

LIFE OF JOHN ANDERSON.

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At St. Leonard's, Anderson said,—“My mother was sold away down to New Orleans when I was about seven years old. She had a great big spirit, something like me, and would'nt stand being beat about and knocked around. One day her mistress and she had a fight, and my mother pulled a handful of hair out of my mistress's head. For this she was sold, and went down South, and I have never seen her since. Slave women have no rights, no matter what their colour may be. Some of

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them are as white as English women are, but because their mothers have been women with some negro blood in them, they are slaves, and are treated as slaves.

They are without protection, and white men may do what they please with them, for there is no law for a poor slave woman. Some folks say slaveholders may be good Christians, but I can't and won't believe it, nor do I think that a slaveholder can get to heaven. He may possibly get there, I don't know; but though I wish to get there myself, I don't want to have anything more to do with slaveholders either here or in heaven. When my mother was sent away, I was brought up by my mistress, and used to call her mother; I didn't call her mistress, for I couldn't get the word into my mouth. I was raised in the house, and was a kind of nurse to the daughters of my owner. When I was fourteen or fifteen years old, I was sent into the field, and when I had learnt my work there, I was put over the other slaves and left to look after them when my master was away. I had to see the work done, and had to knock the other slaves about to make them do it. When I was about nineteen or twenty years old, I did what I suppose young men in this country do. I took the notion that I would go a courting. I did not want to marry a girl belonging to my own place, because I knew I could not bear t see her ill-treated. I had often thought of being free. An old man, who was called Jacob, had many times talked with me about Canada, and I had talked with other slaves about starting off for that place, and we had often formed plans for the purpose, but they were always disappointed. Well, about my marriage: there was a slave girl called

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Maria, she belonged to a man named Brown, and had been married when she was very young, and had two children, and her husband died, and I went to his funeral; I was then about twenty. You'll think it strange that I should be thinking of courtship and marriage at a funeral, but I couldn't help it, for I felt that I should very much like to have Maria for my wife; so six months after the funeral, I went with Maria to a camp meeting. Many slaves, who have no religion, go to camp meetings that they may be merry, for there is much whisky sold at these gatherings, and the people drink and play at cards, while others attend to religion. Maria was spoken to by her friends about going with me so soon after her husband's death. After that, I kept going to see her, and at last asked her if she would marry me. She said, 'You must speak to my father, and I did speak to him; and he said, 'You had better wait awhile, and I'll see about it.' I saw him again, and he still said, 'wait awhile.' When I told Maria, she said, 'never mind, if he doesn't consent soon, we'll be married all the same.' Lewis Tomlin (Maria's father) was a free man, who had purchased himself for eight hundred dollars, and had given six or seven hundred more for his wife. He had a little property, and was well to do as a barber, in the town of Fayette. So we got married, and Maria had a child seven or eight months old when I ran away. Maria's first husband had been dead about a year when we were married. It was during the Christmas holidays. My master allowed me to go and see my wife once a week—that is, on Saturday night, and I was ordered to be back again

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on Monday morning. I did not, however, care much for his orders, and I used to go almost every night. When we had been married about a year and a half, Maria fell sick, and I wanted to go more frequently to see her. My master would not permit me, but I disobeyed him, and went. On one occasion when I had been to see her, and had remained all night, my master was on the look-out for me when I returned in the morning. When he saw me, he said, "Jackey, where have you been?" I replied, "Oh, Iv'e been walking about." "I'll walk you about," he said, and came up to me to give me a licking with a raw hide which he had in his hand. I warded off his blows with my arm. He then went and got a rope, and threw it over the branch of an old walnut tree. I knew very well that he wanted to tie me up and wipe me, and I determined that I would not be whipped. He ordered me to strip and cross my hands, that I might be bound and drawn up, but I refused. He cursed and swore, and threatened, but I still refused. He then fetched his gun, and said he would shoot me, but the daughter I had nursed when in the house interposed, and got the gun away from him. He then said he only wanted to frighten me, but that he would sell me to some one who would break my spirit. My mistress, who used to protect me, had been dead for some time, and I had now no one to save me from ill treatment. When she died, Burton made up his mind to conquer me. One day after this he came home, and not being pleased with me, ordered me to go into a barn and receive punishment, but I refused. On this occasion the daughters took part with their father, and

