Fall AP Reading Packet

AP English Language & Composition

Clear Falls High School

Mrs. Herrera & Mrs. Maxwell

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**The Sacred Earth and the Power of Storytelling: The Cycle of Life:**

Native Americans saw animals, plants, and the forces of nature as part of a great sacred cycle of life that humans must treat with deep respect. Religious ceremonies organized around the event of this natural cycle. Through dreams and visions, Native Americans sought contact with the spirits they believed to inhabit all living things. Through their tales and songs, Native Americans expressed their view of the sacredness of the natural world.

**Owning Land:**

Native American's belief that the natural world is sacred affected their attitude toward land ownership. In their view, no one person could own land, which instead belonged in common to all people—and other living things—that inhabited it.

This concept of common ownership controlled sharply with that of the Europeans, who began selling North America in the early 1600s. These settles had a fierce desire to own their own land. Violent conflicts often resulted when Native American leaders signed treaties—which they usually did not understand—that opened lands to white settlement.

**A Legacy of Stories:**

The Native American oral tradition began when humans crossed from Asia to Alaska via a land bridge now covered by the Bering Strait. As populations migrated south, unique cultures and languages developed in response to different environments. Even European explorers first arrive in the New World, thousands of languages, some as unlike each other as English and Chinese, were spoken in the Americas. Each of these cultures developed its own stores and mythology.

It is likely that many early stories dramatized the struggle of the first Americans to survive. Stone Age hunters may have related tales of the hunt to groups sitting around campfires. Sacred stories were often at the heart of religious ceremonies, and in societies where myth and reality merged; rituals were thought to link the spirits of hunters and animals. Version of the earliest stories has evolved through hundreds of generations and is still a living part of Native American traditions.

**Native American Mythology**

Centuries before the first Europeans arrived on the shores of North America; Native Americans had established hundreds of thriving nations, each with a unique culture and heritage. Each nation had its own tradition of **oral literature—**stories that were passed down from one generation to the next as they were told and retold in the privacy of households and in tribal ceremonies. These stores embodied the tribe's past and told of it close relationship with the natural world. The result is a literature that is timeless, a literature created by no one author but by the people as a whole.

**Creation Myths:**

A **myth** is an anonymous, traditional story that explains a natural phenomenon, an aspect of human behavior, or a mystery of the universe. **Creation myths** tell how the world and human beings came to exist. **Origin myths** explain how natural phenomena, such as the stars, moon, and mountains, came to be or why a society has certain beliefs and customs. Elements of both creation myths and origin myths appear in one story, as in this my of the Taos Pueblo people:

“When earth was still young and giants still roamed the land, a great sickness came upon them. All of them died except for one small boy. One day while he was playing, a snake bit him. They boy cried and cried. The blood came out, and finally he dies. With his tears our lakes became. With his blood the red clay became. With his body our mountains became, and that was how earth became.”

**Archetypes:**

The myths told by peoples around the world share common elements known as archetypes. An archetype is a symbol, story pattern, or character type that is found in the literature of many cultures. An example of an archetype is children with opposite qualities who are born of the same parent. In Iroquois myth, Sky Woman gives birth to twins, one good and one evil. This event explains the eternal struggle between light and dark and between order and chaos.

**Tricksters:**

Another archetype found in Native American mythology is the **trickster**. This character type, frequently an animal—such as a coyote, a raven, or a mink-- that speaks and displays other human traits, has two sides to its personality. Tricksters are rebels who defy authority and frequently cause trouble, but they are also clever and creative figures who can unexpectedly reveal wisdom. For example, in one Native American myth, the coyote brought death into the word when he realized that the earth would become too crowded if people were to live forever. In a Navajo myth, the Holy People were gathered to place the stars in the sky. This process was taking so long that Coyote grew impatient, snatched that bag of stars, and hurled it into the heavens, forming the Milky Way. A Kiowa myth explains how a trickster stole the sun from those living on the other side on the earth so that all people could share day and night equally.

**The Function of Myths:**

Native American myths told by various tribes have several things in common. Many emphasize a strong spiritual bond between the Creator, humanity, and the entire natural world. They emphasize that it is the duty of human’s beings to maintain a balance within the natural world.

In many Native American cultures, each family group, or clan, believed it descended from a particular animal or to the natural object, called the **totem**. Members of the bear clan, for example, honored the bear as their clan ancestor. The bear in turn served as the clan's guardian spirit, helping and protecting its members. The bear clan was responsible for preserving the myths of the bear.

Myths and rituals continue to play a central role in traditional Native American cultures. They are used to give people a sense of order and identity, to heal the sick, to ensure a plentiful supply of food, to teach moral lessons, and to initiate young people into adulthood and the wisdom of the tribal past.

The Way to Rainy Mountain by N. Scott Momaday

**Prologue**

A single knoll rises out of the plain in Oklahoma, north and west of the Wichita Range. For my people, the Kiowa’s, it is an old landmark, and they gave it the name Rainy Mountain. The hardest weather in the world is there. Winter brings blizzards, hot tornadic winds arise in the spring, and in summer the prairie is an anvil's edge. The grass turns brittle and brown, and it cracks beneath your feet. There are green belts along the rivers and creeks, linear groves of hickory and pecan, willow and witch hazel. At a distance in July or August the steaming foliage seems almost to writhe in fire. Great green and yellow grasshoppers are everywhere in the

tall grass, popping up like corn to sting the flesh, and tortoises crawl about on the red earth, going nowhere in the plenty of time. Loneliness is an aspect of the land. All things in the plain are isolate; there is no confusion of objects in the eye, but one hill or one tree or one man. To look upon that landscape in the early morning, with the sun at your back, is to lose the sense of proportion. Your imagination comes to life, and this, you think, is where Creation was begun.

I returned to Rainy Mountain in July. My grandmother had died in the spring, and I wanted to be at her grave. She had lived to be very old and at last infirm. Her only living daughter was with her when she died, and I was told that in death her face was that of a child.

I like to think of her as a child. When she was born, the Kiowa’s were living the last great moment of their history. For more than a hundred years they had controlled the open range from the Smoky Hill River to the Red, from the headwaters of the Canadian to the fork of the Arkansas and Cimarron. In alliance with the Comanche’s, they had ruled the whole of the southern Plains. War was their sacred business, and they were among the finest horsemen the world has ever known. But warfare for the Kiowa’s was preeminently a

matter of disposition rather than of survival, and they never understood the grim, unrelenting advance of the U.S. Cavalry. When at last, divided and ill provisioned, they were driven onto the Staked Plains in the cold rains of autumn, they fell into panic. In Palo Duro Canyon they abandoned their crucial stores to pillage and had nothing then but their lives. In order to save themselves, they surrendered to the soldiers at Fort Sill and were imprisoned in the old stone corral that now stands as a military museum. My grandmother was spared the humiliation of those high gray walls by eight or ten years, but she must have known from birth the affliction of defeat, the dark brooding of old warriors.

Her name was Aho, and she belonged to the last culture to evolve in North America. Her forebears came down from the high country in western Montana nearly three centuries ago. They were a mountain people, a mysterious tribe of hunters whose language has never been positively classified in any major group. In the late seventeenth century they began a long migration to the south and east. It was a journey toward the dawn, and it led to a golden age. Along the way the Kiowa’s were befriended by the Crows, who gave them the culture and religion of the Plains. They acquired horses, and their ancient nomadic spirit was suddenly free of the ground. They acquired Tai-me, the sacred Sun Dance doll, from that moment the object and symbol of their worship, and so shared in the divinity of the sun. Not least, they acquired the sense of destiny, therefore courage and pride. When they entered upon the southern Plains they had been transformed. No longer were they slaves to the simple necessity of survival; they were a lordly and dangerous society of fighters and thieves, hunters and priests of the sun. According to their origin myth, they entered the world through a hollow log. From

one point of view, their migration was the fruit of an old prophecy, for indeed they emerged from a sunless world.

Although my grandmother lived out her long life in the shadow of Rainy Mountain, the immense landscape of the continental interior lay like memory in her blood. She could tell of the Crows, whom she had never seen, and of the Black Hills, where she had never been. I wanted to see in reality what she had seen more perfectly in the mind's eye, and traveled fifteen hundred miles to begin my pilgrimage.

Yellowstone, it seemed to me, was the top of the world, a region of deep lakes and dark timber, canyons and waterfalls. But, beautiful as it is, one might have the sense of confinement there. The skyline in all directions is close at hand, the high wall of the woods and deep cleavages of shade. There is a perfect freedom in the mountains, but it belongs to the eagle and the elk, the badger and the bear. The Kiowa’s reckoned their stature by the distance they could see, and they were bent and blind in the wilderness.

Descending eastward, the highland meadows are a stairway to the plain. In July the inland slope of the Rockies is luxuriant with flax and buckwheat, stonecrop and larkspur. The earth unfolds and the limit of the land recedes. Clusters of trees, and animals grazing far in the distance, cause the vision to reach away and wonder to build upon the mind. The sun follows a longer course in the day, and the sky is immense beyond all comparison. The great billowing clouds that sail upon it are shadows that move upon the grain like water, dividing light. Farther down, in the land of the Crows and Blackfeet, the plain is yellow. Sweet clover takes hold of the hills and bends upon itself to cover and seal the soil. There the Kiowa’s paused on their way; they had come to the place where they must change their lives. The sun is at home on the plains. Precisely there does it have the certain character of a god. When the Kiowa’s came to the land of the Crows, they could see the darkness of the hills at dawn across the Bighorn River, the profusion of light on the grain shelves, the oldest deity ranging after the solstices. Not yet would they veer southward to the caldron of the land that lay below; they must wean their blood from the northern winter and hold the mountains a while longer in their view. They bore Tai-me in procession to the east.

A dark mist lay over the Black Hills, and the land was like iron. At the top of a ridge I caught sight of Devil's Tower up thrust against the gray sky as if in the birth of time the core of the earth had broken through its crust and the motion of the world was begun. There are things in nature that engender an awful quiet in the heart of man; Devil's Tower is one of them. Two centuries ago, because they could not do otherwise, the Kiowa’s made a legend at the base of the rock. My grandmother said:

Eight children were there at play, seven sisters and their brother. Suddenly the boy was struck dumb; he trembled and began to run upon his hands and feet. His fingers became claws, and his body was covered with fur. Directly there was a bear where the boy had been. The sisters were terrified; they ran, and the bear after them. They came to the stump of a great tree, and the tree spoke to them. It bade them climb upon it, and as they did so it began to rise into the air. The bear came to kill them, but they were just beyond its reach. It reared against the tree and scored the bark all around with its claws. The seven sisters were born into the sky, and they became the stars of the Big Dipper. From that moment, and so long as the legend lives, the Kiowa’s have kinsmen in the night sky. Whatever they were in the mountains, they could be no more. However tenuous their well-being, however much they had suffered and would suffer again, they had found a way out of the wilderness.

My grandmother had a reverence for the sun, a holy regard that now is all but gone out of mankind. There was wariness in her, and an ancient awe. She was a Christian in her later years, but she had come a long way about, and she never forgot her birthright. As a child she had been to the Sun Dances; she had taken part in those annual rites, and by them she had learned the restoration of her people in the presence of Tai-me. She was about seven when the last Kiowa Sun Dance was held in 1887 on the Washita River above Rainy Mountain Creek. The buffalo were gone. In order to consummate the ancient sacrifice--to impale the head of a buffalo bull upon the medicine tree--a delegation of old men journeyed into Texas, there to beg and barter for an animal from the Goodnight herd. She was ten when the Kiowa’s came together for the last time as a living Sun Dance culture. They could find no buffalo; they had to hang an old hide from the sacred tree. Before the dance could begin, a company of soldiers rode out from Fort Sill under orders to disperse the tribe. Forbidden without cause the essential act of their faith, having seen the wild herds slaughtered and left to rot upon the ground, the Kiowa’s backed away forever from the medicine tree. That was July 20, 1890, at the great bend of the Washita. My grandmother was there. Without bitterness, and for as long as she lived, she bore a vision of deicide.

Now that I can have her only in memory, I see my grandmother in the several postures that were peculiar to her: standing at the wood stove on a winter morning and turning meat in a great iron skillet; sitting at the south window, bent above her beadwork, and afterwards, when her vision failed, looking down for a long time into the fold of her hands; going out upon a cane, very slowly as she did when the weight of age came upon her; praying. I remember her most often at prayer. She made long, rambling prayers out of suffering and hope, having seen many things. I was never sure that I had the right to hear, so exclusive were they of all mere custom and company. The last time I saw her she prayed standing by the side of her bed at night, naked to the waist, the light of a kerosene lamp moving upon her dark skin. Her long, black hair, always drawn and braided in the day, lay upon her shoulders and against her breasts like a shawl. I do not speak Kiowa, and I never understood her prayers, but there was something inherently sad in the sound, some merest hesitation upon the syllables of sorrow. She began in a high and descending pitch, exhausting her breath to silence; then again and again--and always the same intensity of effort, of something that is, and is not, like urgency in the human voice. Transported so in the dancing light among the shadows of her room, she seemed beyond the reach of time. But that was illusion; I think I knew then that I should not see her again.

Houses are like sentinels in the plain, old keepers of the weather watch. There, in a very little while, wood takes on the appearance of great age. All colors wear soon away in the wind and rain, and then the wood is burned gray and the grain appears and the nails turn red with rust. The windowpanes are black and opaque; you imagine there is nothing within, and indeed there are many ghosts, bones given up to the land. They stand here and there against the sky, and you approach them for a longer time than you expect. They belong in the distance; it is their domain.

Once there was a lot of sound in my grandmother's house, a lot of coming and going, feasting and talk. The summers there were full of excitement and reunion. The Kiowa’s are a summer people; they abide the cold and keep to themselves, but when the season turns and the land becomes warm and vital they cannot hold still; an old love of going returns upon them. The aged visitors who came to my grandmother's house when I was a child were made of lean and leather, and they bore themselves upright. They wore great black hats and bright ample shirts that shook in the wind. They rubbed fat upon their hair and wound their braids with strips of colored cloth. Some of them painted their faces and carried the scars of old and cherished enmities. They were an old council of warlords, come to remind and be reminded of who they were. Their wives and daughters served them well. The women might indulge themselves; gossip was at once the mark and compensation of their servitude. They made loud and elaborate talk among themselves, full of jest and gesture, fright and false alarm. They went abroad in fringed and flowered shawls, bright beadwork and German silver. They were at home in the kitchen, and they prepared meals that were banquets.

There were frequent prayer meetings, and great nocturnal feasts. When I was a child I played with my cousins outside, where the lamplight fell upon the ground and the singing of the old people rose up around us and carried away into the darkness. There were a lot of good things to eat, a lot of laughter and surprise. And afterwards, when the quiet returned, I lay down with my grandmother and could hear the frogs away by the river and feel the motion of the air.

Now there is a funeral silence in the rooms, the endless wake of some final word. The walls have closed in upon my grandmother's house. When I returned to it in mourning, I saw for the first time in my life how small it was. It was late at night, and there was a white moon, nearly full. I sat for a long time on the stone steps by the kitchen door. From there I could see out across the land; I could see the long row of trees by the creek, the low light upon the rolling plains, and the stars of the Big Dipper. Once I looked at the moon and caught sight of a strange thing. A cricket had perched upon the handrail, only a few inches away from me.

My line of vision was such that the creature filled the moon like a fossil. It had gone there, I thought, to live and die, for there, of all places, was its small definition made whole and eternal. A warm wind rose up and purled like the longing within me.

The next morning I awoke at dawn and went out on the dirt road to Rainy Mountain. It was already hot, and the grasshoppers began to fill the air. Still, it was early in the morning, and the birds sang out of the shadows. The long yellow grass on the mountain shone in the bright light, and a scissor tail high above the land. There, where it ought to be, at the end of a long and legendary way, was my grandmother's grave. Here and there on the dark stones were ancestral names. Looking back once, I saw the mountain and came away.

1976

**“from The Iroquois Constitution”**

I am Dekanawidah and with the Five Nations’ Confederate Lords I plant the Tree of Great Peace. I plant it in your territory, Adodarhoh, and the Onondaga Nation, in the territory of you who are Fire keepers. I name the tree the Tree of the Great Long Leaves. Under the shade of this Tree of the Great Peace we spread the soft white feathery down of the globe thistle as seats for you, Adodarhoh, and your cousin Lords.

We place you upon those seats, spread soft with the feathery down of the globe thistle, there beneath the shade of the spreading branches of the Tree of Peace. There shall you sit and watch the Council Fire of the Confederacy of the Five Nations, and all the affairs of the Five Nations shall be transacted at this place before you, Adodarhoh, and your cousin Lords, by the Confederate Lords of the Five Nations.

Roots have spread out from the Tree of the Great Peace, one to the north, one to the east, one to the south and one to the west. The name of these roots is The Great White Roots and their nature is Peace and Strength.

If any man or any nation outside the Five Nations shall obey the laws of the Great Peace and make known their disposition to the Lords of the Confederacy, they may trace the Roots to the Tree and if their minds are clean and they are obedient and promise to obey the wishes of the Confederate Council, they shall be welcomed to take shelter beneath the Tree of the Long Leaves.

We place at the top of the Tree of the Long Leaves an Eagle who is able to see afar. If he sees in the distance any evil approaching or any danger threatening he will at once warn the people of the Confederacy.

The Smoke of the Confederate Council Fire shall ever ascend and pierce the sky so that other nations who may be allies may see the Council Fire of the Great Peace.

Whenever the Confederate Lords shall assemble for the purpose of holding a council, the Onondaga Lords shall open it by expressing their gratitude to their cousin Lords and greeting them, and they shall make an address and offer thanks to the earth where men dwell, to the streams of water, the pools, the springs and the lakes, to the maize and the fruits, to the medicinal herbs and trees, to the forest trees for their usefulness, to the animals that serve as food and give their pelts for clothing, to the great winds and the lesser winds, to the Thunderers, to the Sun, the mighty warrior, to the moon, to the messengers of the Creator who reveal his wishes and to the Great Creator who dwells in the heavens above, who gives all the things useful to men, and who is the source and the ruler of health and life.

Then shall the Onondaga Lords declare the council open. . . .

All Lords of the Five Nations Confederacy must be honest in all things. They must not idle or gossip, but be men possessing those honorable qualities that make true royaneh. It shall be a serious wrong for anyone to lead a Lord into trivial affairs, for the people must ever hold their Lords high in estimation out of respect to their honorable positions.

When a candidate Lord is to be installed he shall furnish four strings of shells (or wampum) one span in length bound together at one end. Such will constitute the evidence of his pledge to the Confederate Lords that he will live according to the constitution of the Great Peace and exercise justice in all affairs.

When the pledge is furnished the Speaker of the Council must hold the shell strings in his hand and address the opposite side of the Council Fire and he shall commence his address saying: “Now behold him. He has now become a Confederate Lord. See how splendid he looks.” An address may then follow. At the end of it he shall send the bunch of shell strings to the 4arveled side and they shall be received as evidence of the pledge. Then shall the opposite side say:

“We now do crown you with the sacred emblem of the deer’s antlers, the emblem of your Lordship. You shall now become a mentor of the people of the Five Nations. The thickness of your skin shall be seven spans — which is to say that you shall be proof against anger, offensive actions and criticism. Your heart shall be filled with peace and good will and your mind filled with a yearning for the welfare of the people of the Confederacy. With endless patience you shall carry out your duty and your firmness shall be tempered with tenderness for your people. Neither anger nor fury shall find lodgement in your mind and all your words and actions shall be marked with calm deliberation. In all of your deliberations in the Confederate Council, in your efforts at law making, in all your official acts, self interest shall be cast into oblivion. Cast not over your shoulder behind you the warnings of the nephews and nieces should they chide you for any error or wrong you may do, but return to the way of the Great Law which is just and right. Look and listen for the welfare of the whole people and have always in view not only the present but also the coming generations, even those whose faces are yet beneath the surface of the ground — the unborn of the future Nation.”

1550-1600

**Meet William Bradford**

**(1590-1657)**

It was 1620, and the passengers aboard the Mayflower were traveling to the Americas. Violent storms tossed the creaking ship and blew it far off course. Among the passengers was thirty-year-old William Bradford.

Born in Yorkshire, England, in 1590, Bradford was orphaned as an infant and brought up by relatives. As a youth, he studied the Bible and became a Separatist. Like the Puritans, Separatists sought reforms in the Church of England. Rather than try to “purify “it, however, the Separatists broke away. In 1609, Bradford expatriated, moving to Leiden in Holland with the congregation and its leader, John Robinson. Fearing they might become assimilated into Dutch culture and lose their identity, the Separatists decided to go to the Americans. John Carver, a successful businessman, attained financial backing and chartered the Mayflower. Nearly 500 miles northeast of their intended destination, the Separatists landed in Province town, Massachusetts, on Cape Cod on November 21, 1620. On December 26, the 102 settlers disembarked nearby at a site they named Plymouth, after the town where they had set said. Before leaving the Mayflower, the men in the group drafted and signed the historic Mayflower compact, the colony's rules of government.

**The First Winter:**

The group of about 100 settlers, known today as the Pilgrims, elected Bradford leader after John Carver, the first governor, died. The voyage had been harsh. They arrived with little or no food at the onset of winter and had no wilderness survival skills. They constructed crude shelters, hoping to make it through the winter. Nearly half the colonists died of scurvy, pneumonia, fever, or starvation.

**Governor:**

The colony survived and in time grew into a thriving community under Bradford's leadership. He was reelected governor for thirty one-year terms between 1622-1656. In his gubernatorial years, he served as chief magistrate, high judge, and treasurer. He also presided over the community's legislature, known as the General Court. Unlike the Massachusetts Bay Colony, which was a Bible commonwealth, Plymouth was fairly egalitarian for its day, allowing Presbyterians and maverick non believers to live in the community without forcing them to practice in Congregationalist or Separatist churches. To ensure a peaceable, organized society, Bradford distributed parcels of land equally to all settlers, even non-believers.

In 1630, Bradford started to compile Of Plymouth Plantation, 1620-1647. The chronicle is unique in that it separates religious commentary from historical commentary. Certain narratives published by Puritans who had arrived during the Great Migration deemed colonial life as God's plan. Bradford made no such doctrinaire claims. Instead he steered a middle course between a Bible commonwealth and a secular society that made for a prosperous Plymouth.

# Of Plymouth Plantation By William Bradford

From Chapter 9: Of Their Voyage, and How They Passed the Sea; and of Their Sate Arrival at Cape Cod

In sundry[[1]](#footnote-1)1 of these storms the winds were so fierce and the seas so high, as they could not bear a knot of sail, but were forced to hull for divers 2 days together. And in one of them, as they thus lay at hull in a mighty storm, a lusty 3 young man called John Howland, coming upon some occasion above the gratins was, with seele of the ship, thrown into sea; but it pleased God that he caught hold of the topsail halyards which hung overboard and ran out at length. Yet he held his hold (though he was sundry fathoms under water0 till he was hauled up by the same rope to the brim of the water, and then with a boat hook and other means got into the ship again his life saved. And though he was something ill with it, yet he lived many years after and became a profitable member both in church and commonwealth. In all this voyage there died but one of the passengers, which was William Butten, a youth, servant to Samuel Fuller, when they drew near the coast.

But to omit other things (that I may be brief) after long beating at sea they fell with that lend which is called Cape Cod; the which being made and certainly known to be it, they were not a little joyful. After some deliberation had amongst themselves and with the master of the ship, they tacked about and resolved to stand for the southward (the wind and weather being fair) to find some place about Hudson’s River for their habitation. But after they had sailed that course about half the day, they fell amongst dangerous shoals and roaring breakers, and they were so far entangled therewith as they conceived themselves in great danger; and the wind shrinking upon them withal, 4 they resolved to bear up again for the Cape and thought themselves happy to get out of those dangers before night overtook them, as by God’s good providence they did. And the next day they got into the Cape Harbor where they rid 5 in safety…

Being thus arrived in a good harbor, and brought them safe to land, they fell upon their knees and blessed the God of Heaven who had brought them over the vast and furious ocean, and delivered them from all the perils and miseries thereof, again to set their feet on the firm and stable earth, their proper element. And no marvel if they were thus joyful, seeing wise Seneca 6 was so affected with sailing a few limes on coast of his own Italy, as he affirmed, that he had rather remain twenty years his way by land than pass by sea to any place in a short time, so tedious and dreadful was the same unto him.

But her I cannot but stay and make a pause, and stand half amazed at this poor people’s present condition; and so I think will the reader, too, when he well considers the same. Being thus passed the vast ocean, and a sea of troubles before in their preparation (as may be remembered by that which went before), they had now no friends to welcome them nor inns to entertain or refresh their weatherbeaten bodies; no houses or much less towns to repair to, to see for succor. 7 It is recorded in Scripture 8 as a mercy to the Apostle and his shipwrecked company, that the barbarians showed them no small kindness in refreshing them, but these savage barbarians, when they met with them (as after will appear) were readier to fill their sides full of arrows than otherwise. And for the season it was winter, and they that know the winters of that country [[2]](#footnote-2)know them to be sharp and violent, and subject to cruel and fierce storms, dangerous to travel to known places, much more to search an unknown coast.

**From Chapter 11: The Starving Time**

But that which was most sad and lamentable was, that in two or three months’ time half of their company died, especially in January and February, being the depth of winter, and wanting houses and other comforts; being infected with the scurvy 9 and other diseases which this long voyage and their inaccommodate condition had brought upon them. So as there died some times two or three a day in the foresaid time, that of 100 and odd persons, scarce fifty remained. And of these, in the time of most distress, there was but six or seven sound persons who to their great commendations, be it spoken, spared no pains night nor day, but with abundance to tail and hazard of their own health, fetched them wood, made them fires, dressed them meant, made their beds, washed their loathsome clothes, clothed and unclothed the. In a word, did all homely 10 and necessary offices for them which dainty and queasy stomachs cannot endure to hear named; and all this willingly and cheerfully, without any grudging in the least, showing herein their true love unto their friends and brethren; a rare example and worthy to be remembered. Two of these seven were Mr. William Brewster, their reverend Elder, and Myles Standish, their Captain and military commander, unto whom myself and many others were much beholden in our low and sick condition. And yet the Lord so upheld these person as in this general calamity they were not at all infected either with sickness or lameness.

**INDIAN RELATIONS**

All this while the Indians came skulking about them, and would sometimes show themselves all off, but when any approached near them, they would run away; and once they [the Indians] stole away their [the colonists’] tools where they had been at work and were gone to dinner. But about the 16th of March, a certain Indian came boldly amongst them and spoke to them in broken English, which they could well understand but marveled at it. At length they understood by discourse with him, that he was not of these parts, but belonged to the eastern parts where some English ships came to fish, with whom he was acquainted and could name sundry of them by their names, amongst whom he had got his language. He became profitable to them in acquainting them with many things concerning the state of the country in the east parts where he lived, which was afterwards profitable unto them; as also of the people here, of their names, number and strength, of their situation and distance from this place , and who was chief amongst them. His name was Samoset. He told them also of another Indian who name was Squanto, a native of this place, who had been in England and could speak better English than himself.

Being, after some time of entertainment and gifts dismissed, a while after he came again, and five more with him, and they brought again all the tools that were stolen away before, and made way for the coming of their great Sachem, called Massasoit. Who about four or five days after, came with the chief of his friends and other attendance, with the aforesaid Squanto. With whom, after friendly entertainment and some gifts given him, they made a peace with him (which hath now continued this 24 years) in these terms:

1. That neither he nor any of his should injure or do hurt to any of their people.

2. That if any of his did hurt to any of theirs, he should send the offender, that they might punish him.

3. That if anything were taken away from any of theirs, he should cause it to be restored; and they should do the like to his.

4. If any did unjustly war against him, they would aid him; if any did war against them, the should aid them.

5. He should send to his neighbors confederates to certify them of this, that they might not wrong them, but might be likewise comprised in the conditions of peace.

6. That when their men came to them, they should leave their bows and arrows behind them.

After these things he returned to his place called Sowams, some 40 miles from this place, but Squanto continued with them and was their interpreter and was a special instrument sent of God for their good beyond their expectations. He directed them how to set their corn, where to take fish, and to procure other commodities, and was also their pilot to bring them to unknown places for their profit, and never left them till he died.

**From Chapter 12: First Thanksgiving**

They began now to gather in the small harvest they had, and to fit up their houses and dwellings against winter, being all well recovered in health and strength and had all things in good plenty. For as some were thus employed in affairs abroad, others exercised in fishing, about cod and bass and other fish, of which they took good store, of which every family had their portion. All the summer there was no want; an now began to come in store of fowl, as winter approached, of which this place did abound when they came first (but afterward decreased by degrees). And besides waterfowl there was great store of wild turkeys, of which they took many, besides venison, etc. Besides they had about a peck of meal a week to a person, or now since harvest, Indian corn to that proportion. Which made many afterwards write so largely of their plenty here to their friends in England, which were no feigned but true reports.

1647

# "To My Dear and Loving Husband"

*By Anne Bradstreet*

If ever two were one, then surely we.

If ever man were loved by wife, then thee;

If ever wife was happy in a man,

Compare with me ye women if you can.

I prize thy love more than whole mines of gold,

Or all the riches that the East doth hold.

My love is such that rivers cannot quench,

Nor ought1 but love from thee give recompense.

Thy love is such I can no way repay;

The heavens reward thee manifold2, I pray.

Then while we live, in love let's so persevere,3

That when we live no more we may live ever. 1649

1 Ought means “anything”

2 here, manifold means “in many different ways”

3 In the 1600s, the word persevere was spelled and pronounced as per se ver, with the accent on the second syllable. Therefore, it rhymed with ever in the following line.

### 

**"Upon the Burning of Our House"**

*by Anne Bradstreet*

In silent night when rest I took,   
For sorrow near I did not look,   
I waken'd was with thund’ring noise   
And piteous shrieks of dreadful voice.   
That fearful sound of fire and fire,   
Let no man know is my Desire.   
I, starting up, the light did spy,   
And to my God my heart did cry   
To strengthen me in my Distress   
And not to leave me succorless.1   
Then coming out beheld a space,   
The flame consume my dwelling place.

And, when I could no longer look,   
I blest his Name that gave and took,2   
[[3]](#footnote-3)That laid my goods now in the dust:    
Yea so it was, and so 'twas just.   
It was his own: it was not mine;   
Far be it that I should repine.3

He might of All justly bereft,   
But yet sufficient for us left.   
When by the ruins oft I past,   
My sorrowing eyes aside did cast,   
And here and there the places spy   
Where oft I sate, and long did lye.

Here stood that Trunk, and there that chest;   
There lay that store I counted best:   
My pleasant things in ashes lye,   
And them behold no more shall I.   
Under thy roof no guest shall sit,   
Nor at thy Table eat a bit.

No pleasant tale shall 'ere be told,   
Nor things recounted done of old.   
No Candle e’re shall shine in Thee,   
Nor bridegroom's voice e’re heard shall bee.   
In silence ever shall thou lie;   
Adieu, Adeiu,4 All's vanity.5

Then straight I gin my heart to chide,   
And didst thy wealth on earth abide?   
Didst fix thy hope on mould’ring dust,   
The arm of flesh didst make thy trust?   
Raise up thy thoughts above the sky   
That dunghill mists away may fly.

Thou hast an house on high erect   
Framed by that mighty Architect,   
With glory richly furnished,   
Stands permanent though this bee fled.   
It's purchased, and paid for too   
By him who hath enough to do.

A price so vast as is unknown,   
Yet, by His gift, is made thine own.   
There's wealth enough, I need no more;   
Farewell my Pelf,6 farewell my Store.   
The world no longer let me Love,   
My hope and Treasure lies Above. 1666

# “Huswifery”

# by EDWARD TAYLOR

Make me, O Lord, thy Spinning Wheele compleat;   
 Thy Holy Worde my Distaff make for mee.   
Make mine Affections thy Swift Flyers neate,   
 And make my Soule thy holy Spoole to bee.   
 My Conversation make to be thy Reele,   
 And reele the yarn thereon spun of thy Wheele.

Make me thy Loome then, knit therein this Twine:   
 And make thy Holy Spirit, Lord, winde quills:   
Then weave the Web thyselfe. The yarn is fine.   
 Thine Ordinances make my Fulling Mills.   
 Then dy the same in Heavenly Colours Choice,   
 All pinkt with Varnish't Flowers of Paradise.

Then cloath therewith mine Understanding, Will,   
 Affections, Judgment, Conscience, Memory;   
My Words and Actions, that their shine may fill   
 My wayes with glory and thee glorify.   
 Then mine apparell shall display before yee   
That I am Cloathd in Holy robes for glory.

1645

*from* Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God

by Jonathan Edwards

So that, thus it is that natural men are held in the hand of God, over the pit of hell; they have deserved the fiery pit, and are already sentenced to it; and God is dreadfully provoked, his anger is as great towards them as to those that are actually suffering the executions of the fierceness of his wrath in hell, and they have done nothing in the least to appease or abate that anger, neither is God in the least bound by any promise to hold them up one moment; the devil is waiting for them, hell is gaping for them, the flames gather and flash about them, and would fain lay hold on them, and swallow them up; the fire pent up in their own hearts is struggling to break out: and they have no interest in any Mediator, there are no means within reach that can be any security to them. In short, they have no refuge, nothing to take hold of; all that preserves them every moment is the mere arbitrary will, and uncovenanted, unobliged forbearance of an incensed God.

The use of this awful subject may be for awakening unconverted persons in this congregation. This that you have heard is the case of every one of you that are out of Christ. — That world of misery, that lake of burning brimstone, is extended abroad under you. There is the dreadful pit of the glowing flames of the wrath of God; there is hell’s wide gaping mouth open; and you have nothing to stand upon, nor any thing to take hold of; there is nothing between you and hell but the air; it is only the power and mere pleasure of God that holds you up.

You probably are not sensible of this; you find you are kept out of hell, but do not see the hand of God in it; but look at other things, as the good state of your bodily constitution, your care of your own life, and the means you use for your own preservation. But indeed these things are nothing; if God should withdraw his hand, they would avail no more to keep you from falling, than the thin air to hold up a person that is suspended in it.

Your wickedness makes you as it were heavy as lead, and to tend downwards with great weight and pressure towards hell; and if God should let you go, you would immediately sink and swiftly descend and plunge into the bottomless gulf, and your healthy constitution, and your own care and prudence, and best contrivance, and all your righteousness, would have no more influence to uphold you and keep you out of hell, than a spider’s web would have to stop a falling rock. . . .

The wrath of God is like great waters that are dammed for the present; they increase more and more, and rise higher and higher, till an outlet is given; and the longer the stream is stopped, the more rapid and mighty is its course, when once it is let loose. It is true, that judgment against your evil works has not been executed hitherto; the floods of God’s vengeance have been withheld; but your guilt in the mean time is constantly increasing, and you are every day treasuring up more wrath; the waters are constantly rising, and waxing more and more mighty; and there is nothing but the mere pleasure of God, that holds the waters back, that are unwilling to be stopped, and press hard to go forward. If God should only withdraw his hand from the flood-gate, it would immediately fly open, and the fiery floods of the fierceness and wrath of God, would rush forth with inconceivable fury, and would come upon you with omnipotent power; and if your strength were ten thousand times greater than it is, yea, ten thousand times greater than the strength of the stoutest, sturdiest devil in hell, it would be nothing to withstand or endure it.

The bow of God’s wrath is bent, and the arrow made ready on the string, and justice bends the arrow at your heart, and strains the bow, and it is nothing but the mere pleasure of God, and that of an angry God, without any promise or obligation at all, that keeps the arrow one moment from being made drunk with your blood. Thus all you that never passed under a great change of heart, by the mighty power of the Spirit of God upon your souls; all you that were never born again, and made new creatures, and raised from being dead in sin, to a state of new, and before altogether unexperienced light and life, are in the hands of an angry God. However you may have reformed your life in many things, and may have had religious affections, and may keep up a form of religion in your families and closets, and in the house of God, it is nothing but his mere pleasure that keeps you from being this moment swallowed up in everlasting destruction. However unconvinced you may now be of the truth of what you hear, by and by you will be fully convinced of it. Those that are gone from being in the like circumstances with you, see that it was so with them; for destruction came suddenly upon most of them; when they expected nothing of it, and while they were saying, Peace and safety: now they see, that those things on which they depended for peace and safety, were nothing but thin air and empty shadows.

The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider, or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked: his wrath towards you burns like fire; he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else, but to be cast into the fire; he is of purer eyes than to bear to have you in his sight; you are ten thousand times more abominable in his eyes, than the most hateful venomous serpent is in ours. You have offended him infinitely more than ever a stubborn rebel did his prince; and yet it is nothing but his hand that holds you from falling into the fire every moment. It is to be ascribed to nothing else, that you did not go to hell the last night; that you was suffered to awake again in this world, after you closed your eyes to sleep. And there is no other reason to be given, why you have not dropped into hell since you arose in the morning, but that God’s hand has held you up. There is no other reason to be given why you have not gone to hell, since you have sat here in the house of God, provoking his pure eyes by your sinful wicked manner of attending his solemn worship. Yea, there is nothing else that is to be given as a reason why you do not this very moment drop down into hell.

O sinner! Consider the fearful danger you are in: it is a great furnace of wrath, a wide and bottomless pit, full of the fire of wrath, that you are held over in the hand of that God, whose wrath is provoked and incensed as much against you, as against many of the damned in hell. You hang by a slender thread, with the flames of divine wrath flashing about it, and ready every moment to singe it, and burn it asunder; and you have no interest in any Mediator, and nothing to lay hold of to save yourself, nothing to keep off the flames of wrath, nothing of your own, nothing that you ever have done, nothing that you can do, to induce God to spare you one moment. . . .

1774

The Crucible by Arthur Miller

ACT ONE

(AN OVERTURE)

*A small upper bedroom in the home of Reverend Samuel Parris, Salem, Massachusetts, in the spring of the year 1692. There is a narrow window at the left. Through its leaded panes the morning sunlight streams. A candle still burns near the bed, which is at the right. A chest, a chair, and a small table are the other furnishings. At the back a door opens on the landing of the stairway to the ground floor. The room gives op an air of clean spareness. The roof rafters are exposed, and the wood colors are raw and unmellowed. As the curtain rises, Reverend Parris is discovered kneeling be-side the bed, evidently in prayer. His daughter, Betty Parris, aged ten, is lying on the bed, inert.*

At the time of these events Parris was in his middle forties. In history he cut a villainous path, and there is very little good to be said for him. He believed he was being persecuted wherever he went, despite his best efforts to win people and God to his side. In meeting, he felt insulted if someone rose to shut the door without first asking his permission. He was a widower with no interest in children, or talent with them. He regarded them as young adults, and until this strange crisis he, like the rest of Salem, never conceived that the children were anything but thankful for being permitted to walk straight, eyes slightly lowered, arms at the sides, and mouths shut until bidden to speak. His house stood in the “town” - but we today would hardly call it a village. The meeting house was nearby, and from this point outward - toward the bay or inland - there were a few small-windowed, dark houses snuggling against the raw Massachusetts winter. Salem had been established hardly forty years before. To the European world the whole province was a bar-baric frontier inhabited by a sect of fanatics who, nevertheless, were shipping out products of slowly increasing quantity and value. No one can really know what their lives were like. They had no novelists - and would not have permitted anyone to read a novel if one were handy. Their creed forbade anything resembling a theater or “vain enjoyment.” They did not celebrate Christmas, and a holiday from work meant only that they must concentrate even more upon prayer. Which is not to say that nothing broke into this strict and somber way of life. When a new farmhouse was built, friends assembled to “raise the roof,” and there would be special foods cooked and probably some potent cider passed around. There was a good supply of ne’er-do-wells in Salem, who dallied at the shovelboard in Bridget Bishop’s tavern. Probably more than the creed, hard work kept the morals of the place from spoiling, for the people were forced to fight the land like heroes for every grain of corn, and no man had very much time for fooling around. That there were some jokers, however, is indicated by the practice of appointing a two-man patrol whose duty was to “walk forth in the time of God’s worship to take notice of such as either lye about the meeting house, without attending to the word and ordinances, or that lye at home or in the fields with-out giving good account thereof, and to take the names of such persons, and to present them to the magistrates, whereby they may be accordingly proceeded against.” This predilection for minding other people’s business was time honored among the people of Salem, and it undoubtedly created many of the suspicions which were to feed the coming madness. It was also, in my opinion, one of the things that a John Proctor would rebel against, for the time of the armed camp had almost passed, and since the country was reasonably - although not wholly - safe, the old disciplines were beginning to rankle. But, as in all such matters, the issue was not clear cut, for danger was still a possibility, and in unity still lay the best promise of safety. The edge of the wilderness was close by. The American continent stretched endlessly west, and it was full of mystery for them. It stood, dark and threatening, over their shoulders night and day, for out of it Indian tribes marauded from time to time, and Reverend Parris had parishioners who had lost relatives to these heathen. The parochial snobbery of these people was partly responsible for their failure to convert the Indians. Probably they also preferred to take land from heathens rather than from fellow Christians. At any rate, very few Indians were converted, and the Salem folk believed that the virgin forest was the Devil’s last preserve, his home base and the citadel of his final stand. To the best of their knowledge the American forest was the last place on earth that was not paying homage to God. For these reasons, among others, they carried about an air of innate resistance, even of persecution. Their fathers had, of course, been persecuted in England. So now they and their church found it necessary to deny any other sect its freedom; lest their New Jerusalem be defiled and corrupted by wrong ways and deceitful ideas. They believed, in short, that they held in their steady hands the candle that would light the world. We have inherited this belief, and it has helped and hurt us. It helped them with the discipline it gave them. They were a dedicated folk, by and large, and they had to be to survive the life they had chosen or been born into in this country. The proof of their belief’s value to them may be taken from the opposite character of the first Jamestown settlement, farther south, in Virginia. The Englishmen who landed there were motivated mainly by a hunt for profit. They had thought to pick off the wealth of the new country and then return rich to Eng-land. They were a band of individualists, and a much more ingratiating group than the Massachusetts men. But Virginia destroyed them. Massachusetts tried to kill off the Puritans, but they combined; they set up a communal society which, in the beginning, was little more than an armed camp with an autocratic and very devoted leadership. It was, however, an autocracy by consent, for they were united from top to bottom by a commonly held ideology whose perpetuation was the reason and justification for all their sufferings. So their self-denial, their purposefulness, their suspicion of all vain pursuits, their hard handed justice, were altogether perfect instruments for the con-quest of this space so antagonistic to man. But the people of Salem in 1692 were not quite the dedicated folk that arrived on the Mayflower. A vast differentiation had taken place, and in their own time a revolution had unseated the royal government and substituted a junta which was at this moment in power. The times, to their eyes, must have been out of joint, and to the common folk must have seemed as insoluble and complicated as do ours today. It is not hard to see how easily many could have been led to believe that the time of confusion had been brought upon them by deep and darkling forces. No hint of such speculation appears on the court record, but social disorder in any age breeds such mystical suspicions, and when, as in Salem, wonders are brought forth from below the social surface, it is too much to expect people to hold back very long from laying on the victims with all the force of their frustrations. The Salem tragedy, which is about to begin in these pages, developed from a paradox. It is a paradox in whose grip we still live, and there is no prospect yet that we will discover its resolution. Simply, it was this: for good purposes, even high purposes, the people of Salem developed a theocracy, a combine of state and religious power whose function was to keep the com-munity together, and to prevent any kind of disunity that might open it to destruction by material or ideological enemies. It was forged for a necessary purpose and accomplished that purpose. But all organization is and must be grounded on the idea of exclusion and prohibition, just as two objects cannot occupy the same space. Evidently the time came in New England when the repressions of order were heavier than seemed warranted by the dangers against which the order was organized. The witch-hunt was a perverse manifestation of the panic which set in among all classes when the balance began to turn toward greater individual freedom. When one rises above the individual villainy displayed, one can only pity them all, just as we shall be pitied someday. It is still impossible for man to organize his social life without repressions, and the balance has yet to be struck between order and freedom. The witch-hunt was not, however, a mere repression. It was also, and as importantly, a long overdue opportunity for every-one so inclined to express publicly his guilt and sins, under the cover of accusations against the victims. It suddenly became possible - and patriotic and holy - for a man to say that Martha Corey had come into his bedroom at night, and that, while his wife was sleeping at his side, Martha laid herself down on his chest and “nearly suffocated him.” Of course it was her spirit only, but his satisfaction at confessing himself was no lighter than if it had been Martha herself. One could not ordinarily speak such things in public. Long-held hatreds of neighbors could now be openly ex-pressed, and vengeance taken, despite the Bible’s charitable injunctions. Land-lust which had been expressed before by constant bickering over boundaries and deeds, could now be elevated to the arena of morality; one could cry witch against one’s neighbor and feel perfectly justified in the bargain. Old scores could be settled on a plane of heavenly combat between Lucifer and the Lord; suspicions and the envy of the miserable toward the happy could and did burst out in the general revenge.

*Reverend Parris is praying now, and, though we cannot hear his words, a sense of his confusion hangs about him. He mumbles, then seems about to weep; then he weeps, then, prays again; but his daughter does not stir on the bed.*

*The door opens, and his Negro slave enters. Tituba is in her forties. Parris brought her with him from Barbados, where he spent some years as a merchant before entering the ministry. She enters as one does who can no longer bear to be barred from the sight of her beloved, but she is also very frightened because her slave sense has warned her that, as always, trouble in this house eventually lands on her back.*

Tituba, already taking a step backward: My Betty be hearty soon?

Parris: Out of here!

Tituba, backing to the door: My Betty not goin’ die...

Parris, *scrambling to his feet in a fury*: Out of my sight! She is gone. Out of my - *He is overcome with sobs. He clamps his teeth against them and closes the door and leans against it, exhausted*. Oh, my God! God help me! Quaking with fear, mumbling to himself through his sobs, he goes to the bed and gently takes Betty’s hand. Betty. Child. Dear child, Will you wake, will you open up your eyes! Betty, little one...

*He is bending to kneel again when his niece, Abigail Williams, seventeen, enters - a strikingly beautiful girl, an orphan, with an endless capacity for dissembling. Now she is all worry and apprehension and propriety.*

Abigail: Uncle? *He looks to her.* Susanna Walcott’s here from Doctor Griggs.

Parris:Oh?. Let her come, let her come.

Abigail, *leaning out the door to call to Susanna, who is down the hall a few steps:* Come in, Susanna*.*

*Susanna Walcott, a little younger than Abigail, a nervous, hur-ried girl, enters.*

Parris, *eagerly:* What does the doctor say, child?

Susanna, *craning around Parris to get a look at Betty:* He bid me come and tell you, reverend sir, that he cannot discover no medicine for it in his books.

Parris: Then he must search on.

Susanna: Aye, sir, he have been searchin’ his books since he left you, sir. But he bid me tell you, that you might look to un-natural things for the cause of it.

Parris, *his eyes going wide:* No - no. There be no unnatural cause here. Tell him I have sent for Reverend Hale of Beverly, and Mr. Hale will surely confirm that. Let him look to medicine and put out all thought of unnatural causes here. There be none.

Susanna: Aye, sir. He bid me tell you. She turns to go.

Abigail: Speak nothin’ of it in the village, Susanna.

Parris: Go directly home and speak nothing of unnatural causes.

Susanna: Aye, sir. I pray for her. *She goes out.*

Abigail: Uncle, the rumor of witchcraft is all about; I think you’d best go down and deny it yourself. The parlor’s packed with people, sir. I’ll sit with her.

Parris, pressed, turns on her: And what shall I say to them? That my daughter and my niece I discovered dancing like heathen in the forest?

Abigail: Uncle, we did dance; let you tell them I confessed it - and I’ll be whipped if I must be. But they’re speakin’ of witch-craft. Betty’s not witched.

Parris: Abigail, I cannot go before the congregation when I know you have not opened with me. What did you do with her in the forest?

Abigail: We did dance, uncle, and when you leaped out of the bush so suddenly, Betty was frightened and then she fainted. And there’s the whole of it.

Parris: Child. Sit you down.

Abigail, quavering, as she sits: I would never hurt Betty. I love her dearly.

Parris; Now look you, child, your punishment will come in its time. But if you trafficked with spirits in the forest I must know it now, for surely my enemies will, and they will ruin me with it.

Abigail: But we never conjured spirits.

Parris: Then why can she not move herself since midnight? This child is desperate! Abigail lowers her eyes. It must come out - my enemies will bring it out. Let me know what you done there. Abigail, do you understand that I have many enemies?

Abigail: I have heard of it, uncle.

Parris: There is a faction that is sworn to drive me from my pulpit. Do you understand that?

Abigail: I think so, sir.

Parris: Now then, in the midst of such disruption, my own household is discovered to be the very center of some obscene practice. Abominations are done in the forest -

Abigail: It were sport, uncle!

Parris, pointing at Betty: You call this sport? She lowers her eyes. He pleads: Abigail, if you know something that may help the doctor, for God’s sake tell it to me. She is silent. I saw Tituba waving her arms over the fire when I came on you. Why was she doing that? And I heard a screeching and gibberish coming from her mouth. She were swaying like a dumb beast over that fire!

Abigail: She always sings her Barbados songs, and we dance.

Parris: I cannot blink what I saw, Abigail, for my enemies will not blink it. I saw a dress lying on the grass.

Abigail, innocently: A dress?

Parris - it is very hard to say: Aye, a dress. And I thought I saw - someone naked running through the trees!

Abigail, in terror: No one was naked! You mistake yourself, uncle!

Parris, with anger: I saw it! He moves from her. Then, re-solved: Now tell me true,

Abigail. And I pray you feel the weight of truth upon you, for now my ministry’s at stake, my ministry and perhaps your cousin’s life. Whatever abomination you have done, give me all of it now, for I dare not be taken unaware when I go before them down there.

Abigail: There is nothin’ more. I swear it, uncle.

Parris, studies her, then nods, half convinced: Abigail, I have Sought here three long years to bend these stiff-necked people to me, and now, just now when some good respect is rising for me in the parish, you compromise my very character. I have given you a home, child, I have put clothes upon your back - now give me upright answer. Your name in the town - it is entirely white, is it not?

Abigail, with an edge of resentment: Why, I am sure it is, sir. There be no blush about my name.

Parris, to the point: Abigail, is there any other cause than you have told me, for your being discharged from Goody Proc-tor’s service? I have heard it said, and I tell you as I heard it, that she comes so rarely to the church this year for she will not sit so close to something soiled. What signified that remark?

Abigail: She hates me, uncle, she must, for I would not be her slave. It’s a bitter woman, a lying, cold, sniveling woman, and I will not work for such a woman!

Parris: She may be. And yet it has troubled me that you are now seven month out of their house, and in all this time no other family has ever called for your service.

Abigail: They want slaves, not such as I. Let them send to Barbados for that. I will not black my face for any of them! With ill-concealed resentment at him: Do you begrudge my bed, uncle?

Parris: No - no.

Abigail, in a temper: My name is good in the village! I will not have it said my name is soiled! Goody Proctor is a gossiping liar!

*Enter Mrs. Ann Putnam. She is a twisted soul of forty-five, a death-ridden woman, haunted by dreams.*

Parris, as soon as the door begins to open: No - no, I cannot have anyone'. He sees her, and a certain deference springs into him, although his worry remains. Why, Goody Putnam, come in.

Mrs. Putnam, *full of breath, shiny-eyed:* It is a marvel. It is surely a stroke of hell upon you.

Parris: No, Goody Putnam, it is

Mrs. Putnam, glancing at Betty: How high did she fly, how high?

Parris: No, no, she never flew -

Mrs. Putnam, very pleased with it: Why, it’s sure she did. Mr. Collins saw her goin’ over Ingersoll’s barn, and come down light as bird, he says!

Parris: Now, look you, Goody Putnam, she never - Enter Thomas Putnam, a well-to-do, hard-handed landowner, near fifty. Oh, good morning, Mr. Putnam.

Putnam: It is a providence the thing is out now! It is a providence. He goes directly to the bed.

Parris: What’s out, sir, what’s - ?

Mrs. Putnam goes to the bed.

Putnam, looking down at Betty: Why, her eyes is closed! Look you, Ann.

Mrs. Putnam: Why, that’s strange. To Parris: Ours is open.

Parris, shocked: Your Ruth is sick?

Mrs. Putnam, *with vicious certainty:* I’d not call it sick; the Devil’s touch is heavier than sick. It’s death, y’know, it’s death drivin’ into them, forked and hoofed.

Parris: Oh, pray not! Why, how does Ruth ail?

Mrs. Putnam: She ails as she must - she never waked this morning, but her eyes open and she walks, and hears naught, sees naught, and cannot eat. Her soul is taken, surely.

*Parris is struck.*

Putnam, *as though for further details:* They say you’ve sent for Reverend Hale of Beverly?

Parris, with dwindling conviction now: A precaution only. He has much experience in all demonic-arts, and I -

Mrs. Putnam: He has indeed; and found a witch in Beverly last year, and let you remember that.

Parris: Now, Goody Ann, they only thought that were a witch, and I am certain there be no element of witchcraft here.

Putnam: No witchcraft! Now look you, Mr. Parris -

Parris: Thomas, Thomas, I pray you, leap not to witchcraft. I know that you - you least of all, Thomas, would ever wish so disastrous a charge laid upon me. We cannot leap to witchcraft. They will howl me out of Salem for such corruption in my house.

A word about Thomas Putnam. He was a man with many grievances, at least one of which appears justified. Some time before, his wife’s brother-in-law, James Bayley, had been turned down as minister of Salem. Bayley had all the qualifications, and a two-thirds vote into the bargain, but a faction stopped his acceptance, for reasons that are not clear. Thomas Putnam was the eldest son of the richest man in the village. He had fought the Indians at Narragansett, and was deeply interested in parish affairs. He undoubtedly felt it poor payment that the village should so blatantly disregard his candidate for one of its more important offices, especially since he regarded himself as the intellectual superior of most of the people around him. His vindictive nature was demonstrated long before the witch-craft began. Another former Salem minister, George Burroughs, had had to borrow money to pay for his wife’s funeral, and, since the parish was remiss in his salary, he was soon bankrupt. Thomas and his brother John had Burroughs jailed for debts the man did not owe. The incident is important only in that Burroughs succeeded in becoming minister where Bayley, Thomas Putnam’s brother-in-law, had been rejected; the motif of resentment is clear here. Thomas Putnam felt that his own name and the honor of his family had been smirched by the village, and he meant to right matters however he could. Another reason to believe him a deeply embittered man was his attempt to break his father’s will, which left a dispropor-tionate amount to a stepbrother. As with every other public cause in which he tried to force his way, he failed in this. So it is not surprising to find that so many accusations against people are in the handwriting of Thomas Putnam, or that his name is so often found as a witness corroborating the super-natural testimony, or that his daughter led the crying-out at the most opportune junctures of the trials, especially when - But we’ll speak of that when we come to it.

Putnum - *at the moment he is intent upon getting Parris, for whom he has only contempt, to move toward the abyss:* Mr. Parris, I have taken your part in all contention here, and I would continue; but I cannot if you hold back in this. There are hurtful, vengeful spirits layin’ hands on these children.

Parris: But, Thomas, you cannot -

Putnam: Ann! Tell Mr. Parris what you have done.

Mrs. Putnam: Reverend Parris, I have laid seven babies un-baptized in the earth. Believe me, sir, you never saw more hearty babies born, And yet, each would wither in my arms the very night of their birth. I have spoke nothin’, but my heart has clamored intimations. And now, this year, my Ruth, my only - I see her turning strange. A secret child she has become this year, and shrivels like a sucking mouth were pullin’ on her life too. And so I thought to send her to your Tituba -

Parris: To Tituba! What may Tituba - ?

Mrs. Putnam: Tituba knows how to speak to the dead, Mr. Parris.

Parris: Goody Ann, it is a formidable sin to conjure up the dead!

Mrs. Putnam: I take it on my soul, but who else may surely tell us what person murdered my babies?

Parris, horrified: Woman!

Mrs. Putnam: They were murdered, Mr. Parris! And mark this proof! Mark it! Last night my Ruth were ever so close to their little spirits; I know it, sir. For how else is she struck dumb now except some power of darkness would stop her mouth? It is a marvelous sign, Mr. Parris!

Putnam: Don’t you understand it, sir? There is a murdering witch among us, bound to keep herself in the dark. Parris turns to Betty, a frantic terror rising in him. Let your enemies make of it what they will, you cannot blink it more.

Parris, to Abigail: Then you were conjuring spirits last night.

Abigail, whispering: Not I, sir - Tituba and Ruth.

Parris turns now, with new fear, and goes to Betty, looks down at her, and then, gazing off: Oh, Abigail, what proper payment for my charity! Now I am undone.

Putnam: You are not undone! Let you take hold here. Wait for no one to charge you - declare it yourself. You have discovered witchcraft -

Parris: In my house? In my house, Thomas? They will topple me with this! They will make of it a -

*Enter Mercy Lewis, the Putnams’ servant, a fat, sly, merciless girl of eighteen.*

Mercy: Your pardons. I only thought to see how Betty is

Putnam: Why aren’t you home? Who’s with Ruth?

Mercy: Her grandma come. She’s improved a little, I think - she give a powerful sneeze before.

Mrs. Putnam: Ah, there’s a sign of life!

Mercy: I’d fear no more, Goody Putnam. It were a grand sneeze; another like it will shake her wits together, I’m sure. She goes to the bed to look.

Parris: Will you leave me now, Thomas? I would pray a while alone.

Abigail: Uncle, you’ve prayed since midnight. Why do you not go down and -

Parris: No - no. To Putnam: I have no answer for that crowd. I’ll wait till Mr. Hale arrives. To get Mrs. Putnam to leave: If you will, Goody Ann...

Putnam: Now look you, sir. Let you strike out against the Devil, and the village will bless you for it! Come down, speak to them - pray with them. They’re thirsting for your word, Mister! Surely you’ll pray with them.

Parris, swayed: I’ll lead them in a psalm, but let you say nothing of witchcraft yet. I will not discuss it. The cause is yet unknown. I have had enough contention since I came; I want no more.

Mrs. Putnam: Mercy, you go home to Ruth, d’y’hear?

Mercy: Aye, mum.

Mrs. Putnam goes out.

Parris, to Abigail: If she starts for the window, cry for me at once.

Abigail: I will, uncle.

Orris, to Putnam: There is a terrible power in her arms to-day. He goes out with Putnam.

Abigail, with hushed trepidation: How is Ruth sick?

Mercy!: It’s weirdish, I know not - she seems to walk like a dead one since last night.

Abigail, turns at once and goes to Betty, and now, with fear in her voice: Betty? Betty doesn’t move. She shakes her. Now stop this! Betty! Sit up now! Betty doesn’t stir. Mercy comes over.

Mercy: Have you tried beatin’ her? I gave Ruth a good one and it waked her for a minute. Here, let me have her.

Abigail, holding Mercy back: No, he’ll be comin’ up. Listen, now; if they be questioning us, tell them we danced - I told him as much already,

Mercy: Aye. And what more?

Abigail: He knows Tituba conjured Ruth’s sisters to come out of the grave.

Mercy: And what more?

Abigail: He saw you naked.

Mercy: clapping her hands together with a frightened laugh: Oh, Jesus!

Enter Mary Warren, breathless. She is seventeen, a subservient, naive, lonely girl.

Mary Warren: What’ll we do? The village is out! I just come from the farm; the whole country’s talkin’ witchcraft! They’ll be callin’ us witches, Abby!

Mercy, pointing and looking at Mary Warren: She means to tell, I know it.

Mary Warren: Abby, we’ve got to tell. Witchery’s a hangin’ error, a hangin’ like they done in Boston two year ago! We must tell the truth, Abby! You’ll only be whipped for dancin’, and the other things!

Abigail: Oh,-we’ll be whipped!

Mary Warren: I never done none of it, Abby. I only looked!

Mercy, moving menacingly toward Mary: Oh, you’re a great one for lookin’, aren’t you,

Mary Warren? What a grand peeping courage you have!

Betty, on the bed, whimpers. Abigail turns to her at once.

Abigail: Betty? She goes to Betty. Now, Betty, dear, wake up now. It’s Abigail. She sits

Betty up and furiously shakes her. I’ll beat you, Betty! Betty whimpers. My, you seem improving. I talked to your papa and I told him everything. So there’s nothing to - Betty, darts op the bed, frightened of Abigail, and flattens her-self against the wall: I want my mama!

ABIGAIL, with alarm, as she cautiously approaches Betty: What ails you, Betty? Your mama’s dead and buried.

Betty: I’ll fly to Mama. Let me fly! She raises her arms as though to fly, and streaks for the window, gets one leg out.

Abigail, pulling her away from the window: I told him every-thing,' he knows now, he knows everything we -

Betty: You drank blood, Abby! You didn’t tell him that!

Abigail: Betty, you never say that again! You will never--

Betty: You did, you did! You drank a charm to kill John Proctor’s wife! You drank a charm to kill Goody Proctor!

Abigail, smashes her across the face: Shut it! Now shut it!

Barry, *collapsing on the bed:* Mama, Mama! *She dissolves into sobs.*

Abigail: Now look you. All of you. We danced. And Tituba conjured Ruth Putnam’s dead sisters. And that is all. And mark this. Let either of you breathe a word, or the edge of a word, about the other things, and I will come to you in the black of some terrible night and I will bring a pointy reckoning that will shudder you. And you know I can do it; I saw Indians smash my dear parents’ heads on the pillow next to mine, and I have seen some reddish work done at night, and I can make you wish you had never seen the sun go down! She goes to Betty and roughly sits her up. Now, you - sit up and stop this' But Betty collapses in her hands and lies inert on the bed.

Marry Warren, with hysterical fright, What’s got her? Abigail stares in fright at Betty. Abby, she’s going to die! It’s a sin to conjure, and we -

Abigail, starting for Mary: I say shut it, Mary Warren!

*Enter John Proctor. On seeing him, Mary Warren leaps in fright,*

Proctor was a farmer in his middle thirties, He need not have been a partisan of any faction in the town, but there is evidence to suggest that he had a sharp and biting way with hypocrites. He was the kind of man - powerful of body, even-tempered, and not easily led - who cannot refuse support to partisans with-out drawing their deepest resentment. In Proctor’s presence a fool felt his foolishness instantly - and a Proctor is always marked for calumny therefore. But as we shall see, the steady manner he displays does not spring from an untroubled soul. He is a sinner, a sinner not only against the moral fashion of the time, but against his own vision of decent conduct. These people had no ritual for the washing away of sins. It is another trait we inherited from them. and it has helped to discipline us as well as to breed hypocrisy among us. Proctor, respected and even feared in Salem, has come to regard himself as a kind of fraud. But no hint of this has yet appeared on the surface, and as he enters from the crowded parlor below it is a man in his prime we see, with a quiet confidence and an unexpressed, hidden force. Mary Warren, his servant, can barely speak for embarrassment and fear.

Mary Warren: Oh! I’m just going home, Mr. Proctor.

Proctor: Be you foolish, Mary Warren? Be you deaf? I for-bid you leave the house, did I not? Why shall I pay you? I am looking for you more often than my cows!

Mary Warren: I only come to see the great doings in the world.

Proctor: I’ll show you a great doin' on your arse one of these days. Now get you home; my wife is waitin’ with your work! Trying to retain a shred of dignity, she goes slowly out.

Mercy Lewis, both afraid of him and strangely titillated: I’d best be off. I have my Ruth to watch. Good morning, Mr. Proctor.

Mercy sidles out. Since Proctor’s entrance, Abigail has stood as though on tiptoe, absorbing his presence, wide-eyed. He glances at her, then goes to Betty on the bed.

Abigail: Gah! I’d almost forgot how strong you are, John Proctor!

Proctor, looking at Abigail now, the faintest suggestion of a knowing smile on his face: What’s this mischief here?

Abigail, with a nervous laugh: Oh, she’s only gone silly some-how.

Proctor: The road past my house is a pilgrimage to Salem all morning. The town’s mumbling witchcraft.

Abigail: Oh, posh! Winningly she comes a little closer, with a confidential, wicked air. We were dancin’ in the woods last night, and my uncle leaped in on us. She took fright, is all.

Proctor, his smile widening: Ah, you’re wicked yet, aren’t y’! A trill of expectant laughter escapes her, and she dares come closer, feverishly looking into his eyes. You’ll be clapped in the stocks before you’re twenty. He takes a step to go, and she springs into his path.

Abigail: Give me a word, John. A soft word. Her concentrated desire destroys his smile.

Proctor: No, no, Abby. That’s done with.

Abigail, tauntingly: You come five mile to see a silly girl fly? I know you better.

Proctor, setting her firmly out of his path: I come to see what mischief your uncle’s brewin’ now. With final emphasis: Put it out of mind, Abby.

Abigail, grasping his hand before he can release her: John - I am waitin’ for you every night.

Proctor: Abby, I never give you hope to wait for me.

Abigail, now beginning to anger - she can’t believe it: I have something better than hope, I think!

Proctor: Abby, you’ll put it out of mind. I’ll not be comin’ for you more.

Abigail: You’re surely sportin’ with me.

Proctor: You know me better.

Abigail: I know how you clutched my back behind your house and sweated like a stallion whenever I come near! Or did I dream that? It’s she put me out, you cannot pretend it were you. I saw your face when she put me out, and you loved me then and you do now!

Proctor: Abby, that’s a wild thing to say –

Abigail: A wild thing may say wild things. But not so wild, I think. I have seen you since she put me out; I have seen you nights.

Proctor: I have hardly stepped off my farm this sevenmonth.

Abigail: I have a sense for heat, John, and yours has drawn me to my window, and I have seen you looking up, burning in your loneliness. Do you tell me you’ve never looked up at my window?

Proctor: I may have looked up.

Abigail, now softening: And you must. You are no wintry man. I know you,

John. I know you. She is weeping. I cannot sleep for dreamin‘; I cannot dream but I wake and walk about the house as though I’d find you comin’ through some door. She clutches him desperately.

Proctor, gently pressing her from him, with great sympathy but firmly: Child -

Abigail, with a pash of anger: How do you call me child!

Proctor: Abby, I may think of you softly from time to time. But I will cut off my hand before I’ll ever reach for you again. Wipe it out of mind. We never touched, Abby.

Abigail: Aye, but we did.

Proctor: Aye, but we did not.

Abigail, with a bitter anger: Oh, I marvel how such a strong man may let such a sickly wife be -

Proctor, angered - at himself as well: You’ll speak nothin’ of Elizabeth!

Abigail: She is blackening my name in the village! She is telling lies about me! .She is a cold, sniveling woman, and you bend to her! Let her turn you like a -

Proctor, shaking her: Do you look for whippin’?

A psalm is heard being sung below.

Abigail, in tears: I look for John Proctor that took me from my sleep and put knowledge in my heart! I never knew what pretense Salem was, I never knew the lying lessons I was taught by all these Christian women and their covenanted men! And now you bid me tear the light out of my eyes? I will not, I cannot! You loved me, John Proctor, and whatever sin it is, you love me yet! He turns abruptly to go out. She rushes to him. John, pity me, pity me!

The words “going up to Jesus” are heard in the psalm and Betty claps her ears suddenly and whines loudly.

Abigail: Betty? She hurries to Betty, who is now sitting up and screaming. Proctor goes to Betty as Abigail is trying to pull her hands down, calling “Betty!”

Proctor, growing unnerved: What’s she doing? Girl, what ails you? Stop that wailing! The singing has stopped in the midst of this, and now Parris rushes in.

Parris: What happened? What are you doing to her? Betty! He rushes to the bed, crying, “Betty, Betty!” Mrs. Putnam enters, feverish with curiosity, and with her Thomas Putnam and Mercy Lewis. Parris, at the bed, keeps lightly slapping Betty’s face, while she moans and tries to get up.

Abigail: She heard you singin’ and suddenly she’s up and screamin’.

Mrs. Putnam: The psalm! The psalm! She cannot bear to hear the Lord’s name!

Parris: No. God forbid. Mercy, run to the doctor! Tell him what’s happened here! Mercy Lewis rushes out.

Mrs. Putnam: Mark it for a sign, mark it!

Rebecca Nurse, seventy-two, enters. She is white-haired, leaning upon her walking-stick.

Putnam, pointing at the whimpering Betty: That is a notorious sign of witchcraft afoot, Goody Nurse, a prodigious sign!

Mrs. Putnam: My mother told me that! When they cannot bear to hear the name of -

Parris, trembling: Rebecca, Rebecca, go to her, we’re lost. She suddenly cannot bear to hear the Lord’s -

Giles Corey, eighty-three, enters. He is knotted with muscle, canny, inquisitive, and still powerful.

Rebecca: There is hard sickness here, Giles Corey, so please to keep the quiet.

Giles: I’ve not said a word. No one here can testify I’ve said a word. Is she going to fly again? I hear she flies.

Putnam: Man, be quiet now!

Everything is quiet. Rebecca walks across the room to the bed. Gentleness exudes from her. Betty is quietly whimpering, eyes shut, Rebecca simply stands over the child, who gradually quiets.

And while they are so absorbed, we may put a word in for Rebecca. Rebecca was the wife of Francis Nurse, who, from all accounts, was one of those men for whom both sides of the argument had to have respect. He was called upon to arbitrate disputes as though he were an unofficial judge, and Rebecca also enjoyed the high opinion most people had for him. By the time of the delusion, they had three hundred acres, and their children were settled in separate homesteads within the same estate. However, Francis had originally rented the land, and one theory has it that, as he gradually paid for it and raised hi: social status, there were those who resented his rise. Another suggestion to explain the systematic campaign against Rebecca, and inferentially against Francis, is the land war he fought with his neighbors, one of whom was a Putnam. This squabble grew to the proportions of a battle in the woods be-tween partisans of both sides, and it is said to have lasted for two days. As for Rebecca herself, the general opinion of her character was so high that to explain how anyone dared cry her out for a witch - and more, how adults could bring them-selves to lay hands on her - we must look to the fields and boundaries of that time. As we have seen, Thomas Putnam’s man for the Salem ministry was Bayley. The Nurse clan had been in the faction that prevented Bayley’s taking office. In addition, certain families allied to the Nurses by blood or friendship, and whose farms were contiguous with the Nurse farm or close to it, combined to break away from the Salem town authority and set up Tops-field, a new and independent entity whose existence was resented by old Salemites. That the guiding hand behind the outcry was Putnam’s is, indicated by the fact that, as soon as it began, this Topsfield-Nurse ’faction absented themselves from church in

protest and disbelief. It was Edward and Jonathan Putnam who signed the first complaint against Rebecca; and Thomas Putnam’s little daughter was the one who fell into a fit at the hearing and pointed to Rebecca as her attacker. To top it all, Mrs. Putnam - who is now staring at the bewitched child on the bed - soon accused Rebecca’s spirit of “tempting her to iniquity,” a charge that had more truth in it than Mrs. Putnam could know, Mrs. Putnam, astonished: What have you done? Rebecca, in thought, now leaves the bedside and sits.

Parris, wondrous and relieved: What do you make of it, Rebecca?

Putnam, eagerly: Goody Nurse, will you go to my Ruth and see if you can wake her?

Rebecca, sitting: I think she’ll wake in time. Pray calm your-selves. I have eleven children, and I am twenty-six times a grandma, and I have seen them all through their silly seasons, and when it come on them they will run the Devil bowlegged keeping up with their mischief. I think she’ll wake when she tires of it. A child’s spirit is like a child, you can never catch it by running after it; you must stand still, and, for love, it will soon itself come back,

Proctor: Aye, that’s the truth of it, Rebecca.

Mrs. Putnam: This is no silly season, Rebecca. My Ruth is bewildered,

Rebecca; she cannot eat.

Rebecca: Perhaps she is not hungered yet. To Parris: I hope you are not decided to go in search of loose spirits, Mr. Parris. I’ve heard promise of that outside.

Parris: A wide opinion’s running in the parish that the Devil may be among us, and I would satisfy them that they are wrong.

Proctor: Then let you come out and call them wrong. Did you consult the wardens before you called this minister to look for devils?

Parris: He is not coming to look for devils!

Proctor: Then what’s he coming for?

Putnam: There be children dyin’ in the village, Mister!

Proctor: I seen none dyin’. This society will not be a bag to swing around your head, Mr. Putnam. To Parris: Did you call a meeting before you - ?

Putnam: I am sick of meetings; cannot the man turn his head without he have a meeting?

Proctor:, He may turn his head, but not to Hell!

Rebecca: Pray, John, be calm. Pause. He defers to her. Mr. Parris, I think you’d best send Reverend Hale back as soon as he come. This will set us all to arguin’ again in the society, and we thought to have peace this year; I think we ought rely on the doctor now, and good prayer.

Mrs. Putnam: Rebecca, the doctor’s baffled!

Rebecca: If so he is, then let us go to God for the cause of it. There is prodigious danger in the seeking of loose spirits. I fear it, I fear it. Let us rather blame ourselves and -

Putnam: How may we blame ourselves? I am one of nine sons; the Putnam seed have peopled this province. And yet I have but one child left of eight - and now she shrivels!

Rebecca: I cannot fathom that.

Mrs. Putnam, with a growing edge of sarcasm: But I must! You think it God’s work you should never lose a child, nor grand-child either, and I bury all but one? There are wheels within wheels in this village, and fires within fires!

Putnam, to Parris: When Reverend Hale comes, you will proceed to look for signs of witchcraft here.

Proctor, to Putnam: You cannot command Mr. Parris. We vote by name in this society, not by acreage.

Putnam: I never heard you worried so on this society, Mr. Proctor. I do not think I saw you at Sabbath meeting since snow flew.

Proctor: I have trouble enough without I come five mile to hear him preach only hellfire and bloody damnation. Take it to heart, Mr. Parris. There are many others who stay away from church these days because you hardly ever mention God any more.

Parris, now aroused: Why, that’s a drastic charge!

Rebecca: It’s somewhat true; there are many that quail to bring their children -

Parris: I do not preach for children, Rebecca. It is not the children who are unmindful of their obligations toward this ministry.

Rebecca: Are there really those unmindful?

Parris: I should say the better half of Salem village -

Putnam: And more than that!

Parris: Where is my wood? My contract provides I be supplied with all my firewood. I am waiting since November for a stick, and even in November I had to show my frostbitten hands like some London beggar!

Giles: You are allowed six pound a year to buy your wood, Mr. Parris.

Parris: I regard that six pound as part of my salary. I am paid little enough without I spend six pound on firewood.

Proctor: Sixty, plus six for firewood -

Parris: The salary is sixty-six pound, Mr. Proctor! I am not some preaching farmer with a book under my arm; I am a graduate of Harvard College.

Giles: Aye, and well instructed in arithmetic!

Parris: Mr. Corey, you will look far for a man of my kind at sixty pound a year! I am not used to this poverty; I left a thrifty business in the Barbados to serve the Lord. I do not fathom it, why am I persecuted here? I cannot offer one proposition but there be a howling riot of argument. I have often wondered if the Devil be in it somewhere; I cannot understand you people otherwise.

Proctor: Mr. Parris, you are the first minister ever did demand the deed to this house –

Parris: Man! Don’t a minister deserve a house to live in?

Proctor: To live in, yes. But to ask ownership is like you shall own the meeting house itself; the last meeting I were at you spoke so long on deeds and mortgages I thought it were an auction.

Parris: I want a mark of confidence, is all! I am your third preacher in seven years. I do not wish to be put out like the cat whenever some majority feels the whim. You people seem not to comprehend that a minister is the Lord’s man in the parish; a minister is not to be so lightly crossed and contradicted -

Putnam: Aye!

Parris: There is either obedience or the church will burn like Hell is burning!

Proctor: Can you speak one minute without we land in Hell again? I am sick of Hell!

Parris: It is not for you to say what is good for you to hear!

Proctor: I may speak my heart, I think!

Parris, in a fury: What, are we Quakers? We are not Quakers here yet, Mr.

Proctor. And you may tell that to your followers!

Proctor: My followers!

Parris: now he’s out with it: There is a party in this church. l am not blind; there is a faction and a party.

Proctor: Against you?

Putnam: Against him and all authority!

Proctor: Why, then I must find it and join it. There is shock among the others.

Rebecca: He does not mean that.

Putnam: He confessed it now!

Proctor: I mean it solemnly, Rebecca; I like not the smell of this “authority.”

Rebecca: No, you cannot break charity with your minister. You are another kind, John. Clasp his hand, make your peace.

Proctor: I have a crop to sow and lumber to drag home. He goes angrily to the door and turns to Corey with a smile. What say you, Giles, let’s find the party. He says there’s a party.

Giles: I’ve changed my opinion of this man, John. Mr. Parris, I beg your pardon. I never thought you had so much iron in you.

Parris, surprised: Why, thank you, Giles!

Giles: It suggests to the mind what the trouble be among us all these years. To all: Think on it. Wherefore is everybody suing everybody else? Think on it now, it’s a deep thing, and dark as a pit. l have been six time in court this year - Proctor, familiarly, with warmth, although he knows he is approaching the edge of Giles’ tolerance with this: Is it the Devil’s fault that a man cannot say you good morning without you clap him for defamation? You’re old, Giles, and you’re not hearin’ so well as you did.

Giles - he cannot be crossed: John Proctor, I have only last month collected four pound damages for you publicly sayin’ I burned the roof off your house, and I –

Proctor: Against you?

Putnam: Against him and all authority! Proctor: Why, then I must find it and join it.

There is shock among the others. Rebecca: He does not mean that. Putnam: He confessed it now!

Proctor: I mean it solemnly, Rebecca; I like not the smell of this “authority.”

Rebecca: No, you cannot break charity with your minister. You are another kind, John. Clasp his hand, make your peace.

Proctor: I have a crop to sow and lumber to drag home. He goes angrily to the door and turns to Corey with a smile. What say you, Giles, let’s find the party.

He says there’s a party.

Giles: I’ve changed my opinion of this man, John. Mr. Parris, I beg your pardon. I never thought you had so much iron in you.

Parris, Surprised: Why, thank you, Giles!

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Proctor, laughing: I never said no such thing, but I’ve paid you for it, so I hope I can call you deaf without charge. Now come along, Giles, and help me drag my lumber home.

Putnam: A moment, Mr. Proctor. What lumber is that you’re draggin’, if I may ask you?

Proctor: My lumber. From out my forest by the riverside.

Putnam: Why, we are surely gone wild this year. What anarchy is this? That tract is in my bounds, it’s in my bounds, Mr. Proctor.

Proctor: In your bounds! indicating Rebecca: I bought that tract from Goody Nurse’s husband five months ago.

Putnam: He had no right to sell it. It stands clear in my grand-father’s will that all the land between the river and -

Proctor: Your grandfather had a habit of willing land that never belonged to him, if I may say it plain.

Giles: That’s God’s truth; he nearly willed away my north pasture but he knew I’d break his fingers before he’d set his name to it. Let’s get your lumber home, John. I feel a sudden will to work coming on.

Putnam: You load one oak of mine and you’ll fight to drag it home!

Giles: Aye, and we’ll win too, Putnam - this fool and I. Come on! He turns to Proctor and starts out.

Putnam: I’ll have my men on you, Corey! I’ll clap a writ on you!

Enter Reverend John Hale of Beverly.

Mr. Hale is nearing forty, a tight-skinned, eager-eyed intellectual. This is a beloved errand for him; on being called here to ascertain witchcraft he felt the pride of the specialist whose unique knowledge has at last been publicly called for. Like almost all men of learning, he spent a good deal of his time pondering the invisible world, especially since he had himself encountered a witch in his parish not long before. That woman, however, turned into a mere pest under his searching scrutiny, and the child she had allegedly been afflicting recovered her normal behavior after Hale had given her his kindness and a few days of rest in his own house. However, that experience never raised a doubt in his mind as to the reality of the under-world or the existence of Lucifer’s many-faced lieutenants. And his belief is not to his discredit. Better minds than Hale’s were - and still are - convinced that there is a society of spirits beyond our ken. One cannot help noting that one of his lines has never yet raised a laugh in any audience that has seen this play; it is his assurance that “,We cannot look to superstition in this. The Devil is precise.” Evidently we are not quite certain even now whether diabolism is holy and not to be scoffed at. And it is no accident that we should be so bemused. Like Reverend Hale and the others on this stage, we conceive the Devil as a necessary part of a respectable view of cosmology. Ours is a divided empire in which certain ideas and emotions and actions are of God, and their opposites are of Lucifer. It is as impossible for most men to conceive of a morality without sin as of an earth without “sky.” Since 1692 a great but superficial change has wiped out God’s beard and the Devil’s horns, but the world is still gripped between two diametrically opposed absolutes. The concept of unity, in which positive and negative are attributes of the same force, in which good and evil are relative, ever-changing, and always joined to the same phenomenon - such a concept is still reserved to the physical sciences and to the few who have grasped the history of ideas. When it is recalled that until the Christian era the underworld was never regarded as a hostile area, that all gods were useful and essentially friendly to man despite occasional lapses; when we see the steady and methodical inculcation into humanity of the idea of man’s worthlessness - until redeemed - the necessity of the Devil may become evident as a weapon, a weapon designed and used time and time again in every age to whip men into a surrender to a particular church or church-state. Our difficulty in believing the - for want of a better word - political inspiration of the Devil is due in great part to the fact that he is called up and damned not only by our social antagonists but by our own side, whatever it may be. The Catholic Church, through its Inquisition, is famous for cultivating Lucifer as the arch-fiend, but the Church’s enemies relied no less upon the Old Boy to keep the human mind enthralled. Luther was himself accused of alliance with Hell, and he in turn accused his enemies. To complicate matters further, he believed that he had had contact with the Devil and had argued theology with him. I am not surprised at this, for at my own university a professor of history - a Lutheran, by the way - used to assemble his graduate students, draw the shades, and commune in the classroom with Erasmus. He was never, to my knowledge, officially scoffed at for this, the reason being that the university officials, like most of us, are the children of a history which still sucks at the Devil’s teats. At this writing, only England has held back before the temptations of contemporary diabolism. In the countries of the Communist ideology, all resistance of any import is linked to the totally malign capitalist succubi, and in America any man who is not reactionary in his views is open to the charge of alliance with the Red hell. Political opposition, thereby, is given an inhumane overlay which then justifies the abrogation of all normally applied customs of civilized inter-course. A political policy is equated with moral right, and opposition to it with diabolical malevolence. Once such an equation is effectively made, society becomes a congerie of plots and counterplots, and the main role of government changes from that of the arbiter to that of the scourge of God. The results of this process are no different now from what they ever were, except sometimes in the degree of cruelty inflicted, and not always even in that department. Normally the actions and deeds of a man were all that society felt comfortable in judging, The secret intent of an action was left to the ministers, priests, and rabbis to deal with. When diabolism rises, however, actions are the least important manifests of the true nature of a man. The Devil, as Reverend Hale said, is a wily one, and, until an hour before he fell, even God thought him beautiful in Heaven. The analogy, however, seems to falter when one considers that, while there were no witches then, there are Communists and capitalists now, and in each camp there is certain proof that spies of each side are at work undermining the other. But this is a snobbish objection and not at all warranted by the facts. I have no doubt that people were communing with, and even worshiping, the Devil in Salem, and if the whole truth could be known in this case, as it is in others, we should discover a regular and conventionalized' propitiation of the dark spirit, One certain evidence of this is the confession of Tituba, the slave of Reverend Parris, and another is the behavior of the, children who were known to have indulged in sorceries with her. There are accounts of similar klatches in Europe, where the daughters of the towns would assemble at night and, sometimes with fetishes, sometimes with a selected young man, give them-selves to love, with some bastardly results. The Church, sharp-eyed as it must be when gods long dead are brought to life, condemned these orgies as witchcraft and interpreted them, rightly, as a resurgence of the Dionysiac forces it had crushed long before. Sex, sin, and the. Devil were early linked, and so they continued to be in Salem, and are today. From all accounts there are no more puritanical mores in the world than those enforced by the Communists in Russia, where women’s fashions, for instance, are as prudent and all-covering as any American Baptist would desire. The divorce laws lay a tremendous responsibility on the father for the care of his children. Even the laxity of divorce regulations in the early years of the revolution was undoubtedly a revulsion from the nineteenth-century Victorian immobility of marriage and the consequent hypocrisy that developed from it. If for no other reasons, a state so powerful, so jealous of the uniformity of its citizens, cannot long tolerate the atomization of the family. And yet, in American eyes at least, there remains the conviction that the Russian attitude toward women is lascivious. It is the Devil working again, just as he is working within the Slav who is shocked at the very idea of a woman’s disrobing herself in a burlesque show. Our opposites are always robed in sexual sin, and it is from this unconscious conviction that demonology gains both its attractive sensuality and its capacity to infuriate and frighten.

Coming into Salem now, Reverend Hale conceives of himself much as a young doctor on his first call. His painfully acquired armory of symptoms, catchwords, and diagnostic procedures are now to be put to use at last. The road from Beverly is unusually busy this morning, and he has passed a hundred rumors that make him smile at the ignorance of the yeomanry in this most precise science. He feels himself allied with the best minds of Europe - kings, philosophers, scientists, and ecclesiasts of all churches. His goal is light, goodness and its preservation, and he knows the exaltation of the blessed whose intelligence, sharpened by minute examinations of enormous tracts, is finally called upon to face what may be a bloody fight with the Fiend himself. He appears loaded down with half a dozen heavy books. Hale: Pray you, someone take these! Parris, delighted: Mr. Hale! Oh! it’s good to see you again! Taking some books: My, they’re heavy! Hale, setting down his books: They must be; they are weighted with authority.

Parris, a little scared: Well, you do come prepared!

Hale: We shall need hard study if it comes to tracking down the Old Boy. Noticing

Rebecca: You cannot be Rebecca Nurse?

Rebecca: I am, sir. Do you know me?

Hale: It’s strange how I knew you, but I suppose you look as such a good soul should. We have all heard of your great charities in Beverly.

Parris: Do you know this gentleman? Mr. Thomas Putnam. And his good wife Ann.

Hale: Putnam! I had not expected such distinguished company, sir.

Putnam, pleased: It does not seem to help us today, Mr. Hale. We look to you to come to our house and save our child.

Hale: Your child ails too?

Mrs. Putnam: Her soul, her soul seems flown away. She sleeps and yet she walks...

Putnam: She cannot eat.

Hale: Cannot eat! Thinks on it, Then, to Proctor and Giles Corey: Do you men have addicted children?

Parris: No, no, these are farmers. John Proctor -

Giles Corey: He don’t believe in witches.

Proctor, to Hale: I never spoke on witches one way or the other. Will you come, Giles?

Giles: No - no, John, I think not. I have some few queer questions of my own to ask this fellow.

Proctor: I’ve heard you to be a sensible man, Mr. Hale. I hope you’ll leave some of it in Salem.

Proctor goes. Hale stands embarrassed for an instant.

Parris, quickly: Will you look at my daughter, sir? Leads Hale to the bed. She has tried to leap out the window; we discovered her this morning on the highroad, waving her arms as though she’d fly.

Hale, narrowing his eyes. Tries to fly.

Putnam: She cannot bear to hear the Lord’s name, Mr. Hale; that’s a sure sign of witchcraft afloat.

Hale, holding up his hands: No, no. Now let me instruct you. We cannot look to superstition in this. The Devil is precise; the marks of his presence are definite as stone, and I must tell you all that I shall not proceed unless you are prepared to believe me if I should find no bruise of hell upon her.

Parris: It is agreed, sir - it is agreed - we will abide by your judgment.

Hale: Good then. He goes to the bed, looks down at Betty. To Parris: Now, sir, what were your first warning of this strangeness?

Parris: Why, sir - I discovered her - indicating Abigail - and my niece and ten or twelve of the other girls, dancing in the forest last night.

Hale, surprised: You permit dancing?

Parris: No, no, it were secret -

Mrs. Putnam, unable to wait: Mr. Parris’s slave has knowledge of conjurin’, sir.

Parris, to Mrs. Putnam: We cannot be sure of that, Goody Ann -

Mrs. Putnam, frightened, very softly: I know it, sir. I sent my child - she should learn from Tituba who murdered her sisters.

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Rebecca horrified: Goody Ann! You sent a child to conjure up the dead?

Mrs. Putnam: Let God blame me, not you, not you, Rebecca! I’ll not have you judging me any more! To Hale: Is it a natural work to lose seven children before they live a day?

Parris: Sssh!

Rebecca, with great pain, turns her face away. There is a pause.

Hale: Seven dead in childbirth.

Mrs. Putnam, softly: Aye. Her voice breaks; she looks up at him. Silence. Hale is impressed. Parris looks to him. He goes to his books, opens one, turns pages, then reads. All wait, avidly.

Parris, hushed: What book is that?

Mrs. Putnam: What's there, sir?

Hale, with a tasty love of intellectual pursuit: Here is all the invisible world, caught, defined, and calculated. In these books the Devil stands stripped of all his brute disguises. Here are all your familiar spirits - your incubi and succubi; your witches that go by land, by air, and by sea; your wizards of the night and of the day. Have no fear now - we shall find him out if he has come among us, and I mean to crush him utterly if he has shown his face! He starts for the bed.

Rebecca: Will it hurt the child, sir?

Hale: I cannot tell. If she is truly in the Devil’s grip we may have to rip and tear to get her free.

REBECCA: I think I’ll go, then. I am too old for this. She rises.

Parris, striving for conviction: Why, Rebecca, we may open up the boil of all our troubles today!

Rebecca: Let us hope for that. I go to God for you, sir. 40 The Crucible

Parris, with trepidation - and resentment: I hope you do not mean we go to Satan here! Slight pause.

Rebecca: I wish I knew. She goes out; they feel resentful of her note of moral superiority.

Putnam, abruptly: Come, Mr. Hale, let’s get on. Sit you here.

Giles: Mr. Hale, I have always wanted to ask a learned man - what signifies the readin’ of strange books?

Hale: What books?

Giles: I cannot tell; she hides them, Hale; Who does this?

Giles: Martha, my wife. I have waked at night many a time and found her in a corner, readin’ of a book. Now what do you make of that?

Hale: Why, that’s not necessarily -

Giles: It discomfits me! Last night - mark this - I tried and tried and could not say my prayers. And then she close her book and walks out of the house, and suddenly - mark this - I could pray again!

Old Giles must be spoken for, if only because his fate was to be so remarkable and so different from that of all the others. He was in his early eighties at this time, and was the most comical hero in the history. No man has ever been blamed for so much. If a cow was missed, the first thought was to look for her around Corey’s house; a fire blazing up at night brought suspicion of arson to his door. He didn’t give a hoot for public opinion, and only in his last years - after he had married Martha - did he bother much with the church. That she stopped his prayer is very probable, but he forgot to say that he’d only recently learned any prayers and it didn’t take much to make him stumble over them. He was a crank and a nuisance, but withal a deeply innocent and brave man. In court once he was asked if it were true that he had been frightened by the strange behavior of a hog and had then said he knew it to be the Devil in an animal’s shape. “What frighted you?” he was asked. He forgot everything but the word “frighted,” and instantly replied, “I do not know that I ever spoke that word in my life,”

Hale: Ah! The stoppage of prayer - that is strange. I’ll speak further on that with you.

Giles: I’m not sayin’ she’s touched the Devil, now, but I’d admire to know what books she reads and why she hides them. ' She’ll not answer me, y’ see.

Hale: Aye, we’ll discuss it. To all: Now mark me, if the Devil is in her you will witness some frightful wonders in this room, so please to keep your wits about you. Mr. Putnam, stand close in case she flies. Now, Betty, dear, will you sit up? Putnam comes in closer, ready-handed. Hale sits Betty up, but she hangs limp in his hands. Hmmm. He observes her carefully. The others watch breathlessly. Can you hear me? I am John Hale, minister of Beverly. I have come to help you, dear. Do you remember my two little girls in Beverly? She does not stir in his hands.

Parris, in fright: How can it be the Devil? Why would he choose my house to strike? We have all manner of licentious . people in the village!

Hale: What victory would the Devil have to win a soul already bad? It is the best the Devil wants, and who is better than the minister?

Giles: That’s deep, Mr, Parris, deep, deep!

Parris, with resolution now: Betty! Answer Mr. Hale! Betty! Hale: Does someone afflict you, child? It need not be a woman, mind you, or a man. Perhaps some bird invisible to others comes to you - perhaps a pig, a mouse, or any beast at all. Is there some figure bids you fly? The child remains limp in his hands. In silence he lays her back on the pillow Now, holding out his hands toward her, he intones: In nomine Domini Sabaoth sui filiique ite ad infernos. She does not stir. He turns to

Abigail, his eyes narrowing. Abigail, what sort of dancing were you doing with her in the forest?

Abigail: Why - common dancing is all.

Parris: I think I ought to say that I - I saw a kettle in the grass where they were dancing.

