

W Still

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THE
UNDERGROUND RAIL ROAD

A RECORD

OF

FACTS, AUTHENTIC NARRATIVES, LETTERS, &C.,

Narrating the Hardships Hair-breadth Escapes and Death Struggles

OF THE

Slaves in their efforts for Freedom,

AS RELATED

BY THEMSELVES AND OTHERS, OR WITNESSED BY THE AUTHOR;

TOGETHER WITH

SKETCHES OF SOME OF THE LARGEST STOCKHOLDERS, AND
MOST LIBERAL AIDERS AND ADVISERS,
OF THE ROAD.

BY

WILLIAM STILL,

For many years connected with the Anti-Slavery Office in Philadelphia, and Chairman
of the Acting Vigilant Committee of the Philadelphia Branch of
the Underground Rail Road.

Illustrated with 70 fine Engravings by Bensell, Schell and others, and
Portraits from Photographs from Life.

Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant that has escaped from his master unto thee.—Deut. xxiii. 15.

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DEDICATION.

TO THE
FRIENDS OF FREEDOM, TO HEROIC FUGITIVES AND THEIR
POSTERITY IN THE UNITED STATES,
THESE MEMORIALS OF THEIR LOVE OF LIBERTY
ARE INSCRIBED

By the AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

Whereas, The position of William Still in the vigilance committee connected with the "Underground Rail Road," as its corresponding secretary, and chairman of its active sub-committee, gave him peculiar facilities for collecting interesting facts pertaining to this branch of the anti-slavery service; therefore

Resolved, That the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society request him to compile and publish his personal reminiscences and experiences relating to the "Underground Rail Road."

In compliance with this Resolution, unanimously passed at the closing meeting of the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society held last May in Philadelphia, the writer, in the following pages, willingly and he hopes satisfactorily discharges his duty.

In these Records will be found interesting narratives of the escapes of many men, women and children, from the prison-house of bondage; from cities and plantations; from rice swamps and cotton fields; from kitchens and mechanic shops; from Border States and Gulf States; from cruel masters and mild masters;—some guided by the north star alone, penniless, braving the perils of land and sea, eluding the keen scent of the blood-hound as well as the more dangerous pursuit of the savage slave-hunter; some from secluded dens and caves of the earth, where for months and years they had been hidden away waiting for the chance to escape; from mountains and swamps, where indescribable suffering from hunger and other privations had patiently been endured. Occasionally fugitives came in boxes and chests, and not infrequently some were secreted in steamers and vessels, and in some instances journeyed hundreds of miles in skiffs. Men disguised in female attire and women dressed in the garb of men have under very trying circumstances triumphed in thus making their way to freedom. And here and there when all other modes of escape seemed cut off, some, whose fair complexions have rendered them indistinguishable from their Anglo-Saxon brethren, feeling that they could endure the yoke no longer, with assumed airs of im-

portance, such as they had been accustomed to see their masters show when traveling, have taken the usual modes of conveyance and have even braved the most scrutinizing inspection of slaveholders, slave-catchers and car conductors, who were ever on the alert to catch those who were considered base and white enough to practice such deception. Passes have been written and used by fugitives, with their masters' and mistresses' names boldly attached thereto, and have answered admirably as a protection, when passing through ignorant country districts of slave regions, where but few, either white or colored, knew how to read or write correctly.

Not a few, upon arriving, of course, hardly had rags enough on them to cover their nakedness, even in the coldest weather.

It scarcely needs be stated that, as a general rule, the passengers of the U. G. R. R. were physically and intellectually above the average order of slaves.

They were determined to have liberty even at the cost of life.

The slave auction block indirectly proved to be in some respects a very active agent in promoting travel on the U. G. R. R., just as Jeff. Davis was an agent in helping to bring about the downfall of Slavery. The horrors of the block, as looked upon through the light of the daily heart-breaking separations it was causing to the oppressed, no pen could describe or mind imagine; hence it will be seen that many of the passengers, whose narratives will be found in this work, ascribed their first undying resolution to strike for freedom to the auction block or to the fear of soon having to take their chances thereon. But other agencies were at work in the South, which in various ways aided directly or tacitly the U. G. R. R. cause.

