

is all a-shinin' like dey is to-night. Now you jest fetch me some vittles from old miss' table, and you come go long'r old Gran. Don't go to de kitchen for dat vittles, for dat nigger 'oman what's doin' dat cooking, aldo she's been bo'n and raised on dis plantation, and many's de bucket o' water she's toted on her head to de cotton choppers when old Gran was carryin' de lead row 'mong de hands, she's done got so quality 'case she's cookin' for de white folks she don't notice a plantation nigger, and she gwine to give you scraps shore's you born if you go dar. I knows her 'case I done tried her."

A SOUTHERN SKETCH.

In the good old days of slavery, when I was a boy, my father owned a negro named Granville, so named from Granville county, N. C., where both he and my father were born. This negro was called "Gran" for short (we had no surnames for negroes in those days). I called him "Uncle Gran," and he called me "Little Marster."

I wish I could describe old Gran to you as I knew him then, but I know I can't do him justice. His frame was large and manly, and he was the most unyieldingly looking mass of humanity I ever saw. But in a puncheon floor dance, when the patters and singers started up the old plantation negro rhymes no negro could wing higher from the floor, nor last longer in the dance than old Gran, and when he had danced down all his partners, and the singers changed to Juba, Gran was always equal to the occasion, changed his step and branched out as if he had just begun.

In addition to all this, as Uncle Remus said about "Burr" Rabbit, he could "blow a lonesome chune on de quilla"—his strength was equal to his size, and at log rolling in the new ground Gran was always at the butt end of the log.

Gran's foot alone, if properly and minutely described, would fill a book. I will not attempt to say how large it was, but his track in the mud looked as much as if a pig had wallowed there as it did like the print of a human foot. You could not tell by his track which way he was going, for there was as much of his foot behind his ankle as before it. He never had on a pair of socks until the day of his burial—seldom ever wore a pair of shoes, and when he did, he had the back of them mashed in and a couple of shoe rags stuck in them for socks.

I recollect on one occasion he had an order on a store near by for \$2 in trade, and when Gran, with his black skin showing through his ragged shirt, walked into the store and laid his order on the counter Mr. Crump said to him: "Gran, what do you want for this order?"

"Bacon, sah! Bacon, sah! Bacon, Mister Crump, to de very last cent."

Amos' ghost every night when the chickens crowded for 12 o'clock, and how when old Aunt Milly got bad off, and "peared like she gwine to die, old marster tuck little Milly outen de field and sount her down to old Aunt Milly's house to wait on her, and how one night jes' as the chickens crowded for midnight, de door flew wide open, and old Aunt Milly, she raised up in her bed and say: 'Dat you, Amos? Come in. You looks mighty cold, Amos. Is you hongry, Amos? You jes' look in dat box under little Milly's bed and git your clo'es what I done put dar for you, and den look in dat cupboard ober Milly's bed, and you find some vittles what I done put away for you.'

Gran always got his supper, so did Ring, and we were soon off on the hunt. Gran was always the autocrat of the occasion and the master of ceremonies, selected his own crowd and always picked four good axmen to assist in cutting down the tree. Each negro carried his only weapon, his ax. One carried a lighted torch and material for more, and as we went down through the turn rows in the field to get to the swamps on the back of the plantation, Ring followed behind us, as unconcerned as if he intended to take no part in the hunt. But when he climbed the back fence on the back side of the plantation and Gran gave his familiar war whoop:

"Whar you, Ring? Hark to 'em, puppy!" Ring was gone in a moment and the hunt began, and whether Gran instinctively followed Ring or Ring instinctively hunted before Gran, I could never tell, nor could he; but they always kept in hearing distance of each other. No particular course was taken, no point aimed for. I was lost as soon as I got in the woods, and remained so until we got back to the clearing. But old Gran would hunt and ramble for hours and hours, and when the hunt was over and we started back he would strike a bee line for the "quarters," and was never known to miss his course. Every few minutes during the hunt, and until Ring started on a hot trail, he gave an occasional yelp, to which old Gran would respond: "Speak to me, Ring!"

And in a voice you could hear for a mile and which rang out in the night as clear as a bugle note and echoed far and near through the tall trees and gloomy brakes of the dark woods. The glare of our torchlight disturbed many a little bird which had nested for the night in some scrubby bush, and as it flitted away to find another hiding place it would give its chirrup of warning to its companions hard by. The solemn owl from her perch in the tall tree top hooted at her neighbor across the lake:

"Eber since old Adam's bin bo'n, We bin scratchin' and pullin' up de corn." And so on, until it would take me all night if I told you all the old stories and negro melodies I heard in those bygone days.

