

ward motion of the boat. We were afloat and going—God knows where.

'Oh, how we wept in that dark room. Oh, how my heart broke to think of my mother, my poor, dear mammy, hunting for me, her lost boy, her only boy, never to see me again!' He stopped, overcome.

The pathos in that Negro's voice would have put to shame the tenderest, deepest feeling expressed by a cultivated white man, and I, too, felt my heart swell in sympathy, for I knew he was telling a true, simple fact. He went on:

'Soon everything was quiet, and we, too, poor little darkies, put our arms around each other and wept ourselves asleep. When it was daylight we were taken on deck, given something to eat, and found ourselves sweeping out to the ocean.

'We were taken to Charleston and there sold at auction to different planters. I remember my purchaser before he bid for me thrusting his fingers into my mouth, bending all my joints, trying my eyes, my teeth, my hearing.

'One man bid a hundred and fifty dollars, and I was sold at last for two hundred and twenty-five dollars, and was delivered over to this buyer. I was now a slave! I did not dare resist, but went passively wherever I was told.

'How lonely I was, living in the silent country with three hundred slaves, toiling from dawn to dark. How I watched them, their strange ways, their poor cabins, their wild stories, and their religion! How different from Baltimore. And, oh, how I pined for my poor mother! I never saw her again!

'Almost the first thing that happened was a dispute about me.

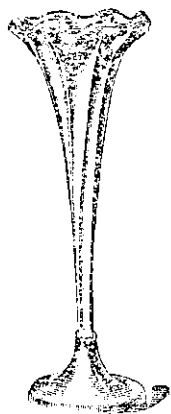
'The family I was sold to was half Methodist and half Baptist, the father holding to the Methodists and the mother to the Baptists.

'They argued hot and strong with each other to possess me for their religion. They quoted the Bible—

lots of it. The bigger children laughed, but took neither side. But I was a bold little darkie, and I waited for a lull in the dispute. I wanted my chance, for my dear mother's words came ringing into my head, and at last there was a moment's quiet.

'I mustered up all my courage and stood up in my bare feet and my little shirt and pants, my hands in my pocket-holes, and called out: "I am a Catholic, that's what I am! It's God's only true religion!"

'When I got through and before they got over their surprise I thought I had better say it over again, because it didn't sound loud enough the first time, so I planted my feet firmly and fairly yelled out my good mammy's words. And, suh, I felt them deep down in my heart, and I would have said them if those people killed me, as indeed I thought they would! Not at all, suh. First they stared and glared at me, but I stared back. Then two of the big girls giggled, and then the children laughed, and there was a shout all around, and then they made me tell them all I knew. I said my prayers three times over during my story. I told them how I was stolen and about my poor mother, and I think my mistress was kind-hearted, for she said: "You poor little nigger, no one shall touch you!" I never had any real trouble after that day about religion. The people were good enough to me—but I had hard work, and I often just hankered after my mother, and never forgot my prayers. When they wanted me to go to camp meeting I said "No" so fierce that they left me alone. You see, Father, it was my mother's words. She had stamped them on my heart, and although I knew not one thing about Catholics, I knew she was right, and anything different was wrong. So I stuck to my mother. I never saw a Catholic, never heard of any in reach. I have been a working-man all my life and always poor. After the war I was free and worked on a lighter in a little cotton port and got a chance of working my passage to Baltimore. My whole heart was set on getting to Baltimore and finding my mother!



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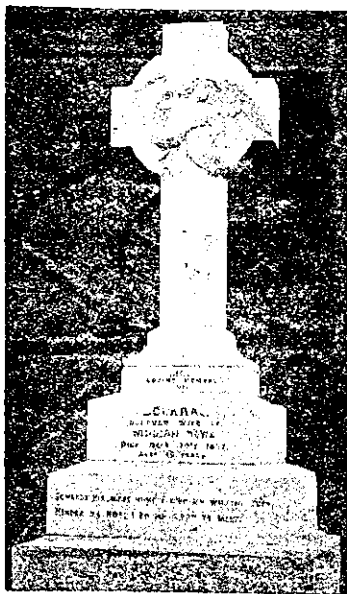
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