Abigail: That were only soup.

Hale: What sort of soup were in this kettle, Abigail?

Abigail: Why, it were beans - and lentils, I think, and -

Hale: Mr. Parris, you did not notice, did you, any living thing in the kettle? A mouse, perhaps, a spider, a frog - ?

Parris, fearfully: I - do believe there were some movement - in the soup.

Abigail: That jumped in, we never put it in!

Hale, quickly: What jumped in?

Abigail: Why, a very little frog jumped -

Parris: A frog, Abby!

Hale, grasping Abigail: Abigail, it may be your cousin is dying. Did you call the Devil last night?

Abigail: I never called him! Tituba, Tituba...

Parris, blanched: She called the Devil?

Hale: I should like to speak with Tituba,

Parris: Goody Ann, will you bring her up? Mrs, Putnam exits.

Hale: How did she call him?

Abigail: I know not - she spoke Barbados.

Hale: Did you feel any strangeness when she called him? A sudden cold wind, perhaps? A trembling below the ground?

Abigail: I didn’t see no Devil! Shaking Betty: Betty, wake up. Betty! Betty!

Hale: You cannot evade me, Abigail. Did your cousin drink any of the brew in that kettle?

Abigail: She never drank it!

Hale: Did you drink it?

Abigail: No, sir!

Hale ". Did Tituba ask you to drink it?

Abigail: She tried, but I refused.

Hale: Why are you concealing? Have you sold yourself to Lucifer?

Abigail: I never sold myself! I’m a good girl! I’m a proper girl!

Mrs. Putnam enters with Tituba, and instantly Abigail points at Tituba.

Abigail: She made me do it! She made Betty do it!

Tituba, shocked and angry: Abby!

Abigail: She makes me drink blood!

Parris: Blood!!

Mrs. Putnam: My baby’s blood?

Tituba: No, no, chicken blood. I give she chicken blood!

Hale: Woman, have you enlisted these children for the Devil?

Tituba: No, no, sir, I don’t truck with no Devil!

Hale: Why can she not wake? Are you silencing this child? 44 The Crucible

Tituba: I love me Betty!

Hale; You have sent your spirit out upon this child, have you not? Are you gathering souls for the Devil?

Abigail: She sends her spirit on me in church; she makes me laugh at prayer!

Parris: She have often laughed at prayer!

Abigail: She comes to me every night to go and drink blood!

Tituba: You beg me to conjure! She beg me make charm -

Abigail: Don’t lie! To Hale: She comes to me while I sleep; she’s always making me dream corruptions!

Tituba: Why you say that, Abby?

Abigail: Sometimes I wake and find myself standing in the open doorway and not a stitch on my body! I always hear her laughing in my sleep. I hear her singing her Barbados songs and tempting me with -

Tituba: Mister Reverend, I never -

Hale, resolved now: Tituba, I want you to wake this child.

Tituba: I have no power on this child, sir.

Hale: You most certainly do, and you will free her from it now! When did you compact with the Devil?

Tituba: I don’t compact with no Devil!

Parris: You will confess yourself or I will take you out and whip you to your death, Tituba!

Putnam: This woman must be hanged! She must be taken and hanged!

Tituba, terrified, falls to her knees: No, no, don’t hang Tituba! I tell him I don’t desire to work for him, sir. Parris: The Devil?

Hale: Then you saw him! Tituba weeps. Now Tituba, I know that when we bind ourselves to Hell it is very hard to break with it. We are going to help you tear yourself free -

Tituba, frightened by the coming process: Mister Reverend, I do believe somebody else be witchin’ these children.

Hale: Who?

Tituba: I don’t know, sir, but the Devil got him numerous witches.

Hale: Does he! It is a clue. Tituba, look into my eyes. Come, look into me. She raises her eyes to his fearfully. You would be a good Christian woman, would you not, Tituba?

Tituba: Aye, sir, a good Christian woman.

Hale: And you love these little children?

Tituba: Oh, yes, sir, I don’t desire to hurt little children.

Hale: And you love God, Tituba?

Tituba: I love God with all my bein’.

Hale: Now, in God’s holy name -

Tituba: Bless Him. Bless Him. She is rocking on her knees, sobbing in terror.

Hale: And to His glory -

Tituba: Eternal glory. Bless Him - bless God...

Hale: Open yourself, Tituba - open yourself and let, God’s holy light shine on you.

Tituba: Oh, bless the Lord.

Hale: When the Devil comes to you does he ever come - with another person? She stares up into his face, Perhaps another person in the village? Someone you know.

Parris: Who came with him?

Putnam: Sarah Good? Did you ever see Sarah Good with him? Or Osburn?

Parris: Was it man or woman came with him?

Tituba: Man or woman. Was - was woman.

Parris: What woman? A woman, you said. What woman?

Tituba: It was black dark, and I -

Parris: You could see him, why could you not see her?

Tituba: Well, they was always talking; they was always runnin’ round and carryin’ on -

Parris: You mean out of Salem? Salem witches?

Tituba: I believe so, yes, sir.

Now Hale takes her hand. She is surprised.

Hale: Tituba. You must have no fear to tell us who they are, do you understand? We will protect you. The Devil can never overcome a minister. You know that, do you not?

Tituba, kisses Hale’s hand: Aye, sir, oh, I do.

Hale: You have confessed yourself to witchcraft, and that speaks a wish to come to Heaven’s side. And we will bless you, Tituba.

Tituba, deeply relieved: Oh, God bless you, Mr. Hale!

Hale, with rising exaltation: You are God’s instrument put in our hands to discover the Devil’s agents among us. You are selected, Tituba, you are chosen to help us cleanse our village. So speak utterly, Tituba, turn your back on him and face God - face God, Tituba, and God will protect you.

TITUBA, joining with him: Oh, God, protect Tituba!

Hale, kindly: Who came to you with the Devil? Two? Three? Four? How many?

Tituba pants, and begins rocking back and forth again, staring ahead.

Tituba: There was four. There was four.

Parris, pressing in on her: Who? Who? Their names, their names! Tituba, suddenly bursting out: Oh, how many times he bid me .kill you, Mr. Parris!

Parris: Kill me!

Tituba, in a fury: He say Mr. Parris must be kill! Mr. Parris no goodly man, Mr. Parris mean man and no gentle man, and he bid me rise out of my bed and cut your throat! They gasp. But I tell him “No! I don’t hate that man. I don’t want kill that man.” But he say, “You work for me, Tituba, and I make you free! I give you pretty dress to wear, and put you way high up in the air, and you gone fly back to Barbados!” And I say, “You lie, Devil, you lie!” And then he come one stormy night to me, and he say, “Look! I have white people belong to me.” And I look - and there was Goody Good.

Parris: Sarah Good!

Tituba, rocking and weeping: Aye, sir, and Goody Osburn.

Mrs. Putnam: I knew it! Goody Osburn were midwife to me three times. I begged you, Thomas, did I not? I begged him not to call Osburn because I feared her. My babies always shriveled in her hands!

Hale: Take courage, you must give us all their names. How can you bear to see this child suffering? Look at her, Tituba. He is indicating Betty on the bed. Look at her God-given innocence; her soul is so tender; we must protect her, Tituba; the Devil is out and preying on her like a beast upon the mesh of the pure lamb. God will bless you for your help.

*Abigail rises, staring as though inspired, and cries out.*

Abigail: I want to open myself! They turn to her, startled. She is enraptured, as though in a pearly light. I want the light of God, I want the sweet love of Jesus! I danced for the Devil; I saw him; I wrote in his book; I go back to Jesus; I kiss His hand. I saw Sarah Good with the Devil! I saw Goody Osburn with the Devil! I saw Bridget Bishop with the Devil!

*As she is speaking, Betty is rising from the bed, a fever in her eyes, and picks up the chant.*

Betty, staring too: I saw George Jacobs with the Devil! I saw Goody Howe with the Devil!

Parris: She speaks! He rushes to embrace Betty. She speaks! Hale: Glory to God! It is broken, they are free!

Betty, *calling out hysterically and with great relief*: I saw Martha Bellows with the Devil!

Abigail: I saw Goody Sibber with the Devil! It is rising to o great glee.

Putnam: The marshal, I’ll call the marshal!

Parris is shouting a prayer of thanksgiving.

Betty: I saw Alice Barrow with the Devi1!

*The curtain begins to fall.*

Hale, as Putnam goes out: Let the marshal bring irons!

Abigail: I saw Goody Hawkins with the Devil!

Betty: I saw Goody Bibber with the Devil!

Abigail: I saw Goody Booth with the Devil!

On their ecstatic cries

THE CURTAIN FALLS

**ACT TWO**

The common room of Proctor’s house, eight days later. At the right is a door opening on the fields outside. A fireplace is at the left, and behind it a stairway leading upstairs. It is the low, dark, and rather long living room of the time. As the curtain rises, the room is empty. From above, Elizabeth is heard softly singing to the children. Presently the door opens and John Proctor enters, carrying his gun. He glances about the room as he comes toward the fireplace, then halts for an instant as he hears her singing. He continues on to the fireplace, leans the gun against the wall as he swings a pot out of the fire and smells it. Then he lifts out the ladle and tastes. He is not quite pleased. He reaches to a cupboard, takes a pinch of salt, and drops it into the pot. As he is tasting again, her footsteps are heard on the stair. He swings the pot into the fireplace and goes to a basin and washes his hands and face, Elizabeth enters. Elizabeth: What keeps you so late? It’s almost dark. Proctor: I were planting far out to the forest edge. Elizabeth: Oh, you’re done then. Proctor: Aye, the farm is seeded. The boys asleep? Elizabeth: They will be soon. And she goes to the fireplace, proceeds to ladle up stew in a dish. Proctor: Pray now for a fair summer.

Elizabeth: Aye.

Proctor: Are you well today?

Elizabeth: I am. She brings the plate to the table, and, indicating the food:. It is a rabbit.

Proctor, going to the table: Oh, is it! In Jonathan’s trap?

Elizabeth: No, she walked into the house this afternoon; I found her sittin’ in the corner like she come to visit.

Proctor: Oh, that’s a good sign walkin’ in.

Elizabeth: Pray God. It hurt my heart to strip her, poor rabbit. She sits and watches him taste it.

Proctor: It’s well seasoned.

Elizabeth, blushing with pleasure: I took great care. She’s tender?

Proctor: Aye. He eats. She watches him. I think we’ll see green fields soon. It’s warm as blood beneath the clods.

Elizabeth: That’s well.

Proctor eats, then looks up.

Proctor: If the crop is good I’ll buy George Jacob’s heifer. How would that please you?

Elizabeth: Aye, it would.

Proctor, with a grin: I mean to please you, Elizabeth.

Elizabeth - it is hard to say: I know it, John.

He gets up, goes to her, kisses her. She receives it. With a certain disappointment, he returns to the table.

Proctor, as gently as he can: Cider?

Elizabeth, with a sense of reprimanding herself for having forgot: Aye! She gets up and goes and pours a glass for him. He now arches his back.

Proctor: This farm’s a continent when you go foot by foot droppin’ seeds in it.

Elizabeth, coming with the cider: It must be.

Proctor, drinks a long draught, then, putting the glass down: You ought to bring some flowers in the house.

Elizabeth: Oh! I forgot! I will tomorrow.

Proctor: It’s winter in here yet. On Sunday let you come with me, and we’ll walk the farm together; I never see such a load of flowers on the earth. With good feeling he goes and looks up at the sky through the open doorway. Lilacs have a purple smell. Lilac is the smell of nightfall, I think. Massachusetts is a beauty in the spring!

Elizabeth: Aye, it is. There is a pause. She is watching him from the table as he stands there absorbing the night. It is as though she would speak but cannot. Instead, now, she takes up his plate and glass and fork and goes with them to the basin. Her back is turned to him. He turns to her and watches her. A sense of their separation rises.

Proctor: I think you’re sad again. Are you?

Elizabeth - she doesn’t want friction, and yet she must: You come so late I thought you’d gone to Salem this afternoon.

Proctor: Why? I have no business in Salem.

Elizabeth: You did speak of going, earlier this week. Proctor - he knows what she means: I thought better of it since.

Elizabeth: Mary Warren’s there today,

Proctor: Why’d you let her? You heard me forbid her go to Salem any morel

Elizabeth: I couldn’t stop her.

Proctor, holding back a full condemnation of her: It is a fault, it is a fault,

Elizabeth - you’re the mistress here, not Mary Warren.

Elizabeth: She frightened all my strength away.

Proctor: How may that mouse frighten you, Elizabeth? You –

Elizabeth: It is a mouse no more. I forbid her go, and she raises up her chin like the daughter of a prince and lays to me, “I must go to Salem, Goody Proctor; I am an official of the court!”

Proctor: Court! What court?

Elizabeth: Aye, it is a proper court they have now. They’ve sent four judges out of Boston, she says, weighty magistrates of the General Court, and at the head sits the Deputy Governor of the Province.

Proctor, astonished: Why, she’s mad.

Elizabeth: I would to God she were. There be fourteen people in the jail now, she says. Proctor simply looks at her, unable to grasp it. And they’ll be tried, and the court have power to hang them too, she says.

Proctor, scoffing, but without conviction: Ah, they’d never hang -

Elizabeth: The Deputy Governor promise hangin’ if they’ll not confess, John. The town’s gone wild, I think. She speak of Abigail, and I thought she were a saint, to hear her. Abigail brings the other girls into the court, and where she walks the crowd will part like the sea for Israel. And folks are brought before them, and if they scream and howl and fall to the floor - the person’s clapped in the jail for bewitchin’ them.

Proctor, wide-eyed: Oh, it is a black mischief.

Elizabeth: I think you must go to Salem, John. He turns to her. I think so. You must tell them it is a fraud.

Proctor, thinking beyond this: Aye, it is, it is surely.

Elizabeth: Let you go to Ezekiel Cheever - he knows you well. And tell him what she said to you last week in her uncle’s house. She said it had naught to do with witchcraft, did she not?

Proctor, in thought: Aye, she did, she did. Now, a pause.

Elizabeth, quietly, fearing to anger him by prodding: God for-bid you keep that from the court, John. I think they must be told.

Proctor, quietly, struggling with his thought: Aye, they must, they must. It is a wonder they do believe her.

Elizabeth: I would go to Salem now, John - let you go tonight.

Proctor: I’ll think on it.

Elizabeth, with her courage now: You cannot keep it, John,

Proctor, angering: I know I cannot keep it. I say I will think on it!

Elizabeth, hurt, and very coldly: Good, then, let you think on it. She stands and starts to walk out of the room.

Proctor: I am only wondering how I may prove what she told me, Elizabeth. If the girl’s a saint now, I think it is not easy to prove she’s fraud, and the town gone so silly. She told it to me in a room alone - I have no proof for it.

Elizabeth: You were alone with her?

Proctor, stubbornly: For a moment alone, aye. Elizabeth: Why, then, it is not as you told me.

Proctor, his anger rising: For a moment, I say. The others come in soon after.

Elizabeth, quietly - she has suddenly lost all faith in him: Do as you wish, then. She starts to turn.

Proctor: Woman. She turns to him. I’ll not have your suspicion any more.

Elizabeth, a little loftily: I have no -

Proctor: I’ll not have it!

Elizabeth: Then let you not earn it.

Proctor, with a violent undertone: You doubt me yet?

Elizabeth, with a smile, to keep her dignity: John, if it were not Abigail that you must go to hurt, would you falter now? I think not.

Proctor: Now look you -

Elizabeth: I see what I see, John.

Proctor, with solemn warning: You will not judge me more, Elizabeth. I have good reason to think before I charge fraud on Abigail, and I will think on it. Let you look to your own improvement before you go to judge your husband any more. I have forgot Abigail, and -

Elizabeth: And I.

Proctor: Spare me! You forget nothin’ and forgive nothin’. Learn charity, woman. I have gone tiptoe in this house all seven month since she is gone. I have not moved from there to there without I think to please you, and still an everlasting funeral marches round your heart. I cannot speak but I am doubted, every moment judged for lies, as though I come into a court when I come into this house!

Elizabeth: John, you are not open with me. You saw her with a crowd, you said. Now you -

Proctor: I’ll plead my honesty no more, Elizabeth.

Elizabeth - now she would justify herself: John, I am only -

Proctor: No more! I should have roared you down when first you told me your suspicion. But I wilted, and, like a Christian, I confessed. Confessed! Some dream I had must have mistaken you for God that day. But you’re not, you’re not, and let you remember it! Let you look sometimes for the goodness in me, and judge me not.

Elizabeth: I do not,judge you. The magistrate sits in your heart that judges you. I never thought you but a good man, John - with a smile - only somewhat bewildered.

Proctor, laughing bitterly: Oh, Elizabeth, your justice would freeze beer! He turns suddenly toward a sound outside. He starts for the door as Mary Warren enters. As soon as he sees her, he goes directly to her and grabs her by her cloak, furious. How do you go to Salem when I forbid it? Do you mock me? Shaking her. I’ll whip you if you dare leave this house again! Strangely, she doesn’t resist him, but hangs limply by his grip.

Mary Warren: I am sick, I am sick, Mr. Proctor. Pray, pray, hurt me not. Her strangeness throws him op, and her evident pallor and weakness. He frees her. My insides are all shuddery; I am in the proceedings all day, sir.

Proctor, with draining anger - his curiosity is draining it:. And what of these proceedings here? When will you proceed to keep this house, as you are paid nine pound a year to do - and my wife not wholly well? As though to compensate, Mary Warren goes to Elizabeth with a small rag

doll.

Mary Warren: I made a gift for you today, Goody Proctor. I had to sit long hours in a chair, and passed the time with sewing.

Elizabeth, perplexed, looking at the doll: Why, thank you, it’s a fair poppet.

Mary Warren, with a trembling, decayed voice: We must all love each other now, Goody Proctor.

Elizabeth, amazed at her strangeness: Aye, indeed we must.

Mary Warren, glancing at the room: I’ll get up early in the morning and clean the house. I must sleep now. She turns and starts off.

Proctor: Mary. She halts. Is it true? There be fourteen women arrested?

Mary Warren: No, sir. There be thirty-nine now - She suddenly breaks op and sobs and sits down, exhausted.

Elizabeth: Why, she’s weepin'! What ails you, child?

Mary Warren: Goody Osburn - will hang!

There is a shocked pause, while she sobs.

Proctor: Hang! He calls into her face. Hang, y’say?

Mary Warren, through her weeping: Aye.

Proctor: The Deputy Governor will permit it?

Mary Warren: He sentenced her. He must. To ameliorate it: But not Sarah Good. For Sarah Good confessed, y’see.

Proctor: Confessed' To what?

Mary Warren: That she - in horror at the memory - she some-times made a compact with Lucifer, and wrote her name in his black book - with her blood - and bound herself to torment Christians till God’s thrown down - and we all must worship Hell forevermore,

Pause.

Proctor: But - surely you know what a jabberer she is. Did you tell them that?

Mary Warren: Mr. Proctor, in open court she near to choked us all to death.

Proctor: How, choked you?

Mary Warren: She sent her spirit out.

Elizabeth: Oh, Mary, Mary, surely you -

Mary Warren, with an indignant edge: She tried to kill me many times, Goody Proctor!

Elizabeth: Why, I never heard you mention that before.

Mary Warren: I never knew it before. I never knew anything before. When she come into the court I say to myself, I must not accuse this woman, for she sleep in ditches, and so very old and poor. But then - then she sit there, denying and denying, and I feel a misty coldness climbin’ up my back, and the skin on my skull begin to creep, and I feel a clamp around my neck and I cannot breathe air; and then - entranced - I hear a voice, a screamin’ voice, and it were my voice - and all at once I re-membered everything she done to me!

Proctor: Why? What did she do to you?

Mary Warren, like one awakened to a marvelous secret in-sight: So many time,

Mr. Proctor, she come to this very door, beggin’ bread and a cup of cider - and mark this: whenever I turned her away empty, she mumbled.

Elizabeth: Mumbled! She may mumble if she’s hungry

Mary Warren: But what does she mumble? You must re-member, Goody

Proctor. Last month - a Monday, I think - she walked away, and I thought my guts would burst for two days after. Do you remember it?

Elizabeth: Why - I do, I think, but -

Mary Warren: And so I told that to Judge Hathorne, and he asks her so. “Sarah Good,” says he, “what curse do you mumble that this girl must fall sick after turning you away?” And then she replies - mimicking an old crone - "Why, your excellence, no curse at all. I only say my commandments; I hope I may say my commandments,” says she!

Elizabeth: And that’s an upright answer.

Mary Warren: Aye, but then Judge Hathorne say, “Recite for us your commandments!” - leaning avidly toward them - and of all the ten she could not say a single one. She never knew no commandments, and they had her in a flat lie!

Proctor: And so condemned her?

Mary Warren, now a little strained, seeing his stubborn doubt: Why, they must when she condemned herself.

Proctor: But the proof, the proof!

Mary Warren, with greater impatience with him: I told you the proof. It’s hard proof, hard as rock, the judges said.

Proctor, pauses an instant, then: You will not go to court again, Mary Warren.

Mary Warren: I must tell you, sir, I will be gone every day now. I am amazed you do not see what weighty work we do.

Proctor: What work you do! It’s strange work for a Christian girl to hang old women!

Mary Warren: But, Mr. Proctor, they will not hang them it they confess. Sarah Good will only sit in jail some time - recall-ing - and here’s a wonder for you; think on this. Goody Good is pregnant!

Elizabeth: Pregnant! Are they mad? The woman’s near to sixty!

Mary Warren: They had Doctor Griggs examine her, and she’s full to the brim. And smokin’ a pipe all these years, and no husband either! But she’s safe, thank God, for they’ll not hurt the innocent child, But be that not a marvel? You must see it, sir, it’s God’s work we do. So I’ll be gone every day for some time. I’m - I am an official of the court, they say, and I - She has been edging toward onstage.

Proctor: I’ll official you! He strides to the mantel, takes down the whip hanging there.

Mary Warren, terrified, but coming erect, striving for her authority: I’ll not stand whipping anymore!

Elizabeth, hurriedly, as Proctor approaches: Mary, promise now you’ll stay at home -

Mary Warren, backing from him, but keeping her erect posture, striving, striving for her way: The Devil’s loose in Salem, Mr. Proctor; we must discover where he’s hiding!

Proctor! I’ll whip the Devil out of you! With whip raised he reaches out for her, and she streaks away and yells.

Mary Warren, pointing at Elizabeth: I saved her life today!

Silence. His whip comes down.

Elizabeth, softly: I am accused?

Mary Warren, quaking: Somewhat mentioned. But I said 1 never see no sign you ever sent your spirit out to hurt no one, and seeing I do live so closely with you, they dismissed it.

Elizabeth: Who accused me?

Mary Warren: I am bound by law, I cannot tell it. To Proctor: I only hope you’ll not be so sarcastical no more. Four judges and the King’s deputy sat to dinner with us but an hour ago. I - I would have you speak civilly to me, from this out.

Proctor, in horror, muttering in disgust at her: Go to bed.

Mary Warren, with a stamp of her foot: I’ll not be ordered to bed no more, Mr. Proctor! I am eighteen and a woman, how-ever single!

Proctor: Do you wish to sit up? Then sit up.

Mary Warren: I wish to go to bed!

Proctor, in anger: Good night, then!

Mary Warren: Good night. Dissatisfied, uncertain of herself, she goes out. Wide-eyed, both,

Proctor and Elizabeth stand staring.

Elizabeth, quietly: Oh, the noose, the noose is up!

Proctor: There’ll be no noose.

Elizabeth: She wants me dead. I knew all week it would come to this!

Proctor, Without conviction: They dismissed it. You heard her say -

Elizabeth: And what of tomorrow? She will cry me out until they take me!

Proctor: Sit you down.

Elizabeth: She wants me dead, John, you know it!

Proctor: I say sit down! She sits, trembling. He speaks quietly, trying to keep his wits, Now we must be wise, Elizabeth.

Elizabeth, with sarcasm, and a sense of being lost: Oh, indeed, indeed!

Proctor: Fear nothing. I’ll find Ezekiel Cheever. I’ll tell him she said it were all sport.

Elizabeth: John, with so many in the jail, more than Cheever’s help is needed now, I think. Would you favor me with this? Go to Abigail.

Proctor, his soul hardening as he senses... : What have I to say to Abigail?

Elizabeth, delicately: John - grant me this. You have a faulty understanding of young girls. There is a promise made in any bed -

Proctor, striving against his anger: What promise!

Elizabeth: Spoke or silent, a promise is surely made. And she may dote on it now - I am sure she does - and thinks to kill me, then to take my place.

Proctor’s anger is rising; he cannot speak.

Elizabeth: It is her dearest hope, John, I know it. There be a thousand names; why does she call mine? There be a certain danger in calling such a name - I am no Goody Good that sleeps in ditches, nor Osburn, drunk and half-witted. She’d dare not call out such a farmer’s wife but there be monstrous profit in it. She thinks to take my place, John,

Proctor: She cannot think it! He knows it is true.

Elizabeth, “reasonably”: John, have you ever shown her some-what of contempt? She cannot pass you in the church but you will blush -

Proctor: I may blush for my sin.

Elizabeth: I think she sees another meaning in that blush.

Proctor: And what see you? What see you, Elizabeth?

Elizabeth, “conceding”: I think you be somewhat ashamed, far I am there, and she so close.

Proctor: When will you know me, woman? Were I stone 1 would have cracked for shame this seven month!

Elizabeth: Then go and tell her she’s a whore. Whatever promise she may sense - break it, John, break it.

Proctor, between his teeth: Good, then. I’ll go. He starts for his rifle.

Elizabeth, trembling, fearfully: Oh, how unwillingly!

Proctor, turning on her, ripe in hand: I will curse her hotter than the oldest cinder in hell. But pray, begrudge me not my anger!

Elizabeth: Your anger! I only ask you -

Proctor: Woman, am I so base? Do you truly think me base?

Elizabeth: I never called you base.

Proctor: Then how do you charge me with such a promise? The promise that a stallion gives a mare I gave that girl!

Elizabeth: Then why do you anger with me when I bid you break it?

Proctor: Because it speaks deceit, and I am honest! But I’ll plead no more! I see now your spirit twists around the single error of my life, and I will never tear it free!

Elizabeth, crying out: You’ll tear it free - when you come to know that I will be your only wife, or no wife at all! She has an arrow in you yet, John Proctor, and you know it well!

Quite suddenly, as though from the air, a figure appears in the doorway. They start slightly. 1t is Mr. Hale. He is different now - drawn a little, and there is a quality of deference, even of guilt, about his manner now.

Hale: Good evening

Proctor, still in his shock: Why, Mr. Hale! Good evening to you, sir. Come in, come in.

Hale, to Elizabeth: I hope I do not startle you.

Elizabeth: No, no, it’s only that I heard no horse -

Hale: You are Goodwife Proctor.

Proctor: Aye; Elizabeth.

Hale, nods, then: I hope you’re not off to bed yet.

Proctor, setting down his gun: No, no. Hale comes further into the room. And

Proctor, to explain his nervousness: We are not used to visitors after dark, but you’re welcome here. Will you sit you down, sir?

Hale: I will. He sits. Let you sit, Goodwife Proctor. She does, never letting him out of her sight. There is a pause as Hale looks about the room.

Proctor, to break the silence: Will you drink cider, Mr. Hale?

Hale: No, it rebels my stomach; I have some further traveling yet tonight. Sit you down, sir. Proctor sits. I will not keep you long, but I have some business with you.

Proctor: Business of the court?

Hale: No - no, I come of my own, without the court’s authority. Hear me. He wets his lips. I know not if you are aware, but your wife’s name is - mentioned in the court.

Proctor: We know it, sir. Our Mary Warren told us. We are entirely amazed. Hale: I am a stranger here, as you know. And in my ignorance I find it hard to draw a clear opinion of them that come accused before the court. And so this afternoon, and now tonight, I go from house to house - I come now from Rebecca Nurse’s house and -

Elizabeth, shocked: Rebecca’s charged!

Hale: God forbid such a one be charged. She is, however - mentioned somewhat.

Elizabeth, with an attempt at a laugh: You will never believe, I hope, that

Rebecca trafficked with the Devil.

Hale: Woman, it is possible.

Proctor: taken aback: Surely you cannot think so.

Hale: This is a strange time, Mister. No man may longer doubt the powers of the dark are gathered in monstrous attack upon this village. There is too much evidence now to deny it. You will agree, sir?

Proctor, evading: I - have no knowledge in that line. But it’s hard to think so pious a woman be secretly a Devil’s bitch after seventy year of such good prayer.

Hale: Aye. But the Devil is a wily one, you cannot deny it. However, she is far from accused, and I know she will not be. Pause. I thought, sir, to put some questions as to the Christian character of this house, if you’ll permit me.

Proctor, coldly, resentful: Why, we - have no fear of questions, sir.

Hale: Good, then. He makes himself more comfortable. In the book of record that Mr. Parris keeps, I note that you are rarely in the church on Sabbath Day.

Proctor: No, sir, you are mistaken.

Hale: Twenty-six time in seventeen month, sir. I must call that rare. Will you tell me why you are so absent?

Proctor: Mr. Hale, I never knew I must account to that man for I come to church or stay at home. My wife were sick this winter.

Hale: So I am told. But you, Mister, why could you not come alone?

Proctor: I surely did come when I could, and when I could not I prayed in this house.

Hale: Mr. Proctor, your house is not a church; your theology must tell you that.

Proctor: It does, sir, it does; and it tells me that a minister may pray to God without he have golden candlesticks upon the altar.

Hale: What golden candlesticks?

Proctor: Since we built the church there were pewter candle-sticks upon the altar;

Francis Nurse made them, y’know, and a sweeter hand never touched the metal. But Parris came, and for twenty week he preach nothin’ but golden candlesticks until he had them. I labor the earth from dawn of day to blink of night, and I tell you true, when I look to heaven and see my money glaring at his elbows - it hurt my prayer, sir, it hurt my prayer. I think, sometimes, the man dreams cathedrals, not clapboard meetin’ houses.

Hale, thinks, then: And yet, Mister, a Christian on Sabbath Day must be in church.

Pause. Tell me - you have three children?

Proctor: Aye. Boys.

Hale: How comes it that only two are baptized?

Proctor, starts 'o speak, then stops, then, as though unable to restrain this: I like it not that Mr. Parris should lay his hand upon my baby. I see no light of God in that man. I’ll not conceal it.

Hale: I must say it, Mr. Proctor; that is not for you to decide. The man’s ordained, therefore the light of God is in him.

Proctor, flushed with resentment but trying to smile: What’s your suspicion, Mr. Hale?

Hale; No, no, I have no -

Proctor: I nailed the roof upon the church, I hung the door -

Hale: Oh, did you! That’s a good sign, then.

Proctor: It may be I have been too quick to bring the man to book, but you cannot think we ever desired the destruction of religion. I think that’s in your mind, is it not?

Hale, not altogether giving way: I - have - there is a softness in your record, sir, a softness.

Elizabeth: I think, maybe, we have been too hard with Mr. Parris. I think so. But sure we never loved the Devil here.

Hale, nods, deliberating this. Then, with the voice of one ad-ministering a secret test: Do you know your Commandments, Elizabeth?

Elizabeth, without hesitation, even eagerly: I surely do. There be no mark of blame upon my life, Mr. Hale. I am a covenanted Christian woman.

Hale: And you, Mister?

Proctor, a tripe unsteadily: I - am sure I do, sir.

Hale, glances at her open face, then at John, then: Let you re-peat them, if you will.

Proctor: The Commandments.

Hale: Aye.

Proctor, looking off, beginning to sweat: Thou shalt not kill.

Hale: Aye.

Proctor, counting on his angers: Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s goods, nor make unto thee any graven image. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord in vain; thou shalt have no other gods before me. With some hesitation: Thou shalt remember the Sabbath Day and keep it holy. Pause. Then: Thou shalt honor thy father and mother. Thou shalt not bear false witness. He is stuck. He counts back on his fingers, knowing one is missing. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.

Hale: You have said that twice, sir. Proctor, lost: Aye. He is failing for it. Elizabeth, delicately: Adultery, John.

Proctor, as though a secret arrow had pained his heart: Aye. Trying to grin it away - to Hale: You see, sir, between the two of us we do know them all. Hale only looks at

Proctor, deep in his attempt to define this man, Proctor grows more uneasy. I think it be a small fault.

Hale: Theology, sir, is a fortress; no crack in a fortress may be accounted small. He rises; he seems worried now. He paces a little, in deep thought.

Proctor: There be no love for Satan in this house, Mister.

Hale: I pray it, I pray it dearly. He looks to both of them, an attempt at a smile on his face, but his misgivings are clear. Well, then - I’ll bid you good night.

Elizabeth, unable to restrain herself: Mr. Hale. He turns. I do think you are suspecting me somewhat? Are you not?

Hale, obviously disturbed - and evasive: Goody Proctor, I do not judge you. My duty is to add what I may to the godly wisdom of the court. I pray you both good health and good fortune.

To John: Good night, sir. He starts out.

Elizabeth, with a note of desperation: I think you must tell him, John.

Hale: What’s that?

Elizabeth, restraining a call: Will you tell him?

Slight pause. Hale looks questioningly at John.

Proctor, with difficulty: I - I have no witness and cannot prove it, except my word be taken. But I know the children’s sickness had naught to do with witchcraft.

Hale, stopped, struck: Naught to do - ?

Proctor: Mr. Parris discovered them sportin' in the woods. They were startled and took sick.

Pause.

Hale: Who told you this?

Proctor, hesitates, then: Abigail Williams.

Hale: Abigail!

Proctor: Aye.

Hale, his eyes wide: Abigail Williams told you it had naught to do with witchcraft!

Proctor: She told me the day you came, sir.

Hale, suspiciously: Why - why did you keep this?

Proctor: I never knew until tonight that the world is gone daft with this nonsense.

Hale: Nonsense! Mister, I have myself examined Tituba, Sarah Good, and numerous others that have confessed to dealing with the Devil. They have confessed it.

Proctor: And why not, if they must hang for denyin’ it? There are them that will swear to anything before they’ll hang; have you never thought of that?

Hale: I have. I - I have indeed. It is his own suspicion, but he resists it. He glances at Elizabeth, then at John. And you - would you testify to this in court?

Proctor: I - had not reckoned with goin’ into court. But if I must I will.

Hale: Do you falter here?

Proctor: I falter nothing, but I may wonder if my story will be credited in such a court. I do wonder on it, when such a steady-minded minister as you will suspicion such a woman that never lied, and cannot, and the world knows she cannot! I may falter somewhat, Mister; I am no fool.

Hale, quietly - it has impressed him: Proctor, let you open with me now, for I have a rumor that troubles me.' It’s said you hold no belief that there may even be witches in the world. Is that true, sir?

Proctor - he knows this is critical, and is striving against his disgust with Hale and with himself for even answering: I know not what I have said, I may have said it. I have wondered if there be witches in the world - although I cannot believe they come among us now.

Hale: Then you do not believe -

Proctor: I have no knowledge of it; the Bible speaks of witches, and I will not deny them.

Hale: And you, woman?

Elizabeth: I - I cannot believe it.

Hale, shocked: You cannot!

Proctor: Elizabeth, you bewilder him!

Elizabeth, to Hale: I cannot think the Devil may own a woman’s soul, Mr. Hale, when she keeps an upright way, as I have. I am a good woman, I know it; and if you believe I may do only good work in the world, and yet be secretly bound to Satan, then I must tell you, sir, I do not believe it.

Hale: But, woman, you do believe there are witches in -

Elizabeth: If you think that I am one, then I say there are none.

Hale: You surely do not fly against the Gospel, the Gospel -

Proctor: She believe in the Gospel, every word!

Elizabeth: Question Abigail Williams about the Gospel, not myself!

Hale stares at her.

Proctor: She do not mean to doubt the Gospel, sir, you can-not think it. This be a Christian house, sir, a Christian house.

Hale: God keep you both; let the third child be quickly baptized, and go you without fail each Sunday in to Sabbath prayer; and keep a solemn, quiet way among you. I think -

Giles Corey appears in doorway.

Giles: John!

Prctor: Giles! What’s the matter?

Giles: They take my wife.

Francis Nurse enters.

Giles: And his Rebecca!

Proctor, to Francis: Rebecca’s in the jail1

Francis: Aye, Cheever come and take her in his wagon. We’ve only now come from the jail, and they’ll not even let us in to see them.

Elizabeth: They’ve surely gone wild now, Mr. Hale!

Francis, going to Hale: Reverend Hale! Can you not speak to the Deputy Governor? I’m sure he mistakes these people -

Hale: Pray calm yourself, Mr. Nurse.

Francis: My wife is the very brick and mortar of the church, Mr.. Hale - indicating Giles - and Martha Corey, there cannot be a woman closer yet to God than Martha.

Hale: How is Rebecca charged, Mr. Nurse?

Francis, with a mocking, half-hearted laugh: For murder, she’s charged!

Mockingly quoting the warrant: “For the marvelous and supernatural murder of

Goody Putnam’s babies.” What am I to do, Mr. Hale?

Hale, turns from Francis, deeply troubled, then: Believe me, Mr. Nurse, if

Rebecca Nurse be tainted, then nothing’s left to stop the whole green world from burning. Let you rest upon the justice of the court; the court will send her home, I know it.

Francis: You cannot mean she will be tried in court!

Hale, pleading: Nurse, though our hearts break, we cannot flinch; these are new times, sir. There is a misty plot afoot so subtle we should be criminal to cling to old respects and ancient friendships. I have seen too many frightful proofs in court - the Devil is alive in Salem, and we dare not quail to follow wherever the accusing finger points!

Proctor, angered: How may such a woman murder children?

Hale, in great pain: Man, remember, until an hour before the Devil fell, God thought him beautiful in Heaven.

Giles: I never said my wife were a witch, Mr. Hale; I only said she were reading books!

Hale: Mr. Corey, exactly what complaint were made on your wife?

Giles: That bloody mongrel Walcott charge her. Y’see, he buy a pig of my wife four or five year ago, and the pig died soon after. So he come dancin’ in for his money back. So my Martha, she says to him, “Walcott, if you haven’t the wit to feed a pig properly, you’ll not live to own many,” she says. Now he goes to court and claims that from that day to this he cannot keep a pig alive for more than four weeks because my Martha bewitch them with her books!

Enter Ezekiel Cheever. A shocked silence.

Cheever: Good evening to you, Proctor.

Proctor: Why, Mr. Cheever. Good evening.

Cheever: Good evening, all. Good evening, Mr. Hale.

Proctor: I hope you come not on business of the court.

Cheever: I do, Proctor, aye. I am clerk of the court. now, y’know.

Enter Marshal Herrick, a man in hi" early thirties, who is some-what shamefaced at the moment.

Giles: It’s a pity, Ezekiel, that an honest tailor might have gone to Heaven must burn in Hell. You’ll burn for this, do you know it?

Cheever: You know yourself I must do as I’m told. You surely know that, Giles. And I’d as lief you’d not be sending me to Hell. I like not the sound of it, I tell you; I like not the sound of it. He fears Proctor, but starts to reach inside his coat. Now believe me, Proctor, how heavy be the law, all its tonnage I do carry on my back tonight. He takes out a warrant. I have a warrant for your wife.

Proctor, to Hale: You said she were not charged!

Hale: I know nothin’ of it. To Cheever: When were she charged?

Cheever: I am given sixteen warrant tonight, sir, and she is one.

Proctor: Who charged her?

Cheever: Why, Abigail Williams charge her.

Proctor: On what proof, what proof?

Cheever, looking about the room: Mr. Proctor, I have little time. The court bid me search your house, but I like not to search a house. So will you hand me any poppets that your wife may keep here?

Proctor: Poppets?

Elizabeth: I never kept no poppets, not since I were a girl.

Cheever, embarrassed, glancing toward the mantel where sits Mary Warren’s poppet: I spy a poppet, Goody Proctor.

Elizabeth: Oh! Going for it: Why, this is Mary’s.

Cheever, shyly: Would you please to give it to me?

Elizabeth, handing it to him, asks HaLe: Has the court discov-ered a text in poppets now?

Cheever, carefully holding the poppet: Do you keep any others in this house?

Proctr: No, nor this one either till tonight. What signifies a poppet?

Cheever: Why, a poppet - he gingerly turns the poppet over - a poppet may signify - Now, woman, will you please to come with me?

Proctor: She will not! To Elizabeth: Fetch Mary here.

Cheever, ineptly reaching toward Elizabeth: No, no, I am for-bid to leave her from my sight.

Proctor, pushing his arm away: You’ll leave her out of sight and out of mind,

Mister. Fetch Mary, Elizabeth. Elizabeth goes upstairs.

Hale: What signifies a poppet, Mr. Cheever?

Cheever, turning the poppet over in his hands: Why, they say it may signify that she - He has lifted the poppet’s skirt, and his eyes widen in astonished fear. Why, this, this -

Proctor, reaching for the poppet: What’s there?

Cheever: Why - He draws out a long needle from the poppet - it is a needle!

Herrick, Herrick, it is a needle!

Herrick comes toward Aim.

Proctor, angrily, bewildered: And what signifies a needle!

Cheever, his hands shaking: Why, this go hard with her, Proc-tor, this - I had my doubts, Proctor, I had my doubts, but here’s' calamity. To Hale, showing the needle: You see it, sir, it is a needle!

Hale: Why? What meanin’ has it?

Cheever, wide-eyed, trembling: The girl, the Williams girl, Abi-gail Williams, sir. She sat to dinner in Reverend Parris’s house tonight, and without word nor warnin’ she falls to the floor. Like a struck beast, he says, and screamed a scream that a bull would weep to hear. And he goes to save her, and, stuck two inches in the flesh of her belly, he draw a needle out. And demandin’ of her how she come to be so stabbed, she - to Proctor now - testify it -were your wife’s familiar spirit pushed it in.

Proctor: Why, she done it herself! To Hale: I hope you’re not takin’ this for proof, Mister!

Hale, struck by the proof, is silent.

Cheever: ’Tis hard proof! To Hale: I find here a poppet Goody Proctor keeps. I have found it, sir. And in the belly of the poppet a needle’s stuck. I tell you true, Proctor, I never warranted to see such proof of Hell, and I bid you obstruct me not, for I -

Enter Elizabeth with Mary Warren. Proctor, seeing Mary War-ren, draws her by the arm to Hale.

Proctor: Here now! Mary, how did this poppet come into my house?

Mary Warren, frightened for herself, her voice very small: What poppet’s that, sir?

Proctor, impatiently, pointing at the doll in Cheever’s hand: This poppet, this poppet.

Mary Warren, evasively, looking at it: Why, I - I think it is mine.

Proctor: It is your poppet, is it not?

Mary Warren, not understanding the direction of this: It - is, sir.

Proctor: And how did it come into this house?

Mary Warren, glancing about at the avid faces: Why - I made it in the court, sir, and - give it to Goody Proctor tonight.

Proctor, to Hale: Now, sir - do you have it?

Hale: Mary Warren, a needle have been found inside this poppet.

Mary Warren, bewildered: Why, I meant no harm by it, sir.

Proctor, quickly: You stuck that needle in yourself?

Mary Warren: I - I believe I did, sir, I –

Proctor: to Hale: What say you now?

Hale, watching Mary Warren closely: Child, you are certain this be your natural memory? May it be, perhaps, that someone conjures you even now to say this?

Mary Warren: Conjures me? Why, no, sir, I am entirely my-self, I think. Let you ask

Susanna Walcott - she saw me sewin’ it in court. Or better still: Ask Abby, Abby sat beside me when I made it.

Proctor, to Hale, of Cheever: Bid him begone. Your mind is surely settled now. Bid him out, Mr. Hale.

Elizabeth: What signifies a needle?

Hale: Mary - you charge a cold and cruel murder on Abigail.

Mary Warren: Murder! I charge no -

Hale: Abigail were stabbed tonight; a needle were found stuck into her belly -

Elizabeth: And she charges me?

Hale: Aye.

Elizabeth, her breath knocked out: Why - ! The girl is mur-der! She must be ripped out of the world!

Cheever, pointing at Elizabeth: You’ve heard that, sir! Ripped out of the world!

Herrick, you heard it!

Proctor, suddenly snatching the warrant out of Cheever’s hands: Out with you.

Cheever: Proctor, you dare not touch the warrant.

Proctor, ripping the warrant: Out with you!

Cheever: You’ve ripped the Deputy Governor’s warrant, man!

Proctor: Damn the Deputy Governor! Out of my house!

Hale: Now, Proctor, Proctor!

PRoctoR: Get y’gone with them! You are a broken minister. Hale: Proctor, if she is innocent, the court -

Proctor: If she is innocent! Why do you never wonder if Parris be innocent, or Abigail? Is the accuser always holy now? Were they born this morning as clean as God’s fingers? I’ll tell you what’s walking Salem - vengeance is walking Salem. We are what we always were in Salem, but now the little crazy children are jangling the keys of the kingdom, and common vengeance writes the law! This warrant’s vengeance! I’ll not give my wife to vengeance!

Elizabeth: I’ll go, John - Proctor: You will not go!

Herrick: I have nine men outside. You cannot keep her. The lair binds me, John, I cannot budge.

Proctor, to Hale, ready to break him: Will you see her taken? Hale: Proctor, the court is just -

Proctor: Pontius Pilate! God will not let you wash your hands of this!

Elizabeth: John - I think I must go with them. He cannot bear to look at her. Mary, there is bread enough for the morning; you will bake, in the afternoon. Help Mr. Proctor as you were his daughter - you owe me that, and much more. She is fighthing her weeping.

To Proctor: When the children wake, speak noth-ing of witchcraft - it will frighten them. She cannot go on.

Proctor: I will bring you home. I will bring you soon. Elizabeth: Oh, John, bring me soon!

Proctor: I will fall like an ocean on that court! Pear nothing, Elizabeth.

Elizabeth, with great fear: I will fear nothing. She looks about the room, as though to fix it in her mind. Tell the children I have gone to visit someone sick.

She walks out the door, Herrick and Cheever behind her. For a moment,

Proctor watches from the doorway. The clank of chain is heard.

Proctor: Herrick! Herrick, don’t chain her! He rushes out the door. From outside: Damn you, man, you will not chain her! Off with them! I’ll not have it! I will not have her chained! There are other men's voices against his. Hale, in a fever of guilt and uncertainty, turns from the door to avoid the sight; Mary Warren bursts into tears and sits weeping. Giles Corey calls to Hale.

Giles: And yet silent, minister? It is fraud, you know it is fraud! That keeps you, man?

Proctor is half braced, half pushed into the room by two deputies and Herrick.

Proctor: I’ll pay you, Herrick, I will surely pay you!

Herrick, panting: In God’s name, John, I cannot help myself. I must chain them all. Now let you keep inside this house till 1 am gone! He goes out with his deputies.

Proctor stands there, gulping air. Horses and a wagon creak-ing are heard.

Hale, in great uncertainty: Mr. Proctor - Proctor: Out of my sight!

Hale: Charity, Proctor, charity. What I have heard in her favor, I will not fear to testify in court. God help me, I cannot judge her guilty or innocent - I know not. Only this consider: the world goes mad, and it profit nothing you should lay the cause to the vengeance of a little girl.

Proctor: You are a coward! Though you be ordained in God’s own tears, you are a coward now!

Hale: Proctor, I cannot think God be provoked so grandly by such a petty cause. The jails are packed - our greatest judges sit in Salem now - and hangin’s promised. Man, we must look to cause proportionate. Were there murder done, perhaps, and never brought to light? Abomination? Some secret blasphemy that stinks to Heaven? Think on cause, man, and let you help me to discover it. For there’s your way, believe it, there is your only way, when such confusion strikes upon the world. He goes to Giles and Francis. Let you counsel among yourselves; think on your village and what may have drawn from heaven such thundering wrath upon you all. I shall pray God open up our eyes.

Hale goes out.

Francis, struck by Hate’s mood: I never heard no murder done in Salem.

Proctor - he has been reached by Hale’s words: Leave me, Francis, leave me.

Giles, shaken: John - tell me, are we lost?

Proctor: Go home now, Giles, We’ll speak on it tomorrow.

Giles: Let you think on it. We’ll come early, eh?

Proctor: Aye. Go now, Giles.

Giles: Good night, then.

Giles Corey goes out. After a moment:

Mary Warren, in a fearful squeak of n voice: Mr. Proctor very likely they’ll let her come home once they’re given proper evidence.

Proctor: You’re coming to the court with me, Mary. You will tell it in the court,

Mary Warren: I cannot charge murder on Abigail.

Proctor, moving menacingly toward her: You will tell the court how that poppet come here and who stuck the needle in.

Mary Warren: She’ll kill me for sayin’ that! Proctor continues toward her. Abby’ll charge lechery on you, Mr. Proctor!

Proctor, halting: She’s told you!

Mary Warren: I have known it, sir. She’ll ruin you with it, I know she will.

Proctor, hesitating, and with deep hatred of himself: Good. Then her saintliness is done with. Mary backs from him. We will slide together into our pit; you will tell the court

what you know. Mary Warren, in terror: I cannot, they’ll turn on me -

Proctor strides and catches her, and she is repeating, “I cannot, I cannot!”

Proctor: My wife will never die for me! I will bring your guts into your mouth but that goodness will not die for me!

Mary Warren, struggling to escape him: I cannot do it, I cannot!

Proctor, grasping her by the throat as though he would strangle her: Make your peace with it! Now Hell and Heaven grapple on our backs, and all our old pretense is ripped away - make your peace! He throws her to the poor, where she sobs, "I cannot, I cannot...” And now, half to himself, staring, and turning to the open door: Peace. It is a providence, and no great change; we are only what we always were, but naked now. He walks as though toward a great horror, facing the open skye, naked! And the wind, God’s icy wind, will blow! And she is over and over again sobbing, “I cannot, I cannot, l cannot,” as

THE CURTAIN FALLS\*

ACT THREE

The vestry room of the Salem meeting house, now serving as the anteroom of the General Court. As the curtain rises, the room is empty, but for sunlight pouring through two high windows in the back wall. The room is solemn, even forbidding. Heavy beams jut out, boards of random widths make up the walls. At the right are two doors leading into the meeting house proper, where the court is being held. At the left another door leads outside. There is a plain bench at the left, and another at the right. In the center a rather long meeting table, with stools and a con-siderable armchair snugged up to it. Through the partitioning wall at the right we hear a prosecutor’s voice, Judge Hathorne’s, asking a question; then a woman’s voice, Martha Corey’s, replying.

Hathorne's Voice: Now, Martha Corey, there is abundant evidence in our hands to show that you have given yourself to the reading of fortunes, Do you deny it?

Martha Corey’s Voice: I am innocent to a witch. I know not what a witch is.

Hawthorne’s Voice: How do you know, then, that you are not a witch?

Martha Corey’s Voice: If I were, I would know it.

Hawthorne’s Voice: Why do you hurt these children?

Martha Corey’s Voice: I do not hurt them. I scorn it!

Giles’ Voice, roaring: I have evidence for the court!

Voices of townspeople rise in excitement.

Danforth’s Voice: You will keep your seat!

Giles Voice: Thomas Putnam is reaching out for land!

Danforth’s Voice: Remove that man, Marshal!

Giles’ Voice: You’re hearing lies, lies!

A roaring goes up from the people.

Hawthorne’s Voice: Arrest him, excellency!

Giles’ Voice: I have evidence. Why will you not hear my evi-dence?

The door opens and Giles is half carried into the vestry room by Herrick.

Giles: Hands off, damn you, let me go!

Herrick: Giles, Giles!

Giles: Out of my way, Herrick! I bring evidence -

Herrick: You cannot go in there, Giles; it’s a court!

Enter Hale from the court.

Hale: Pray be calm a moment.

Giles: You, Mr. Hale, go in there and demand I speak.

Hale: A moment, sir, a moment.

Giles: They’ll be hangin’ my wife!

Judge Hathorne enters. He is in his sixties, a bitter, remorseless Salem judge.

Hawthorne: How do you dare come roarin’ into this court! Are you gone daft,

Corey?

Giles: You’re not a Boston judge yet, Hathorne. You’ll not call me daft!

Enter Deputy Governor Danforth and, behind him, Ezekiel Cheever and Parris. On his appearance, silence falls. Danforth is a grave man in his sixties, of some humor and sophistication that does not, however, interfere with an exact loyalty to his position and his cause. He comes down to Giles, who awaits his wrath.

Danforth, looking directly at Giles: Who is this man?

Parris: Giles Corey, sir, and a more contentious –

Giles, to Parris: I am asked the question, and I am old enough to answer it! To Danforth, who impresses him and to whom he smiles through his strain: My name is Corey, sir, Giles Corey. I have six hundred acres, and timber in addition. It is my wife you be condemning now. He indicates the courtroom.

Danforth: And how do you imagine to help her cause with such contemptuous riot? Now be gone. Your old age alone keeps you out of jail for this.

Giles, beginning to plead: They be tellin’ lies about my wife, sir, I -

Danforth: Do you take it upon yourself to determine what this court shall believe and what it shall set aside?

Giles: Your Excellency, we mean no disrespect for -

Danforth: Disrespect indeed! It is disruption, Mister. This is the highest court of the supreme government of this province, do you know it?

Giles, beginning to weep: Your Excellency, I only said she were readin’ books, sir, and they come and take her out of my house for -

Danforth, mystified: Books! What books?

Giles, through helpless sobs: It is my third wife, sir; I never had no wife that be so taken with books, and I thought to find the cause of it, d’y’see, but it were no witch I blamed her for. He is openly weeping. I have broke charity with the woman, I have broke charity with her. He covers his face, ashamed. Dan-forth is respectfully silent.

Hale: Excellency, he claims hard evidence for his wife’s de-fense. I think that in all justice you must -

Danforth: Then let him submit his evidence in proper affidavit. You are certainly aware of our procedure here, Mr. Hale. To Herrick: Clear this room.

Herrick: Come now, Giles, He gently pushes Corey out.

Francis: We are desperate, sir; we come here three days now and cannot be heard.

Danforth: Who is this man?

Francis: Francis Nurse, Your Excellency.

Hale: His wife’s Rebecca that were condemned this morning.

Danforth: Indeed! I am amazed to find you in such uproar; I have only good report of your character, Mr. Nurse.

Hathorne: I think they must both be arrested in contempt, sir.

Danforth, to Francis: Let you write your plea, and in due time I will –

Francis: Excellency, we have proof for your eyes; God forbid you shut them to it. The girls, sir, the girls are frauds.

Danforth: What’s that?

Francis: We have proof of it, sir. They are all deceiving you.

Danforth is shocked, but studying Francis.

Hathorne: This is contempt, sir, contempt!

Danforth: Peace, Judge Hathorne. Do you know who I am, Mr. Nurse?

Francis: I surely do, sir, and I think you must be a wise judge to be what you are.

Danforth: And do you know that near to four hundred are in the jails from Marblehead to Lynn, and upon my signature?

Francis: I -

Danforth: And seventy-two condemned to hang by that signature?

Francis: Excellency, I never thought to say it to such a weighty judge, but you are deceived.

Enter Giles Corey from left. All turn to see as he beckons in Mary Warren with Proctor. Mary is keeping her eyes to the ground; Proctor has her elbow as though she were near collapse.

Parris, on seeing her, in shock: Mary Warren! He goes directly to bend close to her face. What are you about here?

Proctor, pressing Parris away from her with a gentle but burnt motion of protectiveness: She would speak with the Deputy Governor.

Danforth, shocked by this, turns to Herrick: Did you not tell me Mary Warren were sick in bed?

Herrick: She were, Your Honor. When I go to fetch her to the court last week, she said she were sick.

Giles: She has been strivin’ with her soul all week, Your Honor; she comes now to tell the truth of this to you.

Danforth: Who is this?

Proctor: John Proctor, sir. Elizabeth Proctor is my wife.

Parris: Beware this man, Your Excellency, this man is mischief.

Hale, excitedly: I think you must hear the girl, sir, she -

Danforth, who has become very interested in Mary Warren and only raises a hand toward Hale: Peace. What would you tell us, Mary Warren?

Proctor looks at her, but she cannot speak. Proctor! She never saw no spirits, sir.

Danforth, with great alarm and surprise, to Mary: Never saw no spirits!

Giles, eagerly: Never.

Proctor, reaching into his jacket: She has signed a deposition, sir -

Danforth, instantly: No, no, I accept no depositions. He is rapidly calculating this; he turns from her to Proctor. Tell me, Mr. Proctor, have you given out this story in the village?

Proctor: We have not.

Parris: They’ve come to overthrow the court, sir! This man is -

Danforth: I pray you, Mr, Parris. Do you know, Mr. Proctor, that the entire contention of the state in these trials is that the voice of Heaven is speaking through the children?

Proctor: I know that, sir.

Danforth, thinks, staring at Proctor, then turns to Mary War-ren: And you, Mary

Warren, how came you to cry out people for sending their spirits against you?

Mary Warren: It were pretense, sir.

Danforth: I cannot hear you.

Proctor: It were pretense, she says.

Danforth: Ah? And the other girls? Susanna Walcott, and - the others? They are also pretending?

Mary Warren: Aye, sir.

Danforth, wide-eyed: Indeed. Pause. He is baffled by this. He turns to study Proctor’s face.

Parris, in a sweat: Excellency, you surely cannot think to let so vile a lie be spread in open court!

Danforth: Indeed not, but it strike hard upon me that she will dare come here with such a tale. Now, Mr. Proctor, before I decide whether I shall hear you or not, it is my duty to tell you this. We burn a hot fire here; it melts down all concealment.

Proctor: I know that, sir.

Danforth: Let me continue. I understand well, a husband’s tenderness may drive him to extravagance in defense of a wife. Are you certain in your conscience, Mister, that your evidence is the truth?

Proctor: It is. And you will surely know it.

Danforth: And you thought to declare this revelation in the open court before the public?

Proctor: I thought I would, aye - with your permission.

Danforth, his eyes narrowing: Now, sir, what is your purpose in so doing?

Proctor: Why, I - I would free my wife, sir.

Danforth: There lurks nowhere in your heart, nor hidden in your spirit, any desire to undermine this court?

Proctor, with the faintest faltering: Why, no, sir.

Cheever, clears his throat, awakening: I - Your Excellency.

Danforth: Mr. Cheever.

Cheever: I think it be my duty, sir - Kindly, to Proctor: You’ll not deny it, John.

To Danforth: When we come to take his wife, he damned the court and ripped your warrant.

Parris: Now you have it!

Danforth: He did that, Mr. Hale?

Hale, takes a breath: Aye, he did.

Proctor: It were a temper, sir. I knew not what I did.

Danforth, studying him: Mr. Proctor.

Proctor: Aye, sir.

Danforth, straight into his eyes: Have you ever seen the Devil?

Proctor: No, sir.

Danforth: You are in all respects a Gospel Christian?

Proctor: I am, sir.

Parris: Such a Christian that will not come to church but once in a month!

Danforth, restrained - he is curious: Not come to church?

Proctor: I - I have no love for Mr. Parris. It is no secret. But God I surely love.

Cheever: He plow on Sunday, sir.

Danforth: Plow on Sunday!

Cheever, apologetically: I think it be evidence, John. I am an official of the court, I cannot keep it.

Proctor: I - I have once or twice plowed on Sunday. I have three children, sir, and until last year my land give little.

Giles: You’ll find other Christians that do plow on Sunday if the truth be known.

Hale: Your Honor, I cannot think you may judge the man on such evidence.

Danforth: I judge nothing. Pause. He keeps watching Proctor, who tries to meet his gaze. I tell you straight, Mister - I have seen marvels in this court. I have seen people choked before my eyes by spirits; I have seen them stuck by pins and slashed by daggers. I have until this moment not the slightest reason to suspect that the children may be deceiving me. Do you 'understand my meaning?

Proctor: Excellency, does it not strike upon you that so many of these women have lived so long with such upright reputation, and -

Parris: Do you read the Gospel, Mr. Proctor? Proctor: I read the Gospel.

Parris: I think not, or you should surely know that Cain were an upright man, and yet he did kill Abel.

Proctor: Aye, God tells us that. To Danforth: But who tells us Rebecca Nurse murdered seven babies by sending out her spirit on them? It is the children only, and this one will swear she lied to you.

Danforth considers, then beckons Hathorne to him. Hathorne leans in, and he speaks in his ear. Hathorne nods.

Hathorne: Aye, she’s the one.

Danforth: Mr. Proctor, this morning, your wife send me a claim in which she states that she is pregnant now.

Proctor: My wife pregnant!

Danforth: There be no sign of it - we have examined her body.

Proctor: But if she say she is pregnant, then she must be! That woman will never lie, Mr. Danforth.

Danforth: She will not?

Proctor: Never, sir, never.

Danforth: We have thought it too convenient to be credited. However, if I should tell you now that I will let her be kept another month; and if she begin to show her natural signs, you shall have her living yet another year until she is delivered - what say you to that? John Proctor is struck silent. Come now. You say your only purpose is to save your wife. Good, then, she is saved at least this year, and a year is long. What say ' you, sir? It is done now. In convict, Proctor glances at Francis and Giles. Will you drop this charge?

Proctor: I - I think I cannot.

Danforth, now an almost imperceptible hardness in his voice: Then your purpose is somewhat larger.

Parris: He’s come to overthrow this court, Your Honor!

Proctor: These are my friends. Their wives are also accused -

Danforth, with a sudden briskness of manner: I judge you not, sir. I am ready to hear your evidence.

Proctor: I come not to hurt the court; I only -

Danforth, cutting him op: Marshal, go into the court and bid

Judge Stoughton and Judge Sewall declare recess for one hour. And let them go to the tavern, if they will. All witnesses and prisoners are to be kept in the building.

Herrick: Aye, sir'. Very deferentially: If I may say it, sir, I know this man all my life. It is a good man, sir.

Danforth - it is the reflection on himself he resents: I am sure of it, Marshal.

Herrick nods, then goes out. Now, what deposi-tion do you have for us, Mr.

Proctor? And I beg you be clear, open as the sky, and honest.

Proctor, as he takes out several papers: I am no lawyer, so I'll -

Danforth: The pure in heart need no lawyers. Proceed as you will.

Proctor, handing Danforth a paper: Will you read this first, sir? It’s a sort of testament. The people signing it declare their good opinion of Rebecca, and my wife, and Martha Corey. Danforth looks down at the paper.

Parris, to enlist Danforth’s sarcasm: Their good opinion! But Danforth goes on reading, and Proctor is heartened.

Proctor: These are all landholding farmers, members of the church. Delicately, trying to point out a paragraph: If you’ll notice, sir - they’ve known the women many years and never saw no sign they had dealings with the Devil.

Parris nervously moves over and reads over Dan forth’s shoulder.

Danforth, glancing down a long list: How many names are here?

Francis: Ninety-one, Your Excellency.

Parris,'sweating: These people should be summoned. Danforth looks up at him questioningly. For questioning.

Francis, trembling with anger: Mr. Danforth, I gave them all my word no harm would come to them for signing this.

Parris: This is a clear attack upon the court!

Hale, to Parris, trying to contain himself: Is every defense an attack upon the court? Can no one - ?

Parris: All innocent and Christian people are happy for the courts in Salem! These people are gloomy for it. To Danforth directly: And I think you will want to know, from each and every one of them, what discontents them with you!

Hathorne: I think they ought to be examined, sir.

Danforth: It is not necessarily an attack, I think. Yet -

Francis: These are all covenanted Christians, sir.

Danforth: Then I am sure they may have nothing to fear. Hands Cheever the paper. Mr. Cheever, have warrants drawn for all of these - arrest for examination. To Proctor: Now, Mister, what other information do you have for us? Francis is still standing, horrified. You may sit, Mr. Nurse.

Francis: I have brought trouble on these people; I have -

Danforth: No, old man, you have not hurt these people if they are of good conscience. But you must understand, sir, that a person is either with this court or he must be counted against it, there be no road between. This is a sharp time, now, a pre-cise time - we live no longer in the dusky afternoon when evil mixed itself with good and befuddled the world. Now, by God’s grace, the shining sun is up, and them that fear not light will surely praise it. I hope you will be one of those. Mary Warren suddenly sobs. She’s not hearty, I see.

Proctor: No, she’s not, sir. To Mary, bending to her, holding her hand, quietly: Now remember what the angel Raphael saint to the boy Tobias. Remember it.

Proctor: “Do that which is good, and no harm shall come to thee.”

Mary Warren: Aye.

Danforth: Come, man, we wait you.

Marshal Herrick returns, and takes his post at the door.

Giles: John, my deposition, give him mine.

Proctor: Aye. He hands Danforth another paper. This is Mr. Corey’s deposition.

Danforth: Oh? He looks down at it. Now Hathorne comes behind him and reads with him.

Hathorne, suspiciously: What lawyer drew this, Corey?

Giles: You know I never hired a lawyer in my life, Hathorne.

Danforth, finishing the reading: It is very well phrased. My compliments. Mr.

Parris, if Mr. Putnam is in the court, will you bring him in? Hathorne takes the deposition, and walks to the window with it. Parris goes into the court. You have no legal training, Mr. Corey?

Giles, very pleased: I have the best, sir - I am thirty-three time in court in my life. And always plaintiff, too.

Danforth: Oh, then you’re much put-upon.

Giles: I am never put-upon; I know my rights, sir, and I will have them. You know, your father tried a case of mine - might be thirty-five year ago, I think.

Danforth: Indeed.

Giles: He never spoke to you of it?

Danforth: No, I cannot recall it.

Giles: That’s strange, he give me nine pound damages. He were a fair judge, your father. Y’see, I had a white mare that tinge, and this fellow come to borrow the mare -

Enter Parris with Thomas Putnam. When he sees Putnam, Giles’ ease goes; he is hard. Aye, there he is.

Danforth: Mr. Putnam, I have here an accusation by Mr. Corey against you. He states that you coldly prompted your daughter to cry witchery upon George

Jacobs that is now in jail.

Putnam: It is a lie.

Danforth, turning to Giles: Mr. Putnam states your charge is a lie. What say you to that?

Giles, furious, his fists clenched: A fart on Thomas Putnam, that is what I say to that!

Danforth: What proof do you submit for your charge, sir?

Giles: My proof is there! Pointing to the paper. If Jacobs hangs for a witch he forfeit up his property - that’s law! And there is none but Putnam with the; coin to buy so great a piece. This man is killing his neighbors for their land!

Danforth: But proof, sir, proof.

Giles, pointing at his deposition: The proof is there! I have it from an honest man who heard Putnam say it! The day his daughter cried out on Jacobs, he said she’d given him a fair gift of land.

Hathorne: And the name of this man?

Giles, taken aback: What name?

Hathorne: The man that give you this information.

Giles, hesitates, then: Why, I - I cannot give you his name.

Hathorne: And why not?

Giles, hesitates, then bursts out: You know well why not! He’ll lay in jail if I give his name!

Hathorne: This is contempt of the court, Mr. Danforth!

Danforth, to avoid that: You will surely tell us the name.

Giles: I will not give you no name, I mentioned my wife’s name once and I’ll burn in hell long enough for that. I stand mute.

Danforth: In that case, I have no choice but to arrest you for contempt of this court, do you know that?

Giles: This is a hearing; you cannot clap me for contempt of a hearing.

Danforth: Oh, it is a proper lawyer! Do you wish me to declare the court in full session here? Or will you give me good reply?

Giles, faltering: I cannot give you no name, sir, I cannot.

Danforth: You are a foolish old man. Mr. Cheever, begin the record. The court is now in session. I ask you, Mr. Corey -

Proctor, breaking in: Your Honor - he has the story in confidence, sir, and he -

Parris: The Devil lives on such confidences! To Danforth: Without confidences there could be no conspiracy, Your Honor!

Hathorne. I think it must be broken, sir.

Danforth, to Giles: Old man, if your informant tells the truth let him come here openly like a decent man. But if he hide in anonymity I must know why. Now sir, the government and central church demand of you the name of him who reported Mr. Thomas Putnam a common murderer.

Hale: Excellency -

Danforth: Mr. Hale

Hale: We cannot blink it more. There is a prodigious fear of this court in the country -

Danforth: Then there is a prodigious guilt m the country. Are you afraid to be questioned here?

Hale: I may only fear the Lord, sir, bat there is fear in the country nevertheless.

Danforth, angered now: Reproach me not with the fear in the country; there is fear in the country because there is a moving plot to topple Christ in the country!

Hale: But it does not follow that everyone accused is part of it.

Danforth; No uncorrupted man may fear this court, Mr. Hale! None! To Giles: You are under arrest in contempt of this court. Now sit you down and take counsel with yourself, or you will be set in the jail until you decide to answer all questions.

Giles Corey makes a rush for Putnam. Proctor lunges and holds him.

Proctor: No, Giles!

Giles, over Proctor’s shoulder at Putnam: I’ll cut your throat, Putnam, I’ll kill you yet!

Proctor, forcing him into a chair: Peace, Giles, peace. Re-leasing him. We’ll prove ourselves. Now we will. He starts to turn to Danforth.

Giles: Say nothin’ more, John. Pointing at Danforth: He’s only playin’ you! He means to hang us all!

Mary Warren bursts into sobs.

Danforth: This is a court of law, Mister. I’ll have no effron-tery here!

Proctor: Forgive him, sir, for his old age. Peace, Giles, we’ll prove it all now.

He lifts up Mary’s chin. You cannot weep,

Mary. Remember the angel, what he say to the boy. Hold to it, now; there is your rock. Mary quiets. He takes out a paper, and turns to Danforth. This is Mary Warren’s deposition. I - I would ask you remember, sir, while you read it, that until two week ago she were no different than the other children are today. He is speaking reasonably, restraining all his fears, his anger, his anxiety. You saw her scream, she howled, she swore familiar spirits choked her; she even testified that Satan, in the form of women now in jail, tried to win hex soul away, and then when she refused -

Danforth: We know all this.

Proctor: Aye, sir. She swears now that she never saw Satan; nor any spirit, vague or

clear, that Satan may have sent to hurt her. And she declares her friends are lying now.

Proctor starts to hand Danforth the deposition, and Hale comes up to Danforth in a

trembling state.

Hale: Excellency, a moment. I think this goes to the heart of the matter.

Danforth, with deep misgivings: It surely does.

Hale: I cannot say he is an honest man; I know him little. But in all justice, sir, a claim

so weighty cannot be argued by a farmer. In God’s name, sir, stop here; send him home

and let him come again with a lawyer -

Danforth, patiently: Now look you, Mr. Hale -

Hale: Excellency, I have signed seventy-two death warrants; I am a minister of the Lord,

and I dare not take a life without there be a proof so immaculate no slightest qualm of

conscience may doubt it.

Danforth: Mr. Hale, you surely do not doubt my justice.

Hale: I have this morning signed away the soul of Rebecca 100 The Crucible

Nurse, Your Honor. I’ll not conceal it, my hand shakes yet as with a wound! I

pray you, sir, this argument let lawyers present to you.

Danforth: Mr. Hale, believe me; for a man of such terrible learning you are most bewildered - I hope you will forgive me. I have been thirty-two year at the bar, sir, and I should be con-founded were I called upon to defend these people. Let you consider, now - To Proctor and the others: And I bid you all do likewise. In an ordinary crime, how does one defend the accused? One calls up witnesses to prove his innocence. But witchcraft is ipso facto, on its face and by its nature, an invisible crime, is it not? Therefore, who may possibly be witness to it? The witch and the victim. None other. Now we cannot hope the witch will accuse herself; granted? Therefore, we must rely upon her victims - and they do testify, the children certainly do testify. As for the witches, none will deny that we are most eager for all their confessions. Therefore, what is left for a lawyer to bring

out? I think I have made my point. Have I not? Hale: But this child claims the girls are not truthful, and if they are not -

Danforth: That is precisely what I am about to consider, sir. What more may you ask of me? Unless you doubt my probity?

Hale, defeated: I surely do not, sir. Let you consider it, then.

Danforth: And let you put your heart to rest. Her deposition, Mr. Proctor.

Proctor hands it to him. Hathorne rises, goes beside Danforth, and starts reading. Parris comes to his other side. Danforth looks at John Proctor, then proceeds to read. Hale gets up, finds position near the judge, reads too. Proctor glances at Giles. Francis prays silently, hands pressed together. Cheever waits placidly, the sublime official, dutiful. Mary Warren sobs once. John Proctor touches her head reassuringly.

Presently Danforthlifts his eyes, stands up, takes out a kerchief and blows his nose. The others stand aside as he moves in thought toward the window.

Parris, hardly able to contain his anger and fear: I should like to question -

Danforth - his first real outburst, in which his contempt for Parris is clear:

Mr. Parris, I bid you be silent! He stands in silence, looking out the window. Now, having established that he will set the gait: Mr. Cheever, will you go into the court and bring the children here? Cheever gets up and goes out up-stage.

Danforth now turns to Mary. Mary Warren, how came you to this turnabout? Has Mr. Proctor threatened you for this deposition?

Mary Warren: No, sir.

Danforth: Has he ever threatened you?

Mary Warren, weaker: No, sir.

Danforth, sensing a weakening: Has he threatened you?-

Mary Warren: No, sir.

Danforth: Then you tell me that you sat in my court, cal-lously lying, when you knew that people would hang by your evidence? She does not answer. Answer me!

Mary Warren, almost inaudibly: I did, sir.

Danforth: How were you instructed in your life? Do you not know that God damns all liars? She cannot speak. Or is it now that you lie'!

Mary Warren: No, sir - I am with God now.

Danforth: You are with God now.

Mary Warren: Aye, sir. 102 The Crucible

Danforth, containing himself: I will tell you this - you are either lying now, or you were lying in the court, and in either case you have committed perjury and you will go to jail for it. You cannot lightly say you lied, Mary. Do you know that?

Mary Warren: I cannot lie no more. I am with God, I am with God. But she breaks into sobs at the thought of it, and the right door opens, and enter

Susanna Walcott, Mercy Lewis, Betty Parris, and finally Abigail. Cheever comes to Danforth.

Cheever: Ruth Putnam’s not in the court, sir, nor the other children.

Danforth: These will be sufficient. Sit you down, children. Silently they sit. Your friend, Mary Warren, has given us a deposition. In which she swears that she never saw familiar spirits, apparitions, nor any manifest of the Devil. She claims as well that none of you have seen these things either. Slight pause. Now, children, this is a court of law. The law, based upon the Bible, and the Bible, writ by Almighty God, forbid the practice of witchcraft, and describe death as the penalty thereof. But likewise, children, the law and Bible damn all bearers of false witness. Slight pause. Now then. It does not escape me that this deposition may be devised to blind us; it may well be that Mary Warren has been conquered by Satan, who sends her here to distract our sacred purpose. If so, her neck will break for it. But if she speak true, I bid you now drop your guile and confess your pretense, for a quick confession will go easier with you.

Pause. Abigail Williams, rise, Abigail slowly rises. Is there any truth in this?

Abigail: No, sir.

Danforth, thinks, glances at Mary, then back to Abigail: Chil-dren, a very augur bit will now be turned into your souls until your honesty is proved. Will either of you change your positions now, or do you force me to hard questioning?

Abigail: I have naught to change, sir. She lies.

Danforth. to Mary: You would still go on with this?

Mary Warren, faintly: Aye, sir.

Danforth, turning to Abigail: A poppet were discovered in Mr. Proctor’s house, stabbed by a needle. Mary Warren claims that you sat beside her in the court when she made it, and that you saw her make it and witnessed how she herself stuck her needle into it for safe-keeping. What say you to that?

Abigail, with a slight note of indignation: It is a lie, sir.

Danforth, after a slight pause: While you worked for Mr. Proctor, did you see poppets

in that house?

Abigail: Goody Proctor always kept poppets.

Proctor: Your Honor, my wife never kept no poppets. Mary Warren confesses it was

her poppet.

Cheever: Your Excellency. Danforth: Mr. Cheever.

Cheever: When I spoke with Goody Proctor in that house, she said she never kept no poppets. But she said she did keep poppets when she were a girl.

Proctor: She has not been a girl these fifteen years, Your Honor.

Hathorne: But a poppet will keep fifteen years, will it not?

Proctor: It will keep it is kept, but Mary Warren swears she never saw no poppets in my house, nor anyone else.

Parris: Why could there not have been poppets hid where no one ever saw them?

Proctor, furious: There might also be a dragon with five legs in my house, but no one has ever seen it.

Parris: We are here, Your Honor, precisely to discover what no one has ever seen.

Proctor: Mr. Danforth, what profit this girl to turn herself about? What may Mary Warren gain but hard questioning and worse?

Danforth: You are charging Abigail Williams with a marvelous cool plot to murder, do you understand that?

Proctor: I do, sir. I believe she means to murder.

Danforth, pointing at Abigail, incredulously: This child would murder your wife?

Proctor: It is not a child. Now hear me, sir. In the sight of the congregation she were twice this year put out of this meetin’ house for laughter during prayer.

Danforth, shocked, turning to Abigail: What’s this? Laughter during - !

Parris: Excellency, she were under Tituba’s power at that time, but she is solemn now.

Giles: Aye, now she is solemn and goes to hang people! Danforth: Quiet, man.

Hathorne: Surely it have no bearing on the question, sir. He charges contemplation of murder.

Danforth: Aye. He studies Abigail for a moment, then: Con-tinue, Mr. Proctor.

Proctor: Mary. Now tell the Governor how you danced in the woods.

Parris, instantly: Excellency, since I come to Salem this man is blackening my name. He -

Danforth: In a moment, sir. To Mary Warren, sternly, and surprised: What is this dancing?

Mary Warren: I - She glances at Abigail, who is staring down at her remorselessly.

Then, appealing to Proctor: Mr. Proctor -

Proctor, taking it right up: Abigail leads the girls to the woods, Your Honor, and they have danced there naked -

Parris: Your Honor, this -

Proctor, at once: Mr. Parris discovered them himself in the dead of night! There’s the “child” she is!

Danforth - it is growing into a nightmare, and he turns, as-tonished, to Parris: Mr. Parris -

Parris: I can only say, sir, that I never found any of them naked, and this man is -

Danforth: But you discovered them dancing in the woods? Eyes on Parris, he points at

Abigail. Abigail?

Hale: Excellency, when I first arrived from Beverly, Mr. Parris told me that.

Danforth: Do you deny it, Mr. Parris?

Parris: I do not, sir, but I never saw any of them naked.

Danforth: But she have danced?

Parris, unwillingly: Aye, sir.

Danforth, as though with new eyes, looks at Abigail.

Hathorne: Excellency, will you permit me? He points at Mary Warren.

Danforth, with great worry: Pray, proceed.

Hathorne: You say you never saw no spirits, Mary, were never threatened or afflicted by any manifest of the Devil or the Devil’s agents.

Mary Warren, very faintly: No, sir.

Hathorne, with a gleam of victory: And yet, when people ac-cused of witchery confronted you in court, you would faint, saying their spirits came out of their bodies and choked you -

Mary Warren: That were pretense, sir.

Danforth: I cannot hear you.

Mary Warren: Pretense, sir.

Parris: But you did turn cold, did you not? I myself picked you up many times, and your skin were icy, Mr. Danforth, you -

Danforth: I saw that many times.

Proctor: She only pretended to faint, Your Excellency. They’re all marvelous pretenders.

Hathorne: Then can she pretend to faint now? Proctor: Now?

Parris: Why not? Now there are no spirits attacking her, for none in this room is accused of witchcraft. So let her turn herself cold now, let her pretend she is attacked now, let her faint. He turns to Mary Warren. Faint!

Mary Warren: Faint?

Parris: Aye, faint. Prove to us how you pretended in the court so many times.

Mary Warren, looking to Proctor: I - cannot faint now, sir. Proctor, alarmed, quietly: Can you not pretend it?

Mary Warren: I - She looks about as though searching for the passion to faint. I - have no sense of it now, I –

Danforth: Why? What is lacking now?

MARY Warren: I - cannot tell, sir, I -

Danforth: Might it be that here we have no afflicting spirit loose, but in the court there were some?

Mary Warren: I never saw no spirits.

Parris: Then see no spirits now, and prove to us that you can faint by your own will, as you claim.

Mary Warren, stares, searching for the emotion of it, and then shakes her head: I - cannot do it.

Parris: Then you will confess, will you not? It were attacking spirits made you faint!

Mary Warren: No, sir, I -

Parris: Your Excellency, this is a trick to blind the court!

Mary Warren: It’s not a trick! She stands. I - I used to faint because I - I thought I saw spirits.

Danforth: Thought you saw them!

Mary Warren: But I did not, Your Honor.

Hathorne: How could you think you saw them unless you saw them?

Mary Warren: I - I cannot tell how, but I did. I - I heard the other girls screaming, and you, Your Honor, you seemed to believe them, and I - It were only sport in the beginning, sir, but then the whole world cried spirits, spirits, and I - I promise you, Mr. Danforth, I only thought I saw them but I did not.

Danforth peers at her.

Parris, smiling, but nervous because Danforth seems to be struck by Mary Warren’s story: Surely Your Excellency is not taken by this simple lie.

Danforth, turning worriedly to Abigail: Abigail. I bid you now search your heart and tell me this - and beware of it, child, to God every soul is precious and His vengeance is terrible on them that take life without cause. Is it possible, child, that the spirits you have seen are illusion only, some deception that may cross your mind when -

Abigail: Why, this - this - is a base question, sir.

Danforth: Child, I would have you consider it -

Abigail: I have been hurt, Mr. Danforth; I have seen my blood runnin’ out! I have been near to murdered every day because I done my duty pointing out the Devil’s people - and this is my reward? To be mistrusted, denied, questioned like a -

Danforth, weakening: Child, I do not mistrust you -

Abigail, in an open threat: Let you beware, Mr. Danforth. Think you to be so mighty that the power of Hell may not turn your wits? Beware of it! There is –

Suddenly, from an accusa-tory attitude, her face turns, looking into the air above - it is truly frightened.

Danforth, apprehensively: What is it, child?

Abigail, looking about in the air, clasping her arms about her as though cold: I - I know not. A wind, a cold wind, has come. Her eyes fall on Mary Warren.

Mary Warren, terrified, pleading: Abby!

Mercy Lewis, shivering: Your Honor, I freeze!

Proctor: They’re pretending! Act Three 109

Hathorne, touching Abigail’s hand: She is cold, Your Honor, touch her!

Mercy Lewis, through chattering teeth: Mary, do you send this shadow on me?

Mary Warren: Lord, save me!

Susanna Walcott: I freeze, I freeze!

Abigail, shivering visibly: It is a wind, a wind!

Mary Warren: Abby, don’t do that!

Danforth, himself engaged and entered by Abigail: Mary Warren, do you witch her? I say to you, do you send your spirit out?

With a hysterical cry Mary Warren starts to run. Proctor catches her. Mary Warren, almost collapsing: Let me go, Mr. Proctor, I cannot, I cannot - Abigail, crying to Heaven: Oh, Heavenly Father, take away this shadow! without warning or hesitation, Proctor leaps at Abigail and, grabbing her by the hair, pulls her to her feet. She screams in pain.

Danforth, astonished, cries, “What are you about?” and Hathorne and Parris call, “Take your hands off her!” and out of it all comes Proctor’s roaring voice.

Proctor: How do you call Heaven! Whore! Whore!

Herrick breaks Proctor from her.

Herrick: John!

Danforth: Man! Man, what do you -

Proctor, breathless and in agony: It is a whore! Danforth, dumfounded:

You charge - ? Abigail: Mr. Danforth, he is lying!

Proctor: Mark her! Now she’ll suck a scream to stab me with, but -

Danforth: You will prove this! This will not pass!

Proctor, trembling, his life collapsing about him: I have known her, sir. I have known her.

Danforth: You - you are a lecher?

Francis, horrified: John, you cannot say such a -

Proctor: Oh, Francis, I wish you had some evil in you that you might know me! To

Danforth: A man will not cast away his good name. You surely know that.

Danforth, dumfounded: In - in what time? In what place?

Proctor, his voice about to break, and his shame great: In the proper place - where my beasts are bedded. On the last night of my joy, some eight months past. She used to serve me in my house, sir. He has to clamp his jaw to keep from weeping. A man may think God sleeps, but God sees everything, I know it now. I beg you, sir, I beg you - see her what she is. My wife, my dear good wife, took this girl soon after, sir, and put her out on the highroad. And being what she is, a lump of vanity, sir - He is being overcome. Excellency, forgive me, forgive me. An-grily against himself, he turns away from the Governor for a moment. Then, as though to cry out is his only means of speech left: She thinks to dance with me on my wife’s grave! And well she might, for I thought of her softly. God help me, t lusted, and there is a promise in such sweat. But it is a whore’s venge-ance, and you must see it; I set myself entirely in your hands, I know you must see it now.

Danforth, blanched, in horror, turning to Abigail: You deny every scrap and tittle of this?

Aalu.: If I must answer that, I will leave and I will not come back again!

Danforth seems unsteady.

Proctor: l have made a bell of my honor! I have rung the doom of my good name - you will believe me, Mr. Danforth! My wife is innocent, except she knew a whore when she saw one!

Abigail, stepping up to Danforth: What look do you give me? Danforth cannot speak. I’ll not have such looks! She turns and starts for the door.

Danforth: You will remain where you are! Herrick steps into her path. She comes up short, fire in her eyes. Mr. Parris, go into the court and bring

Goodwife Proctor out.

Parris, objecting: Your Honor, this is all a -

Danforth, sharply to Parris: Bring her out! And tell her not one word of what’s been spoken here. And let you knock before you enter. Parris goes out. Now we shall touch the bottom of this swamp.

To Proctor: Your wife, you say, is an honest woman.

Proctor: In her life, sir, she have never lied. There are them that cannot sing, and them that cannot weep - my wife cannot lie. I have paid much to learn it, sir.

Danforth: And when she put this girl out of your house, she put her out for a harlot?

Proctor: Aye, sir.

Danforth: And knew her for a harlot?

Proctor: Aye, sir, she knew her for a harlot.

Danforth: Good then. To Abigail: And if she tell me, child, 112 The Crucible it were for harlotry, may God spread His mercy on you! There is a knock. He calls to the door. Hold! To Abigail: Turn your back. Turn your back. To Proctor: Do likewise. Both turn their backs - Abigail with indignant slowness. Now let neither of you turn to face Goody Proctor. No one in this room is to speak one word, or raise a gesture aye or nay.

He turns toward the door, calls: Enter! The door opens. Elizabeth enters with Parris.

Parris leaves her. She stands alone, her eyes looking for Proctor. Mr. Cheever, report this testimony in all exactness. Are you ready?

Cheever: Ready, sir.

Danforth: Come here, woman. Elizabeth comes to him, glanc-ing at Proctor's back.

Look at me only, not at your husband. In my eyes only.

Elizabeth, faintly: Good, sir.

Danforth: We are given to understand that at one time you dismissed your servant,

Abigail Williams.

Elizabeth: That is true, sir.

Danforth: For what cause did you dismiss her? Slight pause. Then Elizabeth tries to glance at Proctor. You will look in my eyes only and not at your husband. The answer is in your memory and you need no help to give it to me. Why did you dismiss Abigail Williams?

Elizabeth, not knowing what to say, sensing a situation, wetting her lips to stall for time:

She - dissatisfied me. Pause. And my husband.

Danforth: In what way dissatisfied you?

Elizabeth: She were - She glances at Proctor for a cue.

Danforth: Woman, look at me! Elizabeth does. Were she slovenly? Lazy? What disturbance did she cause?

Elizabeth: Your Honor, I - in that time I were sick. And I - My husband is a good and righteous man. He is never drunk as some are, nor wastin’ his time at the shovelboard, but always at his work. But in my sickness - you see, sir, I were a long time sick after my last baby, and I thought I saw my husband somewhat turning from me. And this girl

- She turns to Abigail.

Danforth: Look at me.

Elizabeth: Aye, sir. Abigail Williams - She breaks op.

Danforth: What of Abigail Williams?

Elizabeth: I came to think he fancied her. And so one night I lost my wits, I think, and put her out on the highroad.

Danforth: Your husband - did he indeed turn from you?

Elizabeth, in agony: My husband - is a goodly man, sir.

Danforth: Then he did not turn from you.

Elizabeth, starting to glance at Proctor: He -

Danforth, reaches out and holds her face, then: Look at me! To your own knowledge, has John Proctor ever committed the crime of lechery? 1n a crisis of indecision she cannot speak, Answer my question! Is your husband a lecher!

Elizabeth, faintly: No, sir.

Danforth: Remove her, Marshal.

Proctor: Elizabeth, tell the truth!

Danforth: She has spoken. Remove her!

Proctor, crying out: Elizabeth, I have confessed it!

Elizabeth: Oh, God! The door closes behind her.

Proctor: She only thought to save my name!

Hale: Excellency, it is a natural lie to tell; I beg you, stop now before another is condemned! l may shut my conscience to it no more - private vengeance is working through this testimony! From the beginning this man has struck me true. By my oath to Heaven, I believe him now, and I pray you call back his wife before we -

Danforth: She spoke nothing of lechery, and this man has lied'

Hale: I believe him! Pointing at Abigail: This girl has always struck me false! She has -

Abigail, with a weird, wild, chilling cry, screams up to the ceiling.

Abigail: You will not! Begone! Begone, I say!

Danforth: What is it, child? But Abigail, pointing with fear, is now raising up her frightened eyes, her awed face, toward the ceiling - the girls are doing the same - and now Hathorne, Hale, Putnam, Cheever, Herrick, and Danforth do the same. What’s there? He lowers his eyes from the ceiling, and now he is fright-ened; there is real tension in his voice. Child! She is transfixed - with all the girls, she is whimpering open-mouthed, agape at the ceiling. Girls! Why do you - ?

Mercy Lewis, pointing: It’s on the beam! Behind the rafters

Danforth, looking up: Where!

Abigail: Why - ? She gulps. Why do you come, yellow bird?

Proctor: Where’s a bird? I see no bird!

Abigail, to the ceiling: My face? My face?

Proctor: Mr. Hale -

Danforth: Be quiet!

Proctor, to Hale: Do you see a bird? Danforth: Be quiet!!

Abigail, to the ceiling, in a genuine conversation with the “bird,.” as though trying to talk it out of attacking her: But God made my face; you cannot want to tear my face. Envy is a deadly sin, Mary.

Mary Warren, on her feet with a spring, and horrified, plead-ing: Abby!

Abigail, unperturbed, continuing to the “bird”: Oh, Mary, this is a black art to change your shape. No, I cannot, I cannot stop my mouth; it’s God’s work I do.

Mary Warren: Abby, I’m here!

Proctor, frantically: They’re pretending, Mr. Danforth!

Abigail - now she takes a backward step, as though in fear the bird will swoop down momentarily: Oh, please, Mary! Don’t come down.

Susanna Walcott: Her claws, she’s stretching her claws!

Proctor: Lies, lies.

Abigail, backing further, eyes still fixed above: Mary, please don’t hurt me!

Mary Warren, to Danforth: I’m not hurting her!

Danforth, to Mary Warren: Why does she see this vision?

Mary Warren: She sees nothin’!

Abigail, now staring full front as though hypnotized, and mimicking the exact tone of Mary

Warren’s cry: She sees nothin’!

Mary Warren, pleading: Abby, you mustn’t!

Abigail AND All THE Girls, all transfixed: Abby, you mustn’t!

MARY Warren, to all the girls: I’m here, I'm here!

Girls: I’m here, I’m here!

Danforth, horrified: Mary Warren! Draw back your spirit out of them!

Mary Warren: Mr. Danforth!

Girls, cutting her op: Mr. Danforth!

Danforth: Have you compacted with the Devil? Have you?

Mary Warren: Never, never!

Girls: Never, never!

Danforth, growing hysterical: Why can they only repeat you?

Proctor: Give me a whip - I’ll stop it!

Mary Warren: They’re sporting. They - !

Girls: They’re sporting!

.Mary Warren, turning on them all hysterically and stamping her feet: Abby, stop it!

Girls, stamping their feet: Abby, stop it!

Mary Warren: Stop it!

Girls: Stop it!

Mary Warren, screaming it out at the top of her lungs, and raising her fists:

Stop it!!

Girls, raising their fists: Stop it!!

Mary Warren, utterly confounded, and becoming overwhelmed by Abigail’s - and the girls’ - utter conviction, starts to whimper, hands half raised, powerless, and all the girls begin whimpering exactly as she does.

Danforth: A little while ago you were afflicted. Now it seems you afflict others; where did you find this power?

Mary WARREN, staring at Abigail: I - have no power. Girls: I have no power. Proctor: They’re gulling you, Mister!

Danforth: Why did you turn about this past two weeks? You have seen the Devil, have you not?

Hale, indicating Abigail and the girls: You cannot believe them! -

Mary Warren: I -

Proctor, sensing her weakening: Mary, God damns all liars!

