

The Handkerchief on Garvey's Head

By Robert Minor

THE "Great House" of the white master arose in cruel majesty over the plantation—the seat of a petty feudal principality. "Master" sat on the "po'ch" with his feet comfortably poised on the railing, whisky bottle and mint close at hand, dreamily gazing over the broad acres of cotton, tobacco or corn. Master wasn't lazy—he was a gen'lman. Only "niggers" are lazy.

Out on the broad acres, scores and hundreds—maybe thousands—of human beings toiled in the scorching sun, deftly doing the labor that transformed the one-time jungle into a garden of the world. They were black human beings, clad in rags; their heads covered with crude straw hats and bowed toward feet that had seldom, if ever, known shoes, eyes staring endlessly at "master's" cotton rows, toiling, perishing, actually, without hope, without purpose. Without purpose? Only the negative purpose to avoid the attention of a hard-faced white overseer who is riding there up and down the long line of bowed backs where black skin glistens through the ragged attire. The man on horseback, the white overseer, has a long, blue-stained leather whip in his hand—the "cow-skin." On his hip he carries a brace of pistols. Suddenly the white overseer's curse rings out—"Work, there, you God-damned lazy black bitch!"—and the whip sings through the air to cut the back of a woman laborer, tired and lagging under the endless strain. A near-by slave man's eyes shift their black orbs in the white, to look his death-like hate at the beast on horseback.

Across the broad acres, the white master crushes the mint in his whisky glass, and calls gruffly for attendance. Then it is that you see there are other black men and black women in and around this feudal castle. A black man comes running to master's call. A black woman hastens to prepare master's supper; other women, other men scurry about the place, sweeping, cleaning, attending the little "white master's" and "misses'" wants, saddling horses, running errands, fanning the white lady while she sleeps through the hot afternoon—attending to all the petty bodily comforts of the master's family. These are not the "corn-field niggers." Their feet wear the cast-off shoes of master's family; their eyes don't look hate at the master, or at the overseer whose lash has nothing to do with them. They work at the "Great House," and their bowing and scraping attention to "master's" wants wins the leavings of real food from "master's" table.

"Handkerchief-Heads."

And very often their heads, that never feel the blazing sun of the cotton and corn fields, are decked with gay and fancy-colored cotton handkerchiefs, while they do their chores about the "Great House."

In the language-crucible of long and ghastly centuries of slavery, the term "handkerchief-head" came to have a meaning. It meant a habit of mind; it meant a walk of life in the shade of the "Great House," and a consequent point of view in which the "Great House" that cast the cool shade, was the center of all things and "white master," the source of victuals and cast-off shoes.

A "handkerchief-head" is no "corn-field" Negro.

One hundred and two years ago, when the slave laborers about Charleston, South Carolina, organized an insurrection

against slavery, it was a "handkerchief-head" who went to his white master with a whispered story. And Denmark Vesey, the black lion of freedom, and thirty-five of his "corn-field" lieutenants were hanged.

Plain working class Negroes commonly judge a Negro leader by asking, "Is he a handkerchief-head?" or "Is he a white man's Negro?"

Frederick Douglass, the escaped Negro slave laborer, who was the greatest leader, black or white, of the abolition movement, had the keen vision to see that the abolition of slavery could come only with drawing a clean line of sharp division between the Negro and the southern master class, with no dealings with the slave-owning masters except through the mouths of cannon. Though the white man's history can see none but the white Lincoln, it was this "Black Lincoln," Douglass, who later urged the more timorous white president to effect that the Civil War of '61 was a revolution, and that it could be won only by bringing the black slave masses themselves into military combat against the feudal oligarchy.

The Negro masses have had many leaders since then. After "reconstruction," and after the desertion of the Negro by the Republican party (which was through with him after making him a propertyless wage-laborer and peon-farmer), the Negro was cursed for half a century with "handkerchief-head" leadership. The Negro preacher, ignorant, superstitious, often cowardly, often depending on the charity of the white propertied class, led the Negro for the white propertied class; he was soaked in the ideology which teaches that only from the "Great House" could benefits come, only from the white master's kitchen door could victuals be had—only with the white master's sanction and help could a plan for the Negro's redemption be put through. And with every "help" extended by the white master class, with every plan approved or supported by the white master class (which lived upon exploiting the Negro), the Negro sank lower and lower into stagnation and despair.

