

UNCLE TOM'S CABIN

(Told to the Children)

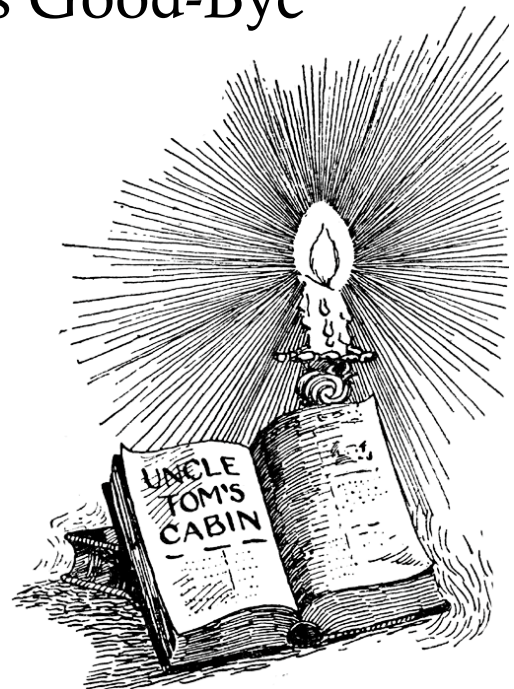
By

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Chapter 6

Uncle Tom Says Good-Bye



The day after the hunt for Eliza was a very sad one in Uncle Tom's cabin. It was the day on which Haley was going to take Uncle Tom away.

Aunt Chloe had been up very early. She had washed and ironed all Tom's clothes, and packed his trunk neatly. Now she was cooking the breakfast,—the last breakfast she would ever cook for her dear husband. Her eyes were quite red and swollen with crying, and the tears kept running down her cheeks all the time.

'It's the last time,' said Tom sadly.

Aunt Chloe could not answer. She sat down, buried her face in her hands, and sobbed aloud.

'S'pose we must be resigned. But, O Lord, how can I? If I knew anything where you was goin', or how they'd treat you! Missis says she'll try and buy you back again in a year or two. But, Lor', nobody never comes back that goes down there.'

'There'll be the same God there, Chloe, that there is here.'

'Well,' said Aunt Chloe, 's'pose dere will. But the Lord lets drefful things happen sometimes. I don't seem to get no comfort dat way.'

'Let's think on our mercies,' said Tom, in a shaking voice.

'Mercies!' said Aunt Chloe, 'don't see any mercies in 't. It isn't right! it isn't right it should be so! Mas'r never ought to have left it so that ye could be took for his debts. Mebbe he can't help himself now, but I feel it's wrong. Nothing can beat that out of me. Such a faithful crittur as ye've been, reckonin' on him more than your own wife and chil'en.'

'Chloe! now, if ye love me, you won't talk so, when it is perhaps jest the last time we'll ever have together,' said Tom.

'Wall, anyway, there's wrong about it somewhere,' said Aunt Chloe, 'I can't jest make out where 'tis. But there is wrong somewhere, I'm sure of that.'

Neither Tom nor Chloe could eat any breakfast; their hearts were too full of sorrow. But the little children, who hardly understood what was happening, enjoyed theirs. It was not often that they had such a fine one as Chloe had cooked for Tom's last morning at home.

Breakfast was just finished, when Mrs. Shelby came. Chloe was not very pleased to see her. She was angry, and blamed her for letting Tom be sold.

But Mrs. Shelby did not seem to see Aunt Chloe's angry looks. 'Tom,' she said, turning to him, 'I come to—' she could say no more, she was crying so bitterly.

Then all Aunt Chloe's anger faded away.

'Lor', now missis, don't—don't,' she said. She too burst out crying again, and for a few minutes they all sobbed together.

'Tom,' said Mrs. Shelby at last, 'I can't do anything for you now. But I promise you, most solemnly, to save as much money as I can. As soon as I have enough, I will buy you back again.'

Just then Haley arrived. Tom said a last sad good-bye to his wife and children, and got into the cart, which Haley had brought with him.

As soon as Tom was seated in the cart, Haley took a heavy chain, and fastened it round his ankles. Poor Tom had done nothing wrong, yet he was treated worse than a thief, just because he was a slave.

'You don't need to do that,' said Mrs. Shelby, 'Tom won't run away.'

'Don't know so much about that, ma'am; I've lost one already. I can't afford to run any more risks,' replied Haley.

'Please give my love to Mas'r George,' said Tom, looking round sadly. 'Tell him how sorry I am he is not at home to say good-bye.'

Master George was Mr. and Mrs. Shelby's son. He was very fond of Tom, and was teaching him to write. He often used to come and have tea in Uncle Tom's little cottage. Aunt Chloe used to make her very nicest cakes when Mas'r George came to tea. But he was not at home now, and did not know that Tom had been sold.

Haley whipped up the horse, and, with a last sad look at the old place, Tom was whirled away.