

UNCLE
TOM'S CABIN.

BY
HARRIET BEECHER STOWE.

WITH
Twenty-seven Illustrations on Wood

BY
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EVA AND TOPSY.

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stones, and to force an existence out of Nature; and mine settled in Louisiana, to rule over men and women, and force an existence out of them. "My mother," said St. Clare, getting up and walking to a picture at the end of the room, and gazing upward with a face fervent with veneration, "*she was divine!* Don't look at me so!—you know what I mean! She probably was of mortal birth; but as far as ever I could observe, there was no trace of any human weakness or error about her; and everybody that lives to remember her, whether bond or free, servant, acquaintance, relation, all say the same. Why, cousin, that mother has been all that has stood between me and utter unbelief for years. She was a direct embodiment and personification of the New Testament, a living fact, to be accounted for, and to be accounted for in no other way than by its truth. O mother! mother!" said St. Clare, clasping his hands, in a sort of transport; and then suddenly checking himself, he came back, and seating himself on an ottoman, he went on:—

"My brother and I were twins; and they say, you know, that twins ought to resemble each other; but we were in all points a contrast. He had black, fiery eyes, coal-black hair, a strong, fine Roman profile, and a rich brown complexion. I had blue eyes, golden hair, a Greek outline, and fair complexion. He was active and observing, I dreamy and inactive. He was generous to his friends and equals, but proud, dominant, overbearing to inferiors, and utterly unmmerciful to whatever set itself up against him. Truthful we both were; he from pride and courage, I from a sort of abstract ideality. We loved each other about as boys generally do, off and on, and in general; he was my father's pet, and I my mother's.

"There was a morbid sensitiveness and acuteness of feeling in me on all possible subjects, of which he and my father had no kind of understanding, and with which they could have no possible sympathy. But mother did; and so, when I had quarrelled with Alfred, and father looked sternly on me, I used to go off to mother's room, and sit by her. I remember just how she used to look, with her pale cheeks, her deep, soft, serious eyes, her white dress—she always wore white—and I used to think of her whenever I read in Revelation about the saints that were arrayed in fine linen, clean and white. She had a great deal of genius of one sort or another, particularly in music, and she used to sit at her organ, playing fine old majestic music of the Catholic church, and singing with a voice more like an angel than a mortal woman; and I would lay my head down on her lap, and cry, and dream, and feel—oh, immeasurably!—things that I had no language to say!

"In those days, this matter of slavery had never been canvassed as it has now; nobody dreamed of any harm in it.

"My father was a born aristocrat. I think, in some pre-existent state, he must have been in the higher circles of spirits, and brought all his old

court pride along with him ; for it was ingrain, bred in the bone, though he was originally of poor and not in any way of noble family. My brother was begotten in his image.

" Now, an aristocrat, you know, the world over, has no human sympathies, beyond a certain line in society. In England the line is in one place, in Burmah in another, and in America in another ; but the aristocrat of all these countries never goes over it. What would be hardship and distress and injustice in his own class, is a cool matter of course in another one. My father's dividing line was that of colour. *Among his equals*, never was a man more just and generous ; but he considered the negro, through all possible gradations of colour, as an intermediate link between man and animals, and graded all his ideas of justice or generosity on this hypothesis. I suppose, to be sure, if anybody had asked him, plump and fair, whether they had human immortal souls, he might have hemmed and hawed, and said yes. But my father was not a man much troubled with spiritualism ; religious sentiment he had none, beyond a veneration for God, as decidedly the head of the upper classes.

" Well, my father worked some five hundred negroes ; he was an inflexible, driving, punctilious business man ; everything was to move by system—to be sustained with unfailing accuracy and precision. Now, if you take into account that all this was to be worked out by a set of lazy, twaddling, shiftless labourers, who had grown up all their lives in the absence of every possible motive to learn how to do anything but 'shirk,' as you Vermonters say, and you'll see that there might naturally be on his plantation a great many things that looked horrible and distressing to a sensitive child like me.

" Besides all, he had an overseer—a great, tall, slab-sided, two-fisted renegade son of Vermont (begging your pardon), who had gone through a regular apprenticeship in hardness and brutality, and taken his degree to be admitted to practice. My mother never could endure him, nor I ; but he obtained an entire ascendancy over my father ; and this man was the absolute despot of the estate.