I recollect one night, after we had finished a famous hunt, had stretched ourselves about the fire, and all these old stories and melodies had been retold and resung, without seeming to have lost one particle of interest to any of us, and certainly not to me, a negro boy called "Loss," who happened to be with us, related the particulars of a story which became much famed. Loss, by the way, was one of the best mimics I ever saw, and the grandest rascal. He raised up on his elbow and asked old Gran, who was lying on the other side of the fire, "if he remembered 'bout dat 'possum he ketcht dat time when de hands was a-clearin' up de fork field?"

"Course I does," said old Gran. "What make me gwine forgit dat 'possum, when he was sperrted outen dat skillet, and I ain't neber got satisfied in my min' how he done it?" "I'll tell you folkses how dat was," said Loss, "and I been a keepin' dat secret for de longest, 'case I was a-feared o' Unc. Gran. You see, one Sat'day, when de hands was a rollin' logs and clarin' up dat field, I was de water tater, and jes' as I was comin' up wid a bucket o' water Unc. Gran he done ketcht a pretty good size young 'possum outen a holle tree what he cut down, and I heard Unc. Gran say as how he 'lowed to take dat 'possum home and make Aunt Sylvia cook it. So I crep up to Unc. Gran's cabin when de hands come from work, and I watch Unc. Gran from a pole what done burn in de chimney jam, and I heard Aunt Sylvia say as how she wan't gwine to clean no 'possum Sat'day night, she wan't, but was gwine ober to Sis. Hannah's house to 'tend pra'r meetin' she was, and away she went outen de cabin, singin' 'bout longin' for de soun' of Mars Jesus' voice callin' her home to glory."

"Neber min' 'bout dat song," said old Gran, rising up, "you go on 'bout dat 'possum."

"Well, you see, folks, de ole man had to clean dat 'possum hisself or do 'bout his supper, 'case Aunt Sylvia she done wan't to do pra'r meetin'. So Unc. Gran he sot down and he clean dat 'possum, he did, jes' as good as any 'oman. And he put him in de skillet, and he put a whole heap ob live coals under dat skillet and on top ob it, and when he done fix dat 'possum fore-cookin' he say to hisself, he did: 'Now, Mister 'Possum, I done fix you, and I'll jest drap back on dis stool in de chimney corner and take a nap while you's a cookin'.' De ole man he might tired, and he hadn't more'n hit dat stool 'fore he fast asleep.

"I went roun' 'mong de quarters till 'bout de time I thought dat 'possum was done, and den went back to Unc. Gran's house to ax him gin me little taste, but when I got dar de ole man still fast asleep. I sten in de door and I say, 'Unc. Gran!' kinder low like. De ole man he didn't say puffin'. Den I say, 'Unc. Gran!' a little louder. But de ole man sno' away and nod backward and forrads and look like he gwine to tumble offen dat stool every minute. Den I crep in, and I tuck de fire stick and poke it frou de eye ob dat skillet, lid and tuck it off. U-m-umph! folkses, 'fore God, it seem to me I can smell de fumes o' dat 'possum right now. It smells so good, I clar to gracious, I feard it wake Unc. Gran up. But de ole man he too fur gone; so I sot down on de ha'th and I eat dat 'possum 'specially up. Den I put all de bones in de skillet and put de lid on 'zactly like I foun' it, and left Unc. Gran de grabby. Den I tuck some o' de 'possum fat and rubb it ober Unc. Gran's fingers and roun' his mou't, and dodge outen de cabin jes in time to miss ole Aunt Sylvia comin' from de pra'r meetin' singin' dat same song 'bout Mars Jesus callin'."

de crosses and rastlin' wid Satan on your 'count, and been prayin' mighty hard to de Lord to knock at de door o' your heart for 'mission, but de Lord done tole me to-night you 'fused him so long dat he gwine to turn you ober to de hardness o' your heart and stiffness o' your neck—and woe unto you, Granville!"

