

AARON IN THE WILD WOODS

The Story of a Southern Swamp.

By JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS

CHAPTER I. THE LITTLE MASTER. If you imagine that the book called "The Story of Aaron (so named) the Son of Ben All" tells all the adventures of the Arab while he was a fugitive in the wild woods you are very much mistaken. If you will go back to that book you will see that Timoleon, the black stallion; Grunter, the pie; Griddle, the grey pony; and Rambler, the track dog, told only what they were asked to tell. And they were not anxious to tell even that. They would much rather have been left alone. What they did tell they told without any flourish whatever, for they wanted to get through and be done with it. Story telling was not in their line, and they knew it very well, so they said what they had to say and that was the end of it so far as they were concerned, setting a cheerful example to men and women, and to children, too.



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never knew then nor later what Big Sal meant, but ever afterward, whenever the woman had one of her tantrums, she went straight to her Little Master, and if she seemed to express deep desire to tear her hair out if anybody asked her where she had been or where she was going. It was not such an extraordinary thing to reach the plow hands. The fields were wide and the furrows were long on that plantation, and some of the mules were nimbler than the others and some of the hands were quicker. So that it rarely happened that they all came abreast down the furrows. But what difference did that make? Let them come one by one, or two by two, or twenty abreast, it was all the same when the Little Master was in sight. It was hats off and "Howdy," with "Gee, Heck!" and "Haw, Rhody!" and "What you been, Little Master, dat we ain't seed you sence day 'fo' yistiddy?" And so until they had all saluted the child on the Gray Pony.

de corn off'n de cob, but sponen dey wa'n't no corn off de cob. "Honey, ain't it de true?" exclaimed Uncle Fountain. Thus the negroes talked. They knew a great deal more about Aaron than the white people did, but even the negroes didn't know as much as the Little Master, and for a very good reason. They had no time to find out things except at night, and at night, you may believe it or not, just as you please, but at night the door of the swamp was closed and locked—locked hard and fast. The owls, the night hawks, the whippoorwill and the chuck-will-widows could fly over. Yes, and the Willie Whittlers could creep through or crawl under when they returned home from their wild serenades. But everything else, even that red joker, the Fox Squirrel, must have a key. Aaron had one, and the White Grunter and Rambler, and all the four-footed creatures that walk on horn sandals or in velvet slippers each had a key. The Little Master might have had one for the asking, but always when night came he was glad to get on his sofa and read, or better still, go to bed and sleep, so that he never had need of a key to open the door of the swamp after it was locked at night.

shop. The proprietor presented himself and asked what they desired. "You have a tray of diamonds in the window," said the comedian. "Will you let me see them?" The stolid-faced shopkeeper surveyed his prospective customer from head to foot. He saw a sharp-featured little man, with a long nose and bead-like eyes. Despite that his face was clean-shaven, myriads of wrinkles creased his forehead, and his visage that peculiar blue tint that Thespian foxes are wont to affect in their make-up. "Do you want to buy, or only to look at them?" asked the suspicious Briton, surlily. "That depends altogether upon how they please me," retorted the comedian. "I certainly will not purchase unless I am first permitted to examine them."

fused all cases that were offered to him and entered into local politics. "Two inseparable comrades," says the Philadelphia Record, "both members of the Royal Legion, are General H. S. Hildekooper and State Senator Francis A. Osbourn. Both are veterans of the civil war, in which unpleasantness each lost an arm. But while General Hildekooper is minus his right arm, Senator Osbourn mourns the loss of his left. For years he has been practicing with two veterans to make one pair of gloves do for both. Whenever the general purchased a new pair he invariably sent the right glove to the senator, and when the senator invested the general would get the left glove. Up to last Monday the senator hadn't received a glove from the general for about a year, and had concluded that his old friend was getting parsimonious, when a package was handed to him in his seat at Harrisburg. On opening the bundle the senator was overjoyed to find a right-hand glove."

