

UNCLE NOAH'S FREEDOM

A Lincoln Day Story

By CLARISSA MACKIE

"Hucome yoh ain't said nuffin to ole marse about it?" demanded Aunt Hessa as she tossed a smoking section of hoeecake on to her husband's plate. Uncle Noah sighed and shook his white, woolly head. "I dunno, Hessa. Somehow I can't git de right inspiration to 'proach de kunnel on dat subject."

"Den I specs I's got to go alone. De norf is a col' place in winter, I've been hearin', an' it'll be mighty lonesome for dis nigger woman widout her husband erlong, but mebbe I'll catch de brownkitts er somethin' er ruther an' die! Do yoh reckon dey buries po' ded nigger folkses up dere, Noah?" Hessa's voice ended in a plaintive moan.

Noah shivered. "Of co'se dey buries eberybody, old woman, only what's de use of goin' if yoh's so suah yoh'll die? What's de matter wid Virginny for awhile?"

The old man almost ducked under the table at the flaming wrath in Hessa's eyes. She pointed a scornful finger at him. "I knowed it—I knowed it! Yoh'd ruther stay heah in slavery den to go norf an' be free an' earn sights of munney an' some day be ridin' in yoh own kerridge. Dey's big wages fo' black folkses up dere, an' I'm goin' alone tomorrer er yoh's too chicken livered to come erlong too."

"I'd like to go mighty, Hessa, only I dunno whut de kunnel an' ole miss will do widout us," protested Noah weakly. "Now, de kunnel has only one arm left."

"Shucks!" exploded Aunt Hessa impatiently, and forthwith she proceeded to convince her wavering husband that, although they had both been born and raised on Colonel Partidge's plantation and had lived happily all through the years of a kind master's supervision, now that President Lincoln had proclaimed that all slaves should be emancipated on and after the 1st day of January, 1863, it was their bounden duty to take advantage of the liberty that had come to them and hasten northward to the land of plenty of money.

All the other slaves on the Partidge plantation had run away during the colonel's absence on the battlefield. Only Uncle Noah, the family butler, and Hessa, the cook, had remained faithful. But relatives who were preparing to take advantage of their newly acquired freedom were working upon Hessa's feelings.

Colonel Partidge and his wife sat in the small study adjoining the sitting room. It was a warmer room and more easily heated by the pine logs in the wide fireplace. Outside it was crisp and cold, with a light fall of snow on the ground. Within the study it was warm and cozy and comfortable. There was a crimson glow over the polished mahogany tables and chairs and over the rows of books on the shelves. The heavy damask curtains and table covers had vanished. They were serving as blankets for soldiers in the Confederate army.

"What are you thinking about, Richard?" asked Mrs. Partidge after awhile. She was knitting woolen socks for the soldiers, and her delicate white fingers worked as willingly as they had ever done on dainty embroidery. She was a woman past middle age, and the strenuous time she was passing through was leaving its blighting imprint upon her. She had sent three sons to the war and had received them back again—to be buried in the family tomb. Her husband had gone forth strong and hale and vigorous, and he had come back minus one arm and quite broken in health, with old age pressing heavily upon his grief smitten heart. With the desertion of his slaves the revenue from his plantation dwindled to a mere pittance.

If Uncle Noah and his wife had not remained faithful it would have gone hard with the Partidges. The old butler had not scorned to become man of all work about the place, and in addition to the little vegetable garden he maintained there had been one cow salvaged from the large herd that once grazed on the pastures.

"What are you thinking of, dear?" asked Mrs. Partidge after awhile.

The colonel looked up from his sad contemplation of the hissing fire. "I was wondering what we would do if Noah and Hessa should decide to go away," he answered quietly.

"Oh, Richard, have they spoken to you?" Mrs. Partidge's gray eyes filled with tears.

He shook his head. "No, but Blythe says that nine of his negroes are goin' tomorrer, and one of them told him that our Hessa and Noah were goin' too."

