



SUPPLEMENT

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ET
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DES SOCIÉTÉS
DE LA CROIX-ROUGE

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PRINCIPAL ITEMS OF INTEREST

Austria. — On February 25 last the Delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross distributed to needy aged persons in Vienna 304 parcels containing blankets, sheets and tonics, also tea and coffee. The distribution of these relief supplies, presented by the International Committee, took place in the presence of His Eminence the Cardinal Innitzer who paid the Committee's work a tribute in which he was joined by the representatives of the World Council of Churches and Caritas.

The ICRC Delegation also supplied medicaments, tonics and in particular iso-nicotinyl hydrazide (sufficient for the complete treatment of over 1,000 cases) to two sanatoria where tuberculous children are accommodated one of which, in Scheiffling (Styria), is reserved for refugee children, and also to the Austrian Red Cross sanatorium in Grimmstein. The value of these products, also donated by the International Committee, amounted to 12,500 Swiss francs.

Greece. — During 1952 the relief supplies given out by the Athens Delegation of the ICRC amounted to some 53 tons in weight. The value of these supplies, consisting of foodstuffs, clothing, pharmaceutical products and surgical equipment, was about 300,000 Swiss francs. The Committee's share in this amount, about 60,000 Swiss francs, principally covered the medical relief despatched.

It will be remembered that the beneficiaries of these relief supplies are chosen among persons interned or exiled, refugees (of whom the majority are Albanian), disabled persons and the civilian population.

The figures above-mentioned are not connected with the anti-tuberculosis campaign carried on by the Delegation on behalf of the civilian population and interned or exiled persons. This work of detection, which was mentioned under the same heading in September 1952, has allowed for the treatment of over 300 cases. It represents an outlay by the International Committee of 100,000 Swiss francs.

Vietnam. — In December the International Committee's Delegate in Vietnam visited two camps for prisoners in French hands in the North of the country.

South Korea. — The ICRC Delegation handed over to the South Korean Red Cross, in February, medicaments and a small supply of dressings. These relief supplies, worth 16,000 Swiss francs, will be used in particular in the mobile dispensaries which are being set up by the South Korean Red Cross to give medical treatment to civilians outside the great centres. It is planned to provide a dispensary of this nature for each province.

Japan. — The ICRC Delegation in Japan, in January last, presented the Japanese Red Cross with a quantity of vaccines, serums and antibiotics, valued at slightly over 7,000 Swiss francs. These drugs were immediately distributed to the various Japanese Red Cross Hospitals.

HENRI COURSIER

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“ UNCLE TOM’S CABIN ” AND THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY

In 1852 a book published in the United States, “ Uncle Tom’s Cabin ” by Harriet Beecher Stowe, caused a great sensation.

The book, a stirring plea for the abolition of slavery, greatly contributed to the success of the great cause ; it preceded by a few years only the amendment to the American Constitution which brought the inhuman system to an end. Its influence may be compared to that of “ Un Souvenir de Solférino ”, which also drew a vivid picture of human suffering, and enabled Henry Dunant to prepare the way for the work of the Red Cross.

By recalling in these pages the centenary of “ Uncle Tom’s Cabin ” we are extolling one of the grandest figures and one of the principal episodes of humanitarian history.

* * *

It may be said that before the discovery of America slavery had died out in Christian countries. Vicquefort stated that, according to French jurists, “ the air in France is so good and so fair that as soon as a slave enters the kingdom, even with an ambassador’s suite, he draws a breath of freedom and regains his liberty ” ; and we know that Bodin¹, in commenting the decisions taken by the Toulouse Parliament, in the beginning

¹ BODIN, *Les six livres de la République*, Tit. 1, Chap. V.

of the XV Century, gave authority to the principle that even the slave of a foreigner was free immediately he set foot on French soil. For Great Britain the jurist Blackstone declared in the reign of Elizabeth that " the air of England is too pure for a slave to breathe therein ". Hence the rule, always affirmed in the same terms as in France, that " as soon as a man put foot on English ground he is free " ¹.

The discovery of the New World was unfortunately to bring this progress of civilisation once more into question.

