

ed off.' The repast being finished with such hints, the party hastened to boats waiting for them at the creek; and were thence in a few hours rowed by merry singing negroes to St. Johns. There the members of the party were separated at the several plantations where they resided; the invalid with his sister, landing at the place chosen to commence their visits, were welcomed by all on shore, as if members of the family.

A plantation has little to be described: It is generally an immense clearing or farm, with few or no divisions, and in the midst of logs and skeleton trees killed by girdling, the soil is cultured for cotton or sugar. In the centre is the domicile of the master's family, and a little in the rear those of the negroes. Generally there is little to distinguish the master's cabin from those of his slaves, excepting a second story: They are all constructed of logs piled up for walls and dove-tailed together at the corners: They have either clay or slab floors—plastered wood chimnies, and no glazing. The first night the invalid had to attain his lodging place by an outside ladder, and the apartment was long and well lighted through its interstices by the moon. Yet the owner of that mansion was a wealthy planter, who at Saratoga would sport as splendid an equipage, and live in style as refined as the best; but at home, though always a free, and noble hearted host, he lives at ease with house and dress adapted to his business.

After spending a few days among the generous planters—the invalid accepted an invitation to accompany one of them, a Mr T—, with an old friend, down the St. John's river to St. Mary's. The boat and company were announced at the landing early the next morning, and, with the invalid on board, they were soon making rapid way, favored by the combined forces of the current, their sails, and four negroes at the oars. It was in the month of March, and yet the sun's heat was quite oppressive till 4 o'clock in the evening. There were few houses upon the flat river banks, and nothing peculiarly interesting, unless it were the continued forests of the Magnolia Grandiflora, and Live Oaks draped with festoons of the Spanish gray moss; or occasionally the lazy alligators taking alarm, and falling from the logs on which they reposed into the waters; or the bounding of a startled deer in the edge of the forest; or the satirical mimicry of the mocking birds. Then the negroes as they cheerily pulled their oars to the notes of impromptu songs started many a merry laugh: And the planter's friend contributed also a little amusement; for he was a whimsical old French bachelor, and, take the subject where you will, from any nation, a bachelor by choice, is a public mark of raillery; and as steel sharpens steel, there is many a witty flash, struck out from the hard hearted Benedicts by fretting collisions. So it was with the Frenchman: But he could not bear much joking, though he was willing to confess that instead of being pinned to the skirts of a faithful one he was dependent on the jeering merciless many; he was in every one's way, with sympathy from none—and like a lone tree, exposed to every pelting storm, was becoming daily more gnarled and ugly—and even his name seemed to screen the vista of social prospects.

The second night, it was found necessary to encamp upon the shore, as, at sunset, no house was near. Accordingly a fire was kindled—a rude tent pitched under the lee of the smoke, to ward off the dew—a kettle of rice was cooked for supper—and leaving a blazing beacon against obtrusive bears and other midnight prowlers, the gentlemen reclined in their tent, and the negroes, with feet nearly in the fire, stretched themselves around, and were soon wrapped in luxurious sleep. The invalid courted in vain the favors of Somnus; and as he restlessly turned from side to side, his friend, the planter lying next him, noticed it, and proposed to lull him, with a story of his experience in camping out.

'One very dark night,' said he, 'I was encamped with a friend, much as we are now, when in the dead stillness of the night I was aroused by a loud snuffing sound, as if some animal, near by, were trying to smell out the contents of our camp, preparatory to an attack. Upon the instant, I started partly up—seized my rifle—and was ready for defence, when pretty soon I heard it again; but, to my surprise, (I laugh when I think of it) I traced the alarm to the olfactory efforts of an old nigger, who just then raised himself up, and thus soliloquized: 'sn'ff! sn'ff! Who foot dat a burn?—sn'ff—Who foot dat a burn?'—then putting his hand down to his feet he exclaimed: 'Oh, psha! nigger's own foot a burn.'

The following morning the sailing party were early upon the water, and soon met in their way a Mr Kingsley, taking a short cruise in a neat plantation yacht. He was very polite, and as Mr P. was a favorite friend he insisted upon a visit, and urged that the party should at least take a breakfast with him. The invalid has heard much, to excite his curiosity about this Mr K. and was at once inclined to accept the invitation. Mr P. accordingly consented, 'Now,' said Mr P. to the invalid, 'Now you have a chance of seeing something new under the sun. The plantation of this old fellow in the yacht is on Fort George's island a few miles off, and as we work our way to his landing, I will tell you a little about him. I think in his youth he was a yankee captain; but he very early engaged in the Slave Trade and continued it several years. At last, having accumulated sufficient means and reserved perhaps 200 slaves for himself, he relinquished the trade—came to Florida—bought several plantations—and selected the one we are now approaching which was then a perfect garden, laid out in parks, arbors and flower beds, for his own residence. But, to crown it all, what do you think he chose for a wife?—Why one of the blackest wenches that you ever saw. But perhaps you will think stranger, that he has been faithful to her for more than twenty years, he has a grown mulatto son by her, and two mulatto daughters, and they all live together in concord as blissful as the best. The son superintends the plantation, and the girls are accomplished candidates for the Hymeneal altar. Tutors have attended them from infancy and the girls have been taught music, and dancing, the modern languages and polite literature: How much they know of these branches I cannot tell, as they are very modest, and always avoid white strangers. The old man however himself likes very much to have civil white persons call upon him, and he will be very polite; but you will laugh, I know, to hear him descant upon the superior charms of the African beauties. But we are close to the landing now: Just yonder where you see a ship on the stocks is the place. You will soon be there to see and judge for yourself.' It

