

英 語
簡 易 讀 物

H. Beecher Stowe

Uncle Tom's Cabin

(adapted)

时 代 出 版 社

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UNCLE TOM'S CABIN

by H. Beecher Stowe

湯姆叔的小屋

畢求·斯托著

唐鈞註釋

(簡寫本)

時代出版社

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內 容 提 要

“湯姆叔的小屋”(Uncle Tom's Cabin)是美國女作家畢求·斯托夫人(Harriet Beecher Stowe, 1812—1896)寫的,先在一種主張解放黑奴的報紙 The National Era 上分期連載,至 1852 年出版成書。小說描寫十九世紀中叶美國黑奴的遭遇,並揭露了奴隸制度的殘酷。Tom 是一個忠實的黑奴,主人 Shelby 因經濟困難,將他和 Eliza 的兒子賣給奴隸販子 Haley。Eliza 知道了,立刻帶着兒子逃跑,終於獲得自由;而 Tom 生性善良,听命賣給 Haley,后又轉賣給 St. Clare。此后二年,生活還好,但 St. Clare 死后,又被賣給一個兇暴的農場主 Simon Legree,受到百般虐待,最后因幫助黑人同胞並協助二黑人婦女逃跑,被 Legree 活活打死。

此書出版時,轟動一時,並推進了解放黑奴的運動。作者以后還寫過另一本反對奴役黑人的小說(Dred, A Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp, 1856 出版)和一些描寫美國中產階級生活的小说,但都不如此書。此書中譯本有解放前商務印書館出版,林紓譯的“黑奴吁天錄”。

這個簡寫本是蘇聯中學生學習英語的課外讀物,文字淺易流暢,現翻印出版,並詳加漢語註釋,供大學英語專業二年級學生和程度相當的自修英語的讀者閱讀。書后附有詞彙表,也用漢語註釋,並一律都加國際音標注音。

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CHAPTER I

Late in the afternoon of a chilly day in February two men were sitting alone over their wine,¹ in a well-furnished room, in the town of P-, in Kentucky.² One of them was Mr. Shelby,³ a Kentucky slaveowner,⁴ and the other, a slavetrader,⁵ Haley⁶ by name.

"That is the way I should like to arrange the matter⁷," said Mr. Shelby.

"I can't make trade that way — I positively can't, Mr. Shelby," said the other.

"Why, Haley, Tom is an uncommon fellow; he is certainly worth that sum.⁸ He manages my whole farm and is honest and capable."

"Well," replied Haley, "I'll take your Tom if you add a boy to him."⁹

"Hum! I think I haven't got any; to tell the truth, it's only hard necessity that makes me sell at all.¹⁰ If I had any possibility not to sell..."¹¹

Here the door opened, and a small quadroon¹² boy, between four and five years of age, entered the room.

"Hulloa, Jim Crow!"¹³ said Mr. Shelby, whistling, and throwing a bunch of raisins¹⁴ towards him, "pick that up, now!"

The child caught the prize,¹⁵ while his master laughed.

"Come here, Jim Crow," said he. The child came

up and the master patted the curly head,¹⁶ and chucked him under the chin.¹⁷

"Now, Jim, show this gentleman how you can dance and sing." The boy began to sing one of the most popular Negro songs, in a rich and clear voice.

"Bravo!"¹⁸ said Haley, throwing him a quarter of an orange.

"Now, Jim, walk like old uncle Cudjoe¹⁹ when he has the rheumatism,²⁰" said the Master.

The boy began hobbling about the room, his master's stick in his hand, in imitation of²¹ an old man.

"Hurrah! bravo! what a boy!"²² said Haley. "Shelby, I like that chap. If you add him, the business is done".²³

"I would rather not sell him,"²⁴ said Mr. Shelby, showing the boy that he was allowed to go away,²⁵ "the fact is, sir, I'm a humane man,²⁶ and I hate to take the boy from his mother,²⁷ sir. But I'll think the matter over. Come this evening, between six and seven, and you'll have my answer."

"Well," said Haley, "I'll come just in time. But you must know, sir, that I'm in a hurry²⁸ and can't wait any longer." The trader got up from his seat, bowed and went out of the room.

