FAMOUS AMERICANS
FOR YOUNG READERS

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HARRIET BEECHER STOWE

RUTH BROWN MacARTHUR

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HARRIET BEECHER STOWE

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FOR YOUNG READERS

THE · STORY · OF
HARRIET BEECHER STOWE

BY

RUTH BROWN MacARTHUR

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PREFACE

A hundred years ago, a large family of boys and girls came to gladden a Connecticut home. Two out of the dozen were to come to world-wide fame—Henry Ward Beecher, one of the greatest of pulpit orators, and his sister Harriet, author of an epoch-making book. Harriet's early life was in no sense remarkable; she was happy and care-free, and although she married a man who had no worldly goods, she did her share as a provider. The author of several books and many short stories, her chief fame to-day rests as author of "Uncle Tom's Cabin." When issued in book form, more than half a million copies were sold within five years—a tremendous sale for those days. Everybody read the book and either praised or condemned it, according to whether they lived North or South. Its terrific arraignment of slavery did no little to hasten the Civil War. "So you are the little lady who started the War!" remarked Lincoln to Mrs. Stowe, when he first met her.

This story of her life is unexpectedly rich in dramatic incident. But she never posed as a "lion." Mrs. Stowe was a very human and very friendly sort of person, whom to know even at second-hand is to admire.

PREFACE

The material used in this manuscript was gathered chiefly from "Life and Letters of Harriet Beecher Stowe," by Annie Fields; "Harriet Beecher Stowe," by Chas. E. Stowe and Lyman Beecher Stowe; and "Harriet Beecher Stowe, a Biography for Girls," by Martha Foote Crow; together with miscellaneous sources; to all of which the author desires to express appreciation.

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THE STORY OF HARRIET BEECHER STOWE

I

AS A CHILD

"Children, who do you suppose came to live with us last night?" The proud father's face shone happily as he asked this question of a band of bright-eyed girls and boys gathered around the breakfast table that bright June morning.

"Who?" they instantly demanded with youthful eagerness, pausing with forks or spoons uplifted as they waited for his answer.

"A baby girl!"

"Hurrah! What is her name?" they chorused, and immediately everyone had some suggestion to offer for the naming of the wee one just come to join their number and be one of them.

In some such manner was the birth of Harriet Elizabeth Beecher announced to her brothers and sisters, for she was sixth child in this lively household where children were always welcomed with warm hearts and childish devotion. "The more the merrier," seemed to be their motto. At least, the family circle continued to grow until there were thirteen children, eleven of whom grew to manhood and womanhood.

The father, Dr. Lyman Beecher, was a Presbyterian minister, who, at the time Harriet was born, was living in the beautiful town of Litchfield, Connecticut. The parsonage was a huge, rambling affair, which had grown with the family. The original house was a square building with a great brick chimney in the middle of it; but as the family needs had increased, several bedrooms, a new kitchen, a sinkroom, a woodshed, a carriage house, and other outbuildings had been added one by one, until someone had suggested that it seemed as if the house had been constructed on the model of a telescope. Besides all these rooms in which the family lived, there were several cellars where the autumn harvests were stored for winter use, and four great garrets to add to the charm of the place; and as Harriet grew up she loved them all, from the damp, dark vegetable cellar with its earthy smell, to the attic where many barrels of old sermons were kept, and in which she revelled to her heart's content.

The Beecher family was an old one, rich in intellect and achievement, makers of history both in the Old World and in the New. Eighteen years after the first Pilgrims had landed from the *Mayflower* on the rugged shores of our beloved America, a company of rich and cultured men and women under the guidance of a London clergyman named Davenport, came to the same part of the country with the intention of founding a new colony. Among this band were John Beecher and his mother. His father had been promised land in this country if he would join the colony, but he died just before the venturesome band left old England. However, Mrs. Beecher had proved herself so useful to the company, that she was given a large tract of land near New Haven, where they set up their home, and here the first religious services of the new colony were held. This is an interesting fact when we remember that Lyman Beecher and six of his sons were ministers of the Gospel years later.

Lyman Beecher himself was an only child. His mother died of consumption two days after he was born, and so puny and frail was he at birth that the neighbors who cared for his mother decided he could not live, and actually wrapped him up and laid him aside as not worth dressing. Later, some curious soul investigated the little bundle and discovered that the babe still breathed, so he was taken care of and given a chance to live. As he says in his "Autobiography," "It was by a hair's breadth I got a foothold in this world." Although his father married again and had several children by his second wife, Lyman Beecher was brought up in his uncle's family, at Guilford, Connecticut, went to college, earning most of the necessary money himself, and married Roxana Foote while still very young. Eight children were born of this union, Catherine, William Henry, Edward, Mary Foote, George, Harriet Elizabeth, Henry Ward and Charles, of whom, as stated before, Harriet was the sixth. Harriet's birthday was June 14, 1811. After her came her famous brother, Henry Ward, her inseparable companion, and a brother Charles. When her mother died of that same dread disease, consumption, Harriet was but five years old, so her memories of her mother were not many, yet there was a subtle bond between the two which influenced all Harriet's life, and is revealed in nearly everything she wrote.

Mrs. Beecher was a calm, restful, sympathetic person, whose temper never seemed to get ruffled, no matter what emergency might arise, so the discipline of the large family of children was left to the father, whose punishments, though few, were so severe and unique that they were never forgotten by the culprits, and all it required to gain immediate and explicit obedience from any of the children was his command, "Mind your mother! Quick! No crying! Look pleasant!" Yet they remembered him as their playfellow, not as a disciplinarian. He believed thoroughly in playtime, and when long or hard tasks were well done, often rewarded the small workers with a fishing trip or a nut-gathering, according to the season of the year. Huge baskets were filled with a substantial lunch for the hearty appetites, and the pleasure seekers tramped happily away at daybreak for a holiday that often lasted till after dark. Harriet writes of the fishing excursions particularly, for she was not included in the merrymaking until she was quite a girl, and the days seemed so lonely and long-drawn-out with all the noisy brothers away that she scarcely knew what to do with herself till bedtime came.

When they went nutting, Dr. Beecher would choose the tallest trees himself to shake for the ripening nuts, and in one well-remembered spot he frequently climbed a tree that leaned far out over a deep gully in order to gather some specially fine nuts. But he would not permit any of the boys to take the same risk.

He possessed a stimulating personality that always brought forth the best efforts of his large brood in whatever tasks they undertook, and he tried to make these tasks so interesting that no one would want to shirk. When the tedious apple-cutting or wood-splitting events occurred, as they did each year, he marshaled his forces with contagious enthusiasm and they all set to work with a royal will. If the tasks were indoors, one of the company would read Scott's novels or some other interesting book, while the rest busied themselves with their hands, and the long evenings slipped by so rapidly that no one could believe bedtime was at hand when the old clock struck the hour. Of course when the great piles of oak and hickory logs were to be sawed and split, such a quiet program was impossible. But even then they strengthened their minds debating some topic suggested by the father, possibly, and often he would purposely take the wrong side of a question in order to create a lively argument. If the children did not make the most of the points in their favor, he would call attention to the arguments they had overlooked, and say, "Now, if you had argued in this way, you could have tripped me up." Thus he developed their reasoning powers to an unusual degree, making strong speakers of all his children, and in this manner fitting them to become the powerful preachers which six of them afterward became.

He was very fond of music, and when some lucky accident made it possible for him to bring home from New Haven a fine, upright piano, the joy of the household knew no bounds. The house must have fairly rung with music at times, for Catherine and Harriet learned to play the magical instrument, their father was a devotee of the violin all his life, and the two oldest boys could perform on the flute; so they had quite a respectable orchestra under their own roof.

Unfortunately, few memories of her mother lingered to comfort her when the dear figure was gone from the home nest. Two incidents, however, impressed themselves so vividly upon her mind that she could never forget them, and they are good examples of how this unusual woman governed her boisterous brood. One Sunday morning, Harriet, with some of her younger brothers, danced noisily out of the nursery to meet the mother as she was passing, and she rebuked them with the gentle admonition, " 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.' "

Another time while Mrs. Beecher was gone from the nursery for some minutes, Harriet unearthed a bag of tulip bulbs which their uncle John had sent his sister, knowing her love of flowers; and the child, mistaking them for onions, which she had never tasted, persuaded her brothers to help her eat them up.

When they were entirely devoured, the mother returned, and the children ran to tell her of their discovery and of the feast that had followed. Poor Mrs. Beecher must have been greatly disappointed over the loss of the bulbs, but instead of chiding them for their action, or even frowning her displeasure, she merely explained the nature of the bulbs they had eaten, and told them that now it would be impossible to have the red and yellow blossoms in the garden when spring came around. The children were much crestfallen and more punished than if they had been severely reprimanded.

The mother was a very talented person herself, being quite a musician, and an artist of considerable ability. She painted twenty-four miniatures of her friends on ivory before her marriage, and it is said that the likenesses were very good. She also had a positive genius for home-making, which was very fortunate indeed, being the wife of a minister, and the mother of so large a family. She was well-read, spoke French fluently, made bobbin lace and cobweb stitch such as is never seen any more, and her needlework was truly marvelous for its delicacy. When problems of any sort arose in her domestic duties, she promptly went to the encyclopædia for advice and studied until she had solved the difficulty. With the aid of a mason, she built for her own use a Russian stove, according to a description she had seen in an encyclopædia, which was so successful that it warmed six rooms on less fuel than it took for a single fire in the open fireplaces. She even made a carpet for her parlor floor when such things were unknown in her circle, because Dr. Beecher had brought home a bale of cotton from one of his lecture tours, and she could think of no other use to put it to.

So she carded, spun, wove and cut it to fit the best room, and stretching it on the garret floor, she brushed it with a thin paste to give it body. Then she painted a design of flowers and leaves on the surface, taking for her patterns the plants of her own garden. When finished it was the envy and admiration of all who saw it, and the church deacons, when they came to call, were afraid to step on it. Indeed, they chided Mrs. Beecher for trying to make the house so splendid that Heaven would lose its attractiveness! But perhaps they were excusable, for at that time the only decorations on parlor floors were made by sifting clean sand over them and marking them off in patterns.

With such a father and mother, it is scarcely to be wondered at that Harriet developed into the genius she afterward became. But she did not inherit all the talent in the family. There were gifted brothers and sisters, as well. Catherine, the oldest girl, was her father's favorite, and in her earlier years was regarded as the most promising of his daughters. She, like her mother, could do almost anything her mind set itself to, and she wrote many books on various subjects, as well as being one of the best-known women educators of her day. Six of the brothers grew up as foremost preachers of that period, and foremost of the six was Henry Ward, Harriet's favorite brother.

There were good times aplenty in the Beecher home while the children were growing up, although there were few toys or story books for their amusement. That was an age when children were seen and not heard, and the world seemed made just for grown-ups. To be sure, the lack of toys was not greatly felt, for all the little Beechers possessed vivid imaginations and could readily think up new games when the old ones palled. Catherine seems to have been particularly gifted along that line, and the younger sisters never lacked for rag dolls with real, painted faces, so long as she was at home to make and dress them for the others.

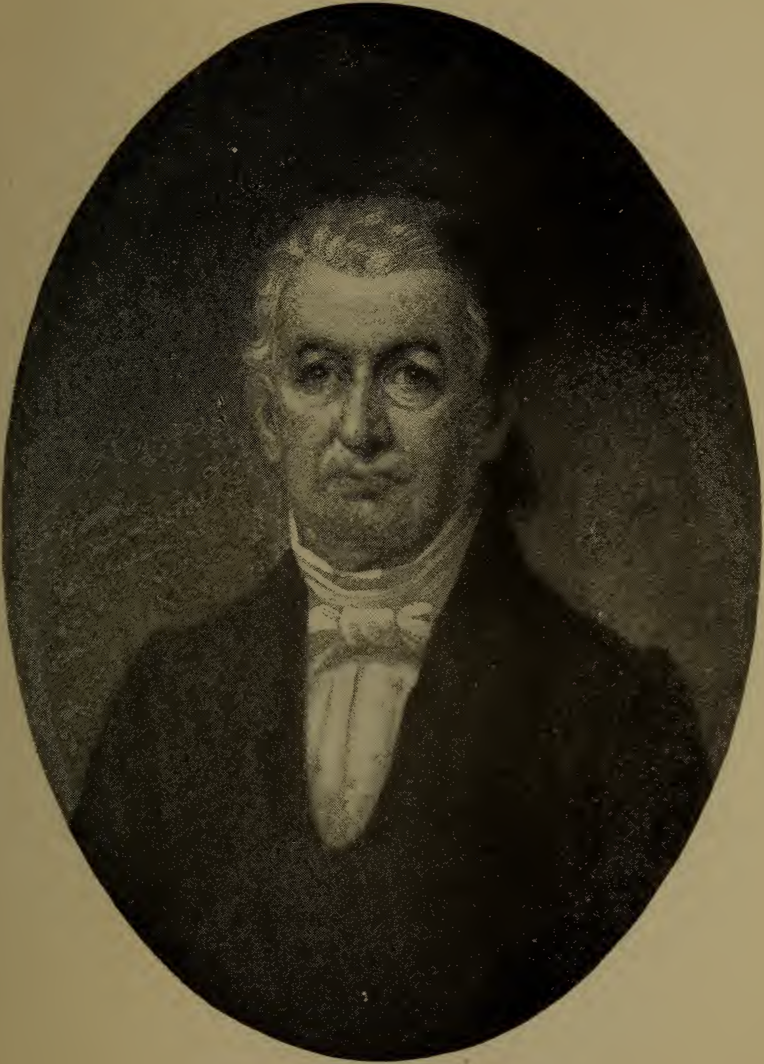
Indeed, most of their crude toys were the product of this oldest sister's brain and the work of her nimble fingers. Much to the amusement of her father, she once made a Queen of Sheba sitting in a pumpkin chariot which was drawn by four prancing steeds, made of crook-neck squashes, with ears and legs whittled out of wood. Harriet's delight in this contraption knew no bounds, and even the brothers were interested. Catherine celebrated most of the household mishaps in rhyme—nonsense, Dr. Beecher called it, yet it so amused him that he sometimes contributed to the cause himself. On one occasion, when one of the many parsonage cats had died, Harriet begged this big sister for an "epithet," meaning an epitaph for its tombstone, and Catherine wrote this touching ditty:

"Here died our kit
Who had a fit,
And acted queer.
Shot with a gun,
Her race is run,
And she lies here."

All the Beechers were out-of-door people, and when the weather permitted, the children almost lived in the open air, which accounts in a large measure for the robust constitutions they possessed in their youth. Dr. Beecher's salary was paid partly in money, partly in provisions and partly in firewood, and the huge wood-piles that always had a place in the back yard of the parsonage afforded Harriet and the rest an ever-fascinating playground.

In summer there were the gardens to add to her enjoyment also, and no doubt she helped plant the cucumber patch, which always grew where the winter's logs had been piled, so each spring the ground must be cleared of chips before the seed could be sowed. She was an eager little worker, and just a remark from her father that she should have been a boy so she could do as much work as her brothers would stimulate her to arduous efforts in clearing this particular spot. But naturally she liked the flower gardens better, and took great pleasure in watching and tending the little plot of ground where the hollyhocks and marigolds grew in rich profusion of color. The summer months with their warm days and gentle showers were very pleasant, but winter had its charms, too, for when the north winds blew and blizzards raged, the older boys made some rough sleds out of whatever materials were at hand, and many a cold morning Harriet and the younger brothers were hauled to school through the snow when it was too deep for their short legs to wade through.

Day began in the Beecher household at four o'clock in the morning. Harriet was usually awakened by a lighted candle set inside the door of her room. There were no fires to warm the sleeping chambers, and no matter how cold it was she must crawl out of bed and dress herself in the icy room, with fingers that often grew too numb to find the buttons; and then help the younger ones who could not dress themselves. Breakfast followed—not such a breakfast as we would expect to-day, for white bread was unknown then, and a heavy, hard



LYMAN BEECHER
Father of Harriet Beecher Stowe

loaf of rye and Indian meal furnished the staff of life for them. However, Harriet wrote in later years that this kind of bread tasted very good, served as it was, smoking hot, with sausage and pork and beans. Family prayers followed breakfast, and every member of the household took part. So impressive were these brief morning services that they were never forgotten by any of them.

Next came the packing of lunches and getting the children ready for school, quite a task when there were seven or eight to look after, for each child carried a small basket, filled with slices of brownbread and rosy apples, with which to appease the hearty appetites during the brief nooning. School kept until late in the afternoon, and by the time the evening chores were done it was supper time. The long evenings were given over to family discussions, preparing the next day's lessons, or household tasks that all could engage in. Then family prayers were held again, and good-nights were spoken.

There were fewer holidays then than now, and those few were celebrated in a different fashion. There were no Christmas trees with splendid gifts, such as we receive to-day, but the occasion was observed rather as a religious service, beginning the day with old-fashioned Christmas carols. Thanksgiving was a time of merrymaking and feasting enjoyed by everyone. It had not then become a national holiday celebrated annually, but was observed by different states at different times, according to different governors' proclamations. When Harriet was about nine years old, Dr. Beecher wrote to one of his sons in college, describing a Thanksgiving just past, in which he says, "We had a pleasant Thanksgiving dinner, and, they say, a good sermon. We had presents piled up yesterday at a great rate. Mr. Henry Wadsworth sent six pounds of butter, six pounds lard, two pounds Hyson tea, five dozen eggs, eight pounds sugar, a large pig, a large turkey, and four cheeses. The Governor sent a turkey, Mrs. Thompson, ditto; and to cap it all, Mr. Rogers sent us a turkey!"

The preparation for this event was almost as much fun as the event itself, and the whole family took part. For days before the feast, the kitchen was full of bustle and commotion, while the children stoned raisins, pounded spices in the big lignum-vitæ mortar, peeled apples, picked over cranberries, cracked nuts, and sorted fruit and vegetables for the older members of the family to mix up in all sorts of savory concoctions. When all the family were at home, there were thirteen, without counting the aunts, who from time to time lived with the Beechers, or the other relatives who usually helped celebrate the holidays with them; and we can imagine how the great house must have resounded with their mirth and jollity. After the Thanksgiving dinner had been eaten, Dr. Beecher always preached a little sermon to his own household, recounting the many blessings that had come to them during the year and exhorting them to be good. Then the whole family joined in singing some hymn of praise, and the feast was over until another year.

But the holiday that probably was looked forward to with the most anticipation by the children, at least, was the wood-spell, so called because on this occasion, the members of Dr. Beecher's church brought their contributions of firewood to the parsonage. This event, therefore, had to take place after heavy snows had fallen, so the great, awkward-looking pungs could haul their heavy loads easily; and cords and cords of oak, hickory, birch and pine were dumped into the preacher's dooryard before the eventful day was over. The winter following the death of Mrs. Beecher, possibly to show their sympathy for their pastor in his bereavement, the people brought unusually large donations; and Catherine, then but sixteen years old, prepared the feast with which the farmers regaled themselves before returning to their own homes.

