

Marx Hardy Machiavelli Joyce Austen
Defoe Abbot Melville Montaigne Cooper Emerson Hugo
Stoker Wilde Christie Maupassant Haggard Chesterton Molière Eliot Grimm
Garnett Engels Schiller Byron Molière
Goethe Hawthorne Smith Kafka
Cotton Dostoyevsky Kipling Doyle
Baum Leslie Henry Flaubert Nietzsche Willis
Dumas Stockton Vatsyayana Crane
Burroughs Verne
Curtis Tocqueville Gogol Busch
Homer Tolstoy Whitman Twain
Darwin Zola Lawrence Dickens Plato
Potter Freud Jowett Stevenson Andersen Burton Harte
Kant London Descartes Cervantes Voltaire Cooke
Poe Aristotle Wells Bunner Shakespeare Chambers Irving
Hale James Hastings Richter Chekhov da Shaw Wodehouse
Doré Dante Pushkin Alcott
Swift



tredition was established in 2006 by Sandra Latusseck and Soenke Schulz. Based in Hamburg, Germany, tredition offers publishing solutions to authors and publishing houses, combined with worldwide distribution of printed and digital book content. tredition is uniquely positioned to enable authors and publishing houses to create books on their own terms and without conventional manufacturing risks.

For more information please visit: www.tredition.com

TREDITION CLASSICS

This book is part of the TREDITION CLASSICS series. The creators of this series are united by passion for literature and driven by the intention of making all public domain books available in printed format again - worldwide. Most TREDITION CLASSICS titles have been out of print and off the bookstore shelves for decades. At tredition we believe that a great book never goes out of style and that its value is eternal. Several mostly non-profit literature projects provide content to tredition. To support their good work, tredition donates a portion of the proceeds from each sold copy. As a reader of a TREDITION CLASSICS book, you support our mission to save many of the amazing works of world literature from oblivion. See all available books at www.tredition.com.



The content for this book has been graciously provided by Project Gutenberg. Project Gutenberg is a non-profit organization founded by Michael Hart in 1971 at the University of Illinois. The mission of Project Gutenberg is simple: To encourage the creation and distribution of eBooks. Project Gutenberg is the first and largest collection of public domain eBooks.

**Biography of a Slave Being the
Experiences of Rev. Charles
Thompson**

Charles Thompson

Imprint

This book is part of TREDITION CLASSICS

Author: Charles Thompson
Cover design: Buchgut, Berlin - Germany

Publisher: tredition GmbH, Hamburg - Germany
ISBN: 978-3-8424-7303-4

www.tredition.com
www.tredition.de

Copyright:
The content of this book is sourced from the public domain.

The intention of the TREDITION CLASSICS series is to make world literature in the public domain available in printed format. Literary enthusiasts and organizations, such as Project Gutenberg, worldwide have scanned and digitally edited the original texts. tredition has subsequently formatted and redesigned the content into a modern reading layout. Therefore, we cannot guarantee the exact reproduction of the original format of a particular historic edition. Please also note that no modifications have been made to the spelling, therefore it may differ from the orthography used today.

PREFACE.

In publishing this book I hope to do good not only to my own race, but to all who may read it. I am not a book-maker, and make no pretensions to literary attainments; and I have made no efforts to create for myself a place in the literary, book-making ranks. I claim for my book truthfulness and honesty of purpose, and upon that basis it must succeed or fail. The Biography of a Slave is called for by a very large number of my immediate acquaintances, and, I am assured, will meet with such reception as to justify the expense I have incurred in having it printed and bound. To the members of the United Brethren Church, white as well as colored, I look for help in the sale and circulation of my work, yet I am satisfied I will receive commendable patronage from members of all Christian churches everywhere.

The book is written in the narrative style, as being much better suited to the tastes and capacities of my colored readers, and I have used simple and plain English language, discarding the idiomatic and provincial language of the southern slaves and ignorant whites, expecting thereby to help educate the blacks in the use of proper language.

I am indebted to William H. Rhodes, Esq., attorney at law, of Newman, Douglas County, Illinois, for his valuable assistance in the preparation of my manuscript for the printer. He has re-written the whole of it for me, and has otherwise assisted me in the matter of placing the book before the public.

CHARLES THOMPSON.

Newman, Illinois, Aug., 1874.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

Charles Thompson, born in Atala County, Mississippi—Division of Kirkwood's slaves among his six Children—The writer and his two sisters fall to Mrs. Wilson—The parting between mother and child—Deprived of a fond mother forever—Old Uncle Jack—Wilson buys Uncle Ben from Strucker—Uncle Ben runs away and is hunted with blood-hounds—Two hundred dollars reward.

CHAPTER II

Not sent to hell by Wilson—Mrs. Wilson protects me, to whom I belong—Sent to school with the children—The school-children teach me to read and write—What came of it—Mount that mule or I'll shoot you—I mounted the mule—A start for the railroad to work—I dismount and take to the woods—I owe allegiance to God and my country only.

