

from his chair when Cassy reëntered the room smiling and bringing a tin dipperful of fresh water.

“Humph!” he grunted, and sank in his seat again.

“I reckon you think I’ve been gone a mighty long time, but I had to rench out the bucket an’ the gourd too, — they was so full er dirt an’ dust,” Cassy explained. “I allers said I’d never let no nigger fool wi’ nothin’ I had to put to my mouth, an’ I’ll say it ag’in.”

“They’re not the cleanest in the world,” remarked Mrs. Shacklett, taking the dipper in her trembling hand. “Have you drank?”

“No ’m,” said Cassy. “Atter you is manners.” She still held the handle of the dipper gently, but firmly, and guided it to Mrs. Shacklett’s lips.

Mr. Shacklett heard this last remark and turned his head and stared at Cassy. And somehow the expression of displeasure and suspicion cleared away from his face. “I’ll have some, too, if you please,” he said.

“I would n’t slight you fer the world,” replied Cassy, and went after another supply of water.