Danforth, pounding it into her: You have seen the Devil, you have made compact with Lucifer, have you not?

Proctor: God damns liars, Mary!

Mary utters something unintelligible, staring at Abigail, who keeps watching the “bird” above.

Danforth: I cannot hear you. What do you say? Mary utters again unintelligibly

You will confess yourself or you will hang! He turns her roughly to face him. Do you know who I am? I say you will hang if you do not open with me!

Proctor: Mary, remember the angel Raphael - do that which is good and -

Abigail, pointing upward: The wings! Her wings are spreading! Mary, please, don’t, don’t - !

Hale: I see nothing, Your Honor!

Danforth: Do you confess this power! He is an inch from her face. Speak!

Abigail: She’s going to come down! She’s walking the beam!

Danforth: Will you speak! 118 The Crucible

Mary Warren, staring in horror: I cannot! Girls: I cannot!

Parris: Cast the Devil out! Look him in the face! Trample him! We’ll save you,

Mary, only stand fast against him and -

Abigail, looking up: Look out! She’s coming down! She and all the girls run to one wall, shielding their eyes. And now, as though cornered, they let out a gigantic scream, and Mary, as though infected, opens her mouth and screams with them. Gradually Abigail and the girls leave op, until only Mary is left there, staring up at the “bird,” screaming madly. All watch her, horrified by this evident fit. Proctor strides to her.

Proctor: Mary, tell the Governor what they - He has hardly got a word out, when, seeing him coming for her, she rushes out of his reach, screaming in horror,

Mary Warren: Don’t touch me - don’t touch me! At which the girls halt at the door.

Proctor, astonished: Mary!

Mary Warren, pointing at Proctor: You’re the Devil’s man! He is stopped in his tracks.

Parris: Praise God!

Girls: Praise God!

Proctor, numbed: Mary, how - ?

Mary Warren: I’ll not hang with you! I love God, I love God.

Danforth, to Mary: He bid you do the Devil’s work?

Mary Warren, hysterically, indicating Proctor: He come at me by night and every day

to sign, to sign, to -

Danforth: Sign what?

Parris: The Devil’s book? He come with a book?

Mary Warren, hysterically, pointing at Proctor, fearful of him: My name, he want my name. “I’ll murder you,” he says, “if my wife hangs! We must go and overthrow the court,” he says! Danforth’s head jerks toward Proctor, shock and horror in his face.

Proctor, turning, appealing to Hale: Mr. Hale!

Mary Warren, her sobs beginning: He wake me every night, his eyes were like coals and his fingers claw my neck, and I sign, I sign...

Hale: Excellency, this child’s gone wild!

Proctor, as Danforth’s wide eyes pour on him: Mary, Mary!

Mary Warren, screaming at him: No, I love God; I go your way no more. I love God, I bless God. Sobbing, she rushes to Abigail. Abby, Abby, I’ll never hurt you more! They all watch, as Abigail, out of her infinite charity, reaches out and draws the sobbing Mary to her, and then looks up to Danforth.

Danforth, to Proctor: What are you? Proctor is beyond speech in his anger. You are combined with anti-Christ, are you not? I have seen your power; you will not deny it!

What say you, Mister?

Hale: Excellency -

Danforth: I will have nothing from you, Mr. Hale! To Proctor: Will you confess yourself befouled with Hell, or do you keep that black allegiance yet? What say you?

Proctor, his mind wild, breathless: I say - I say - God is dead'

Parris: Hear it, hear it!

Proctor, laughs insanely, then: A fire, a fire is burning! I hear 120 The Crucible the boot of Lucifer, I see his filthy face! And it is my face, and yours, Danforth! For them that quail to bring men out of ignorance, as I have quailed, and as you quail now when you know in all your black hearts that this be fraud - God damns our kind especially, and we will burn, we will burn together!

Danforth: Marshal! Take him and Corey with him to the jail!

Hale, starting across to the door: I denounce these proceedings!

Proctor: You are pulling Heaven down and raising up a whore!

Hale: I denounce these proceedings, I quit this court! He slams the door to the outside behind him.

Danforth, calling to him in a fury: Mr. Hale! Mr. Hale!

THE CURTAIN FALLS

ACT FOUR

A cell in Salem jail, that fall. At the back is a high barred window; near it, a great, heavy door. Along the walls are two benches. The place is in darkness but for the moonlight seeping through the bars. It appears empty. Presently footsteps are heard com-ing down a corridor beyond the wall, keys rattle, and the door swings open. Marshal Herrick enters with a lantern. He is nearly drunk, and heavy-footed. He goes to a bench and nudges a bundle of rags lying on it.

Herrick: Sarah,. wake up! Sarah Good! He then crosses to the other bench.

Sarah Good, rising in her rags: Oh, Majesty! Comin’, comin’! Tituba, he’s here, His Majesty’s come!

Herrick.: Go to the north cell; this place is' wanted now. He hangs his lantern on the wall. Tituba sits up.

Tituba: That don’t look to me like His Majesty; look to me like the marshal.

Herrick, taking out a ask: Get along with you now, clear this Herrick, grabbing Tituba: Come along, come along. Tituba, resisting him: No, he comin’ for me. I goin' home!

Herrick, pulling her to the door: That’s not Satan, just a poor old cow with a hatful of

milk. Come along now, out with you!

Tituba, calling to the window: Take me home, Devil! Take me home!

Sarah Good, following the shouting Tituba out: Tell him I’m goin’, Tituba! Now you tell him Sarah Good is goin’ too!

In the corridor outside Tituba calls on - “Take me home, Devil; Devil take me home!” and Hopkins’ voice orders her to move on. Herrick returns and begins to push old rags and straw into a corner. Hearing footsteps, he turns, and enter

Danforth and Judge Hathorne. They are in greatcoats and wear hats against the bitter cold. They are followed in by Cheever, who carries a dispatch case and a flat wooden box containing his writing materials.

Herrick Good morning, Excellency. Danforth: Where is Mr. Parris?

Herrick: I’ll fetch him. He starts for the door.

Danforth: Marshal. Herrick stops. When did Reverend Hale arrive?

Herrick: It were toward midnight, I think.

Danforth, suspiciously: that is he about here?

Herrick: He goes among them that will hang, sir. And he prays with them. He sits with Goody Nurse now. And Mr. Parris with him.

Danforth: Indeed. That man have no authority to enter here, Marshal. Why have you let him in? 124 The Crucible

Herrick: Why, Mr. Parris command me, sir. I cannot deny him. Danforth: Are you drunk, Marshal?

Herrick: No, sir; it is a bitter night, and I have no fire here. Danforth, containing his anger: Fetch Mr. Parris.

Herrick: Aye, sir.

Danforth: There is a prodigious stench in this place.

Herrick: I have only now cleared the people out for you.

Danforth: Beware hard drink, Marshal.

Herrick: Aye, sir. He waits an instant for further orders. But Danforth, in dissatisfaction, turns his back on him, and Herrick goes out. There is a pause.

Danforth stands in thought.

Hathorne: Let you question Hale, Excellency; I should not be surprised he have been preaching in Andover lately.

Danforth: We’ll come to that; speak nothing of Andover. Parris prays with him. That’s strange. He blows on his hands, moves toward the window, and looks out.

Hathorne: Excellency, I wonder if it be wise to let Mr. Parris so continuously with the prisoners. Danforth turns to him, inter-ested. I think, sometimes, the man has a mad look these days.

Danforth: Mad?

Hathorne: I met him yesterday coming out of his house, and I bid him good morning - and he wept and went his way. I think it is not well the village sees him so unsteady.

Danforth: Perhaps he have some sorrow.

Cheever, stamping his feet against the cold: I think it be the cows, sir.

Danforth: Cows? Act Four 125

Cheever: There be so many cows wanderin’ the highroads, now their masters are in the jails, and much disagreement who they will belong to now. I know Mr. Parris be arguin’ with farmers all yesterday - there is great contention, sir, about the cows. Contention make him weep, sir; it were always a man that weep for contention. He turns, as do Hathorne and Danforth, hearing someone coming up the corridor. Danforth raises his head as Parris enters. He is gaunt, frightened, and sweating in his greatcoat.

Parris, to Danforth, instantly: Oh, good morning, sir, thank you ' for coming, I beg your pardon wakin’ you so early. Good morn-ing, Judge Hathorne.

Danforth: Reverend Hale have no right to enter this -

Parris: Excellency, a moment. He hurries back and shuts the door.

Hathorne: Do you leave him alone with the prisoners?

Danforth: What’s his business here?

Parris, prayerfully holding up his hands: Excellency, hear me. It is a providence.

Reverend Hale has returned to bring Rebecca Nurse to God.

Danforth, surprised: He bids her confess?

Parris, sitting: Hear me. Rebecca have not given me a word this three month since she came. Now she sits with him, and her sister and Martha Corey and two or three others, and he pleads with them, confess their crimes and save their lives.

Danforth: Why - this is indeed a providence. And they soften, they soften?

Parris: Not yet, not yet. But I thought to summon you, sir, that we might think on whether it be not wise, to - He dares not’ 126 The Crucible say it. I had thought to put a question, sir, and I hope you will not -

Danforth: Mr. Parris, be plain, what troubles you?

Parris: There is news, sir, that the court - the court must reckon with. My niece, sir, my niece - I believe she has vanished.

Danforth: Vanished!

Parris: I had thought to advise you of it earlier in the week, but -

Danforth: Why? How long is she gone?

Parris: This be the third night. You see, sir, she told me she would stay a night with Mercy Lewis. And next day, when she does not return, I send to Mr. Lewis to inquire. Mercy told him she would sleep in my house for a night.

Danforth: They are both gone?!

Parris, in fear of him: They are, sir.

Danforth, alarmed: I will send a party for them. Where may they be?

Parris: Excellency, I think they be aboard a ship. Danforth stands agape. My daughter tells me how she heard them speaking of ships last week, and tonight I discover my - my strongbox is broke into. He presses his fingers against his eyes to keep back tears.

Hathorne, astonished: She have robbed you?

Parris: Thirty-one pound is gone. I am penniless. He covers his face and sobs.

Danforth: Mr. Parris, you are a brainless man! He walks in thought, deeply worried. Act Four 127

Parris: Excellency, it profit nothing you should blame me. I cannot think they would run off except they fear to keep in Salem any more. He is pleading. Mark it, sir, Abigail had close knowledge of the town, and since the news of Andover has broken here - '

Danforth: Andover is remedied. The court returns there on Friday, and will resume examinations.

Parris: I am sure of it, sir. But the rumor here speaks rebellion in Andover, and it -

Danforth: There is no rebellion in Andover!

Parris: I tell you what is said here, sir. Andover have thrown out the court, they say, and will have no part of witchcraft. There be a faction here, feeding on that news, and I tell you true, sir, I fear there will be riot here.

Hathorne: Riot! Why at every execution I have seen naught but high satisfaction in the town.

Parris: Judge Hathorne - it were another sort that hanged till now. Rebecca

Nurse is no Bridget that lived three year with Bishop before she married him.

John Proctor is not Isaac Ward that drank his family to ruin. To Danforth: I would to God it were not so, Excellency, but these people have great weight jet in the town. Let Rebecca stand upon the gibbet and send up some righteous prayer, and I fear she’ll wake a vengeance on

you.

Hathorne: Excellency, she is condemned a witch. The court have -

Danforth, in deep concern, raising a hand to Hathorne: Pray you. To Parris: How do you propose, then?

Parris: Excellency, I would postpone these hangin’s for a time. Danforth: There will be no postponement.

Parris: Now Mr. Hale’s returned, there is hope, I think - for if he bring even one of these to God, that confession surely damns the others in the public eye, and none may doubt more that they are all linked to Hell. This way, unconfessed and claiming innocence, doubts are multiplied, many honest people will weep for them, and our good purpose is lost in their tears.

Danforth, after thinking a moment, then going to Cheever: Give me the list.

Cheever opens the dispatch case, searches.

Parris: It cannot be forgot, sir, that when I summoned the con-gregation for John Proctor’s excommnnication there were hardly thirty people come to hear it. That speak a discontent, I think, and -

Danforth, studying the list: There will be no postponement.

Parris: Excellency -

Danforth: Now, sir - which of these in your opinion may be brought to God? I will myself strive with him till dawn. He hands she list to Parris, who merely glances at it.

Parris: There is not sufficient time till dawn.

Danforth: I shall do my utmost. Which of them do you have hope for?

Parris, not even glancing at the list now, and in a quavering voice, quietly:

Excellency - a dagger - He chokes up.

Danforth: What do you say?

Parris: Tonight, when I open my door to leave my house - a dagger clattered to the ground. Silence. Danforth absorbs this. Now Parris cries out: You cannot hang this sort. There is danger for me. I dare not step outside at night!

Reverend Hale enters. They look at him for an instant in silence He is steeped in sorrow, exhausted, and more direct than he ever was.

Danforth: Accept my congratulations, Reverend Hale; we are gladdened to see you returned to your good work.

Hale, coming to Danforth now: You must pardon them. They will not budge.

Herrick enters, waits.

Danforth, conciliatory: You misunderstand, sir; I cannot par-don these when twelve are already hanged for the same crime. It is not just.

Parris, with failing heart: Rebecca will not confess?

Hale: The sun will rise in a few minutes. Excellency, I must have more time.

Danforth: Now hear me, and beguile yourselves no more. I will not receive a single plea for pardon or postponement. Them that will not confess will hang. Twelve are already executed; the names of these seven are given out, and the village expects to see them die this morning. Postponement now speaks a floundering on my part; reprieve or pardon must cast doubt upon the guilt of them that died till now. While I speak God’s law, I will not crack its voice with whimpering. If retaliation is your fear, know this - I should hang ten thousand that dared to rise against the law, and an ocean of salt tears could not melt the resolution of the statutes. Now draw yourselves up like men and help me, as you are bound by Heaven to do. Have you spoken with them all, Mr. Hale?

Hale: All but Proctor. He is in the dungeon.

Danforth, to Herrick: What’s Proctor’s way now?

Herrick: He sits like some great bird; you’d not know he lived except he will take food from time to time.

Speech to the Virginia Convention, *Patrick Henry, March 23, 1775*

No man thinks more highly than I do of the patriotism, as well as abilities, of the very worthy gentlemen who have just addressed the House. But different men often see the same subject in different lights; and, therefore, I hope it will not be thought disrespectful to those gentlemen if, entertaining as I do opinions of a character very opposite to theirs, I shall speak forth my sentiments freely and without reserve. This is no time for ceremony. The question before the House is one of awful moment to this country. For my own part, I consider it as nothing less than a question of freedom or slavery; and in proportion to the magnitude of the subject ought to be the freedom of the debate. It is only in this way that we can hope to arrive at truth, and fulfill the great responsibility which we hold to God and our country. Should I keep back my opinions at such a time, through fear of giving offense, I should consider myself as guilty of treason towards my country, and of an act of disloyalty toward the Majesty of Heaven, which I revere above all earthly kings.

Mr. President, it is natural to man to indulge in the illusions of hope. We are apt to shut our eyes against a painful truth, and listen to the song of that siren till she transforms us into beasts. Is this the part of wise men, engaged in a great and arduous struggle for liberty? Are we disposed to be of the number of those who, having eyes, see not, and, having ears, hear not, the things which so nearly concern their temporal salvation? For my part, whatever anguish of spirit it may cost, I am willing to know the whole truth; to know the worst, and to provide for it.

I have but one lamp by which my feet are guided, and that is the lamp of experience. I know of no way of judging of the future but by the past. And judging by the past, I wish to know what there has been in the conduct of the British ministry for the last ten years to justify those hopes with which gentlemen have been pleased to solace themselves and the House. Is it that insidious smile with which our petition has been lately received? Trust it not, sir; it will prove a snare to your feet. Suffer not yourselves to be betrayed with a kiss. Ask yourselves how this gracious reception of our petition comports with those warlike preparations which cover our waters and darken our land. Are fleets and armies necessary to a work of love and reconciliation? Have we shown ourselves so unwilling to be reconciled that force must be called in to win back our love? Let us not deceive ourselves, sir. These are the implements of war and subjugation; the last arguments to which kings resort. I ask gentlemen, sir, what means this martial array, if its purpose be not to force us to submission? Can gentlemen assign any other possible motive for it? Has Great Britain any enemy, in this quarter of the world, to call for all this accumulation of navies and armies? No, sir, she has none. They are meant for us: they can be meant for no other. They are sent over to bind and rivet upon us those chains which the British ministry have been so long forging. And what have we to oppose to them? Shall we try argument? Sir, we have been trying that for the last ten years. Have we anything new to offer upon the subject? Nothing. We have held the subject up in every light of which it is capable; but it has been all in vain. Shall we resort to entreaty and humble supplication? What terms shall we find which have not been already exhausted? Let us not, I beseech you, sir, deceive ourselves. Sir, we have done everything that could be done to avert the storm which is now coming on. We have petitioned; we have remonstrated; we have supplicated; we have prostrated ourselves before the throne, and have implored its interposition to arrest the tyrannical hands of the ministry and Parliament. Our petitions have been slighted; our remonstrances have produced additional violence and insult; our supplications have been disregarded; and we have been spurned, with contempt, from the foot of the throne! In vain, after these things, may we indulge the fond hope of peace and reconciliation. There is no longer any room for hope. If we wish to be free—if we mean to preserve inviolate those inestimable privileges for which we have been so long contending—if we mean not basely to abandon the noble struggle in which we have been so long engaged, and which we have pledged ourselves never to abandon until the glorious object of our contest shall be obtained—we must fight! I repeat it, sir, we must fight! An appeal to arms and to the God of hosts is all that is left us!

They tell us, sir, that we are weak; unable to cope with so formidable an adversary. But when shall we be stronger? Will it be the next week, or the next year? Will it be when we are totally disarmed, and when a British guard shall be stationed in every house? Shall we gather strength by irresolution and inaction? Shall we acquire the means of effectual resistance by lying supinely on our backs and hugging the delusive phantom of hope, until our enemies shall have bound us hand and foot? Sir, we are not weak if we make a proper use of those means which the God of nature hath placed in our power. The millions of people, armed in the holy cause of liberty, and in such a country as that which we possess, are invincible by any force which our enemy can send against us. Besides, sir, we shall not fight our battles alone. There is a just God who presides over the destinies of nations, and who will raise up friends to fight our battles for us. The battle, sir, is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave. Besides, sir, we have no election. If we were base enough to desire it, it is now too late to retire from the contest. There is no retreat but in submission and slavery! Our chains are forged! Their clanking may be heard on the plains of Boston! The war is inevitable—and let it come! I repeat it, sir, let it come.

It is in vain, sir, to extenuate the matter. Gentlemen may cry, Peace, Peace—but there is no peace. The war is actually begun! The next gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms! Our brethren are already in the field! Why stand we here idle? What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!

The Declaration of Independence

edited by the Second Continental Congress

July 2-4, 1776

***Mark each change with one or more of the following***

**Effect of Change**

1. makes the language stronger
2. makes the language weaker

**Reason for Change**

V. for accuracy

W. for clarity

X. for brevity

Y. to avoid offending France or Spain

Z. to avoid offending “friends” in Parliament

[Editors note: text in **boldface** was removed for the final version of the Declaration, and text in *italics* was added].

### A Declaration by the Representatives of the

#### United States of America, in General

#### Congress Assembled.

When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth the separate & equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature’s God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their creator with **inherent and** [*certain*] inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, & the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, & to institute new government, laying it’s foundation on such principles, & organizing it’s powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety & happiness. Prudence indeed will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light & transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses & usurpations **begun at a distinguished period and** pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty to throw off such government, & to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of these colonies; & such is now the necessity which constrains them to **expunge** [*alter*] their former systems of government. The history of the present king of Great Britain is a history of **unremitting** [*repeated*] injuries & usurpations, **among which appears no solitary fact to contradict the uniform tenor of the rest but all have** [*all having*] in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these states. To prove this let facts be submitted to a candid world **for the truth of which we pledge a faith yet unsullied by falsehood**.

He has refused his assent to laws the most wholesome & necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his governors to pass laws of immediate & pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his assent should be obtained; & when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of representation in the legislature, a right inestimable to them, & formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved representative houses repeatedly **& continually** for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time after such dissolutions to cause others to be elected, whereby the legislative powers, incapable of annihilation, have returned to the people at large for their exercise, the state remaining in the meantime exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without & convulsions within.

He has endeavored to prevent the population of these states; for that purpose obstructing the laws for naturalization of foreigners, refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, & raising the conditions of new appropriations of lands.

He has **suffered** [*obstructed*] the administration of justice **totally to cease in some of these states** [*by*] refusing his assent to laws for establishing judiciary powers.

He has made **our** judges dependant on his will alone, for the tenure of their offices, & the amount & 4arvele of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of new offices **by a self assumed power** and sent hither swarms of new officers to harass our people and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us in times of peace standing armies **and ships of war** without the consent of our legislatures.

He has affected to render the military independent of, & superior to the civil power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitutions & unacknowledged by our laws, giving his assent to their acts of pretended legislation for quartering large bodies of armed troops among us; for protecting them by a mock-trial from punishment for any murders which they should commit on the inhabitants of these states; for cutting off our trade with all parts of the world; for imposing taxes on us without our consent; for depriving us [ ] [*in many cases*] of the benefits of trial by jury; for transporting us beyond seas to be tried for pretended offences; for abolishing the free system of English laws in a neighboring province, establishing therein an arbitrary government, and enlarging its boundaries, so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these **states** [*colonies*]; for taking away our charters, abolishing our most valuable laws, and altering fundamentally the forms of our governments; for suspending our own legislatures, & declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated government here **withdrawing his governors, and declaring us out of his allegiance & protection**. [*by declaring us out of his protection, and waging war against us*.]

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burnt our towns, & destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large armies of foreign mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation & tyranny already begun with circumstances of cruelty and perfidy [*scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, & totally*] unworthy the head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow citizens taken captive on the high seas to bear arms against their country, to become the executioners of their friends & brethren, or to fall themselves by their hands.

He has [*excited domestic insurrection among us, & has*] endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes, & conditions **of existence**.

**He has incited treasonable insurrections of our fellow-citizens, with the allurements of forfeiture & confiscation of our property.**

**He has waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating it’s most sacred rights of life and liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, captivating & carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur miserable death in their transportation thither. This piratical warfare, the 4arveled4g of INFIDEL powers, is the warfare of the CHRISTIAN king of Great Britain. Determined to keep open a market where MEN should be bought & sold, he has prostituted his negative for suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or to restrain this execrable commerce. And that this assemblage of horrors might want no fact of distinguished die, he is now exciting those very people to rise in arms among us, and to purchase that liberty of which he has deprived them, by murdering the people on whom he also obtruded them: thus paying off former crimes committed against the LIBERTIES of one people, with crimes which he urges them to commit against the LIVES of another.**

In every stage of these oppressions we have petitioned for redress in the most humble terms: our repeated petitions have been answered only by repeated injuries.

A prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant is unfit to be the ruler of a [ ] [*free*] people **who mean to be free. Future ages will scarcely believe that the hardiness of one man adventured, within the short compass of twelve years only, to lay a foundation so broad & so undisguised for tyranny over a people fostered & fixed in principles of freedom**.

Nor have we been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend **a** [an unwarrantable] jurisdiction over **these our states** [*us*]. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration & settlement here, **no one of which could warrant so strange a pretension: that these were effected at the expense of our own blood & treasure, unassisted by the wealth or the strength of Great Britain: that in constituting indeed our several forms of government, we had adopted one common king, thereby laying a foundation for perpetual league & amity with them: but that submission to their parliament was no part of our constitution, nor ever in idea, if history may be credited: and**, we [ ] [*have*] appealed to their native justice and magnanimity **as well as to** [*and we have conjured them by*] the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations which **were likely to** [*would inevitably*] interrupt our connection and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice & of consanguinity, **and when occasions have been given them, by the regular course of their laws, of removing from their councils the disturbers of our harmony, they have, by their free election, re-established them in power. At this very time too they are permitting their chief magistrate to send over not only soldiers of our common blood, but Scotch & foreign mercenaries to invade & destroy us. These facts have given the last stab to agonizing affection, and manly spirit bids us to renounce forever these unfeeling brethren. We must [*We must therefore*] endeavor to forget our former love for them, and hold them as we hold the rest of mankind, enemies in war, in peace friends. We might have been a free and a great people together; but a communication of grandeur & of freedom it seems is below their dignity. Be it so, since they will have it. The road to happiness & to glory is open to us too. We will tread it apart from them, and** acquiesce in the necessity which denounces our **eternal** separation [ ] [*and hold them as we hold the rest of mankind, enemies in war, in peace friends*.]!

We therefore the representatives We therefore the representatives

of the United States of the United States of

America in General Congress America in General Congress

assembled do in the name & assembled, appealing to the

by authority of the good supreme judge of the world

people of these **states reject** for the rectitude of our

**& renounce all allegiance &** intentions, do in the name, & by

**subjection to the kings of** the authority of the good

**Great Britain & all others** people of these colonies,

**who may hereafter claim by,**  solemnly publish & declare that

**through or under them: we** these united colonies are &

**utterly dissolve all political** of right ought to be free &

**connection which may** independent states; that they

**heretofore have subsisted** are absolved from all allegiance

**between us & the people or** to the British crown,

**parliament of Great Britain:** and that all political

**& finally we do assert &** connection between them & the

**declare these colonies to be free** state of Great Britain is, &

**& independent states,** & that ought to be, totally

as free & independent states, dissolved; & that as free &

they have full power to levy independent states they have

war, conclude peace, contract full power to levy war,

alliances, establish commerce, conclude peace, contract

& to do all other acts & alliances, establish commerce &

things which independent to do all other acts & things

states may of right do. Which independent states

may of right do.

And for the support of And for the support of this

this declaration we mutually declaration, with a firm

pledge to each other our reliance on the protection of

lives, our fortunes, & our divine providence we mutually

sacred honor. Pledge to each other our

lives, our fortunes, & our

sacred honor.

The Declaration thus signed on the 4th, on paper was engrossed on parchment, & signed again on the 2d. of August.

**From Crisis , NO 1 by THOMAS PAINE**

THESE are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly: it is dearness only that gives every thing its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as FREEDOM should not be highly rated. Britain, with an army to enforce her tyranny, has declared that she has a right (not only to TAX) but "to BIND us in ALL CASES WHATSOEVER," and if being bound in that manner, is not slavery, then is there not such a thing as slavery upon earth. Even the expression is impious; for so unlimited a power can belong only to God.

Whether the independence of the continent was declared too soon, or delayed too long, I will not now enter into as an argument; my own simple opinion is, that had it been eight months earlier, it would have been much better. We did not make a proper use of last winter, neither could we, while we were in a dependent state. However, the fault, if it were one, was all our own**\***; we have none to blame but ourselves. But no great deal is lost yet. All that Howe has been doing for this month past, is rather a ravage than a conquest, which the spirit of the Jerseys, a year ago, would have quickly repulsed, and which time and a little resolution will soon recover.

##### \* The present winter is worth an age, if rightly employed; but, if lost or neglected, the whole continent will partake of the evil; and there is no punishment that man does not deserve, be he who, or what, or where he will, that may be the means of sacrificing a season so precious and useful.

I have as little superstition in me as any man living, but my secret opinion has ever been, and still is, that God Almighty will not give up a people to military destruction, or leave them unsupportedly to perish, who have so earnestly and so repeatedly sought to avoid the calamities of war, by every decent method which wisdom could invent. Neither have I so much of the infidel in me, as to suppose that He has relinquished the government of the world, and given us up to the care of devils; and as I do not, I cannot see on what grounds the king of Britain can look up to heaven for help against us: a common murderer, a highwayman, or a house-breaker, has as good a pretence as he.

'Tis surprising to see how rapidly a panic will sometimes run through a country. All nations and ages have been subject to them. Britain has trembled like an ague at the report of a French fleet of flat-bottomed boats; and in the fourteenth [fifteenth] century the whole English army, after ravaging the kingdom of France, was driven back like men petrified with fear; and this brave exploit was performed by a few broken forces collected and headed by a woman, Joan of Arc. Would that heaven might inspire some Jersey maid to spirit up her countrymen, and save her fair fellow sufferers from ravage and ravishment! Yet panics, in some cases, have their uses; they produce as much good as hurt. Their duration is always short; the mind soon grows through them, and acquires a firmer habit than before. But their peculiar advantage is, that they are the touchstones of sincerity and hypocrisy, and bring things and men to light, which might otherwise have lain forever undiscovered. In fact, they have the same effect on secret traitors, which an imaginary apparition would have upon a private murderer. They sift out the hidden thoughts of man, and hold them up in public to the world. Many a disguised Tory has lately shown his head, that shall penitentially solemnize with curses the day on which Howe arrived upon the Delaware.

As I was with the troops at Fort Lee, and marched with them to the edge of Pennsylvania, I am well acquainted with many circumstances, which those who live at a distance know but little or nothing of. Our situation there was exceedingly cramped, the place being a narrow neck of land between the North River and the Hackensack. Our force was inconsiderable, being not one-fourth so great as Howe could bring against us. We had no army at hand to have relieved the garrison, had we shut ourselves up and stood on our defence. Our ammunition, light artillery, and the best part of our stores, had been removed, on the apprehension that Howe would endeavor to penetrate the Jerseys, in which case Fort Lee could be of no use to us; for it must occur to every thinking man, whether in the army or not, that these kind of field forts are only for temporary purposes, and last in use no longer than the enemy directs his force against the particular object which such forts are raised to defend. Such was our situation and condition at Fort Lee on the morning of the 20th of November, when an officer arrived with information that the enemy with 200 boats had landed about seven miles above; Major General [Nathaniel] Green, who commanded the garrison, immediately ordered them under arms, and sent express to General Washington at the town of Hackensack, distant by the way of the ferry = six miles. Our first object was to secure the bridge over the Hackensack, which laid up the river between the enemy and us, about six miles from us, and three from them. General Washington arrived in about three-quarters of an hour, and marched at the head of the troops towards the bridge, which place I expected we should have a brush for; however, they did not choose to dispute it with us, and the greatest part of our troops went over the bridge, the rest over the ferry, except some which passed at a mill on a small creek, between the bridge and the ferry, and made their way through some marshy grounds up to the town of Hackensack, and there passed the river. We brought off as much baggage as the wagons could contain, the rest was lost. The simple object was to bring off the garrison, and march them on till they could be strengthened by the Jersey or Pennsylvania militia, so as to be enabled to make a stand. We staid four days at Newark, collected our out-posts with some of the Jersey militia, and marched out twice to meet the enemy, on being informed that they were advancing, though our numbers were greatly inferior to theirs. Howe, in my little opinion, committed a great error in generalship in not throwing a body of forces off from Staten Island through Amboy, by which means he might have seized all our stores at Brunswick, and intercepted our march into Pennsylvania; but if we believe the power of hell to be limited, we must likewise believe that their agents are under some providential control.

I shall not now attempt to give all the particulars of our retreat to the Delaware; suffice it for the present to say, that both officers and men, though greatly harassed and fatigued, frequently without rest, covering, or provision, the inevitable consequences of a long retreat, bore it with a manly and martial spirit. All their wishes centred in one, which was, that the country would turn out and help them to drive the enemy back. Voltaire has remarked that King William never appeared to full advantage but in difficulties and in action; the same remark may be made on General Washington, for the character fits him. There is a natural firmness in some minds which cannot be unlocked by trifles, but which, when unlocked, discovers a cabinet of fortitude; and I reckon it among those kind of public blessings, which we do not immediately see, that God hath blessed him with uninterrupted health, and given him a mind that can even flourish upon care.

I shall conclude this paper with some miscellaneous remarks on the state of our affairs; and shall begin with asking the following question, Why is it that the enemy have left the New England provinces, and made these middle ones the seat of war? The answer is easy: New England is not infested with Tories, and we are. I have been tender in raising the cry against these men, and used numberless arguments to show them their danger, but it will not do to sacrifice a world either to their folly or their baseness. The period is now arrived, in which either they or we must change our sentiments, or one or both must fall. And what is a Tory? Good God! what is he? I should not be afraid to go with a hundred Whigs against a thousand Tories, were they to attempt to get into arms. Every Tory is a coward; for servile, slavish, self-interested fear is the foundation of Toryism; and a man under such influence, though he may be cruel, never can be brave.

But, before the line of irrecoverable separation be drawn between us, let us reason the matter together: Your conduct is an invitation to the enemy, yet not one in a thousand of you has heart enough to join him. Howe is as much deceived by you as the American cause is injured by you. He expects you will all take up arms, and flock to his standard, with muskets on your shoulders. Your opinions are of no use to him, unless you support him personally, for 'tis soldiers, and not Tories, that he wants.

I once felt all that kind of anger, which a man ought to feel, against the mean principles that are held by the Tories: a noted one, who kept a tavern at Amboy, was standing at his door, with as pretty a child in his hand, about eight or nine years old, as I ever saw, and after speaking his mind as freely as he thought was prudent, finished with this unfatherly expression, "Well! give me peace in my day." Not a man lives on the continent but fully believes that a separation must some time or other finally take place, and a generous parent should have said, "If there must be trouble, let it be in my day, that my child may have peace;" and this single reflection, well applied, is sufficient to awaken every man to duty. Not a place upon earth might be so happy as America. Her situation is remote from all the wrangling world, and she has nothing to do but to trade with them. A man can distinguish himself between temper and principle, and I am as confident, as I am that God governs the world, that America will never be happy till she gets clear of foreign dominion. Wars, without ceasing, will break out till that period arrives, and the continent must in the end be conqueror; for though the flame of liberty may sometimes cease to shine, the coal can never expire.

America did not, nor does not want force; but she wanted a proper application of that force. Wisdom is not the purchase of a day, and it is no wonder that we should err at the first setting off. From an excess of tenderness, we were unwilling to raise an army, and trusted our cause to the temporary defence of a well-meaning militia. A summer's experience has now taught us better; yet with those troops, while they were collected, we were able to set bounds to the progress of the enemy, and, thank God! they are again assembling. I always considered militia as the best troops in the world for a sudden exertion, but they will not do for a long campaign. Howe, it is probable, will make an attempt on this city [Philadelphia]; should he fail on this side the Delaware, he is ruined. If he succeeds, our cause is not ruined. He stakes all on his side against a part on ours; admitting he succeeds, the consequence will be, that armies from both ends of the continent will march to assist their suffering friends in the middle states; for he cannot go everywhere, it is impossible. I consider Howe as the greatest enemy the Tories have; he is bringing a war into their country, which, had it not been for him and partly for themselves, they had been clear of. Should he now be expelled, I wish with all the devotion of a Christian, that the names of Whig and Tory may never more be mentioned; but should the Tories give him encouragement to come, or assistance if he come, I as sincerely wish that our next year's arms may expel them from the continent, and the Congress appropriate their possessions to the relief of those who have suffered in well-doing. A single successful battle next year will settle the whole. America could carry on a two years' war by the confiscation of the property of disaffected persons, and be made happy by their expulsion. Say not that this is revenge, call it rather the soft resentment of a suffering people, who, having no object in view but the good of all, have staked their own all upon a seemingly doubtful event. Yet it is folly to argue against determined hardness; eloquence may strike the ear, and the language of sorrow draw forth the tear of compassion, but nothing can reach the heart that is steeled with prejudice.

Quitting this class of men, I turn with the warm ardor of a friend to those who have nobly stood, and are yet determined to stand the matter out: I call not upon a few, but upon all: not on this state or that state, but on every state: up and help us; lay your shoulders to the wheel; better have too much force than too little, when so great an object is at stake. Let it be told to the future world, that in the depth of winter, when nothing but hope and virtue could survive, that the city and the country, alarmed at one common danger, came forth to meet and to repulse it. Say not that thousands are gone, turn out your tens of thousands; throw not the burden of the day upon Providence, but "show your faith by your works," that God may bless you. It matters not where you live, or what rank of life you hold, the evil or the blessing will reach you all. The far and the near, the home counties and the back, the rich and the poor, will suffer or rejoice alike. The heart that feels not now is dead; the blood of his children will curse his cowardice, who shrinks back at a time when a little might have saved the whole, and made them happy. I love the man that can smile in trouble, that can gather strength from distress, and grow brave by reflection. 'Tis the business of little minds to shrink; but he whose heart is firm, and whose conscience approves his conduct, will pursue his principles unto death. My own line of reasoning is to myself as straight and clear as a ray of light. Not all the treasures of the world, so far as I believe, could have induced me to support an offensive war, for I think it murder; but if a thief breaks into my house, burns and destroys my property, and kills or threatens to kill me, or those that are in it, and to "bind me in all cases whatsoever" to his absolute will, am I to suffer it? What signifies it to me, whether he who does it is a king or a common man; my countryman or not my countryman; whether it be done by an individual villain, or an army of them? If we reason to the root of things we shall find no difference; neither can any just cause be assigned why we should punish in the one case and pardon in the other. Let them call me rebel and welcome, I feel no concern from it; but I should suffer the misery of devils, were I to make a whore of my soul by swearing allegiance to one whose character is that of a sottish, stupid, stubborn, worthless, brutish man. I conceive likewise a horrid idea in receiving mercy from a being, who at the last day shall be shrieking to the rocks and mountains to cover him, and fleeing with terror from the orphan, the widow, and the slain of America.

There are cases which cannot be overdone by language, and this is one. There are persons, too, who see not the full extent of the evil which threatens them; they solace themselves with hopes that the enemy, if he succeed, will be merciful. It is the madness of folly, to expect mercy from those who have refused to do justice; and even mercy, where conquest is the object, is only a trick of war; the cunning of the fox is as murderous as the violence of the wolf, and we ought to guard equally against both. Howe's first object is, partly by threats and partly by promises, to terrify or seduce the people to deliver up their arms and receive mercy. The ministry recommended the same plan to Gage, and this is what the tories call making their peace, "a peace which passeth all understanding" indeed! A peace which would be the immediate forerunner of a worse ruin than any we have yet thought of. Ye men of Pennsylvania, do reason upon these things! Were the back counties to give up their arms, they would fall an easy prey to the Indians, who are all armed: this perhaps is what some Tories would not be sorry for. Were the home counties to deliver up their arms, they would be exposed to the resentment of the back counties who would then have it in their power to chastise their defection at pleasure. And were any one state to give up its arms, that state must be garrisoned by all Howe's army of Britons and Hessians to preserve it from the anger of the rest. Mutual fear is the principal link in the chain of mutual love, and woe be to that state that breaks the compact. Howe is mercifully inviting you to barbarous destruction, and men must be either rogues or fools that will not see it. I dwell not upon the vapors of imagination; I bring reason to your ears, and, in language as plain as A, B, C, hold up truth to your eyes.

I thank God, that I fear not. I see no real cause for fear. I know our situation well, and can see the way out of it. While our army was collected, Howe dared not risk a battle; and it is no credit to him that he decamped from the White Plains, and waited a mean opportunity to ravage the defenceless Jerseys; but it is great credit to us, that, with a handful of men, we sustained an orderly retreat for near an hundred miles, brought off our ammunition, all our field pieces, the greatest part of our stores, and had four rivers to pass. None can say that our retreat was precipitate, for we were near three weeks in performing it, that the country might have time to come in. Twice we marched back to meet the enemy, and remained out till dark. The sign of fear was not seen in our camp, and had not some of the cowardly and disaffected inhabitants spread false alarms through the country, the Jerseys had never been ravaged. Once more we are again collected and collecting; our new army at both ends of the continent is recruiting fast, and we shall be able to open the next campaign with sixty thousand men, well armed and clothed. This is our situation, and who will may know it. By perseverance and fortitude we have the prospect of a glorious issue; by cowardice and submission, the sad choice of a variety of evils- a ravaged country- a depopulated city- habitations without safety, and slavery without hope- our homes turned into barracks and bawdy-houses for Hessians, and a future race to provide for, whose fathers we shall doubt of. Look on this picture and weep over it! and if there yet remains one thoughtless wretch who believes it not, let him suffer it unlamented.

COMMON SENSE.

December 23, 1776.

**His Excellency General Washington**

by [Phillis Wheatley](http://www.poets.org/poet.php/prmPID/431)

   Celestial choir! enthron'd in realms of light,

Columbia's scenes of glorious toils I write.

While freedom's cause her anxious breast alarms,

She flashes dreadful in refulgent arms.

See mother earth her offspring's fate bemoan,

And nations gaze at scenes before unknown!

See the bright beams of heaven's revolving light

Involved in sorrows and the veil of night!

   The Goddess comes, she moves divinely fair,

Olive and laurel binds Her golden hair:

Wherever shines this native of the skies,

Unnumber'd charms and recent graces rise.

   Muse! Bow propitious while my pen relates

How pour her armies through a thousand gates,

As when Eolus heaven's fair face deforms,

Enwrapp'd in tempest and a night of storms;

Astonish'd ocean feels the wild uproar,

The refluent surges beat the sounding shore;

Or think as leaves in Autumn's golden reign,

Such, and so many, moves the warrior's train.

In bright array they seek the work of war,

Where high unfurl'd the ensign waves in air.

Shall I to Washington their praise recite?

Enough thou know'st them in the fields of fight.

Thee, first in peace and honors—we demand

The grace and glory of thy martial band.

Fam'd for thy valour, for thy virtues more,

Hear every tongue thy guardian aid implore!

   One century scarce perform'd its destined round,

When Gallic powers Columbia's fury found;

And so may you, whoever dares disgrace

The land of freedom's heaven-defended race!

Fix'd are the eyes of nations on the scales,

For in their hopes Columbia's arm prevails.

Anon Britannia droops the pensive head,

While round increase the rising hills of dead.

Ah! Cruel blindness to Columbia's state!

Lament thy thirst of boundless power too late.

   Proceed, great chief, with virtue on thy side,

Thy ev'ry action let the Goddess guide.

A crown, a mansion, and a throne that shine,

With gold unfading, WASHINGTON! Be thine.

**"Letter to John Adams" Abigail Adams**, **March 31, 1776**

I wish you would ever write me a Letter half as long as I write you; and tell me if you may where your Fleet are gone? What sort of Defence Virginia can make against our common Enemy? Whether it is so situated as to make an able Defence? Are not the Gentery Lords and the common people vassals, are they not like the uncivilized Natives Brittain represents us to be? I hope their Riffel Men who have shewen themselves very savage and even Blood thirsty; are not a specimen of the Generality of the people.

I ~~[~~*~~illegible~~*~~]~~ am willing to allow the Colony great merrit for having produced a Washington but they have been shamefully duped by a Dunmore.

I have sometimes been ready to think that the passion for Liberty cannot be Eaquelly Strong in the Breasts of those who have been accustomed to deprive their fellow Creatures of theirs. Of this I am certain that it is not founded upon that generous and christian principal of doing to others as we would that others should do unto us.

Do not you want to see Boston; I am fearfull of the small pox, or I should have been in before this time. I got Mr. Crane to go to our House and see what state it was in. I find it has been occupied by one of the Doctors of a Regiment, very dirty, but no other damage has been done to it. The few things which were left in it are all gone. Cranch has the key which he never deliverd up. I have wrote to him for it and am determined to get it cleand as soon as possible and shut it up. I look upon it a new acquisition of property, a property which one month ago I did not value at a single Shilling, and could with pleasure have seen it in flames.

The Town in General is left in a better state than we expected, more oweing to a percipitate flight than any Regard to the inhabitants, tho some individuals discoverd a sense ofhonour and justice and have left the rent of the Houses in which they were, for the owners and the furniture unhurt, or if damaged sufficent to make it good.

Others have committed abominable Ravages. The Mansion House of your **President** is safe and the furniture unhurt whilst both  the House and Furniture of the **Solisiter General** have fallen a prey to their own merciless party. Surely the very Fiends feel a Reverential awe for Virtue and patriotism, whilst they Detest the paricide and traitor.

I feel very differently at the approach of spring to what I did a month ago. We knew not then whether we could plant or sow with safety, whether when we had toild we could reap the fruits of our own industery, whether we could rest in our own Cottages, or whether we should not be driven from the sea coasts to seek shelter in the wilderness, but now we feel as if we might sit under our own vine and eat the good of the land.

I feel a gaieti de Coar to which before I was a stranger. I think the Sun looks brighter, the Birds sing more melodiously, and Nature puts on a more chearfull countanance. We feel a temporary peace, and the poor fugitives are returning to their deserted habitations.

Tho we felicitate ourselves, we sympathize with those who are trembling least the Lot of Boston should be theirs. But they cannot be in similar circumstances unless pusillanimity and cowardise should take possession of them. They have time and warning given them to see the Evil and shun it. -- I long to hear that you have declared an independency -- and by the way in the new Code of Laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make I desire you would remember the Ladies, and be more generous and favourable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the Husbands. Remember all Men would be tyrants if they could. If perticuliar care and attention is not paid to the ladies we are determined to foment a Rebelion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any Laws in which we have no voice, or Representation.

That your Sex are Naturally Tyrannical is a Truth so thoroughly established as to admit of no dispute, but such of you as wish to be happy willingly give up the harsh title of Master for the more tender and endearing one of Friend. Why then, not put it out of the power of the vicious and the Lawless to use us with cruelty and indignity with impunity. Men of Sense in all Ages abhor those customs which treat us only as the vassals of your Sex. Regard us then as Beings placed by providence under your protection and in immitation of the Supreem Being make use of that power only for our happiness.

**From Benjamin Franklin’s *Autobiography***

It was about this time I conceived the bold and arduous project of arriving at moral perfection. I wished to live without committing any fault at any time; I would conquer all that either natural inclination, custom, or company might lead me into. As I knew, or thought I knew, what was right and wrong, I did not see why I might not always do the one and avoid the other. But I soon found I had undertaken a task of more difficulty than I had imagined. While my care was employed in guarding against one fault, I was often surprised by another; habit took the advantage of inattention; inclination was sometimes too strong for reason. I concluded, at length, that the mere speculative conviction that it was our interest to be completely virtuous was not sufficient to prevent our slipping, and that the contrary habits must be broken, and good ones acquired and established, before we can have any dependence on a steady, uniform rectitude of conduct. For this purpose I therefore contrived the following method.  
  
In the various enumerations of the moral virtues I met in my reading, I found the catalogue more or less numerous, as different writers included more or fewer ideas under the same name. Temperance, for example, was by some confined to eating and drinking, while by others it was extended to mean the moderating every other pleasure, appetite, inclination, or passion, bodily or mental, even to our avarice and ambition. I proposed to myself, for the sake of clearness, to use rather more names, with fewer ideas annexed to each, than a few names with more ideas; and I included under thirteen names of virtues all that at that time occurred to me as necessary or desirable, and annexed to each a short precept, which fully expressed the extent I gave to its meaning.  
  
These names of virtues, with their precepts were:

1. Temperance  
   Eat not to dullness; drink not to elevation.
2. Silence  
   Speak not but what may benefit others or yourself; avoid trifling conversation.
3. Order  
   Let all your things have their places; let each part of your business have its time.
4. Resolution  
   Resolve to perform what you ought; perform without fail what you resolve.
5. Frugality  
   Make no expense but to do good to others or yourself, i.e., waste nothing.
6. Industry  
   Lose no time; be always employed in something useful; cut off all unnecessary actions.
7. Sincerity.  
   Use no hurtful deceit; think innocently and justly, and, if you speak, speak accordingly.
8. Justice  
   Wrong none by doing injuries or omitting the benefits that are your duty.
9. Moderation  
   Avoid extremes; forbear resenting injuries so much as you think they deserve.
10. Cleanliness  
    Tolerate no uncleanliness in body, clothes, or habitation.
11. Tranquillity  
    Be not disturbed at trifles, or at accidents common or unavoidable.
12. Chastity  
    Rarely use venery but for health or offspring, never to dullness, weakness, or the injury of your own or another's peace or reputation.
13. Humility  
    Imitate Jesus and Socrates.

My intention being to acquire the *habitude* of all these virtues, I judged it would be well not to distract my attention by attempting the whole at once, but to fix it on one of them at a time, and, when I should be master of that, then to proceed to another, and so on, till I should have gone thro' the thirteen; and, as the previous acquisition of some might facilitate the acquisition of certain others, I arranged them with that view, as they stand above. Temperance first, as it tends to procure that coolness and clearness of head which is so necessary where constant vigilance was to be kept up, and guard maintained against the unremitting attraction of ancient habits and the force of perpetual temptations. This being acquired and established, Silence would be more easy; and my desire being to gain knowledge at the same time that I improved in virtue, and considering that in conversation it was obtained rather by the use of the ears than of the tongue, and therefore wishing to break a habit I was getting into prattling, punning, and joking, which only made me acceptable to trifling company, I gave *Silence* the second place. This and the next, *Order*, I expected would allow me more time for attending to my project and my studies. Resolution, once because habitual, would keep me firm in my endeavors to obtain all the subsequent virtues;*Frugality* and Industry, freeing me from my remaining debt, and producing affluence and independence, would make more easy the practice of Sincerity and Justice, etc., Conceiving, then, that, agreeably to the advice of Pythagoras in his Garden Verses, daily examination would be necessary, I contrived the following method for conducting that examination.  
  
I made a little book, in which I allotted a page for each of the virtues. I ruled each page with red ink, so as to have seven columns, one for each day of the week, marking each column with a letter for the day. I crossed these columns with thirteen red lines, marking the beginning of each line with the first letter of one of the virtues, on which line, and in its proper column, I might mark, by a little black spot, every fault I found upon examination to have been committed respecting that virtue upon that day.

*Form of the Pages*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **TEMPERANCE.** | | | | | | | |
| *Eat Not to Dulness; Drink not to Elevation.* | | | | | | | |
|  | S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
| T |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| S | \*\* | \* |  | \* |  | \* |  |
| O | \* | \* | \* |  | \* | \* | \* |
| R |  |  | \* |  |  | \* |  |
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| I |  |  | \* |  |  |  |  |
| S |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| J |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| Cl. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| T |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Ch |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| H |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

I determined to give a week's strict attention to each of the virtues successively. Thus, in the first week, my great guard was to avoid every the least offense against*Temperance*, leaving the other virtues to their ordinary chance, only marking every evening the faults of the day. Thus, if in the first week I could keep my first line, marked T, clear of spots, I supposed the habit of that virtue so much strengthened, and its opposite weakened, that I might venture extending my attention to include the next, and for the following week keep both lines clear of spots. Proceeding thus to the last, I could go thro' a course complete in thirteen weeks, and four courses in a years. And like him who, having a garden to weed, does not attempt to eradicate all the bad herbs at once, which would exceed his reach and his strength, but works on one of the beds at a time, and, having accomplished the first, proceeds to a second, so I should have, I hoped, the encouraging pleasure of seeing on my pages the progress I made in virtue, by clearing successively my lines of their spots, till in the end, by a number of courses, I should be happy in viewing a clean book, after a thirteen weeks' daily examination.  
  
This my little book had for its motto these lines from *Addison's "Cato":*

*Here will I hold. If there's a power above us (And that there is, all nature cries aloud Thro' all her works), He must delight in virtue; And that which He delights in must be happy.*

Another from Cicero:  
  
*O vitae Philosophia dux! O virtutum indagatrix expultrixque vitiorum! Unus dies, bene et ex praeceptis tuis actus, peccanti immortalitati est anteponendus.*  
  
Another from the Proverbs of Solomon, speaking of wisdom or virtue:  
  
Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace (iii. 16, 17).  
  
And conceiving God to be the fountain of wisdom, I thought it right and necessary to solicit His assistance for obtaining it; to this end I formed the following little prayer, which was prefixed to my tables of examination, for daily use:  
  
*O powerful Goodness! bountiful Father! merciful Guide! increase in me that wisdom which discovers my truest interest.Strengthen my resolutions to perform what that wisdom dictates. Accept my kind offices to Thy other children as the only return in my power for Thy continual favors to me.*I used also sometimes a little prayer which I took from *Thomson's* "Poems," viz.:

Father of light and life, thou Good Supreme!  
O teach me what is good; teach me Thyself!  
Save me from folly, vanity, and vice,  
From every low pursuit; and fill my soul  
With knowledge, conscious peace, and virtue pure;  
Sacred, substantial, never-fading bliss!  
The precept of Order requiring that *every part of my business should have its allotted time*, one page in my little book contained the following scheme of employment for the twenty-four hours of a natural day:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| The Morning Question, What good Shall I do this Day? | 5 | Rise, wash, and address *Powerful Goodness;* Contrive day's good shall I do this Business, and take the resolution of the day; prosecute the present Study: and breakfast?-- |
| 6 |
| 7 |
| 8 | Work |
| 9 |
| 10 |
| 11 |
| 12 | Read, or overlook my Accounts, and dine. |
| 1 |
| 2 | Work. |
| 3 |
| 4 |
| 5 |
| 6 | Put Things in their Places, Supper, Musick, or Diversion, or Conversation, Examination of the Day. |
| 7 |
| Evening Question, What Good have I done to day? | 8 |
| 9 |
| 10 | Sleep. -- |
| 11 |
| 12 |
| 1 |
| 2 |
| 3 |
| 4 |

I entered upon the execution of this plan for self-examination, and continued it, with occasional intermissions, for some time. I was surprised to find myself so much fuller of faults than I had imagined; but I had the satisfaction of seeing them diminish. To avoid the trouble of renewing now and then my little book, which, by scraping out the marks on the paper of old faults to make room for new ones in a new course, became full of holes, I transferred my tables and precepts to the ivory leaves of a memorandum book, on which the lines were drawn with red ink, that made a durable strain, and on those lines I marked my faults with a black leading pencil, which marks I could easily wipe out with a wet sponge. After a while I went thro' one course only in a year, and afterward only one in several years, till at length I omitted them entirely, being employed in voyages and business abroad, with a multiplicity of affairs that interfered; but I always carried my little book with me.  
  
My scheme of Order gave me the most trouble; and I found that, tho' it might be practicable where a man's business was such as to leave him the disposition of his time, that of a journeyman printer, for instance, it was not possible to be exactly observed by a master, who must mix with the world, and often receive people of business at their own hours. Order, too, with regard to places for things, papers, etc., I found extremely difficult to acquire. I had not been early accustomed to it, and, having an exceeding good memory, I was not so sensible of the inconvenience attending want of method. This article, therefore, cost me so much painful attention, and my faults in it vexed me so much, and I made so little progress in amendment, and had such frequent relapses, that I was almost ready to give up the attempt, and content myself with a faulty character in that respect, like the man who, in buying an ax of a smith, my neighbor, desired to have the whole of its surface as bright as the edge. The smith consented to grind it bright for him if he would turn the wheel; he turned, while the smith pressed the broad face of the ax hard and heavily on the stone, which made the turning of it very fatiguing. The man came every now and then from the wheel to see how the work went on, and at length would take his ax as it was, without farther grinding. " No," said the smith; " turn on, turn on; we shall have it bright by and by; as yet, it is only speckled." "Yes," says the man, "*but I think I like a apeckled ax best."*And I believe this may have been the case with many, who, having, for want of some such means as I employed, found the difficulty of obtaining good and breaking bad habits in other points of vice and virtue, have given up the struggle, and concluded that " *a speckled ax was best*" for something, that pretended to be reason, was every now and then suggesting to me that such extreme nicety as I exacted of myself might be a kind of foppery in morals, which, if it were known, would make me ridiculous; that a perfect character might be attended with the inconvenience of being envied and hated; and that a benevolent man should allow a few faults in himself, to keep his friends in countenance.  
  
In truth, I myself incorrigible with respect to Order; and now I am grown old, and my memory bad, I feel very sensibly the want of it. But, on the whole, tho' I never arrived at the perfection I had been so amblitious of obtaining, but fell far short of it, yet I was, by the endeavor, a better and a happier man than I otherwise should have been if I had not attempted it; as those who aim at perfect writing by imitating the engraved copies, tho' they never reach the wished-for excellence of those copies, their hand is mended by the endeavor, and tolerable, while it continues fair and legible.  
  
It may be well my posterity should be informed that to this little artifice, with the blessing of God, their ancestor owned the constant felicity of his life down to his seventyninth year, in which this is written. What reverses may attend the remainder is in the hand of Providence; but, if they arrive, the reflection on past happiness enjoyed ought to help his bearing them with more resignation. To Temperance he ascribe his long-continued health and what is still left to him of a good constitution; to Industry and Frugality, the early easiness of his circumstances and acquisition of his fortune, with all that knowledge that enabled him to be a useful citizen, and obtained for him some degree of reputation among the learned; to Sincerity and Justice, the confidence of his country, and the honorable employs it conferred upon him; and to the joint influence of the whole mass of the virtues, even in the imperfect state he was able to acquire them, all that evenness of temper, and that cheerfulness in conversation, which makes his company still sought for, and agreeable even to his younger acquaintance. I hope, therefore, that some of my descendants may follow the example and reap the benefit.  
  
It will be remarked that, tho' my scheme was not wholly without religion, there was in it no mark of the distinguishing tenets of any particular sect. I had purposely avoided them; for, being fully persuaded of the utility and excellency of my method, and that it might be serviceable to people in all religions, and intending some time or other to publish it, I would not have anything in it that should prejudice any one,of any sect, against it. I purposed writing a little comment on each virtue, in which I would have shown the advantages of possessing it, and the mischiefs attending its opposite vice; and I should have called my book "The Art of Virtue," 1 because it would have shown the means and manner of obtaining virtue, which would have distinguished it from the mere exhortation to be good, that does not instruct and indicate the means, but is like the apostle's man of verbal charity, who only, without showing to the naked and hungry how or where they might get clothes or victuals, exhorted themto be fed and clothed (James ii. 15,16).

But it so happened that my intention of writing and publishing this comment was never fulfilled. I did, indeed, from time to time, put down short hints of the sentiments, reasonings, etc., to be made use of in it, some of which I have still by me: But the necessary close Attention to private Business in the earlier part of Life, and public Business since, have occasioned my postponing it. For it being connected in my Mind with a *great and extensive Project* that require the whole man to execute, and which an unforeseen Secession of Employs prevented my attending to, it has hitherto remain'd unfinish'd.  
  
In this piece it was my design to explain and enforce this doctrine, that vicious actions are not hurtful because they are forbidden, but forbidden because they are hurtful, the nature of man alone considered; that it was, therefore, every one's interest to be virtuous who wished to be happy even in this world; and I should, from this circumstance (there being always in the world a number of rich merchants, nobility, states, and princes, who have need of honest instruments for the management of their affairs, and such being so rare), have endeavored to convince young persons that no qualities were so likely to make a poor man's fortune as those of probity and integrity.  
  
My list of virtues continued at first but twelve; but a Quaker friend having kindly informed me that I was generally thought proud, that my pride showed itself frequently in conversation, that I was not content with being in the right when discussing any point, but was overbearing and rather insolent, of which he convinced me by mentioning several instances, I determined endeavoring to cure myself, if I could, of this vice or folly among the rest, and I added *Humility* to my list, giving an extensive meaning to the word.  
  
I cannot boast of much success in acquiring the *reality* of this virtue, but I had a good deal with regard to the *appearance* of it. I made it a rule to forbear all direct contradiction to the sentiments of others, and all positive assertion of my own. I even forbid myself, agreeably to the old laws of our Junto, the use of every word or expression in the language that imported a fixed opinion, such as *certainly*,*undoubtedly*, etc., and I adopted, instead of them, I *conceive*, I *apprehend*, or I *imagine*a thing to be so or so, or it so *appears* to me at *present.* When another asserted something that I thought an error, I denied myself the pleasure of contradicting him abruptly and of showing immediately some absurdity in his proposition; and in answering, I began by observing that in certain cases or circumstances his opinion would be right, but in the present case there *appeared* or *seemed* to me some difference, etc. I soon found the advantage of this charge in my manner; the conversations I engaged in went on more pleasantly.  
  
The modest way in which I proposed my opinions procured them a readier reception and less contradiction; I had less mortification when I was found to be in the wrong, and I more easily prevailed with other to give up their mistakes and join with me when I happened to be in the right.  
  
And this mode, which I at first put on with some violence to natural inclination, became at length so easy, and so habitual to me, that perhaps for these fifty years past no one has ever heard a dogmatical expression escape me. And to this habit (after my character of integrity) I think it principally owing that I had early so much weight with my fellow-citizens when I proposed new institutions, or alterations in the old, and so much influence in public councils when I became a member; for I was but a bad speaker, never eloquent, subject to much hesitation in my choice of words, hardly correct in language, and yet I generally carried my points.  
  
In reality, there is, perhaps, no one of our natural passions so hard to subdue as *pride.*Disguise it, struggle with it, beat it down, stifle it, mortify it as much as one pleases, it is still alive, and will every now and then peep out and show itself; you will see it, perhaps, often in this history; for, even if I could conceive that I had completely overcome it, I should probably be proud of my humility.  
  
[Thus far written at Passy, 1784]

Aphorisms from Benjamin Franklin’s Poor Richard’s Almanack.

*There are no gains without pains.*

*At the working man’s house hunger looks in but dares not enter.*

*Industry pays debts while despair increases them.*

*Diligence is the mother of good luck.*

*God gives all things to industry.*

*Plough deep while sluggards sleep and you shall have corn to sell and to keep.*

*Work while it is called today for you know not how much you may be hindered tomorrow.*

*One today is worth two tomorrows.*

*Have you something to do tomorrow? Do it today.*

*If you were a servant would you not be ashamed that a good master should catch you idle? Then if you are your own master be ashamed to catch yourself idle.*

*Trouble springs from idleness and grievous toil from needless ease.*

*Industry gives comfort and plenty and respect.*

*Keep thy shop and thy shop will keep thee.*

*If you would have your business done, go; if not, send.*

*Want of care does us more damage than want of knowledge.*

*Not to oversee workmen is to leave them your purse open.*

*If you would have a faithful servant and one that you like — serve yourself.*

*If you would be wealthy think of saving as well as getting: The Indies have not made Spain rich because her outgoes are greater than her incomes.*

*Women and wine, game and deceit make the wealth small and the wants great.*

*Many estates are spent in the getting, Since women for tea forsook spinning and knitting, And men for punch forsook hewing and splitting.*

*What maintains one vice would bring up two children.*

*Fools make feasts and wise men eat them.*

*Who dainties love shall beggars prove.*

*You may think, perhaps, that a little tea, or a little punch now and then, diet a little more costly, clothes a little finer, and a little more entertainment now and then can be no great matter but remember what Poor Richard says “Many a little makes a mickle; beware of little expense for a small leak will sink a great ship.”*

*Buy what thou has no need of and ere long thou shall sell thy necessaries.*

*Silks and satins, scarlet and velvets have put out the kitchen fire.*

*A child and a fool imagine twenty shillings and twenty years can never be spent.*

*To be humble to superiors is duty, to equals courtesy, to inferiors nobleness.*

*After crosses and losses Men grow humbler and wiser.*

*The proud hate pride — in others.*

*Pride dines on Vanity, sups on Contempt.*

*Pride breakfasted with Plenty Dined with poverty Supped with Infamy.*

*Blame-all and Praise-all are two blockheads.*

*Experience keeps a dear school, but fools will learn in no other, and scarce in that.*

*It is ill-manners to silence a fool and cruelty to let him go on.*

*The wise man draws more advantage from his enemies than the fool from his friends.*

*A learned blockhead is a greater blockhead than an ignorant one.*

*The learned fool writes his nonsense in better languages than the unlearned; but still it is nonsense.*

*When befriended, remember it; When you befriend, forget it.*

*He that lives upon hope will die fasting.*

*He that has a trade has an estate.*

*The noblest question in the world is What good may I do in it?*

*Sell not virtue to purchase wealth nor liberty to purchase power.*

*Nothing brings more pain than too much pleasure; nothing more bondage than too much liberty.*

*Wink at small faults; remember thou hast great ones.*

*Each year one vicious habit rooted out, In time might make the worst man good throughout.*

*Hear no ill of a friend, nor speak any of an enemy.*

*Many a man thinks he is buying pleasure when he is really selling himself a slave to it.*

*Having been poor is no shame; but being ashamed of it is.*

*‘Tis hard but glorious to be poor and honest.*

*Meanness is the parent of insolence.*

*The busy man has few idle visitors; to the boiling pot the flies come not.*

*If you would reap praise you must sow the seeds, Gentle words and useful deeds.*

*Anger is never without a reason but seldom with a good one.*

*Virtue and a trade are a child’s best portion.*

*Love your neighbor Yet don’t pull down your hedge.*

*He that does what he should not shall feel what he would not.*

*The honest man takes pains and then enjoys pleasures; The knave takes pleasures and then suffers pains.*

*What you would seem to be, be really.*

*Necessity never made a good bargain.*

*The heart of a fool is in his mouth, but the mouth of a wise man is in his heart.*

*Tricks and treachery are the practice of fools that have not wit enough to be honest.*

*Drink does not drown care, but waters it, and makes it grow fast.*

*Three good meals a day is bad living.*

*Here comes the orator! With his flood of words and his drop of reason.*

*He that speaks much is much mistaken.*

*Proclaim not all thou knoweth, all thou owest, all thou hast, nor all thou canst.*

*Words may shew a man’s wit but actions his meaning.*

*A great talker may be no fool but he is one that relies on him.*

*He that lies down with dogs shall rise up with fleas.*

*All things are easy to industry, All things are difficult to sloth.*

*Take this remark from Richard poor and lame, Whatever is begun in anger ends in shame.*

*Be slow in choosing a friend, slower in changing.*

*The sun never repents of the good he does, nor does he ever demand recompense.*

*If what most men admire they would despise, It would look as if mankind were growing wise.*

*He that would live in peace and ease Must not speak all he knows nor judge all he sees.*

*Think of three things: Whence you came, Where you are going, And to whom you must account.*

*Being ignorant is not so much a shame as being unwilling to learn.*

*Be civil to all, serviceable to many, familiar with few, friend to one, enemy to none.*

*Love your enemies, for they tell you your faults.*

*Be always ashamed to catch thyself idle.*

*Fear to do evil and you need fear nothing else.*

*Good sense and learning may esteem obtain, Humor and wit a laugh, if rightly taken; Fair virtue admiration may impart; But tis good-nature only wins the heart.*

