CHAPTER VI.

REMOVAL TO BRUNSWICK, 1850-1852.

MRS. STOWE'S REMARKS ON WRITING AND UNDERSTANDING BIOGRAPHY.--THEIR

APPROPRIATENESS TO HER OWN BIOGRAPHY.--REASONS FOR PROFESSOR STOWE'S

LEAVING CINCINNATI.--MRS. STOWE'S JOURNEY TO BROOKLYN.--HER BROTHER'S

SUCCESS AS A MINISTER.--LETTERS FROM HARTFORD AND BOSTON.--ARRIVES IN

BRUNSWICK.--HISTORY OF THE SLAVERY AGITATION.--PRACTICAL WORKING OF

THE FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW.--MRS. EDWARD BEECHER'S LETTER TO MRS. STOWE

AND ITS EFFECT.--DOMESTIC TRIALS.--BEGINS TO WRITE "UNCLE TOM'S CABIN"

AS A SERIAL FOR THE "NATIONAL ERA."--LETTER TO FREDERICK DOUGLASS.--

"UNCLE TOM'S CABIN" A WORK OF RELIGIOUS EMOTION.

Early in the winter of 1849 Mrs. Stowe wrote in a private journal in which she recorded thought and feeling concerning religious themes: "It has been said that it takes a man to write the life of a man; that is, there must be similarity of mind in the person who undertakes to present the character of another. This is true, also, of reading and understanding biography. A statesman and general would read the life

of Napoleon with the spirit and the understanding, while the commonplace man plods through it as a task. The difference is that the one, being of like mind and spirit with the subject of the biography, is able to sympathize with him in all his thoughts and experiences, and the other is not. The life of Henry Martyn would be tedious and unintelligible to a mind like that of a Richelieu or a Mazarin. They never experienced or saw or heard anything like it, and would be quite at a loss where to place such a man in their mental categories. It is not strange, therefore, that of all biography in the world that of Jesus Christ should be least understood. It is an exception to all the world has ever seen. 'The world knew Him not.' There is, to be sure, a simple grandeur about the life of Jesus which awes almost every mind. The most hardened scoffer, after he has jested and jeered at everything in the temple of Christianity, stands for a moment uncovered and breathless when he comes to the object of its adoration and feels how awful goodness is, and Virtue in her shape how lovely. Yet, after all, the character of the Christ has been looked at and not sympathized with. Men have turned aside to see this great sight. Christians have fallen in adoration, but very few have tried to enter into his sympathies and to feel as He felt." How little she dreamed that these words were to become profoundly appropriate as a description of her own life in its relation to mankind! How little the countless thousands who read, have read, and will read, "Uncle Tom's Cabin" enter into or sympathize with the feelings out of which it was written! A delicate, sensitive woman struggling with poverty, with weary step and aching head attending to the innumerable demands of a

large family of growing children; a devoted Christian seeking with strong crying and tears a kingdom not of this world,--is this the popular conception of the author of "Uncle Tom's Cabin"? Nevertheless it is the reality. When, amid the burning ruins of a besieged city, a mother's voice is heard uttering a cry of anguish over a child killed in her arms by a bursting shell, the attention is arrested, the heart is touched. So "Uncle Tom's Cabin" was a cry of anguish from a mother's heart, and uttered in sad sincerity. It was the bursting forth of deep feeling, with all the intense anguish of wounded love. It will be the purpose of this chapter to show this, and to cause to pass before the reader's mind the time, the household, and the heart from which this cry was heard.

After struggling for seventeen years with ill health and every possible vexation and hindrance in his work, Professor Stowe became convinced that it was his duty to himself and his family to seek some other field of labor.

February 6, 1850, he writes to his mother, in Natick, Mass.: "My health has not been good this winter, and I do not suppose that I should live long were I to stay here. I have done a great deal of hard work here, and practiced no little self-denial. I have seen the seminary carried through a most vexatious series of lawsuits, ecclesiastical and civil, and raised from the depths of poverty to comparative affluence, and I feel at liberty now to leave. During the three months of June, July, and August last, more than nine thousand

persons died of cholera within three miles of my house, and this winter, in the same territory, there have been more than ten thousand cases of small-pox, many of them of the very worst kind. Several have died on the hill, and the Jesuits' college near us has been quite broken up by it. There have been, however, no cases in our families or in the seminary.

"I have received many letters from friends in the East expressing great gratification at the offer from Bowdoin College, and the hope that I would accept it. I am quite inclined to do so, but the matter is not yet finally settled, and there are difficulties in the way. They can offer me only $1,000 a year, and I must, out of it, hire my own house, at an expense of $75 to $100 a year. Here the trustees offer me $1,500 a year if I will stay, and a good house besides, which would make the whole salary equivalent to $1,800; and to-day I have had another offer from New York city of $2,300. . . . On the whole, I have written to Bowdoin College, proposing to them if they will give me $500 free and clear in addition to the salary, I will accept their proposition, and I suppose that there is no doubt that they will do it. In that case I should come on next spring, in May or June."

