Synopsis of Preceding Chapters.

Five years before the outbreak of the Civil War, love of adventure, hatred of slavery and the desire to help my friend, George Wesner, led me, Charles Bradley, a civil engineer of Attakapas County, Louisiana, to become an agent of the underground railroad. Wesner had been nursed through the smallpox by a young slave, Lucy, belonging to the Coverley plantation. He discovered facts which proved that Lucy was white and of good family. A secret love match followed, which progressed well until Coverley proposed to sell Lucy to his son and refused to sell her to anyone else. Wesner became desperate. I agreed to help him steal Lucy, and went to New York to arrange with the anti-slavery society for the care of any slaves we could bring North. Returning home, I secure a boat and supplies, locate a refuge station at my wood camp, several miles up the river, and lay out a safe and secret route from the mouth of the White River, to our yard. Wesner and I put up a store building near home, where, to avoid all suspicion, we carry on a general merchandise business. In a few days Wesner starts the first batch of Coverley's slaves, including Lucy, for the North, and immediately a searching party is sent out. Under clever disguises Wesner evades the pursuers. The venture is successful. Wesner returns and tells me his adventures.

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CHAPTER XI.

"Five miles above us was a little village. Below there was no settlement for a number of miles; to the west stretched a forest. We built a secure shelter about a mile from the bayou, and camped, feeling perfectly secure. Wild turkeys and deer were plenty, and the river, not a mile away, swarmed with fish. The weather was delightful, and for a week we stayed here and rested. It was a prolonged picnic, and I never enjoyed myself more than I did that week. Care I banished by sheer force of will, and enjoyed myself with the rest, listening to the plantation stories and songs.

"Brad, those people think and feel deeply; there are brutes among them, yet there are true hearts and brave.

"All things must have an end, and so did our Acadia. We were soon off again on our toilsome passage up the stream. It was night voyaging, now for a few days, until we got above the settlements along the route; then again we could try day navigation.

"About sunset June 10 we entered the bayou with our canoes loaded and ready for the voyage. We toiled for 12 days and at length, the morning of June 15, we were within 10 miles of the Arkansas, where we must cross and enter the White River chute, and as I was not very well acquainted with its navigation, we must perforce try it by daylight in the presence of the enemy.

"Most of the day we spent in dragging our boats over a portage between the landing-place on the bayou and the Arkansas River. This was finally accomplished, although it was nearly morning before we were well over, as the carry was muddy and the trail full of roots and fallen trees.

"When light enough I went to the bank to take a look at the river; the water was at a fair pitch and not very muddy. Most of my anxiety centered on the White river; we could cross the Arkansas without interruption, but when we came to paddle up the White river past plantations and settlements, it looked a little hazardous. However, there was no alternative but to try it. So we lay dormant all day on the banks of the Arkansas. About 6 o'clock P. M. we shoved off boldly and shaped our course for the mouth of the White River chute. By dark we were well down, and at 8 P. M. our canoes were pushing their noses into the chute (a little passage from one stream to another).

"We passed the town of White River and the few plantations scattered along the bank, and at daylight we had made 20 miles of the most dangerous portion and were camped for the day a few miles from the east bank of the stream.

"I was sound asleep; by the sun it was near 5 o'clock P. M. when a startled exclamation from Lemuel Mason, who was on watch, brought me to my feet. Not 20 feet from me, rifle in hand, stood two men. Arkansas was stamped upon their features, and their eyes said shoot. For an instant my heart almost stopped beating; the next moment I was as calm and cool as I am now. I realized that we were in danger. In a country where runaway niggers were plenty, so were coon dogs and bloodhounds.

"One of them spoke: 'Phil, here's a bonanza for us!'

"'Oh, no, I think not,' said I, coming forward, 'for these folks have been in my possession for three weeks.'

"For the first time they noticed I was a white man, and their countenances fell.

"'No, not this time,' said I, laughing.

