

PRESENTING THE ORIGINAL

FACTS AND DOCUMENTS

TOGETHER WITH

Corroborative Statements

BY HARRIET BEECHER STOWE,
AUTHOR OF "UNCLE TOM'S CABIN."

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P R E F A C E.

THE work which the writer here presents to the public is one which has been written with no pleasure, and with much pain.

In fictitious writing, it is possible to find refuge from the hard and the terrible, by inventing scenes and characters of a more pleasing nature. No such resource is open in a work of fact; and the subject of this work is one on which the truth, if told at all, must needs be very dreadful. There is no bright side to slavery, as such. Those scenes which are made bright by the generosity and kindness of masters and mistresses, would be brighter still if the element of slavery were withdrawn. There is nothing picturesque or beautiful, in the family attachment of old servants, which is not to be found in countries where these servants are legally free. The tenants on an English estate are often more fond and faithful than if they were slaves. Slavery, therefore, is not the element which forms the picturesque and beautiful of Southern life. What is peculiar to slavery, and distinguishes it from free servitude, is evil, and only evil, and that continually.

In preparing this work, it has grown much beyond the author's original design. It has so far overrun its limits that she has been obliged to omit one whole department; — that of the characteristics and developments of the colored race in various countries and circumstances. This is more properly the subject for a volume; and she hopes that such an one will soon be prepared by a friend to whom she has transferred her materials.

The author desires to express her thanks particularly to those legal gentlemen who have given her their assistance and support in the legal part of the discussion. She also desires to thank those, at the North and at the South, who have kindly furnished materials for her use. Many more have been supplied than could possibly be used. The book is actually selected out of a mountain of materials.

The great object of the author in writing has been to bring this subject of slavery, as a moral and religious question, before the minds of all those who

profess to be followers of Christ, in this country. A minute history has been given of the action of the various denominations on this subject.

The writer has aimed, as far as possible, to say what is true, and only that, without regard to the effect which it may have upon any person or party. She hopes that what she has said will be examined without bitterness,—in that serious and earnest spirit which is appropriate for the examination of so very serious a subject. It would be vain for her to indulge the hope of being wholly free from error. In the wide field which she has been called to go over, there is a possibility of many mistakes. She can only say that she has used the most honest and earnest endeavors to learn the truth.

The book is commended to the candid attention and earnest prayers of all true Christians, throughout the world. May they unite their prayers that Christendom may be delivered from so great an evil as slavery!

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

AT different times, doubt has been expressed whether the representations of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" are a fair representation of slavery as it at present exists. This work, more, perhaps, than any other work of fiction that ever was written, has been a collection and arrangement of real incidents,—of actions really performed, of words and expressions really uttered,—grouped together with reference to a general result, in the same manner that the mosaic artist groups his fragments of various stones into one general picture. His is a mosaic of gems,—this is a mosaic of facts.

Artistically considered, it might not be best to point out in which quarry and from which region each fragment of the mosaic picture had its origin; and it is equally unartistic to disentangle the glittering web of fiction, and show out of what real warp and woof it is woven, and with what real coloring dyed. But the book had a purpose entirely transcending the artistic one, and accordingly encounters, at the hands of the public, demands not usually made on fictitious works. It is *treated* as a reality,—sifted, tried and tested, as a reality; and therefore as a reality it may be proper that it should be defended.

The writer acknowledges that the book is a very inadequate representation of slavery; and it is so, necessarily, for this reason,—that slavery, in some of its workings, is too dreadful for the purposes of art. A work which should represent it strictly as it is would be a work which could not be read. And all works which ever mean to give pleasure must draw a veil somewhere, or they cannot succeed.

The author will now proceed along the course of the story, from the first page onward, and develop, as far as possible, the incidents by which different parts were suggested.

CHAPTER II.

MR. HALEY.

IN the very first chapter of the book we encounter the character of the negro-trader, Mr. Haley. His name stands at the head of this chapter as the representative of all the different characters introduced in the work which exhibit the trader, the kidnapper, the negro-catcher, the negro-whipper, and all the other inevitable auxiliaries and indispensable appendages of what is often called the "divinely-instituted relation" of slavery. The author's first personal observation of this class of beings was somewhat as follows:

Several years ago, while one morning employed in the duties of the nursery, a colored woman was announced. She was ushered into the nursery, and the author thought, on first survey, that a more surly, unpromising face she had never seen. The woman was thoroughly black, thick-set, firmly built, and with strongly-marked African features. Those who have been accustomed to read the expressions of the African face know what a peculiar effect is produced by a lowering, desponding expression upon its dark features. It is like the shadow of a thunder-cloud. Unlike her race generally, the woman did not smile when smiled upon, nor utter any pleasant remark in reply to such as were addressed to her. The youngest pet of the nursery, a boy about three years old, walked up, and laid his little hand on her knee, and seemed astonished not to meet the quick smile which the negro almost always has in reserve for the little child. The writer thought her very cross and disagreeable, and, after a few moments' silence, asked, with perhaps a little impatience, "Do you want anything of me to-day?"

"Here are some papers," said the woman, pushing them towards her; "perhaps you would read them."

The first paper opened was a letter from