

## CLARISSA DAVIS

## ARRIVED DRESSED IN MALE ATTIRE

Clarissa fled from Portsmouth, Va., in May, 1854, with two of her brothers. Two months and a half before she succeeded in getting off, Clarissa had made a desperate effort, but failed. The brothers succeeded, but she was left. She had not given up all hope of escape, however, and therefore sought "a safe hiding-place until an opportunity might offer," by which she could follow her brothers on the U. G. R. R. Clarissa was owned by Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Burley, of Portsmouth, under whom she had always served.

Of them she spoke favorably, saying that she "had not been used as hard as many others were." At this period, Clarissa was about twenty-two years of age, of a bright brown complexion, with handsome features, exceedingly respectful and modest, and possessed all the characteristics of a well-bred young lady. For one so little acquainted with books as she was, the correctness of her speech was perfectly astonishing.

For Clarissa and her two brothers a "reward of one thousand dollars" was kept standing in the papers for a length of time, as these (articles) were considered very rare and valuable; the best that could be produced in Virginia.

In the meanwhile the brothers had passed safely on to New Bedford, but Clarissa remained secluded, "waiting for the storm to subside." Keeping up courage day by day, for seventy-five days with the fear of being detected and severely punished, and then sold, after all her hopes and struggles, required the faith of a martyr. Time after time, when she hoped to succeed in making her escape, ill luck seemed to disappoint her, and nothing but intense suffering appeared to be in store. Like many others, under the crushing weight of oppression, she thought she "should have died" ere she tasted liberty. In this state of mind, one day, word was conveyed to her that the steamship, "City of Richmond," had

arrived from Philadelphia, and that the steward on board (with whom she was acquainted) had consented to secrete her this trip, if she could manage to reach the ship safely, which was to start the next day. This news to Clarissa was both cheering and painful. She had been "praying all the time while waiting," but now she felt "that if it would only rain right hard the next morning about three o'clock, to drive the police officers off the street, then she could safely make her way to the boat." Therefore she prayed anxiously all that day that it would rain, "but no sign of rain appeared till towards midnight." The prospect looked horribly discouraging; but she prayed on, and at the appointed hour (three o'clock—before day), the rain descended in torrents. Dressed in male attire, Clarissa left the miserable coop where she had been almost without light or air for two and a half months, and unmolesed, reached the boat safely, and was secreted in a box by Wm. Bagual, a clever young man who sincerely sympathized with the slave, having a wife in slavery himself; and by him she was safely delivered into the hands of the Vigilance Committee.

Clarissa Davis here, by advice of the Committee, dropped her old name, and was straightway christened "Mary D. Armistead." Desiring to join her brothers and sister in New Bedford, she was duly furnished with her U. G. R. R. passport and directed thitherward. Her father, who was left behind when she got off, soon after made his way on North, and joined his children. He was too old and infirm probably to be worth anything, and had been allowed to go free, or to purchase himself for a mere nominal sum. Slaveholders would, on some such occasions, show wonderful liberality in letting their old slaves go free, when they could work no more. After reaching New Bedford, Clarissa manifested her gratitude in writing to her friends in Philadelphia repeatedly, and evinced a very lively interest in the U. G. R. R. The appended letter indicates her sincere feelings of gratitude and deep interest in the cause—

NEW BEDFORD, August 26, 1855.

Mr. STILL.—I avail my self to write you the few lines hoping they may find you and your family well as they leaves me very well and all the family well except my father he seems to be improving with his shoulder he has been able to work a little I

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received the papers I was highly delighted to receive them I was very glad to hear from you in the wheeler case I was very glad to hear that the persons were safe I was very sorry to hear that mr Williamson was put in prison but I know if the praying part of the people will pray for him and if he will put his trust in the lord he will bring him out more than conquer please remember my Dear old father and sisters and brothers to your family kiss the children for me I hear that the yellow fever is very bad down south now if the underground railroad could have free course the emigrant would cross the river of gordan rapidly I hope it may continue to run and I hope the wheels of the car may be greased with more substantial grease so they may run over swiftly I would have wrote before but circumstances would not permit me Miss Sanders and all the friends desired to be remembered to you and your family I shall be pleased to hear from the underground rail road often

Yours respectfully,

MARY D. ARMSTEAD.

WILLIAM PEEL, ALIAS  
WILLIAM BOX PEEL JONES

ARRIVED PER ERICSSON LINE OF STEAMERS.  
WRAPPED IN STRAW AND BOXED UP, APRIL, 1859

William is twenty-five years of age, unmistakably colored, good-looking, rather under the medium size, and of pleasing manners. William had himself boxed up by a near relative and forwarded by the Ericsson line of steamers. He gave the ship to Robert H. Carr, his owner (a grocer and commission merchant), after this wise, and for the following reasons: For some time previous his master had been selling off his slaves every now and then, the same as other groceries, and this astonished William that he was liable to be in the market any day; consequently, he preferred the box to the auction-block.