All of this kindness meant the frying of untold dozens of doughnuts and the baking of countless loaves and cakes. Baking powder and compressed yeast were unheard of at that time, and Catherine had to make the preparation for raising her cakes by putting certain ingredients together in covered jars, and setting them close to the fire so the heat would cause fermentation. So for several days before she could begin her baking, rows of earthen jars almost surrounded the great fireplace, because it would require such large quantities of this sour sponge or home-made yeast. But the young cook was triumphant, and both cakes and doughnuts were voted a great success by her hungry guests. Cider and cheese completed the refreshments, and the day was a gala event for all concerned. The Academy closed in order that the teacher might be present to help entertain the farmers with stories, and all the children were allowed to remain at home. Not until the sun was setting in the west did the last of the sleds depart, while the children perched triumphantly on the great stacks of wood in the back yard, waving their hands and screaming loud farewells to the drivers.

Thus far, we have said little about the town in which Harriet was born; but it, of itself, was a constant inspiration to the imaginative child, nestling among the beautiful Connecticut hills with wonderful, enchanted forests on all sides, and the river and lakes gleaming in the distance. The wild beauty of the place held the child enthralled even before she could tell what it was that seemed so beautiful about her surroundings, and she afterwards described the hours she sat on the rough granite steps at the front of the rambling old parsonage and gazed at the landscape with loving eyes, or watched the glorious sunsets fade into the purple twilights, too deeply moved for words. Old Mount Tom with its round, blue head, the Great and Little Ponds, curtained by steel-blue pines, Prospect Hill with its smooth, grassy, inviting slopes, and Chestnut Hill, thickly wooded with chestnut and hickory trees, were very dear to her heart, and when the Beechers moved to Hartford, Harriet felt that no other home would ever be quite so well beloved as the lovely town of Litchfield.

It also had an historical setting that must have filled the growing girl's heart with intense patriotism, for during the Revolutionary War this town had been a place of great activity. It lay along the state road connecting Boston, West Point and New York, and many an exciting incident of this struggle for liberty took place within or close to its borders. At one time there were only eight men left in Litchfield, and these were all too old or feeble to fight. All the able-bodied men had responded to the call to arms. But the men were not the only patriots in this patriotic town. It is said that when the leaden statue of King George was thrown from its pedestal in New York City, the pieces were gathered up and taken to the military storehouses in Litchfield, where they remained hidden until the ammunition of the American Army ran low. Then the women of Litchfield melted the great lumps of the broken statue and made bullets for their men to fire.

At different times during the course of the war General Washington, Lafayette, Rochambeau, and many other officers of the army visited the town, and one of the chief heroes of the time afterward became a parishioner of Dr. Beecher. So Harriet must have heard many stories of those stirring times, for she was born less than thirty-five years after the American colonies had won their independence and had set up a government of their own. Thus she lived during the infancy of our nation and became a staunch patriot, interested in every movement for the betterment of her government.

When Mrs. Beecher died, the aunt for whom Harriet was named, Harriet Foote, was living with the family, and after the funeral she took the child home to Nutplains for a long visit. Here Harriet heard many tales of her own dear mother, saw her paintings and examined her needlework, for Harriet Foote had a great propensity for treasuring family relics, and had great drawers and cabinets filled with things that had belonged to friends or relatives, and were prized accordingly. Here the child also saw wonderful treasures of foreign countries brought home by her Uncle Samuel Foote, and listened to the tales of adventure he told of his trips around the world, for he was a sea-captain, and had visited many quaint and little-heard-of places in his travels. The bed in which she slept was hung with draperies adorned with Chinese mandarins, quaint summer houses decorated with bells that never rang, and birds larger than the pictured people, all of which made impressions never to be forgotten by the sensitive, romantic child.

The Footes were Episcopalians and followed the customs of that church very strictly; so Harriet became as familiar with its teachings as with those of her father's faith, and, in fact, learned both catechisms, for after her Aunt Harriet had taught her the daily portion of the Church catechism, she evidently thought it her duty to teach her the Primer of the Presbyterian Church as well, much to Harriet's dismay, although she was too well-bred to rebel. Besides this, she also learned twenty-seven hymns and two chapters of the Bible one summer while she was visiting Nutplains as a small child.

She stood somewhat in awe of her Aunt Harriet, who was a strict disciplinarian, but between her and Grandmother Foote there existed a very tender bond of sympathy, although this dearly beloved soul was in her secret heart a Tory, and Harriet was the staunchest of patriots. The grandmother made no outward demonstrations of her beliefs, but confided in Harriet her grief that the prayers for the king and queen and royal family had ceased to be read in church. As for herself, she often turned to those particular passages in her prayer book and read them aloud in a voice that trembled with emotion, for she always felt that there must have been some other way of settling the dispute which led to American independence.

She was a strong character with a clear, active mind, fond of reading and always busy, at something. She liked to have her grandchildren read to her from the Bible, and gave them many explanations which made certain passages very plain to their youthful minds. But it always troubled her when any of them got into a controversy over religion, as they were sure to do whenever they visited Nutplains, because their Uncle George and Aunt Harriet were such firm believers in the Episcopalian doctrines, and the young Beechers were equally firm believers in the views their father held and expounded from his pulpit. These discussions were always friendly affairs, but oftentimes in the heat of argument the voices would be raised unnecessarily loud, and the deaf grandmother, watching their impassioned gestures, feared that a real quarrel was imminent. The place was rather lonely for a child, but the atmosphere of the home was so cordial and cheerful that the hours Harriet spent there were golden memories to her, and she welcomed every chance she got to visit Nutplains, her mother's former home.

When Harriet was between six and seven years old, her father took one of his customary journeys, to preach or lecture in a neighboring town, and went to Portland, Maine, where he married Harriet Porter, a woman of good family and remarkable intelligence. They returned to Litchfield one night after the children were in bed. Harriet was roused from her dreams by an unusual stir about the house, and sitting up in her bed, she saw her father standing in the door of the nursery where she slept with her two younger brothers. "Why, here is Pa!" she cried in surprise. A voice from behind him echoed, "And here is Ma!"

There before their wondering eyes stood a beautiful lady with lovely blue eyes and auburn hair, who bent over them eagerly and kissed them, telling them that she loved little children and had come to be their mother. They immediately demanded to be dressed, but were persuaded to wait until morning, as this new mother had come to stay. No stepmother ever made a sweeter impression on the children she had come to mother, and though they felt some awe of her at first because of her dainty elegance and unusual grace and beauty, they learned to love her dearly, and she returned the feeling with her whole heart. In a letter she wrote shortly after her arrival as mistress of the Beecher home, she describes each member of the lively brood with appreciative words, closing with the lines, "Harriet and Henry come next, and they are always hand in hand. They are as lovely children as I ever saw; amiable, affectionate, and very bright."

Among the impressions of Harriet's childhood, one of the most vivid was of her father's study. It was in one of the four great attics, in order that the noise of the household should not disturb his meditations. Here Harriet loved to browse among the books that lined the walls, or sit and watch her father at work on his sermons, sometimes speaking to himself in a loud whisper as he studied. To her, this retreat seemed like holy ground, and it must have been a solemn place, for she was never allowed to disturb her father by a question or a remark. The books on the shelves were like Greek to her, for she could not understand the deep theology expounded in their pages; but one day Dr. Beecher brought home Cotton Mather's "Magnalia," in two volumes, and Harriet was overjoyed to have such wonderful stories of her own country to read, although it is very doubtful if boys and girls of to-day would find them very interesting.

But she had no access to public libraries, as we have, and indeed there were very few children's books written at that time. So she was glad to find anything to read, and when in rummaging through some barrels of old sermons in the garret one day she unearthed tattered copies of "The Tempest" and "Arabian Nights," her delight knew no bounds. After that she did not care how often the boys went fishing without her, for curled up in a corner with one of these books in her hands she was soon lost to the world, living the scenes herself that the stories depicted. Of course, she was familiar with "Pilgrim's Progress," too, reading it over and over again until she knew it almost by heart. The passage describing the dwelling place of the tormented made a great impression on her, for in childish curiosity she had one day opened the glistening, creosote-incrusted door of the smokehouse, built into the kitchen chimney, and the rumbling noises within, as well as the biting, strangling smoke that issued from the black pit below reminded her of Bunyan's vivid description, and she fled from the place in terror.

Another childhood memory of this old parsonage which had a lasting effect on her sensitive nature was of the rats in the old walls. The Beecher cats and dogs did not seem able to exterminate them, and traps failed to diminish their number, so they flourished and grew fat and raised large families of little rats to take their places when they should die of old age. In the daytime they stayed strictly at home, but when the darkness of night settled over the old house, they scuttled out of their holes, and srcambled and squealed and fought so madly through the partitions and across the attic floors above Harriet's head, that she used to cower and quake under the bedclothes, expecting any moment to see them burst through the walls and pounce upon her.

Sometimes the racket they made was terrific as they rolled ears of corn over the rough boards and down into their nests between the beams; and when the winter winds bellowed about the old house, whistling around the corners, roaring down the chimneys, rattling the windows, and banging the doors, the revels of the rats grew so loud and hideous that the frightened child could scarcely sleep at all. But they never did get a hole gnawed through the wainscoting while the Beechers lived there, and in after years Harriet could laugh at the frights they used to give her.

The meeting-house, in the middle of the village green, where her father preached, of course, was never forgotten. She thought its architecture resembled Noah's Ark and Solomon's Temple combined, as pictured in her catechism. It had a double row of windows, which she counted over and over until she knew exactly how many there were and where they were placed. It had great, wooden curls over the doors, a belfry on the east end, and a steeple with a bell. The turnip-like canopy that hung over the preacher's head in the pulpit, suspended by a long iron rod to the ceiling above, seemed very magnificent to Harriet's eyes, but she could not help wondering what would happen to that august personage if the canopy ever should fall. The singing of the choir also caused her a great deal of wonder, for each of the four different parts of the choir sang a different set of words, and

Harriet felt sure each time they attempted a selection that they would lose themselves in the medley, and when they did triumphantly reach the end of the piece in perfect harmony, she never ceased to feel an amazed delight over the feat they had accomplished.

Sunday mornings after the several little Beechers had donned their best clothes and had recited their catechisms, they wended their way soberly to the meeting-house, where they must sit through long hours of sermons on a low seat in front of the pulpit. They found the time dragged heavily when they were too small to understand what the minister was talking about, and sometimes tried to amuse themselves by making rabbits out of their handkerchiefs, or nibbling at a bit of gingerbread or an apple which they had hidden in their pockets, but woe to them if the deacon caught them at it!

Although Dr. Beecher insisted that his children be in their seats when the old steeple bell pealed out its Sabbath summons, he himself caused his wife much anxiety by one peculiar habit of his. Every Sunday morning he roamed about the house, chatting amiably with various members of his family, apparently without a care in the world, until nearly time to start for meeting. Then suddenly he would rush away to his study in the attic, frantically begin writing notes for the sermon he was about to preach, and remain in this seclusion until the hour for the service was at hand.

Poor Mrs. Beecher would wait for him apprehensively while the minutes flew rapidly by, till just when she had decided he could not possibly reach his charge on time, he would rush out from his retreat again with his cravat tied under one ear or with a button conspicuously off his coat, and seizing his wife or daughter by the arm, much as he would grab a hand satchel, he would hurry away to the meeting-house, hardly allowing his family time to make him presentable. After a mad race through the quiet Sunday streets, they would arrive at the church panting and breathless, but triumphant, just as the last peal of the bell sounded; and the smiling doctor of divinity would push his way through the crowded aisles to the pulpit as if he enjoyed that particular part of the program.

The parishioners came from miles around, and of course their dogs came too, lying very quietly in the aisle or under the pews while the preaching was in progress. But occasionally they were not so well behaved. The Beechers had a dog named Trip, who, according to Harriet, had a nervous disposition, and would snap and snarl at the bothersome flies which interrupted his Sabbath meditations, and this annoyed the sober elderly folk of the congregation. Sometimes he even howled out loud in a nightmare, and this sort of thing could not be tolerated, so the animal was shut up on Sunday before the family went to meeting, in order to keep him from attending also. But often he would manage to break out of prison, and sneak up the aisle to his position right in front of the pulpit after the morning service had begun, so he could not be removed without too much commotion.

Harriet tells of one memorable occasion, when Dr. Beecher exchanged pulpits with a neighboring preacher, a thin, wiry little man, given to wearing many buckles about his clothing, and being afflicted with a comically high, cracked voice which made the children stare and giggle whenever he spoke. On that particular morning, the young Beechers were in rather a hilarious mood when they set out for church, and Trip somehow managed to follow them, taking his place just as the bell ceased its compelling summons. He looked very meek and innocent, but the minute the strange preacher rose in the pulpit, Trip also rose, alert and attentive. The minister began to read the hymn according to the custom:

> " 'Sing to the Lord aloud.' "

At the sound of the queer, squeaking voice, the surprised dog burst into a dismal howl. But the visiting divine was not dismayed, and issued instructions for the removal of the dog in the same tone in which he read the hymn, so to the spirited children it sounded like this:

> " 'Sing to the Lord aloud,' (Please put that dog out)
> 'And make a joyful noise.' "

This the children proceeded to do, laughing unrestrainedly, but fortunately the choir had taken up the words of the hymn, and their joyful noise drowned out that of the children.

II

AS A STUDENT

In the center of the town of Litchfield was the village green, where the square, old meeting-house stood. From this green, like the spokes of a wheel, radiated four wide, elm-bordered streets, called East, West, North and South Streets. The parsonage where the Beecher family lived was built at the highest point of North Street, and about the same distance from the green on West Street stood the ugly, box-like building where Harriet received her first schooling. This was the Dame School, and in Harriet's day was conducted by Ma'am Kilbourne, a strict, fussy, disagreeable person who seemed to take delight in confusing her pupils instead of trying to make their lessons clear to their youthful minds. The schoolhouse stood in an unfenced, barren waste, with neither trees nor flowers to beautify the yard, with nothing but a huge pile of wood in front of the door in winter, and a scattered pile of chips in summer.

Inside the building it was just as dreary-looking. The benches were great rough slabs set on legs. The desks were the same, except that they were set at an angle. They were cut and scratched and disfigured by generations of jack-knife engravings, but if Ma'am Kilbourne saw any of her pupils in the act of marring these ancient desks, punishment was swift and sure. If the stinging ferrule was not at hand, her fingers were just as good, and the scholar who had once felt the pinch of these supple fingers on arm or hand was slow to offend again.

Harriet and Henry Ward attended this school together six days of the week, from early morning till late afternoon, with but a brief intermission at noon for lunch. But on Saturday the session differed somewhat from the program of other days, in that the pupils learned to recite the Shorter Catechism, instead of studying "The New England Primer," which taught them to read by means of quaint rhymes, such as,

"The cat doth play
And after slay," or

"Young pious Ruth
Left all for truth."

When the lessons were learned sooner than the time allotted for them, these little scholars brought forth a bit of sewing and busied themselves making neat stitches, in order that no precious minutes should be wasted during school hours. Even at noon when the lunches had been eaten, there were long towels to be laboriously hemmed by boys and girls alike, instead of the games that modern-day school children enjoy. Evidently Ma'am Kilbourne did not believe in physical exercises of any kind for her small charges; at least there was no playtime provided for them, and it is no wonder they often envied the flies on the window-pane because they did not have to go to school. When Harriet had mastered the art of reading her Primer, she was promoted to reading the Bible and the "Columbian Orator," to doing sums in "Daboll's Arithmetic," and to writing in her copy-books with quill pens. But getting an education in those days must have been a tedious task if all school-teachers were like Ma'am Kilbourne.

After a few years, Harriet entered the Litchfield Female Academy, a goal she had long been looking forward to with eager heart. This Academy was conducted by Miss Sally and Miss Mary Pierce, very sensible, charming, cultivated ladies. Miss Sally was particularly well beloved, and probably the Miss Titcomb of Mrs. Stowe's "Oldtown Folks" was drawn from her impressions of this teacher. The school was held in a small, modest house with a closet at each end, one for the piano and the other for the pupils' wraps. There were the same severely plain desks and benches that formed the equipment of all schools in that day, and a small table and an elevated chair for the teacher. This chair was where Miss Sally Pierce, the principal, sat to instruct her charges. She was given to expressing herself in dignified and rather flowery language, which her pupils tried to emulate.

Her ideal which she held constantly before her school was moral perfection. Dr. Beecher was much interested in the academy, and made it a practice to visit there every Saturday in order to talk with the young ladies about the state of their souls. They, in turn, were required to attend his church on Sundays and to report on the sermons he preached. It was the fashion at that time for everyone to keep a diary, and some of these records of everyday affairs have been saved by relatives of the writers, so we can read the entries certain ambitious pupils made regarding Dr. Beecher's doctrines, as well as other matters that give us an insight into what was expected of schoolgirls of that period.

Mrs. Beecher was also interested in this school, and though unusually retiring and modest in her manner, so she could not bring herself to speak in public anywhere, she often acted on committees for awarding prizes at the end of the term. The annual graduation exercises took place in June, just as they do now, and this event was a very important occasion for the whole town. The gayly dressed girls formed in line and marched down North Street to the music of the flute and flageolet until they reached the church, where, after brief exercises, they received their diplomas, stating that they had completed the prescribed course of study. This included grammar, geography, history, arithmetic, rhetoric, natural and moral philosophy, chemistry, logic and the principles of taste. The diplomas were printed on small squares of white satin and bound with blue ribbon. Some of them, yellow-stained now and ancient looking, are still preserved in the Town Museum of Litchfield, but Harriet Beecher's is not there. In fact, she probably did not remain in Litchfield long enough to earn hers, as she left her birthplace to be with her sister Catherine in Hartford, while she was still a young girl. But she thought so much of Miss Pierce's method of teaching history that when she had a family of little ones of her own, she wrote to her former teacher for a copy of the book that she herself had studied in her childhood.

Miss Pierce's school was so successful that it finally became necessary to have another assistant, and her nephew, John Brace, accepted the position she offered him. Harriet Beecher was greatly impressed with his knowledge of botany, mineralogy and natural sciences in general, and could not resist listening to the recitations of the classes he conducted, when she should have been studying her own lessons. She found him a very stimulating and inspiring instructor, and became so interested in the discussions he held with his classes in moral philosophy and rhetoric that she could hardly wait until she was old enough to write compositions herself.

