It was summer time, and twilight. We were sitting on the porch of the farm-house, on the summit of the hill, and “Aunt Rachel” was sitting respectfully below our level, on the steps, – for she was our servant, and colored. She was of mighty frame and stature; she was sixty years old, but her eye was undimmed and her strength unabated. She was a cheerful, hearty soul, and it was no more trouble for her to laugh than it is for a bird to sing. She was under fire, now, as usual when the day was done. That is to say, she was being chaffed without mercy, and was enjoying it. She would let off peal after peal of laughter, and then sit with her face in her hands and shake with throes of enjoyment which she could no longer get breath enough to express. At such a moment as this a thought occurred to me, and I said:

“Aunt Rachel, how is it that you’ve lived sixty years and never had any trouble?”

She stopped quaking. She paused, and there was a moment of silence. She turned her face over her shoulder toward me, and said, without even a smile in her voice: –

“Misto C –, is you in ‘earnest?”

It surprised me a good deal; and it sobered my manner and my speech, too. I said: –

“Why, I thought – that is, I meant – why, you can’t have had any trouble. I’ve never heard you sigh, and never seen your eye when there wasn’t a laugh in it.”

She faced fairly around, now, and was full of earnestness.

“Has I had any trouble? Misto C –, I’s gwyne to tell you, den I leave it to you. I was bawn down ’mongst de slaves; I knows all ’bout slavery, ’cause I been one of ’em my own se’f. Well, sah, my ole man – dat’s my husban’ – he was lovin’ an’ kind to me, jist as kind as you is to yo’ own wife. An’ we had chil’en – seven chil’en – an’ we loved dem chil’en jist de same as you loves you’ chil’en. Dey was black, but de Lord can’t make no chil’en so black but what dey mother loves ’em an’ wouldn’t give ‘em up, no, not for anything dat’s in dis whole world.

“Well, sah, I was raised in ole Fo’ginny, but my mother she was raised in Maryland; an’ my souls! She was turrible when she’d git started! My lan’! But she’d make de fur fly! When she’d git into dem tantrums, she always had one word dat she said. She’d straighten herse’f up an’ put her fists in her hips an’ say, ‘I want you to understan’ dat I wasn’t bawn in de mash to be fool’ by trash! I’s one o’ de ole Blue Hen’s Chickens, I is!’ …

“Well, bymeby my ole mistis say she’s broke, an’ she got to sell all de n_____s on de place. An’ when I heah dat dey gwyne to sell us all off at oction in Richmon’, oh de good gracious! I know what dat mean!”

Aunt Rachel had gradually risen, while she warmed to her subject, and now she towered above us, black against the stars.

“Dey put chains on us an’ put us on a stan’ as high as dis po’ch, – twenty foot high, – an’ all de people stood aroun’, crowds an’ crowds. An’ dey’d come up dah an’ look at us all roun’, an’ squeeze our arm, an’ make us git up an’ walk, an’ den say, ‘Dis one too ole,’ or ‘Dis one lame,’ or ‘Dis one don’t ‘mount to much.’ An’ dey sole my ole man, an’ took him away, an’ dey begin to sell my chil’en an’ take dem away, an’ I begin to cry; an’ de man say, ‘Shet up yo’ dam blubberin’,’ an’ hit me on de mouf wid his han’. An’ when de las’ one was gone but my little Henry, I grab’ him clos’ up to my breas’ so, an’ I ris up an’ says, ‘You shan’t take him away,’ I says; ‘I’ll kill de man dat tetch him!’ I says. But my little Henry whisper an’ say, ‘I gwyne to run away, an’ den I work an’ buy yo’ freedom.’ Oh, bess de chile, he always so good! But dey got him – dey got him, de men did; but I took and tear de clo’es mos’ off of ’em, an’ beat ’em over de head wid my chain; an’ dey give it to me, too, but I didn’t mine dat. …
“Well, I thinks to myse’f, if my little Henry ever got a chance to run away, he’d make to de Norf, o’ course. So one day I comes in dah whah de big officers was, in de parlor, an’ I drops a kurtchy, so, an’ I up an’ tol’ ‘em ‘bout my Henry, dey a-listenin’ to my troubles jist de same as if I was white folks; an’ I says, ‘What I come for is beca’se if he got away and got up Norf whah you gemmen comes from, you might ‘a’ seen him, maybe, an’ could tell me so as I could fine him ag’in; he was very little, an’ he had a sk-yar on his lef’ wris’, an’ at de top of his forehead.’ Den dey look mournful, an’ de Gen’l say, ‘How long sence you los’ him?’ an’ I say, ‘Thirteen year.’ Den de Gen’l say, ‘He wouldn’t be little no mo’, now – he’s a man!’