This does not imply that the conquerors, in spite of their superiority of arms, succeeded in reducing the West Indian natives to slavery. The courage of the Indians and the protests of the Church had been opposed to the brutal action of the first settlers. In the first place it was necessary to do battle with (sometimes even to exterminate) a proud and vigorous race, and secondly, under the influence of religion, to allow them to receive baptism as free men. " Although they are ignorant of the Christian faith ", Pope Paul III wrote in 1537, " they are not, and should not, for that reason be deprived of their liberty and their property or be reduced to slavery. They are men like us ". This doctrine, proclaimed with such authority by the jurists of the Salamanca school, was sanctioned by the " Laws of the Indies ", which are a monument of humane inspiration.

But, while proclaiming this generous legislation, Charles the Fifth yielded to pressure by the settlers who, being unable to find the necessary man-power on the spot, had conceived the idea of importing labour from Africa. The negroes were men also ; yet from time beyond all memory the slave-trade had existed on the African continent. Until the XVI Century it had been more particularly directed towards the Eastern Mediterranean area ; but from the previous century slave traffic, handled by Portuguese traders, had been set up in the Canary Islands and on the Guinea Coast.

¹ See Cino VILLA, *La défense internationale de la liberté et de la moralité individuelles*, Recueil des cours professés à l'Académie de Droit international de La Haye. Vol. 45, page 563.

This trade considerably increased with the opening up of the Western lands beyond the Ocean. The King of Spain had already authorised in 1528 the transportation of slaves to America against payment to the Crown. The import of this labour, considered as a commodity, was also subject to the payment of customs duties. This was the *Assiento* system, whereby the States concluded formal contracts with the slave-traders, which brought in considerable revenue to the Treasury. After first being reserved for the Spanish only, the Assiento was later granted to foreign companies, and was the subject of actual diplomatic transactions. With the accession to the Spanish throne of the grandson of Louis XIV, a French company was licensed; later the English (who had joined in the Spanish war of Succession) negotiated with their allies the Dutch in order to make certain of enjoying the privilege of carrying on the slave-trade in peace-time. In 1713 the Queen of England concluded with the King of Spain a new Assiento, which was confirmed in the same year by the Treaties of Utrecht. A company appointed by the British Government was to supply 4,800 "pièces d'Inde" per year for thirty years. Nys¹ estimates that from 1680 to 1700 the privileged English company had shipped 140,000 negroes, and private traders 160,000, making a total of 300,000. This traffic continued to increase. During the year 1786 England supplied the American colonies with 38,000 negroes, while France furnished 20,000, Portugal 10,000, the United Provinces 4,000 and Denmark 2,000².

It was at this time that international opposition to the slave-trade first set in.

The following year the Abolition Society was founded in England, of which body the moving spirit was Wilberforce, who led an energetic campaign in the name of public morals for the abolition of slavery. The success of this campaign was not entirely due to its moral aspect.

¹ Nys, *L'Esclavage noir devant les jurisconsultes et les Cours de Justice*. Revue de Droit international et législation comparée. Vol. XXII, pages 60-61.

² See Cino VILLA, *op. cit.*, page 572.

The English were in favour of abolition for many political and economical reasons. The United States having become independent, they were no longer concerned with the success of plantations in the American tropical regions. On the other hand, as they had in the Indies an abundant source of non-servile labour, they could even conceive the idea of using this labour to enter into competition with their former colonies. Further, the "right of search", which is the inevitable accompaniment of any practical scheme for the repression of the slave-trade, was a most tempting advantage for a commercial nation possessing the strongest navy in the world. Without contesting the sincerity of Wilberforce and his followers, it must be admitted that these motives served as arguments for the opponents of the diplomatic action carried on by the Cabinet of Saint James in favour of abolition both at the Vienna Congress and at subsequent European Conferences. As for the British Parliament it first prohibited the slave-trade in 1807, and slavery in British Colonies in 1838.

In France the "Société des amis des Noirs" was constituted in 1788 under the guidance of Mirabeau and the Abbé Grégoire. The Revolution, as a faithful consequence of its principles of equality between men, abolished slavery; but Bonaparte, following protests by settlers in the French West Indies, repealed this measure, thus causing the Santo Domingo rebellion.

In the United States the Law of March 22, 1794 prohibited citizens from engaging in the slave traffic. In 1808 Congress prohibited the import of slaves, and in 1819 attached to this measure the death penalty. Slavery nevertheless continued to exist, and even to flourish by the mere fact of the birth-rate.