There have been some Negro leaders whom it might be unfair to call "handkerchief-heads," but who through mere ignorance, have had tendencies to look to the white master class as the source of all things, even if only of political victuals and philosophical cast-off shoes. There has always been an inclination among many Negro leaders that have come forth since the Civil War, to disparage or to be blind to the inherent and independent capacities of the toiling millions of black labor, and fancying all the Negro race to be naturally dependent on "master" for victuals and "master's help" for any plans for freedom, to shape the Negro movement accordingly.

There came Booker T. Washington. Booker Washington was a great man, after a certain fashion. But he believed in the "Great House." He sought, and received, for the Negro, the leavings of the white master's table. Never a plan had he for the redemption of the Negro, but first it must be fingered on the mahogany table in the drawing room of the "Great House" of the white master class, to be corrected, o. k.'d and financed by the leaders of the capitalist master class, whose sole interest in the Negro was to find a more efficient way of keeping him perpetually in subjection

as a lowest caste within an exploited labor class. And when the plans emerged with this "O. K." and the bank check of the white master attached, they invariably read: "No social equality, but always a specially marked blue-caste; no political equality, but always 'white supremacy'; no real citizenship, but always 'white supremacy'; no real citizen-ship, but always the American-born Negro must be an alien African, tolerated only because he is a good servant." It was always "give and take," with the Negro giving up first his political franchise, then his civil status of equal man- hood, and then his right to form his own intellectual leader- hood, through the higher education of Negro youth. In ex- change the Negro took a few filthy dollars for "industrial training" to fit him better to be an industrial or agricultural serwan-casto for the master class.

If we look over the field of Negro leadership in the past twenty years, we still find a bit of that old handkerchief fluttering from the head of nearly every one. Today there are some exceptions—by intention, at least. Some able and courageous men and women of the Negro race are on the scene, brilliant individuals who boldly demand for the Negro much of what he must have—full and free equality in every respect, with no distinction of race or color in polit- ical or industrial life or in social or civic custom. But the trouble is that nearly all of these leaders are stricken with a certain disease. The very up-hill struggle which they were forced to endure while individually battling their way through the caste system in the intellectual field, has made most of them involuntarily to merge themselves with the middle-class intellectual stratum which we have learned to call the "intelligentsia." Struggling to establish the place of their people in the social structure, they have found their own place too well—in a social system which we now know is ready for destruction and without the destruction of which there can be no progress, no light, no advancement for the masses of men, black or white.

The Negro intellectual leaders, generally speaking, have become what is called "liberals," identified with middle-class thinking, and separated by a vast chasm from the teeming millions of their people who toil in the corn fields and the cotton fields—or in the big northern industries as a most suppressed stratum of the modern proletariat.

What the Negro needs today is not intellectual aristo- crats—but organizers of the toiling black masses. The Negro has shown that he can be a bank-teller or bank president, that he can paint and draw and sing and write as well as any man on earth—and that he can be a real estate specu- lator in juar-crow apartments altogether too well. The pens of the Negroes, Pushkin, Dumas and Phillis Wheatly, Paul Laurence Dunbar, and of Jean Toomer, and of DuBois, and of Jessie Fauset, have scratched out the preposterous slavestate of Negro "inferiority," while the beautiful voice of Roland Hayes sings mockery upon it.

But what the Negro needs today is what the ruling class would call "demagogues"—that is, agitators, hard-fisted men and women to go among the masses and rally the thousands—leaders who seek no recognition in capitalist society, who don't submit their plans to the white master class or take charity at the white master's kitchen door, but who call for the overthrow of both the white master class and its Negro hangers-on.

Negro leaders, not with the poet's lyre, but with the bat- tle-axe of class struggle, not with lyric voice to sing before white kings, but with the agitator's voice to call through the



Here is an old cartoon under the title "Dis Nigger, will soon have to work de same as de white folk do." published in the Southern Enterprise, 1887. Mr. Garvey might well reproduce this picture in his propaganda appealing to the Southern ruling class against the "equality Negroes."

swamps and woods of Louisiana, the fields of Alabama and Georgia and the steel mills of Gary and Pittsburgh.