"Without a word to us?" Richard hardly think they would do it," said his wife.

"It is their right, Catherine. They are afraid to speak to wish they would go openly to give them something for start in life. They are old—just as we are, but they are cent children in the face of they will meet. But"

bowed his white head and covered his eyes with his hand.

There was a heavy shuffling step in the hall, and the two looked up to see Hessa's lumbering form filling the doorway. Her black fingers nervously smoothed the crisp folds of her white apron, and the snow turban that surmounted her dusky face shook tremulously.

Something in the old servant's attitude—something in the frightened uncertainty of her round face—revealed to the colonel and his wife the nature of Hessa's errand. It had come at last—the final blow—the desertion of these two faithful retainers.

"Come in, Hessa," said Mrs. Partidge gently.

Hessa leaned for support against the door lintel and rolled her dark eyes at Colonel Partidge. "Scuse me, Marse Kunnel," she said hurriedly, "but tomorrer am de day when Marse Linkum penounces all niggers free and ekwill—and—Noah and me am goin' norf!" She hid her face in her apron, and there was a convulsive movement of her fat shoulders.

"Do you want to go, Hessa?" asked the colonel quietly.

"We gotta go, ole marse!" she wailed. "We's free, an' we gotta go. Dey's all goin' tomorrer mohlnin'."

"Very well, Hessa. Wait a minute, please."

Colonel Partidge opened a drawer in the mahogany desk and drew out a canvas bag. He emptied its contents on the table, and Hessa's eyes snapped at the pile of gold pieces.

The colonel carefully counted the gold into two piles and, gathering one into a heap, tossed it into the canvas bag and knotted the string around it.

"Hessa, here is a sum of money for you and Noah. It is half of what I have got. Take good care of it, because you will meet many dishonest people who will try to take it away from you. You have both been faithful servants. Nay, you have been friends to me and my family. Nay, even more than that, Hessa—you have been one of us. If there is anything we can do, if there is anything you want to make you comfortable, let us know. Come and bid us goodby before you go." The colonel's voice broke queerly.

Hessa was standing there staring from master to mistress. The bag of gold pieces hung limply from her hand. She looked frightened, but some purpose within impelled her to go on. "I's mighty sorry, but we's gotta go. I's cooked up a sight of vittels, Miss Catherine. Dey's a col' ham an' fo' ples an' a big fruit cake, an' Noah he's toted all de wood inter de cellar an' filled all de wood boxes an'—er—"

Hessa suddenly vanished, and presently they heard the outer door close loudly. They did not look at each other after that. The blow had fallen. The great clock in the hall chimed 8 and 9 and 10 and 11. The colonel sat with his eyes fixed on a book, but not once during the hours did the turning of a leaf break the silence. Mrs. Partidge knitted unceasingly, only pausing to unravel her work and reknit the skipped stitches.

Just after midnight there was the noisy rattle of wagon wheels on the highway, accompanied by negro voices lifted in song and excited chatter. It was undoubtedly the freed negroes on their way north, and they were going to stop for Hessa and Noah. There must have been several box wagons, for there was a din of confusion outside the Partidge gates. Then there came loud talk from the negro quarters, and the colonel and his wife heard Hessa's commanding tones raised above the tumult.

After awhile the wagons went away, and all sound ceased. Even the neglected fire had dwindled into soundless breaking embers, and the candles were burning low. It seemed as though an end had come to everything. "Catherine!" said the colonel kindly. "Richard!" Her voice trembled as their eyes met. Her hands flew up to her face, and her tears fell unrestrained. The colonel knelt beside her, his one arm around her slender shoulders. "They were all we had left that made it seem like old times," she sobbed. "I know, I know," he soothed gently. It was some time before they looked up to see in the dying candlelight Hessa's great bulk in the doorway. Over her shoulder peered Noah's rolling eyes.

"Ah, Hessa, you have come to say goodby?" said the colonel, lifting his frail wife to her feet and leading her to the emancipated slaves.