This offer from Bowdoin College was additionally attractive to Professor Stowe from the fact that it was the college from which he graduated, and where some of the happiest years of his life had been passed.

The professorship was one just established through the gift of Mrs. Collins, a member of Bowdoin Street Church in Boston, and named in her honor, the "Collins Professorship of Natural and Revealed Religion."

It was impossible for Professor Stowe to leave Lane Seminary till some one could be found to take his place; so it was determined that Mrs. Stowe, with three of the children, should start for the East in April, and having established the family in Brunswick, Professor Stowe was to come on with the remaining children when his engagements would permit.

The following extracts from a letter written by Mrs. Stowe at her brother Henry's, at Brooklyn, April 29, 1850, show us that the journey was accomplished without special incident.

"The boat got into Pittsburgh between four and five on Wednesday. The agent for the Pennsylvania Canal came on board and soon filled out our tickets, calling my three chicks one and a half. We had a quiet and agreeable passage, and crossed the slides at five o'clock in the morning, amid exclamations of unbounded delight from all the children, to whom the mountain scenery was a new and amazing thing. We reached Hollidaysburg about eleven o'clock, and at two o'clock in the night were called up to get into the cars at Jacktown. Arriving at Philadelphia about three o'clock in the afternoon, we took the boat and railroad line for New York.

"At Lancaster we telegraphed to Brooklyn, and when we arrived in New

York, between ten and eleven at night, Cousin Augustus met us and took us over to Brooklyn. We had ridden three hundred miles since two o'clock that morning, and were very tired. . . . I am glad we came that way, for the children have seen some of the finest scenery in our country. . . . Henry's people are more than ever in love with him, and have raised his salary to $3,300, and given him a beautiful horse and carriage worth $600. . . . My health is already improved by the journey, and I was able to walk a good deal between the locks on the canal. As to furniture, I think that we may safely afford an outlay of $150, and that will purchase all that may be necessary to set us up, and then we can get more as we have means and opportunity. . . . If I got anything for those pieces I wrote before coming away, I would like to be advised thereof by you. . . . My plan is to spend this week in Brooklyn, the next in Hartford, the next in Boston, and go on to Brunswick some time in May or June."

May 18, 1850, we find her writing from Boston, where she is staying with her brother, Rev. Edward Beecher:--

MY DEAR HUSBAND,--I came here from Hartford on Monday, and have since then been busily engaged in the business of buying and packing furniture.

I expect to go to Brunswick next Tuesday night by the Bath steamer, which way I take as the cheaper. My traveling expenses, when I get to Brunswick, including everything, will have been seventy-six dollars. . . .

And now, lastly, my dear husband, you have never been wanting . . . in kindness, consideration, and justice, and I want you to reflect calmly how great a work has been imposed upon me at a time when my situation particularly calls for rest, repose, and quiet.

To come alone such a distance with the whole charge of children, accounts, and baggage; to push my way through hurrying crowds, looking out for trunks, and bargaining with hackmen, has been a very severe trial of my strength, to say nothing of the usual fatigues of traveling.

It was at this time, and as a result of the experiences of this trying period, that Mrs. Stowe wrote that little tract dear to so many Christian hearts, "Earthly Care a Heavenly Discipline."

On the eve of sailing for Brunswick, Mrs. Stowe writes to Mrs. Sykes (Miss May): "I am wearied and worn out with seeing to bedsteads, tables, chairs, mattresses, with thinking about shipping my goods and making out accounts, and I have my trunk yet to pack, as I go on board the Bath steamer this evening. I beg you to look up Brunswick on the map; it is about half a day's ride in the cars from Boston. I expect to reach there by the way of Bath by to-morrow forenoon. There I have a house engaged and kind friends who offer every hospitable assistance. Come, therefore, to see me, and we will have a long talk in the pine woods, and knit up the whole history from the place where we left it."

Before leaving Boston she had written to her husband in Cincinnati: "You are not able just now to bear anything, my dear husband, therefore trust all to me; I never doubt or despair. I am already making arrangements with editors to raise money.

"I have sent some overtures to Wright. If he accepts my pieces and pays you for them, take the money and use it as you see necessary; if not, be sure and bring the pieces back to me. I am strong in spirit, and God who has been with me in so many straits will not forsake me now. I know Him well; He is my Father, and though I may be a blind and erring child, He will help me for all that. My trust through all errors and sins is in Him. He who helped poor timid Jacob through all his fears and apprehensions, who helped Abraham even when he sinned, who was with David in his wanderings, and who held up the too confident Peter when he began to sink,--He will help us, and his arms are about us, so that we shall not sink, my dear husband."