Introducing Marcus Garvey.

Eight years ago, in the spring of 1916, a short, heavy-set, clear-eyed and prepossessing Negro landed in the United States from the British-ruled island of Jamaica. He had been a printer in Jamaica, and it is said that he had organized there a Negro printers' union.

Within a short time the Negro inhabitants of Harlem became accustomed to seeing this man, Marcus Garvey, on the street corners, where he stood on a soap box and called upon his people to organize. In his voice there was the English accent of Jamaica. It was a custom for American Negroes to despise the Jamaicans as "monkey-chasers" who decided the "possum-bunster" in return. But the facile speech of Garvey soon conquered the prejudice.

It soon became apparent that no leader in America could accumulate crowds of Negro working people as large as those that hung upon the words of Garvey. And this was at a time when the Negro masses were stirring with a turmoil that had not been equaled since the news of the Emancipa- tion Proclamation had leaked through General Lee's battle line to the slaves of the South. The war trade was in full swing, the European labor supply was shut off, and the big Negro migration from the South to the North was just be- ginning. It was a period in which a vast change in the out- look and the activities of the Negro population of America was inevitable. Virtually there had never been any form of Negro organization (or mixed organization), except the primitive and reactionary colored churches and innocuous lodges in imitation of the white middle class. Negro leaders, though dimly conscious that a change was impending, were generally blind to its deep, class significance, and with a few notable but ineffective exceptions, had nothing to offer ex- cept the old, stale organizational forms. The masses of Ne- groes in their new restlessness were found to find some new form of expression. And this man offered something that sounded different. To Marcus Garvey, tens of thousands of Negro working people listened as never: Negroes listened before.

Was this to be the new leader?

Probably never in history did a man have a better chance to serve his people. With a gift of tongue seldom equaled by any man, with a magnetism of personality that draws

irresistibly, with a quick sense of mass psychology and a genius for organizing—what would Garvey do with his power? Garvey came to the test with a head full of the "natio- nalist" lore of 1848, patched up with scraps of plausible ideas gathered from Allied war-propaganda about "liberation of weaker nations." These he applied to the Negro movement with a pinch of opium borrowed from the Zionist move- ment of the Jews. Yet this eclectic mess was sure to find eager attention in New York's restless Negro section in the spring of 1916, striking as it did at the weakest point of the Negro whom the caste system forces to think eternally of race, race, race. In the midst of the war-illusions it was easy to transmute the terms of race into the terms of nation; black and mulatto workers and farmers in America as a "weaker nation" (or a portion of it), whose grievance was the denial of its national rights.

Under this interesting theory, Mr. Garvey might have been expected to demand that South Carolina and Mississippi, having a majority of Negro population, be immediately turned over to the black "nation," and that a plebiscite be held in Louisiana, Alabama, Georgia, and Florida, to determine whether they or any portions of them should go to the black "nation" or to the white "nation." But it soon became clear that Garvey's omelette was to be made without breaking any eggs. His platitudes were not being built to bring the Negro into collision with his ruling class enemies, but to avoid the real struggle for real emancipation of the Negro.

And so Marcus Garvey resurrected an old program—just two hundred and three years old—for the Negroes to win their freedom in Africa (and to pay dues meantime), and to surrender all rights in the United States. This was supposed to please both the Negroes and their oppressors. The idea of colonization of the Negroes in Africa was more than hoary with age. First heard of in 1713 as a Utopian scheme of the Quakers for the gradual and painless abolition of slavery, the scheme of course came to nothing,

but remained an abstract idea for a hundred years. When revived in the era of the cotton gin, however, it was no longer a plan for the abolition of slavery, but a crafty scheme for making slavery permanent. The Eli Whitney cotton gin had brought the period of unmitigated hell for the Negro and big profits in slavery for the owner. In his book "The Negro in Our History," C. G. Woodson says:

"Many slaveholders believed that the then ever-increas- ing important institution of slavery could be maintained only by removing from this country the most striking argument for its abolition, the free Negro, and the foreigners then crowding the free blacks out of the industries of the North hoped to remove them from the field of competition. Coloniza- tion, therefore, received a new impetus. . . . The move- ment was no longer a means of uplift for the Negro, but rather a method of getting rid of an undesirable class that slave- ry might be thoroughly engrained upon our country."

