



The Pearl of Orr` Island : A Story of the Coast of Maine. a Novel: By Harriet Beecher Stowe

Harriet Beecher Stowe



The rural tranquillity of the lonely, pine-girthed shores of the Maine coast is the setting for this beautiful novel of conflicting aspirations written by one of the most prolific and influential writers in American history. Here is the heartwarming story of a young girls struggle to belong and fit in, in the face of adversity, and of her upbringing among strong women, grumpy fishermen, annoying gossips, sea captains, and the dreamlike, tempestuous landscape of Orrs Island. THE PEARL OF ORRS ISLAND is one of the forgotten -- but not lost -- masterpieces of American literature. It reflects Harriet Beecher Stowes awareness of the complexity of small-town society, her commitment to realism, and her fluency in the local language. Harriet Elisabeth Beecher Stowe (June 14, 1811 - July 1, 1896) was an American abolitionist and author. She came from a famous religious family and is best known for her novel Uncle Toms Cabin (1852). It depicts the harsh life for African Americans under slavery. It reached millions as a novel and play, and became influential in the United States and Great Britain. It energized anti-slavery forces in the American North, while provoking widespread anger in the South. She wrote 30 books, including novels, three travel memoirs, and collections of articles and letters. She was influential for both her writings and her public stands on social issues of the day. Harriet Elisabeth Beecher was born in Litchfield, Connecticut, on June 14, 1811. She was the seventh of 13 children born to outspoken Calvinist preacher Lyman Beecher and Roxana (Foote), a deeply religious woman who died when Stowe was only five years old. Roxanas maternal grandfather was General Andrew Ward of the Revolutionary War. Her notable siblings included a sister, Catharine Beecher, who became an educator and author, as well as brothers who became ministers: including Henry Ward Beecher, who became a famous preacher and abolitionist, Charles Beecher, and Edward Beecher. Harriet enrolled in the Hartford Female Seminary run by her older sister Catharine, where she received a traditional academic education usually reserved for males at the time with a focus in the classics, including study of languages and mathematics. Among her classmates was Sarah P. Willis, who later wrote under the pseudonym Fanny Fern. In 1832, at the age of 21, Harriet Beecher moved to Cincinnati, Ohio to join her father, who had become the president of Lane Theological Seminary. There, she also joined the Semi-Colon Club, a literary salon and social club whose members included the Beecher sisters, Caroline Lee Hentz, Salmon P. Chase (future governor of the state and Secretary of Treasury under President Lincoln), Emily Blackwell, and others. Cincinnati's trade and shipping business on the Ohio River was booming, drawing numerous migrants from different parts of the country, including many free blacks, as well as Irish immigrants who worked on the states canals and railroads. Areas of the city had been wrecked in the Cincinnati riots of 1829, when ethnic Irish attacked blacks, trying to push competitors out of the city. Beecher met a number of African Americans who had suffered in those attacks, and their experience contributed to her later writing about slavery. Riots took place again in 1836 and 1841, driven also by native-born anti-abolitionists. It was in the literary club that she met Calvin Ellis Stowe, a widower who was a professor at the seminary. The two married on January 6, 1836. He was -- an ardent critic of slavery, and the Stowes supported the Underground Railroad, temporarily housing several fugitive slaves in their home. Most slaves continued north to secure freedom in Canada. The Stowes had seven children together, including twin daughters.

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