

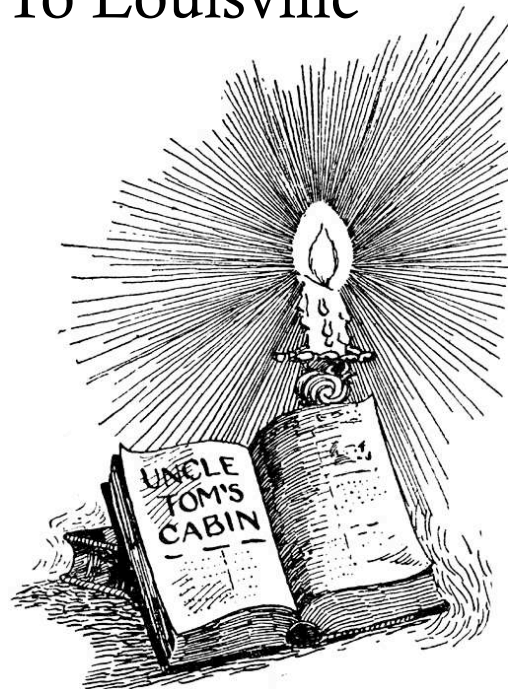
UNCLE TOM'S CABIN

(Told to the Children)

By

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H. E. Marshall ed.

Chapter 12 Aunt Chloe Goes To Louisville



Late on a summer afternoon, a few days after Tom's letter was posted, Mr. and Mrs. Shelby sat together in the hall of their house. It was very hot, and all the doors and windows were wide open.

'Do you know,' said Mrs. Shelby, 'that Chloe has had a letter from Tom ?'

'Ah, has she? Tom has some friend there, then. How is the old boy ?'

'He has been bought by a very fine family, I should think,' said Mrs. Shelby. 'He is kindly treated, and has not much to do.'

'Ah ! well, I'm glad of it—very glad,' said Mr. Shelby. 'Tom, I suppose, is quite pleased. He won't want to come back here again.'

'Oh, but he does. He is very anxious to know when the money to buy him is to be raised,' said Mrs. Shelby.

'I'm sure I don't know,' said Mr. Shelby. 'Once things begin to go wrong, there seems to be no end to it. It's like jumping from one bog to another, all through a swamp. You borrow of one to pay another, and then borrow of another to pay one. I don't know when things will come straight.'

'Oh, we must do something. Suppose we sell all the horses, and one of your farms,' said Mrs. Shelby.

'Oh, nonsense, you don't know anything about business.'

Mrs. Shelby sighed. 'Don't you think we ought to try to get the money some way or other? Poor Aunt Chloe, her heart is so set upon it.'

'I'm sorry if it is. I ought not to have promised to buy Tom back again. I'm not sure now but it would be best to tell Chloe that we can't possibly do it, and let her make up her mind to it.'

'Oh, I can't do that. If I cannot get money any other way, I shall take music pupils. I could earn enough myself that way,' replied Mrs. Shelby.

'Don't speak of such a thing. I should never allow it,' replied Mr. Shelby quite crossly.

Just then Aunt Chloe came and asked if Missis would come and look at dis lot of poetry.'

Aunt Chloe always would call poultry poetry, in spite of anything one could say to her.

'I can't see it,' she would say. 'One word is just as good as another. Poetry is something nice anyhow.' So poetry Chloe called it.

Mrs. Shelby went to look at the poultry. She soon saw, however, that it was only an excuse. Aunt Chloe didn't really want her to look at it—she wanted to talk about something. For a minute or two she hesitated, then she said with a shy laugh, 'Laws me, missis, why should mas'r and missis be troubling about money? Why don't they use what is in their hands?'

'I don't understand,' said Mrs. Shelby, rather suspecting that Chloe had been listening to what they had been talking about.

'Why, laws me, missis,' said Chloe, 'some folks hires out their niggers to other people, and so makes money out of them.'

'Well, Chloe, who do you think we could hire out?'

'I an't thinking nothing. Only Sam, he told me der was a perfectioner in Louisville who said he wanted some one who could make nice cakes and pastry. He said he would give four dollar a week to one, he did.'

'Well, Chloe ?'

'Well, I's a thinkin', missis, Sally has been under my care now for some time. She can cook nearly as well as me. If missis would only let me go, I could earn some money, and help to buy my old man back again. I an't afraid to put my cake nor pies neither 'longside no perfectioner's.'

'Confectioner's, Chloe.'

'Dear me, missis, words is so curis. Can't never get 'em right.'

'But, Chloe, do you want to leave your children ?'

'De boys is big enough now, and Sally will look after baby.'

'Louisville is a long way off.'

'Who's afeard? It's somewhere near my old man, perhaps,' said Chloe, looking at Mrs. Shelby in a questioning way.

'No, Chloe, it's many hundred miles off,' said Mrs. Shelby sadly.

Chloe's face fell.

'Never mind; your going there will bring you nearer,' said Mrs. Shelby. 'Yes, you may go. Every penny of your wages shall be laid aside to buy Tom back with.'

Chloe's face really shone.

'Oh, missis is too good. I was thinkin' of dat very thing. I shan't need no clothes, nor shoes, nor nothin'. I could save every penny. How many weeks is there in a year, missis?'

'Fifty-two,' said Mrs. Shelby.

'And four dollars for each of'em. Why, how much would dat be?'

'Two hundred and eight dollars.'

'Why—e!' said Chloe, quite surprised and delighted at the big sum. 'How long would it take me to earn enough, missis?'

'Four or five years, Chloe. But then you needn't do it all. I shall add some to it.'

'I wouldn't hear of missis giving lessons. Mas'r's quite right in dat. I hope none of our family will ever be brought to dat while I's got hands,' said Chloe proudly.

'Don't be afraid,' said Mrs. Shelby smiling. Now she knew that Chloe had heard what she had said to Mr. Shelby.

So it was settled that Aunt Chloe should start next day for Louisville, and that all the money she earned was to be laid aside for Tom. In great delight she ran off to pack her clothes.

'You didn't know that I was going to Louisville, Mas'r George,' she said to him, when he came into her cottage a little later. 'But I am. I'm going to have four dollars a week. Missis is going to lay it all up, to buy back my old man again.'

'Whew!' said George, 'here's a stroke of business, to be sure. When are you going?'

'To—morrow; and now, Mas'r George, I knows you will just sit down and write to my old man, and tell him all about it—won't ye?'

'To be sure I will,' said George. 'Uncle Tom will be right glad to hear from us.'

So George sat down and wrote a long letter to Uncle Tom. He told him everything that was happening at home, and how Aunt Chloe was going to Louisville, to help to make money to buy him back again.

The letter cheered Tom very much when he received it, and a great hope grew in his heart.

Chloe too was happier than she had been since Uncle Tom had been taken away from her, because she felt that she was working for him, and every penny she earned brought them nearer to each other. She still belonged to Mr. and Mrs. Shelby. They had not sold her, but only lent her to the confectioner, who paid wages to her for the work she did. Mr. and Mrs. Shelby did not spend this money. They looked upon it as Chloe's own, and it was all laid aside until there should be enough with which to buy Uncle Tom back again.