

IN DIXIE'S LAND

BEFORE THE WAR.

BY JAS. FRANKLIN FITZ.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

A highly dramatic story, showing the lights and shadows of an era now fast passing into the dim distant past.

Be Sure and Read It!

CHAPTER XIX.
THE CLOVEN FOOT.

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

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

"O, yo' nebbber know how good a maussa he was."

"O, Lordy, Lordy, what we all do now! What little misy do widout him! What sho do wiv all us niggers?" In the midst of the commotion Le Fevre rode up with Mr. Coteau. The overseer was shocked, as everybody had been, at the news; but the habit of authority was strong in him, and he asserted himself at once. He went among the weeping, clamoring people on the stairs, and, with a few energetic words, sent them to the rear of the

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

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

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

"Do you mean Conrad Bostock?"

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

Le Fevre spoke slowly and with an effort.

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

"What do you think?"

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

The telegraph from La Fourche crossing took the intelligence of the planter's sudden death to New Orleans that morning; it was published in the afternoon papers. The arrangements had been made to have the funeral on the second day after. On the morning of that day Conrad Bostock arrived, accompanied by three men of his own



"ALL DE DAHRIES AM A WEEPIN'."

class, ill-looking fellows, whose appearance led me to believe that they were armed. It occurred to me at once that the man had come determined to assert his ownership here with force, if necessary.

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

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

I looked at Le Fevre.

"Tell him," he muttered.

"We have reason to believe," I said, "that the late Mr. Bostock did not leave a will."

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

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

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

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

Conrad Bostock looked inquiringly at the book.

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

"Yes."

"I'd like to see it."

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

"Is this all?" he asked.

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

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

His eye ran rapidly down the list, and he spoke a name here and there. When he came to the end he folded the leaves, put them in his breast pocket

and lit a cigar. His companions followed his example, and soon the parlor was filled with smoke. Le Fevre looked at the lounging, loaferish figures and then I saw that his gorge was rising. He rose and threw open the windows.

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

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

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

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

I started up, almost speechless with passion.

"Coralie was his daughter, you know that?"

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

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

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

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

"Just so."

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

"Stay!" I exclaimed. My voice was hoarse, and I shook with emotion. "Conrad Bostock, she is of your own blood—your father's daughter. The last evening of his life he gave his consent that I should marry her. He sent for a lawyer to draw her free papers, and to draw a will, leaving her everything. The lawyer arrived here after he had died. Mr. Le Fevre here knows this. Coralie will go with me; you have nothing to do with her."

An insolent laugh from Bostock's companions greeted my frantic protest. Conrad looked on me with undissembled contempt.

"Young man, your stay in this house will end right now. Your effects and those of your friend, Mr. Le Fevre, will be set out on the veranda. As for all this foolishness about the girl you've been preaching, I've nothing to say. It's hardly the thing in Louisiana for a white man to marry a slave; the law don't permit it. If it did, do you suppose I would be fool enough to give you twenty-five hundred dollars' worth of property? Not I. If it will make you feel any better, I'll say to you that, if the girl behaves herself, I'll get a good master for her. If not—if she goes into any tantrums—off she goes to the Orleans slave market."

My head swam, my heart seemed to stand still. I saw the faces of leering devils through the smoke wreaths. A strong hand grasped my shoulder. Le Fevre stood by my side.

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

"No."

"Three thousand dollars."

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

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

The fiend shook his head. I could bear it no longer. With fists clenched and muscles strained, I dashed at him. The iron hand of Le Fevre restrained me and dragged me from the room. As the door was closed behind us, I heard a roar of laughter from within.

CHAPTER XX.
A GLEAM OF HOPE.

Le Fevre never released his hold on my collar till we were out of sight of the house, among the cane. I think that I held back a little.

"Come along," he said brusquely. "I'm as much stirred up as you are about it; but I've got my senses, and you've lost yours. You want to do something desperate and foolish."

"Let me go!" I cried. "I'll kill him."

"Come along, I say, you young idiot! What good would it do to kill him? That would only make things worse for you and the girl. You want to help her, don't you?"

"I'll die before I leave her here in that man's power! I would—"

"Yes, I know how you feel. I've got some feeling myself on the subject. I've got a plan, too; but I tell you flatly, Dorr Jewett, if you don't come along with me and quit your crazy notion of taking the girl out of the house by force, with those roughs standing between, I'll go my own way, and leave you to your destruction."

His words calmed me; I ceased to resist, and followed him as he strode through the cane. His hopeful words, his strong confidence in himself put new life into me; I leaned on him as upon a human providence.

He never stopped till he reached the edge of the great swamp, more than a quarter of a mile back of the house. It was overgrown with scrub oak and cypress; festoons of Spanish moss, ivy, and other parasites ran from tree to tree; where the heat had dried the edges of the swamp for many rods, a thick growth of palm bushes had sprung up. A serpent wriggled in at our approach, and a cloud of ravenous mosquitoes gave us a warm greeting.