May 29, 1850, she writes from Brunswick: "After a week of most incessant northeast storm, most discouraging and forlorn to the children, the sun has at length come out. . . . There is a fair wind blowing, and every prospect, therefore, that our goods will arrive promptly from Boston, and that we shall be in our own house by next week. Mrs. Upham [Footnote: Wife of Professor Upham of Bowdoin College.] has done everything for me, giving up time and strength and taking charge of my affairs in a way without which we could not have

got along at all in a strange place and in my present helpless condition. This family is delightful, there is such a perfect sweetness and quietude in all its movements. Not a harsh word or hasty expression is ever heard. It is a beautiful pattern of a Christian family, a beautiful exemplification of religion. . . ."

The events of the first summer in Brunswick are graphically described by Mrs. Stowe in a letter written to her sister-in-law, Mrs. George Beecher, December 17, 1850.

MY DEAR SISTER,--Is it really true that snow is on the ground and Christmas coming, and I have not written unto thee, most dear sister? No, I don't believe it! I haven't been so naughty--it's all a mistake--yes, written I must have--and written I have, too--in the night-watches as I lay on my bed--such beautiful letters--I wish you had only gotten them; but by day it has been hurry, hurry, hurry, and drive, drive, drive! or else the calm of a sick-room, ever since last spring.

I put off writing when your letter first came because I meant to write you a long letter--a full and complete one, and so days slid by,--and became weeks,--and my little Charlie came . . . etc. and etc.!!! Sarah, when I look back, I wonder at myself, not that I forget any one thing that I should remember, but that I have remembered anything. From the time that I left Cincinnati with my children to come forth to a country that I knew not of almost to the present time, it has seemed

as if I could scarcely breathe, I was so pressed with care. My head dizzy with the whirl of railroads and steamboats; then ten days' sojourn in Boston, and a constant toil and hurry in buying my furniture and equipments; and then landing in Brunswick in the midst of a drizzly, inexorable northeast storm, and beginning the work of getting in order a deserted, dreary, damp old house. All day long running from one thing to another, as for example, thus:---

Mrs. Stowe, how shall I make this lounge, and what shall I cover the back with first?

Mrs. Stowe. With the coarse cotton in the closet.

Woman. Mrs. Stowe, there isn't any more soap to clean the windows.

Mrs. Stowe. Where shall I get soap?

Here H., run up to the store and get two bars.

There is a man below wants to see Mrs. Stowe about the cistern. Before you go down, Mrs. Stowe, just show me how to cover this round end of the lounge.

There 's a man up from the depot, and he says that a box has come for Mrs. Stowe, and it's coming up to the house; will you come down and

see about it?

Mrs. Stowe, don't go till you have shown the man how to nail that carpet in the corner. He 's nailed it all crooked; what shall he do? The black thread is all used up, and what shall I do about putting gimp on the back of that sofa? Mrs. Stowe, there is a man come with a lot of pails and tinware from Furbish; will you settle the bill now?

Mrs. Stowe, here is a letter just come from Boston inclosing that bill of lading; the man wants to know what he shall do with the goods. If you will tell me what to say I will answer the letter for you.

Mrs. Stowe, the meat-man is at the door. Hadn't we better get a little beefsteak, or something, for dinner?

Shall Hatty go to Boardman's for some more black thread?

Mrs. Stowe, this cushion is an inch too wide for the frame. What shall we do now?

Mrs. Stowe, where are the screws of the black walnut bedstead?

Here's a man has brought in these bills for freight. Will you settle them now?

Mrs. Stowe, I don't understand using this great needle. I can't make

it go through the cushion; it sticks in the cotton.

Then comes a letter from my husband saying he is sick abed, and all but dead; don't ever expect to see his family again; wants to know how I shall manage, in case I am left a widow; knows we shall get in debt and never get out; wonders at my courage; thinks I am very sanguine; warns me to be prudent, as there won't be much to live on in case of his death, etc., etc., etc. I read the letter and poke it into the stove, and proceed. . . .

Some of my adventures were quite funny; as for example: I had in my kitchen elect no sink, cistern, or any other water privileges, so I bought at the cotton factory two of the great hogsheads they bring oil in, which here in Brunswick are often used for cisterns, and had them brought up in triumph to my yard, and was congratulating myself on my energy, when lo and behold! it was discovered that there was no cellar door except one in the kitchen, which was truly a strait and narrow way, down a long pair of stairs. Hereupon, as saith John Bunyan, I fell into a muse,--how to get my cisterns into my cellar. In days of chivalry I might have got a knight to make me a breach through the foundation walls, but that was not to be thought of now, and my oil hogsheads standing disconsolately in the yard seemed to reflect no great credit on my foresight. In this strait I fell upon a real honest Yankee cooper, whom I besought, for the reputation of his craft and mine, to take my hogsheads to pieces, carry them down in staves, and set them up again, which the worthy man actually accomplished one fair

