

“ Well, suh, he sorter rub his han’ ’cross his eyes, en den de young ’oman fetched a squall en called ’im by name. Wid dat, he stoop down en pick up my young marster’s coat en den he clomb down des ez cool ez a cucumber. ’T wa n’t long atter dat ’fo’ we made a landin’. You may n’t b’lieve it, suh, but folks in gettin’ off dat burnin’ boat, what wid der crowdin’ en der pushin’, would drown deyse’f in water dat wa n’t up ter der chin ef dey ’d a stood up. It’s de Lord’s trufe. Not one here en dar, suh, but a whole drove un um.

“ De folks in de neighborhood seed de light en know’d purty much what de matter wuz, en ’t wa’n’t long ’fo’ here dey come wid der buggies, en der carryalls, en der waggins, en by sunup me an’ my young marster, en de young ’oman en her daddy, wuz all doin’ mighty well at a house not mo’n two mile fum de river. Leas’ways, I know I wuz doin’ mighty well, suh, kaze I wuz drinkin’ hot coffee en eatin’ hot biscuits in de kitchen, en I speck de yuthers wuz doin’ de same in de house. En what better kin you ax dan dat?

“ Atter dinner, whiles I wuz settin’ out on de hoss-block sunnin’ myse’f — kaze de sun