

TOM'S CABIN or Life among the Lowly By Harriet Beecher Stowe VOLUME I CHAPTER I In the afternoon of a chilly day in February, two gentlemen were sitting alone over their wine, in the town of P---, in Kentucky. There were no servants present, and the gentlemen, with chairs closely approaching, seemed to be discussing some subject with great earnestness. For convenience sake, we shall call, hitherto, two gentlemen, however, when critically examined, did not seem, strictly speaking, to come under the species. He was a short, thick-set man, with coarse, commonplace features, and that swaggering air of pretension which marks a low man who is trying to be st of many colors, a blue neckerchief, bedropped gayly with yellow spots, and arranged with a flaunting tie, quite in keeping with the general air of the man. His hands, large and coarse, e with a bundle of seals of portentous size, and a great variety of colors, attached to it,—which, in the ardor of conversation, he was in the habit of flourishing a nd jangling with evident Grammar, and was garnished at convenient intervals with various profane expressions, which not even the desire to be graphic in our account shall induce us to transcribe. \* English American grammarian of his day. His companion, Mr. Shelby, had the appearance of a gentleman; and the arrangements of the house, and the general air of t he h o usekeeping g, in he two were in the midst of an earnest conversation. "That is the way I should arrange the matter," said Mr. Shelby. "I can't make trade that way—I positively c an't. Mr. Sh elby," s aid "Why, the fact is, Haley, Tom is an uncommon fellow; he is certainly worth that sum anywhere,—steady, honest, capable, manages my whole farm like a clock. " "You mean ho ne st, dy. "No; I mean, really, Tom is a good, steady, sensible, pious fellow. He got religion at a camp-meeting, four years ago; and I believe he really did get it. I v e trusted d him, sinc e let him come and go round the country; and I always found him true and square in everything." "Some folks don't believe there is pious niggers S helby," sai d fellow, now, in this yer last lot I took to Orleans—"I was as good as a meetin, now, really, to hear that critter pray; and he was quite gentle and quiet like. He fetch ed that was 'bliged to sell out; so I realized six hundred on him. Yes, I consider religion a valeable thin g in a nigger, when it's the genuine article, an d fellow had," rejoined the other. "Why, last fall, I let him go to Cincinnati alone, to do busines s for me, and bring home fiv e hundre d dollars. 'Tom,' says I, 'st you, because I think you're a Christian—I know you wouldn't cheat.' Tom comes back, sure enough; I knew he would. 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