



## Uncle Tom's Cabin

BY HARRIET BEECHER STOWE

The following episode is drawn from *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. This book was published in 1851 and is said to have played a definite part in the national outcry against slavery, which led to the American Civil War. This episode gives a little insight into just one aspect of slavery and its effects.

- 1 Mr. and Mrs. Shelby had retired to their apartment for the night. Turning to her husband, Mrs. Shelby asked, "By the way, Arthur, who was that fellow that you lugged in to our dinner table today?"
- 2 "Haley is his name," said Mr. Shelby, turning himself rather uneasily in his chair and continuing with his eyes fixed on a letter.
- 3 "Is he a Negro trader?" asked Mrs. Shelby, noticing a certain embarrassment in her husband's manner.
- 4 "Why, my dear, what put that into your head?" replied her husband, looking up.
- 5 "Nothing—only Eliza came in here after dinner in a great worry, crying and carrying on, and said you were talking with a trader, and that she heard him make an offer for her boy. I told Eliza," said Mrs. Shelby as she continued to brush her hair, "that she had no reason to worry, and that you never had anything to do with that sort of person. Of course I knew you never meant to sell any of our people—least of all to such a fellow."
- 6 "Well, Emily," said her husband, "so I have always felt and said; but the fact is, my business lies so that I cannot get on without doing that very thing. I shall have to sell some of my hands; and I've agreed to sell Tom."
- 7 "What! Our Tom? That good, faithful creature has been your faithful servant from a boy! Oh, Mr. Shelby! And you had promised him his freedom too; you and I have spoken to him a hundred times of it! Well, I can believe anything now; I can believe now that you could sell little Harry, poor Eliza's only child!" said Mrs. Shelby in a tone between grief and indignation.
- 8 "Well, since you must know all, it is so. I have agreed to sell Tom and Harry both; and I don't know why I am to be rated as if I were a monster for doing what everyone else does every day. I can't help myself."