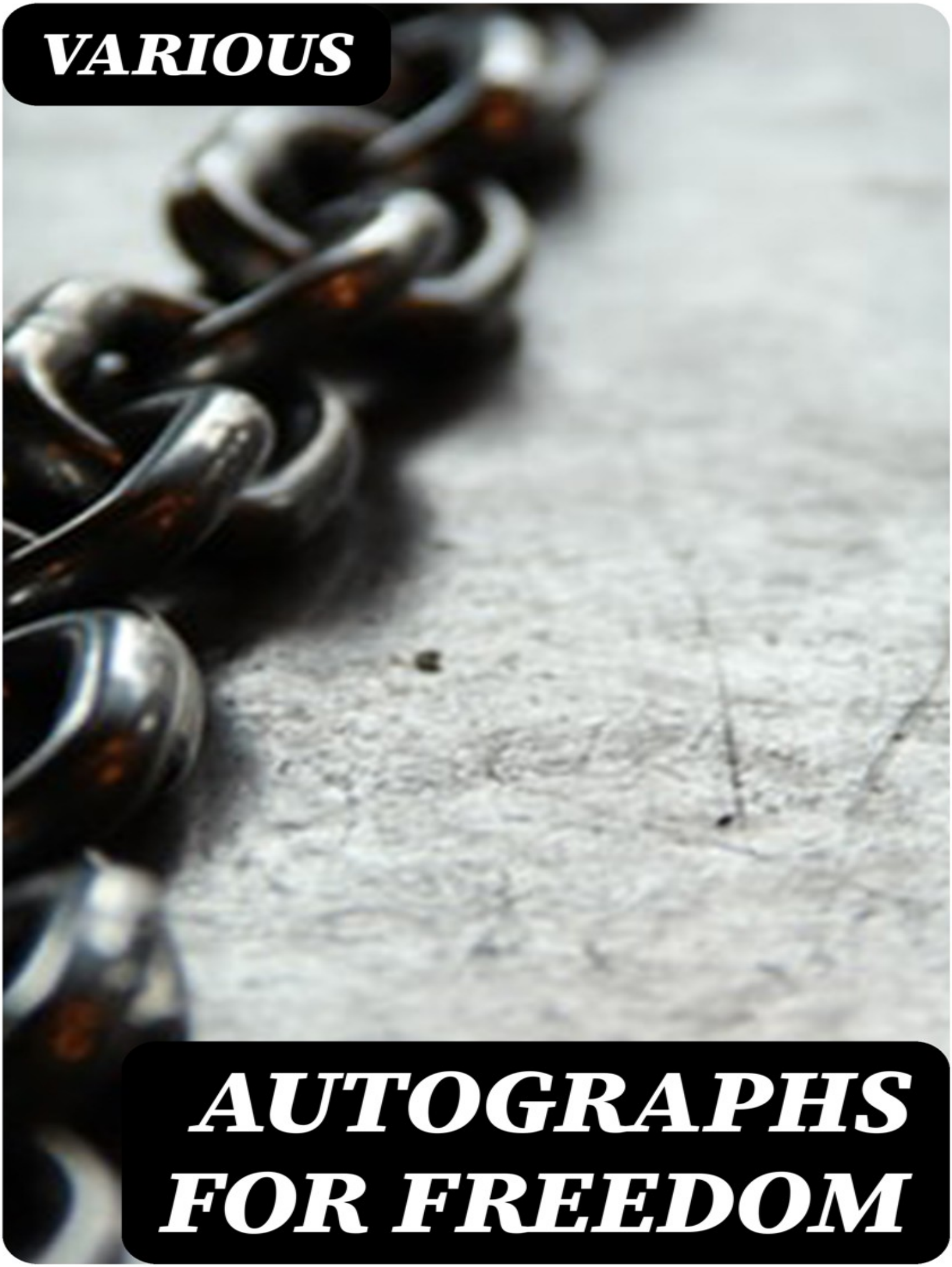
VARIOUS
AUTOGRAPHS
FOR FREEDOM

Various

Autographs for Freedom

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PREFACE.