In an old book of 1833, Mrs. Child tells how the project "at first excited some jealousy in the Southern States," but soon persuaded their colleagues that it was only a measure to help them to keep in slavery the great mass of Negroes by getting rid of those who were freed. Speaking for the American Colonization Society, Henry Clay said:

"It is far from the intention of this society to affect in any manner, the tenure by which a certain species of prop- erty is held. I am myself a slave holder, and I consider that kind of property as inviolable as any other in the country. I would resist encroachment upon it as soon, and with as much firmness as I would upon any other property that I hold."

John Randolph, wealthy leader of the slave oligarchy of Virginia according to the records of the Colonization Society, "thought it necessary, being himself a slave holder, to show that so far from being in the smallest degree connected with the abolition of slavery, the proposed Society would prove one of the greatest securities to enable the master to keep in possession his own property."

With these and many other assurances, the colonization scheme became a pet measure of leading slave holders. On the other hand, the freed Negroes of Baltimore, Boston, Hart- ford, New York and Philadelphia in a series of mass meet- ings raised a furor of protest against the swindle.

Mrs. Child wrote in 1832:

"The society has been in operation more than fifteen years, during which it has transported between two and three thousand free people of color. There are in the United States two million of slaves, and three hundred thousand free blacks; and their numbers are increasing at the rate of seventy thousand annually. While the society has re- moved less than three thousand—five hundred thousand have been born. While one hundred and fifty free blacks have been sent to Africa in a year, two hundred slaves have been born in a day. . . . It is Dame Partridge with her bull mopping up the rushing waters of the Atlantic."

Luckily for the Negro, the colonization scheme—as far as it was a scheme to affect the Negro in America—was a flat failure; and the issue of chattel slavery was brought to its real solution—Civil War and the overthrow of the slave oligarchy.

The "colonization" plan to evade the slavery issue died with few but handkerchief-heads to mourn.



Here is another cartoon from the "Salt River Gazette," Negro appearing before an official with a white woman and saying, "Massa, you must marry us. De law says so." Garvey ought surely not to have failed to reproduce this cartoon in his effort to arouse the Southern aristocracy against the "merry and fraterinize in every social way" with white people.

1) "An Appeal in Favor of that Class of Americans Called Africans, by Mrs. Child, Boston, 1833.

And here comes Marcus Garvey, in a new time that seems with struggle, bringing with him a revival of the old movement for colonization.

In its inception, a whole lot of the passion (if not the science) of rebellion crept into the program of the Universal Negro Improvement Association. Rebellion against oppression was the food it fed upon. Garvey could not, if he would, have stemmed the tide. There is in the first program adopted by the association in 1920, something of the glorious if antiquated cry of the rebel slave Nat Turner, who in the year 1831, defined in biblical language the slogan of revolution: "And the last shall be first; and the first shall be last."

But soon events began to show what stuff Garvey was made of. On October 26, 1921, President Harding, anxious to extend the two-party system of big capitalism among the ruling class of the South, made his famous speech at Birmingham, Alabama, promising the Southern white rulers that the Republican party would uphold the caste system, with the words:

"Men of both races may well stand uncompromisingly against every suggestion of social equality. Instead, it would be helpful to have that word, 'equality,' eliminated from this consideration; to have it accepted on both sides that this is not a question of social equality, but a question of recognizing a fundamental, eternal and inescapable difference."

And the applause of all the keener-witted organs of Southern capitalism, we see Marcus Garvey ranting like a good old "Uncle Tom" to do as much bowing and scraping in the plantation style as can be done over the cold wires of the "western Union Telegraph company. Garvey telegraphed Harding:

"The Negroes of the world . . . greet you as a wise and great statesman and feel that with principles such as you stand for, humanity will lose its prejudices and the brotherhood of man will be established. All true Negroes are against social equality."

It might be wondered whether Garvey didn't take this incident as laying the basis for his whole future policy of kow-towing to the Southern ruling class. For, since then, he has constantly appealed to the Southern white wealthy class with fervid denunciations of those Negroes who, as he puts it, seek the equality of "Negroes and whites in the same hotels, homes, residence districts, public and private places, etc."