"'Who 'mout you be, now?' cried Phil, looking hard at me. 'I believe you are a 'bitionist from 'Illo, and are lugging these men off to Illinois or New York—maybe to Canada—for all I know.'

"'Who might I be?' said I, slowly, for I knew there was trouble coming, the appearance of my amiable crowd saying plainly as possible, 'Swamp.'

"There was an air of swamp in their faces and in their clothes; their very wool savored of the cottonwood and cypress, while 50 days in the wilderness would destroy any man's genteel appearance. I knew that airs would not do just here.

"'Perhaps you be from Kansas?' again ventured Phil.

"Ignoring the negroes as of no account, they both kept their eyes fastened on me from the moment they perceived I was white.

"Lem and Obed were creeping slowly behind them. The stranger called Phil continuously fingered the trigger of his rifle, with his black eyes never for an instant wavering from their steady stare as he watched my motions.

"'Kansas, Kansas,' repeated I slowly. Just here Obed stumbled; at the noise Phil's eyes for an instant left mine; he had lost. I jerked both revolvers from my belt and covered them.

"'Hands up, my lads; I have the drop on you!'

"I spoke slowly, but not very loud, but Colt's silent, forcible argument was effective. All four Arkansas paws went into the air, and the rifle dropped from Phil's hand as he exclaimed: 'Downed by a sucker!' in evident allusion to my supposed Illinois origin.

"In an instant Lem and Obed were upon them, and they were securely bound. Here was trouble enough. What should we do with our capture? It was impossible to leave them to starve; we did not wish to commit deliberate murder, and could not possibly take them with us. Finally I thought of the only feasible plan, short of death, and binding them safely, we carried them to an old woodyard a few miles below and tied them to a tree, advising them to patiently wait a passing steamer, leaving them with the assurance that one might be along the next day. I afterward learned they passed a couple of nights there before being liberated, the first steamer taking no notice of their cries.

"At dark we again started, bending all our energies to increase the distance between ourselves and the prisoners. At daylight next morning we were at least 35 miles up the river and again encamped for the day.

"In addition to snakes, coon dogs, bloodhounds, alligators, swamp mosquitoes, mud and Arkansas pikes, to say nothing of Sneider and the Attakapas warriors, we here met another enemy that nearly frightened the negroes to death and gave me the chills for a week.

"The next morning after leaving the prisoners we encamped beside the stream where the banks were high. We dragged our boats into the woods and going back a short distance from the bank, selected our camping place. About 4 o'clock in the afternoon there came the most unearthly yell from the woods back of us—one prolonged shriek, rising like the howling of the wind through the cordage of a ship, and dying away like the sobbing of a child. I was lying on my back about half asleep. As this unearthly shriek wailed through the trees it brought me to my feet. I had never heard the like before. The negroes were terrified. They thought the devil had come to punish them for running away.

"'What's dat? What dat?' Pharo asked.

"Old Mose's wife replied, 'sounds like a baby, may be a chile lost in dese woods.'

"Again, still nearer, we could hear the bushes crack.

"Obed spoke. 'It's a panther! quick, the rifles!'

"Mine lay near Obed. He seized it, but mistrusting his own marksmanship, brought it to me, taking his revolver from his belt.

"We could hear the creature coming nearer, every moment. It had ceased to shriek and only uttered at intervals a cat-like growl. We had left the shelter of the tent and gathered together in a little open space a few yards distant. Near us was a large uprooted cottonwood, fallen and lying at an angle of perhaps 20 degrees. To the top of this the beast made a leap and stood in full view; 'there's your baby,' said Mose to his wife. He was a magnificent sight as he moved his tail from side to side and tore the bark from the tree with his claws. He crouched to spring. Bringing my rifle to my shoulder and taking deliberate aim at his broad breast, I pulled the trigger. With a shriek he left the tree, springing wildly into the air, and landed on his feet close to us. Although wounded, he had leaped at least 20 feet into the air, and was 30 from the tree, and still capable of making a desperate fight. Obed sprang close to the wounded beast and opened upon him with his revolver, the first shot destroying the sight of one eye. Blinded by the shot and with the blood gushing from the ragged bullet hole in his breast, the tortured brute sprang savagely toward the group. One blow from his powerful paw stripped the sleeves from Pharo's jacket, the red blood following the sharp claws through the clear cuts made in his arm. The poor negro screamed from terror and pain. Obed gave the panther another shot. Snapping at the wound in his side he endeavored to tear it with his immense teeth. It was his last struggle. For one moment he writhed in agony, and in another lay dead at the feet of the negro.

