

persons in the North, whose consciences impelled them to act on slavery in some way, and whose prudence or ignorance of the question led them to accept the plan favored by slaveholders. However useful to Africa the emigration to its shores of intelligent, moral, and enterprising blacks may be, it is now universally admitted that colonization, as a means of extinguishing slavery, is a drivelling absurdity. These were the views of the Abolition Convention, which met at Philadelphia in 1833, and set on foot the agitation which has since convulsed the Union.

The President of that Convention, Mr. Arthur Tappan, was one of the most liberal donors of Lane Seminary. He forwarded its address to the students; and, in a few weeks afterwards, the whole subject was up for discussion amongst them. At first there was little interest. But soon the fire began to burn. Many of the students had travelled or taught in schools in the slave States; a goodly number were sons of slaveholders, and some were owners of slaves. They had seen slavery, and had facts to relate, many of which made the blood run chill with horror. Those spread thro' the pages of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, reader, and which your swelling heart and overflowing eyes would not let you read aloud, are cold in comparison. The discussion was soon ended, for all were of accord; but the meetings for the relation of facts were continued night after night and week after week. What was, at first, sensibility grew into enthusiasm; the feeble flame had become a conflagration. The slave owners among the students gave liberty to their slaves; the idea of going on foreign missions was scouted at, because there were heathens at home; some left their studies and collected the colored population of Cincinnati into churches, and preached to them; others gathered the young men into evening schools, and the children into day school; and devoted themselves to teaching them; others organized benevolent societies for aiding them, and orphan asylums for the destitute and abandoned children; and others again, left all to aid fugitive slaves on their way to Canada, or to lecture on the evils of slavery. The fanaticism was sublime; every student felt himself a Peter the hermit, and acted as if the abolition of slavery depended on his individual exertions.

At first the discussion had been encouraged by the President and Professors; but when they saw it swallowing up everything like regular study, they thought it high time to stop. It was too late; the current was too strong to be arrested. The commercial interests of Cincinnati took the alarm—manufacturers feared the loss of their Southern trade. Public sentiment exacted the suppression of the discussion and excitement. Slaveholders came over from Kentucky, and urged the mob on to violence. For several weeks there was immi-

nent danger that Lane Seminary, and the houses of Drs. Beecher and Stowe, would be burnt or pulled down by a drunken rabble. These must have been weeks of mortal anxiety for Harriet Beecher. The board of trustees now interfered, and allayed the excitement of the mob by forbidding all further discussion on slavery in the Seminary. To this the students responded by withdrawing *en masse*. Where hundreds had been, there was left a mere handful. Lane Seminary was deserted. For seventeen years after this, Dr. Beecher and Professor Stowe remained there, endeavoring in vain to revive its prosperity. In 1850 they returned to the Eastern States, the great project of their life defeated. After a short stay at Bowdoin College, Maine, Professor Stowe accepted an appointment to the chair of Biblical literature in the Theological Seminary at Andover, Massachusetts, an institution which stands, to say the least, as high as any in the United States.

These events caused a painful reaction in the feelings of the Beechers. Repulsed alike by the fanaticism they had witnessed among the foes, and the brutal violence among the friends of slavery, they thought their time for action had not come, and gave no public expression of their abhorrence to slavery. They waited for the storm to subside, and the angel of truth to mirror his form in tranquil waters. For a long time they resisted all attempts to make them bow the knee to slavery, or to avow themselves abolitionists. It is to this period Mrs. Stowe alludes, when she says, in the closing chapter of her book: "For many years of her life the author avoided all reading upon, or allusion to, the subject of slavery, considering it too painful to be inquired into, and one which advancing light and civilization would live down." The terrible and dramatic scenes which occurred in Cincinnati, between 1835 and 1847, were calculated to increase the repugnance of a lady to mingle actively in the *melee*. That city was the chief battle-ground of freedom and slavery. Every month there was something to attract attention to the strife; either a press destroyed, or a house mobbed, or a free negro kidnapped, or a trial for freedom before the courts, or the confiscation of an English abolitionist riddled, or a public discussion, or an escape of slaves, or an armed attack on the negro quarter, or a negro school-house razed to the ground, or a slave in prison, and killing his wife and children to prevent their being sold to the South. The abolition press, established there in 1835 by James G. Burney, whom, on account of his mildness, Miss Martineau called "the gentleman of the abolition cause," and continued by Dr. Bailey, the moderate and able editor of the *National Era*, of Washington city, in which *Uncle Tom's Cabin* first appeared in weekly numbers, was destroyed five times. On one occasion, the Mayor dismissed at mid-