The Southern States, where the climate made land cultivation arduous for white people, were greatly in favour of slavery, which was there referred to as their own "domestic institution". The tobacco plantations, which throughout the XVIII Century were Virginia's great source of wealth (so much so that there was no National Debt), and subsequently the cultivation of cotton, which became the more important industry, called for

a number of workers, and the number increased with the development of the cotton mills in Europe, which in turn depended upon supplies of raw material from America.

Slave labour was not however necessary in the Northern States, where the climate was suitable for white man-power. Furthermore, the population was continually being increased by the arrival of immigrants from Europe. Anti-slavery propaganda therefore expanded in those States without opposition. It did not clash with any interests, and was in keeping with the Puritanism of the people.

The prosperous economy of the South however ensured its political preponderance within the Union, so long as the Northern States had not asserted their industrial capacity.

Even when the Republican Party came into power with Jefferson as President in the United States (and within a short period had completely eliminated the Federal Party with its far more aristocratic tendencies) slavery was not seriously threatened. Jefferson, who had formerly been Minister in Paris and was imbued with the principles of the French Revolution, doubtless blamed the practice in his heart : he even said : " I fear for my country when I think of a just God ". But, as a rich Virginian planter, he could hardly fight against traditions so firmly implanted.

This exceptional situation was maintained, when the Democrats took the place of the Republicans. In order to remain in power they were also obliged to consider the essential interests of the slave States.

Nevertheless the opposition between the North and the South in regard to slavery broke out on each admission of a new State to the Union. To meet these difficulties compromises were arranged. The compromise in the case of Missouri in 1820 confined slavery to the South of the thirty-sixth parallel. In the case of Kansas in 1850 it was decided that there should be no slaves in California (although it was situated to the South of the line), whereas slaves were allowed above the line in Kansas. At the same time a law was passed whereby the owners of runaway slaves could recover their property, even in the free States, with the help of the authorities.

This arrangement merely increased competition between the North and the South. In the free States societies were instituted to assist needy emigrants to settle in Kansas, whereas from the South armed adventurers were to make the territory a slave State. Each of the two parties fought to enforce its Constitution.

It was in these troubled times that Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote "Uncle Tom's Cabin".

* * *

Harriet Beecher, born in a Puritan New England family, a pastor's daughter, was the wife of the Reverend Stowe, Professor of Bible History at Cincinnati University. She left her home in her youth and lived for several years in the immediate proximity of a slave State, Kentucky. At the age of fifty she published "Uncle Tom's Cabin". The book is not therefore the fruit of a brief survey; it proceeds from a close study of the subject. It is the expression of free thought, entirely independent of material interests.

The portrait of the author (reproduced in the frontispiece) figures in one of her other works. It is to be presumed therefore that she approved of it. "The first remark that people usually make on seeing me", she states with humour in "Sunny Memories"¹, "is that I am not as ill-looking as they thought I would be, and I assure you that, since having seen the things displayed in shopwindows here, with my name below, I have a singular admiration for the stupendous kind-heartedness of my friends in England and Scotland in keeping so much affection in their hearts for such a Gorgon. I should think that the Sphinx of the British Museum must have served as a model for the majority of my portraits. I am going to make a collection to take home with me. There are a great many varieties, and they will be of as much use as the Irishman's signpost showing where the road did not lead!" Let us hope that our likeness is better. We should like to think so in any case, for this face is instinct with benevolence and even with compassion; and

¹ *Sunny Memories* — A Travel Book, published in 1853.

one finds in it real distress at the thought of the sufferings of others. According to a graphologist the analysis of her writing confirms these characteristics.

With regard to her moral nature, it may be thought that Harriet Beecher-Stowe drew her own portrait in one of the characters of her book, Miss Ophelia, who came from the North to look after the household of her cousin, St. Clare, in New Orleans. "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."

She made an effort nevertheless to put aside established ideas, and to pursue in the light of experience a wholly objective line of thought. In her "Memories" she says "I have tried to get rid of the prejudices—if you like to call them thus—of my Puritan education". For instance, when travelling in England and discussing house-keeping with the people she met, she tried to understand the other persons' views. These persons, without upholding slavery in so far as it conflicted with conscience, were at pains nevertheless to point out the advantages of a hierarchic society, where the interests of all are served by a tolerant and accepted patriarchial rule. When questioned as to the condition of servants in America, she said that one of the principal difficulties in American housekeeping was caused by the numerous well-paid careers open to everybody, so that very few men or women were prepared to work as servants, unless as a temporary expedient. At bottom, she added, the idea of domestic service was radically different to what she had seen in Europe: it was regarded as a temporary engagement, and did not essentially differ from the contract between a workman and a manufacturer. Her listeners were of the opinion that in these conditions servants could not be imbued with affection for the families in which they worked. She agreed, and said that old family servants were a great exception in free America.