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THERE is, perhaps, little need of detaining the kind reader, even for one moment, in this the vestibule of our Temple of Liberty, to state the motives and reasons for the publication of this collection of Anti-slavery testimonies.

The good cause to which the volume is devoted;—the influence which must ever be exerted by persons of exalted character, and high mental endowments;—the fact that society is slow to accept any cause that has not the baptism of the acknowledged noble and good;—the happiness arising from making any exertion to ameliorate the condition of the injured race amongst us, will, at once, suggest reasons and motives for sending forth this offering, which, while it shall prove acceptable as a GIFT BOOK, may help to swell the tide of that sentiment that, by the Divine blessing, will sweep away from this otherwise happy land, the great sin of SLAVERY.

Should this publication be instrumental in casting *one* ray of hope on the heart of one poor slave, or should it draw the attention of one person, hitherto uninterested, to the deep wrongs of the bondman, or cause one sincere and earnest effort to promote emancipation, we believe that the kind contributors, who have generously responded to our call, not less than the members of our Society, will feel themselves gratified and compensated.

The proceeds of the sale of the "AUTOGRAPHS FOR FREEDOM," will be devoted to the dissemination of light and truth on the subject of slavery throughout the country.

On behalf of "*The Rochester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society*,"

JULIA GRIFFITHS, *Secretary*.

ROCHESTER, 1852.

BE UP AND DOING.

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CAN nothing be done for Freedom? Yes, much can be done. Everything can be done. Slavery can be confined within its present bounds. It can be meliorated. It can be, and it must be abolished. The task is as simple as its performance would be beneficent and as its rewards would be glorious. It requires only that we follow this plain rule of conduct and course of activity, namely, to do, everywhere, and on every occasion what we can, and not to neglect nor refuse to do what we can at any time, because at that precise time and on that particular occasion we cannot do more. Circumstances define possibilities. When we have done our best to shape them and to make them propitious, we may rest satisfied that superior wisdom has, nevertheless, controlled them and us, and that it will be satisfied with us if we do all the good that shall then be found possible.

But we can, and we must begin deeper and lower than the composition and combination of factions. Wherein do the security and strength of slavery consist? You answer, in the constitution of the United States, and in the constitutions and laws of the slave-holding States. Not at all. It is in the erroneous sentiments of the American people.

Constitutions and laws can no more rise above the virtue of the people than the limpid stream can climb above its native spring. Inculcate the love of freedom and the sacredness of the rights of man under the paternal roof. See to it, that they are taught in the schools and in the churches. Reform your own codes and expurgate the vestiges of slavery. Reform your own manners and customs and rise above the prejudices of caste. Receive the fugitive who lays his weary limbs at your door, and defend him as you would your household gods, for he, not they, has power to bring down blessings on your hearth. Correct your error that slavery has any constitutional guarantee that may not be released, and that ought not to be relinquished. Say to slavery, when it shows its bond and demands its pound of flesh, that if it draws one drop of blood its life shall pay the forfeit. Inculcate that the free States can exercise the rights of hospitality and humanity, that Congress knows no finality and can debate, that Congress can at least mediate with the slave-holding States, that at least future generations may be bought and given up to freedom. Do all this, and inculcate all this, in the spirit of moderation and benevolence, and not of retaliation and fanaticism, and you will ultimately bring the parties of this country into a common condemnation and even the slave-holding States themselves into a renunciation of slavery, which is not less necessary for them than for the common security and welfare. Whenever the public mind shall be prepared, and the public conscience shall demand the abolition of slavery the way to do it will open before us, and then mankind will

be surprised at the ease with which the greatest of social and political evils can be removed.

William H. Seward.

CASTE AND CHRIST.

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He is not ashamed to call them brethren.

Ho! thou dark and weary stranger
From the tropic’s palmy strand,
Bowed with toil, with mind benighted,
What wouldst thou upon our land?

Am I not, O man, thy brother?
Spake the stranger patiently,
All that makes thee, man, immortal,
Tell me, dwells it not in me?

I, like thee, have joy, have sorrow,
I, like thee, have love and fear,
I, like thee, have hopes and longings
Far beyond this earthly sphere.