"We bound up the wound in Pharo's arm, removed the panther's skin and continued our journey, taking the skin with us as a trophy."

CHAPTER XII.

"Two weeks later we arrived at Bradley's yard. It was night when we reached the house. Before us, shimmering in the moonlight, rolled the broad Mississippi. My dusky travelers shouted with joy at the sight of the great waters, for the darkest portion of their journey had ended. I intended to take the first Louisville freight boat, on which would be few passengers except ourselves.

"Monday morning I went below to Baxter's landing, arranging with Moore to signal to him if all was right. I waited a day or two at the landing for the steamer. Finally a Louisville steamer (the James Tucker) came along. She was about what I wanted, so I stepped on board. When we arrived at the woodyard Moore was at the landing with the negroes; he delivered them, ostentatiously taking my receipts, and we were off. It was seldom that a party of negroes were carried North, and I expected some questions would be asked, but there were none, so I kept quiet, volunteering no information. I had arranged with Moore that he should take the next passenger steamer that came along, land at Cairo and there make arrangements to secrete our people (now numbering 13) until we could deliver them to the agent. His directions were to telegraph to Mr. Entwissle at New York.

"The next day the magnificent steamer Uncle Sam passed us. She was a St. Louis boat, but touched at Cairo. Moore sat on deck, smoking serenely. As the boat passed, I saw him take out his handkerchief and wipe his face. As about all the passengers hailed us with some badinage, he cried out, 'All right, old fellow, I'll meet you at Cairo.'

"No questions were asked me on board the steamer. There were few to ask them, as we were the only passengers. I smoked and read most of the time until we arrived at Cairo. It was 3 o'clock in the morning when we made fast alongside the wharf boat. I quietly mustered my party, walked ashore, chatted with the captain a while, and told him that I should take a St. Louis steamer from there.

"Moore was waiting with a covered wagon. Into this he hurried the whole party, jumped on the seat, and, taking the reins, urged the horse at a rattling rate through the black mud of the prairie road. At 6 o'clock we brought up at George Gillott's (Entwissle's agent), to whom Moore was ordered to report. We here found the most perfect arrangements. One hundred persons could have been secreted so closely that the keenest detectives would search for them in vain.

"The house is built at the foot of a long swell that rises so gradually from the smooth level as to be unnoticed by the casual observer. This swell is covered by a growth of oak, chestnut and walnut trees that Gillott had set out on taking possession of the claim.

"The hill is excavated, and in it a room 20x60, and at least eight feet high, is constructed, ventilated by an ingenious arrangement of logs bored and so cut as to represent hollow stumps, a very wise deception in case the woods were scrutinized too closely. A pipe running under the ground communicates with his kitchen chimney, and the smoke from the chimney can attract no attention. The entrance to this room is through the kitchen wall, carefully hidden from observation. There is a mode of egress never used except in cases of emergency, and known only to Gillott, whereby the occupants could escape at the rear of the cave. This room was constructed at the expense of the Anti-Slavery Society, who sent workmen from New York. Three months were spent in its construction, the earth from the excavation being evenly distributed along the road running past the house. Gillott informed me that he had at one time a party of negroes concealed for three weeks in that room.

"The house has been watched by the Sheriffs; in fact, Gillott is always under suspicion.

"At one time a negro was seen to enter the house. Two days later the place was searched by the Sheriffs, from Cairo, aided by the owner of the negroes. Finding nothing they left; but their presence had taught Gillott to be careful, and he also watched. Two of their number dropped out, and concealed themselves in the woods about the house.

