



THOMAS HUGHES

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**J**UDGE THOMAS HUGHES, English lawyer and social economist, known throughout the English-speaking world as the author of "Tom Brown's School Days," the best story of schoolboy life in English literature, was born at Uffington, Berks, England, Oct. 23, 1823, and died at Brighton, March 22, 1896. He was educated at Rugby under Dr. Arnold, and at Oriol College, Oxford, studied law, and was called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn in 1848. He was an advanced Liberal at college, and was later associated with Kingsley and Maurice in their propaganda of "Christian Socialism." In trades unions and legislation regarding the relations of employers and workmen, he took special interest, but always deprecated the extreme measures advocated by certain of the trades unionists. From 1865 to 1868 he was member of Parliament for Lambeth, and for Frome, 1868-74. In 1869 he became Queen's Counsel, and in the following year made a tour in this country and aided in founding an English colony at Rugby, Tenn. He was a warm friend of the United States and during the Civil War period spoke publicly in behalf of the Union. In 1882 he was appointed judge of the County Court Circuit. His published writings include "Tom Brown's School Days" (1857); "The Scouring of the White Horse" (1858); "Tom Brown at Oxford" (1861); "Religio Laici" (1861), reissued as "A Layman's Faith" (1868); "The Cause of Freedom: Which is its Champion in America?" (1863); "Alfred the Great" (1869); "Memoirs of a Brother" (1873); "The Old Church; What shall we Do with It?" a plea against disestablishment (1878); "The Manliness of Christ," an exceedingly popular religious work (1880); "Rugby, Tennessee" (1881); "Memoir of Daniel Macmillan, Publisher" (1882); "Gone to Texas" (1885); "Life of Bishop Fraser" (1887); "David Livingston" (1889); "Vacation Rambles" (1895). Judge Hughes was for a time principal of a London College for Working Men and Women, and took an active part in its management, as well as in advancing the interests and well being of labor.

### THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM

DELIVERED AT EXETER HALL, LONDON, JANUARY 29, 1863

**L**ADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—I am very happy to be here to meet you this evening. It must be a great satisfaction to every man who believes as I do to find that this question, as to what is the real issue in America, is coming out more clearly and distinctly everywhere. The question which in England is now coming up clearer and  
(287)

sharper every day is, "Which is the side of freedom?" That is the only question which an Englishman has to ask himself; and that is the question which is asked now of this nation. It has been within the last fortnight answered by the "Times." [Cheers and groans for the "Times."]

Allow me to suggest, ladies and gentlemen, that as our time is limited, and as each speaker has only twenty minutes allowed to him to say all that he has to say in, there is no time for all this applause. I shall be very much obliged to you if, at any rate while I am speaking, you will be kind enough to suppress your cheering and give me the time to say what I have to say. Again I say, ladies and gentlemen, that the issue has been fairly taken by the "Times" newspaper. I hold in my hand the articles of Monday, the 19th of this month, in which the "Times" says: "The great mind of England is deeply impressed with the conviction of the truth of all this;" I leave out some sentences which are not material—"that the cause of the South gallantly defending itself against the cruel and desolating invasions of the North is the cause of freedom." [Hisses.]

Now, ladies and gentlemen, that is the point upon which we wish to take issue this evening. Let us see whether the voice of England supports that statement.

In the same article there are some remarks to which the speaker who preceded me referred—some facetious remarks and some bitter taunts—calling us who are here present to address you this evening a set of struggling obscurities. Well, gentlemen, as the speaker before me accepted that, so I accept it. I am ready to admit—though the sight before me to-night makes me doubt it—that we may be few and obscure; but that is all the more reason for us to speak out what we believe. I believe there is not a man here this evening

who won't join with me in indorsing the words of the great American poet of freedom:

"They are slaves who will not choose  
Scorn and hatred and abuse,  
Rather than in silence shrink  
From the truth they needs must think;  
They are slaves who will not be  
In the right with two or three."

