained his own liberty, and that of one hundred and thirty-four others, but his dear Susan was safe. Only one man, Howell, had been killed. Capt. Enson, and others who were wounded, soon recovered, and were kindly treated by Madison, and for which they proved ungrateful; for, on the second night, Capt. Enson, Mr. Gilford, and Merritt, took advantage of the absence of Madison from the deck, and attempted to retake the vessel. The slaves, exasperated at this treachery, fell upon the whites with deadly weapons. The captain and his men fled to the cabin, pursued by the blacks. Nothing but the heroism of the negro leader saved the lives of the white men on this occasion; for, as the slaves were rushing into the cabin, Madison threw himself between them and their victims, exclaiming, “Stop! no more blood. My life, that was perilled for your liberty, I will lay down for the protection of these men. They have proved themselves unworthy of life which we granted them; still let us be magnanimous.” By the kind heart and noble bearing of Madison, the vile slave-traders were again permitted to go unwhipped of justice. This act of humanity raised the uncouth son of Africa far above his Anglo-Saxon oppressors.

The next morning “The Creole” landed at Nassau, New Providence, where the noble and heroic slaves were warmly greeted by the inhabitants, who at once offered protection, and extended hospitality to them.

But the noble heroism of Madison Washington and his companions found no applause from the Government, then in the hands of the slaveholders. Daniel Webster, then Secretary of State, demanded of the British authorities the surrender of these men, claiming that they were murderers and pirates: the English, however, could not see the point.

Had the “Creole” revolters been white, and committed their noble act of heroism in another land, the people of the United States would have been the first to recognize their claims. The efforts of Denmark Vesey, Nat Turner, and Madison Washington to strike the chains of slavery from the limbs of their enslaved race will live in, history, and will warn all tyrants to beware of the wrath of God and the strong arm of man.

Every iniquity that society allows to subsist for the benefit of the oppressor is a sword with which she herself arms the oppressed. Right is the most dangerous of weapons: woe to him who leaves it to his enemies.

CHAPTER V – GROWTH OF THE SLAVE-POWER

Introduction of the Cotton-gin. – Its effect on Slavery. – Fugitive Slave Law. – Anthony Burns. – The Dred Scott Decision. – Imprisonment for reading “Uncle Tom’s Cabin.” – Struggles with Slavery.

The introduction of the cotton-gin into the South, by Whitney of Connecticut, had materially enhanced the value of slave property; the emancipation societies of Virginia and Maryland had ceased to petition their Legislatures for the “Gradual Emancipation” of the slaves; and the above two States had begun to make slave-raising a profitable business, when the American Antislavery Society was formed in the city of Philadelphia, in the year 1833. The agitation of the question in Congress, the mobbing of William Lloyd Garrison in Boston, the murder of the Rev. E. P. Lovejoy in Illinois, and the attempt to put down free speech throughout the country, only hastened the downfall of the institution.

In the earlier days of the Antislavery movement, not a year, sometimes hardly a month, passed that did not bear upon its record the report of mobs, almost always ferocious in spirit, and sometimes cruel and blood-stained in act. It was the first instinctive and brutal response of a proslavery people convicted of guilt and called to repentance; and it was almost universal. Wherever antislavery was preached, honestly, and effectually, there the mobocratic spirit followed it; so that, in those times, he who escaped this ordeal was, with some justice, held to be either inefficient or unfaithful. Hardly a town or city, from Alton to Portland, where much antislavery labor was bestowed, in the first fifteen years of this enterprise, that was not the scene of one of these attempts to crush all free discussion of the subject of slavery by violence or bloodshed. Hardly one of the earlier public advocates of the cause that was not made to suffer, either in person or in property, or in both, from popular violence, – the penalty of obedience to the dictates of his own conscience. Nor was this all: official countenance was often given to the mad proceedings of the mob; or, if not given, its protection was withheld from those who were the objects of popular hatred; and, as if this were not enough, legislation was invoked to the same end. It was suggested to the Legislature of one of the Southern States, that a large reward be offered for the head of a citizen of Massachusetts who was the pioneer in the modern antislavery movement. A similar reward was offered for the head of a citizen of New York. Yet so foul an insult excited neither the popular indignation nor legislative resentment in either of those States.

Great damage was done to the cause of Christianity by the position assumed on the question of slavery by the American churches, and especially those in the Southern States. Think of a religious kidnapper! a Christian slave-breeder! a slave-trader, loving his neighbor as himself, receiving the “sacraments” in some Protestant church from the hand of a Christian apostle, then the next day selling babies by the dozen, and tearing young women from the arms of their husbands to feed the lust of lecherous New Orleans! Imagine a religious man selling his own children into eternal bondage! Think of a Christian defending slavery out of the Bible, and declaring there is no higher law, but atheism is the first principle of Republican Government!

Yet this was the stand taken, and maintained, by the churches in the slave States down to the day that Lee surrendered to Grant.

One of the bitterest fruits of slavery in our land is the cruel spirit of caste, which makes the complexion even of the free negro a badge of social inferiority, exposing him to insult in the steamboat and the railcar, and in all places of public resort, not even excepting the church; banishing him from remunerative occupations; expelling him from the legislative hall, the magistrate’s bench, and the jury-box; and crushing his noblest aspirations under a weight of prejudice and proscription which he struggles in vain to throw off. Against this unchristian and hateful spirit, every lover of liberty

should enter his solemn protest. This hateful prejudice caused the breaking up of the school of Miss Prudence Crandall, in the State of Connecticut, in the early days of the antislavery agitation.

Next came the burning of Pennsylvania Hall, one of the most beautiful edifices in the City of Brotherly Love, simply because colored persons were permitted to occupy seats by the side of whites.

The enactment by Congress of the Fugitive Slave Law caused the friends of freedom, both at home and abroad, to feel that the General Government was fast becoming the bulwark of slavery. The rendition of Thomas Sims, and still later that of Anthony Burns, was, indeed, humiliating in the extreme to the people of the Northern States.

On that occasion, the sons of free, enlightened, and Christian Massachusetts, descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers, bowed submissively to the behests of a tyranny more cruel than Austrian despotism; yielded up their dignity and self-respect; became the allies of slave-catchers, the associates and companions of bloodhounds. At the bidding of slaveholders and serviles, they seized the image of God, bound their fellow-man with chains, and consigned him to torture and premature death under the lash of a piratical overseer. God's law and man's rights were trampled upon; the self-respect, the constitutional privileges, of the free States, were ignominiously surrendered. A people who resisted a paltry tax upon tea, at the cannon's mouth, basely submitted to an imposition tenfold greater, in favor of brutalizing their fellow-men. Soil which had been moistened with the blood of American patriots was polluted by the footsteps of slave-catchers and their allies.

The Boston Court House in chains, two hundred rowdies and thieves sworn in as special policemen, respectable citizens shoved off the side-walks by these slave-catchers; all for the purpose of satisfying "our brethren of the South." But this act did not appease the feelings, or satisfy the demands, of the slave-holders, while it still further inflamed the fire of abolitionism.

The "Dred Scott Decision" added fresh combustibles to the smouldering heap. Dred Scott, a slave, taken by his master into free Illinois, and then beyond the line of 36° 30', and then back into Missouri, sued for and obtained his freedom on the ground, that, having been taken where by the Constitution slavery was illegal, his master had lost all claim. But the Supreme Court, on appeal, reversed the judgment; and Dred Scott, with his wife and children, was taken back into slavery. By this decision in the highest court of American law, it was affirmed that no free negro could claim to be a citizen of the United States, but was only under the jurisdiction of the separate State in which he resided; that the prohibition of slavery in any Territory of the Union was unconstitutional; and that the slave-owner might go where he pleased with his property, throughout the United States, and retain his right.

This decision created much discussion, both in America and in Europe, and materially injured the otherwise good name of our country abroad.

The Constitution, thus interpreted by Judge Taney, became the emblem of the tyrants and the winding sheet of liberty, and gave a boldness to the people of the South, which soon showed itself, while good men at the North felt ashamed of the Government under which they lived.

The slave-holders in the cotton, sugar, and rice growing States began to urge the re-opening of the African slave-trade, and the driving out from the Southern States of all free colored persons.