summer forenoon, to the great astonishment of "us Yankees." When my man came to put up the pump, he stared very hard to see my hogsheads thus translated and standing as innocent and quiet as could be in the cellar, and then I told him, in a very mild, quiet way, that I got 'em taken to pieces and put together--just as if I had been always in the habit of doing such things. Professor Smith came down and looked very hard at them and then said, "Well, nothing can beat a willful woman." Then followed divers negotiations with a very clever, but (with reverence) somewhat lazy gentleman of jobs, who occupieth a carpenter's shop opposite to mine. This same John Titcomb, my very good friend, is a character peculiar to Yankeedom. He is part owner and landlord of the house I rent, and connected by birth with all the best families in town; a man of real intelligence, and good education, a great reader, and quite a thinker. Being of an ingenious turn he does painting, gilding, staining, upholstery jobs, varnishing, all in addition to his primary trade of carpentry. But he is a man studious of ease, and fully possessed with the idea that man wants but little here below; so he boards himself in his workshop on crackers and herring, washed down with cold water, and spends his time working, musing, reading new publications, and taking his comfort. In his shop you shall see a joiner's bench, hammers, planes, saws, gimlets, varnish, paint, picture frames, fence posts, rare old china, one or two fine portraits of his ancestry, a bookcase full of books, the tooth of a whale, an old spinning-wheel and spindle, a lady's parasol frame, a church lamp to be mended, in short, Henry says Mr. Titcomb's shop is like the ocean; there is no end to the curiosities in it.

In all my moving and fussing Mr. Titcomb has been my right-hand man. Whenever a screw was loose, a nail to be driven, a lock mended, a pane of glass set, and these cases were manifold, he was always on hand. But my sink was no fancy job, and I believe nothing but a very particular friendship would have moved him to undertake it. So this same sink lingered in a precarious state for some weeks, and when I had nothing else to do, I used to call and do what I could in the way of enlisting the good man's sympathies in its behalf.

How many times I have been in and seated myself in one of the old rocking-chairs, and talked first of the news of the day, the railroad, the last proceedings in Congress, the probabilities about the millennium, and thus brought the conversation by little and little round to my sink! . . . because, till the sink was done, the pump could not be put up, and we couldn't have any rain-water. Sometimes my courage would quite fail me to introduce the subject, and I would talk of everything else, turn and get out of the shop, and then turn back as if a thought had just struck my mind, and say:--

"Oh, Mr. Titcomb! about that sink?"

"Yes, ma'am, I was thinking about going down street this afternoon to look out stuff for it."

"Yes, sir, if you would be good enough to get it done as soon as

possible; we are in great need of it."

"I think there's no hurry. I believe we are going to have a dry time now, so that you could not catch any water, and you won't need a pump at present."

These negotiations extended from the first of June to the first of July, and at last my sink was completed, and so also was a new house spout, concerning which I had had divers communings with Deacon Dunning of the Baptist church. Also during this time good Mrs. Mitchell and myself made two sofas, or lounges, a barrel chair, divers bedspreads, pillow cases, pillows, bolsters, mattresses; we painted rooms; we revarnished furniture; we--what didn't we do?

Then came on Mr. Stowe; and then came the eighth of July and my little Charley. I was really glad for an excuse to lie in bed, for I was full tired, I can assure you. Well, I was what folks call very comfortable for two weeks, when my nurse had to leave me. . . .

During this time I have employed my leisure hours in making up my engagements with newspaper editors. I have written more than anybody, or I myself, would have thought. I have taught an hour a day in our school, and I have read two hours every evening to the children. The children study English history in school, and I am reading Scott's historic novels in their order. To-night I finish the "Abbot;" shall begin "Kenilworth" next week; yet I am constantly pursued and haunted

by the idea that I don't do anything. Since I began this note I have been called off at least a dozen times; once for the fish-man, to buy a codfish; once to see a man who had brought me some barrels of apples; once to see a book-man; then to Mrs. Upham, to see about a drawing I promised to make for her; then to nurse the baby; then into the kitchen to make a chowder for dinner; and now I am at it again, for nothing but deadly determination enables me ever to write; it is rowing against wind and tide.

I suppose you think now I have begun, I am never going to stop, and in truth it looks like it; but the spirit moves now and I must obey.

Christmas is coming, and our little household is all alive with preparations; every one collecting their little gifts with wonderful mystery and secrecy. . . .

To tell the truth, dear, I am getting tired; my neck and back ache, and I must come to a close.

Your ready kindness to me in the spring I felt very much; and why I did not have the sense to have sent you one line just by way of acknowledgment, I'm sure I don't know; I felt just as if I had, till I awoke, and behold! I had not. But, my dear, if my wits are somewhat wool-gathering and unsettled, my heart is as true as a star. I love you, and have thought of you often.

