

My grandfather was skeptical, but had his household prepare for the worst. Ammunition was obtained and the guns put in order. When the dreaded night came, as soon as it was dark, all the axes were taken into the house from the woodpile. The scythes and pitchforks were taken in also. Water was provided to put out fire. The doors were barred and the watchers were stationed. It was soon observed that the dogs did not bark as usual. This was interpreted to mean that the negroes had taken them into their cabins. A horse was heard to neigh, which was unusual. The report of a gun was heard some distance away. These things, and the fact that otherwise the night was especially silent, all betokened something going on. The night wore on; eleven o'clock came. My grandfather concluded he would go out and reconnoiter. He quietly passed out the side door and made his way in the shadows of the buildings, until he could see the door of Jim's cabin. Jim was the one who would take a hand in the business, if any did. A suspicious light shone under his cabin door, and while my grandfather was contemplating that fact, the door opened and Jim stepped out, *and went straight to the grindstone and ground a knife.* As soon as he returned, grandfather went back quickly, fully impressed that there was danger ahead. His report made the watchers all the more vigilant. Twelve o'clock came; grandfather would reconnoiter again. He was determined to see what was going on in that cabin. Fully armed he made his way to the back of the cabin where he could look in through a window. The light glimmered as he approached, but he heard no sound; evidently, they were planning with great secrecy and caution. He was near enough to look in, but if he did so, he might be seen. He paused a moment, then boldly raised himself and looked into the cabin. There upon the floor, down before the fire, *sat the dreaded negro, Jim, busily engaged in making a shuck-mat!* The poor suspected negro, oblivious of all the terror that was abroad, was working away by the fire-light until after midnight, upon a shuck-mat which he could sell to somebody for a quarter of a dollar.