In the Southern Rights' Convention, which assembled at Baltimore, June 8, 1850, a resolution was adopted, calling on the Legislature to pass a law driving the free colored people out of the State. Nearly every speaker took the ground that the free colored people must be driven out to make the slave's obedience more secure. Judge Mason, in his speech, said, "It is the thrifty and well-to-do free negroes, that are seen by our slaves, that make them dissatisfied." A similar appeal was made to the Legislature of Tennessee. Judge Catron, of the Supreme Court of the United States, in a long and able letter to "The Nashville Union," opposed the driving out of the colored people. He said they were among the best mechanics, the best artisans, and the most industrious laborers in the State, and that to drive them out would be an injury to the State itself. This is certainly good evidence in their behalf.

The State of Arkansas passed a law driving the free colored people out of the State, and they were driven out three years ago. The Democratic press howled upon the heels of the free blacks until they had all been expatriated; but, after they had been driven out, "The Little Rock Gazette" – a Democratic paper – made a candid acknowledgment with regard to the character of the free colored people. It said, "Most of the exiled free negroes are industrious and respectable. One of them, Henry King, we have known from our boyhood, and take the greatest pleasure in testifying to his good character. The community in which he casts his lot will be blessed with that noblest work of God, an honest man."

Yet these free colored people were driven out of the State, and those who were unable to go, as many of the women and children were, were reduced to slavery.

"The New Orleans True Delta" opposed the passage of a similar law by the State of Louisiana. Among other things, it said, "There are a large free colored population here, correct in their general deportment, honorable in their intercourse with society, and free from reproach so far as the laws are concerned; not surpassed in the inoffensiveness of their lives by any equal number of persons in any place, North or South."

And yet these free colored persons were not permitted by law to school their children, or to read books that treated against the institution of slavery. The Rev. Samuel Green, a colored Methodist preacher, was convicted and sent to the Maryland penitentiary, in 1858, for the offence of being found reading "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

The growth of the "Free-Soil" party, which had taken the place of the "Liberty" party; and then the rapid increase of the "Republican" party; the struggle in Kansas; the "Oberlin Rescue Trials;" and, lastly, the "John Brown Raid," carried the discussion of slavery to its highest point.

All efforts, in Congress, in the proslavery political conventions, and in the churches, only added fuel to the flame that was fast making inroads upon the vitals of the monster.

CHAPTER VI. – THE JOHN BROWN RAID

John Brown. – His Religious Zeal. – His Hatred to Slavery. – Organization of his Army. – Attack on Harper's Ferry. – His Execution. – John Brown's Companions, Green and Copeland. – The Executions.

The year 1859 will long be memorable for the bold attempt of John Brown and his companions to burst the bolted door of the Southern house of bondage, and lead out the captives by a more effectual way than they had yet known: an attempt in which, it is true, the little band of heroes dashed themselves to bloody death, but, at the same time, shook the prison-walls from summit to foundation, and shot wild alarm into every tyrant-heart in all the slave-land. What were the plans and purposes of the noble old man is not precisely known, and perhaps will never be; but, whatever they were, there is reason to believe they had been long maturing, – brooded over silently and secretly, with much earnest thought, and under a solemn sense of religious duty. As early as the fall of 1857, he began to organize his band, chiefly from among the companions of his warfare against the "Border Ruffians" in Kansas. Nine or ten of these spent the winter of 1857-8 in Iowa, where a Col. Forbes was to have given them military instruction; but he, having-fallen out with Brown, did not join them, and Aaron D. Stevens, one of the company, took his place.

About the middle of April, 1858, they left Iowa, and went to Chatham, Canada, where, on the 8th of May, was held a convention, called by a written circular, which was sent to such persons only as could be trusted. The convention was composed mostly of colored men, a few of whom were from the States, but the greater part residents in Canada, with no white men but the organized band already mentioned. A "Provisional Constitution," which Brown had previously prepared, was adopted; and the members of the convention took an oath to support it. Its manifest purpose was to insure a perfect organization of all who should join the expedition, whether free men or insurgent slaves, and to hold them under such strict control as to restrain them from every act of wanton or vindictive violence, all waste or needless destruction of life or property, all indignity or unnecessary severity to prisoners, and all immoral practices; in short, to keep the meditated movement free from every possibly avoidable evil ordinarily incident to the armed uprising of a long-oppressed and degraded people.

And let no one who glories in the revolutionary struggles of our fathers for their freedom deny the right of the American bondsman to imitate their high example. And those who rejoice in the deeds of a Wallace or a Tell, a Washington or a Warren; who cherish with unbounded gratitude the name of Lafayette for volunteering his aid in behalf of an oppressed people in a desperate crisis, and at the darkest hour of their fate, – cannot refuse equal merit to this strong, free, heroic man, who freely consecrated all his powers, and the labors of his whole life, to the help of the most needy, friendless, and unfortunate of mankind.

The picture of the Good Samaritan will live to all future ages, as the model of human excellence, for helping one whom he chanced to find in need.

John Brown did more: he went to *seek* those who were lost that he might save them.

On Sunday night, Oct. 16, John Brown, with twenty followers (five of them colored), entered the town of Harper's Ferry, in the State of Virginia; captured the place, making the United-States Armory his headquarters; sent his men in various directions in search of slaves with which to increase his force.

The whole thing, though premature in its commencement, struck a blow that rang on the fetters of the enslaved in every Southern State, and caused the oppressor to tremble for his own safety, as well as for that of the accursed institution.

John Brown's trial, heroism, and execution, an excellent history of which has been given to the public by Mr. James Redpath, saves me from making any lengthened statement here. His life and

acts are matters of history, which will live with the language in which it is written. But little can be said of his companions in the raid on slavery. They were nearly all young men, unknown to fame, enthusiastic admirers of the old Puritan, entering heartily into all of his plans, obeying his orders, and dying bravely, with no reproach against their leader.

Of the five colored men, two only were captured alive, – Shields Green and John A. Copeland. The former was a native of South Carolina, having been born in the city of Charleston in the year 1832. Escaping to the North in 1857, he resided in Rochester, N.Y., until attracted by the unadorned eloquence and native magnetism of the hero of Harper's Ferry. The latter was from North Carolina, and was a mulatto of superior abilities, and a genuine lover of liberty and justice. The following letter, written a short time before his execution, needs no explanation: —

“Charlestown, Va., Dec. 10, 1859.

“My dear Brother, – I now take my pen to write you a few lines to let you know how I am, and in answer to your kind letter of the 5th inst. Dear brother, I am, it is true, so situated at present as scarcely to know how to commence writing; not that my mind is filled with fear, or that it has become shattered in view of my near approach to death; not that I am terrified by the gallows which I see staring me in the face, and upon which I am so soon to stand and suffer death for doing what George Washington, the so-called father of this great but slavery-cursed country, was made a hero for doing while he lived, and when dead his name was immortalized, and his great and noble deeds in behalf of freedom taught by parents to their children. And now, brother, for having lent my aid to a general no less brave, and engaged in a cause no less honorable and glorious, I am to suffer death. Washington entered the field to fight for the freedom of the American people, – not for the white man alone, but for both black and white. Nor were they white men alone who fought for the freedom of this country. The blood of black men flowed as freely as that of white men. Yes, the *very first* blood that was spilt was that of a negro. It was the blood of that heroic man (though black he was), Crispus Attucks. And some of the *very last* blood shed was that of black men. To the truth of this, history, though prejudiced, is compelled to attest. *It is true* that black men did an equal share of the fighting for American independence; and they were assured by the whites that they should share equal benefits for so doing. But, after having performed their part honorably, they were by the whites most treacherously deceived, – they refusing to fulfil their part of the contract. But this you know as well as I do; and I will therefore say no more in reference to the claims which we, as colored men, have on the American people...

“It was a sense of the wrongs which we have suffered that prompted the noble but unfortunate Capt. Brown and his associates to attempt to give freedom to a small number, at least, of those who are now held by cruel and unjust laws, and by no less cruel and unjust men. To this freedom they were entitled by every known principle of justice and humanity; and, for the enjoyment of it, God created them. And now, dear brother, could I die in a more noble cause? Could I, brother, die in a manner and for a cause which would induce true and honest men more to honor me, and the angels more readily to receive me to their happy home of everlasting joy above? I imagine that I hear you, and all of you, mother, father, sisters and brothers, say, ‘No, there is not a cause for which we, with less sorrow, could see you die!’”

“Your affectionate brother,

“John A. Copeland.”