To refer in detail to any considerable number of these agents would be impossible, if necessary. Some there were who nobly periled their all for the freedom of the oppressed, whose sufferings and deeds of bravery must have a fitting place in this volume.

Where in history, modern or ancient, could be found a more Christlike exhibition of love and humanity, of whole-souled devotion to freedom, than was proven in the character of the hero. Seth Concklin, who lost his life while endeavoring to rescue from Alabama slavery the wife and children of Peter Still?

So also do the heroic and faithful services of Samuel D. Burris demand special reference and commemoration, for his connection with the U. G. R. R. cost him not only imprisonment and the most barbarous treatment, but likewise the loss of his freedom. He was sold on the auction block.

Here too come the overwhelming claims of S. A. Smith, who at the sad cost to himself of many of the best years of his life in the Richmond penitentiary, boxed up Henry Box Brown and others in Richmond, and committed them to Adams' Express office, to be carried in this most extraordinary manner to freedom.

We must not omit from these records the boldness and the hazard of the unparalleled undertakings of Captains Drayton, Lee, Baylis, &c.

While the Vigilance Committee of Philadelphia was in no wise responsible for the suffering incurred by many of those who helped the slave, yet in order to show how men were moved to lend an ear to those hungering and thirsting for freedom, and to what extent the relentless spirit of Slavery would go in wreaking vengeance upon them—out of the many who were called upon to suffer thus, the individual cases here brought forward must suffice. Without introducing a few of such incidents the records would necessarily be incomplete.

Those who come after us seeking for information in regard to the existence, atrocity, struggles and destruction of Slavery, will have no trouble in finding this hydra-headed monster ruling and tyrannizing over Church and State, North and South, white and black, without let or hindrance, for at least several generations. Nor will posterity have any difficulty in finding the deeds of the brave and invincible opposers of Slavery, who in the language of Wm. Lloyd Garrison, declared without concealment and without compromise: "I am in earnest, I will not equivocate—I will not excuse—I will not retreat a single inch—and I will be heard."

While this resolute spirit actuated the hearts of all true abolitionists, it was a peculiar satisfaction and gratification to them to know that the slaves themselves were struggling and hungering for deliverance. Hence such evidence from this quarter never failed to meet with hearty sympathy and aid. But here the enemy was never willingly allowed to investigate.

The slave and his particular friends could only meet in private to transact the business of the Underground Rail Road ground. All others were outsiders. The right hand was not to know what the left hand was doing.

Stockholders did not expect any dividends, nor did they require special reports to be published. Indeed prudence often dictated that even the recipients of our favor should not know the names of their helpers, and *vice versa* they did not desire to know theirs.

The risk of aiding fugitives was never lost sight of, and the safety of all concerned called for still tongues. Hence sad and thrilling stories were listened to, and made deep impressions; but as a universal rule, friend and fugitive parted with only very vivid recollection of the secret interview and with mutual sympathy; for a length of time no narratives were written. The writer, in common with others, took no notes. But after the restoration of Peter Still, his own brother (the kidnapped and the ransomed), after forty years' cruel separation from his mother, the wonderful discovery and joyful reunion, the idea forced itself upon his mind that all over this wide and extended country thousands of mothers and children, separated by Slavery, were in a similar way living without the slightest knowledge of each other's whereabouts, praying and weeping without ceasing, as did this mother and son. Under these reflections it seemed reasonable to hope that by carefully gathering the narratives of Underground Rail Road passengers, in some way or other some of the bleeding and severed hearts might be united and comforted; and by the use that might be made privately, if not publicly, of just such facts as would naturally be embraced in their brief narratives, re-unions might take place. For years it was the writer's privilege to see many travelers, to receive from their own lips the most interesting and in many cases exceedingly thrilling accounts of their struggles for liberty, and to learn who had held them in bondage, how they had been treated, what prompted them to escape, and whom that were near and dear to them they had left in chains. Their hopes, fears and sufferings were thus recorded in a book. It scarcely need be added with no expectation, however, that the day was so near when these things could be published.