# Rappaccini’s Daughter



## Nathaniel Hawthorne

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |
| 1844 |  |
| A young man, named Giovanni Guasconti, came, very long ago, from the more southern region of Italy, to pursue his studies at the University of Padua. Giovanni, who had but a scanty supply of gold ducats in his pocket, took lodgings in a high and gloomy chamber of an old edifice which looked not unworthy to have been the palace of a Paduan noble, and which, in fact, exhibited over its entrance the armorial bearings of a family long since extinct. The young stranger, who was not unstudied in the great poem of his country, recollected that one of the ancestors of this family, and perhaps an occupant of this very mansion, had been pictured by Dante as a partaker of the immortal agonies of his Inferno. These reminiscences and associations, together with the tendency to heartbreak natural to a young man for the first time out of his native sphere, caused Giovanni to sigh heavily as he looked around the desolate and ill-furnished apartment. | *1* |
| “Holy Virgin, signor!” cried old Dame Lisabetta, who, won by the youth’s remarkable beauty of person, was kindly endeavoring to give the chamber a habitable air, “what a sigh was that to come out of a young man’s heart! Do you find this old mansion gloomy? For the love of Heaven, then, put your head out of the window, and you will see as bright sunshine as you have left in Naples.” | *2* |
| Guasconti mechanically did as the old woman advised, but could not quite agree with her that the Paduan sunshine was as cheerful as that of southern Italy. Such as it was, however, it fell upon a garden beneath the window and expended its fostering influences on a variety of plants, which seemed to have been cultivated with exceeding care. |  |
| “Does this garden belong to the house?” asked Giovanni. | *6* |
| “Heaven forbid, signor, unless it were fruitful of better pot herbs than any that grow there now,” answered old Lisabetta. “No; that garden is cultivated by the own hands of Signor Giacomo Rappaccini, the famous doctor, who, I warrant him, has been heard of as far as Naples. It is said that he distils these plants into medicines that are as potent as a charm. Oftentimes you may see the signor doctor at work, and perchance the signora, his daughter, too, gathering the strange flowers that grow in the garden.” | *7* |
| The old woman had now done what she could for the aspect of the chamber; and, commending the young man to the protection of the saints, took her departure. | *8* |
| Giovanni still found no better occupation than to look down into the garden beneath his window. From its appearance, he judged it to be one of those botanic gardens which were of earlier date in Padua than elsewhere in Italy or in the world. Or, not improbably, it might once have been the pleasure-place of an opulent family; for there was the ruin of a marble fountain in the centre, sculptured with rare art, but so 4arveled shattered that it was impossible to trace the original design from the chaos of remaining fragments. The water, however, continued to gush and sparkle into the sunbeams as cheerfully as ever. A little gurgling sound ascended to the young man’s window, and made him feel as if the fountain were an immortal spirit that sung its song unceasingly and without heeding the vicissitudes around it, while one century imbodied it in marble and another scattered the perishable garniture on the soil. All about the pool into which the water subsided grew various plants, that seemed to require a plentiful supply of moisture for the nourishment of gigantic leaves, and, in some instances, flowers gorgeously magnificent. There was one shrub in particular, set in a marble vase in the midst of the pool, that bore a profusion of purple blossoms, each of which had the 4arvel and richness of a gem; and the whole together made a show so resplendent that it seemed enough to illuminate the garden, even had there been no sunshine. Every portion of the soil was peopled with plants and herbs, which, if less beautiful, still bore tokens of assiduous care, as if all had their individual virtues, known to the scientific mind that fostered them. Some were placed in urns, rich with old carving, and others in common garden pots; some crept serpent-like along the ground or climbed on high, using whatever means of ascent was offered them. One plant had wreathed itself round a statue of Vertumnus, which was thus quite veiled and shrouded in a drapery of hanging foliage, so happily arranged that it might have served a sculptor for a study. | *9* |
| While Giovanni stood at the window he heard a rustling behind a screen of leaves, and became aware that a person was at work in the garden. His figure soon emerged into view, and showed itself to be that of no common laborer, but a tall, emaciated, sallow, and sickly-looking man, dressed in a scholar’s garb of black. He was beyond the middle term of life, with gray hair, a thin, gray beard, and a face singularly marked with intellect and cultivation, but which could never, even in his more youthful days, have expressed much warmth of heart. | *10* |
| Nothing could exceed the intentness with which this scientific gardener examined every shrub which grew in his path: it seemed as if he was looking into their inmost nature, making observations in regard to their creative essence, and discovering why one leaf grew in this shape and another in that, and wherefore such and such flowers differed among themselves in hue and perfume. Nevertheless, in spite of this deep intelligence on his part, there was no approach to intimacy between himself and these vegetable existences. On the contrary, he avoided their actual touch or the direct inhaling of their odors with a caution that impressed Giovanni most disagreeably; for the man’s demeanor was that of one walking among malignant influences, such as savage beasts, or deadly snakes, or evil spirits, which, should he allow them one moment of license, would wreak upon him some terrible fatality. It was strangely frightful to the young man’s imagination to see this air of insecurity in a person cultivating a garden, that most simple and innocent of human toils, and which had been alike the joy and labor of the unfallen parents of the race. Was this garden, then, the Eden of the present world? And this man, with such a perception of harm in what his own hands caused to grow,—was he the Adam? | *11* |
| The distrustful gardener, while plucking away the dead leaves or pruning the too luxuriant growth of the shrubs, defended his hands with a pair of thick gloves. Nor were these his only armor. When, in his walk through the garden, he came to the magnificent plant that hung its purple gems beside the marble fountain, he placed a kind of mask over his mouth and nostrils, as if all this beauty did but conceal a deadlier malice; but, finding his task still too dangerous, he drew back, removed the mask, and called loudly, but in the infirm voice of a person affected with inward disease,— | *12* |
| “Beatrice! Beatrice!” | *13* |
| “Here am I, my father. What would you?” cried a rich and youthful voice from the window of the opposite house—a voice as rich as a tropical sunset, and which made Giovanni, though he knew not why, think of deep hues of purple or crimson and of perfumes heavily delectable. “Are you in the garden?” | *14* |
| “Yes, Beatrice,” answered the gardener, “and I need your help.” | *15* |
| Soon there emerged from under a sculptured portal the figure of a young girl, arrayed with as much richness of taste as the most splendid of the flowers, beautiful as the day, and with a bloom so deep and vivid that one shade more would have been too much. She looked redundant with life, health, and energy; all of which attributes were bound down and compressed, as it were, and girdled tensely, in their luxuriance, by her virgin zone. Yet Giovanni’s fancy must have grown morbid while he looked down into the garden; for the impression which the fair stranger made upon him was as if here were another flower, the human sister of those vegetable ones, as beautiful as they, more beautiful than the richest of them, but still to be touched only with a glove, nor to be approached without a mask. As Beatrice came down the garden path, it was observable that she handled and inhaled the odor of several of the plants which her father had most sedulously avoided. | *16* |
| “Here, Beatrice,” said the latter, “see how many needful offices require to be done to our chief treasure. Yet, shattered as I am, my life might pay the penalty of approaching it so closely as circumstances demand. Henceforth, I fear, this plant must be consigned to your sole charge.” | *17* |
| “And gladly will I undertake it,” cried again the rich tones of the young lady, as she bent towards the magnificent plant and opened her arms as if to embrace it. “Yes, my sister, my splendor, it shall be Beatrice’s task to nurse and serve thee; and thou shalt reward her with thy kisses and perfumed breath, which to her is as the breath of life.” | *18* |
| Then, with all the tenderness in her manner that was so strikingly expressed in her words, she busied herself with such attentions as the plant seemed to require; and Giovanni, at his lofty window, rubbed his eyes and almost doubted whether it were a girl tending her favorite flower, or one sister performing the duties of affection to another. The scene soon terminated. Whether Dr. Rappaccini had finished his labors in the garden, or that his watchful eye had caught the stranger’s face, he now took his daughter’s arm and retired. Night was already closing in; oppressive exhalations seemed to proceed from the plants and steal upward past the open window; and Giovanni, closing the lattice, went to his couch and dreamed of a rich flower and beautiful girl. Flower and maiden were different, and yet the same, and fraught with some strange peril in either shape. | *19* |
| But there is an influence in the light of morning that tends to rectify whatever errors of fancy, or even of judgment, we may have incurred during the sun’s decline, or among the shadows of the night, or in the less wholesome glow of moonshine. Giovanni’s first movement, on starting from sleep, was to throw open the window and gaze down into the garden which his dreams had made so fertile of mysteries. He was surprised and a little ashamed to find how real and matter-of-fact an affair it proved to be, in the first rays of the sun which gilded the dew-drops that hung upon leaf and blossom, and, while giving a brighter beauty to each rare flower, brought everything within the limits of ordinary experience. The young man rejoiced that, in the heart of the barren city, he had the privilege of over-looking this spot of lovely and luxuriant vegetation. It would serve, he said to himself, as a symbolic language to keep him in communion with Nature. Neither the sickly and thoughtworn Dr. Giacomo Rappaccini, it is true, nor his brilliant daughter, were now visible; so that Giovanni could not determine how much of the singularity which he attributed to both was due to their own qualities and how much to his wonder-working fancy; but he was inclined to take a most rational view of the whole matter. | *20* |
| In the course of the day he paid his respects to Signor Pietro Baglioni, professor of medicine in the university, a physician of eminent repute, to whom Giovanni had brought a letter of introduction. The professor was an elderly personage, apparently of genial nature, and habits that might almost be called jovial. He kept the young man to dinner, and made himself very agreeable by the freedom and liveliness of his conversation, especially when warmed by a flask or two of Tuscan wine. Giovanni, conceiving that men of science, inhabitants of the same city, must needs be on familiar terms with one another, took an opportunity to mention the name of Dr. Rappaccini. But the professor did not respond with so much cordiality as he had anticipated. | *21* |
| “Ill would it become a teacher of the divine art of medicine,” said Professor Pietro Baglioni, in answer to a question of Giovanni, “to withhold due and well-considered praise of a physician so eminently skilled as Rappaccini; but, on the other hand, I should answer it but scantily to my conscience were I to permit a worthy youth like yourself, Signor Giovanni, the son of an ancient friend, to imbibe erroneous ideas respecting a man who might hereafter chance to hold your life and death in his hands. The truth is, our worshipful Dr. Rappaccini has as much science as any member of the faculty—with perhaps one single exception—in Padua, or all Italy; but there are certain grave objections to his professional character.” | *22* |
| “And what are they?” asked the young man. | *23* |
| “Has my friend Giovanni any disease of body or heart, that he is so inquisitive about physicians?” said the professor, with a smile. “But as for Rappaccini, it is said of him—and I, who know the man well, can answer for its truth—that he cares infinitely more for science than for mankind. His patients are interesting to him only as subjects for some new experiment. He would sacrifice human life, his own among the rest, or whatever else was dearest to him, for the sake of adding so much as a grain of mustard seed to the great heap of his accumulated knowledge.” | *24* |
| “Methinks he is an awful man indeed,” remarked Guasconti, mentally recalling the cold and purely intellectual aspect of Rappaccini. “And yet, worshipful professor, is it not a noble spirit? Are there many men capable of so spiritual a love of science?” | *25* |
| “God forbid,” answered the professor, somewhat testily; “at least, unless they take sounder views of the healing art than those adopted by Rappaccini. It is his theory that all medicinal virtues are comprised within those substances which we term vegetable poisons. These he cultivates with his own hands, and is said even to have produced new varieties of poison, more horribly deleterious that Nature, without the assistance of this learned person, would ever have plagued the world withal. That the signor doctor does less mischief than might be expected with such dangerous substances is undeniable. Now and then, it must be owned, he has effected, or seemed to effect, a 4arveled4 cure; but, to tell you my private mind, Signor Giovanni, he should receive little credit for such instances of success,—they being probably the work of chance,—but should be held strictly accountable for his failures, which may justly be considered his own work.” | *26* |
| The youth might have taken Baglioni’s opinions with many grains of allowance had he known that there was a professional warfare of long continuance between him and Dr. Rappaccini, in which the latter was generally thought to have gained the advantage. If the reader be inclined to judge for himself, we refer him to certain black-letter tracts on both sides, preserved in the medical department of the University of Padua. | *27* |
| “I know not, most learned professor,” returned Giovanni, after musing on what had been said of Rappaccini’s exclusive zeal for science,—“I know not how dearly this physician may love his art; but surely there is one object more dear to him. He has a daughter.” | *28* |
| “Aha!” cried the professor, with a laugh. “So now our friend Giovanni’s secret is out. You have heard of this daughter, whom all the young men in Padua are wild about, though not half a dozen have ever had the good hap to see her face. I know little of the Signora Beatrice save that Rappaccini is said to have instructed her deeply in his science, and that, young and beautiful as fame reports her, she is already qualified to fill a professor’s chair. Perchance her father destines her for mine! Other absurd rumors there be, not worth talking about or listening to. So now, Signor Giovanni, drink off your glass of 4arveled4.” | *29* |
| Guasconti returned to his lodgings somewhat heated with the wine he had quaffed, and which caused his brain to swim with strange fantasies in reference to Dr. Rappaccini and the beautiful Beatrice. On his way happening to pass by a florist’s, he bought a fresh bouquet of flowers. | *30* |
| Ascending to his chamber, he seated himself near the window, but within the shadow thrown by the depth of the wall, so that he could look down into the garden with little risk of being discovered. All beneath his eye was a solitude. The strange plants were basking in the sunshine, and now and then nodding gently to one another, as if in acknowledgement of sympathy and kindred. In the midst, by the shattered fountain, grew the magnificent shrub, with its purple gems clustering all over it; they glowed in the air, and gleamed back again out of the depths of the pool, which thus seemed to overflow with colored radiance from the rich reflection that was steeped in it. At first, as we have said, the garden was a solitude. Soon, however,—as Giovanni had half hoped, half feared, would be the case,—a figure appeared beneath the antique sculptured portal, and came down between the rows of plants, inhaling their various perfumes as if she were one of those beings of old classic fable that lived upon sweet odors. On again beholding Beatrice, the young man was even startled to perceive how much her beauty exceeded his recollection of it; so brilliant, so vivid, was its character, that she glowed amid the sunlight, and, as Giovanni whispered to himself, positively illuminated the more shadowy intervals of the garden path. Her face being now more revealed than on the former occasion, he was struck by its expression of simplicity and sweetness,—qualities that had not entered into his idea of her character, and which made him ask anew what manner of mortal she might be. Nor did he fail again to observe, or imagine, an analogy between the beautiful girl and the gorgeous shrub that hung its gemlike flowers over the fountain,—a resemblance which Beatrice seemed to have indulged a fantastic humor in heightening, both by the arrangement of her dress and the selection of its hues. | *31* |
| Approaching the shrub, she threw open her arms, as with a passionate ardor, and drew its branches into an intimate embrace—so intimate that her features were hidden in its leafy bosom and her glistening ringlets all intermingled with the flowers. | *32* |
| “Give me thy breath, my sister,” exclaimed Beatrice; “for I am faint with common air. And give me this flower of thine, which I separate with gentlest fingers from the stem and place it close beside my heart.” | *33* |
| With these words the beautiful daughter of Rappaccini plucked one of the richest blossoms of the shrub, and was about to fasten it in her bosom. But now, unless Giovanni’s draughts of wine had bewildered his senses, a singular incident occurred. A small orange-colored reptile, of the lizard or chameleon species, chanced to be creeping along the path, just at the feet of Beatrice. It appeared to Giovanni,—but, at the distance from which he gazed, he could scarcely have seen anything so minute,—it appeared to him, however, that a drop or two of moisture from the broken stem of the flower descended upon the lizard’s head. For an instant the reptile contorted itself violently, and then lay motionless in the sunshine. Beatrice observed this remarkable phenomenon, and crossed herself, sadly, but without surprise; nor did she therefore hesitate to arrange the fatal flower in her bosom. There it blushed, and almost glimmered with the dazzling effect of a precious stone, adding to her dress and aspect the one appropriate charm which nothing else in the world could have supplied. But Giovanni, out of the shadow of his window, bent forward and shrank back, and murmured and trembled. | *34* |
| “Am I awake? Have I my senses?” said he to himself. “What is this being? Beautiful shall I call her, or inexpressibly terrible?” | *35* |
| Beatrice now strayed carelessly through the garden, approaching closer beneath Giovanni’s window, so that he was compelled to thrust his head quite out of its concealment in order to gratify the intense and painful curiosity which she excited. At this moment there came a beautiful insect over the garden wall, it had, perhaps, wandered through the city, and found no flowers or verdure among those antique haunts of men until the heavy perfumes of Dr. Rappaccini’s shrubs had lured it from afar. Without alighting on the flowers, this winged brightness seemed to be attracted by Beatrice, and lingered in the air and fluttered about her head. Now, here it could not be but that Giovanni Guasconti’s eyes deceived him. Be that as it might, he fancied that, while Beatrice was gazing at the insect with childish delight, it grew faint and fell at her feet; its bright wings shivered; it was dead—from no cause that he could discern, unless it were the atmosphere of her breath. Again Beatrice crossed herself and sighed heavily as she bent over the dead insect. | *36* |
| An impulsive movement of Giovanni drew her eyes to the window. There she beheld the beautiful head of the young man—rather a Grecian than an Italian head, with fair, regular features, and a glistening of gold among his ringlets—gazing down upon her like a being that hovered in mid air. | *37* |
| Scarcely knowing what he did, Giovanni threw down the bouquet which he had hitherto held in his hand. | *38* |
| “Signora,” said he, “there are pure and healthful flowers Wear them for the sake of Giovanni Guasconti.” | *39* |
| “Thanks, signor,” replied Beatrice, with her rich voice, that came forth as it were like a gush of music, and with a mirthful expression half childish and half woman-like. “I accept your gift, and would fain recompense it with this precious purple flower; but if I toss it into the air it will not reach you. So Signor Guasconti must even content himself with my thanks.” | *40* |
| She lifted the bouquet from the ground, and then, as if inwardly ashamed at having stepped aside from her maidenly reserve to respond to a stranger’s greeting, passed swiftly homeward through the garden. But few as the moments were, it seemed to Giovanni, when she was on the point of vanishing beneath the sculptured portal, that his beautiful bouquet was already beginning to wither in her grasp. It was an idle thought; there could be no possibility of distinguishing a faded flower from a fresh one at so great a distance. | *41* |
| For many days after this incident the young man avoided the window that looked into Dr. Rappaccini’s garden, as if something ugly and monstrous would have blasted his eyesight had be been betrayed into a glance. He felt conscious of having put himself, to a certain extent, within the influence of an unintelligible power by the communication which he had opened with Beatrice. The wisest course would have been, if his heart were in any real danger, to quit his lodgings and Padua itself at once; the next wiser, to have accustomed himself, as far as possible, to the familiar and daylight view of Beatrice—thus bringing her rigidly and systematically within the limits of ordinary experience. Least of all, while avoiding her sight, ought Giovanni to have remained so near this extraordinary being that the proximity and possibility even of intercourse should give a kind of substance and reality to the wild vagaries which his imagination ran riot continually in producing. Guasconti had not a deep heart—or, at all events, its depths were not sounded now; but he had a quick fancy, and an ardent southern temperament, which rose every instant to a higher fever pitch. Whether or no Beatrice possessed those terrible attributes, that fatal breath, the affinity with those so beautiful and deadly flowers which were indicated by what Giovanni had witnessed, she had at least instilled a fierce and subtle poison into his system. It was not love, although her rich beauty was a madness to him; nor horror, even while he fancied her spirit to be imbued with the same baneful essence that seemed to pervade her physical frame; but a wild offspring of both love and horror that had each parent in it, and burned like one and shivered like the other. Giovanni knew not what to dread; still less did he know what to hope; yet hope and dread kept a continual warfare in his breast, alternately vanquishing one another and starting up afresh to renew the contest. Blessed are all simple emotions, be they dark or bright! It is the lurid intermixture of the two that produces the illuminating blaze of the infernal regions. | *42* |
| Sometimes he endeavored to assuage the fever of his spirit by a rapid walk through the streets of Padua or beyond its gates: his footsteps kept time with the 4arveled4 of his brain, so that the walk was apt to accelerate itself to a race. One day he found himself arrested; his arm was seized by a portly personage, who had turned back on recognizing the young man and expended much breath in overtaking him. | *43* |
| “Signor Giovanni! Stay, my young friend!” cried he, “Have you forgotten me? That might well be the case if I were as much altered as yourself.” | *44* |
| It was Baglioni, whom Giovanni had avoided ever since their first meeting, from a doubt that the professor’s sagacity would look too deeply into his secrets. Endeavoring to recover himself, he stared forth wildly from his inner world into the outer one and spoke like a man in a dream. | *45* |
| “Yes; I am Giovanni Guasconti. You are Professor Pietro Baglioni. Now let me pass!” | *46* |
| “Not yet, not yet, Signor Giovanni Guasconti,” said the professor, smiling, but at the same time scrutinizing the youth with an earnest glance. “What! Did I grow up side by side with your father? And shall his son pass me like a stranger in these old streets of Padua? Stand still, Signor Giovanni; for we must have a word or two before we part.” | *47* |
| “Speedily, then, most worshipful professor, speedily,” said Giovanni, with feverish impatience. “Does not your worship see that I am in haste?” | *48* |
| Now, while he was speaking there came a man in black along the street, stooping and moving feebly like a person in inferior health. His face was all overspread with a most sickly and sallow hue, but yet so pervaded with an expression of piercing and active intellect that an observer might easily have overlooked the merely physical attributes and have seen only this wonderful energy. As he passed, this person exchanged a cold and distant salutation with Baglioni, but fixed his eyes upon Giovanni with an intentness that seemed to bring out whatever was within him worthy of notice. | *49* |
| Nevertheless, there was a peculiar quietness in the look, as if taking merely a speculative, not a human, interest in the young man. | *50* |
| “It is Dr. Rappaccini!” whispered the professor when the stranger had passed. “Has he ever seen your face before?” | *51* |
| “Not that I know,” answered Giovanni, starting at the name. | *52* |
| “He *has* seen you! He must have seen you!” said Baglioni, hastily. “For some purpose or other, this man of science is making a study of you. I know that look of his! It is the same that coldly illuminates his face as he bends over a bird, a mouse, or a butterfly, which, in pursuance of some experiment, he has killed by the perfume of a flower; a look as deep as Nature itself, but without Nature’s warmth of love. Signor Giovanni, I will stake my life upon it, you are the subject of one of Rappaccini’s experiments!” | *53* |
| “Will you make a fool of me?” cried Giovanni, passionately. *“That,* signor professor, were an untoward experiment.” | *54* |
| “Patience! Patience!” replied the imperturbable professor. “I tell thee, my poor Giovanni, that Rappaccini has a scientific interest in thee. Thou hast fallen into fearful hands! And the Signora Beatrice,—what part does she act in this mystery?” | *55* |
| But Guasconti, finding Baglioni’s pertinacity intolerable, here broke away, and was gone before the professor could again seize his arm. He looked after the young man intently and shook his head. | *56* |
| “This must not be,” said Baglioni to himself. “The youth is the son of my old friend, and shall not come to any harm from which the 4arvel of medical science can preserve him. Besides, it is too insufferable an impertinence in Rappaccini, thus to snatch the lad out of my own hands, as I may say, and make use of him for his infernal experiments. This daughter of his! It shall be looked to. Perchance, most learned Rappaccini, I may foil you where you little dream of it!” | *57* |
| Meanwhile Giovanni had pursued a circuitous route, and at length found himself at the door of his lodgings. As he crossed the threshold he was met by old Lisabetta, who smirked and smiled, and was evidently desirous to attract his attention; vainly, however, as the ebullition of his feelings had momentarily subsided into a cold and dull vacuity. He turned his eyes full upon the withered face that was puckering itself into a smile, but seemed to behold it not. The old dame, therefore, laid her grasp upon his cloak. | *58* |
| “Signor! Signor!” whispered she, still with a smile over the whole breadth of her visage, so that it looked not unlike a grotesque carving in wood, darkened by centuries. “Listen, signor! There is a private entrance into the garden!” | *59* |
| “What do you say?” exclaimed Giovanni, turning quickly about, as if an inanimate thing should start into feverish life. “A private entrance into Dr. Rappaccini’s garden?” | *60* |
| “Hush! Hush! Not so loud!” whispered Lisabetta, putting her hand over his mouth. “Yes; into the worshipful doctor’s garden, where you may see all his fine shrubbery. Many a young man in Padua would give gold to be admitted among those flowers.” | *61* |
| Giovanni put a piece of gold into her hand. | *62* |
| “Show me the way,” said he. | *63* |
| A surmise, probably excited by his conversation with Baglioni, crossed his mind, that this interposition of old Lisabetta might perchance be connected with the intrigue, whatever were its nature, in which the professor seemed to suppose that Dr. Rappaccini was involving him. But such a suspicion, though it disturbed Giovanni, was inadequate to restrain him. The instant that he was aware of the possibility of approaching Beatrice, it seemed an absolute necessity of his existence to do so. It mattered not whether she were angel or demon; he was irrevocably within her sphere, and must obey the law that whirled him onward, in ever-lessening circles, towards a result which he did not attempt to foreshadow; and yet, strange to say, there came across him a sudden doubt whether this intense interest on his part were not delusory; whether it were really of so deep and positive a nature as to justify him in now thrusting himself into an incalculable position; whether it were not merely the fantasy of a young man’s brain, only slightly or not at all connected with his heart. | *64* |
| He paused, hesitated, turned half about, but again went on. His withered guide led him along several obscure passages, and finally undid a door, through which, as it was opened, there came the sight and sound of rustling leaves, with the broken sunshine glimmering among them. Giovanni stepped forth, and, forcing himself through the entanglement of a shrub that wreathed its tendrils over the hidden entrance, stood beneath his own window in the open area of Dr. Rappaccini’s garden. | *65* |
| How often is it the case that, when impossibilities have come to pass and dreams have condensed their misty substance into tangible realities, we find ourselves calm, and even coldly self-possessed, amid circumstances which it would have been a delirium of joy or agony to anticipate! Fate delights to thwart us thus. Passion will choose his own time to rush upon the scene, and lingers sluggishly behind when an appropriate adjustment of events would seem to summon his appearance. So was it now with Giovanni. Day after day his pulses had throbbed with feverish blood at the improbable idea of an interview with Beatrice, and of standing with her, face to face, in this very garden, basking in the Oriental sunshine of her beauty, and snatching from her full gaze the mystery which he deemed the riddle of his own existence. But now there was a singular and untimely equanimity within his breast. He threw a glance around the garden to discover if Beatrice or her father were present, and, perceiving that he was alone, began a critical observation of the plants. | *66* |
| The aspect of one and all of them dissatisfied him; their gorgeousness seemed fierce, passionate, and even unnatural. There was hardly an individual shrub which a wanderer, straying by himself through a forest, would not have been startled to find growing wild, as if an unearthly face had glared at him out of the thicket. Several also would have shocked a delicate instinct by an appearance of artificialness indicating that there had been such commixture, and, as it were, adultery, of various vegetable species, that the production was no longer of God’s making, but the monstrous offspring of man’s depraved fancy, glowing with only an evil mockery of beauty. They were probably the result of experiment, which in one or two cases had succeeded in mingling plants individually lovely into a compound possessing the questionable and ominous character that distinguished the whole growth of the garden. In fine, Giovanni recognized but two or three plants in the collection, and those of a kind that he well knew to be poisonous. While busy with these contemplations he heard the rustling of a silken garment, and, turning, beheld Beatrice emerging from beneath the sculptured portal. | *67* |
| Giovanni had not considered with himself what should be his deportment; whether he should apologize for his intrusion into the garden, or assume that he was there with the privity at least, if not by the desire, of Dr. Rappaccini or his daughter; but Beatrice’s manner placed him at his ease, though leaving him still in doubt by what agency he had gained admittance. She came lightly along the path and met him near the broken fountain. There was surprise in her face, but brightened by a simple and kind expression of pleasure. | *68* |
| “You are a connoisseur in flowers, signor,” said Beatrice, with a smile, alluding to the bouquet which he had flung her from the window. “It is no marvel, therefore, if the sight of my father’s rare collection has tempted you to take a nearer view. If he were here, he could tell you many strange and interesting facts as to the nature and habits of these shrubs; for he has spent a lifetime in such studies, and this garden is his world.” | *69* |
| “And yourself, lady,” observed Giovanni, “if fame says true,—you likewise are deeply skilled in the virtues indicated by these rich blossoms and these spicy perfumes. Would you deign to be my instructress, I should prove an apter scholar than if taught by Signor Rappaccini himself.” | *70* |
| “Are there such idle rumors?” asked Beatrice, with the music of a pleasant laugh. “Do people say that I am skilled in my father’s science of plants? What a jest is there! No; though I have grown up among these flowers, I know no more of them than their hues and perfume; and sometimes methinks I would fain rid myself of even that small knowledge. There are many flowers here, and those not the least brilliant, that shock and offend me when they meet my eye. But pray, signor, do not believe these stories about my science. Believe nothing of me save what you see with your own eyes.” | *71* |
| “And must I believe all that I have seen with my own eyes?” asked Giovanni, pointedly, while the recollection of former scenes made him shrink. “No, signora; you demand too little of me. Bid me believe nothing save what comes from your own lips.” | *72* |
| It would appear that Beatrice understood him. There came a deep flush to her cheek; but she looked full into Giovanni’s eyes, and responded to his gaze of uneasy suspicion with a queenlike haughtiness. | *73* |
| “I do so bid you, signor,” she replied. “Forget whatever you may have fancied in regard to me. If true to the outward senses, still it may be false in its essence; but the words of Beatrice Rappaccini’s lips are true from the depths of the heart outward. Those you may believe.” | *74* |
| A fervor glowed in her whole aspect and beamed upon Giovanni’s consciousness like the light of truth itself; but while she spoke there was fragrance in the atmosphere around her, rich and delightful, though evanescent, yet which the young man, from an indefinable reluctance, scarcely dared to draw into his lungs. It might be the odor of the flowers. Could it be Beatrice’s breath which thus embalmed her words with a strange richness, as if by steeping them in her heart? A faintness passed like a shadow over Giovanni and flitted away; he seemed to gaze through the beautiful girl’s eyes into her transparent soul, and felt no more doubt or fear. | *75* |
| The tinge of passion that had colored Beatrice’s manner vanished; she became gay, and appeared to derive a pure delight from her communion with the youth not unlike what the maiden of a lonely island might have felt conversing with a voyager from the civilized world. Evidently her experience of life had been confined within the limits of that garden. She talked now about matters as simple as the daylight or summer clouds, and now asked questions in reference to the city, or Giovanni’s distant home, his friends, his mother, and his sisters—questions indicating such seclusion, and such lack of familiarity with modes and forms, that Giovanni responded as if to an infant. Her spirit gushed out before him like a fresh rill that was just catching its first glimpse of the sunlight and wondering at the reflections of earth and sky which were flung into its bosom. There came thoughts, too, from a deep source, and fantasies of a gemlike brilliancy, as if diamonds and rubies sparkled upward among the bubbles of the fountain. Ever and anon there gleamed across the young man’s mind a sense of wonder that he should be walking side by side with the being who had so wrought upon his imagination, whom he had idealized in such hues of terror, in whom he had positively witnessed such manifestations of dreadful attributes,—that he should be conversing with Beatrice like a brother, and should find her so human and so maidenlike. But such reflections were only momentary; the effect of her character was too real not to make itself familiar at once. | *76* |
| In this free intercourse they had strayed through the garden, and now, after many turns among its avenues, were come to the shattered fountain, beside which grew the magnificent shrub, with its treasury of glowing blossoms. A fragrance was diffused from it which Giovanni recognized as identical with that which he had attributed to Beatrice’s breath, but incomparably more powerful. As her eyes fell upon it, Giovanni beheld her press her hand to her bosom as if her heart were throbbing suddenly and painfully. | *77* |
| “For the first time in my life,” murmured she, addressing the shrub, “I had forgotten thee.” | *78* |
| “I remember, signora,” said Giovanni, “that you once promised to reward me with one of these living gems for the bouquet which I had the happy boldness to fling to your feet. Permit me now to pluck it as a memorial of this interview.” | *79* |
| He made a step toward the shrub with extended hand; but Beatrice darted forward, uttering a shriek that went through his heart like a dagger. She caught his hand and drew it back with the whole force of her slender figure. Giovanni felt her touch thrilling through his fibres. | *80* |
| “Touch it not!” exclaimed she, in a voice of agony. “Not for thy life! It is fatal!” | *81* |
| Then, hiding her face, she fled from him and vanished beneath the sculptured portal. As Giovanni followed her with his eyes, he beheld the emaciated figure and pale intelligence of Dr. Rappaccini, who had been watching the scene, he knew not how long, within the shadow of the entrance. | *82* |
| No sooner was Guasconti alone in his chamber than the image of Beatrice came back to his passionate musings, invested with all the witchery that had been gathering around it ever since his first glimpse of her, and now likewise imbued with a tender warmth of girlish womanhood. She was human; her nature was endowed with all gentle and feminine qualities; she was worthiest to be worshipped; she was capable, surely, on her part, of the height and heroism of love. Those tokens which he had hitherto considered as proofs of a frightful peculiarity in her physical and moral system were now either forgotten, or, by the subtle sophistry of passion transmitted into a golden crown of enchantment, rendering Beatrice the more admirable by so much as she was the more unique. Whatever had looked ugly was now beautiful; or, if incapable of such a change, it stole away and hid itself among those shapeless half ideas which throng the dim region beyond the daylight of our perfect consciousness. Thus did he spend the night, nor fell asleep until the dawn had begun to awake the slumbering flowers in Dr. Rappaccini’s garden, whither Giovanni’s dreams doubtless led him. Up rose the sun in his due season, and, flinging his beams upon the young man’s eyelids, awoke him to a sense of pain. When thoroughly aroused, he became sensible of a burning and tingling agony in his hand—in his right hand—the very hand which Beatrice had grasped in her own when he was on the point of plucking one of the gemlike flowers. On the back of that hand there was now a purple print like that of four small fingers, and the likeness of a slender thumb upon his wrist. | *83* |
| Oh, how stubbornly does love,—or even that cunning semblance of love which flourishes in the imagination, but strikes no depth of root into the heart,—how stubbornly does it hold its faith until the moment comes when it is doomed to vanish into thin mist! Giovanni wrapped a handkerchief about his hand and wondered what evil thing had stung him, and soon forgot his pain in a reverie of Beatrice. | *84* |
| After the first interview, a second was in the inevitable course of what we call fate. A third; a fourth; and a meeting with Beatrice in the garden was no longer an incident in Giovanni’s daily life, but the whole space in which he might be said to live; for the anticipation and memory of that ecstatic hour made up the remainder. Nor was it otherwise with the daughter of Rappaccini. She watched for the youth’s appearance, and flew to his side with confidence as unreserved as if they had been playmates from early infancy—as if they were such playmates still. If, by any unwonted chance, he failed to come at the appointed moment, she stood beneath the window and sent up the rich sweetness of her tones to float around him in his chamber and echo and reverberate throughout his heart: “Giovanni! Giovanni! Why tarriest thou? Come down!” And down he hastened into that Eden of poisonous flowers. | *85* |
| But, with all this intimate familiarity, there was still a reserve in Beatrice’s demeanor, so rigidly and invariably sustained that the idea of infringing it scarcely occurred to his imagination. By all appreciable signs, they loved; they had looked love with eyes that conveyed the holy secret from the depths of one soul into the depths of the other, as if it were too sacred to be whispered by the way; they had even spoken love in those gushes of passion when their spirits darted forth in articulated breath like tongues of long-hidden flame; and yet there had been no seal of lips, no clasp of hands, nor any slightest caress such as love claims and hallows. He had never touched one of the gleaming ringlets of her hair; her garment—so marked was the physical barrier between them—had never been waved against him by a breeze. On the few occasions when Giovanni had seemed tempted to overstep the limit, Beatrice grew so sad, so stern, and withal wore such a look of desolate separation, shuddering at itself, that not a spoken word was requisite to repel him. At such times he was startled at the horrible suspicions that rose, monster-like, out of the caverns of his heart and stared him in the face; his love grew thin and faint as the morning mist, his doubts alone had substance. But, when Beatrice’s face brightened again after the momentary shadow, she was transformed at once from the mysterious, questionable being whom he had watched with so much awe and horror; she was now the beautiful and unsophisticated girl whom he felt that his spirit knew with a certainty beyond all other knowledge. | *86* |
| A considerable time had now passed since Giovanni’s last meeting with Baglioni. One morning, however, he was disagreeably surprised by a visit from the professor, whom he had scarcely thought of for whole weeks, and would willingly have forgotten still longer. Given up as he had long been to a pervading excitement, he could tolerate no companions except upon condition of their perfect sympathy with his present state of feeling. Such sympathy was not to be expected from Professor Baglioni. | *87* |
| The visitor chatted carelessly for a few moments about the gossip of the city and the university, and then took up another topic. | *88* |
| “I have been reading an old classic author lately,” said he, “and met with a story that strangely interested me. Possibly you may remember it. It is of an Indian prince, who sent a beautiful woman as a present to Alexander the Great. She was as lovely as the dawn and gorgeous as the sunset; but what especially distinguished her was a certain rich perfume in her breath—richer than a garden of Persian roses. Alexander, as was natural to a youthful conqueror, fell in love at first sight with this magnificent stranger; but a certain sage physician, happening to be present, discovered a terrible secret in regard to her.” | *89* |
| “And what was that?” asked Giovanni, turning his eyes downward to avoid those of the professor. | *90* |
| “That this lovely woman,” continued Baglioni, with emphasis, “had been nourished with poisons from her birth upward, until her whole nature was so imbued with them that she herself had become the deadliest poison in existence. Poison was her element of life. With that rich perfume of her breath she blasted the very air. Her love would have been poison—her embrace death. Is not this a 4arveled4 tale?” | *91* |
| “A childish fable,” answered Giovanni, nervously starting from his chair. “I marvel how your worship finds time to read such nonsense among your graver studies.” | *92* |
| “By the by,” said the professor, looking uneasily about him, “what singular fragrance is this in your apartment? Is it the perfume of your gloves? It is faint, but delicious; and yet, after all, by no means agreeable. Were I to breathe it long, methinks it would make me ill. It is like the breath of a flower; but I see no flowers in the chamber.” | *93* |
| “Nor are there any,” replied Giovanni, who had turned pale as the professor spoke; “nor, I think, is there any fragrance except in your worship’s imagination. Odors, being a sort of element combined of the sensual and the spiritual, are apt to deceive us in this manner. The recollection of a perfume, the bare idea of it, may easily be mistaken for a present reality.” | *94* |
| “Ay; but my sober imagination does not often play such tricks,” said Baglioni; “and, were I to fancy any kind of odor, it would be that of some vile apothecary drug, where-with my fingers are likely enough to be imbued. Our worshipful friend Rappaccini, as I have heard, tinctures his medicaments with odors richer than those of Araby. Doubtless, likewise, the fair and learned Signora Beatrice would minister to her patients with draughts as sweet as a maiden’s breath; but woe to him that sips them!” | *95* |
| Giovanni’s face evinced many contending emotions. The tone in which the professor alluded to the pure and lovely daughter of Rappaccini was a torture to his soul; and yet the intimation of a view of her character, opposite to his own, gave instantaneous distinctness to a thousand dim suspicions, which now grinned at him like so many demons. But he strove hard to quell them and to respond to Baglioni with a true lover’s perfect faith. | *96* |
| “Signor professor,” said he, “you were my father’s friend; perchance, too, it is your purpose to act a friendly part towards his son. I would fain feel nothing towards you save respect and deference; but I pray you to observe, signor, that there is one subject on which we must not speak. You know not the Signora Beatrice. You cannot, therefore, estimate the wrong—the blasphemy, I may even say—that is offered to her character by a light or injurious word.” | *97* |
| “Giovanni! My poor Giovanni!” answered the professor, with a calm expression of pity, “I know this wretched girl far better than yourself. You shall hear the truth in respect to the poisoner Rappaccini and his poisonous daughter; yes, poisonous as she is beautiful. Listen; for, even should you do violence to my gray hair, it shall not silence me. That old fable of the Indian woman has become a truth by the deep and deadly science of Rappaccini and in the person of the lovely Beatrice.” | *98* |
| Giovanni groaned and hid his face. | *99* |
| “Her father,” continued Baglioni, “was not restrained by natural affection from offering up his child in this horrible manner as the victim of his insane zeal for science; for, let us do him justice, he is as true a man of science as ever distilled his own heart in an alembic. What, then, will be your fate? Beyond a doubt you are selected as the material of some new experiment. Perhaps the result is to be death; perhaps a fate more awful still. Rappaccini, with what he calls the interest of science before his eyes, will hesitate at nothing.” | *100* |
| “It is a dream,” muttered Giovanni to himself; “surely it is a dream.” | *101* |
| “But,” resumed the professor, “be of good cheer, son of my friend. It is not yet too late for the rescue. Possibly we may even succeed in bringing back this miserable child within the limits of ordinary nature, from which her father’s madness has estranged her. Behold this little silver vase! It was wrought by the hands of the renowned Benvenuto Cellini, and is well worthy to be a love gift to the fairest dame in Italy. But its contents are invaluable. One little sip of this antidote would have rendered the most virulent poisons of the Borgias innocuous. Doubt not that it will be as efficacious against those of Rappaccini. Bestow the vase, and the precious liquid within it, on your Beatrice, and hopefully await the result.” | *102* |
| Baglioni laid a small, exquisitely wrought silver vial on the table and withdrew, leaving what he had said to produce its effect upon the young man’s mind. | *103* |
| “We will thwart Rappaccini yet,” thought he, chuckling to himself, as he descended the stairs; “but, let us confess the truth of him, he is a wonderful man—a wonderful man indeed; a vile empiric, however, in his practice, and therefore not to be tolerated by those who respect the good old rules of the medical profession.” | *104* |
| Throughout Giovanni’s whole acquaintance with Beatrice, he had occasionally, as we have said, been haunted by dark surmises as to her character; yet so thoroughly had she made herself felt by him as a simple, natural, most affectionate, and guileless creature, that the image now held up by Professor Baglioni looked as strange and incredible as if it were not in accordance with his own original conception. True, there were ugly recollections connected with his first glimpses of the beautiful girl; he could not quite forget the bouquet that withered in her grasp, and the insect that perished amid the sunny air, by no ostensible agency save the fragrance of her breath. These incidents, however, dissolving in the pure light of her character, had no longer the efficacy of facts, but were acknowledged as mistaken fantasies, by whatever testimony of the senses they might appear to be substantiated. There is something truer and more real than what we can see with the eyes and touch with the finger. On such better evidence had Giovanni founded his confidence in Beatrice, though rather by the necessary force of her high attributes than by any deep and generous faith on his part. But now his spirit was incapable of sustaining itself at the height to which the early enthusiasm of passion had exalted it; he fell down, 4arveled4 among earthly doubts, and defiled therewith the pure whiteness of Beatrice’s image. Not that he gave her up; he did but distrust. He resolved to institute some decisive test that should satisfy him, once for all, whether there were those dreadful peculiarities in her physical nature which could not be supposed to exist without some corresponding monstrosity of soul. His eyes, gazing down afar, might have deceived him as to the lizard, the insect, and the flowers; but if he could witness, at the distance of a few paces, the sudden blight of one fresh and healthful flower in Beatrice’s hand, there would be room for no further question. With this idea he hastened to the florist’s and purchased a bouquet that was still gemmed with the morning dew-drops. | *105* |
| It was now the customary hour of his daily interview with Beatrice. Before descending into the garden, Giovanni failed not to look at his figure in the mirror,—a vanity to be expected in a beautiful young man, yet, as displaying itself at that troubled and feverish moment, the token of a certain shallowness of feeling and insincerity of character. He did gaze, however, and said to himself that his features had never before possessed so rich a grace, nor his eyes such vivacity, nor his cheeks so warm a hue of superabundant life. | *106* |
| “At least,” thought he, “her poison has not yet insinuated itself into my system. I am no flower to perish in her grasp.” | *107* |
| With that thought he turned his eyes on the bouquet, which he had never once laid aside from his hand. A thrill of indefinable horror shot through his frame on perceiving that those dewy flowers were already beginning to droop; they wore the aspect of things that had been fresh and lovely yesterday. Giovanni grew white as marble, and stood motionless before the mirror, staring at his own reflection there as at the likeness of something frightful. He remembered Baglioni’s remark about the fragrance that seemed to pervade the chamber. It must have been the poison in his breath! Then he shuddered—shuddered at himself. Recovering from his stupor, he began to watch with curious eye a spider that was busily at work hanging its web from the antique cornice of the apartment, crossing and recrossing the artful system of interwoven lines—as vigorous and active a spider as ever dangled from an old ceiling. Giovanni bent towards the insect, and emitted a deep, long breath. The spider suddenly ceased its toil; the web vibrated with a tremor originating in the body of the small artisan. Again Giovanni sent forth a breath, deeper, longer, and imbued with a venomous feeling out of his heart: he knew not whether he were wicked, or only desperate. The spider made a convulsive gripe with his limbs and hung dead across the window. | *108* |
| “Accursed! Accursed!” muttered Giovanni, addressing himself. “Hast thou grown so poisonous that this deadly insect perishes by thy breath?” | *109* |
| At that moment a rich, sweet voice came floating up from the garden. | *110* |
| “Giovanni! Giovanni! It is past the hour! Why tarriest thou? Come down!” | *111* |
| “Yes,” muttered Giovanni again. “She is the only being whom my breath may not slay! Would that it might!” | *112* |
| He rushed down, and in an instant was standing before the bright and loving eyes of Beatrice. A moment ago his wrath and despair had been so fierce that he could have desired nothing so much as to wither her by a glance; but with her actual presence there came influences which had too real an existence to be at once shaken off: recollections of the delicate and benign power of her feminine nature, which had so often enveloped him in a religious calm; recollections of many a holy and passionate outgush of her heart, when the pure fountain had been unsealed from its depths and made visible in its transparency to his mental eye; recollections which, had Giovanni known how to estimate them, would have assured him that all this ugly mystery was but an earthly illusion, and that, whatever mist of evil might seem to have gathered over her, the real Beatrice was a heavenly angel. Incapable as he was of such high faith, still her presence had not utterly lost its magic. Giovanni’s rage was quelled into an aspect of sullen insensibility. | *113* |
| Beatrice, with a quick spiritual sense, immediately felt that there was a gulf of blackness between them which neither he nor she could pass. They walked on together, sad and silent, and came thus to the marble fountain and to its pool of water on the ground, in the midst of which grew the shrub that bore gem-like blossoms. Giovanni was affrighted at the eager enjoyment—the appetite, as it were—with which he found himself inhaling the fragrance of the flowers. | *114* |
| “Beatrice,” asked he, abruptly, “whence came this shrub?” | *115* |
| “My father created it,” answered she, with simplicity. | *116* |
| “Created it! Created it!” repeated Giovanni. “What mean you, Beatrice?” | *117* |
| “He is a man fearfully acquainted with the secrets of Nature,” replied Beatrice; “and, at the hour when I first drew breath, this plant sprang from the soil, the offspring of his science, of his intellect, while I was but his earthly child. Approach it not!” continued she, observing with terror that Giovanni was drawing nearer to the shrub. “It has qualities that you little dream of. But I, dearest Giovanni,—I grew up and blossomed with the plant and was nourished with its breath. It was my sister, and I loved it with a human affection; for, alas!—hast thou not suspected it?—there was an awful doom.” | *118* |
| Here Giovanni frowned so darkly upon her that Beatrice paused and trembled. But her faith in his tenderness reassured her, and made her blush that she had doubted for an instant. | *119* |
| “There was an awful doom,” she continued, “the effect of my father’s fatal love of science, which estranged me from all society of my kind. Until Heaven sent thee, dearest Giovanni, oh, how lonely was thy poor Beatrice!” | *120* |
| “Was it a hard doom?” asked Giovanni, fixing his eyes upon her. | *121* |
| “Only of late have I known how hard it was,” answered she, tenderly. “Oh, yes; but my heart was torpid, and therefore quiet.” | *122* |
| Giovanni’s rage broke forth from his sullen gloom like a lightning flash out of a dark cloud. | *123* |
| “Accursed one!” cried he, with venomous scorn and anger. “And, finding thy solitude wearisome, thou has severed me likewise from all the warmth of life and enticed me into thy region of unspeakable horror!” | *124* |
| “Giovanni!” exclaimed Beatrice, turning her large bright eyes upon his face. The force of his words had not found its way into her mind; she was merely thunderstruck. | *125* |
| “Yes, poisonous thing!” repeated Giovanni, beside himself with passion. “Thou hast done it! Thou hast blasted me! Thou hast filled my veins with poison! Thou hast made me as hateful, as ugly, as loathsome and deadly a creature as thyself—a world’s wonder of hideous monstrosity! Now, if our breath be happily as fatal to ourselves as to all others, let us join our lips in one kiss of unutterable hatred, and so die!” | *126* |
| “What has befallen me?” murmured Beatrice, with a low moan out of her heart. “Holy Virgin, pity me, a poor heart-broken child!” | *127* |
| “Thou,—dost thou pray?” cried Giovanni, still with the same fiendish scorn. “Thy very prayers, as they come from thy lips, taint the atmosphere with death. Yes, yes; let us pray! Let us to church and dip our fingers in the holy water at the portal! They that come after us will perish as by a pestilence! Let us sign crosses in the air! It will be scattering curses abroad in the likeness of holy symbols!” | *128* |
| “Giovanni,” said Beatrice, calmly, for her grief was beyond passion, “why dost thou join thyself with me thus in those terrible words? I, it is true, am the horrible thing thou namest me. But thou,—what hast thou to do, save with one other shudder at my hideous misery to go forth out of the garden and mingle with thy race, and forget that there ever crawled on earth such a monster as poor Beatrice?” | *129* |
| “Dost thou pretend ignorance?” asked Giovanni, scowling upon her. “Behold! This power have I gained from the pure daughter of Rappaccini.” | *130* |
| There was a swarm of summer insects flitting through the air in search of the food promised by the flower odors of the fatal garden. They circled round Giovanni’s head, and were evidently attracted towards him by the same influence which had drawn them for an instant within the sphere of several of the shrubs. He sent forth a breath among them, and smiled bitterly at Beatrice as at least a score of the insects fell dead upon the ground. | *131* |
| “I see it! I see it!” shrieked Beatrice. “It is my father’s fatal science! No, no, Giovanni; it was not I! Never! Never! I dreamed only to love thee and be with thee a little time, and so to let thee pass away, leaving but thine image in mine heart; for, Giovanni, believe it, though my body be nourished with poison, my spirit is God’s creature, and craves love as its daily food. But my father,—he has united us in this fearful sympathy. Yes; spurn me, tread upon me, kill me! Oh, what is death after such words as thine? But it was not I. Not for a world of bliss would I have done it.” | *132* |
| Giovanni’s passion had exhausted itself in its outburst from his lips. There now came across him a sense, mournful, and not without tenderness, of the intimate and peculiar relationship between Beatrice and himself. They stood, as it were, in an utter solitude, which would be made none the less solitary by the densest throng of human life. Ought not, them, the desert of humanity around them to press this insulated pair closer together? If they should be cruel to one another, who was there to be kind to them? Besides, thought Giovanni, might there not still be a hope of his returning within the limits of ordinary nature, and leading Beatrice, the redeemed Beatrice, by the hand? O, weak, and selfish, and unworthy spirit, that could dream of an earthly union and earthly happiness as possible, after such deep love had been so bitterly wronged as was Beatrice’s love by Giovanni’s blighting words! No, no; there could be no such hope. She must pass heavily, with that broken heart, across the borders of Time—she must bathe her hurts in some fount of paradise, and forget her grief in the light of immortality, and *there* be well. | *133* |
| But Giovanni did not know it. | *134* |
| “Dear Beatrice,” said he, approaching her, while she shrank away as always at his approach, but now with a different impulse, “dearest Beatrice, our fate is not yet so desperate. Behold! There is a medicine, potent, as a wise physician has assured me, and almost divine in its efficacy. It is composed of ingredients the most opposite to those by which thy awful father has brought this calamity upon thee and me. It is distilled of blessed herbs. Shall we not quaff it together, and thus be purified from evil?” | *135* |
| “Give it me!” said Beatrice, extending her hand to receive the little silver vial which Giovanni took from his bosom. She added, with a peculiar emphasis, “I will drink; but do thou await the result.” | *136* |
| She put Baglioni’s antidote to her lips; and, at the same moment, the figure of Rappaccini emerged from the portal and came slowly towards the marble fountain. As he drew near, the pale man of science seemed to gaze with a triumphant expression at the beautiful youth and maiden, as might an artist who should spend his life in achieving a picture or a group of statuary and finally be satisfied with his success. He paused; his bent form grew erect with conscious power; he spread out his hands over them in the attitude of a father imploring a blessing upon his children; but those were the same hands that had thrown poison into the stream of their lives. Giovanni trembled. Beatrice shuddered nervously, and pressed her hand upon her heart. | *137* |
| “My daughter,” said Rappaccini, “thou art no longer lonely in the world. Pluck one of those precious gems from thy sister shrub and bid thy bridegroom wear it in his bosom. It will not harm him now. My science and the sympathy between thee and him have so wrought within his system that he now stands apart from common men, as thou dost, daughter of my pride and triumph, from ordinary women. Pass on, then, through the world, most dear to one another, and dreadful to all besides!” | *138* |
| “My father,” said Beatrice, feebly,—and still as she spoke she kept her hand upon her heart,—“wherefore didst thou inflict this miserable doom upon thy child?” | *139* |
| “Miserable!” exclaimed Rappaccini. “What mean you, foolish girl? Dost thou deem it misery to be endowed with 4arveled4 gifts against which no power nor strength could avail an enemy—misery, to be able to quell the mightiest with a breath—misery, to be as terrible as thou art beautiful? Wouldst thou, then, have preferred the condition of a weak woman, exposed to all evil and capable of none?” | *140* |
| “I would fain have been loved, not feared,” murmured Beatrice, sinking down upon the ground. “But now it matters not. I am going, father, where the evil which thou hast striven to mingle with my being will pass away like a dream—like the fragrance of these poisonous flowers, which will no longer taint my breath among the flowers of Eden. Farewell, Giovanni! Thy words of hatred are like lead within my heart; but they, too, will fall away as I ascend. Oh, was there not, from the first, more poison in thy nature than in mine?” | *141* |
| To Beatrice,—so radically had her earthly part been wrought upon by Rappaccini’s skill,—as poison had been life, so the powerful antidote was death; and thus the poor victim of man’s ingenuity and of thwarted nature, and of the fatality that attends all such efforts of perverted wisdom, perished there, at the feet of her father and Giovanni. Just at that moment Professor Pietro Baglioni looked forth from the window, and called loudly, in a tone of triumph mixed with horror, to the thunderstricken man of science,— | *142* |
| “Rappaccini! Rappaccini! And is *this* the upshot of your experiment!” | *143* |

### From The Snow-Image, and Other Twice-Told Tales, 1852

### By Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864), 1831

# My Kinsman,  Major Molineux

AFTER THE KINGS of Great Britain had assumed the right of appointing the colonial governors, the measures of the latter seldom met with the ready and general approbation which had been paid to those of their predecessors, under the original charters. The people looked with most jealous scrutiny to the exercise of power, which did not emanate from themselves, and they usually rewarded the rulers with slender gratitude for the compliances, by which, in softening their instructions from beyond the sea, they had incurred the reprehension of those who gave them. The annals of Massachusetts Bay will inform us, that of six governors, in the space of about forty years from the surrender of the old charter, under James II, two were imprisoned by a popular insurrection; a third, as Hutchinson inclines to believe, was driven from the province by the whizzing of a musketball; a fourth, in the opinion of the same historian, was hastened to his grave by continual bickerings with the House of Representatives; and the remaining two, as well as their successors, till the Revolution, were favored with few and brief intervals of peaceful sway. The inferior members of the court party, in times of high political excitement, led scarcely a more desirable life. These remarks may serve as a preface to the following adventures, which chanced upon a summer night, not far from a hundred years ago. The reader, in order to avoid a long and dry detail of colonial affairs, is requested to dispense with an account of the train of circumstances, that had caused much temporary inflammation of the popular mind.

It was near nine o'clock of a moonlight evening, when a boat crossed the ferry with a single passenger, who had obtained his conveyance, at that unusual hour, by the promise of an extra fare. While he stood on the landing-place, searching in either pocket for the means of fulfilling his agreement, the ferryman lifted a lantern, by the aid of which, and the newly risen moon, he took a very accurate survey of the stranger's figure. He was a youth of barely eighteen years, evidently country-bred, and now, as it should seem, upon his first visit to town. He was clad in a coarse gray coat, well worn, but in excellent repair; his under garments were durably constructed of leather, and sat tight to a pair of serviceable and well-shaped limbs; his stockings of blue yarn, were the incontrovertible handiwork of a mother or a sister; and on his head was a three-cornered hat, which in its better days had perhaps sheltered the graver brow of the lad's father. Under his left arm was a heavy cudgel, formed of an oak sapling, and retaining a part of the hardened root; and his equipment was completed by a wallet, not so abundantly stocked as to incommode the vigorous shoulders on which it hung. Brown, curly hair, well-shaped features, and bright, cheerful eyes, were nature's gifts, and worth all that art could have done for his adornment.

The youth, one of whose names was Robin, finally drew from his pocket the half of a little province-bill of five shillings, which, in the depreciation of that sort of currency, did but satisfy the ferryman's demand, with the surplus of a sexangular piece of parchment, valued at three pence. He then walked forward into the town, with as light a step, as if his day's journey had not already exceeded thirty miles, and with as eager an eye as if he were entering London city, instead of the little metropolis of a New England colony. Before Robin had proceeded far, however, it occurred to him, that he knew not whither to direct his steps; so he paused, and looked up and down the narrow street, scrutinizing the small and mean wooden buildings, that were scattered on either side.

"This low hovel cannot be my kinsman's dwelling," thought he, "nor yonder old house, where the moonlight enters at the broken casement; and truly I see none hereabouts that might be worthy of him. It would have been wise to inquire my way of the ferryman, and doubtless he would have gone with me, and earned a shilling from the major for his pains. But the next man I meet will do as well."

He resumed his walk, and was glad to perceive that the street now became wider, and the houses more respectable in their appearance. He soon discerned a figure moving on moderately in advance, and hastened his steps to overtake it. As Robin drew nigh, he saw that the passenger was a man in years, with a full periwig of gray hair, a wide-skirted coat of dark cloth, and silk stockings rolled above his knees. He carried a long and polished cane, which he struck down perpendicularly before him, at every step; and at regular intervals he uttered two successive hems, of a peculiarly solemn and sepulchral intonation. Having made these observations, Robin laid hold of the skirt of the old man's coat, just when the light from the open door and windows of a barber's shop fell upon both their figures. "Good evening to you, honored sir," said he, making a low bow, and still retaining his hold of the skirt. "I pray you tell me whereabouts is the dwelling of my kinsman, Major Molineux?"

The youth's question was uttered very loudly; and one of the barbers, whose razor was descending on a well-soaped chin, and another who was dressing a Ramillies wig, left their occupations, and came to the door. The citizen, in the meantime, turned a long-favored countenance upon Robin, and answered him in a tone of excessive anger and annoyance. His two sepulchral hems, however, broke into the very centre of his rebuke, with most singular effect, like a thought of the cold grave obtruding among wrathful passions.

"Let go my garment, fellow! I tell you, I know not the man you speak of. What! I have authority, I have--hem, hem--authority; and if this be the respect you show for your betters, your feet shall be brought acquainted with the stocks by daylight, tomorrow morning!"

Robin released the old man's skirt, and hastened away, pursued by an ill-mannered roar of laughter from the barber's shop. He was at first considerably surprised by the result of his question, but, being a shrewd youth, soon thought himself able to account for the mystery.

"This is some country representative," was his conclusion, "who has never seen the inside of my kinsman's door, and lacks the breeding to answer a stranger civilly. The man is old, or verily--I might be tempted to turn back and smite him on the nose. Ah, Robin, Robin! even the barber's boys laugh at you choosing such a guide! You will be wiser in time, friend Robin."

He now became entangled in a succession of crooked and narrow streets, which crossed each other, and meandered at no great distance from the water-side. The smell of tar was obvious to his nostrils, the masts of vessels pierced the moonlight above the tops of the buildings, and the numerous signs, which Robin paused to read, informed him that he was near the centre of business. But the streets were empty, the shops were closed, and lights were visible only in the second stories of a few dwelling-houses. At length, on the corner of a narrow lane, through which he was passing, he beheld the broad countenance of a British hero swinging before the door of an inn, whence proceeded the voices of many guests. The casement of one of the lower windows was thrown back, and a very thin curtain permitted Robin to distinguish a party at supper, round a well-furnished table. The fragrance of the good cheer steamed forth into the outer air, and the youth could not fail to recollect, that the last remnant of his travelling stock of provision had yielded to his morning appetite, and that noon had found, and left him, dinnerless.

"Oh, that a parchment three-penny might give me a right to sit down at yonder table!" said Robin, with a sigh. "But the major will make me welcome to the best of his victuals; so I will even step boldly in, and inquire my way to his dwelling."

He entered the tavern, and was guided by the murmur of voices, and the fumes of tobacco, to the public room. It was a long and low apartment, with oaken walls, grown dark in the continual smoke, and a floor, which was thickly sanded, but of no immaculate purity. A number of persons, the larger part of whom appeared to be mariners, or in some way connected with the sea, occupied the wooden benches, or leather-bottomed chairs, conversing on various matters, and occasionally lending their attention to some topic of general interest. Three or four little groups were draining as many bowls of punch, which the West India trade had long since made a familiar drink in the colony. Others, who had the appearance of men who lived by regular and laborious handicraft, preferred the insulated bliss of an unshared potation, and became more taciturn under its influence. Nearly all, in short, evinced a predilection for the Good Creature in some of its various shapes, for this is a vice to which, as Fast-day sermons of a hundred years ago will testify, we have a long hereditary claim. The only guests to whom Robin's sympathies inclined him, were two or three sheepish countrymen, who were using the inn somewhat after the fashion of a Turkish caravansary; they had gotten themselves into the darkest corner of the room, and, heedless of the Nicotian atmosphere, were supping on the bread of their own ovens, and the bacon cured in their own chimney-smoke. But though Robin felt a sort of brotherhood with these strangers, his eyes were attracted from them to a person who stood near the door, holding whispered conversation with a group of ill-dressed associates. His features were separately striking almost to grotesqueness, and the whole face left a deep impression on the memory. The forehead bulged out into a double prominence, with a vale between; the nose came boldly forth in an irregular curve, and its bridge was of more than a finger's breadth; the eyebrows were deep and shaggy, and the eyes glowed beneath them like fire in a cave.

While Robin deliberated of whom to inquire respecting his kinsman's dwelling, he was accosted by the innkeeper, a little man in a stained white apron, who had come to pay his professional welcome to the stranger. Being in the second generation from a French Protestant, he seemed to have inherited the courtesy of his parent nation; but no variety of circumstances was ever known to change his voice from the one shrill note in which he now addressed Robin.

"From the country, I presume, Sir?" said he, with a profound bow. "Beg to congratulate you on your arrival, and trust you intend a long stay with us. Fine town here, Sir, beautiful buildings, and much that may interest a stranger. May I hope for the honor of your commands in respect to supper?"

"The man sees a family likeness! the rogue has guessed that I am related to the Major!" thought Robin, who had hitherto experienced little superfluous civility.

All eyes were now turned on the country lad, standing at the door, in his worn three-cornered hat, gray coat, leather breeches, and blue yarn stockings, leaning on an oaken cudgel, and bearing a wallet on his back.

Robin replied to the courteous innkeeper, with such an assumption of confidence as befitted the major's relative.

"My honest friend," he said, "I shall make it a point to patronize your house on some occasion when--" here he could not help lowering his voice--"I may have more than a parchment three-pence in my pocket. My present business," continued he, speaking with lofty confidence, "is merely to inquire my way to the dwelling of my kinsman, Major Molineux."

There was a sudden and general movement in the room, which Robin interpreted as expressing the eagerness of each individual to become his guide. But the innkeeper turned his eyes to a written paper on the wall, which he read, or seemed to read, with occasional recurrences to the young man's figure.

"What have we here?" said he, breaking his speech into little dry fragments. "'Left the house of the subscriber, bounden servant, Hezekiah Mudge--had on, when he went away, gray coat, leather breeches, master's third best hat. One pound currency reward to whosoever shall lodge him in any jail of the province.' Better trudge, boy, better trudge!"

Robin had begun to draw his hand towards the lighter end of the oak cudgel, but a strange hostility in every countenance, induced him to relinquish his purpose of breaking the courteous innkeeper's head. As he turned to leave the room, he encountered a sneering glance from the bold-featured personage whom he had before noticed; and no sooner was he beyond the door, than he heard a general laugh, in which the innkeeper's voice might be distinguished, like the dropping of small stones into a kettle.

"Now, is it not strange," thought Robin, with his usual shrewdness, "is it not strange, that the confession of an empty pocket should outweigh the name of my kinsman, Major Molineux? Oh, if I had one of those grinning rascals in the woods, where I and my oak sapling grew up together, I would teach him that my arm is heavy, though my purse be light!"

On turning the corner of the narrow lane, Robin found himself in a spacious street, with an unbroken line of lofty houses on each side, and a steepled building at the upper end, whence the ringing of a bell announced the hour of nine. The light of the moon, and the lamps from the numerous shop windows, discovered people promenading on the pavement, and amongst them Robin hoped to recognize his hitherto inscrutable relative. The result of his former inquiries made him unwilling to hazard another, in a scene of such publicity, and he determined to walk slowly and silently up the street, thrusting his face close to that of every elderly gentleman, in search of the Major's lineaments. In his progress, Robin encountered many gay and gallant figures. Embroidered garments, of showy colors, enormous periwigs, gold-laced hats, and silver-hilted swords, glided past him, and dazzled his optics. Travelled youths, imitators of the European fine gentlemen of the period, trod jauntily along, half-dancing to the fashionable tunes which they hummed, and making poor Robin ashamed of his quiet and natural gait. At length, after many pauses to examine the gorgeous display of goods in the shop windows, and after suffering some rebukes for the impertinence of his scrutiny into people's faces, the major's kinsman found himself near the steepled building, still unsuccessful in his search. As yet, however, he had seen only one side of the thronged street, so Robin crossed, and continued the same sort of inquisition down the opposite pavement, with stronger hopes than the philosopher seeking an honest man, but with no better fortune. He had arrived about midway towards the lower end, from which his course began, when he overheard the approach of someone, who struck down a cane on the flag-stones at every step, uttering, at regular intervals, two sepulchral hems.

"Mercy on us!" quoth Robin, recognizing the sound.

Turning a corner, which chanced to be close at his right hand, he hastened to pursue his researches, in some other part of the town. His patience was now wearing low, and he seemed to feel more fatigue from his rambles since he crossed the ferry, than from his journey of several days on the other side. Hunger also pleaded loudly within him, and Robin began to balance the propriety of demanding, violently, and with lifted cudgel, the necessary guidance from the first solitary passenger, whom he should meet. While a resolution to this effect was gaining strength, he entered a street of mean appearance, on either side of which a row of ill-built houses was straggling towards the harbor. The moonlight fell upon no passenger along the whole extent, but in the third domicile which Robin passed there was a half-opened door, and his keen glance detected a woman's garment within.

"My luck may be better here," said he to himself.

Accordingly, he approached the door, and beheld it shut closer as he did so; yet an open space remained, sufficing for the fair occupant to observe the stranger, without a corresponding display on her part. All that Robin could discern was a strip of scarlet petticoat, and the occasional sparkle of an eye, as if the moonbeams were trembling on some bright thing.

"Pretty mistress," for I may call her so with a good conscience, thought the shrewd youth, since I know nothing to the contrary--"my sweet pretty mistress, will you be kind enough to tell me whereabouts I must seek the dwelling of my kinsman, Major Molineux?"

Robin's voice was plaintive and winning, and the female, seeing nothing to be shunned in the handsome country youth, thrust open the door, and came forth into the moonlight. She was a dainty little figure, with a white neck, round arms, and a slender waist, at the extremity of which her scarlet petticoat jutted out over a hoop, as if she were standing in a balloon. Moreover, her face was oval and pretty, her hair dark beneath the little cap, and her bright eyes possessed a sly freedom, which triumphed over those of Robin.

"Major Molineux dwells here," said this fair woman.

Now her voice was the sweetest Robin had heard that night, the airy counterpart of a stream of melted silver; yet he could not help doubting whether that sweet voice spoke Gospel truth. He looked up and down the mean street, and then surveyed the house before which they stood. It was a small, dark edifice of two stories, the second of which projected over the lower floor; and the front apartment had the aspect of a shop for petty commodities.

"Now truly I am in luck," replied Robin, cunningly, "and so indeed is my kinsman, the major, in having so pretty a housekeeper. But I prithee trouble him to step to the door; I will deliver him a message from his friends in the country, and then go back to my lodgings at the inn."

"Nay, the Major has been a-bed this hour or more," said the lady of the scarlet petticoat; "and it would be to little purpose to disturb him tonight, seeing his evening draught was of the strongest. But he is a kind-hearted man, and it would be as much as my life's worth, to let a kinsman of his turn away from the door. You are the good old gentleman's very picture, and I could swear that was his rainy-weather hat. Also he has garments very much resembling those leather small-clothes. But come in, I pray, for I bid you hearty welcome in his name."

So saying, the fair and hospitable dame took our hero by the hand; and though the touch was light, and the force was gentleness, and though Robin read in her eyes what he did not hear in her words, yet the slender-waisted woman, in the scarlet petticoat, proved stronger than the athletic country youth. She had drawn his half-willing footsteps nearly to the threshold, when the opening of a door in the neighborhood, startled the Major's housekeeper, and, leaving the Major's kinsman, she vanished speedily into her own domicile. A heavy yawn preceded the appearance of a man, who, like the Moonshine of Pyramus and Thisbe, carried a lantern, needlessly aiding his sister luminary in the heavens. As he walked sleepily up the street, he turned his broad, dull face on Robin, and displayed a long staff, spiked at the end.

"Home, vagabond, home!" said the watchman, in accents that seemed to fall asleep as soon as they were uttered. "Home, or we'll set you in the stocks by peep of day!"

"This is the second hint of the kind," thought Robin. "I wish they would end my difficulties, by setting me there tonight."

Nevertheless, the youth felt an instinctive antipathy towards the guardian of midnight order, which at first prevented him from asking his usual question. But just when the man was about to vanish behind the corner, Robin resolved not to lose the opportunity, and shouted lustily after him--

"I say, friend! will you guide me to the house of my kinsman, Major Molineux?"

The watchman made no reply, but turned the corner and was gone; yet Robin seemed to hear the sound of drowsy laughter stealing along the solitary street. At that moment, also, a pleasant titter saluted him from the open window above his head; he looked up, and caught the sparkle of a saucy eye; a round arm beckoned to him, and next he heard light footsteps descending the staircase within. But Robin, being of the household of a New England clergyman, was a good youth, as well as a shrewd one; so he resisted temptation, and fled away.

He now roamed desperately, and at random, through the town, almost ready to believe that a spell was on him, like that by which a wizard of his country had once kept three pursuers wandering, a whole winter night, within twenty paces of the cottage which they sought. The streets lay before him, strange and desolate, and the lights were extinguished in almost every house. Twice, however, little parties of men, among whom Robin distinguished individuals in outlandish attire, came hurrying along; but though on both occasions they paused to address him, such intercourse did not at all enlighten his perplexity. They did but utter a few words in some language of which Robin knew nothing, and perceiving his inability to answer, bestowed a curse upon him in plain English, and hastened away. Finally, the lad determined to knock at the door of every mansion that might appear worthy to be occupied by his kinsman, trusting that perseverance would overcome the fatality that had hitherto thwarted him. Firm in this resolve, he was passing beneath the walls of a church, which formed the corner of two streets, when, as he turned into the shade of its steeple, he encountered a bulky stranger, muffled in a cloak. The man was proceeding with the speed of earnest business, but Robin planted himself full before him, holding the oak cudgel with both hands across his body, as a bar to further passage.

"Halt, honest man, and answer me a question," said he, very resolutely. "Tell me, this instant, whereabouts is the dwelling of my kinsman, Major Molineux?"

"Keep your tongue between your teeth, fool, and let me pass!" said a deep, gruff voice, which Robin partly remembered. "Let me pass, I say, or I'll strike you to the earth!"

"No, no, neighbor!" cried Robin, flourishing his cudgel, and then thrusting its larger end close to the man's muffled face. "No, no, I'm not the fool you take me for, nor do you pass, till I have an answer to my question. Whereabouts is the dwelling of my kinsman, Major Molineux?"

The stranger, instead of attempting to force his passage, stepped back into the moonlight, unmuffled his face, and stared full into that of Robin.

"Watch here an hour, and Major Molineux will pass by," said he.

Robin gazed with dismay, and astonishment, on the unprecedented physiognomy of the speaker. The forehead with its double prominence, the broad-hooked nose, the shaggy eyebrows, and fiery eyes, were those which he had noticed at the inn, but the man's complexion had undergone a singular, or, more properly, a two-fold change. One side of the face blazed an intense red, while the other was black as midnight, the division line being in the broad bridge of the nose; and a mouth which seemed to extend from ear to ear was black or red, in contrast to the color of the cheek. The effect was as if two individual devils, a fiend of fire and a fiend of darkness, had united themselves to form this infernal visage. The stranger grinned in Robin's face, muffled his parti-colored features, and was out of sight in a moment.

"Strange things we travellers see!" ejaculated Robin.

He seated himself, however, upon the steps of the church-door, resolving to wait the appointed time for his kinsman. A few moments were consumed in philosophical speculations upon the species of the genus homo, who had just left him; but having settled this point shrewdly, rationally, and satisfactorily, he was compelled to look elsewhere for his amusement. And first he threw his eyes along the street; it was of more respectable appearance than most of those into which he had wandered, and the moon, "creating, like the imaginative power, a beautiful strangeness in familiar objects," gave something of romance to a scene, that might not have possessed it in the light of day. The irregular and often quaint architecture of the houses, some of whose roofs were broken into numerous little peaks, while others ascended, steep and narrow, into a single point, and others again were square; the pure milk-white of some of their complexions, the aged darkness of others, and the thousand sparklings, reflected from bright substances in the walls of many; these matters engaged Robin's attention for a while, and then began to grow wearisome. Next he endeavored to define the forms of distant objects, starting away, with almost ghostly indistinctness, just as his eye appeared to grasp them; and finally he took a minute survey of an edifice which stood on the opposite side of the street, directly in front of the church-door, where he was stationed. It was a large, square mansion, distinguished from its neighbors by a balcony, which rested on tall pillars, and by an elaborate Gothic window, communicating therewith.

"Perhaps this is the very house I have been seeking," thought Robin.

Then he strove to speed away the time, by listening to a murmur which swept continually along the street, yet was scarcely audible, except to an unaccustomed ear like his; it was a low, dull, dreamy sound, compounded of many noises, each of which was at too great a distance to be separately heard. Robin marvelled at this snore of a sleeping town, and marvelled more whenever its continuity was broken by now and then a distant shout, apparently loud where it originated. But altogether it was a sleep-inspiring sound, and, to shake off its drowsy influence, Robin arose, and climbed a window-frame, that he might view the interior of the church. There the moonbeams came trembling in, and fell down upon the deserted pews, and extended along the quiet aisles. A fainter, yet more awful radiance, was hovering around the pulpit, and one solitary ray had dared to rest upon the opened page of the great Bible. Had nature, in that deep hour, become a worshipper in the house, which man had builded? Or was that heavenly light the visible sanctity of the place, visible because no earthly and impure feet were within the walls? The scene made Robin's heart shiver with a sensation of loneliness, stronger than he had ever felt in the remotest depths of his native woods; so he turned away, and sat down again before the door. There were graves around the church, and now an uneasy thought obtruded into Robin's breast. What if the object of his search, which had been so often and so strangely thwarted, were all the time mouldering in his shroud? What if his kinsman should glide through yonder gate, and nod and smile to him in dimly passing by?

"Oh, that any breathing thing were here with me!" said Robin.

Recalling his thoughts from this uncomfortable track, he sent them over forest, hill, and stream, and attempted to imagine how that evening of ambiguity and weariness, had been spent by his father's household. He pictured them assembled at the door, beneath the tree, the great old tree, which had been spared for its huge twisted trunk, and venerable shade, when a thousand leafy brethren fell. There, at the going down of the summer sun, it was his father's custom to perform domestic worship, that the neighbors might come and join with him like brothers of the family, and that the wayfaring man might pause to drink at that fountain, and keep his heart pure by freshening the memory of home. Robin distinguished the seat of every individual of the little audience; he saw the good man in the midst, holding the Scriptures in the golden light that shone from the western clouds; he beheld him close the book, and all rise up to pray. He heard the old thanksgivings for daily mercies, the old supplications for their continuance, to which he had so often listened in weariness, but which were now among his dear remembrances. He perceived the slight inequality of his father's voice when he came to speak of the Absent One; he noted how his mother turned her face to the broad and knotted trunk; how his elder brother scorned, because the beard was rough upon his upper lip, to permit his features to be moved; how the younger sister drew down a low hanging branch before her eyes; and how the little one of all, whose sports had hitherto broken the decorum of the scene, understood the prayer for her playmate, and burst into clamorous grief. Then he saw them go in at the door; and when Robin would have entered also, the latch tinkled into its place, and he was excluded from his home.

"Am I here, or there?" cried Robin, starting; for all at once, when his thoughts had become visible and audible in a dream, the long, wide, solitary street shone out before him.

He aroused himself, and endeavored to fix his attention steadily upon the large edifice which he had surveyed before. But still his mind kept vibrating between fancy and reality; by turns, the pillars of the balcony lengthened into the tall, bare stems of pines, dwindled down to human figures, settled again into their true shape and size, and then commenced a new succession of changes. For a single moment, when he deemed himself awake, he could have sworn that a visage, one which he seemed to remember, yet could not absolutely name as his kinsman's, was looking towards him from the Gothic window. A deeper sleep wrestled with and nearly overcame him, but fled at the sound of footsteps along the opposite pavement. Robin rubbed his eyes, discerned a man passing at the foot of the balcony, and addressed him in a loud, peevish, and lamentable cry.

"Hallo, friend! must I wait here all night for my kinsman, Major Molineux?"

The sleeping echoes awoke, and answered the voice; and the passenger, barely able to discern a figure sitting in the oblique shade of the steeple, traversed the street to obtain a nearer view. He was himself a gentleman in his prime, of open, intelligent, cheerful, and altogether prepossessing countenance. Perceiving a country youth, apparently homeless and without friends, he accosted him in a tone of real kindness, which had become strange to Robin's ears.

"Well, my good lad, why are you sitting here?" inquired he. "Can I be of service to you in any way?"

"I am afraid not, Sir," replied Robin, despondingly; "yet I shall take it kindly, if you'll answer me a single question. I've been searching, half the night, for one Major Molineux; now, Sir, is there really such a person in these parts, or am I dreaming?"

"Major Molineux! The name is not altogether strange to me," said the gentleman, smiling. "Have you any objection to telling me the nature of your business with him?"

Then Robin briefly related that his father was a clergyman, settled on a small salary, at a long distance back in the country, and that he and Major Molineux were brothers' children. The Major, having inherited riches, and acquired civil and military rank, had visited his cousin, in great pomp, a year or two before; had manifested much interest in Robin and an elder brother, and, being childless himself, had thrown out hints respecting the future establishment of one of them in life. The elder brother was destined to succeed to the farm, which his father cultivated, in the interval of sacred duties; it was therefore determined that Robin should profit by hiskinsman's generous intentions, especially as he seemed to be rather the favorite, and was thought to possess other necessary endowments.

"For I have the name of being a shrewd youth," observed Robin, in this part of his story.

"I doubt not you deserve it," replied his new friend, good-naturedly; "but pray proceed."

"Well, sir, being nearly eighteen years old, and well-grown, as you see," continued Robin, drawing himself up to his full height, "I thought it high time to begin the world. So my mother and sister put me in handsome trim, and my father gave me half the remnant of his last year's salary, and five days ago I started for this place, to pay the Major a visit. But, would you believe it, Sir? I crossed the ferry a little after dusk, and have yet found nobody that would show me the way to his dwelling; only an hour or two since, I was told to wait here, and Major Molineux would pass by."

"Can you describe the man who told you this?" inquired the gentleman.

"Oh, he was a very ill-favored fellow, Sir," replied Robin, "with two great bumps on his forehead, a hook nose, fiery eyes, and, what struck me as the strangest, his face was of two different colors. Do you happen to know such a man, Sir?"

"Not intimately," answered the stranger, "but I chanced to meet him a little time previous to your stopping me. I believe you may trust his word, and that the Major will very shortly pass through this street. In the meantime, as I have a singular curiosity to witness your meeting, I will sit down here upon the steps, and bear you company."

He seated himself accordingly, and soon engaged his companion in animated discourse. It was but of brief continuance, however, for a noise of shouting, which had long been remotely audible, drew so much nearer, that Robin inquired its cause.

"What may be the meaning of this uproar?" asked he. "Truly, if your town be always as noisy, I shall find little sleep, while I am an inhabitant."

"Why, indeed, friend Robin, there do appear to be three or four riotous fellows abroad to-night," replied the gentleman. "You must not expect all the stillness of your native woods, here in our streets. But the watch will shortly be at the heels of these lads, and--"

"Ay, and set them in the stocks by peep of day," interrupted Robin, recollecting his own encounter with the drowsy lantern-bearer. "But, dear Sir, if I may trust my ears, an army of watchmen would never make head against such a multitude of rioters. There were at least a thousand voices went to make up that one shout."

"May not a man have several voices, Robin, as well as two complexions?" said his friend.

"Perhaps a man may; but Heaven forbid that a woman should!" responded the shrewd youth, thinking of the seductive tones of the Major's housekeeper.

The sounds of a trumpet in some neighboring street now became so evident and continual, that Robin's curiosity was strongly excited. In addition to the shouts, he heard frequent bursts from many instruments of discord, and a wild and confused laughter filled up the intervals. Robin rose from the steps, and looked wistfully towards a point, whither several people seemed to be hastening.

"Surely some prodigious merrymaking is going on," exclaimed he. "I have laughed very little since I left home, Sir, and should be sorry to lose an opportunity. Shall we just step round the corner by that darkish house, and take our share of the fun?"

"Sit down again, sit down, good Robin," replied the gentleman, laying his hand on the skirt of the gray coat. "You forget that we must wait here for your kinsman; and there is reason to believe that he will pass by, in the course of a very few moments."

The near approach of the uproar had now disturbed the neighborhood; windows flew open on all sides; and many heads, in the attire of the pillow, and confused by sleep suddenly broken, were protruded to the gaze of whoever had leisure to observe them. Eager voices hailed each other from house to house, all demanding the explanation, which not a soul could give. Half-dressed men hurried towards the unknown commotion, stumbling as they went over the stone steps, that thrust themselves into the narrow foot-walk. The shouts, the laughter, and the tuneless bray, the antipodes of music, came onward with increasing din, till scattered individuals, and then denser bodies, began to appear round a corner, at the distance of a hundred yards.

"Will you recognize your kinsman, Robin, if he passes in this crowd?" inquired the gentleman.

"Indeed, I can't warrant it, Sir; but I'll take my stand here, and keep a bright look out," answered Robin, descending to the outer edge of the pavement.

A mighty stream of people now emptied into the street, and came rolling slowly towards the church. A single horseman wheeled the corner in the midst of them, and close behind him came a band of fearful wind-instruments, sending forth a fresher discord, now that no intervening buildings kept it from the ear. Then a redder light disturbed the moonbeams, and a dense multitude of torches shone along the street, concealing, by their glare, whatever object they illuminated. The single horseman, clad in a military dress, and bearing a drawn sword, rode onward as the leader, and, by his fierce and variegated countenance, appeared like war personified: the red of one cheek was an emblem of fire and sword; the blackness of the other betokened the mourning that attends them. In his train were wild figures in the Indian dress, and many fantastic shapes without a model, giving the whole march a visionary air, as if a dream had broken forth from some feverish brain, and were sweeping visibly through the midnight streets. A mass of people, inactive, except as applauding spectators, hemmed the procession in, and several women ran along the side-walk, piercing the confusion of heavier sounds, with their shrill voices of mirth or terror.

"The double-faced fellow has his eye upon me," muttered Robin, with an indefinite but an uncomfortable idea that he was himself to bear a part in the pageantry.

The leader turned himself in the saddle, and fixed his glance full upon the country youth, as the steed went slowly by. When Robin had freed his eyes from those fiery ones, the musicians were passing before him, and the torches were close at hand; but the unsteady brightness of the latter formed a veil which he could not penetrate. The rattling of wheels over the stones sometimes found its way to his ear, and confused traces of a human form appeared at intervals, and then melted into the vivid light. A moment more, and the leader thundered a command to halt: the trumpets vomited a horrid breath, and held their peace; the shouts and laughter of the people died away, and there remained only a universal hum, allied to silence. Right before Robin's eyes was an uncovered cart. There the torches blazed the brightest, there the moon shone out like day, and there, in tar-and-feathery dignity, sat his kinsman Major Molineux!

He was an elderly man, of large and majestic person, and strong, square features, betokening a steady soul; but steady as it was, his enemies had found means to shake it. His face was pale as death, and far more ghastly; the broad forehead was contracted in his agony, so that his eyebrows formed one grizzled line; his eyes were red and wild, and the foam hung white upon his quivering lip. His whole frame was agitated by a quick and continual tremor, which his pride strove to quell, even in those circumstances of overwhelming humiliation. But perhaps the bitterest pang of all was when his eyes met those of Robin; for he evidently knew him on the instant, as the youth stood witnessing the foul disgrace of a head grown gray in honor. They stared at each other in silence, and Robin's knees shook, and his hair bristled, with a mixture of pity and terror. Soon, however, a bewildering excitement began to seize upon his mind; the preceding adventures of the night, the unexpected appearance of the crowd, the torches, the confused din and the hush that followed, the spectre of his kinsman reviled by that great multitude, all this, and, more than all, a perception of tremendous ridicule in the whole scene, affected him with a sort of mental inebriety. At that moment a voice of sluggish merriment saluted Robin's ears; he turned instinctively, and just behind the corner of the church stood the lantern-bearer, rubbing his eyes, and drowsily enjoying the lad's amazement. Then he heard a peal of laughter like the ringing of silvery bells; a woman twitched his arm, a saucy eye met his, and he saw the lady of the scarlet petticoat. A sharp, dry cachinnation appealed to his memory, and, standing on tiptoe in the crowd, with his white apron over his head, he beheld the courteous little innkeeper. And lastly, there sailed over the heads of the multitude a great, broad laugh, broken in the midst by two sepulchral hems; thus--

"Haw, haw, haw--hem, hem--haw, haw, haw, haw!"

The sound proceeded from the balcony of the opposite edifice, and thither Robin turned his eyes. In front of the Gothic window stood the old citizen, wrapped in a wide gown, his gray periwig exchanged for a night-cap, which was thrust back from his forehead, and his silk stockings hanging down about his legs. He supported himself on his polished cane in a fit of convulsive merriment, which manifested itself on his solemn old features like a funny inscription on a tomb-stone. Then Robin seemed to hear the voices of the barbers, of the guests of the inn, and of all who had made sport of him that night. The contagion was spreading among the multitude, when, all at once, it seized upon Robin, and he sent forth a shout of laughter that echoed through the street; every man shook his sides, every man emptied his lungs, but Robin's shout was the loudest there. The cloud-spirits peeped from their silvery islands, as the congregated mirth went roaring up the sky! The Man in the Moon heard the far bellow; "Oho," quoth he, "the old earth is frolicsome tonight!"

When there was a momentary calm in that tempestuous sea of sound, the leader gave the sign, the procession resumed its march. On they went, like fiends that throng in mockery around some dead potentate, mighty no more, but majestic still in his agony. On they went, in counterfeited pomp, in senseless uproar, in frenzied merriment, trampling all on an old man's heart. On swept the tumult, and left a silent street behind.

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"Well, Robin, are you dreaming?" inquired the gentleman, laying his hand on the youth's shoulder.

Robin started, and withdrew his arm from the stone post to which he had instinctively clung, while the living stream rolled by him. His cheek was somewhat pale, and his eye not quite as lively as in the earlier part of the evening.

"Will you be kind enough to show me the way to the ferry?" said he, after a moment's pause.

"You have, then, adopted a new subject of inquiry?" observed his companion, with a smile.

"Why, yes, Sir," replied Robin, rather dryly. "Thanks to you, and to my other friends, I have at last met my kinsman, and he will scarce desire to see my face again. I begin to grow weary of a town life, Sir. Will you show me the way to the ferry?"

"No, my good friend Robin, not to-night, at least," said the gentleman. "Some few days hence, if you continue to wish it, I will speed you on your journey. Or, if you prefer to remain with us, perhaps, as you are a shrewd youth, you may rise in the world, without the help of your kinsman, Major Molineux."

**FREDERICK DOUGLASS.**

Frederick Douglass was born in slavery as Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey near Easton in Talbot County, Maryland. He was not sure of the exact year of his birth, but he knew that it was 1817 or 1818. As a young boy he was sent to Baltimore, to be a house servant, where he learned to read and write, with the assistance of his master's wife. In 1838 he escaped from slavery and went to New York City, where he married Anna Murray, a free colored woman whom he had met in Baltimore. Soon thereafter he changed his name to Frederick Douglass. In 1841 he addressed a convention of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society in Nantucket and so greatly impressed the group that they immediately employed him as an agent. He was such an impressive orator that numerous persons doubted if he had ever been a slave, so he wrote NARRATIVE OF THE LIFE OF FREDERICK DOUGLASS. During the Civil War he assisted in the recruiting of colored men for the 54th and 55th Massachusetts Regiments and consistently argued for the emancipation of slaves. After the war he was active in securing and protecting the rights of the freemen. In his later years, at different times, he was secretary of the Santo Domingo Commission, marshall and recorder of deeds of the District of Columbia, and United States Minister to Haiti. His other autobiographical works are MY BONDAGE AND MY FREEDOM and LIFE AND TIMES OF FREDERICK DOUGLASS, published in 1855 and 1881 respectively. He died in 1895.

## CHAPTER I

I was born in Tuckahoe, near Hillsborough, and about twelve miles from Easton, in Talbot county, Maryland. I have no accurate knowledge of my age, never having seen any authentic record containing it. By far the larger part of the slaves know as little of their ages as horses know of theirs, and it is the wish of most masters within my knowledge to keep their slaves thus ignorant. I do not remember to have ever met a slave who could tell of his birthday. They seldom come nearer to it than planting-time, harvest-time, cherry-time, spring-time, or fall-time. A want of information concerning my own was a source of unhappiness to me even during childhood. The white children could tell their ages. I could not tell why I ought to be deprived of the same privilege. I was not allowed to make any inquiries of my master concerning it. He deemed all such inquiries on the part of a slave improper and impertinent, and evidence of a restless spirit. The nearest estimate I can give makes me now between twenty-seven and twenty-eight years of age. I come to this, from hearing my master say, some time during 1835, I was about seventeen years old.

My mother was named Harriet Bailey. She was the daughter of Isaac and Betsey Bailey, both colored, and quite dark. My mother was of a darker complexion than either my grandmother or grandfather.

My father was a white man. He was admitted to be such by all I ever heard speak of my parentage. The opinion was also whispered that my master was my father; but of the correctness of this opinion, I know nothing; the means of knowing was withheld from me. My mother and I were separated when I was but an infant—before I knew her as my mother. It is a common custom, in the part of Maryland from which I ran away, to part children from their mothers at a very early age. Frequently, before the child has reached its twelfth month, its mother is taken from it, and hired out on some farm a considerable distance off, and the child is placed under the care of an old woman, too old for field labor. For what this separation is done, I do not know, unless it be to hinder the development of the child's affection toward its mother, and to blunt and destroy the natural affection of the mother for the child. This is the inevitable result.

I never saw my mother, to know her as such, more than four or five times in my life; and each of these times was very short in duration, and at night. She was hired by a Mr. Stewart, who lived about twelve miles from my home. She made her journeys to see me in the night, travelling the whole distance on foot, after the performance of her day's work. She was a field hand, and a whipping is the penalty of not being in the field at sunrise, unless a slave has special permission from his or her master to the contrary—a permission which they seldom get, and one that gives to him that gives it the proud name of being a kind master. I do not recollect of ever seeing my mother by the light of day. She was with me in the night. She would lie down with me, and get me to sleep, but long before I waked she was gone. Very little communication ever took place between us. Death soon ended what little we could have while she lived, and with it her hardships and suffering. She died when I was about seven years old, on one of my master's farms, near Lee's Mill. I was not allowed to be present during her illness, at her death, or burial. She was gone long before I knew any thing about it. Never having enjoyed, to any considerable extent, her soothing presence, her tender and watchful care, I received the tidings of her death with much the same emotions I should have probably felt at the death of a stranger.

Called thus suddenly away, she left me without the slightest intimation of who my father was. The whisper that my master was my father, may or may not be true; and, true or false, it is of but little consequence to my purpose whilst the fact remains, in all its glaring odiousness, that slaveholders have ordained, and by law established, that the children of slave women shall in all cases follow the condition of their mothers; and this is done too obviously to administer to their own lusts, and make a gratification of their wicked desires profitable as well as pleasurable; for by this cunning arrangement, the slaveholder, in cases not a few, sustains to his slaves the double relation of master and father.

I know of such cases; and it is worthy of remark that such slaves invariably suffer greater hardships, and have more to contend with, than others. They are, in the first place, a constant offence to their mistress. She is ever disposed to find fault with them; they can seldom do any thing to please her; she is never better pleased than when she sees them under the lash, especially when she suspects her husband of showing to his mulatto children favors which he withholds from his black slaves. The master is frequently compelled to sell this class of his slaves, out of deference to the feelings of his white wife; and, cruel as the deed may strike any one to be, for a man to sell his own children to human flesh-mongers, it is often the dictate of humanity for him to do so; for, unless he does this, he must not only whip them himself, but must stand by and see one white son tie up his brother, of but few shades darker complexion than himself, and ply the gory lash to his naked back; and if he lisp one word of disapproval, it is set down to his parental partiality, and only makes a bad matter worse, both for himself and the slave whom he would protect and defend.

Every year brings with it multitudes of this class of slaves. It was doubtless in consequence of a knowledge of this fact, that one great statesman of the south predicted the downfall of slavery by the inevitable laws of population. Whether this prophecy is ever fulfilled or not, it is nevertheless plain that a very different-looking class of people are springing up at the south, and are now held in slavery, from those originally brought to this country from Africa; and if their increase do no other good, it will do away the force of the argument, that God cursed Ham, and therefore American slavery is right. If the lineal descendants of Ham are alone to be scripturally enslaved, it is certain that slavery at the south must soon become unscriptural; for thousands are ushered into the world, annually, who, like myself, owe their existence to white fathers, and those fathers most frequently their own masters.

I have had two masters. My first master's name was Anthony. I do not remember his first name. He was generally called Captain Anthony—a title which, I presume, he acquired by sailing a craft on the Chesapeake Bay. He was not considered a rich slaveholder. He owned two or three farms, and about thirty slaves. His farms and slaves were under the care of an overseer. The overseer's name was Plummer. Mr. Plummer was a miserable drunkard, a profane swearer, and a savage monster. He always went armed with a cowskin and a heavy cudgel. I have known him to cut and slash the women's heads so horribly, that even master would be enraged at his cruelty, and would threaten to whip him if he did not mind himself. Master, however, was not a humane slaveholder. It required extraordinary barbarity on the part of an overseer to affect him. He was a cruel man, hardened by a long life of slaveholding. He would at times seem to take great pleasure in whipping a slave. I have often been awakened at the dawn of day by the most heart-rending shrieks of an own aunt of mine, whom he used to tie up to a joist, and whip upon her naked back till she was literally covered with blood. No words, no tears, no prayers, from his gory victim, seemed to move his iron heart from its bloody purpose. The louder she screamed, the harder he whipped; and where the blood ran fastest, there he whipped longest. He would whip her to make her scream, and whip her to make her hush; and not until overcome by fatigue, would he cease to swing the blood-clotted cowskin. I remember the first time I ever witnessed this horrible exhibition. I was quite a child, but I well remember it. I never shall forget it whilst I remember any thing. It was the first of a long series of such outrages, of which I was doomed to be a witness and a participant. It struck me with awful force. It was the blood-stained gate, the entrance to the hell of slavery, through which I was about to pass. It was a most terrible spectacle. I wish I could commit to paper the feelings with which I beheld it.

This occurrence took place very soon after I went to live with my old master, and under the following circumstances. Aunt Hester went out one night,—where or for what I do not know,—and happened to be absent when my master desired her presence. He had ordered her not to go out evenings, and warned her that she must never let him catch her in company with a young man, who was paying attention to her belonging to Colonel Lloyd. The young man's name was Ned Roberts, generally called Lloyd's Ned. Why master was so careful of her, may be safely left to conjecture. She was a woman of noble form, and of graceful proportions, having very few equals, and fewer superiors, in personal appearance, among the colored or white women of our neighborhood.

Aunt Hester had not only disobeyed his orders in going out, but had been found in company with Lloyd's Ned; which circumstance, I found, from what he said while whipping her, was the chief offence. Had he been a man of pure morals himself, he might have been thought interested in protecting the innocence of my aunt; but those who knew him will not suspect him of any such virtue. Before he commenced whipping Aunt Hester, he took her into the kitchen, and stripped her from neck to waist, leaving her neck, shoulders, and back, entirely naked. He then told her to cross her hands, calling her at the same time a d——d b—-h. After crossing her hands, he tied them with a strong rope, and led her to a stool under a large hook in the joist, put in for the purpose. He made her get upon the stool, and tied her hands to the hook. She now stood fair for his infernal purpose. Her arms were stretched up at their full length, so that she stood upon the ends of her toes. He then said to her, "Now, you d——d b—-h, I'll learn you how to disobey my orders!" and after rolling up his sleeves, he commenced to lay on the heavy cowskin, and soon the warm, red blood (amid heart-rending shrieks from her, and horrid oaths from him) came dripping to the floor. I was so terrified and horror-stricken at the sight, that I hid myself in a closet, and dared not venture out till long after the bloody transaction was over. I expected it would be my turn next. It was all new to me. I had never seen any thing like it before. I had always lived with my grandmother on the outskirts of the plantation, where she was put to raise the children of the younger women. I had therefore been, until now, out of the way of the bloody scenes that often occurred on the plantation.

## CHAPTER II

My master's family consisted of two sons, Andrew and Richard; one daughter, Lucretia, and her husband, Captain Thomas Auld. They lived in one house, upon the home plantation of Colonel Edward Lloyd. My master was Colonel Lloyd's clerk and superintendent. He was what might be called the overseer of the overseers. I spent two years of childhood on this plantation in my old master's family. It was here that I witnessed the bloody transaction recorded in the first chapter; and as I received my first impressions of slavery on this plantation, I will give some description of it, and of slavery as it there existed. The plantation is about twelve miles north of Easton, in Talbot county, and is situated on the border of Miles River. The principal products raised upon it were tobacco, corn, and wheat. These were raised in great abundance; so that, with the products of this and the other farms belonging to him, he was able to keep in almost constant employment a large sloop, in carrying them to market at Baltimore. This sloop was named Sally Lloyd, in honor of one of the colonel's daughters. My master's son-in-law, Captain Auld, was master of the vessel; she was otherwise manned by the colonel's own slaves. Their names were Peter, Isaac, Rich, and Jake. These were esteemed very highly by the other slaves, and looked upon as the privileged ones of the plantation; for it was no small affair, in the eyes of the slaves, to be allowed to see Baltimore.

Colonel Lloyd kept from three to four hundred slaves on his home plantation, and owned a large number more on the neighboring farms belonging to him. The names of the farms nearest to the home plantation were Wye Town and New Design. "Wye Town" was under the overseership of a man named Noah Willis. New Design was under the overseership of a Mr. Townsend. The overseers of these, and all the rest of the farms, numbering over twenty, received advice and direction from the managers of the home plantation. This was the great business place. It was the seat of government for the whole twenty farms. All disputes among the overseers were settled here. If a slave was convicted of any high misdemeanor, became unmanageable, or evinced a determination to run away, he was brought immediately here, severely whipped, put on board the sloop, carried to Baltimore, and sold to Austin Woolfolk, or some other slave-trader, as a warning to the slaves remaining.

Here, too, the slaves of all the other farms received their monthly allowance of food, and their yearly clothing. The men and women slaves received, as their monthly allowance of food, eight pounds of pork, or its equivalent in fish, and one bushel of corn meal. Their yearly clothing consisted of two coarse linen shirts, one pair of linen trousers, like the shirts, one jacket, one pair of trousers for winter, made of coarse negro cloth, one pair of stockings, and one pair of shoes; the whole of which could not have cost more than seven dollars. The allowance of the slave children was given to their mothers, or the old women having the care of them. The children unable to work in the field had neither shoes, stockings, jackets, nor trousers, given to them; their clothing consisted of two coarse linen shirts per year. When these failed them, they went naked until the next allowance-day. Children from seven to ten years old, of both sexes, almost naked, might be seen at all seasons of the year.

There were no beds given the slaves, unless one coarse blanket be considered such, and none but the men and women had these. This, however, is not considered a very great privation. They find less difficulty from the want of beds, than from the want of time to sleep; for when their day's work in the field is done, the most of them having their washing, mending, and cooking to do, and having few or none of the ordinary facilities for doing either of these, very many of their sleeping hours are consumed in preparing for the field the coming day; and when this is done, old and young, male and female, married and single, drop down side by side, on one common bed,—the cold, damp floor,—each covering himself or herself with their miserable blankets; and here they sleep till they are summoned to the field by the driver's horn. At the sound of this, all must rise, and be off to the field. There must be no halting; every one must be at his or her post; and woe betides them who hear not this morning summons to the field; for if they are not awakened by the sense of hearing, they are by the sense of feeling: no age nor sex finds any favor. Mr. Severe, the overseer, used to stand by the door of the quarter, armed with a large hickory stick and heavy cowskin, ready to whip any one who was so unfortunate as not to hear, or, from any other cause, was prevented from being ready to start for the field at the sound of the horn.

Mr. Severe was rightly named: he was a cruel man. I have seen him whip a woman, causing the blood to run half an hour at the time; and this, too, in the midst of her crying children, pleading for their mother's release. He seemed to take pleasure in manifesting his fiendish barbarity. Added to his cruelty, he was a profane swearer. It was enough to chill the blood and stiffen the hair of an ordinary man to hear him talk. Scarce a sentence escaped him but that was commenced or concluded by some horrid oath. The field was the place to witness his cruelty and profanity. His presence made it both the field of blood and of blasphemy. From the rising till the going down of the sun, he was cursing, raving, cutting, and slashing among the slaves of the field, in the most frightful manner. His career was short. He died very soon after I went to Colonel Lloyd's; and he died as he lived, uttering, with his dying groans, bitter curses and horrid oaths. His death was regarded by the slaves as the result of a merciful providence.

Mr. Severe's place was filled by a Mr. Hopkins. He was a very different man. He was less cruel, less profane, and made less noise, than Mr. Severe. His course was characterized by no extraordinary demonstrations of cruelty. He whipped, but seemed to take no pleasure in it. He was called by the slaves a good overseer.

The home plantation of Colonel Lloyd wore the appearance of a country village. All the mechanical operations for all the farms were performed here. The shoemaking and mending, the blacksmithing, cartwrighting, coopering, weaving, and grain-grinding, were all performed by the slaves on the home plantation. The whole place wore a business-like aspect very unlike the neighboring farms. The number of houses, too, conspired to give it advantage over the neighboring farms. It was called by the slaves the *Great House Farm.* Few privileges were esteemed higher, by the slaves of the out-farms, than that of being selected to do errands at the Great House Farm. It was associated in their minds with greatness. A representative could not be prouder of his election to a seat in the American Congress, than a slave on one of the out-farms would be of his election to do errands at the Great House Farm. They regarded it as evidence of great confidence reposed in them by their overseers; and it was on this account, as well as a constant desire to be out of the field from under the driver's lash, that they esteemed it a high privilege, one worth careful living for. He was called the smartest and most trusty fellow, who had this honor conferred upon him the most frequently. The competitors for this office sought as diligently to please their overseers, as the office-seekers in the political parties seek to please and deceive the people. The same traits of character might be seen in Colonel Lloyd's slaves, as are seen in the slaves of the political parties.

The slaves selected to go to the Great House Farm, for the monthly allowance for themselves and their fellow-slaves, were peculiarly enthusiastic. While on their way, they would make the dense old woods, for miles around, reverberate with their wild songs, revealing at once the highest joy and the deepest sadness. They would compose and sing as they went along, consulting neither time nor tune. The thought that came up, came out—if not in the word, in the sound;—and as frequently in the one as in the other. They would sometimes sing the most pathetic sentiment in the most rapturous tone, and the most rapturous sentiment in the most pathetic tone. Into all of their songs they would manage to weave something of the Great House Farm. Especially would they do this, when leaving home. They would then sing most exultingly the following words:—

*"I am going away to the Great House Farm!*

*O, yea! O, yea! O!"*

This they would sing, as a chorus, to words which to many would seem unmeaning jargon, but which, nevertheless, were full of meaning to themselves. I have sometimes thought that the mere hearing of those songs would do more to impress some minds with the horrible character of slavery, than the reading of whole volumes of philosophy on the subject could do.

I did not, when a slave, understand the deep meaning of those rude and apparently incoherent songs. I was myself within the circle; so that I neither saw nor heard as those without might see and hear. They told a tale of woe which was then altogether beyond my feeble comprehension; they were tones loud, long, and deep; they breathed the prayer and complaint of souls boiling over with the bitterest anguish. Every tone was a testimony against slavery, and a prayer to God for deliverance from chains. The hearing of those wild notes always depressed my spirit, and filled me with ineffable sadness. I have frequently found myself in tears while hearing them. The mere recurrence to those songs, even now, afflicts me; and while I am writing these lines, an expression of feeling has already found its way down my cheek. To those songs I trace my first glimmering conception of the dehumanizing character of slavery. I can never get rid of that conception. Those songs still follow me, to deepen my hatred of slavery, and quicken my sympathies for my brethren in bonds. If any one wishes to be impressed with the soul-killing effects of slavery, let him go to Colonel Lloyd's plantation, and, on allowance-day, place himself in the deep pine woods, and there let him, in silence, analyze the sounds that shall pass through the chambers of his soul,—and if he is not thus impressed, it will only be because "there is no flesh in his obdurate heart."

I have often been utterly astonished, since I came to the north, to find persons who could speak of the singing, among slaves, as evidence of their contentment and happiness. It is impossible to conceive of a greater mistake. Slaves sing most when they are most unhappy. The songs of the slave represent the sorrows of his heart; and he is relieved by them, only as an aching heart is relieved by its tears. At least, such is my experience. I have often sung to drown my sorrow, but seldom to express my happiness. Crying for joy, and singing for joy, were alike uncommon to me while in the jaws of slavery. The singing of a man cast away upon a desolate island might be as appropriately considered as evidence of contentment and happiness, as the singing of a slave; the songs of the one and of the other are prompted by the same emotion.

## CHAPTER III

Colonel Lloyd kept a large and finely cultivated garden, which afforded almost constant employment for four men, besides the chief gardener, (Mr. M'Durmond.) This garden was probably the greatest attraction of the place. During the summer months, people came from far and near—from Baltimore, Easton, and Annapolis—to see it. It abounded in fruits of almost every description, from the hardy apple of the north to the delicate orange of the south. This garden was not the least source of trouble on the plantation. Its excellent fruit was quite a temptation to the hungry swarms of boys, as well as the older slaves, belonging to the colonel, few of whom had the virtue or the vice to resist it. Scarcely a day passed, during the summer, but that some slave had to take the lash for stealing fruit. The colonel had to resort to all kinds of stratagems to keep his slaves out of the garden. The last and most successful one was that of tarring his fence all around; after which, if a slave was caught with any tar upon his person, it was deemed sufficient proof that he had either been into the garden, or had tried to get in. In either case, he was severely whipped by the chief gardener. This plan worked well; the slaves became as fearful of tar as of the lash. They seemed to realize the impossibility of touching TAR without being defiled.

The colonel also kept a splendid riding equipage. His stable and carriage-house presented the appearance of some of our large city livery establishments. His horses were of the finest form and noblest blood. His carriage-house contained three splendid coaches, three or four gigs, besides dearborns and barouches of the most fashionable style.

This establishment was under the care of two slaves—old Barney and young Barney—father and son. To attend to this establishment was their sole work. But it was by no means an easy employment; for in nothing was Colonel Lloyd more particular than in the management of his horses. The slightest inattention to these was unpardonable, and was visited upon those, under whose care they were placed, with the severest punishment; no excuse could shield them, if the colonel only suspected any want of attention to his horses—a supposition which he frequently indulged, and one which, of course, made the office of old and young Barney a very trying one. They never knew when they were safe from punishment. They were frequently whipped when least deserving, and escaped whipping when most deserving it. Every thing depended upon the looks of the horses, and the state of Colonel Lloyd's own mind when his horses were brought to him for use. If a horse did not move fast enough, or hold his head high enough, it was owing to some fault of his keepers. It was painful to stand near the stable-door, and hear the various complaints against the keepers when a horse was taken out for use. "This horse has not had proper attention. He has not been sufficiently rubbed and curried, or he has not been properly fed; his food was too wet or too dry; he got it too soon or too late; he was too hot or too cold; he had too much hay, and not enough of grain; or he had too much grain, and not enough of hay; instead of old Barney's attending to the horse, he had very improperly left it to his son." To all these complaints, no matter how unjust, the slave must answer never a word. Colonel Lloyd could not brook any contradiction from a slave. When he spoke, a slave must stand, listen, and tremble; and such was literally the case. I have seen Colonel Lloyd make old Barney, a man between fifty and sixty years of age, uncover his bald head, kneel down upon the cold, damp ground, and receive upon his naked and toil-worn shoulders more than thirty lashes at the time. Colonel Lloyd had three sons—Edward, Murray, and Daniel,—and three sons-in-law, Mr. Winder, Mr. Nicholson, and Mr. Lowndes. All of these lived at the Great House Farm, and enjoyed the luxury of whipping the servants when they pleased, from old Barney down to William Wilkes, the coach-driver. I have seen Winder make one of the house-servants stand off from him a suitable distance to be touched with the end of his whip, and at every stroke raise great ridges upon his back.

To describe the wealth of Colonel Lloyd would be almost equal to describing the riches of Job. He kept from ten to fifteen house-servants. He was said to own a thousand slaves, and I think this estimate quite within the truth. Colonel Lloyd owned so many that he did not know them when he saw them; nor did all the slaves of the out-farms know him. It is reported of him, that, while riding along the road one day, he met a colored man, and addressed him in the usual manner of speaking to colored people on the public highways of the south: "Well, boy, whom do you belong to?" "To Colonel Lloyd," replied the slave. "Well, does the colonel treat you well?" "No, sir," was the ready reply. "What, does he work you too hard?" "Yes, sir." "Well, don't he give you enough to eat?" "Yes, sir, he gives me enough, such as it is."

The colonel, after ascertaining where the slave belonged, rode on; the man also went on about his business, not dreaming that he had been conversing with his master. He thought, said, and heard nothing more of the matter, until two or three weeks afterwards. The poor man was then informed by his overseer that, for having found fault with his master, he was now to be sold to a Georgia trader. He was immediately chained and handcuffed; and thus, without a moment's warning, he was snatched away, and forever sundered, from his family and friends, by a hand more unrelenting than death. This is the penalty of telling the truth, of telling the simple truth, in answer to a series of plain questions.

It is partly in consequence of such facts, that slaves, when inquired of as to their condition and the character of their masters, almost universally say they are contented, and that their masters are kind. The slaveholders have been known to send in spies among their slaves, to ascertain their views and feelings in regard to their condition. The frequency of this has had the effect to establish among the slaves the maxim, that a still tongue makes a wise head. They suppress the truth rather than take the consequences of telling it, and in so doing prove themselves a part of the human family. If they have any thing to say of their masters, it is generally in their masters' favor, especially when speaking to an untried man. I have been frequently asked, when a slave, if I had a kind master, and do not remember ever to have given a negative answer; nor did I, in pursuing this course, consider myself as uttering what was absolutely false; for I always measured the kindness of my master by the standard of kindness set up among slaveholders around us. Moreover, slaves are like other people, and imbibe prejudices quite common to others. They think their own better than that of others. Many, under the influence of this prejudice, think their own masters are better than the masters of other slaves; and this, too, in some cases, when the very reverse is true. Indeed, it is not uncommon for slaves even to fall out and quarrel among themselves about the relative goodness of their masters, each contending for the superior goodness of his own over that of the others. At the very same time, they mutually execrate their masters when viewed separately. It was so on our plantation. When Colonel Lloyd's slaves met the slaves of Jacob Jepson, they seldom parted without a quarrel about their masters; Colonel Lloyd's slaves contending that he was the richest, and Mr. Jepson's slaves that he was the smartest, and most of a man. Colonel Lloyd's slaves would boast his ability to buy and sell Jacob Jepson. Mr. Jepson's slaves would boast his ability to whip Colonel Lloyd. These quarrels would almost always end in a fight between the parties, and those that whipped were supposed to have gained the point at issue. They seemed to think that the greatness of their masters was transferable to themselves. It was considered as being bad enough to be a slave; but to be a poor man's slave was deemed a disgrace indeed!

## CHAPTER IV

Mr. Hopkins remained but a short time in the office of overseer. Why his career was so short, I do not know, but suppose he lacked the necessary severity to suit Colonel Lloyd. Mr. Hopkins was succeeded by Mr. Austin Gore, a man possessing, in an eminent degree, all those traits of character indispensable to what is called a first-rate overseer. Mr. Gore had served Colonel Lloyd, in the capacity of overseer, upon one of the out-farms, and had shown himself worthy of the high station of overseer upon the home or Great House Farm.

Mr. Gore was proud, ambitious, and persevering. He was artful, cruel, and obdurate. He was just the man for such a place, and it was just the place for such a man. It afforded scope for the full exercise of all his powers, and he seemed to be perfectly at home in it. He was one of those who could torture the slightest look, word, or gesture, on the part of the slave, into impudence, and would treat it accordingly. There must be no answering back to him; no explanation was allowed a slave, showing himself to have been wrongfully accused. Mr. Gore acted fully up to the maxim laid down by slaveholders,—"It is better that a dozen slaves should suffer under the lash, than that the overseer should be convicted, in the presence of the slaves, of having been at fault." No matter how innocent a slave might be—it availed him nothing, when accused by Mr. Gore of any misdemeanor. To be accused was to be convicted, and to be convicted was to be punished; the one always following the other with immutable certainty. To escape punishment was to escape accusation; and few slaves had the fortune to do either, under the overseership of Mr. Gore. He was just proud enough to demand the most debasing homage of the slave, and quite servile enough to crouch, himself, at the feet of the master. He was ambitious enough to be contented with nothing short of the highest rank of overseers, and persevering enough to reach the height of his ambition. He was cruel enough to inflict the severest punishment, artful enough to descend to the lowest trickery, and obdurate enough to be insensible to the voice of a reproving conscience. He was, of all the overseers, the most dreaded by the slaves. His presence was painful; his eye flashed confusion; and seldom was his sharp, shrill voice heard, without producing horror and trembling in their ranks.

Mr. Gore was a grave man, and, though a young man, he indulged in no jokes, said no funny words, seldom smiled. His words were in perfect keeping with his looks, and his looks were in perfect keeping with his words. Overseers will sometimes indulge in a witty word, even with the slaves; not so with Mr. Gore. He spoke but to command, and commanded but to be obeyed; he dealt sparingly with his words, and bountifully with his whip, never using the former where the latter would answer as well. When he whipped, he seemed to do so from a sense of duty, and feared no consequences. He did nothing reluctantly, no matter how disagreeable; always at his post, never inconsistent. He never promised but to fulfil. He was, in a word, a man of the most inflexible firmness and stone-like coolness.

His savage barbarity was equalled only by the consummate coolness with which he committed the grossest and most savage deeds upon the slaves under his charge. Mr. Gore once undertook to whip one of Colonel Lloyd's slaves, by the name of Demby. He had given Demby but few stripes, when, to get rid of the scourging, he ran and plunged himself into a creek, and stood there at the depth of his shoulders, refusing to come out. Mr. Gore told him that he would give him three calls, and that, if he did not come out at the third call, he would shoot him. The first call was given. Demby made no response, but stood his ground. The second and third calls were given with the same result. Mr. Gore then, without consultation or deliberation with any one, not even giving Demby an additional call, raised his musket to his face, taking deadly aim at his standing victim, and in an instant poor Demby was no more. His mangled body sank out of sight, and blood and brains marked the water where he had stood.

A thrill of horror flashed through every soul upon the plantation, excepting Mr. Gore. He alone seemed cool and collected. He was asked by Colonel Lloyd and my old master, why he resorted to this extraordinary expedient. His reply was, (as well as I can remember,) that Demby had become unmanageable. He was setting a dangerous example to the other slaves,—one which, if suffered to pass without some such demonstration on his part, would finally lead to the total subversion of all rule and order upon the plantation. He argued that if one slave refused to be corrected, and escaped with his life, the other slaves would soon copy the example; the result of which would be, the freedom of the slaves, and the enslavement of the whites. Mr. Gore's defence was satisfactory. He was continued in his station as overseer upon the home plantation. His fame as an overseer went abroad. His horrid crime was not even submitted to judicial investigation. It was committed in the presence of slaves, and they of course could neither institute a suit, nor testify against him; and thus the guilty perpetrator of one of the bloodiest and most foul murders goes unwhipped of justice, and uncensured by the community in which he lives. Mr. Gore lived in St. Michael's, Talbot county, Maryland, when I left there; and if he is still alive, he very probably lives there now; and if so, he is now, as he was then, as highly esteemed and as much respected as though his guilty soul had not been stained with his brother's blood.

I speak advisedly when I say this,—that killing a slave, or any colored person, in Talbot county, Maryland, is not treated as a crime, either by the courts or the community. Mr. Thomas Lanman, of St. Michael's, killed two slaves, one of whom he killed with a hatchet, by knocking his brains out. He used to boast of the commission of the awful and bloody deed. I have heard him do so laughingly, saying, among other things, that he was the only benefactor of his country in the company, and that when others would do as much as he had done, we should be relieved of "the d——d niggers."

The wife of Mr. Giles Hicks, living but a short distance from where I used to live, murdered my wife's cousin, a young girl between fifteen and sixteen years of age, mangling her person in the most horrible manner, breaking her nose and breastbone with a stick, so that the poor girl expired in a few hours afterward. She was immediately buried, but had not been in her untimely grave but a few hours before she was taken up and examined by the coroner, who decided that she had come to her death by severe beating. The offence for which this girl was thus murdered was this:—She had been set that night to mind Mrs. Hicks's baby, and during the night she fell asleep, and the baby cried. She, having lost her rest for several nights previous, did not hear the crying. They were both in the room with Mrs. Hicks. Mrs. Hicks, finding the girl slow to move, jumped from her bed, seized an oak stick of wood by the fireplace, and with it broke the girl's nose and breastbone, and thus ended her life. I will not say that this most horrid murder produced no sensation in the community. It did produce sensation, but not enough to bring the murderess to punishment. There was a warrant issued for her arrest, but it was never served. Thus she escaped not only punishment, but even the pain of being arraigned before a court for her horrid crime.