“The Baltimore Sun” says, “A few moments before leaving the jail, Copeland said, ‘If I am dying for freedom, I could not die for a better cause. *I had rather die than be a slave!*’ A military officer in charge on the day of the execution says, ‘I had a position near the gallows, and carefully observed all. I can truly say I never witnessed more firm and unwavering fortitude, more perfect composure, or more beautiful propriety, than were manifested by young Copeland to the very last.’”

Shields Green behaved with equal heroism, ascending the scaffold with a firm and unwavering step, and died, as he had lived, a brave man, and expressing to the last his eternal hatred to human bondage, prophesying that slavery would soon come to a bloody end.

CHAPTER VII – THE FIRST GUN OF THE REBELLION

Nomination of Fremont. – Nomination of Lincoln. – The Mob Spirit. – Spirit of Slavery. – The Democracy. – Cotton. – Northern Promises to the Rebels. – Assault on Fort Sumter. – Call for 75,000 Men. – Response of the Colored Men.

The nomination of John C. Fremont by the Republican party in 1856, and the large vote given him at the election that autumn, cleared away all doubts, if any existed as to the future action of the Federal Government on the spread and power of slavery. The Democratic party, which had ruled the nation so long and so badly, saw that it had been weighed, and found wanting; that it must prepare to give up the Government into the hands of better men.

But the party determined to make the most of Mr. Buchanan's administration, both in the profuse expenditure of money among themselves, and in getting ready to take the Southern States out of the Union.

Surrounded by the men who believed that the Government was made for them, and that their mission was to rule the people of the United States, Mr. Buchanan was nothing more than a tool, – clay in the hands of the potters; and he permitted them to prepare leisurely for disunion, which culminated, in 1860, in the nomination of Abraham Lincoln for the presidency.

The proslavery Democracy became furious at the prospect of losing the control of the situation, and their hatred of free speech was revived. From the nomination of Mr. Lincoln to his inauguration, mob-law ruled in most of the cities and large villages. These disgraceful scenes, the first of which commenced at the antislavery-meeting at the Tremont Temple, Boston, was always gotten up by members of the Democratic party, who usually passed a series of resolutions in favor of slavery. New York, Philadelphia, Albany, Buffalo, Troy, Cincinnati, and Chicago, all followed the example set by Boston.

These demonstrations were caused more by sympathy with the South, and the long-accustomed subserviency of the Northern people to slaveholding dictation, than to any real hatred to the negro.

During all this time the Abolitionists were laboring faithfully to widen the gulf between the North and South.

Towards the close of the year 1860, the spirit of compromise began to show itself in such unmistakable terms as to cause serious apprehension on the part of the friends of freedom for the future of American liberty. The subdued tone of the liberal portion of the press, the humiliating offers of Northern political leaders of compromises, and the numerous cases of fugitive slaves being returned to their masters, sent a thrill of fear to all colored men in the land for their safety, and nearly every train going North found more or less negroes fleeing to Canada.

At the South, the people were in earnest, and would listen to no proposals whatever in favor of their continuance in the Union.

The vast wealth realized by the slave-holder had made him feel that the South was independent of the rest of the world.

Prosperity had made him giddy. Cotton was not merely king: it was God. Moral considerations were nothing. The sentiment of right, he argued, would have no influence over starving operatives; and England and France, as well as the Eastern States of the Union, would stand aghast, and yield to the masterstroke which should deprive them of the material of their labor. Millions were dependent on it in all the great centres of civilization; and the ramifications of its power extended into all ranks of society and all departments of industry and commerce. It was only necessary to wave this imperial sceptre over the nations; and all of them would fall prostrate, and acknowledge the supremacy of the power which wielded it. Nothing could be more plausible than this delusion. Satan himself, when about to wage war in heaven, could not have invented one better calculated to marshal his hosts, and

give promise of success in rebellion against the authority of the Most High. But, alas! the supreme error of this anticipation lay in omitting from the calculation all power of principle. The right still has authority over the minds of men and in the counsels of nations. Factories may cease their din; men and women may be thrown out of employment; the marts of commerce may be silent and deserted: but truth and justice still command some respect among men; and God yet remains the object of their adoration.

Drunk with power, and dazzled with prosperity, monopolizing cotton, and raising it to the influence of a veritable fetich, the authors of the Rebellion did not admit a doubt of the success of their attack on the Federal Government. They dreamed of perpetuating slavery, though all history shows the decline of the system as industry, commerce, and knowledge advance. The slave-holders proposed nothing less than to reverse the currents of humanity, and to make barbarism flourish in the bosom of civilization.

Weak as were the Southern people in point of numbers and political power, compared with those of the opposite section, the haughty slave-holders easily persuaded themselves and their dependents that they could successfully cope in arms with the Northern adversary, whom they affected to despise for his cowardly and mercenary disposition. Proud and confident, they indulged the belief that their great political prestige would continue to serve them among their late party associates in the North, and that the counsels of the adversary would be distracted, and his power weakened, by the fatal effects of dissension.

The proslavery men in the North are very much to blame for the encouragement that they gave the rebels before the breaking out of the war. The Southerners had promises from their Northern friends, that, in the event of a rebellion, civil war should reign in the free States, – that men would not be permitted to leave the North to go South to put down their rebellions brethren.

All legitimate revolutions are occasioned by the growth of society beyond the growth of government; and they will be peaceful or violent just in proportion as the people and government shall be wise and virtuous or vicious and ignorant. Such revolutions or reforms are generally of a peaceful nature in communities in which the government has made provision for the gradual expansion of its institutions to suit the onward march of society. No government is wise in overlooking, whatever may be the strength of its own traditions, or however glorious its history, that human institutions which have been adapted for a barbarous age or state of society will cease to be adapted for more civilized and intelligent times; and, unless government makes a provision for the gradual expansion, nothing can prevent a storm, either of an intellectual or a physical nature. Slavery was always the barbarous institution of America; and the Rebellion was the result of this incongruity between it and freedom.

The assault on Fort Sumter on the 12th of April, 1861, was the dawn of a new era for the negro. The proclamation of President Lincoln, calling for the first 75,000 men to put down the Rebellion, was responded to by the colored people throughout the country. In Boston, at a public meeting of the blacks, a large number came forward, put their names to an agreement to form a brigade, and march at once to the seat of war. A committee waited on the Governor three days later, and offered the services of these men. His Excellency replied that he had no power to receive them. This was the first wet blanket thrown over the negro's enthusiasm. "This is a white man's war," said most of the public journals. "I will never fight by the side of a nigger," was heard in every quarter where men were seen in Uncle Sam's uniform.

Wherever recruiting offices were opened, black men offered themselves, and were rejected. Yet these people, feeling conscious that right would eventually prevail, waited patiently for the coming time, pledging themselves to go at their country's call, as the following will show: —

"Resolved, That our feelings urge us to say to our countrymen that we are ready to stand by and defend the Government as the equals of its white defenders; to do so with our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor, for the sake of freedom and as good citizens; and we ask you to modify your

laws, that we may enlist, – that full scope may be given to the patriotic feelings burning in the colored man's breast.” —*Colored Men's Meeting, Boston.*

CHAPTER VIII – THE UNION AND SLAVERY BOTH TO BE PRESERVED

Union Generals offer to suppress Slave Insurrections. – Return of Slaves coming into our Army.

At the very commencement of the Rebellion, the proslavery generals in the field took the earliest opportunity of offering their services, together with those under their commands, to suppress any slave insurrection that might grow out of the unsettled condition of the country. Major-Gen. B. F. Butler led off, by tendering his services to Gov. Hicks of Maryland. About the same time, Major-Gen. Geo. B. McClellan issued the following, “*To the Union Men of Western Virginia*,” on entering that portion of the State with his troops: – “The General Government cannot close its ears to the demands you have made for assistance. I have ordered troops to cross the river. They come as Your friends and brothers, – as enemies only to the armed rebels who are preying upon you. Your homes, your families, your property, are safe under our protection. All your rights shall be religiously respected. Notwithstanding all that has been said by the traitors to induce you to believe our advent among you will be signalled by an interference with your slaves, understand one thing clearly: not only will we abstain from all such interference, but we shall, on the contrary, *with an iron hand*, crush any attempt at insurrection on their part.”

