

at last piecemeal by the great foxhunter Boguey and his hounds.

I will put a case. I have a handsome gold watch (which I haven't), and I am in St. Petersburg (where I am not). I go for an evening's amusement to the Eaux Minerales, where the chalybeate springs are the pretext, and Herr Isler's gardens, with their military bands and fireworks and suspicious company, the real attraction. My watch is quietly subtracted from my fob by some dexterous pickpocket in the gardens; and I deserve no sympathy for my mishap, for Isler's is famous for its filous. The next day I go like a fool, and according to my folly, and lodge my complaint at the police Siège of my arrondissement. I have the number of my watch. I give the maker's name. I describe it minutely, and narrate accurately the circumstances under which it was taken from me. I do not see the major of police, but one of his aids. The aid tells me in German (the judicial police, as a rule, do not speak French; the secret police speak every language under the sun—Chinese, I am sure, included) that justice is on the alert, that the thief will certainly be caught and brought to condign punishment, and that of the ultimate recovery of my watch there cannot be any reasonable doubt. Clerks have got through a prodigious quantity of manuscript all about me and my watch, by this time; and a number of the everlasting forms are pushed towards me to sign. I have been told beforehand what I must do, and that there is no help for it, so I slip a red note for ten roubles, en sandwich, between two of the forms, and hand the triplet to the aid, who with a greasy smile bids me good morning.

Henceforth I belong no more to myself, but to Boguey. I am hunted up in the morning while I am shaving, and at night as I am retiring to rest. I am peremptorily summoned to the police office five minutes before dinner, and five minutes before I have concluded that repast. With infernal ingenuity Boguey fixes on the exact hours when I have a social engagement abroad, to summon me to his cave of Trophonius, and submit me to vexatious interrogatories. Boguey catches sham thieves for me—worsted stocking knaves with hearts in their bellies no bigger than pins' heads—mere toasts and butter, who would as lieve steal the Czar's crown as a gold watch, and whose boldest feat of larceny would probably be the purloining of a pickled cucumber from a stall. I am confronted with these scurvy companions, and asked whether I can identify them? Boguey's outlying myrmidons bring me vile pinchbeck saucepan lids, infamous tinpot sconces, which they call watches; and would much like to know if I can recognise them as my property? All this time I am paying rouble after rouble for perquisitions, and inquiries, and gratifications, and messengers' expenses, and stamps, and an

infinity of other engines of extortion. At last (under advice) I rush to the major of police, and ask him plainly (but privately), for how much he will let me off? He smiles and refers me to his aid, saying that justice cannot have her course impeded. I go to the aid, and he smiles too, and tells me that he does not think the disbursement of twenty roubles will do my Excellency any harm; and that if I choose to place that sum in his hand to be administered in charity, he thinks he can guarantee my not being again troubled about the robbery. So, I give him the money (which I don't), and, thank Heaven, I am rid of Boguey, as Andrew Miller thanked Heaven he was rid of Doctor Johnson.

Now do you understand why every sensible man in Russia, who is unfortunate enough to be robbed, leaves Boguey alone?

#### SKETCHING AT A SLAVE AUCTION.

At the time when Uncle Tom had roused all Europe as well as America to an unusual pitch of excitement on the subject of slavery, I for the first time visited Richmond, the capital of Virginia. I lounged after breakfast into the parlour of the American Hôtel, a print of whose splendid outside appearance sticks to this day with wonderful pertinacity to our travelling-trunk. Its effigy, labelled to the side of the portmanteau as an advertisement, revives its faded image, and I behold once more its verandah below, and its square battlement on top, from which flaunts the Star and Stripes flag. I am further reminded by the same document that M. J. Mildeburger Smith is the proprietor, a worthy and communicative host. Having ascertained from the local papers, of which the Richmond Enquirer is the best-known in England, that certain slave sales were to take place that morning at eleven, I inquired the nearest way of the man at the bar. It was only two streets off, he answered. He seemed startled at my inquiry, and endeavoured to prepare me for the worst, as if half-ashamed that a European should look in at the dread arcana of the Slave-Trade without due preparation.

I afterwards ascertained that Europeans are generally accompanied by gentlemen known in Richmond, who act as guarantees of the good behaviour of the dealers, and who, I suppose, by their presence, warn the dealers to mitigate those more revolting details, which long habit has rendered harmless in the sight of those indulging in this unwholesome traffic. For two reasons I did not avail myself of the habitual Cicerones. First, because, for the purposes of observation, one has a better chance than two, from not having his attention diverted; and, secondly, because I wished to witness the scene as it happened every day, before what may be called its legitimate witnesses, and not

rehearsed in a special manner to suit the occasion.

