

"Uncle Tom's Cabin as it is."

This long promised publication, which seems to have had as many ante-natal difficulties to encounter as "Poor Yorrick" had, is, at length, born and swaddled; and Buffalo, this Queen City of the Lakes, has the high honor, or the humiliating affliction, whichever it may be considered by the reader, of being the place of its nativity and the residence of its parent.

We have done what many others will do—we have read it to see what the author could find to say in disparagement of the late publication from the pen of Mrs. Stowe, the name of which he has taken the liberty to appropriate, with the addition of "As it is," to evade the penalty of infringement. As we had understood that the forthcoming work was designed to counteract the effect which Mrs. Stowe's book was producing throughout the whole Union, we supposed it was to take the shape of a labored criticism on that work. We find, however, that the author deemed it more prudent to take a different course. He chose to let her portrait stand untouched, and to draw one from his own fancy, of a character in juxtaposition. He has plagiarized nothing from the original "Uncle Tom's Cabin" but the name, which was necessary *ad captandam*. And this, if it even prove to be indictable literary-larceny, is a matter between the rightful proprietor and the rightless purloiner, with which we and the reader have nothing to do. Our business is with its claims to be recognized as a representative of the moral sentiments and literary taste of the present age, in this country, and particularly in this locality.

We emphatically condemn its morale; because it is a labored effort to sustain an institution which has already become odious to every christian community on earth, for its immorality, its injustice and its inhumanity; because it is evidently designed to misrepresent the character of that institution, by presenting a picture of a single case, as a fair sample of the whole, which, even if its original had ever existed, would have been merely an exception, disproving nothing which has been alleged against that moral abomination, which is the paramount curse and disgrace of the nation: because it evinces a disposition in its author, to malign honest and humane philanthropists, who sincerely deprecate the existence and the evil influence of that moral plague in the country, and to caricature and render ridiculous their efforts in the sacred cause of humanity: because the author is not a citizen of a slave state, where familiarity with the system of enslaving and chattelizing God's human images, indurates the feelings, blinds the moral vision, and whelms the enormity of the sin in the generality and popularity of its practice; and because he was not necessitated to become the champion of an enormous vice, for the sake of the pecuniary profit to be derived from it; he being a member of a profession, of which no one who is capable and worthy need ever lack the necessities or luxuries of life.

The plot is entitled to commendation for perfect simplicity. It imposes upon the fabricator of the story, nothing more than the easy task of producing an anomalous case of human slavery, in which all the usual effects of the institution are reversed; in which the chit-chat of characters is all laudatory of the enslavement of the African race, and condemnatory of their emancipation; in which a single character is represented to be seduced by a northern sojourner, to run away from a humane and fatherly master, and made to pass through all kinds of mishaps and endure every kind of ill treatment, "in the land of liberty," till he is glad to embrace the privilege of returning home with his master, who is on a visit to Niagara Falls, in Canada; and in which no allusion is made to any of the odious features of the institution.

This was a task which presented no other difficulties of accomplishment, than the necessity of finding use for a sufficient amount of words to make a large volume. This was certainly a very heavy duty to be imposed upon any one unblest with exhaustless volubility, or afflicted with a loathing of senseless redundancy. But our author seems to have been happily constituted for the performance of this undertaking; for he has succeeded to admiration in attenuating unimportant incidents and spinning chapters.

The inadequacy and lameness of the plot, are made palpable in the carrying out and the filling up of the details. The whole 519 pages prove just as much in favor of human slavery, as three of these lines will prove in favor of arson. Take a case like this: An incendiary set fire to a steamboat on the Hudson; she was immediately run ashore where she was consumed, and no person was burnt to death or drowned. If an isolated case, in which a slave-holder treats his chattels like a father, and does not oppress them beyond endurance, is evidence that the enslavement

of human beings is in accordance with humanity and christian ethics, then a case like the one given, in which no one is destroyed by the conflagration is evidence that there is no moral turpitude in the commission of arson.

The style of the author is quite as unexceptionable as that of many other authors, whose productions will live till thousands of years after the thing which we have under consideration shall have passed into oblivion. It is much in the

narrative style of "The wonderful life and surprising adventures of the renowned hero, Robinson Crusoe." But it is entirely barren of thrilling incident, and manifests no lofty conceptions—no sublimity of thought. In its attempts at the pathetic, it is rather harrowing than melting; and its wit rather bores than pierces. It is as pleasant a task to read it, as it would be to foot it three days on a road so strait and so flat that you could see ten miles ahead all the time, with a perfect monotony of scenery on both sides.

It is evident that the author did not think it worth while to emulate Mrs. Stowe in chasteness of expression. If he had, he would have found some other measure for the quantity of papers consulted by "Mr. Pettibone" when he was about to make his speech in Congress, than that of "an ass load." And he would not, probably, have allowed Tom and Dinah to kneel down and pray, and immediately after, suffer Tom to utter the expression: "I'll be dam to hell if I'll stay." We think the author should not so frequently have allowed his slave characters to use profane language in presence of so good a master.

In imitation of Mrs. Stowe, the book abounds in negro colloquy; but our Buffalo author bungles at that kind of confab, rather ridiculously. He scarcely fails to mingle words incomprehensible to any negro slave, with every sentence he makes them utter. That would be all right if he were translating their jargon into English; but he pretends to give their ideas in their own vehicles of expression. Take the following examples:

"What's your proposition?" "De niggers are recanting." "It will be time enough when dat event occurs, to meditate a stampede." "Now, Dinah, you are giving reins to your imagination, dat is de dark side." "I begin to think you have revoked your decision." "Whom do you prefer to serve? dat's de question." All these and thousands more quite as ill assorted, are expressions of his ebony characters, all of whom he compels to confabulate in negro jargon, as often as they have occasion to speak.

We do not wish, and do not intend, to say an ill-natured word in relation to this production of Buffalo genius. We heartily wish it were worthy of a more favorable notice; but we should do violence to the literary fame of our country, and to the moral sentiments of this community, and to our own conscience, if we should refrain from speaking of it in such terms as truth and fairness dictate. We do most heartily regret that such a book, gotten up for such a purpose, should hail from Buffalo; knowing as we do, that whoever compares it with that gem of literary and moral excellence, which so vividly reflects the refined intellect and lofty genius of Mrs. Stowe, must look upon Buffalo with mingled pity and contempt, and ask intellectually—"how can you bear this literary humiliation?" It is hard to bear, and we submit to it under protest.