

Chapter Four The Move To The South

After getting a small wagon and two horses and what little we could get together, we parted with our friends at Troy and started across the country to the western waters. We traveled in company with a young man that came with us from Europe and a brother Valentine, from the state of New York, who wished to go to that country. We traveled with as little expense as possible through the state of Pennsylvania and struck the Ohio river at Wheeling. There we stayed for near two weeks at a Quaker's, who was very kind to me. Lorenzo strove to get passage in a flat-bottomed boat -- where they frequently took horses, carriages and produce of families that are wishing to remove to that country. But as he could not obtain one that would take his horses, he was under the necessity of taking his horses through by land. He met with a person who was going down the river with a loaded barge to Natchez and engaged him to carry me with some trunks and other baggage.

The people who owned the boat that Lorenzo had engaged my passage in were friendly Quakers, but they were not ready to sail for some time. Accordingly, Lorenzo left me with the young man that came with us from Europe to go down the river in this boat, while he went on by land. I felt very gloomy to be left among strangers, and to go on board a boat with a company of men, without one woman for a companion. But the people in Wheeling were very kind to me while I stayed there, after Lorenzo left me, which gave me much satisfaction. They provided me with many necessaries for the voyage -- such as sugar, tea and other things to make me comfortable. *May the Lord reward them for this.*

I stayed at Wheeling between one and two weeks after Lorenzo left me. In that time, the people who owned the boat sold it and all that pertained to it to a couple of doctors from Virginia. But they still reserved a place for me to go in the boat. This was a very trying time to me. The people that owned the boat when Lorenzo applied for me to go down in it were plain Quakers, and they promised to take good care of me. But the man that bought the boat, although he was in a gentleman's garb, was quite of a different appearance. The young man that was with me went as a hand to help work the boat. We went on board at evening. The barge was laden with flour, cider and various kinds of produce adapted for Natchez. There was a small cabin with two berths, where three or four persons might sleep tolerably comfortable. There I was obliged to rest at night. In a small vacancy between this cabin and the other part of the boat, they had run up a small

chimney where they could cook provisions. In this gloomy situation I was fixed to start for the Mississippi, where I knew I must meet with many trials, if ever I should reach there.

The river at the time when we started was very low, and we made but slow progress for many days together. I could not set my foot on land and was shut up in a boat, with none but men. Though they were of that class who neither feared God nor man, they treated me, for the most part, with civility. None can tell how disagreeable such a situation is, but those who have passed through something similar.

We left Wheeling about the last of October [1808]. The boat stopped at Limestone, in Kentucky, for part of one day and a night. Lorenzo had some acquaintances there, and when they found out that I was on board of this boat, some of them came down to see me. They invited me to go on shore and stay the night, which I accepted with thankfulness. I had some hope that Lorenzo would arrive there before the boat would start in the morning. O how anxiously I looked out for him. But he did not come, and I had to go on board the boat very early in the morning and continue on my journey with a heavy heart. My mind was much depressed. The prospects before me were dark, as to when I should reach my place of destination, and the weather was uncommonly cold for that climate and season.

After being confined on board of a boat for six weeks, we reached the mouth of Byopeare, about twelve miles from Gibson Port, which was forty miles from Natchez. We left the boat, myself and the young man that was with me, and took our things to a public house. But that public house was ten or twelve miles from the place we wished to get. I had never been in that country before, but Lorenzo had several times -- and hence I had some grounds to expect I should find some friends, as many of them had manifested a desire that I should come to that country. But my sister had conducted in such a manner that it made my way difficult. How to get to the neighborhood that I wish to go to, I did not know.

However brother Valentine, who came with us from the state of New York, had traveled by land with Lorenzo as far as Limestone. There he put his horse on board of a boat and worked his passage down to the same place that I was at. I landed at night, and he came in the morning. And so I was provided for. We left our things at this public house. I rode the horse, while he and the young man walked about twelve miles through the mud. This was about the 12th of January [1809]. We stayed at Gibson Port that night, about four miles from the place where my sister had lived and had brought such a stain on the cause of religion. We were all

strangers, but Lorenzo had written to some friends that we were coming. Furthermore, he had requested them, if I should arrive before him, to take care of me until he should come.