"These two were never lost sight of, either Gillott or his men always shadowing them, until the last negro had been smuggled away. Everything went on about the farm as usual; the slaves were taken care of. Gillott has been searched a number of times, but besides the furniture, nothing more suspicious than the bare walls of an Illinois kitchen ever rewarded the efforts of the Sheriffs. The depot of the U. G. R. R. remains undiscovered.

"Mr. Entwissle was to have been here before we arrived, but was delayed one day. When he did come, and had seen and talked with the refugees, he was evidently satisfied; he paid over the money and congratulated me upon the successful issue of my scheme, but thought we had both run a great risk. Well, so did I.

"I laid my plans for Lucy's future before Mrs. Gillott, and she recommended that first I should place her in the hands of a dressmaker, as, however becoming her plantation wardrobe might be in my eyes, it would attract undue attention at a ladies' boarding school. Yielding to my solicitations, Mrs. Gillott agreed to accompany us to Chicago and select a proper outfit. I bade a long farewell to the rest of the party, leaving them with Gillott, upon whom all responsibility now rested, and started the next day with Lucy and Mrs. Gillott for Chicago. Lucy was, by the way, arrayed in a very becoming suit belonging to that lady. We did not venture to take the train at Cairo, but rode to a station 20 miles beyond. Mr. Gillott drove us over, and we arrived an hour before train time.

As the train drew near I felt apprehensive that there might be some United States officer aboard who would suspect us, but if such a person was on board, we did not attract his notice, and sank into the car seat unnoticed as the other passengers.

"Mrs. Gillott entered first, Lucy followed, I brought up the rear, clutching the butt of my six-shooter, and seating myself behind the two women. Lucy, who saw a railroad for the first time, showed no signs of curiosity, earnestly gazing at the scenery as we rolled along.

"We arrived in Chicago without mishap, remained there for a week, and when I left for Boston, I was accompanied by a lady arrayed in one of the most fashionable traveling suits in vogue, and whose wardrobe, besides numerous traveling bags, filled one of the largest trunks that Chicago could produce.

"We arrived in Boston, saw Bunker Hill and heard Wendell Phillips lecture, whereupon I made up my mind that I was the better abolitionist of the two. I placed Lucy at school in Andover, and am now here for the next move."

CHAPTER XIII.

We were well satisfied with our first venture, and determined to make another. The excitement arising from the escape of Coverly's negroes had abated and was almost forgotten by the time George got back home. It was rarely spoken of; people generally came to the conclusion that the runaways had perished in the swamps. No man suspected, as we moved among our neighbors, that their companions and friends were two paid and accredited agents of the Under Ground Railroad.

Lucy was free and George was happy; he was a silent man, seldom mentioning her name, and I asked no questions regarding her; I knew he wrote her long letters under cover of some person in Philadelphia; she never wrote to him in reply.

Business was good with us; we had the confidence of the surrounding population, and dealt heavily in cotton; sugar we seldom meddled with.

It was my turn to take the next lot to the North; George had arranged with Mason to be at the rendezvous the 21st of August, and had written Moore to start Obed along.

We grew bolder as time passed, and we remained unsuspected. Night after night when business was over we discussed ways and means. Another expedition by the waterways back of the levees was impracticable; the water was too low. In fact, many of the little cut-offs and streams we had used were now dry.

It was our intention to take a large number and try a different route. Like most speculators, we grew bolder with success.

Brashear City is situated at the mouth of the Atchafalaya River, and was the western terminus of the New Orleans & Oppelousas Railroad. This road connected with a line of steamers for Galveston and Western Texas. The president of the road had been North during the Summer, and purchased a lot of iron and other railroad material. I do not remember the quantity, but the cargo was to be discharged at Brashear City. An extension of this road was in process of construction along the west bank of the Teche toward Oppelousas. The information with regard to this case we obtained from some Maine men who had charge of the grading. This cargo was awaiting shipment in New York. There was at the time, engaged in the New York and West India trade, a brig called the Millard Fillmore, hailing from the Island of Santa Cruz. The captain I had known in the days of "auld lang syne," but of this fact Wesner was ignorant. I had met him at Barracoon, on the African coast, and had seen him on the deck of a slaver. I wrote to Mr. Entwissle about the brig. By a curious coincidence, some of the active members of the anti-slavery society in New York owned an interest in this vessel.