He used to divide the school into groups of three or four, who took turns in writing each week. Besides that, he called for volunteers every week and there were always those who responded. So when Harriet was but nine years old, she volunteered to write a composition every week, quite a task for one whose handwriting was hardly formed yet. But this amused Mr. Brace, and he instructed her to the best of his ability, although the subjects he chose for his pupils' essays seem very strange indeed. Imagine a child of twelve writing a composition on "Can the Immortality of the Soul be Proved by the Light of Nature?" Yet this was the title of an essay Harriet wrote, which was read as one of the three best at a school exhibition that her father attended. Dr. Beecher was seated on the platform facing the school when the papers were read, and Harriet saw his face brighten with interest, as he leaned forward to listen to hers. She says it was the proudest moment of her life when he asked who wrote that particular essay, and was told that it was his own daughter. It was shortly after this episode that Harriet was sent to Hartford, and she never returned to the Litchfield schools again.

Besides these experiences in public and private schools of that period, Harriet received much book knowledge from home instruction, when, from time to time her father or stepmother acted as teacher of their own children and conducted regular lessons at regular hours daily. The necessity for this arose, no doubt, from the fact that the family moved several times to districts where the schools were inferior or too far away for the children to attend with any regularity. It is possible also that the Doctor's slender salary could not cover all the demands made upon it, and it was more economical to teach the children at home than to send them all to school.

When but a child herself, Harriet assumed the task of teaching her younger brothers, and some of her efforts were ludicrous indeed. To mischievous Henry Ward she patiently explained his grammar lessons, saying, "Now, 'his' is a possessive pronoun, and denotes possession. You would say 'his book,' and not 'him book.' "

"But why can't I say 'hymn book'?" Henry demanded saucily. "We sing out of a hymn book at church."

Another time she told him, " 'A' is an indefinite article, used only with a singular noun. It is proper to say 'a man,' but never 'a men.' "

"Yes it is, too, proper to say 'amen,' " protested the roguish little fellow. "We always say amen at the end of our prayers."

What could the youthful teacher do at such sallies but laugh, which was just what the small boy desired, and the lesson would end for the day.

Nor was book knowledge the only thing Harriet gleaned from her home life, for with such a remarkable father as head of the household, it was impossible for her to escape hearing the discussions he carried on with his older children and with the famous men who sought him out because they valued his opinions in all matters. Much of these conversations was too deep for the child to understand at the time, but it had its influence, nevertheless, and as she grew in age, her brain developed with great rapidity, absorbing all kinds of information that proved of great value to her later.

III

AS A READER OF BOOKS

Mention has already been made of the lack of children's story books when Harriet was a small child, and of how she read and re-read the few volumes that accidentally fell into her eager hands. But it is hard for us, in this age of children, to realize how unimportant a part children played in the world's affairs a century ago. America was very young when Harriet Beecher was born. We had no literature of our own. Few writers of merit had been produced within our borders. The country had been too busily engaged in building cities, surveying the boundaries of its holdings, fighting for independence, struggling for recognition as a nation, and fashioning its new and untried form of government, to pay any attention to novels and poetry. In fact, most folks looked askance at the idea of a wholesome novel being written. Good poetry had made a place for itself in the minds of men, but prose had yet to prove its worth except as a means for preachers to preserve their lengthy exhortations in book form. Women writers were almost unheard of. Indeed, when a certain German professor heard that Catherine Beecher had written a splendid argument against Edwards' learned work, "The Will," he raised his hands in utter amazement, and cried, "God forgive Christopher Columbus for discovering America!"

Behold, then, the rapid strides this country made in the field of literature during the nineteenth century, producing, as it did, such authors and poets as Longfellow, Whittier, Holmes, Poe, Lowell, Emerson, Irving, Julia Ward Howe, Sarah Orne Jewett, Celia Thaxter, and others. In England and other European countries, literature had received a like impetus. So if Harriet Beecher found little to read that was suited to her age as a child, she certainly had no reason for complaint as she grew in years, and such rich treasures in both prose and rhyme sprang into being all about her. And this much can be said on the other side of the question, also. If there was a dearth of good stories for children for this eager child mind a century ago, at least there was no silly trash nor Diamond Dick exploits to be had by the youth of the land to sear their brains and besmirch their souls. The very lack of children's literature sent these inquisitive young folk to the encyclopædia and dictionary for amusement as well as for information, and consequently they accumulated a wonderful fund of real knowledge that helped them in many ways.

A certain young lady of Litchfield, finding it necessary to take a tedious journey—and all journeys were tedious in those days,—asked Miss Sally Pierce, Principal of the Litchfield Female Academy, for a list of suitable books to take with her to occupy her thoughts, and Miss Pierce suggested "Wilberforce's View," "Memoirs of Miss Susanna Anthony," and "Reflections on Death," as being both amusing and instructive. She might have added "Sir Charles Grandison," the one novel of that day which was admitted to the best of homes, but this tiresome love story of little action or excitement rambled its lengthy course through seven thick volumes, and it is hardly likely that even the most voracious reader would want to pack so large a set of books about, no matter how long the journey. In later years Mrs. Stowe described "Sir Charles Grandison" as a "delightful old bore."

Certainly any new book published during those barren years was hailed with delight as a real friend and discussed at every parlor gathering for weeks after its first appearance. The Beechers were constantly adding to their library in spite of meager finances, and to her Uncle Samuel Foote, Harriet owes many a precious volume, for he was a great reader himself and enjoyed sending boxes of the latest publications to his appreciative nieces and nephews, who not only read them over and over, but memorized whole passages of such things as Scott's "Lady of the Lake," "Marmion," and "The Lay of the Last Minstrel."

Byron also was at the height of his fame during Harriet's girlhood, and exerted so powerful an influence over the theological students and the seminary girls that they wore the same kind of loosely tied cravat that he affected, and allowed themselves to become so thoroughly saturated with his melancholia that Dr. Beecher and other noted divines of the day felt called upon to preach against his harmful influence from their pulpits, although Dr. Beecher himself was an ardent admirer of this great poet. However, he realized Byron's shortcomings, and sincerely mourned his untimely death, because the man of such great genius should so wastefully misuse his life.

When Harriet was but eleven years of age, her Aunt Esther one day loaned her a copy of Byron's "Corsair," to keep the restless mind occupied for a time, and the child was so entranced with the only-half-understood lines that she besieged her aunt for explanations of many phrases contained therein, and from that time on, read everything of his that she could find. The news of his death was like the loss of an intimate friend to the sensitive, imaginative girl, and she went out on Chestnut Hill and lay down among the daisies to find a solace for her grief. The Sunday following the receipt of this news, Dr. Beecher preached a funeral sermon in memory of the dead poet, taking for his text, "The name of the just is as brightness, but the memory of the wicked shall rot." His sermons were generally too profound for Harriet to understand, but this discourse she never forgot, so clearly did her father explain that no matter how talented and brilliantly gifted a person might be, it was no excuse for being vicious, and any writer's works would eventually sink into oblivion if he let the impurities of his thoughts find expression in words. The sermon was intended especially for the young people who formed the mass of his congregation, as a warning against living such a loose life as Byron had lived, and Harriet was not the only person who long remembered his earnest, vigorous exposition.

Dr. Beecher was very much opposed to novels as a class, and refused to permit his children to read such trash; but he recognized the real merits of Scott's works, and even bought "Ivanhoe," himself, in order that Harriet and her brothers might have the opportunity of reading it, which they did seven times in one summer. Nor were they content with merely reading such books. They must play them out, discuss them with their friends, and compare their merits and faults with those of other books which they had read. In fact, it was an age of amateur dramatization. Schools encouraged it, homes fostered it, and even the Sunday School, just in its infancy, made use of symbolism and moralities.

In Miss Pierce's school the dramatic tendency was unusually strong, for the principal herself wrote some dramas of no small merit, which her pupils presented at the exhibitions that marked the annual close of school. Catherine and Mary Beecher were among her best youthful actors, but Harriet seems to have been too young for very important parts, though we have reason to believe that the oldest sister displayed real talent in portraying the parts that fell to her lot. Miss Pierce's favorite drama was called "Jephthah's Daughter," an intensely tragic play based on the Bible story. Catherine Beecher took the part of Bethulah, Jephthah's wife, and was a great success in that rôle. The play was very realistic and adhered very closely to the Bible story. The actors did not hesitate in their portrayal of every historic incident, even to the bringing in of Ada, unfortunate daughter of the great general, who sacrificed her life because of a vow made to the Lord, on a bier, accompanied by a procession of weeping damsels and lamenting youths. When male characters were needed to complete the cast, as in this play, students from the Litchfield Academy gladly volunteered their services, and were as gladly accepted.

Costumes played an important part in these theatricals, and much study was given to the subject. The encyclopædia and dictionary were consulted, garrets were ransacked for suitable materials, and ancient chests yielded up long-hoarded gowns and garments of all descriptions, which were painstakingly adapted to the needs of the hour. Gilt paper made effective helmets, shields and royal crowns; and swords or guns were easily carved out of wood. Satisfactory thrones could be made from just an armchair, and even a realistic gallows was not difficult to arrange, but when it came to staging a hanging, which they really attempted in the play of Queen Esther, they found it necessary to substitute a dog for the victim, as no one was willing to take the part of Haman on the gallows.

However, the Bible did not supply all the plots which these ardent young actors chose to portray. The pupils of the Litchfield Seminary analyzed the stories in "Plutarch's Lives," for plots, and even dramatized modern historical events, such as the battle of Bunker Hill, where the cannonading was imitated by rolling cannon balls across the floor behind scenes, and two lone cannons in the foreground served as ample battleground scenery.

Dr. Beecher raised no objections to these simple theatricals as long as they took place under the supervision of the Seminary or the Academy, but Catherine's ambition soared higher than that. She wanted to put on a drama all by herself, and lacking any more suitable setting, decided to give a play at home. She chose one of Miss Edgeworth's stories, called, "The Unknown Friend," which had characters enough in it to give each Beecher child a part of his own. "Variety is the spice of life," and this story had enough variety to please anyone, for certain passages were written in Welsh, Scotch and Irish dialects, and for change of scene, the play took place in a palace, on a mountain top, and in a shop, all of which could be easily staged with a little different arrangement of a few chairs, rugs and draperies.

Secret rehearsals took place very frequently for some weeks, and then one evening unexpected guests arrived and kept arriving in such numbers, that the doctor and his wife began to wonder at the coincidence. But before they could voice their suspicions even to each other, or could investigate the circumstances, the dining-room door was suddenly pushed open, and the amateur actors began their play with great earnestness from the stage set up in the farthest corner of the room. All went well and the admiring audience applauded lavishly, while the amazed preacher and Mrs. Beecher sat by in watchful silence. The little band of performers at length retired flushed and elated by their success, while the guests departed. But the next day Catherine was called to her father's study and emphatically told that she must never again indulge in home theatricals.

Soon after this, she left Litchfield to study in Boston, and the Seminary lost one of its most promising actors. Then a few years later Harriet also left her home town, and Litchfield knew them no more. But though Harriet ceased to act in such amateur dramatizations, they had left their effect ineffaceably upon her, and in her secret heart she cherished the idea of becoming a writer of drama, an ambition she actually tried to realize while still a very young girl, as we shall see.

IV

AS A TEACHER

When Harriet's mother died in 1816, it was quite natural that the burden of the household should, in a large measure, fall upon the eldest daughter of the family, the talented Catherine, though she was only sixteen or seventeen years of age herself. Nevertheless, she had been so well trained by her mother, as well as being naturally capable and energetic that she filled the vacant place very well indeed until the new mother came to guide the riotous band of motherless children. Catherine was her father's favorite daughter and at that time was considered the most talented of the children. Naturally she had a great influence over the sensitive, dreamy Harriet. In fact, the younger sister almost worshiped this brilliant, sympathetic spirit who was the very life of the home for so many years, and no doubt she received much inspiration and help from her.

Catherine herself was an author of no mean reputation, and wrote on a wide range of subjects from cooking recipes and home economics to the most profound philosophy and religious discussions.

When Harriet was about nine years old, Catherine went to Boston to study music and other subjects preparatory to teaching, and after a short time accepted a position as teacher in a young ladies' school in New London, Connecticut. Here she became engaged to a promising young professor of Yale, by the name of Alexander Fisher, a mathematical genius. He had made such an enviable record as a student that upon his graduation he was appointed professor of mathematics and was sent abroad by his alma mater to study in his chosen field and to purchase books and mathematical instruments for his department. The ship, *Albion,* of which he was a passenger, was wrecked off the coast of Ireland, and only one of the passengers reached shore alive. Catherine Beecher was for a time almost crushed by this loss, especially as she was afraid her lover was not a Christian man, according to her strict views of what that term implied. Nor were her doubts entirely dispelled when she went to live with his parents for a time.

However, Catherine was a strong character and not finding a satisfactory answer to her questions, she resolved not to let her grief crush her utterly, and set about to find happiness in helping others. Being an energetic person by nature, she could not sit down and fold her hands in idleness, so she turned her attention once more toward teaching, and wrote to her father for his advice in regard to opening a seminary in Hartford, Connecticut, similar to the Litchfield Female Academy which Harriet was at that time attending. Dr. Beecher sanctioned the idea and urged her to take steps at once, provided she were earnest in her desire to do this thing and willing to put her whole soul into the project. He even went to Hartford himself to see what prospect there was for such a school in that territory, and, finding people enthusiastic over the plan, coöperated with his daughter in getting the school started. Its first location was in an apartment over a harness shop, across the street from the famous Christ Church. The harness maker advertised his wares by means of a pair of white, wooden horses, one on either side of the entrance, and the memory of the Sign of the White Horses lingered with the imaginative Harriet throughout her life, for she became one of Catherine's first pupils.

The school opened with an enrollment of but twenty-five, but in a few years it had increased to several hundred. Catherine herself prepared textbooks on chemistry, natural history, and logic for the use of her pupils, as well as studying up very thoroughly on arithmetic, algebra and geometry that she might be well qualified to teach these subjects. The progress of the school was so satisfactory that in the second year of its existence, Miss Beecher put up a building just for its use, and it became a full-fledged female seminary which was to endure for years.

Harriet was nearly thirteen years of age when she entered this seminary as one of its first pupils. She boarded in the home of Isaac D. Bull, a wholesale druggist of Hartford, and his youngest daughter boarded with the Beechers in Litchfield, in order that she might attend the Litchfield Academy. Harriet had a small room that overlooked the Connecticut

River, the first room she had ever had all by herself; and the motherly Mrs. Bull watched over her with the tenderest kind of care. The oldest daughter of the druggist's family was a beautiful soprano singer of note in Hartford and her three brothers also possessed good singing voices, so Harriet received much helpful training in that line during the year she lived under their roof.

The second year several members of the Beecher family were living in Hartford, so Dr. Beecher's sister Esther came to the city to act as housekeeper for them, and Catherine, Mary and Harriet, and two of the brothers who were attending school there became members of this household. Several of the school-teachers boarded with them, too, making a large family of grown people with Harriet the only girl, and they had some very interesting discussions around the table at meal time. All these experiences tended to develop and discipline the girl, and to give her new views of life. Now, too, she came to realize one of her dearest dreams. She had always longed for girl friends her own age, but somehow in Litchfield had never found the real chum she sought. Here among Catherine's first pupils, however, were two unusually intelligent, lovable girls, who wrote letters of welcome to Harriet before she left Litchfield, to which Harriet responded very promptly, and this was the beginning of lifelong friendships between them. One of them, Catherine Cogswell, was the daughter of Hartford's leading physician, and so popular a girl among her mates that Harriet could receive but a small share of her leisure time. Georgiana May, the other chum, was of a more retiring nature, and being older than Catherine, was less sought after by the younger girls, but between her and Harriet there sprang up a rare and beautiful friendship which grew only stronger and deeper with the passing years.

Yet in spite of the new friends and experiences, the next few years of Harriet's life were probably the most futile and unhappy of any period she passed through in her varied career, due to her intense emotional nature. Brought up in such a strongly religious atmosphere as existed in her father's house, she naturally was religiously inclined from early childhood, but at the age of thirteen, while at home on a vacation, a sermon of her father's on the text, "I call you not servants, but friends," made so strong an appeal to her that she surrendered herself completely to the service of the Lord and told her father of her decision upon reaching home after the sermon and sacramental service were over. The good doctor held her in his arms silently for a moment, and said simply, "Then has a new flower blossomed in the Kingdom this day."

But, having doubts as to her understanding of the step she had just taken, he urged her to go to her Hartford pastor and talk the matter over with him, which Harriet did upon her return to school. In those days great stress was laid upon what was called, "being under conviction," before a person could become a Christian in the opinion of his fellow beings, and Harriet's simple statement of her decision was most unusual. Even her own sister Catherine doubted the genuineness of the younger sister's conversion, and the well-meaning pastor of the First Church in Hartford asked her such bewildering and awe-inspiring questions concerning the state of her soul, that poor Harriet was stripped of all the joy she had experienced in deciding to become a Christian, and left only with morbid questionings and grave doubts to torment her.

Naturally, a feeling of great depression took possession of her. She could not grasp her father's philosophy, and his stern, uncompromising Calvinistic beliefs appalled her. She came to think of God as a great Power afar off, too omnipotent to be bothered with her petty cares and troubled thoughts. The religious arguments between Catherine and her brother Edward increased her mental distress and to make her misery complete, her health became seriously impaired, for she was using up her physical energy by too long hours in the schoolroom and too many tasks out of it. Sixteen or eighteen hours a day she worked with might and main, with very little physical exercise or relaxation, and human nature cannot stand such a strain.

When one pauses to consider that at thirteen years of age this girl was translating Ovid into English verse, at fourteen was teaching Virgil and rhetoric to students as old or older than she herself, besides studying French and Italian, drawing and painting, was allowing herself only half an hour at mid-day for her lunch, was in the habit of snatching a bite of supper only when she could find time from her other tasks, and was helping her Aunt Esther with the housework of the large family, one can readily understand why nature rebelled and why she grew so depressed mentally.

In those days, physical culture for the women of the family was not regarded as essential. Dr. Beecher recognized the necessity of relieving his own mental fatigue by indulging in physical labor, such as splitting wood and hoeing in his garden, but the women folk of his household were permitted to work early and late at tasks that held them indoors most of the time and afforded little or no mental relaxation. "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy" also applies to his sister Jill, and Harriet suffered the consequences of overwork, hard study, and her spiritual struggle by permanent injury to her once robust health.

She tried to express her misgivings to her father, but for once he failed to understand how serious was her need, although he had passed through a similar struggle in his own young manhood. She tried to hide her troubled condition from her friends, hoping that she would soon find the comfort and peace she was seeking, and succeeded so well that she was often reproved for laughing too much when in reality she was feeling the worst. Fortunately she had an older brother who finally won her confidence, and was able to untangle the snarl of misgivings which had hampered her for so long a time.

When she was sixteen years old, her ill health worried Catherine so much that the older sister persuaded her to make a visit to Nutplains, and the rest, together with regular, wholesome meals, peaceful surroundings and a normal mode of living did much to build up the tired body and over-stimulated brain. Thus she gradually worked her way out of the labyrinth of doubts and fears that had oppressed her. She began to believe that God was not a God of wrath, but a God of compassion, and taking for her creed, "God is love," she found happiness and sunshine in life once more by doing for others, just as Catherine, in her great sorrow, had found peace and resignation by devoting her time and self to those about her.