This fall I have felt often sad, lonesome, both very unusual feelings with me in these busy days; but the breaking away from my old home, and leaving father and mother, and coming to a strange place affected me naturally. In those sad hours my thoughts have often turned to George; I have thought with encouragement of his blessed state, and hoped that I should soon be there too. I have many warm and kind friends here, and have been treated with great attention and kindness. Brunswick is a delightful residence, and if you come East next summer you must come to my new home. George [Footnote: Her brother George's only child.] would delight to go a-fishing with the children, and see the ships, and sail in the sailboats, and all that.

Give Aunt Harriet's love to him, and tell him when he gets to be a painter to send me a picture. Affectionately yours, H. STOWE.

The year 1850 is one memorable in the history of our nation as well as in the quiet household that we have followed in its pilgrimage from Cincinnati to Brunswick.

The signers of the Declaration of Independence and the statesmen and soldiers of the Revolution were no friends of negro slavery. In fact, the very principles of the Declaration of Independence sounded the deathknell of slavery forever. No stronger utterances against this national sin are to be found anywhere than in the letters and published writings of Jefferson, Washington, Hamilton, and Patrick Henry. "Jefferson encountered difficulties greater than he could

overcome, and after vain wrestlings the words that broke from him, 'I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just and that his justice cannot sleep forever,' were the words of despair."

"It was the desire of Washington's heart that Virginia should remove slavery by a public act; and as the prospects of a general emancipation grew more and more dim . . . he did all that he could by bequeathing freedom to his own slaves." [Footnote: Bancroft's funeral oration on Lincoln.]

Hamilton was one of the founders of the Manumission Society, the object of which was the abolition of slaves in the State of New York. Patrick Henry, speaking of slavery, said: "A serious view of this subject gives a gloomy prospect to future times." Slavery was thought by the founders of our Republic to be a dying institution, and all the provisions of the Constitution touching slavery looked towards gradual emancipation as an inevitable result of the growth of the democracy.

From an economic standpoint slave labor had ceased to be profitable. "The whole interior of the Southern States was languishing, and its inhabitants emigrating, for want of some object to engage their attention and employ their industry." The cultivation of cotton was not profitable for the reason that there was no machine for separating the seed from the fibre.

This was the state of affairs in 1793, when Eli Whitney, a New England

mechanic, at this time residing in Savannah, Georgia, invented his cotton-gin, or a machine to separate seed and fibre. "The invention of this machine at once set the whole country in active motion." [Footnote: Greeley's American Conflict, vol. i. p. 65.] The effect of this invention may to some extent be appreciated when we consider that whereas in 1793 the Southern States produced only about five or ten thousand bales, in 1859 they produced over five millions. But with this increase of the cotton culture the value of slave property was augmented. Slavery grew and spread. In 1818 to 1821 it first became a factor in politics during the Missouri compromise. By this compromise slavery was not to extend north of latitude 36° 30'. From the time of this compromise till the year 1833 the slavery agitation slumbered. This was the year that the British set the slaves free in their West Indian dependencies. This act caused great uneasiness among the slaveholders of the South. The National Anti-Slavery Society met in Philadelphia and pronounced slavery a national sin, which could be atoned for only by immediate emancipation. Such men as Garrison and Lundy began a work of agitation that was soon to set the whole nation in a ferment. From this time on slavery became the central problem of American history, and the line of cleavage in American politics. The invasion of Florida when it was yet the territory of a nation at peace with the United States, and its subsequent purchase from Spain, the annexation of Texas and the war with Mexico, were the direct results of the policy of the pro-slavery party to increase its influence and its territory. In 1849 the State of California knocked at the door of the Union for admission as a free State. This was bitterly opposed by

the slaveholders of the South, who saw in it a menace to the slave-power from the fact that no slave State was seeking admission at the same time. Both North and South the feeling ran so high as to threaten the dismemberment of the Union, and the scenes of violence and bloodshed which were to come eleven years afterwards. It was to preserve the Union and avert the danger of the hour that Henry Clay brought forward his celebrated compromise measures in the winter of 1850. To conciliate the North, California was to be admitted as a free State. To pacify the slaveholders of the South, more stringent laws were to be enacted "concerning persons bound to service in one State and escaping into another."

The 7th of March, 1850, Daniel Webster made his celebrated speech, in which he defended this compromise, and the abolitionists of the North were filled with indignation, which found its most fitting expression in Whittier's "Ichabod:"

"So fallen, so lost, the glory from his gray hairs gone."

. . .

"When honor dies the man is dead."

It was in the midst of this excitement that Mrs. Stowe, with her children and her modest hopes for the future, arrived at the house of her brother, Dr. Edward Beecher.