“I never thought o’ dat befo’! He was only dat little feller to me, yit. I never thought ‘bout him growin’ up an’ bein’ big. But I see it den. None o’ de gemmen had run across him, so dey couldn’t do nothin’ for me. But all dat time, do, I didn’t know it, my Henry was run off to de Norf, years an’ years, an’ he was a barber, too, an’ worked for hisse’f. An’ bymby, when de waw come, he up an’ he says, ‘I’s done barberin’,’ he says; ‘I’s gwyne to fine my ole mammy, less’n she’s dead.’ So he sole out an’ went to whah dey was recruitin’, an’ hired hisse’f out to de colonel for his servant; en’ den he went all froo de battles everywhah, huntin’ for his ole mammy; yes indeedy, he’d hire to fust one officer an’ den another, tell he’d ransacked de whole Sou’f; but you see I didn’t know nufffin’ ‘bout dis. How was I gwyne to know it?

“Well, one night we had a big sojer ball; de sojers dah at Newbern was always havin’ balls an’ carryin’ on. Dey had ‘em in my kitchen, heaps o’ times, ‘ca’se if he got away and got up Norf whah you gemmen comes from, you might ‘a’ seen him, maybe, an’ could tell me so as I could fine him ag’in; he was very little, an’ he had a sk-yar on his lef’ wris’, an’ at de top of his forehead.”

—Jim, he says, “Jim,” he says, “you go “long an’ tell de cap’n I be on han’ “bout eight o’clock in de mawnin’”; dey’s a Friday night, I hadn’t had no trouble. An’ no joy!”
A True Story, Repeated Word for Word as I Heard It
Twain, Mark, 1835-1910

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It was summer time, & twilight. We were sitting on the porch of the farm-house, on the summit of the hill, "Aunt Rachel" was sitting respectfully below our level, -- for she was our servant, & colored. She was of mighty frame & stature; she was sixty years old, but her eye was undimmed, the strength unabated. She was a cheerful, hearty soul, and it was no more trouble for
years old, but her eye was undimmed ∧ her strength unabated. She was a cheerful, hearty soul, & it was no more trouble for her to laugh than it is for a bird to sing. She was under fire, now, as usual when the day was done. That is to say, she was being chaffed without mercy, and was enjoying it. She would let off peal after peal of laughter, & then sit with her face in her hands & shake with

throes of enjoyment which she / could/ no longer get breath enough to express. At such a moment as this a thought /happened to/ occur/ red/ to me, ∧ I said:

"Aunt Rachel, how is it that you've lived sixty years & never had any trouble?"

She stopped quaking. She paused, & there was a moment of / [unclear: still] / silence. She turned her face over her shoulder toward me, & said, with-
out even a smile in her voice:

"Misto C., is you in earnest?"

It surprised me quite a good deal -- & it sobered my manner & my speech, too. I said:

"Why, I thought -- that is, I meant -- why, you can't have had any trouble. I've never heard you sigh, and never seen your eye when there wasn't a laugh in it."

She faced fairly around, now, & was full of earnestness.
Has I had any trouble? Misto C., I's gwyne to tell you, den I leave it to you. I was bawn down mongst de slaves -- I knows all 'bout slavery, 'cause I ben one of 'em my own se/[illeg.]/ 'cause J f. Well, sah, my ole man -- dat's my husban' -- he was lovin' an' kind to me -- jus/ jist as kind as you is to yo' own wife. An' we had chil'en -- seven chil'en -- & we /loved/ dem chil'en jist de same as you loves yo' chil'en. Dey was black, but de Lord can't make no chil'en so black but what dey mother loves 'em an' wouldn't give 'em up, no, not for anything dat's in dis whole world.

Well, sah, I was raised in ole Fo'ginny, but my mother she was raised in Maryland; an' my souls!
she was turrible when she'd
git started! My / [unclear: lawd] /
lan'! but she'd make de
fur fly! When she'd git
into dem tantrums, she/d/
always had one word dat
she said. She'd straighten
herse'f up & put her fists
in her hips & say, "I want
you to understan'/] [d] dat[illeg.]
/I ain't no houn'-dog mash:/

/-7-

[I wan't bawn in de mash to be fool' by trash!]
/to be trod on by common
trash!] I's one o' de ole
Blue Hen's Chickens, I
is!" -- 'case you see, dat's
what folks dat's bawn
in Maryland calls dey-
selves, an' dey's proud of
it. Well dat was her
word. I don't ever for-
git it, / becase/ she said it so much,
an' becase she said it one
day when my little Henry
tore his wris', awful, /a/ n'
most busted his head,
right up at /the/ / de/ top of his
forehead, an' de n______s

/-8-
didn't fly aroun['d] fas'

enough to 'tend to him.

