

# UNCLE TOM'S CABIN

## A Kentucky Octoroon Talks About the Author of the Book.

### Gives Mrs. Stowe the Data for It.

**Lewis George Clark Mourns the Death of Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe—He Tells of Her Bitter Feelings Against Slavery—How She Came to Write the Story—First Published in a Weekly Paper.**

LEXINGTON, Ky., July 5.—(Special.)—There is one man in Lexington to whom the death of Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe means much, and that is Lewis George Clarke, the octoroon, now eighty-five years old, who gave Mrs. Stowe the data from which she drew the character of George Harris in her great work, "Uncle Tom's Cabin." In fact many of the incidents of Clark's life were woven into the story. In an interview the old octoroon said:

"I am sorry to hear that this good woman has been called into the great beyond. In the death of Mrs. Stowe the country loses one of the greatest emancipators the world has ever known, and I believe that had it not been for her story, 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,' we would all be slaves today. That book threw a fierce light on the institution of slavery, under which it was compelled to perish. We were individually trying to show to the people of the north just what slavery was, but we were unable to reach the masses properly, and it remained for Mrs. Stowe to do this. I consider her one of the immortals whose name shall never die so long as mankind loves freedom. When she wrote 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' I am sure she did not anticipate the great results which followed. Greater writers than she, such as Elijah P. Lovejoy, Joseph C. Lovejoy, Lewis Tappan, Dr. William Goodell, William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips and Cassius M. Clay had written and spoken volumes against slavery, but the Yankee schoolmistress struck a more responsive chord than the others were able to do, and the result was that the great human heart of the nation was touched and slavery was ultimately abolished.

"I first met Mrs. Stowe at the home of her step-sister, Mrs. Safford, in Cambridgeport, Mass., in 1844. She questioned me a great deal about the system of American slavery and asked me particularly of my own experiences. She was making a visit to Mrs. Safford from Cincinnati, where she was teaching school. Her father, Dr. Lyman Beecher, was president of Lane seminary. Mrs. Stowe and her father would go east each year to visit relatives during vacation. At such times Lyman Beecher would preach in various churches throughout Massachusetts and New England. In 1845 Mrs. Stowe again called at Mrs. Safford's to see me and as before she talked about slavery. She seemed greatly interested in the institution as it existed in the south at that time, but she didn't know as much of it as did Mrs. Safford, and the latter was anxious to have me talk with her.

"Prior to my first meeting with her I had traveled two years in Maine and lectured in nearly all the towns in the state, after which I went to Mrs. Safford's to live. When Mrs. Stowe first came there she was about thirty-three years old. She was rather homely and never put on any style. While I was talking with her she would loll around in her chair, and appear to be rather careless and indifferent in questioning me, but I thought she did this so that she would not excite me. She was not as strong in the anti-slavery cause as was Mrs. Safford, and the latter was anxious that I should give her all the information I could, as she told me that Mrs. Stowe was a woman of great influence. Mrs. Stowe took the notes she made while questioning me and kept them until after the passage of the fugitive slave law in 1850. After that bill was passed the leading abolitionists held a meeting to devise means to counteract its influence. They decided to employ Mrs. Stowe to write articles weekly for the National Era, of which Dr. Bailey was editor. It was published in Washington. She then began the publication in that paper, in 1851 or 1852, of 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,' in serial form. She was paid \$100 at first.

"The story took so well with the people that the publishers could scarcely print enough papers. Mrs. Stowe intimated that she was not satisfied with the remuneration that she was receiving, and at an abolitionists' meeting, where Lewis Tappan, who was the head of the movement; President Grover of New York Central college, Dr. Leavitt, editor of the Emancipator; Rev. Austin Willia of Hollowell, Me., editor of the Liberal Standard, and several other leading abolitionists met and decided to pay Mrs. Stowe \$300 more, if she would finish the story. She agreed and the story was finished. She had it copyrighted and the world knows the rest. I read the story as it appeared from week to week in the National Era and I recognized the facts I had told her six years before at Mrs. Safford's.

"I was at Andover, N. H., several years after the story appeared lecturing on temperance. I found that Mrs. Stowe was then a resident of Andover and one day she sent me a pressing invitation to come to her house and take dinner with her. I went and dined with her and her family. She met me at the door and was very gracious. She shook hands with me, asked me how I was getting along and introduced her children, who were small. I sat at her right at table and during the meal she talked a great deal about slavery asked me if I had read 'Uncle Tom's Cabin.' I told her I had and asked her why she did not send for me before she printed the story as I could have straightened out some things she got wrong. She replied: 'You slaves are so reserved that I didn't think you would come if I sent for you. When I was taking the notes of your conversation at my sister's I had no idea I would ever use them, as I expected to keep them for relics. But when Mr. Tappan and others asked me to write about slavery I found my notes of great value. But you told me then more facts than the people are willing to believe, and I have written another book to tell where I got my information.' I answered her that I would have quickly responded to her call, and she seemed much pleased. I remained at Mrs. Stowe's several hours talking with her and the children. That is the last I ever saw of her, as I shortly afterwards came west."