

want my Mammy—I want my Mammy!’ Finally, I cried myself into a high fever; the old family doctor was sent for, and came jogging along on a fat white horse with saddle-bags on each side, as was the custom in the country then; he came in the nursery and asked: ‘What is the matter with the little girl?’ in a tone so kind and sympathetic that I fairly wailed in anguish: ‘I want my Mammy—I want my Mammy! I must have my Mammy!’ The doctor loved children, and when my father said: ‘What are we going to do with this child, doctor?’ he shook his head, and answered, ‘You know, Judge, she is very delicate, she is now in a high fever; her nurse tells me that she has taken scarcely any nourishment for the last week—she is literally starving from grief.’

“‘I want my Mammy—I want my Mammy!’

“The old doctor put his hand tenderly on my head, and said: ‘I really think there is nothing for it, Judge, except to buy her Mammy back again.’

“‘Very well,’ my father answered, ‘I don’t care what it costs—I’ll do it.’

“I was only four, not old enough to understand all the conversation, difficult to convince of Mammy’s return, and that day I refused to eat altogether. When the shadows were at their longest in the afternoon, my mother had persuaded me to go into the dining room, an immense room with six long windows and two doors. I had not touched a morsel of food the entire day. She opened the door of a cupboard which contained cream, and curds and whey, and cakes, and jellies, and preserves of all kinds, for my mother was a famous cook and noted housekeeper, and she began:

“‘Now, if you would like a little peach preserve and a little cream you can have it.’

“‘I want my Mammy,’ I said.

“‘Or if you would like a little cake and some milk you can have that!’

“‘I want my Mammy.’

“‘Oh, do,’ she said, ‘be reasonable, and try just a little bit of honey and some clabber.’ (Milk with cream on the top, which turns sour in a hot country in perhaps less than an hour—it has a slightly acid taste, and is delicious.) ‘Take some clabber,’ she said.

“‘I want my Mammy—I want my Mammy!’

“Suddenly a long ray of sunlight fell through the door; I turned and there, with the tears running down her dusty face, exhausted, travel-stained and bare-headed except for her many-coloured head-handkerchief, stood my Mammy. I gave one wild cry of delight, rushed towards her, and she gathered me in her black, strong arms.

“‘Oh,’ I said, ‘I’ve got my Mammy! I’ve got my Mammy!’ And I began to pat her black cheeks and kiss her all over her face. Then I tucked my head in her neck and almost fainted with joy.

“‘Why, Hester,’ I heard my mother say, ‘Where have you come from?’

“‘Miss Marcia,’ she answered, ‘I have runned away. Ever since I left my white chile I’ve had awful dreams—I thought she was dyin’ an’ I could

hear her cryin’ for me, an’ cryin’ for me, an’ cryin’ for me, an’ I knowed she wuz jus’ breakin’ her po’ little heart—de chile got so much heart—an’ las’ night at eleven o’clock I got out of bed, stole out of the niggers’ quarters, and since then I have walked twenty-five miles in de sun. I’ve had nothin’ to eat or drink—I felt my baby wuz dyin’, an’ I jus’ kep’ on till I got here.’

“And about everything Mammy possessed an extraordinary prophetic instinct.

“The next day, when we were all less emotional, my father spoke to her and said, ‘Hester, I am going down to Bastrop to buy you and your children back again.’

“He went and found the woman who had bought Mammy obdurate; she said the children were valuable, they were healthy boys, and she had got them very cheap—that Hester was lazy, and he could buy her back if he liked, but no price would induce her to part with her children.

“My father returned, bringing the bad news. ‘Well, Hester,’ he said, ‘I am very sorry, but I am afraid you have got to decide between my child and your boys. I won’t buy you back and separate you from your children without your own consent.’

“She took the night to think it over, and then she gave her decision, saying: ‘Judge, Betty’s a terrible, nervous, delicate chile, an’ I think it would kill her if I left her; them little niggers of mine are strong, healthy children—they’ll grow up anyhow—so I have decided to stay with my white chile.’”

How many English nurses, if the same alternative was put before them would sacrifice so much for a delicate charge?

Those were stirring times in the South, and the Judge, who was the soul of honour, was suddenly arrested on a serious charge, when his little daughter attacked the men sent on this obnoxious errand with some ferocity. Years afterwards, if the charge of spoiling her was preferred against him he would say, “You see, Betty is the only one of my children who has ever fought for me.” One of the most delightful things in the book is the perfect understanding and sympathy between the child and her father, who must have been a very beautiful character. The autobiography of “The Lady from Texas” is cordially to be commended.

P. G. Y.

#### VERSE.

There is no chance, no destiny, no fate,  
Can circumvent or hinder or control  
The firm resolve of a determined soul.  
Gifts count for nothing; will alone is great;  
All things give way before it, soon or late.

ELLA WHEELER WILCOX.

#### COMING EVENTS.

August 15th.—Royal Institute of Public Health. Annual Congress in Dublin.

#### WORD FOR THE WEEK.

There are three things that ought to be considered before some things are spoken—the *manner*, the *place*, and the *time*.

Southey.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)