* * *

In the state of Kentucky the system of slavery²⁹ is less cruel than in many other states. The agricultural work is of a quiet and gradual nature,³⁰ not requiring those

periodic seasons of hurry and pressure³¹ that are common in the more southern districts. This makes the task of the Negro a more healthful and reasonable one.³² The well-known hardheartedness of slaveowners is rarely met with here.

Whoever visits some estates in Kentucky might dream the old legend of the friendly relations between masters and slaves.³³

But over and above the scene there is a dark shadow³⁴ — the shadow of law which considers the slaves, all these human beings with beating hearts and living affections,³⁵ only as so many things belonging to a master.

Mr. Shelby was a good-natured man, rather kind to his Negroes. But he had speculated³⁶ largely and unsuccessfully, and his notes³⁷ had come into the hands of Haley, the slavetrader. Afraid of the worst,³⁸ he had to accept Haley's proposal to pay his debts³⁹ by giving him two of his slaves: Uncle Tom, an elderly Negro, highly esteemed by all the people of the estate, and little Harry,⁴⁰ the son of a young quadroon woman named Eliza.⁴¹ This small piece of information⁴² is the key to the events related in this book.⁴³

* * *

The Cabin⁴⁴ of Uncle Tom was a small log building, close adjoining to "the house," as the Negro usually calls his master's dwelling.⁴⁵ In front it had a little garden where, every summer, strawberries, raspberries, and a

variety of⁴⁶ fruits and vegetables flourished under careful tending.⁴⁷

Let us enter the dwelling.⁴⁸ The evening meal at the house is over, and Aunt Chloe,⁴⁹ who presided over its preparation as head cook,⁵⁰ has left to other servants the business of⁵¹ clearing away and washing dishes, and has come into her own snug territories⁵² to cook her old man's⁵³ supper. She has a round, black, shining face so glossy as if it has been washed over with the white of eggs,⁵⁴ like one of her own tea rusks.⁵⁵ Her whole countenance⁵⁶ beams with satisfaction from under her well-starched turban.⁵⁷ On it, however, is to be seen some kind of selfconsciousness⁵⁸ which is natural for the first cook of the neighbourhood, as Aunt Chloe was universally acknowledged to be.⁵⁹

A cook she certainly was, in the very bone and centre of her soul.⁶⁰ Her corn-cake,⁶¹ in all its varieties, was a great mystery to all less practised cooks.⁶² No one of them was able to compete with her.

Just at present, Aunt Chloe is looking into the pan;⁶³ in this operation we shall leave her till we finish our picture of the cottage.⁶⁴

In one corner of it stood a bed, covered neatly with a snowy blanket; and by the side of it was a carpet of some considerable size.⁶⁵ The carpet and the bed by which it lay, and the whole corner, in fact, were treated with much consideration.⁶⁶ In fact, that corner was the

drawing-room of the dwelling. In the other corner was a much humbler bed, evidently designed for use. The wall over the fireplace was adorned with some very brilliant scriptural prints,⁶⁷ and a portrait⁶⁸ of General Washington.⁶⁹

On a rough bench in the corner, a couple of woolly-headed boys,⁷⁰ with glistening black eyes and fat shining cheeks, were busy watching the first walking operations of the baby,⁷¹ which, as is usually the case,⁷² repeated getting up on its feet, balancing a moment, and then tumbling down. Its successive failures⁷³ were violently cheered, as something decidedly clever.

A table, somewhat rheumatic in its limbs, was drawn out in front of the fire, and covered with a cloth, displaying brilliant cups and saucers on it. At the table was seated Uncle Tom, Mr. Shelby's best hand,⁷⁴ whom, as he is to be the hero of our story,⁷⁵ we must describe to our readers. He was a large, broad-chested, powerfully-made man, of a full glossy black, and a face whose truly African features were characterized by an expression of grave and steady good sense, united with much kindness and benevolence.⁷⁶ There was something about his whole air self-respecting and dignified, yet united with trustful and humble simplicity.⁷⁷

At this moment he was looking attentively on a slate⁷⁸ lying before him, and was carefully and slowly copying some letters. In this operation he was being instructed by young Master George,⁷⁹ Mr. Shelby's son, a smart,

bright boy of thirteen, who appeared fully to realize the dignity of his position as teacher.

“Not that way,⁸⁰ Uncle Tom, — not that way,” said he briskly, as Uncle Tom brought up the tail of his *g* the wrong side out,⁸¹ “that makes a *q*,⁸² you see.”

