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UNCLE TOM'S CABIN.

CHAP. XV.

Of Tom's new Master, and various other matters—History of St. Clare—Disappointed Love—The Ideal of a Wife—New England Farm-house—Ophelia St. Clare—Miss Ophelia's Duties.

Since the thread of our humble hero's life has now become interwoven with that of higher ones, it is necessary to give some brief introduction to them.

Augustine St. Clare was the son of a wealthy planter of Louisiana. The family had its origin in Canada. Of two brothers, very similar in temperament and character, one had settled on a flourishing farm in Vermont, and the other became an opulent planter in Louisiana. The mother of Augustine was a Huguenot French Lady, whose family had emigrated to Louisiana during the days of its early settlement. Agustine and another brother were the only children of their parents. Having inherited from his mother an exceeding delicacy of constitution, he was, at the instance of physicians, during many years of his boyhood, sent to the care of his uncle in Vermont, in order that his constitution might be strengthened by the cold of a more bracing climate.

In childhood he was remarkable for an extreme and marked sensitiveness of character, more akin to the softness of woman than the ordinary hardness of his own sex. Time, however, overgrew this softness with the rough bark of manhood, and but few knew how living and fresh it still lay at the core. His talents were of the very first order, although his mind showed a preference always for the ideal and the æsthetic; and there was about him that repugnance to the actual business of life which is the common result of this balance of the faculties. Soon after the completion of his college course, his whole nature was kindled into one intense and passionate effervescence of romantic passion. His hour came—the hour that comes only once; his star rose in the horizon—that star that rises so often in vain, to be remembered only as a thing of dreams; and it rose for him in vain. To drop the figure, he saw and won the love of a high-minded and beautiful woman, in one of the northern states, and they were affianced. He retuined south to make arrangements for their marriage, when, most unexpectedly, his letters were returned to him by mail, with a short note, from her guardian, stating to him that ere this reached him the lady would be the wife of another. Stung to madness, he vainly hoped, as many another has done, to fling the whole thing from his heart by one desperate effort. Too proud to supplicate or seek explanation, he threw himself at once into a whirl of fashionable society, and in a fortnight from the time of the fatal letter was the accepted lover of the reigning belle of the season; and as soon as arrangements could be made, he became the husband of a fine figure, a pair of bright dark eyes, and a hundred thousand dollars; and, of course, everybody thought him a happy fellow.

The married couple were enjoying their honeymoon, and entertaining a brilliant circle of friends in their splendid villa near Lake Pontchartrain, when one day a letter was brought to him in *that* well remembered writing. It was handed to him, while he was in full tide of gay and successful conversation, in a whole room-full of company. He turned deadly pale when he saw the writing, but still preserved his composure, and finished the playful warfare of *badinage* which he was at the moment carrying on with a lady opposite; and, a short time after, was missed from the circle. In his room, alone, he opened and read the letter, now worse than idle and useless to be read. It was from her, giving a long account of a persecution to which she had been exposed by her guardian's family, to lead her to unite herself with his son; and she related how, for a long time, his letters had ceased to arrive; how she had written time and again, till she became weary and doubtful; how her health had failed under her anxieties, and how, at last, she had discovered the whole fraud which had been practised on them both. The letter ended with expressions of hope and thankfulness, and professions of undying affection, which were more bitter than death to the unhappy young man. He wrote to her immediately:—

"I have received yours—but too late. I believed all I heard. I was desperate. *I am married*, and all is over. Only forget—it is all that remains for either of us."

And thus ended the whole romance and ideal of life for Augustine St. Clare; but the *real* remained—the *real*, like the flat, bare, oozy tide-mud, when the blue sparkling wave, with all its company of gliding boats and white-winged ships, its music of oars and chiming waters, has gone down, and there it lies, flat, slimy, bare—exceedingly real.