An' when dey talk['d] back

at her, she up an' she

says, "Look-a-heah!"

[illeg.]

[ she says, "I want you n____s to understan']

[illeg.]

[ dat I wa'nt bawn in de mash to be fool' by]

trash! -- I's one o' de

ole Blue Hen's Chickens,

I is!" an' den she clar'

dat kitchen an' bandage'

up de chile hers'/] e't. So I / says dat word, too, when I's riled./

"Well, bymeby my ole

---9---

mistis say she's broke, an'
she got to sell all de nig-
gers on de place. An'
when I heah dat dey gwyne
to sell us all off at oction
in Richmon', O de good
/God/ / gracious/ I know what dat
mean!"/

[Aunt Rachel had
gradually risen, while
she warmed to her sub-
ject, & now she towered
above us, /huge ∧/ black against the stars.]

"/ Dey put chains on us an' put us on a stan'
an' de man say "Shet up yo' darn blubberins,"
an hit me on de mouf wid his han'. An' when
de las' one was gone but
my little Henry, I grab him close up to my breas',
so, an' I ris up an' says,
"You shan't take him a-way/" I says; "I'll kill de man dat tetches him!"
I says. But my little Henry whisper an' say, "I gygwyne to run away, an' den I
work an' buy yo' freedom."
O, bless de chile, (it mos')
De man dat bought me b'long in [unclear: Norfolk] Newbern, an' he took me dah. Well, bymeby de years roll on [∧ de] an' de waw come. My marster he was a Confedrit Colonel, an' I was his family's cook. So when de Unions took dat town, dey all run away an' lef' me all by myse[1] f wid de other n_____s in dat mon'sus big house. So de big Union officers move in dah an' dey

ask me would I cook for dem/. / [for money.] "Lord bless you," says [illeg.]/ I, "dat's what/ s I's for."
"Dey wa'nt [unclear: nt] no small-fry officers, mine you,
dey was de biggest dey is;
an' dey mosey roun'! /Well I thinks/ De Gen'l he tole
me to boss dat kitchen;
an' he say if anybody
come/s/ meddlin' wid you,
you jist /come an tell me;/ / make 'em walk chalk;/
don't you be afeard,/ ' he say,
' you's 'mong frens, now.'

Well, I thinks to myself,
if my little Henry ever
got a chance to run
away, he'd ma' e to de
Norf, o'course. So one
day I comes in dah whah
de big officers was, in
de parlor, an' I drops a
kurtchy, so, an' I /says,
to de Gen'l, says I,/ up an'/ tole 'em 'bout my Henry,
dey a listenin' / to my troubles/ jus/ jist de
same as if I was white / folks/;
an' I says, "What I come
for is / becase/ dat/ if he got away
& got up Norf whah you
gemmen comes from, you might a seen him, maybe, \[^{\wedge}\] an' could tell me so as I could fine him agin;  
\[
\text{he was very little, an' he had a sk-yar on his lef' wis', an' at de top of his forehead.}
\]
Dey look mournful, & de Gen'l say, "How long sence you los' him?" an' I say "Thirteen year." Den de Gen'l say, "He wouldn't be little no mo', now -- he's a man!"

I never thought o' dat o' dat before! He was only dat little feller to me, yit. I never thought 'bout him

--17--

growin' up an' bein' big. \[\text{But I see it den.}\] None o' de gemmen had run acrost him, so dey couldn't do nothin' for me. \[\text{But all dat time, do' I didn't know it, my Henry was run off to de Norf,}\]
years & years, an' he was
a barber, too, an' worked
for hisse'f. An'/d/ bymeby
when de waw come, he
ups an' he says, "I's done
barberin," he says; "I's
gwyne to fine my ole
mammy, less'n she's
dead." So he sole out an'
went to whah dey was re-

-18-

cruitin', an' hired hisse'f
out to de Colonel for
his servant; an' den he
went all froo de battles
everywhah, huntin' for
his ole mammy; yes in-
deed, he'd hire to fust
one officer an' den an-
other, tell he'd ransacked
de whole Souf -- but
you see I didn't know
nuffin' 'bout dis. How
/could I know it/ [ was I gwyne to know it?]