"We shan't be overheard here," said my companion. "I'll make a smoke to save us from being devoured alive."

He lit a cigar and consumed it with short, emphatic puffs. I watched his face anxiously, and saw that his square under-jaw was set, and that he was thinking hard. Suddenly he put the question to me:

"What do you think of me, anyway, Dorr Jewett?"

A little disconcerted by the abruptness of the question, I presently answered, and told him the exact truth:

"When I first came here, I thought you were rough and cruel to the negroes. Afterward I found out that you were more rough than cruel; and still later, I have known you for a good friend."

"Yes; that's pretty near the truth. Before I tell you my plan, I want you to know enough about me to understand that I am not coming to your help blindfolded. I know the risk, and I'll face it; and you must know it. I told you I was born in Pennsylvania. Ten years and more, I've been in Louisiana. I came down here with a head full of the horrors of slavery, as it had been pictured to me. I suppose the real thing strikes different people from the north in different ways; some might have seen all that I've seen, and be confirmed in their notions of the institution. I haven't been. Contact with the negro in this state, where there are as many of him as there is of the white man, has made me believe that a condition of slavery is a good thing, the only thing for him."

"But Coralie—"

"Hold on; I'm coming to her. Such has been my opinion. In a single day I am brought face to face with the ugliest aspect of the whole problem. I've heard of such things as this. I never knew any such personally. I have supposed that the facts must be distorted and exaggerated. Now, there is no mistake. We know what has happened on this plantation. I won't sicken you by reminding you of what may happen. You'd say, I would say, almost every planter in the La Fourche would agree, that the treatment which that beautiful white girl—I tell you it just as it is—is likely to receive at the hands of her own kin, her half-brother, just as you heard him threaten it—is more than brutal. Sir, it is damnable!"

He stamped his foot in his excitement.

"And the law would permit it?"

"The law would ask just one question: Was her mother a slave? We know what the answer would be in this case. Nothing else would be regarded."

"Must we submit to such a monstrous condition of law?" I cried.

He looked fixedly at me.

"Boy, you've got spirit; you need to be guided, but you've the true stuff. The girl's safety and deliverance are a thousand times more to you than to me; yet hang me if the fix she's in don't appeal to me in a way that I can't stand. And if you ask me if we shall submit to have Coralie sent to New Orleans and sold like a horse to a condition worse than death I say no! by the good mother that bore me, I won't!"

I pass the words I said to him, the thanks I tried to give him. He cut them all short.

"Never mind that, Dorr. I'm with you, heart and hand; you be guided by me, and we'll save her or—"

He stopped.

"Perhaps you didn't know that if you are caught trying to abduct a slave in Louisiana they'll send you to the Baton Rouge penitentiary for a term of years."

"I did not know it, and don't care for it. Tell me what we shall do."

His own excited feelings found relief in a laugh at my eager recklessness. Rapidly he laid his plans before me. I considered it as he spoke, and saw that it offered a chance of success.

He said that men of the class of Conrad Bostock and his companions, upon such an occasion as this, would be very sure to spend the night over the wine bottle and cards. He proposed to communicate stealthily with Coralie through the faithful house servants, and after midnight get her quietly out of the house and drive to Donaldsonville, taking carriage and ponies from the place. He knew that the Cotton Queen stopped at Donaldsonville about daylight, going up, and that to-morrow was her day. We would go far enough to reach the vicinity of a railroad, short of any of the cities where we might be overtaken by telegraph, and there go ashore.

"We can throw off the pursuit in this way," he said. "We can land at some obscure wood station. It must be this side of Baton Rouge, if the Queen stops there, for there the telegraph can overhaul us, and we will strike across the country to some equally obscure railroad station. I'll defy them to find us when we are clear of the river. I have plenty of money; that and a little adroitness will carry us safe through to Canada within a week."

"Le Fevre, you're a noble fellow. If I ever—"

"Don't bother yourself," he laughed. "We're not there yet."

A convulsion of mirth seized him. He sat down in the grass and shook with laughter.

"You needn't fear I'm going crazy, Dorr. But suppose anyone had said to me three days ago: 'Wash Le Fevre, you think you're a good deal of a southern man, now, don't you? And you think slavery is about the thing for the nigger, don't you? Well, next week you'll be trying to run off a slave to Canada.' Suppose any man had said that to me! I'd a struck him, if he was as big as a mountain. And now look at me!"

"Circumstances change all of us."

"They do, indeed. Now to work. I'll go and feel round among the house people, keeping carefully out of sight. Go get into the shade, and stay there till you hear from me. I don't want you with me yet; you're too rash. I'll send one of the boys out here with something to eat. Here's some cigars; these confounded 'skeeters would eat you up alive."

When Baby was sick, we gave her Castoria.

When she was a Child, she cried for Castoria.

When she became Miss, she clung to Castoria.

When she had Children, she gave them Castoria.

IF YOU

Owe us for subscription to this paper, and the label on each issue tells whether you do or not, you MUST SETTLE AT ONCE. It is a small matter for you to pay \$2, but the aggregate is a very large one to us. Send us your dues as soon as you read this.