CHAPTER III

Caught, tried, and taken back home to James Wilson—My mistress saves me from being whipped—I go to the railroad and work one month precisely—Go back home—Wilson surprised—Left the railroad at 3 o'clock A.M.—Did not want to disturb Leadbitter's rest—Sent to Memphis with a load of cotton—Afraid of the slavepens and slave-auction—Start for home—Not sold—Pray, sing, and shout—Get home and ordered to hire myself out.

CHAPTER IV

Start out on my travels to hunt a new master—Find Mr. Dansley—Hire to him—Thirty dollars per month for my master and five dollars for myself—Wilson astonished—Appointed superintendent of Dansley's farm—Rules and regulations—Peace and tranquillity—My moral labors successful—Prayer and social meetings—Meetings in the woods—Quarrel and fight like very brothers—Time comes to be moved to another field of labor.

CHAPTER V

James Wilson comes along—Wants me to go with him to Saulsbury, Tennessee, to help build a house for a grocery-store—Takes me along with him—Wilson taken sick—I take care of him—He gets well—I make another attempt to escape from slavery—What came of it.

CHAPTER VI

Was hired to Mr. Thompson, and adopted his name—Opened regular meetings, and preached on the plantation and other places—Took unto myself a wife—Was purchased by Thompson, duly installed on the plantation, and invested with authority—Various means and plans resorted to by the overseer to degrade me in the eyes of Mr. Thompson—Driven, through persecution, to run away—Return back to my master.

BIOGRAPHY OF A SLAVE.

CHAPTER I.

Charles Thompson, born in Atala County, Mississippi—Division of Kirkwood's Slaves Among his Six Children—The Writer and his Two Sisters Fall to Mrs. Wilson—The Parting Between Mother and Child—Deprived of a Fond Mother Forever—Old Uncle Jack—Wilson Buys Uncle Ben from Strucker—Uncle Ben Runs Away and is Hunted with Blood-Hounds—Two Hundred Dollars Reward.

I was a slave, and was born in Atala County, Mississippi, near the town of Rockford, on the third day of March, 1833. My father and mother both being slaves, of course my pedigree is not traceable, by me, farther back than my parents. Our family belonged to a man named Kirkwood, who was a large slave-owner. Kirkwood died when I was about nine years old, after which, upon the settlement of the affairs of his estate, the slaves belonging to the estate were divided equally, as to value, among the six heirs. There were about seventy-five slaves to be divided into six lots; and great was the tribulation among the poor blacks when they learned that they were to be separated.

When the division was completed two of my sisters and myself were cast into one lot, my mother into another, and my father into another, and the rest of the family in the other lots. Young and slave as I was, I felt the pang of separation from my loved and revered mother; child that I was I mourned for mother, even before our final separation, as one dead to me forever. So early to be deprived of a fond mother, by the "law," gave me my first view of the curse of slavery. Until this time I did not know what trouble was, but from then until the tocsin of freedom was sounded through the glorious Emancipation Proclamation by the immortal Abraham Lincoln, I passed through hardship after hardship, in quick succession, and many, many times I have almost seen and tasted death.

I bade farewell to my mother, forever, on this earth. Oh! the pangs of that moment. Even after thirty years have elapsed the scene comes vividly to my memory as I write. A gloomy, dark cloud seemed to pass before my vision, and the very air seemed to still

with awfulness. I felt bereaved, forlorn, forsaken, lost. Put yourself in my place; feel what I have felt, and then say, God is just; he will protect the helpless and right the wronged, and you will have some idea of my feelings and the hope that sustained me through long and weary years of servitude. My mother, my poor mother! what must she have suffered. Never will I forget her last words; never will I forget the earnest prayers of that mother begging for her child, and refusing to be comforted. She had fallen to the lot of Mrs. Anderson, and she pleaded with burning tears streaming down her cheeks, "He is my only son, my baby child, my youngest and the only son I have; please let me have him to go with me!"

Anderson spoke roughly to her and told her to hold her peace; but with her arms around me she clung to me and cried the louder, "Let me have my child; if you will let me have my baby you may have all the rest!"

Mothers can realize this situation only, who have parted with children whom they never expected to see again. Imagine parting with your dearest child, never to see it again; to be thrown into life-servitude in one part of the country and your dear child in the same condition six hundred miles away. Although my mother was black, she had a soul; she had a heart to feel just as you have, and I, her child, was being ruthlessly torn from her by inexorable "law." What would you have done if you had been in her place? *She* prayed to God for help.

My kind old father consoled and encouraged my mother all he could, and said to her, "Do not be discouraged, for Jesus is your friend; if you lack for knowledge, he will inform you, and if you meet with troubles and trials on your way, cast all your cares on Jesus, and don't forget to pray." The old man spoke these words while praying, shouting, crying, and saying farewell to my mother. He had, in a manner, raised nearly all the colored people on the plantation; so he had a fatherly feeling for all of them. The old man looked down on me, and said, "My child, you are now without a father and will soon be without a mother; but be a good boy, and God will be father and mother to you. If you will put your trust in him and pray to him, he will take you home to heaven when you die, where you can meet your mother there, where parting will be