He did not complain of having been treated very badly by Carr, but felt that no man was safe while owned by another. In fact, he "hated the very name of slaveholder." The limit of the box not admitting of straightening himself out he was taken with the cramp on the road, suffered indescribable misery, and had his faith fixed to the utmost—indeed was brought to the very verge of "screaming aloud" ere relief came. However, he controlled himself, though only for a short season, for before a great while an excessive faintness came over him. Here nature became quite exhausted. He thought he must "die"; but his time had not yet come. After a severe struggle he revived, but only to encounter a third ordeal no less painful than the one through which he had just passed. Next a very "cold chill" came over him, which seemed almost to freeze the very blood in his veins and gave him intense agony, from which he only found relief on awaking, having actually fallen asleep in that condition. Finally, however, he arrived at Philadelphia, on a steamer, Sabbath morning. A devoted friend of his, expecting him, engaged a carriage and repaired to the wharf for the box. The bill of lading and the receipt he had with him, and likewise knew where the box was located on the boat. Although he well knew freight was not usually delivered on Sunday, yet his deep solicitude for the safety of his friend determined him to do all that lay in his power to res-

cue him from his perilous situation. Handing his bill of lading to the proper officer of the boat, he asked if he could get the freight that it called for. The officer looked at the bill and said, "No, we do not deliver freight on Sunday;" but, noticing the anxiety of the man, he asked him if he would know it if he were to see it. Slowly—fearing that too much interest manifested might excite suspicion—he replied: "I think I should." Deliberately looking around amongst all the "freight," he discovered the box, and said, "I think that is it there." Said officer stepped to it, looked at the directions on it, then at the bill of lading, and said, "That is right, take it along." Here the interest in these two persons was thrilling in the highest degree. But the size of the box was too large for the carriage, and the driver refused to take it. Newly an hour and a half was spent in looking for a furniture car. Finally one was procured, and again the box was laid hold of by the occupants particular friend, when, to his dread alarm, the poor fellow within gave a sudden cough. At this startling circumstance he dropped the box, equally as quick, although dreadfully frightened, and, as if helped by some invisible agency, he commenced singing, "Hush, my babe, lie still and slumber;" with the most apparent indifference, at the same time slowly making his way from the box. Soon his fears subsided, and it was presumed that no one was any the wiser on account of the accident, or coughing. Thus, after summoning courage, he laid hold of the box a third time, and the Rubicon was passed. The car driver, totally ignorant of the contents of the box, drove to the number to which he was directed to take it—left it and went about his business. Now is a moment of intense interest—now of inexpressible delight. The box is opened, the straw removed, and the poor fellow is loosed; and is rejoicing. I will venture to say, as mortal never did rejoice, who had not been in similar peril. This particular friend was scarcely less overjoyed, however, and their joy did not abate for several hours; nor was it confined to themselves, for two invited members of the Vigilance Committee also partook of a full share. This box man was named Wm. Jones. He was boxed up in Baltimore by the friend who received him at the wharf, who did not come in the boat with him, but came in the cars and met him at the wharf.

The trial in the box lasted just seventeen hours before victory was achieved. Jones was well cared for by the Vigilance Committee and sent on his way rejoicing, feeling that Resolution, Underground Rail Road, and Liberty were invaluable.

On his way to Canada, he stopped at Albany, and the subjoined letter gives his view of things from that stand-point—

MR. STILLER.—I take this opportunity of writing a few lines to you hoping that you may find you in good health and family; I am well at present and doing well at present I am now in a store and getting sixteen dollars a month at the present. I feel very much obliged to you and your family for your kindness to me while I was with you I have got a long without any trial. I am now in Albany City. Give my love to Mrs and Mr Miller and tell them I am very much obliged to them for their kind notice. Give my love to my Brother more Jones tell him I should like to hear from him very much and he must write. Tell him to give my love to all of my particular friends and tell them I should like to see them very much. Tell him that he must come to see me for I want to see him for something very particular. Please answer this letter as soon as possible and excuse me for not writing sooner as I don't write myself. no more at the present.

WILLIAM JONES.

direct to one hundred 125 yards. sit

His good friend returned to Baltimore the same day the box man started for the North, and immediately dispatched through the post the following brief letter, worded in Underground Rail Road parables:

BALTIMORE APRIL 16, 1859.

W. STILLER.—Dear brother I have taken the opportunity of writing you these few lines to inform you that I am well and hoping these few lines may find you enjoying the same good blessing please to write me word at what time was it when Israel went to Jerico I am very anxious to hear for there is a mighty host will pass over and you and I my brother will sing hallelujah I shall notify you when the great catastrophe shall take place No more at the present but remain your brother

N. L. J.

## WILLIAM JORDON, ALIAS WILLIAM PRICE

Under Governor Badger, of North Carolina, William had experienced Slavery in its most hateful form. True, he had only been twelve months under the yoke of this high functionary. But William's experience in this short space of time, was of a nature very painful.

Previous to coming into the governor's hands, William was held as the property of Mrs. Mary Jordon, who owned large numbers of slaves. Whether the governor was moved by this consideration, or by the fascinating charms of Mrs. Jordon, or both, William was not able to decide. But the governor offered her his hand, and they became united in wedlock. By this circumstance, William was brought into his unhappy relations with the Chief Magistrate of the State of North Carolina. This was the third time the governor had been married. Thus it may be seen, that the governor was a firm believer in wives as well as slaves. Commonly he was regarded as a man of wealth. William being an intelligent piece of property, his knowledge of the governor's rules and customs was quite complete, as he readily answered such questions as were propounded to him. In this way a great amount of interesting information was learned from William respecting the governor, slaves, on the plantation, in the swamps, etc. The governor owned large plantations, and was interested in raising cotton, corn, and peas, and was also a practical planter. He was willing to trust neither overseers nor slaves any further than he could help.

The governor and his wife were both equally severe towards them; would stint them shamefully in clothing and food, though they did not get flogged quite as often as some others on neighboring plantations. Frequently, the governor would be out on the plantation from early in the morning till noon, inspecting the operations of the overseers and slaves.

