

him than I would hurt that post at the end of the gallery. He started toward me, and I started backing away. He kept coming on me, and I kept hitting and backing away. Hitting and backing away. Then he grabbed the stick out of my hand and swung it to the side. I turned to go after it and fell. I looked up, and there he was right over me. He didn't look like a man at all, he looked like some kind of wild animal. His face had an animal-greed look. Then he grabbed me in his arms and started with me into the bushes. But we hadn't gone more than a few steps when I heard, whup, whup, whup. I was too busy trying to get away from the slow-wit to think that this noise had anything to do with me or him. And, anyhow, who would be fighting for me? I didn't have anybody. But I heard the noise, whup, whup, whup. And each time I heard it I could see the hurt in the slow-wit face. It went again, whup, whup, whup. Then the slow-wit turned, and we was both facing Big Laura. She had the stick cocked back to hit him again.

"Drop her," she said. "Your stud-ing days over. Drop her, dog."

(I had heard that this went on. No, I had never seen it on the place where I was a slave, but I had heard that it went on on some other plantations. The master would use a big healthy man--a prime nigger; a big healthy woman--a prime wench to bring forth big healthy children.)