W. P. Walton.

Great REDUCTIONS.

For the next 30 days we will sell Men's, Boys' and Children's

OVERCOATS

At unprecedented low prices. A few

LADIES' CLOAKS

To close at one-half former price. If you need anything in these goods it will pay you to see our stock before purchasing.

W. E. PERKINS, Crab Orchard.

NEW GOODS

FALL AND WINTER

Goods are

All In. Come and See.

H. J. McROBERTS.



Correspondence With

Good Attractions

Solicited.

WALTON BROS., Managers.

THE CINCINNATI "WEEKLY"

GAZETTE

—NOW PUBLISHED—

Twice-a-Week

FOR \$1.00 A YEAR.

ONE HUNDRED AND FOUR PAPERS A YEAR, OR LESS THAN ONE CENT PER COPY.

The popularity of the Gazette extends from Ocean to Ocean. From every part of the Globe the news is given in reliable shape. Twelve to Sixteen Pages a week will be printed for \$1.00 a Year. Address

THE COMMERCIAL GAZETTE CO. CINCINNATI.

17
23
90
109



WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

It means that the Queen and Crescent Route is the shortest between Cincinnati and New Orleans, and the most direct route between Cincinnati and New Orleans, and the most direct route between Cincinnati and New Orleans, and the most direct route between Cincinnati and New Orleans.

SOLID VESTIBULE TRAINS

Between all of the above points. Through Cars to Vicksburg and Shreveport. Only one transfer, through cars to Knoxville and Asheville, N. C. Direct line to Texas and Mexico via New Orleans or Shreveport. Ask agents about route to California. From Louisville, Shreveport and Lawrenceburg, direct connection is made at Lexington with vestibule trains to all points South.

W. C. RINEARSON, Gen'l Pass' Agent, Cincinnati, O.

QUEEN AND CRESCENT ROUTE.

California—the Land of Sunshine, Fruit and Flowers.

The Midwinter Exposition, already much talked of, bids fair to rival the great fair that has just closed at Chicago. Not in size, perhaps, but certainly so in originality, in richness, and in delighted visitors, who will unanimously agree that the Pacific Coast is worth many times the time and money spent to visit it, in its return of delightful climate, mellow sunlight, wondrous growth of vegetation, and the heretofore unheard of network of industries connected with fruit raising, and the shipping of the product. In order to give an opportunity for everybody to visit this wonder land during the Exposition, California rates via the Queen & Crescent route have been reduced, and every one may find the cost of such a trip within his means. As for equipment, it is the only line by which you can travel from Cincinnati to San Francisco, absolutely without change. Tourist sleeping cars run every two weeks through from Cincinnati to San Francisco. Solid vestibuled trains twice a day from Cincinnati to New Orleans, where connection is made with through trains and Pullman sleepers daily to California points. Through car service to either New Orleans or Shreveport, making direct connection for Texas, Mexico and California. From Louisville through trains make direct connection at Lexington with solid vestibuled service to New Orleans. Send to us for further particulars. Ask agents for rates, schedules and other information, or address W. C. Rinearson, G. P. A. Cincinnati, O.

PERSONAL: Bear in mind one thing, that if business, pleasure, or necessity calls you away from home at any time, be particular, to have your route fully decided upon and arranged before starting.

Many things should be taken into consideration, especially the inducements offered by the Wisconsin Central Company to those who wish to visit St. Paul, Minneapolis, Ashland, West Superior, Duluth or any point in Wisconsin.

Their trains leave Chicago at convenient hours. Their equipment is unsurpassed by any line in the Northwest.

Close connections are made at St. Paul and Minneapolis, with the various lines running to all California and Pacific Coast points.

Ask your nearest ticket agent for full information, and be particular to see that your tickets read via the "Wisconsin Central Lines. Jas. C. Pond, Genl. Pass. Agent, Milwaukee, Wis.

An Old Song.

When giants lived in ancient times,
Sing heigh, my boy, sing ho!
In good old England or foreign climes,
Sing heigh, my boy, sing ho!
They carried things with a high old hand,
Nor strong, nor weak could before them stand,
And they killed whom they pleased throughout
The land.

Sing heigh, my boy, sing ho!
But the giants didn't have things their own way when Jack-the-Giant-killer arrived on the scene. You remember the story. Recollect too that every age has its giant killer. We have our giants in the form of all sorts of dread diseases, supposed to be incurable. Our Jack is in the form of Dr. Pierce, who has proven the expression "incurable diseases" to be a fallacy. Can you imagine more potent weapons to assist a woman in killing the giant disease than Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription? It's the only guaranteed remedy for all functional disturbances, painful disorders and chronic weaknesses of womanhood. In female complaints of every kind it ever fails to benefit or cure you have your money back. It's simply a question of the company you prefer—the Giant or Jack.

—The freight on a car of Oregon wheat was 32½ cents per bushel to Chicago, where it sold at 58 cents.