We left Gibson Port and went to the neighborhood of the mill, to the house of Samuel Cobun. He did not profess religion, though he was very kind and humane, but he had two sisters that were members of the Methodist church. He had no wife living, and the sisters lived with him to take care of the family. They had been friends to my sister when she first went to that country. They received me, apparently, with affection, which was a consolation to my heart. I had expected to meet with many a cold look, on the account of my poor unfortunate sister, and I expect that I did. I do not blame them, as it had given them so much pain, but I could not help my feelings. As those that professed religion seemed not to take much notice of me, however, I stayed with Mr. Cobun's until Lorenzo came. When he left me at Wheeling, Lorenzo went on through the states of Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee, and through the Indian country to the Mississippi territory.

Lorenzo had written to a man who was a Methodist and preached, and who had appeared very friendly to him in days that were past. He requested that if I should reach there before him, that he would permit me to stay with him until he should arrive. But he did not seem very anxious that I should stay at his house. He came over to Mr. Cobun's, which was six or seven miles, to see me and to request me to come and visit them -- as though suggesting I had been fixed [with the Cobun's] in a comfortable situation with every thing that I needed. But it was quite the reverse with me, as I had neither house nor friends in that country -- except the people chosen to befriend me. I was a stranger in a strange land, and in the neighborhood where my nearest relatives had conducted themselves very improperly. I expect that was one cause why the friends kept so distant. (However the Cobun family was very kind.) I went once to this friend's house during the two weeks before Lorenzo arrived. I stayed there one night, and then returned to Mr. Cobun's, where I stayed until Lorenzo came to me. The winter had been uncommonly severe, and Lorenzo had a very distressing time through the wilderness. But Providence had brought him through in safety, and this was a matter of rejoicing to my poor heart.

The cloud that had been gathering for some time grew darker and darker, so that we scarcely knew which way to turn or how to extricate ourselves from the difficulties that my imprudent friends had brought us into on every side. Making the impression that Lorenzo would pay all when he came from Europe, they had run in debt to merchants. There were some that had befriended them on

Lorenzo's account; these he felt it was his duty to compensate, which he did. My brother-in-law had made a contract with some people in that country for a tract of land, on which was a mill-seat. Without any title whatever and before we returned from Europe, he went to building a mill -- which involved them still deeper in debt. After Lorenzo returned from Europe and went to that country, which was nearly twelve months after, he found him in such a distressed situation that he, out of pity, stepped in to assist him as a kind of mediator. Then they cast the whole burden on Lorenzo's shoulders, and this proved to be a heavy burden to him.

We arrived there in January [1809]. We had a couple of tolerably good horses, a small wagon and some money; but we were under the necessity of parting with them, and what little money we had was soon gone. The old mill-frame, which was all that was done to the mill, Lorenzo let a man take on some terms. The man might undertake to build a mill if he chose, without any more expense to Lorenzo; and if he could make one stand, Lorenzo should be entitled to one half.

We stayed with a family near the mill-frame from March until July [1809]. During this time, I was taken sick with the fever that is common in that country, on the day that Lorenzo had resolved to prepare to start for Georgia, and my life was despaired of. The people that had appeared so desirous that we should come to that country forsook us. Had not the man that was styled a deist, and who first received me into his house, befriended us now, I do not know what I should have done. His two sisters, Elizabeth and Ann Cobun, were friends indeed. Ann stayed with me day and night for about three weeks, until we were under the necessity of removing from the house where we were staying. We had no place to go.

Mr. Cobun, however, gave us permission to come and stay at his house as long as we chose. As I was so low at that time that I could not sit up at all, they sewed some blankets together over a frame (similar to a bier to carry the dead), put a bed upon it and laid me thereon. Two black men conveyed me to his house, which was about a mile away.