Thou art happy,—I am sorrowing,
Thou art rich, and I am poor;
In the name of our *one* Father
Do not spurn me from your door.

Thus the dark one spake, imploring,
To each stranger passing nigh,
But each child and man and woman,
Priest and Levite passed him by.

Spurned of men,—despised, rejected,
Spurned from school and church and hall,
Spurned from business and from pleasure,
Sad he stood, apart from all.

Then I saw a form all glorious,
Spotless as the dazzling light,
As He passed, men veiled their faces,
And the earth, as heaven, grew bright.

Spake he to the dusky stranger,
Awe-struck there on bended knee,
Rise! for *I* have called thee *brother*,
I am not ashamed of thee.

When I wedded mortal nature
To my Godhead and my throne,
Then I made all mankind sacred,
Sealed all human for mine own.

By Myself, the Lord of ages,
I have sworn to right the wrong,
I have pledged my word, unbroken,
For the weak against the strong.

And upon my gospel banner
I have blazed in light the sign,
He who scorns his lowliest brother,
Never shall have hand of mine.

Hear the word!—who fight for freedom!
Shout it in the battle’s van!

Hope! for bleeding human nature!
Christ the *God*, is Christ the *man*!

H. E. B. Stowe.

ANDOVER, JULY 22, 1852.

LETTER FROM THE EARL OF CARLISLE TO THE SECRETARY OF THE SOCIETY.

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LONDON, JULY 8, 1852.

MADAM:—

I should be very sorry indeed to refuse any request addressed to me from “the Rochester Ladies’ Anti-Slavery Association.”

At the same time I really should feel at a loss what to send, but as I am on the point of sending off a letter to the authoress of Uncle Tom’s Cabin, I venture to submit a copy of it to those who I feel sure must be fond of such a countrywoman.

Your very faithful Servant,

Carlisle

LONDON, JULY 8, 1852.

MADAM:—

I have allowed some time to elapse before I thanked you for the great honor and kindness you did me in sending to me, from yourself, a copy of Uncle Tom’s Cabin. I thought it due to the subject of which I perceived that it treated, not to send a mere acknowledgment, as I confess from a motive of policy I am apt to do, upon the first arrival of the book. I therefore determined to read, before I wrote.

Having thus read, it is not in the stiff and conventional form of compliment, still less in the technical language of criticism, that I am about to speak of your work. I return my deep and solemn thanks to Almighty God, who has led and enabled you to write such a book.

I do feel, indeed, the most thorough assurance that in His good providence such a book cannot have been written in vain. I have long felt that slavery is by far the *topping* question of the world and age we live in, involving all that is most thrilling in heroism, and most touching in distress,—in short, the real epic of the universe. The self-interest of the parties most nearly concerned on the one hand, the apathy and ignorance of unconcerned observers on the other, have left these august pretensions to drop very much out of sight, and hence my rejoicing that a writer has appeared who will be read, and must be felt, and that happen what may to the transactions of slavery, they will no longer be suppressed, “carent quia vate sacrâ.”

I trust that what I have just said was not required to show the entire sympathy I entertain with respect to the main truth and leading scope of your high argument, but we live in a world only too apt to regard the accessories and accidents of a subject above its real and vital essence; no

one can know so well as you how much the external appearance of the negro detracts from the romance and sentimentality which undoubtedly might attach to his position and his wrongs, and on this account it does seem to me proportionately important that you should have brought to your portraiture great grace of style, great power of language, a play of humor which relieves and brightens even the dark depth of the back-ground which you were called upon to reveal, a force of pathos which, to give it the highest praise, does not lay behind even all the dread reality, and, above all, a variety, a discrimination, and a truth in the delineation of character, which even to my own scanty and limited experience of the society you describe accredits itself instantaneously and irresistibly. Seldom, indeed, could I more forcibly apply the line of a very favorite poet,—

“And truths divine came mended from that tongue.”

I have been told that in an English periodical, the quality of genius has been denied to your book. The motives which must have guided its composition will probably have made you supremely indifferent to mere criticism, especially to any which argues so much obfuscation both of head and heart. Your work has genius of the highest order, and it is the lowest of its merits.