Slaves escaping from their masters were promptly returned by the officers of the army. Gen. W. S. Harney, commanding in Missouri, in responding to the claims of slave-holders for their blacks, said, —

“Already, since the commencement of these unhappy disturbances, slaves have escaped from their owners, and have sought refuge in the camps of United-States troops from the Northern States, and commanded by a Northern general. *They were carefully sent Back to their owners.*”

The correspondent of “The New-York Herald” gave publicity to the following: —

“The guard on the bridge across the Anacostia arrested a negro who attempted to pass the sentries on the Maryland side. He seemed to feel confident that he was among friends, for he made no concealment of his character and purpose. He said he had walked sixty miles, and was going North. He was very much surprised and disappointed when he was taken into custody, and informed that he would be sent back to his master. He is now in the guard-house, and answers freely all questions relating to his weary march. Of course, such an arrest excites much comment among the men. Nearly all are restive under the thought of acting as slave-catchers. The Seventy-first made a forced march, and the privations they endured have been honorably mentioned in the country’s history. This poor negro made a forced march, twice the length – in perils often, in fasting, – hurrying toward the North for his liberty! And the Seventy-first catches him at the end of his painful journey, – the goal in sight, – and sends him back to the master who even now may be in arms against us, or may take the slave, sell him for a rifle, and use it on his friends in the Seventy-first New-York Regiment. Humanity speaks louder here than it does in a large city; and the men who in New York would dismiss the subject with a few words about ‘constitutional obligations’ are now the loudest in denouncing the abuse of power which changes a regiment of gentlemen into a regiment of negro-catchers.” At Pensacola, Slemmer did even more, putting in irons fugitives who fled to him for protection, and returning them to their masters to be scourged to death. Col. Dimmick, at Fortress Monroe, told the rebel Virginians that he had not an Abolitionist in his command, and that no molestation of their slave-system would be suffered.

Gen. D. C. Buell, commanding in Tennessee, said, in reply to a committee of slave-holders demanding the return of their fugitives, —

“It has come to my knowledge that slaves sometimes make their way improperly into our lines, and in some instances they may be enticed there; but I think the number has been magnified by report. Several applications have been made to me by persons whose servants have been found in our camps; and, in every instance that I know of, the master has removed his servant, and taken him away.

“I need hardly remind you that there will always be found some lawless and mischievous persons in every army; but I assure you that the mass of this army is law-abiding, and that it is neither its disposition nor its policy to violate law or the rights of individuals in any particular.”

Yet, while Union soldiers were returning escaped slaves to rebels, it was a notorious fact that the enemy were using negroes to build fortifications, drive teams, and raise food for the army.

Black hands piled up the Sand-bags, and raised the batteries, which drove Anderson out of Sumter. At Montgomery, the capital of the confederacy, negroes were being drilled and armed for military duty.

CHAPTER IX – INTELLIGENT CONTRABANDS

James Lawson. – His Bravery. – Rescue of his Wife and Children. – He is sent out on Important Business. – He fights his Way Back. – He is Admired by Gens. Hooker and Sickles. – Rhett's Servant. – "Foraging for Butter and Eggs."

I spent three weeks at Liverpool Point, the outpost of Hooker's Division, almost directly opposite Aquia Creek, waiting patiently for the advance of our left wing to follow up the army, becoming, if not a participator against the dying struggles of rebeldom, at least a chronicler of the triumphs in the march of the Union army.

During this time I was the guest of Col. Graham, of Mathias-Point memory, who had brought over from that place (last November) some thirty valuable chattels. A part of the camp was assigned to them. They built log huts, and obtained from the soldiers many comforts, making their quarters equal to any in the camp.

They had friends and relatives. Negroes feel as much sympathy for their friends and kin as the whites; and, from November to the present time, many a man in Virginia has lost a very likely slave, for the camp contains now upwards of a hundred fat and healthy negroes, in addition to its original number from Mathias Point.

One of the number deserves more honor than that accorded to Toussaint L'Ouverture in the brilliant lecture delivered by Wendell Phillips. He is unquestionably the hero of the Potomac, and deserves to be placed by the side of his most renowned black brethren.

The name of this negro is James Lawson, born near Hempstead, Virginia, and he belonged to a Mr. Taylor. He made his escape last December. On hearing his praises spoken by the captains of the gunboats on the Potomac, I was rather indisposed to admit the possession of all the qualities they give him credit for, and thought possibly his exploits had been exaggerated. His heroic courage, truthfulness, and exalted Christian character seemed too romantic for their realization. However, my doubts on that score were dispelled; and I am a witness of his last crowning act.

Jim, after making his escape from Virginia, shipped on board of "The Freeborn," Flag-gunboat, Lieut. Samuel Magaw commanding. He furnished Capt. Magaw with much valuable intelligence concerning the rebel movements, and, from his quiet, every-day behavior, soon won the esteem of the commanding officer.

Capt. Magaw, shortly after Jim's arrival on board "The Freeborn," sent him upon a scouting tour through the rebel fortifications, more to test his reliability than anything else; and the mission, although fraught with great danger, was executed by Jim in the most faithful manner. Again Jim was sent into Virginia, landing at the White House, below Mount Vernon, and going into the interior for several miles; encountering the fire of picket-guards and posted sentries; returned in safety to the shore; and was brought off in the captain's gig, under the fire of the rebel musketry.

Jim had a wife and four children at that time still in Virginia. They belonged to the same man as Jim did. He was anxious to get them; yet it seemed impossible.

One day in January, Jim came to the captain's room, and asked for permission to be landed that evening on the Virginia side, as he wished to bring off his family. "Why, Jim," said Capt. Magaw, "how will you be able to pass the pickets?"

"I want to try, captain: I think I can get 'em over safely," meekly replied Jim.

"Well, you have my permission;" and Capt. Magaw ordered one of the gunboats to land Jim that night on whatever part of the shore he designated, and return for him the following evening.

True to his appointment, Jim was at the spot with his wife and family, and was taken on board the gunboat, and brought over to Liverpool Point, where Col. Graham had given them a log-house to live in, just back of his own quarters. Jim ran the gauntlet of the sentries unharmed, never taking

to the roads, but keeping in the woods, every foot-path of which, and almost every tree, he knew from his boyhood up.

Several weeks afterwards another reconnoissance was planned, and Jim sent on it. He returned in safety, and was highly complimented by Gens. Hooker, Sickles, and the entire flotilla.

On Thursday, week ago, it became necessary to obtain correct information of the enemy's movements. Since then, batteries at Shipping and Cockpit Points had been evacuated, and their troops moved to Fredericksburg. Jim was the man picked out for the occasion, by Gen. Sickles and Capt. Magaw. The general came down to Col. Graham's quarters, about nine in the evening, and sent for Jim. There were present, the general, Col. Graham, and myself. Jim came into the colonel's.

"Jim," said the general, "I want you to go over to Virginia to-night, and find out what forces they have at Aquia Creek and Fredericksburg. If you want any men to accompany you, pick them out."

"I know *two* men that would like to go," Jim answered.

"Well, get them, and be back as soon as possible." Away went Jim over to the contraband camp, and, returning almost immediately, brought into our presence two very intelligent-looking darkies.

"Are you all ready?" inquired the general.

"All ready, sir," the trio responded.

"Well, here, Jim, you take my pistol," said Gen. Sickles, unbuckling it from his belt; "and, if you are successful, I will give you \$100."

Jim hoped he would be, and, bidding us good-by, started off for the gunboat "Satellite," Capt. Foster, who landed them a short distance below the Potomac-Creek Batteries. They were to return early in the morning, but were unable, from the great distance they went in the interior. Long before daylight on Saturday morning, the gunboat was lying off at the appointed place. As the day dawned, Capt. Foster discovered a mounted picket-guard near the beach, and almost at the same instant saw Jim to the left of them, in the woods, sighting his gun at the rebel cavalry. He ordered the "gig" to be manned, and rowed to the shore. The rebels moved along slowly, thinking to intercept the boat, when Foster gave them a shell, which scattered them. Jim, with only one of his original companions, and two fresh contrabands, came on board. Jim had *lost the other*. He had been challenged by a picket when some distance in advance of Jim, and the negro, instead of answering the summons, fired the contents of Sickles's revolver at the picket. It was an unfortunate occurrence; for at that time the entire picket-guard rushed out of a small house near the spot, and fired the contents of their muskets at Jim's companion, killing him instantly. Jim and the other three hid themselves in a hollow, near a fence, and, after the pickets gave up pursuit, crept through the woods to the shore. From the close proximity of the rebel pickets, Jim could not display a light, which was the signal for Capt. Foster to send a boat.