Of course, in a novel, people's hearts break, and they die, and that is the end of it; and in a story this is very convenient. But in real life we do not die, when all that makes life bright dies to us. There is a most busy and important round of eating, drinking, dressing, walking, visiting, buying, selling, talking, reading, and all that makes up what is commonly called *living*, yet to be gone through; and this yet remained to Augustine. Had his wife been a whole woman, she might yet have done something—as a woman can—to mend the broken threads of life, and weave them again into a tissue of brightness. But Marie St. Clare could not even see that they had been broken. As before stated, she consisted of a fine figure, a pair of splendid eyes, and a hundred thousand dollars; and none of these items were precisely the ones to minister to a mind diseased.

When Augustine, pale as death, was found lying on the sofa, and pleaded sudden sick-headache as the cause of his distress, she recommended to him to smell of hartshorn; and when the paleness and headache came on, week after week, she only said that she never thought Mr. St. Clare was sickly; but it seems he was very liable to sick-headaches, and that it was a very unfortunate thing for her, because he didn't enjoy going into company with her, and it seemed odd to go so much alone, when they were just married. Augustine was glad in his heart that he had married so undiscerning woman: but as the glosses and civilities of the honeymoon wore away, he discovered that a beautifull young woman, who has lived all her life to be caressed and waited on, might prove quite a hard mistress in domestic life. Marie never had possessed much capability of affection or much sensibility; and the little that she had merged into a most intense and unconscious selfishness; a selfishness the more hopeless from its quiet obtuseness, its utter ignorance of any claims but her own. From her infancy she had been surrounded with servants, who lived only to study her caprices: the idea that they had either feelings or rights had never dawned upon her, even in distant perspective. Her father, whose only child she had been, had never denied her anything that lay within the compass of human possibility; and when she entered life, beautiful, accomplished, and an heiress, she had, of course, all the eligibles and non-eligibles of the other sex sighing at her feet, and she had no doubt, that Augustine was a most fortunate man in having obtained her. It is a great mistake to suppose that a woman with no heart will be an easy creditor in the exchange of affection. There is not on earth a more merciless exactor of love from others than a thoroughly selfish woman; and the more unlovely she grows, the more jealously and scrupulously she exacts love, to the uttermost farthing. When, therefore, St. Clare began to drop off those gallantries and small attentions which flowed at first through the habitude of courtship, he found his sultana no way ready to resign her slave; there were abundance of tears, poutings, and small tempests; there were discontents, pinings, upbraidings. St.Clare was good-natured and self-indulgent, and sought to buy off with presents and flatteries; and when Marie became mother to a beautiful daughter, he really felt awakened for a time to something like tenderness.

St. Clare's mother had been a woman of uncommon elevation and purity of character, and he gave to this child his mother's name, fondly fancying, that she would prove a reproduction of her image. The thing had been remarked with petulant jealousy by his wife, and she regarded her husband's absorbing devotion to the child with suspicion and dislike; all that was given to her seemed so much taken from herself. From the time of the birth of this child, her health gradually sank. A life of constant inaction, bodily and mental—the friction of ceaseless *ennui* and discontent, united to the ordinary weakness which attends the period of maternity—in the course of a few years changed the blooming young belle into a yellow, faded, sickly woman, whose time was divided among a variety of fanciful diseases, and who considered herself, in every sense, the most ill-used and suffering person in existence.

There was no end of her various complaints; but her principal forte appeared to lie in sick-headache, which sometimes would confine her to her room three days out of six. As, of course, all family arrangements fell into the hands of servants, St. Clare found his *menage* anything but comfortable. His only daughter was exceedingly delicate, and he feared that, with no one to look after her and attend to her, her health and life might yet fall a sacrifice to her mother's inefficiency. He had taken her with him on a tour to Vermont, and had persuaded his cousin, Miss Ophelia St. Clare, to return with him to his southern residence: and they are now returning on this boat, where we have introduced them to our readers.

And now, while the distant domes and spires of New Orleans rise to our view, there is yet time for an introduction to Miss Ophelia.