In order to serve the governor, William had been separated from his wife by sale, which was the cause of his escape. He parted not with his companion willingly. At the time, however,

he was promised that he should have some favors shown him—he could make over-work, and earn a little money, and once or twice in the year, have the opportunity of making visits to her. Two hundred miles was the distance between them.

He had not been long on the governor's plantation before his honor gave him distinctly to understand that the idea of his going two hundred miles to see his wife was all nonsense, and entirely out of the question. "If I said so, I did not mean it," said his honor, when the slave, on a certain occasion, alluded to the conditions on which he consented to leave home, etc.

Against this cruel decision of the governor, William's heart revolted, for he was warmly attached to his wife, and so he made up his mind, if he could not see her "once or twice a year even," as he had been promised, he had rather "die," or live in a "cave in the wood," than to remain all his life under the governor's yoke. Obeying the dictates of his feelings, he went to the woods. For ten months before he was successful in finding the Underground Rail Road, this brave-hearted young fugitive abode in the swamps—three months in a cave—surrounded with bears, wild cats, rattle-snakes and the like.

While in the swamps and cave, he was not troubled, however, about ferocious animals and venomous reptiles. He feared only man!

From his own story there was no escaping the conclusion, that if the choice had been left to him, he would have preferred at any time to have encountered at the mouth of his cave a ferocious bear than his master, the governor of North Carolina. How he managed to subsist, and ultimately effected his escape, was listened to with the deepest interest, though the recital of these incidents must here be very brief.

After night he would, come out of his cave, and, in some instances, would succeed in making his way to a plantation, and if he could get nothing else, he would help himself to a "pig," or anything else he could conveniently convert into food. Also, as opportunity would offer, a friend of his would favor him with some meal, etc. With this mode of living he labored to content himself until he could do better. During these ten months he suffered indescribable hardships, but he felt that his condition in the cave was far preferable to that on the plantation, under the

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control of his Excellency, the Governor. All this time, however, William had a true friend, with whom he could communicate; one who was wide awake, and was on the alert to find a reliable captain from the North, who would consent to take this "property," or "freight," for a consideration. He heard at last of a certain Captain, who was then doing quite a successful business in an Underground way. This good news was conveyed to William, and afforded him a ray of hope in the wilderness. As Providence would have it, his hope did not meet with disappointment; nor did his ten months' trial, warring against the barbarism of Slavery, seem too great to endure for Freedom. He was about to leave his cave and his animal and reptile neighbors—his heart swelling with gladness—but the thought of soon being beyond the reach of his mistress and master thrilled him with inexpressible delight. He was brought away by Captain F., and turned over to the Committee, who were made to rejoice with him over the signal victory he had gained in his martyr-like endeavors to throw off the yoke, and of course they took much pleasure in aiding him. William was of a dark color, stout made physically, and well knew the value of Freedom, and how to hate and combat Slavery. It will be seen by the appended letter of Thomas Garrett, that William had the good luck to fall into the hands of this tried friend, by whom he was aided to Philadelphia.

WILMINGTON, 12th mo., 19th, 1855.

DEAR FRIEND, WILLIAM STILL.—The bearer of this is one of the twenty-one that I thought had all gone North; he left home on Christmas day, one year since, wandered about the forests of North Carolina for about ten months, and then came here with those forwarded to New Bedford, where he is anxious to go. I have furnished him with a pretty good pair of boots, and gave him money to pay his passage to Philadelphia. He has been at work in the country near here for some three weeks, till taken sick; he is, by no means, well, but thinks he had better try to get further North, which I hope his friends in Philadelphia will aid him to do. I handed this morning Captain Lambson's\* wife twenty dollars to help fee a lawyer to defend him. She leaves this morning, with

\*Captain Lambson had been suspected of having aided in the escape of slaves from the neighborhood of Norfolk, and was in prison awaiting his trial.

CHARLES THOMPSON

her child, for Norfolk, to be at the trial before the Commissioner on the 24th instant. Passmore Williamson agreed to raise fifty dollars for him. As none came to hand, and a good chance to send it by his wife, I thought best to advance that much.

Thy friend,  
THOS. GARRETT.

## ARRIVAL FROM MARYLAND, 1859

ANN MARIA JACKSON AND HER SEVEN CHILDREN—  
MARY ANN, WILLIAM HENRY, FRANCES SABRINA, WILHELMINA,  
JOHN EDWIN, EBENEZER THOMAS, AND WILLIAM ALBERT

The coming of the above named was duly announced by  
Thomas Garrett:

WILMINGTON, 11th mo., 21st, 1858.

DEAR FRIENDS—MCKIN AND STILL:—I write to inform you that on the 16th of this month, we passed on four able bodied men to Pennsylvania, and they were followed last night by a woman and her six children, from three or four years of age, up to sixteen years; I believe the whole belonged to the same estate.

and they were to have been sold at public sale, I was informed yesterday, but preferred seeking their own master; we had some trouble in getting those last safe along, as they could not travel far on foot, and could not safely cross any of the bridges on the canal, either on foot or in carriage. A man left here two days since, with carriage, to meet them this side of the canal, but owing to spies they did not reach him till 10 o'clock last night; this morning he returned, having seen them about one or two o'clock this morning in a second carriage, on the border of Chester county, where I think they are all safe, if they can be kept from Philadelphia. If you see them they can tell their own tales, as I have seen one of them. May He, who feeds the ravens, care for them. Yours,  
THOS. GARRETT.

