

## UNCLE TOM'S CABIN.

BY AUGUSTA ALLEN.

This is a book of which the world can never live, for men and women will ever have hearts to feel the woes of mankind. They will ever have sighs to breathe for oppressed humanity, and tears to shed for dwarfed distorted manhood.

Though the great work for which the book was created, is done, neither this fact nor its age has dimmed the lustre of its merit or its literary excellence.

It was, I think, the first book ever read by me. It was brought into our family during the time when this nation was living the scenes of the last blood-stained epoch of its history; when the dark pall of slavery overshadowed the land; when scarcely a person could be found in the North who had not given some dear one to battle in the cause of liberty; when households were weeping over loved members, who were among the fallen; and when the whole country was but a scene of bleeding hearts and bitter desolation.

When even news of the foe's defeat was hailed with joy chastened and subdued by the thought that the precious life-blood of hundreds had been poured out to purchase the sacred victory. It was during such times as these that "Uncle Tom's Cabin" found its way into our country home: a home in which trashy novels met with neither welcome nor quarter. With what breathless interest every member of that family, from the gray-haired man to the little child, listened to the reading of that book! And when the last chapter was finished my child-mind was not satisfied. I took it up, and by skipping the longest words and bravely wrestling with those of medium length, mastered it for myself. Nor did one such reading suffice; but again and again the precious book was read from first to last. How I thought about it! How I studied it! and what grand lessons I learned from its pages. I saw so plainly the man and the woman beneath the black skin of the slave. I felt the bond of brotherhood between the races. Child, though I was, my heart burned at the injustice of slavery, and bled over the knowledge of its cruelties.

As I learned from this book, the true nature of the mighty curse which rested

upon the nation and realized for what our brave soldiers were fighting, it raised up within me such a passionate love of country, and such a strong feeling of patriotism as nothing else could have awakened.

I loved that book in my childhood, and I have never outgrown my interest in it. Ever since the year it became a part of our library, I have, once or twice in the course of the twelve-month, taken it from the shelf, and again pondered its truths; laughed at the rare humor flashing out here and there, and wept over the sad pictures so touchingly portrayed.

Many works of fiction are written for the sole purpose of lining the purse with gold, or of wreathing the author's brow with the laurels of fame. Not so with "Uncle Tom's Cabin." If such had been the case, God's blessing would not have gone with it as it did. Its author is a noble Christian woman. Her sympathies, for years before the book was written, were with the race in bondage. But during that time Harriet Beecher Stowe little dreamed that her white hand was to do more toward breaking the iron chain of the oppressor, and freeing the slaves of the South, than any other single hand in the whole world. But so it was to be. And I rejoice to-day, that a woman's hand did the mighty work.

In 1850 the Fugitive Slave law was passed. A law which crowned the Dred Scott decision, and was even more infamous than that. Never, since the formation of our Government, has Congress passed any other law, which so overshadowed America with disgrace, as the one which had for its aim the converting of all the people of a nation into Negro hunters, and slaveholders' servants. Mrs. Stowe's soul cried out against such a measure, and when she found that it was supported by humane men and women in the North, she said, "These people do not know what slavery is!" and she determined that they should know. For she, herself, would strip it of its painted mask, and hold its hideous features up to the view of the whole world. With mind filled with this noble thought and with heart bleeding for the oppressed, she set about her task. All are familiar with the story of the domestic nature of her labor, its consequently slow progress, the final publi-

cation of the book, and the wonderful sales following. It was eagerly sought by people of all classes. The national question changed from "How are you?" to "Have you read Uncle Tom's Cabin?" It was read with equal interest by old and young. Christian parents read it to their children. Even those who looked with scorn upon any thing of a religious nature read and praised that book, a book rich in Bible truths; abounding in sweet lessons of faith and trust in God; breathing of Christ and unfolding Christianity in its every page.

Ministers of the Gospel, who for years had not read a line of fiction, read and re-read that book, pronouncing its influence for good all-powerful. Anti-slavery men and women read it, and saw in it the dawn of a new era in the nation's history. Slave-holders read it and cursed this woman, who dared to write it, for they too saw what the result must be. Negroes read it, and praised God with overflowing hearts for the woman "whose loving sympathy for their race could be felt pulsing along every line." Certain it is, that no other work of fiction has ever exerted an influence for good equal to that of this book. Its political influence has been great. That alone would have rendered it praiseworthy. As great a politician as Lord Palmerston said, "I have not read a novel for thirty years, but I have read 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' three times; not alone for the sake of the story, but for the statesmanship of it."

It dealt the death-blow to the Fugitive Slave law. Nothing else could have done the work so speedily and so effectually. It opened the eyes of millions, and caused them to look upon the system of slavery in its true light. It made thousands of converts to the anti-slavery cause. It stirred the hearts of Abolitionists and spurred them to action in the great strife which followed; and which, as the world knows, resulted in the bursting of fetters and chains; the emancipation of an enslaved people; and the uplifting and dispelling of the darkest cloud that ever stretched its murky darkness between America and the Sun of Righteousness.

The miser is the great original chest protector.

Why do hens always lay eggs in day time? They are roosters at night.