Her Uncle Samuel Foote had told her at

one time of a sun dial he had seen in his travels which bore the inscription, "I count the fair hours only." This sentiment appealed to her so strongly that she determined to make it her own motto and to forget the unsatisfactory things in life which she did not understand. So after four years of struggle and despair, she found herself back at the point from which she had started, when at thirteen years of age she had made her decision to be a Christian girl.

It was while Harriet was passing through this troublesome period that her father accepted a call to become pastor of Hanover Church in Boston, and the family left Litchfield never to return there to live. But Harriet found little enjoyment in her Boston home, because of the continuous theological discussions which took place under its roof between her father and brothers and visiting preachers. However, she was not there a great deal, because of her work as teacher in Catherine's school at Hartford. In fact, when she was but eighteen years old, she took entire charge of this school, while Catherine was forced to go away in search of health, and during this period of great responsibility she instituted a system of self-government among the pupils which proved to be as satisfactory as it was unique for that day and age. She had wanted to open a school of her own in Groton, where her brother George was preaching, but was persuaded to give up the plan by her father and Catherine. Now, however, the opportunity had unexpectedly come to her to show others that she was capable of so great a responsibility, and it pleased her greatly to find her efforts at managing Catherine's school so successful and herself so popular a teacher.

Now came a great change in the Beecher fortunes. Dr. Beecher had for a long time been meditating on going West to take up his work in the new country which was rapidly being opened up to civilization. West at that time still meant east of the Mississippi River. The territory beyond that great waterway was a trackless wilderness. This great preacher seemed to feel that there was to be a big conflict waged in the Mississippi Valley between the forces of right and wrong; so when he received a call to become the head of Lane Theological Seminary in Cincinnati, Ohio, he accepted with characteristic enthusiasm, and prevailed upon Catherine to go with him to establish a school in that city.

Although Harriet shared her father's enthusiasm for the new project, she dreaded leaving her loved ones, most of whom were established now in or near Hartford. Her brothers William and Edward were both preaching from their own pulpits; Henry Ward and Charles were in college; and the sister Mary was married and living in Hartford. It would be hard to leave all these behind, but she wasted no time in lamentations. There was a long journey to be undertaken, and she had an adventuresome spirit like all pioneers. So she decided to go with the rest of the family and do her part toward bettering this new country.

There were no railroads to this growing Western city at that time, so the move of the Beechers was made in relays, part by steamboat, part by private conveyance, and much of it by stage. They stopped in all the large towns they came to, in order that Dr. Beecher, whose reputation had preceded him, might preach to eager audiences and raise funds for the founding of the chair of Bibliography at system of self-government among the pupils which proved to be as satisfactory as it was unique for that day and age. She had wanted to open a school of her own in Groton, where her brother George was preaching, but was persuaded to give up the plan by her father and Catherine. Now, however, the opportunity had unexpectedly come to her to show others that she was capable of so great a responsibility, and it pleased her greatly to find her efforts at managing Catherine's school so successful and herself so popular a teacher.

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At Harrisburg they rested up for the long journey in the Appalachian Mountains, and it was well they did, for what ordinarily was but a two-day journey dragged itself out over eight days, on account of bad roads and poor horses. When they reached Wheeling, they had expected to take the canal boat down the Ohio River to Cincinnati, but because of a rumored epidemic of cholera along this waterway, they decided to continue their journey by stagecoach, even though this meant a longer trip, and many miles of it were over a corduroy road, made of logs laid crosswise and covered with dirt—a very rough and jolting ride. But at length they reached the beautiful Ohio Valley and entered the city of Cincinnati, which was to be the Beecher home for eighteen years.

Samuel and John Foote, Harriet's uncles, were wealthy residents of this new city of the West, so the Beechers were cordially welcomed and quickly introduced to the social life of the new country. Their first home here was a very uncomfortable, unsatisfactory affair, inconveniently arranged, and with very little light or ventilation, which Harriet hinted was due to the fact that the owner was a bachelor. The kitchen was entirely separated from the rest of the house, so it was necessary to go out of doors to reach it at all. But they did not linger long in that place. A house was being prepared for them at Walnut Hills, close to Lane Seminary and they moved into it as soon as it was ready. It was about two miles from the heart of town, but the roadway leading to it lay through some of the most beautiful scenery the Beechers had known, much to the delight of Catherine and Harriet, who had to make the trip daily to and from their school.

The house was a two-story brick building facing west, with a long L running back into a thick grove of beech and black oak which gave them shade during the heat of the summer, and protected them from the bitter winds of winter. Here it was that the venturesome little sister, Isabella, climbed to the topmost branches of the high trees and rocked in their cradling arms as she listened to the music of the whispering leaves. There was a wide veranda built in the angle formed by the L, and here the family lived during the hot summer months.

Dr. Beecher, besides being head of the Seminary, was also pastor of the Second Church of Cincinnati, considered the best church in the city, having been offered the position by the parishioners with the understanding that he give the church just what time he could spare from the Seminary. So the family became happily established in this growing city of the West which had sprung up like a mushroom in the night. There was room for thirty steamboats to tie up to the wharves at one time, and the river was a busy place, for Cincinnati had a lively export and import trade even in 1832, which was the year the Beechers took up their residence there. The city also boasted twenty-one foundries and factories, a medical college and hospital, a court house, a theater, a museum, several public libraries and fifteen churches.

Catherine had great ambitions for her school, which was to include a teachers' training department of fifty or sixty young ladies, a primary department of a similar number of little girls and a school for little boys, on the plan of our normal schools of to-day; for this pioneer educator foresaw that eventually the teaching of young America was to be done by the women of the land. The men would be engaged in sterner duties, tilling the soil, preaching from the pulpit and blazing the trail still further into the west. She experienced some difficulty in securing qualified teachers at first, so Harriet threw herself into the work with characteristic energy, much to the detriment of her health. She worked early and late, neglecting her physical needs, as she had always done, until she was completely exhausted, and wrote pathetically to her friend, Georgiana May, back East, that she was no good to herself nor to anyone else.

The school very early in its career discovered that all geographies then published for children were very unsatisfactory, and Harriet was appointed to compile this important textbook. She called it the "New Geography for Children," and it instantly sprang into such favor, that it was used by all the primary schools of Cincinnati. It was not the kind of geography that is used by schools of to-day, but was written like a story, depicting the customs of the different peoples of the earth, their manners, religions, laws, and characteristics.

All his life Dr. Beecher had been very open and emphatic in his opposition to the Church of Rome, but his daughter Harriet was more diplomatic and unprejudiced in the matter, and handled the question so tactfully in this little geography, that Bishop Purcell, while visiting the Beecher school, commended her for her attitude, much to her delight. She also treated the subject of slavery very ably, showing how England had forced this wretched system upon her colonial possessions this side of the Atlantic, and censuring the Mother Country for the misery it had caused our fair land. But notwithstanding this and other very pointed remarks concerning England's treatment of America, nearly twenty years later, this book was published in its original form in England, for use in English schools.

V

AS WIFE AND MOTHER

In the summer of 1834, Harriet went East to see her brother, Henry Ward, graduate from Amherst College. She traveled by stage to Toledo, Ohio, and by steamboat to Buffalo.

While she was in the East, she received the sad tidings that a very dear friend, Eliza Tyler Stowe, had died. She was the wife of Calvin E. Stowe, then teaching at Lane Theological Seminary, and was so beloved of her husband that her death nearly drove him insane. So, upon Harriet's return to Cincinnati, she strove to comfort him as best she could, and their friendship ripened into a real love affair which culminated in their marriage two years later.

But they were not able to settle down in a home of their own at once, for, through the influence of General Harrison, Professor Stowe was appointed a commissioner by the

State of Ohio to investigate the public school systems of Europe. In addition to this, the Lane Seminary faculty intrusted him with funds for the purpose of buying some much needed supplies for their library while abroad, and he sailed for Europe in June, 1836, just five months after his marriage. It was not possible for Mrs. Stowe to accompany him, so she went to live at her father's house during his absence, and kept herself busy writing short stories and articles for the *Western Monthly Magazine* and the New York *Evangelist.* She also helped her brother Henry, who at that time was editing a small daily paper in Cincinnati, called the *Journal.*

In a letter to a friend, she says of her marriage, "I was married when I was twenty-five years of age to a man rich in Greek and Hebrew, Latin and Arabic, and, also, rich in nothing else." And this condition remained true all her life, in spite of the fact that she earned large sums of money by her writing. Neither she nor her husband was a good business manager, and they invested unwisely, were imposed upon by so-called charities, and in other ways soon used up all the money they earned.

In a brief autobiographical sketch she says that when she set up housekeeping her entire stock of china cost her eleven dollars. Two years later when her brother was married and came visiting her with his bride, she had to buy ten dollars' worth more in order to set a respectable table. But this supply was made to last for several years without further replenishing. She must have inherited her mother's gift for manufacturing household necessities, for she records at different times in her letters the making of sofas, lounges, barrel chairs, pillows, bolsters, mattresses and other articles of furniture. She could wield the paintbrush about the house as well as in her art, could drive nails as well as her brothers could, knew how to tack down carpets and mend furniture with practiced hand, and the family came to depend upon her in such emergencies rather than upon the professor. One time when a pane of glass had been broken in the cellar window, Professor Stowe decided that it was his duty to mend it, so he selected a thin board to cover the opening, and went to work with hammer and nails. But after he had succeeded in breaking the rest of the glass in the window, and almost demolishing the sash, he returned to the house much crestfallen, and Mrs. Stowe quietly repaired the damaged window.

Besides these rather peculiar accomplishments, Mrs. Stowe possessed the ability to cut and fit her own clothes, and even to make her husband's coats and her own shoes. When she found it difficult to insert the rubber in the sides of certain styles of shoes, she invented a way of lacing them up the back, which really made a more presentable shoe when it was finished. So we discover that she was talented in other ways than in her writing, for surely very few people of to-day can make their own shoes, although they might succeed in fitting their own dresses.

The first year of Mrs. Stowe's married life, twin daughters were born, while the professor was still in England. The fond mother named them Eliza Tyler and Isabella, but when the proud father returned from his lengthy sojourn in foreign lands, he insisted that they be called Eliza Tyler and Harriet Beecher. Five other babes came to enrich her life as the years sped by, adding more cares to the already busy woman, but she always declared that she would never exchange her children for all the ease, leisure and pleasure she could have without them. She said, "God invented mothers' hearts, and He certainly has the pattern in His own."

She took her motherhood very seriously, just as she took everything else, and her growing family became her foremost thought. Many anxious hours she devoted to her little ones in nursery and schoolroom, as well as hovering over their sick beds when childish ailments robbed them of their health temporarily. And much of their early education they received under her guidance in their own home. In speaking of this subject in one of her letters, she says, "The most fearful thing about this education matter is that it is example more than word. Talk as you will, the child follows what he sees, not what he hears. The prevailing tone of the parent's character will make the temper of the household; the spirit of the parent will form the spirit of the child." With this thought uppermost in her heart, she succeeded in making the atmosphere of her home sweet, harmonious and happy, and between the members of her family existed a bond of understanding such as is rarely found.

Domestic service was hard to obtain even in her time, and particularly in homes of so little worldly wealth. But at one time Mrs. Stowe had befriended a homeless English girl who had come to our land to seek her fortune, and for years this girl lived with her and helped her solve her household problems. Mrs. Stowe says she never would have lived through all the trials her position in life brought her, if it had not been for this friend, Anna. Yet in spite of the numberless tasks that absorbed her time night and day for the welfare of her flock, she found time to keep at her writing through all the years; or perhaps it would be better to say that she made the time, for she certainly learned to do several things at once, and in this way managed her stories when a less determined or a less talented soul would have given up in despair. She was a rapid writer, and could accomplish much in a brief time, so she forged ahead in spite of almost overwhelming obstacles.

Professor Stowe was very dependent upon her, and being somewhat of a pessimist, drew upon her strength as one of the children might have done, for she had to cheer him on whenever he became down-hearted. She mothered him, teased him, laughed at him, humored him, and yet helped him at every turn. He had a quick temper, and as his health broke under the heavy mental work he was engaged in, he often was decidedly irritable; but her patience and his own good nature always brought about a happy ending to the occasional domestic explosions.

One day he brought home a dozen eggs to set, having decided to try his luck at raising blooded stock. Saying nothing about his intentions, he hid the eggs in the woodshed until he should have time to build a nest according to his own notions. Naturally, the children found the eggs in their play and thinking that a hen had stolen her nest, they gathered up the treasure and carried it in triumph to their mother. She was busy with the day's cooking and had just discovered that there was not an egg in the house, so the children's find delighted her housewifely soul, and she briskly beat up the eggs into puddings and pies. A day or two later, the busy professor remembered his eggs and went to get them from their hiding place. Finding them gone, he stormed the house, expressed himself in no uncertain terms to the whole family, and rushed wrathfully away to deliver another lecture to his class at college.

The ingenious and whimsical mother was amused at his tantrum and decided to laugh him out of it. So when he returned for dinner still feeling rather injured and peppery, he found the table properly set but no one in sight indoors or out. Perplexed, and possibly a little alarmed at this unusual occurrence, he set out to find the missing members of his family. A very human imitation of the cackling of hens drew him to the woodshed from which his setting of eggs had vanished, and when he peered in through the door for the cause of the loud and enthusiastic chorus of cackles, he beheld his wife, all the children, and even the dog perched on a beam overhead, making as much racket as they could. It was impossible to keep his face straight, and he burst into a hearty laugh. That was all they wanted, and the whole family trooped gaily into the house for the belated dinner.

Nor was the domestic calm ever any more seriously ruffled than on the occasion just mentioned, for the professor and his wife were very much in love with each other to the end of their days, and dwelt in rare communion of spirit. He writes to her during an absence from home, "If you could come home to-day, how happy should I be. I am daily finding out more and more (what I knew very well before) that you are the most intelligent and agreeable woman in the whole circle of my acquaintance." She replies in the same vein, "If you were not already my dearly beloved husband, I should certainly fall in love with you."

Next in line to her twin daughters, came two sons, Henry Ellis and Frederick William, born in 1838 and 1840. While they were very small the State of Ohio suffered a near-famine, due to the blocking of the river with ice, so navigation was impossible for some weeks, and supplies were so difficult to obtain that only the rich could afford even the bare necessities of life. The Stowes, like many other families, lived on black bread and bacon for several months, and this diet still further impaired Mrs. Stowe's health, which was very poor during these strenuous years. She taxed her strength to the uttermost in helping prepare for a family reunion at her father's house at about this time, and the excitement of meeting brothers and sisters whom she had not seen for years only buoyed her temporarily.

Eleven of Dr. Beecher's children were home for this reunion, and strange as it may seem, it was the first time some of these children had ever met each other! Three different sons occupied their father's pulpit during this celebration. But when the hardships and excitement were over, Mrs. Stowe felt compelled to go away for a brief rest, and returned to Hartford for a short vacation. On the way home, she visited her brother William in Batavia.

The winter which followed this brief breathing spell was a hard one at Walnut Hills. Typhoid fever broke out at the Seminary, the Beecher house was turned into a hospital, and the whole family laid everything else aside to nurse the sick. Hardly had they recovered from this siege when the shocking news reached them that George Beecher, one of Mrs. Stowe's brothers, had accidentally shot himself and was dead. While the whole family was sorrowing over the loss of this loved one, Mrs. Stowe's fifth child, Georgiana May, was born. The Seminary was struggling desperately to keep open, there was no money to pay the salaries of its instructors, the students were more poverty-stricken than ever before, and finally Professor Stowe was obliged to go East in an attempt to raise money for the institution.

Mrs. Stowe was overworked and so worried over the ill health of her little flock that her own health gave way at last and she was bundled off to Dr. Wesselhoeft's water-cure at Brattleboro, Vermont, where she remained for eleven months. She demurred against going at this time, saying they had no money to pay for such expensive treatments, but afterwards said she should have had more faith in God's goodness, for the money came in from unknown friends who had heard of the sickness in the professor's family and wanted to help in any way they could. Mrs. Stowe seemed much benefited by her water cure, and returned to Walnut Hills very hopefully in the summer of 1847, only to suffer a very trying siege of neuralgia in her eyes which almost incapacitated her for work of any kind.

A sixth child, Samuel Charles, was born the following January, and after that her eyes, as well as her general health improved. But the anxiety of these struggles and adversities had proved too much for the professor, and shortly after this wee son was born, he, himself, was forced to go to Vermont to the water cure, where he remained for fifteen months. During his absence, Cincinnati was stricken with an epidemic of cholera which was unusually fatal to its victims. Hardly a home in the city escaped the scourge. Professor Stowe, learning of the plague, wanted to return to his family, but his wife opposed him so strongly because of his bad health, that he remained at Brattleboro, although his youngest child was taken with the dread disease, and after a partial recovery, suffered a relapse, which proved fatal. The oldest boy, Henry, was also ill with it, but did not die. Those were indeed dark days for the poor mother, alone with her little children. But with her unswerving faith in her God, she bore her burden bravely, and while her own heart was crushed with her heavy sorrow, she went about doing all she could for other stricken homes.

Professor Stowe returned to Cincinnati from his long absence with the determination to go East to live. He had been with the Lane Seminary for seventeen years, but several calls had come to him from different Eastern institutions, and he decided to accept the position offered him by Bowdoin College, his Alma Mater. He could not at once leave Cincinnati, as his successor must be found to fill the place he would leave vacant, but after much discussion, Mrs. Stowe concluded to take three of the children and go to Brunswick, Maine, to make ready for the rest of the family when the professor should be at liberty to come.

They had a long, tedious journey, for trains were not as common then as now, and part of the trip must still be made by boat. There was furniture to be bought, a house to be found and put in order, and countless unexpected tasks to be looked after, in the midst of a cold, northeastern storm that continued for days until every one of her brood was on edge and she herself just ready to die from weariness and disgust at the weather. But in spite of all her handicaps and discouragements, she found many of her adventures funny, and laughed heartily over them with family and friends.

The kitchen in the dreary old house they had to live in when they first reached Brunswick had no sink, cistern or other water near at hand. But the resourceful Mrs. Stowe bought two hogsheads, with the idea of putting them down cellar in place of a real cistern, when to her dismay she discovered that the only cellar door in the house was in the kitchen, and was a mean, narrow affair, leading down a steep, almost perpendicular flight of stairs. Not to be discouraged at this state of affairs, nor forced to give up this desire of her heart, she set herself to think out some solution of the difficulty, and decided that the hogsheads must come to pieces and be set up again in the cellar. Arrived at this decision, she was fortunate enough to find an honest Yankee cooper who actually carried out this idea one summer forenoon, and put her novel cisterns in working order, to the utter amazement of the natives, who thought it could not be done satisfactorily.