Slavishness can hardly go further than this. But treason to his toiling race did go further. In October, 1922, Garvey carried his course to its logical climax in a friendly visit to the Imperial Giant of the Ku Klux Klan, Edward Young Clarke, at Atlanta, Georgia. In the headquarters of the Ku Klux Klan in Atlanta he seems to have found the formula:

The attitude of the Ku Klux Klan to the Negro is fairly representative of the feelings of the majority of the white race toward the Negro; therefore, the only solution of the situation is for the Negroes to secure for themselves a government of their own on African soil. (The substance of this has been adopted as a definition of its policy toward the Ku Klux Klan by the U. N. I. A.)

The charge is made by other Negro leaders that Garvey made such a formula the basis of an agreement that the Negro organization would fight all Negro "equality" organizations, would not fight the Klan, and would organize the

Negroes to migrate "back to Africa," thus supposedly ridding the Klan of the presence of the race that it hates. (The complete idiosyncrasy of the idea that the Southern ruling class would permit the ten millions of its black labor-supply to leave the country, even if that were possible, does not bar it from the minds of a Garvey and a Klan chief.)

In short, Garvey did everything that was humanly possible and left no boots unlicked in the effort to make himself a "white man's nigger," in the eyes of the white ruling class, and at the same time, a "Negro Moses" in the eyes of the suffering black masses.

And so Garvey's shield reads on one side: "Deport the damned niggers to Africa," and on the other side: "Let us go to our glorious Homeland in Africa."

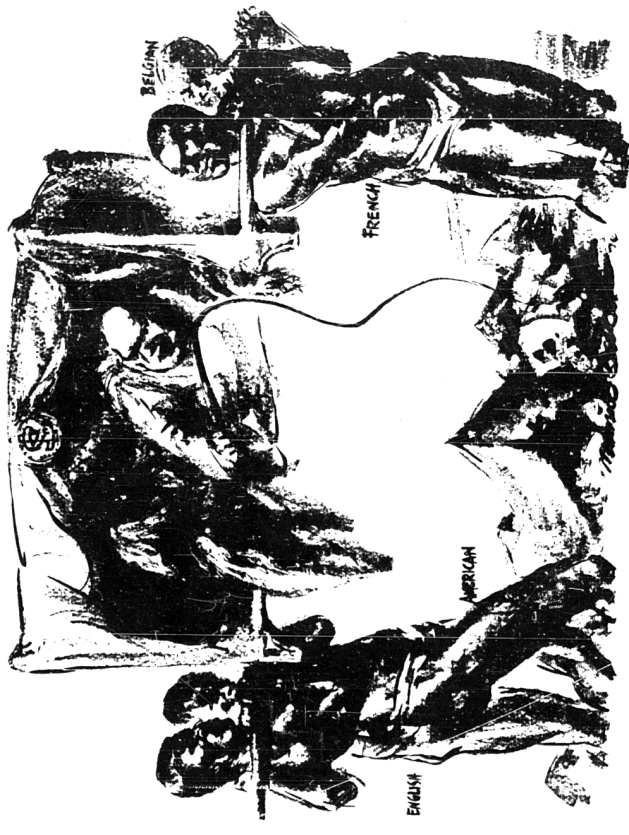
But all was not smooth even for such a handkerchief head. The very material with which Garvey had to work—the new, rebellious Negro—was human dynamite. Under present circumstances, any organization of the masses of wage-working Negroes is dangerous to a social order based on their submission to exploitation. For no matter what purpose may be declared by an organization of the restless Negro toiler, under the circumstances, the mere process of organizing the discontented resulted in the mobilization of militant human material. Soon, smile and apologize as Garvey might, the fear arose in high quarters that the new Negro organization was dangerous. Tradition was soon established that stool-pigeons and informers on the organization met quick and violent ends. A story is told of an ex-member of the organization who called on a New Orleans prosecutor, and was shot down a few minutes later.

