CHAPTER II

Life and Works of Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe

In the galaxy of sentimentalist writers Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe stands out as a novelist who relentlessly fought for social justice. She wrote her novels during a period of revolutionary ferment. The ideals of the French and American Revolutions were stirring the minds of people. Gone were the days when the doctrine of natural rights and equality before law extended only to middle-class men. Workers, women, serfs in Russia, and slaves in the United States were claiming their natural rights and demanding equality before law. The year 1848 was marked by a series of abortive revolution throughout Europe and the publication of The Communist Manifesto, which exhorted the deprived to rise up against the privileged and ruling class.

Harriet Beecher Stowe "was a radical democrat, approaching Karl Marks in her sympathy with a world-wide revolt of the masses." She believed in a world-wide protarian revolution and identified herself with the oppressed. In 1868, in Men of Our Times, she wrote:
The Revolution through which the American nation has been passing was not a mere local convulsion. It was a war for a principle which concerns all mankind. It was the war for the rights of the working class of society as against the usurpation of privileged aristocracies you can make nothing else of it. That is the reason why, like a shaft of light in the judgement day, it has gone through all nations dividing the multitudes to the right and left. For us and our cause, all common working classes of Europe -- all that toil and sweat, and are oppressed. Against us, all privileged classes, nobles, princes, bankers and great manufacturers, all who live at ease.

Formative Years

Harriet Elizabeth Beecher was born on June 14, 1811
to Lyman Beecher, and Roxana Foote Beecher at Litchfield, Connecticut. Lyman Beecher was a Calvinist minister whereas Roxana Foote Beecher came from a Tory Episcopalian family. She was the youngest daughter, and the seventh child of Lyman Beecher and Roxana Foote Beecher who gave birth to nine of Lyman Beecher's children. The Beechers had lived in America since 1637. Lyman Beecher's father, grandfather, and great-grandfather were all blacksmith. His father, David, was locally known for his learning.

When Harriet was born, there were already five brothers and sisters in the family. The eldest child Catherine was twelve years old; she had a powerful intellect and high ambition. This made her the favourite companion of her father, and filled mother's heart with mingled pride and solicitude. The second child, William was a sturdy boy of nine; the third, Edward, a curly haired lad two years younger, full of boisterous fun, always looking for adventures at home; the fourth, Mary, a girl of three; and the fifth, George, who had to be weaned to make way for the new-comer.

There had been a baby two years before, a girl named Harriet who died within a few weeks after the birth, and therefore the parents named the seventh child for the one who was lost. Henry Ward was born two years after Harriet's birth and the ninth child, Charles, was just an infant when Roxana died.
Certainly, there was plenty of happiness and gaiety in the lives of children in the Beecher family. On the regular nutting excursion their father used to frolic like a boy and Harriet was allowed to dress and play like her brothers. But, like her fictional image, Dolly of Poganuc People, Harriet was dominated in the family by her elder brothers and sisters. Of all the brothers and sisters, the most important to her were Catharine, and Henry Ward who she adored the most.

In the early nineteenth century males dominated every walk of life, whether it be politics, business, profession, or family. This was so by law and by custom. In keeping with this tradition Lyman Beecher was dominant figure in his family. Sex discrimination was prevalent throughout the nineteenth century American society; daughters were ignored vis-a-vis sons in most of the families. However, Harriet was fortunate in that her father was quite affectionate to her. He held her in high esteem. In a letter written in 1889 he observes, "Harriet is a genius. I would give a hundred dollars if she was a boy. She is as odd as she is intelligent and studious."

Harriet's mother died on September 25, 1816 when she was hardly five years old. But Roxana Beecher was not forgotten. She left an indelible impression on her children. Henry Ward
Beecher, Harriet's younger brother, acknowledged that Roxana had been the greatest influence on him. During the great birthday celebration which Mrs. Stowe's publishers organized at "The Old Elms", Governor Claflin's residence in Newtonville, Massachusetts, in 1882 Henry Ward Beecher paid tribute to his mother in the following words: "My mother is to me what the Virgin Mary is to a devout Catholic". Harriet was of the same view. She wrote that "the deep interest and veneration she inspired in all who knew her was such that during all my childhood, I was constantly hearing her spoken of, and from one friend to another, some incident or anecdote of her life was constantly being impressed on me."