The fire of freedom obviously burned with no ordinary fervor in the breast of this slave mother, or she never would have ventured with the burden of seven children, to escape from the hell of Slavery.

ANN MARIA was about forty years of age, good-looking, pleasant countenance, and of a chestnut color, height medium, and intellect above the average. Her bearing was humble, as might have been expected, from the fact that she emerged from the lowest depths of Delaware Slavery. During the Fall prior to her escape, she lost her husband under most trying circumstances: he died in the poor-house, a raving maniac. Two of his children

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had been taken from their mother by her owner, as was usual with slave-holders, which preyed so severely on the poor father's mind that it drove him into a state of hopeless insanity. He was a "free man" in the eye of Delaware laws, yet he was not allowed to exercise the least authority over his children.

Prior to the time that the two children were taken from their mother, she had been allowed to live with her husband and children, independently of her master, by supporting herself and them with the white-wash brush, wash-tub, etc. For this privilege the mother doubtless worked with double energy, and the master, in all probability, was largely the gainer, as the children were no expense to him in their infancy; but when they began to be old enough to hire out, or bring high prices in the market, he snatched away two of the finest articles, and the powerless father was immediately rendered a fit subject for the mad-house; but the brave hearted mother looked up to God, resolved to wait patiently until in a good Providence the way might open to escape with her remaining children to Canada.

Year in and year out she had suffered to provide food and raiment for her little ones. Many times in going out to do day's work she would be compelled to leave her children, not knowing whether during her absence they would fall victims to fire, or be carried off by the master. But she possessed a well tried faith, which in her flight kept her from despondency. Under her former lot she scarcely murmured, but declared that she had never been at ease in Slavery a day after the birth of her first-born. The desire to go to some part of the world where she could have the control and comfort of her children, had always been a prevailing idea with her. "It almost broke my heart," she said, "when he came and took my children away as soon as they were big enough to hand me a drink of water. My husband was always very kind to me, and I had often wanted him to run away with me and the children, but I could not get him in the notion; he did not feel that he could, and so he stayed, and died broken-hearted crazy. I was owned by a man named Joseph Brown, he was a property in Milford, and he had a place in Vicksburg, and some of his time he spends there, and some of the time he lives in Maryland. This Fall he said he was going to take four of my oldest children and two other servants to Vicksburg. I just hap-

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pened to hear of this news in time. My master was wanting to keep me in the dark about taking them, for fear that something might happen. My master is very sly; he is a tall, slim man, with a smooth face, bald head, light hair, long and sharp nose, swears very hard, and drinks. He is a widower, and is rich.

On the road the poor mother with her travel-worn children became desperately alarmed, fearing that they were betrayed. But God had provided better things for her; her strength and hope were soon fully restored, and she was lucky enough to fall into the right hands. It was a special pleasure to aid such a mother. Her arrival in Canada was announced by Rev. H. Wilson as follows:

NIAGARA CITY, Nov. 30th, 1858.

DEAR BRO. STILLÉ—I am happy to inform you that Mrs. Jackson and her interesting family of seven children arrived safe and in good health and spirits at my house in St. Catharines, on Saturday evening last. With sincere pleasure I provided for them comfortable quarters till this morning, when they left for Toronto. I got them conveyed there at half fare, and gave them letters of introduction to Thomas Henning, Esq., and Mrs. Dr. Willis, trusting that they will be better cared for in Toronto than they could be at St. Catharines. We have so many coming to us we think it best for some of them to pass on to other places. My wife gave them all a good supply of clothing before they left us. James Henry, an older son is, I think, not far from St. Catharine, but has not as yet reunited with the family. Faithfully and truly yours,  
HIRAM WILSON.

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD



MOTHER ESCAPING WITH SEVEN CHILDREN



## ESCAPING IN A CHEST

**\$150 REWARD.** Ran away from the subscriber, on Sunday night, 27th inst., my NEGRO GIRL, Lear Green, about 18 years of age, black complexion, round-featured, good-looking and ordinary size; she had on and with her when she left, a tan-colored silk bonnet, a dark plaid silk dress, a light moulin de laine, also one watered silk cape and one tan colored cape. I have reason to be confident that she was persuaded off by a negro man named Wm. Adams, black, quick spoken, 5 feet 10 inches high, a large scar on one side of his face running down in a ridge by the corner of his mouth, about 4 inches long, barber by trade, but works mostly about taverns, opening oysters, &c. He has been missing about a week; he had been heard to say he was going to marry the above girl and ship to New York, where it is said his mother resides. The above reward will be paid if said girl is taken out of the State of Maryland and delivered to me; or fifty dollars if taken in the State of Maryland.

JAMES NOBLE

No. 153 Broadway, Baltimore.

**LEAR GREEN**, so particularly advertised in the *Baltimore Sun* by: "James Noble," won for herself a strong claim to a high place among the heroic women of the nineteenth century. In regard to description and age the advertisement is tolerably accurate, although her master might have added, that her countenance was one of peculiar modesty and grace. Instead of being "black," she was of a "dark-brown color." Of her bondage she made the following statement: She was owned by "James Noble, a Bitter Dealer" of Baltimore. He fell heir to Lear by the will of his wife's



LEAR GREEN ESCAPING IN A CHEST

mother, Mrs. Rachel Howard, by whom she had previously been owned. Lear was but a mere child when she came into the hands of Noble's family. She, therefore, remembered but little of her old mistress. Her young mistress, however, had made a lasting impression upon her mind, for she was very exacting and oppressive in regard to the tasks she was daily in the habit of laying upon Lear's shoulders, with no disposition whatever to allow her any liberties. At least Lear was never indulged in this respect. In this situation a young man by the name of William Adams proposed marriage to her. This offer she was inclined to accept, but disliked the idea of being encumbered with the chains of slavery and the duties of a family at the same time.