Capt. Foster, after hearing Jim's story of the shooting of his companion, determined to avenge his death; so, steaming his vessel close in to the shore, he sighted his guns for a barn, where the rebel cavalry were hiding behind. He fired two shells: one went right through the barn, killing four of the rebels, and seven of their horses. Capt. Foster, seeing the effect of his shot, said to Jim, who stood by, "Well, Jim, I've avenged the death of poor Cornelius" (the name of Jim's lost companion).

Gen. Hooker has transmitted to the War Department an account of Jim's reconnoissance to Fredericksburg, and unites with the army and navy stationed on the left wing of the Potomac, in the hope that the Government will present Jim with a fitting recompense for his gallant services. — *War Correspondent of the New-York Times*.

On Thursday, beyond Charlestown, our pickets descried a solitary horseman, with a bucket on his arm, jogging soberly towards them. He proved to be a dark mulatto, of about thirty-five. As he approached, they ordered a halt.

"Where are you from?"

"Southern Army, cap'n," giving the military salute.

"Where are you going?"

"Coming to yous all."

“What do you want?”

“Protection, boss. You won’t send me back, will you?”

“No, come in. Whose servant are you?”

“Cap’n Rhett’s, of South Carliny: you’s heard of Mr. Barnwell Rhett, editor of ‘The Charleston Mercury’? His brother commands a battery.”

“How did you get away?”

“Cap’n gove me fifteen dollars this morning, and said, ‘John, go out, and forage for butter and eggs.’ So you see, boss (with a broad grin), I’s out foraging! I pulled my hat over my eyes, and jogged along on the cap’n’s horse (see the brand S.C. on him?) with this basket on my arm, right by our guards and pickets. They never challenged me once. If they had, though, I brought the cap’n’s pass. And the new comer produced this document from his pocket-book, written in pencil, and carefully folded. I send you the original: —

“Pass my servant, John, on horseback, anywhere between Winchester and Martinsburg, in search of butter, &c., &c.”

“A. BURNETT RHETT, Capt. Light Artillery, Lee’s Battalion.”

“Are there many negroes in the rebel corps?”

“Heaps, boss.”

“Would the most of them come to us if they could?”

“All of them, cap’n. There isn’t a little pickanniny so high (waving his hand two feet from the ground) that wouldn’t.”

“Why did *you* expect protection?”

“Heard so in Maryland, before the Proclamation.”

“Where did you hear about the Proclamation?”

“Read it, air, in a Richmond paper.”

“What is it?”

“That every slave is to be emancipated on and after the thirteenth day of January. I can’t state it, boss.”

“Something like it. When did you learn to read?”

“In ‘49, sir. I was head waiter at Mrs. Nevitt’s boarding-house in Savannah, and Miss Walcott, a New-York lady, who was stopping there, taught me.”

“Does your master know it?”

“Capt. Rhett doesn’t know it, sir; but he isn’t my master. He thinks I’m free, and hired me at twenty five dollars a month; but he never paid me any of it. I belong to Mrs. John Spring. She used to hire me out summers, and have me wait on her every winter, when she came South. After the war, she couldn’t come, and they were going to sell me for Government because I belonged to a Northerner. Sold a great many negroes in that way. But I slipped away to the army. Have tried to come to you twice before in Maryland, but couldn’t pass our pickets.”

“Were you at Antietam?”

“Yes, boss. Mighty hard battle!”

“Who whipped?”

“Yous all, massa. They say you didn’t; but I saw it, and know. If you had fought us that next day, – Thursday, – you would have captured our whole army. They say so themselves.”

“Who?”

“Our officers, sir.”

“Did you ever hear of old John Brown?”

“Hear of *him*? Lord bless you, yes, boss: I’ve read his life, and have it now in my trunk in Charleston; sent to New York by the steward of ‘The James Adger,’ and got it. I’ve read it to heaps of the colored folks. Lord, they think John Brown was almost a god. Just say you was a friend of his, and any slave will almost kiss your feet, if you let him. They sav, if he was only alive now, he

would be king. How it did frighten the white folks when he raised the insurrection! It was Sunday when we heard of it. They wouldn't let a negro go into the streets. I was waiter at the Mills House in Charleston. There was a lady from Massachusetts, who came down to breakfast that morning at my table. 'John,' she says, 'I want to see a negro church; where is the principal one?' 'Not any open to-day, mistress,' I told her. 'Why not?' 'Because a Mr. John Brown has raised an insurrection in Virginny.' 'Ah!' she says; 'well, they'd better look out, or they'll get the white churches shut up in that way some of these days, too!' Mr. Nicholson, one of the proprietors, was listening from the office to hear what she said. Wasn't that lady watched after that? I have a History of San Domingo, too, and a Life of Fred. Douglass, in my trunk, that I got in the same way."

"What do the slaves think about the war?"

"Well, boss, they all wish the Yankee army would come. The white folks tell them all sorts of bad stories about you all; but they don't believe them."

John was taken to Gen. McClellan, to whom he gave all the information he possessed about the position, numbers, and organization of the rebel army. His knowledge was full and valuable, and is corroborated by all the facts we have learned from other sources. The principal features of it I have already transmitted to you by telegraph. At the close of the interview, he asked anxiously, —

"General, you won't send me back, will you?"

"Yes," replied the general, with a smile, "I believe I will."

"I hope you won't, general. If you say so, I know I will have to go; but I come to you all for protection, and I hope you won't."

"Well, then, I suppose we will not. No, John, you are at liberty to go where you please. Stay with the army, if you like. No one can ever take you against your will."

"May the Lord bless you, general. I *thought* you wouldn't drive me out. You's the best friend I ever had; I shall never forget you till I die." And John made the salute, re-mounted his horse, and rode back to the rear, his dusky face almost white with radiance.

An hour later, he was on duty as the servant of Capt. Batchelor, Quartermaster of Couch's Second Division; and I do not believe there was another heart in our corps so light as his in the unwonted joy of freedom. —*New York Tribune*.

CHAPTER X – PROCLAMATIONS OF FREMONT AND HUNTER

Gen. Fremont's Proclamation, and its Effect on the Public Mind. – Gen. Hunter's Proclamation; the Feeling it created.

While the country seemed drifting to destruction, and the Administration without a policy, the heart of every loyal man was made glad by the appearance of the proclamation of Major-Gen. John C. Fremont, then in command at the West. The following extract from that document, which at the time caused so much discussion, will bear insertion here: —

“All persons who shall be taken with arms in their hands within these lines shall be tried by court martial, and, if found guilty, will be shot. The property, real and personal, of all persons in the State of Missouri, who shall take up arms against the United States, or who shall be directly proven to have taken active part with their enemies in the field, is declared to be confiscated to the public use, and their slaves, if any they have, are hereby declared free men.”

The above was the first official paper issued after the commencement of the war, that appeared to have the ring of the right kind of mettle. But while the public mind was being agitated upon its probable effect upon the Rebellion, a gloom was thrown over the whole community by the President's removal of Gen. Fremont, and the annulling of the proclamation. This act of Mr. Lincoln gave unintentional “aid and comfort” to the enemy, and was another retrograde movement in the Way of crushing out the Rebellion.

Gen. Fremont, before the arrival of the President's letter, had given freedom to a number of slaves, in accordance with his proclamation. His mode of action may be seen in the following deed of manumission: —

“Whereas, Thomas L. Snead, of the city and county of St. Louis, State of Missouri, has been taking an active part with the enemies of the United States, in the present insurrectionary movement against the Government of the United States; now, therefore, I, John Charles Fremont, Major-General commanding the Western Department of the Army of the United States, by authority of law, and the power vested in me as such commanding general, declare Hiram Reed, heretofore held to service or labor by Thomas L. Snead, to be free, and forever discharged from the bonds of servitude, giving him full right and authority to have, use, and control his own labor or service as to him may seem proper, without any accountability whatever to said Thomas L. Snead, or any one to claim by, through, or under him.

“And this deed of manumission shall be respected and treated by all persons, and in all courts of justice, as the full and complete evidence of the freedom of said Hiram Reed.

“In testimony whereof, this act is done at headquarters of the Western Department of the Army of the United States, in the city of St. Louis, State of Missouri, on this twelfth day of September, A.D. eighteen hundred and sixty-one, as is evidenced by the Departmental Seal hereto affixed by my order.

“J. C. FREMONT,

“Major-General Commanding.”

