

"UNCLE SAM STRIKES A MORAL POSE"

by
Frank R. Crosswaith.

STUDENTS OF MORALITY and contemporary American history will find it no easy task to explain the righteous indignation which Secretary of State, Stimson, displayed in his recent letter to the Liberian Government. In that letter, Uncle Sam poses as the outraged Christian Crusader against slavery; against the very institution for opposing which, John Brown was hung, Elijah Lovejoy lynched, Thaddeus Stevens struck down on the floor of the U.S. Senate and the abolitionists generally hounded, tormented and despised less than one hundred years ago.

FREDERICK DOUGLAS, WENDELL PHILLIPS and the other Abolitionists then felt, even as Uncle Sam pretends now to feel, that slavery was a thing vile and outrageous, and sought to destroy it. But at every turn they found that slavery enjoyed the blessings of the church and the protection of the Constitution of the United States. What would these Abolitionists say if, from their enshrined sepulchre they could read and comment upon the letter a Secretary of State of the United States sends to a far off Negro republic on the question of slavery? More than likely they would discern in his conduct the same economic forces at work which once made the New England States defend slavery and at a later period oppose it.

HERE IS A SAMPLE of the circle completed by the average New England business transaction in the days when slavery was respectable. Lumber and fish were sold in the West Indies in exchange for molasses; the molasses made into rum in New England; the rum exchanged with African tribes for slaves; the slaves sold to cotton-growers for cotton; the cotton made into clothes in the New England factories, - and a part of the product exchanged for more molasses, to make more rum; to get more slaves; to get more cotton; to make more clothes; to get more molasses, etc. The balance of the products were used to invest in and to monopolize western land, to enlarge her own manufacturing interests, to support schools, colleges, and churches. The future might yet disclose that the Firestone interests played an important role in "discovering" slavery in Liberia.

A CENTURY AGO LIBERIA was established as a sanctuary for Negroes escaping from bondage in the United States. It was the fond hope of the friends of Negro freedom that the freed black men transported to Liberia would contribute much toward the civilizing of Africa; today we find that the descendants of those transported free-men have been treating the native Africans in much the same manner as their ancestors were treated in the days of American slavery. The Americo-Liberians, who chiefly reside in Monrovia, have held themselves superior to the natives even as the average so-called intellectual Negro assumes an austere and haughty attitude toward the Negro masses here and in the West Indies.

THE SITUATION IS A SERIOUS ONE, and calls for "tall thinking" on the part of the thinking element among Negroes as well as among white workingmen. In the past many well meaning individuals

have advanced the claim that the "Negro Problem" is one of color - a psychological problem, - which can be solved thru amalgamation, or "lightening up" the Negro race. A minority of both races on the other hand have steadfastly claimed that the Negro Problem is largely an economic one. The revolting disclosures about conditions in Liberia amply substantiate the claims of the latter group. In the clash of economic interest, race, color and religion play but a very minor role. The textile barons of the South exploit members of their own race with as little compunction as they do members of the Negro race. The slave holding elements in Liberia, if given the opportunity, would as readily enslave white workers as they now enslave men and women of their own race. In this respect it is interesting to note that, when the question of investigating slavery in Africa was being debated by the League of Nations' Committee, a French-African Negro eloquently defended slavery while a white Socialist, member of the British Labor Party, vehemently denounced it.

ALBEIT, HOWEVER, the moral lecture which Mr. Stimson delivered to Liberia would have had a greater force if the United States herself were free from slavery. It is common knowledge that slavery in a modified form (peonage) exists in many Southern States, and the victims are both black and white workingmen--mostly black. Through Grandfather clauses and other restrictive measures political slavery also claims a majority of the citizens in South Carolina, Louisiana, Georgia, Virginia, Alabama, Oklahoma, Mississippi and other hot-beds of slavery in the United States, to say nothing of the wage-slave system which so effectively nullifies the "Constitutional freedom" of the workingclass North and South.

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MY PEOPLE

My people are happy people, No matter what goes wrong; They wear chains and trust in fate, And sing emotion's song.	My people are noisy people-- They give to every quack, And cherish every ancient lie With moss upon its back.
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My people are working people-- They labor all their lives To take care of rich parasites And clothe their lazy wives.	My people are handsome people-- You'll find them everywhere, Putting cobwebs in their brains And pressing down their hair.
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My people are fearless people-- They fight and bleed and die, And do not want a single thing But mansions in the sky.	My people are leading people-- Their leaders get the gold; They lead and keep the rest behind With empty bags to hold. -
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