

Kidnapped and Sold into Slavery.

(Continued.)

The Ride to Florence—A Sympathetic Landlord—The Ride to Lexington—The Robards Share Pass—A thirty mile ride With an Overseer.

That night I lay awake all night, and I prayed that the good Lord would stand by me and deliver me out of my trouble. I could hear some one moving once in a while through the night, outside of my door, whom I found afterwards was one of the poor white trash you could find every place in the South those days, who were ready to hunt a runaway nigger or do any other dirty work the slave owners might bid them. This time he was standing guard over me to see that I didn't escape. About six o'clock the next morning I heard rap at my door, and when I answered I was ordered to get ready for breakfast, for the buggy was ready at the door which was to take me away. I was already up, but I took my time to make known my readiness for breakfast. I walked to the window to take one last look at old Cincinnati, where I had had a sweet taste of liberty. The morning was a bright Spring morning—one steamed as was just landing on arrival from New Orleans loaded with cotton. Another boat was just coming down the Ohio; the passengers were out on the guards of the boat, the hacks were coming down the wharf to take the passengers up town. (Then I thought of my back ride the day before, and what come of it.) The river was high and a large lumber raft was floating down past the city, one of the hands was playing a fiddle, and one was dancing, the rest were standing around looking on. But a loud rap on the door of my room and a "G—d d—n you, are you never going to get up?" brought me to my senses, and I undressed the door. As I wanted no breakfast I was ordered to follow the speaker down stairs which I done. A buggy was standing at the door, in which I was ordered to take my seat. I done so, and two men, one named Bolton and the other Willoughby, Scott, also seated themselves and drove off. They drove out the Lexington pike. When we arrived at Florence they put up for the night, as there was their headquarters for the present gang they were collecting for the Southern market. The two men and I occupied the same room that night; I sleeping on a mattress on the floor while they occupied the best bed in the room. I slept a little that night. The next morning when the men got up they told me they were going to Burlington to collect some more niggers which they had bought and who were to go in the same gang with me, and that I must not talk to any one while they were gone, and if I said anything about Cincinnati it would be the worse for me. I krowed what that meant—it meant "Nigger I'll whip you if you do." After they were gone a young man (a son of the landlady) came up to my room and says, "Aunt, these men who brought you here told

me when they left to keep you locked in your room, and not permit you to come out of it even for your meals, but that I must serve them in your room. They have brought you here, and you are the first one ever they've had any such orders about. Now, I want you to tell me the truth, where did they get you? I didn't want to tell, because I was afraid. He said, "You need not fear, they'll not be back before eleven o'clock, and I'll not betray you." So I told him all about it, and he said "who do you know in Cincinnati?" I told him and he said, "I'll go over to Cincinnati and if you are free they shall not take you any farther than Lexington." His mother and sisters were standing round talking and feeling sorry for me. When we heard the ruddy dog at the door we knew Bolton and Scott had returned, so they all left me. Immediately after, I heard the horn of the Lexington stage, and a shout came up the stairs for me to come down. The landlady came up to unlock my door and whispered to me "I'll see you in Lexington, if I can't do you any good here to day I'll do you no harm." I went down and was crowded into the stage with several others. We stopped on the road but once, where the horses were changed, or watered, or something. It was after dark when we reached Lexington the stage drove up to a large building, having a yard around it, with a high fence. We got out and were taken into the yard. When I heard the clang of the big iron gates as they shut behind us, my heart sank within me, for seeing a great many colored persons standing around I realized the fact that I was in a slave pen, which I afterward learned was Robards'. I was taken into the part of the house where Robards lived with a colored woman, who was known as his wife and by name Beck II-bards. I was taken there because buyers were permitted to go in and out of the slave pen, and there being danger that some one would follow me and see and take me from there, and in the house of Robards they would have no such opportunity. The next morning I took a view of the sale room connected with the slave pen. It was 60 feet in length and about half as wide, and at the time had 50 or 60 inmates of all ages and colors of both sexes. The women and girls wore either dresses of blue calico with a white spot in it, or red calico; all wore white aprons and collars. The men wore dark blue pants, blue blouse coats and broad lay-down collars, and they were compelled to keep themselves clean. If one was found with hair uncombed that one got the lash sore. I peeped through the hole in the wall and could not be seen by those inside; some were walking round, some were being inspected by purchasers, who were feeling their limbs and looking at their teeth just as you would a horse's, making them dance, etc. While I was at Robards' they kept me sewing on shirts for men in the pen. I was not there very long when one morning while Beck Robards and I was eating breakfast, (we sat in Robards' kitchen), the young landlord from Florence passed through the yard, and as he looked into the kitchen through the window his eye and mine met, he passed on; but I was so glad to see him I kind of smiled, and Beck saw it and she rushed up stairs and told Robards there was a man down there after me. So he came down and told me to get on my things right away, as Mrs. Fogles wanted me to come and sew for her. I had no things to get on but my bonnet, so I put it on and went with him. When we got there she asked me if I didn't want some breakfast; I said no. She then said she would give me some sewing directly; but just then an overseer named Woods drove up in a buggy and said to me, "come on! I'd nothing to do but obey, so I got in and he drove me to a place thirty miles from there that day."

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