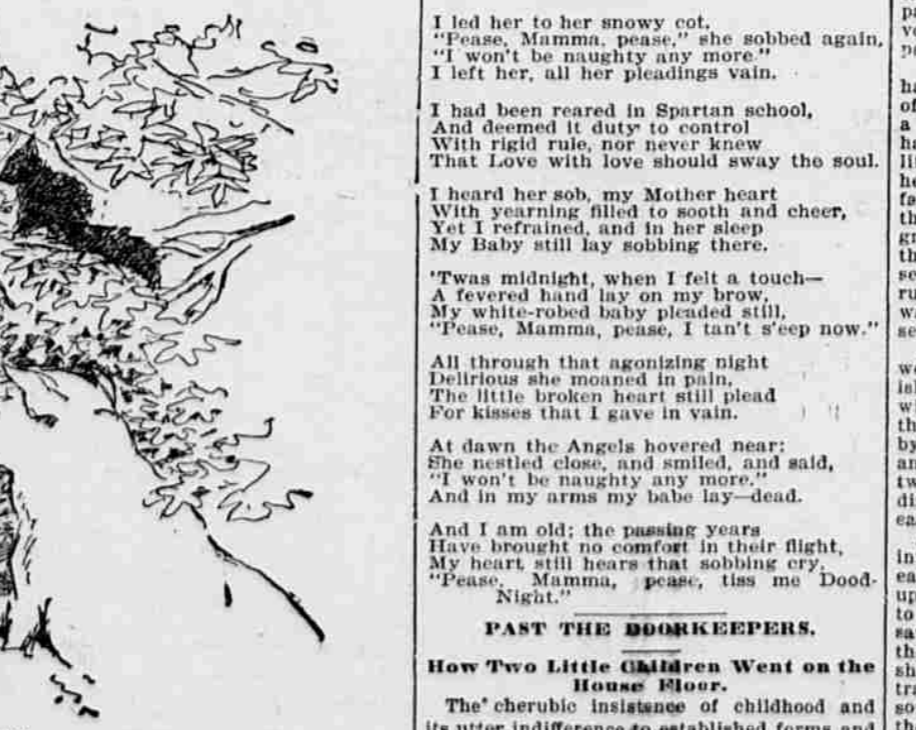
But, although Little Crotchet was small and crippled, he had a very wise head on his shoulders. One of the first things he noticed was that that everybody was in a conspiracy to prevent unpleasant things from coming to his ears and that he was being humbugged in this way made him laugh. It was no funny. He said to himself that if he could hear troubles while everybody was trying to keep him from hearing them, he would surely hear other people who had nobody to look out for them, but he was much larger trouble. For it was not only that he could hear, but he could hear what he wanted to hear. That was the word—"funny"—and yet it had a deeper meaning for the negroes than the white people ever gave it. Funny meant the lad leaned his pale cheek on the fence and allowed his thoughts (were they thoughts or fleeting aspirations, or momentary longings?) to follow the swift, sweet echoes of the song. For the echoes had a thousand nimble feet, and with these they tickled his ears, for the echoes had wings, like those of a turtle dove, and on these they lifted themselves heavenward and hovered above the world and above the toll and trouble and sorrow and pain therein. Funny! when the voice of some singer, sweeter and more powerful than the best, rose suddenly from the pauses of the song and gave words, as it seemed, to all the suffering that the Little Master had ever known. Aye! so funny that at such times Little Crotchet would suddenly wave his hand to the singing reapers and turn the hand of his pony toward the river. Was he

THE GENERAL'S GREETING. By Hamlin Garland. It was midday in the battle of the wilderness and a small teamster of it was standing beside his wagon near General Meade's headquarters and close to the gory, hurried and troubled surgeons, who were

"TISS ME DOOD-NIGHT." "Peace, Mamma, peace, tiss me Dood-Night." "My blue-eyed love with sunny curls and golden hair, my heart is full of tears. I said, 'I can't kiss naughty girls.'" "I led her to her snowy cot. 'Peace, Mamma, peace,' she sobbed again. 'I won't be naughty any more.' I left her, all her pleadings vain."

How It May Be Done. Chicago Post: "Is there any sure way of getting rid of the wrinkles and sagging of the face?" inquired the young man. "There is answered the man who had been in the business of writing for a long time. 'What is it?' 'First acquire a reputation for something besides writing,' answered the old-timer. 'If you are much different from what you are, so long as there is nothing literary about it, just get yourself known for almost anything from crime to philanthropy, and the magazines will be after everything you write.'"

THE WHITE PIG. following the rolling echoes? He could never hope to overtake him, but at present he was not so sure. Once when this happened Uncle Fountain stopped singing to say: "If with I was a runaway nigger!" "No, you don't," exclaimed Randall. "Yes, I do," Uncle Fountain insisted. "How come?" "Kaze dey I'd have Little Marster runnin' after me ev'ry chance he got." "Go' way, nigger man! You'd have Jim Simmon's nigger dogs after you, an' den what?" "Dat ar Aaron had an' after 'im, an' what'd he do?" "De Lord, He knows I don't! But don't you git gittin' consate, nigger! Kaze you'll find out what Aaron done—kaze you'll see yo' self, 'sho'!" "What Aaron done?" Fountain persisted. "He done fool dem ar nigger dogs; dat what he done done." "Den how come I can't fool dem ar dogs?" "How come? Well, you des try an' fool dem, kaze dey name Soun'." "Well, I ain't biege ter try it when de white folks treat me right," remarked Little Fountain, after thinking the matter over. "Dat what make I say what I does," asserted the white man. "When you know 'zactly what you got an' when you got mighty nigh what you want, dat's de time ter lay low an' say nothin'. Hit's some trouble ter git



