

A KEY
TO
UNCLE TOM'S CABIN;

PRESENTING

**THE ORIGINAL FACTS AND DOCUMENTS UPON WHICH
THE STORY IS FOUNDED.**

TOGETHER WITH

CORROBORATIVE STATEMENTS

VERIFYING THE TRUTH OF THE WORK.

BY

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[The Author reserves the right of Translation of this Work.]

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and what is left for them to be interested in *but* trifles?

The present Attorney-general of Liberia, Mr. Lewis, is a man who commands the highest respect, for talent and ability in his position; yet, while he was in America, it is said that, like many other young coloured men, he was distinguished only for foppery and frivolity. What made the change in Lewis after he went to Liberia? Who does not see the answer? Does any one wish to know what is inscribed on the seal which keeps the great stone over the sepulchre of African mind? It is this,—which was so truly said by poor Topsy,—“*NOTHING BUT A NIGGER!*”

It is this, burnt into the soul by the branding-iron of cruel and unchristian scorn, that is a sorer and deeper wound than all the physical evils of slavery together.

There never was a slave who did not feel it. Deep, deep down in the dark, still waters of his soul is the conviction, heavier, bitterer than all others, that he is *not regarded as a man*. On this point may be introduced the testimony of one who has known the wormwood and the gall of slavery by bitter experience. The following letter has been received from Dr. Pennington, in relation to some inquiries of the author:—

*New York, 50 Laurens-street,
November 30, 1852.*

ESTEEMED MADAM,

I HAVE duly received your kind letter in answer to mine of the 15th instant, in which you state that you “have an intense curiosity to know how far you have rightly divined the heart of the slave.” You give me your idea in these words: “There lies buried down in the heart of the most seemingly careless and stupid slave a *bleeding spot*, that bleeds and aches, though he could scarcely tell why; and that this sore spot is the *degradation* of his position.”

After escaping from the plantation of Dr. Tilghman, in Washington County, Md., where I was held as a slave, and worked as a blacksmith, I came to the State of Pennsylvania, and, after experiencing there some of the vicissitudes referred to in my little published narrative, I came into New York State, bringing in my mind a certain indescribable feeling of wretchedness. They used to say of me at Dr. Tilghman’s, “That blacksmith *Jemmy* is a ‘cute fellow; still water runs deep.’” But I confess that “blacksmith *Jemmy*” was not ‘cute enough to understand the cause of his own wretchedness. The current

of the still water may have run deep, but it did not reach down to that awful bed of lava.

At times I thought it occasioned by the lurking fear of betrayal. There was no Vigilance Committee at the time,—there were but anti-slavery men. I came North with my counsels in my own cautious breast. I married a wife, and did not tell her I was a fugitive. None of my friends knew it. I knew not the means of safety, and hence I was constantly in fear of meeting with some one who would betray me.

It was fully two years before I could hold up my head; but still that feeling was in my mind. In 1846, after opening my bosom as a fugitive to John Hooker, Esq., I felt this much relief,—“Thank God there is one brother-man in hard old Connecticut that know my troubles.”

Soon after this, when I sailed to the island of Jamaica, and on landing there saw coloured men in all the stations of civil, social, commercial life, where I had seen white men in this country, that feeling of wretchedness experienced a sensible relief, as if some feverish sore had been just reached by just the right kind of balm. There was before my eye evidence that a coloured man is more than “a nigger.” I went into the House of Assembly at Spanishtown, where fifteen out of forty-five members were coloured men. I went into the courts, where I saw in the jury-box coloured and white men together, coloured and white lawyers at the bar. I went into the Common Council of Kingston; there I found men of different colours. So in all the counting-rooms, &c., &c.

But still there was this drawback. Somebody says, “This is nothing but a nigger island.” Now, then, my old trouble came back again, “a nigger among niggers is but a nigger still.”

In 1849, when I undertook my second visit to Great Britain, I resolved to prolong and extend my travel and intercourse with the best class of men, with a view to see if I could banish that troublesome old ghost entirely out of my mind. In England, Scotland, Wales, France, Germany, Belgium and Prussia, my whole power has been concentrated on this object: “I’ll be a man, and I’ll kill off this enemy which has haunted me these twenty years and more.” I believe I have succeeded in some good degree; at least, I have now no more trouble on the score of equal manhood with the whites. My European tour was certainly useful, because there the trial was fair and honourable. I had nothing to complain of. I got what was due to man, and I was expected to do what was due from man to man. I sought not to be treated as a pet. I put myself into the harness, and wrought manfully in the first pulpits, and the platforms in peace congresses, conventions, anniversaries, commencements, &c.: and in these exercises that rusty old iron came out of my soul, and went “clean away.”

You say again you have never seen a slave, however careless and merry-hearted, who had not this sore place, and that did not shrink or get angry if a finger was laid on it. I see that you have been a close observer of negro nature.

So far as I understand your idea, I think you are perfectly correct in the impression you have received, as explained in your note.

O, Mrs. Stowe, slavery is an awful system! It takes man as God made him; it demolishes him, and then mis-creates him, or perhaps I should say mal-creates him!

Wishing you good health and good success in your arduous work,

I am yours, respectfully,

Mrs. H. B. Stowe.

J. W. C. PENNINGTON.

People of intelligence, who have had the care of slaves, have often made this remark to the writer: "They are a singular whimsical people; you can do a great deal more with them by humoring some of their prejudices, than by bestowing on them the most substantial favours." On inquiring what these prejudices were, the reply would be, "They like to have their weddings elegantly celebrated, and to have a good deal of notice taken of their funerals, and to give and go to parties dressed and appearing like white people; and they will often put up with material inconveniences, and suffer themselves to be worked very hard, if they are humored in these respects."

Can any one think of this without compassion? Poor souls! willing to bear with so much for simply this slight acknowledgment of their common humanity. To honour their weddings and funerals is, in some sort, acknowledging that they are human, and therefore they prize it. Hence we see the reason of the passionate attachment which often exists in a faithful slave to a good master. It is, in fact, a transfer of his identity to his master. A stern law, and an unchristian public sentiment, has taken away his birth-right of humanity, erased his name from the catalogue of men, and made him an anomalous creature—neither man nor brute. When a kind master recognizes his humanity, and treats him as a humble companion and a friend, there is no end to the devotion and gratitude which he thus excites. He is to the slave a deliverer and a saviour from the curse which lies on his hapless race. Deprived of all legal rights and privileges, all opportunity or hope of