It is now a source of great satisfaction to feel that not

only these numerous narratives may be published, but that in connection therewith, for the completeness of the work, many interesting private letters from fugitives in Canada, slaves in the South, Underground Rail Road conductors and stockholders, and last and least, from slaveholders, in the bargain—all having a direct bearing on the mysterious road.

In the use of these various documents, the writer begs to assure his readers that the most scrupulous care has been taken to furnish artless stories, simple facts,—to resort to no coloring to make the book seem romantic, as he is fully persuaded that any exaggerations or additions of his own could not possibly equal in surpassing interest, the original and natural tales given under circumstances, when life and death seemed about equally balanced in the scale, and fugitives in transit were making their way from Slavery to Freedom, with the horrors of the Fugitive Slave-law staring them in the face.

Thousands were either directly or indirectly interested in this enterprise, and in all probability two generations will pass away before many who are now living witnesses to the truth of these records will cease to bring vividly to mind the hour and circumstance when for the first time they were led to resort to this road to escape the "barbarism" of Slavery.

Far be it from the writer to assume, however, that these Records cover the entire Underground Rail Road operations. Many local branches existed in different parts of the country, which neither time nor limit would allow mention of in this connection. Good men labored and suffered, who deserve to be held in the highest admiration by the friends of Freedom, whose names may be looked for in vain in these pages; for which reason some may be inclined to complain. With respect to these points it may here be remarked that in gathering narratives from unwritten sources—from memory simply—no amount of pains or labor could possibly succeed in making a trustworthy history. The writer has deemed it best, therefore, to confine himself to facts coming within his personal knowledge, and to the records of his own preserving, which, by the way, are quite too voluminous to be all used in this work. Frequent abridgements and omissions must be made.

The writer is fully conscious of his literary imperfections. The

time allotted him from other pressing duties is, moreover, exceedingly limited. Nevertheless he feels that he owes it to the cause of Freedom, and to the Fugitives and their posterity in particular, to bring the doings of the U. G. R. R. before the public in the most truthful manner; not for the purpose of amusing the reader, but to show what efforts were made and what success was gained for Freedom under difficulties. That some professing a love of liberty at this late date will be disposed to criticise some of the methods resorted to in aiding in the escape of fugitives as herein recounted, may be expected. While the writer holds the labors of Abolitionists generally in very grateful appreciation, he hopes not to be regarded as making any invidious discriminations in favor of the individual friends of the slave, whose names may be brought out prominently in this work, as it is not with the Anti-Slavery question proper that he is dealing, but simply the Underground Rail Road. In order, therefore, fittingly to bring the movements of this enterprise to light, the writer could not justly confine himself to the Acting Committee, but felt constrained to bring in others—Friends—who never forsook the fugitive, who visited him in prison, clothed him when naked, fed him when hungry, wept with him when he wept, and cheered him with their warmest sympathies and friendship. In addition to the names of the Acting Committee, he has felt constrained to beg the portraits of the following stockholders and advisers of the Road, whose names will be found on the next page, and in thus presenting a brief sketch of their labors, he feels that the true friends of the slave in recognizing them in this connection with many of the once Fugitives (now citizens), will regard it as a tribute to the Anti-Slavery cause rather than the individuals themselves.

WILLIAM STILL.

PHILADELPHIA, *January, 1872.*

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and auction-blocks had no charms for him. He loved his sisters, but he knew if he could not protect himself, much less could he protect them. So he concluded to bid them adieu forever in this world.

Turning from the three male companions for the purpose of finding a brief space for Maria, it will be well to state here that females in attempting to escape from a life of bondage undertook three times the risk of failure that males were liable to, not to mention the additional trials and struggles they had to contend with. In justice, therefore, to the heroic female who was willing to endure the most extreme suffering and hardship for freedom, double honors were due.