After a full consultation with her mother and also her intended upon the matter, she decided that she must be free in order to fill the station of a wife and mother. For a time dangers and difficulties in the way of escape seemed utterly to set at defiance all hope of success. Whilst every pulse was beating strong for liberty, only one chance seemed to be left, the trial of which required as much courage as it would to endure the cutting off the right arm or plucking out the right eye. An old chest of substantial make, such as sailors commonly use, was procured. A quilt, a pillow, and a few articles of raiment, with a small quantity of food and a bottle of water were put in it, and Lear placed therein; strong ropes were fastened around the chest and she was safely stowed amongst the ordinary freight on one of the Erricon line of steamers. Her intended's mother, who was a free woman, agreed to come as a passenger on the same boat. How could she refuse? The prescribed rules of the Company assigned colored passengers to the deck. In this instance it was exactly where this guardian and mother desired to be—as near the chest as possible. Once or twice, during the silent watches of the night, she was drawn irresistibly to the chest, and could not refrain from venturing to unte the rope and raise the lid a little, to see if the

poor child still lived, and at the same time to give her a breath of fresh air. Without uttering a whisper, that frightful moment, this office was successfully performed. That the silent prayers of this oppressed young woman, together with her faithful protector's, were momentarily ascending to the ear of the good God above, there can be no question. Nor is it to be doubted for a moment but that some ministering angel aided the mother to unfasten the rope, and at the same time nerved the heart of poor Lear to endure the trying ordeal of her perilous situation. She declared that she had no fear.

After she had passed eighteen hours in the chest, the steamer arrived at the wharf in Philadelphia, and in due time the living freight was brought off the boat, and at first was delivered at a house in Barley street, occupied by particular friends of the mother. Subsequently chest and freight were removed to the residence of the writer, in whose family she remained several days under the protection and care of the Vigilance Committee. Such hungering and thirsting for liberty, as was evinced by Lear Green, made the efforts of the most ardent friends, who were in the habit of aiding fugitives, seem feeble in the extreme. Of all the heroes in Canada, or out of it, who have purchased their liberty by downright bravery, through perils the most hazardous, none deserve more praise than Lear Green.

She remained for a time in this family, and was then forwarded to Elmira. In this place she was married to William Adams, who has been previously alluded to. They never went to Canada, but took up their permanent abode in Elmira. The brief space of about three years only was allotted her in which to enjoy freedom, as death came and terminated her career. About the time of this sad occurrence, her mother-in-law died in this city. The impressions made by both mother and daughter can never be effaced. The chest in which Lear escaped has been preserved by the writer as a rare trophy, and her photograph taken, while in the chest, is an excellent likeness of her and, at the same time, a fitting memorial.

## ROBERT BROWN, ALIAS THOMAS JONES

### CROSSING THE RIVER ON HORSEBACK IN THE NIGHT

In very desperate straits many new inventions were sought after by deep-thinking and resolute slaves, determined to be free at any cost. But it must here be admitted, that, in looking carefully over the more perilous methods resorted to, Robert Brown, alias Thomas Jones, stands second to none, with regard to deeds of bold daring. This hero escaped from Martinsburg, Va., in 1856. He was

a man of medium size, mulatto, about thirty-eight years of age, could read and write, and was naturally sharp-witted. He had formerly been owned by Col. John F. Franic, whom Robert charged with various offences of a serious domestic character.

Furthermore, he also alleged, that his "mistress was cruel to all the slaves," declaring that "they (the slaves), could not live with her," that "she had to hire servants," etc.

In order to effect his escape, Robert was obliged to swim the Potomac river on horseback, on Christmas night, while the cold, wind, storm, and darkness were indescribably dismal. This daring bondman, rather than submit to his oppressor any longer, perilled his life as above stated. Where he crossed the river was about a half a mile wide. Where could he be found in history a more noble and daring struggle for Freedom?

The wife of his bosom and his four children, only five days before he fled, were sold to a trader in Richmond, Va., for no other offence than simply "because she had resisted" the lustful designs of her master, being "true to her own companion." After this poor slave mother and her children were cast into prison for sale, the husband and some of his friends tried hard to find a purchaser in the neighborhood, but the malicious and brutal master refused to sell her—wishing to gratify his malice to the utmost, and to punish his victims all that lay in his power, he sent them to the place above named.

In this trying hour, the severed and bleeding heart of the husband resolved to escape at all hazards, taking with him a daguerreotype likeness of his wife which he happened to have on hand, and a lock of hair from her head, and from each of the children, as mementoes of his unbounded (though sundered) affection for them.

