

UNCLE TOM'S CABIN

(Told to the Children)

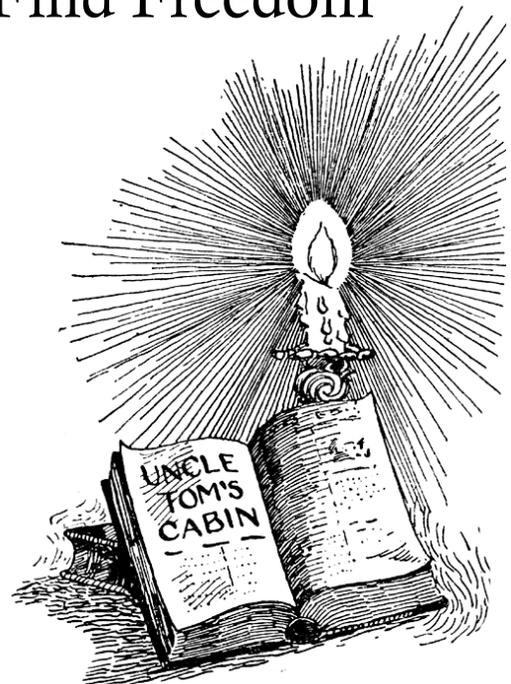
By

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Chapter 19

George and Eliza Find Freedom



Tom Loker lay tossing and tumbling in his clean, comfortable bed at the Quaker farmhouse. A pretty, old Quaker lady, with white hair and a kind face, was nursing him. Tom Loker did not like being ill and having to lie in bed. He threw the clothes about, grumbling and using naughty words all the time.

'I must ask thee, Thomas Loker, not to use such language,' said the nice lady, as she smoothed his sheets, and made his bed comfortable again for him.

'Well, I won't, granny, if I can help it,' he replied; 'but it is enough to make a fellow swear, it is so awfully hot.' He gave another great lunge, and made the sheets and blankets all untidy again.

'I suppose that fellow George and the girl Eliza are here,' he said, in a sulky voice, after a few minutes' silence.

'Yes, they are,' said the old lady.

'They had better get away across the lake,' said Tom Loker, 'the quicker the better.'

'Very likely they will do so, said the old lady, calmly going on with her knitting.

'But, listen,' said Tom Loker, getting excited, 'there are people who are watching the boats for us. I don't care if I tell now. I hope they will get away, just to spite the others for going and leaving me as they did—the mean puppies, the — —'

'Thomas Loker!' said the old lady.

'I tell you, granny, if you bottle a fellow up too tight he'll split,' said Tom Loker. 'But about Eliza—tell them to dress her up some way so as to alter her. We have sent a description of what she looks like to the town

where the boats start from. She will be caught yet if she doesn't dress up differently.'

'I thank thee, Thomas Loker,' replied the old lady with her usual calmness. 'We will attend to that. Thank thee.' Then she went to tell George and Eliza what Tom Loker had said.

They were indeed very grateful to him, and very glad that they had not left him, as his own friends had done, to die by the roadside.

So next day Eliza cut off all her beautiful black hair, and dressed herself like a boy.

'Don't I make a pretty young fellow?' she said to George, laughing and blushing at the same time.

'You always will be pretty,' said George gravely, 'do what you will.'

'What makes you so sober?' asked Eliza, kneeling on one knee, and laying her hand on his. 'We are within twenty-four hours of Canada, they say. Only a day and a night on the lake, and then—oh, then!'

'O Eliza,' said George, holding her fast, 'that is just it. To be so near liberty, to be almost in sight of it—and then if we lost it. O Eliza, I should die.'

'Don't fear,' said Eliza hopefully. 'The good Lord would not have brought us so far if He didn't mean to save us. I seem to feel him with us, George.'

So George kissed his wife and took heart again. Then the kind old lady brought Harry in dressed as a little girl. And a very pretty girl he made too. They called him 'Harriet,' as it was so like Harry it was easy to remember.

Harry did not know his mamma, dressed as she was, and clung to the kind lady, feeling rather afraid of the strange young man. That was just as well, as he was too young to understand what this dressing-up and pretending meant, and he might have spoiled it all by calling the nice-looking young man 'Mamma.' So the kind lady was going with them, pretending to be the little girl's aunt.

When everything was ready they got into a cab, and drove to the wharf. The two young men, as they seemed to be, got out, Eliza helping the kind lady and little girl, while George saw to the luggage.

As he was standing at the office, taking the tickets, George overheard two men talking by his side.

'I've watched every one that came on board,' said one, and I know they are not on this boat.'

'You would scarcely know the woman from a white one,' said the other. 'The man is very fair too. He has an **H** burned into the palm of his hand.'

The hand with which George was taking the tickets and change trembled a little, but he turned calmly round, looked straight at the speaker, and then walked slowly away to where Eliza was waiting for him.

It was a terribly anxious time, but at last the bell rang, the boat began to move, and George and Eliza drew long sighs of relief as they saw the shore getting farther and farther away.

It was a lovely day. The blue waves of Lake Erie danced, rippling and sparkling, in the sunlight. Hour after hour the boat steamed on.

Night came; and in the morning, clear and beautiful before them, rose the shores of Canada.

George and his wife stood arm in arm as the boat came near the little town, where they were going to land. His breath came thick and short; a mist gathered before his eyes; he silently pressed the little hand that lay trembling on his arm.

The bell rang—the boat stopped.

Scarcely seeing what he did, George looked out his luggage, and gathered his little party.

They were landed on the shore, and stood still till the boat had started again.

Then with tears of joy, the husband and wife, with their wondering little boy in their arms, knelt down and lifted up their hearts to God. They were free.