“Done at the office of the Provost-Marshal, in the city of St. Louis, the twelfth day of September, A.D. eighteen hundred and sixty-one, at nine o’clock in the evening of said day.

“Witness my hand and seal of office-hereto affixed.

“J. McKINSTRY,

“Brigadier-General, Provost-Marshal.”

The agitation in the public mind on account of the proclamation and its annulment, great as it was, was soon surpassed by one still more bold and sweeping from Major-Gen. David Hunter, in the following language, issued from his headquarters, at Hilton Head, S.C., on the 9th of May: —

“Headquarters Department of the South, Hilton Head, S.C., May 9, 1862.

“General Orders, No. 11:

“The three States of Georgia, Florida, and South Carolina, comprising the Military Department of the South, having deliberately declared themselves no longer under the protection of the United States of America, and having taken up arms against the said United States, it became a military necessity to declare them under martial law. This was accordingly done on the 25th day of April, 1862. Slavery and martial law in a free country are altogether incompatible. The persons in these three States, Georgia, Florida, and South Carolina, heretofore held as slaves, are therefore declared forever free.

“DAVID HUNTER,

“Major-General Commanding.

“[Official.]

“Ed. W. Smith, Acting Assistant Adjutant-General.”

But, before Mr. Lincoln was officially informed of the issuing of the above order, he made haste to annul it in the terms following: “That neither Gen. Hunter nor any other commander or person has been authorized by the Government of the United States to make proclamation declaring the slaves of any State free; and that the supposed proclamation now in question, whether genuine or false, is altogether void, so far as respects such declaration.

“I further make known, that, whether it be competent for me, as Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy, to declare the slaves of any State or States free, and whether at any time or in any case it shall have become a necessity indispensable to the maintenance of the Government to exercise such supposed power, are questions which, under my responsibility, I reserve to myself, and which I cannot feel justified in leaving to the decision of commanders in the field.”

These words of the President were hailed with cheers by the proslavery press of the North, and carried comfort to the hearts of the rebels; although the Chief-Magistrate did not intend either. However, before the President’s proclamation reached Carolina, Gen. Hunter was furnishing slaves with free papers, of which the succeeding is a copy: —

“DEED OF EMANCIPATION

“It having been proven, to the entire satisfaction of the general commanding the Department of the South, that the bearer, named – , heretofore held in involuntary servitude, has been directly employed to aid and assist those in rebellion against the United States of America.

“Now, be it known to all, that, agreeably to the laws, I declare the said person free, and forever absolved from all claims to his services. Both he and his wife and children have full right to go North, East, or West, as they may decide.

“Given under my hand, at the Headquarters of the Department of the South, this nineteenth day of April, 1862.

“D. HUNTER,

“Major-General Commanding.”

The words, “forever free,” sounded like a charm upon the ears of the oppressed, and seemed to give hopes of a policy that would put down the Rebellion, and leave the people untrammelled with slavery.

“God’s law of compensation worketh sure,
So we may know the right shall aye endure!
‘Forever free!’ God! how the pulse doth bound
At the high, glorious, Heaven-prompted sound
That greets our ears from Carolina’s shore!
‘Forever free!’ and slavery is no more!
Ere time the hunter followed up the slave;
But now a Hunter, noble, true, and brave,
Proclaims the right, to each who draws a breath,
To lift himself from out a living death,
And plant his feet on Freedom’s happy soil,
Content to take her wages for his toil,
And look to God, the author of his days,
For food and raiment, sounding forth His praise.”

Deep indeed was the impression left upon the public mind by the orders of both Fremont and Hunter; and they hastened the policy which the President eventually adopted, to the great gratification of the friends of freedom everywhere.

CHAPTER XI – HEROISM OF NEGROES ON THE HIGH SEAS

Heroism of Negroes. – William Tillman re-captures “The S. G. Waring.” – George Green. – Robert Small captures the Steamer “Planter.” – Admiral Dupont’s Opinion on Negro Patriotism.

In the month of June, 1861, the schooner “S. J. Waring,” from New York, bound to South America, was captured on the passage by the rebel privateer “Jeff. Davis,” a prize-crew put on board, consisting of a captain, mate, and four seamen; and the vessel set sail for the port of Charleston, S.C. Three of the original crew were retained on board, a German as steersman, a Yankee who was put in irons, and a black man named William Tillman, the steward and cook of the schooner. The latter was put to work at his usual business, and told that he was henceforth the property of the Confederate States, and would be sold, on his arrival at Charleston, as a slave. Night comes on; darkness covers the sea; the vessel is gliding swiftly towards the South; the rebels, one after another, retire to their berths; the hour of midnight approaches; all is silent in the cabin; the captain is asleep; the mate, who has charge of the watch, takes his brandy toddy, and reclines upon the quarter-deck. The negro thinks of home and all its endearments: he sees in the dim future chains and slavery.

He resolves, and determines to put the resolution into practice upon the instant. Armed with a heavy club, he proceeds to the captain’s room. He strikes ‘the fatal blow: he feels the pulse, and all is still. He next goes to the adjoining room: another blow is struck, and the black man is master of the cabin. Cautiously he ascends to the deck, strikes the mate: the officer is wounded but not killed. He draws his revolver, and calls for help. The crew are aroused: they are hastening to aid their commander. The negro repeats his blows with the heavy club: the rebel falls dead at Tillman’s feet. The African seizes the revolver, drives the crew below deck, orders the release of the Yankee, puts the enemy in irons, and proclaims himself master of the vessel.

“The Waring’s” head is turned towards New York, with the stars and stripes flying, a fair wind, and she rapidly retraces her steps. A storm comes up: more men are needed to work the ship. Tillman orders the rebels to be unchained, and brought on deck. The command is obeyed; and they are put to work, but informed, that, if they show any disobedience, they will be shot down. Five days more, and “The S. J. Waring” arrives in the port of New York, under the command of William Tillman, the negro patriot.

“The New-York Tribune” said of this event, —

“To this colored man was the nation indebted for the first vindication of its honor on the sea.” Another public journal spoke of that achievement alone as an offset to the defeat of the Federal arms at Bull Run. Unstinted praise from all parties, even those who are usually awkward in any other vernacular than derision of the colored man, has been awarded to this colored man. At Barnum’s Museum he was the centre of attractive gaze to daily increasing thousands. Pictorials vied with each other in portraying his features, and in graphic delineations of the scene on board the brig; while, in one of them, Tillman has been sketched as an embodiment of black action on the sea, in contrast with some delinquent Federal officer as white inaction on land.

The Federal Government awarded to Tillman the sum of six thousand dollars as prize-money for the capture of the schooner. All loyal journals joined in praise of the heroic act; and, even when the news reached England, the negro’s bravery was applauded. A few weeks later, and the same rebel privateer captured the schooner “Enchantress,” bound from Boston to St. Jago, while off Nantucket Shoals. A prize-crew was put on board, and, as in the case of “The Waring,” retaining the colored steward; and the vessel set sail for a Southern port. When off Cape Hatteras, she was overtaken by the Federal gunboat “Albatross,” Capt. Prentice.

On speaking her, and demanding where from and whence bound, she replied, "Boston, for St. Jago." At this moment the negro rushed from the galley, where the pirates had secreted him, *and jumped into the sea*, exclaiming, "They are a privateer crew from The 'Jeff. Davis,' and bound for Charleston!" The negro was picked up, and taken on board "The Albatross." The prize was ordered to heave to, which she did. Lieut. Neville jumped aboard of her, and ordered the pirates into the boats, and to pull for "The Albatross," where they were secured in irons. "The Enchantress" was then taken in tow by "The Albatross," and arrived in Hampton Roads. On the morning of the 13th of May, 1862, the rebel gunboat "Planter" was captured by her colored crew, while lying in the port of Charleston, S.C., and brought out, and delivered over to our squadron then blockading the place. The following is the dispatch from Com. Dupont to the Secretary of War, announcing the fact: —

"U. S. Steamship Augusta, off Charleston, May 13, 1862.

"Sir, — I have the honor to inform you that the rebel armed gunboat 'Planter' was brought out to us this morning from Charleston by eight contrabands, and delivered up to the squadron. Five colored women and three children are also on board. She was the armed despatch and transportation steamer attached to the engineer department at Charleston, under Brig. — Gen. Ripley. At four in the morning, in the absence of the captain who was on shore, she left her wharf close to the government office and head-quarters, with the Palmetto and confederate flags flying, and passed the successive forts, saluting as usual, by blowing the steam-whistle. After getting beyond the range of the last gun, they hauled down the rebel flags, and hoisted a white one. 'The Onward' was the inside ship of the blockading squadron in the main channel, and was preparing to fire when her commander made out the white flag.