My object to-night, then, will be to maintain before you that the cause of the South is not the cause of freedom, but that it is the cause of the most degrading and hateful slavery that has been before the world for thousands of years. I shall endeavor as much as possible to take with me your judgment and understanding. I do not want to excite your passions. I don't want to state anything which shall do that, and I ask you therefore to give me a patient and quiet hearing, because the facts that I shall have to put before you will take at least as much time as this meeting can possibly give to me.

I propose first to take a few of the leading Southern statesmen to show you what they have done in times past, what have been their acts, and what their words, and then to ask you to say whether they are the sort of people who are in favor of freedom.

The first representative man of the Southern States is Mr. Jefferson Davis. Mr. Jefferson Davis is a planter—a Southern planter—who was educated at West Point. The first public act of his life, as far as I know, was that he raised a regiment and went to the Mexican war. The Mexican war I believe to have been as atrocious a war as has ever been waged in this world. However, be that as it may, he came back from that war; and what was the next public act of his life? You know very well that a great disgrace has fallen upon many of the States of America because they repudiated their public debts.

Now, the next act of Mr. Jefferson Davis's life was this, that when there was a man—Mr. Walker—who came forward for the governorship of Mississippi upon the platform of making the State pay its debts, he was opposed by Mr. Jefferson Davis, who advocated repudiation of the debt. No doubt in one sense Mr. Jefferson Davis was then the advocate of freedom—the freedom of not paying debts; but that is a freedom which I don't think any Englishman will indorse.

After the Mexican war the United States got a vast tract of new territory, and the question was, what was to be done with it? Then there arose a great struggle between the Free-Soil party and the slave party. The Free-Soil party said "slavery shall not be brought into these Territories." The slave party said that any man should go where he liked with his slaves. Upon that question Mr. Jefferson Davis came out in 1850 in the debate upon what is called Bell's compromise—a compromise that was endeavored to be made by legalizing a doctrine called "squatter's sovereignty," which I may explain to you if I have time. Upon that he said in the Senate: "Never will I consent to any compromise which shall forbid slaves from being taken into the Territories at the option of their owners."

On the 23d of July, 1850, he moved "That all laws existing in the said Territory (California) which deny or obstruct the right of any citizen to remove or reside in such Territory with any species of property legally held in any State of the Union, be and are hereby declared to be null and void."

He was then appointed secretary at war to Mr. President Pierce, and as secretary at war, and throwing the force of the federal government into the struggle in Kansas, he sent troops, turned out the free legislators, and had it not been

for John Brown and such men as he, slavery would have been established in Kansas by Mr. Jefferson Davis.

Then came the question of the reopening of the slave-trade; and, whatever may be said in England, I can prove to you that one of the things that is as clear as the sun at noonday is that the Southern slaveholders, whatever they may say now, have been for years in favor of the reopening of the African slave-trade. Well, upon this occasion in 1859 to which I am alluding, Mr. Jefferson Davis, though he declined to vote in the State of Mississippi for the reopening as far as that State was concerned, for fear lest Mississippi should be swamped by too much of a good thing, yet carefully guarded himself, and said, "I have no coincidence of opinion with those who prate of the inhumanity of the slave-trade." In 1860, when secession was imminent, he moved in the Senate, by way of an amendment to the constitution of the United States:

"That it shall be declared by amendment of the constitution that property in slaves, recognized as such by the local laws of any State, shall be on the same footing as any other species of property, and not subject to be divested or impaired by the local laws of any other State."

The meaning of that is that the Southern slaveholder might take his slaves into New England and that even there they should not be interfered with. Now, I have taken you shortly and rapidly through the career of this representative of the Southern States, and I say that there is not an act of his life which has not been opposed to the sacred cause of freedom.

Mr. A. H. Stephens, of Georgia, as you have been told, is the Vice-President of the Confederate States, a thoughtful man—one of the best of Southern slaveholders. Let us see

what his opinions are. This is a portion of a speech of his in 1857 on the slave-trade:

“It is plain that unless the number of the African stock be increased we have not the population, and might as well abandon the race with our brethren of the North in the colonization of the Territories.”