"Bout dat time de ole 'oman ketcht de fumes o' dat 'possum, and she whirled roun', she did, and she say: 'Granville, what you done wid dat 'possum you fotch home to-night? 'Pear like I smell cook 'possum 'bout dis cabin.' 'Unc. Gran he pay no 'tention to what Aunt Sylvia say, and he raise his self offed dat stool, and he stretches hisself, he did, and he said: 'I spek 'bout time dat 'possum was done.' 'So he poked de fire stick frou de eye o' dat skillet lid, and he lif' it off easy like, to keep de ashes from drappin' in on de 'possum, and when he peep in dat skillet, I 'clar' to gracious he looked like he see'd a 'hant.' He looked and he looked, and den he rub his eyes and he look again, and he say to hisself: 'I wonder what 'come o' dat 'possum,' and he look roun' to old Aunt Sylvia, and den he look back in de skillet and he say: 'I wonder if I did git up in my sleep and eat dat 'possum.' 'Fore God I don't 'member nothin' 'bout it if I did.' 'Bout dat time de ole man he smell his fingers and sniff up his nose, and lick his tongue out roun' his mou't like oxen, whar I done put 'possum fat, and he say: 'I shoredy did eat dat 'possum. Well, if I did git up in my sleep and eat dat 'possum, I jis' got dis to say, it sets lighter on my stomach and done me less good dan any 'possum I eber eat since I been bo'n.'—Sidney Smith in Detroit Free Press.

Our Eccentricities. America is the home of all forms of eccentricity and daring. Has not the vastness of the continent the Americans inhabit something to do with this? I think so. There is that boundlessness about the notions of an American which must be born of the vastness, the limitless possibilities of such a great territory. To the American, his own daring and eccentricity are the most natural things in the world, and this is what makes a great part of his charm. He talks of, or does, things that fairly take your breath away just as coolly as if they were matters of every day occurrence.

Parisians remember to this day the American millionaire—I was going to say billionaire—who, on the occasion of his daughter's wedding, wrote to the town council of Paris to ask for the loan of the Arc de Triomphe, which he was anxious to decorate in honor of the wedding and have the special use of during the day. He was politely informed that the arch was not to let. "Then I will buy it," he replied; "name your price." An American would ask the queen of England to let him have Windsor castle for the shooting season, and if she refused a good price for it, he would probably have a very poor idea of her. The looking upon everything and everybody as being to be had at a price, is one of the chief forms of this daring of the American. It would be an ugly trait in his character if often it were not so preposterous as to be amusing, and if it were not backed by a perfect bonhomie.—Max O'Rell.

Tropical Fruits. The impression is no doubt general that the tropics are especially favorable to fruit culture. Travelers describe in glowing colors the appearance of orange trees bearing at one and the same time blossoms, green fruit and ripe. Such a condition of things is convenient and desirable in cases where the fruit is raised for home consumption, but it is a serious drawback to exportation. A fixed season for harvesting is necessary if the aim of the culturist be supplying a foreign market.

In the case of fruit which has to be gathered in clusters, like the grape, this habit of ripening indifferently at any time of year is a most inconvenient one. It is said by observers that in Brazil and in tropical Africa grapes look well, but the bunches never ripen thoroughly. In fact, the same cluster will contain berries of every age, from the smallest green to the oldest purple. For the making of wine this makes necessary a sorting of the berries, which involves a great deal of labor and trouble as well as a waste of fruit. Again, in many parts of tropical America, the hot season is also the rainy season. The wet and heat together lead to rapid decay as the fruit approaches maturity.

To protect itself from this danger, the skin of the grape is said to become thick and leathery, and it acquires an unpleasant taste. We all aware how thick is the peel of the orange and lemon, and how abundant is the oil it contains to protect from decay the pulp within.—Youth's Companion.

Not a Bad Fate. Is there any country in Europe in which morals are better regulated than in America, work better paid or education wider spread? Is there a country in Europe where you can find such natural riches and such energy to employ them? So many people with a consciousness of their own intellectual and moral force? So many free schools, where the child of the millionaire and the child of the poor are seen studying side by side? So many free libraries, where the boy in rags may enter and read the history of his country and be fired with the exploits of its heroes? Can you name a country with so many learned societies, so many newspapers, so many charitable institutions, or so much comfort?

The greatest French prose writer of the day, M. Ernest Renan, one day wishing to turn himself into a prophet of ill omen, predicted that if France continued republican she would become a second America. May nothing worse befall her.—Max O'Rell.

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