"The armament of the steamer is a thirty-two pounder, on pivot, and a fine twenty-four-pound howitzer. She has, besides, on her deck, four other guns, one seven-inch, rifled, which were to be taken on the following morning to a new fort on the middle ground. One of the four belonged! to Fort Sumter, and had been struck, in the rebel attack, on the muzzle. Robert Small, the intelligent slave; and pilot of the boat, who performed this bold feat so skilfully, is a superior man to any who have come into our lines; intelligent as many of them have been. His information: has been most interesting, and portions of it of the utmost importance. The steamer is quite a valuable acquisition to the squadron by her good machinery and very light draught. The bringing out of this steamer would have done credit to any one. I do not know whether, in the view of the Government, the vessel will be considered a prize; but, if so, I respectfully submit to the Department the claims of the man Small and his associates. Very respectfully, Your obedient servant,

“S. F. DUPONT,

“Flag-Officer Commanding.”

The New-York “Commercial Advertiser” said of the capture, “We are forced to confess that this is a heroic act, and that the negroes deserve great praise. Small is a middle-aged negro, and his features betray nothing of the firmness of character he displayed. He is said to be one of the most skilful pilots of Charleston, and to have a thorough knowledge of all the ports and inlets of South Carolina.”

A bill was introduced in Congress to give the prize to Robert Small and his companions; and, while it was under consideration, the “New-York Tribune” made the following timely remarks: “If we must still remember with humiliation that the Confederate flag yet waves where our national colors were struck, we should be all the more prompt to recognize the merit that has put in our possession the first trophy from Fort Sumter. And the country should feel doubly humbled if there is not magnanimity enough to acknowledge a gallant action, because it was the head of a black man that conceived, and the hand of a black man that executed it. It would better, indeed, become us to remember that no small share of the naval glory of the war belongs to the race which we have forbidden to fight for us; that one negro has captured a vessel from a Southern privateer, and another has brought away from under the very guns of the enemy, where no fleet of ours has yet dared to venture, a prize whose possession a commodore thinks worthy to be announced in a special despatch.” The bill was taken up, passed both branches of Congress, and Robert Small, together with his associates, received justice at the hands of the American Government.

The “New-York Herald” gave the following account of the capture: —

“One of the most daring and heroic adventures since the war commenced was undertaken and successfully accomplished by a party of negroes in Charleston on Monday night last. Nine colored men, comprising the pilot, engineers, and crew of the rebel gunboat ‘Planter,’ took the vessel under their exclusive control, passed the batteries and forts in Charleston Harbor, hoisted the white flag, ran out to the blockading squadron, and thence to Port Royal, *via* St. Helena Sound and Broad River, reaching the flagship ‘Wabash’ shortly after ten o’clock last evening.

“‘The Planter’ is just such a vessel as is needed to navigate the shallow waters between Hilton Head and the adjacent islands, and will prove almost invaluable to the Government. It is proposed, I hear, by the commodore, to recommend the appropriation of \$20,000 as a reward to the plucky Africans who have distinguished themselves by this gallant service, \$5,000 to be given to the pilot, and the remainder to be divided among his companions.

“‘The Planter’ is a high-pressure, side-wheel steamer, one hundred and forty feet in length, and about fifty feet beam, and draws about five feet of water. She was built in Charleston, was formerly used as a cotton boat, and is capable of carrying about 1,400 bales. On the organization of the Confederate navy, she was transformed into a gunboat, and was the most valuable war-vessel the Confederates had at Charleston. Her armament consisted of one thirty-two-pound rifle-gun forward, and a twenty-four-pound howitzer aft. Besides, she had on board, when she came into the harbor, one seven-inch rifle-gun, one eight-inch columbiad, one eight-inch howitzer, one long thirty-two pounder, and about two hundred rounds of ammunition, which had been consigned to Fort Ripley, and which would have been delivered at that fortification on Tuesday had not the designs of the rebel authorities been frustrated. She was commanded by Capt. Relay, of the Confederate Navy, all the other employees of the vessel, excepting the first and second mates, being persons of color.

“Robert Small, with whom I had a brief interview at Gen. Benham’s headquarters this morning, is an intelligent negro, born in Charleston, and employed for many years as a pilot in and about that harbor. He entered upon his duties on board ‘The Planter’ some six weeks since, and, as he told me, adopted the idea of running the vessel to sea from a joke which one of his companions perpetrated.

He immediately cautioned the crew against alluding to the matter in any way on board the boat; but asked them, if they wanted to talk it up in sober earnestness, to meet at his house, where they would devise and determine upon a plan to place themselves under the protection of the Stars and Stripes, instead of the stars and bars. Various plans were proposed; but finally the whole arrangement of the escape was left to the discretion and sagacity of Robert, his companions promising to obey him, and be ready at a moment's notice to accompany him. For three days he kept the provisions of the party secreted in the hold, awaiting an opportunity to slip away. At length, on Monday evening, the white officers of the vessel went on shore to spend the night, intending to start on the following morning for Fort Ripley, and to be absent from the city for some days. The families of the contrabands were notified, and came stealthily on board. At about three o'clock, the fires were lit under the boilers, and the vessel steamed quietly away down the harbor. The tide was against her, and Fort Sumter was not reached till broad daylight. However, the boat passed directly under its walls, giving the usual signal – two long pulls and a jerk at the whistle-cord – as she passed the sentinel.

“Once out of range of the rebel guns, the white flag was raised, and ‘The Planter’ steamed directly for the blockading steamer ‘Augusta.’ Capt. Parrott, of the latter vessel, as you may imagine, received them cordially, heard their report, placed Acting-Master Watson, of his ship, in charge of ‘The Planter,’ and sent the Confederate gunboat and crew forward to Commodore Dupont.”

CHAPTER XII – GENERAL BUTLER AT NEW ORLEANS

Recognition of Negro Soldiers with Officers of their own Color. – Society in New Orleans. – The Inhuman Master. – Justice. – Change of Opinion. – The Free Colored Population.

When Major-Gen. Butler found himself in possession of New Orleans, he was soon satisfied of the fact that there were but few loyalists amongst the whites, while the Union feeling of the colored people was apparent from the hour of his landing; they having immediately called upon the commander, and, through a committee, offered their services in behalf of the Federal cause. Their offer was accepted, as the following will show: —

“Headquarters Department of the Gulf, New Orleans, Aug. 22, 1862.

“General Order, No. 63:

“Whereas, on the twenty-third day of April, in the year eighteen hundred and sixty-one, at a public meeting of the free colored population of the city of New Orleans, a military organization, known as the ‘Native Guards’ (colored), had its existence, which military organization was duly and legally enrolled as a part of the military of the State, its officers being commissioned by Thomas O. Moore, Governor, and Commander-in-Chief of the Militia, of the State of Louisiana, in the form following, that is to say: —

“The State of Louisiana.

[Seal of the State.]

“By Thomas Overton Moore, Governor of the State of Louisiana, and Commander-in-Chief of the Militia thereof.

“In the name and by the authority of the State of Louisiana:

“Know ye that — , having been duly and legally elected Captain of the “Native Guards” (colored), First Division of the Militia of Louisiana, to serve for the term of the war,

“I do hereby appoint and commission him Captain as aforesaid, to take rank as such, from the second day of May, 1861.

“He is, therefore, carefully and diligently to discharge the duties of his office, by doing and performing all manner of things thereto belonging. And I do strictly charge and require all officers, non-commissioned officers, and privates under his command to be obedient to his orders as Captain; and he is to observe and follow such orders and directions, from time to time, as he shall receive from me, or the future Governor of the State of Louisiana, or other superior officers, according to the Rules and Articles of War, and in conformity to law.

“In testimony whereof, I have caused these letters to be made patent, and the seal of the State to be hereunto annexed.

“Given under my hand, at the city of Baton Rouge, on the second day of May, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-two.

“(Signed)

“THOMAS O. MOORE

“By the Governor.

“P. D. HARDY, *Secretary of State.*”

[INDORSED.]

