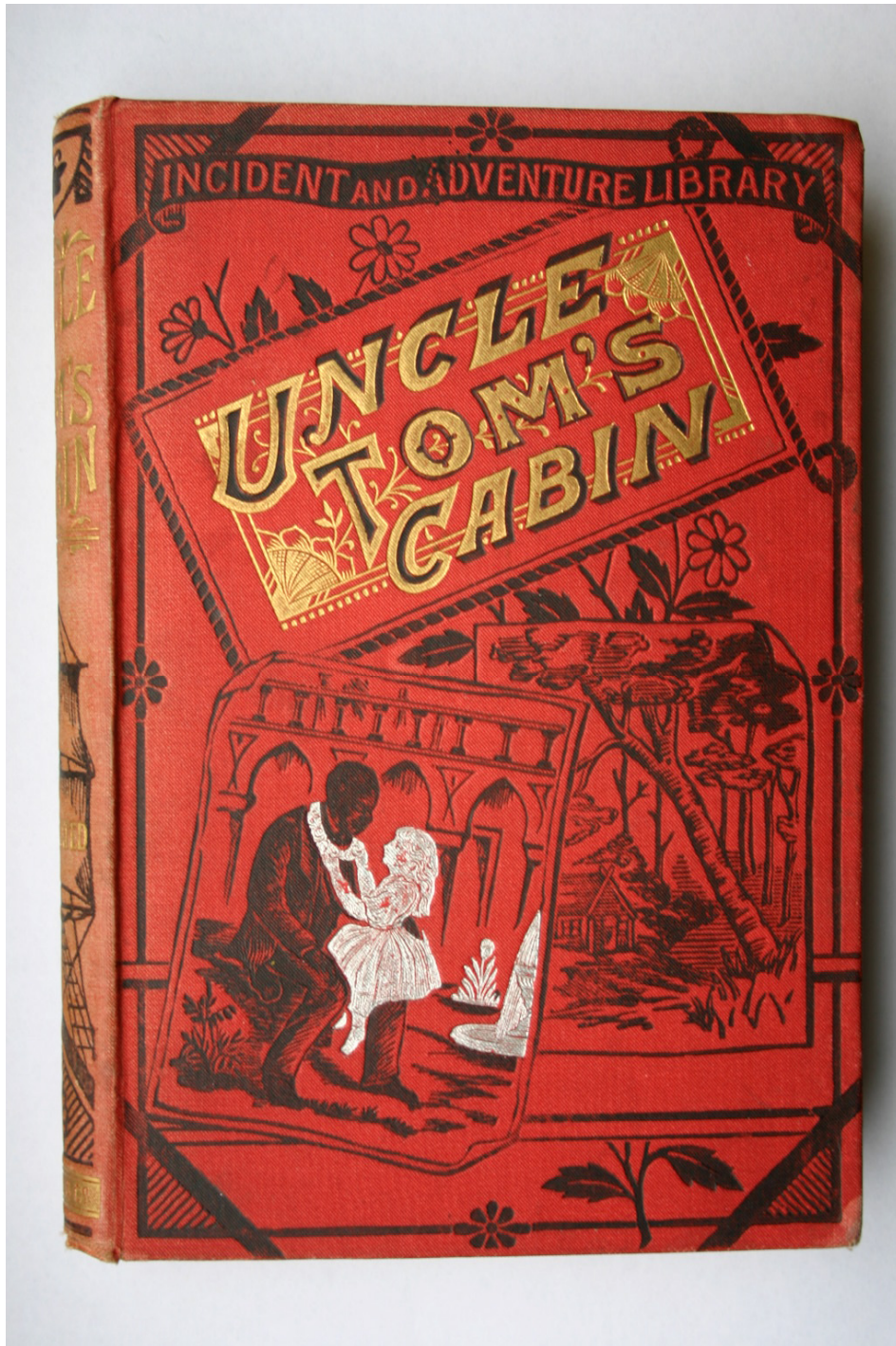


3. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in the Post-Bellum Victorian Era

As time passes after the first publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and the moment of emancipation during the Civil War recedes, the focus of the illustrations, now firmly dating from the mid-Victorian era, became ever more sentimental, as the next several editions demonstrate.

Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin; A Tale of Life Among the Lowly*
London: Frederick Warne and Co., 1887.

The firm of Frederick Warne was to prove a prolific publisher of editions of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. This mid-Victorian edition, part of the 'Incident and Adventure Library', consistently emphasized, on its cover and in its choice of illustrations, the sentimental side of its story and its potential to provide religious instruction concerning humble religious piety. The cover here is particularly compelling in this respect. The image of Little Eva sitting on Uncle Tom's knee had by this time become one of the most iconic in the book.



Cover illustration, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, London, Fredrick Warne and Co. 1887

This edition claims to supply 'original illustrations'. It does not, of course, do this much at all, but rather draws on established illustrative tropes, though the selection of silver on the book's cover to highlight Little Eva against the black of Uncle Tom disturbingly exaggerates their difference in appearance, in what might be held to be a particularly loaded fashion. By now, stereotypical subjects are almost always predominant — with virtually no surprises — as in this depiction of the fleeing Eliza — with her apparel somewhat updated (again, quite typically). The escape across the Ohio River was of course established as one main visual trope:



'Eliza's escape across the Ohio on the Ice', *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, London, Fredrick Warne and Co. 1887, p. 53.

Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin; A Tale of Life Among the Lowly*
London, Edinburgh and New York: T. Nelson and Sons, 1890.

This is an example of an edition with illustrations of a slightly more elaborate standard to that found in the Warne edition. Though the images are stock ones, they are nevertheless striking in their composition. Included, of course, is the high sentimentalism of Eliza fleeing across the river on the book's frontispiece to Tom grieving by Littler Eva's deathbed.



T. NELSON AND SONS

Title page from *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, by Harriet Beecher Stowe, London, T. Nelson and Sons, 1890

But we also get reference to the violence of slavery, even if this is somewhat toned down now the realities have receded, along with abolitionist activity.



'Legree and Uncle Tom', from *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, London, T. Nelson and Sons, 1890, p. 474.

However, some images are particularly striking, as in the case of a highly exoticised Topsy — a stock image, it is true, but in this case it is given a particularly creative twist:



From *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, London, T. Nelson and Sons, 1890, p. 474.

Images such as these stand in quite sharp contrast to the more typical Victorian fare of mid-to-late Victorian editions, which were steadily becoming more concertedly sentimentalized and less inventive.

Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin; A Tale of Life Among the Lowly*
London: The Walter Scott Publishing Company, Ltd., n.d. [c. 1890-1900]

In this undated edition (c. 1895), the frontispiece picture of Eliza being rescued from the ice-floe filled river shows well how much the story had become increasingly sentimentalized by its framing illustrations.



Frontispiece, 'He roughly, but kindly, drew her up the steep bank', *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, London, Walter Scott Publishing Company Ltd, c. 1890-1900.

This frontispiece illustration can serve to usher us into a period of sickly sentimentalism in *Uncle Tom's Cabin's* publishing history.

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