Without comment on particular incidents, we note that the American capitalist ruling class soon began to regard the organization work of the Universal Negro Improvement Association as a dangerous stirring of the masses. Negro preachers accustomed all their lives to taking all the spare pennies of their flocks, waited long and loudly that the Negroes were deserting the church and that the impostor Garvey was getting all the dimes. Garvey met the opposition by out-praying the preachers. And, gosh! how he can pray! Shabby, peurile drool—with a straight face he out-drools the most shameless. Facing the Negroes' century-old habit of church-going and his new desire to stay away from church, Garvey opens every meeting with hymns, fills in the middle with vitriolic denunciations of preachers, and closes with prayer. And Garvey held his own against the preachers.

The Government Strikes at Negroes.

But the attack was taken up by the government. Seizing on the wild financial methods of the Black Star Line, a shipping company in which Garvey got the Negroes to invest their savings in the belief that its ships would carry them "back to Africa," the federal government easily convicted Garvey and sentenced him to five years of imprisonment. He was kept in jail during the summer of 1923, by which means the association was prevented from holding its annual convention.

Then came the "intellectuals" on the scene, after the usual fashion of "intellectuals," to take sides with the government in the prosecution of Garvey. Not all, but most of the Negro intelligentsia took the position that our good and just government (Harry Daugherty of the Little Green House on K street was in control of the federal prosecutors) was prosecuting Garvey, the "scoundrel," in the interest of "honesty." They declared that Garvey had a "fair trial"



Maurice Becker

Drop him!

and was "justly convicted," and jeered at him while he lay in jail, demanding his deportation as an alien.

Naturally, the wholesome instincts of the Negro masses were aroused in exactly the opposite direction. The best evidence of the fundamental healthiness of the Negro masses is that tens of thousands of them flocked to the defense of Garvey, ignoring Garvey's pandering to their enemies, they made him their hero. It is probably true that never before was a Negro leader so completely worshipped as was Marcus Garvey in prison.

But the hero meantime, on closer inspection, is seen employing every device of servility toward the ruling class and officialdom to get out of prison. He wrote cajoling and begging letters to the big White Masters, protesting that he did not seek any rights for the Negro in these United States, but only in far-away Africa. Soon Garvey was out on bond and proceeding with his old way.

The "handkerchief-head" who diverts hatred from the master of the Great House—must logically claim his reward in victuals and east-coast clothing, at the Great House kitchen door. This Garvey did.

There is a large number of white capitalists—and, in the South, of the wealthy white land-owning class—who realize that the caste-system has historically become one of the strongest bulwarks of the class system. These people have money to spend—and Garvey has, let us say, financial genius. About the beginning of this year, he got out a series of circular letters which were addressed to a select list of this class, appealing for assistance "morally or otherwise," and adroitly suggesting that it would be advantageous to "leaders of the white race" to give help to the U. N. I. A. because this organization diverts the Negro's attention from seeking political and social equity in the United States. I have before me a pamphlet which was enclosed with the class of white readers. Garvey, as it says, expressly for that class of white readers. The pamphlet is entitled "Aims and Objectives of Movement for Solution of Negro Problem Outlined." In it Mr. Garvey addresses his white capitalist friends:

"The white man of America has become the natural leader of the world. He, because of his exalted position, is called upon to help in all human efforts. From nations to individuals the appeal is made to him for aid in all things affecting humanity, so naturally, there can be no great mass

movement or change without first acquainting the leader on whose sympathy and advice the world moves."

To quote further:

"To us, the white race has a right to peaceful possession and occupation of countries of its own and in like manner the yellow and black races have their rights." (It is later made evident that this means that Negro has no rights in America, which is a white man's country.)

"... Hilberio the other Negro movements in America, with the exception of the Tuskegee effort of Booker T. Washington, sought to teach the Negro to aspire to social equality with the whites, meaning thereby the right to intermarry and fraternize in every social way. This has been the source of much trouble and still some Negro organizations continue to preach this dangerous race destroying doctrine added to a program of political agitation and aggression. The Universal Negro Improvement Association on the other hand, believes in, and teaches the pride and purity of race." (After developing this theme in a way, exactly after the fashion of the Ku Klux Klan, calculated to make the picture of the Negro as a lower race threatening to inoculate the pure and holy white race with "mongrel" blood—such as that of Frederick Douglass, or Dumas, or Pushkin—if once the Negro is granted his constitutional equality, Garvey continues to discuss the Negro's rights in this way):