There is one point which, in face of all that your book has aimed at and achieved, I think of extremely slight importance, but which I will nevertheless just mention, if only to show that I have not been bribed into this fervor of admiration. I think, then, that whenever you speak of

England and her institutions, it is in a tone which fails to do them fair justice. I do not know what distinct charges you think could be established against our aristocracy and capitalists, but you generally convey the impression that the same oppressions in degree, though not in kind, might be brought home to them which are now laid to the charge of Southern slave-holders. Exposed to the same ordeal, they might very probably not stand the test better. All I contend for is, that the circumstances in which they are placed, and the institutions by which they are surrounded, make the parallel wholly inapplicable. I cannot but suspect that your view has been in many respects derived from composers of fiction and others among ourselves who, writing with distinguished ability, have been more successful in delineating and dissecting the morbid features of our modern society, than in detecting the principle which is at fault, or suggesting the appropriate remedy. My own belief is, liable, if you please, to national bias, that our capitalists are very much the same sort of persons as your own in the Northern States, with the same mixtures and inequalities of motive and action. With respect to our aristocracy, I should really be tempted to say that, tried by their conduct on the question of Free Trade, they do not sustain an unfavorable comparison with your uppermost classes. Allow me to add, that when in one place you refer to those who have already emancipated their slaves, I think a case more directly in point than the proceedings of the Hungarian nobles might have been selected: such, at least, I feel sure would have been the case, if the passages in question had been written by one who certainly was keenly alive to the faults of

England, but who did justice to her good qualities and deeds with a heartiness exceeding that of most of her own sons,—your great and good Dr. Channing.

I need not repeat how irrelevant, after all, I feel what I have said upon this head to be to the main issues involved in your work; there is little doubt, too, that as a nation we have our special failings, and one of them probably is that we care too little about what other nations think of them.

Nor can I wish my countrymen ever to forget that their own past history should prevent them from being forward in casting accusations on their transatlantic brethren on the subject of slavery. With great ignorance of its actual miseries and horrors, there is also among us great ignorance of the fearful perplexities and difficulties with which its solution could not fail to be attended. I feel, however, that there is a considerable difference between reluctant acquiescence in what you inherit from the past, and voluntary fresh enlargements and reinforcements of the system. For instance, I should not say that the mode in which such an enactment as the Fugitive Slave Law has been considered in this country has at all erred upon the side of overmuch indignation.

I need not detain you longer: I began my letter with returning thanks to Almighty God for the appearance of your work, and I offer my humble and ardent prayer to the same Supreme Source that it may have a marked agency in hastening the great consummation, which I should feel it a practical atheism not to believe must be among the unfulfilled purposes of the Divine power and love.

I have the honor to be, Madam,

Your sincere admirer and well-wisher,

CARLISLE.

MRS. BEECHER STOWE.

MOMMA CHARLOTTE.

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“SLAVERY is merely an idea!” said Mr. S——; “the slaves are, in reality, better off than we are, if they had sense enough to know it. They are taken care of—(they must be, you know, because it is the master’s interest to keep them in good condition, and a man will always do what is for his interest). They get rid of all responsibility,—which is what we are groaning under; and if they were only let alone, they would be happy enough,—happier than their masters, I dare say.”

“You think it, then, anything but kindness to urge their emancipation?”

“To be sure I do! and I would have every one that teaches them to be discontented hung up without judge or jury.”

“You seem particularly interested for the slave,—”

“Interested! I would have every one of them sent beyond the Rocky Mountains, if I could,—or into ‘kingdom come,’ for that matter. They are the curse of the country; but as long as they are *property*, I would shoot any man that put bad ideas in their heads or that interfered with my management of them, as I would shoot a dog that killed my sheep.”

“But do they never get what you call ‘bad ideas’ from any but white people?”

“O, there is no knowing where they get them,—but they are full of ’em. No matter how kind you are to them, they are never satisfied!”

“I can tell you where they get some of their ideas of slavery, if you will allow me.”

