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## CANADIAN ANTI-SLAVERY GROUP

(Continued from Last Issue)

Henry Bibb, who also made attempts at colonization, was a refugee who reached the Detroit river region at an early date. From 1842 to 1844 he lectured throughout Michigan under the auspices of the Liberty Association which was promoting the election of anti-slavery candidates. In 1850 he advocated the formation of a society which should purchase 30,000 acres of Canadian government land and locate negro refugees upon it. Such an association was formed two years later and bought about 2,000 acres of land in Essex county not far from Windsor. This was divided into 25-acre plots and forty of these plots were taken in the first year. Difficulties arose, however, regarding the terms under which the land was sold to the negroes and the Refugees' Home, as the settlement was called, gradually waned. In addition to his other activities Bibb also conducted a newspaper, "The Voice of the Fugitive," which chronicled the activities and set forth the views of the colored people. Bibb died in the early fifties and after his death his wife conducted a school for negro children at Windsor for some time.

The third class of the Canadian abolitionists includes those who were chiefly distinguished as propagandists though it must be remembered that these men in most cases, equally interested in improving the condition of the refugees then in Canada. They did much to arouse the sympathy of their fellow-citizens to this opportunity right at hand to lift up the fallen and help the poor and distressed. They helped to create in Canada the sense of moral responsibility for the slavery evil in the United States which was emphasized by the Fugitive Slave Bill of 1850. The organization of the Anti-slavery Society of Canada came at Toronto in February, 1851. Its objects were declared to be "to aid in the extinction of slavery all over the world by means exclusively lawful and peaceable, moral and religious." Rev. Dr. Willis was the first president, Rev. William McClure corresponding secretary, Capt. Charles Stuart, secretary and Andrew Hamilton treasurer. An active campaign was begun, branches being established in other cities and towns, a ladies' association organized to relieve distress, and prominent abolitionists, George Thompson and Frederick Douglass among others, were brought to Canada. The society continued active right into the Civil War Years and did not end its existence until emancipation had realized its aims. Typical of the extent of its work is the report presented at the annual meeting held April 9, 1857, when it was stated that in the past two years there had been expended £444-7-7, between 400 and 500 refugees having been assisted.

Hon. George Brown, editor of *The Toronto Globe*, was one of Canada's strong apostles of abolition.

He had spent several years of his early manhood in New York and had seen something of the domination exercised in United States affairs by the pro-slavery element. Coming back to Canada he was at once interested in the fugitives and besides many acts of personal kindness, made *The Globe* a medium for pleading their cause. At the 1852 meeting of the Anti-slavery Society Brown spoke very plainly on Canada's duty in relation to the slavery issue. It was a question of humanity, of Christianity and of liberty, he said. Canada could not escape the contamination of a system existing so near her borders.

"We, too, are Americans," he said. "On us, as well as on them, rests the responsibility of preserving the honor of the continent. On us, as on them, rests the noble trust of shielding free institutions."

Though less in the public eye than his brother, Gordon Brown is credited with having exercised considerable influence in determining *The Globe's* attitude to slavery and its later attitude to the North during the Civil War. George Brown had, of course, been an abolitionist orator for years before the war and might have been expected to stand whole-heartedly behind the North. But as Canadian sympathies following the example of the "classes" in Great Britain tended during the war to be alienated from the North George Brown was somewhat inclined to hedge. It was at this stage that Gordon Brown, more of an idealist, threatened to resign and leave *The Globe* unless he were given free hand regarding the slavery issue. The stand taken by Gordon Brown was so well known that after the close of the war, American citizens residing in Toronto joined in presenting him with a gold watch, suitably inscribed. "Gordon Brown was the heart, soul, courage, inspirer and real maker of *The Globe* insofar as it was an honorable and consistent anti-slavery paper throughout the war," is the statement of a former editorial colleague of both the Browns on *The Globe*.

Rev. Dr. Willis, the president of the Anti-slavery Society, all through its existence, was a fine type of Presbyterian clergyman, scholarly, cultured, a strong platform speaker and influential in his community. Dr. Willis never had smooth words to varnish the stains of slavery and more than once he was called upon to rebuke the attitude of those who, calling themselves Christian, condoned the great sin of the times. The Canadian churches, with the exception of the Presbyterian church, were inclined to regard slavery as something outside their domain. At the 1857 meeting of the Anti-slavery Society Dr. Willis declared that it was the duty of Canadian churches to remonstrate on the matter. He thought that a day might be well set aside at all synods and conferences for prayer and humiliation over the fact of slavery existing so nearby. There were some churches strong on missions but strangely silent on slavery.

At this same meeting Rev. Dr. Dick said that the churches were the bulwark of the slavery system. Churches in Canada were fraternizing with those in the United States (Continued on Page 5).

## LONDON

The Merry-makers' Club held an informal evening at the home of Mr. and Mrs. James Coursey, Glenwood Ave., last Thursday evening. As is always expected of them, the Merry-makers made it merry for all.

The local branch of the C. L. A. C. P. has received a request from the Dresden branch to assist in raising funds to defray the expenses of the appeal of Wm. McCathern. Although there has been no meeting since the request was received, it is reasonably certain that our local unit will embrace the opportunity to help a sister unit.

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