"No, no, Marse Kunnel; we come ter say 'Howdy' all over agin! Hucome dem niggers stopped heah, but Noah an' me we couldn't go away an' leave yoh an' Miss Catherine!"

"Dis am all de home we got in de worl'. Dere won't any place else look jes' lak dis yere one," sobbed Noah, sinking to his knees beside Hessa and laying the bag of gold at the colonel's feet.

"I guess dat Marse Abe Linkum didn't mean us niggers to break our hearts goin' norf, so I guess he won't care so's we's happy. Noah, yoh lazy ole nigger, yoh mend de fah an' make a blaze in de bedchamber while I git-moh candles an' makes a milk punch. I declare if it ain't tomorrer mornin' already!" Hessa scolded everybody back into smiles once more.

As they went to their cabin after beloved master and mistress were alone and sleeping Noah pinched his wife's fat arm.

"Ole woman, yoh's free! Does yoh feel any different?" he demanded doubtfully. His own face beamed contentment.

Hessa shook her arm free. "Oh, g'arlon, de, Noah! Whut time I got to be 'fishin' about foolishness when I cent children in the face of they will meet. But"

"Hessa, here is a sum of money for you and Noah. It is half of what I have got. Take good care of it, because you will meet many dishonest people who will try to take it away from you. You have both been faithful servants. Nay, you have been friends to me and my family. Nay, even more than that, Hessa—you have been one of us. If there is anything we can do, if there is anything you want to make you comfortable, let us know. Come and bid us goodby before you go." The colonel's voice broke queerly.

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The Scrap Book

A Stroke of Business.

Years ago in Jamaica, West Indies, before artificial ice was very well known, a shopkeeper who tried to keep up with the times thought he would outclass his rival across the street and purchased a thousand pounds of fine "cool" ice, paying about \$12 for it. He did a wonderful business the next day. All the town trade came to get a cool drink, while the shop opposite was empty. When she shopkeeper shut up that night he had made good profits and had about \$800 pounds of ice left.

The next morning his brilliant black boy, who opened up the shop, greeted him with a happy grin. "Morning, boss," he said. "I's done a good bit of business this morning, sah."

"How's that, boy; how's that?" "Well, sah, I sold that fool nigger in the store across the street all that stale ice that was left for 4 shillings, and he never knew the difference, sah"—Everybody's.

Content With Little.

Some murmur when their sky is clear And wholly bright to view If one small speck of dark appear In their great heaven of blue.

And some with thankful love are filled If but one streak of light. One ray of God's good mercy, gild The darkness of their night.

In palaces are hearts that ask In discontent and pride Why life is such a dreary task And all good things denied.

While hearts in poorest huts admire How love has in their aid— Love that not ever seems to tire— Such rich provision made.

—R. C. Trench.

Must Have Been a Terror.

Gene Stevens, being asked if he knew a new story, deposed and said that he did not, but that he had a friend who was very sick and that the friend had had a good doctor, but that the doctor was puzzled about the case. So a consultation was held. Four other doctors came, looked wise, shook their heads, talked it over together and went away. Then the first doctor summoned the patient's wife.

"I am sorry to tell you that your husband is in a bad way," he said. "If he is religiously inclined I should advise that you send for a minister without delay."

"Yes, doctor. Shall I get just one minister or will he need a consultation?"—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

What Saved Him.

William was not kind to his small brother Henry; in fact, he looked upon him as a nuisance, a scourge sent from heaven to try his spirit and spoil his fun. Especially that day was Henry a thorn in the older boy's flesh. In his efforts to rid himself of his burden William resorted to all the methods the mind of youth suggested, but in vain. Henry continued to stick as close, if not closer, than a brother.

"William," finally said the boy's father, who had witnessed, unheeded, the final paroxysm of the unequal struggle, "you should be ashamed of yourself to treat your little brother in that way! He ought to be sacred to you."