Harriet's father wielded tremendous influence and imposed his religious views on her. He was a staunch Calvinist. The basic outlines of Lyman Beecher's Calvinism are shocking and frightening to the intellectually immature. For him, Jonathan Edwards was its chief exemplar and expositor. According to this greatest of divines, as his disciple interpreted him, man was by nature actively evil, in spite of being endowed with will sufficient to withstand evil. Man was free to be good, certain to be bad, and undoubtedly fit after this turbulent life only for those everlasting hellfires that a just God had provided for man's future abode. Escape? Through human nature there was none. Hope?

79
One alone, the mercy of a pitying God for the favoured among a wicked people. Assurance? None whatever. To feel one's soul safe was, to a man of Beecher's creed, a pitiful delusion? In the Beecher family indoctrination on the Edwardsean form of Calvinism was carried on continuously through daily worship; it was not limited to Sunday worship alone. Lyman Beecher insisted that his sons become minister and continue his work, as indeed the seven, who survived, did. However, he was hardly concerned with the future of his daughters as there was hardly anything that a girl could do in those days except marrying, preferably a minister. Therefore, Harriet was convinced that—apart from terrifying his daughters with the dangers of hell, her father neglected them. Much of Harriet's girlhood was gloomy and sorrowful because of the slight esteem in which her father held her. Her father's proud assertion when she was seven years old, that she was a genius could have comforted her partly, for he immediately qualified it by wishing that she should have been a boy. In Lyman Beecher's view there was enough of feminine genius in the eldest daughter Catherine, and no more was needed.

John R. Adams, an authority on Harriet Beecher Stowe and her works stakes a very grim view of Lyman Beecher. He writes: "Within his home Lyman was a bully of the worst stripe, a benevo-

lently intentioned and systematically complete bully. It is
difficult to know which alarmed his children more, the sterness with which he ordinarily treated them or the periods of capricious high spirits that were vented upon rather than shared with them. If Lyman Beecher customarily spared the rod, the reason was that he wielded more powerful instruments of torture, the most successful being dialectic and hellfire, which, as a disciple of Jonathan Edwards, he was adept at unleashing. In his logical battles with his children, which he considered admirable discipline for them, he loved to befuddle and humble, never permitting them privileges because of tender years.

However, Edward Wagen is inclined to question Adams conclusion, though he admits that he shares Adams’ horror over the behaviour of Lyman Beecher.

The impressionable mind of Harriet was also influenced by the members of her mother’s family, particularly, by the grandmother Foote, aunt Mary Hubbard, and uncle Samuel Foote at Nutplains. Whereas Roxana Beecher’s tastes were rather for subjects of a scientific and metaphysical cast, Mary Hubbard’s were predominantly for polite literature and work of imagination. Mary Hubbard, a charming widow, was a delightful reader; she read her favourite authors to the Beecher children whenever they visited Nutplains. Uncle Foote was a sea captain endowed with robust common sense, cultivated taste, and wide reading. On his return from each voyage, he came to the home at Litchfield each time
making his advent as a sort of brilliant genius from another sphere, bringing gifts, and tales of wonders, and descriptions of far countries, which seem wake new faculties in them all. Sometimes he came from the shores of Spain, with mementoes from Alhambra and the ancient Moors; sometimes from Africa bringing oriental head gear or Moorish slippers; again from South America, with ingots of silver, or strange implements from the tombs of the Incas, or hammocks wrought by the South American Indians.  

