

reputation of being a lady of wealth, and owned one hundred and twelve slaves. Most of her slave property was kept on her plantation not far from Old Point Comfort. According to William's testimony "of times Mrs. Twyne would meddle too freely with the cup, and when under its influence she was very desperate, and acted as though she wanted to kill some of the slaves."

After the evil spirit left her and she had regained her wonted composure, she would pretend that she loved her "negroes," and would make a great fuss over them. Not infrequently she would have very serious difficulty with her overseers. Having license to do as they pleased, they would of course carry their cruelties to the most extreme verge of punishment. If a slave was maimed or killed under their correction, it was no loss of theirs. "One of the overseers by the name of Bill Anderson once shot a young slave man called Luke and wounded him so seriously that he was not expected to live." "At another time one of the overseers beat and kicked a slave to death." This barbarity caused the mistress to be very much "stirred up," and she declared that she would not have any more white overseers; condemned them for everything, and decided to change her policy in future and to appoint her overseers from her own slaves, setting the property to watch the property. This system was organized and times were somewhat better.

WILLIAM had been hired out almost his entire life. For the last twelve or fifteen years he had been accustomed to hire his time for one hundred and thirty dollars per annum. In order to meet this demand he commonly resorted to oystering. By the hardest toil he managed to maintain himself and family in a humble way.

For the last twenty years (prior to his escape) the slaves had constantly been encouraged by their mistress' promises to believe that at her death all would be free, and transported to Liberia, where they would enjoy their liberty and be happy the remainder of their days.

With full faith in her promises year by year the slaves awaited her demise with as much patience as possible, and often prayed that her time might be shortened for the general good of the oppressed. Fortunately, as the slaves thought, she had no children or near relatives to deprive them of their just and promised rights.

In November, previous to William's escape, her long looked-for dissolution took place. Every bondman who was old enough to realize the nature and import of the change felt a great anxiety to learn what the will of their old mistress said, whether she had actually freed them or not. Alas! when the secret was disclosed, it was ascertained that not a fetter was broken, not a bond unloosed, and that no provision whatever had been made looking towards freedom. In this sad case, the slaves could imagine no other fate than soon to be torn asunder and scattered. The fact was soon made known that the High Sheriff had administered on the estate of the late mis-