The next day Lorenzo was taken very ill also. There we were, both confined to our beds and unable to help each other to as much as a drink of water. At that time Lorenzo could not have commanded one dollar, to procure so much as a little medicine. This was a trying time, and when the storm would be over we could not tell. But the Lord supported us under these distressing circumstances, or we would have sunk beneath the weight. *Forever*

praised be the adored name of our great Benefactor for all his mercies to us.

My fever began to abate; but Lorenzo's grew worse, and it was doubtful which way it would terminate with him. O the anguish of heart I felt at this trying juncture. I was still so low that I could not sit up but very little, nor walk without assistance. We were altogether dependent upon others for the necessities of life, and Lorenzo appeared to be fast approaching to eternity. But after some weeks he began to gain a little, so that he was able to ride a few miles at a time. We then removed to brother Randal Gibson's, where we stayed a few days. I was still unable to work and had the common fever and auge¹ which kept me very weak and feeble. After staying there for some time, perhaps two weeks, we returned to friend Baker's, near the mill. Lorenzo held meetings as much as he was able, and perhaps more. Although he was so weak in body and depressed in mind, he did not slack in his labors. Frequently he preached sitting or lying down.

A young man, who died about six or seven miles from where we were, desired that Lorenzo should preach at his funeral. Lorenzo was still very feeble, but he wished to be of some use to his fellow-mortals the few days he might have to stay in this world of woe. He started soon in the morning to attend the funeral, and brother Baker went with him. This was on Sunday, and he preached with considerable liberty to a crowded congregation. The people were tender and attentive. After the conclusion of the ceremony, he started to return to brother Baker's, where he had left me. He had rode but a few miles before he was suddenly taken ill. He would have fallen from his horse if brother Baker had not seen that something was the matter. Being active, he sprang from his horse and caught Lorenzo before he fell to the ground.

As it happened, they were near a small cabin that was occupied by a man who professed religion. They conveyed him to it senseless, and so he continued for some time. When he came to himself, he was in the most excruciating pain imaginable. They gave him a large quantity of laudanum,² which gave him some little relief, but he could not be removed from that place. Brother Baker stayed with him until nearly night, and then he came home.

As he did not return according to my expectation, I had become very uneasy in my mind on his account. When friend Baker came and told me Lorenzo's situation, my heart trembled. I feared I should be called to relinquish my claim, and resign him up to the pale messenger. It made me cry mightily to God to give me strength to say, "The will of the Lord be done." *I had no reason to doubt that if the great Master saw it best to remove him from this region of pain, he would be conveyed by angelic hands to the*

realms of peace and happiness where he would have to suffer no more pain and affliction, either of body or mind. But it was a task too hard for me to accomplish without the immediate assistance of the Friend of sinners.

I slept but little that night. Early the next morning, the friend at whose house Lorenzo was came with two horses to take me to him. When I arrived there, I found him in a very distressed situation. He could not be moved in any position whatever without the greatest pain. He could lie no way except on his back, and in this position he lay for ten days. The disorder was in his left side and across his bowels. I was apprehensive it would terminate in a mortification, and others I believe were of the same opinion.

One day, for the entire day, we thought that he was dying. He was unable to speak for the greater part of the day, and my mind was in such a state of anxiety as I had never experienced before. That appeared to be the turning point, however, for the next day he was something better. He continued to mend slowly, and in a few days he had gained so much strength as to ride about a mile to a quarterly meeting. *What a precious time it was to me, and to many others. O what an indulgent Parent we have to rely upon. May my heart ever feel sensations of gratitude to that God who hath cleared my way through storms of affliction and various other difficulties.*

I had not recovered my health fully at this time. The people, it appeared to me, were almost tired of us in every direction. I was unable to labor for a living, and Lorenzo was so feeble in body that he could preach but little. Consequently, we were entirely dependent on others for a subsistence. We continued in the neighborhood where Lorenzo had been sick, and that of the mill, until the first of January [1810], when we left that part for a friend's house twelve or fourteen miles off. Although they were very kind and friendly, their small house and large family was made it very inconvenient to them and us.