Uncle Samuel Foote possessed good humoured combative-ness; he used to attack, sometime jokingly and often seriously, the theories and prejudices of his friends. Consequently, he and Lyman Beecher continually debated on the New England peculiarities of character, and especially their theological thought. To their long arguments children listened engrossingly. He maintained that Turks were more honest than Christians, supporting his arguments with startling facts. He told the tales of the Roman Catholic bishops and archbishops whom he affirmed to be as truely learned, pious, and devoted to the welfare of men, as any Protestants to be found in America. He always brought a collection of books when he came to Litchfield, which he and aunt Mary Hubbard read aloud. This was the time when Scott, Byron, Moore, and a host of other brilliant writers were publishing books at regular intervals.
Harriet and her brothers and sisters frequently visited their grandmother at Nutplains. Her following words reveal what kind of imprints these visits made on their minds:

"I think, in the recollection of all the recollection of all the children, our hours spent at Nutplains were the golden hours of our life. Aunt Harriet had precisely the turn which made her treasure every scrape of a family relic and history. All even those of the family who had passed away for ever seemed still to be living as Nutplains, so did she cherish every memorial, and recall every action and world. There was Aunt Catharine's embroidery; Aunt Mary's paintings and letters; there the things which Uncle Samuel had brought from foreign shores, frankincens from Spain, mats and baskets from Mogadore and various other trophies locked in drawers which aunt Harriet displayed to us on every visit!"

"At Nutplains our mother, lost to us, seemed to live again. We saw her paintings, her needle-work, and heard a thousand little sayings and doings of her daily life. And so dear was every thing that belonged to grandmother and our Nutplains home, that the Episcopal service, even though not were read, was always chosen during our visits there in preference to our own. It seemed a part of Nutplains and of the life there."
"There was also an interesting and well selected library, and a portfolio of fine engraving; and, though the places was lonely, yet the cheerful hospitality that reigned there left them scarcely ever without agreeable visitors; and some of the most charming recollections of my childhood are of a beautiful young lady, who used to play at chess with Uncle George when he returned from his work in the wood-lot of a winter evening."

"The earliest poetry that I ever heard were the ballads of Walter Scott, which Uncle George repeated to Cousin Mary and me the first winter that I was there. The story of the blacks and white huntsman made an impression on me that I shall never forget. His mind was so steeped in poetical literature that he could at anytime complete any passage in Burns or Scott from memory. As for graver reading, there was Rees's Cyclopedia, in which I suppose he had read every article, and which was often taken down when I became old enough to ask questions, and passages pointed out in it for my reading."

"All these rememberances may explain why the lonely little farm-house under this hill was such a paradise to us, and the sights of its chimney's after a day's ride was like vision of
Eden. In later years, returning there, I have been surprised to find that hills around were so bleak and land so barren; that the little stream near by had so few charms to uninitiated eyes. To us, every juniper bush, every wild sweet brier, every barren sandy hillside, every story pasture spoke of bright hours of love, when we welcomed back to Nutplains as to our mother's heart.

From the above extract it is clear how Harriet's mother relieved in her memory, where her literary aptitudes had genesis, where the seeds of her inner conflict between Calvinism and Episcopalianism lie. It also reveals the sharp contrast between the atmosphere at her father's terrifying home where all the time one was reminded of the God of doom and that of her grandmother's home full of affection, literary tastes, and the belief in a redeeming God.

After Harriet's mother's death, Grandmother Beecher and Aunt Esther moved to parsonage at Litchfield to take charge of the family. Grandma Beecher was a strict Puritan. However, she was kind, generous, and sympathetic. She was the embodiment of neatness and order, but her heart flowed with unstinted love for her grandchildren, and little Harriet was the most favoured one. Under the honest, conscientious Aunt Esther's dispensation
the family lived on comfortably for a year. However, in 1817, a year after Roxana's death, Lyman Beecher married Harriet Porter of Portland, Maine. Harriet Beecher's first impression of her step-mother was of a beautiful and very fair lady with blue eyes and soft auburn hair. The Beecher children were noisy, red-cheeked, hearty country children who looked at the delicate, elegant lady with awe. She appeared like a strange princess, rather than like their own mother. She spoke and moved in a very graceful manner. She was dainty and neat in appearance. But her nature and habits were too refined and exacting for the bringing up of so many agile and somewhat unruly children. Her religious training to children included an hour of intense and positive exhortion and prayer every Sunday night; and she gave an impression of religion as being like herself, calm, solemn, inflexible, mysteriously sad and rigorously exacting. Lyman Beecher used to say that his second wife, who was converted from lighthearted petted beauty into a serious Christian of extreme severity, adopted her minister's dyspepsia at the same time she did his Calvinism. Lyman Beecher had four children by her, Frederick, who died when he was a baby, Isabella, Thomas and James. However, till the end, she had little sympathy with children.