Maria, the heroine of the party, was about forty years of age, chestnut color, medium size, and possessed of a good share of common sense. She was owned by George Parker. As was a common thing with slave-holders, Maria had found her owners hard to please, and quite often, without the slightest reason, they would threaten to "sell or make a change." These threats only made matters worse, or rather it only served to nerve Maria for the conflict. The party walked almost the entire distance from Washington to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

In the meantime George Parker, the so-called owner of Daniel and Maria, hurriedly rushed their good names into the "Baltimore Sun," after the following manner—

"FOUR HUNDRED DOLLARS REWARD.—Ranaway from my house on Saturday night, August 30, my negro man 'Daniel,' twenty-five years of age, bright yellow mulatto, thick set and stout made.

Also, my negro woman, 'Maria,' forty years of age, bright mulatto. The above reward will be paid if delivered in Washington city.

GEORGE PARKER."

While this advertisement was in the Baltimore papers, doubtless these noble passengers were enjoying the hospitalities of the Vigilance Committee, and finally a warm reception in Canada, by which they were greatly pleased. Of Benjamin and Daniel, the subjoined letter from Rev. H. Wilson is of importance in the way of throwing light upon their whereabouts in Canada:

ST. CATHARINE, C. W., Sept. 15th, 1856.

MR. WILLIAM STILL:—*Dear Sir*—Two young men arrived here on Friday evening last from Washington, viz: Benjamin R. Fletcher and Daniel Neall. Mr. Neall (or Neale) desires to have his box of clothing forwarded on to him. It is at Washington in the care of John Dade, a colored man, who lives at Doct. W. H. Gilman's, who keeps an Apothecary store on the corner of 4½ and Pennsylvania Avenue. Mr. Dade is a slave, but a free dealer. You will please write to John Dade, in the care of Doct. W. H. Gilman, on behalf of Daniel Neale, but make use of the name of George Harrison, instead of Neale, and Dade will understand it. Please have John Dade direct the box by express to you in Philadelphia; he has the means of paying the charges on it in advance, as far as Philadelphia; and as soon as it comes you will please forward it on to my care at St. Catharine. Say to John Dade, that George Harrison sends his love to his sister and Uncle Allen Sims, and all inquiring friends. Mr. Fletcher and Mr. Neale both send their respects to you, and I may add mine.

Yours truly,

HIRAM WILSON.

P. S.—Mr. Benjamin R. Fletcher wishes to have Mr. Dade call on his brother James,

and communicate to him his affectionate regards, and make known to him that he is safe, and cheerful and happy. He desires his friends to know, through Dade, that he found Mrs. Starke here, his brother Alfred's wife's sister; that she is well, and living in St. Catharine, C. W., near Niagara Falls.

H. W.

HENRY BOX BROWN.

ARRIVED BY ADAMS' EXPRESS.

Although the name of Henry Box Brown has been echoed over the land for a number of years, and the simple facts connected with his marvelous escape from slavery in a box published widely through the medium of anti-slavery papers, nevertheless it is not unreasonable to suppose that very little is generally known in relation to this case.

Briefly, the facts are these, which doubtless have never before been fully published—

Brown was a man of invention as well as a hero. In point of interest, however, his case is no more remarkable than many others. Indeed, neither before nor after escaping did he suffer one-half what many others have experienced.