Although her ideas were formed on such objective lines, they were nevertheless firm and often in advance of her time.

We shall see that she condemned slavery with peremptory

force, and exposed its dire consequences, but with constant regard for absolute veracity.

With regard to equal rights for men and women, so much in dispute at the time, she remarked casually that one of her characters was "only a weak woman as her husband said", which is sufficient to show her scepticism in regard to the privileges of the male sex ¹.

As regards social progress, she had already (in 1853) declared herself to be in favour of the "Saturday half-holiday". During her visit to England the Great Exhibition was in full swing in London. It was a question whether the Crystal Palace should be opened on the Lord's Day in order that it might be seen by workmen and shop people. "I asked", she said, "why the philanthropists did not go to the employers and urge them to give their workers part of Saturday; it seemed rather un-Christian for working people to be allowed intellectual and social recreation on Sundays only. It was agreed that my advice was the best means of solving the difficulty; but will it be followed by the British people? That is another matter."

On the great question of war and peace, the author of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" had long recommended pacific settlement of conflicts, pointing out that "modern society in general is equally opposed to war and to slavery; but a time will certainly come when a more rational and humane means will be found of solving differences between nations".

Finally, in regard to her religious beliefs, it will be observed that this daughter, sister and wife of Protestant ministers was most favourably disposed towards her Catholic brethren. In this she is akin to Florence Nightingale, another great humanitarian character of the same period, who for some time lived among the Sisters of Saint Vincent of Paul in Paris.

It was therefore in a purely Christian spirit that Harriet Beecher Stowe opposed slavery in her thoughts and in her writings. The words of Saint Paul to the first Christians, when slavery was still one of the foundations of society, remained

¹ In 1855 she published *The Chimney Corner*, a work in favour of sex-equality.

in her mind (" There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male or female ; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus ".) It was in the name of this doctrine of fundamental equality between men that she rose in judgment against the customs of her time and relentlessly condemned slavery.

* * *

" Uncle Tom's Cabin " is taken from life. It closely follows actual facts, and this was doubtless the principal reason for its success.

We have not the slightest intention of criticising the literary talent of Harriet Beecher Stowe. As a professional writer she, and several of her brothers, had been endowed with the family art of writing ; but of her numerous works only this one became famous. When commenting upon this book herself, Harriet Beecher Stowe informs us in fact that " This work has been made up of a carefully chosen mixture of *real* incidents, of *actual* facts and of words *really* spoken, which were merely grouped together as need for the result in view—just as the mosaicist assembles his stone fragments according to the pattern he wishes to compose. His mosaic is of stones, ours is of facts."

Tom was a slave who was resigned to his fate. He was as gentle as he was strong, both intelligent and honest ; and he was in fact the overseer of the farming estate of his master in Kentucky. Faithful to the principles of the Christian faith, he lived happily with his wife and children in his humble dwelling—" Uncle Tom's Cabin was a small log building, close adjoining to " *the house* " as the negro, *par excellence*, designates his master's dwelling. In front it had a neat garden-patch where, every summer, strawberries, raspberries and a variety of fruits and vegetables, flourished under careful tending. The whole front of it was covered by a large scarlet begonia and a native multi-flora rose which, entwisting and interlacing, left scarce a vestige of the rough logs to be seen. Here also, in summer, various brilliant annuals such as marigolds, petunias, four o'clocks

found an indulgent corner in which to unfold their splendours, and were the delight and pride of Aunt Chloe's heart."

Tom was liked by everybody, particularly his master's small son who, proud of his new learning, taught him to write. All called him "Uncle Tom".

But all of a sudden this blissful existence suffered a dramatic change. Having run into debt the master, being hard pressed by his creditors, had no other means of meeting his obligations than to sell his best slave. Tom was sold; and the slave-merchant also insisted upon taking a small child, the son of another slave, to be harshly separated from his mother.

Having learned of the sale, the mother escaped with her child, warning the other victim before her departure; but, whereas she succeeded after many perils in reaching the free soil of Canada, Tom, resigned to his lot, and in deference to his master's decision, with some faint hope of being bought back in a happier future, let himself be chained and led away to meet his fate.

