

THE STORY OF GEORGE HARRIS.

Elsewhere we give a curious history of the actual facts and characters out of which grew "Uncle Tom's Cabin." They are chiefly interesting as furnishing one of those odd examples of the development of national events and revolutions, by chance, in themselves both commonplace and trivial, which occur sometimes as if to call our attention sharply to the Divine Provision underlying the ordinary every-day routine of our lives. The original George Harris was but one of a thousand nameless slaves who ran through on the underground railroad to Canada. His story is inferior to most of the others in dramatic interest, yet it furnished the germ of Mrs. Stowe's book, and this book, although when critically judged it is not equal in power to some of her others which are comparatively unknown, was without doubt one of the inciting causes of the war which set free over four millions of slaves.

We urge upon the more intelligent of the colored people the propriety of collecting now such histories as this of Lewis Clarke, and any others which will paint in imperishable colors for them the picture of Slavery and the slave as he was. The natural impulse since the war with the Whites of the North has been to put it and its cause out of sight as quickly as possible. They fought, driven by a savage necessity, with their own flesh and blood; and that necessity overcome, they have no mind to go back and pick over the details of the loathsome quarrel. They would be glad if the sunshine and quick-growing grain would hide now and always their brother's blood and their own which cry against each other from the ground. Nor would we have the histories kept as a record of guilt laid up against the slaveholder. Of a dead sin—no memorial. Beside that Christian consideration, there is the plain one of common sense, that it would be unfair to hold them responsible for that error out of the belief in which they are rapidly growing. In ten years from now, Slavery could by no possibility form a part of the Constitution of a Southern State. So quickly do the morals, the opinions, and the sentiment of a people alter and adapt themselves to the actual necessity of their present life. Nothing changes the

creed of a corporate body so fast as expediency. In 1858 we saw a mulatto slave arrested when crossing the Ohio River and taken into the streets of a border town on the Southern side. She had her baby in her arms, with which she had traveled on foot two hundred miles, only to see the strip of free soil on the other side of the river, and to be dragged back into slavery again. The citizens turned out to help drive her through the streets, and when some woman would have given her a cup of water out of charity, drove her back from her with insults. The same town, its interests being with the North, three years afterward, was foremost in the Union cause, and now is eager to give suffrage, and that with the heartiest good will, not only to black men but to black women. The wind is driving the great currents with this straw.

Free labor, mutual trade, and immigration will make the nightmare tales of the cruelties of Slavery appear fabulous in the eyes of the next generation of whites at the South, and it perhaps is as well it should be so. But if the descendants of slaves would furnish the surest incentive to ambition to their own children, they will suffer not one of these records of heroism among themselves to fall to the ground. "It may be good for a man," as says the Prophet, "to remember that he had borne the yoke "in his youth," provided he can also remember that he risked life and all that made life dear to rid himself of the yoke. If the colored people of this country desire a stronger bond to make them a nation, they can find it in the names of the men and women who first testified in torture and death to the price at which they held their chance of freedom. Let them not forget to carry these household gods with them from generation to generation, lest they learn to wear their liberty lightly, forgetting its worth. At the recent closing exercises of the Anti-Slavery Society in Pennsylvania, some reference was made to a record that had been kept for many years by the agent of the underground railroad in Philadelphia, himself the son of a slave, and a man of remarkable intelligence and probity. To that office, under the care of the leading Pennsylvanian Friends, came negroes from every part of the South, in every disguise, maimed and scarred, in boxes and bales—alive sometimes, to draw the free breath they had never known—dead sometimes, in sight of land. No tragedy could surpass in elements of dramatic horror the simple facts as stated by the agent; the covert notice, given by telegram, that goods were to be looked for; the watching for the train; its delays when life hung upon an hour, upon the chance overturn of the box by a careless porter; its conveyal to the office; the two or three men and women at night with locked doors, standing with bated breath while the boards were knocked off, not knowing whether a free man would come out among them or a dead lump of matter on which man could wreak his brutal malice no longer. Brothers met in this room that had never seen each other's faces; mothers came here for tidings of the children that had been taken from them long years ago, not knowing whether they were living or dead. We sincerely hope that the promise made of the publication of this especial record will be fulfilled, and that all such histories may be preserved now while they can be taken down freshly from the lips of eye-witnesses. To the most indifferent reader they would prove full of a strange interest, and pregnant with a noble meaning. But to the future descendant of these men they will have a value only to be appreciated when they are lost beyond recall.