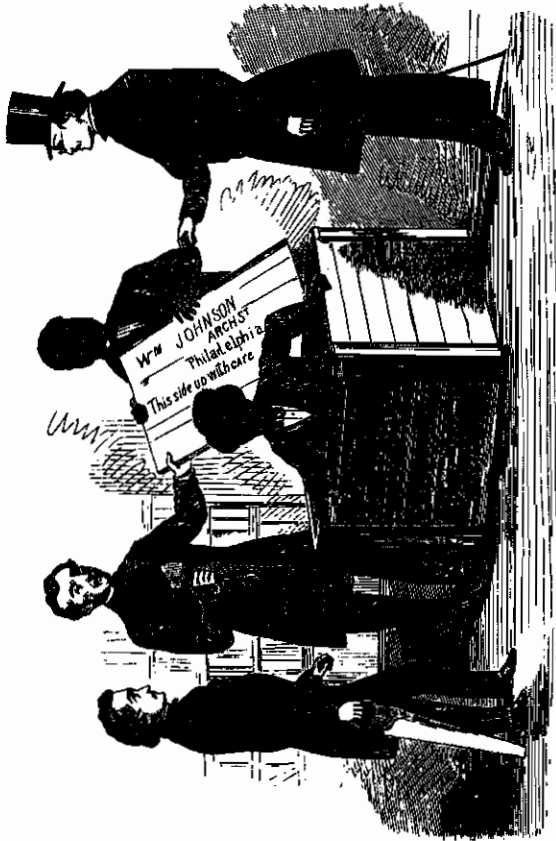
He was decidedly an unhappy piece of property in the city of Richmond, Va. In the condition of a slave he felt that it would be impossible for him to remain. Full well did he know, however, that it was no holiday task to escape the vigilance of Virginia slave-hunters, or the wrath of an enraged master for committing the unpardonable sin of attempting to escape to a land of liberty. So Brown counted well the cost before venturing upon this hazardous undertaking. Ordinary modes of travel he concluded might prove disastrous to his hopes; he, therefore, hit upon a new invention altogether, which was to have himself boxed up and forwarded to Philadelphia direct by express. The size of the box and how it was to be made to fit him most comfortably, was of his own ordering. Two feet eight inches deep, two feet wide, and three feet long were the exact dimensions of the box, lined with baize. His resources with regard to food and water consisted of the following: One bladder of water and a few small biscuits. His mechanical implement to meet the death-struggle for fresh air, all told, was one large gimlet. Satisfied that it would be far better to peril his life for freedom in this way than to remain under the galling yoke of Slavery, he entered his box, which was safely nailed up and hooped with five hickory hoops, and was then addressed by his next friend, James A. Smith, a shoe dealer, to Wm. H. Johnson, Arch street, Philadelphia, marked, "This side up with care." In this condition he was sent to Adams' Express office in a dray, and thence by overland express to Philadelphia. It was twenty-six hours from the time he left Richmond until his arrival in the City of Brotherly Love. The notice, "This side up, &c.," did not avail

with the different expressmen, who hesitated not to handle the box in the usual rough manner common to this class of men. For a while they actually had the box upside down, and had him on his head for miles. A few days before he was expected, certain intimation was conveyed to a member of the Vigilance Committee that a box might be expected by the three o'clock morning train from the South, which might contain a man. One of the most serious walks he ever took—and they had not been a few—to meet and accompany passengers, he took at half past two o'clock that morning to the depot. Not once, but for more than a score of times, he fancied the slave would be dead. He anxiously looked while the freight was being unloaded from the cars, to see if he could recognize a box that might contain a man; one alone had that appearance, and he confessed it really seemed as if there was the scent of death about it. But on inquiry, he soon learned that it was not the one he was looking after, and he was free to say he experienced a marked sense of relief. That same afternoon, however, he received from Richmond a telegram, which read thus, "Your case of goods is shipped and will arrive to-morrow morning."

At this exciting juncture of affairs, Mr. McKim, who had been engineering this important undertaking, deemed it expedient to change the programme slightly in one particular at least to insure greater safety. Instead of having a member of the Committee go again to the depot for the box, which might excite suspicion, it was decided that it would be safest to have the express bring it direct to the Anti-Slavery Office.

But all apprehension of danger did not now disappear, for there was no room to suppose that Adams' Express office had any sympathy with the Abolitionist or the fugitive, consequently for Mr. McKim to appear personally at the express office to give directions with reference to the coming of a box from Richmond which would be directed to Arch street, and yet not intended for that street, but for the Anti-Slavery office at 107 North Fifth street, it needed of course no great discernment to foresee that a step of this kind was wholly impracticable and that a more indirect and covert method would have to be adopted. In this dreadful crisis Mr. McKim, with his usual good judgment and remarkably quick, strategical mind, especially in matters pertaining to the U. G. R. R., hit upon the following plan, namely, to go to his friend, E. M. Davis,* who was then extensively engaged in mercantile business, and relate the circumstances. Having daily intercourse with said Adams' Express office, and being well acquainted with the firm and some of the drivers, Mr. Davis could, as Mr. McKim thought, talk about "boxes, freight, etc.," from any part of the country without risk. Mr. Davis heard Mr. McKim's plan and instantly approved of it, and was heartily at his service.