On the ship sailing southwards he met a charming little girl of about ten years of age, Eva, the fair-haired daughter of a wealthy New Orleans cotton-planter. The little girl, drawn by Tom's gentle manner and pleased with the little figures he made with cherry stones, persuaded her father to buy him. St. Clare, an easy-going but kind gentleman, bought Tom to be in his daughter's service.

From that time our hero's life might be termed delightful, had he not been homesick for his cabin and bereft of his family. St. Clare's palace in New Orleans and his country house were luxurious residences surrounded by gardens where tropical plants grew in beautiful profusion. Eva was an angelic child. She was deeply moved by the sufferings of others; she sought to comfort, to heal, to teach and to improve the morals of her father's slaves. Unfortunately, within a few years she died, worn out by phtisis and her sorrow for the negroes' unhappy condition. Before her death however she made her father promise to set Tom free in order that he might return to his home.

St. Clare was quite desirous of keeping his promise; but he nevertheless delayed in taking the necessary steps. He said

one day to his slave : “ Why, Tom, you couldn’t possibly have earned by your work such clothes and such living as I have given you.” “ Knows all that, Mas’r St. Clare, replied Tom, masr’s been too good ; but, mas’r, I’d rather have poor clothes, poor house, poor everything, and have ’em *mine*, than have the best, and have ’em any man’s else. I think its natur, mas’r ! ”

This was in fact sound reasoning, for death came to St. Clare before he could accomplish the emancipation formalities ; and Tom was sold once more, to a cruel master this time who shamelessly robbed him. “ He took Tom’s trunk, which contained a very neat and abundant wardrobe, to the fore-castle, where it was soon surrounded by various hands of the boat. With much laughing at the expense of niggers who tried to be gentlemen, the articles very readily were sold to one another, and the empty trunk finally put up at auction. It was a good joke, they all thought, especially to see how Tom looked after his things, as they were going this way and that.”

The poor man gave up his belongings and accepted his destitution in the most Christian spirit. Would he at least benefit by his renunciation—would he be able to work in peace in this new master’s service ? No, for the man was a foul, brutal drunkard, who inhumanly exploited his slaves’ labour. He was asked the question “ And how long do they generally last ? ” to which he replied “ Well dunno, ’cordin as their constitution is. Stout fellers last six or seven years ; trashy ones get worked up in two or three. I used to, when I fust begun, have considerable trouble fussing with ’em and trying to make ’em hold out—doctorin’ on ’em when they’s sick, and givin’ on ’em clothes and blankets, and what not, tryin’ to keep ’em all sort ’o decent and comfortable. Law, ’twasn’t no sort o’ use ; I lost money on ’em and ’twas heaps of trouble. Now you see I just put ’em straight through, sick or well. When one nigger’s dead, I buy another, and I find it comes cheaper and easier every way.”

This unworthy master had supposed that his new recruit would second him in wielding the lash to force other negroes to work beyond their strength ; but Uncle Tom was too good to play such a part. On the contrary, he helped the weakest of the slaves to make up the quantity of cotton representing

their day's task in order to avoid their being punished. He was harshly flogged himself for his charitable action.

One evening two negro women brought him a hatchet, telling him that he could strike his master, who was in a drunken slumber, and be free. He refused to kill, but helped them to escape.

This escape brought the tormentor's fury to a pitch ; he made Tom bear the responsibility, and illtreated him until he died from his sufferings, his last words being to pardon his torturer.

This work contains numerous digressions by other characters. Mr. and Mrs. Shelby gave fair treatment to their slaves, until the day arrived when the husband was obliged to sell two of them. When Mrs. Shelby objected that Tom was married and had children, saying " I have taught my people that their marriages are as sacred as ours ", her husband replied : " It's a pity, wife, that you have burdened them with a morality above their condition and prospects." However desirous these masters were to treat their servants well, they did not go so far as to deprive themselves of the benefits of an established social condition. St. Clare was undecided on the question. " There is no doubt that slavery is a very bad thing ", he said, " a great many people think so ; I do myself. I heartily wish there were not a slave in the land, but then I don't know what is to be done about it." And we know that his negligence was fatal to poor Tom.