"... The great white majority will never grant them, and thus we march on to danger if we do not stop and adjust the matter." (At the white master's kitchen door Garvey grovels and admits that the Negro should not be granted equal rights in white master's country, and pleads):

"... Help him to return to his original home—Africa, and there give him the opportunity to climb from the lowest to the highest positions in a state of his own. If not, then the nation will have to hearken to the demand of the aggressive, social equality organization, known as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, of which Dr. W. E. B. DuBois is leader, which declares vehemently for social and political equality, viz: Negroes and whites in the same hotels, houses, residential districts, public and private places, a Negro as president, members of the cabinet, governors of states, mayors of cities, and leaders of society in the United States. . . ." (He continues, that white in effect the white master class will treat the Negro "kindly"):

"Yet it is realized that all human beings have a limit to their humanity. The humanity of white America, we realize, will seek self-protection and self-preservation, and that is why the thoughtful and reasonable Negro sees no hope in America for satisfying the aggressive program of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, but advances the reasonable plan of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, that of creating in Africa a nation and government for the Negro race." (After continuing in this vein to appeal to white prejudice against mulattoes and against Negro political leaders, who hanker after social equality and fight for the impossible in politics and government) and those Negroes who "fight for those things that the white man has created," Mr. Garvey completes his bow at the white master's kitchen door with his palm suggestively extended, saying):

"Teach the Negro to do for himself, help him the best way possible in that direction; but to encourage him in the belief that he is going to possess himself of the things that others have fought and died for, is to build up in his mind false hopes never to be realized."

THE LIBERATOR

The conclusion is inescapable that Garvey is deliberately picking out the most brutish enemies of his exploited race, and, catering to their hatred of the Negro, appeals on that basis for actual money support. Yet he was destined for more trouble.

Obligated to make some showing of reality for his make-believe of freedom by migration, Garvey sent emissaries of the association to Africa, about the beginning of this year, and fight away the cables to Paris and London began to hum of "dangerous Negro agitators" having designs against the sovereignty of British and French territory.

The Africa of today is not the Africa of a hundred years ago. The No-Man's wasteland into which colonization societies in 1830 could pour discontented Negroes, is today the coveted garden of ambition of all the Great Powers. The diamond and gold fields and rubber and mineral lands are guarded by the most powerful armies and navies in the world. In fact, Africa has become one of the pivotal points in world imperialism. The breaking of imperialist rule in Africa is one of the tasks of the impending world-revolution. The continent is already in a state of restlessness, as witness the present Moroccan insurrections and the disturbances in the Sudan. Under the circumstances, the landing of the American Negro emissaries with talk of "a government of their own in Africa" was not a pleasant event for the British, French and Belgian foreign offices.

The weight of the wrath of six Great Powers came down upon the handkerchief-covered head of our hero. Garvey's agents were barred from Africa. The United States government, probably at the request of foreign ambassadors, tried to stop the 1924 convention of the Negro association which had turned out to be an international clearing house of colonial discontent. The United States government distrusted a two-year-old income tax return on which it indicted Garvey again with the charge of falsification—an obvious frame-up. The indictment was held back until the convention opened, and then Garvey was arrested.

At the same time, pressure was brought to bear upon the Negro republic of Liberia, which had apparently granted concessions to the American Negro organization. Suddenly the news came that rubber and mineral concessions that were claimed as granted by Liberia to the American Negro organization, were given instead to Harvey Firestone, the American millionaire friend of Calvin Coolidge.

And so the Negro movement is thrown, willy-nilly, into combat on two sides—against the American capitalist government which wants no lay organization among the toiling Negro masses for no matter what avowed purpose, and against world imperialism.

Let there be no mistake about it—the Universal Negro Improvement Association is not to be discarded as a useless organization merely because of the direction that Mr. Garvey has given to its declared purposes. On the contrary, this writer regards it as the most important mass phenomenon to be found in the sphere of Negro activities since the reconstruction days. In a thousand sleepy Southern villages today, tens of thousands of suffering and oppressed Negro wage laborers are meeting together and talking about their wrongs. For the first time in a century Negro masses are meeting without the preacher! For the first time in forty-eight years they are talking about freedom in some other place than "heaven." It is true that Africa is almost as far away as "heaven"—but not quite.