* E. M. Davis was a member of the Executive Committee of the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society and a long-tried Abolitionist, son-in-law of James and Lucretia Mott.



RESURRECTION OF HENRY BOX BROWN.

“Dan, an Irishman, one of Adams’ Express drivers, is just the fellow to go to the depot after the box,” said Davis. “He drinks a little too much whiskey sometimes, but he will do anything I ask him to do, promptly and obligingly. I’ll trust Dan, for I believe he is the very man.” The difficulty which Mr. McKim had been so anxious to overcome was thus pretty well settled. It was agreed that Dan should go after the box next morning before daylight and bring it to the Anti-Slavery office direct, and to make it all the more agreeable for Dan to get up out of his warm bed and go on this errand before day, it was decided that he should have a five dollar gold piece for himself. Thus these preliminaries having been satisfactorily arranged, it only remained for Mr. Davis to see Dan and give him instructions accordingly, etc.

Next morning, according to arrangement, the box was at the Anti-Slavery office in due time. The witnesses present to behold the resurrection were J. M. McKim, Professor C. D. Cleveland, Lewis Thompson, and the writer.

Mr. McKim was deeply interested; but having been long identified with the Anti-Slavery cause as one of its oldest and ablest advocates in the darkest days of slavery and mobs, and always found by the side of the fugitive to counsel and succor, he was on this occasion perfectly composed.

Professor Cleveland, however, was greatly moved. His zeal and earnestness in the cause of freedom, especially in rendering aid to passengers, knew no limit. Ordinarily he could not too often visit these travelers, shake them too warmly by the hand, or impart to them too freely of his substance to aid them on their journey. But now his emotion was overpowering.

Mr. Thompson, of the firm of Merrihew & Thompson—about the only printers in the city who for many years dared to print such incendiary documents as anti-slavery papers and pamphlets—one of the truest friends of the slave, was composed and prepared to witness the scene.

All was quiet. The door had been safely locked. The proceedings commenced. Mr. McKim rapped quietly on the lid of the box and called out, “All right!” Instantly came the answer from within, “All right, sir!”

The witnesses will never forget that moment. Saw and hatchet quickly had the five hickory hoops cut and the lid off, and the marvellous resurrection of Brown ensued. Rising up in his box, he reached out his hand, saying, “How do you do, gentlemen?” The little assemblage hardly knew what to think or do at the moment. He was about as wet as if he had come up out of the Delaware. Very soon he remarked that, before leaving Richmond he had selected for his arrival-hymn (if he lived) the Psalm beginning with these words: “*I waited patiently for the Lord, and He heard my prayer.*” And most touchingly did he sing the psalm, much to his own relief, as well as to the delight of his small audience.

He was then christened Henry Box Brown, and soon afterwards was sent to the hospitable residence of James Mott and E. M. Davis, on Ninth street, where, it is needless to say, he met a most cordial reception from Mrs. Lucretia Mott and her household. Clothing and creature comforts were furnished in abundance, and delight and joy filled all hearts in that stronghold of philanthropy.

As he had been so long doubled up in the box he needed to promenade considerably in the fresh air, so James Mott put one of his broad-brim hats on his head and tendered him the hospitalities of his yard as well as his house, and while Brown promenaded the yard flushed with victory, great was the joy of his friends.

After his visit at Mr. Mott's, he spent two days with the writer, and then took his departure for Boston, evidently feeling quite conscious of the wonderful feat he had performed, and at the same time it may be safely said that those who witnessed this strange resurrection were not only elated at his success, but were made to sympathize more deeply than ever before with the slave. Also the noble-hearted Smith who boxed him up was made to rejoice over Brown's victory, and was thereby encouraged to render similar service to two other young bondmen, who appealed to him for deliverance. But, unfortunately, in this attempt the undertaking proved a failure. Two boxes containing the young men alluded to above, after having been duly expressed and some distance on the road, were, through the agency of the telegraph, betrayed, and the heroic young fugitives were captured in their boxes and dragged back to hopeless bondage. Consequently, through this deplorable failure, Samuel A. Smith was arrested, imprisoned, and was called upon to suffer severely, as may be seen from the subjoined correspondence, taken from the New York Tribune soon after his release from the penitentiary.