Whilst I am detailing bloody deeds which took place during my stay on Colonel Lloyd's plantation, I will briefly narrate another, which occurred about the same time as the murder of Demby by Mr. Gore.

Colonel Lloyd's slaves were in the habit of spending a part of their nights and Sundays in fishing for oysters, and in this way made up the deficiency of their scanty allowance. An old man belonging to Colonel Lloyd, while thus engaged, happened to get beyond the limits of Colonel Lloyd's, and on the premises of Mr. Beal Bondly. At this trespass, Mr. Bondly took offence, and with his musket came down to the shore, and blew its deadly contents into the poor old man.

Mr. Bondly came over to see Colonel Lloyd the next day, whether to pay him for his property, or to justify himself in what he had done, I know not. At any rate, this whole fiendish transaction was soon hushed up. There was very little said about it at all, and nothing done. It was a common saying, even among little white boys, that it was worth a half-cent to kill a "nigger," and a half-cent to bury one.

## CHAPTER V

As to my own treatment while I lived on Colonel Lloyd's plantation, it was very similar to that of the other slave children. I was not old enough to work in the field, and there being little else than field work to do, I had a great deal of leisure time. The most I had to do was to drive up the cows at evening, keep the fowls out of the garden, keep the front yard clean, and run of errands for my old master's daughter, Mrs. Lucretia Auld. The most of my leisure time I spent in helping Master Daniel Lloyd in finding his birds, after he had shot them. My connection with Master Daniel was of some advantage to me. He became quite attached to me, and was a sort of protector of me. He would not allow the older boys to impose upon me, and would divide his cakes with me.

I was seldom whipped by my old master, and suffered little from any thing else than hunger and cold. I suffered much from hunger, but much more from cold. In hottest summer and coldest winter, I was kept almost naked—no shoes, no stockings, no jacket, no trousers, nothing on but a coarse tow linen shirt, reaching only to my knees. I had no bed. I must have perished with cold, but that, the coldest nights, I used to steal a bag which was used for carrying corn to the mill. I would crawl into this bag, and there sleep on the cold, damp, clay floor, with my head in and feet out. My feet have been so cracked with the frost, that the pen with which I am writing might be laid in the gashes.

We were not regularly allowanced. Our food was coarse corn meal boiled. This was called MUSH. It was put into a large wooden tray or trough, and set down upon the ground. The children were then called, like so many pigs, and like so many pigs they would come and devour the mush; some with oyster-shells, others with pieces of shingle, some with naked hands, and none with spoons. He that ate fastest got most; he that was strongest secured the best place; and few left the trough satisfied.

I was probably between seven and eight years old when I left Colonel Lloyd's plantation. I left it with joy. I shall never forget the ecstasy with which I received the intelligence that my old master (Anthony) had determined to let me go to Baltimore, to live with Mr. Hugh Auld, brother to my old master's son-in-law, Captain Thomas Auld. I received this information about three days before my departure. They were three of the happiest days I ever enjoyed. I spent the most part of all these three days in the creek, washing off the plantation scurf, and preparing myself for my departure.

The pride of appearance which this would indicate was not my own. I spent the time in washing, not so much because I wished to, but because Mrs. Lucretia had told me I must get all the dead skin off my feet and knees before I could go to Baltimore; for the people in Baltimore were very cleanly, and would laugh at me if I looked dirty. Besides, she was going to give me a pair of trousers, which I should not put on unless I got all the dirt off me. The thought of owning a pair of trousers was great indeed! It was almost a sufficient motive, not only to make me take off what would be called by pig-drovers the mange, but the skin itself. I went at it in good earnest, working for the first time with the hope of reward.

The ties that ordinarily bind children to their homes were all suspended in my case. I found no severe trial in my departure. My home was charmless; it was not home to me; on parting from it, I could not feel that I was leaving any thing which I could have enjoyed by staying. My mother was dead, my grandmother lived far off, so that I seldom saw her. I had two sisters and one brother, that lived in the same house with me; but the early separation of us from our mother had well nigh blotted the fact of our relationship from our memories. I looked for home elsewhere, and was confident of finding none which I should relish less than the one which I was leaving. If, however, I found in my new home hardship, hunger, whipping, and nakedness, I had the consolation that I should not have escaped any one of them by staying. Having already had more than a taste of them in the house of my old master, and having endured them there, I very naturally inferred my ability to endure them elsewhere, and especially at Baltimore; for I had something of the feeling about Baltimore that is expressed in the proverb, that "being hanged in England is preferable to dying a natural death in Ireland." I had the strongest desire to see Baltimore. Cousin Tom, though not fluent in speech, had inspired me with that desire by his eloquent description of the place. I could never point out any thing at the Great House, no matter how beautiful or powerful, but that he had seen something at Baltimore far exceeding, both in beauty and strength, the object which I pointed out to him. Even the Great House itself, with all its pictures, was far inferior to many buildings in Baltimore. So strong was my desire, that I thought a gratification of it would fully compensate for whatever loss of comforts I should sustain by the exchange. I left without a regret, and with the highest hopes of future happiness.

We sailed out of Miles River for Baltimore on a Saturday morning. I remember only the day of the week, for at that time I had no knowledge of the days of the month, nor the months of the year. On setting sail, I walked aft, and gave to Colonel Lloyd's plantation what I hoped would be the last look. I then placed myself in the bows of the sloop, and there spent the remainder of the day in looking ahead, interesting myself in what was in the distance rather than in things near by or behind.

In the afternoon of that day, we reached Annapolis, the capital of the State. We stopped but a few moments, so that I had no time to go on shore. It was the first large town that I had ever seen, and though it would look small compared with some of our New England factory villages, I thought it a wonderful place for its size—more imposing even than the Great House Farm!

We arrived at Baltimore early on Sunday morning, landing at Smith's Wharf, not far from Bowley's Wharf. We had on board the sloop a large flock of sheep; and after aiding in driving them to the slaughterhouse of Mr. Curtis on Louden Slater's Hill, I was conducted by Rich, one of the hands belonging on board of the sloop, to my new home in Alliciana Street, near Mr. Gardner's ship-yard, on Fells Point.

Mr. and Mrs. Auld were both at home, and met me at the door with their little son Thomas, to take care of whom I had been given. And here I saw what I had never seen before; it was a white face beaming with the most kindly emotions; it was the face of my new mistress, Sophia Auld. I wish I could describe the rapture that flashed through my soul as I beheld it. It was a new and strange sight to me, brightening up my pathway with the light of happiness. Little Thomas was told, there was his Freddy,—and I was told to take care of little Thomas; and thus I entered upon the duties of my new home with the most cheering prospect ahead.

I look upon my departure from Colonel Lloyd's plantation as one of the most interesting events of my life. It is possible, and even quite probable, that but for the mere circumstance of being removed from that plantation to Baltimore, I should have to-day, instead of being here seated by my own table, in the enjoyment of freedom and the happiness of home, writing this Narrative, been confined in the galling chains of slavery. Going to live at Baltimore laid the foundation, and opened the gateway, to all my subsequent prosperity. I have ever regarded it as the first plain manifestation of that kind providence which has ever since attended me, and marked my life with so many favors. I regarded the selection of myself as being somewhat remarkable. There were a number of slave children that might have been sent from the plantation to Baltimore. There were those younger, those older, and those of the same age. I was chosen from among them all, and was the first, last, and only choice.

I may be deemed superstitious, and even egotistical, in regarding this event as a special interposition of divine Providence in my favor. But I should be false to the earliest sentiments of my soul, if I suppressed the opinion. I prefer to be true to myself, even at the hazard of incurring the ridicule of others, rather than to be false, and incur my own abhorrence. From my earliest recollection, I date the entertainment of a deep conviction that slavery would not always be able to hold me within its foul embrace; and in the darkest hours of my career in slavery, this living word of faith and spirit of hope departed not from me, but remained like ministering angels to cheer me through the gloom. This good spirit was from God, and to him I offer thanksgiving and praise.

## CHAPTER VI

My new mistress proved to be all she appeared when I first met her at the door,—a woman of the kindest heart and finest feelings. She had never had a slave under her control previously to myself, and prior to her marriage she had been dependent upon her own industry for a living. She was by trade a weaver; and by constant application to her business, she had been in a good degree preserved from the blighting and dehumanizing effects of slavery. I was utterly astonished at her goodness. I scarcely knew how to behave towards her. She was entirely unlike any other white woman I had ever seen. I could not approach her as I was accustomed to approach other white ladies. My early instruction was all out of place. The crouching servility, usually so acceptable a quality in a slave, did not answer when manifested toward her. Her favor was not gained by it; she seemed to be disturbed by it. She did not deem it impudent or unmannerly for a slave to look her in the face. The meanest slave was put fully at ease in her presence, and none left without feeling better for having seen her. Her face was made of heavenly smiles, and her voice of tranquil music.

But, alas! this kind heart had but a short time to remain such. The fatal poison of irresponsible power was already in her hands, and soon commenced its infernal work. That cheerful eye, under the influence of slavery, soon became red with rage; that voice, made all of sweet accord, changed to one of harsh and horrid discord; and that angelic face gave place to that of a demon.

Very soon after I went to live with Mr. and Mrs. Auld, she very kindly commenced to teach me the A, B, C. After I had learned this, she assisted me in learning to spell words of three or four letters. Just at this point of my progress, Mr. Auld found out what was going on, and at once forbade Mrs. Auld to instruct me further, telling her, among other things, that it was unlawful, as well as unsafe, to teach a slave to read. To use his own words, further, he said, "If you give a nigger an inch, he will take an ell. A nigger should know nothing but to obey his master—to do as he is told to do. Learning would *spoil* the best nigger in the world. Now," said he, "if you teach that nigger (speaking of myself) how to read, there would be no keeping him. It would forever unfit him to be a slave. He would at once become unmanageable, and of no value to his master. As to himself, it could do him no good, but a great deal of harm. It would make him discontented and unhappy." These words sank deep into my heart, stirred up sentiments within that lay slumbering, and called into existence an entirely new train of thought. It was a new and special revelation, explaining dark and mysterious things, with which my youthful understanding had struggled, but struggled in vain. I now understood what had been to me a most perplexing difficulty—to wit, the white man's power to enslave the black man. It was a grand achievement, and I prized it highly. From that moment, I understood the pathway from slavery to freedom. It was just what I wanted, and I got it at a time when I the least expected it. Whilst I was saddened by the thought of losing the aid of my kind mistress, I was gladdened by the invaluable instruction which, by the merest accident, I had gained from my master. Though conscious of the difficulty of learning without a teacher, I set out with high hope, and a fixed purpose, at whatever cost of trouble, to learn how to read. The very decided manner with which he spoke, and strove to impress his wife with the evil consequences of giving me instruction, served to convince me that he was deeply sensible of the truths he was uttering. It gave me the best assurance that I might rely with the utmost confidence on the results which, he said, would flow from teaching me to read. What he most dreaded, that I most desired. What he most loved, that I most hated. That which to him was a great evil, to be carefully shunned, was to me a great good, to be diligently sought; and the argument which he so warmly urged, against my learning to read, only served to inspire me with a desire and determination to learn. In learning to read, I owe almost as much to the bitter opposition of my master, as to the kindly aid of my mistress. I acknowledge the benefit of both.

I had resided but a short time in Baltimore before I observed a marked difference, in the treatment of slaves, from that which I had witnessed in the country. A city slave is almost a freeman, compared with a slave on the plantation. He is much better fed and clothed, and enjoys privileges altogether unknown to the slave on the plantation. There is a vestige of decency, a sense of shame, that does much to curb and check those outbreaks of atrocious cruelty so commonly enacted upon the plantation. He is a desperate slaveholder, who will shock the humanity of his non-slaveholding neighbors with the cries of his lacerated slave. Few are willing to incur the odium attaching to the reputation of being a cruel master; and above all things, they would not be known as not giving a slave enough to eat. Every city slaveholder is anxious to have it known of him, that he feeds his slaves well; and it is due to them to say, that most of them do give their slaves enough to eat. There are, however, some painful exceptions to this rule. Directly opposite to us, on Philpot Street, lived Mr. Thomas Hamilton. He owned two slaves. Their names were Henrietta and Mary. Henrietta was about twenty-two years of age, Mary was about fourteen; and of all the mangled and emaciated creatures I ever looked upon, these two were the most so. His heart must be harder than stone, that could look upon these unmoved. The head, neck, and shoulders of Mary were literally cut to pieces. I have frequently felt her head, and found it nearly covered with festering sores, caused by the lash of her cruel mistress. I do not know that her master ever whipped her, but I have been an eye-witness to the cruelty of Mrs. Hamilton. I used to be in Mr. Hamilton's house nearly every day. Mrs. Hamilton used to sit in a large chair in the middle of the room, with a heavy cowskin always by her side, and scarce an hour passed during the day but was marked by the blood of one of these slaves. The girls seldom passed her without her saying, "Move faster, you *black gip!*" at the same time giving them a blow with the cowskin over the head or shoulders, often drawing the blood. She would then say, "Take that, you *black gip!*" continuing, "If you don't move faster, I'll move you!" Added to the cruel lashings to which these slaves were subjected, they were kept nearly half-starved. They seldom knew what it was to eat a full meal. I have seen Mary contending with the pigs for the offal thrown into the street. So much was Mary kicked and cut to pieces, that she was oftener called "*pecked*" than by her name.

## CHAPTER VII

I lived in Master Hugh's family about seven years. During this time, I succeeded in learning to read and write. In accomplishing this, I was compelled to resort to various stratagems. I had no regular teacher. My mistress, who had kindly commenced to instruct me, had, in compliance with the advice and direction of her husband, not only ceased to instruct, but had set her face against my being instructed by any one else. It is due, however, to my mistress to say of her, that she did not adopt this course of treatment immediately. She at first lacked the depravity indispensable to shutting me up in mental darkness. It was at least necessary for her to have some training in the exercise of irresponsible power, to make her equal to the task of treating me as though I were a brute.

My mistress was, as I have said, a kind and tender-hearted woman; and in the simplicity of her soul she commenced, when I first went to live with her, to treat me as she supposed one human being ought to treat another. In entering upon the duties of a slaveholder, she did not seem to perceive that I sustained to her the relation of a mere chattel, and that for her to treat me as a human being was not only wrong, but dangerously so. Slavery proved as injurious to her as it did to me. When I went there, she was a pious, warm, and tender-hearted woman. There was no sorrow or suffering for which she had not a tear. She had bread for the hungry, clothes for the naked, and comfort for every mourner that came within her reach. Slavery soon proved its ability to divest her of these heavenly qualities. Under its influence, the tender heart became stone, and the lamblike disposition gave way to one of tiger-like fierceness. The first step in her downward course was in her ceasing to instruct me. She now commenced to practise her husband's precepts. She finally became even more violent in her opposition than her husband himself. She was not satisfied with simply doing as well as he had commanded; she seemed anxious to do better. Nothing seemed to make her more angry than to see me with a newspaper. She seemed to think that here lay the danger. I have had her rush at me with a face made all up of fury, and snatch from me a newspaper, in a manner that fully revealed her apprehension. She was an apt woman; and a little experience soon demonstrated, to her satisfaction, that education and slavery were incompatible with each other.

From this time I was most narrowly watched. If I was in a separate room any considerable length of time, I was sure to be suspected of having a book, and was at once called to give an account of myself. All this, however, was too late. The first step had been taken. Mistress, in teaching me the alphabet, had given me the *inch,* and no precaution could prevent me from taking the *ell.*

The plan which I adopted, and the one by which I was most successful, was that of making friends of all the little white boys whom I met in the street. As many of these as I could, I converted into teachers. With their kindly aid, obtained at different times and in different places, I finally succeeded in learning to read. When I was sent of errands, I always took my book with me, and by going one part of my errand quickly, I found time to get a lesson before my return. I used also to carry bread with me, enough of which was always in the house, and to which I was always welcome; for I was much better off in this regard than many of the poor white children in our neighborhood. This bread I used to bestow upon the hungry little urchins, who, in return, would give me that more valuable bread of knowledge. I am strongly tempted to give the names of two or three of those little boys, as a testimonial of the gratitude and affection I bear them; but prudence forbids;—not that it would injure me, but it might embarrass them; for it is almost an unpardonable offence to teach slaves to read in this Christian country. It is enough to say of the dear little fellows, that they lived on Philpot Street, very near Durgin and Bailey's ship-yard. I used to talk this matter of slavery over with them. I would sometimes say to them, I wished I could be as free as they would be when they got to be men. "You will be free as soon as you are twenty-one, *but I am a slave for life!* Have not I as good a right to be free as you have?" These words used to trouble them; they would express for me the liveliest sympathy, and console me with the hope that something would occur by which I might be free.

I was now about twelve years old, and the thought of being *a slave for life* began to bear heavily upon my heart. Just about this time, I got hold of a book entitled "The Columbian Orator." Every opportunity I got, I used to read this book. Among much of other interesting matter, I found in it a dialogue between a master and his slave. The slave was represented as having run away from his master three times. The dialogue represented the conversation which took place between them, when the slave was retaken the third time. In this dialogue, the whole argument in behalf of slavery was brought forward by the master, all of which was disposed of by the slave. The slave was made to say some very smart as well as impressive things in reply to his master—things which had the desired though unexpected effect; for the conversation resulted in the voluntary emancipation of the slave on the part of the master.

In the same book, I met with one of Sheridan's mighty speeches on and in behalf of Catholic emancipation. These were choice documents to me. I read them over and over again with unabated interest. They gave tongue to interesting thoughts of my own soul, which had frequently flashed through my mind, and died away for want of utterance. The moral which I gained from the dialogue was the power of truth over the conscience of even a slaveholder. What I got from Sheridan was a bold denunciation of slavery, and a powerful vindication of human rights. The reading of these documents enabled me to utter my thoughts, and to meet the arguments brought forward to sustain slavery; but while they relieved me of one difficulty, they brought on another even more painful than the one of which I was relieved. The more I read, the more I was led to abhor and detest my enslavers. I could regard them in no other light than a band of successful robbers, who had left their homes, and gone to Africa, and stolen us from our homes, and in a strange land reduced us to slavery. I loathed them as being the meanest as well as the most wicked of men. As I read and contemplated the subject, behold! that very discontentment which Master Hugh had predicted would follow my learning to read had already come, to torment and sting my soul to unutterable anguish. As I writhed under it, I would at times feel that learning to read had been a curse rather than a blessing. It had given me a view of my wretched condition, without the remedy. It opened my eyes to the horrible pit, but to no ladder upon which to get out. In moments of agony, I envied my fellow-slaves for their stupidity. I have often wished myself a beast. I preferred the condition of the meanest reptile to my own. Any thing, no matter what, to get rid of thinking! It was this everlasting thinking of my condition that tormented me. There was no getting rid of it. It was pressed upon me by every object within sight or hearing, animate or inanimate. The silver trump of freedom had roused my soul to eternal wakefulness. Freedom now appeared, to disappear no more forever. It was heard in every sound, and seen in every thing. It was ever present to torment me with a sense of my wretched condition. I saw nothing without seeing it, I heard nothing without hearing it, and felt nothing without feeling it. It looked from every star, it smiled in every calm, breathed in every wind, and moved in every storm.

I often found myself regretting my own existence, and wishing myself dead; and but for the hope of being free, I have no doubt but that I should have killed myself, or done something for which I should have been killed. While in this state of mind, I was eager to hear any one speak of slavery. I was a ready listener. Every little while, I could hear something about the abolitionists. It was some time before I found what the word meant. It was always used in such connections as to make it an interesting word to me. If a slave ran away and succeeded in getting clear, or if a slave killed his master, set fire to a barn, or did any thing very wrong in the mind of a slaveholder, it was spoken of as the fruit of *abolition.* Hearing the word in this connection very often, I set about learning what it meant. The dictionary afforded me little or no help. I found it was "the act of abolishing;" but then I did not know what was to be abolished. Here I was perplexed. I did not dare to ask any one about its meaning, for I was satisfied that it was something they wanted me to know very little about. After a patient waiting, I got one of our city papers, containing an account of the number of petitions from the north, praying for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, and of the slave trade between the States. From this time I understood the words *abolition* and *abolitionist,* and always drew near when that word was spoken, expecting to hear something of importance to myself and fellow-slaves. The light broke in upon me by degrees. I went one day down on the wharf of Mr. Waters; and seeing two Irishmen unloading a scow of stone, I went, unasked, and helped them. When we had finished, one of them came to me and asked me if I were a slave. I told him I was. He asked, "Are ye a slave for life?" I told him that I was. The good Irishman seemed to be deeply affected by the statement. He said to the other that it was a pity so fine a little fellow as myself should be a slave for life. He said it was a shame to hold me. They both advised me to run away to the north; that I should find friends there, and that I should be free. I pretended not to be interested in what they said, and treated them as if I did not understand them; for I feared they might be treacherous. White men have been known to encourage slaves to escape, and then, to get the reward, catch them and return them to their masters. I was afraid that these seemingly good men might use me so; but I nevertheless remembered their advice, and from that time I resolved to run away. I looked forward to a time at which it would be safe for me to escape. I was too young to think of doing so immediately; besides, I wished to learn how to write, as I might have occasion to write my own pass. I consoled myself with the hope that I should one day find a good chance. Meanwhile, I would learn to write.

The idea as to how I might learn to write was suggested to me by being in Durgin and Bailey's ship-yard, and frequently seeing the ship carpenters, after hewing, and getting a piece of timber ready for use, write on the timber the name of that part of the ship for which it was intended. When a piece of timber was intended for the larboard side, it would be marked thus—"L." When a piece was for the starboard side, it would be marked thus—"S." A piece for the larboard side forward, would be marked thus—"L. F." When a piece was for starboard side forward, it would be marked thus—"S. F." For larboard aft, it would be marked thus—"L. A." For starboard aft, it would be marked thus—"S. A." I soon learned the names of these letters, and for what they were intended when placed upon a piece of timber in the ship-yard. I immediately commenced copying them, and in a short time was able to make the four letters named. After that, when I met with any boy who I knew could write, I would tell him I could write as well as he. The next word would be, "I don't believe you. Let me see you try it." I would then make the letters which I had been so fortunate as to learn, and ask him to beat that. In this way I got a good many lessons in writing, which it is quite possible I should never have gotten in any other way. During this time, my copy-book was the board fence, brick wall, and pavement; my pen and ink was a lump of chalk. With these, I learned mainly how to write. I then commenced and continued copying the Italics in Webster's Spelling Book, until I could make them all without looking on the book. By this time, my little Master Thomas had gone to school, and learned how to write, and had written over a number of copy-books. These had been brought home, and shown to some of our near neighbors, and then laid aside. My mistress used to go to class meeting at the Wilk Street meetinghouse every Monday afternoon, and leave me to take care of the house. When left thus, I used to spend the time in writing in the spaces left in Master Thomas's copy-book, copying what he had written. I continued to do this until I could write a hand very similar to that of Master Thomas. Thus, after a long, tedious effort for years, I finally succeeded in learning how to write.

## CHAPTER VIII

In a very short time after I went to live at Baltimore, my old master's youngest son Richard died; and in about three years and six months after his death, my old master, Captain Anthony, died, leaving only his son, Andrew, and daughter, Lucretia, to share his estate. He died while on a visit to see his daughter at Hillsborough. Cut off thus unexpectedly, he left no will as to the disposal of his property. It was therefore necessary to have a valuation of the property, that it might be equally divided between Mrs. Lucretia and Master Andrew. I was immediately sent for, to be valued with the other property. Here again my feelings rose up in detestation of slavery. I had now a new conception of my degraded condition. Prior to this, I had become, if not insensible to my lot, at least partly so. I left Baltimore with a young heart overborne with sadness, and a soul full of apprehension. I took passage with Captain Rowe, in the schooner Wild Cat, and, after a sail of about twenty-four hours, I found myself near the place of my birth. I had now been absent from it almost, if not quite, five years. I, however, remembered the place very well. I was only about five years old when I left it, to go and live with my old master on Colonel Lloyd's plantation; so that I was now between ten and eleven years old.

We were all ranked together at the valuation. Men and women, old and young, married and single, were ranked with horses, sheep, and swine. There were horses and men, cattle and women, pigs and children, all holding the same rank in the scale of being, and were all subjected to the same narrow examination. Silvery-headed age and sprightly youth, maids and matrons, had to undergo the same indelicate inspection. At this moment, I saw more clearly than ever the brutalizing effects of slavery upon both slave and slaveholder.

After the valuation, then came the division. I have no language to express the high excitement and deep anxiety which were felt among us poor slaves during this time. Our fate for life was now to be decided. we had no more voice in that decision than the brutes among whom we were ranked. A single word from the white men was enough—against all our wishes, prayers, and entreaties—to sunder forever the dearest friends, dearest kindred, and strongest ties known to human beings. In addition to the pain of separation, there was the horrid dread of falling into the hands of Master Andrew. He was known to us all as being a most cruel wretch,—a common drunkard, who had, by his reckless mismanagement and profligate dissipation, already wasted a large portion of his father's property. We all felt that we might as well be sold at once to the Georgia traders, as to pass into his hands; for we knew that that would be our inevitable condition,—a condition held by us all in the utmost horror and dread.

I suffered more anxiety than most of my fellow-slaves. I had known what it was to be kindly treated; they had known nothing of the kind. They had seen little or nothing of the world. They were in very deed men and women of sorrow, and acquainted with grief. Their backs had been made familiar with the bloody lash, so that they had become callous; mine was yet tender; for while at Baltimore I got few whippings, and few slaves could boast of a kinder master and mistress than myself; and the thought of passing out of their hands into those of Master Andrew—a man who, but a few days before, to give me a sample of his bloody disposition, took my little brother by the throat, threw him on the ground, and with the heel of his boot stamped upon his head till the blood gushed from his nose and ears—was well calculated to make me anxious as to my fate. After he had committed this savage outrage upon my brother, he turned to me, and said that was the way he meant to serve me one of these days,—meaning, I suppose, when I came into his possession.

Thanks to a kind Providence, I fell to the portion of Mrs. Lucretia, and was sent immediately back to Baltimore, to live again in the family of Master Hugh. Their joy at my return equalled their sorrow at my departure. It was a glad day to me. I had escaped a worse than lion's jaws. I was absent from Baltimore, for the purpose of valuation and division, just about one month, and it seemed to have been six.

Very soon after my return to Baltimore, my mistress, Lucretia, died, leaving her husband and one child, Amanda; and in a very short time after her death, Master Andrew died. Now all the property of my old master, slaves included, was in the hands of strangers,—strangers who had had nothing to do with accumulating it. Not a slave was left free. All remained slaves, from the youngest to the oldest. If any one thing in my experience, more than another, served to deepen my conviction of the infernal character of slavery, and to fill me with unutterable loathing of slaveholders, it was their base ingratitude to my poor old grandmother. She had served my old master faithfully from youth to old age. She had been the source of all his wealth; she had peopled his plantation with slaves; she had become a great grandmother in his service. She had rocked him in infancy, attended him in childhood, served him through life, and at his death wiped from his icy brow the cold death-sweat, and closed his eyes forever. She was nevertheless left a slave—a slave for life—a slave in the hands of strangers; and in their hands she saw her children, her grandchildren, and her great-grandchildren, divided, like so many sheep, without being gratified with the small privilege of a single word, as to their or her own destiny. And, to cap the climax of their base ingratitude and fiendish barbarity, my grandmother, who was now very old, having outlived my old master and all his children, having seen the beginning and end of all of them, and her present owners finding she was of but little value, her frame already racked with the pains of old age, and complete helplessness fast stealing over her once active limbs, they took her to the woods, built her a little hut, put up a little mud-chimney, and then made her welcome to the privilege of supporting herself there in perfect loneliness; thus virtually turning her out to die! If my poor old grandmother now lives, she lives to suffer in utter loneliness; she lives to remember and mourn over the loss of children, the loss of grandchildren, and the loss of great-grandchildren. They are, in the language of the slave's poet, Whittier,—

*"Gone, gone, sold and gone*

*To the rice swamp dank and lone,*

*Where the slave-whip ceaseless swings,*

*Where the noisome insect stings,*

*Where the fever-demon strews*

*Poison with the falling dews,*

*Where the sickly sunbeams glare*

*Through the hot and misty air:—*

*Gone, gone, sold and gone*

*To the rice swamp dank and lone,*

*From Virginia hills and waters—*

*Woe is me, my stolen daughters!"*

The hearth is desolate. The children, the unconscious children, who once sang and danced in her presence, are gone. She gropes her way, in the darkness of age, for a drink of water. Instead of the voices of her children, she hears by day the moans of the dove, and by night the screams of the hideous owl. All is gloom. The grave is at the door. And now, when weighed down by the pains and aches of old age, when the head inclines to the feet, when the beginning and ending of human existence meet, and helpless infancy and painful old age combine together—at this time, this most needful time, the time for the exercise of that tenderness and affection which children only can exercise towards a declining parent—my poor old grandmother, the devoted mother of twelve children, is left all alone, in yonder little hut, before a few dim embers. She stands—she sits—she staggers—she falls—she groans—she dies—and there are none of her children or grandchildren present, to wipe from her wrinkled brow the cold sweat of death, or to place beneath the sod her fallen remains. Will not a righteous God visit for these things?

In about two years after the death of Mrs. Lucretia, Master Thomas married his second wife. Her name was Rowena Hamilton. She was the eldest daughter of Mr. William Hamilton. Master now lived in St. Michael's. Not long after his marriage, a misunderstanding took place between himself and Master Hugh; and as a means of punishing his brother, he took me from him to live with himself at St. Michael's. Here I underwent another most painful separation. It, however, was not so severe as the one I dreaded at the division of property; for, during this interval, a great change had taken place in Master Hugh and his once kind and affectionate wife. The influence of brandy upon him, and of slavery upon her, had effected a disastrous change in the characters of both; so that, as far as they were concerned, I thought I had little to lose by the change. But it was not to them that I was attached. It was to those little Baltimore boys that I felt the strongest attachment. I had received many good lessons from them, and was still receiving them, and the thought of leaving them was painful indeed. I was leaving, too, without the hope of ever being allowed to return. Master Thomas had said he would never let me return again. The barrier betwixt himself and brother he considered impassable.

I then had to regret that I did not at least make the attempt to carry out my resolution to run away; for the chances of success are tenfold greater from the city than from the country.

I sailed from Baltimore for St. Michael's in the sloop Amanda, Captain Edward Dodson. On my passage, I paid particular attention to the direction which the steamboats took to go to Philadelphia. I found, instead of going down, on reaching North Point they went up the bay, in a north-easterly direction. I deemed this knowledge of the utmost importance. My determination to run away was again revived. I resolved to wait only so long as the offering of a favorable opportunity. When that came, I was determined to be off.

## CHAPTER IX

I have now reached a period of my life when I can give dates. I left Baltimore, and went to live with Master Thomas Auld, at St. Michael's, in March, 1832. It was now more than seven years since I lived with him in the family of my old master, on Colonel Lloyd's plantation. We of course were now almost entire strangers to each other. He was to me a new master, and I to him a new slave. I was ignorant of his temper and disposition; he was equally so of mine. A very short time, however, brought us into full acquaintance with each other. I was made acquainted with his wife not less than with himself. They were well matched, being equally mean and cruel. I was now, for the first time during a space of more than seven years, made to feel the painful gnawings of hunger—a something which I had not experienced before since I left Colonel Lloyd's plantation. It went hard enough with me then, when I could look back to no period at which I had enjoyed a sufficiency. It was tenfold harder after living in Master Hugh's family, where I had always had enough to eat, and of that which was good. I have said Master Thomas was a mean man. He was so. Not to give a slave enough to eat, is regarded as the most aggravated development of meanness even among slaveholders. The rule is, no matter how coarse the food, only let there be enough of it. This is the theory; and in the part of Maryland from which I came, it is the general practice,—though there are many exceptions. Master Thomas gave us enough of neither coarse nor fine food. There were four slaves of us in the kitchen—my sister Eliza, my aunt Priscilla, Henny, and myself; and we were allowed less than a half of a bushel of corn-meal per week, and very little else, either in the shape of meat or vegetables. It was not enough for us to subsist upon. We were therefore reduced to the wretched necessity of living at the expense of our neighbors. This we did by begging and stealing, whichever came handy in the time of need, the one being considered as legitimate as the other. A great many times have we poor creatures been nearly perishing with hunger, when food in abundance lay mouldering in the safe and smoke-house, and our pious mistress was aware of the fact; and yet that mistress and her husband would kneel every morning, and pray that God would bless them in basket and store!

Bad as all slaveholders are, we seldom meet one destitute of every element of character commanding respect. My master was one of this rare sort. I do not know of one single noble act ever performed by him. The leading trait in his character was meanness; and if there were any other element in his nature, it was made subject to this. He was mean; and, like most other mean men, he lacked the ability to conceal his meanness. Captain Auld was not born a slaveholder. He had been a poor man, master only of a Bay craft. He came into possession of all his slaves by marriage; and of all men, adopted slaveholders are the worst. He was cruel, but cowardly. He commanded without firmness. In the enforcement of his rules, he was at times rigid, and at times lax. At times, he spoke to his slaves with the firmness of Napoleon and the fury of a demon; at other times, he might well be mistaken for an inquirer who had lost his way. He did nothing of himself. He might have passed for a lion, but for his ears. In all things noble which he attempted, his own meanness shone most conspicuous. His airs, words, and actions, were the airs, words, and actions of born slaveholders, and, being assumed, were awkward enough. He was not even a good imitator. He possessed all the disposition to deceive, but wanted the power. Having no resources within himself, he was compelled to be the copyist of many, and being such, he was forever the victim of inconsistency; and of consequence he was an object of contempt, and was held as such even by his slaves. The luxury of having slaves of his own to wait upon him was something new and unprepared for. He was a slaveholder without the ability to hold slaves. He found himself incapable of managing his slaves either by force, fear, or fraud. We seldom called him "master;" we generally called him "Captain Auld," and were hardly disposed to title him at all. I doubt not that our conduct had much to do with making him appear awkward, and of consequence fretful. Our want of reverence for him must have perplexed him greatly. He wished to have us call him master, but lacked the firmness necessary to command us to do so. His wife used to insist upon our calling him so, but to no purpose. In August, 1832, my master attended a Methodist camp-meeting held in the Bay-side, Talbot county, and there experienced religion. I indulged a faint hope that his conversion would lead him to emancipate his slaves, and that, if he did not do this, it would, at any rate, make him more kind and humane. I was disappointed in both these respects. It neither made him to be humane to his slaves, nor to emancipate them. If it had any effect on his character, it made him more cruel and hateful in all his ways; for I believe him to have been a much worse man after his conversion than before. Prior to his conversion, he relied upon his own depravity to shield and sustain him in his savage barbarity; but after his conversion, he found religious sanction and support for his slaveholding cruelty. He made the greatest pretensions to piety. His house was the house of prayer. He prayed morning, noon, and night. He very soon distinguished himself among his brethren, and was soon made a class-leader and exhorter. His activity in revivals was great, and he proved himself an instrument in the hands of the church in converting many souls. His house was the preachers' home. They used to take great pleasure in coming there to put up; for while he starved us, he stuffed them. We have had three or four preachers there at a time. The names of those who used to come most frequently while I lived there, were Mr. Storks, Mr. Ewery, Mr. Humphry, and Mr. Hickey. I have also seen Mr. George Cookman at our house. We slaves loved Mr. Cookman. We believed him to be a good man. We thought him instrumental in getting Mr. Samuel Harrison, a very rich slaveholder, to emancipate his slaves; and by some means got the impression that he was laboring to effect the emancipation of all the slaves. When he was at our house, we were sure to be called in to prayers. When the others were there, we were sometimes called in and sometimes not. Mr. Cookman took more notice of us than either of the other ministers. He could not come among us without betraying his sympathy for us, and, stupid as we were, we had the sagacity to see it.

While I lived with my master in St. Michael's, there was a white young man, a Mr. Wilson, who proposed to keep a Sabbath school for the instruction of such slaves as might be disposed to learn to read the New Testament. We met but three times, when Mr. West and Mr. Fairbanks, both class-leaders, with many others, came upon us with sticks and other missiles, drove us off, and forbade us to meet again. Thus ended our little Sabbath school in the pious town of St. Michael's.

I have said my master found religious sanction for his cruelty. As an example, I will state one of many facts going to prove the charge. I have seen him tie up a lame young woman, and whip her with a heavy cowskin upon her naked shoulders, causing the warm red blood to drip; and, in justification of the bloody deed, he would quote this passage of Scripture—"He that knoweth his master's will, and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes."

Master would keep this lacerated young woman tied up in this horrid situation four or five hours at a time. I have known him to tie her up early in the morning, and whip her before breakfast; leave her, go to his store, return at dinner, and whip her again, cutting her in the places already made raw with his cruel lash. The secret of master's cruelty toward "Henny" is found in the fact of her being almost helpless. When quite a child, she fell into the fire, and burned herself horribly. Her hands were so burnt that she never got the use of them. She could do very little but bear heavy burdens. She was to master a bill of expense; and as he was a mean man, she was a constant offence to him. He seemed desirous of getting the poor girl out of existence. He gave her away once to his sister; but, being a poor gift, she was not disposed to keep her. Finally, my benevolent master, to use his own words, "set her adrift to take care of herself." Here was a recently-converted man, holding on upon the mother, and at the same time turning out her helpless child, to starve and die! Master Thomas was one of the many pious slaveholders who hold slaves for the very charitable purpose of taking care of them.

My master and myself had quite a number of differences. He found me unsuitable to his purpose. My city life, he said, had had a very pernicious effect upon me. It had almost ruined me for every good purpose, and fitted me for every thing which was bad. One of my greatest faults was that of letting his horse run away, and go down to his father-inlaw's farm, which was about five miles from St. Michael's. I would then have to go after it. My reason for this kind of carelessness, or carefulness, was, that I could always get something to eat when I went there. Master William Hamilton, my master's father-in-law, always gave his slaves enough to eat. I never left there hungry, no matter how great the need of my speedy return. Master Thomas at length said he would stand it no longer. I had lived with him nine months, during which time he had given me a number of severe whippings, all to no good purpose. He resolved to put me out, as he said, to be broken; and, for this purpose, he let me for one year to a man named Edward Covey. Mr. Covey was a poor man, a farm-renter. He rented the place upon which he lived, as also the hands with which he tilled it. Mr. Covey had acquired a very high reputation for breaking young slaves, and this reputation was of immense value to him. It enabled him to get his farm tilled with much less expense to himself than he could have had it done without such a reputation. Some slaveholders thought it not much loss to allow Mr. Covey to have their slaves one year, for the sake of the training to which they were subjected, without any other compensation. He could hire young help with great ease, in consequence of this reputation. Added to the natural good qualities of Mr. Covey, he was a professor of religion—a pious soul—a member and a class-leader in the Methodist church. All of this added weight to his reputation as a "nigger-breaker." I was aware of all the facts, having been made acquainted with them by a young man who had lived there. I nevertheless made the change gladly; for I was sure of getting enough to eat, which is not the smallest consideration to a hungry man.

## CHAPTER X

I had left Master Thomas's house, and went to live with Mr. Covey, on the 1st of January, 1833. I was now, for the first time in my life, a field hand. In my new employment, I found myself even more awkward than a country boy appeared to be in a large city. I had been at my new home but one week before Mr. Covey gave me a very severe whipping, cutting my back, causing the blood to run, and raising ridges on my flesh as large as my little finger. The details of this affair are as follows: Mr. Covey sent me, very early in the morning of one of our coldest days in the month of January, to the woods, to get a load of wood. He gave me a team of unbroken oxen. He told me which was the in-hand ox, and which the off-hand one. He then tied the end of a large rope around the horns of the in-hand ox, and gave me the other end of it, and told me, if the oxen started to run, that I must hold on upon the rope. I had never driven oxen before, and of course I was very awkward. I, however, succeeded in getting to the edge of the woods with little difficulty; but I had got a very few rods into the woods, when the oxen took fright, and started full tilt, carrying the cart against trees, and over stumps, in the most frightful manner. I expected every moment that my brains would be dashed out against the trees. After running thus for a considerable distance, they finally upset the cart, dashing it with great force against a tree, and threw themselves into a dense thicket. How I escaped death, I do not know. There I was, entirely alone, in a thick wood, in a place new to me. My cart was upset and shattered, my oxen were entangled among the young trees, and there was none to help me. After a long spell of effort, I succeeded in getting my cart righted, my oxen disentangled, and again yoked to the cart. I now proceeded with my team to the place where I had, the day before, been chopping wood, and loaded my cart pretty heavily, thinking in this way to tame my oxen. I then proceeded on my way home. I had now consumed one half of the day. I got out of the woods safely, and now felt out of danger. I stopped my oxen to open the woods gate; and just as I did so, before I could get hold of my ox-rope, the oxen again started, rushed through the gate, catching it between the wheel and the body of the cart, tearing it to pieces, and coming within a few inches of crushing me against the gate-post. Thus twice, in one short day, I escaped death by the merest chance. On my return, I told Mr. Covey what had happened, and how it happened. He ordered me to return to the woods again immediately. I did so, and he followed on after me. Just as I got into the woods, he came up and told me to stop my cart, and that he would teach me how to trifle away my time, and break gates. He then went to a large gum-tree, and with his axe cut three large switches, and, after trimming them up neatly with his pocketknife, he ordered me to take off my clothes. I made him no answer, but stood with my clothes on. He repeated his order. I still made him no answer, nor did I move to strip myself. Upon this he rushed at me with the fierceness of a tiger, tore off my clothes, and lashed me till he had worn out his switches, cutting me so savagely as to leave the marks visible for a long time after. This whipping was the first of a number just like it, and for similar offences.

I lived with Mr. Covey one year. During the first six months, of that year, scarce a week passed without his whipping me. I was seldom free from a sore back. My awkwardness was almost always his excuse for whipping me. We were worked fully up to the point of endurance. Long before day we were up, our horses fed, and by the first approach of day we were off to the field with our hoes and ploughing teams. Mr. Covey gave us enough to eat, but scarce time to eat it. We were often less than five minutes taking our meals. We were often in the field from the first approach of day till its last lingering ray had left us; and at saving-fodder time, midnight often caught us in the field binding blades.

Covey would be out with us. The way he used to stand it, was this. He would spend the most of his afternoons in bed. He would then come out fresh in the evening, ready to urge us on with his words, example, and frequently with the whip. Mr. Covey was one of the few slaveholders who could and did work with his hands. He was a hard-working man. He knew by himself just what a man or a boy could do. There was no deceiving him. His work went on in his absence almost as well as in his presence; and he had the faculty of making us feel that he was ever present with us. This he did by surprising us. He seldom approached the spot where we were at work openly, if he could do it secretly. He always aimed at taking us by surprise. Such was his cunning, that we used to call him, among ourselves, "the snake." When we were at work in the cornfield, he would sometimes crawl on his hands and knees to avoid detection, and all at once he would rise nearly in our midst, and scream out, "Ha, ha! Come, come! Dash on, dash on!" This being his mode of attack, it was never safe to stop a single minute. His comings were like a thief in the night. He appeared to us as being ever at hand. He was under every tree, behind every stump, in every bush, and at every window, on the plantation. He would sometimes mount his horse, as if bound to St. Michael's, a distance of seven miles, and in half an hour afterwards you would see him coiled up in the corner of the wood-fence, watching every motion of the slaves. He would, for this purpose, leave his horse tied up in the woods. Again, he would sometimes walk up to us, and give us orders as though he was upon the point of starting on a long journey, turn his back upon us, and make as though he was going to the house to get ready; and, before he would get half way thither, he would turn short and crawl into a fence-corner, or behind some tree, and there watch us till the going down of the sun.

Mr. Covey's FORTE consisted in his power to deceive. His life was devoted to planning and perpetrating the grossest deceptions. Every thing he possessed in the shape of learning or religion, he made conform to his disposition to deceive. He seemed to think himself equal to deceiving the Almighty. He would make a short prayer in the morning, and a long prayer at night; and, strange as it may seem, few men would at times appear more devotional than he. The exercises of his family devotions were always commenced with singing; and, as he was a very poor singer himself, the duty of raising the hymn generally came upon me. He would read his hymn, and nod at me to commence. I would at times do so; at others, I would not. My non-compliance would almost always produce much confusion. To show himself independent of me, he would start and stagger through with his hymn in the most discordant manner. In this state of mind, he prayed with more than ordinary spirit. Poor man! such was his disposition, and success at deceiving, I do verily believe that he sometimes deceived himself into the solemn belief, that he was a sincere worshipper of the most high God; and this, too, at a time when he may be said to have been guilty of compelling his woman slave to commit the sin of adultery. The facts in the case are these: Mr. Covey was a poor man; he was just commencing in life; he was only able to buy one slave; and, shocking as is the fact, he bought her, as he said, for A BREEDER. This woman was named Caroline. Mr. Covey bought her from Mr. Thomas Lowe, about six miles from St. Michael's. She was a large, able-bodied woman, about twenty years old. She had already given birth to one child, which proved her to be just what he wanted. After buying her, he hired a married man of Mr. Samuel Harrison, to live with him one year; and him he used to fasten up with her every night! The result was, that, at the end of the year, the miserable woman gave birth to twins. At this result Mr. Covey seemed to be highly pleased, both with the man and the wretched woman. Such was his joy, and that of his wife, that nothing they could do for Caroline during her confinement was too good, or too hard, to be done. The children were regarded as being quite an addition to his wealth.

If at any one time of my life more than another, I was made to drink the bitterest dregs of slavery, that time was during the first six months of my stay with Mr. Covey. We were worked in all weathers. It was never too hot or too cold; it could never rain, blow, hail, or snow, too hard for us to work in the field. Work, work, work, was scarcely more the order of the day than of the night. The longest days were too short for him, and the shortest nights too long for him. I was somewhat unmanageable when I first went there, but a few months of this discipline tamed me. Mr. Covey succeeded in breaking me. I was broken in body, soul, and spirit. My natural elasticity was crushed, my intellect languished, the disposition to read departed, the cheerful spark that lingered about my eye died; the dark night of slavery closed in upon me; and behold a man transformed into a brute!

Sunday was my only leisure time. I spent this in a sort of beast-like stupor, between sleep and wake, under some large tree. At times I would rise up, a flash of energetic freedom would dart through my soul, accompanied with a faint beam of hope, that flickered for a moment, and then vanished. I sank down again, mourning over my wretched condition. I was sometimes prompted to take my life, and that of Covey, but was prevented by a combination of hope and fear. My sufferings on this plantation seem now like a dream rather than a stern reality.

Our house stood within a few rods of the Chesapeake Bay, whose broad bosom was ever white with sails from every quarter of the habitable globe. Those beautiful vessels, robed in purest white, so delightful to the eye of freemen, were to me so many shrouded ghosts, to terrify and torment me with thoughts of my wretched condition. I have often, in the deep stillness of a summer's Sabbath, stood all alone upon the lofty banks of that noble bay, and traced, with saddened heart and tearful eye, the countless number of sails moving off to the mighty ocean. The sight of these always affected me powerfully. My thoughts would compel utterance; and there, with no audience but the Almighty, I would pour out my soul's complaint, in my rude way, with an apostrophe to the moving multitude of ships:—

"You are loosed from your moorings, and are free; I am fast in my chains, and am a slave! You move merrily before the gentle gale, and I sadly before the bloody whip! You are freedom's swift-winged angels, that fly round the world; I am confined in bands of iron! O that I were free! O, that I were on one of your gallant decks, and under your protecting wing! Alas! betwixt me and you, the turbid waters roll. Go on, go on. O that I could also go! Could I but swim! If I could fly! O, why was I born a man, of whom to make a brute! The glad ship is gone; she hides in the dim distance. I am left in the hottest hell of unending slavery. O God, save me! God, deliver me! Let me be free! Is there any God? Why am I a slave? I will run away. I will not stand it. Get caught, or get clear, I'll try it. I had as well die with ague as the fever. I have only one life to lose. I had as well be killed running as die standing. Only think of it; one hundred miles straight north, and I am free! Try it? Yes! God helping me, I will. It cannot be that I shall live and die a slave. I will take to the water. This very bay shall yet bear me into freedom. The steamboats steered in a north-east course from North Point. I will do the same; and when I get to the head of the bay, I will turn my canoe adrift, and walk straight through Delaware into Pennsylvania. When I get there, I shall not be required to have a pass; I can travel without being disturbed. Let but the first opportunity offer, and, come what will, I am off. Meanwhile, I will try to bear up under the yoke. I am not the only slave in the world. Why should I fret? I can bear as much as any of them. Besides, I am but a boy, and all boys are bound to some one. It may be that my misery in slavery will only increase my happiness when I get free. There is a better day coming."

Thus I used to think, and thus I used to speak to myself; goaded almost to madness at one moment, and at the next reconciling myself to my wretched lot.

I have already intimated that my condition was much worse, during the first six months of my stay at Mr. Covey's, than in the last six. The circumstances leading to the change in Mr. Covey's course toward me form an epoch in my humble history. You have seen how a man was made a slave; you shall see how a slave was made a man. On one of the hottest days of the month of August, 1833, Bill Smith, William Hughes, a slave named Eli, and myself, were engaged in fanning wheat. Hughes was clearing the fanned wheat from before the fan. Eli was turning, Smith was feeding, and I was carrying wheat to the fan. The work was simple, requiring strength rather than intellect; yet, to one entirely unused to such work, it came very hard. About three o'clock of that day, I broke down; my strength failed me; I was seized with a violent aching of the head, attended with extreme dizziness; I trembled in every limb. Finding what was coming, I nerved myself up, feeling it would never do to stop work. I stood as long as I could stagger to the hopper with grain. When I could stand no longer, I fell, and felt as if held down by an immense weight. The fan of course stopped; every one had his own work to do; and no one could do the work of the other, and have his own go on at the same time.

Mr. Covey was at the house, about one hundred yards from the treading-yard where we were fanning. On hearing the fan stop, he left immediately, and came to the spot where we were. He hastily inquired what the matter was. Bill answered that I was sick, and there was no one to bring wheat to the fan. I had by this time crawled away under the side of the post and rail-fence by which the yard was enclosed, hoping to find relief by getting out of the sun. He then asked where I was. He was told by one of the hands. He came to the spot, and, after looking at me awhile, asked me what was the matter. I told him as well as I could, for I scarce had strength to speak. He then gave me a savage kick in the side, and told me to get up. I tried to do so, but fell back in the attempt. He gave me another kick, and again told me to rise. I again tried, and succeeded in gaining my feet; but, stooping to get the tub with which I was feeding the fan, I again staggered and fell. While down in this situation, Mr. Covey took up the hickory slat with which Hughes had been striking off the half-bushel measure, and with it gave me a heavy blow upon the head, making a large wound, and the blood ran freely; and with this again told me to get up. I made no effort to comply, having now made up my mind to let him do his worst. In a short time after receiving this blow, my head grew better. Mr. Covey had now left me to my fate. At this moment I resolved, for the first time, to go to my master, enter a complaint, and ask his protection. In order to do this, I must that afternoon walk seven miles; and this, under the circumstances, was truly a severe undertaking. I was exceedingly feeble; made so as much by the kicks and blows which I received, as by the severe fit of sickness to which I had been subjected. I, however, watched my chance, while Covey was looking in an opposite direction, and started for St. Michael's. I succeeded in getting a considerable distance on my way to the woods, when Covey discovered me, and called after me to come back, threatening what he would do if I did not come. I disregarded both his calls and his threats, and made my way to the woods as fast as my feeble state would allow; and thinking I might be overhauled by him if I kept the road, I walked through the woods, keeping far enough from the road to avoid detection, and near enough to prevent losing my way. I had not gone far before my little strength again failed me. I could go no farther. I fell down, and lay for a considerable time. The blood was yet oozing from the wound on my head. For a time I thought I should bleed to death; and think now that I should have done so, but that the blood so matted my hair as to stop the wound. After lying there about three quarters of an hour, I nerved myself up again, and started on my way, through bogs and briers, barefooted and bareheaded, tearing my feet sometimes at nearly every step; and after a journey of about seven miles, occupying some five hours to perform it, I arrived at master's store. I then presented an appearance enough to affect any but a heart of iron. From the crown of my head to my feet, I was covered with blood. My hair was all clotted with dust and blood; my shirt was stiff with blood. I suppose I looked like a man who had escaped a den of wild beasts, and barely escaped them. In this state I appeared before my master, humbly entreating him to interpose his authority for my protection. I told him all the circumstances as well as I could, and it seemed, as I spoke, at times to affect him. He would then walk the floor, and seek to justify Covey by saying he expected I deserved it. He asked me what I wanted. I told him, to let me get a new home; that as sure as I lived with Mr. Covey again, I should live with but to die with him; that Covey would surely kill me; he was in a fair way for it. Master Thomas ridiculed the idea that there was any danger of Mr. Covey's killing me, and said that he knew Mr. Covey; that he was a good man, and that he could not think of taking me from him; that, should he do so, he would lose the whole year's wages; that I belonged to Mr. Covey for one year, and that I must go back to him, come what might; and that I must not trouble him with any more stories, or that he would himself GET HOLD OF ME. After threatening me thus, he gave me a very large dose of salts, telling me that I might remain in St. Michael's that night, (it being quite late,) but that I must be off back to Mr. Covey's early in the morning; and that if I did not, he would *get hold of me,* which meant that he would whip me. I remained all night, and, according to his orders, I started off to Covey's in the morning, (Saturday morning,) wearied in body and broken in spirit. I got no supper that night, or breakfast that morning. I reached Covey's about nine o'clock; and just as I was getting over the fence that divided Mrs. Kemp's fields from ours, out ran Covey with his cowskin, to give me another whipping. Before he could reach me, I succeeded in getting to the cornfield; and as the corn was very high, it afforded me the means of hiding. He seemed very angry, and searched for me a long time. My behavior was altogether unaccountable. He finally gave up the chase, thinking, I suppose, that I must come home for something to eat; he would give himself no further trouble in looking for me. I spent that day mostly in the woods, having the alternative before me,—to go home and be whipped to death, or stay in the woods and be starved to death. That night, I fell in with Sandy Jenkins, a slave with whom I was somewhat acquainted. Sandy had a free wife who lived about four miles from Mr. Covey's; and it being Saturday, he was on his way to see her. I told him my circumstances, and he very kindly invited me to go home with him. I went home with him, and talked this whole matter over, and got his advice as to what course it was best for me to pursue. I found Sandy an old adviser. He told me, with great solemnity, I must go back to Covey; but that before I went, I must go with him into another part of the woods, where there was a certain *root,* which, if I would take some of it with me, carrying it *always on my right side,* would render it impossible for Mr. Covey, or any other white man, to whip me. He said he had carried it for years; and since he had done so, he had never received a blow, and never expected to while he carried it. I at first rejected the idea, that the simple carrying of a root in my pocket would have any such effect as he had said, and was not disposed to take it; but Sandy impressed the necessity with much earnestness, telling me it could do no harm, if it did no good. To please him, I at length took the root, and, according to his direction, carried it upon my right side. This was Sunday morning. I immediately started for home; and upon entering the yard gate, out came Mr. Covey on his way to meeting. He spoke to me very kindly, bade me drive the pigs from a lot near by, and passed on towards the church. Now, this singular conduct of Mr. Covey really made me begin to think that there was something in the ROOT which Sandy had given me; and had it been on any other day than Sunday, I could have attributed the conduct to no other cause than the influence of that root; and as it was, I was half inclined to think the *root* to be something more than I at first had taken it to be. All went well till Monday morning. On this morning, the virtue of the ROOT was fully tested. Long before daylight, I was called to go and rub, curry, and feed, the horses. I obeyed, and was glad to obey. But whilst thus engaged, whilst in the act of throwing down some blades from the loft, Mr. Covey entered the stable with a long rope; and just as I was half out of the loft, he caught hold of my legs, and was about tying me. As soon as I found what he was up to, I gave a sudden spring, and as I did so, he holding to my legs, I was brought sprawling on the stable floor. Mr. Covey seemed now to think he had me, and could do what he pleased; but at this moment—from whence came the spirit I don't know—I resolved to fight; and, suiting my action to the resolution, I seized Covey hard by the throat; and as I did so, I rose. He held on to me, and I to him. My resistance was so entirely unexpected that Covey seemed taken all aback. He trembled like a leaf. This gave me assurance, and I held him uneasy, causing the blood to run where I touched him with the ends of my fingers. Mr. Covey soon called out to Hughes for help. Hughes came, and, while Covey held me, attempted to tie my right hand. While he was in the act of doing so, I watched my chance, and gave him a heavy kick close under the ribs. This kick fairly sickened Hughes, so that he left me in the hands of Mr. Covey. This kick had the effect of not only weakening Hughes, but Covey also. When he saw Hughes bending over with pain, his courage quailed. He asked me if I meant to persist in my resistance. I told him I did, come what might; that he had used me like a brute for six months, and that I was determined to be used so no longer. With that, he strove to drag me to a stick that was lying just out of the stable door. He meant to knock me down. But just as he was leaning over to get the stick, I seized him with both hands by his collar, and brought him by a sudden snatch to the ground. By this time, Bill came. Covey called upon him for assistance. Bill wanted to know what he could do. Covey said, "Take hold of him, take hold of him!" Bill said his master hired him out to work, and not to help to whip me; so he left Covey and myself to fight our own battle out. We were at it for nearly two hours. Covey at length let me go, puffing and blowing at a great rate, saying that if I had not resisted, he would not have whipped me half so much. The truth was, that he had not whipped me at all. I considered him as getting entirely the worst end of the bargain; for he had drawn no blood from me, but I had from him. The whole six months afterwards, that I spent with Mr. Covey, he never laid the weight of his finger upon me in anger. He would occasionally say, he didn't want to get hold of me again. "No," thought I, "you need not; for you will come off worse than you did before."

This battle with Mr. Covey was the turning-point in my career as a slave. It rekindled the few expiring embers of freedom, and revived within me a sense of my own manhood. It recalled the departed self-confidence, and inspired me again with a determination to be free. The gratification afforded by the triumph was a full compensation for whatever else might follow, even death itself. He only can understand the deep satisfaction which I experienced, who has himself repelled by force the bloody arm of slavery. I felt as I never felt before. It was a glorious resurrection, from the tomb of slavery, to the heaven of freedom. My long-crushed spirit rose, cowardice departed, bold defiance took its place; and I now resolved that, however long I might remain a slave in form, the day had passed forever when I could be a slave in fact. I did not hesitate to let it be known of me, that the white man who expected to succeed in whipping, must also succeed in killing me.

From this time I was never again what might be called fairly whipped, though I remained a slave four years afterwards. I had several fights, but was never whipped.

It was for a long time a matter of surprise to me why Mr. Covey did not immediately have me taken by the constable to the whipping-post, and there regularly whipped for the crime of raising my hand against a white man in defence of myself. And the only explanation I can now think of does not entirely satisfy me; but such as it is, I will give it. Mr. Covey enjoyed the most unbounded reputation for being a first-rate overseer and negro-breaker. It was of considerable importance to him. That reputation was at stake; and had he sent me—a boy about sixteen years old—to the public whipping-post, his reputation would have been lost; so, to save his reputation, he suffered me to go unpunished.

My term of actual service to Mr. Edward Covey ended on Christmas day, 1833. The days between Christmas and New Year's day are allowed as holidays; and, accordingly, we were not required to perform any labor, more than to feed and take care of the stock. This time we regarded as our own, by the grace of our masters; and we therefore used or abused it nearly as we pleased. Those of us who had families at a distance, were generally allowed to spend the whole six days in their society. This time, however, was spent in various ways. The staid, sober, thinking and industrious ones of our number would employ themselves in making corn-brooms, mats, horse-collars, and baskets; and another class of us would spend the time in hunting opossums, hares, and coons. But by far the larger part engaged in such sports and merriments as playing ball, wrestling, running foot-races, fiddling, dancing, and drinking whisky; and this latter mode of spending the time was by far the most agreeable to the feelings of our masters. A slave who would work during the holidays was considered by our masters as scarcely deserving them. He was regarded as one who rejected the favor of his master. It was deemed a disgrace not to get drunk at Christmas; and he was regarded as lazy indeed, who had not provided himself with the necessary means, during the year, to get whisky enough to last him through Christmas.

From what I know of the effect of these holidays upon the slave, I believe them to be among the most effective means in the hands of the slaveholder in keeping down the spirit of insurrection. Were the slaveholders at once to abandon this practice, I have not the slightest doubt it would lead to an immediate insurrection among the slaves. These holidays serve as conductors, or safety-valves, to carry off the rebellious spirit of enslaved humanity. But for these, the slave would be forced up to the wildest desperation; and woe betide the slaveholder, the day he ventures to remove or hinder the operation of those conductors! I warn him that, in such an event, a spirit will go forth in their midst, more to be dreaded than the most appalling earthquake.

The holidays are part and parcel of the gross fraud, wrong, and inhumanity of slavery. They are professedly a custom established by the benevolence of the slaveholders; but I undertake to say, it is the result of selfishness, and one of the grossest frauds committed upon the down-trodden slave. They do not give the slaves this time because they would not like to have their work during its continuance, but because they know it would be unsafe to deprive them of it. This will be seen by the fact, that the slaveholders like to have their slaves spend those days just in such a manner as to make them as glad of their ending as of their beginning. Their object seems to be, to disgust their slaves with freedom, by plunging them into the lowest depths of dissipation. For instance, the slaveholders not only like to see the slave drink of his own accord, but will adopt various plans to make him drunk. One plan is, to make bets on their slaves, as to who can drink the most whisky without getting drunk; and in this way they succeed in getting whole multitudes to drink to excess. Thus, when the slave asks for virtuous freedom, the cunning slaveholder, knowing his ignorance, cheats him with a dose of vicious dissipation, artfully labelled with the name of liberty. The most of us used to drink it down, and the result was just what might be supposed; many of us were led to think that there was little to choose between liberty and slavery. We felt, and very properly too, that we had almost as well be slaves to man as to rum. So, when the holidays ended, we staggered up from the filth of our wallowing, took a long breath, and marched to the field,—feeling, upon the whole, rather glad to go, from what our master had deceived us into a belief was freedom, back to the arms of slavery.

I have said that this mode of treatment is a part of the whole system of fraud and inhumanity of slavery. It is so. The mode here adopted to disgust the slave with freedom, by allowing him to see only the abuse of it, is carried out in other things. For instance, a slave loves molasses; he steals some. His master, in many cases, goes off to town, and buys a large quantity; he returns, takes his whip, and commands the slave to eat the molasses, until the poor fellow is made sick at the very mention of it. The same mode is sometimes adopted to make the slaves refrain from asking for more food than their regular allowance. A slave runs through his allowance, and applies for more. His master is enraged at him; but, not willing to send him off without food, gives him more than is necessary, and compels him to eat it within a given time. Then, if he complains that he cannot eat it, he is said to be satisfied neither full nor fasting, and is whipped for being hard to please! I have an abundance of such illustrations of the same principle, drawn from my own observation, but think the cases I have cited sufficient. The practice is a very common one.

On the first of January, 1834, I left Mr. Covey, and went to live with Mr. William Freeland, who lived about three miles from St. Michael's. I soon found Mr. Freeland a very different man from Mr. Covey. Though not rich, he was what would be called an educated southern gentleman. Mr. Covey, as I have shown, was a well-trained negro-breaker and slave-driver. The former (slaveholder though he was) seemed to possess some regard for honor, some reverence for justice, and some respect for humanity. The latter seemed totally insensible to all such sentiments. Mr. Freeland had many of the faults peculiar to slaveholders, such as being very passionate and fretful; but I must do him the justice to say, that he was exceedingly free from those degrading vices to which Mr. Covey was constantly addicted. The one was open and frank, and we always knew where to find him. The other was a most artful deceiver, and could be understood only by such as were skilful enough to detect his cunningly-devised frauds. Another advantage I gained in my new master was, he made no pretensions to, or profession of, religion; and this, in my opinion, was truly a great advantage. I assert most unhesitatingly, that the religion of the south is a mere covering for the most horrid crimes,—a justifier of the most appalling barbarity,—a sanctifier of the most hateful frauds,—and a dark shelter under, which the darkest, foulest, grossest, and most infernal deeds of slaveholders find the strongest protection. Were I to be again reduced to the chains of slavery, next to that enslavement, I should regard being the slave of a religious master the greatest calamity that could befall me. For of all slaveholders with whom I have ever met, religious slaveholders are the worst. I have ever found them the meanest and basest, the most cruel and cowardly, of all others. It was my unhappy lot not only to belong to a religious slaveholder, but to live in a community of such religionists. Very near Mr. Freeland lived the Rev. Daniel Weeden, and in the same neighborhood lived the Rev. Rigby Hopkins. These were members and ministers in the Reformed Methodist Church. Mr. Weeden owned, among others, a woman slave, whose name I have forgotten. This woman's back, for weeks, was kept literally raw, made so by the lash of this merciless, *religious* wretch. He used to hire hands. His maxim was, Behave well or behave ill, it is the duty of a master occasionally to whip a slave, to remind him of his master's authority. Such was his theory, and such his practice.

Mr. Hopkins was even worse than Mr. Weeden. His chief boast was his ability to manage slaves. The peculiar feature of his government was that of whipping slaves in advance of deserving it. He always managed to have one or more of his slaves to whip every Monday morning. He did this to alarm their fears, and strike terror into those who escaped. His plan was to whip for the smallest offences, to prevent the commission of large ones. Mr. Hopkins could always find some excuse for whipping a slave. It would astonish one, unaccustomed to a slaveholding life, to see with what wonderful ease a slaveholder can find things, of which to make occasion to whip a slave. A mere look, word, or motion,—a mistake, accident, or want of power,—are all matters for which a slave may be whipped at any time. Does a slave look dissatisfied? It is said, he has the devil in him, and it must be whipped out. Does he speak loudly when spoken to by his master? Then he is getting high-minded, and should be taken down a button-hole lower. Does he forget to pull off his hat at the approach of a white person? Then he is wanting in reverence, and should be whipped for it. Does he ever venture to vindicate his conduct, when censured for it? Then he is guilty of impudence,—one of the greatest crimes of which a slave can be guilty. Does he ever venture to suggest a different mode of doing things from that pointed out by his master? He is indeed presumptuous, and getting above himself; and nothing less than a flogging will do for him. Does he, while ploughing, break a plough,—or, while hoeing, break a hoe? It is owing to his carelessness, and for it a slave must always be whipped. Mr. Hopkins could always find something of this sort to justify the use of the lash, and he seldom failed to embrace such opportunities. There was not a man in the whole county, with whom the slaves who had the getting their own home, would not prefer to live, rather than with this Rev. Mr. Hopkins. And yet there was not a man any where round, who made higher professions of religion, or was more active in revivals,—more attentive to the class, love-feast, prayer and preaching meetings, or more devotional in his family,—that prayed earlier, later, louder, and longer,—than this same reverend slave-driver, Rigby Hopkins.

But to return to Mr. Freeland, and to my experience while in his employment. He, like Mr. Covey, gave us enough to eat; but, unlike Mr. Covey, he also gave us sufficient time to take our meals. He worked us hard, but always between sunrise and sunset. He required a good deal of work to be done, but gave us good tools with which to work. His farm was large, but he employed hands enough to work it, and with ease, compared with many of his neighbors. My treatment, while in his employment, was heavenly, compared with what I experienced at the hands of Mr. Edward Covey.

Mr. Freeland was himself the owner of but two slaves. Their names were Henry Harris and John Harris. The rest of his hands he hired. These consisted of myself, Sandy Jenkins,\* and Handy Caldwell.

*\*This is the same man who gave me the roots to prevent my*

*being whipped by Mr. Covey. He was "a clever soul." We used*

*frequently to talk about the fight with Covey, and as often*

*as we did so, he would claim my success as the result of the*

*roots which he gave me. This superstition is very common*

*among the more ignorant slaves. A slave seldom dies but that*

*his death is attributed to trickery.*

Henry and John were quite intelligent, and in a very little while after I went there, I succeeded in creating in them a strong desire to learn how to read. This desire soon sprang up in the others also. They very soon mustered up some old spelling-books, and nothing would do but that I must keep a Sabbath school. I agreed to do so, and accordingly devoted my Sundays to teaching these my loved fellow-slaves how to read. Neither of them knew his letters when I went there. Some of the slaves of the neighboring farms found what was going on, and also availed themselves of this little opportunity to learn to read. It was understood, among all who came, that there must be as little display about it as possible. It was necessary to keep our religious masters at St. Michael's unacquainted with the fact, that, instead of spending the Sabbath in wrestling, boxing, and drinking whisky, we were trying to learn how to read the will of God; for they had much rather see us engaged in those degrading sports, than to see us behaving like intellectual, moral, and accountable beings. My blood boils as I think of the bloody manner in which Messrs. Wright Fairbanks and Garrison West, both class-leaders, in connection with many others, rushed in upon us with sticks and stones, and broke up our virtuous little Sabbath school, at St. Michael's—all calling themselves Christians! humble followers of the Lord Jesus Christ! But I am again digressing.

I held my Sabbath school at the house of a free colored man, whose name I deem it imprudent to mention; for should it be known, it might embarrass him greatly, though the crime of holding the school was committed ten years ago. I had at one time over forty scholars, and those of the right sort, ardently desiring to learn. They were of all ages, though mostly men and women. I look back to those Sundays with an amount of pleasure not to be expressed. They were great days to my soul. The work of instructing my dear fellow-slaves was the sweetest engagement with which I was ever blessed. We loved each other, and to leave them at the close of the Sabbath was a severe cross indeed. When I think that these precious souls are to-day shut up in the prison-house of slavery, my feelings overcome me, and I am almost ready to ask, "Does a righteous God govern the universe? and for what does he hold the thunders in his right hand, if not to smite the oppressor, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the spoiler?" These dear souls came not to Sabbath school because it was popular to do so, nor did I teach them because it was reputable to be thus engaged. Every moment they spent in that school, they were liable to be taken up, and given thirty-nine lashes. They came because they wished to learn. Their minds had been starved by their cruel masters. They had been shut up in mental darkness. I taught them, because it was the delight of my soul to be doing something that looked like bettering the condition of my race. I kept up my school nearly the whole year I lived with Mr. Freeland; and, beside my Sabbath school, I devoted three evenings in the week, during the winter, to teaching the slaves at home. And I have the happiness to know, that several of those who came to Sabbath school learned how to read; and that one, at least, is now free through my agency.

The year passed off smoothly. It seemed only about half as long as the year which preceded it. I went through it without receiving a single blow. I will give Mr. Freeland the credit of being the best master I ever had, *till I became my own master.* For the ease with which I passed the year, I was, however, somewhat indebted to the society of my fellow-slaves. They were noble souls; they not only possessed loving hearts, but brave ones. We were linked and interlinked with each other. I loved them with a love stronger than any thing I have experienced since. It is sometimes said that we slaves do not love and confide in each other. In answer to this assertion, I can say, I never loved any or confided in any people more than my fellow-slaves, and especially those with whom I lived at Mr. Freeland's. I believe we would have died for each other. We never undertook to do any thing, of any importance, without a mutual consultation. We never moved separately. We were one; and as much so by our tempers and dispositions, as by the mutual hardships to which we were necessarily subjected by our condition as slaves.

At the close of the year 1834, Mr. Freeland again hired me of my master, for the year 1835. But, by this time, I began to want to live *upon free land* as well as *with Freeland;* and I was no longer content, therefore, to live with him or any other slaveholder. I began, with the commencement of the year, to prepare myself for a final struggle, which should decide my fate one way or the other. My tendency was upward. I was fast approaching manhood, and year after year had passed, and I was still a slave. These thoughts roused me—I must do something. I therefore resolved that 1835 should not pass without witnessing an attempt, on my part, to secure my liberty. But I was not willing to cherish this determination alone. My fellow-slaves were dear to me. I was anxious to have them participate with me in this, my life-giving determination. I therefore, though with great prudence, commenced early to ascertain their views and feelings in regard to their condition, and to imbue their minds with thoughts of freedom. I bent myself to devising ways and means for our escape, and meanwhile strove, on all fitting occasions, to impress them with the gross fraud and inhumanity of slavery. I went first to Henry, next to John, then to the others. I found, in them all, warm hearts and noble spirits. They were ready to hear, and ready to act when a feasible plan should be proposed. This was what I wanted. I talked to them of our want of manhood, if we submitted to our enslavement without at least one noble effort to be free. We met often, and consulted frequently, and told our hopes and fears, recounted the difficulties, real and imagined, which we should be called on to meet. At times we were almost disposed to give up, and try to content ourselves with our wretched lot; at others, we were firm and unbending in our determination to go. Whenever we suggested any plan, there was shrinking—the odds were fearful. Our path was beset with the greatest obstacles; and if we succeeded in gaining the end of it, our right to be free was yet questionable—we were yet liable to be returned to bondage. We could see no spot, this side of the ocean, where we could be free. We knew nothing about Canada. Our knowledge of the north did not extend farther than New York; and to go there, and be forever harassed with the frightful liability of being returned to slavery—with the certainty of being treated tenfold worse than before—the thought was truly a horrible one, and one which it was not easy to overcome. The case sometimes stood thus: At every gate through which we were to pass, we saw a watchman—at every ferry a guard—on every bridge a sentinel—and in every wood a patrol. We were hemmed in upon every side. Here were the difficulties, real or imagined—the good to be sought, and the evil to be shunned. On the one hand, there stood slavery, a stern reality, glaring frightfully upon us,—its robes already crimsoned with the blood of millions, and even now feasting itself greedily upon our own flesh. On the other hand, away back in the dim distance, under the flickering light of the north star, behind some craggy hill or snow-covered mountain, stood a doubtful freedom—half frozen—beckoning us to come and share its hospitality. This in itself was sometimes enough to stagger us; but when we permitted ourselves to survey the road, we were frequently appalled. Upon either side we saw grim death, assuming the most horrid shapes. Now it was starvation, causing us to eat our own flesh;—now we were contending with the waves, and were drowned;—now we were overtaken, and torn to pieces by the fangs of the terrible bloodhound. We were stung by scorpions, chased by wild beasts, bitten by snakes, and finally, after having nearly reached the desired spot,—after swimming rivers, encountering wild beasts, sleeping in the woods, suffering hunger and nakedness,—we were overtaken by our pursuers, and, in our resistance, we were shot dead upon the spot! I say, this picture sometimes appalled us, and made us

*"rather bear those ills we had,*

*Than fly to others, that we knew not of."*

In coming to a fixed determination to run away, we did more than Patrick Henry, when he resolved upon liberty or death. With us it was a doubtful liberty at most, and almost certain death if we failed. For my part, I should prefer death to hopeless bondage.

Sandy, one of our number, gave up the notion, but still encouraged us. Our company then consisted of Henry Harris, John Harris, Henry Bailey, Charles Roberts, and myself. Henry Bailey was my uncle, and belonged to my master. Charles married my aunt: he belonged to my master's father-in-law, Mr. William Hamilton.

The plan we finally concluded upon was, to get a large canoe belonging to Mr. Hamilton, and upon the Saturday night previous to Easter holidays, paddle directly up the Chesapeake Bay. On our arrival at the head of the bay, a distance of seventy or eighty miles from where we lived, it was our purpose to turn our canoe adrift, and follow the guidance of the north star till we got beyond the limits of Maryland. Our reason for taking the water route was, that we were less liable to be suspected as runaways; we hoped to be regarded as fishermen; whereas, if we should take the land route, we should be subjected to interruptions of almost every kind. Any one having a white face, and being so disposed, could stop us, and subject us to examination.

The week before our intended start, I wrote several protections, one for each of us. As well as I can remember, they were in the following words, to wit:—

*"This is to certify that I, the undersigned, have given the bearer, my*

*servant, full liberty to go to Baltimore, and spend the Easter holidays.*

*Written with mine own hand, &c., 1835.*

*"WILLIAM HAMILTON,*

"Near St. Michael's, in Talbot county, Maryland."

We were not going to Baltimore; but, in going up the bay, we went toward Baltimore, and these protections were only intended to protect us while on the bay.

As the time drew near for our departure, our anxiety became more and more intense. It was truly a matter of life and death with us. The strength of our determination was about to be fully tested. At this time, I was very active in explaining every difficulty, removing every doubt, dispelling every fear, and inspiring all with the firmness indispensable to success in our undertaking; assuring them that half was gained the instant we made the move; we had talked long enough; we were now ready to move; if not now, we never should be; and if we did not intend to move now, we had as well fold our arms, sit down, and acknowledge ourselves fit only to be slaves. This, none of us were prepared to acknowledge. Every man stood firm; and at our last meeting, we pledged ourselves afresh, in the most solemn manner, that, at the time appointed, we would certainly start in pursuit of freedom. This was in the middle of the week, at the end of which we were to be off. We went, as usual, to our several fields of labor, but with bosoms highly agitated with thoughts of our truly hazardous undertaking. We tried to conceal our feelings as much as possible; and I think we succeeded very well.

After a painful waiting, the Saturday morning, whose night was to witness our departure, came. I hailed it with joy, bring what of sadness it might. Friday night was a sleepless one for me. I probably felt more anxious than the rest, because I was, by common consent, at the head of the whole affair. The responsibility of success or failure lay heavily upon me. The glory of the one, and the confusion of the other, were alike mine. The first two hours of that morning were such as I never experienced before, and hope never to again. Early in the morning, we went, as usual, to the field. We were spreading manure; and all at once, while thus engaged, I was overwhelmed with an indescribable feeling, in the fulness of which I turned to Sandy, who was near by, and said, "We are betrayed!" "Well," said he, "that thought has this moment struck me." We said no more. I was never more certain of any thing.

The horn was blown as usual, and we went up from the field to the house for breakfast. I went for the form, more than for want of any thing to eat that morning. Just as I got to the house, in looking out at the lane gate, I saw four white men, with two colored men. The white men were on horseback, and the colored ones were walking behind, as if tied. I watched them a few moments till they got up to our lane gate. Here they halted, and tied the colored men to the gate-post. I was not yet certain as to what the matter was. In a few moments, in rode Mr. Hamilton, with a speed betokening great excitement. He came to the door, and inquired if Master William was in. He was told he was at the barn. Mr. Hamilton, without dismounting, rode up to the barn with extraordinary speed. In a few moments, he and Mr. Freeland returned to the house. By this time, the three constables rode up, and in great haste dismounted, tied their horses, and met Master William and Mr. Hamilton returning from the barn; and after talking awhile, they all walked up to the kitchen door. There was no one in the kitchen but myself and John. Henry and Sandy were up at the barn. Mr. Freeland put his head in at the door, and called me by name, saying, there were some gentlemen at the door who wished to see me. I stepped to the door, and inquired what they wanted. They at once seized me, and, without giving me any satisfaction, tied me—lashing my hands closely together. I insisted upon knowing what the matter was. They at length said, that they had learned I had been in a "scrape," and that I was to be examined before my master; and if their information proved false, I should not be hurt.

In a few moments, they succeeded in tying John. They then turned to Henry, who had by this time returned, and commanded him to cross his hands. "I won't!" said Henry, in a firm tone, indicating his readiness to meet the consequences of his refusal. "Won't you?" said Tom Graham, the constable. "No, I won't!" said Henry, in a still stronger tone. With this, two of the constables pulled out their shining pistols, and swore, by their Creator, that they would make him cross his hands or kill him. Each cocked his pistol, and, with fingers on the trigger, walked up to Henry, saying, at the same time, if he did not cross his hands, they would blow his damned heart out. "Shoot me, shoot me!" said Henry; "you can't kill me but once. Shoot, shoot,—and be damned! *I won't be tied!*" This he said in a tone of loud defiance; and at the same time, with a motion as quick as lightning, he with one single stroke dashed the pistols from the hand of each constable. As he did this, all hands fell upon him, and, after beating him some time, they finally overpowered him, and got him tied.

During the scuffle, I managed, I know not how, to get my pass out, and, without being discovered, put it into the fire. We were all now tied; and just as we were to leave for Easton jail, Betsy Freeland, mother of William Freeland, came to the door with her hands full of biscuits, and divided them between Henry and John. She then delivered herself of a speech, to the following effect:—addressing herself to me, she said, "*You devil! You yellow devil!* it was you that put it into the heads of Henry and John to run away. But for you, you long-legged mulatto devil! Henry nor John would never have thought of such a thing." I made no reply, and was immediately hurried off towards St. Michael's. Just a moment previous to the scuffle with Henry, Mr. Hamilton suggested the propriety of making a search for the protections which he had understood Frederick had written for himself and the rest. But, just at the moment he was about carrying his proposal into effect, his aid was needed in helping to tie Henry; and the excitement attending the scuffle caused them either to forget, or to deem it unsafe, under the circumstances, to search. So we were not yet convicted of the intention to run away.

When we got about half way to St. Michael's, while the constables having us in charge were looking ahead, Henry inquired of me what he should do with his pass. I told him to eat it with his biscuit, and own nothing; and we passed the word around, "*Own nothing;*" and "*Own nothing!*" said we all. Our confidence in each other was unshaken. We were resolved to succeed or fail together, after the calamity had befallen us as much as before. We were now prepared for any thing. We were to be dragged that morning fifteen miles behind horses, and then to be placed in the Easton jail. When we reached St. Michael's, we underwent a sort of examination. We all denied that we ever intended to run away. We did this more to bring out the evidence against us, than from any hope of getting clear of being sold; for, as I have said, we were ready for that. The fact was, we cared but little where we went, so we went together. Our greatest concern was about separation. We dreaded that more than any thing this side of death. We found the evidence against us to be the testimony of one person; our master would not tell who it was; but we came to a unanimous decision among ourselves as to who their informant was. We were sent off to the jail at Easton. When we got there, we were delivered up to the sheriff, Mr. Joseph Graham, and by him placed in jail. Henry, John, and myself, were placed in one room together—Charles, and Henry Bailey, in another. Their object in separating us was to hinder concert.

We had been in jail scarcely twenty minutes, when a swarm of slave traders, and agents for slave traders, flocked into jail to look at us, and to ascertain if we were for sale. Such a set of beings I never saw before! I felt myself surrounded by so many fiends from perdition. A band of pirates never looked more like their father, the devil. They laughed and grinned over us, saying, "Ah, my boys! we have got you, haven't we?" And after taunting us in various ways, they one by one went into an examination of us, with intent to ascertain our value. They would impudently ask us if we would not like to have them for our masters. We would make them no answer, and leave them to find out as best they could. Then they would curse and swear at us, telling us that they could take the devil out of us in a very little while, if we were only in their hands.

While in jail, we found ourselves in much more comfortable quarters than we expected when we went there. We did not get much to eat, nor that which was very good; but we had a good clean room, from the windows of which we could see what was going on in the street, which was very much better than though we had been placed in one of the dark, damp cells. Upon the whole, we got along very well, so far as the jail and its keeper were concerned. Immediately after the holidays were over, contrary to all our expectations, Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Freeland came up to Easton, and took Charles, the two Henrys, and John, out of jail, and carried them home, leaving me alone. I regarded this separation as a final one. It caused me more pain than any thing else in the whole transaction. I was ready for any thing rather than separation. I supposed that they had consulted together, and had decided that, as I was the whole cause of the intention of the others to run away, it was hard to make the innocent suffer with the guilty; and that they had, therefore, concluded to take the others home, and sell me, as a warning to the others that remained. It is due to the noble Henry to say, he seemed almost as reluctant at leaving the prison as at leaving home to come to the prison. But we knew we should, in all probability, be separated, if we were sold; and since he was in their hands, he concluded to go peaceably home.

I was now left to my fate. I was all alone, and within the walls of a stone prison. But a few days before, and I was full of hope. I expected to have been safe in a land of freedom; but now I was covered with gloom, sunk down to the utmost despair. I thought the possibility of freedom was gone. I was kept in this way about one week, at the end of which, Captain Auld, my master, to my surprise and utter astonishment, came up, and took me out, with the intention of sending me, with a gentleman of his acquaintance, into Alabama. But, from some cause or other, he did not send me to Alabama, but concluded to send me back to Baltimore, to live again with his brother Hugh, and to learn a trade.

Thus, after an absence of three years and one month, I was once more permitted to return to my old home at Baltimore. My master sent me away, because there existed against me a very great prejudice in the community, and he feared I might be killed.

In a few weeks after I went to Baltimore, Master Hugh hired me to Mr. William Gardner, an extensive ship-builder, on Fell's Point. I was put there to learn how to calk. It, however, proved a very unfavorable place for the accomplishment of this object. Mr. Gardner was engaged that spring in building two large man-of-war brigs, professedly for the Mexican government. The vessels were to be launched in the July of that year, and in failure thereof, Mr. Gardner was to lose a considerable sum; so that when I entered, all was hurry. There was no time to learn any thing. Every man had to do that which he knew how to do. In entering the shipyard, my orders from Mr. Gardner were, to do whatever the carpenters commanded me to do. This was placing me at the beck and call of about seventy-five men. I was to regard all these as masters. Their word was to be my law. My situation was a most trying one. At times I needed a dozen pair of hands. I was called a dozen ways in the space of a single minute. Three or four voices would strike my ear at the same moment. It was—"Fred., come help me to cant this timber here."—"Fred., come carry this timber yonder."—"Fred., bring that roller here."—"Fred., go get a fresh can of water."—"Fred., come help saw off the end of this timber."—"Fred., go quick, and get the crowbar."—"Fred., hold on the end of this fall."—"Fred., go to the blacksmith's shop, and get a new punch."—"Hurra, Fred! run and bring me a cold chisel."—"I say, Fred., bear a hand, and get up a fire as quick as lightning under that steam-box."—"Halloo, nigger! come, turn this grindstone."—"Come, come! move, move! and BOWSE this timber forward."—"I say, darky, blast your eyes, why don't you heat up some pitch?"—"Halloo! halloo! halloo!" (Three voices at the same time.) "Come here!—Go there!—Hold on where you are! Damn you, if you move, I'll knock your brains out!"

This was my school for eight months; and I might have remained there longer, but for a most horrid fight I had with four of the white apprentices, in which my left eye was nearly knocked out, and I was horribly mangled in other respects. The facts in the case were these: Until a very little while after I went there, white and black ship-carpenters worked side by side, and no one seemed to see any impropriety in it. All hands seemed to be very well satisfied. Many of the black carpenters were freemen. Things seemed to be going on very well. All at once, the white carpenters knocked off, and said they would not work with free colored workmen. Their reason for this, as alleged, was, that if free colored carpenters were encouraged, they would soon take the trade into their own hands, and poor white men would be thrown out of employment. They therefore felt called upon at once to put a stop to it. And, taking advantage of Mr. Gardner's necessities, they broke off, swearing they would work no longer, unless he would discharge his black carpenters. Now, though this did not extend to me in form, it did reach me in fact. My fellow-apprentices very soon began to feel it degrading to them to work with me. They began to put on airs, and talk about the "niggers" taking the country, saying we all ought to be killed; and, being encouraged by the journeymen, they commenced making my condition as hard as they could, by hectoring me around, and sometimes striking me. I, of course, kept the vow I made after the fight with Mr. Covey, and struck back again, regardless of consequences; and while I kept them from combining, I succeeded very well; for I could whip the whole of them, taking them separately. They, however, at length combined, and came upon me, armed with sticks, stones, and heavy handspikes. One came in front with a half brick. There was one at each side of me, and one behind me. While I was attending to those in front, and on either side, the one behind ran up with the handspike, and struck me a heavy blow upon the head. It stunned me. I fell, and with this they all ran upon me, and fell to beating me with their fists. I let them lay on for a while, gathering strength. In an instant, I gave a sudden surge, and rose to my hands and knees. Just as I did that, one of their number gave me, with his heavy boot, a powerful kick in the left eye. My eyeball seemed to have burst. When they saw my eye closed, and badly swollen, they left me. With this I seized the handspike, and for a time pursued them. But here the carpenters interfered, and I thought I might as well give it up. It was impossible to stand my hand against so many. All this took place in sight of not less than fifty white ship-carpenters, and not one interposed a friendly word; but some cried, "Kill the damned nigger! Kill him! kill him! He struck a white person." I found my only chance for life was in flight. I succeeded in getting away without an additional blow, and barely so; for to strike a white man is death by Lynch law,—and that was the law in Mr. Gardner's ship-yard; nor is there much of any other out of Mr. Gardner's ship-yard.

I went directly home, and told the story of my wrongs to Master Hugh; and I am happy to say of him, irreligious as he was, his conduct was heavenly, compared with that of his brother Thomas under similar circumstances. He listened attentively to my narration of the circumstances leading to the savage outrage, and gave many proofs of his strong indignation at it. The heart of my once overkind mistress was again melted into pity. My puffed-out eye and blood-covered face moved her to tears. She took a chair by me, washed the blood from my face, and, with a mother's tenderness, bound up my head, covering the wounded eye with a lean piece of fresh beef. It was almost compensation for my suffering to witness, once more, a manifestation of kindness from this, my once affectionate old mistress. Master Hugh was very much enraged. He gave expression to his feelings by pouring out curses upon the heads of those who did the deed. As soon as I got a little the better of my bruises, he took me with him to Esquire Watson's, on Bond Street, to see what could be done about the matter. Mr. Watson inquired who saw the assault committed. Master Hugh told him it was done in Mr. Gardner's ship-yard at midday, where there were a large company of men at work. "As to that," he said, "the deed was done, and there was no question as to who did it." His answer was, he could do nothing in the case, unless some white man would come forward and testify. He could issue no warrant on my word. If I had been killed in the presence of a thousand colored people, their testimony combined would have been insufficient to have arrested one of the murderers. Master Hugh, for once, was compelled to say this state of things was too bad. Of course, it was impossible to get any white man to volunteer his testimony in my behalf, and against the white young men. Even those who may have sympathized with me were not prepared to do this. It required a degree of courage unknown to them to do so; for just at that time, the slightest manifestation of humanity toward a colored person was denounced as abolitionism, and that name subjected its bearer to frightful liabilities. The watchwords of the bloody-minded in that region, and in those days, were, "Damn the abolitionists!" and "Damn the niggers!" There was nothing done, and probably nothing would have been done if I had been killed. Such was, and such remains, the state of things in the Christian city of Baltimore.

Master Hugh, finding he could get no redress, refused to let me go back again to Mr. Gardner. He kept me himself, and his wife dressed my wound till I was again restored to health. He then took me into the ship-yard of which he was foreman, in the employment of Mr. Walter Price. There I was immediately set to calking, and very soon learned the art of using my mallet and irons. In the course of one year from the time I left Mr. Gardner's, I was able to command the highest wages given to the most experienced calkers. I was now of some importance to my master. I was bringing him from six to seven dollars per week. I sometimes brought him nine dollars per week: my wages were a dollar and a half a day. After learning how to calk, I sought my own employment, made my own contracts, and collected the money which I earned. My pathway became much more smooth than before; my condition was now much more comfortable. When I could get no calking to do, I did nothing. During these leisure times, those old notions about freedom would steal over me again. When in Mr. Gardner's employment, I was kept in such a perpetual whirl of excitement, I could think of nothing, scarcely, but my life; and in thinking of my life, I almost forgot my liberty. I have observed this in my experience of slavery,—that whenever my condition was improved, instead of its increasing my contentment, it only increased my desire to be free, and set me to thinking of plans to gain my freedom. I have found that, to make a contented slave, it is necessary to make a thoughtless one. It is necessary to darken his moral and mental vision, and, as far as possible, to annihilate the power of reason. He must be able to detect no inconsistencies in slavery; he must be made to feel that slavery is right; and he can be brought to that only when he ceases to be a man.

I was now getting, as I have said, one dollar and fifty cents per day. I contracted for it; I earned it; it was paid to me; it was rightfully my own; yet, upon each returning Saturday night, I was compelled to deliver every cent of that money to Master Hugh. And why? Not because he earned it,—not because he had any hand in earning it,—not because I owed it to him,—nor because he possessed the slightest shadow of a right to it; but solely because he had the power to compel me to give it up. The right of the grim-visaged pirate upon the high seas is exactly the same.