OCTOBER, 1924

There seems to be no limit to the servility of which Marcus Garvey is capable. In the last convention of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, held in August, 1924, the indication that he had actually made an "arrangement" with the Ku Klux Klan was too plain for doubt—it was practically admitted. A strong appeal to the convention by the Workers Party, requesting the convention to reconsider its stand on the Klan, created a sensation but was turned down. Garvey openly spoke against "antagonizing" the Klan which exists largely and primarily for the purpose of terrorizing and murdering Negroes so as to keep them in subjection.

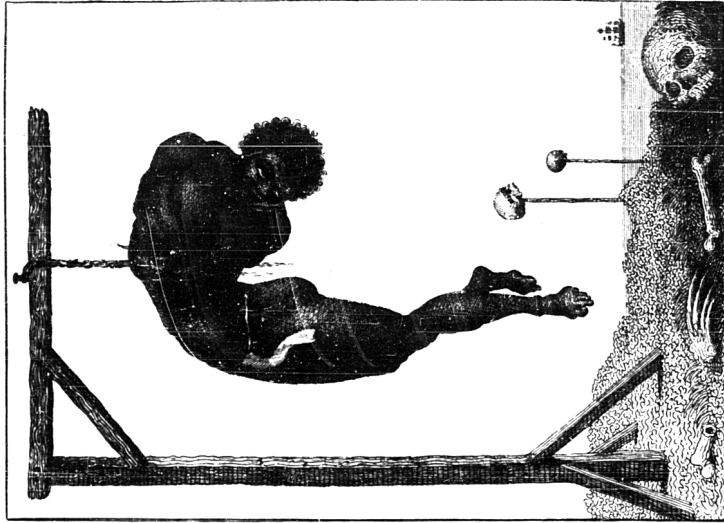
There are curious coincidences. Hearst's International for March, 1924, published an extract from a letter written by the Imperial Kludge of the Klan, as follows:

"We have also in mind, for sometime in the future, for consideration the possibility of picking out the good Negroes (for there are some) and organizing them, or at least financing an organization for them, and thus split the force of the Negro itself. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People has insulted and ignored the memory of Booker T. Washington, and while I do not approve of Booker T. Washington, in some ways, he was better than some of the rest of his gang. If we were to foster under cover, an organization of the Negroes to honor the memory of Booker T. Washington, we would have sprung up a strong organization to fight the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and you know sometimes the best policy is to divide your enemy by getting your enemy to fight among themselves."

Is it only a coincidence that, since Mr. Garvey's visit to the Klan headquarters, he refuses to let the Negro organization take a stand against the Klan—and is it only an accident that about the time the above letter was written, Garvey in his propaganda among white capitalists, holds Booker Washington up as the model of the "good" and "reasonable" Negro?—and that he names the new steamship of the re-incarnated "Black Cross Line" the "Booker T. Washington?"

Marcus Garvey turns out to be but one more of the long line of "handkerchief-head" leaders who seem endlessly to curse the Negro in America.

But his efforts to emasculate the Negro movement will be futile. The American Negro's attention to Africa will be transformed into the healthy, revolutionary internationalism even as the British, French and American imperialists fear: and the liberation of the African peoples will be served, not because of, but in spite of, Mr. Garvey. The American Negro's interest in Africa is not a mistake except where it is made an excuse for evasion of the struggle for equality in America. The working class members of the U. N. I. A. will learn that the idea of colonization to escape



"White Supremacy" a hundred and forty years ago. An old picture, published in 1796, showing how rebellious slaves were punished in South America.

oppression in America is a fantastic swindle, and will ultimately turn all "handkerchief-head" leaders out and will win their freedom through boldly entering the class struggle, full equals among the militant proletariat.

Paradise Hill (The Miners' Cemetery)

THE road is long and white,
The road is a path for the living to the dead,
The road leads from the town to Paradise Hill.

On the bosom of the hill men are sleeping,
Men who knew how to fill a glass and say "Luck to you!"
Men who were underground and suddenly forgot something
Sleepers who knew they would never be trapped.

Stanley Kimmel.