THE DELIVERER OF BOX BROWN—MEETING OF THE COLORED CITIZENS OF PHILADELPHIA.

[Correspondence of the N. Y. Tribune.]

PHILADELPHIA, Saturday, July 5, 1856.

Samuel A. Smith, who boxed up Henry Box Brown in Richmond, Va., and forwarded him by overland express to Philadelphia, and who was arrested and convicted, eight years ago, for boxing up two other slaves, also directed to Philadelphia, having served out his imprisonment in the Penitentiary, was released on the 18th ultimo, and arrived in this city on the 21st.

Though he lost all his property; though he was refused witnesses on his trial (no officer could be found, who would serve a summons on a witness); though for five long months, in hot weather, he was kept heavily chained in a cell four by eight feet in dimensions; though he received five dreadful stabs, aimed at his heart, by a bribed assassin, nevertheless he still rejoices in the motives which prompted him to "undo the heavy burdens, and let

the oppressed go free." Having resided nearly all his life in the South, where he had traveled and seen much of the "peculiar institution," and had witnessed the most horrid enormities inflicted upon the slave, whose cries were ever ringing in his ears, and for whom he had the warmest sympathy, Mr. Smith could not refrain from believing that the black man, as well as the white, had God-given rights. Consequently, he was not accustomed to shed tears when a poor creature escaped from his "kiud master;" nor was he willing to turn a deaf ear to his appeals and groans, when he knew he was thirsting for freedom. From 1828 up to the day he was incarcerated, many had sought his aid and counsel, nor had they sought in vain. In various places he operated with success. In Richmond, however, it seemed expedient to invent a new plan for certain emergencies, hence the Box and Express plan was devised, at the instance of a few heroic slaves, who had manifested their willingness to die in a box, on the road to liberty, rather than continue longer under the yoke. But these heroes fell into the power of their enemies. Mr. Smith had not been long in the Penitentiary before he had fully gained the esteem and confidence of the Superintendent and other officers. Finding him to be humane and generous-hearted—showing kindness toward all, especially in buying bread, &c., for the starving prisoners, and by a timely note of warning, which had saved the life of one of the keepers, for whose destruction a bold plot had been arranged—the officers felt disposed to show him such favors as the law would allow. But their good intentions were soon frustrated. The Inquisition (commonly called the Legislature), being in session in Richmond, hearing that the Superintendent had been speaking well of Smith, and circulating a petition for his pardon, indignantly demanded to know if the rumor was well founded. Two weeks were spent by the Inquisition, and many witnesses were placed upon oath, to solemnly testify in the matter. One of the keepers swore that his life had been saved by Smith. Col. Morgan, the Superintendent, frequently testified in writing and verbally to Smith's good deportment; acknowledging that he had circulated petitions, &c.; and took the position, that he sincerely believed, that it would be to the interest of the institution to pardon him; calling the attention of the Inquisition, at the same time, to the fact, that not unfrequently pardons had been granted to criminals, under sentence of death, for the most cold-blooded murder, to say nothing of other gross crimes. The effort for pardon was soon abandoned, for the following reason given by the Governor: "I can't, and I won't pardon him!"

In view of the unparalleled injustice which Mr. S. had suffered, as well as on account of the aid he had rendered to the slaves, on his arrival in this city the colored citizens of Philadelphia felt that he was entitled to sympathy and aid, and straightway invited him to remain a few days, until arrangements could be made for a mass meeting to receive him. Accordingly, on last Monday evening, a mass meeting convened in the Israel church, and

the Rev. Wm. T. Catto was called to the chair, and Wm. Still was appointed secretary. The chairman briefly stated the object of the meeting. Having lived in the South, he claimed to know something of the workings of the oppressive system of slavery generally, and declared that, notwithstanding the many exposures of the evil which came under his own observation, the most vivid descriptions fell far short of the realities his own eyes had witnessed. He then introduced Mr. Smith, who arose and in a plain manner briefly told his story, assuring the audience that he had always hated slavery, and had taken great pleasure in helping many out of it, and though he had suffered much physically and pecuniarily for the cause' sake, yet he murmured not, but rejoiced in what he had done. After taking his seat, addresses were made by the Rev. S. Smith, Messrs. Kinnard, Brunner, Bradway, and others. The following preamble and resolutions were adopted—

WHEREAS, We, the colored citizens of Philadelphia, have among us Samuel A. Smith, who was incarcerated over seven years in the Richmond Penitentiary, for doing an act that was honorable to his feelings and his sense of justice and humanity, therefore,

Resolved, That we welcome him to this city as a martyr to the cause of Freedom.