Dr. Beecher had been the intimate friend and supporter of Lovejoy, who

had been murdered by the slaveholders at Alton for publishing an anti-slavery paper. His soul was stirred to its very depths by the iniquitous law which was at this time being debated in Congress,--a law which not only gave the slaveholder of the South the right to seek out and bring back into slavery any colored person whom he claimed as a slave, but commanded the people of the free States to assist in this revolting business. The most frequent theme of conversation while Mrs. Stowe was in Boston was this proposed law, and when she arrived in Brunswick her soul was all on fire with indignation at this new indignity and wrong about to be inflicted by the slave-power on the innocent and defenseless.

After the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act, letter after letter was received by Mrs. Stowe in Brunswick from Mrs. Edward Beecher and other friends, describing the heart-rending scenes which were the inevitable results of the enforcement of this terrible law. Cities were more available for the capturing of escaped slaves than the country, and Boston, which claimed to have the cradle of liberty, opened her doors to the slavehunters. The sorrow and anguish caused thereby no pen could describe. Families were broken up. Some hid in garrets and cellars. Some fled to the wharves and embarked in ships and sailed for Europe. Others went to Canada. One poor fellow who was doing good business as a crockery merchant, and supporting his family well, when he got notice that his master, whom he had left many years before, was after him, set out for Canada in midwinter on foot, as he did not dare to take a public conveyance. He froze both of his feet on the journey,

and they had to be amputated. Mrs. Edward Beecher, in a letter to Mrs. Stowe's son, writing of this period, says:---

"I had been nourishing an anti-slavery spirit since Lovejoy was murdered for publishing in his paper articles against slavery and intemperance, when our home was in Illinois. These terrible things which were going on in Boston were well calculated to rouse up this spirit. What can I do? I thought. Not much myself, but I know one who can. So I wrote several letters to your mother, telling her of various heart-rending events caused by the enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law. I remember distinctly saying in one of them, 'Now, Hattie, if I could use a pen as you can, I would write something that would make this whole nation feel what an accursed thing slavery is.' . . . When we lived in Boston your mother often visited us. . . . Several numbers of 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' were written in your Uncle Edward's study at these times, and read to us from the manuscripts."

A member of Mrs. Stowe's family well remembers the scene in the little parlor in Brunswick when the letter alluded to was received. Mrs. Stowe herself read it aloud to the assembled family, and when she came to the passage, "I would write something that would make this whole nation feel what an accursed thing slavery is," Mrs. Stowe rose up from her chair, crushing the letter in her hand, and with an expression on her face that stamped itself on the mind of her child, said: "I will write something. I will if I live."

This was the origin of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and Professor Cairnes has well said in his admirable work, "The Slave Power," "The Fugitive Slave Law has been to the slave power a questionable gain. Among its first-fruits was 'Uncle Tom's Cabin.'"

The purpose of writing a story that should make the whole nation feel that slavery was an accursed thing was not immediately carried out. In December, 1850, Mrs. Stowe writes: "Tell sister Katy I thank her for her letter and will answer it. As long as the baby sleeps with me nights I can't do much at anything, but I will do it at last. I will write that thing if I live.

"What are folks in general saying about the slave law, and the stand taken by Boston ministers universally, except Edward?

"To me it is incredible, amazing, mournful!! I feel as if I should be willing to sink with it, were all this sin and misery to sink in the sea. . . . I wish father would come on to Boston, and preach on the Fugitive Slave Law, as he once preached on the slave-trade, when I was a little girl in Litchfield. I sobbed aloud in one pew and Mrs. Judge Reeves in another. I wish some Martin Luther would arise to set this community right."

December 22, 1850, she writes to her husband in Cincinnati: "Christmas has passed, not without many thoughts of our absent one. If you want a description of the scenes in our family preceding it, vide a

'New Year's Story,' which I have sent to the 'New York Evangelist.' I am sorry that in the hurry of getting off this piece and one for the 'Era' you were neglected." The piece for the "Era" was a humorous article called "A Scholar's Adventures in the Country," being, in fact, a picture drawn from life and embodying Professor Stowe's efforts in the department of agriculture while in Cincinnati.

December 29,1850. "We have had terrible weather here. I remember such a storm when I was a child in Litchfield. Father and mother went to Warren, and were almost lost in the snowdrifts.

"Sunday night I rather watched than slept. The wind howled, and the house rocked just as our old Litchfield house used to. The cold has been so intense that the children have kept begging to get up from table at meal-times to warm feet and fingers. Our air-tight stoves warm all but the floor,---heat your head and keep your feet freezing. If I sit by the open fire in the parlor my back freezes, if I sit in my bedroom and try to write my head aches and my feet are cold. I am projecting a sketch for the 'Era' on the capabilities of liberated blacks to take care of themselves. Can't you find out for me how much Willie Watson has paid for the redemption of his friends, and get any items in figures of that kind that you can pick up in Cincinnati? . . . When I have a headache and feel sick, as I do to-day, there is actually not a place in the house where I can lie down and take a nap without being disturbed. Overhead is the school-room, next door is the dining-room, and the girls practice there two hours a day. If I lock

my door and lie down some one is sure to be rattling the latch before fifteen minutes have passed. . . . There is no doubt in my mind that our expenses this year will come two hundred dollars, if not three, beyond our salary. We shall be able to come through, notwithstanding; but I don't want to feel obliged to work as hard every year as I have this. I can earn four hundred dollars a year by writing, but I don't want to feel that I must, and when weary with teaching the children, and tending the baby, and buying provisions, and mending dresses, and darning stockings, sit down and write a piece for some paper."