/"/ Well, one night, we
had a big sojer ball -- de sojers dah at New-
bern was always havin' balls an' carryin' on. Dey had 'em in my kitchen, heaps o' times, 'case it was so big. Mine you, /I didn't/ I was down on sich doins; becase my place was wid de officers, an' it rasp' me to have /dem/ common sojers cavortin' roun' my kitchen like dat. But I /[unclear: all] / always stood aroun' an' kep' things straight, I did; an' some-times dey'd git my dander up, an' den I'd make 'em

clar dat kitchen, mine I tell you!

"/" Well, one night -- it was a Friday night / [unclear: d] / -- dey comes a whole plattoon /fr/ I'm a n ridgment dat was on guard at de house -- de house was headquarters, you know -- an' den I
was jist a bilin'! / Mad? /Well honey/ I was jist a boomin'/! I swelled aroun'; an' swelled aroun'. -- I jist was / a/ itchin' for 'em to do somefin' for to start me. An' dey was a waltzin' an' a dan-

-21-

cin'! -- my! but dey was havin' a time! -- an' I jist a swellin' an' a swellin' up! Pooty soon, 'long comes / sich a/ /de/ spruce/st/ young n_____ a-sailin' down de room wid a yaller wench roun' de wais'; an' roun' an' roun' an' roun' dey went, / enough/ /'nuff/ to make a body drunk to look at 'em; an' when dey got abreas' o' me, dey went to kin' o' balancin' aroun', fust on one leg an' den on tother, an'

-22-
smilin' at my big red

turban, / an' makin' fun', / an' I / ups an'/ says, "Git along wid you! -- rub-
bage!" De young man's

face kin' o' changed, all

of a sudden, for 'bout

a second, but den he went
to smilin' agin same

as he was befo'. Well, 'bout
dis time, in comes some

n____s dat played mu-

sic an' b'long' to de ban',
an dey never could git

along widout puttin'
on airs. An' de very
fust air dey put on dat

night, I lit into 'em!

Dey laughed, an' dat

made me wuss. De

res' o' de n____s got to

laughin'/ / /g/ , an' den my

soul alive but I was

hot! My eye was jist

a blazin'/ / /g/ ! I jist straight-

ened myself up, so/./ --

jist as I/am/ / is/ now/. / --

plum to de ceilin', mos'/./

/ -- / an'/ I digs my fists into my hips, an'/ I says, " Look-a-

heah!" I says, "I want you

n____s to understan'"

/ [unclear: dat I ain't no houn'] /

/ dat I wa'nt bawn in de mash to be fool'\}
[unclear: dog mash to be trod on by cousins o ] [ by ] [unclear: trash] [ by trash!] I's one o' de ole Blue Hen's Chickens, I is!"

[ -- ] an' den I see dat young man stan' a-starin' an' stiff, [like] lookin' kin' o'
up at de ceilin' like he fogot somefin', an'
couldn't 'member it no mo'. Well[.] I jist march'
on dem n_____s[, -- so[, -- ]]
lookin' [ g] like a Gen'l[.] [ a goin into battle -- ]
an' dey jist cave' away befo' me an' out at de
do'. An' as dis young man [ was a goin'] [went] out, I heah him say to another nig-
ger, "Jim," he says, "you go 'long an' tell de Cap'n I be on han' 'bout eight
o'clock in de mawnin';
dey's somefin on my mine," he says; "I don't sleep no mo' dis night.[/]
You go 'long," he says, "an' leave me by my own se'f."

"Dis was 'bout one o'clock in de mawnin'.
Well, 'bout seven I was up an' on han', gittin'[illeg.] de

officers' breakfast. I was a/ - / stoopin' down by de stove/ . / -- jist so/. / / -- / same as if yo' foot was de stove/ . / -- an' I'd opened de stove do' wid my right han', -- so, pushin' it back, jist as I pushes yo' foot/ . / -- an' I'd jist got de pan o' hot biscuits in my han' an' was 'bout to raise up, when I see a black face come aroun' under /my/ mine, an' de eyes a/ - / lookin' up
into mine, jist as I'm a lookin' up clost under yo' face now; an' I jist stopped right dah, an' never budged! jist gazed, an' de pan begin to tremble, an' all of a sudden I knowed! De pan drop' on de flo' an' I grab his lef' han' an' shove back his sleeve; -- jist so, as I'm doin' to you; -- an' den I went.

for his forehead an' push de hair back.

if you ain't my Henry, what is you doin' wid dis welt on yo' wris' an' dat sk-yar on yo' forehead! de Lord God ob Heaven be praise', I got my own agin!"
"O, no, / Mr. C../ I ain't had no trouble. An' no joy!"

*Mark Twain.*