Whoever has travelled in the New England States will remember, in some cool village, the large farm-house, with its clean-swept grassy yard, shaded by the dense and massive foliage of the sugar-maple; and remember the air of order and stillness, of perpetuity and unchanging repose, that seemed to breathe over the whole place. Nothing lost, or out of order, not a picket loose in the fence, not a particle of litter in the turfy yard, with its clumps of lilac-bushes growing up under the windows. Within, he will remember wide, clean rooms, where nothing ever seems to be doing or going to be done, where everything is once and for ever rigidly in place, and where all household arrangements move with the punctual exactness of the old clock in the corner. In the family "keeping-room," as it is termed, he will remember the staid, respectable old bookcase, with its glass doors, where Rollin's History, Milton's Paradise Lost, Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, and Scott's Family Bible, stand side by side in decorous order, with multitudes of other books, equally solemn and respectable. There are no servants in the house, but the lady in the snowy cap, with the spectacles, who sits sewing every afternoon among her daughters, as if nothing ever had been done, or were to be done—she and her girls, in some long-forgotten forepart of the day, "*did up the work*," and for the rest of the time, probably at all hours when you would see them, it is "*done up*." The old kitchen-floor never seems stained or spotted: the tables, the chairs, and the various cooking utensils, never seemed deranged or disordered: though three and sometimes four meals a day are got there, though the family washing and ironing is there performed, and though pounds of butter and cheese are, in some silent and mysterious manner, there brought into existence.

On such a farm, in such a house and family, Miss Ophelia had spent a quiet existence of some forty-five years, when her cousin invited her to visit his southern mansion. The eldest of a large family, she was still considered by her father and mother as one of "the children," and the proposal that she should go to *Orleans* was a most momentous one to the family circle. The old grey-headed father took down Morse's Atlas out of the bookcase, and looked out the exact latitude and longitude; and read Flint's Travels in the South and West, to make up his own mind as to the nature of the country.

The good mother inquired, anxiously, "if Orleans wasn't an awful wicked place;" saying, "that it seemed to her, most equal to going to the Sandwich Islands, or anywhere among the heathen."

It was known at the minister's, and at the doctor's, and at Miss Peabody's milliner's shop, that Ophelia St. Clare was "talking about going away down to Orleans with her cousin; and, of course, the whole village could do no less than help this very important process by *talking about* the matter. The minister, who inclined strongly to Abolitionist views, was quite doubtful, whether such a step might not tend somewhat to encourage the southerners in holding on to their slaves; while the doctor, who was a staunch Colonisationist, inclined to the opinion that Miss Ophelia ought to go, to show the Orleans people that we don't think hardly of them, after all. He was of opinion, in fact, that southern people needed encouraging. When, however, the fact, that she had resolved to go, was fully before the public mind, she was solemnly invited out to tea by all her friends and neighbours for the space of a fortnight, and her prospects and plans duly canvassed and inquired into. Miss Mosely, who came into the house to help to do the dressmaking, acquired daily accessions of importance from the developments with regard to Miss Ophelia's wardrobe which she had been enabled to make. It was credibly ascertained that Squire Sinclare, as his name was commonly contracted in the neighbourhood, had counted out fifty dollars, and given them to Miss Ophelia, and told her to buy any clothes she thought best; and that two new silk dresses, and a bonnet, had been sent for from Boston. As to the propriety of this extraordinary outlay, the public mind was divided; some affirming that it was well enough, all things considered, for once in one's life, and others stoutly affirming, that the money had better have been sent to the missionaries; but all parties agreed, that there had been no such parasol seen in those parts as had been sent on from New York, and that she had one silk dress that might fairly be trusted to stand alone, whatever might be said of its mistress. There were credible rumours, also of a hem-stitched pocket-handkerchief, and report even went so far as to state that Miss Ophelia had one pocket-handkerchief with lace all around it—it was even added that it was worked in the corners; but this latter point was never satisfactorily ascertained, and remains, in fact, unsettled to this day.

