

law of God and the best interests of mankind. Many who were careless of the issue were brought to a consciousness of the evils of the slavery system by the reading of this book, or by the dramatic presentations of it that soon followed its first publication. Even to-day, with the issue it presented settled a half a century ago, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* remains one of the most widely read books in Canada, as it is also one of the most widely read books in the United States.

Towards the enslaved race the Canadian people performed remarkable service during the years 1815 to 1860. The Canadian hatred of slavery found its most spectacular outlet in abduction of slaves from the south, both by native Canadians and by Negroes who had settled in the country. Dr. Alexander Milton Ross tells in his memoirs¹⁵ of more than 30 blacks whom he assisted to freedom. Josiah Henson, himself a fugitive, claims that he brought out 118 slaves.¹⁶ William Wells Brown says he took 69 over Lake Erie in six months;¹⁷ and the famous woman, Harriet Tubman, is credited with having assisted more than 300 fugitives to liberty, making repeated trips into the slave states for that purpose.¹⁸

A second work that was performed by Canadians was that of receiving the fugitives at the end of their flight and assisting them to get on their feet in the new country. Missions were established at Malden, Sandwich, Toronto, and elsewhere, and the material as well as the moral side of the Negro was cared for. Rev. Isaac Rice, a graduate of Hamilton College, laboured for many years at Malden. He had been well situated in Ohio as the pastor of a Presbyterian church, and with fine prospects, but he gave it up in order to aid the helpless blacks who crowded over the Canadian border. At his missionary house in Malden he sheltered hundreds of the fugitives until homes could be found for them elsewhere.¹⁹

Of another character was the work done by men like Rev. Wm. King, Henry Bibb and Josiah Henson in the founding of distinctly Negro colonies, with schools and churches and effort directed to improving the whole social status of the race. Interesting observations have been recorded in connection with these colonies. The constant violation of domestic relations, under a slave system was bound to react on home life and take away the incentive to constancy, yet one of the first things married slaves did on arriving in Canada was to have their plantation union reaffirmed by the form of marriage legal in Canada. It was observed that the refugees tended to settle in families and to hallow marriage, and that sensuality lessened in freedom. Their religious instincts were manifested in charity to the sick and to newcomers and in their attitude towards women. The general improvement was well summed up by one competent observer, who wrote: "The refugees in Canada earn a living and gather property; they build churches and send their children to school; they improve in manners and morals—not because they are picked men, but, because they are free men."²⁰

¹⁵ Ross: *Recollections and Experiences of an Abolitionist*.

¹⁶ Henson: *Father Henson's Story of His Own Life*, pp. 149-150.

¹⁷ Brown: *Narrative of William Wells Brown*, p. 109.

¹⁸ Bradford: *Harriet, the Moses of Her People*, p. 88.

¹⁹ Coffin: *Reminiscences*, pp. 249-250.

²⁰ Howe: *Refugees from Slavery in Canada West*, p. iv. For Howe's general conclusions with regard to the improvement of the race in Canada, see pp. 101-110 of his report.