Mr. Entwissle, having a thorough understanding with the captain, immediately chartered her, promising a return cargo of cotton and sugar. I received the following letter from him:

"New York, Aug. 4, 1855.—Messrs. Bradley & Wesner: Yours received. I have chartered the brig Millard Fillmore for Berwicks Bay and return. The captain is fully informed in regard to the voyage, and I have left all preparations with him. She will sail about the 11th, and it will take 29 or 30 days for the voyage. Yours respectfully, S. ENTWISSLE."

We immediately made arrangements for our return cargo of cotton and sugar; this was easily done. Next for the livestock; that was a more serious matter, and far from easy. The Fillmore was to receive her return cargo at Franklin, 30 miles from Brashear. Plantations lined the banks of the bayou Teche from Franklin to New Iberia, and the stream was spanned by a number of bridges. Upon the east side, opposite, and a short distance below where the brig would lay, we formed a shelter suitable for our purpose, should we be obliged to keep many people for a day or two.

We supposed the brig would be searched. That search must be made after the slaves were missed, but before they were on board the Fillmore; therefore they must be concealed while it was going on.

This undertaking was very dangerous, but our love of adventure was aroused, and there were large gains in prospect.

Before any move was made we must select some place for a rendezvous not so far from the brig but that the distance could be passed between 10 o'clock at night and 8 the next morning; it ought not to be more than 15 miles distant.

The movement fully decided upon, there was no procrastination. First, we visited our rendezvous. Everything was as George had left it.

The month of August is usually hot in the Attakapas country. This year was no exception. In the swamp the vegetation fairly steamed with miasma. No person, except it be a negro, could live there for a week, and we were really afraid it would affect them. Each morning a thick, heavy fog crept over the treetops, wrapping them in a blanket of chilly dampness. One could almost see fever and ague, like buzzards, roosting on the limbs.

We could not hesitate—our quota for the Fillmore must be forthcoming. The insanity of success was pushing us on. We cared little for obstacles. Coverly had replenished his stock. I wished to pass him by, but George, who hated him bitterly, would not listen to me. He said Coverly was no Jew, but he would examine his door posts, and unless he saw traces of the angel's visit, he should not keep the feast of the Passover, with his consent.

Raymond's was another isolated plantation. Him we assessed for as many as possible.

About 80 miles from our place lived two brothers by the name of Wells. These two men owned 300 negroes, and were hard masters. We concluded to draw on them for the rest, for as many as might be. How could we do this and not be suspected? Easily, for it only required a little shrewdness and some nerve, perhaps pluck would be the better word. The work must be done and the darkies spirited away before the brig was at Franklin.

CHAPTER XIV.

One morning before daylight, disguised as a French peddler, I stepped briskly from Bradley & Wesner's store. The peddler's beard was long and tinged with gray. His hair was the same. One leg was slightly bent, and he walked with a decided limp. On his back he bore one of those nondescript packs, so often carried by the peddlers with which the Southwest was infested in those days. In the pack were needles and pins, ribbons and laces, shawls, combs and all sorts of knick-knacks for the negro trade, for, poor and wretched as they were, they always possessed a few dimes to spend for finery. Most masters allowed their help to keep a few hens, and from the sale of the eggs and chickens, quite a sum could be raised by the more provident. Some masters gave out a certain stint, as it was called, and paid for overwork. This stint was usually a good day's work, and was only a saving of an overseer's wages to the master.