William made no reply, but shortly afterward, believing himself to be free of surveillance, he was heard to address Henry thus: "Always takin' after me! If you weren't sacred I'd break your blamed face for you!"—New York Tribune.

His Head and the Psalm.

A now popular clergyman, telling of some of his earlier experiences, said:

"In my third living there was a very crowded congregation the first morning I officiated. The parishioners were evidently curious as to the build, color of hair, etc., of their new vicar. As a matter of fact I was, though a young man, very bald. A little thought would have caused me to make my first appearance on any morning but the 8th, but it was the 8th, and in the Psalms, which were read and not sung, I had to say, 'My sins are more in number than the hairs of my head.'"

A Tough Cure.

Faith will do wonders. A woman in Devonshire, England, recently said to a chemist:

"I've got a cruel, bad cough, surely. I've heard that bronchial troches are good things. Hav'ee got any?"

The assistant pointed to a small box on the table and said:

"Yes; there they are."

"How much is it?" was the inquiry. The price was paid, and the old woman took her departure. At night the assistant missed a box of glycerin soap (three cakes).

A couple of days afterward the woman returned to the shop and said:

"I want'ee to take back two of them things I had t'other day. I took one of 'em. It was mortal hard to chew and awful to swallow, but it cured the cough."

Knew His Geography.

A prominent theatrical manager of New York city strolled into one of the leading hotels of the metropolis with Colonel William F. Cody and met Jim Thornton, the eccentric monologist.

The manager greeted Mr. Thornton and, turning to Cody, said, "I would like to have you meet my friend here, Mr. Thornton."

"Mr. Thornton, this is Colonel William F. Cody, better known as Buffalo Bill."

Mr. Thornton, gripping the wild west showman's hand, said: "Glad to know you, Bill. What part of Buffalo are you from?"—National Monthly.

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THE REASON.

The Man Who Had a Family and Never Saw One of Them.

"I HAVE a wife and four children in Chicago, and I have never seen one of them," remarked a man one evening.

Mrs. Dodge, who was noted for her inquisitiveness, looked toward him in great surprise. After a moment's pause she asked:

"Were you ever blind, Mr. Evans?" "No, madam," was the reply. "Did you marry a widow?" the woman inquired.

"No, indeed," he said. There was silence again while the inquisitive woman tried to solve the problem to her satisfaction. Failing to do so, she asked:

"Didn't I understand you to say, Mr. Evans, that you had a wife and four children in Chicago and had never seen one of them?"

"Yes; that was what I said." "How can it be that you never saw one of them, Mr. Evans?" asked the woman.

"Why, madam," replied the man "one of them was born after I left."—Harper's Bazar.

Sensitive.

John Jones, who is remarkable for his large ears, has had a falling out with Miss Esmeralda Smith, toward whom he had been suspected of entertaining matrimonial intentions. Somebody asked him the other day why he and Miss Smith were not driving out as much as usual, to which he replied that he did not propose to pay trap hire for any woman who called him a donkey.

"I can't believe that Miss Smith would call any gentleman a donkey," was the reply.

"Well, she didn't exactly say that I was a donkey, but she might just as well have said so. She hinted that much."

"What did she say?" "We were out driving, and it looked very much like rain, and I said it was going to rain on us, as I felt a raindrop on my ear, and what do you suppose she said?"

"I have no idea." "Well, she said, 'that rain you felt on your ear may be two or three miles off.'"—London Telegraph.

Omnibus Tall Talk.

"Fare!" The passenger in the omnibus gave no heed.

"Fare, please!" Still was the passenger oblivious.

"By the ejaculatory term 'fare,'" said the conductor, "I imply no reference to the state of the weather, the complexion of the admirable blond you observe in the contiguous seat nor even to the quality of service vouchsafed by this philanthropic corporation. I merely allude, in a matter perhaps lacking in delicacy, but not in conciseness, to the monetary obligation set up by your presence in this conveyance and suggest that, without contemping your celerity with enunciation, you liquidate."