“I, Maurice Grivot, Adjutant and Inspector-General of the State of Louisiana, do hereby certify that —, named in the within commission, did, on the twenty-second day of May, in the year 1861, deposit in my office his written acceptance of the office to which he is commissioned, and his oath of office taken according to law.

“M. GRIVOT “*Adjutant and Inspector-General La.*’

“And whereas such military organization elicited praise and respect, and was complimented in general orders for its patriotism and loyalty, and was ordered to continue during the war, in the words following: —

“Headquarters Louisiana Militia,

“Adjutant-General’s Office, Mardi 24, 1862.

“Order No. 426:

“I, The Governor and Commander-in-Chief, relying implicitly upon the loyalty of the free colored population of the city and State, for the protection of their homes, their property, and for Southern rights, from the pollution of a ruthless invader, and believing that the military organization which existed prior to the 15th February, 1862, and elicited praise and respect for the patriotic motives which prompted it, should exist for and during the war, calls upon them to maintain their organization, and hold themselves prepared for such orders as may be transmitted to them.

“II. The colonel commanding will report without delay to Major-Gen. Lewis, commanding State Militia.

“By order of

“THOS. O. MOORE, *Governor.*

“31. GRIVOT, *Adjutant-General.*’

“And whereas said military organization, by the same order, was directed to report to Major-Gen. Lewis for service, but did not leave the city of New Orleans when he did:

“Now, therefore, the commanding-general, believing that a large portion of this military force of the State of Louisiana are willing to take service in the volunteer forces of the United States, and be enrolled and organized to ‘defend their homes from ruthless invaders;’ to protect their wives and children and kindred from wrongs and outrages; to shield their property from being seized by bad men; and to defend the flag of their native country as their fathers did under Jackson at Chalmette against Packingham and his myrmidons, carrying the black flag of ‘beauty and booty’.

“Appreciating their motives, relying upon their ‘well-known loyalty and patriotism,’ and with ‘praise and respect’ for these brave men, it is ordered that all the members of the ‘Native Guards’ aforesaid, and all other free colored citizens recognized by the first and late governor and authorities of the State of Louisiana as a portion of the militia of the State, who shall enlist in the volunteer service of the United States, shall be duly organized by the appointment of proper officers, and accepted, paid, equipped, armed, and rationed as are other volunteer corps of the United States, subject to the approval of the President of the United States. All such persons are required to report themselves at the Touro Charity Building, Front Levee Street, New Orleans, where proper officers will muster them into the service of the United States.

“By command of

“R. S. DAVIS, *Captain and A.A.A.G.*

“*Major-Gen. BUTLER.*”

The commanding general soon discovered that he was amongst a different people from those with whom he had been accustomed to associate. New Orleans, however, though captured was not subdued. The city had been for years the headquarters and focus of all Southern rowdyism. An immense crowd of “loafers,” many without regular occupation or means, infested the streets,

controlled the ballot-boxes, nominated the judges, selected the police, and affected to rule every one except a few immensely wealthy planters, who governed them by money. These rowdies had gradually dissolved society, till New Orleans had become the most blood-thirsty city in the world; a city where every man went armed, where a sharp word was invariably answered by a stab, and where the average of murdered men taken to one hospital was three a day. The mob were bitter advocates of slavery, held all Yankees in abhorrence, and guided by the astute brain of Pierre Soulé, whilom ambassador to Spain, resolved to contest with Gen. Butler the right to control the city. They might as well have contested it with Bonaparte. The first order issued by the general indicated a policy from which he never swerved. The mob had surrounded the St. Charles Hotel, threatening an attack on the building, then the general's headquarters; and Gen. Williams, commanding the troops round it, reported that he would be unable to control the mob. "Gen. Butler, in his serenest manner, replied, 'Give my compliments to Gen. Williams, and tell him, if he finds he cannot control the mob, to open upon them with artillery.'" The mob did that day endeavor to seize Judge Summers, the Recorder; and he was only saved by the determined courage of Lieut. Kinsman, in command of an armed party. From this moment the general assumed the attitude he never abandoned, that of master of New Orleans, making his own will the law. He at first retained the municipal organization; but, finding the officials incurably hostile, he sent them to Fort Lafayette, and thenceforward ruled alone, feeding the people, re-establishing trade, maintaining public order, and seeing that negroes obtained some reasonable measure of security. Their evidence was admitted, "Louisiana having, when she went out of the Union, taken her black code with her;" the whipping-house was abolished, and all forms of torture sternly prohibited.

The following interesting narrative, given by a correspondent of "The Atlantic Monthly," will show, to some extent, the scenes which Gen. Butler had to pass through in connection with slavery: —

"One Sunday morning, late last summer, as I came down to the breakfast-room, I was surprised to find a large number of persons assembled in the library.

"When I reached the door, a member of the staff took me by the arm, and drew me into a room toward a young and delicate mulatto girl, who was standing against the opposite wall, with the meek, patient bearing of her race, so expressive of the system of repression to which they have been so long subjected.

"Drawing down the border of her dress, my conductor showed me a sight more revolting than I trust ever again to behold.

"The poor girl's back was flayed until the quivering flesh resembled a fresh beefsteak scorched on a gridiron. With a cold chill creeping through my veins, I turned away from the sickening spectacle, and, for an explanation of the affair, scanned the various persons about the room.

"In the centre of the group, at his writing-table, sat the general. His head rested on his hand, and he was evidently endeavoring to fix his attention upon the remarks of a tall, swarthy-looking man who stood opposite, and who, I soon discovered, was the owner of the girl, and was attempting a defence of the foul outrage he had committed upon the unresisting and helpless person of his unfortunate victim, who stood smarting, but silent, under the dreadful pain inflicted by the brutal lash.

"By the side of the slave-holder stood our adjutant-general, his face livid with almost irrepressible rage, and his fists tight clenched, as if to violently restrain himself from visiting the guilty wretch with summary and retributive justice. Disposed about the room, in various attitudes, but all exhibiting in their countenances the same mingling of horror and indignation, were other members of the staff; while near the door stood three or four house-servants, who were witnesses in the case.

"To the charge of having administered the inhuman castigation, Landry (the owner of the girl) pleaded guilty, but urged, in extenuation, that the girl had dared to make an effort for that freedom which her instincts, drawn from the veins of her abuser, had taught her was the God-given right of all who possess the germ of immortality, no matter what the color of the casket in which it is hidden.

“I say ‘drawn from the veins of her abuser,’ because she declared she was his daughter; and everyone in the room, looking upon the man and woman confronting each other, confessed that the resemblance justified the assertion.

“At the conclusion of all the evidence in the case, the general continued in the same position as before, and remained for some time apparently lost in abstraction. I shall never forget the singular expression on his face.

“I had been accustomed to see him in a storm of passion at any instance of oppression or flagrant injustice; but, on this occasion, he was too deeply affected to obtain relief in the usual way.

“His whole air was one of dejection, almost listlessness; his indignation too intense, and his anger too stern, to find expression, even in his countenance. After sitting in the mood which I have described at such length, the general again turned to the prisoner, and said, in a quiet, subdued tone of voice, —

“‘Mr. Landry, I dare not trust myself to decide to-day what punishment would be meet for your offence; for I am in that state of mind that I fear I might exceed the strict demands of justice. I shall therefore place you under guard for the present, until I conclude upon your sentence.’

“A few days after, a number of influential citizens having represented to the general that Mr. Landry was not only a ‘high-toned gentleman,’ but a person of unusual ‘amiability’ of character, and was consequently entitled to no small degree of leniency, he answered, that, in consideration of the prisoner’s ‘high-toned’ character, and especially of his ‘amiability,’ of which he had seen so remarkable a proof, he had determined to meet their views; and therefore ordered that Landry give a deed of manumission to the girl, and pay a fine of five hundred dollars, to be placed in the hands of a trustee for her benefit.”

It was scenes like the above that changed Gen. Butler’s views upon the question of slavery; for it cannot be denied, that, during the first few weeks of his command in New Orleans, he had a controversy with Gen. Phelps, owing to the latter’s real antislavery feelings. Soon after his arrival, Gen. Butler gave orders that all negroes not needed for service should be removed from the camps. The city was sealed against their escape. Even secession masters were assured that their property, if not employed, should be returned. It is said that pledges of reimbursement for loss of labor were made to such. Gen. Phelps planted himself on the side of the slave; would not exile them from his camp; branded as cruel the policy that harbored, and then drove out the slave to the inhuman revenge that awaited him.

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