## CHAPTER XI

I now come to that part of my life during which I planned, and finally succeeded in making, my escape from slavery. But before narrating any of the peculiar circumstances, I deem it proper to make known my intention not to state all the facts connected with the transaction. My reasons for pursuing this course may be understood from the following: First, were I to give a minute statement of all the facts, it is not only possible, but quite probable, that others would thereby be involved in the most embarrassing difficulties. Secondly, such a statement would most undoubtedly induce greater vigilance on the part of slaveholders than has existed heretofore among them; which would, of course, be the means of guarding a door whereby some dear brother bondman might escape his galling chains. I deeply regret the necessity that impels me to suppress any thing of importance connected with my experience in slavery. It would afford me great pleasure indeed, as well as materially add to the interest of my narrative, were I at liberty to gratify a curiosity, which I know exists in the minds of many, by an accurate statement of all the facts pertaining to my most fortunate escape. But I must deprive myself of this pleasure, and the curious of the gratification which such a statement would afford. I would allow myself to suffer under the greatest imputations which evil-minded men might suggest, rather than exculpate myself, and thereby run the hazard of closing the slightest avenue by which a brother slave might clear himself of the chains and fetters of slavery.

I have never approved of the very public manner in which some of our western friends have conducted what they call the *underground railroad,* but which I think, by their open declarations, has been made most emphatically the *upper-ground railroad.* I honor those good men and women for their noble daring, and applaud them for willingly subjecting themselves to bloody persecution, by openly avowing their participation in the escape of slaves. I, however, can see very little good resulting from such a course, either to themselves or the slaves escaping; while, upon the other hand, I see and feel assured that those open declarations are a positive evil to the slaves remaining, who are seeking to escape. They do nothing towards enlightening the slave, whilst they do much towards enlightening the master. They stimulate him to greater watchfulness, and enhance his power to capture his slave. We owe something to the slave south of the line as well as to those north of it; and in aiding the latter on their way to freedom, we should be careful to do nothing which would be likely to hinder the former from escaping from slavery. I would keep the merciless slaveholder profoundly ignorant of the means of flight adopted by the slave. I would leave him to imagine himself surrounded by myriads of invisible tormentors, ever ready to snatch from his infernal grasp his trembling prey. Let him be left to feel his way in the dark; let darkness commensurate with his crime hover over him; and let him feel that at every step he takes, in pursuit of the flying bondman, he is running the frightful risk of having his hot brains dashed out by an invisible agency. Let us render the tyrant no aid; let us not hold the light by which he can trace the footprints of our flying brother. But enough of this. I will now proceed to the statement of those facts, connected with my escape, for which I am alone responsible, and for which no one can be made to suffer but myself.

In the early part of the year 1838, I became quite restless. I could see no reason why I should, at the end of each week, pour the reward of my toil into the purse of my master. When I carried to him my weekly wages, he would, after counting the money, look me in the face with a robber-like fierceness, and ask, "Is this all?" He was satisfied with nothing less than the last cent. He would, however, when I made him six dollars, sometimes give me six cents, to encourage me. It had the opposite effect. I regarded it as a sort of admission of my right to the whole. The fact that he gave me any part of my wages was proof, to my mind, that he believed me entitled to the whole of them. I always felt worse for having received any thing; for I feared that the giving me a few cents would ease his conscience, and make him feel himself to be a pretty honorable sort of robber. My discontent grew upon me. I was ever on the look-out for means of escape; and, finding no direct means, I determined to try to hire my time, with a view of getting money with which to make my escape. In the spring of 1838, when Master Thomas came to Baltimore to purchase his spring goods, I got an opportunity, and applied to him to allow me to hire my time. He unhesitatingly refused my request, and told me this was another stratagem by which to escape. He told me I could go nowhere but that he could get me; and that, in the event of my running away, he should spare no pains in his efforts to catch me. He exhorted me to content myself, and be obedient. He told me, if I would be happy, I must lay out no plans for the future. He said, if I behaved myself properly, he would take care of me. Indeed, he advised me to complete thoughtlessness of the future, and taught me to depend solely upon him for happiness. He seemed to see fully the pressing necessity of setting aside my intellectual nature, in order to contentment in slavery. But in spite of him, and even in spite of myself, I continued to think, and to think about the injustice of my enslavement, and the means of escape.

About two months after this, I applied to Master Hugh for the privilege of hiring my time. He was not acquainted with the fact that I had applied to Master Thomas, and had been refused. He too, at first, seemed disposed to refuse; but, after some reflection, he granted me the privilege, and proposed the following terms: I was to be allowed all my time, make all contracts with those for whom I worked, and find my own employment; and, in return for this liberty, I was to pay him three dollars at the end of each week; find myself in calking tools, and in board and clothing. My board was two dollars and a half per week. This, with the wear and tear of clothing and calking tools, made my regular expenses about six dollars per week. This amount I was compelled to make up, or relinquish the privilege of hiring my time. Rain or shine, work or no work, at the end of each week the money must be forthcoming, or I must give up my privilege. This arrangement, it will be perceived, was decidedly in my master's favor. It relieved him of all need of looking after me. His money was sure. He received all the benefits of slaveholding without its evils; while I endured all the evils of a slave, and suffered all the care and anxiety of a freeman. I found it a hard bargain. But, hard as it was, I thought it better than the old mode of getting along. It was a step towards freedom to be allowed to bear the responsibilities of a freeman, and I was determined to hold on upon it. I bent myself to the work of making money. I was ready to work at night as well as day, and by the most untiring perseverance and industry, I made enough to meet my expenses, and lay up a little money every week. I went on thus from May till August. Master Hugh then refused to allow me to hire my time longer. The ground for his refusal was a failure on my part, one Saturday night, to pay him for my week's time. This failure was occasioned by my attending a camp meeting about ten miles from Baltimore. During the week, I had entered into an engagement with a number of young friends to start from Baltimore to the camp ground early Saturday evening; and being detained by my employer, I was unable to get down to Master Hugh's without disappointing the company. I knew that Master Hugh was in no special need of the money that night. I therefore decided to go to camp meeting, and upon my return pay him the three dollars. I staid at the camp meeting one day longer than I intended when I left. But as soon as I returned, I called upon him to pay him what he considered his due. I found him very angry; he could scarce restrain his wrath. He said he had a great mind to give me a severe whipping. He wished to know how I dared go out of the city without asking his permission. I told him I hired my time and while I paid him the price which he asked for it, I did not know that I was bound to ask him when and where I should go. This reply troubled him; and, after reflecting a few moments, he turned to me, and said I should hire my time no longer; that the next thing he should know of, I would be running away. Upon the same plea, he told me to bring my tools and clothing home forthwith. I did so; but instead of seeking work, as I had been accustomed to do previously to hiring my time, I spent the whole week without the performance of a single stroke of work. I did this in retaliation. Saturday night, he called upon me as usual for my week's wages. I told him I had no wages; I had done no work that week. Here we were upon the point of coming to blows. He raved, and swore his determination to get hold of me. I did not allow myself a single word; but was resolved, if he laid the weight of his hand upon me, it should be blow for blow. He did not strike me, but told me that he would find me in constant employment in future. I thought the matter over during the next day, Sunday, and finally resolved upon the third day of September, as the day upon which I would make a second attempt to secure my freedom. I now had three weeks during which to prepare for my journey. Early on Monday morning, before Master Hugh had time to make any engagement for me, I went out and got employment of Mr. Butler, at his ship-yard near the drawbridge, upon what is called the City Block, thus making it unnecessary for him to seek employment for me. At the end of the week, I brought him between eight and nine dollars. He seemed very well pleased, and asked why I did not do the same the week before. He little knew what my plans were. My object in working steadily was to remove any suspicion he might entertain of my intent to run away; and in this I succeeded admirably. I suppose he thought I was never better satisfied with my condition than at the very time during which I was planning my escape. The second week passed, and again I carried him my full wages; and so well pleased was he, that he gave me twenty-five cents, (quite a large sum for a slaveholder to give a slave,) and bade me to make a good use of it. I told him I would.

Things went on without very smoothly indeed, but within there was trouble. It is impossible for me to describe my feelings as the time of my contemplated start drew near. I had a number of warmhearted friends in Baltimore,—friends that I loved almost as I did my life,—and the thought of being separated from them forever was painful beyond expression. It is my opinion that thousands would escape from slavery, who now remain, but for the strong cords of affection that bind them to their friends. The thought of leaving my friends was decidedly the most painful thought with which I had to contend. The love of them was my tender point, and shook my decision more than all things else. Besides the pain of separation, the dread and apprehension of a failure exceeded what I had experienced at my first attempt. The appalling defeat I then sustained returned to torment me. I felt assured that, if I failed in this attempt, my case would be a hopeless one—it would seal my fate as a slave forever. I could not hope to get off with any thing less than the severest punishment, and being placed beyond the means of escape. It required no very vivid imagination to depict the most frightful scenes through which I should have to pass, in case I failed. The wretchedness of slavery, and the blessedness of freedom, were perpetually before me. It was life and death with me. But I remained firm, and, according to my resolution, on the third day of September, 1838, I left my chains, and succeeded in reaching New York without the slightest interruption of any kind. How I did so,—what means I adopted,—what direction I travelled, and by what mode of conveyance,—I must leave unexplained, for the reasons before mentioned.

I have been frequently asked how I felt when I found myself in a free State. I have never been able to answer the question with any satisfaction to myself. It was a moment of the highest excitement I ever experienced. I suppose I felt as one may imagine the unarmed mariner to feel when he is rescued by a friendly man-of-war from the pursuit of a pirate. In writing to a dear friend, immediately after my arrival at New York, I said I felt like one who had escaped a den of hungry lions. This state of mind, however, very soon subsided; and I was again seized with a feeling of great insecurity and loneliness. I was yet liable to be taken back, and subjected to all the tortures of slavery. This in itself was enough to damp the ardor of my enthusiasm. But the loneliness overcame me. There I was in the midst of thousands, and yet a perfect stranger; without home and without friends, in the midst of thousands of my own brethren—children of a common Father, and yet I dared not to unfold to any one of them my sad condition. I was afraid to speak to any one for fear of speaking to the wrong one, and thereby falling into the hands of money-loving kidnappers, whose business it was to lie in wait for the panting fugitive, as the ferocious beasts of the forest lie in wait for their prey. The motto which I adopted when I started from slavery was this—"Trust no man!" I saw in every white man an enemy, and in almost every colored man cause for distrust. It was a most painful situation; and, to understand it, one must needs experience it, or imagine himself in similar circumstances. Let him be a fugitive slave in a strange land—a land given up to be the hunting-ground for slaveholders—whose inhabitants are legalized kidnappers—where he is every moment subjected to the terrible liability of being seized upon by his fellowmen, as the hideous crocodile seizes upon his prey!—I say, let him place himself in my situation—without home or friends—without money or credit—wanting shelter, and no one to give it—wanting bread, and no money to buy it,—and at the same time let him feel that he is pursued by merciless men-hunters, and in total darkness as to what to do, where to go, or where to stay,—perfectly helpless both as to the means of defence and means of escape,—in the midst of plenty, yet suffering the terrible gnawings of hunger,—in the midst of houses, yet having no home,—among fellow-men, yet feeling as if in the midst of wild beasts, whose greediness to swallow up the trembling and half-famished fugitive is only equalled by that with which the monsters of the deep swallow up the helpless fish upon which they subsist,—I say, let him be placed in this most trying situation,—the situation in which I was placed,—then, and not till then, will he fully appreciate the hardships of, and know how to sympathize with, the toil-worn and whip-scarred fugitive slave.

Thank Heaven, I remained but a short time in this distressed situation. I was relieved from it by the humane hand of Mr. DAVID RUGGLES, whose vigilance, kindness, and perseverance, I shall never forget. I am glad of an opportunity to express, as far as words can, the love and gratitude I bear him. Mr. Ruggles is now afflicted with blindness, and is himself in need of the same kind offices which he was once so forward in the performance of toward others. I had been in New York but a few days, when Mr. Ruggles sought me out, and very kindly took me to his boarding-house at the corner of Church and Lespenard Streets. Mr. Ruggles was then very deeply engaged in the memorable *Darg* case, as well as attending to a number of other fugitive slaves, devising ways and means for their successful escape; and, though watched and hemmed in on almost every side, he seemed to be more than a match for his enemies.

Very soon after I went to Mr. Ruggles, he wished to know of me where I wanted to go; as he deemed it unsafe for me to remain in New York. I told him I was a calker, and should like to go where I could get work. I thought of going to Canada; but he decided against it, and in favor of my going to New Bedford, thinking I should be able to get work there at my trade. At this time, Anna,\* my intended wife, came on; for I wrote to her immediately after my arrival at New York, (notwithstanding my homeless, houseless, and helpless condition,) informing her of my successful flight, and wishing her to come on forthwith. In a few days after her arrival, Mr. Ruggles called in the Rev. J. W. C. Pennington, who, in the presence of Mr. Ruggles, Mrs. Michaels, and two or three others, performed the marriage ceremony, and gave us a certificate, of which the following is an exact copy:—

*"This may certify, that I joined together in holy matrimony Frederick*

*Johnson\*\* and Anna Murray, as man and wife, in the presence of Mr. David*

*Ruggles and Mrs. Michaels.*

*"JAMES W. C. PENNINGTON*

*"NEW YORK, SEPT. 15, 1838"*

*\*She was free.*

*\*\*I had changed my name from Frederick BAILEY to that of*

*JOHNSON.*

Upon receiving this certificate, and a five-dollar bill from Mr. Ruggles, I shouldered one part of our baggage, and Anna took up the other, and we set out forthwith to take passage on board of the steamboat John W. Richmond for Newport, on our way to New Bedford. Mr. Ruggles gave me a letter to a Mr. Shaw in Newport, and told me, in case my money did not serve me to New Bedford, to stop in Newport and obtain further assistance; but upon our arrival at Newport, we were so anxious to get to a place of safety, that, notwithstanding we lacked the necessary money to pay our fare, we decided to take seats in the stage, and promise to pay when we got to New Bedford. We were encouraged to do this by two excellent gentlemen, residents of New Bedford, whose names I afterward ascertained to be Joseph Ricketson and William C. Taber. They seemed at once to understand our circumstances, and gave us such assurance of their friendliness as put us fully at ease in their presence.

It was good indeed to meet with such friends, at such a time. Upon reaching New Bedford, we were directed to the house of Mr. Nathan Johnson, by whom we were kindly received, and hospitably provided for. Both Mr. and Mrs. Johnson took a deep and lively interest in our welfare. They proved themselves quite worthy of the name of abolitionists. When the stage-driver found us unable to pay our fare, he held on upon our baggage as security for the debt. I had but to mention the fact to Mr. Johnson, and he forthwith advanced the money.

We now began to feel a degree of safety, and to prepare ourselves for the duties and responsibilities of a life of freedom. On the morning after our arrival at New Bedford, while at the breakfast-table, the question arose as to what name I should be called by. The name given me by my mother was, "Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey." I, however, had dispensed with the two middle names long before I left Maryland so that I was generally known by the name of "Frederick Bailey." I started from Baltimore bearing the name of "Stanley." When I got to New York, I again changed my name to "Frederick Johnson," and thought that would be the last change. But when I got to New Bedford, I found it necessary again to change my name. The reason of this necessity was, that there were so many Johnsons in New Bedford, it was already quite difficult to distinguish between them. I gave Mr. Johnson the privilege of choosing me a name, but told him he must not take from me the name of "Frederick." I must hold on to that, to preserve a sense of my identity. Mr. Johnson had just been reading the "Lady of the Lake," and at once suggested that my name be "Douglass." From that time until now I have been called "Frederick Douglass;" and as I am more widely known by that name than by either of the others, I shall continue to use it as my own.

I was quite disappointed at the general appearance of things in New Bedford. The impression which I had received respecting the character and condition of the people of the north, I found to be singularly erroneous. I had very strangely supposed, while in slavery, that few of the comforts, and scarcely any of the luxuries, of life were enjoyed at the north, compared with what were enjoyed by the slaveholders of the south. I probably came to this conclusion from the fact that northern people owned no slaves. I supposed that they were about upon a level with the non-slaveholding population of the south. I knew *they* were exceedingly poor, and I had been accustomed to regard their poverty as the necessary consequence of their being non-slaveholders. I had somehow imbibed the opinion that, in the absence of slaves, there could be no wealth, and very little refinement. And upon coming to the north, I expected to meet with a rough, hard-handed, and uncultivated population, living in the most Spartan-like simplicity, knowing nothing of the ease, luxury, pomp, and grandeur of southern slaveholders. Such being my conjectures, any one acquainted with the appearance of New Bedford may very readily infer how palpably I must have seen my mistake.

In the afternoon of the day when I reached New Bedford, I visited the wharves, to take a view of the shipping. Here I found myself surrounded with the strongest proofs of wealth. Lying at the wharves, and riding in the stream, I saw many ships of the finest model, in the best order, and of the largest size. Upon the right and left, I was walled in by granite warehouses of the widest dimensions, stowed to their utmost capacity with the necessaries and comforts of life. Added to this, almost every body seemed to be at work, but noiselessly so, compared with what I had been accustomed to in Baltimore. There were no loud songs heard from those engaged in loading and unloading ships. I heard no deep oaths or horrid curses on the laborer. I saw no whipping of men; but all seemed to go smoothly on. Every man appeared to understand his work, and went at it with a sober, yet cheerful earnestness, which betokened the deep interest which he felt in what he was doing, as well as a sense of his own dignity as a man. To me this looked exceedingly strange. From the wharves I strolled around and over the town, gazing with wonder and admiration at the splendid churches, beautiful dwellings, and finely-cultivated gardens; evincing an amount of wealth, comfort, taste, and refinement, such as I had never seen in any part of slaveholding Maryland.

Every thing looked clean, new, and beautiful. I saw few or no dilapidated houses, with poverty-stricken inmates; no half-naked children and barefooted women, such as I had been accustomed to see in Hillsborough, Easton, St. Michael's, and Baltimore. The people looked more able, stronger, healthier, and happier, than those of Maryland. I was for once made glad by a view of extreme wealth, without being saddened by seeing extreme poverty. But the most astonishing as well as the most interesting thing to me was the condition of the colored people, a great many of whom, like myself, had escaped thither as a refuge from the hunters of men. I found many, who had not been seven years out of their chains, living in finer houses, and evidently enjoying more of the comforts of life, than the average of slaveholders in Maryland. I will venture to assert, that my friend Mr. Nathan Johnson (of whom I can say with a grateful heart, "I was hungry, and he gave me meat; I was thirsty, and he gave me drink; I was a stranger, and he took me in") lived in a neater house; dined at a better table; took, paid for, and read, more newspapers; better understood the moral, religious, and political character of the nation,—than nine tenths of the slaveholders in Talbot county Maryland. Yet Mr. Johnson was a working man. His hands were hardened by toil, and not his alone, but those also of Mrs. Johnson. I found the colored people much more spirited than I had supposed they would be. I found among them a determination to protect each other from the blood-thirsty kidnapper, at all hazards. Soon after my arrival, I was told of a circumstance which illustrated their spirit. A colored man and a fugitive slave were on unfriendly terms. The former was heard to threaten the latter with informing his master of his whereabouts. Straightway a meeting was called among the colored people, under the stereotyped notice, "Business of importance!" The betrayer was invited to attend. The people came at the appointed hour, and organized the meeting by appointing a very religious old gentleman as president, who, I believe, made a prayer, after which he addressed the meeting as follows: "*Friends, we have got him here, and I would recommend that you young men just take him outside the door, and kill him!*" With this, a number of them bolted at him; but they were intercepted by some more timid than themselves, and the betrayer escaped their vengeance, and has not been seen in New Bedford since. I believe there have been no more such threats, and should there be hereafter, I doubt not that death would be the consequence.

I found employment, the third day after my arrival, in stowing a sloop with a load of oil. It was new, dirty, and hard work for me; but I went at it with a glad heart and a willing hand. I was now my own master. It was a happy moment, the rapture of which can be understood only by those who have been slaves. It was the first work, the reward of which was to be entirely my own. There was no Master Hugh standing ready, the moment I earned the money, to rob me of it. I worked that day with a pleasure I had never before experienced. I was at work for myself and newly-married wife. It was to me the starting-point of a new existence. When I got through with that job, I went in pursuit of a job of calking; but such was the strength of prejudice against color, among the white calkers, that they refused to work with me, and of course I could get no employment.\*

*\* I am told that colored persons can now get employment at*

*calking in New Bedford—a result of anti-slavery effort.*

Finding my trade of no immediate benefit, I threw off my calking habiliments, and prepared myself to do any kind of work I could get to do. Mr. Johnson kindly let me have his wood-horse and saw, and I very soon found myself a plenty of work. There was no work too hard—none too dirty. I was ready to saw wood, shovel coal, carry wood, sweep the chimney, or roll oil casks,—all of which I did for nearly three years in New Bedford, before I became known to the anti-slavery world.

In about four months after I went to New Bedford, there came a young man to me, and inquired if I did not wish to take the "Liberator." I told him I did; but, just having made my escape from slavery, I remarked that I was unable to pay for it then. I, however, finally became a subscriber to it. The paper came, and I read it from week to week with such feelings as it would be quite idle for me to attempt to describe. The paper became my meat and my drink. My soul was set all on fire. Its sympathy for my brethren in bonds—its scathing denunciations of slaveholders—its faithful exposures of slavery—and its powerful attacks upon the upholders of the institution—sent a thrill of joy through my soul, such as I had never felt before!

I had not long been a reader of the "Liberator," before I got a pretty correct idea of the principles, measures and spirit of the anti-slavery reform. I took right hold of the cause. I could do but little; but what I could, I did with a joyful heart, and never felt happier than when in an anti-slavery meeting. I seldom had much to say at the meetings, because what I wanted to say was said so much better by others. But, while attending an anti-slavery convention at Nantucket, on the 11th of August, 1841, I felt strongly moved to speak, and was at the same time much urged to do so by Mr. William C. Coffin, a gentleman who had heard me speak in the colored people's meeting at New Bedford. It was a severe cross, and I took it up reluctantly. The truth was, I felt myself a slave, and the idea of speaking to white people weighed me down. I spoke but a few moments, when I felt a degree of freedom, and said what I desired with considerable ease. From that time until now, I have been engaged in pleading the cause of my brethren—with what success, and with what devotion, I leave those acquainted with my labors to decide.

## APPENDIX

I find, since reading over the foregoing Narrative, that I have, in several instances, spoken in such a tone and manner, respecting religion, as may possibly lead those unacquainted with my religious views to suppose me an opponent of all religion. To remove the liability of such misapprehension, I deem it proper to append the following brief explanation. What I have said respecting and against religion, I mean strictly to apply to the *slaveholding religion* of this land, and with no possible reference to Christianity proper; for, between the Christianity of this land, and the Christianity of Christ, I recognize the widest possible difference—so wide, that to receive the one as good, pure, and holy, is of necessity to reject the other as bad, corrupt, and wicked. To be the friend of the one, is of necessity to be the enemy of the other. I love the pure, peaceable, and impartial Christianity of Christ: I therefore hate the corrupt, slaveholding, women-whipping, cradle-plundering, partial and hypocritical Christianity of this land. Indeed, I can see no reason, but the most deceitful one, for calling the religion of this land Christianity. I look upon it as the climax of all misnomers, the boldest of all frauds, and the grossest of all libels. Never was there a clearer case of "stealing the livery of the court of heaven to serve the devil in." I am filled with unutterable loathing when I contemplate the religious pomp and show, together with the horrible inconsistencies, which every where surround me. We have men-stealers for ministers, women-whippers for missionaries, and cradle-plunderers for church members. The man who wields the blood-clotted cowskin during the week fills the pulpit on Sunday, and claims to be a minister of the meek and lowly Jesus. The man who robs me of my earnings at the end of each week meets me as a class-leader on Sunday morning, to show me the way of life, and the path of salvation. He who sells my sister, for purposes of prostitution, stands forth as the pious advocate of purity. He who proclaims it a religious duty to read the Bible denies me the right of learning to read the name of the God who made me. He who is the religious advocate of marriage robs whole millions of its sacred influence, and leaves them to the ravages of wholesale pollution. The warm defender of the sacredness of the family relation is the same that scatters whole families,—sundering husbands and wives, parents and children, sisters and brothers,—leaving the hut vacant, and the hearth desolate. We see the thief preaching against theft, and the adulterer against adultery. We have men sold to build churches, women sold to support the gospel, and babes sold to purchase Bibles for the POOR HEATHEN! ALL FOR THE GLORY OF GOD AND THE GOOD OF SOULS! The slave auctioneer's bell and the church-going bell chime in with each other, and the bitter cries of the heart-broken slave are drowned in the religious shouts of his pious master. Revivals of religion and revivals in the slave-trade go hand in hand together. The slave prison and the church stand near each other. The clanking of fetters and the rattling of chains in the prison, and the pious psalm and solemn prayer in the church, may be heard at the same time. The dealers in the bodies and souls of men erect their stand in the presence of the pulpit, and they mutually help each other. The dealer gives his blood-stained gold to support the pulpit, and the pulpit, in return, covers his infernal business with the garb of Christianity. Here we have religion and robbery the allies of each other—devils dressed in angels' robes, and hell presenting the semblance of paradise.

*"Just God! and these are they,*

*Who minister at thine altar, God of right!*

*Men who their hands, with prayer and blessing, lay*

*On Israel's ark of light.*

*"What! preach, and kidnap men?*

*Give thanks, and rob thy own afflicted poor?*

*Talk of thy glorious liberty, and then*

*Bolt hard the captive's door?*

*"What! servants of thy own*

*Merciful Son, who came to seek and save*

*The homeless and the outcast, fettering down*

*The tasked and plundered slave!*

*"Pilate and Herod friends!*

*Chief priests and rulers, as of old, combine!*

*Just God and holy! is that church which lends*

*Strength to the spoiler thine?"*

The Christianity of America is a Christianity, of whose votaries it may be as truly said, as it was of the ancient scribes and Pharisees, "They bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. All their works they do for to be seen of men.—They love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, . . . . . . and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.—But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. Ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers; therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.—Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cumin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith; these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Ye blind guides! which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter; but within, they are full of extortion and excess.—Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity."

Dark and terrible as is this picture, I hold it to be strictly true of the overwhelming mass of professed Christians in America. They strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. Could any thing be more true of our churches? They would be shocked at the proposition of fellowshipping a SHEEP-stealer; and at the same time they hug to their communion a MAN-stealer, and brand me with being an infidel, if I find fault with them for it. They attend with Pharisaical strictness to the outward forms of religion, and at the same time neglect the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith. They are always ready to sacrifice, but seldom to show mercy. They are they who are represented as professing to love God whom they have not seen, whilst they hate their brother whom they have seen. They love the heathen on the other side of the globe. They can pray for him, pay money to have the Bible put into his hand, and missionaries to instruct him; while they despise and totally neglect the heathen at their own doors.

Such is, very briefly, my view of the religion of this land; and to avoid any misunderstanding, growing out of the use of general terms, I mean by the religion of this land, that which is revealed in the words, deeds, and actions, of those bodies, north and south, calling themselves Christian churches, and yet in union with slaveholders. It is against religion, as presented by these bodies, that I have felt it my duty to testify.

I conclude these remarks by copying the following portrait of the religion of the south, (which is, by communion and fellowship, the religion of the north,) which I soberly affirm is "true to the life," and without caricature or the slightest exaggeration. It is said to have been drawn, several years before the present anti-slavery agitation began, by a northern Methodist preacher, who, while residing at the south, had an opportunity to see slaveholding morals, manners, and piety, with his own eyes. "Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord. Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?"

***A PARODY***

*"Come, saints and sinners, hear me tell*

*How pious priests whip Jack and Nell,*

*And women buy and children sell,*

*And preach all sinners down to hell,*

*And sing of heavenly union.*

*"They'll bleat and baa, dona like goats,*

*Gorge down black sheep, and strain at motes,*

*Array their backs in fine black coats,*

*Then seize their negroes by their throats,*

*And choke, for heavenly union.*

*"They'll church you if you sip a dram,*

*And damn you if you steal a lamb;*

*Yet rob old Tony, Doll, and Sam,*

*Of human rights, and bread and ham;*

*Kidnapper's heavenly union.*

*"They'll loudly talk of Christ's reward,*

*And bind his image with a cord,*

*And scold, and swing the lash abhorred,*

*And sell their brother in the Lord*

*To handcuffed heavenly union.*

*"They'll read and sing a sacred song,*

*And make a prayer both loud and long,*

*And teach the right and do the wrong,*

*Hailing the brother, sister throng,*

*With words of heavenly union.*

*"We wonder how such saints can sing,*

*Or praise the Lord upon the wing,*

*Who roar, and scold, and whip, and sting,*

*And to their slaves and mammon cling,*

*In guilty conscience union.*

*"They'll raise tobacco, corn, and rye,*

*And drive, and thieve, and cheat, and lie,*

*And lay up treasures in the sky,*

*By making switch and cowskin fly,*

*In hope of heavenly union.*

*"They'll crack old Tony on the skull,*

*And preach and roar like Bashan bull,*

*Or braying ass, of mischief full,*

*Then seize old Jacob by the wool,*

*And pull for heavenly union.*

*"A roaring, ranting, sleek man-thief,*

*Who lived on mutton, veal, and beef,*

*Yet never would afford relief*

*To needy, sable sons of grief,*

*Was big with heavenly union.*

*"'Love not the world,' the preacher said,*

*And winked his eye, and shook his head;*

*He seized on Tom, and Dick, and Ned,*

*Cut short their meat, and clothes, and bread,*

*Yet still loved heavenly union.*

*"Another preacher whining spoke*

*Of One whose heart for sinners broke:*

*He tied old Nanny to an oak,*

*And drew the blood at every stroke,*

*And prayed for heavenly union.*

*"Two others oped their iron jaws,*

*And waved their children-stealing paws;*

*There sat their children in gewgaws;*

*By stinting negroes' backs and maws,*

*They kept up heavenly union.*

*"All good from Jack another takes,*

*And entertains their flirts and rakes,*

*Who dress as sleek as glossy snakes,*

*And cram their mouths with sweetened cakes;*

*And this goes down for union."*

Sincerely and earnestly hoping that this little book may do something toward throwing light on the American slave system, and hastening the glad day of deliverance to the millions of my brethren in bonds—faithfully relying upon the power of truth, love, and justice, for success in my humble efforts—and solemnly pledging my self anew to the sacred cause,—I subscribe myself,

FREDERICK DOUGLASS LYNN,  
*Mass., April* 28, 1845.

THE END

The Raven

Edgar Allan Poe

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,  
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore—  
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,  
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.  
"'Tis some visitor," I muttered, "tapping at my chamber door—  
Only this and nothing more."

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December,  
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.  
Eagerly I wished the morrow;—vainly I had sought to borrow  
From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow for the lost Lenore—  
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore—  
Nameless here for evermore.

And the silken sad uncertain rustling of each purple curtain  
Thrilled me—filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;  
So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating  
"'Tis some visiter entreating entrance at my chamber door—  
Some late visiter entreating entrance at my chamber door;  
This it is and nothing more."

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,  
"Sir," said I, "or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore;  
But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,  
And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door,  
That I scarce was sure I heard you"—here I opened wide the door—  
Darkness there and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing,  
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortals ever dared to dream before;  
But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token,  
And the only word there spoken was the whispered word, "Lenore?"  
This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word, "Lenore!"—  
Merely this and nothing more.

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,  
Soon again I heard a tapping something louder than before.  
"Surely," said I, "surely that is something at my window lattice;  
Let me see, then, what thereat is and this mystery explore—  
Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore;—  
'Tis the wind and nothing more.

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter,  
In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly days of yore.  
Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute stopped or stayed he,  
But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door—  
Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber door—  
Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then the ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,  
By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore,  
"Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou," I said, "art sure no craven,  
Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the Nightly shore—  
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's Plutonian shore!"  
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,  
Though its answer little meaning—little relevancy bore;  
For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being  
Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door—  
Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door,  
With such name as "Nevermore."

But the Raven, sitting lonely on that placid bust, spoke only  
That one word, as if its soul in that one word he did outpour  
Nothing farther then he uttered; not a feather then he fluttered—  
Till I scarcely more than muttered: "Other friends have flown before—  
On the morrow *he* will leave me, as my Hopes have flown before."  
Then the bird said "Nevermore."

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken,  
"Doubtless," said I, "what it utters is its only stock and store,  
Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful Disaster  
Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one burden bore—  
Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden bore  
Of 'Never—nevermore.'"

But the Raven still beguiling all my sad soul into smiling,  
Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird and bust and door;  
Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking  
Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore—  
What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore  
Meant in croaking "Nevermore."

This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing  
To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom's core;  
This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease reclining  
On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamp-light gloated o'er,  
But whose velvet violet lining with the lamp-light gloating o'er  
*She* shall press, ah, nevermore!

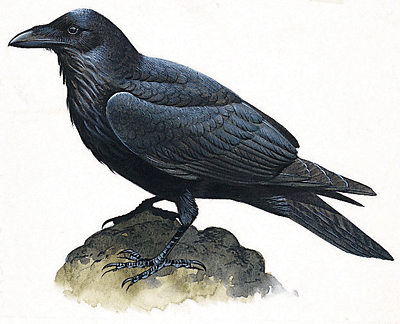
Then, methought, the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen censer  
Swung by Seraphim whose foot-falls tinkled on the tufted floor.  
"Wretch," I cried, "thy God hath lent thee—by these angels he hath sent thee  
Respite—respite and nepenthe from thy memories of Lenore!  
Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe and forget this lost Lenore!"  
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil!—prophet still, if bird or devil!—  
Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here ashore,  
Desolate, yet all undaunted, on this desert land enchanted—  
On this home by Horror haunted—tell me truly, I implore—  
Is there—*is* there balm in Gilead?—tell me—tell me, I implore!"  
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil!—prophet still, if bird or devil!  
By that Heaven that bends above us—by that God we both adore—  
Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the distant Aidenn,  
It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore—  
Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore."  
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Be that our sign of parting, bird or fiend!" I shrieked, upstarting—  
"Get thee back into the tempest and the Night's Plutonian shore!  
Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul has spoken!  
Leave my loneliness unbroken!—quit the bust above my door!  
Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my door!"  
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting  
On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;  
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is dreaming  
And the lamp-light o'er him streaming throws his shadows on the floor;  
And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor  
Shall be lifted—nevermore!



Emily Dickinson

# 1830-1886

# The Poet of Precision

Dickinson was born in Amherst, Massachusetts, in 1830 and lived there all her life. Her grandfather was the founder of Amherst College, and her father Edward Dickinson was a lawyer who served as the treasurer of the college. He also held various political offices. Her mother Emily Norcross Dickinson was a quiet and frail woman. Dickinson went to primary school for four years and then attended Amherst Academy from 1840 to 1847 before spending a year at Mount Holyoke Female Seminary. Her education was strongly influenced by Puritan religious beliefs, but Dickinson did not accept the teachings of the Unitarian church attended by her family and remained agnostic throughout her life. Following the completion of her education, Dickinson lived in the family home with her parents and younger sister Lavinia, while her elder brother Austin and his wife Susan lived next door. She began writing verse at an early age, practicing her craft by rewriting poems she found in books, magazines, and newspapers. During a trip to Philadelphia in the early 1850s, Dickinson fell in love with a married minister, the Reverend Charles Wadsworth; her disappointment in love may have brought about her subsequent withdrawal from society. Dickinson experienced an emotional crisis of an undetermined nature in the early 1860s. Her traumatized state of mind is believed to have inspired her to write prolifically: in 1862 alone she is thought to have composed over three hundred poems. In that same year, Dickinson initiated a correspondence with Thomas Wentworth Higginson, the literary editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* magazine. Over the years Dickinson sent nearly one hundred of her poems for his criticism, and he became a sympathetic adviser and confidant, but he never published any of her poems. Dickinson’s isolation further increased when her father died unexpectedly in 1874 and her mother suffered a stroke that left her an invalid. Dickinson and her sister provided her constant care until her death in 1882. Dickinson was diagnosed in 1886 as having Bright’s disease, a kidney dysfunction that resulted in her death in May of that year.

### And That’s Not All

* Very logical/rational; had extraordinary prescience, almost as though she had read and understood Darwin before *Origin of Species* was published. Evidence suggests that she did read it. She also read Emerson, but rejected Emersonian spirituality.
* Lived in a world of Protestant revival (Amherst College was formed so people wouldn’t have to go to Harvard with all its Unitarian laxness).
* Women’s colleges were beginning around this time. Dickinson moved Mt. Holyoke, which had a different POV. You must be born again (Remember “Sinners in the Hands…”?). Dickinson never could do it, although she wanted to, because she couldn’t lie to herself.
* Much of her poetry deals with her attempts to find Truth/God etc.
* Also wrote much about death (As a child her bedroom window overlooked a graveyard!), but her poems are not about sadness or trivial melodrama. She’s way beyond that, much more insightful. She was interested (and frightened) about what happens to the spirit after the body dies.

441

This is my letter to the World

That never wrote to Me—

The simple News that Nature told--

With tender Majesty

Her Message is committed

To Hands I cannot see—

For love of Her—Sweet—countrymen--

Judge tenderly—of Me

303

The Soul selects her own Society--

Then—shuts the Door—

To her divine Majority--

Present no more—

Unmoved—she notes the Chariots—pausing--

At her low Gate—

Unmoved—an Emperor be kneeling

Upon her Mat—

I’ve known her—from an ample nation--

Choose One—

Then—close the Valves of her attention—

Like Stone—

258

There’s a certain Slant of light,

Winter Afternoons—

That oppresses, like the Heft

Of Cathedral Tunes—

Heavenly Hurt, it gives us—

We can find no scar,

But internal difference,

Where the Meanings, are—

None may teach it—Any—

‘Tis the Seal Despair—

An imperial affliction

Sent us of the air—

When it comes, the Landscape listens—

Shadows—hold their breath—

When it goes, ‘tis like the Distance

On the look of Death—

712

Because I could not stop for Death—

He kindly stopped for me—

The Carriage held but just Ourselves—

And Immortality.

We slowly drove—He knew no haste

And I had put away

My labor and my leisure too,

For His Civility—

We passed the School, where Children strove

At Recess—in the Ring—

We passed the Fields of Gazing Grain—

We passed the Setting Sun—

Or rather—He passed us—

The Dews drew quivering and chill—

For only Gossamer, my Gown—

My Tippet—only Tulle—

We paused before a House that seemed

A Swelling of the Ground—

The Roof was scarcely visible—

The Cornice—in the Ground—

Since then—‘tis Centuries—and yet

Feels shorter than the Day

I first surmised the Horses’ Heads

Were toward Eternity—

1. Success is counted sweetest

By those who ne’er succeed.

To comprehend a nectar

Requires sorest need.

*5* Not one of all the purple Host

Who took the Flag today

Can tell the definition

So clear of Victory

As he defeated—dying—

*10* On whose forbidden ear

The distant Strains of triumph

Burst agonized and clear!

280

I felt a Funeral, in my Brain,

And Mourners to and fro

Kept treading—treading—till it seemed

That Sense was breaking through—

And when they all were seated,

A Service, like a Drum—

Kept beating—beating—till I thought

My Mind was going numb—

And then I heard them lift a Box

And creak across my Soul

With those same Boots of Lead, again,

Then Space—began to toll,

As all the Heavens were a Bell,

And Being, but an Ear,

And I, and Silence, some strange Race

Wrecked, solitary, here—

And then a Plank in Reason, broke,

And I dropped down, and down—

And hit a World, at every plunge,

And Finished knowing—then—

1129

Tell all the Truth but tell it slant--  
Success in Circuit lies  
Too bright for our infirm Delight  
The Truth’s superb surprise  
As Lightening to the Children eased  
With explanation kind  
The Truth must dazzle gradually  
Or every man be blind—

Safe in their Alabaster Chambers—

Untouched my Morning

And untouched by Noon—

Sleep the meek members of the Resurrection—

Rafter of satin,

And Roof of stone.

Light laughs the breeze

In her Castle above them—

Babbles the Bee in a stolid Ear,

Pipe the Sweet Birds in ignorant cadence—

Ah, what sagacity perished here!

*Version of 1859*

Safe in their Alabaster Chambers—

Untouched by Morning—

And untouched by Noon—

Lie the meek members of the Resurrection—

Rafter of Satin—and Roof of Stone!

Grand go the Years—in the Crescent—above them—

Worlds scoop their Arcs—

And Firmaments—row—

Diadems—drop—and Doges—surrender—

Soundless as dots—on a Disc of Snow—

*version of 1861*

**Walt Whitman**

Walt Whitman was born on May 31, 1819, on the West Hills of Long Island, New York. His mother, Louisa Van Velsor, of Dutch descent and Quaker faith, whom he adored, was barely literate. She never read his poetry, but gave him unconditional love. His father of English lineage, was a carpenter and builder of houses, and a stern disciplinarian. His main claim to fame was his friendship with Tom Paine, whose pamphlet *Common Sense* (1776), urging the colonists to throw off English domination was in his sparse library. It is doubtful that his father read any of his son’s poetry, or would have understood it if he had. The senior Walt was too burdened with the struggle to support his ever-growing family of nine children, four of whom were handicapped.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| portrait: from an 1854 engraving by Samuel Hollyer |  |
|  | |

Young Walt, the second of nine, was withdrawn from public school at the age of eleven to help support the family. At the age of twelve he started to learn the printer’s trade, and fell in love with the written and printed word. He was mainly self-taught. He read voraciously, and became acquainted with Homer, Dante, Shakespeare and Scott early in life. He knew the Bible thoroughly, and as a God-intoxicated poet, desired to inaugurate a religion uniting all of humanity in bonds of friendship.

In 1836, at the age of 17, he began his career as an innovative teacher in the one-room school houses of Long Island. He permitted his students to call him by his first name, and devised learning games for them in arithmetic and spelling. He continued to teach school until 1841, when he turned to journalism as a full-time career. He soon became editor for a number of Brooklyn and New York papers. From 1846 to 1847 Whitman was the editor of the Brooklyn Daily Eagle. Whitman went to New Orleans in 1848, where he was editor for a brief time of the “New Orleans Crescent”. In that city he had become fascinated with the French language. Many of his poems contain words of French derivation. It was in New Orleans that he experienced at first hand the viciousness of slavery in the slave markets of that city.

On his return to Brooklyn in the fall of 1848, he founded a “free soil” newspaper, the “Brooklyn Freeman”. Between 1848 and 1855 he developed the style of poetry that so astonished Ralph Waldo Emerson. When the poet’s *Leaves Of Grass* reached him as a gift in July, 1855, the Dean of American Letters thanked him for “the wonderful gift” and said that he rubbed his eyes a little “to see if the sunbeam was no illusion.” Walt Whitman had been unknown to Emerson prior to that occasion. The “sunbeam” that illuminated a great deal of Whitman’s poetry was Music. It was one of the major sources of his inspiration. Many of his four hundred poems contain musical terms, names of instruments, and names of composers. He insisted that music was “greater than wealth, greater than buildings, ships, religions, paintings.”

From “Song of Myself” from *Leaves of Grass*

**1**

I CELEBRATE myself, and sing myself,   
And what I assume you shall assume,   
For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you.

I loafe and invite my soul, .  
I lean and loafe at my ease observing a spear of summer grass.

My tongue, every atom of my blood, form’d from this soil, this air,   
Born here of parents born here from parents the same, and their   
parents the same,   
I, now thirty-seven years old in perfect health begin,   
Hoping to cease not till death.

Creeds and schools in abeyance,   
Retiring back a while sufficed at what they are, but never forgotten,   
I harbor for good or bad, I permit to speak at every hazard,   
Nature without check with original energy.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **10**  Alone, far in the wilds and mountains, I hunt, |  |
| Wandering, amazed at my own lightness and glee; |  |
| In the late afternoon choosing a safe spot to pass the night, |  |
| Kindling a fire and broiling the fresh-kill’d game; | *170* |
| Falling asleep on the gather’d leaves, with my dog and gun by my side. |  |
|  |  |
| The Yankee clipper is under [her](http://www.bartleby.com/142/1001.html#14.172) sky-sails—she cuts the sparkle and scud\*; \*windblown sea spray or foam |  |
| My eyes settle the land—I bend at her prow, or shout joyously from the deck. |  |
|  |  |
| The boatmen and clam-diggers arose early and [stopt](http://www.bartleby.com/142/1001.html#14.174) for me; |  |
| I tuck’d my trowser-ends in my boots, and went and had a good time: | *175* |
| (You should have been with us that day round the chowder-kettle.) |  |
|  |  |
| I saw the marriage of the trapper in the open air in the far west—the bride was a red girl; |  |
| Her father and his friends sat near, cross-legged and dumbly smoking—they had moccasins to their feet, and large thick blankets hanging from their shoulders; |  |
| On a bank lounged the trapper—he was drest mostly in skins—his luxuriant beard and curls protected his [neck](http://www.bartleby.com/142/1001.html#14.179)—he held his bride by the hand; |  |
| She had long eyelashes—her head was bare—her coarse straight locks descended upon her voluptuous limbs and reach’d to her feet. | *180* |
|  |  |
| The runaway slave came to my house and [stopt](http://www.bartleby.com/142/1001.html#14.181) outside; |  |
| I heard his motions crackling the twigs of the woodpile; |  |
| Through the swung half-door of the kitchen I saw him limpsy\* and weak, \*limp; exhausted |  |
| And went where he sat on a log, and led him in and assured him, |  |
| And brought water, and fill’d a tub for his sweated body and bruis’d feet, | *185* |
| And gave him a room that enter’d from my own, and gave him some coarse clean clothes, |  |
| And remember perfectly well his revolving eyes and his awkwardness, |  |
| And remember putting plasters on the galls\* of his neck and ankles; \*sores |  |
| He staid with me a week before he was recuperated and pass’d north; |  |
| (I had him sit next me at table—my fire-lock lean’d in the corner.) |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **52**  The spotted hawk swoops by and accuses me—he complains of my gab and my loitering. |  |
|  |  |
| I too am not a bit tamed—I too am untranslatable; |  |
| I sound my barbaric yawp over the roofs of the world. | *1330* |
|  |  |
| The last scud of day holds back for me; |  |
| It flings my likeness after the rest, and true as any, on the shadow’d wilds; |  |
| It coaxes me to the vapor and the dusk. |  |
|  |  |
| I depart as air—I shake my white locks at the runaway sun; |  |
| I effuse\* my flesh in eddies, and drift it in lacy jags. \*spread out | *1335* |
|  |  |
| I bequeathe myself to the dirt, to grow from the grass I love; |  |
| If you want me again, look for me under your boot-soles. |  |
|  |  |
| You will hardly know who I am, or what I mean; |  |
| But I shall be good health to you nevertheless, |  |
| And filter and fibre your blood. | *1340* |
|  |  |
| Failing to fetch me at first, keep encouraged; |  |
| Missing me one place, search another; |  |
| I stop somewhere, waiting for you. |  |

**I Hear America Singing**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| I HEAR America singing, the varied carols I hear; |  |
| Those of mechanics—each one singing his, as it should be, blithe and strong; |  |
| The carpenter singing his, as he measures his plank or beam, |  |
| The mason singing his, as he makes ready for work, or leaves off work; |  |
| The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat—the deckhand singing on the steamboat deck; | *5* |
| The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench—the hatter singing as he stands; |  |
| The wood-cutter’s song—the ploughboy’s, on his way in the morning, or at the noon intermission, or at sundown; |  |
| The delicious singing of the mother—or of the young wife at work—or of the girl sewing or washing—Each singing what belongs to her, and to none else; |  |
| The day what belongs to the day—At night, the party of young fellows, robust, friendly, |  |
| Singing, with open mouths, their strong melodious [songs](http://www.bartleby.com/142/1009.html#91.10). |  |

**O Me! O Life!**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| O ME! O life!... of the questions of these recurring; |  |
| Of the endless trains of the faithless—of cities fill’d with the foolish; |  |
| Of myself forever reproaching myself, (for who more foolish than I, and who more faithless?) |  |
| Of eyes that vainly crave the light—of the objects mean—of the struggle ever renew’d; |  |
| Of the poor results of all—of the plodding and sordid crowds I see around me; | *5* |
| Of the empty and useless years of the rest—with the rest me intertwined; |  |
| The question, O me! So sad, recurring—What good amid these, O me, O life? |  |
|  |  |
| *Answer.*  That you are here—that life exists, and identity; |  |
| That the powerful play goes on, and you will contribute a verse. |  |

**O CAPTAIN! MY CAPTAIN!**

O Captain! My Captain! Our fearful trip is done;   
The ship has weather’d every rack, the prize we sought is won;   
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,   
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring:   
But O heart! Heart! Heart!   
O the bleeding drops of red,   
Where on the deck my Captain lies,   
Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! My Captain! Rise up and hear the bells;   
Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle trills;   
For you bouquets and ribbon’d wreaths—for you the shores a-crowding;   
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;   
Here Captain! Dear father!   
This arm beneath your head;   
It is some dream that on the deck,   
You’ve fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still;   
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will;   
The ship is anchor’d safe and sound, its voyage closed and done;   
From fearful trip, the victor ship, comes in with object won;   
Exult, O shores, and ring, O bells!   
But I, with mournful tread,   
Walk the deck my Captain lies,   
Fallen cold and dead.

—1865

Selected Poems of Stephen Crane

# More about Crane

Stephen Crane was the son of a preacher man. However, his father died when he was young.

Crane’s clearly a post-Darwinian poet. He felt bereft when religious certainty got ripped away. Darwin’s theory suggested that life was meaningless; perhaps feeling like a sucker for his early religious beliefs, Crane seems to embrace the absurdity of life without meaning.

Writing in free verse, he invents a form all to his own. His poems are delicate yet harsh. How so?

**From *The Black Riders and Other Lines* (1896)**

I

Black riders came from the sea.  
There was clang and clang of spear and shield,  
And clash and clash of hoof and heel,  
Wild shouts and the wave of hair  
In the rush upon the wind:  
Thus the ride of sin.

III

In the desert  
I saw a creature, naked, bestial,  
who, squatting upon the ground,  
Held his heart in his hands,  
And ate of it.  
I said, “Is it good, friend?”  
“It is bitter—bitter,” he answered;  
“But I like it  
Because it is bitter,  
And because it is my heart.”

XXIV

I saw a man pursuing the horizon;  
Round and round they sped.  
I was disturbed at this;  
I accosted the man.

“It is futile,” I said,

“You can never—“

“You lie,” he cried,  
And ran on.

LVI  
A man feared that he might find an assassin;  
Another that he might find a victim.  
One was more wise than the other.

IV

Yes, I have a thousand tongues,  
And nine and ninety-nine lie.  
Though I strive to use the one,  
It will make no melody at my will,  
But is dead in my mouth.

XXI

A man said to the universe:

“Sir I exist!”

“However,” replied the universe,

“The fact has not created in me  
A sense of obligation.”

**Don’t hate, *ANNOTATE*!**

**War is Kind**

Do not weep, maiden, for war is kind.  
Because your lover threw wild hands toward the sky  
And the affrighted steed ran on alone,  
Do not weep.  
War is kind.

Hoarse, booming drums of the regiment,  
Little souls who thirst for fight,  
These men were born to drill and die.  
The unexplained glory flies above them,  
Great is the battle-god, great, and his kingdom—  
A field where a thousand corpses lie.

Do not weep, babe, for war is kind.  
Because your father tumbled in the yellow trenches,  
Raged at his breast, gulped and died,  
Do not weep.  
War is kind.

### [A man adrift on a slim spar]

A man adrift on a slim spar  
A horizon smaller than the rim of a bottle  
Tented waves rearing lashy dark points  
The near white of froth in circles.

God is cold.

The incessant raise and swing of the sea  
And growl after growl of crest  
The sinkings, green, seething, endless  
The upheaval half-completed.

God is cold.

The seas are in the hollow of The Hand;  
Oceans may be turned to a spray  
Raining down through the stars  
Because of a gesture of pity toward a babe.  
Oceans may become grey ashes,  
Die with a long moan and a roar  
Amid the tumult of the fishes  
And the cries of the ships,  
Because The Hand beckons the mice.

A horizon smaller than a doomed assassin’s cap,  
Inky, surging tumults  
A reeling, drunken sky and no sky  
A pale hand sliding from a polished spar.

God is cold.

The puff of a coat imprisoning air:   
A face kissing the water-death  
A weary slow sway of a lost hand  
And the sea, the moving sea, the sea.

God is cold.

(1898)

Swift blazing flag of the regiment,  
Eagle with crest of red and gold,  
These men were born to drill and die.  
Point for them the virtue of slaughter,  
Make plain to them the excellence of killing  
And a field where a thousand corpses lie.

Mother whose heart hung humble as a button  
On the bright splendid shroud of your son,  
Do not weep.  
War is kind.

(1899)

THE OPEN BOAT

**A TALE INTENDED TO BE AFTER THE FACT. BEING THE   
EXPERIENCE OF FOUR MEN SUNK FROM THE STEAMER COMMODORE.**

**Stephen Crane**

**I**

1. None of them knew the color of the sky. Their eyes glanced level, and were fastened upon the waves that swept toward them. These waves were of the hue of slate, save for the tops, which were of foaming white, and all of the men knew the colors of the sea. The horizon narrowed and widened, and dipped and rose, and at all times its edge was jagged with waves that seemed thrust up in points like rocks. Many a man ought to have a bath-tub larger than the boat which here rode upon the sea. These waves were most wrongfully and barbarously abrupt and tall, and each froth-top was a problem in small-boat navigation.
2. The cook squatted in the bottom and looked with both eyes at the six inches of gunwale which separated him from the ocean. His sleeves were rolled over his fat forearms, and the two flaps of his unbuttoned vest dangled as he bent to bail out the boat. Often he said: “Gawd! That was a narrow clip.” As he remarked it he invariably gazed eastward over the broken sea.
3. The oiler, steering with one of the two oars in the boat, sometimes raised himself suddenly to keep clear of water that swirled in over the stern. It was a thin little oar and it seemed often ready to snap.
4. The correspondent, pulling at the other oar, watched the waves and wondered why he was there.
5. The injured captain, lying in the bow, was at this time buried in that profound dejection and indifference which comes, temporarily at least, to even the bravest and most enduring when, willy nilly, the firm fails, the army loses, the ship goes down. The mind of the master of a vessel is rooted deep in the timbers of her, though he commanded for a day or a decade, and this captain had on him the stern impression of a scene in the greys of dawn of seven turned faces, and later a stump of a top-mast with a white ball on it that slashed to and fro at the waves, went low and lower, and down. Thereafter there was something strange in his voice. Although steady, it was, deep with mourning, and of a quality beyond oration or tears.
6. “Keep ‘er a little more south, Billie,” said he.
7. “’A little more south,’ sir,” said the oiler in the stern.
8. A seat in this boat was not unlike a seat upon a bucking broncho, and by the same token, a broncho is not much smaller. The craft pranced and reared, and plunged like an animal. As each wave came, and she rose for it, she seemed like a horse making at a fence outrageously high. The manner of her scramble over these walls of water is a mystic thing, and, moreover, at the top of them were ordinarily these problems in white water, the foam racing down from the summit of each wave, requiring a new leap, and a leap from the air. Then, after scornfully bumping a crest, she would slide, and race, and splash down a long incline, and arrive bobbing and nodding in front of the next menace.
9. A singular disadvantage of the sea lies in the fact that after successfully surmounting one wave you discover that there is another behind it just as important and just as nervously anxious to do something effective in the way of swamping boats. In a ten-foot dingey one can get an idea of the resources of the sea in the line of waves that is not probable to the average experience which is never at sea in a dingey. As each slatey wall of water approached, it shut all else from the view of the men in the boat, and it was not difficult to imagine that this particular wave was the final outburst of the ocean, the last effort of the grim water. There was a terrible grace in the move of the waves, and they came in silence, save for the snarling of the crests.
10. In the wan light, the faces of the men must have been grey. Their eyes must have glinted in strange ways as they gazed steadily astern. Viewed from a balcony, the whole thing would doubtless have been weirdly picturesque. But the men in the boat had no time to see it, and if they had had leisure there were other things to occupy their minds. The sun swung steadily up the sky, and they knew it was broad day because the color of the sea changed from slate to emerald-green, streaked with amber lights, and the foam was like tumbling snow. The process of the breaking day was unknown to them. They were aware only of this effect upon the color of the waves that rolled toward them.
11. In disjointed sentences the cook and the correspondent argued as to the difference between a life-saving station and a house of refuge. The cook had said: “There’s a house of refuge just north of the Mosquito Inlet Light, and as soon as they see us, they’ll come off in their boat and pick us up.”
12. “As soon as who see us?” said the correspondent.
13. “The crew,” said the cook.
14. “Houses of refuge don’t have crews,” said the correspondent. “As I understand them, they are only places where clothes and grub are stored for the benefit of shipwrecked people. They don’t carry crews.”
15. “Oh, yes, they do,” said the cook.
16. “No, they don’t,” said the correspondent.
17. “Well, we’re not there yet, anyhow,” said the oiler, in the stern.
18. “Well,” said the cook, “perhaps it’s not a house of refuge that I’m thinking of as being near Mosquito Inlet Light. Perhaps it’s a life- saving station.”
19. “We’re not there yet,” said the oiler, in the stern.

**II**

1. As the boat bounced from the top of each wave, the wind tore through the hair of the hatless men, and as the craft plopped her stern down again the spray splashed past them. The crest of each of these waves was a hill, from the top of which the men surveyed, for a moment, a broad tumultuous expanse, shining and wind-riven. It was probably splendid. It was probably glorious, this play of the free sea, wild with lights of emerald and white and amber.
2. “Bully good thing it’s an on-shore wind,” said the cook; “If not, where would we be? Wouldn’t have a show.”
3. “That’s right,” said the correspondent.
4. The busy oiler nodded his assent.
5. Then the captain, in the bow, chuckled in a way that expressed humor, contempt, tragedy, all in one. “Do you think We’ve got much of a show now, boys?” said he.
6. Whereupon the three were silent, save for a trifle of hemming and hawing. To express any particular optimism at this time they felt to be childish and stupid, but they all doubtless possessed this sense of the situation in their mind. A young man thinks doggedly at such times. On the other hand, the ethics of their condition was decidedly against any open suggestion of hopelessness. So they were silent.
7. “Oh, well,” said the captain, soothing his children, “We’ll get ashore all right.”
8. But there was that in his tone which made them think, so the oiler quoth: “Yes! If this wind holds!”
9. The cook was bailing: “Yes! If we don’t catch hell in the surf.”
10. Canton flannel gulls flew near and far. Sometimes they sat down on the sea, near patches of brown seaweed that rolled on the waves with a movement like carpets on a line in a gale. The birds sat comfortably in groups, and they were envied by some in the dingey, for the wrath of the sea was no more to them than it was to a covey of prairie chickens a thousand miles inland. Often they came very close and stared at the men with black bead-like eyes. At these times they were uncanny and sinister in their unblinking scrutiny, and the men hooted angrily at them, telling them to be gone. One came, and evidently decided to alight on the top of the captain’s head. The bird flew parallel to the boat and did not circle, but made short sidelong jumps in the air in chicken- fashion. His black eyes were wistfully fixed upon the captain’s head. “Ugly brute,” said the oiler to the bird. “You look as if you were made with a jack-knife.” The cook and the correspondent swore darkly at the creature. The captain naturally wished to knock it away with the end of the heavy painter; but he did not dare do it, because anything resembling an emphatic gesture would have capsized this freighted boat, and so with his open hand, the captain gently and carefully waved the gull away. After it had been discouraged from the pursuit the captain breathed easier on account of his hair, and others breathed easier because the bird struck their minds at this time as being somehow grewsome and ominous.
11. In the meantime the oiler and the correspondent rowed And also they rowed.
12. They sat together in the same seat, and each rowed an oar. Then the oiler took both oars; then the correspondent took both oars; then the oiler; then the correspondent. They rowed and they rowed. The very ticklish part of the business was when the time came for the reclining one in the stern to take his turn at the oars. By the very last star of truth, it is easier to steal eggs from under a hen than it was to change seats in the dingey. First the man in the stern slid his hand along the thwart and moved with care, as if he were of Sevres. Then the man in the rowing seat slid his hand along the other thwart. It was all done with most extraordinary care. As the two sidled past each other, the whole party kept watchful eyes on the coming wave, and the captain cried: “Look out now! Steady there!”
13. The brown mats of seaweed that appeared from time to time were like islands, bits of earth. They were traveling, apparently, neither one way nor the other. They were, to all intents, stationary. They informed the men in the boat that it was making progress slowly toward the land.
14. The captain, rearing cautiously in the bow, after the dingey soared on a great swell, said that he had seen the light-house at Mosquito Inlet. Presently the cook remarked that he had seen it. The correspondent was at the oars then, and for some reason he too wished to look at the lighthouse, but his back was toward the far shore and the waves were important, and for some time he could not seize an opportunity to turn his head. But at last there came a wave more gentle than the others, and when at the crest of it he swiftly scoured the western horizon.
15. “See it?” said the captain.
16. “No,” said the correspondent slowly, “I didn’t see anything.”
17. “Look again,” said the captain. He pointed. “It’s exactly in that direction.”
18. At the top of another wave, the correspondent did as he was bid, and this time his eyes chanced on a small still thing on the edge of the swaying horizon. It was precisely like the point of a pin. It took an anxious eye to find a light house so tiny.
19. “Think we’ll make it, captain?”
20. “If this wind holds and the boat don’t swamp, we can’t do much else,” said the captain.
21. The little boat, lifted by each towering sea, and splashed viciously by the crests, made progress that in the absence of seaweed was not apparent to those in her. She seemed just a wee thing wallowing, miraculously top-up, at the mercy of five oceans. Occasionally, a great spread of water, like white flames, swarmed into her.
22. “Bail her, cook,” said the captain serenely.
23. “All right, captain,” said the cheerful cook.

**III**

1. It would be difficult to describe the subtle brotherhood of men that was here established on the seas. No one said that it was so. No one mentioned it. But it dwelt in the boat, and each man felt it warm him. They were a captain, an oiler, a cook, and a correspondent, and they were friends, friends in a more curiously iron-bound degree than may be common. The hurt captain, lying against the water-jar in the bow, spoke always in a low voice and calmly, but he could never command a more ready and swiftly obedient crew than the motley three of the dingey. It was more than a mere recognition of what was best for the common safety. There was surely in it a quality that was personal and heartfelt. And after this devotion to the commander of the boat there was this comradeship that the correspondent, for instance, who had been taught to be cynical of men, knew even at the time was the best experience of his life. But no one said that it was so. No one mentioned it.
2. “I wish we had a sail,” remarked the captain. “We might try my overcoat on the end of an oar and give you two boys a chance to rest.” So the cook and the correspondent held the mast and spread wide the overcoat. The oiler steered, and the little boat made good way with her new rig. Sometimes the oiler had to scull sharply to keep a sea from breaking into the boat, but otherwise sailing was a success.
3. Meanwhile the lighthouse had been growing slowly larger. It had now almost assumed color, and appeared like a little grey shadow on the sky. The man at the oars could not be prevented from turning his head rather often to try for a glimpse of this little grey shadow.
4. At last, from the top of each wave the men in the tossing boat could see land. Even as the lighthouse was an upright shadow on the sky, this land seemed but a long black shadow on the sea. It certainly was thinner than paper. “We must be about opposite New Smyrna,” said the cook, who had coasted this shore often in schooners. “Captain, by the way, I believe they abandoned that life-saving station there about a year ago.”
5. “Did they?” said the captain.
6. The wind slowly died away. The cook and the correspondent were not now obliged to slave in order to hold high the oar. But the waves continued their old impetuous swooping at the dingey, and the little craft, no longer under way, struggled woundily over them. The oiler or the correspondent took the oars again.
7. Shipwrecks are *a propos* of nothing. If men could only train for them and have them occur when the men had reached pink condition, there would be less drowning at sea. Of the four in the dingey none had slept any time worth mentioning for two days and two nights previous to embarking in the dingey, and in the excitement of clambering about the deck of a foundering ship they had also forgotten to eat heartily.
8. For these reasons, and for others, neither the oiler nor the correspondent was fond of rowing at this time. The correspondent wondered ingenuously how in the name of all that was sane could there be people who thought it amusing to row a boat. It was not an amusement; it was a diabolical punishment, and even a genius of mental aberrations could never conclude that it was anything but a horror to the muscles and a crime against the back. He mentioned to the boat in general how the amusement of rowing struck him, and the weary-faced oiler smiled in full sympathy. Previously to the foundering, by the way, the oiler had worked double-watch in the engine-room of the ship.
9. “Take her easy, now, boys,” said the captain. “Don’t spend yourselves. If we have to run a surf you’ll need all your strength, because we’ll sure have to swim for it. Take your time.”
10. Slowly the land arose from the sea. From a black line it became a line of black and a line of white, trees and sand. Finally, the captain said that he could make out a house on the shore. “That’s the house of refuge, sure,” said the cook. “They’ll see us before long, and come out after us.”
11. The distant lighthouse reared high. “The keeper ought to be able to make us out now, if he’s looking through a glass,” said the captain. “He’ll notify the life-saving people.”
12. “None of those other boats could have got ashore to give word of the wreck,” said the oiler, in a low voice. “Else the lifeboat would be out hunting us.”
13. Slowly and beautifully the land loomed out of the sea. The wind came again. It had veered from the north-east to the south-east. Finally, a new sound struck the ears of the men in the boat. It was the low thunder of the surf on the shore. “We’ll never be able to make the lighthouse now,” said the captain. “Swing her head a little more north, Billie,” said he.
14. “’A little more north,’ sir,” said the oiler.
15. Whereupon the little boat turned her nose once more down the wind, and all but the oarsman watched the shore grow. Under the influence of this expansion doubt and direful apprehension was leaving the minds of the men. The management of the boat was still most absorbing, but it could not prevent a quiet cheerfulness. In an hour, perhaps, they would be ashore.
16. Their backbones had become thoroughly used to balancing in the boat, and they now rode this wild colt of a dingey like circus men. The correspondent thought that he had been drenched to the skin, but happening to feel in the top pocket of his coat, he found therein eight cigars. Four of them were soaked with sea-water; four were perfectly scathless. After a search, somebody produced three dry matches, and thereupon the four waifs rode impudently in their little boat, and with an assurance of an impending rescue shining in their eyes, puffed at the big cigars and judged well and ill of all men. Everybody took a drink of water.

**IV**

1. “Cook,” remarked the captain, “there don’t seem to be any signs of life about your house of refuge.”
2. “No,” replied the cook. “Funny they don’t see us!”
3. A broad stretch of lowly coast lay before the eyes of the men. It was of dunes topped with dark vegetation. The roar of the surf was plain, and sometimes they could see the white lip of a wave as it spun up the beach. A tiny house was blocked out black upon the sky. Southward, the slim lighthouse lifted its little grey length.
4. Tide, wind, and waves were swinging the dingey northward. “Funny they don’t see us,” said the men.
5. The surf’s roar was here dulled, but its tone was, nevertheless, thunderous and mighty. As the boat swam over the great rollers, the men sat listening to this roar. “We’ll swamp sure,” said everybody.
6. It is fair to say here that there was not a life-saving station within twenty miles in either direction, but the men did not know this fact, and in consequence they made dark and opprobrious remarks concerning the eyesight of the nation’s life-savers. Four scowling men sat in the dingey and surpassed records in the invention of epithets.
7. “Funny they don’t see us.”
8. The lightheartedness of a former time had completely faded. To their sharpened minds it was easy to conjure pictures of all kinds of incompetency and blindness and, indeed, cowardice. There was the shore of the populous land, and it was bitter and bitter to them that from it came no sign.
9. “Well,” said the captain, ultimately, “I suppose we’ll have to make a try for ourselves. If we stay out here too long, we’ll none of us have strength left to swim after the boat swamps.”
10. And so the oiler, who was at the oars, turned the boat straight for the shore. There was a sudden tightening of muscle. There was some thinking.
11. “If we don’t all get ashore—“ said the captain. “If we don’t all get ashore, I suppose you fellows know where to send news of my finish?”
12. They then briefly exchanged some addresses and admonitions. As for the reflections of the men, there was a great deal of rage in them. Perchance they might be formulated thus: “If I am going to be drowned—if I am going to be drowned—if I am going to be drowned, why, in the name of the seven mad gods who rule the sea, was I allowed to come thus far and contemplate sand and trees? Was I brought here merely to have my nose dragged away as I was about to nibble the sacred cheese of life? It is preposterous. If this old ninny-woman, Fate, cannot do better than this, she should be deprived of the management of men’s fortunes. She is an old hen who knows not her intention. If she has decided to drown me, why did she not do it in the beginning and save me all this trouble? The whole affair is absurd.... But no, she cannot mean to drown me. She dare not drown me. She cannot drown me. Not after all this work.” Afterward the man might have had an impulse to shake his fist at the clouds: “Just you drown me, now, and then hear what I call you!”
13. The billows that came at this time were more formidable. They seemed always just about to break and roll over the little boat in a turmoil of foam. There was a preparatory and long growl in the speech of them. No mind unused to the sea would have concluded that the dingey could ascend these sheer heights in time. The shore was still afar. The oiler was a wily surfman. “Boys,” he said swiftly, “she won’t live three minutes more, and we’re too far out to swim. Shall I take her to sea again, captain?”
14. “Yes! Go ahead!” said the captain.
15. This oiler, by a series of quick miracles, and fast and steady oarsmanship, turned the boat in the middle of the surf and took her safely to sea again.
16. There was a considerable silence as the boat bumped over the furrowed sea to deeper water. Then somebody in gloom spoke. “Well, anyhow, they must have seen us from the shore by now.”
17. The gulls went in slanting flight up the wind toward the grey desolate east. A squall, marked by dingy clouds, and clouds brick-red, like smoke from a burning building, appeared from the south-east.
18. “What do you think of those life-saving people? Ain’t they peaches?’
19. “Funny they haven’t seen us.”
20. “Maybe they think we’re out here for sport! Maybe they think we’re fishin’. Maybe they think we’re damned fools.”
21. It was a long afternoon. A changed tide tried to force them southward, but the wind and wave said northward. Far ahead, where coast-line, sea, and sky formed their mighty angle, there were little dots which seemed to indicate a city on the shore.
22. “St. Augustine?”
23. The captain shook his head. “Too near Mosquito Inlet.”
24. And the oiler rowed, and then the correspondent rowed. Then the oiler rowed. It was a weary business. The human back can become the seat of more aches and pains than are registered in books for the composite anatomy of a regiment. It is a limited area, but it can become the theatre of innumerable muscular conflicts, tangles, wrenches, knots, and other comforts.
25. “Did you ever like to row, Billie?” asked the correspondent.
26. “No,” said the oiler. “Hang it!”
27. When one exchanged the rowing-seat for a place in the bottom of the boat, he suffered a bodily depression that caused him to be careless of everything save an obligation to wiggle one finger. There was cold sea- water swashing to and fro in the boat, and he lay in it. His head, pillowed on a thwart, was within an inch of the swirl of a wave crest, and sometimes a particularly obstreperous sea came in-board and drenched him once more. But these matters did not annoy him. It is almost certain that if the boat had capsized he would have tumbled comfortably out upon the ocean as if he felt sure that it was a great soft mattress.
28. “Look! There’s a man on the shore!”
29. “Where?”
30. “There! See ‘im? See ‘im?”
31. “Yes, sure! He’s walking along.”
32. “Now he’s stopped. Look! He’s facing us!”
33. “He’s waving at us!”
34. “So he is! By thunder!”
35. “Ah, now we’re all right! Now we’re all right! There’ll be a boat out here for us in half-an-hour.”
36. “He’s going on. He’s running. He’s going up to that house there.”
37. The remote beach seemed lower than the sea, and it required a searching glance to discern the little black figure. The captain saw a floating stick and they rowed to it. A bath-towel was by some weird chance in the boat, and, tying this on the stick, the captain waved it. The oarsman did not dare turn his head, so he was obliged to ask questions.
38. “What’s he doing now?”
39. “He’s standing still again. He’s looking, I think.... There he goes again. Toward the house.... Now he’s stopped again.”
40. “Is he waving at us?”
41. “No, not now! He was, though.”
42. “Look! There comes another man!”
43. “He’s running.”
44. “Look at him go, would you.”
45. “Why, he’s on a bicycle. Now he’s met the other man. They’re both waving at us. Look!”
46. “There comes something up the beach.”
47. “What the devil is that thing?”
48. “Why it looks like a boat.”
49. “Why, certainly it’s a boat.”
50. “No, it’s on wheels.”
51. “Yes, so it is. Well, that must be the life-boat. They drag them along shore on a wagon.”
52. “That’s the life-boat, sure.”
53. “No, by ----, it’s—it’s an omnibus.”
54. “I tell you it’s a life-boat.”
55. “It is not! It’s an omnibus. I can see it plain. See? One of these big hotel omnibuses.”
56. “By thunder, you’re right. It’s an omnibus, sure as fate. What do you suppose they are doing with an omnibus? Maybe they are going around collecting the life-crew, hey?”
57. “That’s it, likely. Look! There’s a fellow waving a little black flag. He’s standing on the steps of the omnibus. There come those other two fellows. Now they’re all talking together. Look at the fellow with the flag. Maybe he ain’t waving it.”
58. “That ain’t a flag, is it? That’s his coat. Why, certainly, that’s his coat.”
59. “So it is. It’s his coat. He’s taken it off and is waving it around his head. But would you look at him swing it.”
60. “Oh, say, there isn’t any life-saving station there. That’s just a winter resort hotel omnibus that has brought over some of the boarders to see us drown.”
61. “What’s that idiot with the coat mean? What’s he signaling, anyhow?”
62. “It looks as if he were trying to tell us to go north. There must be a life-saving station up there.”
63. “No! He thinks we’re fishing. Just giving us a merry hand. See? Ah, there, Willie!”
64. “Well, I wish I could make something out of those signals. What do you suppose he means?”
65. “He don’t mean anything. He’s just playing.”
66. “Well, if he’d just signal us to try the surf again, or to go to sea and wait, or go north, or go south, or go to hell—there would be some reason in it. But look at him. He just stands there and keeps his coat revolving like a wheel. The ass!”
67. “There come more people.”
68. “Now there’s quite a mob. Look! Isn’t that a boat?”
69. “Where? Oh, I see where you mean. No, that’s no boat.”
70. “That fellow is still waving his coat.”
71. “He must think we like to see him do that. Why don’t he quit it? It don’t mean anything.”
72. “I don’t know. I think he is trying to make us go north. It must be that there’s a life-saving station there somewhere.”
73. “Say, he ain’t tired yet. Look at ‘im wave.”
74. “Wonder how long he can keep that up. He’s been revolving his coat ever since he caught sight of us. He’s an idiot. Why aren’t they getting men to bring a boat out? A fishing boat—one of those big yawls—could come out here all right. Why don’t he do something?”
75. “Oh, it’s all right, now.”
76. “They’ll have a boat out here for us in less than no time, now that they’ve seen us.”
77. A faint yellow tone came into the sky over the low land. The shadows on the sea slowly deepened. The wind bore coldness with it, and the men began to shiver.
78. “Holy smoke!” said one, allowing his voice to express his impious mood, “if we keep on monkeying out here! If we’ve got to flounder out here all night!”
79. “Oh, we’ll never have to stay here all night! Don’t you worry. They’ve seen us now, and it won’t be long before they’ll come chasing out after us.”
80. The shore grew dusky. The man waving a coat blended gradually into this gloom, and it swallowed in the same manner the omnibus and the group of people. The spray, when it dashed uproariously over the side, made the voyagers shrink and swear like men who were being branded.
81. “I’d like to catch the chump who waved the coat. I feel like soaking him one, just for luck.”
82. “Why? What did he do?”
83. “Oh, nothing, but then he seemed so damned cheerful.”
84. In the meantime the oiler rowed, and then the correspondent rowed, and then the oiler rowed. Grey-faced and bowed forward, they mechanically, turn by turn, plied the leaden oars. The form of the lighthouse had vanished from the southern horizon, but finally a pale star appeared, just lifting from the sea. The streaked saffron in the west passed before the all-merging darkness, and the sea to the east was black. The land had vanished, and was expressed only by the low and drear thunder of the surf.
85. “If I am going to be drowned—if I am going to be drowned—if I am going to be drowned, why, in the name of the seven mad gods who rule the sea, was I allowed to come thus far and contemplate sand and trees? Was I brought here merely to have my nose dragged away as I was about to nibble the sacred cheese of life?”
86. The patient captain, drooped over the water-jar, was sometimes obliged to speak to the oarsman.
87. “Keep her head up! Keep her head up!”
88. “’Keep her head up,’ sir.” The voices were weary and low.
89. This was surely a quiet evening. All save the oarsman lay heavily and listlessly in the boat’s bottom. As for him, his eyes were just capable of noting the tall black waves that swept forward in a most sinister silence, save for an occasional subdued growl of a crest.
90. The cook’s head was on a thwart, and he looked without interest at the water under his nose. He was deep in other scenes. Finally he spoke. “Billie,” he murmured, dreamfully, “what kind of pie do you like best?”

**V**

1. “Pie,” said the oiler and the correspondent, agitatedly. “Don’t talk about those things, blast you!”
2. “Well,” said the cook, “I was just thinking about ham sandwiches, and—“
3. A night on the sea in an open boat is a long night. As darkness settled finally, the shine of the light, lifting from the sea in the south, changed to full gold. On the northern horizon a new light appeared, a small bluish gleam on the edge of the waters. These two lights were the furniture of the world. Otherwise there was nothing but waves.
4. Two men huddled in the stern, and distances were so magnificent in the dingey that the rower was enabled to keep his feet partly warmed by thrusting them under his companions. Their legs indeed extended far under the rowing-seat until they touched the feet of the captain forward. Sometimes, despite the efforts of the tired oarsman, a wave came piling into the boat, an icy wave of the night, and the chilling water soaked them anew. They would twist their bodies for a moment and groan, and sleep the dead sleep once more, while the water in the boat gurgled about them as the craft rocked.
5. The plan of the oiler and the correspondent was for one to row until he lost the ability, and then arouse the other from his sea-water couch in the bottom of the boat.
6. The oiler plied the oars until his head drooped forward, and the overpowering sleep blinded him. And he rowed yet afterward. Then he touched a man in the bottom of the boat, and called his name. “Will you spell me for a little while?” he said, meekly.
7. “Sure, Billie,” said the correspondent, awakening and dragging himself to a sitting position. They exchanged places carefully, and the oiler, cuddling down in the sea-water at the cook’s side, seemed to go to sleep instantly.
8. The particular violence of the sea had ceased. The waves came without snarling. The obligation of the man at the oars was to keep the boat headed so that the tilt of the rollers would not capsize her, and to preserve her from filling when the crests rushed past. The black waves were silent and hard to be seen in the darkness. Often one was almost upon the boat before the oarsman was aware.
9. In a low voice the correspondent addressed the captain. He was not sure that the captain was awake, although this iron man seemed to be always awake. “Captain, shall I keep her making for that light north, sir?”
10. The same steady voice answered him. “Yes. Keep it about two points off the port bow.”
11. The cook had tied a life-belt around himself in order to get even the warmth which this clumsy cork contrivance could donate, and he seemed almost stove-like when a rower, whose teeth invariably chattered wildly as soon as he ceased his labor, dropped down to sleep.
12. The correspondent, as he rowed, looked down at the two men sleeping under-foot. The cook’s arm was around the oiler’s shoulders, and, with their fragmentary clothing and haggard faces, they were the babes of the sea, a grotesque rendering of the old babes in the wood.
13. Later he must have grown stupid at his work, for suddenly there was a growling of water, and a crest came with a roar and a swash into the boat, and it was a wonder that it did not set the cook afloat in his life-belt. The cook continued to sleep, but the oiler sat up, blinking his eyes and shaking with the new cold.
14. “Oh, I’m awful sorry, Billie,” said the correspondent contritely.
15. “That’s all right, old boy,” said the oiler, and lay down again and was asleep.
16. Presently it seemed that even the captain dozed, and the correspondent thought that he was the one man afloat on all the oceans. The wind had a voice as it came over the waves, and it was sadder than the end.
17. There was a long, loud swishing astern of the boat, and a gleaming trail of phosphorescence, like blue flame, was furrowed on the black waters. It might have been made by a monstrous knife.
18. Then there came a stillness, while the correspondent breathed with the open mouth and looked at the sea.
19. Suddenly there was another swish and another long flash of bluish light, and this time it was alongside the boat, and might almost have been reached with an oar. The correspondent saw an enormous fin speed like a shadow through the water, hurling the crystalline spray and leaving the long glowing trail.
20. The correspondent looked over his shoulder at the captain. His face was hidden, and he seemed to be asleep. He looked at the babes of the sea. They certainly were asleep. So, being bereft of sympathy, he leaned a little way to one side and swore softly into the sea.
21. But the thing did not then leave the vicinity of the boat. Ahead or astern, on one side or the other, at intervals long or short, fled the long sparkling streak, and there was to be heard the whirroo of the dark fin. The speed and power of the thing was greatly to be admired. It cut the water like a gigantic and keen projectile.
22. The presence of this biding thing did not affect the man with the same horror that it would if he had been a picnicker. He simply looked at the sea dully and swore in an undertone.
23. Nevertheless, it is true that he did not wish to be alone. He wished one of his companions to awaken by chance and keep him company with it. But the captain hung motionless over the water-jar, and the oiler and the cook in the bottom of the boat were plunged in slumber.

**VI**

1. “If I am going to be drowned—if I am going to be drowned—if I am going to be drowned, why, in the name of the seven mad gods who rule the sea, was I allowed to come thus far and contemplate sand and trees?”
2. During this dismal night, it may be remarked that a man would conclude that it was really the intention of the seven mad gods to drown him, despite the abominable injustice of it. For it was certainly an abominable injustice to drown a man who had worked so hard, so hard. The man felt it would be a crime most unnatural. Other people had drowned at sea since galleys swarmed with painted sails, but still—
3. When it occurs to a man that nature does not regard him as important, and that she feels she would not maim the universe by disposing of him, he at first wishes to throw bricks at the temple, and he hates deeply the fact that there are no brick and no temples. Any visible expression of nature would surely be pelleted with his jeers.
4. Then, if there be no tangible thing to hoot he feels, perhaps, the desire to confront a personification and indulge in pleas, bowed to one knee, and with hands supplicant, saying: “Yes, but I love myself.”
5. A high cold star on a winter’s night is the word he feels that she says to him. Thereafter he knows the pathos of his situation.
6. The men in the dingey had not discussed these matters, but each had, no doubt, reflected upon them in silence and according to his mind. There was seldom any expression upon their faces save the general one of complete weariness. Speech was devoted to the business of the boat.
7. To chime the notes of his emotion, a verse mysteriously entered the correspondent’s head. He had even forgotten that he had forgotten this verse, but it suddenly was in his mind.
8. “A soldier of the Legion lay dying in Algiers,  
   There was a lack of woman’s nursing, there was dearth of woman’s tears;  
   But a comrade stood beside him, and he took that comrade’s hand,  
   And he said: ‘I shall never see my own, my native land.’”
9. In his childhood, the correspondent had been made acquainted with the fact that a soldier of the Legion lay dying in Algiers, but he had never regarded the fact as important. Myriads of his school-fellows had informed him of the soldier’s plight, but the dinning had naturally ended by making him perfectly indifferent. He had never considered it his affair that a soldier of the Legion lay dying in Algiers, nor had it appeared to him as a matter for sorrow. It was less to him than the breaking of a pencil’s point.
10. Now, however, it quaintly came to him as a human, living thing. It was no longer merely a picture of a few throes in the breast of a poet, meanwhile drinking tea and warming his feet at the grate; it was an actuality—stern, mournful, and fine.
11. The correspondent plainly saw the soldier. He lay on the sand with his feet out straight and still. While his pale left hand was upon his chest in an attempt to thwart the going of his life, the blood came between his fingers. In the far Algerian distance, a city of low square forms was set against a sky that was faint with the last sunset hues. The correspondent, plying the oars and dreaming of the slow and slower movements of the lips of the soldier, was moved by a profound and perfectly impersonal comprehension. He was sorry for the soldier of the Legion who lay dying in Algiers.
12. The thing which had followed the boat and waited, had evidently grown bored at the delay. There was no longer to be heard the slash of the cut-water, and there was no longer the flame of the long trail. The light in the north still glimmered, but it was apparently no nearer to the boat. Sometimes the boom of the surf rang in the correspondent’s ears, and he turned the craft seaward then and rowed harder. Southward, some one had evidently built a watch-fire on the beach. It was too low and too far to be seen, but it made a shimmering, roseate reflection upon the bluff back of it, and this could be discerned from the boat. The wind came stronger, and sometimes a wave suddenly raged out like a mountain-cat, and there was to be seen the sheen and sparkle of a broken crest.
13. The captain, in the bow, moved on his water-jar and sat erect. “Pretty long night,” he observed to the correspondent. He looked at the shore. “Those life-saving people take their time.”
14. “Did you see that shark playing around?”
15. “Yes, I saw him. He was a big fellow, all right.”
16. “Wish I had known you were awake.”
17. Later the correspondent spoke into the bottom of the boat.
18. “Billie!” There was a slow and gradual disentanglement. “Billie, will you spell me?”
19. “Sure,” said the oiler.
20. As soon as the correspondent touched the cold comfortable sea-water in the bottom of the boat, and had huddled close to the cook’s life-belt he was deep in sleep, despite the fact that his teeth played all the popular airs. This sleep was so good to him that it was but a moment before he heard a voice call his name in a tone that demonstrated the last stages of exhaustion. “Will you spell me?”
21. “Sure, Billie.”
22. The light in the north had mysteriously vanished, but the correspondent took his course from the wide-awake captain.
23. Later in the night they took the boat farther out to sea, and the captain directed the cook to take one oar at the stern and keep the boat facing the seas. He was to call out if he should hear the thunder of the surf. This plan enabled the oiler and the correspondent to get respite together. “We’ll give those boys a chance to get into shape again,” said the captain. They curled down and, after a few preliminary 4arveled4g and trembles, slept once more the dead sleep. Neither knew they had bequeathed to the cook the company of another shark, or perhaps the same shark.
24. As the boat caroused on the waves, spray occasionally bumped over the side and gave them a fresh soaking, but this had no power to break their repose. The ominous slash of the wind and the water affected them as it would have affected mummies.
25. “Boys,” said the cook, with the notes of every reluctance in his voice, “she’s drifted in pretty close. I guess one of you had better take her to sea again.” The correspondent, aroused, heard the crash of the toppled crests.
26. As he was rowing, the captain gave him some whisky-and-water, and this steadied the chills out of him. “If I ever get ashore and anybody shows me even a photograph of an oar—“
27. At last there was a short conversation.
28. “Billie.... Billie, will you spell me?”
29. “Sure,” said the oiler.

**VII**

1. When the correspondent again opened his eyes, the sea and the sky were each of the grey hue of the dawning. Later, carmine and gold was painted upon the waters. The morning appeared finally, in its splendor, with a sky of pure blue, and the sunlight flamed on the tips of the waves.
2. On the distant dunes were set many little black cottages, and a tall white windmill reared above them. No man, nor dog, nor bicycle appeared on the beach. The cottages might have formed a deserted village.
3. The voyagers scanned the shore. A conference was held in the boat. “Well,” said the captain, “if no help is coming we might better try a run through the surf right away. If we stay out here much longer we will be too weak to do anything for ourselves at all.” The others silently acquiesced in this reasoning. The boat was headed for the beach. The correspondent wondered if none ever ascended the tall wind-tower, and if then they never looked seaward. This tower was a giant, standing with its back to the plight of the ants. It represented in a degree, to the correspondent, the serenity of nature amid the struggles of the individual—nature in the wind, and nature in the vision of men. She did not seem cruel to him then, nor beneficent, nor treacherous, nor wise. But she was indifferent, flatly indifferent. It is, perhaps, plausible that a man in this situation, impressed with the unconcern of the universe, should see the innumerable flaws of his life, and have them taste wickedly in his mind and wish for another chance. A distinction between right and wrong seems absurdly clear to him, then, in this new ignorance of the grave-edge, and he understands that if he were given another opportunity he would mend his conduct and his words, and be better and brighter during an introduction or at a tea.
4. “Now, boys,” said the captain, “she is going to swamp, sure. All we can do is to work her in as far as possible, and then when she swamps, pile out and scramble for the beach. Keep cool now, and don’t jump until she swamps sure.”
5. The oiler took the oars. Over his shoulders he scanned the surf. “Captain,” he said, “I think I’d better bring her about, and keep her head-on to the seas and back her in.”
6. “All right, Billie,” said the captain. “Back her in.” The oiler swung the boat then and, seated in the stern, the cook and the correspondent were obliged to look over their shoulders to contemplate the lonely and indifferent shore.
7. The monstrous in-shore rollers heaved the boat high until the men were again enabled to see the white sheets of water scudding up the slanted beach. “We won’t get in very close,” said the captain. Each time a man could wrest his attention from the rollers, he turned his glance toward the shore, and in the expression of the eyes during this contemplation there was a singular quality. The correspondent, observing the others, knew that they were not afraid, but the full meaning of their glances was shrouded.
8. As for himself, he was too tired to grapple fundamentally with the fact. He tried to coerce his mind into thinking of it, but the mind was dominated at this time by the muscles, and the muscles said they did not care. It merely occurred to him that if he should drown it would be a shame.
9. There were no hurried words, no pallor, no plain agitation. The men simply looked at the shore. “Now, remember to get well clear of the boat when you jump,” said the captain.
10. Seaward the crest of a roller suddenly fell with a thunderous crash, and the long white comber came roaring down upon the boat.
11. “Steady now,” said the captain. The men were silent. They turned their eyes from the shore to the comber and waited. The boat slid up the incline, leaped at the furious top, bounced over it, and swung down the long back of the wave. Some water had been shipped and the cook bailed it out.
12. But the next crest crashed also. The tumbling, boiling flood of white water caught the boat and whirled it almost perpendicular. Water swarmed in from all sides. The correspondent had his hands on the gunwale at this time, and when the water entered at that place he swiftly withdrew his fingers, as if he objected to wetting them.
13. The little boat, drunken with this weight of water, reeled and snuggled deeper into the sea.
14. “Bail her out, cook! Bail her out,” said the captain.
15. “All right, captain,” said the cook.
16. “Now, boys, the next one will do for us, sure,” said the oiler. “Mind to jump clear of the boat.”
17. The third wave moved forward, huge, furious, implacable. It fairly swallowed the dingey, and almost simultaneously the men tumbled into the sea. A piece of lifebelt had lain in the bottom of the boat, and as the correspondent went overboard he held this to his chest with his left hand.
18. The January water was icy, and he reflected immediately that it was colder than he had expected to find it on the coast of Florida. This appeared to his dazed mind as a fact important enough to be noted at the time. The coldness of the water was sad; it was tragic. This fact was somehow so mixed and confused with his opinion of his own situation that it seemed almost a proper reason for tears. The water was cold.
19. When he came to the surface he was conscious of little but the noisy water. Afterward he saw his companions in the sea. The oiler was ahead in the race. He was swimming strongly and rapidly. Off to the correspondent’s left, the cook’s great white and corked back bulged out of the water, and in the rear the captain was hanging with his one good hand to the keel of the overturned dingey.
20. There is a certain immovable quality to a shore, and the correspondent wondered at it amid the confusion of the sea.
21. It seemed also very attractive, but the correspondent knew that it was a long journey, and he paddled leisurely. The piece of life-preserver lay under him, and sometimes he whirled down the incline of a wave as if he were on a handsled.
22. But finally he arrived at a place in the sea where travel was beset with difficulty. He did not pause swimming to inquire what manner of current had caught him, but there his progress ceased. The shore was set before him like a bit of scenery on a stage, and he looked at it and understood with his eyes each detail of it.
23. As the cook passed, much farther to the left, the captain was calling to him, “Turn over on your back, cook! Turn over on your back and use the oar.”
24. “All right, sir.” The cook turned on his back, and, paddling with an oar, went ahead as if he were a canoe.
25. Presently the boat also passed to the left of the correspondent with the captain clinging with one hand to the keel. He would have appeared like a man raising himself to look over a board fence, if it were not for the extraordinary gymnastics of the boat. The correspondent 4arveled that the captain could still hold to it.
26. They passed on, nearer to shore—the oiler, the cook, the captain—and following them went the water-jar, bouncing gaily over the seas.
27. The correspondent remained in the grip of this strange new enemy—a current. The shore, with its white slope of sand and its green bluff, topped with little silent cottages, was spread like a picture before him. It was very near to him then, but he was impressed as one who in a gallery looks at a scene from Brittany or Holland.
28. He thought: “I am going to drown? Can it be possible Can it be possible? Can it be possible?” Perhaps an individual must consider his own death to be the final phenomenon of nature.
29. But later a wave perhaps whirled him out of this small, deadly current, for he found suddenly that he could again make progress toward the shore. Later still, he was aware that the captain, clinging with one hand to the keel of the dingey, had his face turned away from the shore and toward him, and was calling his name. “Come to the boat! Come to the boat!”
30. In his struggle to reach the captain and the boat, he reflected that when one gets properly wearied, drowning must really be a comfortable arrangement, a cessation of hostilities accompanied by a large degree of relief, and he was glad of it, for the main thing in his mind for some months had been horror of the temporary agony. He did not wish to be hurt.
31. Presently he saw a man running along the shore. He was undressing with most remarkable speed. Coat, trousers, shirt, everything flew magically off him.
32. “Come to the boat,” called the captain.
33. “All right, captain.” As the correspondent paddled, he saw the captain let himself down to bottom and leave the boat. Then the correspondent performed his one little marvel of the voyage. A large wave caught him and flung him with ease and supreme speed completely over the boat and far beyond it. It struck him even then as an event in gymnastics, and a true miracle of the sea. An over-turned boat in the surf is not a plaything to a swimming man.
34. The correspondent arrived in water that reached only to his waist, but his condition did not enable him to stand for more than a moment. Each wave knocked him into a heap, and the under-tow pulled at him.
35. Then he saw the man who had been running and undressing, and undressing and running, come bounding into the water. He dragged ashore the cook, and then waded towards the captain, but the captain waved him away, and sent him to the correspondent. He was naked, naked as a tree in winter, but a halo was about his head, and he shone like a saint. He gave a strong pull, and a long drag, and a bully heave at the correspondent’s hand. The correspondent, schooled in the minor formulae, said: “Thanks, old man.” But suddenly the man cried: “What’s that?” He pointed a swift finger. The correspondent said: “Go.”
36. In the shallows, face downward, lay the oiler. His forehead touched sand that was periodically, between each wave, clear of the sea.
37. The correspondent did not know all that transpired afterward. When he achieved safe ground he fell, striking the sand with each particular part of his body. It was as if he had dropped from a roof, but the thud was grateful to him.
38. It seems that instantly the beach was populated with men with blankets, clothes, and flasks, and women with coffeepots and all the remedies sacred to their minds. The welcome of the land to the men from the sea was warm and generous, but a still and dripping shape was carried slowly up the beach, and the land’s welcome for it could only be the different and sinister hospitality of the grave.
39. When it came night, the white waves paced to and fro in the moonlight, and the wind brought the sound of the great sea’s voice to the men on shore, and they felt that they could then be interpreters.