My disguise was perfect. My eyebrows were colored. My hair artistically dyed, wrinkles in my cheeks and indeed throughout I would have been an honor to the detective service, if disguise were all one needed to make a first-class detective.

I was perfect in the patois of the country (a species of nondescript French, called Acadian). In pure French I was an adept, and was also au fait in the negro slang that had been incorporated in both forms of French as well as in the English language.

These acquirements I used to the best of my ability in our business, but as a general thing that was conducted in English.

If a Frenchman came along who could not understand English, I gave him French for his French; these accomplishments would be of great value to me, and I had no doubt of my success as a peddler. I could also converse in at least three of the negro dialects used on the West Coast of Africa, a knowledge which I had acquired during my residence there, a fact of which George Wesner was entirely ignorant.

I walked slowly along the road toward Raymond's. Now and then I would meet with a horseman jogging along on his pony. Most of them I knew. These usually passed me with an indifferent stare. The pack was heavy, the day was hot and the road dusty. The sweat stood in drops on my face, and my inclination to rest I frequently gratified.

Toward noon I met a gentleman of my acquaintance with whom I was quite intimate. Now, I thought, would be a good opportunity to test the efficacy of my disguise.

I halted beside the road and importuned him to buy some of my goods. No, he didn't want anything. I was persistent, and finally sold him a case containing a couple of double razors and a patent hone, warranted to put a razor edge on a case knife (if the user possessed the requisite skill and patience; I did not).

I had tried my disguise and was satisfied.

That afternoon I was lucky enough to get a lift on a team for five or six miles. This diversion rested me and, about 4 o'clock, I turned off the main road, taking the road across the prairie toward Raymond's.

Raymond was a Boston man and had come into possession of this estate a few years before. He was perhaps a little egotistical and had boasted that he could show the Acadians how to run a plantation and make sugar, and he did show them, going at it with an energy that dazed the easy-going natives. From the home place his land stretched for a mile each way. On this home Raymond had displayed a skill and taste that astonished the people in this section of Attakapas. He had inclosed about six acres of the rolling prairie, surrounding it with a fence of close paling six feet or more in height, whitewashed to a dazzling whiteness. Within the ground was plowed and rolled as smooth as a lawn. Across the inclosure ran a broad driveway; on the left, extending from this, was another, perhaps 25 feet in width, which led to the mansion house. These walks were covered with gravel; the broad-leaved china trees grew in luxuriance along the side of the main driveway, while rows of orange and lemon trees were planted beside the beds of coleus, variegated geraniums and other beautiful plants, that never ceased to bloom in our mild climate. The whole place bore evidence of refinement and prosperity.

The mansion-house was a large two-storied structure, high in the walls and very airy. On two sides ran a piazza. A broad hall extended entirely through the house from side to side, through whose open doors the Summer breeze, fresh from the prairie, cooled the sultry air.

A short distance from the main house stood that of the overseer; this was smaller, but constructed after the same pattern. The chimneys, like those of most Southern houses, were outside. The roofs of the piazzas and the houses also were painted a brick red.

On the right of the entrance leading to them were the negro quarters, situated upon either side of a wide street. The buildings were small, one-story cottages of two rooms. These also had the conventional piazza and a lean-to or flat-roofed porch; attached to each was a small kitchen garden, a few rods square. Beyond the buildings were the orchards and vineyards, intersected by narrow, gravelel walks.

For irrigating, Raymond had sunk two deep wells, using for pumping purposes a windmill of his own construction; this was visible for miles, and was a guide to Raymond's.

This afternoon I was tired and not sorry when the attending negro swung open the big red gates and I had passed through. Hearing that Raymond was in New Orleans, I passed directly to the overseer's house; he was in the fields, but his wife was at home, and in this isolated place even a peddler was welcome.

The crock of water hung suspended from the ceiling of the piazza, swathed in a wet cloth to keep its contents cool.

Asking her for a drink of water, I opened my pack and displayed my wares.

She loved to talk, and I led the conversation, shaping my questions so as to lead her to talk about the field hands. She, as well as her husband, whose name was Everett James, were both from Massachusetts.