Arming myself with a pencil and a slip or two of paper, and putting these carefully into my pocket, I sallied forth into the High Street, and walked some hundreds of yards down its steep declivity. The only object I noticed was one of those contrivances on two wheels, around the axle of which the water-pipes of the fire-engine are generally coiled. Two youngsters were running rapidly backwards and forwards with this rolling hose by way of frolic; or, perhaps, practising for early promotion to the much-sought-after ranks of the fire-brigade. I turned up one of the narrowest alleys of the many abutting upon the High Street. Eleven o'clock had struck, and, strange to say, the bustle consequent on sales of stock was not noticeable, the streets being seemingly deserted.

But, I soon discovered the cause. The sales take place here within doors, on the ground-floor of the houses, four in number, allotted to the traffic. The sale commences in the first auction-room, and, when the stock is disposed of, the company adjourns to the next, till the whole are exhausted. Little red flags, to which were pinned small slips of paper pencilled with the number of likely hands to be sold, were hung out on poles from the threshold. I happened to be a few minutes late, and the preliminary process of examination of the negroes seemed partially over; one old negro was once more donning his coat, had only put one of his brogues on, and had altogether a quaint appearance of shocked propriety. Never shall I forget the sensation occasioned by my first entry into that den! To say that my eyes swam, that I felt a more rapid pulsation, and that my olfactory nerves were assailed by a mephitic atmosphere, is to a certain extent true; but, it hardly gives a fair notion of very complex yet instantaneous feelings. The room might be said to be occupied by three distinct groups. Conspicuously raised above the rest, upon a rude platform flanked on both sides by two steps, stood the dealer with his uplifted right hand, taking the bids, whilst with the left he pointed to a young negress, of some fifteen or sixteen years of age, standing at his side. Holding her petticoat on the ground, immediately beneath, stood a black help, or assistant, who looked round at the bidders, as the sum kept swelling from six, seven, to eight, hundred dollars. Next came, in frowsy array, the purchasers decked in hats in every state of decomposition: some in swallow-tail coats, and rusty, unlacquered boots, grimy with dirt, and holding, either clubs, or wicked-looking whips in their hands. The girl was knocked down to one of these. The third party, and forming a fitting back-ground to the scene, were the negroes huddled together on rude benches, awaiting their fate. The

first to be selected from them was a gaunt and sinewy hand. A sort of line was formed by the dealers, and this lot was made to pace up and down the room at a quick trot. This ambling done, it was suggested that one of his eyes was affected; so they gathered round the negro. One gentleman rivetted, with the precision of long practice, his thumb into the socket of the eye, which was supposed to be the same one, whilst he held up to the other a hair! I saw the poor fellow, who was writhing with pain, vainly rolling the one eye at liberty, to discover, and, if possible, split the hair with his visual organ, but to no purpose; his eyesight was evidently blunted, and he fell in the estimation of his customers, as was soon testified, when he stepped upon the platform to be sold.

I saw, one after the other, the inmates of this first auction-room purchased at various prices, and then the whole company adjourned to the next human warehouse. As I left the room, I noticed the auctioneer locking the door after him, and rudely pushing the young negress, while telling her to be off to other quarters,—I suppose those of her purchaser,—and she flitted out of sight down the street. This was the first example I had noticed in the United States of ill-treatment to that sex, for which a chivalrous deference is every where exacted.

In the room into which we were now ushered, an opportunity was afforded of witnessing the transaction in its entire process. The first thing done is to huddle the wretched gang, *pro formâ*, behind a screen, and to strip them: though why hide in a corner what every one is compelled to look on, is more than even Old World prudery could guess at. It is here that the swarthy labourer is seen in all his brawny prowess, when the gazer is at a little distance. A closer inspection reveals a world of scars and stripes, distributed with not so much regularity as in the flag of the Union. It is satisfactory to note that the value of the negro is reduced according to the greater or smaller quantity of these lash-marks, which are taken as signs, not of the cruelty of the former master, but of restiveness and laziness in the slave.

A very few have what are termed clean backs.