January 12, 1851, Mrs. Stowe again writes to Professor Stowe at Cincinnati: "Ever since we left Cincinnati to come here the good hand of God has been visibly guiding our way. Through what difficulties have we been brought! Though we knew not where means were to come from, yet means have been furnished every step of the way, and in every time of need. I was just in some discouragement with regard to my writing; thinking that the editor of the 'Era' was overstocked with contributors, and would not want my services another year, and lo! he sends me one hundred dollars, and ever so many good words with it. Our income this year will be seventeen hundred dollars in all, and I hope to bring our expenses within thirteen hundred."

It was in the month of February after these words were written that Mrs. Stowe was seated at communion service in the college church at Brunswick. Suddenly, like the unrolling of a picture, the scene of the death of Uncle Tom passed before her mind. So strongly was she

affected that it was with difficulty she could keep from weeping aloud. Immediately on returning home she took pen and paper and wrote out the vision which had been as it were blown into her mind as by the rushing of a mighty wind. Gathering her family about her she read what she had written. Her two little ones of ten and twelve years of age broke into convulsions of weeping, one of them saying through is sobs, "Oh, mamma! slavery is the most cruel thing in the world." Thus Uncle Tom was ushered into the world, and it was, as we said at the beginning, a cry, an immediate, an involuntary expression of deep, impassioned feeling.

Twenty-five years afterwards Mrs. Stowe wrote in a letter to one of her children, of this period of her life: "I well remember the winter you were a baby and I was writing 'Uncle Tom's Cabin.' My heart was bursting with the anguish excited by the cruelty and injustice our nation was showing to the slave, and praying God to let me do a little and to cause my cry for them to be heard. I remember many a night weeping over you as you lay sleeping beside me, and I thought of the slave mothers whose babes were torn from them."

It was not till the following April that the first chapter of the story was finished and sent on to the "National Era" at Washington.

In July Mrs. Stowe wrote to Frederick Douglass the following letter, which is given entire as the best possible introduction to the history of the career of that memorable work, "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

BRUNSWICK, July 9, 1851. FREDERICK DOUGLASS, ESQ.:

Sir,---You may perhaps have noticed in your editorial readings a series of articles that I am furnishing for the "Era" under the title of "Uncle Tom's Cabin, or Life among the Lowly.".

In the course of my story the scene will fall upon a cotton plantation. I am very desirous, therefore, to gain information from one who has been an actual laborer on one, and it occurred to me that in the circle of your acquaintance there might be one who would be able to communicate to me some such information as I desire. I have before me an able paper written by a Southern planter, in which the details and modus operandi are given from his point of sight. I am anxious to have something more from another standpoint. I wish to be able to make a picture that shall be graphic and true to nature in its details. Such a person as Henry Bibb, if in the country, might give me just the kind of information I desire. You may possibly know of some other person. I will subjoin to this letter a list of questions, which in that case you will do me a favor by inclosing to the individual, with the request that he will at earliest convenience answer them.

For some few weeks past I have received your paper through the mail, and have read it with great interest, and desire to return my acknowledgments for it. It will be a pleasure to me at some time when

less occupied to contribute something to its columns. I have noticed with regret your sentiments on two subjects--the church and African colonization, . . . with the more regret because I think you have a considerable share of reason for your feelings on both these subjects; but I would willingly, if I could, modify your views on both points.

In the first place you say the church is "pro-slavery." There is a sense in which this may be true. The American church of all denominations, taken as a body, comprises the best and most conscientious people in the country. I do not say it comprises none but these, or that none such are found out of it, but only if a census were taken of the purest and most high principled men and women of the country, the majority of them would be found to be professors of religion in some of the various Christian denominations. This fact has given to the church great weight in this country--the general and predominant spirit of intelligence and probity and piety of its majority has given it that degree of weight that it has the power to decide the great moral questions of the day. Whatever it unitedly and decidedly sets itself against as moral evil it can put down. In this sense the church is responsible for the sin of slavery. Dr. Barnes has beautifully and briefly expressed this on the last page of his work on slavery, when he says: "Not all the force out of the church could sustain slavery an hour if it were not sustained in it." It then appears that the church has the power to put an end to this evil and does not do it. In this sense she may be said to be pro-slavery. But the church has the same power over intemperance, and Sabbath-breaking,

and sin of all kinds. There is not a doubt that if the moral power of the church were brought up to the New Testament standpoint it is sufficient to put an end to all these as well as to slavery. But I would ask you, Would you consider it a fair representation of the Christian church in this country to say that it is pro-intemperance, pro-Sabbath-breaking, and pro everything that it might put down if it were in a higher state of moral feeling? If you should make a list of all the abolitionists of the country, I think that you would find a majority of them in the church--certainly some of the most influential and efficient ones are ministers.

