

overseer, who came down to the river bank, with two led horses, on one of which was a lady's saddle. He conducted us through a beautiful wood, where the verdure of the evergreen oaks, the pines, and hollies, and the mildness of the air, made it difficult for us to believe that it was mid-winter, and that we had been the month before in a region of snow storms and sledges. We crossed two creeks, and after riding several miles reached the house, and were shown into a spacious room, where a great wood fire was kept up constantly on the hearth, and the doors on both sides left open day and night.

Returning home to this hospitable mansion in the dusk of the evening of the day following, I was surprised to see, in a grove of trees near the court-yard of the farm, a large wood-fire blazing on the ground. Over the fire hung three cauldrons, filled, as I afterwards learned, with hog's lard, and three old negro women, in their usual drab-coloured costume, were leaning over the cauldrons, and stirring the lard to clarify it. The red glare of the fire was reflected from their faces, and I need hardly say how much they reminded me of the scene of the witches in Macbeth. Beside them, moving slowly backwards and forwards in a rocking-chair, sat the wife of the overseer, muffled up in a cloak, and suffering from a severe cold, but obliged to watch the old slaves, who are as thoughtless as children, and might spoil the lard if she turned away her head for a few minutes. When I inquired the meaning of this ceremony, I was told it was "killing time," this being the coldest season of the year, and that since I left the farm in the morning thirty hogs had been sacrificed by the side of a running stream not far off.