Our situation at this time was truly distressing -- we scarcely knew which way to turn. Lorenzo concluded it was best to strive to prepare some place as a shelter from the storms that appeared to have come to such a pitch as not to admit of rising any higher. Sickness and poverty had assailed us on every side. Many that had professed to be our friends forsook us in that country as well in the states.

Furthermore, it was circulating through many parts at that time that we were rolling in riches, surrounded with plenty. The old mill-frame (for it was never finished) had made such a noise in the world that many had been led to believe that we possessed a large plantation -- with an elegant house, other necessary

appurtenances, two or three mills, a number of slaves, and money at interest besides. This was carried from east to west, and from north to south. People supposed that Lorenzo had ranged the wide fields of America and Europe to gather up worldly treasure, and had gone to the Mississippi to enjoy it. This would, of course, make a very unfavorable impression on minds, as it related to his motives in traveling in such an irregular manner as he had done. We were, as I observed before, in quite a different situation -- without house or home, or any thing of consequence we could call our own.

There was a tract of land, lying in the midst of a thick cane-brake, which some person had told Lorenzo of. There was a beautiful spring of water there, breaking out at the foot of a large hill. The soil belonged to the United States. The cane was almost impenetrable, from thirty to forty feet high, inhabited by wild beasts of prey of various kinds and by serpents of the most poisonous nature. Notwithstanding these gloomy circumstances, Lorenzo got a man to go with him to look at it, to see if it would do for an asylum for us to fly to -- provided we could get a little cabin erected near the spring. After he had taken a survey of the place, he concluded to make a trial.

Accordingly, Lorenzo employed a man to put up a small log-cabin within ten or twelve feet of the spring. This the man did, after cutting down the cane for to set it. In addition, a way was made through from a public road to the spot, so that we could enter on horseback or on foot. We obtained a few utensils for keeping house, and in March [1810] we removed to our little place of residence in the wilderness. It may have appeared like the habitation of some exiles, but it was a sweet place to me. I felt I was at home, and many times the Lord was precious to my soul.

There was a man who had resided in Philadelphia, and by some means had got involved in debt and left there to reside in this country. He had a wife and one child. Once he had belonged to the Methodist society, but then he backslid. After he came to this country, he was brought into trying circumstances which brought him to reflect on his present situation. He met with Lorenzo at this time, and there began some intimacy between them on this occasion. After this, he wished to return to Philadelphia for a short time and wanted some place for his wife to stay while he should be gone. Consequently, he requested us to let her stay with us at our little cabin. This was agreed, and she came and made up our little family. She was a peaceable, friendly woman. Although we were left together by ourselves for days, as Lorenzo was frequently called from home to attend meetings and to procure the necessaries of life, we spent the time quite agreeably.

The people were much surprised when they came to our little residence and saw how we came to fix on such a lonely place as this to retreat to. This is a proof that experience teaches more than we otherwise could learn, for we had felt the want of a home in the time of trouble and sickness. This was a pleasant retreat to us, and the wilderness appeared almost like a paradise to me. There were but two ways we could get to our neighbors, the nearest of which was more than half a mile, and the ways were so intricate that it would be almost impossible for any one to find them or to get through them in the night.

We stayed there for near four months, during which time Lorenzo preached as much as his strength would admit. We were sometimes very closely run to get what was necessary to make us comfortable, yet I felt quite contented. I had, in good degree, regained my health so that I was able to labor. I strove to do all I could for a living, although my situation was such that I could not do as much as I wished. But the Lord provided for us beyond what we could have expected. We did not know how long we should stay in that place, and we had no other alternative but to stay there until Providence should open up some other way.

The man that had left his wife with us and started out for the city of Philadelphia went as far as the falls of the Ohio. There he got discouraged and, getting a boat, returned to us in the cane. And so we had an addition to our family -- this man and his wife and child. The chief of the burden to do for them and ourselves fell to my lot. Lorenzo thought this was too much for me to go through with, but the man seemed not to give himself much concern about it. His wife was in a situation that would require more attention than I should be able to give. We thought it would be best to make our return to the states, if possible, as we had been defeated in almost every thing that we had undertaken in this country.