After the death of his second wife in 1835, Lyman Beecher married Lydia Jackson in 1836 by whom he had no children.
However, by this time all of Roxana's children were old enough to afford to be indifferent to their second step-mother and the latter seems to have been quite unimportant to them except when, in Lyman Beecher's dependent old age, she tried to extract as much money as possible from Harriet and Henry which resulted in some unpleasant correspondence.

On April 22, 1822 Alexander Metcalf Fisher, a Yale University Professor and Fiance of Catharine E. Beecher, Harriet's elder sister, died in a shipwreck before undergoing the ritual of a Presbyterian conversion. Professor Fisher was a man of impeccable character and noble aspiration; a lifelong seeker who had never achieved the Calvinistic conviction of sin and assurance of salvation. Neither Lyman Beecher nor any Calvinist could assure Catharine that Fisher's soul would not burn in hell forever. Grief-stricken Catharine visited Fisher's parents to find out definite evidence of her lover's conviction. But she did not find evidence. Moreover, Fisher did not have any disposition towards strict Calvinism. Consequently, he was considered irretrievably damned by the Beechers, though were crushed by the bereavement. Catharine was almost a mental wreck for years. However, she resolved to do good for others since she was denied personal happiness forever. She devoted herself to the cause of improving female education.
starting with a legacy from Fisher, she collected funds to establish the Hartford Female Seminary.

The seminary was established in 1833 and in 1834 Harriet was sent from her birthplace, Litchfield, to Hartford to be placed under the direction of her sister, Catharine. Harriet remained there for eight years, from 1824 to 1832, first as a pupil-teacher and then as a full-time teacher from January 1829 onwards.

Catherine Beecher was one of the pioneers of higher education for women in America. She had been poorly educated and was beyond any doubt incapable of teaching some subjects. However, she was industrious, she worked hard and learned the subject she taught.

In her early womanhood she was a formidable creature, a hard taskmaster and a strict disciplinarian. Catharine possessed her father's bullying instincts and made Harriet's life miserable in the seminary. When she found to Harriet, as a young teacher under her, attempting to write a poetic tragedy, she commanded her to stop such a foolish activity and coerced her to study Bishop Butler's *The Anthology of Religion, Natural and Revealed*, to the Course and Constitution of Nature.
Soon after Harriet was able to assist her with teaching, Catharine extracted so much work from her that she suffered from nervous break down, and kept groaning and crying for hours together in the night and laughing laudly and irrationally through out the day. She did not like the work; it was a burden to her. She thought that her life was being wasted in caring for little children.

But even the darkest cloud has a silver lining. It was Catharine who set Harriet an example of rebelling against the theology of John Calvin as interpreted by Jonathan Edwards and of moving towards the conception of a more merciful and benevolent God. Referring to this a distinguished American theologian said to a German colleague, "The ablest refutation of Edwards on The Will which was ever written is the work of a woman, the daughter of Dr. Lyman Beecher". To this the German remarked, "You have a woman that can write an able refutation of Edwards on The Will? God forgive Christopher Columbus for discovering America!"

Later, when Harriet herself went through a similar agony in connection with the death of his own son Henry, she used the two events indirectly in The Minister's Wooing.
Seeds of antislavery sentiments were sown in Mrs. Stowe's mind right in her childhood, by her aunt, Mary Foote Hubbard, who had married a slaveholding planter and had gone to live with him on his estate in the West Indies. On observing the brutalities of slavery on her husband's plantation, and also on being horrified by the fact that her husband already had a mulatto family, Mrs. Stowe's aunt's health deteriorated so much that she was compelled to leave the West Indies and to return to Litchfield where she lived with her sister Roxana Foote Beecher and brother-in-law Lyman Beecher, "What she saw and heard of slavery filled her with horror and loathing, I often heard her say that she frequently sat by her windows in the tropical night, when all was still, and wished that island might sink in the ocean, with all its sin and misery and that she might sink with it" said Mrs. Stowe about her aunt Mary Hubbard in her father's autobiography.