lopping off limbs from faint soldiers in blue. All the horrors of battle were there: rills of blood, stacks of livid limbs, rows of suffering bodies torn and mangled. One by one the blue-clad men were lifted to a rough table; a keen knife slit sleeve or pantaloons, the sponge swung to the nostrils, the knife-blade fell upon the flesh, the saw followed. A few moments of rapid work and the subject, insensate as wood, was laid aside to make room on the bed of slaughter for a comrade. The young teamster stood there waiting for his wagonload of human torsos, feeling all the horror, all the burning terror of the battle. He could hear the dread continuous thunder to the front and could see the smoke rising like a cloud above the batteries of crouching cannon, unseen but savage. Home seemed as far away as heaven to the boy, and the world appeared to be given up to slaughter and to dying men. Standing so, he saw a horseman approaching and forgot for the moment his terror by reason of his admiration for the horse and his rider. The horse had a swift, steady rack, and as he came his burnished neck and forearms seemed to flash in the light. His rider sat him gloriously, the reins in his left hand guided as if by force of habit. He appeared not to know the horse was moving. He descended slowly,

PAST THE DOORKEEPERS. How Two Little Children Went on the House Moor. The cherubic insistence of childhood and its utter indifference to established forms and customs was strikingly illustrated at the door of a house in the Washington Star. Two little tots, aged about 4 and 6, were trotting around after some ladies and in the crowd got separated from their natural protectors. The children paused in front of the north entrance to the house and looked in through the doors as they swung back and forth. The doorkeepers, who were busy with the time they had recovered from their amazement there was a good fifty yards between them and their flying prey! And that they had as for they might ride, was not easily to overcome! After that first wild rush the Major settled in a stony path—smooth, even run, and easy to sit that the lad relaxed his clutch upon the animal's mane and turned his eyes to the horizon, where gathering swarms of savages showed like clusters of ants against the slope of the hillside. In his track, with shrill, singing cries, like bounds upon a trail, came his pursuers. And far to the south there was a puff of white smoke from the walls of the fort and a moment later the first heavy, echoing boom of the alarm ran thundered across the plain.

Major Handy says that Senator-elect Mason of Illinois is at his best in his home. His family is his idol. He has a sweet wife and seven children, and nothing in the world tempts him ever to leave their society. In Washington he used to drive about town in a horse-drawn carriage, and when the family business and destination, Mr. Mason himself held the reins, one of the children piled the whip, and the turnout was a whole, looked like that of a costermonger out for a holiday. When he made a speech mother and children always filed a front bench in the members' gallery of the house. When one of his sons died, the father was heartbroken. Years passed before he recovered his old form. At Springfield, during the senatorial struggle, his wife was never out of his reach. A friend of Senator Quay tells the Washington Post the story of the senator's first and only law case. He was rather a bashful young man, and above all things dreaded to speak in public. When he arose to address the jury he became exceedingly nervous and could scarcely proceed with his speech. While he was struggling to overcome his excessive diffidence he changed to glance around and saw some of the other attorneys in the room laughing. Believing to a certainty that they were laughing at his nervous efforts, he at once sat down and refused to proceed further with his remarks. From that day he gave up the practice of law, re-

TAKEN FOR A ROGUE. An Actor's Experience While Visiting Francis Wilson, the actor, despite the rough roles he assumes upon the stage, enjoys the reputation of being an accomplished and refined tastes and exemplary habits, as well as an industrious student and the possessor of one of the finest private libraries in the country. Whenever he is able to escape from the exacting demands of his profession he is usually to be found with his wife and children at his luxurious home in New Rochelle. Occasionally, however, he makes a brief visit to the old world, from which he is accustomed to return with a collection of curios and presents for his friends. In the course of one of his recent visits to London he had an experience which has afforded his friends considerable amusement. While waiting along Regent street one day, with an old acquaintance, he saw some diamonds displayed in the window of a jeweler's shop. He looked at them critically for several moments, then, turning to his companion, he said: "I have just received an unexpected check for \$500, and don't think I can employ it to better advantage than by getting some diamonds for my wife. Let us go in." Wilson and his friend then entered the

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