I give you the very words of the celebrated statement of Mr. Stephens, which has only been referred to by the previous speakers. He says:

“Our new government is founded upon exactly the opposite idea; its foundations are laid, its corner-stone rests, upon the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man, that slavery—subordination to the superior race—is his natural and normal condition. It is upon this, as I have stated, our social fabric is firmly planted; and I cannot permit myself to doubt the ultimate success of a full recognition of this principle throughout the civilized and enlightened world. This stone, which was rejected by the first builders, is become the chief stone of the corner in our new edifice. It is the Lord’s doing, and marvellous in our eyes.”

Now, I will add nothing to that but this, that every man who believes as I do, that there is another corner-stone for the life of nations, must believe that that corner-stone has always been the great enemy of slavery—aye, and will fall upon it wherever it is found, in America or anywhere else, and crush it to atoms.

If my time were longer I would say a little about Messrs. Mason and Slidell and other Southern leaders, but they are not important enough to be brought forward before this meeting when time presses. I will therefore only tell you this, that Mr. Mason, who is over here in England, going about in society and preaching the cause of the South, was the author of the Fugitive Slave Act. [Cries of “He is here.”] I don’t know whether he is in the room or not.

[Cries of “Turn him out.”] If he is, I would say, “Don’t turn him out.”

I have now a few words to say on the point, whether or not this Southern Confederacy, which we are told is the cause of freedom, is likely to reopen the African slave-trade. I will give you a few facts which I gather from documents which are as open to any of you as they are to me. In 1857, the governor of South Carolina, in his address to the legislature, said, “Whatever our position, we must have cheap labor, which can be obtained but in one way—by the reopening of the African slave-trade.” Now I say this—and I don’t believe that anybody can deny it, though I am not so certain of it as I am of the other facts, because I did not see the original draft of the Confederate constitution; but I tell you what I believe to be undoubted. It has been stated at any rate by many Americans who ought to know that in the original draft of that constitution the reopening of the slave-trade was provided for, and that it was taken out merely as a sop to England. I tell you why I believe so. Here is Mr. Spratt, of South Carolina—very well known in America, though perhaps many of you have not heard of him. As a member of the convention which took South Carolina out of the Union he said, “We all know that the constitution of the Confederate States is made for the day—just for the time being—a mere tub thrown out to the whale, to amuse and entertain the public mind for a time.” That is the admission of the South Carolinian representative in a protest against the excision of the clause for reopening of the African trade. Then comes the Baltimore convention in 1858. At that convention the question of slavery was brought on, and Mr. Goodwin, of Georgia, said, “I am an African-trade man.” and then he goes on to say:

"I want the gentlemen of this convention to visit my plantation, and I say again—if they come to see me—I will show them as fine a lot of negroes of the pure African blood as they will see anywhere. If it is right for us to go to Virginia and buy a negro, and pay \$2,000 for him, it is equally right to go to Africa and pay \$50."

I won't go through the speeches of the other gentlemen at that convention—a very important convention it was—but I will just read to you the resolutions which they passed. The first was "that slavery is right, and that being right, it could not be wrong to import slaves." The second was to the effect that it is expedient and proper that the African slave-trade should be reopened, and that this convention will lend its influence to promote that end. Gentlemen, I won't detain you further, except to say that in 1859—the year before secession, at Vicksburg, in Mississippi—the states convention passed a resolution for the reopening of the African slave-trade by a large majority. One more fact. In the Arkansas State legislature in the same year the motion disapproving the reopening of the African slave-trade was lost by a majority of twenty-one.