But when it came to getting a sink installed, Mrs. Stowe encountered greater difficulties, for the only carpenter available was her own landlord, who valued his leisure more than his income, and did not think it was ever necessary to hurry. Though capable of doing almost anything, he contented himself with doing next to nothing, and it was weeks before Mrs. Stowe could persuade him to finish that much-needed article of furniture.

On the 8th of July, following their advent in Brunswick, the seventh and last child was born in the Stowe family. He was named Charles Ellis. During the months preceding his birth, in addition to the many tasks Mrs. Stowe found to occupy her time in getting ready the new home for her flock, she had taught school for the benefit of her own children an hour each day, and had read to them two hours every evening. Naturally, she found little time to write. But after the newest baby had come, she set to work to prepare the articles and stories she had promised newspaper editors. She says of her literary efforts at this time, "Nothing but deadly determination enables me ever to write; it is rowing against wind and tide." But at this period of her life when she was perhaps the very busiest with household matters and family anxieties, she began the greatest work she ever did; in fact, the greatest work any American woman ever did.

During the month of December, while her husband was still teaching at Lane Seminary, she wrote him for information she wished to use in getting up an article for the *Era,* on the capabilities of the liberated blacks for taking care of themselves. Earlier in the year, on her way to the new Brunswick home, she had stopped ten days in Boston to visit her brother Edward, then preaching in that city. Daniel Webster's Seventh of March speech was still the topic of the day. That this great man, idolized by the nation, should advocate the Fugitive Slave Law was a cruel blow to all the Beechers, and from this time on, Mrs. Stowe devoted more and more of her time to the cause of the slave. But it was after Mrs. Stowe had reached Brunswick that her brother Edward's wife wrote her, "Hattie, if I could use a pen as you can, I would write something to make this whole nation feel what an accursed thing slavery is." When the letter was read in the midst of the family circle in

Brunswick, Mrs. Stowe was so wrought up by it that she sprang to her feet and cried, "I will write something. I will if I live!" Thus it was that she began writing "Uncle Tom's Cabin" that same winter, and the next April the first chapter of the book, destined to become famous the world over, was sent to the editor of the *National Era* in Washington.

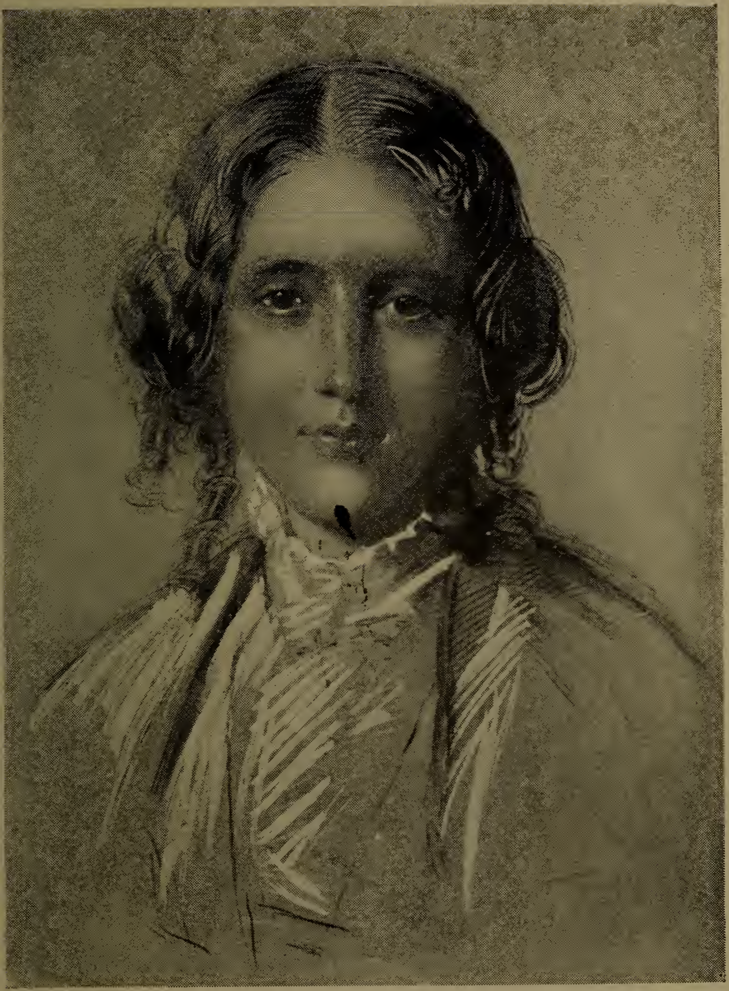
VI

AS A WRITER

Harriet Beecher's first ventures as a writer were made to amuse herself, and with no thought of ever becoming an author. Indeed, her early ambition was to be a great poet, and when but a child of thirteen she wrote a lengthy drama in blank verse, called "Cleon," that being the name of an historical character about whom she had been studying in school. Cleon was a Greek lord who lived during Nero's time and was Nero's friend. He worshiped Greek gods until he heard about Christ and became a Christian. This brought down the wrath of the wicked king upon his head, and Cleon was subjected to every conceivable torture to make him renounce his faith, which he steadfastly refused to do.

Harriet became so engrossed in her theme that she forgot everything else, neglected her studies, and actually filled several books with her verses. But when Catherine saw her complete absorption in this thing, she put a stop to it, saying that the girl was wasting her time and must discipline her mind by studying "Butler's Analogy." Consequently she gave up her idea of writing poetry and settled down to such hard study that in a very short time she was set to instructing a class of girls her own age in this "Analogy." She managed to keep herself prepared a chapter in advance of her pupils, and in this way began her teaching while she was still a pupil herself. Thus Catherine's interference effectually checked the younger sister's youthful ambition, and when she took up her pen to write again, it was prose she selected to express her thoughts.

Soon after the Beechers went to live in the spacious house at Walnut Hills, which they came to love so dearly, Harriet was invited to become a member of a literary club, organized by her uncle, Samuel Foote, and some old New England friends then living in Cincinnati, many of whom later became famous. This club was called the "Semi-colon Club," and they explained their choice of name by saying that "Colon" was the Spanish name for



HARRIET BEECHER
Portrait made before her marriage to Mr. Stowe

Columbus. If the discoverer of a continent could be called a colon, then the discoverers of a new pastime ought to be allowed the privilege of calling themselves "semi-colons." The new pastime was, of course, the exchange of ideas at their weekly meetings, and Samuel Foote drew about him a host of intellectual as well as genial spirits, who made the gatherings most interesting and helpful to all the members, but especially to such eager, inquiring minds as Harriet Beecher's was, and she let her fancy run riot in the new field this club opened up to her.

Her first literary flight after she joined the ranks of the "Semi-colons," was a letter written in the exaggerated, pompous style of Bishop Butler. Her next effort was a satire on the modern uses of language. This was so well received by the Club that the editor of the *Western Magazine* asked permission to publish it in that periodical. She was so well pleased with the result of her first attempts that she became more ambitious and planned to play a practical joke on the rest of the Club by writing a series of letters purporting to come from a group of country people, who were intellectual, refined and agreeable. These letters were written after a plan adopted by the Beecher family when its members became so widely scattered that individual letters to each person would have made the family correspondence a heavy tax on time and energy. Catherine, perhaps, would start the ball rolling by writing a letter to Harriet. She, after reading it, would add a letter from her own pen and send it on to the married sister Mary, who, in turn, would put in her contribution of news and mail it to Edward; and so on until the accumulation of letters had been the rounds of that large family circle, and every member knew what the other members were doing.

When Harriet had written the first one of her series, she smoked it to make it look yellowed with age, and tore the edges to give it the appearance of having been much read. She imitated the postmark by smearing the ink, sealed the letter with sealing-wax, and broke it open again, just as a real letter would have been broken open. Finally she inclosed it in another envelope and addressed it to Mrs. Samuel E. Foote. Then she wrote her cousin Elizabeth Foote about the joke, so she would be on the lookout for the letter which arrived in due time and completely fooled the whole family, even the world-wise Uncle Samuel himself, who thought it was a real letter of years past.

About this time the *Western Magazine* offered a prize of fifty dollars for the best short story submitted to its editors, and Harriet won the prize with a story she called "A New England Sketch," but afterwards renamed "Uncle Tim" and incorporated in the volume, "Mayflower," published by Harper Brothers in 1843. At first she seemed reluctant to sign her own name to her writings, and was delighted when her productions were attributed to Catherine's pen; but as time went on she laid aside such scruples and took great pleasure in her literary achievements.

Before her marriage, she wrote merely for the pleasure she found in expressing her thoughts, but afterwards it became a stern necessity, for she married a man whose only wealth lay in his learning; and as the years brought a large family of children into the home, she could not make ends meet with only his meager salary to depend upon; so when a new mattress or a carpet was needed, she laid aside her household cares long enough to compose a "piece," as she called her stories, and these pieces always seemed to bring in the necessary funds to replenish the furnishings of her home. With the first money she earned in this manner, she bought a featherbed and pillows!

She was never a student of literature, and many of her works have been severely criticized because of their lack of style; yet their very lack is sometimes an added charm to the simply-told, every-day happenings which she chose to write about. Her great sympathy for humanity inspired most of her efforts, and that is why they are so successful.

She was a good housekeeper and naturally found little leisure for literary flights after her babies came, but fortunately she composed rapidly, wrote swiftly, and did very little revising; so she accomplished wonders in the few minutes she snatched from household drudgery when her faithful friend, Anna, was minding the children. And when the stories did need copying, she usually found some friend or relative ready to take the task off her hands.

Her sister Catherine tells in a droll way of an incident she witnessed while visiting Harriet, which shows how the busy mother wrote and managed the house at the same time. Catherine found her in the nursery tending one baby and watching the twins, then just able to walk, and when the older sister reminded her of a serial she was writing for the *Souvenir* and asked for the next instalment that very day, Mrs. Stowe told her it must wait until housecleaning was over and the baby had cut his teeth. Catherine thought the housecleaning could wait, and as it would take months for the baby to cut all his teeth there was no good in waiting for him, either. Still Mrs. Stowe demurred, saying she had a new girl in the kitchen and it was baking day, but Catherine was firm, and brushed away the excuses as fast as they were made. "You know that you can write anywhere, and anyhow," she told her younger sister. "Just take your seat at the kitchen table with your writing weapons, and while you superintend Mina, fill up the odd snatches of time with the labors of your pen.

"I carried my point. In ten minutes she

was seated; a table with flour, rolling-pin, ginger and lard on one side; a dresser with eggs, pork, and beans and various cooking utensils on the other, near her an oven heating, and beside her a dark-skinned nymph waiting for orders.

" 'Here, Harriet,' said I, 'you can write on this atlas in your lap; no matter how the writing looks, I will copy it.'

" 'Well, well,' she said, with a resigned sort of an amused look. 'Mina, you may do what I told you, while I write a few minutes, till it is time to mold up the bread. Where is the inkstand?'

" 'Here it is, on top of the tea-kettle, close by,' said I.

"At this Mina giggled, and we both laughed to see her merriment at our literary proceedings.

"I began to overhaul the portfolio to find the right sheet. 'Here it is,' said I, 'here is Frederick sitting by Ellen glancing at her brilliant face and saying something about "guardian angel," and all that—you remember?'

" 'Yes, yes,' she said, falling into a muse as she attempted to recover the thread of her story.

" 'Ma'am, shall I put the pork on the top of the beans?' asked Mina.

" 'Come, come,' said Harriet, laughing. 'You see how it is. Mina is a new hand and cannot do anything without me to direct her. We must give up the writing for to-day.'

" 'No, no, let us have another trial. You can dictate as easily as you can write. Come, I can set the baby in this clothes basket and give him some mischief or another to keep him quiet; you shall dictate and I will write. Now this is the place where you left off; you were describing the scene between Ellen and her lover: the last sentence was, "Borne down by the tide of agony she leaned her head on her hands, the tears streamed through her fingers, and her whole frame shook with convulsive sobs." What next?'

" 'Mina, pour a little milk into this pear-hash!' said Harriet.

" 'Come,' said I, ' "The tears streamed through her fingers, and her whole frame shook with convulsive sobs." What next?'

"Harriet paused, and looked musingly out of the window as she turned her mind to her story. 'You may write now,' said she, and she dictated as follows:—

" 'Her lover wept with her, nor dared again to touch the point so sacredly guarded.—Mina, roll that crust a little thinner.—He spoke in soothing tones.—Mina, poke the coals in the oven.'

" 'Here,' said I, 'let me direct Mina about these matters and write a while yourself.' "

Then Catherine continues:

"Harriet took the pen and patiently set herself to work. For a while my culinary knowledge and skill were proof to all Mina's investigating inquiries, and they did not fail till I saw two pages completed.

" 'You have done bravely,' said I, as I read over the manuscript; 'now you must direct Mina awhile. Meantime dictate, and I will write.'

"Never was there a more docile literary lady than my sister. Without a word of objection she followed my request.

" 'I am ready to write,' said I. 'The last sentence was, "What is this life to one who has suffered as I have?" What next?'

" 'Shall I put in the brown, or the white bread first?' asked Mina.

" 'The brown first,' said Harriet.

" ' "What is this life to one who has suffered as I have?" ' said I.

"Harriet brushed the flour off her apron, and sat down for a moment in a muse. Then she dictated as follows:—

" 'Under the breaking of my heart I have borne up. I have borne up under all that tries a woman, — but this thought, — oh, Henry!'

" 'Ma'am, shall I put ginger in this pumpkin?' queried Mina.

" 'No, you may let that alone just now,' replied Harriet. She then proceeded:

" 'I know my duty to my children, I see the hour must come. You must take them, Henry; they are my last earthly comfort.'

" 'Ma'am, what shall I do with these egg-shells, and all this truck here?' interrupted Mina.

" 'Put them in the pail by you,' answered Harriet.

" ' "They are my last earthly comfort," said I. 'What next?'

"She continued to dictate,—

" 'You must take them away. It may be—perhaps it must be—that I shall soon follow, but the breaking heart of a wife still pleads, "a little longer, a little longer." '

" 'How much longer must the gingerbread stay in?' asked Mina.

" 'Five minutes,' said Harriet.

" ' "A little longer, a little longer," ' I repeated in a dolorous tone, and we burst out into a laugh.

"Thus we went on, cooking, writing, nursing, and laughing, till I finally accomplished my object. The piece was finished and copied, and the next day sent to the editor."

It is true that Mrs. Stowe often wrote her stories while superintending the housework, but she did not advocate such a plan for authors. In fact, when her genius became an acknowledged fact, and her own husband was urging her to devote her life to it, she wrote him while away on a vacation, that if she were to produce acceptable articles, she must have a room of her own where she could go and be quiet and undisturbed. She suggested a certain room in the house, and proposed setting up a stove there so she could have her plants and be cosy while she wrote. She had bought a cheap carpet for the floor, even as she wrote of her plans. But she knew Professor Stowe would never object. He would heartily indorse any plan that would give his talented wife the opportunity she craved. So she got her room and the quiet she found so essential, and no doubt found it possible to write better stories than ever before.

There certainly is no sameness about her tales. She wrote on every subject under the sun, books of nature for youthful readers, in which she relates the experiences of the Nutcracker Lodge, of the Robin family, of the humming-bird that was blown in at the window one windy day, of the squirrels and magpies, and of the katydids who refused to associate with the crickets because they were black; novels, tales of foreign travel, romances, character sketches, slavery stories, and text-books, all dripped from her versatile pen with apparent ease.

Early in life she conceived the idea that she had a particular mission in the world to perform, and thought she had found it when the plot of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" unfolded in her mind; so she worked at it tirelessly while it grew in magnitude until it became the stupendous production that was one of the chief causes of our Civil War.

VII

AS AUTHOR OF "UNCLE TOM'S CABIN"

We have already seen how stirred Mrs. Stowe was over the Fugitive Slave Law, which was enacted for the purpose of giving slave owners the privilege of pursuing and bringing back runaway slaves from any state in the Union, and also how her sister-in-law's letter roused in this gifted writer the desire to write something which would stir the public to a realization of what a menace to society slavery really was. But there were other reasons which caused her to write her wonderful book, "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

When she was but a girl, her aunt, Mary Hubbard, who had married a planter of the West Indies, returned to her New England home to live, unable to remain on her husband's plantation any longer because she could not endure the sights she was daily compelled to witness among the miserable slaves of the

Islands. The Beecher children were greatly impressed with the terrible tales she told them, and Harriet never forgot her aunt's agony of spirit over the great wrong which she could not right nor even lessen, however much she tried.

A few years later, while she was teaching in Catherine's school in Hartford, she visited a Kentucky slave plantation with another teacher of that school. Here she saw only the best side of slavery. There was little to shock or disturb her. The negroes were well cared for and seemed happy enough. Harriet apparently gave little heed to what she saw about the plantation, yet years later when her friend, the teacher, was reading "Uncle Tom's Cabin," she recognized the description of the Shelby farm as that of the plantation they had visited that day.

For seventeen years Mrs. Stowe lived in Ohio, just across the river from Kentucky, which was a slave state, and she not only had seen runaway slaves, but had aided them herself in their dash for freedom. In fact, what was called the "underground railroad" ran through her own home. This underground railroad was a chain of houses of people known to be friendly to the black race, and with these families the escaped slaves knew they would be safe until they could press on to the next station on this peculiar railway system. In Cincinnati there was quite a settlement of free negroes, among whom runaways often took refuge, until the enactment of the Fugitive Slave Law made it impossible for them to find safety anywhere in the United States. Mrs. Stowe often had colored help from this settlement, and from this source learned much that made her heartsick over the plight of this unhappy race. Many times she taught black children in her own home with her own children because that was the only means they had of receiving an education, and Mrs. Stowe believed in uplifting the black man as well as in giving him his freedom. She always practiced what she preached.

Her father and six brothers were ministers of the Gospel, and every man of them was bitterly opposed to slavery and had the courage to attack it from the pulpit. It was a ticklish thing in those days for a preacher to come out openly on such a question, and many a man who really believed the system was wrong, kept silent rather than antagonize his congregation; but not so with the Beechers. Henry Ward was at this time pastor of Plymouth Church in Brooklyn, and many slaves owed their freedom to this man, who, by his wonderful eloquence was able to rouse his people to such intense feeling that time after time they raised money enough to redeem some fugitive who had taken refuge in the shadow of this church.

One night Henry Ward came to visit his sister, through a blinding snowstorm, and they sat up all night discussing this grave question which was menacing the very life of their country. She told him she intended to write a story directed against the evil, and he promised that he would scatter the book over the face of the earth as thick as the leaves of Vallombrosa!

