The under-ground railroad

Mitchell William M
Title: The under-ground railroad

Author: Mitchell William M

This is an exact replica of a book. The book reprint was manually improved by a team of professionals, as opposed to automatic/OCR processes used by some companies. However, the book may still have imperfections such as missing pages, poor pictures, errant marks, etc. that were a part of the original text. We appreciate your understanding of the imperfections which can not be improved, and hope you will enjoy reading this book.
THE

UNDERGROUND

RAILROAD,

BY

THE REV. W. M. MITCHELL,

OF TORONTO, C. W.

LONDON: WILLIAM TWEEDIE, 337, STRAND.
MANCHESTER: WILLIAM BREMNER, 11, MARKET ST.,
AND 15, PICCADILLY.
BIRMINGHAM: HUDSON & SON, 18, BULL STREET.

MDCCCLX.
BIRMINGHAM:
RICHARD PRIDDY, PRINTER, 85, NEW STREET.
PREFACE.

The Author of the following work is a gentleman of colour, who was born and reared in North Carolina, United States. In early life he was left a destitute orphan, and had but few educational advantages. By the local authorities of Guildford County, in that state, he was bound apprentice to a Planter, whose land was cultivated by the unrequited toil of a company of his enslaved fellow-creatures, whose labour was enforced by the whip, and whose faults, real or fictitious, were punished by torture. His master was also a heartless trader in human beings. It affords a glimpse into Slave morals, that though our Author was freeborn, and, in consequence of his mother being an Indian, legally exempt from bondage, it was necessary to provide expressly in the indenture by which he was bound, against his being kidnapped or ensnared into Slavery. In this service he mis-spent twelve precious years of his life, and became inured to the inflicting of the cruelties attendant upon Man-stealing and Slave-driving. During the last five years of the time, the entire management of the business was committed to his hands. Hence he is
personally conversant with all the disgusting details of Plantation Slave-life, of the Slave-pen, and of the Auction-block. It has since been a source of grief to him to recollect the part he took in ordering and superintending the harassing and flogging of men, women, and children; and in separating for life those dearest one to the other, whose ties of kinship man has no power to sever. The wife and the child are still the wife and the child, how far and how long soever they be parted from husband and parent.

After leaving the unholy business, Mr. Mitchell was brought under the power of God’s converting grace. The study of Christianity resulted—as it ever must, when unbiassed—in his discarding with abhorence the iniquities inherent in Slavery, which in ignorance and depravity he had assisted to perpetrate. He devoted himself from that day to the cause of the enslaved; and unto this day his devotion has continued to burn with unceasing ardour and indomitable persistency. While engaged in the ministry of Christ’s gospel, he has justly regarded it an essential part of his work to promote the letting-go of the oppressed, undoing of the heavy burden, and the breaking of every yoke. Believing the enactment of the Mosaic law to involve a moral principle, which is of perpetual and universal obligation, he has endeavoured to act as answering to the voice of God,
saying unto him, "Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant (bondman) which is escaped from his master unto thee. He shall dwell with thee; even among you, in that place which he shall choose, in one of thy gates, where it liketh him best; thou shalt not oppress him." (Deut. 23: 15, 16.) Resident in the State of Ohio, he was for many years an active member of a Vigilance Committee, whose business is to aid fugitives from Slavery in escaping to Canada. This is explained in the following pages, and is done in violation of iniquitous law, and at the risk of both money and liberty. But it is in obedience to the will of God, enjoined by the prophet Isaiah (chap. 16, v. 3, 4):—

"Bring counsel," i. e. be deliberately united, "interpose with equity; make thy shadow as the night in the midst of noon-day; hide the outcasts; discover not the fugitive. Let the outcasts of Moab sojourn with thee (Oh! Sion); be thou to them a covert from the destroyer.” (Lowth’s Translation.) Acting thus as a director of the so-called "Underground Railroad," he has been a blessing to numbers of poor creatures, whose blessing in return has rested upon him and his fellow-directors. By a wise man, "the blessing of him that is ready to perish" is never despised; and certainly not the loving gratitude of those who by his aid attained unto freedom, comfort, and respectability. Amongst those whose escape
it has been his honour and privilege to promote, it will interest the reader to know, is "Eliza," of Mrs. Stowe, in "Uncle Tom's Cabin," whose passage over the ice with her lovely boy has thrilled so many millions of readers. The Rev. John Rankin, a well-known Abolitionist, whose zeal during a long life has never flagged, and who has aided in the escape of thousands of fugitives, was the first to shelter this miraculously aided woman upon her stepping on the Ohio shore of the river. He passed her on to our author, who took charge of her for a brief period, and conveyed her into the care of another. This fact is related in the book itself. I refer to it because of the additional proof it affords that the talented authoress of that bewitching work has recorded facts, and has not been guilty of exaggeration.

A few years ago, Mr. Mitchell became a missionary to the escaped fugitives in Toronto, Canada West, in the service of the American Baptist Free Mission Society—the only one of that denomination in the United States which takes proper ground in denouncing Slavery as a sin, and refusing to touch its proceeds. He has succeeded in gathering a large congregation of this class of persons, but their poverty, and, alas, the strength of prejudice against colour existing in that British colony, has necessitated his visit to this country to collect money to build a chapel and school-house for their use and benefit. On
his coming to me with a letter from a friend, I rigidly examined his credentials; and being fully satisfied with them, I have deemed it a privilege to promote his object to the extent of my ability. Having had the pleasure to hear him address many audiences, I have become impressed with the importance of giving permanent form to the principal narratives and facts he is accustomed to relate. Hence I suggested the publishing of the book now in the hands of the reader. The suggestion having been cordially sanctioned by many well-known philanthropists, it is hoped that by their aid and that of others, the little work will obtain a wide circulation. By this means good will be done. The excellent object Mr. Mitchell has in view will be served, as the condition and claims of the fugitives in Canada—that interesting class of our fellow British subjects—will become better known to those who have the means and the will to assist them. At least a portion of the profits of the book will be given to the building now in course of erection, which he hopes will be the centre of his future labours. Principally, however, additional information will be diffused respecting that giant crime—American Slavery. Introduced by us into that country, and still sustained by our commerce, we are more closely connected with it than any other nation. Its abolition must and will be brought about mainly by British influence. In this
noble work English Christians must take the lead, as they did in effecting emancipation in the West Indies. Dr. Albert Barnes, the celebrated commentator, has repeatedly testified that Slavery could not exist one hour if the church in that country put forth her power. This witness is true; but I am persuaded that the impetus must be given by the church in this country. Our Christian merchants, manufacturers, and artizans, those princes of wealth, enterprise, skill, and industry, must bring their moral influence to bear upon the four-million-fold enormity, and it will sink beneath the pressure, but not before. Every instrumentality tending to evoke that influence is valuable—though apparently feeble as this little book. "Who hath despised the day of small things?"

For grains of sand the mountains make,  
And atomies infinitude.

A spark may fire a Moscow, or a mouse may tease an elephant to death. God speed this little book, then, and make it mighty to the pulling down of that stronghold of satanic blood-guiltiness and woe.

I need not add how cordially I recommend the case of Mr. Mitchell to the beneficent of every denomination and class. Humanity and religion are alike interested in it. Already he has been well received, and in all instances he has elicited testimonies of his candour, sin-