In her childhood Mrs. Stowe's sensitive mind was also deeply influenced by her father's sermons against the atrocities of slavery and his prayers for the deliverance of the poor, oppressed, and bleeding slaves.

She was also influenced in this regard by Baxter's *Saints Rest* which she read at the age of thirteen.
When Mrs. Stone was at Cincinnati, she visited slaveholding plantations in Kentucky on the other side of the Ohio River, where slaves "were bought and sold tortured, dishonoured, murdered with no hope of rescue or redress in this world." Though on her side of the Ohio River they were nominally free, people were inhibited by heavy penalties to give shelter to the fugitive slaves.

During this period, Lyman Beecher and his family were in favour of gradual emancipation of slaves. The President, the leading professors, and a large number of students at Lane Theological Seminary had become avowed abolitionists. There used to be heated discussion in Lane Seminary for and against abolition which was not relished by a section of the people. Consequently, the President of Lane Seminary ordered that the issue of abolition should not be discussed in the seminary. This resulted in the exodus of three quarters of the students of the Seminary including Theodore Weld, the author of American Slavery As It Is: Testimony of a Thousand Witnesses (1859), who was a student of the Seminary at that time. Sore over this, Catharine published a book in 1837 entitled Miss Beecher On the Slavery Question venting out her feelings against the abolitionists. This book was received very favourably by the slave holders and their apologists.
However, the arguments and facts advanced by the abolitionists were so persuasive that younger members of the family, Charles Henry, and Harriet as well as Professor Stowe became abolitionists and were so much touched by the outrages against slave that, whenever possible, they gave shelter, food, and clothing to the fugitive slaves and helped them in escaping to Canada, very often escorting them up to the Canadian border.

When Charles Beecher was working as a collecting clerk in a large mercantile business house near dockyards in New Orleans, he observed the horrifying aspects of slavery in all its enormity and hideous form. His letters to his family at Cincinnati depicting these ghastly acts were read with horror and indignation. In particular, Mrs. Stowe was deeply moved by these descriptions.

It was during this period that Dr. Gamaliel Bailey, came to Cincinnati and started an anti slavery paper and proposed to discuss the slavery question upon a public platform in the city. He was attacked by a crowd of Kentucky slave holders and their sympathizers.

The mob destroyed his printing press and threw his type into the Ohio River. Needless to say, this incident hardened Mrs. Stowe's antislavery stance further.
Mrs. Stowe was also influenced by Theodore Weld’s *American Slavery As It Is: Testimony of a Thousand Witnesses*. She acknowledged to Weld’s wife Ageline Grimke, that “she kept that book in her work basket by day, and slept with it under her pillow by night, till its fact crystallized into *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*.”

In September 1850, the U.S Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Act under which it became illegal to help fugitive slaves in escaping from their masters. This outraged Mrs. Stowe and changed her attitude towards slavery from a passive opposition to a passionate resolution to bring about its end. The passage of the act converted her to an abolitionist which she was hitherto not. Outraged by the passage of the Act, Mrs. Stowe’s sister-in-law, Mrs. Edward Beecher, urged her in the following words to write against slavery: “Hattie, if I could use a pen as you can, I would write something that would make this whole nation feel what an accursed thing slavery is.” Mrs. Stowe, apparently acceded to her sister-in-law’s advice and started writing *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* the following year.

Marriage and Family

While married was at Hartford Female Seminary, Lyman Beecher moved from Litchfield to Boston in 1826 to become the
Pastor of Boston's Hanover Street Church. Later in 1832, he became president of Lane Theological Seminary in Cincinnati, Ohio. Consequently, the entire Beecher family including Catharine and Harriet moved to Cincinnati and Catharine started Western Female Institute there with Harriet on the faculty and as her chief assistant. Here Harriet remained till 1850.