After crossing the river, his wet clothing freezing to him, he rode all night, a distance of about forty miles. In the morning he left his faithful horse tied to a fence, quite broken down. He then commenced his dreary journey on foot—cold and hungry—in a strange place, where it was quite unsafe to make known his condition and wants. Thus for a day or two, without food or shelter, he traveled until his feet were literally worn out, and in this condition he arrived at Harrisburg, where he, found friends. Passing over many of the interesting incidents on the road, suffice it to say, he

arrived safely in this city, on New Year's night, 1857, about two hours before day break (the telegraph having announced his coming from Harrisburg), having been a week on the way. The night he arrived was very cold, besides, the Underground train, that morning, was about three hours behind time; in waiting for it, entirely out in the cold, a member of the Vigilance Committee thought he was frosted. But when he came to listen to the story of the Fugitive's sufferings, his mind changed.

Scarcely had Robert entered the house of one of the Committee, where he was kindly received, when he took from his pocket his wife's likeness, speaking very touchingly while gazing upon it and showing it. Subsequently, in speaking of his family, he showed the locks of hair referred to, which he had carefully rolled up in paper separately. Unrolling them, he said, "this is my wife's;" "this is from my oldest daughter, eleven years old;" "and this is from my next oldest;" "and this from the next;" "and this from my infant, only eight weeks old." These mementoes he cherished with the utmost care as the last remains of his affectionate family. At the sight of these locks of hair so tenderly preserved, the member of the Committee could fully appreciate the resolution of the fugitive in plunging into the Potomac, on the back of a dumb beast, in order to flee from a place and people who had made such barbarous havoc in his household.

His wife, as represented by the likeness, was of fair complexion, prepossessing, and good looking—perhaps not over thirty-three years of age.

## EX-PRESIDENT TYLER'S HOUSEHOLD LOSES AN ARISTOCRATIC "ARTICLE"

James Hambleton Christian is a remarkable specimen of the "well fed, &c." In talking with him relative to his life as a slave, he said very promptly, "I have always been treated well, if I only have half as good times in the North as I have had in the South, I shall be perfectly satisfied. Any time I desired spending money, five or ten dollars were no object." At times, James had borrowed of his master, one, two, and three hundred dollars, to loan out to some of his friends. With regard to apparel and jewelry, he had worn the best, as an every-day adornment. With regard to food also, he had fared as well as heart could wish, with abundance of leisure time at his command. His deportment was certainly very refined and gentlemanly. About fifty per cent. of Anglo-Saxon blood was visible in his features and his hair, which gave him no inconsiderable claim to sympathy and care. He had been to William and Mary's College in his younger days, to wait on young master James B. C., where, through the kindness of some of the students he had picked up a trifling amount of book learning. To be brief, this man was born the slave of old Major Christian, on the Glen Plantation, Charles City county, Va. The Christians were wealthy and owned many slaves, and belonged in reality to the F. F. V's. On the death of the old Major, James fell into the hands of his son, Judge Christian, who was executor to his father's estate. Subsequently he fell into the hands of one of the Judge's sisters, Mrs. John Tyler (wife of Ex-President Tyler), and then he became a member of the President's domestic household, was at the White House, under the President, from 1841 to 1845. Though but very young at that time, James was only fit for training in the arts, science, and mystery of waiting, in which profession, much pains were taken to qualify him completely for his calling.

After a lapse of time, his mistress died. According to her struggles and hardships he had submitted to in escaping, as well as the luxuries he was leaving behind, were nothing to be compared with the blessings of liberty and a free wife in Canada.

Passing hurriedly over interesting details, received from him respecting his remarkable history, two or three more incidents too good to omit must suffice.

"How did you like Mr. Tyler?" said an inquisitive member of the Vigilance Committee. "I didn't like Mr. Tyler much," was the reply. "Why?" again inquired the member of the Committee. "Because Mr. Tyler was a poor man. I never did like poor people. I didn't like his marrying into our family, who were considered very far Tyler's superiors." "On the plantation," he said, "Tyler was a very cross man, and treated the servants very cruelly; but the house servants were treated much better, owing to their having belonged to his wife, who protected them from persecution, as they had been favorite servants in her father's family." James estimated that "Tyler got about thirty-five thousand dollars and twenty-nine slaves, young and old, by his wife."

What prompted James to leave such pleasant quarters? It was this: He had become enamored of a young and respectable free girl in Richmond, with whom he could not be united in marriage solely because he was a slave, and did not own himself. The frequent sad separations of such married couples (where one or the other was a slave) could not be overlooked; consequently, the poor fellow concluded that he would stand a better chance of gaining his object in Canada than by remaining in Virginia. So he began to feel that he might himself be sold some day, and thus the resolution came home to him very forcibly to make tracks for Canada.

In speaking of the good treatment he had always met with, a member of the Committee remarked, "You must be akin to some one of your master's family?" To which he replied, "I am Christian's son." Unquestionably this passenger was one of that happy class so commonly referred to by apologists for the "Patriarchal Institution." The Committee, feeling a deep interest in his story, and desiring great success to him in his Underground efforts to get rid of slavery, and at the same time possess himself of his affianced, made him heartily welcome, feeling assured that the

struggles and hardships he had submitted to in escaping, as well as the luxuries he was leaving behind, were nothing to be compared with the blessings of liberty and a free wife in Canada.