Mrs. James disliked negroes, and those on this plantation she most cordially hated. We were busily engaged in conversation when her husband entered. I made arrangements for my supper and lodging with him, and what was of more importance to me, obtained permission to trade with the negroes, some of whom I had learned from Mrs. James were very much dissatisfied.

Bob was lazy, Jo sick, Dick ugly, and so on. Dave was the worst, and though often whipped, would never give up.

"In short," said Mrs. James, "I believe he is an oboe man."

An oboe man, in negro belief, is a species of sorcerer or wizard. The poor class of whites, and, indeed, many quite intelligent planters, are believers in the supernatural powers of the oboe man.

"What is that power? Truth to tell, I almost believe in it myself. In those days I would have hesitated before offending an oboe man. Call it mesmerism or hypnotism, if you will, it cannot be denied that the weird, uncanny power that rules men's minds, that leads them to loathe, fear, and obey, is possessed by the oboe man.

Ignorance is easily influenced by fear of the supernatural. I know many overseers who dare not strike an oboe man, for fear that the curse of a withered arm will be laid upon him.

I once knew a gentleman, an able man, liberally educated, very intelligent, and an eloquent preacher of the gospel in Southern Georgia. Yet, with the advantages of his education and reading to combat its influence, he firmly believed in the oboe man, and feared his power. What wonder that the negro feared him!

Of course this reputation gave Dave continual control over his credulous countrymen.

Night came and the tired hands came straggling home from the fields. It was noised about that a peddler was at the overseer's house, and after supper they came, bringing their little hoards of bits, picayunes and quarters to exchange for rings, combs, ribbons and all the little etceteras of a peddler's stock—the cheap finery so dear to the negro's heart.

Closely I watched—the oboe man came not. Him I had decided to venture with. It was late when he joined the throng.

A born African, he had not forgotten his native tongue, nor had he forgotten that he was not always a slave. Dignified and haughty as when he threw his spear or wielded his warclub in the wilds of the Congo forests, and indifferent as he appeared, I was sure that his negro curiosity would bring him to me, although he seemed not to notice my presence.

Among my wares were some music-boxes. One of these I set to work; the attraction was too strong for his African highness, and he crowded his way toward me. Biding my time, I watched him. When his attention was absorbed, I dropped one sentence in the language of his tribe. It was the rallying cry of the slave hunter on the West Coast. He turned to me. "Speak again, white man," he said; "it's many years since I heard that tongue."

"Hush!" I said; "meet me at midnight in the old ginhouse."

"Yes," answered he.

No more was said. At midnight there were hidden in that deserted building the French peddler and Dave, the oboe man. Friends he had none. Once a leader of men, now a slave, there was no craven blood of a captive people in his veins. A few words in his native language were sufficient to unloose his tongue, and in that monotonous tone that marks the spirit-broken man he narrated his past history, unfolding the hopes and miseries of a lifetime of slavery. That night when we separated he had the feeling that he was a free man, and with his terrible Congo oath, agreed to be at the forks of the road one week from that night, with 20 of Raymond's men and as many from the neighboring plantations as could be induced to go.

In all our talking we had used nothing but West Coast dialect, and if overheard it would make no difference, for not a man in the parish could understand a word. After the interview I stole back to bed at the overseer's and did not wake until breakfast time. I feigned sick and unable to walk until about 2 P. M., when I took the road back, traveled until dark, pitched the balance of my wares into the slough, and made my way to the store, elated and very much excited. George laughed at me, took the cart and went back to the slough, fished out the pack, burned what was left and scattered the ashes, for, said he: "If any of these things are found near or in our store the people will move the earth to find that French peddler, and, if found, it will be very bad for that peddler."

"To this I agreed.

"Now Brad," said George, "you are in charge, what is the next move?"

"Don't ask me, George; you have had experience. Suppose you take charge."