—1898



**Crane’s Newspaper Account of the Shipwreck**

Jacksonville**,** Fla., Jan. 6. —It was the afternoon of New Year’s. The Commodore lay at her dock in Jacksonville and negro stevedores processioned steadily toward her with box after box of ammunition and bundle after bundle of rifles. Her hatch, like the mouth of a monster, engulfed them. It might have been the feeding time of some legendary creature of the sea. It was in broad daylight and the crowd of gleeful Cubans on the pier did not forbear to sing the strange patriotic ballads of their island. Everything was perfectly open. The Commodore was cleared with a cargo of arms and munition for Cuba. There was none of that extreme modesty about the proceeding which had marked previous departures of the famous tug. She loaded up as placidly as if shewere going to carry oranges to New York, instead of Remingtons to Cuba. Down the river, furthermore, the revenue cutter Boutwell, the old isosceles triangle that protects United States interests in the St. John.s, lay at anchor, with no sign of excitement aboard her.

EXCHANGING FAREWELLS

On the decks of theCommodore there were exchanges of farewells in two languages. Many of the men who were to sail upon her had many intimates in the old Southern town, and we who had left our friends in the remote North received our first touch of melancholy on witnessing these strenuous and earnest good-bys.

It seems, however, that there was more difficulty at the custom house. The officers of the ship and the Cuban leaders were detained there until a mournful twilight settled upon the St. John.s, and through a heavy fog the lights of Jacksonville blinked dimly. Then at last the Commodore swung clear of the dock, amid a tumult of goodbys. As she turned her bow toward the distant sea the Cubans ashore cheered and cheered. In response the Commodore gave three long blasts of her whistle, which even to this time impressed me with their sadness. Somehow, they sounded as wails.

Then at last we began to feel like filibusters. I don’t suppose that the most stolid brain could contrive to believe that there is not a mere trifle of danger in filibustering, and so as we watched the lights of Jacksonville swing past us and, heard the regular thump, thump, thump of the engines we did considerable reflecting.

But I am sure that there were no hifalutin emotions visible upon any of the faces which confronted the speeding shore. In fact, from cook’s boy to captain, we were all enveloped in a gentle satisfaction and cheerfulness. But less than two miles from Jacksonville, this atrocious fog caused the pilot to ram thebow of the Commodore hard upon the mud and in this ignominious position we were compelled to stay until daybreak.

HELP FROM THE BOUTWELL

It was to all of us more than a physical calamity. We were now no longer filibusters. We were men on a ship stuck in the mud. A certain mental somersault was made once more necessary.

But word had been sent to Jacksonville to the captain of the revenue cutter Boutwell, and Captain Kilgore turned out promptly and generously fired up his old triangle, and came at full speed to our assistance. Shedragged us out of the mud, and again we headed for the mouth of the river. The revenue cutter pounded along a half mile astern of us, to make sure that we did not take on board at some place along the river men for the Cuban army.

This was the early morning of New Year’s Day, and the fine golden southern sunlight fell full upon the river. It flashed over the ancient Boutwell, until her white sides gleamed like pearl, and her rigging was spun into little threads of gold.

Cheers greeted the old Commodore from passing ship and from the shore. It was a cheerful, almost merry, beginning to our voyage. At Mayport, however, we changed our river pilot for a man who could take her to open sea, and again the Commodore was beached. The Boutwell wasfussing around us in her venerable way, and, upon seeing our predicament, she came again to assist us, but this time, with engines reversed, the Commodore dragged herself away from the grip of the sand and again headed for the open sea.

The captain of the revenue cutter grew curious. He hailed the Commodore: “Are you fellows going to sea to-day?”

Captain Murphy of the Commodore called back: “Yes, sir.”

And then as the whistle of theCommodore saluted him, Captain Kilgore doffed his cap and said: “Well, gentlemen, I hope you have a pleasant cruise,” and thiswas our last word from shore.

When the Commodore came to enormous rollers that flee over the bar a certain lightheartedness departed from the ship’s company.

SLEEP IMPOSSIBLE

As darkness came upon the waters, the Commodore was a broad, flaming path of blue and silver phosphorescence, and as her stout bow lunged at the great black waves she threw flashing, roaring cascades to either side. And all that was to be heard was the rhythmical and mighty pounding of the engines. Being an inexperienced filibuster, the writer had undergone considerable mental excitement since the starting of the ship, and in consequence he had not yet been to sleep and so I went to the first mate’s bunk to indulge myself in all the physical delights of holding one’s-self in bed. Every time the ship lurched I expected to be fired through a bulkhead, and it was neither amusing nor instructive to see in the dim light a certain accursed valise aiming itself at the top of my stomach with every lurch of the vessel.

THE COOK IS HOPEFUL

The cook was asleep on a bench in the galley. He is of a portly and noble exterior, and by means of a checker board he had himself wedged on this bench in such a manner the motion of the ship would be unable to dislodge him. He woke as I entered the galley and delivered himself of some dolorous sentiments: “God,” he said in the course of his observations, “I don’t feel right about this ship, somehow. It strikes me that something is going to happen to us. I don’t know what it is, but the old ship is going to get it in the neck, I think.”

“Well, how about the men on board of her?” said I. “Are any of us going to get out, prophet?”

“Yes,” said the cook. “Sometimes I have these damned feelings come over me, and they are always right, and it seems to me, somehow, that you and I will both get and meet again Somewhere, down at Coney Island, perhaps, or some place like that.”

ONE MAN HAS ENOUGH

Finding it impossible to sleep, I went back to the pilot house. An old seaman, Tom Smith, from Charleston, was then at the wheel. In the darkness I could not see Tom’s face, except at those times when he leaned forward to scan the compass and the dim light from the box came upon his weatherbeaten features.

“Well, Tom,” said I, “how do you like filibustering?”

He said “I think I am about through with it. I’ve been in a number of these expeditions and the pay is good, but I think if I ever get back safe this time I will cut it.”

I sat down in the corner of the pilot house and almost went to sleep. In the meantime the captain came on duty and he was standing near me when the chief engineer rushed up the stairs and cried hurriedly to the captain that there was something wrong in the engine room. He and the captain departed swiftly.

I was drowsing there in my comer when the captain returned, and, going to the door of the little room directly back of the pilothouse, he cried to the Cuban leader: “Say, can’t you get those fellows to work I can’t talk their language and I can’t get them started. Come on and get them going.”

HELPS IN the FIREROOM

The Cuban leader turned to me and said: “Go help in the fireroom. They are going to bail with buckets.”

The engine room, by the way, represented a scene at this time taken from the middle kitchen of hades. In the firstplace, it was insufferably warm, and the lights burned faintly in a way to cause mystic and grewsome shadows. There was a quantity of soapish sea water swirling and sweeping and swirling among machinery that roared and banged and clattered and steamed, and, in the second place, it was a devil. Of a ways down below.

Here I first came to know a certain young oiler named Billy Higgins. He was sloshing around this inferno filling buckets with water and passing them to a chain of men that extended up the ship’s side. Afterward we got orders to change our point of attack on water and to operate through a little door on the windward side of the ship that led into the engine room.

NO PANIC ON BOARD

During this time there was much talk of pumps out of order and many other statements of a mechanical kind, which I did not altogether comprehend but understood to mean that there, was a general and sudden ruin in the engine room.

There was no particular agitation at this time, and even later there was never a panic on board the Commodore. The party of men who worked with Higgins and me at this time were all Cubans, andwe were under the direction of the Cuban leaders. Presently we were ordered again to the afterhold, and there was some hesitation about going into the abominable fireroom again, but Higgins dashed down the companionway with a bucket.

LOWERING BOATS

The heat and hard work in the fireroom affected me and I was obliged to come on deck again. Going forward, I heard as I went talk of lowering the boats. Near the corner of the galley the mate was talking with a man.

“Why don’t you send up a rocket?” said this unknown man. And the mate replied: “What the hell do we want to send up a rocket for? The ship is all right.”

Returning with a little rubber and cloth overcoat, I saw the first boat about to be lowered. A certain man was the first person in this first boat, and they were handing him in a valise about as large as a hotel. I had not entirely recovered from astonishment and pleasure in witnessing this noble deed when I saw another valise go to him.

HUMAN HOG APPEARS

This valise was not perhaps so large as a hotel, but it was a big valise anyhow. Afterward there went to him something which looked to me like an overcoat.

Seeing the chief engineer leaning out of his little window, I remarked to him: “What do you think of that blank, blank, blank?”

“Oh, he’s a bird,” said the old chief.

It was now that was heard the order to get away the lifeboat, which was stowed on top of the deckhouse. The deckhouse was a mighty slippery place, and with each roll of the ship, the men there thought themselves likely to take headers into the deadly black sea.

Higgins was on top of the deckhouse, and, with the first mate and two colored stokers, we wrestled with that boat, which, I am willing to swear, weighed as much as a Broadway cable car. She might have been spiked to the deck. We could have pushed a little brick schoolhouse along a corduroy road as easily as we could have moved this boat. But the first mate got a tackle to her from a leeward davit, and on the deck below the captain corralled enough men to make an impression upon the boat.

We were ordered to cease hauling then, and in this lull the cook of the ship came to me and said: “What are you going to do?”

I told him of my plans, and he said: “Well, by God, that’s what I am going to do.”

A WHISTLE OF DESPAIR

Now the whistle of the Commodore had been turned loose, and if there ever was a voice of despair and death, it was in the voice of this whistle. It had gained a new tone. It was as if its throat was already choked by thewater, and this cry on the sea at night, with a wind blowing the spray over the ship, and the waves roaring over the bow, and swirling white along the decks, was to each of us probably a song of man’s end.

It was now that the first mate showed a sign of losing his grip. To us who were trying in all stages of competence and experience to launch the lifeboat he raged in all terms of fiery satire and hammerlike abuse. But the boat moved at last and swung down toward the water.

Afterward, when I went aft, I saw the captain standing, with his arm in a sling, holding on to a stay with his one good hand and directing the launching of the boat. He gave me a five- gallon jug of water to hold, and asked me what I was going to do. I told him what I thought was about the proper thing, and he told me then that the cook had the same idea, and ordered me to go forward and be ready to launch the ten-foot dingy.

IN THE TEN-FOOT DINGY

I remember well that he turned then to swear at a colored stoker who was prowling around, done up in life preservers until he looked like a feather bed. I went forward with my five-gallon jug of water, and when the captain came we launched the dingy, and they put meover theside to fend her off from the ship with an oar.

They handed me down the water jug, and then the cook came into the boat, and we sat there in the darkness, wondering why, by all our hopes of future happiness, the captain was so long in coming over to the side and ordering us away from the doomed ship.

The captain was waiting for the other boat to go. Finally be hailed in the darkness: “Are you all right, Mr. Graines?”

The first mate answered: “All right, sir.” “Shove off, then,” cried the captain.

The captain was just about to swing over the rail when a dark form came forward and a voice said: “Captain, I go with you.”

The captain answered: “Yes, Billy; get in.”

HIGGINS LAST TO LEAVE SHIP

It was Billy Higgins, the oiler. Billy dropped into the boat and a moment later the captain followed, bringing with him an end of about forty yards of lead line. The other end was attached to the rail of the ship.

As we swung back to leeward the captain said: “Boys, we will stay right near the ship till she goes down.”

This cheerful information, of course, filled us all with glee. The line kept us headed properly into the wind, and as we rode over the monstrous waves we saw upon each rise the swaying lights of the dying Commodore.

When came the gray shade of dawn, the form of the Commodore grew slowly clear to us as our little ten-foot boat rose over each swell. She was floating with such an air of buoyancy that we laughed when we had time, and said “What a gag it would be on those other fellows if she didn’t sink at all.”

But later we saw men aboard of her, and later still they began to hail us.

HELPING THEIR MATES

I had forgot to mention that previously we had loosened the end of the lead line and dropped much further to leeward. The men on board were a mystery to us, of course, as we had seen all the boats leave the ship. We rowed back to the ship, but did not approach too near, because we were four men in a ten-foot boat, and we knew that the touch of a hand on our gunwale would assuredly swamp us.

The first mate cried out from the ship that the third boat had foundered alongside. He cried that they had made rafts, and wished us to tow them.

The captain said, “All right.”

Their rafts were floating astern. “Jump in!” cried the captain, but there was a singular and most harrowing hesitation. There were five white men and two negroes. This scene in the gray light of morning impressed one as would a view into some place where ghosts move slowly. These seven men on the stern of the sinking Commodore were silent. Save the words of the mate to the captain there was no talk. Here was death, but here also was a most singular and indefinable kind of fortitude.

Four men, I remember, clambered over the railing and stood there watching the cold, steely sheen of the sweeping waves.

“Jump,” cried the captain again.

The old chief engineer first obeyed the order. He landed on the outside raft and the captain told him how to grip the raft and he obeyed as promptly and as docilely as a scholar in riding school.

THE MATE’S MAD PLUNGE

A stoker followed him, and then the first mate threw his hands over his head and plunged into the sea. He had no life belt and for my part, even when he did this horrible thing, I somehow felt that I could see in the expression of his hands, and in the very toss of his head, as he leaped thus to death, that it was rage, rage, rage unspeakable that was in his heart at the time.

And then I saw Tom Smith, the man who was going to quit filibustering after this expedition, jump to a raft and turn his face toward us. On board the Commodore three men strode, still in silence and with their faces turned toward us. One man had his arms folded and was leaning against the deckhouse. His feet were crossed, so that the toe of his left foot pointed downward. There they stood gazing at us, and neither from the deck nor fromthe rafts was a voice raised. Still was there this silence.

TRIED TO TOWTHE RAFTS

The colored stoker on the first raft threwus a line and we began to tow. Ofcourse, we perfectly understood the absolute impossibility of any such thing; our dingy was within six inches of the water’s edge, there was an enormous sea running, and I knew that under the circumstances a tugboat would have no light task in moving these rafts.

But we tried it, and would have continued to try it indefinitely, but that something critical came to pass. I was at an oar and so faced the rafts. The cook controlled the line.

Suddenly the boat began to go backward and then we saw this negro on the first raft pulling, on the line hand over hand and drawing us to him.

He had turned into a demon. He was wild-wild as a tiger. He was crouched on this raft and ready to spring. Every muscle of him seemed to be turned into an elastic spring. His eyes were almost white. His face was the face of a lost man reaching upward, and we knew that the weight of his hand on our gunwale doomed us.

THE COMMODORE SINKS

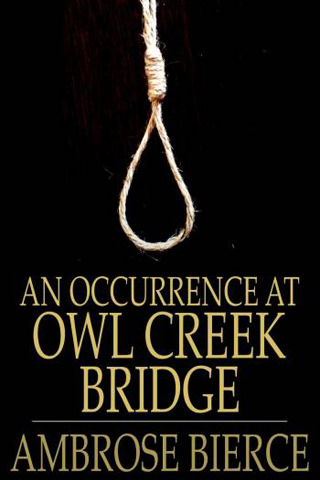
The cook let go of the line. We rowed around to see if we could not get a line from the chief engineer, and all this time, mind you, there were no shrieks, no groans, but silence, silence and silence, and then the Commodore sank.

She lurched to windward, then swung afar back, righted and dove into the sea, and the rafts were suddenly swallowed by this frightful maw of the ocean. And then by the men on the ten-foot dingy were words said that were still not words-something far beyond words.

The lighthouse of Mosquito Inlet stuck up above the horizon like the point of a pin. We turned our dingy toward the shore.

The history of life in an open boat for thirty hours would no doubt be instructive for the young, but none is to be told here and now. For my part I would prefer to tell the story at once, because from it would shine the splendid manhood of Captain Edward Murphy and of William Higgins, the oiler, but let it surface at this time to say that when we were swamped in the surf and making the best of our way toward the shore the captain gave orders amid the wildness of the breakers as clearly as if he had been on the quarter deck of a battleship.

John Kitchell of Daytona came running down the beach, and as he ran the air was filled with clothes. If he had pulled a single lever and undressed, even as the fire horses harness, he could not seem to me to have stripped with more speed. He dashed into the water and dragged the cook. Then he went after the captain, but the captain sent him to me, and then it was that he saw Billy Higgins lying with his forehead on sand that was clear of the water, and he was dead.



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| **I** |

A man stood upon a railroad bridge in northern Alabama, looking down into the swift water twenty feet below. The man’s hands were behind his back, the wrists bound with a cord. A rope closely encircled his neck. It was attached to a stout cross-timber above his head and the slack fell to the level of his knees. Some loose boards laid upon the ties supporting the rails of the railway supplied a footing for him and his executioners—two private soldiers of the Federal army, directed by a sergeant who in civil life may have been a deputy sheriff. At a short remove upon the same temporary platform was an officer in the uniform of his rank, armed. He was a captain. A sentinel at each end of the bridge stood with his rifle in the position known as “support,” that is to say, vertical in front of the left shoulder, the hammer resting on the forearm thrown straight across the chest—a formal and unnatural position, enforcing an erect carriage of the body. It did not appear to be the duty of these two men to know what was occurring at the center of the bridge; they merely blockaded the two ends of the foot planking that traversed it.

Beyond one of the sentinels nobody was in sight; the railroad ran straight away into a forest for a hundred yards, then, curving, was lost to view. Doubtless there was an outpost farther along. The other bank of the stream was open ground—a gentle slope topped with a stockade of vertical tree trunks, loopholed for rifles, with a single embrasure through which protruded the muzzle of a brass cannon commanding the bridge. Midway up the slope between the bridge and fort were the spectators—a single company of infantry in line, at “parade rest,” the butts of their rifles on the ground, the barrels inclining slightly backward against the right shoulder, the hands crossed upon the stock. A lieutenant stood at the right of the line, the point of his sword upon the ground, his left hand resting upon his right. Excepting the group of four at the center of the bridge, not a man moved. The company faced the bridge, staring stonily, motionless. The sentinels, facing the banks of the stream, might have been statues to adorn the bridge. The captain stood with folded arms, silent, observing the work of his subordinates, but making no sign. Death is a dignitary who when he comes announced is to be received with formal manifestations of respect, even by those most familiar with him. In the code of military etiquette silence and fixity are forms of deference.

The man who was engaged in being hanged was apparently about thirty-five years of age. He was a civilian, if one might judge from his habit, which was that of a planter. His features were good—a straight nose, firm mouth, broad forehead, from which his long, dark hair was combed straight back, falling behind his ears to the collar of his well fitting frock coat. He wore a moustache and pointed beard, but no whiskers; his eyes were large and dark gray, and had a kindly expression which one would hardly have expected in one whose neck was in the hemp. Evidently this was no vulgar assassin. The liberal military code makes provision for hanging many kinds of persons, and gentlemen are not excluded.

The preparations being complete, the two private soldiers stepped aside and each drew away the plank upon which he had been standing. The sergeant turned to the captain, saluted and placed himself immediately behind that officer, who in turn moved apart one pace. These movements left the condemned man and the sergeant standing on the two ends of the same plank, which spanned three of the cross-ties of the bridge. The end upon which the civilian stood almost, but not quite, reached a fourth. This plank had been held in place by the weight of the captain; it was now held by that of the sergeant. At a signal from the former the latter would step aside, the plank would tilt and the condemned man go down between two ties. The arrangement commended itself to his judgement as simple and effective. His face had not been covered nor his eyes bandaged. He looked a moment at his “unsteadfast footing,” then let his gaze wander to the swirling water of the stream racing madly beneath his feet. A piece of dancing driftwood caught his attention and his eyes followed it down the current. How slowly it appeared to move! What a sluggish stream!

He closed his eyes in order to fix his last thoughts upon his wife and children. The water, touched to gold by the early sun, the brooding mists under the banks at some distance down the stream, the fort, the soldiers, the piece of drift—all had distracted him. And now he became conscious of a new disturbance. Striking through the thought of his dear ones was sound which he could neither ignore nor understand, a sharp, distinct, metallic percussion like the stroke of a blacksmith’s hammer upon the anvil; it had the same ringing quality. He wondered what it was, and whether immeasurably distant or near by— it seemed both. Its recurrence was regular, but as slow as the tolling of a death knell. He awaited each new stroke with impatience and—he knew not why—apprehension. The intervals of silence grew progressively longer; the delays became maddening. With their greater infrequency the sounds increased in strength and sharpness. They hurt his ear like the trust of a knife; he feared he would shriek. What he heard was the ticking of his watch.

He unclosed his eyes and saw again the water below him. “If I could free my hands,” he thought, “I might throw off the noose and spring into the stream. By diving I could evade the bullets and, swimming vigorously, reach the bank, take to the woods and get away home. My home, thank God, is as yet outside their lines; my wife and little ones are still beyond the invader’s farthest advance.”

As these thoughts, which have here to be set down in words, were flashed into the doomed man’s brain rather than evolved from it the captain nodded to the sergeant. The sergeant stepped aside.

**II**

Peyton Farquhar was a well to do planter, of an old and highly respected Alabama family. Being a slave owner and like other slave owners a politician, he was naturally an original secessionist and ardently devoted to the Southern cause. Circumstances of an imperious nature, which it is unnecessary to relate here, had prevented him from taking service with that gallant army which had fought the disastrous campaigns ending with the fall of Corinth, and he chafed under the inglorious restraint, longing for the release of his energies, the larger life of the soldier, the opportunity for distinction. That opportunity, he felt, would come, as it comes to all in wartime. Meanwhile he did what he could. No service was too humble for him to perform in the aid of the South, no adventure to perilous for him to undertake if consistent with the character of a civilian who was at heart a soldier, and who in good faith and without too much qualification assented to at least a part of the frankly villainous dictum that all is fair in love and war.

One evening while Farquhar and his wife were sitting on a rustic bench near the entrance to his grounds, a gray-clad soldier rode up to the gate and asked for a drink of water. Mrs. Farquhar was only too happy to serve him with her own white hands. While she was fetching the water her husband approached the dusty horseman and inquired eagerly for news from the front.

“The Yanks are repairing the railroads,” said the man, “and are getting ready for another advance. They have reached the Owl Creek bridge, put it in order and built a stockade on the north bank. The commandant has issued an order, which is posted everywhere, declaring that any civilian caught interfering with the railroad, its bridges, tunnels, or trains will be summarily hanged. I saw the order.”

“How far is it to the Owl Creek bridge?” Farquhar asked.

“About thirty miles.”

“Is there no force on this side of the creek?”

“Only a picket post half a mile out, on the railroad, and a single sentinel at this end of the bridge.”

“Suppose a man—a civilian and student of hanging—should elude the picket post and perhaps get the better of the sentinel,” said Farquhar, smiling, “what could he accomplish?”

The soldier reflected. “I was there a month ago,” he replied. “I observed that the flood of last winter had lodged a great quantity of driftwood against the wooden pier at this end of the bridge. It is now dry and would burn like tinder.”

The lady had now brought the water, which the soldier drank. He thanked her ceremoniously, bowed to her husband and rode away. An hour later, after nightfall, he repassed the plantation, going northward in the direction from which he had come. He was a Federal scout.

**III**

As Peyton Farquhar fell straight downward through the bridge he lost consciousness and was as one already dead. From this state he was awakened—ages later, it seemed to him—by the pain of a sharp pressure upon his throat, followed by a sense of suffocation. Keen, poignant agonies seemed to shoot from his neck downward through every fiber of his body and limbs. These pains appeared to flash along well defined lines of ramification and to beat with an inconceivably rapid periodicity. They seemed like streams of pulsating fire heating him to an intolerable temperature. As to his head, he was conscious of nothing but a feeling of fullness—of congestion. These sensations were unaccompanied by thought. The intellectual part of his nature was already effaced; he had power only to feel, and feeling was torment. He was conscious of motion. Encompassed in a luminous cloud, of which he was now merely the fiery heart, without material substance, he swung through unthinkable arcs of oscillation, like a vast pendulum. Then all at once, with terrible suddenness, the light about him shot upward with the noise of a loud splash; a frightful roaring was in his ears, and all was cold and dark. The power of thought was restored; he knew that the rope had broken and he had fallen into the stream. There was no additional strangulation; the noose about his neck was already suffocating him and kept the water from his lungs. To die of hanging at the bottom of a river!—the idea seemed to him ludicrous. He opened his eyes in the darkness and saw above him a gleam of light, but how distant, how inaccessible! He was still sinking, for the light became fainter and fainter until it was a mere glimmer. Then it began to grow and brighten, and he knew that he was rising toward the surface—knew it with reluctance, for he was now very comfortable. “To be hanged and drowned,” he thought, “that is not so bad; but I do not wish to be shot. No; I will not be shot; that is not fair.”

He was not conscious of an effort, but a sharp pain in his wrist apprised him that he was trying to free his hands. He gave the struggle his attention, as an idler might observe the feat of a juggler, without interest in the outcome. What splendid effort!—what magnificent, what superhuman strength! Ah, that was a fine endeavor! Bravo! The cord fell away; his arms parted and floated upward, the hands dimly seen on each side in the growing light. He watched them with a new interest as first one and then the other pounced upon the noose at his neck. They tore it away and thrust it fiercely aside, its undulations resembling those of a water snake. “Put it back, put it back!” He thought he shouted these words to his hands, for the undoing of the noose had been succeeded by the direst pang that he had yet experienced. His neck ached horribly; his brain was on fire, his heart, which had been fluttering faintly, gave a great leap, trying to force itself out at his mouth. His whole body was racked and wrenched with an insupportable anguish! But his disobedient hands gave no heed to the command. They beat the water vigorously with quick, downward strokes, forcing him to the surface. He felt his head emerge; his eyes were blinded by the sunlight; his chest expanded convulsively, and with a supreme and crowning agony his lungs engulfed a great draught of air, which instantly he expelled in a shriek!

He was now in full possession of his physical senses. They were, indeed, preternaturally keen and alert. Something in the awful disturbance of his organic system had so exalted and refined them that they made record of things never before perceived. He felt the ripples upon his face and heard their separate sounds as they struck. He looked at the forest on the bank of the stream, saw the individual trees, the leaves and the veining of each leaf—he saw the very insects upon them: the locusts, the brilliant bodied flies, the gray spiders stretching their webs from twig to twig. He noted the prismatic colors in all the dewdrops upon a million blades of grass. The humming of the gnats that danced above the eddies of the stream, the beating of the dragon flies’ wings, the strokes of the water spiders’ legs, like oars which had lifted their boat—all these made audible music. A fish slid along beneath his eyes and he heard the rush of its body parting the water.

He had come to the surface facing down the stream; in a moment the visible world seemed to wheel slowly round, himself the pivotal point, and he saw the bridge, the fort, the soldiers upon the bridge, the captain, the sergeant, the two privates, his executioners. They were in silhouette against the blue sky. They shouted and gesticulated, pointing at him. The captain had drawn his pistol, but did not fire; the others were unarmed. Their movements were grotesque and horrible, their forms gigantic.

Suddenly he heard a sharp report and something struck the water smartly within a few inches of his head, spattering his face with spray. He heard a second report, and saw one of the sentinels with his rifle at his shoulder, a light cloud of blue smoke rising from the muzzle. The man in the water saw the eye of the man on the bridge gazing into his own through the sights of the rifle. He observed that it was a gray eye and remembered having read that gray eyes were keenest, and that all famous marksmen had them. Nevertheless, this one had missed.

A counter-swirl had caught Farquhar and turned him half round; he was again looking at the forest on the bank opposite the fort. The sound of a clear, high voice in a monotonous singsong now rang out behind him and came across the water with a distinctness that pierced and subdued all other sounds, even the beating of the ripples in his ears. Although no soldier, he had frequented camps enough to know the dread significance of that deliberate, drawling, aspirated chant; the lieutenant on shore was taking a part in the morning’s work. How coldly and pitilessly—with what an even, calm intonation, presaging, and enforcing tranquility in the men—with what accurately measured interval fell those cruel words:

“Company!… Attention!… Shoulder arms!… Ready!… Aim!… Fire!”

Farquhar dived—dived as deeply as he could. The water roared in his ears like the voice of Niagara, yet he heard the dull thunder of the volley and, rising again toward the surface, met shining bits of metal, singularly flattened, oscillating slowly downward. Some of them touched him on the face and hands, then fell away, continuing their descent. One lodged between his collar and neck; it was uncomfortably warm and he snatched it out.

As he rose to the surface, gasping for breath, he saw that he had been a long time under water; he was perceptibly farther downstream—nearer to safety. The soldiers had almost finished reloading; the metal ramrods flashed all at once in the sunshine as they were drawn from the barrels, turned in the air, and thrust into their sockets. The two sentinels fired again, independently and ineffectually.

The hunted man saw all this over his shoulder; he was now swimming vigorously with the current. His brain was as energetic as his arms and legs; he thought with the rapidity of lightning:

“The officer,” he reasoned, “will not make that martinet’s error a second time. It is as easy to dodge a volley as a single shot. He has probably already given the command to fire at will. God help me, I cannot dodge them all!”

An appalling splash within two yards of him was followed by a loud, rushing sound, DIMINUENDO, which seemed to travel back through the air to the fort and died in an explosion which stirred the very river to its deeps! A rising sheet of water curved over him, fell down upon him, blinded him, strangled him! The cannon had taken an hand in the game. As he shook his head free from the commotion of the smitten water he heard the deflected shot humming through the air ahead, and in an instant it was cracking and smashing the branches in the forest beyond.

“They will not do that again,” he thought; “the next time they will use a charge of grape. I must keep my eye upon the gun; the smoke will apprise me—the report arrives too late; it lags behind the missile. That is a good gun.”

Suddenly he felt himself whirled round and round—spinning like a top. The water, the banks, the forests, the now distant bridge, fort and men, all were commingled and blurred. Objects were represented by their colors only; circular horizontal streaks of color—that was all he saw. He had been caught in a vortex and was being whirled on with a velocity of advance and gyration that made him giddy and sick. In few moments he was flung upon the gravel at the foot of the left bank of the stream—the southern bank—and behind a projecting point which concealed him from his enemies. The sudden arrest of his motion, the abrasion of one of his hands on the gravel, restored him, and he wept with delight. He dug his fingers into the sand, threw it over himself in handfuls and audibly blessed it. It looked like diamonds, rubies, emeralds; he could think of nothing beautiful which it did not resemble. The trees upon the bank were giant garden plants; he noted a definite order in their arrangement, inhaled the fragrance of their blooms. A strange roseate light shone through the spaces among their trunks and the wind made in their branches the music of æolian harps. He had not wish to perfect his escape—he was content to remain in that enchanting spot until retaken.

A whiz and a rattle of grapeshot among the branches high above his head roused him from his dream. The baffled cannoneer had fired him a random farewell. He sprang to his feet, rushed up the sloping bank, and plunged into the forest.

All that day he traveled, laying his course by the rounding sun. The forest seemed interminable; nowhere did he discover a break in it, not even a woodman’s road. He had not known that he lived in so wild a region. There was something uncanny in the revelation.

By nightfall he was fatigued, footsore, famished. The thought of his wife and children urged him on. At last he found a road which led him in what he knew to be the right direction. It was as wide and straight as a city street, yet it seemed untraveled. No fields bordered it, no dwelling anywhere. Not so much as the barking of a dog suggested human habitation. The black bodies of the trees formed a straight wall on both sides, terminating on the horizon in a point, like a diagram in a lesson in perspective. Overhead, as he looked up through this rift in the wood, shone great golden stars looking unfamiliar and grouped in strange constellations. He was sure they were arranged in some order which had a secret and malign significance. The wood on either side was full of singular noises, among which—once, twice, and again—he distinctly heard whispers in an unknown tongue.

His neck was in pain and lifting his hand to it found it horribly swollen. He knew that it had a circle of black where the rope had bruised it. His eyes felt congested; he could no longer close them. His tongue was swollen with thirst; he relieved its fever by thrusting it forward from between his teeth into the cold air. How softly the turf had carpeted the untraveled avenue—he could no longer feel the roadway beneath his feet!

Doubtless, despite his suffering, he had fallen asleep while walking, for now he sees another scene—perhaps he has merely recovered from a delirium. He stands at the gate of his own home. All is as he left it, and all bright and beautiful in the morning sunshine. He must have traveled the entire night. As he pushes open the gate and passes up the wide white walk, he sees a flutter of female garments; his wife, looking fresh and cool and sweet, steps down from the veranda to meet him. At the bottom of the steps she stands waiting, with a smile of ineffable joy, an attitude of matchless grace and dignity. Ah, how beautiful she is! He springs forwards with extended arms. As he is about to clasp her he feels a stunning blow upon the back of the neck; a blinding white light blazes all about him with a sound like the shock of a cannon—then all is darkness and silence!

Peyton Farquhar was dead; his body, with a broken neck, swung gently from side to side beneath the timbers of the Owl Creek bridge.

(1890)

**Chickamauga**

Ambrose Bierce

The Battle of Chickamauga Creek took place in Georgia on September 19-20, 1863. Casualties in the first four hours of battle ran to over fifty percent on both sides. There were nearly 40,000 casualties in all, making it one of the most confusing and deadly battles of the Civil War.

O

ne sunny autumn afternoon a child strayed away from its rude home in a small field and entered a forest unobserved. It was happy in a new sense of freedom from control, happy in the opportunity of exploration and adventure; for this child’s spirit, in bodies of its ancestors, had for thousands of years been trained to memorable feats of discovery and conquest—victories in battles whose critical moments were centuries, whose victors’ camps were cities of hewn stone. From the cradle of its race it had conquered its way through two continents and passing a great sea had penetrated a third, there to be born to war and dominion as a heritage.

The child was a boy aged about six years, the son of a poor planter. In his younger manhood the father had been a soldier, had fought against naked savages and followed the flag of his country into the capital of a civilized race to the far South. In the peaceful life of a planter the warrior-fire survived; once kindled, it is never extinguished. The man loved military books and pictures and the boy had understood enough to make himself a wooden sword, though even the eye of his father would hardly have known it for what it was. This weapon he now bore bravely, as became the son of an heroic race, and pausing now and again in the sunny space of the forest assumed, with some exaggeration, the postures of aggression and defense that he had been taught by the engraver’s art. Made reckless by the ease with which he overcame invisible foes attempting to stay his advance, he committed the common enough military error of pushing the pursuit to a dangerous extreme, until he found himself upon the margin of a wide but shallow brook, whose rapid waters barred his direct advance against the flying foe that had crossed with illogical ease. But the intrepid victor was not to be baffled; the spirit of the race which had passed the great sea burned unconquerable in that small breast and would not be denied. Finding a place where some bowlders in the bed of the stream lay but a step or a leap apart, he made his way across and fell again upon the rear-guard of his imaginary foe, putting all to the sword.

Now that the battle had been won, prudence required that he withdraw to his base of operations. Alas; like many a mightier conqueror, and like one, the mightiest, he could not

curb the lust for war,  
Nor learn that tempted Fate will leave the

loftiest star.

Advancing from the bank of the creek he suddenly found himself confronted with a new and more formidable enemy: in the path that he was following, sat, bolt upright, with ears erect and paws suspended before it, a rabbit! With a startled cry the child turned and fled, he knew not in what direction, calling with inarticulate cries for his mother, weeping, stumbling, his tender skin cruelly torn by brambles, his little heart beating hard with terror—breathless, blind with tears—lost in the forest! Then, for more than an hour, he wandered with erring feet through the tangled undergrowth, till at last, overcome by fatigue, he lay down in a narrow space between two rocks, within a few yards of the stream and still grasping his toy sword, no longer a weapon but a companion, sobbed himself to sleep. The wood birds sang merrily above his head; the squirrels, whisking their bravery of tail, ran barking from tree to tree, unconscious of the pity of it, and somewhere far away was a strange, muffed thunder, as if the partridges were drumming in celebration of nature’s victory over the son of her immemorial enslavers. And back at the little plantation, where white men and black were hastily searching the fields and hedges in alarm, a mother’s heart was breaking for her missing child.

Hours passed, and then the little sleeper rose to his feet. The chill of the evening was in his limbs, the fear of the gloom in his heart. But he had rested, and he no longer wept. With some blind instinct which impelled to action he struggled through the undergrowth about him and came to a more open ground—on his right the brook, to the left a gentle acclivity studded with infrequent trees; over all, the gathering gloom of twilight. A thin, ghostly mist rose along the water. It frightened and repelled him; instead of recrossing, in the direction whence he had come, he turned his back upon it, and went forward toward the dark inclosing wood. Suddenly he saw before him a strange moving object which he took to be some large animal—a dog, a pig—he could not name it; perhaps it was a bear. He had seen pictures of bears, but knew of nothing to their discredit and had vaguely wished to meet one. But something in form or movement of this object—something in the awkwardness of its approach—told him that it was not a bear, and curiosity was stayed by fear. He stood still and as it came slowly on gained courage every moment, for he saw that at least it had not the long menacing ears of the rabbit. Possibly his impressionable mind was half conscious of something familiar in its shambling, awkward gait. Before it had approached near enough to resolve his doubts he saw that it was followed by another and another. To right and to left were many more; the whole open space about him were alive with them—all moving toward the brook.

They were men. They crept upon their hands and knees. They used their hands only, dragging their legs. They used their knees only, their arms hanging idle at their sides. They strove to rise to their feet, but fell prone in the attempt. They did nothing naturally, and nothing alike, save only to advance foot by foot in the same direction. Singly, in pairs and in little groups, they came on through the gloom, some halting now and again while others crept slowly past them, then resuming their movement. They came by dozens and by hundreds; as far on either hand as one could see in the deepening gloom they extended and the black wood behind them appeared to be inexhaustible. The very ground seemed in motion toward the creek. Occasionally one who had paused did not again go on, but lay motionless. He was dead. Some, pausing, made strange gestures with their hands, erected their arms and lowered them again, clasped their heads; spread their palms upward, as men are sometimes seen to do in public prayer.

Not all of this did the child note; it is what would have been noted by an elder observer; he saw little but that these were men, yet crept like babes. Being men, they were not terrible, though unfamiliarly clad. He moved among them freely, going from one to another and peering into their faces with childish curiosity. All their faces were singularly white and many were streaked and gouted with red. Something in this—something too, perhaps, in their grotesque attitudes and movements—reminded him of the painted clown whom he had seen last summer in the circus, and he laughed as he watched them. But on and ever on they crept, these maimed and bleeding men, as heedless as he of the dramatic contrast between his laughter and their own ghastly gravity. To him it was a merry spectacle. He had seen his father’s negroes creep upon their hands and knees for his amusement—had ridden them so, “making believe” they were his horses. He now approached one of these crawling figures from behind and with an agile movement mounted it astride. The man sank upon his breast, recovered, flung the small boy fiercely to the ground as an unbroken colt might have done, then turned upon him a face that lacked a lower jaw—from the upper teeth to the throat was a great red gap fringed with hanging shreds of flesh and splinters of bone. The unnatural prominence of nose, the absence of chin, the fierce eyes, gave this man the appearance of a great bird of prey crimsoned in throat and breast by the blood of its quarry. The man rose to his knees, the child to his feet. The man shook his fist at the child; the child, terrified at last, ran to a tree near by, got upon the farther side of it and took a more serious view of the situation. And so the clumsy multitude dragged itself slowly and painfully along in hideous pantomime—moved forward down the slope like a swarm of great black beetles, with never a sound of going—in silence profound, absolute.

Instead of darkening, the haunted landscape began to brighten. Through the belt of trees beyond the brook shone a strange red light, the trunks and branches of the trees making a black lacework against it. It struck the creeping figures and gave them monstrous shadows, which caricatured their movements on the lit grass. It fell upon their faces, touching their whiteness with a ruddy tinge, accentuating the stains with which so many of them were freaked and maculated. It sparkled on buttons and bits of metal in their clothing. Instinctively the child turned toward the growing splendor and moved down the slope with his horrible companions; in a few moments had passed the foremost of the throng—not much of a feat, considering his advantages. He placed himself in the lead, his wooden sword still in hand, and solemnly directed the march, conforming his pace to theirs and occasionally turning as if to see that his forces did not straggle. Surely such a leader never before had such a following.

Scattered about upon the ground now slowly narrowing by the encroachment of this awful march to water, were certain articles to which, in the leader’s mind, were coupled no significant associations: an occasional blanket tightly rolled lengthwise, doubled and the ends bound together with a string; a heavy knapsack here, and there a broken rifle—such things, in short, as are found in the rear of retreating troops, the “spoor” of men flying from their hunters. Everywhere near the creek, which here had a margin of lowland, the earth was trodden into mud by the feet of men and horses. An observer of better experience in the use of his eyes would have noticed that these footprints pointed in both directions; the ground had been twice passed over—in advance and in retreat. A few hours before, these desperate, stricken men, with their more fortunate and now distant comrades, had penetrated the forest in thousands. Their successive battalions, breaking into swarms and reforming in lines, had passed the child on every side—had almost trodden on him as he slept. The rustle and murmur of their march had not awakened him. Almost within a stone’s throw of where he lay they had fought a battle; but all unheard by him were the roar of the musketry, the shock of the cannon, “the thunder of the captains and the shouting.” He had slept through it all, grasping his little wooden sword with perhaps a tighter clutch in unconscious sympathy with his martial environment, but as heedless of the grandeur of the struggle as the dead who had died to make the glory.

The fire beyond the belt of woods on the farther side of the creek, reflected to earth from the canopy of its own smoke, was now suffusing the whole landscape. It transformed the sinuous line of mist to the vapor of gold. The water gleamed with dashes of red, and red, too, were many of the stones protruding above the surface. But that was blood; the less desperately wounded had stained them in crossing. On them, too, the child now crossed with eager steps; he was going to the fire. As he stood upon the farther bank he turned about to look at the companions of his march. The advance was arriving at the creek. The stronger had already drawn themselves to the brink and plunged their faces into the flood. Three or four who lay without motion appeared to have no heads. At this the child’s eyes expanded with wonder; even his hospitable understanding could not accept a phenomenon implying such vitality as that. After slaking their thirst these men had not had the strength to back away from the water, nor to keep their heads above it. They were drowned. In rear of these, the open spaces of the forest showed the leader as many formless figures of his grim command as at first; but not nearly so many were in motion. He waved his cap for their encouragement and smilingly pointed with his weapon in the direction of the guiding light—a pillar of fire to this strange exodus.

Confident of the fidelity of his forces, he now entered the belt of woods, passed through it easily in the red illumination, climbed a fence, ran across a field, turning now and again to coquet with his responsive shadow, and so approached the blazing ruin of a dwelling. Desolation everywhere! In all the wide glare not a living thing was visible. He cared nothing for that; the spectacle pleased, and he danced with glee in imitation of the wavering flames. He ran about, collecting fuel, but every object that he found was too heavy for him to cast in from the distance to which the heat limited his approach. In despair he flung in his sword—a surrender to the superior forces of nature. His military career was at an end.

Shifting his position, his eyes fell upon some outbuildings which had an oddly familiar appearance, as if he had dreamed of them. He stood considering them with wonder, when suddenly the entire plantation, with its inclosing forest, seemed to turn as if upon a pivot. His little world swung half around; the points of the compass were reversed. He recognized the blazing building as his own home!

For a moment he stood stupefied by the power of the revelation, then ran with stumbling feet, making a half-circuit of the ruin. There, conspicuous in the light of the conflagration, lay the dead body of a woman—the white face turned upward, the hands thrown out and clutched full of grass, the clothing deranged, the long dark hair in tangles and full of clotted blood. The greater part of the forehead was torn away, and from the jagged hole the brain protruded, overflowing the temple, a frothy mass of gray, crowned with clusters of crimson bubbles—the work of a shell.

The child moved his little hands, making wild, uncertain gestures. He uttered a series of inarticulate and indescribable cries—something between the chattering of an ape and the gobbling of a turkey—a startling, soulless, unholy sound, the language of a devil. The child was a deaf mute.

Then he stood motionless, with quivering lips, looking down upon the wreck.

(1889)

# T h e W a r P r a y e r

# M a r k T w a i n

I

t was a time of great and exalting excitement. The country was up in arms, the war was on, in every breast burned the holy fire of patriotism; the drums were beating, the bands playing, the toy pistols popping, the bunched firecrackers hissing and spluttering; on every hand and far down the receding and fading spread of roofs and balconies a fluttering wilderness of flags flashed in the sun; daily the young volunteers marched down the wide avenue gay and fine in their new uniforms, the proud fathers and mothers and sisters and sweethearts cheering them with voices choked with happy emotion as they swung by; nightly the packed mass meetings listened, panting, to patriot oratory which stirred the deepest deeps of their hearts, and which they interrupted at briefest intervals with cyclones of applause, the tears running down their cheeks the while; in the churches the pastors preached devotion to flag and country, and invoked the God of Battles beseeching His aid in our good cause in outpourings of fervid eloquence which moved every listener. It was indeed a glad and gracious time, and the half dozen rash spirits that ventured to disapprove of the war and cast a doubt upon its righteousness straightway got such a stern and angry warning that for their personal safety’s sake they quickly shrank out of sight and offended no more in that way.

Sunday morning came—next day the battalions would leave for the front; the church was filled; the volunteers were there, their young faces alight with martial dreams—visions of the stern advance, the gathering momentum, the rushing charge, the flashing sabers, the flight of the foe, the tumult, the enveloping smoke, the fierce pursuit, the surrender! Then home from the war, bronzed heroes, welcomed, adored, submerged in golden seas of glory! With the volunteers sat their dear ones, proud, happy, and envied by the neighbors and friends who had no sons and brothers to send forth to the field of honor, there to win for the flag, or, failing, die the noblest of noble deaths. The service proceeded; a war chapter from the Old Testament was read; the first prayer was said; it was followed by an organ burst that shook the building, and with one impulse the house rose, with glowing eyes and beating hearts, and poured out that tremendous invocation:

God the all-terrible! Thou who ordainest! Thunder thy clarion and lightning thy sword!

Then came the “long” prayer. None could remember the like of it for passionate pleading and moving and beautiful language. The burden of its supplication was, that an ever-merciful and benignant Father of us all would watch over our noble young soldiers, and aid, comfort, and encourage them in their patriotic work; bless them, shield them in the day of battle and the hour of peril, bear them in His mighty hand, make them strong and confident, invincible in the bloody onset; help them to crush the foe, grant to them and to their flag and country imperishable honor and glory.

An aged stranger entered and moved with slow and noiseless step up the main aisle, his eyes fixed upon the minister, his long body clothed in a robe that reached to his feet, his head bare, his white hair descending in a frothy cataract to his shoulders, his seamy face unnaturally pale, pale even to ghastliness. With all eyes following him and wondering, he made his silent way; without pausing, he ascended to the preacher’s side and stood there waiting. With shut lids the preacher, unconscious of his presence, continued with his moving prayer, and at last finished it with the words, uttered in fervent appeal, “Bless our arms, grant us the victory, O Lord our God, Father and Protector of our land and flag!”

The stranger touched his arm, motioned him to step aside—which the startled minister did—and took his place. During some moments he surveyed the spellbound audience with solemn eyes, in which burned an uncanny light; then in a deep voice he said:

“I come from the Throne—bearing a message from Almighty God!” The words smote the house with a shock; if the stranger perceived it he gave no attention. “He has heard the prayer of His servant your shepherd, and will grant it if such shall be your desire after I, His messenger, shall have explained to you its import—that is to say, its full import. For it is like unto many of the prayers of men, in that it asks for more than he who utters it is aware of—except he pause and think.

“God’s servant and yours has prayed his prayer. Has he paused and taken thought? Is it one prayer? No, it is two—one uttered, the other not. Both have reached the ear of Him Who heareth all supplications, the spoken and the unspoken. Ponder this—keep it in mind. If you would beseech a blessing upon yourself, beware! Lest without intent you invoke a curse upon a neighbor at the same time. If you pray for the blessing of rain upon your crop which needs it, by that act you are possibly praying for a curse upon some neighbor’s crop which may not need rain and can be injured by it.

“You have heard your servant’s prayer—the uttered part of it. I am commissioned of God to put into words the other part of it—that part which the pastor—and also you in your hearts—fervently prayed silently. And ignorantly and unthinkingly. God grant that it was so! You heard these words: ‘Grant us the victory, O Lord our God!’ That is sufficient. The *whole* of the uttered prayer is compact into those pregnant words. Elaborations were not necessary. When you have prayed for victory you have prayed for many unmentioned results which follow victory—*must* follow it, cannot help but follow it. Upon the listening spirit of God fell also the unspoken part of the prayer. He commandeth me to put it into words. Listen!

“O Lord our Father, our young patriots, idols of our hearts, go forth to battle—be Thou near them! With them—in spirit—we also go forth from the sweet peace of our beloved firesides to smite the foe. O Lord our God, help us to tear their soldiers to bloody shreds with our shells; help us to cover their smiling fields with the pale forms of their patriot dead; help us to drown the thunder of the guns with the shrieks of their wounded, writhing in pain; help us to lay waste their humble homes with a hurricane of fire; help us to wring the hearts of their unoffending widows with unavailing grief; help us to turn them out roofless with little children to wander unfriended the wastes of their desolated land in rags and hunger and thirst, sports of the sun flames of summer and the icy winds of winter, broken in spirit, worn with travail, imploring Thee for the refuge of the grave and denied it—for our sakes who adore Thee, Lord, blast their hopes, blight their lives, protract their bitter pilgrimage, make heavy their steps, water their way with their tears, stain the white snow with the blood of their wounded feet! We ask it, in the spirit of love, of Him Who is the Source of Love, and Who is the ever-faithful refuge and friend of all that are sore beset and seek His aid with humble and contrite hearts. Amen.

(After a pause.) “Ye have prayed it; if ye still desire it, speak! The messenger of the Most High waits!”

It was believed afterward that the man was a lunatic, because there was no sense in what he said.

## (Published in 1916, six years after Twain’s death)

## Introduction to Modernism

In Modernism, there is an emphasis on impressionism and subjectivity in writing (and in visual arts as well); an emphasis on HOW seeing (or reading or perception itself) takes place, rather than on WHAT is perceived. An example of this would be stream-of-consciousness writing.

**Unreliable narrators**

In Modernist texts, there is a movement away from the apparent objectivity provided by omniscient third-person narrators, fixed narrative points of view, and clear-cut moral positions. Faulkner's multiply-narrated stories are an example of this aspect of modernism.

**Genre-bending**

Modernist writers blur the distinctions between genres, so that poetry seems more documentary (as in T.S. Eliot or ee cummings) and prose seems more poetic (as in Woolf or Joyce).

**Fractured forms**

Modernism places an emphasis on fragmented forms, discontinuous narratives, and random-seeming collages of different materials.

**Art as art**

Modernist art has a tendency toward reflexivity, or self-consciousness, about the production of the work of art, so that each piece calls attention to its own status as a production, as something constructed and consumed in particular ways.

**Minimizing aesthetics**

Modernist artists reject elaborate formal aesthetics in favor of minimalist designs (as in the poetry of William Carlos Williams) and a rejection, in large part, of formal aesthetic theories, in favor of spontaneity and discovery in creation.

**Culture is culture**

In Modernism, there's a rejection of the distinction between "high" and "low" or popular culture, both in choice of materials used to produce art and in methods of displaying, distributing, and consuming art.

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**Some Attributes of Modernist Literature**

**Perspectivism**: The locating of meaning from the viewpoint of the individual; the use of narrators located within the action of the fiction, experiencing from a personal, particular (as opposed to an omniscient, "objective") perspective; the use of many voices, contrasts and contestations of perspective; the consequent **disappearance of the omniscient narrator**

.

**Impressionism**: An emphasis on the process of perception and knowing: the use of devices (formal, linguistic, representational), to present more closely the texture or process or structure of knowing and perceiving.

A break with the sequential, developmental, cause-and-effect presentation of the "reality" of realist fiction, toward a **presentation of experience as layered, allusive, discontinuous**; the use, to these ends, of fragmentation and juxtaposition, motif, symbol, allusion (jump-cuts).

Language is no longer seen as transparent, something if used correctly allows us to "see through" to reality. Rather, **language is seen as a complex, nuanced site of our construction of the "real"**; language is "thick," with multiple meanings.

**Experimentation in form**: In order to present differently, afresh, the structure, the connections, and the experience of life.

**The (re)presentation of inner (psychological) reality**, including the "flow" of experience, through devices such as stream of consciousness.

**Use of such structural approaches to experience** such as psychoanalysis, myth, the symbolic apprehension and comprehension of reality.

**The use of interior or symbolic landscape**: the world is moved "inside", structured symbolically or metaphorically -- as opposed to the Romantic interaction with transcendent forces acting through the exterior world, and Realist representations of the exterior world as a physical, historical, contiguous site of experience. David Lodge suggests in *Modes of Modern Writing* that the realist mode of fiction is based on metonomy, or contiguity, and the modernist mode is based on metaphor, or substitution.

**Time is moved into the interior** as well: time becomes psychological time (time as innerly experienced) or symbolic. Time is used as well more complexly as a structuring device through a movement backwards and forwards through time, the juxtaposing of events of different times, and so forth.

**A turn to "open" or ambiguous endings**, again seen to be more representative of "reality" -- as opposed to "closed" endings, in which matters are resolved.

**The search for symbolic ground** or an ontological or epistemic ground for reality, especially through the device of "epiphany" (Joyce), "inscape" (Hopkins), "moment of being" (Woolf), "Jetztzeit" (Benjamin) -- the moment of revelation of a reality beneath and grounding appearances.

**The search for a ground of meaning in a world without God**; the critique of the traditional values of the culture; the loss of meaning and hope in the modern world and an exploration of how this loss may be faced.

*http://brocku.ca/english/courses/2F55/forces.php*

**Some Cultural Forces Driving Literary Modernism**

Some of the major issues to which 20th century literature responded in ways generally known as "Modernism" are:

A sense of the loss of "ontological ground,"\* i.e., a loss of confidence that there exists a reliable, knowable ground of value and identity. Contributing factors include:

* the challenges to 19th century science and its confidence in its ability to explain the universe;
* industrialization, and the consequent displacement of persons from their previous physical and psychic groundings; (including a pervasive sense that masculinity and masculine authority had been undermined; that mass culture was a "feminizing" force)
* the association of Christianity with capitalism, and with an oppressive often hypocritical moralism;
* the critical historical study of biblical texts and the consequent challenge to revelation;
* the popularization of evolutionary theory;
* a growing awareness of a variety of cultures which had differing but cogent world-views;
* changes in philosophical thought which suggested that 'reality' was an internal and changeable, not an externally validated, concept.

\* Ontology is the study of what "being" is; it is always accompanied by epistemological issues, that is, of questions how we know and what it is to know. Ontological ground is then that which gives us a sense of the surety of being itself.

A sense that our culture has lost its bearings, that there is no center, no cogency, that there is a collapse of values or a bankruptcy (interesting metaphor) of values. As Yeats wrote in "The Second Coming" (1920):

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.  
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere  
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;  
The best lack all conviction, while the worst  
Are full of passionate intensity.

This loss of faith in a moral center and moral direction is based (in part) on the important recognition that the traditional values have, after all, led only to a horrid war, industrial squalor, the breakdown of traditional rural society, exploitation of other cultures and races, and a society built on power and greed. W.W.I was a gruesome wake-up call.

A shift in paradigms from the closed, finite, measurable, cause-and-effect universe of 19th century science to an open, relativistic, changing, strange universe. Einstein was a modernist thinker.

The locus of judgment moves from the traditional sites -- consensus, social authority and textual authority -- to individual judgment and phenomenological (lived experience) validation, hence to the locating of meaning (and, in a sense, "truth") in individual experience.

The development of studies and ideas which have as their focus the nature and functioning of the individual: the discipline of psychology; a growing democratization in politics; in aesthetics, movements such as impressionism and cubism which focus on the process of perception.

Discovery that the forces governing behaviour, and particularly the most powerful and formative ones, are hidden: this in the realms of psychology, economics, politics -- Marx, Freud, Neitzsche, etc.

A move to the mystical and the symbolic as ways of recovering a sense of the holy in experience and of recreating a sustainable ontological ground -- Yeats and the development of symbolic thought, Jung and the concept of universal archetypes; Lawrence with his notions of the creative mystery and blood knowledge, and so forth.

*http://brocku.ca/english/courses/2F55/forces.php*

For much of its history, "modern" has meant something bad. In a general sense it meant having to do with recent times and the present day, but we shall deal with it here in a narrow sense more or less synonymous with that of "modernist." It is not so much a chronological designation as one suggestive of a loosely defined congeries of characteristics. Much twentieth-century literature is not "modern" in the common sense, as much that is contemporary is not. Modern refers to a group of characteristics, and not all of them appear in any one writer who merits the designation modern.

In a broad sense modern is applied to writing marked by a strong conscious break with tradition. It employs a distinctive kind of imagination that insists on having its general frame of reference within itself. It thus practices the solipsism of which Allen Tate accused the modern mind: It believes that we create the world in the act of perceiving it. Modern implies a historical discontinuity, a sense of alienation, loss, and despair. It rejects not only history but also the society of whose fabrication history is a record. It rejects traditional values and assumptions, and it rejects equally the rhetoric by which they were sanctioned and communicated. It elevates the individual and the inward over the social and the outward, and it prefers the unconscious to the self-conscious. The psychologies of Freud and Jung have been seminal in the modern movement in literature. In many respects it is a reaction against REALISM and NATURALISM and the scientific postulates on which they rest. Although by no means can all modern writers be termed philosophical existentialists, EXISTENTIALISM has created a schema within which much of the modern temper can see a reflection of its attitudes and assumptions. The modern revels in a dense and often unordered actuality as opposed to the practical and systematic, and in exploring that actuality as it exists in the mind of the writer it has been richly experimental. What has been distinctively worthwhile in the literature of this century has come, in considerable part, from this modern temper.

"Modernism" in *A Handbook to Literature*. 7th ed.  
Harmon, William, and C. Hugh Holman, eds.  
Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1996. 325-36.

**The Centers of Modernism**

* Stylistic innovations - disruption of traditional syntax and form.
* Artist's self-consciousness about questions of form and structure.
* Obsession with primitive material and attitudes.
* International perspective on cultural matters.

**Modern Attitudes**

* The artist is generally less appreciated but more sensitive, even more heroic, than the average person.
* The artist challenges tradition and reinvigorates it.
* A breaking away from patterned responses and predictable forms.

**Contradictory Elements**

* Democratic and elitist.
* Traditional and anti-tradition.
* National jingoism and provinciality versus the celebration of international culture.
* Puritanical and repressive elements versus freer expression in sexual and political matters.

**Literary Achievements**

* Dramatization of the plight of women.
* Creation of a literature of the urban experience.
* Continuation of the pastoral or rural spirit.
* Continuation of regionalism and local color.
* Fragmentation of traditional literary and artistic styles.

**Modern Themes**

* Collectivism versus the authority of the individual.
* The impact of WWI and the 1918 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia.
* The Jazz Age.
* The disassociated, anomic self.
* The wearing away of traditional class structures.

Modernism, from Paul Reuben (mostly)

The Poetry of Robert Frost

## The Road Not Taken

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveler, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

## Fire and Ice

Some say the world will end in fire,  
Some say in ice.  
From what I've tasted of desire  
I hold with those who favor fire.  
But if it had to perish twice,  
I think I know enough of hate  
To say that for destruction ice  
Is also great  
And would suffice.

(1920)

Then took the other, as just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
Though as for that the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had trodden black.  
Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.

(1920)

Stopping By Woods On A Snowy Evening

Whose woods these are I think I know.  
His house is in the village though;  
He will not see me stopping here  
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

Nothing Gold Can Stay  
  
Nature's first green is gold,  
Her hardest hue to hold.  
Her early leaf's a flower;  
But only so an hour.  
Then leaf subsides to leaf.  
So Eden sank to grief,  
So dawn goes down to day.  
Nothing gold can stay.

(1923)

My little horse must think it queer  
To stop without a farmhouse near  
Between the woods and frozen lake  
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake  
To ask if there is some mistake.  
The only other sound’s the sweep  
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep.  
But I have promises to keep,  
And miles to go before I sleep,  
And miles to go before I sleep.

(1923)

### “Out, Out—“

### After Apple-Picking

My long two-pointed ladder's sticking through a tree  
Toward heaven still,  
And there's a barrel that I didn't fill  
Beside it, and there may be two or three  
Apples I didn't pick upon some bough.  
But I am done with apple-picking now.  
Essence of winter sleep is on the night,  
The scent of apples: I am drowsing off.  
I cannot rub the strangeness from my sight  
I got from looking through a pane of glass  
I skimmed this morning from the drinking trough  
And held against the world of hoary grass.  
It melted, and I let it fall and break.  
But I was well  
Upon my way to sleep before it fell,  
And I could tell  
What form my dreaming was about to take.  
Magnified apples appear and disappear,  
Stem end and blossom end,  
And every fleck of russet showing dear.  
My instep arch not only keeps the ache,  
It keeps the pressure of a ladder-round.  
I feel the ladder sway as the boughs bend.  
And I keep hearing from the cellar bin  
The rumbling sound  
Of load on load of apples coming in.  
For I have had too much  
Of apple-picking: I am overtired  
Of the great harvest I myself desired.  
There were ten thousand thousand fruit to touch,  
Cherish in hand, lift down, and not let fall.  
For all  
That struck the earth,  
No matter if not bruised or spiked with stubble,  
Went surely to the cider-apple heap  
As of no worth.  
One can see what will trouble  
This sleep of mine, whatever sleep it is.  
Were he not gone,  
The woodchuck could say whether it's like his  
Long sleep, as I describe its coming on,  
Or just some human sleep.

(1946)

The buzz-saw snarled and rattled in the yard  
And made dust and dropped stove-length sticks of wood,  
Sweet-scented stuff when the breeze drew across it.  
And from there those that lifted eyes could count  
Five mountain ranges one behind the other  
Under the sunset far into Vermont.  
And the saw snarled and rattled, snarled and rattled,  
As it ran light, or had to bear a load.  
And nothing happened: day was all but done.  
Call it a day, I wish they might have said  
To please the boy by giving him the half hour  
That a boy counts so much when saved from work.  
His sister stood beside them in her apron  
To tell them ‘Supper’. At the word, the saw,  
As if to prove saws knew what supper meant,  
Leaped out at the boy’s hand, or seemed to leap—  
He must have given the hand. However it was,  
Neither refused the meeting. But the hand!  
The boy’s first outcry was a rueful laugh.  
As he swung toward them holding up the hand  
Half in appeal, but half as if to keep  
The life from spilling. Then the boy saw all—  
Since he was old enough to know, big boy  
Doing a man’s work, though a child at heart—  
He saw all spoiled. ‘Don’t let him cut my hand off  
The doctor, when he comes. Don’t let him, sister!’  
So. But the hand was gone already.  
The doctor put him in the dark of ether.  
He lay and puffed his lips out with his breath.  
And then — the watcher at his pulse took fright.  
No one believed. They listened at his heart.  
Little—less—nothing!—and that ended it.  
No more to build on there. And they, since they  
Were not the one dead, turned to their affairs.

(1920)

A Clean, Well-Lighted Place

 Ernest Hemingway 

I

t was very late and everyone had left the cafe except an old man who sat in the shadow the leaves of the tree made against the electric light. In the day time the street was dusty, but at night the dew settled the dust and the old man liked to sit late because he was deaf and now at night it was quiet and he felt the difference. The two waiters inside the cafe knew that the old man was a little drunk, and while he was a good client they knew that if he became too drunk he would leave without paying, so they kept watch on him.

“Last week he tried to commit suicide,” one waiter said.

“Why?”

“He was in despair.”

“What about?”

“Nothing.”

“How do you know it was nothing?”

“He has plenty of money.”

They sat together at a table that was close against the wall near the door of the cafe and looked at the terrace where the tables were all empty except where the old man sat in the shadow of the leaves of the tree that moved slightly in the wind. A girl and a soldier went by in the street. The street light shone on the brass number on his collar. The girl wore no head covering and hurried beside him.

“The guard will pick him up,” one waiter said.

“What does it matter if he gets what he’s after?”

“He had better get off the street now. The guard will get him. They went by five minutes ago.”

The old man sitting in the shadow rapped on his saucer with his glass. The younger waiter went over to him.

“What do you want?”

The old man looked at him. “Another brandy,” he said.

“You’ll be drunk,” the waiter said. The old man looked at him. The waiter went away.

“He’ll stay all night,” he said to his colleague. “I’m sleepy now. I never get into bed before three o’clock. He should have killed himself last week.”

The waiter took the brandy bottle and another saucer from the counter inside the cafe and marched out to the old man’s table. He put down the saucer and poured the glass full of brandy.

“You should have killed yourself last week,” he said to the deaf man.

The old man motioned with his finger. “A little more,” he said. The waiter poured on into the glass so that the brandy slopped over and ran down the stem into the top saucer of the pile. “Thank you,” the old man said. The waiter took the bottle back inside the cafe. He sat down at the table with his colleague again.

“He’s drunk now,” he said.

“He’s drunk every night.”

“What did he want to kill himself for?”

“How should I know.”

“How did he do it?”

“He hung himself with a rope.”

“Who cut him down?”

“His niece.”

“Why did they do it?”

“Fear for his soul.”

“How much money has he got?”

“He’s got plenty.”

“He must be eighty years old.”

“Anyway I should say he was eighty.”

“I wish he would go home. I never get to bed before three o’clock. What kind of hour is that to go to bed?”

“He stays up because he likes it.”

“He’s lonely. I’m not lonely. I have a wife waiting in bed for me.”

“He had a wife once too.”

“A wife would be no good to him now.”

“You can’t tell. He might be better with a wife.”

“His niece looks after him. You said she cut him down.”

“I know.”

“I wouldn’t want to be that old. An old man is a nasty thing.”

“Not always. This old man is clean. He drinks without spilling. Even now, drunk. Look at him.”

“I don’t want to look at him. I wish he would go home. He has no regard for those who must work.”

The old man looked from his glass across the square, then over at the waiters.

“Another brandy,” he said, pointing to his glass. The waiter who was in a hurry came over.

“Finished,” he said, speaking with that omission of syntax stupid people employ when talking to drunken people or foreigners. “No more tonight. Close now.”

“Another,” said the old man.

“No. Finished.” The waiter wiped the edge of the table with a towel and shook his head.

The old man stood up, slowly counted the saucers, took a leather coin purse from his pocket and paid for the drinks, leaving half a peseta tip. The waiter watched him go down the street, a very old man walking unsteadily but with dignity.

“Why didn’t you let him stay and drink?” the unhurried waiter asked. They were putting up the shutters. “It is not half-past two.”

“I want to go home to bed.”

“What is an hour?”

“More to me than to him.”

“An hour is the same.”

“You talk like an old man yourself. He can buy a bottle and drink at home.”

“It’s not the same.”

“No, it is not,” agreed the waiter with a wife. He did not wish to be unjust. He was only in a hurry.

“And you? You have no fear of going home before your usual hour?”

“Are you trying to insult me?”

“No, hombre, only to make a joke.”

“No,” the waiter who was in a hurry said, rising from pulling down the metal shutters. “I have confidence. I am all confidence.”

“You have youth, confidence, and a job,” the older waiter said. “You have everything.”

“And what do you lack?”

“Everything but work.”

“You have everything I have.”

“No. I have never had confidence and I am not young.”

“Come on. Stop talking nonsense and lock up.”

“I am of those who like to stay late at the cafe,” the older waiter said.  “With all those who do not want to go to bed. With all those who need a light for the night.”

“I want to go home and into bed.”

“We are of two different kinds,” the older waiter said. He was now dressed to go home. “It is not only a question of youth and confidence although those things are very beautiful. Each night I am reluctant to close up because there may be some one who needs the cafe.”

“Hombre, there are bodegas open all night long.”

“You do not understand. This is a clean and pleasant cafe. It is well lighted. The light is very good and also, now, there are shadows of the leaves.”

“Good night,” said the younger waiter.

“Good night,” the other said. Turning off the electric light he continued the conversation with himself, it was the light of course but it is necessary that the place be clean and pleasant. You do not want music. Certainly you do not want music. Nor can you stand before a bar with dignity although that is all that is provided for these hours. What did he fear? It was not a fear or dread, It was a nothing that he knew too well. It was all a nothing and a man was a nothing too. It was only that and light was all it needed and a certain cleanness and order. Some lived in it and never felt it but he knew it all was nada y pues nada y nada y pues nada. Our nada who art in nada, nada be thy name thy kingdom nada thy will be nada in nada as it is in nada. Give us this nada our daily nada and nada us our nada as we nada our nadas and nada us not into nada but deliver us from nada; pues nada. Hail nothing full of nothing, nothing is with thee. He smiled and stood before a bar with a shining steam pressure coffee machine.

“What’s yours?” asked the barman.

“Nada.”

“Otro loco mas,” said the barman and turned away.

“A little cup,” said the waiter.

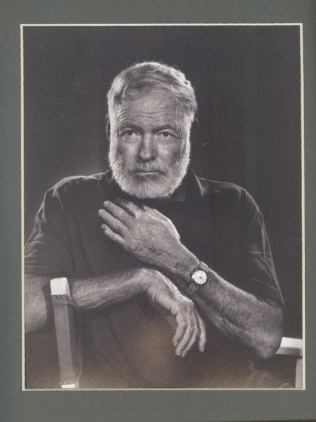
The barman poured it for him.

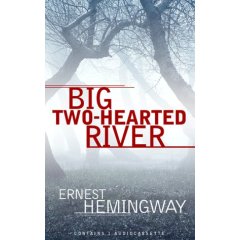
“The light is very bright and pleasant but the bar is unpolished,” the waiter said.

The barman looked at him but did not answer. It was too late at night for conversation.

“You want another copita?” the barman asked.

“No, thank you,” said the waiter and went out. He disliked bars and bodegas. A clean, well-lighted cafe was a very different thing. Now, without thinking further, he would go home to his room. He would lie in the bed and finally, with daylight, he would go to sleep. After all, he said to himself, it’s probably only insomnia. Many must have it.

 (1933)



**Part I**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *1* | The train went on up the track out of sight, around one of the hills of burnt timber. Nick sat  down on the bundle of canvas and bedding the baggage man had  pitched out  of  the door of the baggage  car. There was  no  town, nothing but the rails and the burned-over country. The thirteen saloons that had lined theone street of Seney had not  left a trace. The foundations of the Mansion House hotel stuck up above the ground. The stone was chipped and split by the fire. It  was  all that was left of the town of Seney. Even the surface had been burned off the ground. |
| *2* | Nick  looked  at  the  burned-over stretch  of  hillside, where  he had expected to find the scattered houses of the town  and then  walked down the railroad track to the bridge over the river. The river was there. It swirled against the log spires of the bridge. Nick looked down into the clear, brown water,  colored  from the  pebbly  bottom,  and  watched  the  trout keeping themselves steady in the current with wavering fins. As he watched them they changed their positions  by quick  angles,  only to hold steady  in the fast water again. Nick watched them a long time. |
| *3* | He watched them holding  themselves with their noses into  the current, many trout in deep, fast moving water,  slightly distorted as he watched far down through  the glassy convex surface of the pool, its surface pushing and swelling  smooth  against  the  resistance  of the log-driven piles  of  the bridge. At the bottom of the pool were the big trout. Nick did not  see them at first. Then  he saw them at the bottom of  the pool, big trout looking to hold themselves on the  gravel  bottom in a varying mist of gravel and sand, raised in spurts by the current. |
| *4* | Nick looked  down  into the  pool from the bridge.  It was a hot day. A kingfisher flew up the stream. It was a long time since Nick had looked into a stream and  seen trout. They were very satisfactory. As the  shadow of the kingfisher moved  up the stream, a big trout shot upstream in  a long angle, only  his shadow marking the angle, then lost his shadow as he came  through the surface of the water, caught the sun, and then, as he went back into the stream  under the surface,  his shadow seemed to float down the  stream with the current, unresisting, to his  post under the  bridge where he  tightened facing up into the current. |
| *5* | Nick’s heart tightened as the trout moved. He felt all the old feeling. |
| *6* | He   turned  and   looked   down   the  stream.   It  stretched   away, pebbly-bottomed with shallows and  big boulders and a deep pool as it curved away around the foot of a bluff. |
| *7* | Nick  walked  back  up  the ties  to  where his pack lay in the cinders beside  the railway track. He was happy. He adjusted the pack harness around the bundle, pulling straps tight, slung the pack  on  his back, got his arms  through the shoulder straps  and took  some of the pull off his shoulders by leaning his  forehead against the wide band of the tump-line. Still,  it was too heavy. It was much  too  heavy. He  had his leather rod-case in his hand and leaning forward to keep the weight of the pack high on  his shoulders he walked along the  road that paralleled the railway track, leaving the burned town  behind in  the heat, and then turned  off around  a hill  with a high, fire-scarred  hill  on either  side onto a  road  that  went  back  into the country.  He  walked along the road feeling  the ache from  the pull  of the heavy pack. The road climbed steadily. It was hard work walking up-hill. His muscles ached and the day was hot,  but Nick felt happy. He felt he had left everything behind, the need for thinking, the need to write, other needs. It was all back of him. |
| *8* | From the time he had gotten down off the train and the baggage man had thrown his pack out of the open car door things had been  different. Seney was burned,  the country was burned over and changed, but it did not matter. It could not all be burned. He knew that. He hiked along the road, sweating in the sun, climbing  to cross the range of hills that separated the railway from the pine plains. |
| *9* | The  road ran on, dipping occasionally, but always  climbing. Nick went on up. Finally the road after going parallel  to the burnt hillside reached the top.  Nick  leaned  back  against a stump  and  slipped  out of the pack harness.  Ahead  of him, as far as he could see, was  the  pine plain. The burned country  stopped off at the left with the range  of  hills. On ahead islands of dark pine trees rose  out of  the plain. Far  off to the left was the line of  the  river. Nick followed it with his eye and caught glints  of the water in the sun. |
| *10* | There was  nothing but the pine plain ahead  of him, until the far blue hills that marked  the Lake  Superior height  of land.  He could hardly  see them, faint and far away in the heat-light over the plain. If  he looked too steadily they  were gone.  But  if he only half-looked  they were there, the far-off hills of the height of land. |
| *11* | Nick sat down against the  charred stump  and  smoked a cigarette.  His pack balanced  on  the top  of  the  stump, harness holding  ready, a hollow molded in  it from his back. Nick sat smoking, looking out over the country. He did not need to get his map  out. He  knew where he was from the position of the river. |
| *12* | As  he smoked,  his  legs stretched out  in front of him, he  noticed a grasshopper  walk  along  the  ground  and  up  onto  his  woolen sock.  The grasshopper was black. As he  had walked  along  the  road, climbing, he had started many grasshoppers from the  dust. They were all black. They were not the big grasshoppers  with yellow and black or red and black wings  whirring out from their black wing sheathing as they fly up. These were just ordinary hoppers, but all a sooty black in color. Nick had wondered  about them as he walked,  without really thinking about them.  Now, as he  watched the  black hopper that was nibbling at the wool of his  sock  with its fourway  lip, he realized that they had all turned black from living in the burned-over land. He  realized  that  the  fire  must  have  come  the year  before,  but  the grasshoppers were all black now. He  wondered how  long they would stay that way. |
| *13* | Carefully he reached his hand down  and took hold of the hopper  by the wings. He turned him up,  all his legs walking in the air, and looked at his jointed belly. Yes, it was  black  too, iridescent where  the back and head were dusty. |
| *14* | “Go on, hopper,”  Nick said, speaking out loud for the first time. “Fly away somewhere.” |
| *15* | He tossed the grasshopper up into the air and watched him sail away to a charcoal stump across the road. |
| *16* | Nick  stood up. He leaned his back against the weight of his pack where it rested upright on the stump and got his arms through the shoulder straps. He  stood with  the pack  on his back  on the brow  of the hill  looking out across  the  country  toward the  distant  river  and  then struck  down the hillside  away  from the road. Underfoot the  ground  was good walking.  Two hundred yards  down  the hillside the fire  line stopped. Then it was sweet fern,  growing ankle high, to walk through, and  dumps of jack pines; a long undulating country with frequent rises and descents, sandy underfoot and the country alive again. |
| *17* | Nick kept his direction by the sun.  He knew where he wanted to strike the river and he kept on through the pine plain, mounting small rises to see other rises ahead  of him and sometimes from the top of a rise a great solid island  of pines off  to his right or his left.  He broke off some sprigs of the heathery sweet  fern, and  put them under  his pack  straps. The chafing crushed it and he smelled it as he walked. |
| *18* | He was  tired and very  hot, walking  across the uneven, shadeless pine plain. At any time he knew he could strike the  river by turning off to  his left. It could not be more than a mile away. But he kept on toward the north to hit the river as far upstream as he could go in one day’s walking. |
| *19* | For some time as he walked  Nick had  been in sight of one of  the big islands of pine standing out above the rolling high ground he was crossing. He dipped down and then as he came slowly up to the crest of the bridge he turned and made toward the pine trees. |
| *20* | There was no underbrush in the island of  pine trees. The minks of  the trees  went straight  up  or  slanted  toward  each other.  The trunks  were straight  and brown without branches.  The branches  were  high above.  Some interlocked  to make a  solid shadow on  the brown forest floor. Around  the grove of trees was a bare space. It was brown  and  soft  underfoot as  Nick walked on it. This was the over-lapping of the pine needle floor,  extending out beyond the width of the high branches. The  trees had grown tall and the branches  moved  high,  leaving in  the sun this  bare space  they had  once covered with shadow. Sharp at the edge of this extension of the forest floor commenced the sweet fern. |
| *21* | Nick slipped off his pack and lay down in the shade. He lay on his back and looked  up into the pine  trees. His neck and back and the small of his back rested as he stretched. The earth felt good against his back. He looked up at the sky, through the branches, and then shut his eyes. He opened them and looked  up again. There was a wind high up in  the branches. He shut his eyes again and went to sleep. |
| *22* | Nick  woke stiff  and cramped.  The sun was nearly down. His  pack was heavy and  the  straps painful as he lifted  it on. He leaned over with the pack on and picked up the leather rod-case and started out from  the pine trees across the sweet fern swale, toward the river. He knew it could not be more than a mile. |
| *23* | He came down a hillside covered with stumps  into a meadow. At the edge of the meadow flowed the river. Nick was glad to get to the river. He walked upstream through  the  meadow.  His trousers were soaked with the dew as  he walked. After the hot day, the dew had come  quickly and heavily.  The river made no sound. It was too fast and smooth. At the edge of the meadow, before he  mounted to a piece  of  high ground to  make camp. Nick  looked down the river at the trout  rising. They were rising to  insects come from the swamp on the other side of the stream when the sun went down. The trout jumped out of  water  to  take them. While Nick  walked through  the little stretch  of meadow alongside the stream, trout had jumped high out of  water.  Now as he looked down the river, the insects must be settling on the  surface, for the trout were  feeding steadily all down the  stream.  As  far  down  the  long stretch  as he could see, the trout were rising, making circles all down the surface of the water, as though it were starting to rain. |
| *24* | The ground rose, wooded and  sandy, to overlook the meadow, the stretch of river and the swamp. Nick dropped his pack and rod-case and looked for  a level  piece of ground.  He was very hungry and  he wanted to make his  camp before he  cooked.  Between two jack pines,  the  ground was quite level. He took the ax out of  the pack  and chopped  out  two projecting  roots.  That leveled a  piece  of ground large  enough to sleep on.  He smoothed out  the sandy soil  with his hand  and  pulled  all  the sweet  fern bushes by their roots. His hands smelled good from the sweet fern.  He smoothed the uprooted earth. He did not want anything making lumps under the blankets. When he had the ground smooth, he spread his three blankets. One he folded double, next to the ground. The other two he spread on top. |
| *25* | With  the  ax he slit off a bright slab of pine from one of the  stumps and split  it into  pegs for the tent. He wanted them long and solid to hold in the ground. With the  tent unpacked and spread on  the  ground, the pack, leaning against a  jackpine,  looked much smaller. Nick  tied  the rope that served the tent for a ridge-pole to the trunk of one of  the pine  trees and pulled the tent up off the ground with the other end of the rope and tied it to the other  pine.  The tent hung on the rope  like  a canvas blanket  on a clothesline. Nick poked a pole  he  had  cut up  under the back peak of  the canvas and then made it a tent by pegging out the sides. He pegged the sides out taut and drove the pegs deep, hitting them down into the ground with the flat  of  the ax until  the rope  loops were buried and the canvas  was drum tight. |
| *26* | Across the open mouth of  the tent Nick  fixed cheesecloth  to keep out mosquitoes. He  crawled inside  under the mosquito  bar with various things from the pack to  put at the head of the bed under the slant  of the canvas. Inside  the  tent the  light  came through  the  brown  canvas. It  smelled pleasantly of canvas. Already there was  something mysterious and  homelike. Nick was happy as he crawled inside  the  tent. He had not  been unhappy all day. This was different though. Now things were done. There had been this to do. Now  it was  done.  It had been a hard trip. He was very tired. That was done. He had made his camp. He was settled. Nothing could touch him.  It was a good place to  camp. He  was  there, in the good place. He was in his home where he had made it. Now he was hungry. |
| *27* | He came out, crawling under the cheesecloth. It was quite dark outside. It was lighter in the tent. |
| *28* | Nick went  over to the pack and found, with his fingers, a long nail in a paper sack of nails, in the bottom of the pack. He drove  it into the pine tree, holding it  close and  hitting  it  gently with the flat of the ax. He hung  the pack up on the nail. All  his supplies were in the pack. They were off the ground and sheltered now. |
| *29* | Nick  was  hungry. He  did not  believe he  had ever  been hungrier. He opened and emptied  a can  of pork and beans and a can of spaghetti into the frying pan. |
| *30* | “I’ve got a  right to eat  this kind of stuff, if I’m  willing to carry it,” Nick said. His voice sounded strange in the darkening woods. He did not speak again. |
| *31* | He started a fire with some chunks of pine he got with the  ax  from a stump. Over the fire he stuck a  wire grill, pushing the four legs down into the ground  with  his boot. Nick  put  the  frying pan on the grill over the flames. He  was hungrier. The beans and spaghetti warmed. Nick stirred them and mixed  them  together. They began to  bubble, making little bubbles that rose with difficulty to  the surface. There was a good smell. Nick got out a bottle of tomato catchup  and cut four slices of  bread.  The little bubbles were coming faster now. Nick  sat down beside the fire and lifted the frying pan off. He poured about half the contents out into the tin plate. It spread slowly on the plate.  Nick knew it was too hot.  He  poured  on  some tomato catchup. He knew the  beans  and spaghetti were still too hot. He looked  at the fire, then at the tent, he was not going to spoil it all by burning  his tongue. For years he had never enjoyed fried  bananas  because he had never been  able to wait for  them to  cool. His tongue was very sensitive. He was very hungry. Across  the river in  the  swamp, in the almost  dark, he saw a mist rising. He  looked at the tent  once  more.  All right. He  took a full spoonful from the plate. |
| *32* | “Chrise,” Nick said, “Geezus Chrise,” he said happily. |
| *33* | He ate the whole plateful before he remembered the bread. Nick finished the  second plateful with  the  bread,  mopping the plate  shiny. He had not eaten since a cup of coffee and a ham sandwich in the  station restaurant at St. Ignace. It had been a very fine experience.  He  had been that hungry before, but had not been able to satisfy it. He could have made camp hours before if he had wanted to. There were plenty  of good places to camp on the river. But this was good. |
| *34* | Nick tucked two big chips of pine under  the grill. The fire flared up. He had forgotten  to get water for the coffee. Out  of the pack he got a folding canvas bucket and  walked  down the hill, across the edge of  the meadow, to the stream. The other bank  was in the  white mist. The grass was wet and cold as he knelt on the bank and dipped the canvas bucket into the stream. It bellied and pulled hard in  the current. The water was ice cold. Nick rinsed the bucket and carried it full up to the  camp. Up away from the stream it was not so cold. |
| *35* | Nick  drove another big nail and hung up the bucket full of water. He dipped  the coffee pot half full, put some more chips under the grill onto the fire and put the pot on. He could not remember which way he made coffee. He could remember an argument about it with Hopkins, but not  which side he had taken. He decided to bring  it  to a  boil. He remembered now that was Hopkins’s way. He had once  argued  about everything  with Hopkins. While he waited for the coffee to boil, he opened a small can of apricots.  He liked to open cans. He emptied the  can of apricots  out into a tin cup. While he watched the coffee on the  fire, he drank the  juice syrup of the apricots, carefully at first to  keep  from spilling, then  meditatively, sucking  the apricots down. They were better than fresh apricots. |
| *36* | The coffee boiled as he watched. The lid came up and coffee and grounds ran down the side of the pot. Nick took  it off the grill. It was a triumph for Hopkins.  He put sugar in the empty apricot cup  and  poured some of the coffee out to cool. It was too hot  to pour and he used his hat to hold the handle of the coffee pot. He would not let it steep in the pot at  all. Not the first cup. It should be straight Hopkins all the way. Hop deserved that. He was a very serious coffee drinker. He was the  most serious man Nick had ever known. Not heavy, serious. That was a long time ago. Hopkins spoke without moving his lips. He  had played polo. He made millions of dollars in Texas. He had borrowed carfare to go to Chicago, when the wire came that his first big well had come in.  He could have wired  for money. That would have been too slow. They called Hop’s  girl the Blonde Venus. Hop did not mind because she  was not his real  girl. Hopkins said very confidently that none of  them would make fun of  his real girl. He was  right.  Hopkins went away when the telegram came. That was on the Black River. It  took eight days for the telegram to reach him. Hopkins  gave away his. 22 caliber Colt automatic pistol  to Nick.  He gave his camera to  Bill. It was to remember him always by. They were all going fishing again next summer. The Hop Head was rich. He would  get a  yacht and they would all  cruise along the north shore of Lake Superior.  He was excited but serious. They said  good-bye and all felt bad. It broke up the trip. They never saw Hopkins again. That was a long time ago on the Black River. |
| *37* | Nick drank the coffee, the coffee according to  Hopkins. The coffee was bitter.  Nick  laughed.  It made a  good  ending  to the story. His mind was starting to work. He knew he  could choke it because he was tired enough. He spilled the coffee out of the pot and shook the grounds loose into the fire. He  lit  a cigarette  and went  inside  the tent. He took off his  shoes and trousers, sitting on the blankets,  rolled  the shoes up inside the trousers for a pillow and got in between the blankets. |
| *38* | Out through the front of the tent he watched the glow of the fire, when the  night wind  blew  on it. It was a quiet night. The swamp  was perfectly quiet. Nick stretched under the blanket comfortably. A mosquito hummed close to  his ear. Nick  sat up  and  lit a match. The mosquito was on the canvas, over  his head. Nick moved the match quickly up to it.  The mosquito made  a satisfactory hiss in the  flame. The match went  out. Nick  lay  down  again under the  blanket. He turned on his side and shut his eyes. He  was sleepy. He felt sleep coming. He curled up under the blanket and went to sleep. |