## ARRIVAL FROM VIRGINIA, 1858

ALFRED S. T. HORNTON

The subject of this sketch was a young man about twenty-two years of age, of dark color, but bright intellectually. Alfred found no fault with the ordinary treatment received at the hands of his master; he had evidently been on unusually intimate terms with him. Nor was any fault found with his mistress, so far as her treatment of him was concerned; thus, comparatively, he was "happy and contented," little dreaming of trader or a change of owners. One day, to his utter surprise, he saw a trader with a constable approaching him. As they drew nearer and nearer he began to grow nervous. What further took place will be given, as nearly as possible, in Alfred's own words as follows:

"William Noland (a constable), and the trader was making right up to me almost on my heels, and grabbed at me, they were so near. I flew, I took off my hat and run, took off my jacket and run harder, took off my vest and doubled my pace, the constable and the trader both on the chase hot foot. The trader fired two barrels of his revolver after me, and cried out as loud as he could call, G—d d—n, etc., but I never stopped running, but run for my master. Coming up to him, I cried out, Lord, master, have you sold me? 'Yes,' was his answer. 'To the trader,' I said. 'Yes,' he answered. 'Why couldn't you sold me to some of the neighbors?' I said. 'I don't know,' he said, in a dry way. With my arms around my master's neck, I begged and prayed him to tell me why he had sold me. The trader and constable was again



## A NARROW ESCAPE

to a free State, and go to Canada and make the trial anyhow, but I didn't know which way to travel."

Such great changes in Alfred's prospects having been wrought in so short a while, together with such a fearful looking-for of a fate in the far South more horrid than death, suddenly, as by a miracle, he turns his face in the direction of the North. But the North star, as it were, hid its face from him. For a week he was trying to reach free soil, the rain scarcely ceasing for an hour. The entire journey was extremely discouraging, and many steps had to be taken in vain, hungry and weary. But having the faith of those spoken of in the Scriptures, who wandered about in dens and caves of the earth, being destitute, afflicted and tormented, he endured to the end and arrived safely to the Committee.

He left his father and mother, both slaves, living near Middleburg, in Virginia, not far from where he said his master lived, who went by the name of C. E. Shinn, and followed farm-

pretty near. I let go my master and took to my heels to save me. I run about a mile off and run into a mill dam up to my head in water. I kept my head just above and hid the rest part of my body for more than two hours. I had not made up my mind to escape until I had got into the water. I run only to have little more time to breathe before going to Georgia or New Orleans; but I

ing. His master and mistress were said to be members of the "South Baptist Church," and both had borne good characters until within a year or so previous to Alfred's departure. Since then a very serious disagreement had taken place between them, resulting in their separation, a heavy lawsuit, and consequently large outlays. It was this domestic trouble, in Alfred's opinion, that rendered his sale indispensable. Of the merits of the grave charges made by his master against his mistress, Alfred professed to have formed no opinion; he knew, however, that his master blamed a school-master, by the name of Conway, for the sad state of things in his household. Time would fail to tell of the abundant joy Alfred derived from the fact, that his "heels" had saved him from a Southern market. Equally difficult would it be to express the interest felt by the Committee in this passenger and his wonderful hair-breadth escape.

## ARRIVAL FROM RICHMOND, 1859

STEPNEY BROWN

Stepney was an extraordinary man, his countenance indicating great goodness of heart, and his gratitude to his heavenly Father for his deliverance proved that he was fully aware of the Source whence his help had come. Being a man of excellent natural gifts, as well as of religious fervor and devotion to a remarkable degree, he seemed admirably fitted to represent the slave in chains, looking up to God with an eye of faith, and again the fugitive in Canada triumphant and rejoicing with joy unspeakable over his deliverance, yet not forgetting those in bonds, as bound with them. The beauty of an unshaken faith in the good Father above could scarcely have shone with a brighter lustre than was seen in this simple-hearted believer.

Stepney was thirty-four years of age, tall, slender, and of a dark hue. He readily confessed that he fled from Mrs. Julia A. Mitchell, of Richmond, and testified that she was decidedly stingy and unkind, although a member of St. Paul's church. Still he was wholly free from acrimony, and even in recounting his sufferings was filled with charity towards his oppressors. He

said, "I was moved to leave because I believed that I had a right to be a free man."

He was a member of the Second Baptist church, and entertained strong faith that certain infirmities, which had followed him through life up to within seven years of the time of his escape, had all been removed through the Spirit of the Lord. He had been an eye-witness to many outrages inflicted on his fellow-men. But he spoke more of the sufferings of others than his own.

His stay was brief, but interesting. After his arrival in Canada he turned his attention to industrial pursuits, and cherished his loved idea that the Lord was very good to him. Occasionally he would write to express his gratitude to God and man, and to inquire about friends in different localities, especially those in bonds.

The following letters are specimens, and speak for themselves:

CLIFTON HOUSE, NIAGARA FALLS, August the 27.

DEAR BROTHER:—It is with pleasure i take my pen in hand to write a few lines to inform you that i am well hoping these few lines may find you the same i am longing to hear from you and your family i wish you would say to Julia Anderson that he must really excuse me for not writing but i am in hopes that he is doing well. i have not heard no news from Virginia. please to send me all the news say to Mrs. Hunt an you also forever pray for me knowing that God is so good to us. i have not seen brother John Dungey for 5 months, but we have corresponded together but he is doing well in Brandford. i am now at the falls an have been on here some time an i shall with the help of the lord locate myself somewhere this winter an go to school excuse me for not anner your letter sooner knowing that i cannot write well you please to send me one of the earliest papers send me word if any of our friends have been passing through i know that you are very busy but ask your little daughter if she will anner this letter for you i often feel that i cannot turn god thanks enough for his blessings that he has bestowed upon me. Say to brother sue! that he must not forget what god has con-

sighn to his hand, to do that he must pray in his closet that god might teach him, say to mr. Anderson that i hope he have retrad an has seeked the lord an found him precious to his own soul for he must do it in this world for he cannot do it in the world to come, i often think about the morning that i left your house it was such a sad feeling but still i have a hope in crist do you think it is safe in Boston my love to all, i remain your brother,

STEPNEY BROWN.