While Mrs. Stowe was still living at her father's house in Cincinnati, her brother Charles was studying for the ministry, but could not reconcile his own beliefs with his father's Calvinistic theology; and at last, despairing of ever being able to make a preacher of himself, he accepted a position as clerk for a wholesale commission house in New Orleans. This company did business with cotton plantations of the Red River district, and here Charles saw the worst side of the slave trade. On one of his trips he met a heartless trader who boasted that he had hardened his huge fists in knocking down "niggers." From her brother's description of the man Mrs. Stowe drew her picture of Legree, the slayer of Uncle Tom. From this same source she also got the incident of the slave woman who cast herself into the river from the boat, preferring to drown rather than be sold to a cotton plantation where such terrible conditions existed for the hapless negro.

During Mrs. Stowe's young womanhood, a wealthy, refined Louisiana family came to Ohio and settled near Cincinnati, bringing with them a number of negro servants whom they liberated. Among these freed slaves was a queer, impish little girl who attended a small mission Sunday School where Mrs. Stowe was teaching, and furnished a good deal of amusement by her antics. This child has been faithfully reproduced in Topsy.

In her own family she had as a servant a young woman whose son is the original of little Harry. One day after the Fugitive Slave Law had become a law of the land, this young mother learned that her former master was in the city hunting for her. In her terror she flew to Mrs. Stowe with her story, and that night in a raging storm, Professor Stowe and Henry Ward Beecher drove the woman and her child to a lonely farmhouse owned by a man named Van Sant, who also conducted a station on the underground railroad; and here she found shelter until such time as it would be safe for her to go on to Canada. This scene Mrs. Stowe has reproduced in her description of Eliza's flight, as well as the true incident of the crossing of the Ohio River on floating cakes of ice. Mrs. Stowe met and talked with the man who had helped the fleeing young negress up the Ohio bank after her perilous trip, and from him obtained all the little details which she later wove into her story.

A friend who had witnessed the sale of slaves at auction, described the pitiful scenes of mothers parted from their children, of husbands torn from their wives, and of educated, refined mulattoes or quadroons sold to cotton planters for work on the southern plantations where slave life was of the lowest type. She learned from eye witnesses how the black man was punished, even to being killed by unfeeling and cruel masters, who boasted that they had no use for sick niggers, but "turned them in with the crops." Thus from various sources the author of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" garnered her material, but always she verified it before introducing it into the book which was destined to shake this country from border to border. Facts were what she was seeking, and facts were what she got,—overwhelming, dismaying, terrible facts!

One day, sitting at communion in church, she had a vision of the death of Uncle Tom; and hurrying home, she wrote the chapter, with no thought whatever of the book as a whole. Calling her children to her, she read what she had written, and they wept bitterly, so clear was the picture she had sketched with her pen. Her ten- and twelve-year-old sons clenched their fists and cried, "Oh, mamma, slavery is the most cruel thing in the world!"

Professor Stowe was absent from home at the time this was written, but some time later he came across the scribbled sheets in a drawer where his wife had tucked them for safe keeping, and she found him with tears streaming down his face as he read the words so hastily scrawled on scraps of brown paper saved from the groceries she had bought at the store. It was his suggestion that she make a serial story of it with the death scene as a climax, and she wrote the editor of the *National Era,* saying that she was contemplating writing such a serial and asking if he cared to make use of it. He promptly spoke for it, and it appeared a few chapters at a time for nearly a year before the whole book was done.

Never in the true sense of the word was Mrs. Stowe or her husband an Abolitionist. She heard a great deal of the abolitionist doctrine preached, and witnessed the anti-abolitionist riots in Cincinnati, which at one time even threatened Lane Seminary because this institution housed so many abolitionist students. These disgraceful disturbances were caused primarily because Dr. Bailey published his anti-slavery paper in Cincinnati, and slave traders just across the border resented his attitude. Twice, mobs led by slaveholders from the Kentucky side of the river, attacked his office, destroyed its contents and set fire to the building. Not content with venting their spite in this manner, they raided the shacks of the free black people and drove them from the city, burning their houses and abusing the frightened negroes.

During this time Henry Ward Beecher carried loaded pistols with him for days, and his grim countenance, as he made these ready for use, told his sister for the first time just how serious the anti-slavery situation was becoming. The members of the Beecher household slept many a night with arms in the house and a great bell ready to summon help from the Seminary students in case the mob should come to search their premises for fugitive slaves. But fortunately, Walnut Hills, where the Seminary was located, was two miles from town, and the poor, hilly roads, with their deep and clay-like mud, proved too great an obstacle for the rioters to overcome; so these good people were never molested.

At length, Dr. Bailey gave up the struggle in Cincinnati, and went to Washington to establish his paper there, where by his courtesy, courage and honesty, he made friends among even the most outspoken slaveholders of the south. But all anti-slavery advocates were not as fortunate as Dr. Bailey. Lovejoy, who attempted to edit a similar paper in Alton, Illinois, was shot to death by the infuriated mob who destroyed his office and set fire to his house. At first it was reported that Edward Beecher, who had been a great friend of Lovejoy's, had been killed at the same time; but this proved to be a false rumor.

Mrs. Stowe had no sympathy, of course, with these rioters, nor did she advocate the violent methods the Abolitionists proposed for ridding the country of the slave traffic. She did not believe the Abolitionists would receive her book favorably, because it was not as radical as the doctrines they preached; but she confidently expected that the South would accept it with applause because she thought she had treated the subject with such fairness. To her utter surprise and genuine consternation, the South rose in a mass to denounce her, while the Abolitionists hailed the product of her pen with wild enthusiasm. William Lloyd Garrison, in commenting on this book in a letter he wrote to her personally, remarks that since her story had made its appearance, the slaveholders of the South had ceased to bother him with their denunciations, but had directed all their venom toward the author of "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

Originally Mrs. Stowe intended the serial to run about three months, but as a matter of fact, it grew to such magnitude that it continued from June 5, 1851 to April, 1852. The month before the last instalment appeared in the *National Era,* it was published in book form by John P. Jewett, of Boston, who made overtures for its publication in this form long before it was complete as a serial. Mr. Jewett, however, felt called upon to protest at the length of the story, saying that it would be too long for one volume, and being an unpopular subject, was apt not to succeed when it did appear on the market. Mrs. Stowe replied that she could not help the length of the story, for it had made itself, and she must continue to write it down until it was done. Mr. Jewett offered her ten per cent of all sales, or half the profit with half the risk, if the book should be a failure. Mrs. Stowe's business advisor was Philip Greeley, a member of Congress, and he counseled her to accept the ten per cent royalty, agreeing with Mr. Jewett that the subject was too unpopular to allow of any great success, and besides, a book written by a woman stood little chance of an extensive sale at best.

When the volume finally made its appearance, Professor Stowe carried one of the first copies they received from the publisher to the railroad station where the Congressman was about to board a train for Washington, and this very calm and collected New Englander, who had so poor an opinion of woman's ability as an author, immediately opened the volume and began to read as soon as his train pulled out of the depot. To his profound amazement and deepest chagrin, he found the tears streaming down his cheeks as the simple tale unfolded itself before him; and being unable to check their flow, he left the train at Springfield, engaged a room at a hotel, and sat up far into the night until he had finished this novel, of whose success he had been so doubtful.

Three thousand copies were sold the first day the book appeared on the market, and over three hundred thousand in a year. As a serial, the author received but three hundred dollars for it. In book form it brought her considerably more than ten thousand dollars. She had never given the money part of it any great thought, saying only that she hoped it would bring her enough to buy a new gown with. When the first check for ten thousand dollars reached her,—royalties for the first three months' sale,—she passed it without comment to the Professor. He gazed at it in astonishment for some moments, then gasped, "Why, Hattie, that is more money than I ever saw in my life!"

When the book was nearly finished, Mrs. Stowe's strength suddenly left her, and she suffered a great reaction mentally as well as physically. In her discouragement she wondered if anyone would ever read what she had written. How little she realized that this heart-thrilling tale of hers was to be a contributing cause to the greatest war our nation had ever known!

The story as a whole has often been criticized because it has no literary style; but however that may be, it had the greatest circulation of any book in America except the Bible, and has had almost as many translations. There have been no less than sixty-six translations, not counting abridgments or dramas. Because the United States had no copyright laws at that time, and Mrs. Stowe failed to secure a copyright in England, she unfortunately received but a small percent of the money she should have had from the various editions of her book, and no compensation whatever for its dramatization, though it is doubtful if any other story has ever been so often played on the public stage.

In commenting on the popularity of the author, Dr. O. W. Holmes has said:

> "Briton and Frenchman, Swede and Dane,
> Turk, Spaniard, Tartar of Ukraine,
> Hidalgo, Cossack, Cadi,
> High Dutchman and low Dutchman, too,
> The Russian serf, the Polish Jew,
> Arab, Armenian, and Mantchoo,
> Would shout, 'We know the lady.'"

Most of the book was written while the Stowes were living in Brunswick, Maine, but just before it was completed the Professor decided to accept a position offered him in the Theological Seminary of Andover, Massachusetts, and they moved again. There being no available house large enough for their family, the school authorities gave them permission to make use of an abandoned stone building, which had formerly been a workshop; and they took possession at once, finding great delight in remodeling the structure to suit their needs. Thereafter the place was always referred to as the Stone Cabin, and it became a great gathering place for learned men of the day.

VIII

AS A FAMOUS WOMAN

From a modest, retiring little mother one day, to the author of the world's best seller the next, from obscurity to fame almost overnight,—such was the experience of Mrs. Stowe, and it is no wonder that she was amazed at the position she had achieved unsought. Such a modest disposition as hers could scarcely be other than amazed. She had looked for neither fame nor money. Her one object in writing "Uncle Tom's Cabin" was to open the eyes of the nation to the dreadful injustice of the system of slavery, to rouse the people to the menace it had become to the home life of our land.

She knew slavery was wrong, and therefore she was its enemy. She recognized the fact that there were good masters as well as bad, and was willing even to concede that probably the good masters were in the majority, but as long as the system allowed families to be separated one from another and sold into different states, as long as there were no laws that would deal justice to the black as well as to the white, as long as marriage among the slaves was not regarded as sacred, as long as it was possible for a master to kill his slaves if he liked, without retribution in the courts of our country, Mrs. Stowe felt that the system was a curse to our land, and that Christian people ought to rise up and rid the nation of that blot on its fair name.

But she was not a follower of William Lloyd Garrison. She did not believe it was necessary to disrupt the nation in order to free the country of this curse. She did not believe in nor advocate the secession of the southern states. She was a staunch patriot in the deepest and best sense of the word. She thought slavery should be abolished, but really believed some peaceable settlement could be made between the North and the South. The idea that these two factions must go to war to settle their differences was farthest from her thoughts. Some action must be taken in order to free the slaves, but if Christian people could just be brought to see the injustice of the whole system, she knew that slavery was doomed. The fact that Christian people owned slaves themselves and saw no harm in it was what made it possible for slavery to continue to flourish in our land.

But neither North nor South stopped to analyze her intentions. The North embraced her as an Abolitionist; the South repudiated her as an enemy. She was overwhelmed by an avalanche of criticism, both good and bad, that swept over her as soon as the nation had recovered its breath after reading her story. To her, "Uncle Tom's Cabin" was a sermon directed against a great moral evil. She had not written it for the sake of the plot, she did not recognize its dramatic power, she had never once tried to give it a literary style. But she had written the truth as she saw it, and now indignant slaveholders denounced it as untrue. This was more than she could stand, so she promptly began to compile her "Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin," which was to contain all the facts and documents on which the story was founded.

Long before she began actual work on "Uncle Tom's Cabin" itself, she had busied herself in collecting authentic material, until she thought she had evidence enough to prove her statements, and yet it kept pouring in upon her from all sides while she wrote the many chapters, till she was shocked almost beyond endurance at the evils she saw uncovered. Sometimes she was so overwhelmed by the dreadful tales that came to her ears, that it seemed as if she could not live to finish the book. But the thought of her mission that must be performed kept her up and gave her strength to write. She verified all the incidents she made use of, which she had not witnessed personally, and read reports of legal investigations. These sources of information she now proceeded to put into book form that the whole world might know where she had obtained her material and be convinced of the truth of the things she wrote.

She made friends as well as enemies through this book, and it was balm to her hurt soul to think people wanted to see her because she was its author. While she was in New York aiding escaped slaves, she had the opportunity of hearing Jenny Lind, the famous singer; and her delight overshadowed everything else for the moment. Mr. Howard, publisher and friend of the Stowes, undertook to procure tickets for the performance, when he learned how much Mrs. Stowe wanted to hear the singer, but was told by Mr. Goldschmidt, Jenny Lind's husband, that the house was sold out. In expressing his regret at this bit of information, Mr. Howard chanced to mention the author's name. Instantly Mr. Goldschmidt demanded to know if it could be the Mrs. Stowe who had written "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and immediately set about to get tickets regardless of the fact that the house was sold out. Taking his hat he left the theater, promising to be back directly with the necessary bits of pasteboard. Upon his return he handed Mr. Howard an envelope containing two complimentary tickets for the best seats in the house, addressed to Mrs. Stowe in Jenny Lind's own handwriting. Mrs. Stowe never forgot this occasion, but writes that "the affair was a bewildering dream of sweetness and beauty."

Four months after the publication of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," Mrs. Stowe received her first check for ten thousand dollars, which not only permitted her to do many things for home and family that she had never been able to do before, but also gave her an opportunity to go abroad, a thing she had long wished to do, in order that she might meet distinguished people who were in sympathy with the cause which she had taken up with a determination never to lay aside again until it was won.

Many famous writers in England and France had written her, praising her book and expressing sympathy for the anti-slavery cause. Among these were George Eliot, George Sand, Madame Belloc, Lord Carlisle, Earl of Shaftesbury, Archbishop Whately and the Reverend Charles Kingsley. So it was with a feeling of joy that she received an invitation from the Anti-slavery Society of Glasgow to visit Scotland, for it would give her the opportunity of meeting the people she desired, and her royalties from her book made it possible to accept the invitation the spring of 1853. They were living at this time in Andover, Massachusetts, where Professor Stowe had been called to teach in the Andover Theological Seminary, and the Professor accompanied her on her first trip abroad.

So little heed had Mrs. Stowe paid to the fame that had crowned her literary efforts, that she was wholly unprepared for the reception she met across the sea. The wharf was crowded with people eager to catch a glimpse of her when she landed at Liverpool, and everywhere she went she found the same crowds of enthusiastic admirers, waiting to do homage to the author of so great a book. She said it reminded her of the passage in the Bible, "What went ye out to see? A reed shaken with the wind?" And she was sure the people, after having once seen her, must have felt that God had indeed chosen the weak things of this world to do his great work. She has described herself as "a little bit of a woman, just as thin and dry as a pinch of snuff." She never had the least bit of conceit, for when her brother Edward wrote that he hoped her head would not be turned by the praises sung by the universe, she remarked that she saw no cause for being conceited, for she had not written "Uncle Tom's Cabin," that God Himself was the author and she had but set down what he had told her.

She had looked forward to her trip abroad as a vacation, but found it crammed full of receptions in her own honor, and we find her wishing that she had two bodies so one might be resting while the other was keeping some of the many engagements that became part of her daily program all the while she was gone. The most notable of these receptions was one given her by the Duke and Duchess of Sutherland at Stafford House, in London. On this occasion Lord Shaftesbury read an address from the women of England to the women of America, urging them to abolish slavery from their shores. This was signed by 562,448 women of every rank in England, and it required twenty-six thick volumes to hold all the signatures. This set, beautifully bound in morocco, and packed in a solid oak case, was presented to Mrs. Stowe, with a recommendation from Lord Carlisle that she present it to the women of America in any way she saw fit. It was exhibited at the Boston Anti-slavery Fair, and there still remains as a monument to the sentiment kindled by "Uncle Tom's Cabin." Mrs. Stowe was much impressed by this show of feeling from across the sea, but remembering that slavery was forced onto the American colonists in the face of their opposition, by the mother country, England, she thought the time was not yet ripe for a reply, and it was not until years later that her famous address to the women of England was written.

While visiting England, she was presented with many beautiful gifts, to show the appreciation of the people for the work she was doing in America, to further the cause of the slave. In Scotland, a penny offering, amounting to a thousand gold sovereigns was presented to her on a silver salver. Ireland gave her a bogwood casket, gold lined, and engraved with the national emblems, containing a substantial offering for the cause of the slave. At Surrey Chapel in London, she was presented with a silver inkstand representing Religion, Bible in hand, giving liberty to the slave. Some school children gave her a gold pen, and the only speech she made in public was in accepting their gift. On all other occasions, the handsome, genial Professor had made her responses for her, and they were always well received.

The most significant of all the gifts tendered her was a bracelet presented at the Stafford House meeting in London. It was made of ten links and represented a slave's shackle. One of the links bore the inscription, "March 25, 1807," the date slavery was abolished in England, and "August 1, 1834," the date it was abolished in the English colonies. The clasp bore the number "562,448," the number of signatures appended to the Earl of Shaftesbury's address. It was suggested that Mrs. Stowe have engraved on one of the other links the date of the abolition of slavery in the United States, but she expressed doubts as to her living long enough to witness that event. Had anyone prophesied at that time that slaves would be emancipated in America ten years later, she would have scouted the possibility, but she did live to see the day of the black man's freedom, and engraved the date upon this bracelet with great satisfaction.

It was a delight to Mrs. Stowe to visit the places she had read about in England and Scotland, and her one great grief was that her health would not permit her to visit all the historical places and see all the people she had wanted to. She made many lasting friendships during this visit with such people as the Duchess of Sutherland, Lady Byron, Ruskin, Dickens, George Eliot, and Macaulay, and during the winter that followed, she wrote two volumes called "Sunny Memories" which chronicle her experiences of that first brief tour.

In 1856 Mrs. Stowe returned a second time to England. Her main object was to secure a copyright on a new book, "Dred," which had just appeared, but she also wished to take her daughters to France to study the language of that country. She enjoyed another very pleasant visit, renewing old friendships wherever she went and making new ones. She had the good fortune to meet Robert Browning and his wife, Elizabeth Barrett Browning this time, which pleased her greatly, as she had missed seeing them on her previous tour. Queen Victoria gave her audience, also, and the Professor, describing this experience later, said they had "the pleasantest little interview that ever was" with her Majesty, and that she was a "nice little body, with exceedingly pleasant, agreeable manners."

The new book, "Dred," was a gigantic success. One hundred thousand copies were sold in four weeks! This story, also, deals with the black man, and the author's aim was to show the bad effect slavery had upon our civilization, the demoralization of all classes of society from the wealthy, overbearing planter to the oppressed "po' white trash." The story was better written from a literary standpoint than "Uncle Tom's Cabin," but did not have the dramatic, soul-stirring pathos of the latter, nor is it read as much in our day.