It was striking to watch the same process of sale and purchase going on, with the scenery, as it were, shifted, to prevent the eyes becoming jaded, as the ears were by the incessant changes rung on dollars; the bids swelling by nothing less than hundreds—five, six, seven, eight hundred dollars—according as the being put up, was a lad or an adult. I had noticed a singular specimen of pictorial humour in the first *depôt*, as these rooms are called, in the shape of an old, ill-framed, and cobwebby lithograph. It represented a mounted gentleman astride a sorry horse, which he was pummeling unmercifully. Strangely appropriate did this Yankee dealer

of thwacks appear in this receptacle of dismal cudgelling. The sight of the poor fellow's striped back brought the image vividly before me, as well as the received fiction in the Southern States, that the negro is little better than a brute; a notion which seemed to have been unconsciously illustrated by the artist. No decoration of the kind, however, was noticeable in the second auction-room. In the back-ground was a gentleman reclining against his wooden arm-chair, absorbed in the perusal of a newspaper, apparently as unconscious of what was going on around him, as if he himself had been framed and glazed. I was glad to turn away from the scene, if it were but for a few minutes.

As I emerged from the place and crossed over the way, I came unexpectedly upon what evidently was to be the third scene of operations. The house was a corner one, and open at its two sides on the ground-floor. I do not hesitate to pronounce the spectacle which here presented itself to be one of the most touching which could well be revealed to the sight. On a bench sat, in expectancy of coming fate, a buxom negress, clasping an infant in her arms; its little profile lost in the folds of her ample neck-handkerchief, its little black and shoeless feet dangling from her lap. Other children, a trifle older, lounged on each side of her. On the right, with fingers to his lips, and the one hand clinging to his mother's apron, sat a little fellow, quaintly, yet neatly attired, in a jacket; on his head an oil-skin cap, which would have been pronounced large by a full-blown English engineer, who is also given to this species of head-gear. Nestling at the left was a little girl, who looked wistfully in the direction of the coming company, as if conscious of some strange foreshadowed event. The diminutive striped cap, and the cinnabar-coloured shoes attested the mother's care of her. This group occupied the centre of the bench, and so engrossed one's interest, that the four other women who made up the complement of weight which the seat was made to hold, seemed quite secondary personages. Each of the two who occupied the extreme left, wore a red fillet round her woolly hair, which seems to be adopted by the younger negresses as more becoming than the turban of the dowager ladies, who in this respect ape their more fortunate superiors. A stolid-looking negro sat apart from these, and seemed almost to belong to an inferior caste of blacks from the excessive protrusion of his thick under-lip: a feature which seems to vary, according to the known law of labial deformity. I have been thus circumstantial because the group is rivetted in my memory as strongly as if I saw it but yesterday. I found in it a perfect composition, in which the picturesque element was blended with singular pathos. In a hardly justifiable fit of enthusiasm, when time and place are considered, I took out

pencil and paper to try and trace a few of those inimitable lines which we only find recurring in nature. I had not proceeded far with my sketch, when the hum of voices, and then a general muster round the seat I had selected to draw from, showed that I was transgressing some rule of the place; nothing daunted, I went on sketching, when one of the girls was called off from her seat by the dealer, and both mounted on the auctioneer's table. The fellow had bared the woman's arm, and was descanting on the merits of her feminine proportions, begging for a bid. No one nodded. There seemed to be no purchaser, although all were looking on. Vaguely connecting my presence with this unusual want of alacrity on the part of his customers, the dealer jumped down from his perch on the settee, and asked me what I was doing? I answered:

"I don't feel bound to answer your questions."

Hardly satisfied at this reply, he left me abruptly, resumed his post, and once more endeavoured to rouse his clients to a proper sense of the value of the woman now offered for sale. This effect was equally fruitless. With ill-disguised rage the dealer was once more before me, for I still kept on sketching, wondering what would be the final issue of the adventure.

"I must know what you are about," said he, in a tremulous voice, his face livid with smothered passion.

"You can look for yourself. I am sketching," I said, as composedly as I could, though evidently matters were getting serious. Fancy being surrounded by infuriated Legrees! However, coolness had its effect. For the third time the auctioneer tripped to the right of the negress, who was all this time standing in a purgatorial state, being neither owned, bought, nor sold. The dealers were utterly motionless, and did not heed the offered bait. They kept looking askance at me; and my occupation quite engrossed their curiosity. This was more than flesh and blood (at least, the little that could be discovered of either on the attenuated person of this dealer) could bear. The third and last appeal came to me worded thus:

"If a party came to your store, and interrupted your business, how would you like that?"

This logical innuendo had in it something at once so unanswerable, that I started up from my seat and said:

"O! if I interrupt your business, I shall go."

I walked to the place of egress—it was larger than a doorway—when I heard a hum ominous of mischief: yet, not wishing to look as if I was flying, I turned into the second auction-room, I had already visited. It was tenanted by a solitary negro boy, whom I had not noticed when I was there previously. I had time rapidly to sketch his features, as

he sat quietly by himself, when one of the band hurried into the place in suppressed agitation, and said, "You had better leave."