“Certainly,—I am always glad of information.”

“Well,—I will take up your time with nothing but actual facts, for the truth of which I will be answerable. In a Western tour, not many years since, I saw one day a young lady, fair as a lily, and with a sweet expression of countenance, walking in the street with a little black girl whom she held by the hand. The little girl was about six years old, neatly dressed and very clean; and on her neck she had a little gauze shawl that somebody had given her, the border of which was composed of the figure of the American Eagle many times repeated, each impression accompanied by the word ‘LIBERTY,’ woven into the fabric.

“This curious decoration, together with the wistful look of the child’s face, and the benevolent air of the young lady, with whom I was slightly acquainted, led me to ask some questions, which were answered with an air in which modesty and sensibility were blended. I learned that the young lady had undertaken the trying task of accompanying the little girl through the place—which was a considerable village—for the purpose of collecting the sum of fifty dollars, with which to purchase the freedom of the child.

“‘And how,’ said I, ‘did you become interested in the poor little thing?’

“‘She belongs to a member of my family,’ said Miss C——, with a blush; ‘to my aunt, Mrs. Jones.’

“‘And how did she find her way to the north?’

“‘Her mother, who is the servant of my aunt, got leave to bring Violet along with her, when her mistress came here for

the summer.’

“‘But both mother and child are free by the mere circumstance of being brought here,—’

“‘O, but Momma Charlotte promised her mistress that she would not leave her, nor let Violet do so, if she might bring the child with her, and beg money to buy her. She says she does not care for freedom for herself.’

“I could not do less than go with the good girl for awhile, to assist a little in her labor of love, which in the end, and with a good deal of difficulty, was finally accomplished. It was not until after this that I became acquainted with Momma Charlotte, the mother of Violet, and learned a few of the particulars of a story which had made her ‘not care for freedom.’

“Momma Charlotte was the mother of ten children,—six daughters and four sons. Her husband had been a free black,—a carpenter, able to keep a comfortable home for his family, hiring his wife of her master. At the time of the Southampton insurrection, this man was among the suspected, and, on suspicion, not proof, he was taken up,—tried, after the fashion of that time, and hung, with several others,—all between sunset and sunrise of a single day.

“‘He was innocent,—he had had no hand in the matter, as God is my judge!’ said poor Momma Charlotte.

“This was but the beginning of troubles. A sense of insecurity made the sale of slaves more vigorous than ever. Charlotte’s children were sold, one by one—no two together—the boys for the sugar country,—the girls for—‘the New Orleans market,’ whence they were dispersed, she never knew where.

“‘All gone!’ she said; ‘where I could never see ’em nor hear from ’em. I don’t even know where one of ’em is!’

“‘And Violet?’

“‘O yes,—I mean all but Violet. She’s all I’ve got in the world, and I want to keep her. I begged Missus to let me keep jist one! and she said if I could get any body to buy her for me, I might have her,—for you know I couldn’t own her myself, ’cause I’m a slave.’

“‘But you are no longer a slave, Momma Charlotte; your mistress by bringing you here voluntarily has freed you,—’

“‘Yes,—I know,—but I promised, you see! And I don’t care to be free. I’m old, and my children’s gone, and my heart’s broke. I ha’n’t no more courage. If I can keep Violet, it’s all I expect. My mistress is good enough to me,—I live pretty easy.’

“Such was Momma Charlotte’s philosophy, but her face told through what sufferings such philosophy had been acquired. A fixed grief sat on her brow; since the judicial murder of her husband she had never been known to laugh,—hardly to smile. Her eyes were habitually cast on the ground, and her voice seemed always on the brink of tears. She was what you call ‘*dissatisfied*,’ I think, Mr. S——.”

“O, you have selected an extreme case! those things very seldom happen.” (Seldom!) “After all, you see the poor old thing knew what was right; she showed the right spirit,—”

“Yes,—she,—but her *owners*?”

Here Mr. S—— was sure he saw a friend at a distance to whom it was necessary he should speak immediately; so he

darted off, and I lost the benefit of his defence of the peculiarities of the peculiar institution.

Mrs. C. M. Kirkland