At this point the passenger emerged from his trance.—Boston Post.

Politeness.

Politeness goes a great way, sometimes such a great way that it isn't anywhere around when it would really come in very handy.—Chicago Inter Ocean.

How to Make Better Cough Syrup than You Can Buy

A Family Supply, Saving \$2 and Fully Guaranteed.

A full pint of cough syrup—as much as you could buy for \$2.50—can easily be made at home. You will find nothing that takes hold of an obstinate cough more quickly, usually ending it inside of 24 hours. Excellent, too, for croup, whooping cough, sore lungs, asthma, hoarseness and other throat troubles.

Mix one pint of granulated sugar with ½ pint of warm water, and stir for 2 minutes. Put 2½ ounces of Pinex (fifty cents' worth) in a pint bottle, then add the Sugar Syrup. It keeps perfectly. Take a teaspoonful every one, two or three hours.

This is just laxative enough to help cure a cough. Also stimulates the appetite, which is usually upset by a cough. The taste is pleasant.

The effect of pine and sugar syrup on the inflamed membrane is well known. Pinex is the most valuable concentrated compound of Norway white pine extract, rich in guaiacol and all the natural healing pine elements. Other preparations will not work in this formula.

The Pinex and Sugar Syrup recipe is now used by thousands of housewives throughout the United States and Canada. The plan has been imitated, but the old successful formula has never been equaled.

A guaranty of absolute satisfaction, or money promptly refunded, goes with this recipe. Your druggist has Pinex, or will get it for you. If not, send to The Pinex Co., Ft. Wayne, Ind.



Mrs. Anxious Doesn't Worry Since She Met Anty Drudge

Mrs. Anxious—"It doesn't seem as if I could get through with my work any more. The family is so large that my washing and ironing take all of Monday and Tuesday and put me back for the rest of the week. Besides, I am so tired that I can't do my work right."

Anty Drudge—"There's many a woman feels just as you do. I wish I could gather them all together and tell them about Fels-Naptha Soap. I get through with many a big wash with the help of Fels-Naptha Soap that I just couldn't do without it. It's the thing you and every busy woman ought to use."

Women can end washday drudgery at once by using Fels-Naptha Soap. Every sensible woman is looking for a new, easy way to do her work.

Fels-Naptha Soap is a new way; it is an easy way, and it does its work better than any other way.

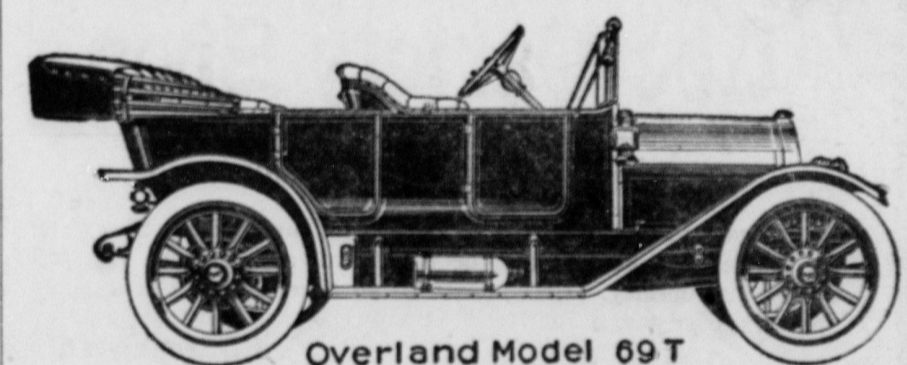
It not only works when you work, but if you leave it alone, it works by itself. For instance, if you will put a big wash to soak in cool or lukewarm water with Fels-Naptha Soap, it will go right to work on the dirt, and in thirty minutes or so, you can come back, rub the clothes lightly and find the dirt just roll out, leaving them white and fresh. They can be washed, rinsed and hung out to dry in just half the time and with half the work.

Fels-Naptha Soap is making housework easy for millions of women. Let it help you.

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