

Fressenden motioned the maids and nurse to approach, and within a few minutes the will was a complete legal document, that the highest courts of the country would have found it difficult to overthrow.

'Mrs. Lenox,' said Fressenden, with rare feeling in his careless voice, 'I am rejoiced to see you so much stronger.'

But there was no reply. The marvellous will that had made her so dominant a figure in life and which had enabled her to drag herself back from the very gates of death, had failed at last, and she was already closed around with the unconsciousness that lasted until she died, a day or two later.

The world's comments when the will was made public were many and varied, but Mrs. Carr perhaps put the general feeling into words with the greatest conciseness:

'Amazing, of course; but it's really something of a relief, too—to find in these material, self-seeking times a genuine case of virtue being rewarded. I for one cannot say I am sorry.'

HIS MOTHER'S MEMORY

Not far from the beginning of my ministry (it was very many years ago, as you may suppose) I was visiting a brother priest at his church in Baltimore.

He asked me to help him in the confessional during a busy season, and I consented. 'Many of my people are Negroes,' he said, 'and I think you will not be sorry for that, when you make friends with them in the box.'

'Negroes!' I said; 'I have yet to discover their fervor! They are very emotional, are they not?'

'Not over much,' he replied. 'They love to sing, so do the angels, for that matter! Given fair instruction they are fine, reliable Catholics. I have no discount to make in comparing them with the whites. To be sure, they are a subject race greatly despised by many whites, as well as feared and detested; others patronise them, spoil them, laugh at their foibles, and forget their striking qualities. But taken all in all they are good people, a submissive race, and religiously considered are the fairest prospect for our Catholic missionary field, second to none!'

And we chatted about the blacks and their spiritual and other traits till far into the night, incidentally comparing notes about their social and domestic qualities, even their intellectual ones, which cross their religious state.

The work in the confessional, always consoling, was especially so with the Negro penitents that time, and it seemed to me I had the lion's share of them. In fact, few others came to me. I revelled in their simplicity and sincerity; I was heartsick at the sidelights of misery that were revealed.

One evening I was pretty nearly done, and was thinking of a well-earned night's rest. Glancing between the curtains after my last penitent had gone, I saw a man rise in the middle of the church. He looked towards my box and doubtless noted that there was no one else to go to confession. Then he left the pew, made a genuflection, and started towards me. Evidently, bending his knee was new to him, for it was anything but rubrical. He was under the full glare of the large central chandelier as he stepped along the middle aisle. I know a handsomely built man when I see one, and that Negro, black as my cassock, was an ebony Apollo! Tall, well-knit, with a fine head and broad shoulders, the swing of his body was full of electricity and grace! It seemed to me he was about twenty-five years old, becomingly and neatly clad. His features were almost regular and they wore an expression that was grave almost to dignity.

He halted square in front of me, for I had drawn back the curtains of my box, and looked at me with a half smile of expectancy and reverence, as if wishing me to say the first word.

'My son, do you want to go to confession?' I said.

'Most suttinly, suh, I do for a fac', suh; but I hardly know how to go 'bout it, suh.' His voice was remarkably sweet and deep and his accent strongly African, but I will not venture to reproduce his dialect

entirely, which I afterwards found was that of the Cotton Belt.

I stepped out of the confessional and shook hands with my bashful penitent and invited him to the sacristy, for I saw he needed some instruction on the method of making his confession, and no doubt on other points of our holy faith. And when I had given him a chair and placed him at his ease by a few kindly words I asked him to tell me all about himself.

'My name,' said he, in his soft southern tones, 'is Jefferson Stewart. I was born in the city of Baltimore. My mother was tall, very dark, and very strong. I was her only child. My father died before I knew him. My mammy often talked of him, and when she said her prayers, with me kneeling at her side, she always made me say, "God rest my father's soul. Amen." Three times I had to say that. And I can look back even to my third year and mind the tears trickling down her face. But suh' (I had quite a time making him call me 'Father,' he evidently thought it too familiar and hence disrespectful), 'but, suh, I mean Father, many and many a time my good mammy took me to this very church, and brought me to that railing out there and made me say over and over, out loud, my childish prayers, while she fixed her eyes on the altar and seemed to see God! Then when I stopped for want of something else to say, suh, she would turn to me and whisper—"God is right heah, Jefferson! He's a-lookin' from that little doah down into youh little heart!" and I would tremble lest the good God saw something there He didn't like. And then she would say sometimes, as we stood at the foot of this church: "Jefferson, chile, look around at dis grand house of God! In dis heah church yoh father and me was married, and heah yoh was baptized a little, pooh baby! You was baptized a Catholic heah, a true Catholic, and doan you nebber forget it, an' if any nasty Meth'dists or Baptists ask you to jine their 'ligion when you git growed up, tell 'em you are a Cath'lic, and that's the only 'ligion that's God's.'"

I suppressed a smile at the epithet my black man bestowed on our non-Catholic brethren; then I asked him about his prayers—did he remember them? Yes! His mother (it was always his mother) taught them to him; and then like a little child, this tall, fine fellow went on his knees and said the 'Our Father,' 'Hail Mary,' and 'Creed,' with numberless little mistakes, repeating the phrases like a little boy when I corrected him. I cannot forget his simple fervor and his intense religion. Then he sat down again.

'My mammy, suh, was a free woman, Father,' he began, 'and always carried in an oilcloth purse in her bosom a printed paper with her name on it, her "free papers," as she called them. I have seen her show them to the constables who sometimes stopped her on the streets.

'I often went with my mother when she was out working. One of her offices was along the waterfront, and one evening while she was working at her sweeping she sent me for some sand to strew the floor. It was a long summer day, and I went over to a pile of sand that lay heaped up near the river. Mother knew the black man who watched there and told me he would give me some in a can. I got the sand, carried it to her, and ran back to talk to the man.

'I found a black boy of my own age and we began playing tag on the long wharf where several schooners lay moored on the river. A man soon began loosening some ropes on one of the vessels, and as we passed he called to us. He was a low-browed, evil-looking man—a white man, of course. When he saw us he shouted:

"Here, you youngsters, get aboard and help to haul this rope in, and I'll give you each a penny."

'We raced each other who should be first to take up his offer, and I thought how proud I should be to give my mother my first earnings that evening! So we jumped aboard, and were instantly caught up by two other fellows, carried down below, locked in a room, and told we would be killed if we made the least noise. We huddled together and shivered in speechless terror.

'Soon we heard the rushing back and forth of hurried feet overhead and felt the upward and down-