One word more as to the state of things just before secession. Every man in America, especially the men concerned in politics, saw that a great split would come unless something could be done. Accordingly, Congress appointed committees of the Senate and legislature to consider what could be done, by way of altering the constitution, so as to keep the Union together. These committees broke up hopelessly and came to no conclusion. The majority sent in a resolution, and the minority sent in a resolution; but from the beginning to the end of their proceedings there was one thing, and one thing only, considered—slavery. And to show you the

temper of the South at that time—which temper has not been improved since by the war—Mr. Adams, the present minister to this country—the son and grandson of eminent men—a man as distinguished for his moderation as any man in the United States—Mr. Adams, being a member of the committee of the House of Representatives, and anxious by any means he could to retain the Union, signed at first the resolution of the majority. Finding however that no concession would do for those men, he sent in a social report and protest alone, one part of which was:

"That no form of adjustment will be satisfactory to the recalcitrant States which does not incorporate into the constitution of the United States a recognition of the obligation to protect and extend slavery, and to that I will never consent."

Once more, I have in my hand all the ordinances of the secession States, but I won't trouble you with them because my time is just up. But I will say this—that I have read those documents, and I tell you that not one, nor two, but all of them take up the ground, and that ground only, for seceding—that slavery was in danger and likely to be put down in the Southern States.

Now, what are the people? I have given you specimens of their leading men. I have given you specimens of the public acts of that government which we are told to recognize as a government in favor of freedom. I am sorry to say the people are quite worthy of the government and of their leaders. What said their chief judge in that accursed judgment which he pronounced in the great slave-case, known as the Dred Scott case? "That the African race are so much inferior to white men that they have no rights, and may justly be reduced to slavery for the white man's benefit." That is a decision of the chief judge of the highest

court in the United States, a man who is at the head of the legal body there; and that principle seems to have been ground into the southern portion of the American people. You have all read what has been written by the special correspondent of the "Times" newspaper on this question. What does Mr. Russell say about the Southern people? That in every city dogs are employed to catch runaway slaves. He and all other trustworthy witnesses describe both the people and the government to be as deliberately hostile to freedom as any men that ever lived on the face of this earth. Of course in a meeting of this sort, and in twenty minutes, you cannot prove your case, but I only say this—I challenge any friend of the South to name one single leader there who is not pledged over and over again to slavery. I ask them to name one public act, one single Southern Confederate State, which is in favor of human freedom.

Well, I, an Englishman, find such a case as this. I, an Englishman, an inhabitant of a country of free thought, of free words, and of free men, am asked to indorse such a state of things. I am asked to indorse a people who do these acts, who have expressed these opinions, and to say that their cause is the cause of freedom. I say on the contrary, as I said when I first stood up before you, that the cause of the South is the most hateful, the most enslaving, the most debasing tyranny that has been on the face of the earth for a thousand years.

During this American contest one American has been abused, and I think more unjustly dealt by than any other man in the United States; and the cruel and unfair abuse of Americans by a portion of the press of this country accounts for the bitter feeling in America against England.

In the same "Times" article from which I read to you just now, I find this statement:

"The stock humbug of the Northern people is a pretence of caring about slavery. Mr. Cassius Clay is much mistaken if he thinks that his neighbors could suppose that he is the real emancipator for emancipation's sake, or that he has any other object in view except that of deluding Europe with fine words."

Such words as these are enough to make any people bitter; for a more unjust, a more cruel comment on a public man was never put forward. Now, Mr. Cassius Clay has said many foolish things about this country; but just let me say a word or two about his history. He was born in Kentucky—a slave State. When he went to New England to be educated, he looked about him to see what was going on there, and the difference between that country and his own struck him, and made him think. He went back to his own State of Kentucky; and what did he do there? When he saw the state of things on one side of the Ohio—magnificent cultivation—but on the other saw desolation and slavery, he said to himself, I will see if I cannot put an end to this, so far as I am concerned; and he emancipated every slave he had.

And what did he do then? He went about Kentucky, the most dangerous State to act such a part in in all America, and with his life in his hand he lectured against slavery. He was attacked in his lecture-room several times. At one time four men attacked him, and after a desperate fight he was left for dead on the floor. This man, who has emancipated every slave of his, who has been cut to pieces for the sake of emancipation, is the man about whom our great paper says: "Cassius Clay is much deceived in his own imagination if he thought his neighbors could imagine that he was a real emancipator for emancipation's sake."