Miss Ophelia, as you now behold her, stands before you, in a very shining brown linen travelling-dress, tall, square-formed, and angular. Her face was thin, and rather sharp in its outlines; the lips compressed, like those of a person who is in the habit of making up her mind definitely on all subjects; while the keen, dark eyes had a peculiarly searching, advised movement, and travelled over everything, as if they were looking for something to take notice of.

All her movements were sharp, decided, and energetic; and, though she was never much of a talker, her words were remarkably direct and to the purpose when she did speak.

In her habits she was a living impersonation of order, method, and exactness. In punctuality she was as inevitable as a clock, and as inexorable as a railroad engine; and she held in most decided contempt and abomination anything of a contrary character.

The great sin of sins, in her eyes—the sum of all evils—was expressed by one very common and important word in her vocabulary—"shiftlessness." Her finale and ultimatum of contempt consisted in a very emphatic pronunciation of the word "shiftless;" and by this she characterized all modes of procedure which had not a direct and inevitable relation to accomplishment of some purpose then definitely had in mind. People who did nothing, or who did not know exactly what they were going to do, or who not take the most direct way to accomplish what they set their hands to, were objects of her entire contempt: a contempt shown less frequently by anything she said than by a kind of stony grimness, as if she scorned to say anything about the matter.

As to mental cultivation, she had a clear, strong, active mind, was well and thoroughly read in history and the older English classics, and thought with great strength within certain narrow limits. Her theological tenets were all made up, labelled in the most positive and distinct forms, and put by, like the bundles in her patch trunk; there were just so many of them, and there were never to be any more. So, also, were her ideas with regard to most matters of practical life—such as housekeeping in all its branches, and the various political relations of her native village. And, underlying all, deeper than anything else, higher and broader, lay the strongest principle of her being—conscientiousness. Nowhere is conscience so dominant and all-absorbing as with New-England women. It is the granite formation, which lies deepest, and rises out, even to the tops of the highest mountains.

Miss Ophelia was the absolute bond-slave of the "*ought*." Once make her certain that the "path of duty," as she commonly phrased it, lay in any given direction, and fire and water could not keep her from it She would walk straight down into a well, or up to a loaded cannon's mouth, if she were only quite sure that there the path lay. Her standard of right was so high, so all-embracing, so minute, and making so few concessions to human frailty, that, though she strove with heroic ardour to reach it, she never actually did so, and of course was burdened with a constant and often harassing sense of deficiency. This gave a severe and somewhat gloomy cast to her religious character.

But how in the world can Miss Ophelia get along with Augustine St. Clare—gay, easy, unpunctual, unpractical, sceptical,—in short, walking with impudent and nonchalant freedom over every one of her most cherished habits and opinions?

To tell the truth, then, Miss Ophelia loved him. When a boy, it had been hers to teach him his catechism, mend his clothes, comb his hair, and bring him up generally in the way he should go; and her heart having a warm side to it, Augustine had, as he usually did with most people, monopolised a large share of it for himself, and therefore it was that he succeeded very easily in persuading her that the "path of duty" lay in the direction of New Orleans, and that she must go with him to take care of Eva, and keep everything from going to wreck and ruin during the frequent illnesses of his wife. The idea of a house without anybody to take care of it went to her heart; then she loved the lovely little girl, as few could help doing; and though she regarded Augustine as very much of a heathen, yet she loved him, laughed at his jokes, and forbore with his failings, to an extent which those who knew him thought perfectly incredible. But what more or other is to be known of Miss Ophelia, our reader must discover by a personal acquaintance.

THINGS TALKED OF IN LONDON.

February, 1853.