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assisted him; but I got away, and escaped the punishment intended for me. Burton, not being able to subdue me, hired me to a man of the name of Paterson. It was while I was working for this man that my owner met with McDonald, who lived thirty miles away, in Salem county, on the other side of the Missouri river. This man offered to buy me. He was already the owner of about thirty slaves. When I came back to Burton's, he came upon the farm to look at me, and to see what sort of a hand I was, and how I went about my work. He went away, and I remained with Burton about three months longer, and, during that time, my master was gradually appointing others to do the work I had been accustomed to do. He did not, however, want me to know that he had made a bargain with McDonald. It was the season for cutting tobacco. I had raised about twenty acres for Burton, and had about an acre and a half of my own, which I had planted in the neighbourhood of my wife's residence. It was on a Saturday that he told me I should do no more work for him, and that he would hand me over to McDonald on the Monday morning: so I resolved to make things square, and accordingly went to Fayette and settled some accounts I had there, that I might be ready to start for my new home. On the Monday morning, when I saw the money paid for me, I said to Burton, 'That's a great deal of money, and I think you ought to give me some of it;' but he made no reply. When my new master was taking me across the river, he told the ferryman to take care that he never allowed me to recross it. About half way to his plantation McDonald stopped to take up his

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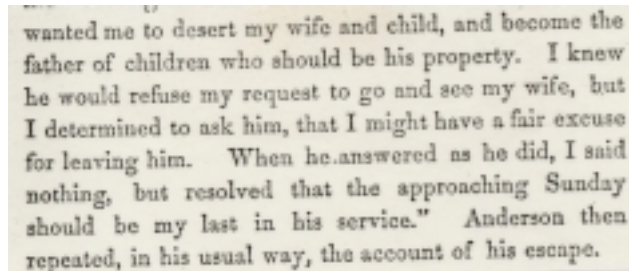
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wife, who was waiting for him. He showed me to her as the fine new slave he had just purchased. On the way he had a good deal to say to me about how he would serve me if I attempted to escape from him, and said, if I did, he would tie me up and cut me to pieces, and then send me to New Orleans. At the place where we took up McDonald's wife, I saw some slaves who appeared as if they were nearly starved, and when my dinner was sent out to me I gave it to them, in consequence of their hungry looks. Indeed, they seemed to have no strength for the work they had to do. I had never seen slaves in a worse condition. When we arrived at the plantation, McDonald told his slave-driver to let me off easy at the beginning, to coax me, and get me into the traces by degrees. I felt the separation from my wife very much, and made up my mind that, if I might not go and see her, I would run away for good; that I would get away some Sunday, and after bidding her good-bye, would start for Canada. That my master might be accustomed to miss me on a Sunday morning without suspecting that I had left him, I used to disappear on that day, but to show myself on Monday morning; so that he came at last to think that I did not go far away. When I had been with him about six months I asked to be allowed to go and see my wife, and bring back some clothes with me. He told me I should never see my wife again; that he would not let me cross the Missouri river any more, and that I must take one of his slave girls for my wife, for that his plantation would be my future home. Here, again, you see what kind of religion it is that the slaveholders possess: he

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wanted me to desert my wife and child, and become the father of children who should be his property. I knew he would refuse my request to go and see my wife, but I determined to ask him, that I might have a fair excuse for leaving him. When he answered as he did, I said nothing, but resolved that the approaching Sunday should be my last in his service." Anderson then repeated, in his usual way, the account of his escape.



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