Eliza Tyler, the daughter of Reverend Dr. Tyler of Andover, Massachusetts, and the wife of Calvin E. Stowe, the scholarly professor of Biblical Criticism and Oriental Literature in Lane Seminary, was one of Harriet's intimate friends during her early years in Cincinnati. Though Mrs. Eliza Tyler Stowe was several years older than her cherished friend, Harriet, she found in Harriet's energetic mind and brisk manners the natural complement to her own gentle personality, which was somewhat depressed by a delicate physique.

Mrs. Eliza Tyler Stowe died in the first year of professorship of her husband at Lane Seminary. At the time of her death, Harriet was in the East attending the graduation ceremony of her brother, Edward Ward, at Amherst. She rushed home to console the despairing young widower whom she continued to comfort for the rest of his life. It was Calvin and Harriet's common grief for Eliza that drew them together which eventually culminated in their marriage on January 6, 1836. Professor
Stowe was more than nine years older than Harriet.

According to Forest Wilson, author of Crusader in Crinoline, Calvin Stowe as a romantic figure is a tough morsel for our cultivated taste in heroes. That the thick-shouldered, boldish, bearded scholar, gluttonous, neurasthenic, timid and lazy, a scatter brain in emergencies, and quite devoid of that talent for getting things done which Harriet called 'Faculty', could have inspired any strong passion in a deep nature, taxes the modern credulity. Once in a letter to George Elliot Harriet write that she considered her husband "as a Goblin Origin, decidedly probably he pre-existed in Germany and certainly it was a great mistake that he was born in America". Mark Twain writes in his autobiography that he was also disfigured by a cauliflower nose and little Susy Clemens, Mark Twain's daughter, having seen him in the streets of Hartford, rushed home to her mother to report that "Santa Claus has got loose."

On another occasion, in her letter to Mrs. Follen of England, Harriet wrote, "I was married when I was twenty-five years old to a man rich in Greek and Hebrew, Latin and Arabic, and, alas! rich in nothing else". Unfortunately, Calvin used to have bouts of melancholy when, as Harriet called it,
he "cultivated indigo".

As a matter of fact, he was so often melancholic than Harriet that one heard nothing of Harriet's depressed moods after their marriage. In brief, Calvin was a highly emotional person who used to have spells of exaltation and intense depression. He was also a victim of mediumism, he was frequently haunted by evil spirits. But in spite of his eccentricities and melancholic moods, Calvin was a lovable man with a keen sense of humour. He was a graduate from Bowdoin and had taught at Andover and Dartmouth before accepting the assignment at Lane Seminary. In 1850 Professor Stowe left Lane Seminary on receiving an appointment to the faculty of his alma mater, Bowdoin College at Brunswick, Maine. Finally, in July 1852 Calvin assumed chair of Sacred Literature at Andover Theological Seminary at Andover, Massachusetts. He died on August 6, 1886.

One special aspect of relationship between Harriet and Calvin was that he encouraged her at the very beginning to take up literature as a career. In a letter to Harriet he wrote,

"My dear, you must be a literary woman.
It is so written in the book of fate. Make all your calculations accordingly. Get a good
stock of health and brush up your mind. Drop the E of your name. It only incumbers it and interferes with the flow of euphony. Write yourself fully and always Harriet Beecher Stowe, which is a name euphonious, flowing, and full of meaning. Then my word for it, your husband will lift up his in the gate, and your children will rise up and call you blessed.\[21\]

The first children of Harriet and Calvin, twin girls, were born on September 29, 1836. Calvin named them Hattie and Eliza after his two wives, Harriet Beecher and Eliza-Tyler. They were followed by five others in quick succession. At this she laughingly remarked that the first child is always a poem, but those who follow are often most unsentimental prose. Six of their children survived childhood.

Both Harriet and Calvin loved their children. However Calvin lacked Harriet's ability to express it.

Harriet lost four of her seven children during her lifetime; the first Charley died when he was a baby; Henry
died by drowning in his College days; Fred died after he disappeared; and the brilliant and charming Georgia, wife of an Episcopal clergyman, succumbed to nervous illness with which she was afflicted for years.