The approach of the vernal equinox is reviving the subject of emigration—that is, if a subject can be said to have died which has been from time to time galvanized by news of the arrival of ships with tons of gold on board, not such mere handfuls of ounces as used to be considered great prizes in the days of the old Spanish galleons. The exploits of the bucaneers read tame, now that we are familiarised with the results of the diggins, and have a promise of their continuance. Besides five new gold-fields, a number of diamonds have been found; and if report speak truth, gold has been discovered in New Zealand also. Present indications shew, that the numbers willing to try their fortune in Australia will not be smaller this year than the last. At Southampton, a capacious lodging-house has been fitted up by the commissioners for the accomodation of emigrants while waiting their departure; and due precautions are taken to preserve health and morality. If similar establishments, equally well looked after, could be promoted in other large ports, the benefit would be extremely great, for there is a dark as well as a bright side, to the prospect of the golden antipodes. Ships have arrived in the Australian ports with a loss of from 50 to a 100 passengers by death from over crowding during the voyage; and reports not less fatal have heen heard from ship spoken on the passage. So there seems to be as little limit to the stowage of a ship as to that of the pit of a theatre. No money being returned in either case, you are left to survive the squeeze as best you may. This question of overcrowding, however, is far too serious to be passed over lightly; and if acts of parliament are not strong enough to prevent a species of slave-ship packing, it is imperative on all who are bent on expatriating themselves, to stipulate for ample space and plenty of air. Besides the contingency of death by the way, we are beginning now to get news from some of the thousands who went out in 1852; marvellous news in some cases, distressing in others: and many exclaim with Touchstone in the forest: 'When I was at home, I was in a better place.' Disappointments will necessarily abound, until the rude social elements of the new country shall have become tamed into something like civilisation. The recent opening of the first Australian university, may perhaps be regarded as proof that knowledge is in request as well as gold; and now that our government contemplates leaving the respective colonies to govern themselves, we shall have an opportunity of seeing what sort of liberty will be most acceptable to our antipodean brethren. Meantime, all sorts of emigration facts are discussed with great interest: 299,504 emigrants landed in New York last year; 10,000 went overland from the States to California; the number that left Ireland, it is estimated, will considerably exceed that of 1851, when it was more than a quarter of a million. It is a fact highly creditable to Irish emigrants, that in 1852, the sums remitted by them to their friends and relatives at home, amounted to L.990,000.

The means of emigration, too, are occupying a large share of attention. Certain earnest projectors will not hear of more than fifty days for the passage to Sydney; and so we are to have an 'Australian direct Steam-navigation Company,' whose boats are to ply on either side, to and from the Isthmus. Another scheme is for *screw clippers* by the same route; but seeing that the *Marco Polo* sailed to Melbourne and back in a little over five months, it is pretty clear that capability for speed does not belong alone to steamers. Most promising, however, for a shortening of the distance, is the renewed proposal for a ship-canal across the Isthmus, traversing the teritory of New Granada, from Port Fecosses on the Atlantic, to San Miguel on the Pacific. Certain concessions, it is said, have already been obtained for this route, which is shorter than any yet surveyed for a similar purpose, being not more than thirty-nine miles; besides which, the district is generally dry, and consequently more free from fevers and noxious insects than the swampy regions. In order that the work shall fully answer its purpose, the project is to cut a canal which shall be 30 feet deep at low water, 160 feet wide at the surface of the water, 140 feet at the bottom, and without locks. This would admit of the largest ships passing from one ocean to the other in five hours; and we are told that any smaller dimensions than these would be inadequate to the purpose. The estimated cost is twelve millions sterling. Only let the promoters create an Isthmian route without transhipment, and they will soon have satisfactory evidence, in the shape of profitable tolls, of the course which trade will take to and from the other side of the globe.

The Americans seem determined to establish a communication in their own way; the legislature of the state of New York is said to have sanctioned a scheme for a railway from some place high up the Mississippi, to California. Six hundred miles of the distance are to be completed in the first year. Good-bye to all the romance about buffalo-hunting, and adventures among the Sioux and Blackfeet, as soon as the steam-whistle shall be heard on the prairie! Much more might be said about enterprise in relation to travel, but there are other subjects to be noticed. One is Mr. Ragan's proposal to cut off a portion of the Mississippi where that river joins the Missouri, by a canal leading to Lake Michigan, which draining away the surplus waters, will save the plantations and towns on the lower course of the stream from the disastrous floods that now so frequently occur.