proved to be just as Mr P. had described. The sooty spouse was indeed as black as jet—as strongly scented as a musk-rat—and, to prejudiced eyes, as ugly as pictures of the king of sinners. The offspring were not so ugly, but, surprised in their pastimes, they took flight at once when the strangers approached. The son left his violin—one girl ran for the piano, and the other, from a waltz with a large dog held erect, followed her mother to the loom and spindle in an adjoining room. After breakfast the host showed his guests about the house and displayed the many curiosities he had brought from Africa; but most of all he seems to prize the pictures of African beauties which were painted from originals by a French artist and then adorned his parlor. One of the originals he had himself seen, and before her picture he poured out his rhapsodies to his guests upon her personal charms. 'Ah!' said he 'the elegance, the enbonpoint, the elasticity of her figure was unequalled. I know, prejudiced white people do not like the African style of beauty; but to see the original of this picture would I am sure disarm all prejudice. Then there is no complexion like the African for setting off with jewelry with effect'—Thus he proceeded in most eloquent strains, which perhaps in poetry might run thus:

'That ebony skin, with crimson seen beneath,  
Those killing eyes, and charming snow-white teeth!  
Such rich, soft lips, that princely beauty had,  
She might, I'm sure, make any man run mad.'

The old man, however, did not think so favorably of black men, but wished very much to obtain white husbands for his daughters. He has indeed offered \$20,000 worth of property, and thirty or forty negroes, to any decent white man who will marry either of his daughters and treat her well. But none have seemed to appreciate the tripple prize, and the old man still remains the only white man on the ground. What could have turned the mind of Mr K. to such tastes and associates the wise ones may surmise; yet true it is—though a white human being—with many white relations—and rich withal—he lives just as has been described from choice. Surely there is no accounting for taste.

## FOR THE REGISTER AND OBSERVER.

## NOTES OF AN INVALID.—NO. 9.

## VISIT TO THE PLANTERS. NIGHT ENCAMPMENT. THE RICH MR K. WITH HIS BLACK CONSORT AND OFFSPRING.

The invalid had spent but little time at St. Augustine, when his improvement in health and spirits received a new impetus by the arrival of an invalid step-father, with his mother and a sister; thus making the place, which was most congenial to his health, the home of his affections. Shortly afterward, having the desire, and sufficient strength, he accepted, with his sister, invitations to accompany a few planters' families to their estates on St. John's river.

It was a delightful day when the party mounted their gigs and horses, and passing out through the northern gate ploughed through the first few miles of sand that skirt the city. But the varied and unsettled state of the road, or path-way, soon showed they were in a new country: Large creeks of uncertain depth were often to be forded. Here they passed over large fields of the Chinese Bayonet, a kind of Palmetto; there, through Pine-Barrens, or an unshaded savanna, carpeted with verdure and flowers: Next they passed the rich hammocks appearing like luxuriant islands. Then a swamp with its tall trunks and jutting buttresses of the sombre cypress. Farther on, the forests thickened with Live Oak and the satin-leaved Magnolia, queen of trees; and near by, opened the outskirts of a plantation, with a pair of date trees, and olive and orange groves, that scented the air far around. Then an arched cluster of vines of wild honeysuckles, and the beautiful jasmine and myrtles, gladdening the sight, lent their fragrance to the soft winds, while the parrot, the mocking-bird, and other songsters made melody in the midst. Ay! then it seemed like Florida—the land of Flowers—whither the credulous Ponce de Leon came to seek the reported fountain of perpetual youth. But alas! though the hand of God may have marked it for the garden of the world, man has done nothing to improve it.

By a little past noon, the party had arrived at Six-Mile-Creek, not far from Picolata; and there upon a little cleared spot—no house being near—a fire was kindled—a cloth was spread upon the earth, and covered with supplies brought for the purpose. To this rustic feast, the party—gypsy-like—sat down upon the nearest stumps or reclined upon the turf. The mode of dining was novel to the strangers, but rendered very agreeable by keen appetites and pleasant company, even in spite of the importuning crowds of mosquitos. The comfort however was soon marred by the mention of horrid snakes, and the kind warning from one of the company to look out for Jiggers and Seed-Ticks, said to be very abundant and worse than snakes. 'Worse than snakes!' exclaimed Miss J. 'Pray tell me what they are.' 'The first' she was answered 'is an exceedingly small insect that embeds itself in the flesh of the foot and there generates: And the second kind is as bad and very minute: They collect in great numbers and hang in balls from blades of grass like swarms of bees from trees; and if a set gets upon any one, they instantly spread over the whole person, and with such tenacity fasten to the skin, as with difficulty to be pull-