Resolved, That we heartily tender him our gratitude for the good he has done to our suffering race.

Resolved, That we sympathize with him in his losses and sufferings in the cause of the poor, down-trodden slave.

W. S.

During his stay in Philadelphia, on this occasion, he stopped for about a fortnight with the writer, and it was most gratifying to learn from him that he was no new-worker on the U. G. R. R. But that he had long hated slavery thoroughly, and although surrounded with perils on every side, he had not failed to help a poor slave whenever the opportunity was presented.

Pecuniary aid, to some extent, was rendered him in this city, for which he was grateful, and after being united in marriage, by Wm. H. Furness, D.D., to a lady who had remained faithful to him through all his sore trials and sufferings, he took his departure for Western New York, with a good conscience and an unshaken faith in the belief that in aiding his fellow-man to freedom he had but simply obeyed the word of Him who taught man to do unto others as he would be done by.

TRIAL OF THE EMANCIPATORS OF COL. J. H. WHEELER'S SLAVES, JANE JOHNSON AND HER TWO LITTLE BOYS.

Among other duties devolving on the Vigilance Committee when hearing of slaves brought into the State by their owners, was immediately to inform such persons that as they were not fugitives, but were brought into the State by their masters, they were entitled to their freedom without another moment's service, and that they could have the assistance of the Committee

and the advice of counsel without charge, by simply availing themselves of these proffered favors.

Many slave-holders fully understood the law in this particular, and were also equally posted with regard to the vigilance of abolitionists. Consequently they avoided bringing slaves beyond Mason and Dixon's Line in traveling North. But some slave-holders were not thus mindful of the laws, or were too arrogant to take heed, as may be seen in the case of Colonel John H. Wheeler, of North Carolina, the United States Minister to Nicaragua. In passing through Philadelphia from Washington, one very warm July day in 1855, accompanied by three of his slaves, his high official equilibrium, as well as his assumed rights under the Constitution, received a terrible shock at the hands of the Committee. Therefore, for the readers of these pages, and in order to completely illustrate the various phases of the work of the Committee in the days of Slavery, this case, selected from many others, is a fitting one. However, for more than a brief recital of some of the more prominent incidents, it will not be possible to find room in this volume. And, indeed, the necessity of so doing is precluded by the fact that Mr. Williamson in justice to himself and the cause of freedom, with great pains and singular ability, gathered the most important facts bearing on his memorable trial and imprisonment, and published them in a neat volume for historical reference.

In order to bring fully before the reader the beginning of this interesting and exciting case, it seems only necessary to publish the subjoined letter, written by one of the actors in the drama, and addressed to the New York Tribune, and an additional paragraph which may be requisite to throw light on a special point, which Judge Kane decided was concealed in the "obstinate" breast of Passmore Williamson, as said Williamson persistently refused before the said Judge's court, to own that he had a knowledge of the mystery in question. After which, a brief glance at some of the more important points of the case must suffice.

LETTER COPIED FROM THE NEW YORK TRIBUNE.

[Correspondence of The N. Y. Tribune.]

PHILADELPHIA, Monday, July 30, 1855.

As the public have not been made acquainted with the facts and particulars respecting the agency of Mr. Passmore Williamson and others, in relation to the slave case now agitating this city, and especially as the poor slave mother and her two sons have been so grossly misrepresented, I deem it my duty to lay the facts before you, for publication or otherwise, as you may think proper.

On Wednesday afternoon, week, at 4½ o'clock, the following note was placed in my hands by a colored boy whom I had never before seen, to my recollection: