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.25II.—*The Underground Railway.*

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It is gratifying to Canadian patriotism to know that among the very first laws enacted by the newly organized province of Upper Canada was one for the abolition of slavery. In the year 1793 the conscript fathers of the new commonwealth, homespun clad farmers or merchants from the plough or store, with a large vision of the future, passed an act which forbade the further introduction of slaves and made provision for the gradual emancipation of all slave born children in the province. Dr. Scadding thus describes the picturesque surroundings of the scene:

"We see them adjourning to the open air from their straightened chamber at Navy Hall, and conducting the business of the young province under the shade of a spreading tree, introducing the English Code and Trial by Jury, decreeing roads, and prohibiting the spread of slavery; while a boulder of the drift, lifting itself up through the natural turf, serves as a desk for the recording clerk."<sup>1</sup>

From that time onward till the abolition of Slavery<sup>2</sup> in the American Republic, a period of nearly a hundred years, Canada was

<sup>1</sup> Previous to this date, however, Lord Mansfield had declared, in 1772, "Villeinage has ceased in England, and it cannot be revived. The air of England," he said, "has long been too pure for a slave, and every man is free who breathes it. Every man who comes into England is entitled to the protection of English law, whatever oppression he may heretofore have suffered, and whatever may be the colour of his skin: Quamvis ille niger, quamvis tu candidus esses."

Cowper, the British poet of the slave, translated this dictum into verse that thrilled the age:—

"Slaves cannot breathe in England: if their lungs  
Receive our air, that moment they are free;  
They touch our country and their shackles fall."

Still earlier, in the very opening years of the eighteenth century, Chief Justice Holt had affirmed that "as soon as a negro comes into England he is free; one may be a villein in England, but not a slave"; and later: "In England there is no such thing as a slave, and a human being never was considered a chattel to be sold for a price."

<sup>2</sup> On September 22nd, 1862, President Lincoln announced that on the first day of January, 1863, "all persons held as slaves within any state or desig-

the place of refuge for many thousands of fugitives from bondage. The lone north star was the cynosure of their watching eyes. On many a midnight march it guided their footsteps till they reached our shores. It is estimated that more than 30,000 negro slaves found freedom in Canada. These were helped on their way to the land of liberty by a philanthropic organization known as the Underground Railway. Of this organization, of its methods, its results, and some of its principal agents, we purpose in this paper to give some account.

From the nature of the case the operations of the "Underground Railway" had to be conducted in secret. Few details of its work were placed on record. Its agents for very practical reasons "did good by stealth and blushed to find it fame." They lived in an atmosphere of suspicion and espionage. When discovered they were marked men, exposed to punishment by the law, and were subject to extra judicial disabilities, annoyance and persecution, and were sometimes done to death as martyrs of liberty. The literature of the subject is therefore meagre. It is scattered through reports of legal trials, newspaper and magazine articles and a number of books and sketches, reminiscence and biography. A few Underground Railway agents were indiscreet enough to commit to writing the record of their operations, some of which, for a time preserved, it was found necessary to destroy. Nevertheless, a number of works have been compiled on this subject.

The most considerable of these is Still's "Underground Railway Records," a large volume of 780 pages, which appeared in 1872 and a second edition in 1883. Mr. Still for some years before the war took an active part in the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society, and had much personal intercourse with the fugitives whom he harboured and helped to Canada. Levi Coffin, an apostle of abolition, a distinguished member of an uncompromising anti-slavery family, has written a large volume of reminiscences of the stirring events in which he was so prominent. Theodore Parker, of Boston, an active abolitionist, made a large collection of manuscript and printed documents on this subject which is now in possession of the Boston Public Library.

That philanthropic Canadian, Dr. Alexander M. Ross, who bore a brave part in aiding the escape of fugitives, has in his "Recollection and Experiences of an Abolitionist," recorded many stirring nated part of a state, the people whereof should then be in rebellion, should be then, thenceforward, and forever free." It was not, indeed, till June 23rd, 1864, that all laws for the rendition of slaves to their masters were repealed, and on January 31st, 1865, by a constitutional amendment, slavery was formally abolished throughout the entire Union, and the fourteenth amendment of the constitution absolutely forbade compensation being made either by the United States or by any state.

incidents of the anti-slavery campaign. The biographies of Fred Douglass, Josiah Henson, Austin Steward and other escaped slaves, also describe many personal incidents and adventures. A very vivacious volume entitled "Heroes in Homespun," by Ascot Hope (Robert Hope Moncrief), gives vivid pictures of the prolonged anti-slavery struggle. The investigations of Dr. Samuel G. Howe on the condition of the refugees in Canada after the Secession War were very painstaking and exhaustive, and his book on the subject gives much valuable information. Other memoirs, biographies, local histories and magazine and newspaper articles describe various aspects of the great moral crusade for the abolition of slavery and succour of the slave.

Mrs. Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin" gives a graphic account of Underground Railway methods, and the Key to that work furnishes corroborative statements vindicating the general truthfulness of her novel — Levi Coffin, for instance, being faithfully portrayed under a pseudonym. Several of the anti-slavery poems by Whittier, Lowell and Longfellow catch their inspiration from the stirring episodes of this great movement.

The latest, best digested and most comprehensive book on this subject is "The Underground Railway from Slavery to Freedom," by Wilbur H. Siebert, Professor of European History in Ohio State University.<sup>1</sup> No other writer has so carefully investigated the sources of information, so admirably digested the vast multitude of facts he has discovered or presented them in such a luminous manner as Professor Siebert. To his volume and to those of several of the other writers referred to above we are indebted for much of the data of this paper. To this we add our own recollections of the antebellum period, our personal acquaintance with not a few fugitive slaves and our intensely interested observation of the struggle for the rendition of Robert Anderson, which was one of the *causes célèbres* of Canadian jurisprudence.

It is somewhat remarkable that such law-abiding and peace-loving people as the Friends or Quakers should be such active agents in the violation of law and defiance of authority involved in the abduction, concealment and forwarding to their destination of the hunted slaves. The zealous abolitionist and Underground Railroad agent, to use the words of Professor Albert Bushnell Hart, of Harvard University, argued thus: "In aiding fugitive slaves he was making the most effective protest against the continuance of slavery; but he was also doing something more tangible; he was helping the oppressed, he was eluding the oppressor; and at the same time he was enjoying the most romantic and exciting amusement open to men who had high moral

<sup>1</sup> Macmillan Company, New York, 1898. 8vo, pp. 478.

standards. He was taking risks, defying the laws, and making himself liable to punishment, and yet could glow with the healthful pleasure of duty done. Above all," he adds, "the Underground Railroad was the opportunity for the bold and adventurous; it had the excitement of piracy, the secrecy of burglary, the daring of insurrection; to the pleasure of relieving the poor negro's sufferings it added the triumph of snapping one's fingers at the slave-catcher; it developed coolness, indifference to danger, and quickness of resource."

Fred Douglass, himself frequently exposed to fine and imprisonment for succouring the fugitives, writes: "I never did more congenial, attractive, fascinating and satisfactory work."

Professor Siebert has recorded the names of over three thousand persons who were engaged in this heroic work, a roll of honour in which its members might well be proud to be inscribed. While the rank and file were men of humble birth and unknown to fame, yet some of them were persons of high position, literary culture, or heroic daring—men who won "glorious infamy" by their sufferings for the slave. We may mention Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Theodore Parker, Gerrit Smith, Joshua Giddings, Levi Coffin, Dr. A. M. Ross and many others. The futile effort of Brown, of Osawatomic, to emancipate the slaves in Virginia led to his execution on the scaffold; but on many a weary march and by many a lonely camp fire, the armies of freedom chanted the Marseillaise of the Civil War: "John Brown's body lies amouldering in the grave, but his soul is marching on." Its refrain, too, furnished the motive for the noble battle hymn of the Republic.

"In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,  
With a glory in his bosom that transfigures you and me:  
As he died to make men holy, let us die to make men free,  
While God is marching on."

The historic record of the Quakers as unflinching friends of liberty and uncompromising foes of oppression and wrong, as heroic confessors unto blood and martyrs unto death for righteousness and truth, finds further illustration in their connection with the Underground Railway.

From very early times in the history of slavery the bondman had a habit of seeking his liberty when he found an opportunity. It is a way that slaves always and everywhere have had. So great a loss thus accrued to the slave holders of the American Republic that as early as 1793, in an unconscious irony on its own recent struggle for Independence, Congress passed its first Fugitive Slave Law.

From that time down to the close of the Secession War may be considered the period of the secret modes of rescuing the slave, culminating in the well organized Underground Railway with its many routes and branches. The fugitive slave laws were from time to time made more severe in their penalties, involving not only heavy fines, but severe imprisonment. These laws became more and more obnoxious to the abolitionists as violations of primal human rights, of the instincts of liberty, and the principles of the Declaration of Independence. The benign provisions of the ancient Hebrew law of divine origin, "Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee," were cited as good reasons for violating the man-made law which virtually made all northern citizens accomplices in the crime of slave catching.

A considerable number of slaves in the far south escaped to Mexico or to the deep recesses of the Dismal Swamp, and some to Great Britain; but to most of them the true land of liberty was Canada. The stimulation of the increased scope and value given to slave labour by the Louisiana Purchase and the invention of the cotton gin and consequent vast extension of cotton culture made the task of the slave more bitter and increased his passion for liberty. Virginia, the mother of Presidents, became also the mother of slaves, as expressed in the pathetic poem of Whittier on the Virginia Slave-mother's Lament for her Daughters. The southern tier of slave states became a great mill in which were ground out the lives of bondmen; and new grist must be supplied, after the foreign slave trade had been abolished, by slave breeding in the northern tier of slave states. This stimulated the activity of the slave marts in Baltimore, Washington, Charleston, Richmond, New Orleans and St. Augustine. The dread of being "sold south," with the utter and irrevocable severance of the dearest and tenderest ties of kinship and love hung like a nightmare over the souls of myriads of our fellow-beings. The value of slaves became greatly enhanced and led to the systematic pursuit of fugitives and sometimes to the kidnapping of free negroes in the north.

Yet, in many parts of the far south the very existence of such a place as Canada and the succour which it proffered for the fugitive were unknown. The war of 1812-15, and the return of the southern soldiers to their homes, made that place of refuge known and predisposed the negroes to seek liberty among the enemies of their masters. It was not long before tidings from the fugitives in Canada found their way back to their old homes. Before the Secession War it is estimated that five hundred negroes annually travelled between the land of freedom and the land of slavery to rescue their kinsmen.

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.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 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!

William Lloyd Garrison, one of the most famous of the abolitionists, was born in Newburyport, Mass., of New Brunswick parentage. In Baltimore and Washington he came in contact with slavery and wrote so vehemently against it that he was tried, imprisoned and amerced in a fine of \$1,000. In 1831 he issued the first number of "The Liberator," in which, for five and thirty years, he continued to plead the cause of the slave. He adopted as his motto "My country is the world, my countrymen are all mankind," and stoutly affirmed "I will not equivocate, I will not excuse, I will not retreat a single inch, and I will be heard." These prophetic words are engraved upon his monument in the city of Boston, through whose streets he was dragged by a mob and committed to prison to save his life. When he visited England Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton was amazed to find him a white man, having taken it for granted that no one could plead so eloquently against slavery unless he had himself been a slave. He procured the aid of George Thompson, the eloquent English abolitionist, who earnestly pleaded the cause of the oppressed in the chief cities of the northern States and Canada.<sup>1</sup>

A noble band of women became leaders in the anti-slavery reform at a time when public opinion forbade public speaking to their sex. Mrs. Chapman, Mrs. Child, Lucretia Mott, Abby Kelley and others bravely bore this reproach and addressed public audiences when stones and brickbats crashed through the windows. For admitting free coloured girls to her school at Canterbury, Conn., Miss Prudence Crandall, a Quaker lady, was treated with contumely and malice. She was boycotted, to use the phrase of a later day, even by the doctor who refused to visit the sick in her school, and lived as in a besieged garrison. She was thrown into a prison cell from which a murderer had just been taken for execution. Her school was fired and well nigh wrecked and was finally closed by violence.

Wendell Phillips, a man of the bluest blood of Boston, a member of its Brahmin caste, son of the first mayor of that city, espoused the cause of the hated abolitionists. He shared their persecutions and witnessed their triumphs. Channing, Quincey and other heroes of reform soon joined the ranks.

Intense opposition was offered the new propaganda, anti-abolitionist riots took place in several northern cities. In New York the house of Mr. Louis Tappan was sacked and the furniture burned. In Philadelphia the anti-slavery hall was burned as was also an asylum for coloured children. The Hon. J. C. Burney, solicitor of Alabama,

<sup>1</sup> After thirty-five years' ceaseless effort the work to which "The Liberator" was devoted was accomplished, and Garrison, an invited guest, saw the flag of the emancipated Union raised upon the battlements of Fort Sumter.

released his slaves, for which his name was stricken off the roll of the bar and the press he established at Cincinnati was destroyed.

Many ministers of religion obeyed the precepts and imitated the example of Him who came to "preach to the captives and to set at liberty them that are bruised."

The Rev. Elijah P. Lovejoy, a Presbyterian pastor, from Maine, for denouncing a cruel lynching in St. Louis, was driven from that city. The same fate followed him to Alton, Ill., where his house was attacked and he was himself shot to death by a mob. He was the first but not the last abolition martyr. His fate sounded the death knell of slavery. Soon more than a hundred anti-slavery societies sprang up throughout the north.

The Rev. Owen Lovejoy, whose brother, as we have seen, was murdered for the cause of liberty, was taunted as "nigger stealer." He replied, "Thou invisible demon of slavery, dost thou think to cross my humble threshold, and forbid me to give bread to the hungry and shelter to the houseless! I bid you defiance in the name of my God!"

For many years the light in the window of Thomas Rankin, a Presbyterian pastor on the Ohio River, "were hailed by slaves fleeing from the soil of Kentucky as beacons to guide them to a haven of safety."

Theodore Parker, the accomplished scholar and orator, and enthusiastic abolitionist of Boston, writes: "I must attend to living men, and not to dead books, and all this winter my time has been occupied with these poor souls."

The Rev. Charles Torrey in 1838 resigned the pastorate of a Congregational church in Providence, Rhode Island, and relinquished quiet and comfort that he might devote himself to the work of freeing the slaves. He was thrust into prison, attempted to escape, was sentenced to penitentiary for six years and in prison he died. In 1844 he wrote: "If I am a guilty man, I am a very guilty one; for I have aided nearly four hundred slaves to escape to freedom, the greater part of whom would probably, but for my exertions, have died in slavery." He was buried in Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge, Mass., and a memorial service in Faneuil Hall on the day of his funeral was signalized by a poem by Lowell, and addresses by General Fessenden and Walter Channing. Of him, Whittier wrote: "In the wild woods of Canada, around many a happy fireside and holy family altar, his name is on the lips of God's poor. He put his soul in their soul's stead; he gave his life for those who had no claim on his love save that of human brotherhood."

Calvin Fairbank, a student of Oberlin College, read at his father's fireside, a station of the Underground Railway, the story of sorrow

of escaped slaves. "My heart wept," he writes, "my anger was kindled, an antagonism to slavery was fixed upon me." He devoted himself with enthusiasm to the work of succouring the slave and soon was placed behind prison bars. He was arrested again and again and spent seventeen years and four months of his life in prison for abducting slaves, and has placed on record the statement that he received at the hands of prison officials 35,000 stripes on his naked body. His ample reward was that he had guided forty-seven slaves toward the north star. "I piloted them," he writes, "through the forests, mostly by night; girls, fair and white, dressed as ladies; men and boys, as gentlemen or servants; men in women's clothes, and women in men's clothes; boys dressed as girls, and girls as boys; on foot or on horseback, in buggies, carriages, common wagons, in and under loads of hay, straw, old furniture, boxes and bags; crossing the Jordan of the slave, swimming or wading chin deep; or in boats, or skiffs; on rafts, and often on a pine log. And I never suffered one to be recaptured."

Two of the most noted leaders of the Underground Railway movement were those sturdy Quakers, Thomas Garrett of Delaware, and Levi Coffin of Ohio. In his sixtieth year Garrett, when mulcted in a fine of \$8,000 for the crime of helping his brother man, replied: "Judge, thou hast not left me a dollar, but I wish to say to thee, and to all in this court-room, that if any one knows of a fugitive who wants shelter and a friend, send him to Thomas Garrett and he will befriend him." Long afterwards he said: "The war came a little too soon for my business. I wanted to help off three thousand slaves. I had only got up to twenty-seven hundred."

Levi Coffin, the Quaker Greatheart of Mrs. Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin," was born in a slave state, North Carolina, in 1798. The scenes he witnessed as a boy entered his soul. In 1847 he settled in Cincinnati for the purpose of dealing only in the product of free labour. It is said that "for thirty-three years he received into his house more than one hundred slaves every year." Under Levi Coffin's Quaker drab and broad-brimmed hat there lurked a vein of quaint humour combined with a shrewd business method. Summoned before the Grand Jury, he was asked if he knew of any violation of the fugitive slave law in his own neighbourhood. He replied that persons often stopped at his house who *said* they were slaves, but he knew nothing about it from their statements for the law did not consider them capable of giving evidence. He collected money for a poor family in need, and three swaggering Kentucky slave holders subscribed their dollar each and were greatly disgusted to find they had helped fugitive slaves along the Underground Railway. He so worked

upon the sympathies of a strongly pro-slavery man by showing him a scarred and wounded fugitive that he could not help contributing to his relief. Coffin promptly rejoined: "Thou hast laid thyself liable not only to a heavy fine, but to imprisonment, under the Fugitive Slave Law. Thou gave a fugitive slave a dollar to help him to Canada; I saw thee do it!"

Sometimes he induced free negroes to act the part of supposed runaways. They would be hurriedly driven off with ostentatious precautions, to cover the fact that the real fugitives had quietly escaped. Coffin's good wife so far compromised with her conscience as to lay aside her Quaker garb and dress up as a fashionable lady, with a negro fugitive slave carrying a rag baby behind her. Coffin knew every quirk of the law and was remarkably shrewd in taking advantage of any flaw in its process to extricate the fugitives from its grasp.

At the close of the War, after the emancipation of the slaves in the United States, Coffin declared: "The stock of the Underground Railroad had gone down in the market, the business is spoiled, the road is now of no further use." The work of the Underground Railroad was done.

It was through Coffin that this mysterious railway received its designation. "Certain baffled slave-hunters," says "Ascot Hope," "are said to have declared that there must be an underground railroad to Canada, with Levi Coffin for president, as they never could get the slightest trace of a fugitive after reaching his house, so shrewdly and slyly did the Quaker manage their flight." Analogous to this was the "grape-vine telegraph" by which intelligence was secretly conveyed with strange rapidity along the Underground Railway lines.

A friend, and in a way a colleague of Coffin's, was John Fairfield, a man of dauntless spirit and reckless audacity. He was the son of a Virginia planter, and became a fierce antagonist of the slave system amid which he was brought up. He was arrested again and again, but always managed to break gaol. He used to hector and bully the very men whom he was helping to escape in a way that convinced their owners that he had little sympathy with abolitionists. Bringing off a number of mulattoes and quadroons, he provided himself at Philadelphia with \$80.00 worth of wigs and powder for their disguise. In 1853 he brought off twenty-eight slaves at the same time. At Detroit, writes Mr. Fitch Reed, "two hundred and fifty abolitionists took breakfast with them just before daylight. We procured boats enough for Fairfield and his crew. As they pushed off from shore, they all commenced singing the song: 'I am on my way to Canada, where coloured men are free,' and continued firing off their arms till out of hearing."

On witnessing the ecstasies of the negroes on reaching the land of liberty, some of them to meet long lost kinsfolk or friends, Fairfield exclaimed: "This pays me for all dangers I have faced in bringing this company, just to see these friends meet."

He was once pursued to Pittsburg by a special train, but the fugitives under his convoy made a dash from the cars, scattered through the city and were so well concealed that not one could be caught, and Fairfield, their gallant conductor, conveyed them all to Canada. After many bold exploits he mysteriously disappeared. "Levi Coffin," says "Ascot Hope," "is inclined to identify him with an unknown white man killed in stirring up an insurrection among slaves, shortly before the war. A slight chance of fortune might have made his name ring through the world as loudly as that of John Brown."

One of the boldest exploits of John Brown was his escorting, in 1858, a band of twelve slaves from Missouri by a devious route of well nigh 1,000 miles to Windsor, in Canada, in mid-winter, in spite of a reward of \$3,000 for his arrest. This raid excited great alarm in Missouri. Many slaves, as a consequence, were sold south and others escaped. John Brown's policy, he himself avowed, was to destroy the money value of slave property by rendering it insecure.

Captain Jonathan Walker, for the crime of attempting to convey seven slaves from Pensacola to the Bahamas, was branded on the hand with the letters "S. S.", slave stealer, amerced in a heavy fine and languished for nearly four years in a southern prison. Whittier's stirring poem immortalizes his heroism:

"Why, that brand is highest honour! — than its traces never yet  
Upon old armorial hatchments was a prouder blazon set:  
And thy unborn generations, as they tread our rocky strand,  
Shall tell with pride the story of their father's branded hand!

"Then lift that manly right-hand, bold ploughman of the wave!  
Its branded palm shall prophesy, 'Salvation to the slave!'  
Hold up its fire-wrought language, that whoso reads may feel  
His heart swell strong within him, his sinews change to steel."

A bold attempt was made by Captain Drayton, of the schooner Pearl, to convey seventy-six slaves at one time from the city of Washington.<sup>1</sup> By an irony of fate their dash for liberty was made during a great torchlight procession in honour of the establishment of the Republic in France. They were pursued and brought back. Three persons were prosecuted, the amount of their bail being fixed at

<sup>1</sup> Outgoing vessels were sometimes smoked, as is done to get rid of rats, to make sure that no stowaways were on board.

\$228,000. Drayton was himself fined \$10,000 and sent to prison in default, but through the efforts of Senator Sumner, after four years' imprisonment, was pardoned. The affair caused intense excitement in Congress.

Undeterred by such disasters, Richard Dillingham, a Quaker, for aiding a slave to escape, was condemned to three years' imprisonment in the Nashville penitentiary; but, separated from his aged parents and his betrothed bride, he died in two months in the prison, from an epidemic of cholera.

A year after Dillingham's death, William M. Chaplin, for attempting the release of two negroes, the property of Robert Timms and Alexander H. Stevens, was arrested, but was released on bail bonds of \$20,000. After five months' imprisonment, by consent of his bondmen he sacrificed his bail rather than meet the trial, which would have resulted in a fifteen years' imprisonment.

Peter Still escaped from Alabama after forty years of slavery. It was too perilous a task for him to return for his family through 1,600 miles of danger and difficulty. Seth Concklin, a white man, volunteered to do it. "He travelled," says "Ascot Hope," "from first to last some thousands of miles, and spent two or three months among men who might have hung him up to the nearest tree had they guessed his true business." Seth Concklin conveyed his party as far as Vincennes. He was arrested and escaped, but was "found drowned with his hands and feet in fetters and his skull fractured"—perhaps by accident, perhaps by a darker fate.

Two brothers, market-gardeners, living near Baltimore, concealed in a large box a slave woman and her daughter and conveyed it in their market wagon across Maryland and Pennsylvania, a three weeks' journey, to the land of liberty. Two students of Marion College were sentenced to twelve years' imprisonment for assisting two negroes to escape, and a pro-slavery party burned the college to the ground.

Among the most heroic agents of the Underground Railway were the negroes themselves. Many of these, having tasted the sweets of liberty in Canada, voluntarily incurred the risks of recapture, with the fearful penalties consequent thereon, in their endeavour to bring off their kinsfolk and often those whose only kinship was that of race and misfortune. Professor Redpath considers as many as 500 a year as incurring this risk.

No danger was too great for these knights of Christian chivalry to incur. With a reward for their capture, dead or alive, they braved imminent peril again and again.

One of the most notable of these sable heroes was Josiah Henson, the original of Mrs. Stowe's "Uncle Tom." Born and bred a slave,

he at length escaped to Canada. Eager to lead others into liberty, he travelled on foot 400 miles into Kentucky, and brought off safely a party of thirty fugitives. Time after time he repeated his adventurous journey and rescued in all 118 slaves from bondage. Of one of these journeys he writes: "Words cannot describe the feelings experienced by my companions as they neared the shore; their bosoms were swelling with inexpressible joy as they mounted the seats of the boat, ready eagerly to spring forward that they might touch the soil of the freeman, and when they reached the shore they danced and wept for joy, and kissed the earth on which they first stepped, no longer the *Slave*, but the *Free*."

John Mason, another fugitive slave from Kentucky, aided the escape in nineteen months of two hundred and sixty-five fugitives, and in all assisted not less than 1,300 to escape to Canada. He was finally captured by the aid of bloodhounds. He resisted till both arms were broken. He was sold south to New Orleans, but escaped to the city of Hamilton, in Canada. "Let a man walk abroad on Freedom's Sunny Plains," he writes, "and having once drunk of its celestial 'stream whereof maketh glad the city of our God,' afterward reduce this man to slavery, it is next to an impossibility to retain him in slavery."

A brave woman named Armstrong, disguised as a man, returned to the Kentucky plantation, where she had been a slave, hid near a spring where her children came for water, and brought off five of them to Canada.

Surpassed by none in high courage and consecrated zeal in these efforts to emancipate the slave was the humble heroine Harriet Tubman. Of this simple black woman Governor William H. Seward, of New York, wrote: "I have known Harriet long, and a nobler, higher spirit or a truer, seldom dwells in human form." John Brown described her as "one of the bravest persons on this continent—General Tubman, as we call her." "She saw in the oppression of her race," says Siebert, "the sufferings of the enslaved Israelites, and was not slow to demand that the Pharaoh of the South should let her people go." She, therefore, received the name of Moses—from the great Hebrew liberator who led to freedom a nation of slaves. Herself born a slave, she first tasted the sweets of liberty in 1849. She subsequently made nineteen excursions south and brought off over three hundred fugitives from bondage. All her own earnings were devoted to this mission together with generous sums given her. Her method was, having secured her convoy of slaves, to start north on Saturday night so as to allow a good start before they could be advertised, and to pay negroes to tear down the advertisements of

their escape.<sup>1</sup> She would soothe the crying babies with paregoric and carry them in baskets. When hard pressed she would make a detour southward to throw off pursuit. At one time an award of as much as \$12,000 was offered for her arrest; yet, unafraid, she pursued her self-imposed task. She boldly waded through icy waters in mid-March, lay hidden in forest or swamp, and incurred incredible hardships.

She brought off in a rude home-made chaise her aged parents, unable themselves to walk, and several brothers and sisters. She was something of a mystic and felt conscious communion with the unseen. She had no fear of arrest for she ventured only where God sent her. She expressed her heroic faith and confidence in the words: "Jes so long as God wanted to use me he would take keer of me, an' when he didn't want me no longer, I was ready to go. I always tole him, I'm gwine to hole stiddy on to you, an' you've got to see me trou." Of her Thomas Garrett said: "I never met with any person, of any colour, who had more confidence in the voice of God, as spoken to her soul."

During the Civil War she was employed as an hospital nurse and scout. "She made many a raid," says Governor Andrew, of Massachusetts, "inside the enemies' lines, displaying remarkable courage, zeal and fidelity."

Old, infirm and poor she still lives in a humble home in Auburn, N.Y., which she transformed into a hospital where she cared for the helpless of her own race.

It should be to every Canadian ground for patriotic pride that during all the years of struggle for the abolition of slavery the only refuge on this continent for the fugitives from bondage was beneath our red cross flag of freedom. The land of promise in the north exercised such a fascination for the slave that their owners endeavoured to discount its attractions by absurd stories concerning its vast distance, the wintry rigours of its climate, the sterility of its soil, its perils from savage beasts and more savage men. One fugitive declares he was assured that the Detroit River was over three thousand miles wide, and a ship starting out in the night would find

<sup>1</sup> These advertisements of runaway slaves are evidence of the cruelties with which they were sometimes treated. They describe the scars upon their bodies; the lacerations of whips; the branding with hot iron on the back, or hand, or cheek; the wounds of rifle shots; the scars by the teeth of bloodhounds with which they had been pursued, and of the fetters with which they were manacled; and sometimes they escaped with iron bands on neck or ankle. Sometimes one or two teeth were knocked out or a slit made in the ear as marks by which slaves could be readily identified. See Reports of Trial of John Anderson, a fugitive slave, at Toronto, 1860, for alleged crime of murder in Missouri.

herself in the morning "right whar she started from." Another was told the grotesque story "that in Canada the British would put out their eyes and send them to lifelong labour in mines underground."

But the slaves were too shrewd to be deceived by these calumnies. "The rumour gradually spread," says Professor Siebert, "among the slaves of the Southern States, that there was, far away under the north star, a land where the flag of the Union did not float; where the law declared all men free and equal; where the people respected the law, and the government, if need be, enforced it. The rumour widened; the fugitives so increased, that a secret pathway, afterward called the Underground Railroad, was soon formed, which ran by the huts of the blacks in the slave states, and the houses of the good Samaritans in the free states. Before the year 1817 it is said that a single group of abolitionists in southern Ohio had forwarded to Canada by this secret path more than a thousand fugitive slaves."

Henry Clay, Secretary of State in 1828, described the escape of slaves as a growing evil which menaced the peaceful relations between the United States and Canada, and urged an extradition treaty for their return; but the British Government staunchly and steadily refused to depart from the principle that every man is free who reaches British ground.

The Underground Railway came in time to cover with a network of routes, not found in the railway maps, the territory embraced by the middle and northern states from the Mississippi to the Atlantic. The greater number, however, were in Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York and other states contiguous to the frontier of central Canada. Windsor, Sandwich, Amherstburgh, Owen Sound, Collingwood, Sarnia, and the Niagara frontier were the principal points of entry for this contraband commerce. "The untrodden wilds of Canada, as well as her populous places, seemed hospitable to a people for whom the hardships of the new life were fully compensated by the consciousness of their possession of the rights of freedom, rights vouchsafed them by a government that exemplified the proud boast of the poet Cowper:—

'Slaves cannot breathe in England; if their lungs  
Receive our air, that moment they are free!  
They touch our country and their shackles fall.'"

The chief agents of the Underground Railway were found, as we have said, among the quiet and peace-loving Quakers. The members of the Presbyterian and Wesleyan Methodist churches, which were strongly anti-slavery in their sympathies, were very good seconds in this law-breaking practical Christianity.

After the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, Philadelphia and New York became important *entrepôts* for receiving and forwarding fugitive slaves. These arrived both by rail and coastwise vessels and were sent by way of Albany, Syracuse and Rochester, or by Harrisburg and Elmira to Upper Canada. A few escaped by way of New England, but the chief routes were through Ohio and western Pennsylvania. Cleveland, Sandusky, Toledo, Detroit and other border towns became important stations of the Underground Railway.

The abolitionists and the helpers of the slaves were not sustained by public sympathy or applause. They were under ban and social disabilities, the subjects of insult and injury. "Niggerites," and "amalgamationists" were among the epithets hurled at them, and "nigger-thief" was the inappropriate designation given men who restored the negro to his ownership of himself. They were subject to suspicion, espionage and persecution; their cattle were injured; their persons were menaced; their houses in some cases were burned. Professor Siebert quotes the offers of as much as \$2,500 for the abduction or assassination of the Rev. John S. Mahon, of Brown County, Ohio, for his offence in aiding the escape of slaves. The slave hunter took the law in his own hands. One such assaulted and injured for life a free citizen and was amerced in a fine of \$10,000 for his crime. A Kentucky slave holder assumed Quaker garb to worm out the secrets of the Friends, but he could not quite adopt their phraseology, and was detected as a wolf in sheep's clothing.

From the need of secrecy most of the travel was done by night, and also because many of the slaves had no other guide but the north star.<sup>1</sup> Professor Siebert thus dramatically described the process at a station of the Underground Railway: "The faltering step, and the light, uncertain rapping of the fugitive at the door, was quickly recognized by the family within, and the stranger was admitted with a welcome at once sincere and subdued. There was a suppressed stir in the house while the fire was building and food preparing; and after the hunger and chill of the wayfarer had been dispelled, he was provided with a bed in some out-of-the-way part of the house,

<sup>1</sup> Readers of Lowell's "Biglow Papers" will remember how Birdofredum Sawin undertook to capture a slave "runnin'." But Pomp captured him and made him work all spring. This is Birdofredum's account of it:

"He made me larn him readin', tu, (although the critter saw  
How much it hut my morril sense to act agin the law),  
So'st he could read a Bible he'd gut; an' axed ef I could pint  
The North Star out; but there I put his nose some out o' jint,  
For I wheeled roun' about sou'west, an', lookin' up a bit,  
Picked out a middlin' shiny one an' tole him thet wuz it."

or under the hay in the barn loft, according to the degree of danger. Often a household was awakened to find a company of five or more negroes at the door. The arrival of such a company was sometimes announced beforehand by special messenger."

Special passwords, signals and cryptic signs were employed; the imitated hoot of an owl or cry of a bird was used. A vein of humour ran through some of the secret messages, as in the following:

"By to-morrow evening's mail you will receive two volumes of the 'irrepressible conflict,' bound in black. After perusal, please forward, and oblige."

"Uncle Tom says if the roads are not too bad you can look for those fleeces of wool by to-morrow. Send them on to test the market and price, no back charges."

Others, with more courage than prudence, boldly wrote without concealment, as the following quoted by Siebert:

"I understand you are a friend to the poor and are willing to obey the heavenly mandate, 'Hide the outcasts, betray not him that wandereth.'

"Yours in behalf of the millions of poor, oppressed and downtrodden in our land."

One good Quaker in Ohio had a large covered wagon for conveying fugitives, which he named "The Liberator." Others used pedler's wagons with concealed recesses. Some fugitives were shipped as freight in boxes. One man, appropriately named Box Jones, was sent in a packing case from Baltimore to Philadelphia, and was seventeen hours on the way. A ruse of Levi Coffin's was to forward twenty-eight negroes in broad day in a funeral-like procession. The routes often followed zigzag detours in order to throw off pursuit and secure safe hiding.

The fugitives were concealed in barns, in hayricks, in cellars and sub-cellars, in the heart of a wood-pile, in the abutment of a bridge, in a smoke-house, in a rail pen covered with straw, in thick, dark woods, in a coal bank, in a cave, beneath a trap door. One good pastor hid the fugitives three days in the belfry of his church, another built a room with a secret panel.

For disguises the men sometimes carried scythes or rakes as if seeking work. Light mulattoes sometimes were passed as white men; sometimes they were disguised by blacking the hands and face. Sometimes theatrical outfits of wig and beard and clothing were employed. A mulatto girl was dressed in silks and ribbons and furnished with a white baby borrowed for the occasion. To her chagrin her master was on the train by which she travelled and watched the ferry for her at

Detroit. When the steamer was under way the fugitive removed her veil and gave a farewell greeting to her master, whose turn it now was to be chagrined. The Quaker veiled bonnet and shawl were admirable disguises, and Brother Aminabab or Jonathan tenderly convoyed on his arm a feeble and decrepit companion, who soon proved to be a very alert negress. A young slave mother with her two children were placed under the convoy of an ardent pro-slavery man, who little thought, so fair was their complexion, that he was acting as an agent of the Underground Railway.

A black nurse, brought with her mistress to Connecticut, refused to take advantage of being in a free state. "Don't you wish to be free?" she was asked. With impressive earnestness, she replied, "Was there ever a slave that did not wish to be free? I long for liberty. I will get out of slavery if I can, the day after I have returned; but go back I must, because I promised that I would."

As may well be supposed, considerable amounts of money were needed to meet the wants and travelling expenses of these fugitives, who after years of toil owned not a penny, nor even themselves. Yet these needs were always met, humble donors giving lavishly to help the escaped slaves.

The "conductors" of this railway ran no small risk. Vigilance committees were organized to guard the route, aid the slave and prevent pursuit. Theodore Parker writes: "Money, time, wariness, devotedness for months and years, that cannot be computed, and will never be recorded except, perhaps, in connection with cases whose details had peculiar interest, were nobly rendered by the true anti-slavery men."

They were known even to storm the Court House where a fugitive was confined and rescue the prisoner, not to lynch but to save him. John Brown, the hero of Harper's Ferry, organized in Springfield, Mass., a league of "Gileadites" to resist the enforcement of the fugitive slave law,—“Whosoever is fearful or afraid let him return and depart early from Mount Gilead.” Brown urged bold measures, the carrying of weapons, the rescue of the prisoners, the creating a tumult in court by burning gunpowder in paper packages and similar practices. "Stand by one another while a drop of blood remains," he said, "and be hanged if you must, but tell no tales."

The fugitives were often penniless, naked and hungry. Sometimes they came "in droves." Levi Coffin had seventeen fugitives at his table at one time. Companies of twenty-eight or thirty were not unknown. They needed food, clothing and money to help them on their way. Although it was forbidden by law under heavy penalties to give the slightest assistance, yet the friends of the slaves did not hesitate to vio-

late such unrighteous commands. Emergency funds were established whose contributors were described as "stockholders" in the Underground Railway. Women conducted sewing circles to supply the fugitives with clothes. Even humble negroes, both men and women, gave freely to help them. After the introduction of steam locomotion, railways and steamboats could often be used. The cost of tickets was considerable, yet it was always cheerfully met by sympathetic friends. Generous captains on the Mississippi, Ohio and Illinois rivers often conveyed fugitives as stowaways. Captain William Brown in 1842 conveyed in seven months sixty-nine of them across Lake Erie to Canada. Scows and sailing craft were also employed.

It is remarkable that so seldom were runaways returned to slavery, and that not unfrequently those seized for that purpose were rescued from the slave hunters. Even when on trial and under the very eyes of the judge, they were sometimes smuggled out of the court room, and the marshal and his deputies hustled and prevented re-arresting them.

Many of the friends of the fugitives suffered in their person and in their purse for their humanity. In Michigan three persons were mulcted in fines and costs \$6,000. D. Kauffman, in Pennsylvania, for sheltering a family of slaves in his barn, was fined over \$4,000. For a similar offence R. Sloan, a lawyer of Sandusky, was fined \$3,000. Space would fail to do justice to this noble army of heroes, and some of them martyrs. Professor Siebert gives a list of 3,211. Their obscurity and unknown death have prevented the record of many more. He well remarks: "Considering the kind of labour performed and the danger involved, one is impressed with the unselfish devotion to principle of these emancipators. There was for them, of course, no outward honour, no material recompense, but instead such contumely and seeming disgrace as can now be scarcely comprehended."

Five families in Ohio whom he mentions forwarded over a thousand fugitives to Canada before the year 1817. Daniel Gibbons, of Pennsylvania, in fifty-six years, aided about one thousand, Dr. Nathan M. Thomas, of Michigan, fifteen hundred, and John Fairfield not only hundreds, but thousands. General McIntyre, resident in Ohio, aided over a hundred fugitive slaves. "Of the multitudes," says ex-President Fairchild, "that came to Obelin, not one was ever taken back to bondage." So intense was popular sympathy with the anti-slavery movement, that a sign-post was erected in the form of a fugitive running towards the town. In consequence of this defiance of the law against harbouring slaves, repeated attempts were made to repeal the charter of Oberlin College.

Though the heroes of this great crusade concealed their acts, they did not conceal their principles; indeed, they sought to make converts

to their convictions. They opposed to the slave law the moral dictates of the Golden Rule, of God's ancient oracles, and the sacred teachings of the Declaration of Independence. "They refused," says Siebert, "to observe a law that made it a felony in their opinion to give a cup of cold water to famishing men and women fleeing from servitude."

Like every great moral movement, their sacred passion found expression in sacred song, of which the following breathes the spirit:

" 'Tis the law of God in the human soul,  
 'Tis the law in the Word Divine;  
 It shall live while the earth in its course shall roll,  
 It shall live in this soul of mine.  
 Let the law of the land forge its bonds of wrong,  
 I shall help when the self-freed crave:  
 For the law in my soul, bright, beaming, and strong,  
 Bids me succour the fleeing slave."

Theodore Parker, in a sermon in Boston, thus defied the Fugitive Slave Bill of 1850: "To law framed of such iniquity I owe no allegiance. Humanity, Christianity, manhood revolts against it. For myself, I say it solemnly, I will shelter, I will help, and I will defend the fugitive with all my humble means and power."

The discipline of the Methodist Church as early as 1789 prohibited the slave trade: "the buying or selling the bodies or souls of men, women, or children, with an intention to enslave them;" and the great division of the Methodist Church in America arose from the possession of slaves by Bishop Jehu Andrews of its southern section.

The Fugitive Slave Bill of 1850, intended to prevent the escape of slaves, increased it. Slaves dissembled their desire for freedom for fear of being sold south. "No, I don't want to go to none o' your free countries," said one. "But I surely *did*," he added, in telling the story in Canada; "a coloured man tells the truth *here*, there he is afraid to."

In the employment of the writer's father as stableman was an escaped slave. He used diligently to con his spelling-book during off hours, and so learned to read. "Did they use you well, Sam, in your old Kentucky home?" we said one day. "Yes, boss," he replied, "dey use me mighty well; allus had 'nuff to eat, not over hard work; but den I'se *free* here," and his black face lit up and his form straightened with the conscious dignity of manhood.

The demonstrations of delight of the fugitive slaves on their reaching the frontier of Canada were often pathetic, even when they were grotesque. Says Captain Cleveland of two negroes whom he landed on our shores: "Is this Canada?" they asked. "Yes," I said, "there are no slaves here;" then I witnessed a scene I shall never forget. They seemed

to be transformed; a new light shone in their eyes, their tongues were loosed, they laughed and cried, prayed and sang praises, fell upon the ground and kissed it, hugged and kissed each other, crying, 'Bress de Lord! Oh! I'se free before I die.'"

In their ecstasies they sometimes lay down and wallowed in the sand.

As Harriet Tubman was convoying a party of fugitives over the Suspension Bridge, she wished them to see the great cataract of which it commands so magnificent a view. "Joe, come, look at de Falls! it's your last chance.' But Joe sat still and never raised his head. At length Harriet knew by the rise in the centre of the bridge and the descent on the other side that they had crossed the line. She sprang across to Joe's seat, shook him with all her might, and shouted, 'Joe, you've shook de lion's paw!' Joe did not know what she meant. 'Joe, you're free!' Then the strong man, who could stand under his master's whip without a groan, burst into an hysterical passion of weeping and singing, so that his fellow-passengers might think he had gone crazy; but did not withhold their sympathy when they knew the cause of such emotion."

Not a few slaves purchased their own liberty by working overtime, and others were purchased by white sympathizers for the purpose of emancipation when they could not be otherwise rescued.

Sometimes an attempt was made to kidnap fugitive slaves even on Canadian soil. A negro named Stanford and his wife had escaped from slavery to St. Catharines, in Canada. A professional slave hunter, Bacon Tate by name, in 1836 kidnapped and carried off these fugitives to the city of Buffalo. He broke into Stanford's house, dragged him, his wife and six week's old baby out of bed, and forced them into a carriage, and before daylight had crossed the Niagara River. The slave hunters were followed by some black neighbours of Stanford's. At Buffalo a coloured rescue party dragged the fugitives from the carriage in which they were being abducted, defended them for a time in a private house, hurried them to the ferry despite the Riot Act read by the sheriff, and after a running fight of two hours the Stanfords were placed in the ferry boat. "Those left behind," says 'Ascot Hope,' "gave three cheers, eagerly watching the boat as it bore the poor slaves out of reach of their enemies. When it was seen to reach the Canadian side, Stanford leaped on shore, rolled himself in the sand, and ever rubbed it into his hair, in the wildness of his delight at finding himself once more on free soil." Twenty-five of the rescue party were tried and fined, but no punishment was meted out to Tate for his dastardly crime.

The hardships which many of the refugees underwent in Canada were severe. One of them, writing from Hamilton, Canada West, to Fred. Douglass, said: "Twenty-one years ago I stood on this spot, penniless, ragged, lonely, homeless, helpless, hungry and forlorn. . . . Hamilton was a cold wilderness for the fugitive when I came there."

There were at first no schools, no churches and very little preaching and other consolations of religion to which the negroes had been accustomed. Their poverty, their ignorance, their fears, made their condition very pitiable. "Yet," says Siebert, "it was brightened much by the compassionate interest of the Canadian people, who were so tolerant as to admit them to a share in the equal rights that could at that time be found in America only in the territory of a monarchical government."

Generous efforts were soon made to meet their religious needs. As early as 1838 a mission was begun among them. Schools were established and other means adopted for the betterment of their social condition. A manual labour institute was begun at Amherstburgh. They were visited by anti-slavery friends from the United States, John Brown, Levi Coffin and others. Mr. Coffin, describing their condition, said some of these former slaves "owned good farms, and were perhaps worth more than their former masters. . . . Many fugitives arrived weary and footsore, with their clothing in rags, having been torn by briars and bitten by dogs on their way, and when the precious boon of freedom was obtained, they found themselves possessed of little else, in a country unknown to them and a climate much colder than that to which they were accustomed." Yet they soon earned an honest living, and not a few amassed considerable property.

Mr. Clay remonstrated with the British Government for harbouring these refugees: "They are generally," he alleged, "the most worthless of their class, and far, therefore, from being an acquisition which the British Government can be anxious to make. The sooner, we should think, they are gotten rid of the better for Canada." "But," says Professor Siebert, "the Canadians did not at any time adopt this view." The Government gave the exiles welcome and protection and land on easy terms. Under the benign influence of Lord Elgin, then Governor-General, the Elgin Association was formed for the purpose of settling the refugees on Clergy Reserve and Crown lands in the township of Raleigh. In the so-called Queen's Bush, a vast region stretching towards Lake Huron, many fugitives hewed out for themselves homes in the wilderness. At Dawn, near Dresden, as early as 1842, a negro settlement was formed. The Revs. Hiram Wilson and Josiah Henson organized a training institute. Several hundred acres of land were secured on which in ten years there were five hundred settlers, with sixty pupils in the school. In other settlements adjacent, says Mr. Hen-

son, there were between three and four thousand refugees and the pupils reached the number of one hundred and sixteen. This was anticipated by nearly half a century the industrial training which Booker T. Washington has so successfully organized at Tuskegee, Alabama.

At Buxton, in Kent County, a settlement named after Thomas Fowell Buxton, the famous philanthropist, was organized, and in 1848 the Elgin Association was incorporated. Ten years later Dr. Howe reports 2,000 acres deeded to negro owners, and two hundred neat cottages erected, with a population of about 1,000. "There is no tavern, and no groggery," he writes, "but there is a chapel and a schoolhouse. . . . Most interesting of all are the inhabitants. Twenty years ago most of them were slaves, who owned nothing, not even their children. Now they own themselves; they own their houses and farms; and they have their wives and children about them. They are enfranchised citizens of a government which protects their rights." A saloon was opened in the Buxton settlement, but could not find customers enough to support it, and so was closed within a year.

Other similar but less noted colonies, one bearing the honoured name of the philanthropist Wilberforce, were established. Some of the negroes' best friends, however, considered that they would succeed better if thrown upon their own resources and encouraged to cultivate self-reliance. Their gregarious instinct, however, tended to keep them together. The refugees for the most part gravitated towards the towns and cities—Amherstburgh, Windsor, Chatham, St. Catharines, Hamilton and Toronto—where they cultivated small gardens and performed such lowly labours as wood sawing, whitewashing, hotel service, laundry work and the like. A less number found homes and occupations at Kingston and Montreal, and a few at St. John and Halifax.

The negroes at Dawn were reported to be "generally very prosperous farmers—of good morals, and mostly Methodists and Baptists." Out of three or four thousand coloured people not one, says Josiah Henson, was sent to gaol for any infraction of the law during the seven years from 1845 to 1852.

In 1852 the Anti-Slavery Society of Canada reported that there were about 30,000 coloured residents in Upper Canada, nearly all being refugees. About ten years later Principal Willis, of Knox College, who took deep interest in their condition, estimated the number at 60,000. This was doubtless an over-estimate. After the War the number very greatly decreased, many returning to the northern tier of states and some further south.

The Canadian census of 1901 reports in the whole Dominion 17,437 negroes, more than half of whom, namely, 8,935, dwell in

Ontario, 5,984 in Nova Scotia, 1,368 in New Brunswick, and only 532 in British Columbia, and 280 in Quebec.<sup>1</sup>

A few of the refugees followed the blacksmith and carpenter trades, fewer still kept small stores, and some accumulated real estate and a degree of wealth. Many of them owned small neat homes, though sometimes the unthrift inherited from slavery days was seen in the unkempt and dilapidated premises. Dr. Howe considered their state better than that of the foreign immigrants in the same regions. Sunday schools were early established in the negro settlements, the Bible was read with interest in many humble homes, not a few learning to read and write after reaching adult years.

The tendency of the negroes to association was shown in the organization of what were known as "True Bands," a sort of mutual improvement clubs; one at Chatham had a membership of 375, and one at Malden a membership of about 600. Religious organizations were formed among them, chiefly of the Methodist and Baptist persuasion, perpetuating the modes of worship of these churches in the Southern States. Most of the meeting places were devoid of architectural pretensions and were sometimes rude and almost primitive. The worship was largely of an emotional character, marked by the vigour and often the eloquence of the address and the beauty of the singing, which were not infrequently accompanied by hand clapping and other physical demonstration.

Among their ministers were some very devout and pious men, some of them possessing much ability and persuasive eloquence. Of these we may mention the Revs. Wm. Mitchell, Josiah Henson, Elder Hawkins, and Bishop Disney of the Methodist Episcopal Church. (The latter three were born slaves.) They accomplished much good among the coloured race in Canada. A few of the negroes joined white churches, but for the most part they worshipped together. The franchise was freely given them on the payment of the same amount of taxes as was paid by the white people.

As may well be imagined many touching scenes took place as each band of fugitives reached the land of liberty. Many families long separated were re-united. "Each new band of pilgrims as it came ashore at some Canadian port was scanned by little groups of

<sup>1</sup> The negro population seems to be continuously decreasing in the Dominion. The census of 1871 reports a total of 21,496, not including Prince Edward Island, Manitoba, British Columbia and the Territories, which were not then in the Dominion. Of these, 13,425 were in Ontario, 6,212 in Nova Scotia, 1,701 in New Brunswick, and 148 in Quebec. In 1881 the negro population in the whole Dominion was 21,394, of whom 12,097 were in Ontario, 7,062 in Nova Scotia, 1,638 in New Brunswick, 274 in British Columbia, 155 in Prince Edward Island, 141 in Quebec, 25 in Manitoba, and 2 in the Territories.

negroes eagerly looking for familiar faces. Strange and solemn reunions, after years of separation and hardship, took place along the friendly shores of Canada."

A large number of fugitives from slavery considered themselves safe, at least till after 1850, within the borders of the Free States. Josiah Henson estimated that in 1852 there were as many as 50,000 former slaves living in the various Free States. But this was always at considerable risk of being kidnapped or, after the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, of being legally restored to bondage. "The Southern people," says Professor Siebert, "apparently regarded their right to recover their escaped slaves as unquestionable as their right to reclaim their strayed cattle, and they were determined to have the former as freely and fully recognized in the North as the latter."

There sprang up a class of men who made it their business to track runaway slaves. They watched the advertisements of such runaways, and haunted the abolition communities or towns for their detection. The Rev. L. B. Grimes, a coloured man, had organized a church of fugitive slaves in Boston. On the enactment of the Fugitive Slave Bill forty of them fled to Canada. One of the number, Shadrach, was arrested, but made his escape. Sims, another, under guard of three hundred Boston policemen, was restored to slavery.

The Rev. J. S. C. Abbott recites a stirring story of another rescue in Boston. A fugitive slave girl married a coloured man named Crafts in that city. To them were born two children. "A young, healthy, energetic mother with two fine boys was a rich prize." An attempt was, therefore, made in 1852 to abduct them. "These Boston boys," says Siebert, "born beneath the shadow of Faneuil Hall, the sons of a free citizen of Boston, and educated in the Boston free schools, were, by the compromises of the Constitution, admitted to be slaves, the property of a South Carolinian planter. The Boston father had no right to his own sons." Warned in time the mother fled with her children and escaped by a Cunard steamer to Halifax.

Senator Charles Sumner declared that "as many as six thousand Christian men and women, meritorious persons,—a larger band than that of the escaping Puritans,—precipitately fled from homes which they had established."

The Coloured Baptist Church of Rochester out of a membership of one hundred and fourteen fugitive slaves lost a hundred and twelve, including the pastor who fled for safety to Canada. Similar numbers escaped from Buffalo, Detroit and other border cities. The persons who aided the escape of such fugitives were subject to severe penalties even before the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act. In 1847 Mr. Giltner, of Kentucky, was amerced in fines of \$2,752 for such an

offence. In 1850, Mr. Newton, of Michigan, was fined the sum of \$2,850 for aiding fugitive slaves, and against Mr. R. R. Sloan, of Sandusky, Ohio, was given a verdict of \$3,330 for aiding the escape of fugitive slaves, besides \$1,393 in law costs. For hindering the arrest of a fugitive in 1855, Mr. Booth, of Wisconsin, was imprisoned one month and amerced in a penalty of \$1,451. In 1856 Margaret Garner, a slave woman, fled with her four children to Cincinnati, Ohio. Frenzied with fear of capture she killed her favourite child, but with the surviving children was restored to slavery.

The Canadian freedmen gave a warm welcome to the fugitives. A declaration which they issued ran in part as follows: "Including our children, we number here in Canada 20,000 souls. The population in the free states are, with few exceptions, the fugitive slave's friends. We are poor. We can do little more for your deliverance than pray to God for it. We will furnish you with pocket compasses, and in the dark nights you can run away."

Upon the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law in 1850, Joshua R. Giddings, of Ohio, declared: "The freemen of Ohio will never turn out to chase the panting fugitive. They will never be metamorphosed into bloodhounds, to track him to his hiding-place, and seize and drag him out, and deliver him to his tormentors. Rely upon it they will die first . . . Let no man tell me there is no higher law than this Fugitive Bill. We feel there is a law of right, of justice, of freedom, implanted in the breast of every intelligent human being, that bids him look with scorn upon the libel on all that is called law."

"Villages, towns and cities from Iowa to Maine," says Professor Siebert, "but especially in the middle states, witnessed scenes calculated to awaken the popular detestation of slavery as it had never been awakened before. Pitiably distress fell upon the fugitive settlers in the North and did much to quicken consciences everywhere. The capture of a fugitive in the place where he had been living invariably caused an outburst of indignation."

The appearance of Mrs. Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin," in 1850, and of its Key of corroborative evidence in 1853, aroused the conscience of the North like the peal of a clarion. In 1854, Anthony Burns, a fugitive slave was arrested in Boston; but, through the zeal of the abolitionists the city was set ablaze with excitement. At a meeting held in Faneuil Hall it was decided to rescue Burns by force from the Court-House gaol which, defended by troops, had the air of a beleaguered fortress. A thousand soldiers furnished with loaded cannon, assisted by four platoons of marines and battalion of artillery conducted Burns to the United States revenue cutter by which he was carried back to Virginia. Fifty thousand people lined the

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streets, greeted the procession with hisses and groans and displayed emblems of mourning and shame.

It does not lie within the scope of this paper to describe the Free Soil struggles in Kansas, nor the career of John Brown, but Professor Siebert quotes the estimate that the "attack on Harper's Ferry caused the value of slave property in Virginia to decline to the extent of ten million dollars." Not a few thoughtful minds agreed that the existence of the Underground Railway was on the whole a fortunate thing for the slave states; that it was, as the negro historian, Williams, has said: "a safety valve to the institution of slavery. As soon as leaders arose among the slaves, who refused to endure the yoke, they would go North. Had they remained, there must have been enacted at the South the direful scenes of San Domingo."

General Quitman, Governor of Louisiana, declared in 1850 that the South had lost 100,000 slaves in the previous forty years whose value he estimated at \$30,000,000. Both the number of fugitives and their value were, doubtless, very much exaggerated. In addition to these it is alleged that the American Colonization Society, whose object was to remove free blacks from the South to the coast of Africa, sent out in forty years previous to 1857, 9,502 emigrants. The solution of the slavery problem was evidently not repatriation in their original home.

In the year 1860 a very stirring international episode occurred in the city of Toronto. It was one of the most remarkable cases ever tried in Canada, both from the public sympathy that was called forth and from the points of law involved. A very dull account of this trial is given both in the Upper Canada Queen's Bench Reports and Common Pleas Reports.<sup>1</sup> The facts of the case were as follows: John Anderson, a slave belonging to one McDonald, in Missouri, had left his owner's house with the intention of escaping from slavery. About thirty miles from his home he met with one Diggs, a planter, working in a field with his negroes. Diggs told Anderson that as he had not a pass he could not allow him to proceed. Anderson tried to run away from his captor when Diggs ordered his slaves, four in number, to take him a prisoner. Diggs himself attempted his arrest, was stabbed by Anderson, and in a few days died of his wound. Anderson in the meantime made good his escape and got away to Canada. This was in September, 1853. After seven years' residence in Canada Anderson was tracked by a slave catcher, charged with murder, and

<sup>1</sup> Queen's Bench Reports, Vol. XX., Second Ed., pp. 124-193, Michaelmas Term, 24 Victoria, 1860. Court of Common Pleas Reports, Vol. XI., Second Ed., pp. 9-72, Hilary Term, 24 Victoria.

his surrender demanded under a clause of the Ashburton Treaty providing for the extradition of slaves guilty of crimes committed in the United States. Lord Elgin, the Governor-General of Canada, in response to an appeal on behalf of Anderson, replied to the effect that "in case of a demand for John Anderson, he should require the case to be tried in their British court; and if twelve freeholders should testify that he had been a man of integrity since his arrival in their dominion, it should clear him."

The magistrate who examined the case decided that the charge against Anderson was sustained. The case was brought before the Court of Queen's Bench, Toronto, which court decided that Anderson should be given up. Intense excitement was created throughout the country by this decision. Public meetings were held and strong protests were made against the surrender of the hunted fugitive. It argued that in defending himself against recapture to bondage and to condign punishment and probably a cruel death he was exercising an inalienable right. The Court of Queen's Bench gave a decision, Justice McLean strongly dissenting, not for his surrender, but against his discharge, leaving him to be dealt with by the Government which might find sufficient reasons for not complying with the requisition from the United States. Justice McLean expressed his strong dissent in these words: "Can, then, or must, the law of slavery in Missouri be recognized by us to such an extent as to make it murder in Missouri, while it is justifiable in this province to do precisely the same act? . . . . In administering the law of a British province, I can never feel bound to recognize as law any enactment which can convert into chattels a very large number of the human race. I think that on every ground the prisoner is entitled to be discharged."

So profound was the interest in this case that after the decision in Canada became known in England, the Habeas Corpus was applied for and granted by the Court of Queen's Bench in that country. Before that could be executed, however, the prisoner had obtained a similar writ from the Court of Common Pleas in Canada. The result was that the prisoner was discharged on the grounds of informality of his committal. There can be little doubt, however, that all the legal resources of Great Britain would have been employed for the defence of this lowly black prisoner.

The present writer has a very vivid recollection of a great public meeting of sympathy with this fugitive slave, held in St. Lawrence Hall, Toronto, in which the Hon. George Brown and Dr. Daniel Wilson, President of Toronto University, took a prominent part. He was also present at the reading of the decisions of three judges before the Court of Queen's Bench at Toronto. It was an occasion

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of thrilling interest. The fugitive slave was brought to the court in a cab surrounded by a strong body of police carrying muskets with fixed bayonets — so great was the fear of a popular rescue. Chief Justice Robinson gave a learned judgment to the effect that Anderson should be given up. Judge Burns followed in an impressive address to the same effect. During the reading of these judgments, which were heard in death-like silence, the poor negro turned almost pale with trepidation. As Judge McLean pronounced his decision that the prisoner should *not* be surrendered, a cheer that could not be restrained, burst from the lips of the audience, was caught up by the thousands gathered outside of the hall, and rang from street to street till the news was known throughout the city.

Co-incident with these events was the secession of South Carolina and the organization of the Southern Confederacy. Then followed the four years' war with, as one of its results, the abolition of the last vestige of slavery on this continent.