Accordingly, Lorenzo made some arrangements to prepare to leave the Mississippi. He let the man that was with us have possession of the house and spring. He also gave him what little we had for family use, as it relates to housekeeping, and took a horse for the intended journey. We left the peaceful retreat of the spring, where I had enjoyed some refreshings from the presence of the Lord, and were again cast on the world without any thing to depend upon but Providence. He had never forsaken us, however, and his power and willingness to save all that trust in him was still the same. And as he had promised that he would be with us in six troubles, and in the seventh that he would not forsake us,³ so it proved in the end.

We left, on horseback, the little cabin on Sunday morning to attend an appointment that Lorenzo had given out twelve or fourteen miles distant. We arrived in time, and he preached to an attentive congregation. This was about six miles from Cobun's, where we had found an asylum in days that were past. We left the place where the meeting was held and started for Cobun's, but we lost our way. By taking a foot-path that we supposed was nearer, we wandered in the woods until almost night before we came to the place that we were in pursuit of. But at last we got to the place. We met with sister Cobun and with brother Valentine, who had been back to the state of New York for his family and had arrived here a few weeks previous.

We did not intend to stay in the country any longer than to make the necessary arrangements for our journey through the wilderness to Georgia. Lorenzo turned every way that he could to get what was necessary. We had got all ready to start, our clothes and every thing being packed up, when we concluded to attend a camp-meeting about six miles from the neighborhood of the old mill-frame. We thought we would then continue on our journey, but Providence seemed not to favor our intentions at that time. As I was taken sick and unable to travel, Lorenzo was under the necessity of leaving me behind and going through without me. But he did stay for several weeks longer, until I had in some degree recovered my health.

He had made some preparations for me to be provided for in his absence. Brother Valentine had erected a small log-house, on public ground, near the mill-frame and contiguous to the little tract of perhaps five-and-twenty acres that Lorenzo still retained. This house he, in conjunction with the sisters Cobun, obtained from Mr. Valentine for us to reside in while he should take a tour through the states. He had let another man have a part of the right that he still held in the mill, if ever it should be made to do any business. Consequently, this left him but one fourth -- and that was in a state of uncertainty, whether it would ever be of any use to him (which the sequel has since proved to be the case).

About this time my poor unfortunate sister finished her career and was called to a world of spirits to give an account of the deeds done in the body. I felt very awful when I first heard the news, but I considered that we had done all in our power to bring her back to the paths of rectitude. Lorenzo had seen her three times: the first, on purpose; the second, on the road; the third, when she came thirty miles to meeting to see me. I was not there then, but Lorenzo strove by every argument to prevail on her to come to us and to forsake the ways of vice to seek her soul's

salvation. We would strive to do the part of children by her. But she would not, alleging that she could not bear the scoffs of her acquaintances. When Lorenzo found that she was determined to stay with the person she had apostatized for, he told her to read the counsel of Jeremiah to Zedekiah, on their last interview, and to look at the sequel and make the application. At this, she wept as they parted. This was the last time that he ever saw her.

She was taken sick shortly after and died in a strange land without a friend to drop a tear of compassion over her in her last moments. The person that had been her seducer went on like one distracted. His wickedness and evil conduct, no doubt, stared him in the face when he reflected that he had been the cause of one who had once enjoyed the Divine favor losing that blessing and falling into sin of such an enormous nature as she had been guilty of. And I know not but he might have been the cause of her sudden departure, but I leave that until the day when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed.