I thought I might as well act on the hint, and as I got out of the door I noticed the whole set issuing in a band, headed by the dealer, coming after me. I turned my back, and walked leisurely away into the High Street, where I breathed as if I had escaped no slight danger. When I recounted the adventure to one of the many hospitable families which abound in Richmond, the wonder was that I had not been lynched. A few days after, a New York paper reached me, containing a narrative from an eye-witness of the scene (the writer utterly unknown to me); I learnt from it what their scheme of revenge was, upon one they rightly took for an Abolitionist. They were each to lend a foot to expel me.

### THE MUSIC OF THE WINDS.

Oh! many-voicèd is that giant lyre  
Swept by the viewless fingers of the Wind,  
And sounding Nature's harmonies, combined  
In mood of joy, or sadness; love, or ire.

At noon, at eve, among the summer leaves  
The gentle wind awakes a melody  
That leniment to pain and sorrow gives,  
Soothing the ear with lulling symphony.

When from the mountain-caves,  
And from the ocean-waves,  
A stormy choral chant is swelling,  
How grand the harmonies that sweep  
Across the foaming deep,  
And through the swaying woods,  
And flying mists and rain-fraught clouds;  
While the loud thunder-tones are knelling  
Around the Tempest-Spirit's lofty dwelling!

And now the mingled music, deep and shrill,  
Streams o'er the sloping shoulder of the hill,  
And, in the vale beyond, in silence dies;  
While, from the cloud-barred western skies,  
The setting sun a crimson glow  
Pours on the sea-cliff's beetling brow,  
And skimmers on each curling wave's white crest,  
And on dim sails of ships far in the louring east.

The Music of the Wind is hushed around;  
And, o'er yon valley where it died away,  
Steal the long shadows of the fading day.  
The darkening hills repeat no other sound  
But the wild murmur of the flooded river,  
And ocean's distant boom that ceaseth never.

### THE DEAD SECRET.

#### CHAPTER THE SEVENTH. WILL THEY COME?

THE housekeeper at Porthgenna Tower had just completed the necessary preparations for the reception of her master and mistress, at the time mentioned in Mrs. Frankland's letter from St. Swithin's-on-Sea, when she was startled by receiving a note sealed with black wax, and surrounded by a thick mourning border. The note briefly communicated the news of Captain Treverton's death, and informed her that the visit of Mr. and Mrs.

Frankland to Porthgenna was deferred for an indefinite period.

By the same post, the builder who was superintending the renovation of the west staircase also received a letter, requesting him to send in his account as soon as the repairs on which he was then engaged were completed; and telling him that Mr. Frankland was unable, for the present, to give any further attention to the project for making the north rooms habitable, in consequence of a domestic affliction which might possibly change his intentions in regard to the alteration proposed in that part of the house. On the receipt of this communication, the builder withdrew himself and his men as soon as the west stairs and banisters had been made secure; and Porthgenna Tower was again left to the care of the housekeeper and her servant, without master or mistress, friends or strangers, to thread its solitary passages or enliven its empty rooms.

From this time, eight months passed away, and the housekeeper heard nothing of her master and mistress, except through the medium of paragraphs in the local newspaper, which dubiously referred to the probability of their occupying the old house, and interesting themselves in the affairs of their tenantry, at no very distant period. Occasionally, too, when business took him to the post-town, the steward collected reports about his employers among the old friends and dependants of the Treverton family. From these sources of information, the housekeeper was led to conclude that Mr. and Mrs. Frankland had returned to Long Beckley, after receiving the news of Captain Treverton's death, and had lived there for some months in strict retirement. When they left that place, they moved (if the newspaper report was to be credited) to the neighbourhood of London, and occupied the house of some friends who were travelling on the continent. Here they must have remained for some time, for the new year came and brought no rumours of any change in their place of abode. January and February passed without any news of them. Early in March the steward had occasion to go to the post-town. When he returned to Porthgenna, he came back with a new report relating to Mr. and Mrs. Frankland, which excited the housekeeper's interest in an extraordinary degree. In two different quarters, each highly respectable, the steward had heard it facetiously announced that the domestic responsibilities of his master and mistress were likely to be increased by their having a nurse to engage and a crib to buy at the end of the spring or the beginning of the summer. In plain English, among the many babies who might be expected to make their appearance in the world in the course of the next three months, there was one who would inherit the name of Frankland, and who (if the infant luckily turned out to be a boy) would cause a sensation