Of the surviving three children, Kattie and Eliza never married. They looked after the household affairs. The youngest child Charles Edward, after a brief career as a seaman settled down as a Congregational minister. During his mother's old age he was stationed at Hartford, where Harriet used to attend his Church, though by that time she was formally affiliated with the Episcopalians. Later, Charles had a bout of skepticism while he was studying in Germany. Harriet thought he was in danger of becoming a Unitarian. She was very much perturbed on this count. Consequently, she launched an unparalleled theological letter-writing campaign which was quite fruitful.

It was Charles who later wrote Harriet's authorized biography, *Life of Harriet Beecher Stone, compiled from Her Letters and Journals* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1889) apparently in collaboration with Harriet herself. It must be mentioned here that the first forty-one years of Harriet's life, preceding the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, was not a bed of roses. She went through all kinds of ordeal, poverty,
ill-health, agonizing religious conflicts in mind, coping up with a melancholic and almost a parasitic husband, rearing a battery of children, doing household chores, and what not. But after the publication of Uncle Tom's Cabin she became famous overnight and her lot changed for the better, though it was punctuated with a number of tragedies in the family.

On August 6, 1886 Harriet lost her husband and from 1888 her mental faculties started deteriorating. Eventually, on July 1, 1896 she died in Hartford.

Evolution as Writer

Harriet received her early training in composition at Litchfield Academy from her remarkable teacher John Pierce Brace special attention was given in Litchfield Academy to the writing of compositions. Harriet was hardly nine years old, when inspired by her teacher, John Pierce Brace, she volunteered to write one composition every week. One of the first themes assigned to Harriet for composition was The Difference between the Natural and the Moral Sublime, quite a formidable subject even for older pupils. But she wrote her first composition on this weighty theme for which she received well deserved praise.
Two years later, in 1823, she received an assignment to write one of the articles to be read before the Literati of Litchfield on the question: "Can the Immorality of the Soul be proved by the Light of Nature?" 22 Taking a negative stand on the question, she wrote the article. Her article was read before the literati who crowded the town Hall. Lyman Beecher was so impressed by the article that, being not aware of the author, asked Mr. Brace, "Who wrote that composition?" "Your daughter, Sir", was the answer, which gave the father pleasant surprise and for Harriet it was the proudest moment of her life. 23.

In 1825, at the age of fourteen she wrote Cleon, a tragedy in blank verse, about a Christian convert in Nero's Court.

When the Beechers arrived Cincinnati in October 1832, the city literati was very much excited over the promised new periodical, the Western Monthly Magazine to be launched from January 1833 under the editorship of Judge James. Hall whom Harriet soon met. Hall was a defender of fiction and he advocated cheerfulness, morality and regionalism as his literary platform. He was also a chivalrous admirer of women writers.
Earlier, men of letters of Cincinnati had formed a literary association, "The Semi-Colon Club, essays, sketches, reviews, stories, and poems were read and discussions and conversations were held which were enlivened and diversified with music. Harriet joined the Semi-Colon Club and enthusiastically participated in its activities. Obviously, this literary guild contributed significantly in the evolution of Harriet as a writer.

At this time she also established rapport with E.D. Mansfield, the editor of the Cincinnati Chronicle.

The conducive literary atmosphere of Cincinnati inspired her to write for periodicals.

Harriet's first contribution, "Modern Uses of Language" appeared in the third issue of the Western Monthly Magazine in March 1833. In the same year her Primary Geography for Children, on an Improved Plan, written in collaboration with her sister Catharine, was published. The June 1833 issue of the Western Monthly Magazine carried a brief, but highly laudatory review of this book.

The September 1833 issue of the Western Monthly Magazine announced A PREMIUM OF FIFTY DOLLARS for a story and

101
an essay each. Harriet won the prize for her story *Uncle Lot*, published as *A New England Sketch* which was used to open the April 1834 issue of the Magazine. However, before this, her story, *Isabella and Her Sister Kate and Their Cousin*, appeared in the February 1834 issue of the same magazine, under the pseudonym. May In the same year her *Frankness* was published in the May issue and *Sister Mary* in the July issue of the *Western Literary Magazine*.