"No, I will be Lieutenant. By and by you will be jealous, and say to yourself, 'George Wesner is running this concern. I want you to take this on your hands. I will be free enough with advice, only you lead off."

"Well," I replied, "let's wait until one week from tonight. That will bring it to Tuesday evening. Look at the almanac and see if there is a moon."

"No—yes, moon sets ten minutes past 10 P. M.," said George, after diligently consulting our almanac.

"That's fine; by 12 it will be dark, at 2 we will be there, and by 3 we will be a mile in the swamp. Let's go to bed on that."

The next morning we were up betimes, and when the first customer straggled along were ready for him. The week wore away as fast as weeks usually do, and Tuesday, the eventful night, came at last, as it happened, cloudy but pleasant. At 10 o'clock George, as a negro, and myself, as a peddler, were lying under a live oak shaded by the long festoons of Spanish moss and closely hidden from view. This friendly tree was near the road, and at no great distance from the forks.

Dave's instructions were to strike directly toward New Iberia across the prairie, and stop under the trees before reaching the main bayou road, keeping as far as possible from the main road. The bayou road was but little used, and the road to Raymond's scarcely any. The main road to Opelousas might have some belated travelers, but there was a large up-country travel, and persons often traveled by night to avoid the hot sun. Dave and his party must come out of the Coverly road (which was not much better than a cart track) quite near our place of concealment, and, as the trees were some distance apart, we could see them.

(To be continued.)

Causes Sentries to Go Mad.

Peering into darkness or semi-darkness while on sentry duty has a tendency to produce a distortion of the vision, which makes of every bush an enemy, and this has in many cases, even so recently as the Soudan campaigns, so affected the nerves of men that they have had a resulting monomania as to eternally seeing various creeping objects.

One man in the Soudan, says the Philadelphia Inquirer, saw every object of a vivid crimson for some months after being on outpost duty during an alarm, and he was only cured with great difficulty. General Hamley tells of sentries who, on being relieved, yet stood stock still, immovable, speechless and staring fixedly into vacancy. In some cases, after the man had been removed, this sort of fixity would remain for hours.

Great numbers of soldiers in war time have committed suicide or accidentally shot themselves, the cause often being that they imagined they had let some one creep past them, and had thus betrayed their trust.

All the Elements of Success.

"Your poem used? I should say not," answered the editor.

"Would you give me a criticism of it?"

"Certainly. It's clumsy and vulgar, and unspeakably idiotic."

"Good!"

"Good?"

"Yes; set it to music, and it will become a popular song."—Philadelphia Inquirer.

The real rough rider is the man who rides the river with a twisting, squirming log for a saddle, on which he stands, balancing himself to its every motion. If his coolness fails or his nerve gives way, disaster and death reach out for him.

It's the giving way of the "nerve" which proves fatal to so many a man. Perhaps he is simply crossing the street, as he has done ten thousand times. He hears a shout, stops, hesitates, gets "rattled" and is run over. When a man finds that his memory plays him false often, when he starts off to get something and forgets what he went for, when he *knows* he has locked the front door and yet an irritating uncertainty compels him to get up and verify his knowledge, then that man is in danger at any minute when confronted by a trifling danger. He is unnerved.

This condition can be perfectly cured by the use of Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery. It strengthens the stomach, nourishes the nerves, and purifies the blood. It contains no alcohol, whisky or other intoxicant.

"The reason I delayed writing was because I wanted to wait *one year* after I had taken the medicine before giving my statement, and now I can send a good, conscientious testimonial," writes Chas. H. Sergeant, Esq., of Plain City, Madison Co., Ohio. "During the summer and fall of 1896 I became all "run down," nerves were out of order and stomach out of order. I wrote to Dr. Pierce for advice. He said I had general debility, and advised Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery, and, thanks to you for your advice, I used six bottles; and since I stopped taking it, about one year ago, I have not taken any medicine of any kind, and *have been able to work every day.* My appetite is good, I can eat three square meals a day, I do not feel that miserable burning in the stomach after eating, and my blood and nerves are in good shape."

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