BRANTFORD, March 3d, 1860.

MR. WILLIAM STILL.—DEAR SIR:—I now take the pleasure of writing to you a few lines write soon hoping to find you enjoying perfect health, as I am the same.

My joy within is so great that I cannot find words to express it. When I met with my friend brother Dungey who stopped at your house on his way to Canada after having a long chase after me from Toronto to Hamilton, he at last found me in the town of Brantford Canada. West and ought we not to return Almighty God thanks for delivering us from the many dangers and trials that beset our path in this wicked world we live in.

I have long been wanting to write to you but I entirely forgot the number of your house Mr. Dungey luckily happened to have your directions with him.

Religion is good when we live right may God help you to pray often to him that he might receive you at the hour of your final departure. Yours most respectfully.

STEPNEY BROWN, per Jas. A. Walk.

P.S. Write as soon as possible for I wish very much to hear from you. I understand that Mrs. Hunt has been to Richmond, Va. be so kind as to ask her if she heard anything about that money. Give my love to all inquiring friends and to your family especially. I now thank God that I have not lost a day in sickness since I came to Canada.

Kiss the baby for me. I know you are busy but I hope you will have time to write a few lines to me to let me know how you and your family are getting on. No more at present, but I am yours very truly,

STEPNEY BROWN, per Jas. A. Walkinslow.

# THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

BRANTFORD, Oct. 25, '60

DEAR SIR:—I take the pleasure of dropping you a few lines. I am yet residing in Brantford and I have been to work all this summer at the falls and I have got along remarkably well, surely God is good to those that put their trust in him I suppose you have been wondering what has become of me but I am in the lands of living and long to hear from you and your family. I would have wrote sooner, but the times has been such in the states I have not but little news to send you and I'm going to school again this winter and will you be pleased to send me word what has become of Julius Anderson and the rest of my friends and tell him I would write to him if I knew where to direct the letter, please send me word whether any body has been along lately that knows me. I know that you are busy but you must take time and answer this letter as I am anxious to hear from you, but nevertheless we must not forget our maker, so we cannot pray too much to our lord so I hope that mr. Anderson has found peace with God for me myself really myself in my slumber with you and I hope we will meet some day. Mr. Dungey sends his love to you I suppose you are aware that he is married, he is luckier than I am or I must get a little foothold before I do marry if I ever do. I am in a very comfortable room all fixed for the winter and we have had one snow. May the lord be with you and all you and all your household. I remain forever your brother in Christ.

STEPNEY BROWN.



## "PETE MATTHEWS," ALIAS SAMUEL SPARROWS

"I MIGHT AS WELL BE IN THE PENITENTIARY, &c."

UP to the age of thirty-five "Pete" had worn the yoke steadily, if not patiently under William S. Matthews, of Oak Hall, near Temperanceville, in the State of Virginia. Pete said that his "master was not a hard man," but the man to whom he "was hired, George Matthews, was a very cruel man." "I might as well be in the penitentiary as in his hands," was his declaration.

One day, a short while before Pete "took out," an ox broke into the truck patch, and helped himself to choice delicacies, to the full extent of his capacious stomach, making sad havoc with the vegetables generally. Peter's attention being directed to the ox, he turned him out, and gave him what he considered proper chastisement, according to the mischief he had done. At this liberty taken by Pete, the master became furious. "He got his gun and threatened to shoot him." "Open your mouth if you dare, and I will put the whole load into you," said the enraged master. "He took out a large dirk-knife, and attempted to stab me, but I kept out of his way," said Pete. Nevertheless the violence of the master did not abate until he had beaten Pete over the head and body till he was weary, inflicting severe injuries. A great change was at once wrought in Pete's mind. He was now ready to adopt any plan that might hold out the least encouragement to escape. Having capital to the amount of four dollars only, he felt that he could not do much towards employing a conductor, but he had a good pair of legs, and a heart stout enough to whip two or three slave-catchers, with the help of a pistol. Happening to know a man who had a pistol for sale, he went to him and told him that he wished to purchase it. For one dollar the pistol became Pete's property. He had but three dollars left, but he was determined to make that amount answer his purposes under the circumstances. The last cruel beating maddened him almost to desperation, especially when he remembered how he had been compelled to work hard night and day, under Matthews. Then, too, Peter had a wife, whom his master prevented him from visiting; this was not among the least offences with which Pete charged his master. Fully bent on leaving, the following Sunday was fixed by him on which to commence his journey.

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### THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

After this signal leg-victory, Pete had more confidence in his "understandings," than he had in his old pistol, although he held on to it until he reached Philadelphia, where he left it in the possession of the Secretary of the Committee. Considering it worth saving simply as a relic of the Underground Rail Road, it was carefully laid aside. Pete was now christened Samuel Sparrows. Mr. Sparrows had the rust of Slavery washed off as clean as possible and the Committee furnishing him with clean clothes, a ticket, and letters of introduction, started him on Canada-ward, looking quite respectable. And doubtless he felt even more so than he looked; free air had a powerful effect on such passengers as Samuel Sparrows.

The unpleasantness which grew out of the mischief done by the ox on George Matthews' farm took place the first of October, 1855. Pete may be described as a man of unmixed blood, well-made, and intelligent.