If the good admitted their inability to fight a social evil, of whose far-reaching effects they were perfectly well aware, what could be said of those whose attitude was one of complacent callousness. Mary St. Clare, an imaginary invalid, accustomed from infancy to the submission and adulation of absolute human cattle, had only misunderstanding or cruelty for these beings' yearnings towards a better life. She followed the same line of thought as one of her relatives, who on seeing a slave beaten merely declared : " No amount of whipping can hurt him ", to which somebody replied with irony " By way of teaching the first verse of a republican's catechism—all men are born free and equal " and received the answer " Poh !

One of Tom Jefferson's pieces of French sentiment and humbug ! It is perfectly ridiculous to have that going the rounds among us to this day."

This was the attitude of the well-born. The commoners were not much better. A farmer, who had hired out one of his slaves to a mill-owner, made the spiteful decision to take his slave back in order to humiliate him by giving him the most degrading work. When an attempt was made to dissuade him, he gave the tragic answer : " It's a free country sir ; the man's *mine* to do what I please with him—that's it."

Nevertheless, among those who were disgusted by such remarks, the Quakers were the first to give shelter to escaping slaves. On being warned that the law gave the master the right to recover them with police assistance, one Quaker exclaimed " Its a shameful law. I'll break it for one the first time I get a chance."

There was also the senator who, yielding to his wife's arguments on the subject, agreed to favour a slave's escape in spite of the law which he had personally approved and voted. " What a situation for a patriotic senator, that had been all the week before spurring up the legislature of his native state to pass more stringent resolutions against escaping fugitives, their harbourers and abettors ! "

By stigmatizing the egoism and hypocrisy of people who tolerated slavery, Harriet Beecher Stowe also revealed the fact that the system was likely to be degrading for the slaves themselves. In his abnegation and self-immolation Tom was animated by super-natural thoughts, which others of his kind rarely possessed. The advanced slave George Harris, a mulatto who could easily pass for a white person to the unaccustomed eye, a worker who had been torn from a mechanical invention which all approved by a spiteful and ignorant master, was also an exception. " On the whole, treated as they were like brute beasts, these wretched people fell as low as human nature could fall."

We are shown how old Prue drank to forget her child's death. Her breasts had run dry, and her mistress would not buy milk for her. In the end she died under the whip for repeated

drunkenness. Topsy the young slave, sly and a thief, deceived all those who were good to her. On being severely scolded she explained "I'so wicked. Laws! I's nothing but a nigger nowadays." She knew nothing of her father or mother, having been abandoned too young to understand. She cried one day in despair: "I jist wish I hadn't never been born. I didn't want to be born nowadays; and I don't see no use on't."

The spectacle of such distress evoked the reflections, which the author attributes to Augustine St. Clare and to his brother, thus giving the problem of abolition its full value. "I tell you", said Augustine, "if there is anything that is revealed with the strength of a divine law in our times, it is that the masses are to rise, and that the under class become the upper one." His brother replied: "Well, I hope I shall be dead before this millenium of your greasy masses comes on." "Greasy or not greasy, they will govern *you* when their time comes", said Augustine, "and they will be just such rulers as you make them."

Harriet Beecher Stowe for her part earnestly hoped for the reform to take place without disturbance. In referring to a resolution of the Presbyterian Assembly of 1818 for "the complete abolition of slavery in America and the Christian World", she stated that the Church should make a resolute approach to the task, and that for the Church it was a question of honour. Further, only the Church could undertake this great work by pacific means. If the terrible problem were some day to enter the arena where the political parties were in conflict, what disturbance and discord it would cause! And how great the peril would be for the Union ¹!

* * *

These words proved to be a true prophecy. Harriet Beecher Stowe's book was read with avidity, because passion was then at its height. In the year it was published, three hundred and

¹ *La Clef de la Case de l'Oncle Tom*, page 393.

five thousand copies were printed and sold. Sales soon reached the figure (unheard of at that time) of a million and a half. It had the same success in Europe. In 1853, the year following the publishing of "Uncle Tom's Cabin", the author travelled to England, Scotland, France, Switzerland and Germany. She was warmly received everywhere. When relating her arrival in Glasgow, Harriet Beecher Stowe said she found so many letters awaiting her that "C" had spent five hours reading and answering them as briefly as possible. The letters came from all classes of the population, persons of distinction and men of the people, rich and poor, in all forms and all styles of composition, in verse and in prose, simple outbursts of sentiments, invitations, advice, questions, requests. Some were accompanied by gifts of flowers and fruit. In England 40 editions of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" were published. In Paris M. "C" said he had never had an experience of this description during his 35 years' career as a bookseller. The book's success was far greater than that of any modern author.