Her first stories were also reprinted in the *Cincinnati Chronicle*. The *Chronicle* also published Harriet’s *Cousin William*, and after the *Chronicle* had grown into a daily, it continued the policy of reprinting her stories.

She had a closer connection with the *Journal and Western Luminary*, a weekly presbyterian periodical, deeply devoted to Lyman Beecher and Lane seminary. It was also on a close business terms with the *Evangelist*, Harriet’s another market published from New York, while the editor, T. Brainerd, of the *Journal and Western Luminary* was away from the town to attend the general assembly of his church, Henry Ward Beecher became the temporary editor. During this period Professor Stone was also away on a mission to study European education and as such Harriet was free to assist her brother in editing the journal. This experience familiarized her with what went on inside a publisher’s office and initiated her into the
Harriet's first book *The Mayflower; or, Sketches of Scenes and Characters among the Descendants of the Pilgrims* was published in 1843. It is a collection of fifteen stories including, *Uncle Tim* (earlier published as *Uncle Lot* in the *Western Monthly Magazine*), *Love Versus Law*, and *Cousin William*. As the subtitle of the book implies, the stories have the New England as their setting and the characters in the stories typify the life and manners of the Puritans in New England. The stories are plagued with the looseness of plot; they exhibit neither the strength nor the originality to betray the later success and fame of their author. However, through these stories Harriet pioneered local color realism in the United States. Later, *The Mayflower* was republished in 1855 as a part of much larger collection of articles and stories with the title *The Mayflower, and Miscellaneous Writings*. Twenty-one new sketches were added to the original fifteen stories out of which a single sketch *So Many Calls* was dropped.

Her works were also published in some of the Eastern publications, magazines as well as gift annuals, notably in the *Evangelist*, the *Religious Souvenir*, the *Christian Keepsake*, *The Gift*, the *Token*, the *Banquet*, the *Christian Souvenir*, the *Violet*,
the Temperance Offering, the Godey's Lady's Book, the National Era, and the Atlantic Monthly. It is very significant to note that, when the Atlantic Monthly was founded in 1857 the publisher agreed to launch the magazine subject to the willingness of Mrs. Stowe writing a serial for it. Uncle Tom's Cabin and Subsequent Publications.

Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin, or, Life Among the Lowly is her most famous novel. It was first published serially in The National Era between 1851-52 and later in the form of a book in 1852. The novel had a mixed reaction. While the general public and the abolitionists hailed it, the anti-abolitionists mounted a bitter attack on it and challenged the accuracy of its contents. In response to the attack on the veracity of the novel, Mrs. Stowe wrote A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin in 1853. The Key is a compilation of facts drawn from laws, court records, newspapers and private letters with a view to authenticating the various episodes described in Uncle Tom's Cabin. At the pinnacle of her glory, Mrs. Stowe embarked upon a tour of England, where she was greeted very enthusiastically. Sunny Memories of Foreign Lands written in 1854, is a collection of her reminiscences of this trip. To promote further the anti-slavery movement, she wrote her second novel, Dred, A Tale of Great Dismal Swamp, which demonstrates the demoralizing influence of slavery upon the whites.
public against her. In 1873 her *Palmato Leaves* was published. It is a collection of her descriptive sketches in praise of Florida, her winter home from 1868 to 1884.


Thematically, Mrs. Stowe's novels fall into three main groups, Anti-Slavery Novels, New England Novels, and Society Novels.

*Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Dred* belong to the group of anti-slavery novels.

*The Minister's Wooing*, *The Pearl of Orr's Island*, *Middlemarch*, *Folks*, and *Fugitive People* all in the group of New England Novels. However, *The Minister's Wooing* has an anti-slavery overtone also.
Pink and White Stripes, My N.F. and I, We and Our 
Neighbors and Ages of Toronto are Society Novels, though, 
strictly speaking, Ages of Toronto is a historical novels.
References


3. Cited in Ibid. p. 54.


6. Ibid. p. 22.


22. Stowe, Lyman Beecher: Ibid. p. 159