" I was a little fellow then, but I had the same love that I have now for all kinds of human things—a kind of passion for the study of humanity, come in what shape it would. I was found in the cabins and among the field-hands a great deal, and, of course, was a great favourite ; and all sorts of complaints and grievances were breathed in my ear, and I told them to mother, and we, between us, formed a sort of committee for a redress of grievances. We hindered and repressed a great deal of cruelty, and congratulated ourselves on doing a vast deal of good, till, as often happens, my zeal overacted. Stubbs complained to my father that he couldn't manage the hands, and must resign his position. Father was a fond, indulgent husband, but a man that never flinched from anything that he thought necessary ; and so he put down his foot, like a

evident, from the expression of his face, that there was no hope; but he applied himself to dressing the wound, and he and Miss Ophelia and Tom proceeded composedly with this work, amid the lamentations and sobs and cries of the affrighted servants, who had clustered about the doors and windows of the verandah.

"Now," said the physician, "we must turn all these creatures out; all depends on his being kept quiet."

St. Clare opened his eyes, and looked fixedly on the distressed beings whom Miss Ophelia and the doctor were trying to urge from the apartment. "Poor creatures!" he said, and an expression of bitter self-reproach passed over his face. Adolph absolutely refused to go. Terror had deprived him of all presence of mind; he threw himself along on the floor, and nothing could persuade him to rise. The rest yielded to Miss Ophelia's urgent representations, that their master's safety depended on their stillness and obedience.

St. Clare could say but little; he lay with his eyes shut, but it was evident that he wrestled with bitter thoughts. After a while, he laid his hand on Tom's, who was kneeling beside him, and said, "Tom! poor fellow!"

"What, mas'r?" said Tom, earnestly.

"I am dying!" said St. Clare, pressing his hand! "pray!"

"If you would like a clergyman—" said the physician.

St. Clare hastily shook his head, and said again to Tom, more earnestly, "Pray!"

And Tom did pray, with all his mind and strength, for the soul that was passing—the soul that seemed looking so steadily and mournfully from those large, melancholy blue eyes. It was literally prayer offered with strong crying and tears.

When Tom ceased to speak, St. Clare reached out and took his hand, looking earnestly at him, but saying nothing. He closed his eyes, but still retained his hold; for, in the gates of eternity, the black hand and the white hold each other with an equal clasp. He murmured softly to himself, at broken intervals,—

"Recordare Jesu pie—
• • • •

"Ne me perdas—illa die
Querens me—sedisti iassua."

It was evident that the words he had been singing that evening were passing through his mind—words of entreaty addressed to Infinite Pity. His lips moved at intervals, as parts of the hymn fell brokenly from them.

"His mind is wandering," said the doctor.

"No! it is coming HOME at last!" said St. Clare, energetically; "at last! at last!"

The effort of speaking exhausted him. The sinking paleness of death fell on him; but with it there fell, as if it shed from the wings of some pitying spirit, a beautiful expression of peace, like that of a wearied child who sleeps.

So he lay for a few moments. They saw that the mighty hand was on him. Just before the spirit parted, he opened his eyes, with a sudden light, as of joy and recognition, and said "*Mother!*" and then he was gone!

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE UNPROTECTED.

WE hear often of the distress of the negro servants, on the loss of a kind master, and with good reason; for no creature on God's earth is left more utterly unprotected and desolate than the slave in those circumstances.

The child who has lost his father has still the protection of friends and of the law; he is something, and can do something—has acknowledged rights and position; the slave has none. The law regards him, in every respect, as devoid of rights as a bale of merchandise. The only possible acknowledgement of any of the longings and wants of a human and immortal creature which are given to him, comes to him through the sovereign and irresponsible will of his master: and when that master is stricken down, nothing remains.

The number of those men who know how to use wholly irresponsible power humanely and generously is small. Everybody knows this, and the slave knows it best of all; so that he feels that there are ten chances of his finding an abusive and tyrannical master, to one of his finding a considerate and kind one. Therefore is it that the wail over a kind master is loud and long, as well it may be.

When St. Clare breathed his last, terror and consternation took hold of all his household. He had been stricken down so in a moment, in the flower and strength of his youth! Every room and gallery of the house resounded with sobs and shrieks of despair.

Marie, whose nervous system had been enervated by a constant course of self-indulgence, had nothing to support the terror of the shock, and

"Herrid!" said Emmeline, every drop of blood receding from her cheeks. "O Cassy, do tell me what I shall do!"

