

UNCLE TOM'S CABIN

(Told to the Children)

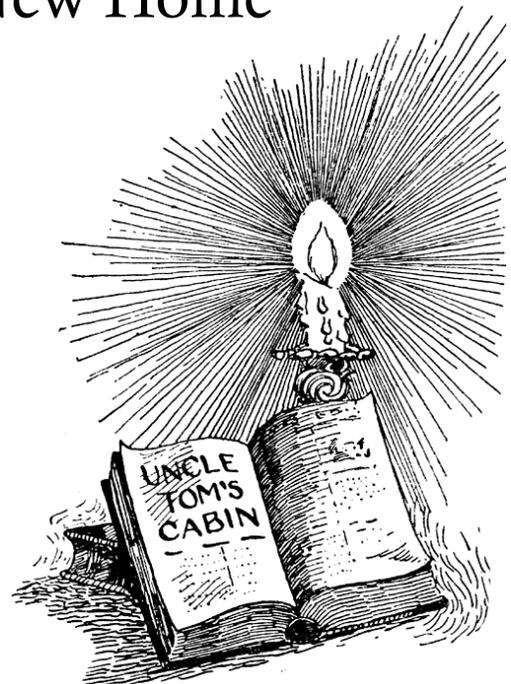
By

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Chapter 10

Uncle Tom's New Home



Uncle Tom soon settled down in his new home. He was as happy as he could be, so far away from his wife and dear little children. He had a kind master.

Mrs. St. Clare, however, was not nearly so nice as her husband. She was cruel, and would often have beaten her poor slaves, but St. Clare would not allow it.

She always pretended that she was very ill, and spent most of her time lying on a sofa, or driving about in her comfortable carriage.

The poor slave woman who waited on Mrs. St. Clare had a very hard time. She was kept running about all day, and sometimes all night too. Then, if she dared to look sleepy the next day, her mistress told her not to be sulky and lazy. Mrs. St. Clare did not seem to understand that a slave could be tired sometimes, just like other people.

Mrs. St. Clare said she really was too ill to look after the house, so everything was left to the slaves. Soon things began to be very uncomfortable, and even good-natured Mr. St. Clare could stand it no longer.

He went to his cousin, Miss Ophelia St. Clare, and begged her to come and keep house for him and to look after Eva. It was on the journey back with her that the accident to Eva happened, which ended in his buying Tom.

Miss Ophelia was a very prim and precise person, not at all like the St. Clares. In her home people did not have slaves. Though her cousin had a great many, and was kind to them, she could not help seeing that it was a very wicked thing to buy and sell men and women as if they were cattle. She was very, very sorry for the poor slaves, and would have liked to free them all. Yet she did not love them. She could not bear even to have them near her, nor to touch them, just because they were black.

It made her quite ill to see Eva kissing and hugging the black slave women when she came home.

'Well, I couldn't do that,' she said.

'Why not?' said Mr. St. Clare, who was looking on.

'Well, I want to be kind to every one. I wouldn't have anybody hurt. But, as to kis—sing niggers—' she gave a little shudder. 'How can she?'

Presently a gay laugh sounded from the court. Mr. St. Clare stepped out to see what was happening.

'What is it?' said Miss Ophelia, following him.

There sat Tom on a little mossy seat in the court. Every one of his buttonholes was stuck full of flowers. Eva, laughing gaily, was hanging a wreath of roses round his neck. Then, still laughing, she perched on his knee like a little sparrow.

'Oh, Tom, you look so funny!'

Tom had a sober smile on his face. He seemed in his own quiet way to be enjoying the fun quite as much as his little mistress. When he lifted his eyes and saw his master he looked as if he were afraid he might be scolded. But Mr. St. Clare only smiled.

'How can you let her do that?' said Miss Ophelia.

'Why not?' said Mr. St. Clare.

'Why? I don't know. It seems dreadful to me.'

'You would think it was quite right and natural if you saw Eva playing with a large dog, even if he was black. But a fellow—creature that can think, and reason, and feel, and is immortal, you shudder at. I know how

you north-country people feel about it. You loathe the blacks as you would a toad or a snake. Yet you pity them, and are angry because they are often ill-treated.'

'Well, cousin,' said Miss Ophelia thoughtfully, 'I dare say you are right. I suppose I must try to get over my feeling.'