

There were those also of an alien race, whose only kinship with the oppressed was that of the soul, who took part in this crusade. Notable among these was Dr. Alexander M. Ross, a native of Ontario, a citizen of Toronto, a man of culture and of distinguished scientific attainments, who devoted his energies with impassioned zeal to the succour of the slave. Mrs. Stowe's tear-compelling story of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" was to him a revelation and a command. Upon reading it his resolution was taken, he says, to devote all his energies to let the oppressed go free. Dr. Ross was a naturalist of distinguished merit. He won name and fame in the old world and the new for his scientific studies, and received decorations from several European sovereigns. He visited the cotton states in pursuit of his studies in ornithology, visited many plantations, conversed with the more intelligent slaves and induced numbers to escape. He would give them money, food, a pocket compass, and a knife or pistol, and send them on to the land of liberty. A reward of \$12,000 was offered for his arrest. While aiding the escape of a slave he evaded capture only by shooting the horse of his pursuer. He was a tried and trusted friend of John Brown whom he entertained at his home in Toronto.

Dr. Ross was in Richmond at the time of Brown's attack on Harper's Ferry. He was arrested and handcuffed, but escaped for lack of incriminating evidence. John Brown on the day before his death wrote to Dr. Ross exhorting him not to give up his labours for "the poor that cry and are in bonds."

During the Civil War Dr. Ross served in the Federal army and subsequently in the army of Mexico. He won the commendation of Mr. Gladstone for his zeal, forethought and tenacity, and for the signal courage and disinterestedness in humanity which formed the basis of his character.¹

¹ Whittier made Dr. Ross the subject of the following memorial verses, which are printed in fac-simile in the *Canadian Magazine*, Vol. V., p. 16:

For his steadfast strength and courage
In a dark and evil time,
When the Golden Rule was treason,
And to feed the hungry crime.

For the poor slave's hope and refuge
When the hounds were on his track,
And saint and sinner, state and church,
Joined hands to send him back.

Blessings upon him! What he did
For each sad, suffering one,
Chained, hunted, scourged and bleeding,
Unto our Lord was done!