She was interred in a lonely place where, perhaps, in a few years the spot of earth cannot be found that bears her ashes. *O that this may be a warning to all that may peruse this short account of the fall of one that might have proved a blessing to society and a comfort to her friends, if she had kept at the feet of her Saviour and attended to the dictates of that Spirit that teaches humility.*

The foregoing unfortunate circumstances are necessarily involved in the thread of those vicissitudes which are connected in the narrative in order to be explicit. These circumstances were generally known, but in many respects greatly misrepresented through the prejudice and ambition of some to block up the way and destroy the reputation of Lorenzo by unfavorable impressions on the public mind. Many, through false modesty and pride, are willing to claim relationship with some because they are considered in the higher circles of life. They would be ashamed of these same people if it was not for their money -- as worth is generally estimated according to a man's property, agreeably to the old saying, "Money makes the man." But what am I the worse for others' vices, or better for their worth and merit, if I have no virtues of my own?

I was much afflicted on account of my poor sister, as she had lain near my heart. But I was enabled to give her up, knowing that she was gone to a just tribunal and that her state was unalterably fixed. What remained for me to do was to strive to make my way safely through a tempestuous world to a glorious eternity.

Lorenzo had made the necessary preparations for me to stay with the sisters Cobun, and for him to take his departure for the states, not expecting to return in less than twelve months. This was something of a cross to me, as he was still considerably afflicted in body and, to appearance, would never enjoy health again. But I was supported under it, so that I felt in a great measure resigned to this dispensation also. I was supplied with what I needed to make me comfortable.

I had joined society when I first came to this country, within a mile of the place I then lived. I lived in great harmony with my two companions that Lorenzo had left me with while he had gone to visit the states once more. I attended meeting regularly every week, and had many precious times to my soul. I had some trials to encounter, but the Lord was my helper and brought me through them all. I was desirous to return to some part of the states, if Providence should spare Lorenzo and he should again come back to me in safety.

He left me in October [1810]. I spent that winter and the next summer as agreeably as I had done such a length of time in almost any situation that I had been placed in for several years. At the same time, the people that had pretended a great deal of friendship to us in former times were quite distant. This affected me but little, however, as I had learned in some degree from this lesson that our happiness does not depend on the smiles or frowns of this world. We must have peace in our own breast, or we can find it nowhere else.

I lived quite retired from the world, with a few exceptions. I seldom went out but to meeting, where I found most peace and consolation. Thus I continued to spend my time, until the period that Lorenzo was to return. Then I received a letter from Lorenzo, to meet him about twelve miles from where I then was, where he had sent an appointment to preach. This was pleasing intelligence to me, as I had then been separated from him for near twelve months.

I went the day before the time appointed for him to arrive at the place. The day that he came I was again attacked with the auge and fever, which I had never escaped for one summer when I was in that country. The auge had left me and the fever was tolerably high, when it was observed by some of the family that Lorenzo had come. My heart leaped for joy at the sound of his name. We met after having been separated for twelve months and six days. I felt some degree of gratitude to our great Preserver, that he had brought us through many dangers and difficulties which we had met with during our separation.

We intended to return to the states as soon as we could get prepared. There was a large congregation attended to hear Lorenzo preach, and it was a solemn, melting time among the people. After meeting, we started for the place that I had made my home in his absence. Although I was quite unwell, in consequence of having a fit of the auge the day before, we rode twelve miles, in company with several friends that had come from the neighborhood to meet him.

It was then ten o'clock before we reached our destination. We were very much rejoiced, however, to have the privilege of joining our hearts and voices in prayer and praise to that God who had prolonged our lives and brought us to meet again on mortal shores. The next day I had a very sick day, as the auge came on more severely than it had the day that Lorenzo came back. He wished to make ready to leave the territory. As I could not enjoy health in that country, I was anxious to go with him. I made use of some means to get rid of the auge, and it had the desired effect. After a few days I got something better, and in about two or three weeks I was able to start on our journey through the wilderness to Georgia.

Notes on Chapter Four

1. In Greek mythology, Auge is a princess/priestess and the heroine of a lost play by Euripides. When a plague afflicts the land, she and her babe are condemned to death. From this story, comes the now obsolete usage of "auge" to refer to a general unspecified plague or malady.
2. The term laudanum is used to refer to any of several opium preparations.
3. Job 5:19