“Now, does it?”⁸³ said Uncle Tom, looking with a respectful admiring air, as his young teacher easily scrawled *q*’s and *g*’s on the slate, and then, taking the pencil in his big, heavy fingers, he patiently recommenced.

“They wanted me to come to supper in the house,”⁸⁴ said George; “but I know what is better, and I prefer to stay here, Aunt Chloe.”

“That’s true, that’s true, honey,”⁸⁵ said Aunt Chloe, heaping the smoking cakes on his plate; “you knew your aunty would keep the best for you.”⁸⁶

“Now for the cake,”⁸⁷ said Master George and, with that,⁸⁸ he cut a piece of it with a large knife.

George and Tom moved to a comfortable seat in the chimney-corner, while Aunt Chloe, after baking a pile of cakes, took her baby on her lap, and began alternately filling its mouth and her own,⁸⁹ and distributing to the two elder children, who preferred to eat their cakes under the table, at the same time tickling each other and pulling the baby’s toes.

* * *

While this scene was passing in Uncle Tom’s cabin, one quite otherwise⁹⁰ passed in the house of the master.

The Negro-trader and Mr. Shelby were seated together in the dining-room, at a table covered with papers and writing utensils.⁹¹

Mr. Shelby was busy in counting some bundles of bills,⁹² which, as they were counted, he pushed over to the trader, who counted them too.

"All right," said the trader; "and now you must sign these papers."⁹³

Mr. Shelby drew the bills of sale⁹⁴ towards him, and signed them, like a man that hurries over some disagreeable business, and then pushed them over with the money. Haley produced, from a well-worn valise,⁹⁵ a parchment,⁹⁶ which, after looking over it a moment, he handed to Mr. Shelby, who took it hastily.

"Well, now the thing's done!"⁹⁷ said the trader, getting up.

"It's done!" said Mr. Shelby, in a musing tone; and, fetching a long breath,⁹⁸ he repeated, "it's done!"

CHAPTER II

Mr. and Mrs. Shelby had retired to their apartment for the night. He was sitting in a large arm-chair, looking over some letters that had come in the afternoon mail, and she was standing before her mirror, brushing her hair.

"By the by¹ Arthur,"² said Mrs. Shelby, "who was that fellow that you invited to our dinner-table³ to-day?"

"Haley is his name," said Shelby, turning himself

rather uneasily in his chair, with his eyes fixed on a letter.

"Haley! What is he, and what may be his business here, pray?"⁴

"Why, I invited him; I had some accounts with him,"⁵ said Shelby.

"Is he a Negro-trader?" said Mrs. Shelby, noticing a certain embarrassment in her husband's manner.

"Why, my dear, what put that into your head?"⁶ said Shelby, looking up.

"Nothing, — only Eliza came in here, after dinner, in a great worry, crying, and said you were talking with a trader, and that she heard him make an offer for her boy!"⁷

"She did, hey?"⁸ said Mr. Shelby, who was looking attentively at his paper without noticing that he was holding it bottom upwards.⁹

"It will have to come out," thought he, "as well now as ever."¹⁰

"I told Eliza," said Mrs. Shelby, as she continued brushing her hair, "that she was a little fool, and that you never had anything to do with that sort of persons."¹¹ Of course, I knew you never meant to sell any of our people, — least of all, to such a fellow."¹²

"Well, Emily,"¹³ said her husband, "so I have always felt and said; but the fact is, that I cannot get on without."¹⁴ I shall have to sell some of my hands."¹⁵

“To that creature! Impossible! Mr. Shelby, you cannot be serious.”¹⁶

“I’m sorry to say that I am,”¹⁷ said Mr. Shelby. “I’ve agreed to sell Tom.”

“What! our Tom?—that good, faithful creature who had been your faithful servant from a boy!¹⁸ Oh, Mr. Shelby!—and you have 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 even believe that you could sell little Harry, poor Eliza’s only child!” said Mrs. Shelby, in a tone between grief and indignation.¹⁹

“Well, since you must know everything, it is so. I have agreed to sell Tom and Harry both; and I don’t know why I am to be looked upon as a monster,²⁰ I have done what every one does every day.”

“But why, of all others, choose these?”²¹ said Mrs. Shelby. “Why sell them, of all the slaves of the estate, if you must sell at all?”²²

“Because they will bring the highest sum²³—that’s why. I could choose another, if you say so. The fellow proposed me to sell Eliza, if that would suit you any better,”²⁴ said Mr. Shelby.