I am a minister's daughter, and a minister's wife, and I have had six brothers in the ministry (one is in heaven); I certainly ought to know something of the feelings of ministers on this subject. I was a child in 1820 when the Missouri question was agitated, and one of the strongest and deepest impressions on my mind was that made by my father's sermons and prayers, and the anguish of his soul for the poor slave at that time. I remember his preaching drawing tears down the hardest faces of the old farmers in his congregation.

I well remember his prayers morning and evening in the family for "poor, oppressed, bleeding Africa," that the time of her deliverance might come; prayers offered with strong crying and tears, and which indelibly impressed my heart and made me what I am from my very soul, the enemy of all slavery. Every brother I have has been in his sphere a leading anti-slavery man. One of them was to the last the bosom

friend and counselor of Lovejoy. As for myself and husband, we have for the last seventeen years lived on the border of a slave State, and we have never shrunk from the fugitives, and we have helped them with all we had to give. I have received the children of liberated slaves into a family school, and taught them with my own children, and it has been the influence that we found in the church and by the altar that has made us do all this. Gather up all the sermons that have been published on this offensive and unchristian Fugitive Slave Law, and you will find that those against it are numerically more than those in its favor, and yet some of the strongest opponents have not published their sermons. Out of thirteen ministers who meet with my husband weekly for discussion of moral subjects, only three are found who will acknowledge or obey this law in any shape.

After all, my brother, the strength and hope of your oppressed race does lie in the church--in hearts united to Him of whom it is said, "He shall spare the souls of the needy, and precious shall their blood be in his sight." Everything is against you, but Jesus Christ is for you, and He has not forgotten his church, misguided and erring though it be. I have looked all the field over with despairing eyes; I see no hope but in Him. This movement must and will become a purely religious one. The light will spread in churches, the tone of feeling will rise, Christians North and South will give up all connection with, and take up their testimony against, slavery, and thus the work will be done.

This letter gives us a conception of the state of moral and religious

exaltation of the heart and mind out of which flowed chapter after chapter of that wonderful story. It all goes to prove the correctness of the position from which we started, that "Uncle Tom's Cabin" came from the heart rather than the head. It was an outburst of deep feeling, a cry in the darkness. The writer no more thought of style or literary excellence than the mother who rushes into the street and cries for help to save her children from a burning house thinks of the teachings of the rhetorician or the elocutionist.

A few years afterwards Mrs. Stowe, writing of this story, said, "This story is to show how Jesus Christ, who liveth and was dead, and now is alive and forever-more, has still a mother's love for the poor and lowly, and that no man can sink so low but that Jesus Christ will stoop to take his hand. Who so low, who so poor, who so despised as the American slave? The law almost denies his existence as a person, and regards him for the most part as less than a man--a mere thing, the property of another. The law forbids him to read or write, to hold property, to make a contract, or even to form a legal marriage. It takes from him all legal right to the wife of his bosom, the children of his body. He can do nothing, possess nothing, acquire nothing, but what must belong to his master. Yet even to this slave Jesus Christ stoops, from where he sits at the right hand of the Father, and says, 'Fear not, thou whom man despiseth, for I am thy brother. Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine.'"

"Uncle Tom's Cabin" is a work of religion; the fundamental principles of the gospel applied to the burning question of negro slavery. It sets forth those principles of the Declaration of Independence that made Jefferson, Hamilton, Washington, and Patrick Henry anti-slavery men; not in the language of the philosopher, but in a series of pictures. Mrs. Stowe spoke to the understanding and moral sense through the imagination.

"Uncle Tom's Cabin" made the enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law an impossibility. It aroused the public sentiment of the world by arousing in the concrete that which had been a mere series of abstract propositions. It was, as we have already said, an appeal to the imagination through a series of pictures. People are like children, and understand pictures better than words. Some one rushes into your dining-room while you are at breakfast and cries out, "Terrible railroad accident, forty killed and wounded, six were burned alive."

"Oh, shocking! dreadful!" you exclaim, and yet go quietly on with your rolls and coffee. But suppose you stood at that instant by the wreck, and saw the mangled dead, and heard the piercing shrieks of the wounded, you would be faint and dizzy with the intolerable spectacle.

So "Uncle Tom's Cabin" made the crack of the slavedriver's whip, and the cries of the tortured blacks ring in every household in the land, till human hearts could endure it no longer.