**Part II**

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| *39* | In the morning  the  sun  was up and the tent  was starting to get hot. Nick crawled out  under the  mosquito netting stretched across the mouth  of the tent, to look at the morning. The grass was wet on his  hands as he came out. He held his trousers and his shoes in  his hands. The sun  was  just up over  the hill. There was the meadow, the  river  and the  swamp. There were birch trees in the green of the swamp on the other side of the river. |
| *40* | The river was clear and smoothly fast in the early morning.  Down about two  hundred yards were three logs  all the way across the stream. They made the water smooth and  deep above them. As Nick  watched, a mink crossed  the river on  the logs and went into the swamp. Nick was excited. He was excited by  the  early morning  and  the  river. He  was really too hurried  to  eat breakfast, but he knew he must. He built a little fire and put on the coffee pot. |
| *41* | While the water was heating in the pot he took an empty bottle and went down over the edge of the high ground to the meadow. The meadow was wet with dew and Nick wanted to catch grasshoppers for bait before  the sun dried the grass.  He found plenty of good grasshoppers.  They  were at the base of the grass  stems. Sometimes they  clung  to a grass stem. They were cold and wet with the dew, and could not jump until the sun warmed them. Nick picked them up,  taking only the  medium-sized brown ones, and put them into the bottle. He turned over a  log  and just  under the shelter of the  edge were several hundred hoppers. It was a grasshopper lodging house. Nick put about fifty of the medium browns into the bottle. While  he was  picking up the hoppers the others warmed in the sun and  commenced  to  hop  away.  They flew when they hopped. At first they made one flight and stayed stiff when  they landed, as though they were dead. |
| *42* | Nick knew that by the time he was through with breakfast  they would be as  lively as ever. Without dew in the  grass it would take him  all  day to catch a  bottle full of good grasshoppers and he would have to crush many of them,  slamming at them with his hat. He washed his  hands at the stream. He was excited to be near it. Then he walked  up to the tent. The  hoppers were already jumping stiffly in the grass. In the bottle, warmed by the sun, they were jumping in  a mass. Nick put in a pine stick as  a cork. It plugged the mouth of the bottle enough, so the hoppers could not get out and left plenty of air passage. |
| *43* | He had  rolled the log back and knew  he  could get grasshoppers  there every morning. |
| *44* | Nick laid the bottle full of jumping grasshoppers against a pine trunk. Rapidly he mixed some buckwheat flour with  water and stirred it smooth, one cup of flour, one  cup of water. He put a handful  of  coffee in the pot and dipped a  lump of grease out of a can  and slid it sputtering across the hot skillet. On the smoking skillet he poured smoothly the buckwheat  batter. It spread  like  lava,  the  grease  spitting  sharply.  Around  the  edges the  buckwheat  cake  began  to  firm, then brown,  then  crisp. The  surface was bubbling slowly to porousness. Nick pushed  under  the browned under surface with a fresh pine chip. He shook the skillet sideways and the cake was loose on  the surface. I won’t try and  flop  it, he  thought. He slid the chip of clean wood all the way under the cake, and flopped it over onto its face. It sputtered in the pan. |
| *45* | When it was cooked Nick regreased the  skillet. He used all the batter. It made another big flapjack and one smaller one. |
| *46* | Nick ate a big  flapjack and  a smaller one, covered with apple butter. He put apple butter on the  third  cake, folded it over twice, wrapped it in oiled paper and put it in his shirt pocket. He put the apple butter jar back in the pack and cut bread for two sandwiches. |
| *47* | In the pack he found  a big onion.  He sliced it in two and peeled  the silky  outer  skin.  Then  he  cut  one  half  into  slices  and  made onion sandwiches. He wrapped them in oiled  paper  and  buttoned them in the other pocket of his khaki shirt. He turned the  skillet upside down  on the grill, drank the coffee, sweetened and yellow brown with the condensed milk in  it, and tidied up the camp. It was a good camp. |
| *48* | Nick took  his  fly rod  out of the leather rod-case,  jointed it, and shoved the rod-case  back into the tent. He put on the reel and threaded the line through the guides. He had to hold it from hand to hand, as he threaded it, or  it would slip back through its  own weight. It  was a heavy,  double tapered fly line. Nick had paid eight dollars for it a long time ago. It was made heavy  to lift  back  in the air and come  forward flat  and  heavy and straight to make it possible to cast a fly which has  no weight. Nick opened the aluminum  leader box. The leaders were  coiled between the damp  flannel pads. Nick had  wet the pads at  the water cooler  on the train  up  to  St. Ignace. In the damp pads the  gut leaders had softened and Nick unrolled one and tied it by a loop at the end to the heavy fly  line. He  fastened a hook on the end of the leader. It was a small hook; very thin and springy. |
| *49* | Nick took  it from his hook book, sitting with the rod  across his lap. He  tested the knot  and the spring  of the rod by pulling the line taut. It was a good feeling. He was careful not to let the hook bite into his finger. |
| *50* | He  started down  to  the  stream,  holding  his  rod,  the  bottle  of grasshoppers hung from his neck by a thong tied in half hitches  around  the neck of  the bottle. His landing net  hung by a hook from his belt. Over his shoulder was a long flour sack tied at each comer into an ear. The cord went over his shoulder. The sack flapped against his legs. |
| *51* | Nick felt  awkward  and professionally  happy with  all  his  equipment hanging  from  him. The grasshopper  bottle swung against  his chest. In his shin the breast pockets bulged against him with the lunch and his fly book. |
| *52* | He stepped into the stream. It was a shock. His trousers clung tight to his legs. His shoes felt the gravel. The water was a rising cold shock. |
| *53* | Rushing, the current  sucked against his legs. Where he stepped in, the water  was over his knees. He waded  with the current. The gravel slid under his shoes. He looked down at the swirl of water below each leg and tipped up the bottle to get a grasshopper. |
| *54* | The first  grasshopper gave a  jump  in the neck of the bottle and went out into the water. He was sucked under in the whirl by Nick’s right leg and came  to the surface  a little way down stream. He floated rapidly, kicking. In a quick circle, breaking the smooth surface of the water, he disappeared. A trout had taken him. |
| *55* | Another hopper poked his face out of the  bottle. His antennae wavered. He  was getting his front legs out of the bottle to jump.  Nick took  him by the head  and held him while he threaded the slim hook under  his chin, down through  his  thorax  and  into  the  last  segments  of  his  abdomen. The grasshopper took  hold  of  the hook  with his  front feet, spitting tobacco juice on it. Nick dropped him into the water. |
| *56* | Holding the  rod in his right hand he  let out line against the pull of the grasshopper in the current. He stripped off line from the reel  with his left hand and let it run free.  He could see the hopper in  the little waves of the current. It went out of sight. |
| *57* | There was a tug on the line. Nick pulled  against the taut line. It was his first strike. Holding the now living rod across  the current, he brought in the  line with his  left  hand. The rod bent in  jerks, the trout pumping against  the  current.  Nick  knew it was  a small one. He  lifted  the  rod straight up in the air. It bowed with the pull. |
| *58* | He saw  the trout in the water jerking with his head  and  body against the shifting tangent of the line in the stream. |
| *59* | Nick took the  line in his  left hand  and pulled the  trout,  thumping tiredly against the current, to the surface. His back was mottled the clear, water-over-gravel  color, his side flashing  in the  sun. The rod under his right arm, Nick stooped, dipping his right hand  into  the  current. He held the trout,  never still, with his  moist  right  hand, while he unhooked the barb from his mouth, then dropped him back into the stream. |
| *60* | He hung unsteadily in the current, then settled to  the bottom beside a stone. Nick reached  down his hand  to touch him, his arm to the elbow under water.  The trout was steady  in the moving  stream, resting  on the gravel, beside a stone. As  Nick’s fingers touched him,  touched his  smooth, cool, underwater feeling he was  gone,  gone in  a shadow across the bottom of the stream. |
| *61* | He’s all right. Nick thought. He was only tired. |
| *62* | He  had  wet his  hand  before he touched  the  trout, so he  would not disturb the delicate mucus that covered him.  If a trout  was touched with a dry hand, a white fungus attacked the unprotected spot. Years before when he had fished crowded streams,  with fly fishermen ahead of him and behind him. Nick had  again  and  again  come on  dead trout, furry  with  white fungus, drifted against a rock, or floating belly up in some pool. Nick did not like to fish with other men on the  river. Unless they were  of  your party, they spoiled it. |
| *63* | He wallowed  down the stream, above his knees in the  current,  through the fifty yards of shallow water above the  pile  of logs that  crossed the stream. He did not rebait  his hook and held it  in his hand as he waded. He was certain he  could catch small trout in the shallows, but he did not want them. There would be no big trout in the shallows this time of day. |
| *64* | Now the water deepened up his  thighs sharply and coldly. Ahead was the smooth dammed-back  flood of water  above the logs. The water was smooth and dark; on the left, the lower edge of the meadow; on the right the swamp. |
| *65* | Nick leaned back against the current and took a hopper from the bottle. He threaded the hopper on the hook and spat  on him for  good  luck. Then he pulled several yards of line  from the reel and tossed the hopper out ahead onto the fast, dark water. It floated down towards the logs, then the weight of  the line pulled  the bait  under the surface. Nick held the rod in his right hand, letting the line run out through his fingers. |
| *66* | There was a long tug. Nick struck and the rod came alive and dangerous, bent double, the line tightening, coming out of water, tightening, all in a heavy,  dangerous,  steady  pull. Nick felt the moment when the leader would break if the strain increased and let the line go. |
| *67* | The reel ratcheted into a mechanical shriek as the  line went out in  a rush. Too fast. Nick could not check it, the line rushing out. The reel note rising as the line ran out. |
| *68* | With the core of the  reel  showing, his heart feeling stopped with the excitement, leaning back against the current that mounted icily his thighs, Nick  thumbed  the  reel hard with his left hand. It was awkward getting his thumb inside the fly reel frame. |
| *69* | As  he put on pressure the line tightened into sudden  hardness and beyond the  logs a huge trout went high  out  of  water. As he jumped.  Nick lowered the tip of the rod. But he felt, as  he dropped the tip  to ease the strain, the moment when the strain was too great; the hardness too tight. Of course,  the leader had broken. There was no  mistaking the feeling when all spring left the line and it became dry and hard. Then it went slack. |
| *70* | His mouth dry, his heart down. Nick reeled in. He had never seen so big a trout. There was a heaviness, a power not to be held, and then the bulk of him, as he jumped. He looked as broad as a salmon. |
| *71* | Nick’s  hand  was shaky. He reeled  in slowly. The thrill  had been too much. He felt, vaguely,  a little sick,  as though it would be better to sit down. |
| *72* | The  leader had broken where the  hook was tied to it. Nick  took it in his hand. He thought of the trout  somewhere on the bottom, holding  himself steady over the gravel,  far down below the light, under the logs,  with the hook in his jaw. Nick knew the trout’s teeth would cut through the snell of the  hook. The hook  would imbed itself  in his jaw. He’d  bet the trout was angry.  Anything  that size would be angry. That  was  a  trout. He had been solidly hooked. Solid as a rock. He felt like a rock, too, before he started off. By God, he was a big one. By God, he  was the biggest one  I ever heard of. |
| *73* | Nick climbed  out onto the  meadow  and stood, water running  down  his trousers and out of his shoes,  his shoes squelchy. He went  over and sat on the logs. He did not want to rush his sensations any. |
| *74* | He  wriggled  his  toes  in  the  water, in  his shoes, and  got  out a cigarette from  his  breast  pocket. He lit it and tossed the match into the fast  water below  the logs.  A  tiny  trout rose at  the match, as it swung around in the fast current. Nick laughed. He would finish the cigarette. |
| *75* | He  sat on  the logs, smoking, drying in the sun,  the sun warm  on his back, the river shallow ahead  entering  the woods, curving into  the woods, shallows, light glittering,  big water-smooth  rocks, cedars along  the bank and white birches, the logs warm in the sun, smooth to sit on, without bark, gray to the touch; slowly  the  feeling of  disappointment left him. It went away  slowly, the  feeling  of disappointment that came  sharply  after the thrill that made his shoulders ache. It was all right now. His rod lying out on the logs. Nick tied a new hook on the leader, pulling the gut tight until it grimped into itself in a hard knot. |
| *76* | He  baited up, then picked up  the rod and walked to the far end of the logs  to get into the water, where it was not too deep. Under and beyond the logs  was  a deep pool. Nick walked around the shallow shelf  near the swamp shore until he came out on the shallow bed of the stream. |
| *77* | On the left, where  the meadow  ended and  the woods began, a great elm tree was uprooted. Gone  over  in a storm, it lay back  into the  woods, its roots clotted with dirt,  grass growing in  them, rising a solid bank beside the stream. The river cut to the edge of the uprooted tree.  From where Nick stood he could see deep channels, like ruts, cut in  the shallow  bed of the stream by the flow of the current. Pebbly where he stood and pebbly and full of boulders beyond;  where it  curved near the tree  roots, the  bed of  the stream was marly and between the ruts of deep water green weed fronds swung in the current. |
| *78* | Nick swung  the  rod back over his shoulder  and forward, and the line, curving  forward,  laid the grasshopper down on one of  the deep channels in the weeds. A trout struck and Nick hooked him. |
| *79* | Holding the rod far out toward  the uprooted tree and sloshing backward in the current. Nick worked the trout, plunging, the rod bending alive, out of the  danger of the weeds into the open  river. Holding the rod, pumping alive against the current.  Nick brought the trout in. He rushed, but always came, the  spring of the rod yielding to the rushes, sometimes jerking under water, but  always bringing him in. Nick eased downstream with the  rushes. The rod above his head he led the trout over the net, then lifted. |
| *80* | The trout hung heavy in the net, mottled trout back and silver sides in the meshes. Nick unhooked him; heavy sides, good to hold, big undershot jaw, and slipped him, heaving and big sliding, into *the* long sack that hung  from his shoulders in the water. |
| *81* | Nick  spread the mouth of the sack against the  current and it  filled, heavy  with  water. He  held it up, the bottom in the stream, and the water poured out through the sides. Inside at the  bottom was the big trout, alive in the water. |
| *82* | Nick  moved downstream. The  sack out ahead  of him sunk  heavy in  the water, pulling from his shoulders. |
| *83* | It was getting hot, the sun hot on the back of his neck. |
| *84* | Nick  had one good trout. He did not care about getting many trout. Now the  stream was  shallow and wide.  There were trees along both banks. The trees of  the left bank  made short shadows  on the current in the  forenoon sun.  Nick knew there were trout in each shadow. In the afternoon, after the sun had crossed toward the hills, the trout would be in  the cool shadows on the other side of the stream. |
| *85* | The very biggest ones would lie up close to the bank. You could always pick them  up there on the Black. When the sun was down they all moved out into the current.  Just when the sun  made the water blinding in the glare before it went  down, you were liable to strike a big  trout anywhere in the current. It was almost impossible to fish then, the surface of the water was blinding as a mirror in the sun. Of course, you could  fish upstream, but in a stream like the Black, or  this, you had to wallow against the current and in a deep place, the water  piled up on you. It  was no fun to fish upstream with this much current. |
| *86* | Nick  moved along through  the shallow stretch watching the  banks  for deep holes. A  beech tree  grew close beside the river, so that the branches hung down  into the water. The stream  went back in  under the leaves. There were always trout in a place like that. |
| *87* | Nick  did not care about fishing  that hole. He was sure  he would get hooked in the branches. |
| *88* | It looked deep  though. He dropped  the grasshopper so the current took it  under water, back  in under the overhanging branch. The line pulled hard and Nick struck. The trout threshed heavily, half out of water in the leaves and branches. The line was caught.  Nick pulled hard and  the trout was off. He reeled in and holding the hook in his hand, walked down the stream. |
| *89* | Ahead,  close to  the left bank, was a big log. Nick saw it was hollow; pointing up  river the current  entered it  smoothly, only  a  little ripple spread each  side of the log. The water was deepening. The top of the hollow log was gray and dry. It was partly in the shadow. |
| *90* | Nick took the  cork out of the grasshopper bottle and a hopper clung to it.  He  picked him off, hooked him and tossed him out. He held the  rod far out so that the hopper on the water moved into the current flowing into the hollow  log.  Nick lowered the rod and the hopper floated  in. There was a heavy strike. Nick swung the rod against the pull. It felt as though he were hooked into the log itself, except for the live feeling. |
| *91* | He tried to force the fish out into the current. It came, heavily. |
| *92* | The line  went slack and Nick thought  the  trout was gone. Then he saw  him,  very near, in the current,  shaking his head, trying to get the hook out.  His mouth  was  clamped shut. He was  fighting  the hook in  the clear flowing current. |
| *93* | Looping in the line with his  left hand. Nick swung the rod to make the line taut and tried to lead the trout toward  the net, but he was  gone, out of sight, the line pumping. Nick fought him against the current, letting him thump in the water against the spring of the rod. He shifted  the rod to his left hand,  worked  the trout upstream,  holding his weight, fighting on the rod, and then let him down into the net. He lifted him clear of the water, a heavy half  circle in the net, the  net dripping, unhooked him  and slid him into the sack. |
| *94* | He spread the mouth of the sack and looked down in at the two big trout alive in the water. |
| *95* | Through the deepening water. Nick waded over to the hollow log. He took the sack off, over his head, the trout flopping as it came out of water, and hung  it so the trout  were  deep in the water. Then he pulled himself up on the log and sat, the water from his trouser and boots  running down into the stream. He  laid his rod down, moved along  to the shady end of  the log and took the sandwiches out of his pocket. He dipped the sandwiches in the  cold water. The current carried away the crumbs. He ate the sandwiches and dipped his hat full of water  to  drink, the water running out through his hat just ahead of his drinking. |
| *96* | It was cool in the shade, sitting on the log. He took  a  cigarette out  and struck a match to light it. The match sunk  into the gray wood, making a tiny furrow. Nick leaned  over the side of the log, found  a  hard place and lit the match. He sat smoking and watching the river. |
| *97* | Ahead the river narrowed and went into a swamp. The river became smooth and deep and the  swamp  looked solid with  cedar  trees, their  trunks dose together, their branches solid. It  would  not be possible to walk through a swamp  like  that. The  branches grew so  low. You would have to keep almost level  with  the ground to  move  at  all. You could  not crash  through the branches. That must  be why the animals  that lived in swamps were built the way they were. Nick thought. |
| *98* | He wished he had  brought something to read.  He  felt like reading. He did not feel like going on  into the swamp. He  looked down the river. A big cedar slanted all the way across the stream. Beyond that the river went into the swamp. |
| *99* | Nick did not  want to go in there now. He felt a reaction  against deep wading with the water deepening up  under his armpits, to hook big trout  in places impossible to land them. In  the swamp the banks  were bare, the  big cedars  came  together  overhead, the  sun  did not come through, except in patches; in the fast deep  water, in the  half light,  the fishing  would be tragic. In  the swamp fishing  was a tragic adventure. Nick did not want it. He did not want to go down the stream any further today. |
| *100* | He  took out  his knife, opened it and stuck it  in the  log.  Then  he pulled  up  the  sack,  reached  into  it and  brought out one of the trout. Holding him near the tail, hard to hold,  alive, in his hand, he whacked him against the log. The  trout quivered, rigid. Nick laid him on the log in the shade and broke the neck  of the other fish the same way. He  laid them side by side on the log. They were fine trout. |
| *101* | Nick cleaned them, slitting them from the  vent to the tip  of the jaw. All  the insides and the  gills and tongue came out in one  piece. They were both  males;  long  gray-white strips  of milt,  smooth  and clean.  All the insides clean and  compact,  coming out all together.  Nick tossed the offal ashore for the minks to find. |
| *102* | He  washed  the  trout in the stream. When he  held them back up in the water they looked like  live fish. Their color  was not gone yet. He  washed his  hands  and dried them on  the log.  Then he  laid the trout on the sack spread out  on the log, rolled them up in it,  tied the bundle and put it in the landing net. His  knife was still  standing, blade stuck in  the log. He cleaned it on the wood and put it in his pocket. |
| *103* | Nick  stood  up on the log, holding his rod, the  landing  net  hanging heavy, then  stepped into the water and splashed ashore. He climbed the bank and  cut  up into  the  woods,  toward the high ground. He was going back to camp.  He looked  back. The river just showed through the  trees. There were plenty of days coming when he could fish the swamp. |

# (1925)

# A Rose for Emily

# William Faulkner

**I**

WHEN Miss Emily Grierson died, our whole town went to her funeral: the men through a sort of respectful affection for a fallen monument, the women mostly out of curiosity to see the inside of her house, which no one save an old man-servant—a combined gardener and cook—had seen in at least ten years.

It was a big, squarish frame house that had once been white, decorated with cupolas and spires and scrolled balconies in the heavily lightsome style of the seventies, set on what had once been our most select street. But garages and cotton gins had encroached and obliterated even the august names of that neighborhood; only Miss Emily’s house was left, lifting its stubborn and coquettish decay above the cotton wagons and the gasoline pumps-an eyesore among eyesores. And now Miss Emily had gone to join the representatives of those august names where they lay in the cedar-bemused cemetery among the ranked and anonymous graves of Union and Confederate soldiers who fell at the battle of Jefferson.

Alive, Miss Emily had been a tradition, a duty, and a care; a sort of hereditary obligation upon the town, dating from that day in 1894 when Colonel Sartoris, the mayor—he who fathered the edict that no Negro woman should appear on the streets without an apron-remitted her taxes, the dispensation dating from the death of her father on into perpetuity. Not that Miss Emily would have accepted charity. Colonel Sartoris invented an involved tale to the effect that Miss Emily’s father had loaned money to the town, which the town, as a matter of business, preferred this way of repaying. Only a man of Colonel Sartoris’ generation and thought could have invented it, and only a woman could have believed it.

When the next generation, with its more modern ideas, became mayors and aldermen, this arrangement created some little dissatisfaction. On the first of the year they mailed her a tax notice. February came, and there was no reply. They wrote her a formal letter, asking her to call at the sheriff’s office at her convenience. A week later the mayor wrote her himself, offering to call or to send his car for her, and received in reply a note on paper of an archaic shape, in a thin, flowing calligraphy in faded ink, to the effect that she no longer went out at all. The tax notice was also enclosed, without comment.

They called a special meeting of the Board of Aldermen. A deputation waited upon her, knocked at the door through which no visitor had passed since she ceased giving china-painting lessons eight or ten years earlier. They were admitted by the old Negro into a dim hall from which a stairway mounted into still more shadow. It smelled of dust and disuse—a close, dank smell. The Negro led them into the parlor. It was furnished in heavy, leather-covered furniture. When the Negro opened the blinds of one window, they could see that the leather was cracked; and when they sat down, a faint dust rose sluggishly about their thighs, spinning with slow motes in the single sun-ray. On a tarnished gilt easel before the fireplace stood a crayon portrait of Miss Emily’s father.

They rose when she entered—a small, fat woman in black, with a thin gold chain descending to her waist and vanishing into her belt, leaning on an ebony cane with a tarnished gold head. Her skeleton was small and spare; perhaps that was why what would have been merely plumpness in another was obesity in her. She looked bloated, like a body long submerged in motionless water, and of that pallid hue. Her eyes, lost in the fatty ridges of her face, looked like two small pieces of coal pressed into a lump of dough as they moved from one face to another while the visitors stated their errand.

She did not ask them to sit. She just stood in the door and listened quietly until the spokesman came to a stumbling halt. Then they could hear the invisible watch ticking at the end of the gold chain.

Her voice was dry and cold. “I have no taxes in Jefferson. Colonel Sartoris explained it to me. Perhaps one of you can gain access to the city records and satisfy yourselves.”

“But we have. We are the city authorities, Miss Emily. Didn’t you get a notice from the sheriff, signed by him?”

“I received a paper, yes,” Miss Emily said. “Perhaps he considers himself the sheriff . . . I have no taxes in Jefferson.”

“But there is nothing on the books to show that, you see We must go by the—“

“See Colonel Sartoris. I have no taxes in Jefferson.”

“But, Miss Emily—“

“See Colonel Sartoris.” (Colonel Sartoris had been dead almost ten years.) “I have no taxes in Jefferson. Tobe!” The Negro appeared. “Show these gentlemen out.”

**II**

So SHE vanquished them, horse and foot, just as she had vanquished their fathers thirty years before about the smell.

That was two years after her father’s death and a short time after her sweetheart—the one we believed would marry her —had deserted her. After her father’s death she went out very little; after her sweetheart went away, people hardly saw her at all. A few of the ladies had the temerity to call, but were not received, and the only sign of life about the place was the Negro man—a young man then—going in and out with a market basket.

“Just as if a man—any man—could keep a kitchen properly, “the ladies said; so they were not surprised when the smell developed. It was another link between the gross, teeming world and the high and mighty Griersons.

A neighbor, a woman, complained to the mayor, Judge Stevens, eighty years old.

“But what will you have me do about it, madam?” he said.

“Why, send her word to stop it,” the woman said. “Isn’t there a law? “

“I’m sure that won’t be necessary,” Judge Stevens said. “It’s probably just a snake or a rat that nigger of hers killed in the yard. I’ll speak to him about it.”

The next day he received two more complaints, one from a man who came in diffident deprecation. “We really must do something about it, Judge. I’d be the last one in the world to bother Miss Emily, but we’ve got to do something.” That night the Board of Aldermen met—three graybeards and one younger man, a member of the rising generation.

“It’s simple enough,” he said. “Send her word to have her place cleaned up. Give her a certain time to do it in, and if she don’t. ..”

“Dammit, sir,” Judge Stevens said, “will you accuse a lady to her face of smelling bad?”

So the next night, after midnight, four men crossed Miss Emily’s lawn and slunk about the house like burglars, sniffing along the base of the brickwork and at the cellar openings while one of them performed a regular sowing motion with his hand out of a sack slung from his shoulder. They broke open the cellar door and sprinkled lime there, and in all the outbuildings. As they recrossed the lawn, a window that had been dark was lighted and Miss Emily sat in it, the light behind her, and her upright torso motionless as that of an idol. They crept quietly across the lawn and into the shadow of the locusts that lined the street. After a week or two the smell went away.

That was when people had begun to feel really sorry for her. People in our town, remembering how old lady Wyatt, her great-aunt, had gone completely crazy at last, believed that the Griersons held themselves a little too high for what they really were. None of the young men were quite good enough for Miss Emily and such. We had long thought of them as a tableau, Miss Emily a slender figure in white in the background, her father a spraddled silhouette in the foreground, his back to her and clutching a horsewhip, the two of them framed by the back-flung front door. So when she got to be thirty and was still single, we were not pleased exactly, but vindicated; even with insanity in the family she wouldn’t have turned down all of her chances if they had really materialized.

When her father died, it got about that the house was all that was left to her; and in a way, people were glad. At last they could pity Miss Emily. Being left alone, and a pauper, she had become humanized. Now she too would know the old thrill and the old despair of a penny more or less.

The day after his death all the ladies prepared to call at the house and offer condolence and aid, as is our custom Miss Emily met them at the door, dressed as usual and with no trace of grief on her face. She told them that her father was not dead. She did that for three days, with the ministers calling on her, and the doctors, trying to persuade her to let them dispose of the body. Just as they were about to resort to law and force, she broke down, and they buried her father quickly.

We did not say she was crazy then. We believed she had to do that. We remembered all the young men her father had driven away, and we knew that with nothing left, she would have to cling to that which had robbed her, as people will.

**III**

SHE WAS SICK for a long time. When we saw her again, her hair was cut short, making her look like a girl, with a vague resemblance to those angels in colored church windows—sort of tragic and serene.

The town had just let the contracts for paving the sidewalks, and in the summer after her father’s death they began the work. The construction company came with riggers and mules and machinery, and a foreman named Homer Barron, a Yankee—a big, dark, ready man, with a big voice and eyes lighter than his face. The little boys would follow in groups to hear him cuss the riggers, and the riggers singing in time to the rise and fall of picks. Pretty soon he knew everybody in town. Whenever you heard a lot of laughing anywhere about the square, Homer Barron would be in the center of the group. Presently we began to see him and Miss Emily on Sunday afternoons driving in the yellow-wheeled buggy and the matched team of bays from the livery stable.

At first we were glad that Miss Emily would have an interest, because the ladies all said, “Of course a Grierson would not think seriously of a Northerner, a day laborer.” But there were still others, older people, who said that even grief could not cause a real lady to forget *noblesse oblige*- -

without calling it *noblesse oblige*. They just said, “Poor Emily. Her kinsfolk should come to her.” She had some kin in Alabama; but years ago her father had fallen out with them over the estate of old lady Wyatt, the crazy woman, and there was no communication between the two families. They had not even been represented at the funeral.

And as soon as the old people said, “Poor Emily,” the whispering began. “Do you suppose it’s really so?” they said to one another. “Of course it is. What else could . . .” This behind their hands; rustling of craned silk and satin behind jalousies closed upon the sun of Sunday afternoon as the thin, swift clop-clop-clop of the matched team passed: “Poor Emily.”

She carried her head high enough—even when we believed that she was fallen. It was as if she demanded more than ever the recognition of her dignity as the last Grierson; as if it had wanted that touch of earthiness to reaffirm her imperviousness. Like when she bought the rat poison, the arsenic. That was over a year after they had begun to say “Poor Emily,” and while the two female cousins were visiting her.

“I want some poison,” she said to the druggist. She was over thirty then, still a slight woman, though thinner than usual, with cold, haughty black eyes in a face the flesh of which was strained across the temples and about the eyesockets as you imagine a lighthouse-keeper’s face ought to look. “I want some poison,” she said.

“Yes, Miss Emily. What kind? For rats and such? I’d recom—“

“I want the best you have. I don’t care what kind.”

The druggist named several. “They’ll kill anything up to an elephant. But what you want is—“

“Arsenic,” Miss Emily said. “Is that a good one?”

“Is . . . arsenic? Yes, ma’am. But what you want—“

“I want arsenic.”

The druggist looked down at her. She looked back at him, erect, her face like a strained flag. “Why, of course,” the druggist said. “If that’s what you want. But the law requires you to tell what you are going to use it for.”

Miss Emily just stared at him, her head tilted back in order to look him eye for eye, until he looked away and went and got the arsenic and wrapped it up. The Negro delivery boy brought her the package; the druggist didn’t come back. When she opened the package at home there was written on the box, under the skull and bones: “For rats.”

**IV**

So THE NEXT day we all said, “She will kill herself”; and we said it would be the best thing. When she had first begun to be seen with Homer Barron, we had said, “She will marry him.” Then we said, “She will persuade him yet,” because Homer himself had remarked—he liked men, and it was known that he drank with the younger men in the Elks’ Club—that he was not a marrying man. Later we said, “Poor Emily” behind the jalousies as they passed on Sunday afternoon in the glittering buggy, Miss Emily with her head high and Homer Barron with his hat cocked and a cigar in his teeth, reins and whip in a yellow glove.

Then some of the ladies began to say that it was a disgrace to the town and a bad example to the young people. The men did not want to interfere, but at last the ladies forced the Baptist minister—Miss Emily’s people were Episcopal—to call upon her. He would never divulge what happened during that interview, but he refused to go back again. The next Sunday they again drove about the streets, and the following day the minister’s wife wrote to Miss Emily’s relations in Alabama.

So she had blood-kin under her roof again and we sat back to watch developments. At first nothing happened. Then we were sure that they were to be married. We learned that Miss Emily had been to the jeweler’s and ordered a man’s toilet set in silver, with the letters H. B. on each piece. Two days later we learned that she had bought a complete outfit of men’s clothing, including a nightshirt, and we said, “They are married.” We were really glad. We were glad because the two female cousins were even more Grierson than Miss Emily had ever been.

So we were not surprised when Homer Barron—the streets had been finished some time since—was gone. We were a little disappointed that there was not a public blowing-off, but we believed that he had gone on to prepare for Miss Emily’s coming, or to give her a chance to get rid of the cousins. (By that time it was a cabal, and we were all Miss Emily’s allies to help circumvent the cousins.) Sure enough, after another week they departed. And, as we had expected all along, within three days Homer Barron was back in town. A neighbor saw the Negro man admit him at the kitchen door at dusk one evening.

And that was the last we saw of Homer Barron. And of Miss Emily for some time. The Negro man went in and out with the market basket, but the front door remained closed. Now and then we would see her at a window for a moment, as the men did that night when they sprinkled the lime, but for almost six months she did not appear on the streets. Then we knew that this was to be expected too; as if that quality of her father which had thwarted her woman’s life so many times had been too virulent and too furious to die.

When we next saw Miss Emily, she had grown fat and her hair was turning gray. During the next few years it grew grayer and grayer until it attained an even pepper-and-salt iron-gray, when it ceased turning. Up to the day of her death at seventy-four it was still that vigorous iron-gray, like the hair of an active man.

From that time on her front door remained closed, save for a period of six or seven years, when she was about forty, during which she gave lessons in china-painting. She fitted up a studio in one of the downstairs rooms, where the daughters and granddaughters of Colonel Sartoris’ contemporaries were sent to her with the same regularity and in the same spirit that they were sent to church on Sundays with a twenty-five-cent piece for the collection plate. Meanwhile her taxes had been remitted.

Then the newer generation became the backbone and the spirit of the town, and the painting pupils grew up and fell away and did not send their children to her with boxes of color and tedious brushes and pictures cut from the ladies’ magazines. The front door closed upon the last one and remained closed for good. When the town got free postal delivery, Miss Emily alone refused to let them fasten the metal numbers above her door and attach a mailbox to it. She would not listen to them.

Daily, monthly, yearly we watched the Negro grow grayer and more stooped, going in and out with the market basket. Each December we sent her a tax notice, which would be returned by the post office a week later, unclaimed. Now and then we would see her in one of the downstairs windows—she had evidently shut up the top floor of the house—like the carven torso of an idol in a niche, looking or not looking at us, we could never tell which. Thus she passed from generation to generation—dear, inescapable, impervious, tranquil, and perverse.

And so she died. Fell ill in the house filled with dust and shadows, with only a doddering Negro man to wait on her. We did not even know she was sick; we had long since given up trying to get any information from the Negro

He talked to no one, probably not even to her, for his voice had grown harsh and rusty, as if from disuse.

She died in one of the downstairs rooms, in a heavy walnut bed with a curtain, her gray head propped on a pillow yellow and moldy with age and lack of sunlight.

**V**

THE NEGRO met the first of the ladies at the front door and let them in, with their hushed, sibilant voices and their quick, curious glances, and then he disappeared. He walked right through the house and out the back and was not seen again.

The two female cousins came at once. They held the funeral on the second day, with the town coming to look at Miss Emily beneath a mass of bought flowers, with the crayon face of her father musing profoundly above the bier and the ladies sibilant and macabre; and the very old men —some in their brushed Confederate uniforms—on the porch and the lawn, talking of Miss Emily as if she had been a contemporary of theirs, believing that they had danced with her and courted her perhaps, confusing time with its mathematical progression, as the old do, to whom all the past is not a diminishing road but, instead, a huge meadow which no winter ever quite touches, divided from them now by the narrow bottle-neck of the most recent decade of years.

Already we knew that there was one room in that region above stairs which no one had seen in forty years, and which would have to be forced. They waited until Miss Emily was decently in the ground before they opened it.

The violence of breaking down the door seemed to fill this room with pervading dust. A thin, acrid pall as of the tomb seemed to lie everywhere upon this room decked and furnished as for a bridal: upon the valance curtains of faded rose color, upon the rose-shaded lights, upon the dressing table, upon the delicate array of crystal and the man’s toilet things backed with tarnished silver, silver so tarnished that the monogram was obscured. Among them lay a collar and tie, as if they had just been removed, which, lifted, left upon the surface a pale crescent in the dust. Upon a chair hung the suit, carefully folded; beneath it the two mute shoes and the discarded socks.

The man himself lay in the bed.

For a long while we just stood there, looking down at the profound and fleshless grin. The body had apparently once lain in the attitude of an embrace, but now the long sleep that outlasts love, that conquers even the grimace of love, had cuckolded him. What was left of him, rotted beneath what was left of the nightshirt, had become inextricable from the bed in which he lay; and upon him and upon the pillow beside him lay that even coating of the patient and biding dust.

Then we noticed that in the second pillow was the indentation of a head. One of us lifted something from it, and leaning forward, that faint and invisible dust dry and acrid in the nostrils, we saw a long strand of iron-gray hair.

(1930)

**The Jilting of Granny Weatherall**

**Katherine Anne Porter**

(1930)

She flicked her wrist neatly out of Doctor Harry’s pudgy careful fingers and pulled the sheet up to her chin. The brat ought to be in knee breeches. Doctoring around the country with spectacles on his nose! “Get along now. Take your schoolbooks and go. There’s nothing wrong with me.”

Doctor Harry spread a warm paw like a cushion on her forehead where the forked green vein danced and made her eyelids twitch. “Now, now, be a good girl, and we’ll have you up in no time.”

“That’s no way to speak to a woman nearly eighty years old just because she’s down. I’d have you respect your elders, young man.”

“Well, Missy, excuse me.” Doctor Harry patted her cheek. “But I’ve got to warn you, haven’t I? You’re a marvel, but you must be careful or you’re going to be good and sorry.”

“Don’t tell me what I’m going to be. I’m on my feet now, morally speaking. It’s Cornelia. I had to go to bed to get rid of her.”

Her bones felt loose, and floated around in her skin, and Doctor Harry floated like a balloon around the foot of the bed. He floated and pulled down his waistcoat, and swung his glasses on a cord. “Well, stay where you are, it certainly can’t hurt you.”

“Get along and doctor your sick,” said Granny Weatherall. “Leave a well woman alone. I’ll call for you when I want you…Where were you forty years ago when I pulled through milk-leg and double pneumonia? You weren’t even born. Don’t let Cornelia lead you on,” she shouted, because Doctor Harry appeared to float up to the ceiling and out. “I pay my own bills, and I don’t throw my money away on nonsense!”

She meant to wave good-by, but it was too much trouble. Her eyes closed of themselves, it was like a dark curtain drawn around the bed. The pillow rose and floated under her, pleasant as a hammock in a light wind. She listened to the leaves rustling outside the window. No, somebody was swishing newspapers: no, Cornelia and Doctor Harry were whispering together. She leaped broad awake, thinking they whispered in her ear.

    “She was never like this, *never* like this!” “Well, what can we expect?” “Yes, eighty years old…”

    Well, and what if she was? She still had ears. It was like Cornelia to whisper around doors. She always kept things secret in such a public way. She was always being tactful and kind. Cornelia was dutiful; that was the trouble with her. Dutiful and good: “So good and dutiful,” said Granny, “that I’d like to spank her.” She saw herself spanking Cornelia and making a fine job of it.

    “What’d you say, mother?”

    Granny felt her face tying up in hard knots.

    “Can’t a body think, I’d like to know?”

    “I thought you might like something.”

    “I do. I want a lot of things. First off, go away and don’t whisper.”

    She lay and drowsed, hoping in her sleep that the children would keep out and let her rest a minute. It had been a long day. Not that she was tired. It was always pleasant to snatch a minute now and then. There was always so much to be done, let me see: tomorrow.

    Tomorrow was far away and there was nothing to trouble about. Things were finished somehow when the time came; thank God there was always a little margin over for peace: then a person could spread out the plan of life and tuck in the edges orderly. It was good to have everything clean and folded away, with the hair brushes and tonic bottles sitting straight on the white, embroidered linen: the day started without fuss and the pantry shelves laid out with rows of jelly glasses and brown jugs and white stone-china jars with blue whirligigs and words painted on them: coffee, tea, sugar, ginger, cinnamon, allspice: and the bronze clock with the lion on top nicely dusted off. The dust that lion could collect in twenty-four hours! The box in the attic with all those letters tied up, well, she’d have to go through that tomorrow. All those letters – George’s letters and John’s letters and her letters to them both – lying around for the children to find afterwards made her uneasy. Yes, that would be tomorrow’s business. No use to let them know how silly she had been once.

    While she was rummaging around she found death in her mind and it felt clammy and unfamiliar. She had spent so much time preparing for death there was no need for bringing it up again. Let it take care of itself for now. When she was sixty she had felt very old, finished, and went around making farewell trips to see her children and grandchildren, with a secret in her mind: This was the very last of your mother, children! Then she made her will and came down with a long fever. That was all just a notion like a lot of other things, but it was lucky too, for she had once and for all got over the idea of dying for a long time. Now she couldn’t be worried. She hoped she had better sense now. Her father had lived to be one hundred and two years old and had drunk a noggin of strong hot toddy on his last birthday. He told the reporters it was his daily habit, and he owed his long life to that. He had made quite a scandal and was very pleased about it. She believed she’d just plague Cornelia a little.

    “Cornelia! Cornelia!” No footsteps, but a sudden hand on her cheek. “Bless you, where have you been?”

    “Here, Mother.”

    “Well, Cornelia, I want a noggin of hot toddy.”

    “Are you cold, darling?”

    “I’m chilly, Cornelia.” Lying in bed stops the circulation. I must have told you a thousand times.”

    Well, she could just hear Cornelia telling her husband that Mother was getting a little childish and they’d have to humor her. The thing that most annoyed her was that Cornelia thought she was deaf, dumb, and blind. Little hasty glances and tiny gestures tossed around here and over her head saying, “Don’t cross her, let her have her way, she’s eighty years old,” and she sitting there as if she lived in a thin glass cage. Sometimes granny almost made up her mind to pack up and move back to her own house where nobody could remind her every minute that she was old. Wait, wait, Cornelia, till your own children whisper behind your back!

    In her day she had kept a better house and had got more work done. She wasn’t too old yet for Lydia to be driving eighty miles for advice when one of the children jumped the track, and Jimmy still dropped in and talked things over: “Now, Mammy, you’ve a good business head, I want to know what you think of this?…” Old. Cornelia couldn’t change the furniture around without asking. Little things, little things! They had been so sweet when they were little. Granny wished the old days were back again with the children young and everything to be done over. It had been a hard pull, but not too much for her. When she thought of all the food she had cooked, and all the clothes she had cut and sewed, and all the gardens she had made – well, the children showed it. There they were, made out of her, and they couldn’t get away from that. Sometimes she wanted to see John again and point to them and say, Well, I didn’t do so badly, did I? But that would have to wait. That was for tomorrow. She used to think of him as a man, but now all the children were older than their father, and he would be a child beside her if she saw him now. It seemed strange and there was something wrong in the idea. Why, he couldn’t possibly recognize her. She had fenced in a hundred acres once, digging the post holes herself and clamping the wires with just a negro boy to help. That changed a woman. John would be looking for a young woman with a peaked Spanish comb in her hair and the painted fan. Digging post holes changed a woman. Riding country roads in the winter when women had their babies  was another thing: sitting up nights with sick horses and sick negroes  and sick children and hardly ever losing one. John, I hardly ever lost one of them! John would see that in a minute, that would be something he could understand, she wouldn’t have to explain anything!

    It made her feel like rolling up her sleeves and putting the whole place to rights again. No matter if Cornelia was determined to be everywhere at once, there were a great many things left undone on this place. She would start tomorrow and do them. It was good to be strong enough for everything, even if all you made melted and changed and slipped under your hands, so that by the time you finished you almost forgot what you were working for. What was it I set out to do? She asked herself intently, but she could not remember. A fog rose over the valley, she saw it marching across the creek swallowing the trees and moving up the hill like an army of ghosts. Soon it would be at the near edge of the orchard, and then it was time to go in and light the lamps. Come in, children, don’t stay out in the night air.

    Lighting the lamps had been beautiful. The children huddled up to her and breathed like little calves waiting at the bars in the twilight. Their eyes followed the match and watched the flame rise and settle in a blue curve, then they moved away from her. The lamp was lit, they didn’t have to be scared and hang on to mother any more. Never, never, never more. God, for all my life, I thank Thee. Without Thee, my God, I could never have done it. Hail, Mary, full of grace.

    I want you to pick all the fruit this year and see nothing is wasted. There’s always someone who can use it. Don’t let good things rot for want of using. You waste life when you waste good food. Don’t let things get lost. It’s bitter to lose things. Now, don’t let me get to thinking, not when I’m tired and taking a little nap before supper….

    The pillow rose about her shoulders and pressed against her heart and the memory was being squeezed out of it: oh, push down the pillow, somebody: it would smother her if she tried to hold it. Such a fresh breeze blowing and such a green day with no threats in it. But he had not come, just the same. What does a woman do when she has put on the white veil and set out the white cake for a man and he doesn’t come? She tried to remember. No, I swear he never harmed me but in that. He never harmed me but in that…and what if he did? There was the day, the day, but a whirl of dark smoke rose and covered it, crept up and over into the bright field where everything was planted so carefully in orderly rows. That was hell, she knew hell when she saw it. For sixty years she had prayed against remembering him and against losing her soul in the deep pit of hell, and now the two things were mingled in one and the thought of him was a smoky cloud from hell that moved and crept in her head when she had just got rid of Doctor Harry and was trying to rest a minute. Wounded vanity, Ellen, said a sharp voice in the top of her mind. Don’t let your wounded vanity get the upper hand of you. Plenty of girls get jilted. You were kilted, weren’t you? Then stand up to it. Her eyelids wavered and let in streamers of blue-gray light like tissue paper over her eyes. She must get up and pull the shades down or she’d never sleep. She was in bed again and the shades were not down. How could that happen? Better turn over, hide from the light, sleeping in the light gave you nightmares. “Mother, how do you feel now?” and a stinging wetness on her forehead. But I don’t like having my face washed in cold water!

    Hapsy? George? Lydia? Jimmy? No, Cornelia and her features were swollen and full of little puddles. “They’re coming, darling, they’ll all be here soon.” Go wash your face, child, you look funny.

    Instead of obeying, Cornelia knelt down and put her head on the pillow. She seemed to be talking but there was no sound. “Well, are you tongue-tied? Whose birthday is it? Are you going to give a party?”

    Cornelia’s mouth moved urgently in strange shapes. “Don’t do that, you bother me, daughter.”

    “Oh no, Mother. Oh, no…”

Nonsense. It was strange about children. They disputed your every word. “No what, Cornelia?”

    “Here’s Doctor Harry.”

    “I won’t see that boy again. He left just five minutes ago.”

    “That was this morning, Mother. It’s night now. Here’s the nurse.”

    “This is Doctor Harry, Mrs. Weatherall. I never saw you look so young and happy!”

    “Ah, I’ll never be young again – but I’d be happy if they’d let me lie in peace and get rested.”

    She thought she spoke up loudly, but no one answered. A warm weight on her forehead, a warm bracelet on her wrist, and a breeze went on whispering, trying to tell her something. A shuffle of leaves in the everlasting hand of God, He blew on them and they danced and rattled. “Mother, don’t mind, we’re going to give you a little hypodermic.” “Look here, daughter, how do ants get in this bed? I saw sugar ants yesterday.” Did you send for Hapsy too?

    It was Hapsy she really wanted. She had to go a long way back through a great many rooms to find Hapsy standing with a baby on her arm. She seemed to herself to be Hapsy also, and the baby on Hapsy’s arm was Hapsy and himself and herself, all at once, and there was no surprise in the meeting. Then Hapsy melted from within and turned flimsy as gray gauze and the baby was a gauzy shadow, and Hapsy came up close and said, “I thought you’d never come,” and looked at her very searchingly and said, “You haven’t changed a bit!” They leaned forward to kiss, when Cornelia began whispering from a long way off, “Oh, is there anything you want to tell me? Is there anything I can do for you?”

    Yes, she had changed her mind after sixty years and she would like to see George. I want you to find George. Find him and be sure to tell him I forgot him. I want him to know I had my husband just the same and my children and my house like any other woman. A good house too and a good husband that I loved and fine children out of him. Better than I had hoped for even. Tell him I was given back everything he took away and more. Oh, no, oh, God, no, there was something else besides the house and the man and the children. Oh, surely they were not all? What was it? Something not given back… Her breath crowded down under her ribs and grew into a monstrous frightening shape with cutting edges; it bored up into her head, and the agony was unbelievable: Yes, John, get the Doctor now, no more talk, the time has come.

    When this one was born it should be the last. The last. It should have been born first, for it was the one she had truly wanted. Everything came in good time. Nothing left out, left over. She was strong, in three days she would be as well as ever. Better. A woman needed milk in her to have her full health.

    “Mother, do you hear me?”

    “I’ve been telling you – “

    “Mother, Father Connolly’s here.”

    “I went to Holy Communion only last week. Tell him I’m not so sinful as all that.”

    “Father just wants to speak with you.”

    He could speak as much as he pleased. It was like him to drop in and inquire about her soul as if it were a teething baby, and then stay on for a cup of tea and a round of cards and gossip. He always had a funny story of some sort, usually about an Irishman who made his little mistakes and confessed them, and the point lay in some absurd thing he would blurt out in the confessional showing his struggles between native piety and original sin. Granny felt easy about her soul. Cornelia, where are your manners? Give Father Connolly a chair. She had her secret comfortable understanding with a few favorite saints who cleared a straight road to God for her. All as surely signed and sealed as the papers for the new forty acres. Forever…heirs and assigns forever. Since the day the wedding cake was not cut, but thrown out and wasted. The whole bottom of the world dropped out, and there she was blind and sweating with nothing under her feet and the walls falling away. His hand had caught her under the breast, she had not fallen, there was the freshly polished floor with the green rug on it, just as before. He had cursed like a sailor’s parrot and said, “I’ll kill him for you.” Don’t lay a hand on him, for my sake leave something to God. “Now, Ellen, you must believe what I tell you….”

    So there was nothing, nothing to worry about anymore, except sometimes in the night one of the children screamed in a nightmare, and they both hustled out and hunting for the matches and calling, “There, wait a minute, here we are!” John, get the doctor now, Hapsy’s time has come. But there was Hapsy standing by the bed in a white cap. “Cornelia, tell Hapsy to take off her cap. I can’t see her plain.”

    Her eyes opened very wide and the room stood out like a picture she had seen somewhere. Dark colors with the shadows rising towards the ceiling in long angles. The tall black dresser gleamed with nothing on it but John’s picture, enlarged from a little one, with John’s eyes very black when they should have been blue. You never saw him, so how do you know how he looked? But the man insisted the copy was perfect, it was very rich and handsome. For a picture, yes, but it’s not my husband. The table by the bed had a linen cover and a candle and a crucifix. The light was blue from Cornelia’s silk lampshades. No sort of light at all, just frippery. You had to live forty years with kerosene lamps to appreciate honest electricity. She felt very strong and she saw Doctor Harry with a rosy nimbus around him.

    “You look like a saint, Doctor Harry, and I vow that’s as near as you’ll ever come to it.”

    “She’s saying something.”

    “I heard you Cornelia. What’s all this carrying on?”

    “Father Connolly’s saying – “

    Cornelia’s voice staggered and jumped like a cart in a bad road. It rounded corners and turned back again and arrived nowhere. Granny stepped up in the cart very lightly and reached for the reins, but a man sat beside her and she knew him by his hands, driving the cart. She did not look in his face, for she knew without seeing, but looked instead down the road where the trees leaned over and bowed to each other and a thousand birds were singing a Mass. She felt like singing too, but she put her hand in the bosom of her dress and pulled out a rosary, and Father Connolly murmured Latin in a very solemn voice and tickled her feet. My God, will you stop that nonsense? I’m a married woman. What if he did run away and leave me to face the priest by myself? I found another a whole world better. I wouldn’t have exchanged my husband for anybody except St. Michael himself, and you may tell him that for me with a thank you in the bargain.

    Light flashed on her closed eyelids, and a deep roaring shook her. Cornelia, is that lightning? I hear thunder. There’s going to be a storm. Close all the windows. Call the children in… “Mother, here we are, all of us.” “Is that you Hapsy?” “Oh, no, I’m Lydia We drove as fast as we could.” Their faces drifted above her, drifted away. The rosary fell out of her hands and Lydia put it back. Jimmy tried to help, their hands fumbled together, and granny closed two fingers around Jimmy’s thumb. Beads wouldn’t do, it must be something alive. She was so amazed her thoughts ran round and round. So, my dear Lord, this is my death and I wasn’t even thinking about it. My children have come to see me die. But I can’t, it’s not time. Oh, I always hated surprises. I wanted to give Cornelia the amethyst set – Cornelia, you’re to have the amethyst set, but Hapsy’s to wear it when she wants, and, Doctor Harry, do shut up. Nobody sent for you. Oh, my dear Lord, do wait a minute. I meant to do something about the Forty Acres, Jimmy doesn’t need it and Lydia will later on, with that worthless husband of hers. I meant to finish the alter cloth and send six bottles of wine to Sister Borgia for her dyspepsia. I want to send six bottles of wine to Sister Borgia, Father Connolly, now don’t let me forget.

    Cornelia’s voice made short turns and tilted over and crashed. “Oh, mother, oh, mother, oh, mother….”

    “I’m not going, Cornelia. I’m taken by surprise. I can’t go.”

    You’ll see Hapsy again. What bothered her? “I thought you’d never come.” Granny made a long journey outward, looking for Hapsy. What if I don’t find her? What then? Her heart sank down and down, there was no bottom to death, she couldn’t come to the end of it. The blue light from Cornelia’s lampshade drew into a tiny point in the center of her brain, it flickered and winked like an eye, quietly it fluttered and dwindled. Granny laid curled down within herself, amazed and watchful, staring at the point of light that was herself; her body was now only a deeper mass of shadow in an endless darkness and this darkness would curl around the light and swallow it up. God, give a sign!

    For a second time there was no sign. Again no bridegroom and the priest in the house. She could not remember any other sorrow because this grief wiped them all away. Oh, no, there’s nothing more cruel than this – I’ll never forgive it. She stretched herself with a deep breath and blew out the light.

Introduction to the Harlem Renaissance

The Harlem Renaissance, an African American cultural movement of the 1920s and early 1930s that was centered in the Harlem neighborhood of New York City. Variously known as the New Negro movement, the New Negro Renaissance, and the Negro Renaissance, the movement emerged toward the end of World War I in 1918, blossomed in the mid- to late 1920s, and then faded in the mid-1930s. The Harlem Renaissance marked the first time that mainstream publishers and critics took African American literature seriously and that African American literature and arts attracted significant attention from the nation at large. Although it was primarily a literary movement, it was closely related to developments in African American music, theater, art, and politics.

**I Beginnings**

The Harlem Renaissance emerged amid social and intellectual upheaval in the African American community in the early 20th century. Several factors laid the groundwork for the movement. A black middle class had developed by the turn of the century, fostered by increased education and employment opportunities following the American Civil War (1861-1865). During a phenomenon known as the Great Migration, hundreds of thousands of black Americans moved from an economically depressed rural South to industrial cities of the North to take advantage of the employment opportunities created by World War I. As more and more educated and socially conscious blacks settled in New York’s neighborhood of Harlem, it developed into the political and cultural center of black America. Equally important, during the 1910s a new political agenda advocating racial equality arose in the African American community, particularly in its growing middle class. Championing the agenda were black historian and sociologist W. E. B. Du Bois and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), which was founded in 1909 to advance the rights of blacks. This agenda was also reflected in the efforts of Jamaican-born black nationalist Marcus Garvey, whose “Back to Africa” movement inspired racial pride among blacks in the United States.

African American literature and arts had begun a steady development just before the turn of the century. In the performing arts, black musical theater featured such accomplished artists as songwriter Bob Cole and composer J. Rosamond Johnson, brother of writer James Weldon Johnson. Jazz and blues music moved with black populations from the South and Midwest into the bars and cabarets of Harlem. In literature, the poetry of Paul Laurence Dunbar and the fiction of Charles W. Chesnutt in the late 1890s were among the earliest works of African Americans to receive national recognition. By the end of World War I the fiction of James Weldon Johnson and the poetry of Claude McKay anticipated the literature that would follow in the 1920s by describing the reality of black life in America and the struggle for racial identity.

In the early 1920s three works signaled the new creative energy in African American literature. McKay’s volume of poetry, Harlem Shadows (1922), became one of the first works by a black writer to be published by a mainstream, national publisher (Harcourt, Brace and Company). Cane (1923), by Jean Toomer, was an experimental novel that combined poetry and prose in documenting the life of American blacks in the rural South and urban North. Finally, There Is Confusion (1924), the first novel by writer and editor Jessie Fauset, depicted middle-class life among black Americans from a woman’s perspective.

With these early works as the foundation, three events between 1924 and 1926 launched the Harlem Renaissance. First, on March 21, 1924, Charles S. Johnson of the National Urban League hosted a dinner to recognize the new literary talent in the black community and to introduce the young writers to New York’s white literary establishment. (The National Urban League was founded in 1910 to help black Americans address the economic and social problems they encountered as they resettled in the urban North.) As a result of this dinner, The Survey Graphic, a magazine of social analysis and criticism that was interested in cultural pluralism, produced a Harlem issue in March 1925. Devoted to defining the aesthetic of black literature and art, the Harlem issue featured work by black writers and was edited by black philosopher and literary scholar Alain Leroy Locke. The second event was the publication of Nigger Heaven (1926) by white novelist Carl Van Vechten. The book was a spectacularly popular exposé of Harlem life. Although the book offended some members of the black community, its coverage of both the elite and the baser side of Harlem helped create a “Negro vogue” that drew thousands of sophisticated New Yorkers, black and white, to Harlem’s exotic and exciting nightlife and stimulated a national market for African American literature and music. Finally, in the autumn of 1926 a group of young black writers produced Fire!!, their own literary magazine. With Fire!! A new generation of young writers and artists, including Langston Hughes, Wallace Thurman, and Zora Neale Hurston, took ownership of the literary Renaissance.

**II Characteristics**

No common literary style or political ideology defined the Harlem Renaissance. What united participants was their sense of taking part in a common endeavor and their commitment to giving artistic expression to the African American experience. Some common themes existed, such as an interest in the roots of the 20th-century African American experience in Africa and the American South, and a strong sense of racial pride and desire for social and political equality. But the most characteristic aspect of the Harlem Renaissance was the diversity of its expression. From the mid-1920s through the mid-1930s, some 16 black writers published more than 50 volumes of poetry and fiction, while dozens of other African American artists made their mark in painting, music, and theater.

The diverse literary expression of the Harlem Renaissance ranged from Langston Hughes’s weaving of the rhythms of African American music into his poems of ghetto life, as in The Weary Blues (1926), to Claude McKay’s use of the sonnet form as the vehicle for his impassioned poems attacking racial violence, as in “If We Must Die” (1919). McKay also presented glimpses of the glamour and the grit of Harlem life in Harlem Shadows. Countee Cullen used both African and European images to explore the African roots of black American life. In the poem “Heritage” (1925), for example, Cullen discusses being both a Christian and an African, yet not belonging fully to either tradition. Quicksand (1928), by novelist Nella Larsen, offered a powerful psychological study of an African American woman’s loss of identity, while Zora Neale Hurston’s novel Their Eyes Were Watching God (1937) used folk life of the black rural south to create a brilliant study of race and gender in which a woman finds her true identity.

Diversity and experimentation also flourished in the performing arts and were reflected in the blues singing of Bessie Smith and in jazz music. Jazz ranged from the marriage of blues and ragtime by pianist Jelly Roll Morton to the instrumentation of bandleader Louis Armstrong and the orchestration of composer Duke Ellington. Artist Aaron Douglas adopted a deliberately “primitive” style and incorporated African images in his paintings and illustrations.

The Harlem Renaissance appealed to a mixed audience. The literature appealed to the African American middle class and to the white book-buying public. Such magazines as The Crisis, a monthly journal of the NAACP, and Opportunity, an official publication of the Urban League, employed Harlem Renaissance writers on their editorial staff; published poetry and short stories by black writers; and promoted African American literature through articles, reviews, and annual literary prizes. As important as these literary outlets were, however, the Renaissance relied heavily on white publishing houses and white-owned magazines. In fact, a major accomplishment of the Renaissance was to push open the door to mainstream white periodicals and publishing houses, although the relationship between the Renaissance writers and white publishers and audiences created some controversy. While most African American critics strongly supported the relationship, Du Bois and others were sharply critical and accused Renaissance writers of reinforcing negative African American stereotypes. Langston Hughes spoke for most of the writers and artists when he wrote in his essay “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain” (1926) that black artists intended to express themselves freely, no matter what the black public or white public thought.

African American musicians and other performers also played to mixed audiences. Harlem’s cabarets attracted both Harlem residents and white New Yorkers seeking out Harlem nightlife. Harlem’s famous Cotton Club carried this to an extreme, by providing black entertainment for exclusively white audiences. Ultimately, the more successful black musicians and entertainers, who appealed to a mainstream audience, moved their performances downtown.

**III Ending and Influence**

A number of factors contributed to the decline of the Harlem Renaissance in the mid-1930s. The Great Depression of the 1930s increased the economic pressure on all sectors of life. Organizations such as the NAACP and Urban League, which had actively promoted the Renaissance in the 1920s, shifted their interests to economic and social issues in the 1930s. Many influential black writers and literary promoters, including Hughes, James Weldon Johnson, Charles S. Johnson, and Du Bois, left New York City in the early 1930s. Finally, a riot in Harlem in 1935—set off in part by the growing economic hardship of the Depression and mounting tension between the black community and the white shop-owners in Harlem who profited from that community—shattered the notion of Harlem as the “Mecca” of the New Negro. In spite of these problems the Renaissance did not disappear overnight. Almost one-third of the books published during the Renaissance appeared after 1929. In the last analysis, the Harlem Renaissance ended when most of those associated with it left Harlem or stopped writing, while new young artists who appeared in the 1930s and 1940s never associated with the movement.

The Harlem Renaissance changed forever the dynamics of African American arts and literature in the United States. The writers that followed in the 1930s and 1940s found that publishers and the public were more open to African American literature than they had been at the beginning of the century. Furthermore, the existence of the body of African American literature from the Renaissance inspired writers such as Ralph Ellison and Richard Wright to pursue literary careers in the late 1930s and the 1940s. The outpouring of African American literature of the 1980s and 1990s by such writers as Alice Walker and Toni Morrison also had its roots in the writing of the Harlem Renaissance. The influence of the Harlem Renaissance was not confined to the United States. Writers McKay, Hughes, and Cullen, actor and musician Paul Robeson, dancer Josephine Baker, and others traveled to Europe and attained a popularity abroad that rivaled or surpassed what they achieved in the United States. South African writer Peter Abrahams cited his youthful discovery of the Harlem Renaissance anthology, The New Negro (1925), as the event that turned him toward a career as a writer. For thousands of blacks around the world, the Harlem Renaissance was proof that the white race did not hold a monopoly on literature and culture.

Selected Poems of the Harlem Renaissance

**Go Down, Death**

**James Weldon Johnson**

Weep not, weep not,  
She is not dead;  
She's resting in the bosom of Jesus.  
Heart-broken husband--weep no more;  
Grief-stricken son--weep no more;  
Left-lonesome daughter --weep no more;  
She only just gone home.  
  
Day before yesterday morning,  
God was looking down from his great, high heaven,  
Looking down on all his children,  
And his eye fell of Sister Caroline,  
Tossing on her bed of pain.  
And God's big heart was touched with pity,  
With the everlasting pity.  
  
And God sat back on his throne,  
And he commanded that tall, bright angel standing at his right hand:  
Call me Death!  
And that tall, bright angel cried in a voice  
That broke like a clap of thunder:  
Call Death!--Call Death!  
And the echo sounded down the streets of heaven  
Till it reached away back to that shadowy place,  
Where Death waits with his pale, white horses.  
  
And Death heard the summons,  
And he leaped on his fastest horse,  
Pale as a sheet in the moonlight.  
Up the golden street Death galloped,  
And the hooves of his horses struck fire from the gold,  
But they didn't make no sound.  
Up Death rode to the Great White Throne,  
And waited for God's command.  
  
And God said: Go down, Death, go down,  
Go down to Savannah, Georgia,  
Down in Yamacraw,  
And find Sister Caroline.  
She's borne the burden and heat of the day,  
She's labored long in my vineyard,  
And she's tired--  
She's weary--  
Do down, Death, and bring her to me.  
  
And Death didn't say a word,  
But he loosed the reins on his pale, white horse,  
And he clamped the spurs to his bloodless sides,  
And out and down he rode,  
Through heaven's pearly gates,  
Past suns and moons and stars;  
on Death rode,  
Leaving the lightning's flash behind;  
Straight down he came.  
  
While we were watching round her bed,  
She turned her eyes and looked away,  
She saw what we couldn't see;  
She saw Old Death.She saw Old Death  
Coming like a falling star.  
But Death didn't frighten Sister Caroline;  
He looked to her like a welcome friend.  
And she whispered to us: I'm going home,  
And she smiled and closed her eyes.  
  
And Death took her up like a baby,  
And she lay in his icy arms,  
But she didn't feel no chill.  
And death began to ride again--  
Up beyond the evening star,  
Into the glittering light of glory,  
On to the Great White Throne.  
And there he laid Sister Caroline  
On the loving breast of Jesus.  
  
And Jesus took his own hand and wiped away her tears,  
And he smoothed the furrows from her face,  
And the angels sang a little song,  
And Jesus rocked her in his arms,  
And kept a-saying: Take your rest,  
Take your rest.  
  
Weep not--weep not,  
She is not dead;  
She's resting in the bosom of Jesus.

## America

## Claude McKay

Although she feeds me bread of bitterness,  
And sinks into my throat her tiger's tooth,  
Stealing my breath of life, I will confess  
I love this cultured hell that tests my youth!  
Her vigor flows like tides into my blood,  
Giving me strength erect against her hate.  
Her bigness sweeps my being like a flood.  
Yet as a rebel fronts a king in state,  
I stand within her walls with not a shred  
Of terror, malice, not a word of jeer.  
Darkly I gaze into the days ahead,  
And see her might and granite wonders there,  
Beneath the touch of Time's unerring hand,  
Like priceless treasures sinking in the sand.

(1922)

**Incident**

Countee Cullen

Once riding in old Baltimore,  
Heart-filled, head-filled with glee,  
I saw a Baltimorean  
Keep looking straight at me.  
  
Now I was eight and very small,  
And he was no whit bigger,  
And so I smiled, but he poked out  
His tongue, and called me, 'Nigger.'  
  
I saw the whole of Baltimore  
From May until December;  
Of all the things that happened there  
That's all that I remember.

(1925)

**Tableau**

Countee Cullen

Locked arm in arm they cross the way  
The black boy and the white,  
The golden splendor of the day  
The sable pride of night.  
  
From lowered blinds the dark folk stare  
And here the fair folk talk,  
Indignant that these two should dare  
In unison to walk.  
  
Oblivious to look and word  
They pass, and see no wonder  
That lightning brilliant as a sword  
Should blaze the path of thunder.

(1925)

## I, Too

Langston Hughes

I, too, sing America.  
  
I am the darker brother.  
They send me to eat in the kitchen  
When company comes,  
But I laugh,  
And eat well,  
And grow strong.  
  
Tomorrow,  
I'll be at the table  
When company comes.  
Nobody'll dare  
Say to me,  
"Eat in the kitchen,"  
Then.  
  
Besides,  
They'll see how beautiful I am  
And be ashamed--  
  
I, too, am America.

(1932)

**Harlem**

Langston Hughes

What happens to a dream deferred?  
  
Does it dry up  
like a raisin in the sun?  
Or fester like a sore—  
And then run?  
Does it stink like rotten meat?  
Or crust and sugar over—  
like a syrupy sweet?  
  
Maybe it just sags  
like a heavy load.  
  
Or does it explode?

(1951)

**The Weary Blues**

**Langston Hughes**

1          Droning a [drowsy](javascript:;) [syncopated](javascript:;) tune,

2          Rocking back and forth to a mellow [croon](javascript:;),

3              I heard a Negro play.

4          [Down](javascript:;) on Lenox Avenue the other [night](javascript:;)

5          By the pale dull pallor of an old gas [light](javascript:;)

6              He did a lazy sway ....

7              He did a lazy sway ....

8          To the tune o' those Weary Blues.

9          With his ebony hands on each ivory key

10        He made that poor piano moan with melody.

11            O Blues!

12        [Swaying to and fro](javascript:;) on his rickety stool

13        He played that sad raggy tune like a musical fool.

14            Sweet Blues!

15        Coming from a black man's soul.

16            O Blues!

17        In a deep song voice with a melancholy tone

18        I heard that Negro sing, that old piano moan--

19            "Ain't got nobody in all this world,

20            [Ain't got nobody but ma self](javascript:;).

21             I's gwine to quit ma frownin'

22             And put ma troubles on the shelf."

23        Thump, thump, thump, went his foot on the floor.

24        He played a few chords then he sang some more--

25            "I got the Weary Blues

26            And I can't be satisfied.

27            Got the Weary Blues

28            And can't be satisfied--

29            I ain't happy no mo'

30            And I wish that I had died."

31        And far into the night he crooned that tune.

32        The stars went out and so did the moon.

33        The singer stopped playing and went to bed

34        While the Weary Blues echoed through his head.

35        He slept like a rock or a man that's dead.

(1923)

**Relationship Between Speaker and Subject:**  Lines 1-3 create what grammarians call a "dangling modifier," a sentence logic problem wherein the clauses preceding the main subject and verb of the sentence ("Droning a drowsy syncopated tune," and "Rocking back and forth to a mellow croon," which precede "I heard") don't most logically refer to the subject of the sentence ("I").  Has Hughes simply made a grammatical error?  Probably not.  Rather, he's using his sentence structure there to show the relationship between the singer and the audience, the dual effect of the music on the performer and on the listener.  The singer is droning and swaying as he performs, but so is the audience as it listens, thus they become conflated grammatically in the sentence that describes their interaction. Here, then, Hughes suggests that the blues offer a sort of communal experience, that they express the feelings of not only the artist, but the whole community.

**"Down on Lenox Avenue":**  Lenox Avenue is a main street in Harlem, which in terms of the geography of New York, is North, or uptown.  We might wonder why Hughes has written "down on Lenox Avenue" rather than "up on Lenox Avenue."  Let's think, then, about the identity of the speaker of the poem.  Because Harlem was home mainly to African Americans and the parts of New York City south of Harlem (referred to as "downtown") were populated mainly by whites, if the speaker were to perceive Lenox Avenue as "up" from his place of origin, we might assume that he is white.  During the 20s and 30s, writings by African-Americans about black identity and culture proliferated. This exceptionally fruitful period of extensive and brilliant literary production is referred to as a "renaissance." During the Harlem Renaissance, African American artists and musicians also gained recognition and currency in the white community; many wealthy whites, who generally lived downtown, took a strong interest in the cultural activity there, in Harlem nightlife and in its artistic productions.  Flocking northward to Harlem, where most African Americans lived, for the entertainment and introduction to new forms of music and art produced by African Americans there, white benefactors of these artists helped them to become known beyond their own community. But some of these patrons also threatened the autonomy and commercial viability of these emerging black artists, sometimes taking advantage of current racial attitudes and the discriminatory laws and social codes to exploit black musicians and artists for their own financial benefit.

So when Hughes's speaker says he was "down on Lenox Avenue" we can assume that he is not white.  Why does it matter whether we see this speaker as white or black?  Certainly, people of all races have experienced the blues (both the music and the feelings) and musicians of all colors have played blues music.  But jazz and blues music must be considered original to African Americans, borne out of "the irrestistible impulse of blacks to create boldly expressive art of a high quality as a primary response to their social conditions, as an affirmation of their dignity and humanity in the face of poverty and racism" (*Norton Anthology of African American Literature* 929).  One can see this important idea in lines 9 and 16:  "With his ebony hands on each ivory key" and "Coming from a black man's soul."  The image of black hands on white keys suggests the way in which black musicians have taken an instrument of white Western culture and through it produced their own artistic expression.  Steven C. Tracy writes the following about this idea:

All the singer seems to have is his moaning blues, the revelation of "a black man's soul," and those blues are what helps keep him alive. Part of that ability to sustain is apparently the way the blues help him keep his identity. Even in singing the blues, he is singing about his life, about the way that he and other blacks have to deal with white society. As his black hands touch the white keys, the accepted Western sound of the piano and the form of Western music are changed. The piano itself comes to life as an extension of the singer, and moans, transformed by the black tradition to a mirror of black sorrow that also reflects the transforming power and beauty of the black tradition. Finally, it is that tradition that helps keep the singer alive and gives him his identity, since when he is done and goes to bed he sleeps like an inanimate or de-animated object, with the blues echoing beyond his playing, beyond the daily cycles, and through both conscious and unconscious states. (*Langston Hughes and the Blues*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988.)

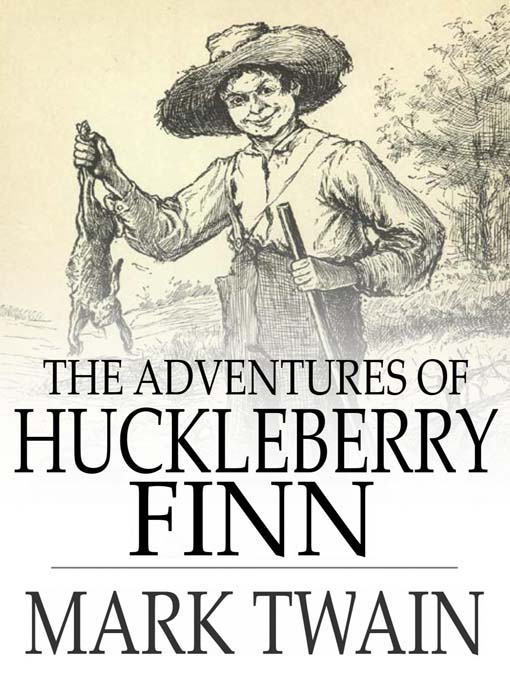
In this interpretation of blues music as an expression of black sorrow and struggle in the face of oppressive and discriminatory forces of the larger society, we can see a clear connection to the character of Sonny in James Baldwin's *Sonny's Blues*.  Sonny and his family have been worn down by many years of struggle against racism and discrimination; the story of Sonny's uncle's death and Sonny's father's lifelong struggle to come to terms with that death represent this struggle.

The word "down" might also refer to the architecture of Harlem, with its multi-storied apartment buildings looking down on the avenues, where the ground floors of buildings housed businesses and people lived in apartments on the upper floors.  "Down" might also refer to the emotional content of the music the speaker will describe.  Here we can see another connection to Sonny's Blues.  Remember when the narrator, standing at the subway in Harlem, says to Sonny's friend, "You come all the way down here just to tell me about Sonny?"  Also, notice the implicit opposition between the sorrows of the singer that bring him down and his desire to quit his "frownin" and "put [his] troubles [up] on the shelf."

**Raggy:**  Hughes uses the word "raggy" in line 13.  "Raggy" is not an actual word; perhaps we might interpret it as a combination of word "raggedy" meaning tattered or worn out and the word "ragtime" which refers to a style of jazz music characterized by elaborately syncopated rhythm in the melody and a steadily accented accompaniment. When we thing of something that is "raggedy," we think of  rags, poverty and need. But we also think of the idea of patchwork, a fabric constructed out of scraps of cloth -- or rags -- sewn together to make a new whole out of disparate parts, such as a quilt.   Music can be patchwork, too, and if you listen to jazz, blues and folk music, you will hear different threads or trends patched together in the music. African American blues music itself is a patching together of different and disparate influences (see above Steven C. Tracy's ideas about the way African Americans made a "white" Western instrument speak of their particular emotions).

Another African American art form, quilting, uses the same principle of patching to produce works of both practical and artistic value.  See Alice Walker's short story "Everyday Use" to understand the importance of the folk arts and quilting in the African American experience.   
  
Musical fool -- multiple meanings of the word "fool" -- fool as enthusiast, fool as mental defective, fool as entertainer.

Study Questions



**READ INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY.**

***Most of these are thinking questions, not short answer questions. Rarely will one sentence suffice for an answer. Think hard.***

1. *Answer the questions as you read, not the night before the test.*
2. *Write your answers in blue or black ink on your own paper in your own handwriting.*
3. *Write on the back of the paper to conserve paper.*
4. *Label the chapter headings just as I have (e.g. “Chapters 1-4,” etc.).*
5. *Number the questions just like I have. (Do not start over at 1 for each section of chapters or use bullets instead of numbers.)*
6. *Skip lines between chapter sections; do not skip a line between every question.*
7. *If you don’t answer a question I should see only a number and blank space.*
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Chapters I-IV

1. What does Twain accomplish by using Huck as narrator?
2. What incident in the first chapter reveals that Huck is superstitious?
3. What is Jim doing when we first see him?
4. What does Huck think of him?
5. Contrast Huck and Tom Sawyer.
6. What is significant about Jim’s story of the witches?
7. What humor is involved in the use of the word *ransom*?
8. Contrast the Widow Douglass’ religion with that of Miss Watson.
9. What is the meaning of Huck’s remark that rubbing the “magic” lamp and ring had “all the marks of a Sunday school”?
10. What is ironic about the cross in the boot print Huck found?

Chapters V-VII

1. What is Twain satirizing with the new judge’s treatment of Pap? How is Huck treated by his Pap?
2. What mixed emotions does Huck feel about his life with his father?
3. What is the irony in Pap’s fury about the educated black?
4. What is significant of Huck’s remarks about the river: “The June rise used to be always luck for me”?
5. What is the importance of Huck preparing his own death?

Chapters VIII-XI

1. Why are cannon being fired over the water?
2. What is implied about Huck in Jim’s belief that Huck is a ghost?
3. Why does Huck use the phrase “lowdown abolitionist”?
4. What is the irony of Jim’s investments?
5. Jim tells Huck not to look at the dead man. What does this say about Jim?
6. What joke does Huck play on Jim? What are the consequences?
7. What three things does Mrs. Loftus do to make sure that Sarah is really a boy in disguise?
8. What does Huck learn from Mrs. Loftus?

Chapters XII-XVI

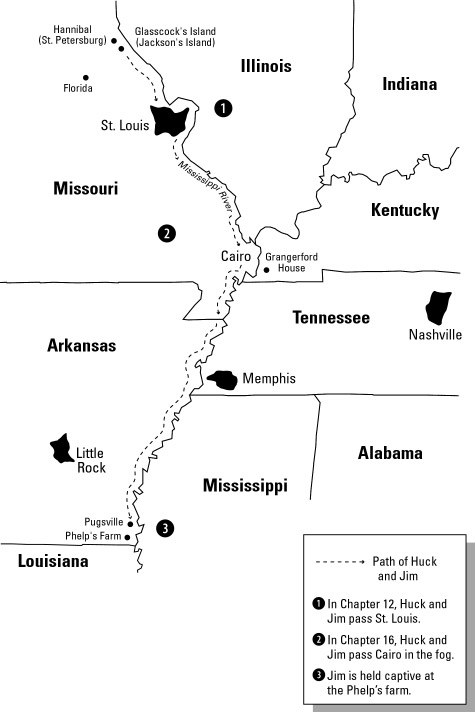
1. What does Jim’s attitude about Solomon reveal about him?
2. How does the conversation about the Frenchmen reveal that Jim’s view of humanity is superior in a moral sense to Huck’s?
3. In chapter 15, several death images strike the reader at once--“I hadn’t no more idea which way I was going than a dead man,” “You feel like you are laying dead still on the water.” What is the significance of these images?
4. Why does Huck feel free to tease Jim?
5. What is the significance of Jim’s lecture to Huck?
6. What new knowledge of human nature has Huck gained?
7. How does Huck battle with his conscience? (This is a very important question. Answer in detail.)
8. What is ironic about Jim’s plans?
9. What is the purpose of Huck’s ‘tall tale”?
10. What happens at the end of chapter 16?

Chapters XVII-XX

1. Why does Huck take a new name?
2. What does the remark that Buck will get enough of the battle “in all good time” tell us about the feud?
3. Why does Twain describe with such detail the physical setting of the Grangerford house?
4. Chapter 18 begins with the comment, “Col. Grangerford was a gentleman, you see.” What does Twain wish the reader to see?
5. What is the irony of the church sermon?
6. Who are the only members of the feuding families specifically mentioned as saved from the massacre?
7. Why does Huck say that there is “no home like a raft”?
8. What is the significance of the many errors and inconsistencies in the claims of the King and the Duke?
9. Huck accepts the outsiders, “for what you want, above all things, on a raft, is for everybody to be satisfied, and feel right and kind toward the others.” Why?
10. What comments about humans and religion does the camp meeting evoke?

Chapters XXI-XXIII

1. How is Colonel Sherburn described?
2. How do the townspeople react to the killings?
3. Why does Twain call it a “lynching bee”? (Don’t think *spelling bee*, think *quilting bee*.)
4. What is Twain’s purpose in inserting Sherburn’s address?
5. What aspects of human nature emerge from the Royal Nonesuch performance?
6. What further aspects of Jim’s character emerge in Chapter 23?



Chapters XIV-XXIX

1. What contrast with the end of chapter 23 emerges immediately at the beginning of chapter 24? (Hint: It’s about Jim)
2. What is Huck’s attitude toward the townspeople, who accept the King and the Duke as the Wilks’ relatives?
3. What role does Dr. Robinson represent?
4. Why do the girls make Huck so ashamed?
5. Why does Huck refuse to expose the frauds at once?
6. Near the end of Chapter 28, speaking of his “tail tales,” Huck says, “Tom Sawyer couldn’t a done it no neater himself. Of course he would a throwed more style into it, but I can’t do that very handy, not being brought up to it.” How is Twain criticizing society here? (Hint: Think about how Twain would define “style” here.)
7. Why is the crowd laughing and shouting as they bring the second set of “Wilks brothers” to the square?
8. What disappointment does Huck feel at the end of chapter 29?

Chapters XXX-XXXIII

1. What is the implication of the King’s false “confession” to the Duke to make peace?
2. How does Huck accept the truth about Jim’s disappearance?
3. What is Huck’s rationale for his plan to steal Jim?
4. Why does Tom fall in Huck’s esteem? (Make sure you explain what Twain is saying through this scene.)
5. What is Huck’s reaction to the punishment of the King and Duke?
6. If you were happy about what happened to the King and Duke, how does Huck’s reaction reverse the moral positions between you and him and therefore make you the reader another target of Twain’s satire?

Chapters XXXIV-XXXIX

1. Why does Huck allow Tom to lead in the escape plot?
2. In Chapter 39, the boys argue about details of their plot. What further revelations of their characters emerge?
3. What is Twain’s purpose in including Tom’s plans?

Chapters XL-XLIII

1. Why was Tom “the gladdest of all because he had a bullet in the calf of his leg”?
2. What assessment of Jim does Huck make near the end of the book (that may seem offensive today but certainly was not meant to be)?
3. What is the irony of the doctor’s comments about Jim?
4. What is significant in Tom’s revelation of Jim’s freedom? (You might compare Huck Finn to Abraham Lincoln who supposedly “freed” the slaves.
5. What is Huck’s reaction to the news?
6. What does Jim’s revelation of Pap’s death mean?
7. Where is Huck planning to go at the end of the book?

T H E

# G R E A T G A T S B Y

## Study Questions

# Gatsby Symbols – *You don’t need to write anything for this part. They’re just things to think about as you read.*

|  |
| --- |
| Examine the following symbols in *The Great Gatsby*.. Some of the symbols are characters and some of them are actions. Think about all of them in the following way: What is the function/meaning of this symbol?   1. Gatsby's uncut books/Nick's unread books 2. Wolfsheim's cufflinks 3. Gatsby's car/Gatsby's clothes 4. Tom Buchanan pushing people around/Tom Buchanan quoting things "he's read" 5. The faded timetable (showing the names of Gatsby's guests) 6. Anti-semitism, prejudice 7. Weather 8. Time, seasons 9. The ash heap 10. The green light at the end of Daisy's dock 11. East versus West Egg 12. Gatsby's career/Nick's career 13. Dan Cody 14. T.J. Eckleberg 15. Silver and gold (color) 16. White (color) 17. Green (color) |

*Failure to follow these instructions will result in a deduction of points:*

*Most of these are thinking questions, not short answer questions. Rarely will one sentence suffice for an answer. Think hard.*

1. Answer the questions as you read, not the night before the test.
2. Write your answers in blue or black ink on your own paper in your own handwriting.
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4. Label the chapter headings just as I have (e.g. “Chapter 1” etc.).
5. Number the questions just like I have. (Do not start over at 1 for each section of chapters or use bullets instead of numbers, as some of you inexplicably did for *The Scarlet Letter*.)
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Before Reading

1. What is the "American Dream"?
2. Where did it originate and how has it changed over the centuries?
3. Why are we (or anyone) reading a book written in the 1920’s?

Chapter 1

1. OK, so we have a 1st person narrator here. What are the ramifications of that in our analysis of the book?
2. What does the phrase “more vulnerable years…” suggest about the narrator’s attitude toward father’s advice?
3. To what “advantages” do you suppose his father was referring?
4. Why is the narrator (Nick) often a “victim” of bores?
5. The book is apparently going to be about the Nick’s time in the East, told from his point of view, looking back on that experience. What does he say here in chapter 1 about how the experience changed him?
6. What was special about Gatsby?
7. Do West Egg and East Egg really look like eggs, as Nick suggests? Why does he say that they do?
8. How are the two “eggs” different?
9. Examine the diction in Nick’s description of Tom in the beginning. How would you describe his diction and what does it reveal about his opinion of Tom?
10. Why is Tom’s statement, “I’ve got a nice place here,” ironic?
11. What are the two women implicitly compared to?
12. What was the most remarkable thing about Daisy? Why?
13. What is revealed about Tom when he brings up an apparently racist book?
14. What does Nick learn about Tom from Jordan?
15. What hints of trouble in their relationship had been previously revealed?
16. How does Nick characterize Daisy’s assertion that she had become “sophisticated”?
17. What do you think Daisy means by her “white girlhood”?
18. What is Gatsby doing the first time we see him? What might that suggest about him?

Chapter 2

1. Nick describes the valley of ashes as a “farm,” although it’s clearly not that. What does this area represent? Why does Fitzgerald make this farm analogy?
2. What might the eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg represent?
3. What idea is represented by the fact that the paint of the eyes is faded yet they “brood-on.”
4. What is suggested about Tom when it’s revealed that he makes no effort to hide the fact that he’s having an affair?
5. Contrast George and Myrtle Wilson.
6. How does Myrtle’s attitude change in the apartment?
7. What is the first rumor we hear about Gatsby?
8. Why does Catherine think Tom can’t marry her?
9. What’s the real reason Tom doesn’t marry her?
10. Describe Nick’s ambivalent feelings about being at the party .
11. What is revealed about Nick when he finally wipes the spot of lather off Mr. McKee’s cheek?
12. Why does Tom hit Myrtle? (Hint: Don’t be too literal. It’s not just because she say’s Daisy’s name, but because of what that represents.)

**Chapter 3**

1. What does comparing the partygoers at Gatsby’s house to moths suggest about the partygoers?
2. How are the partygoers further characterized?
3. What other rumors about Gatsby are passed around?
4. What does the owl-eyed man remind you of from earlier in the novel?
5. What fact amazes him?
6. How is he different from the other partygoers?
7. Like Daisy, Gatsby has one feature that’s remarkable. What is it and why is it so remarkable?
8. What does Nick discover about Jordan?
9. Why doesn’t it bother him?
10. The conversation Nick has with Jordan is on the surface about driving, yet beneath the surface it is about something else more relevant to them both. What is it?
11. What cardinal virtue does Nick suspect himself of? How might that affect our analysis of the book?

Chapter 4

1. What’s the latest rumor about Gatsby?
2. Examine the names of the people who came to Gatsby’s parties. What do you notice about the names Fitzgerald chose/invented?
3. Gatsby’s movements are described as “peculiarly American.” What’s the significance of that?
4. What does Gatsby tell Nick about his background?
5. Why does Nick find it necessary to “restrain [his] incredulous laughter”?
6. What is suggested by the fact that Gatsby carries the picture of him at Oxford and the medal wherever he goes?
7. Who is Wolfshiem?
8. What does Gatsby’s comment that Jordan is a great sportswoman and wouldn’t do anything wrong reveal about him?
9. What does Jordan’s story about the day before Daisy’s wedding reveal about Daisy?
10. So what’s the real reason Gatsby was reaching across the water the first time we see him?
11. What’s the favor that Gatsby wants of Nick? Why does it seem so modest?

Chapter 5

1. Why does Gatsby suggest to Nick that they go to Coney Island or swimming at such a late hour? And, for that matter, why do you suppose all his lights are on?
2. Why does it reassure Gatsby that Nick doesn’t make much money?
3. What is significant about Gatsby’s silver shirt and gold tie?
4. What is ironic, even humorously so, about Gatsby’s comment, “I can’t wait all day.”
5. Upon Daisy’s arrival, why does Gatsby run out the back door, run around the house in the rain, and knock on the front door?
6. What is the tone of the sentence that begins, “Gatsby, pale as death…”?
7. After Gatsby goes into the living room, why does Nick remain in the foyer, apparently looking for something to do?
8. OK, think now, what is the symbolic import of Gatsby catching a defunct clock and “set[ting] it back in place.”
9. Why does Nick refer to his servant, the Finn, as “demoniac”?
10. What finally causes Gatsby to gain control of himself?
11. After his own jaunt in the rain, why does Nick make “every possible noise in the kitchen short of pushing over the stove” before rejoining Gatsby and Daisy in the living room?
12. When Nick goes in, he feels “as if some question had been asked or was in the air.” What question do you think was asked and what was the answer?
13. When Daisy goes to wash up, what does Gatsby do that reminds us of Tom?
14. Why is Daisy overcome by Gatsby’s shirts? (And doesn’t any nice feeling you’ve had for her completely dissolve in this moment? I’m just saying--you don’t have to answer that one.)
15. How is the song Klipspringer plays an ironic comment on the American dream?
16. Speculate on what Nick’s comments at the end of the chapter foreshadow.

Chapter 6

1. Why does Fitzgerald wait till now to have Nick reveal the truth about Gatsby's background? Why else? (There is more than one reason.)
2. Early in chapter 6, Nick comments on the people spreading rumors about Gatsby. What is his tone when describing these people and why is that significant?
3. Characterize the young James Gatz.
4. How does Nick characterize Tom and his friends as they drop in on Gatsby for drinks?
5. Why do they treat him that way?
6. What is Daisy’s reaction to Gatsby’s party? Explain.
7. What is significant about Nick’s declaration that “you can’t repeat the past” and Gatsby’s response, “Why of course you can”?
8. Why does Fitzgerald flashback to five years earlier?

Chapter 7

1. Why does Gatsby stop having all of the big, elaborate parties?
2. Why does Fitzgerald keep emphasizing the heat (“Hot! . . . Hot! . . . Hot!”)? [Wait till you finish the chapter before answering this one.]
3. What similarities do you see between this scene (before they go to the city) and Nick’s visit to the Buchanan’s in chapter 1?
4. What color is Daisy often associated with? Why? (Hint: Gatsby’s car: cream color, i.e. off-white, even yellow).
5. What does Daisy’s question, “What’ll we do with ourselves this afternoon and the day after that, and the next thirty years,” suggest about “old money” and the American dream?
6. When does Tom realize his wife’s been having an affair with Gatsby?
7. What does Gatsby say Daisy’s voice is full of? Explain.
8. Why does the fact that Gatsby wears a pink suit mean to Tom that Jay couldn’t be an Oxford man?
9. Both Wilson and Tom have just discovered their wives are having affairs. Compare their reactions to the news.
10. Why does Fitzgerald emphasize the fact that Myrtle sees Tom with Jordan, whom she perceives to be Tom’s wife, and why does Fitzgerald have Tom driving Gatsby’s yellow Rolls Royce? [Again, answer this one after you’ve read the whole chapter.]
11. Why is Nick happy about Gatsby reasonable explanation regarding Oxford?
12. How has Tom transformed from “a libertine to a prig”?
13. OK, pop psychology time. Why is it important for Gatsby to believe Daisy never loved Tom?
14. When is it clear to the reader that Tom, not Gatsby, has won (if that’s the word) Daisy?
15. Why does Fitzgerald have his narrator reveal to the reader that a death is about to occur (“So we drove on toward death through the cooling twilight”)? [Another way to phrase it might be, why does Fitzgerald purposely undercut the surprise of the death?]
16. Why does Nick refuse to go in Tom’s house with Jordan?
17. How does that mark a significant progression from the Nick in chapter 1 who always “reserved judgment” about others?
18. What does Nick mean when he describes Gatsby watching over nothing?

Chapter 8

1. What “last hope” is Gatsby clinging to?
2. Why was Gatsby first enchanted by Daisy?
3. How was he able to court Daisy despite not being in her social class?
4. What was Gatsby’s ambition before meeting Daisy and how was that ambition corrupted?
5. How does Gatsby’s corruption parallel that of the American dream?
6. Why do you think Gatsby doesn’t go home immediately after the war?
7. How was Tom’s arrival in Louisville timely?
8. How does Gatsby try to minimize the love Daisy felt for Tom?
9. Why does Gatsby return to Louisville while Daisy is on her honeymoon?
10. Why doesn’t Nick want to leave Gatsby and go to work?
11. What’s significant about Nick’s parting comments to Gatsby, “They’re a rotten crowd” and “You’re worth the whole bunch of them put together”?
12. How is Gatsby, who is involved in bootlegging and more serious crimes, “incorruptible”? Or, to put it another way, what does Nick admire about Gatsby, someone he disapproved of from beginning to end?
13. How is Nick’s inability to talk to Jordan “across a tea table that day” a sign of growth?
14. Who does Wilson think was driving the car that killed Myrtle?
15. Wilson confuses an advertisement for God. How might this be Fitzgerald’s commentary on either advertising or religion?
16. Once again, Fitzgerald undercuts the surprise of a death (first with the piecing together of Wilson’s movements, then with the phrase, “until long after there was anyone to give [a message] to if it came”). Why?
17. Nick speculates that while Gatsby floated in his pool, he felt he had “lost the old warm world” and that he looked up into the sky at a “new world.” What do those particular phrasings suggest about the larger meaning of the novel (larger in the sense of a significance that goes beyond the life of an individual character)?
18. Wow! Isn’t the end of this chapter beautiful? (Sad, sure, but man, oh, man, I wish I could write like that.)

Chapter 9

1. What inconsistency did Fitzgerald and his editor miss in the first sentence of this chapter?
2. How does Catherine show character when lying to the coroner? (What I mean is, why does Nick call it *character*?)
3. Why is Nick so determined to “get somebody” for Gatsby?
4. What is ironic about Mr. Gatz’s comment that, if his son had lived, “he’d of been a great man”?
5. What parallel is evident when Mr. Gatz shows Nick the picture of Gatsby’s house, a picture he has evidently carried around with him and shown many people?
6. Closely examine the schedule the teenage Gatsby wrote on the last page of *Hopalong Cassidy*. Fitzgerald is making a clear allusion to something else we’ve read this year. What? How do you know?
7. Why doe Fitzgerald make this comparison?
8. How does the failure of just about everyone who knew Gatsby to show up at his funeral seem to confirm that Nick is a reliable narrator?
9. How does Owl Eyes’ arrival at the burial affirm the significance of his “name”?
10. Why does Nick see Jordan one last time?
11. Why is the truth about who was driving the car “unutterable”?
12. Why does Fitzgerald once again use the phrase “the new world” at the end?
13. How was Gatsby’s dream “already behind him”?
14. How are we Americans (of 1922) chasing a future that “year by year recedes before us”?
15. Reread the last page. Is this not some of the best writing you’ve ever read?.

1. 1 Sundry refers to an indefinite number

   2 Divers means “several”

   3 Lusty here means “strong”

   4 Also is another word for withal

   5 Rid means “rode”

   6 Seneca was a Roman philosopher and writer

   7 Succor means “assistance in a time of need; relief”

   8 The reference here is Scripture, or the Bible, is Acts of the Apostles 28, which tells of the kindness shown to St. Paul and his companions by the natives of Malta after they were shipwrecked on that island. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. 8 The reference here is Scripture, or the Bible, is Acts of the Apostles 28, which tells of the kindness shown to St. Paul and his companions by the natives of Malta after they were shipwrecked on that island.

   9. A severe lack of vitamin C causes a disease called scurvy.

   10. Homely here means “domestic” [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. 3 Repine means “to express unhappiness.”

   4 Adieu is French for “good-bye.”

   5 All’s vanity is a reference to Ecclesiastes 1:2 and 12:8.

   6 Pelf is a term for wealth, often used disapprovingly. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)