After visiting Scotland, England and France, the author of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" arrived at Saint-Cergue. The Swiss innkeeper greeted her with the words "Courage, the sacred cause of freedom will finally be victorious in this world". Harriet Beecher Stowe in turn wrote (in the "Memories") "Ah! these noble Swiss breathe sweet air on their mountain heights! May their simple words be a divine prophecy!" In Geneva Henry Dunant, who was then twenty-five years of age and full of enthusiasm for all noble causes, sought an introduction to Harriet Beecher Stowe, which took place at the house of the Fazy-Meyer, his friends. One of his biographers¹ states: "He trembled with emotion. The meeting only lasted half an hour; but Jean-Henry was always to remember the gentle, lined face, the vibrant voice and her unpretentiousness as marked as her success."

In America however a fresh political conflict had arisen in regard to slavery. The Republican Party, which had been out of power since 1828, reorganised in 1854 and took as its

¹ See *Revue internationale de la Croix-Rouge*, May, 1952, page 406.

watchword the opposing of the extension of slavery to territories destined to form new States. The Democrats were again victorious in the presidential election of 1856 ; but the Republican Party then obtained 114 votes against 174. The Democratic Party in the North, alive to the agitation among the public, gave but reluctant support to the interests of Southern partisans of slavery. To quote a characteristic instance, the Secretary of State Cass who, when Ambassador in Paris in 1842, had contributed to the non-ratification by France of the treaty of the five great European Powers for the repression of slavery, admitted in 1859 that " if the United States continued to maintain that for their flag to be flying at the mast of any vessel conferred upon it the immunity to which American vessels are entitled, they would be adopting an attitude which would justly deserve censure as tending to prevent the rightful punishment of crimes committed on the high seas." This embarrassed declaration seemed to indicate an uneasy conscience. Did it not appear to be the announcement of an early agreement with Great Britain for the repression of the slave-trade ?

By the 1860 elections the candidate of the Republican Party was a new man, Abraham Lincoln. He became famous during the Convention of the Republican Party of his State (Illinois) by stating that " This Government cannot indefinitely continue to be half for slavery and half for freedom ". The hesitations and divisions of his adversaries were to his advantage. As they were not able to agree upon a programme, the Democrats nominated two candidates, and Lincoln was elected.

This memorable election was the signal for the catastrophe which Harriet Beecher Stowe had predicted would be a peril for the Union.

The South, having been accustomed from the outset to lead the country, could not admit its defeat. It seceded, and Lincoln was forced to go to war to save the unity of the country.

His victory, dearly bought in four years, after a million men had perished in more than a hundred battles, at least resulted in the abolition of slavery.

At the outset the President had only in mind the territorial integrity of the United States. In 1862 he stated in one of his

writings that, if he could save the Union without setting one single slave free, he would do so. But events followed their course, Northern troops having captured slaves enrolled in the Southern Army declared them to be war contraband, confiscated them as such and then set them free. Their adversaries retaliated by seizing the property of Northern citizens in their territory, to which Congress in Washington replied by abolishing slavery in all the Secession States. After the re-election of Lincoln in 1865, the measure was completed by the 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution, which definitely abolished slavery in all the Union territory.

By 1862 the ancient quarrels between Great Britain and the United States had come to an end, the two Powers having agreed by treaty upon the right of search for the repression of slave-running.

The War of Secession led to the codification of the laws of war by the Lincoln Government. The statute adopted, drawn up by Lieber, is a great credit to the humanitarian spirit of the American jurists.

A few months after the hostilities the head of the Secession movement was granted a free pardon, which showed the wise policy of the victorious party.

Thus from this long and bloody conflict America emerged more humane and more closely united "drawing strength from its own injury".

* * *

The epilogue of Harriet Beecher Stowe's book has shown us how freedom was attained through death.

It was at Uncle Tom's grave that young George Shelby vowed he would never again possess slaves. Not having arrived in time to save Tom he returned to Kentucky, and freed all his slaves saying: "My friends, when you rejoice in your freedom, think that you owe it to that good old soul. Think of your freedom every time you see Uncle Tom's Cabin."