“The wretch!”²⁵ said Mrs. Shelby indignantly.

“Well, I didn’t listen to it, a moment,—²⁶respecting your feelings, I wouldn’t.”²⁷

“My dear,” said Mrs. Shelby, recollecting herself, “forgive me. I was surprised, and entirely unprepared for

this; — but surely you will allow me to defend these poor creatures. Tom is a noble-hearted faithful fellow, though he is black. I do believe,²⁸ Mr. Shelby, that if it were necessary, he would lay down his life for you.”²⁹

“I know it, — I dare say; — but what’s the use of all this? — I can’t help myself.”³⁰

“Why not give away our money?³¹ Oh, Mr. Shelby, I have tried — tried most faithfully, to do my duty to these poor, simple, dependent creatures. I have cared for them, watched over them,³² and known all their little cares and joys, for years; and what will they think of me, if we sell such a faithful, excellent creature as poor Tom. I have taught them the duties of the family, of parent and child, and husband and wife,³³ and how can I openly acknowledge that we care for no tie, no duty, no relation, — for nothing, except money?³⁴ I have talked with Eliza about her boy — her duty to him as a mother, to watch over him, and to teach him moral principles³⁵ from his very childhood; and now what can I say, if you tear him away, and sell him, to such a brute, just to save money? I have told her that one soul is worth more than all the money in the world;³⁶ and how will she believe me when she sees us sell her child — sell him, perhaps, to bring him to death!”

“I’m sorry you feel so about it, Emily,” said Mr. Shelby; “and I respect your feelings, too, though I don’t share them to their full extent,³⁷ but I tell you now.

solemnly, it's of no use³⁸ — I can't help myself. I didn't mean to tell you this, Emily; but, in plain words,³⁹ there is no choice between selling these two and selling everything.⁴⁰ Either they must go, or everything must. I have to pay my debts, at any rate.⁴¹ I've tried to get money everywhere I could, but just the price of these two lacked to make up the balance,⁴² and I had to give them up.⁴³ Haley agreed to settle the matter that way, and no other.⁴⁴ I was in his power, and had to do it. You don't want to sell Tom and Harry, and what would you say if it were necessary to sell all our slaves?"

Mrs. Shelby was deeply impressed by these words. Finally, turning to her toilet,⁴⁵ she rested her face in her hands, and uttered a groan.

"Oh, slavery!—a bitter, bitter, most accursed thing! — a curse to the master and a curse to the slave!⁴⁶ I was a fool to think I could make anything good out of such a thing as slavery is. It is a sin to hold a slave under laws⁴⁷ like ours, — I always felt it was, — I always thought so; but I thought — I thought, by kindness, and care, and instruction, I could make the condition of mine⁴⁸ better than freedom — fool that I was!"⁴⁹

"Why, wife, you are getting to be an abolitionist,⁵⁰ quite."⁵¹

"Abolitionist! if they knew all I know about slavery, they might talk!⁵² We don't need them to tell us; you know I never thought that slavery was right — never wanted to have my own slaves."

There was one listener to this conversation whom Mr. and Mrs. Shelby little suspected.⁵³

When Mrs. Shelby had dismissed Eliza for the night, the Negro woman had hidden herself in the adjoining room and, with her ear pressed close against the crack of the door, had not lost a word of the conversation.

When they finished speaking, she rose and stole away. Pale, shivering, with rigid features and compressed lips, she was not the same soft and timid creature she had been before. She looked entirely altered. Now Eliza paused one moment at her mistress's door and then turned and glided into her own room. There, on the bed, lay her sleeping boy,⁵⁴ his rosy mouth half open, his little fat hands thrown out over the bed-clothes, and a smile spread like a sunbeam over his whole face.

"Poor boy! poor fellow!" said Eliza; "they have sold you! but your mother will save you yet!"

No tear dropped over that pillow: in such sufferings as these, the heart has no tears to give.

She went to a drawer and made up a little package of clothing for her boy, which she tied with a handkerchief firmly round her waist: she did not forget to put in the little package one or two of his favourite toys. It was some trouble to arouse the little sleeper,⁵⁵ but after some effort,⁵⁶ he sat up, and was playing with a gaily painted parrot, while his mother was putting on her bonnet and shawl.