Mrs. Stowe had placed her daughters in a Protestant school in Paris, and when she decided to return to her native land she left them there because they were making such good progress in their studies. She had scarcely reached home once more when she met with the most crushing blow of her life, in the loss of her eldest son, Henry, who was drowned July 9, 1857, while swimming in the Connecticut River near Dartmouth College, where he was a Freshman. There had been an exceptionally strong bond of sympathy between this son and his mother, and it seemed for a time as if she could not bear the overwhelming sorrow of his loss. Two days after the funeral Mrs. Stowe and the Professor went to Hanover and visited Dartmouth College. Henry's classmates took them around the campus, showed them the room where their son had spent so many hours while away from them, led them down through an enchanting glen to the beautiful river which he had loved so dearly and where he had lost his life, and let them watch the different boating crews at practice during the evening. The boat, *Una,* which had been Henry's, had its flag furled and tied with black crepe, in memory of the member gone from their midst, and his companions were so grief-stricken at his death that the mother heart felt strangely comforted.

In the summer of 1859, the Stowes once more ventured to cross the ocean. This was the last trip abroad for any of them. The Professor and the youngest daughter, Georgiana, were Mrs. Stowe's companions this time, but after a few weeks of visiting their friends in England, father and daughter returned to America, leaving the mother to go on alone to France, where her twin daughters were still at school in Paris. They settled in Florence for several months, then moved on to Rome. Here one day Mrs. Stowe went to visit the Castellani brothers, who were famous workers in gold; and while admiring the beautiful things the shop contained, she saw the head of an Egyptian slave carved in black onyx. It was marvelously done, and while Mrs. Stowe was silently studying it, one of the Castellani brothers told her he wanted her to accept it for her own, because of what she was doing for the slave in America, reminding her that they, too, were slaves in Italy. She accepted the gift, but when her friends looked for her to say some word of thanks, they found her in tears, so touched was she by the whole incident.

This trip abroad was the longest one she made, for she was gone nearly a year and though she wanted to be with her loved ones at home, she was reluctant to leave old Europe's shores. A happy climax to this happy visit was the voyage homeward. In those days it took a full fourteen days to cross the ocean, but the weather was beautiful all the way over, and for fellow voyagers she had the good fortune to have Mr. and Mrs. James T.

Fields, and the Hawthornes. In such company no one could be dull or bored and many pleasant hours were spent on deck telling stories to while away the time. So pleasant was the trip, in fact, that Hawthorne was heard to say, "Oh, I wish we might never get there." But all journeys come to an end some time, and this merry party reached homeland at length, glad to be once again in America. Mrs. Stowe and her daughters went to Andover immediately, and very soon the busy pen was writing "Agnes of Sorrento," a story inspired by their sojourn in Florence.

IX

AS A PATRIOT

Civil War was declared in April, 1861, and the whole nation was immediately plunged into mourning. No one thought it would be a long war, and many even declared that three months would see the end of it. The first volunteers enlisted for a period of three months, little dreaming that it would be four years before peace would again descend upon this fair land.

Frederick Stowe responded to the first call for volunteers, contrary to the wishes of his family and friends. He was in college at the time, studying medicine under Oliver Wendell Holmes. Doctor Holmes wanted the boy to remain in school until he had completed his course, and then go to the front as a doctor, for good physicians were sorely needed by the Government. But Frederick rebelled against this plan, saying that he, a Stowe, would be ashamed not to go at once after the stand his mother had taken in the cause of the slave. So reluctantly they let him go, and he joined Company A of the First Massachusetts Volunteers.

He was in camp at Cambridge for a time, and while he was there his mother was called to Brooklyn on important business. She stayed at her brother Henry's house, and one day he came in with the announcement that the boat bearing the First Massachusetts Regiment had sailed for Jersey City, from which place the soldiers were to go by train to Washington. Mrs. Stowe and her sister-in-law promptly went down to Jersey City where they found the soldier boys dining in the great depot. After a time they succeeded in getting permission to go inside, and remained two hours with Frederick and his cousin Henry Beecher. In a letter home describing her experience, Mrs. Stowe says she found her son strangely changed, for he had become a man over night, and all the other soldiers had grave faces beyond their years.

Again in November of 1862, she saw this dear son, when by special invitation she had gone to Washington to attend a Thanksgiving dinner provided for the crowds of fugitive slaves who had taken refuge in that city. He was now Lieutenant Stowe, having won his title by bravery on the battlefield, and his family was very proud of their soldier boy. He obtained leave of absence for a week, and his mother was allowed to be with him for that time.

This Thanksgiving dinner for the slaves was a never-to-be-forgotten sight for Mrs. Stowe. There were hundreds of refugees who had sought protection within the Federal lines, and for some of them this dinner was the first decent meal they had had in their lives. Great tables groaned with food of all descriptions, and as fast as one crowd had been fed all they could eat, the tables were surrounded by another group of hungry negroes. One blind old slave, called among his followers "John the Baptist," prayed for humility among his people, lest they, in the gladness of their liberation, might forget the God who had saved them from the oppressor. Then the whole gathering sang that slave song, forbidden by the South because of its power to rouse the black man to rebellion:

"Oh, go down Moses,
Way down in Egypt's land!
Tell King Pharaoh
To let my people go!
Stand away dere,
Stand away dere,
And let my people go!"

Mrs. Stowe had another very important reason for going to Washington at this time, and that was to interview "Father Abraham" in person, and to ask him if the Emancipation Proclamation was to become a reality, for she did not wish to call the attention of the women in Europe to such an issue if it were to "fizzle out at the little end of the horn," as she was afraid it might do. She had no difficulty in obtaining an audience with the President, for the Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Salmon P. Chase, had belonged to the Semi-colon Club in Cincinnati at the same time she had been a member, and was glad of the opportunity to present her to his Chief. Mrs. Stowe's son Charles and daughter Harriet went with her, and neither ever forgot this wonderful experience. They were conducted through the East Room up the stairs to the President's private reception parlor. There was a bright fire burning in the fireplace, and when the visitors entered the room, the President was sitting before it, warming his hands. He looked so bowed down and sad that the little party involuntarily drew back, fearful of intruding; but Mr. Chase led them forward and introduced Mrs. Stowe.

The President rose quickly, and eagerly grasped her hand, exclaiming, "So you're the little woman who wrote the book that made this great war!" They had a pleasant hour together, sitting apart from the others in a convenient window seat; but of her interview, Mrs. Stowe never gave a full account. Perhaps it was confidential; but at any rate, Mrs. Stowe received the information she had come to get, and at last was able to write a reply to the address of the English women spoken nearly ten years before. Mr. Lincoln made it very clear to her that the emancipation of the slaves was his goal, and though perhaps his words were not the same, he said in substance what he afterward repeated in his Second Inaugural Address, "If this struggle were to be prolonged till there was not a home in the land where there was not one dead, till all the treasure amassed by the unpaid labor of the slave should be wasted, till every drop of blood drawn by the lash should be atoned by blood drawn by the sword, we could only bow and say, 'Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints!'"

Mrs. Stowe told him of her hopes and fears, and how the task of writing "Uncle Tom's Cabin" had often bowed her down till she thought her health would fail her utterly before she could finish the book; and he in turn confided to her that he did not think he would last long after the gigantic struggle to free the slaves had ended, because the issue meant so much to him that it was taking his very life blood, to watch the terrible conflict being waged between the two factions of his own beloved country.

Like one in a trance Mrs. Stowe returned to her hotel after her interview with the President, and that evening wrote most of her famous "Reply." Up to that moment she had not had a definite idea of what she should say to these English sisters, but now the way was clear, and she spoke very plainly indeed, recounting the history of events in our country up to the time of the Emancipation Proclamation, which was to take effect the following January.

In part she replied thus: "In the beginning of the struggle, the voices that reached us across the water said, 'If we were only sure you were fighting for the abolition of slavery, we should not dare to say whither our sympathies for your cause might not carry us.' When these words reached us, we said, 'We can wait, our friends in England will soon see whither this conflict is tending.' A year and a half have passed, step after step has been taken for liberty; chain after chain has fallen, till the march of our armies is choked and clogged by the glad flocking of emancipated slaves; the day of final emancipation is set; the Border States begin to move in voluntary assent. Universal freedom for all dawns like the sun in the distant horizon, and still no voice from England. No voice? Yes, we have heard on the high seas the voice of a war-steamer, built for a man-stealing Confederacy, with English gold, in an English dockyard, going out of an English harbor, manned by English sailors, with the full knowledge of English government officers, in defiance of the Queen's proclamation of neutrality! So far has English sympathy overflowed!"

The Emancipation Proclamation was officially issued on January 1, 1863. Mrs. Stowe was at a concert in the Music Hall of Boston when the announcement was made from the stage. The immense audience straightway went mad with joy, and during the ensuing excitement, someone discovered that Mrs. Stowe was sitting in the gallery. As soon as the information became generally known, the enthusiastic multitude leaped to their feet, cheered and called her name, waved their handkerchiefs and shouted, until she rose and bowed to the right and left, smiling her gratification and blushing furiously. It was the most triumphant moment of her life!

During this very critical period of our country's history, the Stowes moved from Andover to Hartford, Connecticut. Here, in a beautiful oak grove which she had loved as a girl, Mrs. Stowe built a house according to her own ideas of what she wanted, but without any thought of the practicability of it from an architect's standpoint. She had often dreamed of doing this very thing as she walked and talked with Georgiana May and Catherine Cogswell years before, but she really had never expected to have money enough to make these dreams come true. However, the sale of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" alone had brought her thousands of dollars, and with part of this she purchased the land on which to build. The place was finished in the natural wood cut from the oaks and chestnuts which grew in the grove, but it turned out to be a very costly venture, for the house was not practically arranged, nor suited at all to the rigors of a New England winter. Professor Stowe had opposed her plan from the start, and so she received little sympathy from him when her undertaking proved the failure he had predicted it would be.

Before the structure was finished, her daughter Georgiana was married, earlier than she had planned, and the wedding had to take place in the half-completed house, so Mrs. Stowe found herself hurried and harried almost to death trying to do everything at once. Naturally she found little time to write during such strenuous times, although it was mainly her stories that brought in the money necessary to keep this large, impractical establishment going. Years had not taught the author nor the Professor how to handle money any more wisely than when they first began housekeeping. They were easily imposed upon, and responded so lavishly to all calls in the name of charity, and made so many unfortunate business ventures that the thousands of dollars which Mrs. Stowe's writings brought her from time to time vanished as quickly as they came, and she never was a rich woman. When her publishers clamored for stories during these busy years, she replied, "Who could write on stories that had a son to send to battle, with Washington beleaguered, and the whole country shaken as with an earthquake?" Yet she finished "Agnes of Sorrento" and "The Pearl of Orr's Island" during the darkest hours of the war.

Then came the battle of Gettysburg, the decisive battle of the war, and her son Frederick, now a captain, was among those wounded. Mrs. Stowe received a letter from his chaplain telling her that the lad was in good hands, cheerful and quiet, but longing to see some of his family. At the same time, a similar letter reached Reverend Charles Beecher, of Georgetown, Massachusetts, concerning his son, Lieutenant Fred Beecher; so the two fathers started at once for the battlefield. In a few days it was possible to bring the two wounded soldier boys back to their loved ones, where for weeks they struggled with life and death. Frederick Stowe had received a fragment of shell in his right ear, and though seriously wounded, he eventually recovered a measure of health.

X

AS A FRIEND OF THE FREEDMAN

At the close of the war, Captain Frederick Stowe resigned his commission in the Army and went back to college to finish his medical course. But he soon found this too great a strain mentally, for the wound he had received at Gettysburg never healed entirely and from time to time the pain in his head almost drove him insane. In that condition, constant application to his studies was an impossibility, and he came home much discouraged and depressed. His mother was in despair. What could she do with him?

Then she heard of a movement among some Connecticut people, who were planning to take up an old cotton plantation in Florida and raise cotton by free labor. This appealed to Mrs. Stowe, for she saw not only an opportunity to help Fred in such a move, but also a mission for herself among the freed blacks, and the finding of missions to perform was her aim in life. So she bought a cotton plantation on the beautiful St. Johns River, Florida, and set Fred to developing it, but of course the venture was a failure, for neither mother nor son knew the first thing about cotton raising, and it cost them more to grow the crop than they got for all they picked, mainly because mildew and army worms attacked the cotton plants, causing great havoc everywhere. Mrs. Stowe lost about ten thousand dollars in the experiment, but apparently had no regrets, for she felt that many negroes had been saved by her efforts, and human souls were worth more than money to her.

Before they had made up their minds what to do next, Captain Stowe went on a fishing excursion and discovered Mandarin Cove just across the St. Johns River, with a beautiful orange grove that the owner was anxious to sell. Fred was greatly pleased with the idea of possessing an orange grove instead of a cotton plantation, and Mrs. Stowe promptly bought it for him.

Mandarin Cove now became the winter home of the Stowe family, but they returned to their northern home for the summers until the Professor's failing health made it impossible for him to travel back and forth any longer. Mrs. Stowe was immensely interested in missionary work among the negroes of Florida, for vast numbers of freed slaves had taken up their abode in this state where the mild climate suited them better than the colder regions of the country, and already unscrupulous people were beginning to exploit them. They were in a receptive mood and if good influences were not brought to bear upon them at once, bad influences would naturally triumph. So Mrs. Stowe conceived the idea of organizing a chain of churches up and down St. Johns River, and even wrote to influential leaders of the Episcopal Church in regard to her plan, feeling that this particular branch of the Protestant church would reach the negroes best, because originally it was established to reach the poor working people of England before education was accessible for this class.

She wrote to her brother, Charles Beecher, urging him to come to Florida, buy the orange grove next to hers, and establish an Episcopal church for the colored people in that region. Mrs. Stowe had become a member of this church in 1864, but her brother preferred to remain a Congregational preacher, and though he did eventually go to Florida to live, it was not to Mandarin Cove. He settled at Newport, Florida, where he accomplished a great work among the blacks, but for years the only preacher Mandarin Cove had was Professor Stowe, who lived there just during the winter months. The little church and schoolhouse where he preached was built with Mrs. Stowe's own money, and she taught a Sunday School class of colored children. Unfortunately, this little structure burned down one windy night, and Mrs. Stowe was grief-stricken at the loss; but nothing daunted, she began to plan for a new building just as soon as sufficient funds could be raised for that purpose. However, it was not until 1884 that she succeeded in establishing an Episcopal church at Mandarin.

Mandarin Cove became very dear to the Stowes through the many years they wintered there. Not a nook along the beautiful river, not a spot in the dense pine woods which surrounded them that they did not explore. They had a rude, two-wheeled cart, drawn by a mule called Fly, which Mrs. Stowe said looked like an animated hair trunk, and with this equipage they traveled about the country making friends and enjoying the bracing air, and not caring a particle how queer they must have looked at times.

Not far from the Stowes' modest little house there was a tiny Roman Catholic church, in charge of an Italian priest, Father Batazzi, and a nunnery where lived three French sisters of the faith. They were all very poor, and Mrs. Stowe and her Rabbi, as she always called her Professor, made it a practice to visit them every two or three weeks with baskets of oranges and other delicacies. Creed made no difference to these simple-hearted folk.

Some enterprising steamboat company in Jacksonville organized excursions to Mandarin Cove for the purpose of carrying curious people to visit Mrs. Stowe's orange grove, but without her knowledge or consent, and without any remuneration for the trouble the Stowes were put to when such parties overran their property. The Professor and his wife took it as a joke, and treated all such visitors very courteously and hospitably as long as they conducted themselves properly, but the hot-tempered Professor could not bear to see souvenir-hunters hack up his orange trees; and on one occasion he rebuked a man who ruthlessly broke off a fruit-laden branch without asking permission of anyone.

The trespasser exclaimed in astonishment, "Why, I thought this was Mrs. Stowe's place!"

"I would have you understand, sir, that I am the proprietor and protector both of Mrs. Stowe and this place!" the irate Professor replied.

He was very proud of his wife's fame, but it galled him considerably to be so completely overshadowed by her greatness, for after all, he had some claims to fame himself, being so learned a scholar, and the author of a book on the Bible which brought him ten thousand dollars or more. Once when he was introduced to a woman, she remarked, "I am very glad to meet you, Professor Stowe, but I must admit, I would rather have met Mrs. Stowe."

"So had I, madam," he grimly retorted.

As the Professor grew in years, and his hair turned white as snow, his health gradually failed until at length he found it impossible to make the long journeys back and forth between his old New England home and the Mandarin Cove cottage, and because all the friends and relatives whom they loved the most lived in the North, they decided at length to return to Florida no more. The frosts had destroyed their orange grove, and so when the property was sold it brought them next to nothing, in spite of the vast sums of money they had spent in improving it. Here was another business venture which had failed because neither master nor mistress knew how to handle their income practically.

Now the Hartford house which Mrs. Stowe had built with so much pleasure also proved to be too great a burden on her, and already the industrial district of the city had nearly hemmed them in, so that place, too, was disposed of, and a smaller, more practical establishment purchased in town, where the family resided until after both the Professor and his beloved wife had gone on to the Homeland across the River Jordan.

XI

AS A WRITER OF NEW ENGLAND STORIES

Mrs. Stowe's best literary efforts are without doubt her New England stories, although her two books dealing with the slavery question won her the great reputation she still bears, and always will bear. "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and "Dred" were written about a subject very dear to her heart, but the characters she depicts were not, as a rule, personal acquaintances. She had to rely upon the impressions of others for these studies, and it is really wonderful how true to life these pictures are. There was no opportunity for her to travel through the South to familiarize herself with scenes and settings for her tales; there was no opportunity for her to mingle with the slave traders in their daily lives; and yet she was able to picture human nature so faithfully that very little criticism was offered as to faults in location or description of southern life.

If she could write such gripping stories of people with whom she had not come in personal contact, such as Legree, Augustine St. Clair, and other slaveholders, how much better able she was to write stories of people whom she met in her daily life, and she certainly knew New England people, having lived among them most of her life. Indeed, we can scarcely think of anyone better fitted to preserve for us the scenes and characters of the day in which she lived.

Her first successful story was a New England character sketch, called "Uncle Lot." Her first New England novel was "The Minister's Wooing." This story, as well as "The Pearl of Orr's Island," she began in 1857, the summer her eldest son was drowned; and in it we find her own bitter sufferings vividly pictured in the experience of Mrs. Marvyn in the death of her son at sea. Mrs. Stowe began "The Pearl of Orr's Island" first, but the scene of this is laid in Maine, where she had spent two of the happiest years of her life with her children, and she was so forcibly reminded of the loss of her boy, Henry, whenever she tried to write about those days that at length she laid aside that book for other interests until the bitterness of her own sorrow should be softened by time and resignation.

Had she been able to finish it at once, there is little doubt but that it would have been her masterpiece, for the first chapters gave that promise. But she laid it by first to compile her "Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin" and while she was writing "Dred"; then again in order to push "The Minister's Wooing" to a finish, and two years elapsed before she turned to it once more. "The Minister's Wooing" suited her mood at the time, being a tale of great sorrow and suffering, and into it she poured the accumulated sadness of her own bleeding heart. This book was for the most part dictated, and went forward very rapidly.