Of scientific matters, some have attracted more than ordinary interest—one of them being Sir Charles Lyell's return from America with a land-shell, and the remains of a fossil reptile, found in a fossilized tree standing erect in the coal-measures of Nova Scotia. The reptile is proved to be a *batrachian*, allied to species yet existing in the United States; and coupled with the fact, that a somewhat similar fossil has been discovered in Lanarkshire, it is causing geologists to reconsider their conclusion about air-breateing animals, and other phenomena of the coal-period. We have information, too, that gold has been found in more than one place in Canada; and we shall doubtless get a full report from Mr. Logan, the government-surveyor, as soon as the snows have melted; but if the Canadians are wise, they will not abandon their deposits of copper on Lake Superior for any mere 'prospect' of more precious metal.

On the Thames, experiments have been made by which, if successful, steamers are to burn their own smoke; the process is said to consist in passing a hot blast through the furnace. Some of our ship-builders, inspired by the success of the tubular bridges, are taking up once more the question of iron masts; and it is stated that tubular masts may be made of iron, stronger and lighter than those of wood, and with the additional advantage, that they might slide down one into the other, telescope fashion, while they would require neither shrouds nor stays, leaving room for bracing round the yards to the outermost. Shipbuilders must neglect no means of speed now that the *Ericsson* caloric ship has proved her capabilities. There is something, too, for paper-makers to consider, in the fact that Herr von Pannewitz, the inventor of the process for making wool from pine-trees, has recently presented to the king of Prussia specimens of paper made of the same material. Another ingenious individual, at Giersdorf, has also made paper from the red pine, which is so white and good as to be fit for writing or drawing, and needs no sizing, because of its resinous quality.

COLONIAL LEGISLATURE.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

FRIDAY, 11th March.

Petition of Tenants on Townships Nos. 57, 58, &c, the Property of the Earl of Selkirk—complaining of the Terms of their Leasehold Tenure.

Mr. Davies presented a Petition, as below given, from certain Inhabitants of Townships Nos. 57, 58, &c., being Tenants of the Earl of Selkirk.

To the Honorable the House of Assembly of Prince Edward Island, in Colonial Parliament convened—

The Petition of the undersigned, Inhabitants of Lots or Townships No. 57, 58, &c., being Tenants on the Property of Lord Selkirk, of London, England, Great Britain,

Respectfully Sheweth:

That the principal portion of your Petitioners emigrated to this Colony from Scotland and Ireland—that, at the time of their emigration, they were totally ignorant of the resources of the Colony, unacquainted with the nature of its soil, and also strangers to its commercial intercourse:

That, being thus landed on a foreign shore (to which they were strongly induced to come, and the most flattering promises held out to them) they were, owing to their pecuniary circumstances, unable to seek shelter elsewhere, and, therefore, were obliged to comply with any terms which their Proprietor, or his Agent, might propose or inflict.

That a great number of your Petitioners who have taken Leases, within the last *Ten* or *Fifteen* years, have no longer a Tenure, than 21 *Years*: that the said Leaseholders had been without capital, stock, or any other means whatever of making a livelihood, except by the mere labour of their hands; and the whole of said land being in a *Wilderness* state, the occupants, notwithstanding their industry, found the productions of their labour insufficient to maintain themselves and families, and under such circumstances were totally excluded from the possibility of complying with the terms of their Leases: that the period of said Leases will expire at the end of said term of 21 years from date thereof.

That they are under heavy Interest for Purchase Money of said Land; and considering the poverty and pressure of their circumstances, they are entirely discouraged—unless some mitigation or reduction be offered them, such as making void their liabilities for the arrears, and also reducing the yearly rents; together with extending the Term of their present short Leases to such a greater number of years, as may relieve their minds of the fear of being further burdened or even *ejected* at the expiration of their short Leases, and thereby losing the benefit of their past hard labour, at a time when the greatest share of their hardships in clearing the Lands would be almost at an end: And your Petitioners feel confident that, if the above request should be complied with, they would feel encouraged to make greater efforts to fulfil the terms of such new or remodelled Leases.