"What I've done. Do the best you can; do what you must, and make it up in hating and cursing."

"He wanted to make me drink some of his hateful brandy," said Emmeline; "and I hate it so—"

"You'd better drink," said Cassy. "I hated it, too; and now I can't live without it. One must have something; things don't look so dreadful when you take that."

"Mother used to tell me never to touch any such thing," said Emmeline.

"*Mother* told you!" said Cassy, with a thrilling and bitter emphasis on the word mother. "What use is it for mothers to say anything? You are all to be bought and paid for, and your souls belong to whoever gets you. That's the way it goes. I say, *drink* brandy: drink all you can, and it'll make things come easier."

"O Cassy! do pity me!"

"Pity you! don't I? Haven't I a daughter?—Lord knows where she is, and whose she is now! Going the way her mother went before her, I suppose, and that her children must go after her! There's no end to the curse for ever!"

"I wish I'd never been born!" said Emmeline, wringing her hands.

"That's an old wish with me," said Cassy. "I've got used to wishing that. I'd die, if I dared to," she said, looking out into the darkness with that still, fixed despair which was the habitual expression of her face when at rest.

"It would be wicked to kill one's self," said Emmeline.

"I don't know why; no wickeder than things we live and do day after day. But the sisters told me things when I was in the convent that make me afraid to die. If it would only be the end of us, why then—"

Emmeline turned away and hid her face in her hands.

While this conversation was passing in the chamber, Legree, overcome with his carouse, had sunk to sleep in the room below. Legree was not an habitual drunkard. His coarse, strong nature craved and could endure a continual stimulation, that would have utterly wrecked and crazed a finer one. But a deep underlying spirit of cautiousness prevented his often yielding to appetite in such measure as to lose control of himself.

This night, however, in his feverish efforts to banish from his mind those fearful elements of woe and remorse which woke within him, he had indulged more than common; so that when he had discharged his sable attendants, he fell heavily on a settle in the room, and was sound asleep.

Oh how dares the bad soul to enter the shadowy world of sleep?—

that land whose dim outlines lie so fearfully near to the mystic scene of retribution!" Legree dreamed. In his heavy and feverish sleep a veiled form stood beside him, and laid a cold, soft hand upon him. He thought he knew who it was; and shuddered, with creeping horror, though the face was veiled. Then he thought he felt *that hair* twining round his fingers; and then, that it slid smoothly round his neck, and tightened, and tightened, and he could not draw his breath; and then he thought voices *whispered* to him—whispers that chilled him with horror. Then it seemed to him he was on the edge of a frightful abyss, holding on and struggling in mortal fear, while dark hands stretched up, and were pulling him over: and Cassy came behind him laughing, and pushed him. And then rose up that solemn veiled figure, and drew aside the veil. It was his mother; and she turned away from him, and he fell down, down, down, amid a confused noise of shrieks, and groans, and shouts of demon laughter—and Legree awoke.

Calmly the rosy hue of dawn was stealing into the room. The morning star stood, with its solemn, holy eye of light, looking down on the man of sin, from out the brightening sky. Oh, with what freshness, what solemnity and beauty, is each new day born; as if to say to insensate men, "Behold! thou hast one more chance! Strive for immortal glory!" There is no speech nor language where this voice is not heard; but the bold, bad man heard it not. He woke with an oath and a curse. What to him was the gold and purple, the daily miracle of morning! What to him the sanctity of that star which the Son of God has hallowed as his own emblem? Brute-like, he saw without perceiving; and, stumbling forward, poured out a tumbler of brandy, and drank half of it.

"I've had a h—l of a night!" he said to Cassy, who just then entered from an opposite door.

"You'll get plenty of the same sort, by and by," said she, dryly.

"What do you mean, you minx?"

"You'll find out, one of these days," returned Cassy, in the same tone.

"Now, Simon, I've one piece of advice to give you."

"The devil you have!"

"My advice is," said Cassy, steadily, as she began adjusting some things about the room, "that you let Tom alone."

"What business is't of yours?"

"What? To be sure, I don't know what it should be. If you want to pay twelve hundred for a fellow, and use him right up in the press of the season, just to serve your own spite, it's no business of mine. I've done what I could for him."

"You have? What business have you meddling in my matters?"

"None, to be sure. I've saved you some thousands of dollars, at different times, by taking care of your hands—that's all the thanks I get."