She did her best work when she had an audience to listen to the various chapters as fast as they were completed, and while she was in the midst of any important work, her family hovered close in the background, ready to be called at a moment's notice to criticize and suggest improvement in the tale. If the Professor took exception to any argument she had propounded, or if she had not been minutely accurate in some local description or character, he promptly pointed out the shortcomings, and Mrs. Stowe as promptly corrected the passage. Her twin daughters passed judgment on all the love-making scenes, and usually their mother was as quick to heed their advice as that of their father. Typewriters were unheard of in that day, and all her manuscripts were laboriously written out in long hand, but she was a rapid writer, and prided herself on the fact that she seldom found it necessary to revise or copy. Happy author!

Into "The Minister's Wooing" Mrs. Stowe has woven the story of her sister Catherine's romance, the loss of her lover in a storm at sea, and the doubts that drove her almost frantic because she did not know whether or not he was a Christian. Her heroine, Mary Scudder, is betrothed to a wild young sailor boy, who does not understand the spiritual nature of his sweetheart, but holds a deep reverence for her in his heart. His ship is reported lost at sea, and of course he is supposed to have gone down with it. The minister, believing the lover is dead, courts the maiden, and finally she consents to marry him, though she does not feel the love for him that she had for her wild sailor boy. Before they are married, however, the sailor returns to his home, expecting to claim his bride. Here the minister shows his unselfish devotion to the girl as well as the greatness of his soul by giving up his claim on her, whom he loved dearer than life itself, and thereby winning the wayward sailor to a better life.

Two years later when she again took up the thread of "The Pearl of Orr's Island," she had begun another novel, called "Agnes of Sorrento," dealing with her travels in Italy. She seemed to take keen delight in writing of the life in this sunny, picturesque land, but remarks in one of her letters that it makes her shiver to work on her Maine story, and so, through these many delays, this book loses much of the power it started out with, although Whittier has called it the most charming New England idyl ever written.

"Oldtown Folks" was her next great attempt at picturing New England life. This was published in 1869, and Mrs. Stowe called it her "résumé of the whole spirit and body of New England." She explained that she tried to make her mind as still as a looking-glass, and then to put into words the images she saw reflected there. In this book, she has attempted the difficult task of depicting characters that her husband knew and described to her. Oldtown is South Natick, Massachusetts, where Professor Stowe lived as a boy, and several times while the tale was in progress, he took his wife to visit this town in order that she might get the scenery while he recalled childhood memories and incidents.

In 1877 "Poganuc People" appeared, the last serial Mrs. Stowe undertook. She had not intended to write another book, but began this as a Christmas brochure, and it kept growing as she wrote, until it became book size. It is a companion story to "Oldtown Folks," in that it deals with her recollections of her own childhood, instead of her husband's, and is, in fact, her autobiography. She has described in it the old parsonage with its many garrets and cellars, the woods and lakes, the brothers and sisters, her father and mother. The "Dolly" of "Poganuc People" is Harriet Beecher herself.

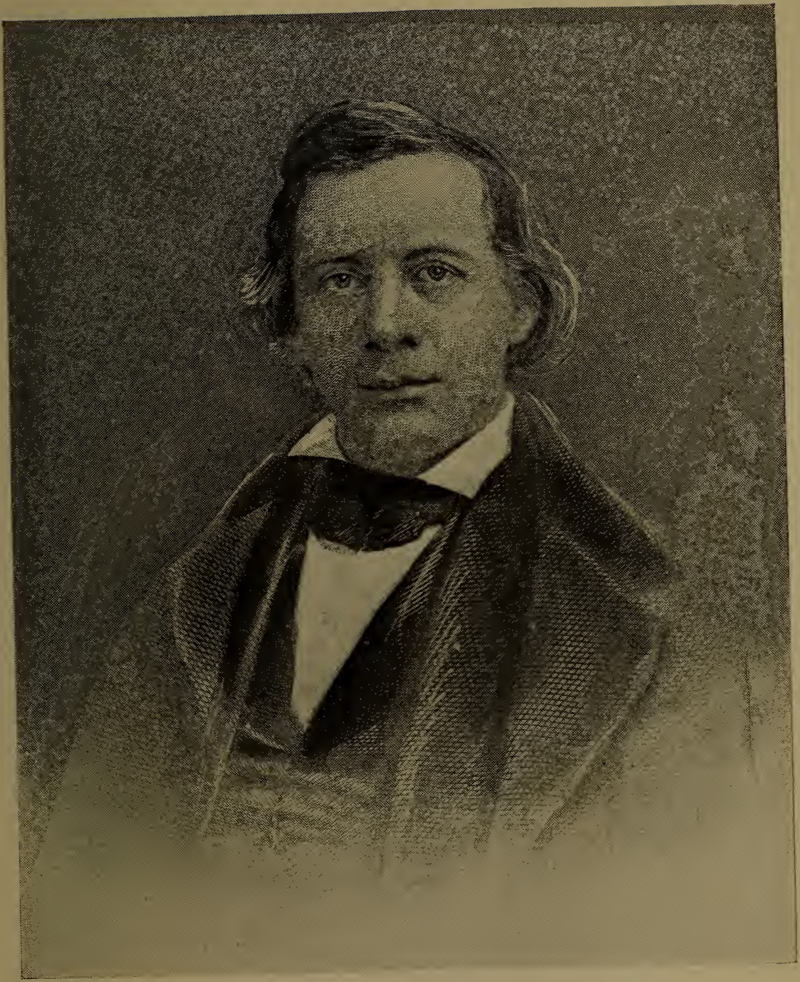
XII

AS A FRIEND

Mrs. Stowe was a little woman physically, very quick in all her movements, but so retiring in disposition that Mrs. Browning said of her, after meeting her at a reception, "Never did lioness roar so softly." She, like the other members of the Beecher family, possessed a keen sense of humor, which was a delight to all who knew her, an element which makes her books so readable. This quality of seeing the funny side of things helped her over many a difficult place and made her an ideal wife, mother, teacher and friend. She was not the kind of person who made friends readily, and as readily forgot them. Her life was rich in real, abiding friendships with people in almost every walk in life.

One of the most striking of these friendships was that existing between her and her schoolmate, Georgiana May. From the time these two went to school together at the Hartford Female Seminary, they never lost sight of each other. During the long years that they lived in different parts of the country, they wrote long, interesting, intimate letters to each other, telling of their personal plans and problems and recounting life's adventures, for both of them married and had different problems to meet in their own little worlds.

Between her and her own brother, Henry Ward Beecher, there existed one of the most precious friendships that has ever been recorded. We read of David and Jonathan, of Damon and Pythias, but of Harriet and Henry fully as much could be said, although they were brother and sister. They loved each other as devotedly as these friends of history, and bore each other's griefs as if the hurt were personal. When Mrs. Stowe suffered so keenly the thrusts of poison tongues after the publication of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," this brother was a great comfort to her. In later years, when mean-spirited men sought to belittle Henry Ward Beecher, who had become a world famous preacher in the meantime, by his brave and courageous stand



H. W. Beecher

against wrong in any form, this sister's unswerving faith in him helped him through his humiliating experience, and when he was completely vindicated of the charges brought against him, her joy was an added zest to the victory.

While abroad she made many friends of note, who remained her friends from that time on. With the Duchess of Sutherland she corresponded for years, and with Lady Byron also. A very deep bond of sympathy existed between her and the gentle, misjudged wife of Lord Byron, which made Mrs. Stowe, at the very pinnacle of her fame, willing to sacrifice her reputation, everything, in order to clear Lady Byron's name of slanderous charges.

John Ruskin and Mrs. Browning counted her as one of their dearest friends after they met her in her travels in England. Her letters to these illustrious writers have never been found, but we can judge of their contents by the interesting answers she received from them.

Nor were these the only children of genius who sought out this wonderful woman and called her friend. George Eliot, foremost woman writer in England at that time, and George Sand, brilliant French authoress of the same period, wrote her freely and frequently, criticizing her literary works with sincere praise, for both seemed to admire their American sister greatly, and to realize what she was accomplishing in the field of literature. Strangely enough, these three women are said to have resembled each other to a marked degree in characteristics, although not in physical likeness. When lost in thought, there was a peculiar heaviness to their features, a lack-luster of eye that made their faces very plain and expressionless like stone masks. But when animated, their faces lighted up, their eyes sparkled, and they looked like different persons. Possibly this accounts for the great difference that exists in all the photographs these women had taken of themselves. Certainly there is a wide range of expression in those of Mrs. Stowe which are still preserved for posterity.

While she was abroad she discovered some pictures of herself supposed to be good likenesses, that astonished her, and she wrote home that she was making a collection of them for her family to put in the museum as curiosities. The Richmond portrait of her is a much better likeness than any of the photographs, because it has caught her best expression. The marble bust by Miss Durant is also a good likeness, for this famous sculpturess was also able to catch and preserve the sweetness and strength of the animated countenance. This bust was given to the University of New York and can still be seen there. It differs from most of her pictures in the method of hair-dressing. She usually wore her hair parted in the middle with five or six long smooth curls hanging at either side of her face, and bound down by a narrow velvet band; but Miss Durant has pictured her with it drawn back into a knot low in her neck.

She was a pleasant person to meet, being always self-possessed, and considerate of others, a gentle, rather old-fashioned little woman, who showed by her very manner that she was a born gentlewoman, though not a society lady. Mrs. Fields recalls in her "Life and Letters of Harriet Beecher Stowe," a reception she once attended with Mrs. Stowe when the hostess drew Mrs. Fields aside and asked in surprise why she had never been told that Mrs. Stowe was beautiful.

"Indeed when I observed her," says Mrs. Fields, "in the full ardor of conversation, with her heightened color, her eyes shining and awake but filled with great softness, her abundant curling hair rippling naturally about her head and falling a little at the sides, I quite agreed with my hostess. Nor was that the first time her beauty had been revealed to me; but she was seldom seen to be beautiful by the great world, and the pleasure of this recognition was very great to those who loved her."

She was inclined to be absent-minded even in her youth, and this habit grew on her with the years. Often while entertaining friends, or being entertained by them, she would suddenly lose herself in some train of thought, brought up, possibly by a chance remark of guest or hostess, and would take no further part in the conversation going on about her. Sometimes she would wander away from the rest of the guests at a reception, and perhaps be found admiring the flowers in the conservatory, or calmly watching the scene from some hidden nook, while her thoughts were far afield.

On one occasion, when at the very height of her fame, she was invited to dine at the Quincy house. Her hostess showed her to an upper room that she might refresh herself after her journey, before she was presented to the other guests, and she was left alone. Presently the family below began to wonder what was delaying her so long, and as the minutes passed they grew impatient, then alarmed. When dinner was announced and Mrs. Stowe had failed to appear, her hostess hurried to her room to discover if she were ill, for she had not answered when a servant had knocked on her door to inquire for her welfare. When the door was opened by the anxious hostess, there stood Mrs. Stowe in front of a bookcase, with her bonnet and shawl still on, reading a volume she had taken from the shelves. It was a copy of "Sir Charles Grandison," a book she had read as a child, and the finding of it there had so taken her attention that she had completely forgotten where she was and what social etiquette demanded of her as a guest. But she was so contrite over her failings, and so lovable that no one could help forgiving her, not even her publishers when she disappointed them in getting a serial instalment ready for a set date.

James Russell Lowell, as editor of the *Atlantic Monthly,* became personally acquainted with Mrs. Stowe, and had only the highest praise to speak of her. Other noted Americans whom she numbered among her friends were Oliver Wendell Holmes, Nathaniel Hawthorne, James T. Fields, John Greenleaf Whittier and John T. Howard. Of course there were hosts of others more or less well known in public life, and who can count those whose names are unknown in the annals of history, who knew this great-hearted woman as a true and tender friend?

Let us not forget the black man in this listing of Mrs. Stowe's friends, for in a large measure he owes his freedom to the compassion of the author of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and after all, it is not the greatness of one's friends that counts; it is their sincerity, and surely no one could love Harriet Beecher Stowe any more sincerely than the humble slave for whom she fought all her life.

XIII

AS THE SUN SET

In 1872, driven by the need of funds, Mrs. Stowe accepted a proposal from the American Literary Bureau of Boston to deliver a course of forty readings from her own books in the larger cities of New England. The offer was liberal, it appealed to her from more than one standpoint, and she accepted with the understanding that the readings be completed before December, so she could join her family in Florida. Even this made her a month late in her southern home, and the Professor, who loved her so devotedly and grew more and more dependent upon her as the years flew by, felt much aggrieved at her protracted absence. He wrote such dismal letters, threatening to die of homesickness if she did not come home at once, that it worried her not a little, but she replied in her humorous vein, begging him to wait a little longer so they could have another quiet evening together before he left her, and trying in this way to cheer him up till she could be with him again.

Traveling in those days was not as easy nor as comfortable as it is in our time, nor were the hotels as complete and well managed, but on the whole Mrs. Stowe enjoyed this experience of riding about the country and reading to the public from her own compositions, and the public certainly enjoyed her. In one of her audiences was a stone-deaf woman who made it a point to see her after the program was over, just to tell her that she came merely to look into Mrs. Stowe's face, for she would rather see her than the Queen of England. Another time, Mrs. Stowe met a woman who had named her two daughters Harriet Beecher and Eva, a compliment that seemed to please the modest little author very much. Several times she met old friends of bygone years and renewed friendships with people she had well-nigh forgotten in the stress of her hurried, busy life. But she did not make any more tours as a public reader, once this course was done, although she often appeared in churches or private homes for the benefit of various charities.

Her last public appearance was in June, 1882, when she was seventy-one years of age. Her Boston publishers, Houghton, Mifflin & Co., gave a reception for her at the home of ex-Governor Claflin, at Newtonville, Massachusetts, and the gathering was notable for the number of famous literary people present. Among these were Holmes, Whittier, Aldrich, Trowbridge, Mrs. J. T. Fields, Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney, Louise Chandler Moulton, Lucy Larcom, Bronson Alcott, Elizabeth Stewart Phelps, and Julia Dorr. The Stowe and Beecher families were well represented also, as three brothers, one sister, a son and a daughter were able to attend.

When the guests had all had opportunity to pay their respects to the guest of honor, Mr. H. O. Houghton addressed this unique assembly of celebrities, stating that the occasion of the gathering was the birthday of one whose years, if they were measured by the amount of work she had accomplished, would place her with the antediluvians, but if measured by the freshness of her stories and her sympathy with youth, would indicate that she must have found the fount of perpetual youth herself. He gave a brief sketch of her life, calling attention to the fact that her unusual training and intense way of living had naturally fitted her for the important part she was to play in the field of literature and in the history of her country. "Uncle Tom's Cabin," in his opinion, was the greatest epic of that period, and would for centuries be the "Iliad" and "Æneid" of American literature. He spoke of how it had been read by every class of people on the globe, from the poorest of men who could scarcely read or write, to crowned heads of great lands, saying that while her New England stories were sufficient to give any author an enviable reputation, in his mind, "Uncle Tom's Cabin" outranked them all.

Henry Ward Beecher, in his happy way, responded to this address of welcome by a wonderful homily on "Our Mother," in which he said that Harriet was most like her own mother in characteristics and sympathies, though possibly not in physical likeness. Edward Beecher also addressed the assembly, relating how favorably his sister's writings had effected the woman's suffrage movement in this country.

These speeches were followed by poems in Mrs. Stowe's honor, written by Whittier, Holmes, and other celebrities. One by her own daughter, Georgiana Allen, is particularly noteworthy:

"A child came down to earth
Just seventy years ágo,
And round its form the angels trod,
Whispering low,
'’Tis an instrument
To be played by the hand of God.'

. . . .

"Though the instrument's feebler grown,
’Twill sound loud and full until death,
Like the harp with its strings Æolian-blown,
Rising and falling,
Whispering and calling,
With the strength of God's own breath."

Then Mrs. Stowe herself rose to speak, and the whole assembly came to their feet and remained standing while she said her thanks in her quiet, modest way, urging all her friends to trust in God, remembering the great things He had brought to pass, and particularly that the scourge of slavery had been driven from our fair land. Then followed an eloquent plea for the black man, slave no longer, but pitifully ignorant and full of faults which the white man was inclined to be intolerant of, now that he had his freedom. So we find her still laboring for the cause of this down-trodden people as long as mind and strength endured, a faithful servant in the sight of God.

During the year that followed, Mrs. Stowe put her letters and papers in order, and wrote her son Charles of what she had done. It seemed to gratify her to find that through all the letters she herself had written, there was one theme running from the time she was thirteen years old, and that was "the intense, unwavering sense of Christ's educating, guiding presence and care," as she expressed it. She named over the friends and relatives who had gone on before her to the spirit land—her girlhood friend, Georgiana May, her three sons, her brother George and sister Catherine, her father and her mother—and she seemed to feel that she herself was very near the border. But as a matter of fact, she lived many years longer, though the splendid mind became that of a little child once more, and the last years of her life were like a fading sunset, as someone has so aptly described it.

Professor Stowe was afflicted with an incurable disease during his old age, and for several years was a helpless invalid, over whom his devoted wife hovered with tender solicitude and yearning heart. He loved her with all the strength of his great soul, and as he grew weaker he clung to her more and more, as a child clings to its mother in its helplessness. This taxed her physical strength to the uttermost, but she would not permit anyone else to nurse him as long as she could keep it up herself; so trained help was called in only when he was far spent and she was well-nigh exhausted. His death came August 6, 1886. The setting sun filled the room with its golden glory when he suddenly opened his eyes, and gazing off toward the distant, cloud-hung hills, he whispered, "Peace with God! Peace with God!" His eyes closed again, and he drifted off into eternal sleep. Within a year he was followed by Henry Ward Beecher, and the youngest daughter, Georgiana. What depths of sorrow that mother heart plumbed during her long, illustrious life!

With so many of her best beloved gone on before, it was only natural that from this time on, Mrs. Stowe's thoughts turned more and more to things spiritual, and the last real letter she ever wrote, sent to her friend, Mrs. Howard, says in part, "My sun has set. The time of work for me is over. I have written all my words, and thought all my thoughts, and now I rest me in the flickering light of the dying embers, in a rest so profound that the voice of an old friend arouses me but momentarily, and I drop back again into repose."

Like her father, Dr. Lyman Beecher, she had lived so intensely that the fires of her mind seemed to have burned out long before her body was released from earthly bondage, and though she realized her condition, she uttered no complaint. Her children cared for her tenderly until she slipped away July 1, 1896, after eighty-five years of loving and living. She was laid to rest beside her husband and children in the cemetery at Andover, while her friends gathered about the grave and sang the old hymns which had never failed to soothe her to the last. What more fitting close to such a sweet and beautiful life!

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