Mas’r had said that the slave-trader was coming in the morning to take away her Harry.

It was nearly twelve o’clock. She had until morning to save her darling. Quickly she made up a little bundle of food and clothes. In all her haste, she did not forget to add to that bundle the gay parrot. Then she woke the little sleeper and dressed him quickly. She hushed in fear his sleepy questions. He must be very, very still, she whispered, or else an ugly man would catch him. Then, taking the child in her arms, she slipped softly across the grounds to Uncle Tom’s cabin.

She stopped there for only a moment to warn her friends of Tom’s danger. But the moment was long to her, for she seemed to feel Haley’s cruel hand trying to pull her Harry out of her arms.

With a shudder, she pressed the boy close to her heart and hurried on into the darkness.

The frosty ground creaked under her feet. Every sound frightened her.

She trembled with fear if a twig crackled or a shadow fell across her path.

On and on she walked.

Harry had been very much frightened at first, and begged his mother to hurry so the ugly man could not get him. But soon he fell asleep in her arms.

She left the Shelby farm far behind her. She passed the grove, the wood lot. She entered the road which led to the Ohio River.

This river flowed between slave states on the South and free states, that is, states where there were no slaves, on the North. And Eliza felt that if she could only get across its waters she would be safe. But the river was still many, many miles away.

She hurried on wildly.

The stars began to fade out of the sky. The east grew red with the sunrise.

Then a horse and its rider passed Eliza. She saw the man turn and look
after her. A wagon rattled by with two men on the seat. Then she met another, and another.

She felt that she ought to go more slowly. If she hurried along so fast, people might suspect that she was a slave running away. But they would not notice her, she said to herself, if only she went slowly and did not act so frightened. For she was almost as fair as her mistress, and little Harry was as pretty as any white woman’s child, so she thought proudly.

She came to a grove by the side of the road, with a little brook running through it. Here she rested for a while and gave Harry his breakfast from the cakes and apples in her bundle. Then she walked on again. But now she held her boy by the hand. Often she forgot all about what people might think, and tried to hurry his baby steps.

Hour after hour the two traveled on. Mile after mile she walked without once stopping to rest. Part of the time she carried Harry. Part of the time he trudged beside her.

ELIZA’S ESCAPE

At noon, they got their dinner at a farmhouse. Then they started out again, all the more bravely because of the little rest.

An hour before sunset, Eliza and the child reached a little village on the bank of the Ohio River. The poor woman was very tired. It seemed as if she could go no farther. And yet, for a few moments, she felt almost happy. She could breathe more freely than at any time since she stole into her mistress’s closet the night before.

For there was the river so very near. Soon she should get across it and be safe, she thought.

She hurried to the bank. Then she stopped with a cry of terror.

The river was full of great cakes of floating ice. They swung heavily about in the muddy waters and piled up in a bend of the stream like a great ice-raft. No ferry-boat, Eliza felt sure, could move through such ice-packed waters. Here was a trouble she had not thought of.
by the wrong road. Two hours more were lost in getting back to the highway.

So, it was half an hour after Eliza had laid Harry to sleep in the fresh white bed of the little inn by the side of the river, before the party came riding up to the same place. Eliza saw them as she stood by the window looking out. But Haley did not see her.

For a minute her heart stood still. She looked wildly about her. The room in which she stood opened by a side door to the river. She caught up her child. She threw open this door and sprang down the steps that led to the water.

At that moment, Haley caught sight of her. He threw himself from his horse, called to Sam and Andy, and rushed after her. She flew before him. He followed like a hound. Her feet were at the water’s edge. Haley was just behind. With a wild cry and a wilder flying leap, she jumped clear over the current of water near shore to the raft of ice beyond.

ELIZA’S ESCAPE

The big green mass of ice on which she landed pitched and creaked. But she stayed there only a moment. Then she jumped to another floating cake of ice. Then to another! And another! Springing, stumbling, standing, slipping, leaping! Nearer and nearer she drew to safety. Or to what seemed like safety.

One of her shoes was gone. Her stockings were cut away. Blood marked every step. But she felt nothing, knew nothing, until, dimly, as in a dream, she saw that a man was helping her up the Ohio bank. She had crossed the river.
Uncle Tom’s cabin [theatrical poster], published by Courier Company in 1899 (http://www.loc.gov/item/2014636545/)